

LEVER'S
WORKS



"IT IS CONSEQUENTLY MINE—MINE THEREFORE TO PUBLISH, TO DECLARE TO THE WORLD, THROUGH ITS WORDS, THAT THE WHOLE OF THIS GRAND ENTERPRIZE IS A CHEAT THAT ITS GREAT DESIGNER IS A MAN OF NOTHING, LIVING THE PRECARIOUS LIFE OF A SPECULATOR, TRADING ON THE RICH MAN'S HORDE AND THE POOR MAN'S PITTANCE." (P. 603.)

THE WORKS
OF
CHARLES LEVER.

VOL. II.

THE KNIGHT OF GWYNNE,
DAVENPORT DUNN.

WITH THIRTY ILLUSTRATIONS

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THE KNIGHT OF GWYNNE.

PREFACE.

I WROTE this story in the Tyrol. The accident of my residence there was in this wise: I had traveled about the Continent for a considerable time in company with my family with my own horses. Our carriage was a large and comfortable calèche, and our team, four horses; the leaders of which, well-bred and thriving-looking, served as saddle horses when needed.

There was something very gipsy-like in this roving uncertain existence, that had no positive bent or limit, and left every choice of place an open question, that gave me intense enjoyment. It opened to me views of Continental life, scenery, people, and habits I should certainly never have attained to by other modes of travel.

Not only were our journeys necessarily short each day, but we frequently sojourned in little villages, and out of the world spots; where, if pleased by the place itself, and the accommodation afforded, we would linger on for days, having at our disposal the total liberty of our time, and all our nearest belongings around us.

In the course of these rambles we had arrived at the town of Bregenz, on the lake of Constance; where the innkeeper, to whom I was known, accosted me with all the easy freedom of his calling, and half-jestingly alluded to my mode of traveling as a most unsatisfactory and wasteful way of life, which could never turn out profitably to myself, or to mine. From the window where we were standing as we talked, I could descry the tall summit of an ancient castle, or schloss, about two miles away; and rather to divert my antagonist from his argument than with any more serious purpose, I laughingly told my host if he could secure me such a fine old château as that I then looked at, I should stable my nags

and rest where I was. On the following day, thinking of nothing less than my late conversation, the host entered my room to assure me that he had been over to the castle, had seen the baron, and learned that he would have no objection to lease me his château, provided I took it for a fixed term, and with all its accessories, not only of furniture but cows and farm requisites. One of my horses, accidentally pricked in shoeing, had obliged me at the moment to delay a day or two at the inn, and for want of better to do, though without the most remote intention of becoming a tenant of the castle, I yielded so far to my host's solicitation—to walk over and see it.

If the building itself was far from faultless, it was spacious and convenient, and its position on a low hill in the middle of a lawn finer than anything I can convey; the four sides of the schloss commanding four distinct and perfectly dissimilar views. By the north it looked over a wooded plain, on which stood the Convent of Mehreran; and beyond this, the broad expanse of the lake of Constance. The south opened a view toward the upper Rhine, and the valley that led to the Via Mala. On the east you saw the Gebhardsberg and its chapel, and the lovely orchards that bordered Bregenz; while to the west rose the magnificent Lenten and the range of the Swiss Alps—their summits lost in the clouds.

I was so enchanted by the glorious panorama around me, and so carried away by the thought of a life of quiet labor and rest in such a spot, that after hearing a very specious account of the varied economies I should secure by this choice of a residence, and the resources I should have in excursions on all sides, that I actually contracted to take the château, and became master of the Rieden Schloss from that day.

Having thus explained by what chance I

came to pitch my home in this little-visited spot, I have no mind to dwell further on my Tyrol experiences than as they concern the story which I wrote there.

If the scene in which I was living, the dress of the peasants, the daily ways and interests had been my prompters, I could not have addressed myself to an Irish theme; but long before I had come to settle at Predeislar, when wandering amongst the Rhine villages, on the vine-clad slopes of the Bergstrasse, I had been turning over in my mind the Union period of Ireland as the era for a story. It was a time essentially rich in the men we are proud of as a people, and peculiarly abounding in traits of self-denial and devotion which, in the corruption of a few, have been totally lost sight of; the very patriotism of the time having been stigmatized as factious opposition, or unreasoning resistance to wiser counsels. That nearly every man of ability in the land was against the Minister, that not only all the intellect of Ireland, but all the high spirit of its squirearchy, and the generous impulses of its people, were opposed to the Union,—there is no denying. If eloquent appeal and powerful argument could have saved a nation, Henry Grattan or Plunkett would not have spoken in vain; but the measure was decreed before it was debated, and the annexation of Ireland was made a Cabinet decision before it came to Irishmen to discuss it.

I had no presumption to imagine I could throw any new light on the history of the period, or illustrate the story of the measure by any novel details; but I thought it would not be uninteresting to sketch the era itself; what aspect society presented; how the country gentleman of the time bore himself in the midst of solicitations and temptings the most urgent and insidious; what, in fact, was the character of that man whom no national misfortunes could subdue, no Ministerial blandishments corrupt; of him, in short, that an authority with little bias to the land of his birth has called—*The First Gentleman of Europe*.

I know well, I feel too acutely, how inadequately I have pictured what I desired to paint; but even now, after the interval of years, I look back on my poor attempt with the satisfaction of one whose arm was not ignoble. A longer and deeper experience of life has succeeded to the time since I wrote this story, but in no land nor amongst any people have I ever found the type of what we love to emblemize by the word Gentleman, so distinctly marked out as in the educated and traveled Irishman of that period. The same unswerving

fidelity of friendship, the same courageous devotion to a cause, the same haughty contempt for all that was mean or unworthy; these, with the lighter accessories of genial temperament, joyous disposition, and a chivalrous respect for women, made up what I had at least in my mind when I tried to present to my readers my Knight of Gwynne.

That my character of him was not altogether ideal, I can give no better proof than the fact that during the course of the publication I received several letters from persons unknown to me, asking whether I had not drawn my portrait from this or that original, several concurring in the belief that I had taken as my model The Knight of Kerry, whose qualities I am well assured fully warranted the suspicion.

For my attempt to paint the social habits of the period, I had but to draw on my memory. In my boyish days I had heard much of that day, and was familiar with most of the names of its distinguished men. Anecdotes of Henry Grattan, Flood, Parsons, Ponsonby, and Curran, jostled in my mind with stories of their immediate successors, the Bushes and the Plunketts, whose fame has come down to the very day we live in. As a boy, it was my fortune to listen to the narratives of the men who had been actors in the events of that exciting era, and who could even show me in modern Dublin the scenes where memorable events occurred, and not unfrequently the very houses where celebrated convivialities occurred. And thus from Drogheda street, the modern Sackville street, where the beaux of the day lounged in all their bravery, to the Circular road where a long file of carriages, six in hand, evidenced the luxury and tone of display of the capital. I was deeply imbued with the features of the time, and ransacked the old newspapers and magazines with a zest which only great familiarity with the names of the leading characters could have inspired.

Though I have many regrets on the same score, there is no period of my life in which I have the same sorrow for not having kept some sort of note-book instead of trusting to a memory most fatally unretentive and uncertain. Through this omission I have lost traces of innumerable epigrams and *jeus d'esprit* of a time that abounded in such effusions, and even where my memory has occasionally relieved the effort, I have forgotten the author. To give an instance, the witty lines—

“With a name that is borrowed, a title that's bought,
Sir William would fain be a gentleman thought.”

His wit is but cunning, his courage but vapor,
His pride is but money, his money but paper,"

which, wrongfully attributed to a political leader in the Irish house, were in reality written by Lovel Edgeworth on the well-known Sir William Gladöwes, who became Lord Newcomen; and the verse was not only poetry but prophecy, for in his bankruptcy some years afterward the sarcasm became fact,—“his money was but paper.”

This circumstance of the authorship was communicated to me by Miss Maria Edgeworth, whose letter was my first step in acquaintance with her, and gave me a pleasure and a pride which long years have not been able to obliterate.

I remember in that letter her having told me how she was in the habit of reading my story aloud to the audience of her nephews and nieces; a simple announcement that imparted such a glow of proud delight to me that I can yet recall the courage with which I resumed the writing of my tale, and the hope it suggested of my being able one day to win a place of honor amongst those who, like herself, had selected Irish traits as the characteristics to adorn fiction.

For Con Hefferman I had an original. For Bagenal Daly, too, I was not without a model. His sister is purely imaginary, but that she is not unreal I am bold enough to hope, since several have assured me that they know where I found my type. In my brief sketch of Lord Castlereagh I was not, I need scarcely say, much aided by the journals and pamphlets of the time, where his character and conduct were ruthlessly and most falsely assailed. It was my fortune, however, to have possessed the close intimacy of one who had acted as his private secretary, and whose abilities have since raised him to high station and great employment; and from him I came to know the real nature of one of the ablest statesmen of his age, as he was one of the most attractive companions, and most accomplished gentlemen. I have no vain pretense to believe that by my weak and unfinished sketch I have in any way vindicated the Minister who carried the Union against the attacks of his opponents, but I have tried at least to represent him such as he was in the society of his intimates; his gay and cheerful temperament, his frank nature, and what least the world is disposed to concede to him, his sincere belief in the honesty of men whose convictions were adverse to him, and who could not be won over to his opinions.

I have not tried to conceal the gross cor-

ruption of an era which remains to us as a national shame, but I would wish to lay stress on the fact that not a few resisted offers and temptations, which to men struggling with humble fortune and linked for life with the fate of the weaker country, must redound to their high credit. All the nobler their conduct, as around them on every side were the great names of the land trafficking for title and place, and shamelessly demanding office for their friends and relatives as the price of their own adhesion.

For that degree of intimacy which I have represented as existing between Bagenal Daly and Freney the robber, I have been once or twice reprehended as conveying a false and unreal view of the relations of the time; but the knowledge I myself had of Freney, his habits and his exploits, were given to me by a well-known and highly-connected Irish gentleman, who represented a county in the Irish Parliament, and was a man of unblemished honor, conspicuous alike in station and ability. And there is still, and once the trait existed more remarkably in Ireland, a wonderful sympathy between all classes and conditions of people; so that the old stories and traditions that amuse the crouching listener round the hearth of the cottage, find their way into luxurious drawing-rooms; and by their means a brotherhood of sentiment was maintained between the highest class in the land and the humblest peasant who labored for his daily bread.

I tried to display the effect of this strange teaching on the mind of a cultivated gentleman when describing the Knight of Gwynne. I endeavored to show the “Irishry” of his nature was no other than the play of those qualities by which he appreciated his countrymen and was appreciated by them. So powerful is this sympathy, and so strong the sense of national humor through all classes of the people, that each is able to entertain a topic from the same point of view as his neighbor, and the subtle equivoque in the polished witticism that amuses the gentleman is never lost on the untutored ear of the unlettered peasant. Is there any other land of which one could say as much?

If this great feature of attractiveness pertains to the country and adds to its adaptiveness as the subject of fiction, I cannot but feel that to un-Irish ears it is necessary to make an explanation which will serve to show that which would elsewhere imply a certain blending of station and condition, is here but a proof of that wide-spread understanding by which, however divided by race, tradition, and religion, we are always

able to appeal to certain sympathies and dispositions in common, and feel the tie of a common country.

At the period in which I have placed this story the rivalry between the two nations was, with all its violence, by no means ungenerous. No contemptuous estimate of Irishmen formed the theme of English journalism, and between the educated men of both countries there was scarcely a jealousy; but the character which the political contest assumed later on changed much of this spirit, and dyed nationalities with an amount of virulence which, with all its faults and all its short-comings, we do not find in the times of the Knight of Gwynne.

CHARLES LEVER.

TRIESTE, 1872.

CHAPTER I.

A FIRESIDE GROUP.

It was exactly forty-five years ago that a group, consisting of three persons, drew their chairs around the fire of a handsome dinner-room in Merrion square, Dublin. The brilliantly lighted apartment, the table still cumbered with decanters and dessert, and the sideboard resplendent with a gorgeous service of plate, showed that the preparations had been made for a much larger party, the last of whom had just taken his departure.

Of the three who now drew near the cheerful blaze, more intent, as it seemed, on confidential intercourse than the pleasures of the table, he who occupied the center was a tall and singularly handsome man, of some six or seven and twenty years of age. His features, perfectly classical in their regularity, conveyed the impression of one of a cold and haughty temperament, unmoved by sudden impulse, but animated by a spirit daringly ambitious. His dress was in the height of the then mode, and he wore it with the air of a man of fashion and elegance.

This was Lord Castlereagh, the youthful Secretary for Ireland, one whose career was then opening with every promise of future distinction.

At his right hand sat, or rather lounged, in all the carelessness of habitual indolence, a young man some years his junior, his dark complexion and eyes, his aquiline features, and short, thin upper lip almost resembling a Spanish face. His dress was the uniform of the Foot Guards, a costume which well became him, and set off to the fullest advantage a figure of perfect sym-

metry. A manner of careless inattention in which he indulged contrasted strongly with the quick impatience of his dark glances and the eager rapidity of his utterance when momentarily excited, for the Honorable Dick Forester was only cool by training, and not by temperament, and, at the time we speak of, his worldly education was scarcely more than well begun.

The third figure—strikingly unlike the other two—was a man of fifty, or thereabouts, short and plethoric. His features, rosy and sensual, were lit up by two gray eyes, whose twinkle was an incessant provocative to laughter. The mouth was, however, the great index to his character. It was large and full, the under lip slightly projecting—a circumstance, perhaps, acquired in the long habit of a life where the tasting function had been actively employed, for Con Heffernan was a gourmand of the first water, and the most critical judge of a vintage the island could boast. Two fingers of either hand were inserted in the capacious pockets of a white vest, while his head jauntily leaning to one side, he sat the very ideal of self-satisfied ease and contentment. The *aplomb*—why should there be a French word for an English quality?—he possessed was not the vulgar ease of a presuming or under-bred man—far from it, it was the impress of certain gifts which gave him an acknowledged superiority in the society he moved in. He was shrewd, without over-caution; he was ready-witted, but never rash; he possessed that rare combination of quick intelligence with strong powers of judgment; and, above all, he knew men, or at least such specimens of the race as came before him in a varied life, well and thoroughly.

If he had a weak point in his character, it was a love of popularity; not that vulgar mob worship which some men court and seek after—no, it was the estimation of his own class and set he desired to obtain. He was proud of his social position, and nervously sensitive in whatever might prejudice or endanger it. His enemies—and Con was too able a man not to have made some—said that his low origin was the secret of his nature; that his ambiguous position in society demanded exertions uncalled for from others less equivocally circumstanced; and that Mr. Heffernan was, in secret, very far from esteeming the high and titled associates with whom his daily life brought him in contact. If this were the case, he was assuredly a consummate actor. No man ever went through a longer or more searching trial unscathed, nor could an expression be quoted, or an act

mentioned, in which he derogated, even for a moment, from the habits of "his order."

"You never did the thing better in your life, my lord," said Con, as the door closed upon the last departing guest. "You hit off Jack Massy to perfection; and as for Watson, though he said nothing at the time, I'll wager my roan cob against Deane Moore's hackney—long odds, I fancy—that you'll find him at the treasury to-morrow morning, with a sly request for five minutes' private conversation."

"I'm of your mind, Heffernan. I saw that he took the bait; indeed, to do the gentlemen justice, they are all open to conviction."

"You surely cannot blame them," said Con, "if they take a more conciliating view of your lordship's opinions, when assisted by such claret as this—this is old '72, if I mistake not.

"They sold it to me as such, but I own to you I'm the poorest connoisseur in the world as regards wine. Some one remarked this evening that the '95 was richer in bouquet."

"It was Edward Harvey, my lord. I heard him: but that was the year he got his baronetcy, and he thinks the sun never shone so brightly before; his father was selling Balbriggan stockings when this grape was ripening, and now, the son has more than one foot on the steps of the peerage." This was said with a short, quick glance beneath the eyelids, and evidently more as a feeler, than with any strong conviction of its accuracy.

"No government can afford to neglect its supporters, and the acknowledgments must be proportioned to the sacrifices, as well as to the abilities of the individuals who second it."

"By Jove! if these gentlemen are in the market," said Forester, who broke silence for the first time, "I don't wonder at their price being a high one; in consenting to the 'Union,' they are virtually voting their own annihilation."

"By no means," said the secretary, calmly; "the field open to their ambition is imperial and not provincial; the English Parliament will form an arena for the display of ability, as wide surely as this of Dublin. Men of note and capacity will not be less rewarded; the losers will be the small talkers, county squires of noisy politics, and crafty lawyers of no principles; they will perhaps be obliged to remain at home, and look after their own affairs; but will the country be the worse for that, while the advantages to trade and commerce are inconceivable?"

"I agree with you there," said Con; "we are likely to increase our exports, by sending every clever fellow out of the country."

"Why not, if the market be a better one?"

"Wouldn't you spare us a few luxuries for home consumption?" said Con, as he smacked his lips and looked at his glass through the candle.

His lordship paid no attention to the remark, but taking a small tablet from his waistcoat-pocket, seemed to study its contents. "Are we certain of Cuffe; is he pledged to us, Heffernan?"

"Yes, my lord, he has no help for it; we are sure of him; he owes the Crown eleven thousand pounds, and says, the only ambition he possesses is to make the debt twelve, and never pay it."

"What of that canting fellow from the north?—Newland."

"He accepts your terms conditionally, my lord," said Con, with a sly roll of his eyes; "if the arguments are equal to your liberality, he will vote for you, but as yet, he does not see the advantages of a Union."

"Not see them!" said Lord Castlereagh, with a look of irony; "why did you not let him look at them from your own windows, Heffernan? the view is enchanting for the Barrack Department."

"The poor man is short-sighted," said Con, with a sigh, "and never could stretch his vision beyond the Custom House."

"Be it so, in the devil's name; a commissioner more or less shall never stop us!"

"What a set of rascals," muttered Forester between his teeth, as he tossed off a bumper to swallow his indignation.

"Well, Forester, what of your mission? Have you heard from your friend Darcy?"

"Yes, I have his note here. He cannot come over just now, but he has given me an introduction to his father, and pledges himself I shall be well received."

"What Darcy is that?" said Heffernan.

"The Knight of Gwynne," said his lordship; "do you know him?"

"I believe, my lord, there is not a gentleman in Ireland who could not say yes to that question; while west of the Shannon, Maurice Darcy is a name to swear by."

"We want such a man much," said the secretary, in a low, distinct utterance; "some well-known leader of public opinion is of great value just now. How does he vote usually? I don't see his name in the divisions."

"Oh, he rarely comes up to town, never liked Parliament, but when he did attend the House, he usually sat with the Opposi-

tion, but, without linking himself to party, spoke and voted independently, and, strange to say, made considerable impression by conduct which in any other man would have proved an utter failure."

"Did he speak well, then?"

"For the first five minutes you could think of nothing but his look and appearance; he was the handsomest man in the House, a little too particular, perhaps, in dress, but never finical; as he went on, however, the easy fluency of his language, the grace and elegance of his style, and the frank openness of his statements, carried his hearers with him; and many who were guarded enough against the practiced power of the great speakers, were intrapped by the unstudied, manly tone of the Knight of Gwynne. You say truly, he would be a great card in your hands at this time."

"We must have him at his own price, if he has one. Is he rich?"

"He has an immense estate, but, as I hear, greatly incumbered; but don't think of money with him, that will never do."

"What's the bait, then? Does he care for rank? Has he any children grown up?"

"One son and one daughter are all his family; and, as for title, I don't think that he'd exchange that of Knight of Gwynne for a dukedom. His son is a lieutenant in the Guards."

"Yes; and the best fellow in the regiment," broke in Forester. "In every quality of a high-spirited gentleman, Lionel Darey has no superior."

"The better deserving of rapid promotion," said his lordship, smiling significantly.

"I should be sorry to offer it to him, at the expense of his father's principles," said Forester.

"Very little fear of your having to do so," said Heffernan, quickly; "the knight would be no easy purchase."

"You must see him, however, Dick," said the secretary; "there is no reason why he should not be with us on grounds of conviction. He is a man of enlightened and liberal mind, and surely will not think the worse of a measure because its advocates are in a position to serve his son's interests."

"If that topic be kept very studiously out of sight, it were all the more prudent," said Con, dryly.

"Of course; Forester will pay his visit, and only advert to the matter with caution and delicacy. To gain him to our side, is a circumstance of so much moment, that I say *carte blanche* for the terms."

"I knew the time that a foxhound would have been a higher bribe than a blue ribbon with honest Maurice; but it's many years since we met, now, and Heaven knows what changes time may have wrought in him. A smile and a soft speech from a pretty woman, or a bold exploit of some hair-brained fellow, were sure to find favor with him, when he would have heard flattery from the lips of royalty without pride or emotion."

"His colleague in the county is with us; has he any influence over the knight?"

"Far from it. Mr. Hickman O'Reilly is the last man in the world to have weight with Maurice Darey, and if it be your intention to make O'Reilly a peer, you could have taken no readier method to arm the knight against you. No, no; if you really are bent on having him, leave all thought of a purchase aside; let Forester, as the friend and brother officer of young Darey, go down to Gwynne, make himself as agreeable to the knight as may be, and when he has one foot on the carriage-step at his departure, turn sharply round, and say, 'Won't you vote with us, knight?' What between surprise and courtesy, he may be taken too short for reflection, and if he say but 'Yes,' ever so low, he's yours. That's *my* advice to you. It may seem a poor chance, but I fairly own I see no better one."

"I should have thought rank might be acceptable in such a quarter," said the secretary, proudly.

"He has it, my lord—at least as much as would win all the respect any rank could confer; and besides, these new peerages have no prestige in their favor yet a while; we must wait for another generation. This claret is perfect now, but I should not say it were quite so delicate in flavor the first year it was bottled. The squibs and epigrams on the new promotions are remembered, where the blazons of the Herald's College are forgotten; that unlucky banker, for instance, that you made a viscount the other day, both his character and his credit have suffered for it."

"What was that you allude to?—an epigram, was it?"

"Yes, very short, but scarcely sweet. Here it is:

With a name that is borrow'd, a title that's
bought,—

you remember, my lord, how true both allegations are—

With a name that is borrow'd, a title that's
bought,—

Sir William would fain be a gentleman thought;

While his wit is mere cunning, his courage but vapor,
His pride is but money, his money but paper."

"Very severe, certainly," said his lordship, in the same calm tone he ever spoke. "Not your lines, Mr. Heffernan?"

"No, my lord; a greater than Con Heffernan indited these: one who did not scruple to reply to yourself in the House in an imitation of your own inimitable manner."

"Oh, I know whom you mean—a very witty person indeed," said the secretary, smiling; "and if we were to be laughed out of office, he might lead the Opposition. But these are very business-like, matter-of-fact days we're fallen upon. The cabinet that can give away blue ribbons may afford to be indifferent to small jokers. But to revert to matters more immediate: you must start at once, Forester, for the west, see the knight, and do whatever you can to bring him toward us. I say *carte blanche* for the terms; I only wish our other elevations to the peerage had half the pretension he has; and, whatever our friend Mr. Heffernan may say, I opine to the mere matter of compact, which says, so much for so much."

"Here's success to the mission, however its negotiations incline," said Heffernan, as he drained off his glass, and rose to depart. "We shall see you again within ten days or a fortnight, I suppose?"

"Oh, certainly; I'll not linger in that wild district an hour longer than I must." And so, with good-night and good wishes, the party separated—Forester to make his preparations for a journey which, in those days, was looked on as something formidable.

CHAPTER II.

A TRAVELING ACQUAINTANCE.

WHATEVER the merits or demerits of the great question, the legislative Union between England and Ireland—and assuredly we have neither the temptation of duty nor inclination to discuss such here—the means employed by ministers to carry the measure through Parliament were in the last degree disgraceful; never was bribery practiced with more open effrontery, never did corruption display itself with more daring indifference to public opinion; the Treasury Office was an open mart, where votes were purchased, and men sold their country, delighted, as a candid member of the party

confessed,—delighted "to have a country to sell."

The ardor of a political career, like the passion for the chase, would seem in its high excitement to still many compunctious murmurings of conscience which in calmer moments could not fail to be heard and acknowledged: the desire to succeed, that ever-present impulse to win, steels the heart against impressions which, under less pressing excitements, had been most painful to endure, and, in this way, honorable and high-minded men have often stooped to acts which, with calmer judgment to guide them, they would have rejected with indignation.

Such was Dick Forester's position at the moment; an aid-de-camp on the staff of the viceroy, a near relative of the secretary, he was intrusted with many secret and delicate negotiations, affairs in which, had he been a third party, he would have as scrupulously condemned the tempter as the tempted: the active zeal of agency allayed, however, all such qualms of conscience, and every momentary pang of remorse was swallowed up in the ardor for success.

Few men will deny in the abstract the cruelty of many field sports they persist in following, fewer still abandon them on such scruples; and that while Forester felt half ashamed to himself of the functions committed to him, he would have been sorely disappointed if he had been passed over in the selection of his relative's political adherents.

Of this nature were some of Dick Forester's reflections as he posted along toward the west; nor was the scene through which he journeyed suggestive of pleasanter thoughts. If any of our readers should perchance be acquainted with that dreary line of country which lies along the great western road of Ireland, they will not feel surprised if the traveler's impressions of the land were not of the brightest or fairest. The least reflective of mortals cannot pass through a dreary and poverty-stricken district without imbibing some of the melancholy which broods over the place. Forester was by no means such, and felt deeply and sincerely for the misery he witnessed on every hand, and was in the very crisis of some most patriotic scheme of benevolence, when his carriage arrived in front of the little inn of Kilbeggan. Resisting, without much violence to his inclinations, the civil request of the landlord to alight, he leaned back to resume the broken thread of his lucubrations, while fresh horses were put to. How long he thus waited, or what progress his benign devices accomplished in

the meanwhile, this true history is unable to record; enough if we say, that when he next became aware of the incidents then actually happening around him, he discovered that his carriage was standing fast in the same place as at the moment of his arrival, and the rain falling in torrents as before.

To let down the glass and call out to the postilions was a very natural act; to do so with the addition of certain expletives not commonly used in good society, was not an extraordinary one. Forester did both; but he might have spared his eloquence and his indignation, for the postilions were both in the stable, and his servant agreeably occupied in the bar over the comforts of a smoking tumbler of punch. The merciful schemes, so late the uppermost object of his thoughts, were routed in a moment, and vowing intentions of a very different purport to the whole household, he opened the door and sprang out. Dark as the night was, he could see that there were no horses to the carriage, and with redoubled anger at the delay, he strode into the inn.

"Holloa, I say—house here! Linwood! Where the devil is the fellow?"

"Here, sir," cried a smart-looking London servant, as he sprang from the bar with his eyes bolting out of his head from the heat of the last mouthful, swallowed in a second. "I've been a trying for horses, sir; but they've never got 'em, though they've been promising to let us have a pair this half-hour."

"No horses! Do you mean that they've not got a pair of posters in a town like this?"

"Yes, indeed, sir," interposed a dirty waiter in a nankeen jacket, for the landlord was too indignant at the rejection of his proposal to appear again, "we've four pair, besides a mare in foal; but there's a deal of business on the line this week past, and there's a gentleman in the parlor now has taken four of them."

"Taken four! Has he more than one carriage?"

"No, sir, and a light chariot it is; but he likes to go fast."

"And so do I—when I can," muttered Forester, the last words being an addition almost independent of him. "Couldn't you tell him that there's a gentleman here very much pressed to push on, and would take it as a great favor if he'd divide the team?"

"To be sure, sir; I'll go and speak to him," said the waiter, as he hurried away on the errand.

"I see how it is, sir," said Linwood,

who, with true servant dexterity, thought to turn his master's anger into any other channel than toward himself, "they wants to get you to stop the night here."

"Confound this trickery! I'll pay what they please for the horses, only let us have them. Well, waiter, what does he say?"

"He says, sir," said the waiter, endeavoring to suppress a laugh, "if you'll come in, and join him at supper, you shall have whatever you like."

"Join him at supper! No; no; I'm hurried—I'm anxious to get forward, and not the least hungry, besides."

"Hadn't you better speak a word to him, anyhow?" said the waiter, half opening the parlor door. And Forester, accepting the suggestion, entered.

In the little low-ceilinged apartment of the small inn, at a table very amply and as temptingly covered, sat a large, and, for his age, singularly handsome man. A forehead both high and broad surmounted two clear blue eyes, whose brilliancy seemed to defy the wear of time; regular and handsome teeth; and a complexion the very type of health appeared to vouch for a strength of constitution rare at his advanced age. His dress was the green coat so commonly worn by country gentlemen, with leather breeches and boots, nor, though the season was winter, did he appear to have any great-coat, or other defense against the weather. He was heaping some turf upon the fire as Forester entered, and laughingly interrupting the operation, he stood up and bowed courteously.

"I have taken a great liberty, sir, first, to suppose that any man at this hour of the night is not the worse for something to eat and drink; and, secondly, that he might have no objection to partake of either in my company." Forester was not exactly prepared for a manner so palpably that of the best society, and at once repressing every sign of his former impatience, replied by apologizing for a request which might inconvenience the granter. "Let me help you to this grouse-pie, and fill yourself a glass of sherry; and by the time you have taken some refreshment, the horses will be put to. I am most happy to offer you a seat."

"I am afraid there is a mistake somewhere," said Forester, half timidly. "I heard you had engaged the only four horses here, and as my carriage is without, my request was to obtain two, if you—"

"But why not come with me? I'm pressed, and must be up, if possible, before morning. Remember, we are forty-eight miles from Dublin."

“Dublin! But I’m going the very opposite road. I’m for Westport.”

“Oh, by Jove! that is different. What a stupid fellow the waiter is! Never mind—sit down. Let us have a glass of wine together. You shall have two of the horses. Old Wilkins must only make his spurs supply the place of the leaders.”

There was a hearty good-nature in every accent of the old man’s voice, and Forester drew his chair to the table, by no means sorry to spend some time longer in his company.

There is a kind of conversation sacred to the occupations of the table—a mixture of the culinary and the social, the gustatory with the agreeable. And the stranger led the way to this, with the art of an accomplished proficient, and while recommending the good things to Forester’s attention, contrived to season their enjoyment by a tone at once pleasing and cordial.

“I could have sworn you were hungry,” said he, laughing, as Forester helped himself for the second time to the grouse-pie. “I know you did not expect so appetizing a supper in such a place; but Rickards has always something in the larder for an old acquaintance, and I have been traveling this road close upon sixty years, now.”

“And a dreary way it is,” said Forester, “except for this most agreeable incident. I never came so many miles before with so little to interest me.”

“Very true: it is a flat, monotonous-looking country, and poor besides; but nothing like what I remember it as a boy.”

“You surely do not mean that the people were ever worse off than they seem now to be?”

“Ay, a hundred times worse off. They may be rack-rented and overtaxed in some instances, now—not as many as you would suppose, after all—but, then, they were held in actual slavery, nearly famished, and all but naked; no roads, no markets; subject to the caprice of the landowners on every occasion in life, and the faction fights—those barbarous vestiges of a rude time—kept up, and encouraged by those who should have set the better example of mutual charity and good feeling. These unhappy practices have not disappeared, but they are far less frequent than formerly; and however the confession may seem to you a sad one, to me there is a pride in saying, Ireland is improving.”

“It is hard to conceive a people more miserably off than these,” said Forester, with a sigh.

“So they seem to your eyes; but let me remark, that there is a transition state

between rude barbarism and civilization which always appears more miserable than either; habits of life which suggest wants that can rarely, if ever, be supplied; the struggle between poverty and the desire for better, is a bitter conflict, and such is the actual condition of this people. You are young enough to witness the fruits of the reformation; I am too old ever to hope to see them, but I feel assured that the day is coming.”

“I like your theory well; it has Hope for its ally,” said Forester, as he gazed on the benevolent features of the old squire.

“It has even better, sir, it has Truth; and hence it is that the peasantry, as they approach nearer to the capital—the seat of civilization—have fewest of those traits that please or attract strangers; they are in the transition state I speak of; while down in *my* wild country, you can see them in their native freshness, reckless and improvident, but light-hearted and happy.”

“Where may the country be you speak of, sir?” said Forester.

“The far west, beside the Atlantic; you have heard of Mayo?”

“Oh, that is my destination at this moment; I am going beyond Westport, to visit one of the chieftains there. I have not the honor to know him, but I conclude that his style of living and habits will not be a bad specimen of the gentry customs generally.”

“I know that neighborhood tolerably well. May I ask the name of your future host?”

“The Knight of Gwynne is his title—Mr. Darcy—”

“Oh! an old acquaintance—I may almost say an old friend of mine,” said the other, smiling. “And so you are going to pass some time at Gwynne?”

“A week or so; I scarcely think I can spare more.”

“They’ll call that a very inhospitable visit at Gwynne, sir; the knight’s guests rarely stay less than a month. I have just left it, and there were some there who had been since the beginning of the partridge shooting, and not the least welcome of the party.”

“I am sorry I had not the good fortune to meet you there,” said Forester.

“Make your visit a fortnight, and I’ll join you, then,” said the old man, gayly. “I’m going up to town to settle a wager; a foolish excursion, you’ll say, at my time of life, but it’s too late to mend.”

“The horses is put to, sir,” said the waiter, announcing the fact for something like the fourth time, without being attend-

"Well, then, it is time to start. Am I to take it as a pledge that I shall find you at Gwynne this day fortnight?"

"I cannot answer for my host," said Forester, laughing.

"Oh! old Darcy is sure to ask you to stay. By the way, would you permit me to trouble you with five lines to a friend, who is now stopping there?"

"Of course; I shall be but too happy to be of any service to you."

The old gentleman sat down, and, tearing a leaf from a capacious pocket-book, wrote a few hurried lines, which, having folded and sealed, he addressed, "Bagenal Daly, Esquire, Gwynne Abbey."

"There, that's my commission; pray add my service to the knight himself, when you see him."

"Permit me to ask, how shall I designate his friend?"

"Oh! I forgot, you don't know me," said he, laughing. "I have half a mind to leave the identification with your own descriptive powers."

"I'd wager five guineas I could make the portrait a resemblance."

"Done, then, I take the bet," said the other; "and I promise you, on the word of a gentleman, I am known to every visitor in the house."

Each laughed heartily at the drollery of such a wager, and, with many a profession of the pleasure a future meeting would afford to both, they parted, less like casual acquaintances, than as old and intimate friends.

CHAPTER III.

GWYNNE ABBEY.

WHEN Forester parted with his chance companion at Kilbeggan, he pursued his way without meeting a single incident worth recording, nor, although he traveled with all the speed of post-chaises, aided by the persuasive power of additional half-crowns, shall we ask of our reader to accompany him, but, at one bound, cross the whole island, and stand with us on the margin of that glorious sheet of water which, begirt with mountain, and studded with its hundred islands, is known as Clew Bay.

At the southern extremity of the bay rises the great mountain of Croagh Patrick, its summit nearly five thousand feet above the sea; on the side next the ocean, it is bold and precipitous, crag rising above crag in succession, and not even the track of a mountain goat visible on the dangerous

surface; landward, however, a gentle slope descends about the lower third of the mountain, and imperceptibly is lost in the rich and swelling landscape beneath. Here, sheltered from the western gales, and favored by the fertility of the soil, the trees are seen to attain a girth and height rarely met with elsewhere, while they preserve their foliage to a much later period than in other parts of the country.

The ruins of an ancient church, whose very walls are washed by the Atlantic, show that the luxuriant richness of the spot was known in times past. They who founded these goodly edifices were no mean judges of the resources of the land, and the rich woods and blossoming orchards that still shelter their ruined shrines, evidence with what correctness they selected their resting-places.

The coast road which leads from Westport skirts along the edge of the bay, and is diversified by many a pretty cottage, whose trellised walls and rose-covered porches vouch for the mildness of the climate, and are in summer resorted to as bathing-lodges by numbers from the inland counties. The high-road has, however, a grander destiny than to such humble, though picturesque dwellings, for it suddenly ceases at the gate of an immense demesne, whose boundary wall may be seen stretching away for miles, and at last is traced high up the mountain side, where it forms the inclosure of a deer park.

Two square and massive towers connected by an arch form the gateway, and though ivy and honeysuckle have covered many an architectural device which once were looked on with pride, a massive armorial escutcheon in yellow stone forms the key of the arch, while two leopards supporting a crown, with the motto "*Ne la touchez pas!*" proclaim the territory of the Knight of Gwynne.

Within, an avenue wide enough for a high-road led through a park of great extent, dotted with trees single or in groups, and bounded by a vast wood, whose waving tops were seen for miles of distance. If a landscape gardener would have deplored with uplifted hands the glorious opportunities of embellishment which neglect or ignorance had suffered to lie undeveloped within these grounds, a true lover of scenery would have felt delighted at the wild and picturesque beauty around him, as, sometimes, the road would dip into a deep glade, where the overhanging banks were clothed with the dog-rose and the sweet-brier, still and hushed to every sound save the song of the thrush, or the not less sweet ripple of

the little stream that murmured past ; and again, emerging from the shade, it wound along some height, whence the great mountain might be seen, or, between the dark foliage, the blue surface of the sea, swelling and heaving with ever restless motion. All the elements of great picturesque beauty were here, and in that glorious profusion with which nature alone diffuses her wealth—the mountain, the forest, and the ocean, the green-sward, the pebbly shore, the great rocks, the banks, blue with the violet and the veronica—and all diversified and contrasted to produce effects the most novel and enchanting.

Many a road and many a pathway led through these woods and valleys, some grass-grown, as though disused, others bearing the track of recent wheels ; still, as you went, the hares and the rabbits felt no terror, the wood-pigeon sat upon the branch above your head, nor was scared at your approach, for, though the knight was a passionate lover of sport, it was his fancy to preserve the demesne intact, nor would he suffer a shot to be fired within its precincts. These may seem small and insignificant matters to record, but they added indescribably to the charms of the spot, completing, as they did, the ideas of tranquillity and peace suggested by the scene.

The approach was of some miles in extent, not needlessly prolonged by every device of sweep and winding, but in reality proceeding by its nearest way to the house, which, for the advantage of a view over the sea, was situated on the slope of the mountain. Nor was the building unworthy of its proud position : originally an abbey, its architecture still displayed the elaborate embellishment which characterized the erections of the latter part of the sixteenth century.

A long façade, interrupted at intervals by square towers, formed the front, the roof consisting of a succession of tall and pointed gables, in each of which some good saint stood inshrined in stone ; the windows, throughout this long extent, were surmounted by pediments and figures, not rudely chiseled, but with high pretension as works of art, and evidencing both taste and skill in the designer ; while the great entrance was a miracle of tracery and carving, the rich architraves retreating one within another to the full depth of twelve feet, such being the thickness of the external wall.

Spacious and imposing as this great mass of building appeared at first sight, it formed but a fragment of the whole, and was in reality but the side of a great quadra-

gle, the approach to which led through one of the large towers, defended by fosse and drawbridge, while overhead the iron spikes of a massive portecullis might be seen, for the Abbot of Gwynne had been a “*puissance*” in days long past, and had his servitors in steel, as well as his followers in sack-cloth. This road, which was excessively steep and difficult of access, was yet that by which carriages were accustomed to approach the house, for the stables occupied one entire wing of the quadrangle ; the servants, of whom there were a goodly company, holding possession of the suite of rooms overhead, once the ancient dormitory of the monks of Gwynne.

In the middle of the court-yard was a large fountain, over which an effigy of St. Francis had formerly stood ; but the saint had unhappily been used as a lay figure, whereupon to brush hunting-coats and soiled leathers, and gradually his proportions had suffered grievous injury, till, at last, nothing remained of him save the legs, which were still profaned as a saddle-tree ; for grooms and stable-boys are irreverent in their notions, and, probably, deemed it no disgrace for a saint to carry such honorable trappings.

The appearance of the abbey from within was even more picturesque than when seen from the outside, each side of the quadrangle displaying a different era and style of architecture, for they had been built with long intervals of time between them ; and one wing, a low two-storied range, with jail-like windows and a small, narrow portal, bore, on a three-cornered stone, the date 1304.

We shall not ask of our readers to accompany us further in our dry description, nor even cast a glance up at that myriad of strange beasts which, in dark gray stone, are frowning or grinning, or leaping or rearing from every angle and corner of the building, a strange company, whose representatives in real life it would puzzle the zoologist to produce ; but there they were, some with a coat of arms between their paws, some supporting an ornamental capital, and others actually, as it seemed, cutting their uncouth capers out of pure idleness.

At the back of the abbey, and terraced on the mountain side, lay a perfect wilderness of flower-gardens and fish-ponds, amid which a taste more profane than that of the founders had erected sundry summer-houses in rockwork, hermitages without hermits, and shrines without worshipers, but all moss-grown and old enough to make them objects of curiosity, while some afforded

glorious points of view over the distant bay and the rich valley where stands the picturesque town of Westport.

The interior of this noble edifice was worthy of its appearance from without. Independent of the ample accommodation for a great household, there was a suite of state apartments running along the entire front and part of one wing, and these were fitted up and furnished with a luxury and costliness that would not have disgraced a royal palace. Here were seen velvet hangings and rich tapestries upon the walls, floors inlaid with tulip and sandal-wood, windows of richly-stained glass threw a mysterious and mellow light over richly carved furniture, the triumphs of that art which the Netherlands once boasted; cabinets, curiously inlaid with silver and tortoiseshell, many of them gifts of distinguished donors, few, without their associations of story; while, one chamber, the ancient hall of audience, was hung round with armor and weapons, the trophies of long-buried ancestors, the proud memorials of a noble line; dark suits of Milan mail, or richly inlaid cuirasses of Spanish workmanship, with great two-handed swords and battle-axes, and, stranger still, weapons of Eastern mold and fashion, for more than one of the house had fought against the Turks, and crossed his broadsword with the scimitar.

There were objects rare and curious enough within these walls to stay and linger over, but even if we dared to take such a liberty with our reader, our duty would not permit the dalliance, and it is to a very different part of the building, and one destined for far other uses, that we must now for a brief space conduct him.

In a small chamber of the ground-floor, whose curiously groined roof and richly stained window showed that its occupancy had once been held by those in station above the common, now sat two persons at a well-garnished table, while, before them, on the wide hearth, blazed a cheerful fire of bog deal. On either side of the fireplace was a niche, in which formerly some saintly effigy had stood, but now, such are Time's chances, an earthenware pitcher, with a pewter lid, decorated each, of whose contents the boon companions drank jovially to each other. One of these was a short, fat old fellow of nigh eighty years; his bowed legs, and wide, round shoulders, the still surviving signs of great personal strength in days gone by; his hair, white as snow, was carefully brushed back from his forehead, and tied into a "queue" behind. Old as he was, the features were intelligent

and pleasing, the hale and hearty expression of good health and good temper animated them when he spoke, nor were the words the less mellow to an Irish ear, that they smacked of the "sweet south," for Tate Sullivan was a Kerry man, and possessed in full measure the attributes of that pleasant kingdom; he was courteous and obliging, faithful in his affections, and if a bit hasty in temper, the very first to discover and correct it. His failing was the national one, the proneness to conceal a truth, if its disclosure were disagreeable; he could not bring himself to bear bad tidings, and this tendency had so grown with years, that few who knew his weakness could trust any version of a fact from his lips without making due allowance for blarney.

For eight-and-forty years he had been a butler in the knight's family, and his reverence for his master went on increasing with his years; in his eyes he was the happy concentration of every good quality of humanity, nor could he bring himself to believe that his like would ever come again.

Opposite to him sat one, as unlike him in form and appearance as he was in reality by character; a gaunt, thin, hollow-cheeked man of sixty-six or seven, rufous and sad-looking, with a greenish gray complexion, and a head of short, close gray hair, cut horseshoe fashion over the temples; his long thin nose, pointed chin, and his cold green eye, only wanted the additional test of his accent to pronounce him from the north. So it was, Sandy M'Grane was from Antrim, and a keener specimen of the "cold cuntry" need not have been looked for.

His dress was a wide-skirted, deep-cuffed brown coat, profusely studded with large silver buttons richly crested, one sleeve of which, armless and empty, was attached to his breast; a dark crimson waistcoat, edged with silver lace, descending below the hips; black leather breeches, and high black boots—a strange costume, uniting in some respects the attributes of in-door life and the road. On the high back of his oaken chair hung a wide-brimmed felt hat and a black leather belt, from which a short straight sword depended, the invariable companion of his journeys, for Sandy had traveled in strange lands, where protective police were unknown, and his master, Mr. Bagenal Daly, was one who ever preferred his own administration of criminal law, when the occasion required such, to the slower process of impartial justice.

Meager and fleshless as he looked, he was possessed of great personal strength, and it needed no acute physiognomist to pro-

nounce, from the character of his head and features, that courage had not been omitted among the ingredients of his nature.

A word of explanation may be necessary as to how a western gentleman, as Bagenal Daly was, should have attached to his person for some forty years a native of a distant county, and one all whose habits and sympathies seemed so little in unison with his own part of the country. Short as the story is, we should not feel warranted in obtruding it on our readers, if it did not to a certain extent serve to illustrate the characters of both master and man.

Mr. Daly, when a very young man, chanced to make an excursion to the northern part of the island, the principal object of which was, to see the Giant's Causeway, and the scenery in the neighborhood. The visit was undertaken with little foresight or precaution, and happened at the very time of the year when severe gales from the north and west prevail, and a heavy sea breaks along that iron-bound coast. Having come so far to see the spot, he was unwilling to be balked in his object; but still, the guides and boatmen of the neighborhood refused to venture out, and notwithstanding the most tempting offers, would not risk their lives by an enterprise so full of danger.

Daly's ardor for the expedition seemed to increase as the difficulty to its accomplishment grew greater, and he endeavored, now, by profuse offers of money, now, by taunting allusions to their want of courage, to stimulate the men to accompany him; when, at last, a tall, hard-featured young fellow stood forward and offered, if Daly himself would pull an oar, to go along with him. Overjoyed at his success, Daly agreed to the proposal, and although a heavy sea was then running, and the coast for miles was covered with fragments of a wreck, the skiff was soon launched, and stood out to sea.

"I'll ga wi' ye to the twa caves and Dunluce, but I'll no engage to ga to Carrig-a-rede," said Sandy, as the sea broke in masses on the bow, and fell in torrents over them.

After about an hour's rowing, during which the boat several times narrowly escaped being swamped, and was already more than half full of water, they arrived off the great cave, and could see the boiling surf, as, sent back with force, it issued beneath the rock, with a music louder than thunder, while, from the great cliffs overhead, the water poured in a thick shower, as each receding wave left a part behind it.

"The cobbles" (so is the boat termed there) "is aye drawing in to shore," said

Sandy; "I trow we'd better pull back, noo."

"Not till we've seen Carrig-a-rede surely," said Daly, on whom danger acted like the most exciting of all stimulants.

"Ye may go there by yersel," said Sandy, "when ye put me ashore; I tauled you, I'd no ga so far."

"Come, come, it's no time to flinch now," said Daly; "turn her head about, and lean down to your oar."

"I'll no do it," said Sandy, "nor will I let you either." And as he spoke, he leaned forward to take the oar from Daly's hand. The young man, irritated at the attempt, rudely repulsed him, and Sandy, whose temper, if not as violent, was at least as determined, grappled with him at once.

"You'll upset the boat—curse the fellow!" said Daly, who now found that he had met his match in point of strength and daring.

"Let go the oar, man," cried Sandy, savagely.

"Never," said Daly, with a violent effort to free his hands.

"Then swim for it, if ye like better," said Sandy; and placing one foot on the gunwale he gave a tremendous push, and the next instant they were both struggling in the sea. For a long time they continued, almost side by side, to buffet the dark water, but at last, Daly began to falter, his efforts became more labored, and his strength seemed failing; Sandy turned his head and seized him in the very struggle that precedes sinking. They were still far from shore, but the hardy northern never hesitated; he held him by the arm, and after a long and desperate effort succeeded in gaining the land.

"Ye got a bra wetting for your pains, anyhow," said Sandy; "but I'm no the best off either: I'll never see the cobbles mair."

Such were the first words Bagenal Daly heard when consciousness returned to him; and the rest of the story is soon told. Daly took Sandy into his service, not without all due thought and consideration on the latter's part, for he owned a small fishing-hut, for which he expected and received due compensation, as well as for the cobbles and the damage to his habiliments by salt water; all matters, of which, as they were left to his own uncontrolled valuation, he was well satisfied with the arrangement; and thus began a companionship which had lasted to the very moment we have presented him to our readers.

It is but fair to say, that in all this time no one had ever heard from Sandy's lips

one syllable of the adventure we have related, nor did he ever, in the remotest degree, allude to it in intercourse with his master. Sandy was little disposed to descant either on the life or the character of his master; the Scotch element of caution was mingled strongly through his nature, and he preferred any other topic of conversation than such as led to domestic events. Whether that he was less on his guard on this evening, or that, esteeming Tate's perceptions at no very high rate, so it is, he talked more freely and unadvisedly than was his wont.

"Ye hae a bra berth o' it here, Maister Sullivan," said he, as he smacked his lips after the smoking compound, whose odor pronounced it mulled port; "I maun say, that a man wha has seen a good deal of life might do far war' than settle down in a snug little nook like this; maybe, ye hae no journeyed far in your time either."

"Indeed, 'tis true for you, Mr. M'Grane, I had not the opportunities you had of seeing the world, and the strange people in foreign parts; they tell me you was in Jericho, and Jerusalem, and Gibraltar."

"Further than that, Maister Sullivan. I hae been in very curious places wi' Mr. Daly; this day nine years we were in the Rocky Mountains, among the Red Indians."

"The Red Indians! blood alive! them was dangerous neighbors."

"Not in our case. My master was a chief among them, I was the doctor of the tribe—the 'Great Mystery Man,' they can'd me; my master's name was the 'Howling Wind,'"

"Sorra doubt, but it was not a bad one—listen to him now;" and Tate lifted his hand to enforce silence, while a cheer loud and sonorous rang out, and floated in rich cadence along the arched corridors of the old abbey; "'tis singing he is," added Tate, lower, while he opened the door to listen.

"That's no a sang, that's the war-cry of the Manhattas," said Sandy, gravely.

"The saints be praised it's no worse!" remarked Tate, with pious horror in every feature. "I thought he was going to raise the divil. And who was the man-haters, Mr. M'Grane?" added he, meekly.

"A vara fine set o' people; a lectle fond o' killing and eating their neighbors, but friendly and ceevil to strangers; I hae a wife amang them mysel."

"A wife! Is she a Christian, then?"

"Nae muckle o' that, but a donce good-humored lassie for a' that."

"And she's a black?"

"Nae, nae; she was a rich copper tint,

something deeper than my waistcoat here, but she had twa yellow streaks over her forehead, and the tip o' her nose was blue."

"The Mother of Heaven be near us! she was a beauty by all accounts."

"Ay, that she was; the best-looking squaw of the tribe, and rare handy wi' a hatchet."

"Divil fear her," muttered Tate between his teeth. "And what was her name now?"

"Her name was Orroawaccanaboo, the 'Jumping Wild Cat.'"

"Oh, holy Moses!" exclaimed Tate, unable any longer to subdue his feelings, "I wouldn't be her husband for a mine of goold."

"You are no sae far wrong there, my auld chap," said Sandy, without showing any displeasure at this burst of feeling.

"And Mr. Daly, had he another—of these craytures?" said Tate, who felt scruples in applying the epithet of the Church in such a predicament.

"He had twa," said Sandy, "for by'e, ane in the mountains, that was too auld to come down; puir lone body, she was unco' fond of a child's head and shoulders wi' fish gravy!"

"To ate it! Do you mane for ating, Mr. M'Grane?"

"Ay, just so; butchers' shops is no sae plenty down in them parts. But what's that! dinna ye hear a ringing o' the bell at the gate there?"

"I hear nothing, I can think of nothing! sorra bit! with the thought of that ould baste in my head, bad luck to her!"—exclaimed Tate, ruefully—"a child's head and shoulders! Sure enough that's the bell, and them that's ringing it knows the way, too." And with these words Tate lighted his lantern and issued forth to the gate tower, the keys of which were each night deposited in his care.

As the massive gates fell back, four splashed and heated horses drew forward a calèche, from which, disengaging himself with speed, Dick Forester descended, and endeavored, as well as the darkness would permit, to survey the great pile of building around him.

"Coming to stop, yer honor?" said Tate, courteously uncovering his white head.

"Yes. Will you present these letters and this card to your master?"

"I must show you your room first, that's my orders always. Tim, bring up this luggage to 27. Will yer honor have supper in the hall, or in your own dressing-room?"

There is nothing more decisive as to the general tone of hospitality pervading any house, than the manner of the servants toward strangers; and thus, few and simple as the old butler's words were, they were amply sufficient to satisfy Forester that his reception would be a kindly one, even though less ably accredited than by Lionel Darcy's introduction; and he followed Tate Sullivan with the pleasant consciousness that he was to lay his head beneath a friendly roof.

"Never mind the supper," said he; "a good night's rest is what I stand most in need of. Show me to my room, and tomorrow I'll pay my respects to the knight."

"This way then, sir," said Tate, entering a large hall, and leading the way up a wide oak staircase, at the top of which was a corridor of immense extent. Turning short at the head of this, Tate opened a small impaneled door, and with a gesture of caution moved forward. Forester followed, not a little curious to know the meaning of the precaution, and, at the same instant, the loud sounds of merry voices laughing and talking reached him, but from what quarter he could not guess, when suddenly his guide drew back a heavy cloth curtain, and he perceived that they were traversing a long gallery, which ran along the entire length of a great room, in the lower part of which a large company was assembled. So sudden and unexpected was the sight, that Forester started with amazement, and stood uncertain whether to advance or retire, while Tate Sullivan, as if enjoying his surprise, leaned his hands on his knees and stared steadily at him.

The scene below was indeed enough to warrant his astonishment. In the great hall, which had once been the refectory of the abbey, a party of about thirty gentlemen were now seated around a table covered with drinking vessels of every shape and material, as the tastes of the guests inclined their potations. Claret, in great glass jugs holding the quantity of two or three ordinary bottles; port, in huge square decanters, both being drunk from the wood, as was the fashion of the day; large china bowls of mulled wine, in which the oranges and limes floated fragrantly; and here and there a great measure made of wood and hooped with silver, called a "mether," contained the native beverage in all its simplicity, and supplied the hard drinker with the liquor he preferred to all—"poteen." The guests were no less various than the good things of which they partook. Old, young, and middle-aged; some, men stamped with the air and seeming of the very high-

est class; others, as undeniably drawn from the ranks of the mere country squire; a few were dressed in all the accuracy of dinner costume; some wore the well-known livery of Daly's Club, and others were in all the easy negligence of morning dress; while, scattered up and down, could be seen the red coat of a hunter, whose splashed and stained scarlet spoke rather for the daring than the dandyism of its wearer. But, conspicuous above all, was a figure who, on an elevated seat, sat at the head of the table, and presided over the entertainment. He was a tall—a very tall—and powerfully-built man, whose age might have been guessed at anything from five-and-forty to seventy, for though his frame and figure indicated few touches of time, his seared and wrinkled forehead boded advanced life. His head was long and narrow, and had been entirely bald were it not for a single stripe of coal-black hair which grew down the very middle of it, and came to a point on the forehead, looking exactly like the scalp-lock of an Indian warrior. The features were long and melancholy in expression—a character increased by a drooping moustache of black hair, the points of which descended below the chin. His eyes were black as a raven's wing, and glanced with all the brilliancy and quickness of youth, while the incessant motion of his arched eyebrows gave to their expression a character of almost demoniac intelligence. His voice was low and sonorous, and, although unmistakably Irish in accent, occasionally lapsed into traits which might be called foreign, for no one that knew him would have accused him of the vice of affectation. His dress was a claret-colored coat, edged with narrow silver lace, and a vest of white satin, over which, by a blue ribbon, hung the medal of a foreign order; white satin breeches and silk stockings, with shoes fastened by large diamond buckles, completed a costume which well became a figure that had lost nothing of its pretension to shapeliness and symmetry. His hands, though remarkably large and bony, were scrupulously white and cared for, and more than one ring of great value ornamented his huge and massive fingers. Altogether, he was one whom the least critical would have pronounced not of the common herd of humanity, and yet whose character was by no means so easy to guess at from external traits.

Amid all the tumult and confusion of the scene, his influence seemed felt everywhere, and his rich solemn tones could be heard high above the crash and din around. As Forester stood and leaned over the balcony the noise seemed to have reached its ut-

most. One of the company—a short, square, bull-faced little squire—being interrupted in a song by some of the party, while others—the greater number—equally loud, called on him to proceed. It was one of the slang ditties of the time—a lyric suggested by that topic which furnished matter for pamphlets, and speeches, and songs, dinners, debates, and even duels—the Union.

“Go on, Bodkin—go on, man! You never were in better voice in your life,” mingled with, “No, no; why introduce any party topic here?”—with a murmured remark: “It’s unfair, too. Hickman O’Reilly is with the Government.”

The tumult, which, without being angry, increased every moment, was at last stilled by the voice of the chairman, saying:

“If the song have a moral, Bodkin—”

“It has—I pledge my honor it has, your ‘grandeur,’” said Bodkin.

“Then finish it. Silence there, gentlemen.”

And Bodkin resumed his chant.

“Trust me, squire,” the dark man cried,
 “I’ll follow close and mind you,
 Nor however high the fence you ride,
 I’ll ever be far behind you.”

And true to his word, like a gentleman
 He rode, there’s no denying,
 And though full twenty miles they ran,
 He took all his ditches flying.

The night now came, and down they sat,
 And the squire drank while he was able,
 But though glass for glass the dark man took,
 He left him under the table.

When morning broke, the squire’s brains,
 Though racking, were still much clearer.
 “I know you well,” said he to his guest,
 “Now that I see you nearer.

“You’ve played me a d—d scurvy trick;
 Come, what have I lost—don’t tease me.
 Is it my soul?” “Not at all,” says Nick,
 “Just vote for the Union to please me.”

Amid the loud hurrahs, and the louder laughter that followed this rude chant, Forester hurried on to his room, fully convinced that his mission was not altogether so promising as he anticipated.

Undeniable in every respect as was the accommodation of his bedchamber, Forester lay awake half the night, the singular circumstances in which he found himself occupying his thoughts, while, at intervals, came the swelling sounds of some loud cheers from the party below, whose boisterous gayety seemed to continue without interruption.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DINNER PARTY.

It was late on the following day when Forester awoke, nor was it for some time that he could satisfy himself how far he had been an actor, or a mere spectator, in the scene he had witnessed the preceding night. The room and the guests were vividly impressed upon his memory, and the excitement of the party, so different in its character from anything he had seen in his own country, convinced him that the sea, narrow as it was, separated two races very unlike in temperament.

What success should he have in this, his first mission? was the question ever rising to his mind; how should he acquit himself among persons to whose habits of life, thought, and expression, he felt himself an utter stranger? Little as he had seen of the party, that little showed him that the Anti-Union feeling was in the ascendant, and that, if a stray convert to the ministerial doctrines was here and there to be found, he was rather ashamed of his new convictions, than resolute to uphold and defend them. From these thoughts he wandered on to others, about the characters of the party, and principally of the host himself, who in every respect was unlike his anticipations. He opened his friend Lionel’s letter, and was surprised to find how filial affection had blinded his judgment—keen enough, when exercised without the trammels of prejudice. “If this,” thought he, “be a fair specimen of Lionel’s portrait-painting, I must take care to form no high-flown expectations of his mother and sister; and as he calls one somewhat haughty and reserved in manner, and the other a blending of maternal pride with a dash of his father’s willful but happy temperament, I take it for granted that Lady Eleanor is a cold, disagreeable old lady, and her daughter Helen a union of petted vanity and capriciousness, pretty much what my good friend Lionel himself was when he joined us, but what he had the good sense to cease to be very soon after.”

Having satisfied himself that he fairly estimated the ladies of the house, he set himself, with all the ingenuity of true speculation, to account for the traits of character he had so good-naturedly conferred on them. “Living in a remote, half-civilized neighborhood,” thought he, without any intercourse save with some country squires and their wives and daughters, they have learned, naturally enough, to feel their own superiority to those about





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them, and possessing a place with such claims to respect from association, as well as from its actual condition, they, like all people who have few equals and no superiors, give themselves a license to think and act independent of the world's prescription, and become, consequently, very intolerable to every one unaccustomed to acknowledge their sovereignty. I heartily wish Lionel had left these worthy people to my own unassisted appreciation of them; his flourish of trumpets has sadly spoiled the effect of the scene for me;" and with this not over gracious reflection he proceeded to dress for the day.

"The squire has been twice at the door this morning, sir," said Linwood, as he arranged the dressing apparatus on the table; "he would not let me awake you, however, and at last said, 'Present my cordial respects to Mr. Forester, and say, that if he should like to ride with the hounds, he'll find a horse ready for him, and a servant who will show him the way.'"

"And are they out already?" said Forester.

"Yes, sir, gone two hours ago; they breakfasted at eight, and I heard a whipper-in say they'd twelve miles to go to the first cover."

"Why, it appeared to me that they were up all night."

"They broke up at four, sir, and except two gentlemen that are gone over to Westport on business, but to be back for dinner, they're all mounted to-day."

"And what is the dinner hour, Linwood?"

"Six, sir, to the minute."

"And it's now only eleven," said Forester to himself, with a wearied sigh, "how am I to get through the rest of the day? Are the ladies in the drawing-room, Linwood?"

"Ladies! no, sir; there are no ladies in the house as I hear of."

"So much the better then," thought his master; "passive endurance is better any day than active boredom, and with all respect for Lady Eleanor and her daughter, I'd rather believe them such as Lionel paints them, than have the less flattering impression nearer acquaintance would as certainly leave behind it."

"The old butler wishes to know if you will breakfast in the library, sir?" asked Linwood.

"Yes, that will do admirably; delighted I am to hear there is such a thing here," muttered he; for already he had suffered the disappointment the host's appearance had caused him to tinge all his thoughts

with bitterness, and make him regard his visit as an act of purgatorial endurance.

In a large and well-furnished library, with a projecting window, offering a view over the entire of Clew Bay, Forester found a small breakfast-table laid beside the fireplace. From the aspect of comfort in everything around, to the elegance of the little service of Dresden, with its accompaniment of ancient silver, the most fastidious critic would not have withheld his praise, and the young Englishman fell into a puzzled reverie how so much of taste for the refinements of daily life could consort with the strange specimen of society he had witnessed the preceding evening. The book-shelves, too, in all their later acquisitions, exhibited judgment in the works selected, and as Forester ran his eye over the titles, he was more than ever at fault to reconcile such readings with such habits. On the tables lay scattered the latest of those political pamphlets which the great contested question of the day evoked, many of them ably and powerfully written, and abounding in strong sarcasm; of these, the greater number were attacks on the meditated Union; some of them, too, bore pencil-marks and annotations, from which Forester collected that the knight's party leanings were by no means to the Government side of the question.

"It will be hard, however," thought he, "but some inducement may be found to tempt a man whose house and habits evidence such a taste for enjoyment; he must have ambitions of one kind or other, and if not for himself, his son, at least, must enter into his calculations. Your ascetic or your anchorite may be difficult to treat with, but show me the man with a good cook, a good stable, a good cellar, and the odds are there is a lurking void somewhere in his heart, to discover which is to have the mastery over him forever." Such were the conclusions the young aid-de-camp came to after long and mature thought, nor were they very unnatural in one whose short experience of life had shown him few, if any, exceptions to his theory. He deemed it possible, besides, that, although the knight's politics should decline to the side of opposition, there might be no very determined or decided objection to the plans of Government, and that, while proof against the temptations of vulgar bribery, he might be won over by the flatteries and seductions of which a ministry can always be the dispensers. To open the negotiation with this view was then the great object with Forester, to sound the depth of the prejudices with

which he had to deal, to examine their bearings and importance, to avoid even to ruffle the slightest of national susceptibilities, and to make it appear that, while Government could have little doubt of the justice of their own views, they would not permit a possibility of misconstruction to interfere with the certainty of securing the adhesion of one so eminent and influential as the Knight of Gwynne.

The old adage has commemorated the facility of that arithmetic which consists in reckoning "without one's host," and there are few men of warm and generous temperament who have not fallen, some time or other, into the error. Forester was certainly not the exception; and so thoroughly was he imbued with the spirit of his mission, and so completely captivated by the force of his own argument, that he walked up and down the ample apartment, repeating aloud, in broken and disjointed sentences, some of those irrefutable positions and plausible inducements by which he speculated on success. It was already the dusk of the evening, the short hours of a wintry day had hurried to a close, and except where the bright glare of the wood fire was reflected on the polished oaken floor, all was shrouded in shadow within that spacious library. Now pushing aside some great deep-ushioned chair, now removing from his path the projecting end of a table, Forester succeeded in clearing a space in which, as he walked, he occasionally gave vent to such reflections as these:

"The necessities of the empire, growing power and influence of England, demand a consolidation of her interests and her efforts—this only to be effected by the act of Union—an English Parliament, the real seat of legislation, and, as such, the suitable position for you, Sir Knight, whose importance will now increase with the sphere in which you exercise your abilities. I do not venture," said he, aloud, and with a voice attuned to its most persuasive accents—"I do not venture to discuss with you a question in which your opportunities and judgment have given you every advantage over me; I would merely direct your attention to those points on which my relative, Lord Castlereagh, founds the hopes of obtaining your support, and those views, by which, in the success of the measure, a more extended field of utility will open before you. If I do not speak more fully on the gratitude which the ministry will feel for your co-operation, and the pledges they are most ready and willing to advance, it is because

I know—that is, I am certain that you—in fact, it is the conviction that—in short—"

"In short, it is because bribery is an ugly theme, sir, and, like a bad picture, only comes out the worse the more varnish you lay on it." These words, uttered in a low, solemn voice from a corner of the apartment, actually stunned Forester, who now stood peering through the gloom to where the indistinct figure of a man was seen seated in the recess of a large chair.

"Excuse me, Captain Forester," said he, rising, and coming forward with his hand out; "but it has so seldom been my fortune to hear any argument in defense of this measure, that I could not bring myself to interrupt you before. Let me, however, perform a more pleasing task, in bidding you welcome to Gwynne Abbey. You slept well, I trust, for I left you in a happy unconsciousness of this world and its cares." It required all Forester's tact to subdue the uncomfortable sensations his surprise excited, and receive the proffered welcome with becoming cordiality. But in this he soon succeeded, not less from his own efforts than from the easy and familiar tone of the speaker. "I have to thank you for a very pleasant note you were kind enough to bring me," continued he, as he seated himself beside the fire. "And how have you left Dublin? Is the popular excitement as great as some weeks ago? or are the people beginning to see that they have nothing to say to a measure which, like venison and turtle, is a luxury only to be discussed by their betters?"

"I should say that there is more of moderation in the tone of all parties of late," said Forester, diffidently, for he felt all the awkwardness of alluding to a topic in which his own game had been so palpably discovered.

"In that case, your friends have gained the victory. Patriotism, as we call it in Ireland, requires to be fed by mob adulation, and when the *canaille* get hoarse, their idols walk over to the Treasury benches.—But there's the bell to dress; and I may as well tell you that we are the models of punctuality in this house, and you have only fifteen minutes for your toilet." With these words the old gentleman arose and strode out of the room, while Forester hastened, on his side, to prepare for the dinner-hour.

When the *aid-de-camp* had accomplished his dressing, he found the party at table, where a vacant place was reserved for himself at the right hand of the host.

"We gave you three minutes' grace, Captain Forester. I knew a candidate lose his

election in the county by very little more"—and here he dropped his voice to a whisper, only audible to Forester—"and I'd rather contract to keep the peace in a menagerie full of tigers than hold in check the passions of twenty hungry fox-hunters while waiting for dinner."

Forester cast his eyes over the table and thought he perceived that his delay had not prepossessed the company in his favor. The glances which met his own round the board bore an expression of very unmistakable dissatisfaction, and, although the conversation was free and unrestrained, he felt all the awkwardness of his position.

There was, at the time we speak of—has it quite disappeared even yet?—a very prevalent notion in most Irish circles, that Englishmen in general, and English officials in particular, assumed airs of superiority over the natives of the country, treating them as very subordinate persons in all the relations in which good breeding and social intercourse are concerned; and this impression, whether well or ill-founded, induced many to suspect intentional insult in those chance occurrences which arise out of thoughtlessness and want of memory.

If the party now assembled manifested any portion of this feeling, it was not sufficient to interrupt the flow of conversation, which took its course in channels the most various and dissimilar. The individuals were intimate, or, at least, familiar with each other, and through all the topics of hunting, farming, politics, and horse-racing, ran a tone of free and easy raillery, that kept a laugh moving up and down the table, or occasionally occupying it entirely. The little chill which marked Forester's first entrance into the room wore off soon, and ere the dinner was over he had drunk wine with nearly every man of the party, and accepted invitations to hunt, course, and shoot in at least a dozen different quarters. Lionel Darcy's friend, as he was soon known to be, was speedily made the object of every attention and civility among the younger members of the company, while even the older and less susceptible reserved their judgments on one they had at first received with some distrust.

Forester had seen in the capital some specimens of those hard-drinking habits which characterized the period, but was still unprepared for the determined and resolute devotion to the bottle which at once succeeded to the dinner. The claret-jugs coursed round the table with a rapidity that seemed sleight of hand, and few refrained from filling a bumper every time. With all his determination to preserve a

cool head and a calm judgment, Forester felt that, what between the noisy tumult of the scene, the fumes of wine, and the still more intoxicating excitement of this exaggerated conviviality, he could listen to tales of miraculous performances in the hunting field, or feats of strength and activity more than mortal, with a degree of belief, or, at least, sufferance, he could scarcely have summoned a few hours earlier.

If wine expands the heart, it has a similar influence on the credulity; and belief, when divested of the trammels of cool judgment, takes a flight which even imagination might envy. It was in a frame of mind reduced to something like this, amid the loud voices of some, the louder laughter of others, strange and absurd bets as eagerly accepted as proffered, that he became suddenly mindful of his own wager made with the stranger at Kilbeggan, and the result of which he had pledged himself to test at the very first opportunity.

No sooner had he mentioned the fact than the interests of the company, directed before into so many different channels, became centered upon the circumstance, and questions and inquiries were rapidly poured in upon him to explain the exact nature of the wager, which in the then hallucination of the party was not an over easy task.

"You are to describe the stranger, Captain Forester, and we are to guess his name—that, I take it, is the substance of the bet," said a thin-faced, dark-eyed man, with a soft silkiness of accent very unlike the others. This was Mr. Hickman O'Reilly, member for the county, and colleague of "the knight" himself.

"Yes, that is exactly what I mean. If my portrait be recognized, I've won my bet."

"May I ask another question?" said Mr. O'Reilly; "are we to pronounce only from the evidence before us, or are we at liberty to guess the party, from other circumstances known to ourselves?"

"Of course, from the evidence only," interrupted a red-faced man of about five-and-thirty, with an air and manner which boded no small reliance on his own opinion; then mimicking the solemnity of a judge, he addressed the assembled party thus: "The gentlemen of the jury will dismiss from their minds everything they may hear touching the case outside this court, and base their verdict solely on the testimony they shall now hear." These few words were delivered in a pompous and snuffling tone, and it was easy to see, from the laughter they excited, were an accurate imitation of some one well known to the company.

Mr. Alexander Mac Donough was, however, a tolerably successful mimic, and had practiced as an attorney until the death of an uncle enabled him to exercise his abilities in the not less crafty calling of a squireen gentleman; he was admitted by a kind of special favor into the best county society, for no other reason, as it seemed, than that it never occurred to any one to exclude him. He was a capital horseman, never turned from a fence in his life, and a noted shot with the pistol, in which his prowess had been more than once tried on "the ground." Probably, however, these qualities would scarcely have procured him acceptance where he now sat, if it were not that he was looked upon as the necessary accompaniment of Mr. Hickman O'Reilly and his son Beecham, not indeed to illustrate their virtues and display their good gifts, but as a species of moral blister, irritating and maddening them eternally.

They had both more money and ambition than Mac Donough, had taken higher and wider views of life, and were strenuously working up from the slough of a plebeian origin to the high and dry soil of patrician security. To them, Mac Donough was a perfect curse; he was what sailors call "a point of departure," everlastingly reminding them of the spot from which they had sailed, and tauntingly hinting how, with all their canvas spread, they had scarcely gained blue water.

Of the O'Reillys a few words are necessary. Three generations were still living, each depicting most strikingly the gradations by which successful thrift and industry transmute the man of humble position into the influential grade of an estated gentleman; the grandfather was an apothecary of Loughrea; the son, an agent, a money-lender, and an M.P.; and the grandson, an Etonian and a fellow commoner of Balliol, emerging into life with the prospect of a great estate, unincumbered with debt, considerable county influence, and not least of all the *ricochet* of that favor with which the government regarded his pliant parent.

To all of these, Mac Donough was insupportable, nor was there any visible escape from the insolent familiarity of his manner. Flattery had been tried in vain; all their blandishments could do nothing with one who well knew that his own acceptance into society depended on his powers of annoying; if not performing the part of torturer, he had no share in the piece; a quarrel with him was equally out of the question, for even supposing such an appeal safe—which it was very far from being—it would have reflected most disadvantageously

on the O'Reillys to have been mixed up in altercation with a man so much beneath themselves as Alexander Mac Donough of "the Tenement," for such, in slang phrase, did he designate his country residence.

Let us now return from this long but indispensable digression to the subject which suggested it.

So many questions were put, explanations demanded, doubts suggested, and advices thrown out to Forester, that it was not until after a considerable lapse of time he was enabled to commence his description of the unknown traveler, nor even then was he suffered to proceed without interruption, a demand being made by Mac Donough, that the absent individual was entitled to counsel, who should look after his interests, and, if necessary, cross-examine the evidence. All this was done in that style of comic seriousness to which Forester was so little accustomed, that, what with the effect of wine, heat, and noise, combined with the well-assumed gravity of the party, he really forgot the absurdity of the whole affair, and became as eager and attentive as though the event were one of deep importance.

It was at last decided that Mac Donough should act as counsel for the unknown, and the company should vote separately, each writing down on a slip of paper their impression of the individual designated, the result being tested by the majority in favor of any one person.

"Gentlemen of the Jury," said the host, in a voice of deep solemnity, "you will hear and well weigh the evidence before you touching this case, and decide with truth and conscience on its merits; so fill a bumper and let us begin. Make your statement, Captain Forester."

The sudden silence succeeding to the tumultuous uproar, the directed gaze of so many eager faces, and the evident attention with which his statement was awaited, conspired to make Forester nervous and uneasy, nor was it without something of an effort that he began the recital of his adventure at Kilbeggan; warming as he proceeded, he told of the accident by which his acquaintance with the unknown traveler was opened, and at length, having given so much of preliminary, entered upon the description of the individual.

Whatever Forester's own impression of the stranger, he soon felt how very difficult a task portrait-painting was, and how very unlike was his representation of the individual in question. The sure way to fail in any untried career is to suspect a failure; this he soon discovered, and cut short a most imperfect description by abruptly

saying, "If you guess him now, gentlemen, I acknowledge the merit is far more in *your* perspicuity than in *my* powers of description."

"Only a few questions before you leave the table, sir," said Mac Donough, addressing him with the mock sternness of a cross-examining barrister. "You said the unknown was gifted with a most courteous and prepossessing manner; pray what is the exact meaning of your phrase, for we uncouth inhabitants of a remote region have very imperfect notions on such subjects; my friend Dan Mahon here would call any man agreeable who could drink fourteen tumblers, and not forget the whisky in mixing the fifteenth: Tom Callaghan, on the other hand, would test his breeding by what he knew of a wether or a 'short-horn:' Giles, my neighbor here, would ask, did he lend you any money? and Mr. Hickman O'Reilly would whisper a hope, that he came of an old family."

The leer by which these words were accompanied, gave them an impertinence even greater than their simple signification, but however coarse the sarcasm, it suited well the excited tone of the party, who laughed loud and vociferously as he uttered it.

Stranger as he was to the party, Forester saw that the allusion had a personal application, and was very far from relishing a pleasantry whose whole merit was its coarseness; he therefore answered in a tone of rather haughty import, "The person I met, sir, was a gentleman, and the word, so far as I know, has an easy signification, at least to all who have had opportunities to learn it."

"I have no doubt of that, Captain Forester," replied Mac Donough, "but if we divided the house on it here, some of us might differ about the definition. Your neighbor there, Mr. Beecham O'Reilly, thinks his own countrymen very far down in the scale."

"A low fellow—nobody pays attention to him," muttered young O'Reilly in Forester's ear, as with a cheek pale as death he affected to seem totally indifferent to the continued insolence of his tormentor.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Beecham O'Reilly," interposed Mac Donough, with a significant smile, "but your observation was, I think, meant to apply to me."

The young man made no answer, but proceeded to fill his glass with claret, while his hand trembled so much that he spilled the wine about the table. Forester stared at him, expecting each instant to hear his

reply to this appeal, but not a word escaped him, nor did he even look toward the quarter from which the taunt proceeded.

"Didn't I tell you so, sir?" exclaimed Mac Donough, with a triumphant laugh. "There are various descriptions of gentlemen: some are contented with qualities of home growth, and satisfied to act, think, and deport themselves like their neighbors; others travel for this improvement, and bring back habits and customs that seem strange in their own country; now, I don't doubt but in England that young gentleman would be thought all that was spirited and honorable."

"I have nothing to say to that, sir!" replied Forester, sternly; "but if you would like to hear the opinion my countrymen would have of yourself, I could perhaps favor you."

"Stop, stop, where are you hurrying to? no more of this nonsense," cried the host, who had suddenly caught the last few words, while conversing with a person on his left.

"I beg your pardon most humbly, sir," said MacDonough, whose face was flushed with passion, and whose lip trembled, notwithstanding all his efforts to seem calm and collected, "but the gentleman was about to communicate a trait of English society. I know you misunderstood him."

"Perhaps so," said the host; "what was it, Captain Forester? I believe I did not hear you quite accurately."

"A very simple fact, sir," said Forester, coolly, "and one that can scarcely astonish Mr. Mac Donough to hear."

"And which is—?" said Mac Donough, affecting a bland smile.

"Perhaps you'd ask for a definition, if I employ a single word."

"Not this time," said MacDonough, still smiling in the same way.

"You are right, sir, it would be affectation to do so; for though you may feel very natural doubts about what constitutes a gentleman, you ought to be pretty sure what makes a blackguard."

The words seemed to fall like a shell in the company; one burst of tumultuous uproar broke forth, voices in every tone and accent of eagerness and excitement, when suddenly the host cried out, "Lock the doors; no man leaves the room till this matter is settled; there shall be no quarrelling beneath this roof so long as Bagenal Daly sits here for his friend."

The caution came too late—Mac Donough was gone.

CHAPTER V.

AN AFTER-DINNER STORY.

THE unhappy event which so suddenly interrupted the conviviality of the party scarcely made a more than momentary impression. Altercations which ended most seriously were neither rare nor remarkable at the dinner tables of the country gentlemen, and if the present instance caused an unusual interest, it was only because one of the parties was an Englishman.

As for Forester himself, his first burst of anger over, he forgot all in his astonishment that the host was not "the knight" himself, but only his representative and friend, Bagenal Daly.

"Come, Captain Forester," said he, "I owe you an *amende* for the mystification I have practiced upon you. You shall have it. Your traveling acquaintance at Kilbeggan was the 'Knight of Gwynne;' and the few lines he sent through your hands contained an earnest desire that your stay here might be sufficiently prolonged to admit of his meeting you at his return."

"I shall be extremely sorry," said Forester, in a low voice, "if anything that has occurred to-night shall deprive me of that pleasure."

"No, no—nothing of the kind," said Daly, with a significant nod of his head. "Leave that to me." Then, raising his voice, he added: "What do you say to that elaret, Conolly?"

"I agree with you," replied a rosy-cheeked old squire in a hunting-dress; "it's too old—there's little spirit left in it."

"Quite true, Tom. Wine has its dotage, like the rest of us. All that the best can do is to keep longest; and, after all, we scarcely can complain of the vintage that has a taste of its once flavor at our age. It's a long time since we were schoolfellows."

"It is not an hour less than—"

"Stop, Tom—no more of that. Of all scores to go back upon, that of years past is the saddest."

"By Jove! I don't think so," said the hearty old squire, as he tossed off a bumper. "I never remember riding better than I did to-day. Ask Beecham O'Reilly there which of us was first over the double ditch at the red barn."

"You forget, sir," said the young gentleman referred to, "that I was on an English-bred mare, and she doesn't understand these fences."

"Faith, she wasn't worse off, in that re-

spect, than the man on her back," said old Conolly, with a hearty chuckle. "If to look before you leap be wisdom, you ought to be the shrewdest fellow in the country."

"Beecham, I believe, keeps a good place in Northamptonshire," said his father, half proudly.

"Another argument in favor of the Union, I suppose," whispered a guest in Conolly's ear.

"Well, well," sighed the old squire, "when I was a young man, we'd have thought of bringing over a dromedary from Asia as soon as an English horse to cross the country with."

"Dick French was the only one I ever heard of backing a dromedary," said a fat, old farmer-like man, from the end of the table.

"How was that, Martin?" said Daly, with a look that showed he either knew the story, or anticipated something good.

"And by all accounts, it's the devil to ride," resumed the old fellow; "now, it's the head down and the loins up, and then, a roll to one side, and then to the other, and a twist in the small of your back, as if it were coming in two. Oh, by the good day! Dick gave me as bad as a stitch in the side just telling me about it."

"But where did he get his experience, Martin? I never heard of it before," said Daly.

"He was a fortnight in Egypt, sir," said the old farmer. "He was in a frigate, or a man-of-war of one kind or another, off—the devil a one o' me knows well where it was, but there was a consul there, a son of one of his father's tenants—indeed, ould French got him the place from the Government—and when he found out that Dick was on board the ship, what does he do but writes him an invitation to pass a week or ten days with him at his house, and that he'd show him some sport. 'We've elegant hunting,' says he; 'not foxes or hares, but a big bird, bigger nor a goose, they call——' By my conscience, I'll forget my own name next, for I heard Dick tell the story at least twenty times."

"Was it an ostrich?" said Tom.

"No; nor an oyster either. Mr. Conolly," said the old fellow, who thought the question was meant to quiz him.

"'Twas an ibis, Martin," cried Daly—"an ibis."

"The devil a doubt of it, that's the name. A crayture with legs as long as Mr. Beecham O'Reilly's, and a way of going—half flying, half walking—almost impossible to catch; and they hunt him on

dromedaries. Dick liked the notion well, and as he was a favorite on board, he got lave for three days to go on shore and have his fun; though the captain said, at parting, 'It's not many dromedaries you'll see, Dick, for the Pasha has them all up the country at this time.' This was true enough; sorra a bit of a camel or dromedary could be seen for miles round. But however it was, the consul kept his word, and had one for Dick the next morning—a great strapping baste, all covered with trappings of one kind or other; elegant shawls and little hearth-rugs all over him.

"The others were mounted on mules or asses, any way they could, and away they went to look after the goose—the 'ibis,' I mean. Well, to be short with it, they came up with one on the bank of a river, and soon gave chase; he was a fine strong fellow, and well able to run. I wish you heard Dick tell this part of it; never was there such sport in the world, blazing away all together as fast as they could prime and load, at one time at the goose, more times at each other; the mules kicking, the asses braying, and Dick cantering about on his dromedary, upsetting every one near him, and shouting like mad. At last he pinned the goose up in a narrow corner among some old walls, and Dick thought he'd have the brush, but sorra step the dromedary would stir; he spurred and kicked, and beat away with a stick as hard as he could, but it was all no good—it was the carpets, maybe, that saved him—for there he stood fast, just for all the world as if he was made of stone.

"Dick pulled out a pistol and fired a shot in his ear, but all to no use; he minded it no more than before. 'Bad luck to you for a baste,' says Dick, 'what ails you at all—are you going to die on me? Get along now.' 'The divil receive the step I'll go till I get some spirits and wather!' says the dromedary, 'for I'm clean smothered with them b—y blankets,' and with them same words the head of the baste fell off, and Dick saw the consul's own man wiping the perspiration off his face, and blowing like a porpoise. 'How the divil the hind legs bears it I can't think,' says he, 'for I'm nigh dead though I had a taste of fresh air.'

"The murther was out, gentlemen, for ye see the consul couldn't get a raal dromedary, and was obliged to make one out of a Christian and a black fellow he had for a cook, and sure enough in the beginning of the day Dick says he went like a clipper, 'twas doubling after the goose destroyed him."

Whether the true tale had or had not been familiar to most of the company before, it produced the effect Bagenal Daly desired, by at first creating a hearty roar of laughter, and then, as seems the consequence in all cases of miraculous narrative, set several others upon recounting stories of equal credibility. Daly encouraged this new turn of conversation with all the art of one who knew how to lead men's thoughts into a particular channel without exciting suspicion of his intentions, by either abruptness or over zeal: to any ordinary observer, indeed, he would have now appeared a mere enjoyer of the scene, and not the spirit who gave it guidance and direction.

In this way passed the hours long after midnight, when, one by one, the guests retired to their rooms, Forester remaining at the table in compliance with a signal which Daly had made him, until at length Hickman O'Reilly stood up to go, the last of all, save Daly and the young guardsman.

Passing round the table, he leaned over Forester's chair, and in a low, cautious whisper, said, "You have put down the greatest bully in this country, Captain Forester; do not spoil your victory by being drawn into a disreputable quarrel! Good-night, gentlemen, both," said he, aloud, and with a polite bow left the room.

"What was that he whispered?" said Daly, as the door closed and they were left alone together.

Forester repeated the words.

"Ah, I guessed why he sat so late; he sees the game clearly enough. You, sir, have taken up the glaive that was thrown down for his son's acceptance, and he knows the consequence—clever fellow, that he is. Had you been less prompt, Beecham's poltroonery might have escaped notice; and even now, if you were to decline a meeting—"

"But I have no intention of doing any such thing."

"Of course, I never supposed you had; but were you to be swayed by wrong counsels and do so, Master Beecham would be saved even yet. Well, well, I am sorry. Captain Forester, you should have met such a reception amongst us, and my friend Darcy will be deeply grieved at it. However, we have other occupation now than vain regret, so to bed as fast as you can, and to sleep; the morning is not very far off, and we shall have some one from Mac Donough here by daybreak."

With a cordial shake hands, like men who already knew and felt kindly toward each other, they separated for the night.

While Forester was thus sensible of the manliness and straightforward resolution that marked Bagenal Daly's character, he was very far from feeling satisfied with the position in which he found himself placed. A duel under any circumstances is scarcely an agreeable incident in one's life, but a meeting whose origin is at a drinking-bout, and where the antagonist is a noted fire-eater, and, by that very reputation, discredit-able, is still a great aggravation of the evil.

To have imbroiled himself in a quarrel of this kind would, he well knew, greatly prejudice him in the estimation of his cold-tempered relative, Lord Castlereagh, who would not readily forgive an indiscretion that should mar his own political views. As he sat in his dressing-room, revolving such unpleasant reflections, there came a gentle tap at the door; he had but time to say, "Come in," when Mr. Hickman O'Reilly entered.

"Will you excuse this intrusion, Captain Forester?" said he, with an accent in which the blandest courtesy was mingled with a well-affected cordiality, "but I really could not lay my head on a pillow in tranquillity until I had seen and spoken to you in confidence. This foolish altercation—"

"Oh, pray don't let that give you a moment's uneasiness! I believe I understand the position the gentleman you allude to occupies in your country society; that license is accorded him, and freedoms taken with him, not habitually the case in the world at large."

"You are quite right, your views are strictly accurate. Mac Donough is a low fellow of very small fortune, no family—indeed, what pretension he has to associate with the gentry I am unable to guess, nor would you have ever seen him under this roof had 'the knight' been at home; Mr. Daly, however, who, being an old school-fellow and friend of Darcy's, does the honors here in his absence, is rather indiscriminate in his hospitalities. You may have remarked around the table some singular-looking guests—in fact, he not only invites the whole hunting field, but half the farmers over whose ground we've ridden, and, were it not that they have sense and shame enough to see their own place with truer eyes, we should have an election mob here every day of the week—but this is not exactly the topic which led to my intruding upon you. I wished, in the first place, to rest assured that you had no intention of noticing the man's impertinence, or of accepting any provocation on his part; in fact, were he admissible to such a privilege,

my son Beecham would have at once taken the whole upon himself, it being more properly his quarrel than yours."

Forester, with all his efforts, was unable to repress a slight smile at these words. O'Reilly noticed it, and colored up, while he added: "Beecham, however, knew the impossibility of such a course—in fact, Captain Forester, I may venture to say, without any danger of being misunderstood by you, that my son has imbibed more correct notions of the world and its habits at *your* side of St. George's Channel than could have fallen to him had his education been merely Irish."

This compliment, if well meant, was scarcely very successful, for Forester bit his lip impatiently, but never made any answer. Whether O'Reilly perceived the cause of this, or that, like a skillful painter, he knew when to take his brush off the canvas, he arose at once, and said, "I leave you, then, with a mind much relieved. I feared that a mistaken estimate of Mac Donough's claims in society, and probably some hot-brained counsels of Mr. Bagenal Daly—"

"You are quite in error there; let me assure you, sir, his view of the matter is exactly my own," interrupted Forester, calmly.

"I am delighted to hear it, and have now only one request—will you favor us with a few days' visit at Mount O'Reilly? I may say, without vanity, that my son is more likely to be a suitable companion to you than the company here may afford; we've some good shooting, and—"

"I must not suffer you to finish the catalogue of temptations," said Forester, smiling courteously; "my hours are numbered already, and I must be back in Dublin within a few days."

"Beecham will be sorely disappointed; in fact, we came back here to-day for no other reason than to meet you at dinner. Daly told us of your arrival. May we hope to see you at another opportunity:—are your engagements formed for Christmas yet?"

"I believe so—Dorsetshire, I think," muttered Forester, with a tone that plainly indicated a desire to cushion the subject at once; and Mr. O'Reilly, with a ready tact, accepted the hint, and wishing him a most cordial good-night, departed.

CHAPTER VI.

A MESSAGE.

WHILE Forester slept soundly and without a dream, his long, light breathing scarce

audible within the quiet chamber, a glance within the room of Bagenal Daly would have shown that, whatever the consequences of the past night's troubles, he, at least, was not likely to be taken unprepared.

On the table in the middle of the apartment two wax candles burned, two others, as yet unlighted, stood ready on the chimney-piece, a pistol-case lay open, displaying the weapons whose trim and orderly appearance denoted recent care, a fact attested by certain cloths and flannels which lay about; a mold for bullets, and about a dozen newly-cast balls most carefully filed and rubbed smooth with sand-paper, were flanked by a small case of surgical instruments, with an ample supply of lint and ligatures, such as are used to secure bleeding vessels, in the use of which few unprofessional persons could vie with Bagenal Daly. A few sheets of paper lay also there, on which appeared some recent writing; and, in a large, deep arm-chair, ready dressed for the day, sat Daly himself, sound asleep; one arm hung listlessly over the chair, the other was supported in the breast of his waist-coat. The strong, stern features, unrelaxed by repose, had the same impassive expression of cold defiance as when awake, and if his lips muttered, the accents were not less determined and firm than in his moments of self-possession. He awoke from time to time, and looked at his watch, and once threw open the sash, and held out his hand to ascertain if it were raining; but these interruptions did not interfere with his rest, for, the minute after, he slept as soundly as before. Nor was he the only one, within that house, who counted the hours thus anxiously. A lantern in the stable beamed brightly, showing three horses ready saddled, the bridles on the neck of each, and ready at a moment's notice to be bitted; while, pacing slowly to and fro, like a sentinel on his post, was the tall figure of Sandy M'Grane, wrapped in a long cloth cloak, and his head covered by a cap, whose shape and material spoke of a far-off land and wild companionship; for it was the skin of a black fox, and the workmanship the product of a squaw's fair fingers.

Sandy's patrol was occasionally extended to the gateway, where he usually halted for a few seconds to listen, and then resumed his path as leisurely as before. At last, he remained somewhat longer at the gate, and bent his head more cautiously to hear; then, noiselessly unbarring and unlocking the door, he leaned out. To an ear less practiced than his own the silence would have been complete. Not so with Sandy,

whose perceptions had received the last finish of an Indian education. He retired hastily, and approaching that part of the court beneath his master's window, gave a long, low whistle. The next moment the casement was opened, and Daly's head appeared.

"What now, Sandy? It is but a quarter past five."

"It may be so; but there's a horse coming fast up the lower road."

"Listen again, and try if you hear it still."

Sandy did so, and was back in a few moments. "He's crossing the bridge at 'the elms' now, and will be here in less than three minutes more."

"Watch the gate then—let there be no noise—and come up by the back stairs." With these words Daly closed the sash, and Sandy returned to his post.

Ere many minutes elapsed, the door of Mr. Daly's chamber was opened, and Sandy announced Major Hackett, of Brough. As Bagenal Daly rose to meet him, an expression of more than ordinary sternness was stamped upon his bold features.

"Your servant informed me that I should find you in readiness to receive me, Mr. Bagenal Daly," said the major, a coarse-looking, carbuncled-faced man of about forty; "but, perhaps, the object of my visit would be better accomplished if I could have a few minutes conversation with a Captain Forester, who is here."

"If you can show me no sufficient cause to the contrary, sir," replied Daly, proudly, "I shall act for him on this occasion."

"I beg pardon," said Hackett, smiling dubiously. "The business I came upon induced me to suspect that, at your time of life—"

"Go on, sir—finish your speech," said Daly, with a fixed and steady stare, which, very far from reassuring, seemed only to increase the major's confusion.

"After all, Mr. Daly," resumed he, more hurriedly, "I have nothing whatever to do with that. My duty is to convey a message from Mr. Alexander Mac Donough to a gentleman named Forester, here. If you will accept the proposition, and assist in the necessary arrangements—"

"We are ready, sir—quite ready. One of the consequences of admitting dubious acquaintances to the intimacy of the table is such a case as the present. I was guilty of one fault in this respect, but I shall show you I was not unprepared for what might follow it." And as he spoke he threw open the window, and called out, "Sandy! awaken Captain Forester. I sup-

pose you are ready, Major Hackett, with your friend?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Mac Donough expects us at Cluan Point."

"And bridle the horses, Sandy," continued Daly, speaking from the window.

"I conclude, from what I see," said Hackett, "that your friend is not only decided against offering an apology for his offense, but desirous of a meeting."

"Who said so, sir?—or what right have you to suppose that any gentleman of good family and good prospects should indulge such an unnatural caprice as to wish to risk character and life in a quarrel with Mr. Alexander Mac Donough?"

"Circumstanced as that gentleman is at this moment, your observations are unsuitable, sir," replied the major.

"So they are," said Daly, hastily; "or, rather, so they would have been, if not provoked by your remark. But, hang me! if I think it signifies much; if it were not that some of our country neighbors were good-natured enough to treat this same Mr. Mac Donough on terms of equality before, I'd have advised Captain Forester not to mind him. *My* maxim is, there are always low fellows enough to shoot one another, and never come trespassing among the manners of their betters."

"I must confess myself unprepared, sir, to hear language like this," said Hackett, sternly.

"Not a whit more than I feel at seeing myself negotiating a meeting with a man turned out of the army with disgrace," said Daly, as his face grew purple with anger. "Were it not that I would not risk a hint of dishonor on this young Englishman's fame, I'd never interchange three words with Major Hackett."

"You shall answer for this, sir, and speedily, too, by G—d!" said Hackett, moving toward the door.

Daly burst into an insolent laugh, and said, "Your friend waits us at Cluan?" The other bowed. "Well, within an hour we'll be there also," continued the old man; and Hackett retired without adding a syllable.

"We've about five miles to ride, Captain Forester," said Daly, as they issued forth beneath the deeply arched gate of the abbey, "but the road is a mountain one, and will not admit of fast riding. A fine old place it is," said he, as, halting his horse, he bestowed a gaze of admiration on the venerable building, now dimly visible in the gray of the breaking dawn. "The pious founders little dreamt of men leaving its portals on such an errand as ours."

Then, suddenly, with a changed voice, he added, "Men are the same in every age and country; what our ancestors did in steel breastplates, we do now in broadcloth; the law, as they call it, must always be subservient to human passions, and the judge and the jury, come too late, since their function is penalty, and not prevention."

"But surely you do not think the world was better in the times when might was right?" said Forester.

"The system worked better than we suspect," said the old man, gravely, "there was such a thing as public opinion among men in those days, although its exponents were neither pamphlets nor scurrilous newspapers. The unjust and the cruel were held in reprobation, and the good and the charitable had a fame as pure, although their deeds were not trumpeted aloud, or graven on marble. Believe me, sir, we are not by any means so much wiser or better than those who went before us, and even if we were both, we certainly are not happier. This eternal warfare, this hand to hand, and foot to foot struggle, for rank, and wealth, and power, that goes on amongst us now, had no existence then, when a man's destiny was carved out for him, and he was all but powerless to alter or control it."

"That alone was no small evil," said Forester, interrupting him; "the humbly born and the lowly were debarred from all the prizes of life, no matter how great their deserts, or how shining their abilities."

"Every rank and class had wherewithal to supply its own requirements," answered Daly, proudly, "and the menial had more time to indulge affection for his master, when removed from the temptation to rival him. That strong bond of attachment has all but disappeared from amongst us." As he spoke, he turned in his saddle and called out, "Can we cross the sands now, or is the tide making, Sandy?"

"It's no just making, yet," said the servant, cautiously, "but when the breakers are so heavy off the point, it's aye safer to keep the road."

"The road be it, then," muttered Daly to himself; "men never are so chary of life as when about to risk it."

The observation, although not intended, reached Forester's ears, and he smiled and said, "Naturally enough, perhaps we ought not to be too exacting with fortune."

Daly turned suddenly round, and after a brief pause, asked, "What skill have you with the pistol?"

"When the mark is a shilling I can hit

it, three times out of four, at twenty paces, but I never fired at a man."

"That does make a difference," said Daly, musingly; "nothing short of an arrant coward could look calmly on a fellow-creature while he pointed a loaded pistol at his heart. A brave man will always have self-possession enough to feel the misery of his position. Had the feat been one of vengeance and not of love, 'Till had never hit the apple, sir. But there—is not that a fire yonder?"

"Yes, I see a red glare through the mist."

"There's a fire on Cluan Point," said Sandy, riding up to his master's side; "I trow it's a signal."

"Ah! meant to quicken us, perhaps; some fear of being surprised," said Daly, hastily; "let us move on faster." And they spurred their horses to a sharp trot as they descended the gentle slope, which, projecting far out to sea, formed the promontory of Cluan.

It was at this moment the glorious panorama of Clew Bay broke forth before Forester's astonished eyes. He looked with rapture on that spacious sheet of water, which, in all the majesty of the great ocean, came heaving and swelling against the rocky coast, or pouring its flood of foam through the narrow channels between the islands. Of these, the diversity seemed endless, some, rich and verdant, teeming with abundance and dotted with cottages; others, less fertile, were covered with sheep or goats; while some, rugged and barren, frowned gloomily amid the watery waste, and one, far out to sea, a bold and lofty cliff, showed a faint twinkling star upon its side, the light for the homeward-bound ships over the Atlantic.

"That's Clare Island yonder," said Bag-enal Daly, as he observed the direction of Forester's gaze; "I must show you the great cliff there. What say you if we go to-morrow?"

"To-morrow!" repeated Forester, smiling faintly; "perhaps so."

CHAPTER VII.

A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

WHEN speaking of Gwynne Abbey to our readers, we omitted to mention a very beautiful portion of the structure—a small building which adjoined the chapel, and went, for some reason or other, by the name of the "Sub-Prior's house." More recent in

date than the other parts of the abbey, it seemed as if here the architect had expended his skill in showing of how much ornament and decoration the Gothic was capable. The stone selected was of that pinkish hue that is seen in many of the cathedrals in the north of England—a material peculiarly favorable to the labors of the chisel, and, when protected from the rude influence of weather, possessing qualities of great endurance. This building was surrounded on three sides by a flower-garden, which descended by successive terraces to the edge of a small river pursuing its course to the sea, into which it emerged about a mile distant. A very unmindful observer would have been struck at once with the aspect of greater care and cultivation bestowed here than on other portions of the abbey grounds. The trim and orderly appearance of everything, from the flowering shrubs, that mingled their blossoms with the rich tracery of the architraves, to the bright gravel of the walks, denoted attention, while flowers of rare beauty, and plants of foreign growth, were seen blending their odors with the wild heaths that shed their perfume from the mountain side. The brilliant beauty of the spot was, indeed, heightened by the wild and rugged grandeur of the scene, like a diamond glittering brighter amid the dark dross of the mine.

On the side nearest to the bay, and with a view extending to the far-off island of Achill, an apartment opened by three large windows, the upper compartments of which exhibited armorial bearings in stained glass. If the view without presented a scene of the most grand and varied loveliness, within this chamber art seemed to have vied in presenting objects the most strange and beautiful. It was furnished in all the gorgeous taste of the time of Louis XV. The ceiling, a deep mass of carving relieved by gold, presented masses of fruit and flowers fantastically interwoven, and hanging, as though suspended, above the head. The walls were covered with cabinet pictures of great price, the very frames objects of wonder and admiration. Large vases of Dresden and Sèvres porcelain stood on brackets of massive silver, and one great cabinet of ebony, inlaid with gold and tortoiseshell, displayed an inscription that showed it was a present from the great Louis XIV. himself.

It is not, however, to linger over the objects of rare and costly excellence which here abounded, that we have conducted our reader to this chamber, and whither we would beg of him to accompany us about

two hours later than the events we have narrated in our last chapter.

At a breakfast-table, whose equipage was, in price and elegance, in exact keeping with all around, were two ladies. The elder of the two was advanced in life, and although her hair was perfectly white, her regular features and finely penciled brow bore, even yet, great marks of beauty. If the expression of the face was haughty, it was so without anything of severity; it was a look of pride that denoted rather a conscious sense of position and its duties, than any selfish assumption of personal importance. Habitual delicacy of health contributed to strengthen this expression, lending to it a character which, to an incautious observer, might convey the notion of weariness or *ennui*. The tones of her voice were low and measured, and perfectly devoid of any peculiar accent. If to those more familiar with the cordial familiarity of Irish manner, Lady Eleanor Darcy might seem cold and frigid, such as knew more of the world at large, and were more conversant with the general habits of society, could detect, through all the seeming impassiveness of her air, that desire to please, that anxiety to make a favorable impression, which marked the character of one who, in early life, had been the beauty of her circle. Even now, as she lay back indolently within the deep recess of a cushioned chair, her attitude evinced a gracefulness and an ease which long habit seemed to have identified with her nature.

At the opposite side of the table, and busy in the preparation of the breakfast, stood a young girl whose age could not have been more than eighteen. So striking was the resemblance between them, that the least acute of physiognomists must have pronounced her the daughter. She was dressed with remarkable simplicity, but not all the absence of ornament could detract from the first impression her appearance conveyed, that she was one of birth and station. Her beauty was of that character which, although attributed peculiarly to the Celtic race, seems strangely enough to present its most striking examples among the Anglo-Irish. Rich auburn hair, the color varying from dark brown to a deep golden hue as the light falls more or less strongly on it, was braided over a brow of classic beauty; her eyes were of blue, that deep color which, in speaking or in moments of excitement, looks like dark hazel or even black; these were fringed with long dark lashes, which habitually hung heavily over the eyes, giving them a character of sleepy, almost indolent beauty. The

rest of her features, in unison with these, were of that Greek mold which our historians attribute to the Phœnician origin of our people—a character by no means rare to be seen to this day among the peasantry. If the mild and gentle indications of womanly delicacy were told in every lineament of her face, there were traits of decision and determination when she spoke not less evident. From her mother she inherited the placid tenderness of English manner, while, from her father, her nature imbibed the joyous animation and buoyant light-heartedness of the Irish character.

“And there are but two letters, mamma,” said Helen, “in the bag this morning?”

“But two,” said Lady Eleanor; “one of them from Lionel.”

“Oh, from Lionel!” cried the young girl, eagerly. “Let me see it.”

“Read this first,” said Lady Eleanor, as she handed across the table a letter bearing a large seal, impressed with an earl’s coronet; “if I mistake not very much, Helen, that’s my cousin Lord Netherby’s writing; but what eventful circumstance could have caused his affectionate remembrance of me, after something nigh twenty years’ silence, is beyond my power of divination.”

Helen Darcy well knew that the theme on which her mother now touched was the sorest subject on her mind, and, however anxiously she might, under other circumstances, have pressed for a sight of her brother’s letter, she controlled all appearance of the wish, and opened the other without speaking.

“If is dated from Carlton House, mamma, the 2d—”

“He is in waiting, I suppose,” said Lady Eleanor, calmly; and Helen began:

“My dear cousin—”

“Ah! so he remembers the relationship at least,” muttered the old lady to herself.

“My dear cousin, it would be a sad abuse of the small space a letter affords, to inquire into the cause of our long silence; faults on both sides might explain much of it; I was never a brilliant correspondent, you were always an indolent one; if I wrote stupid letters, you sent me very brief answers; and if you at last grew weary of giving gold for brass, I can scarcely reproach you for stopping the exchange. Still, at the risk of remaining unanswered, once more—”

“This is intolerable,” broke in Lady Eleanor; “he never replied to the letter in which I asked him to be your godfather.”

“Still, at the risk of remaining unanswered, once more, I must throw myself on

your mercy. In the selfishness of age—don't forget, my dear coz, I am eleven years your senior—In the selfishness of age—

The old lady smiled dubiously at these words, and Helen read on :

“‘I desire to draw closer around me those ties of kindred and family, which, however we may affect to think lightly of, all our experiences in life tend to strengthen and support. Yes, my dear Eleanor, we are the only two remaining of all those light-hearted boys and bright-eyed girls that once played upon the terrace at Netherby. Poor Harry, your old sweetheart at Eton, fell at Mysore. Dudley, with ability for anything, would not wait patiently for the crowning honors of his career, took a judgeship in Madras, and he, too, sleeps in the land of the stranger! And our sweet Catherine! your only rival amongst us, how short-lived was her triumph!—for so the world called her marriage with the margrave—she died of a broken heart at two-and-twenty! I know not why I have called up these sad memories, except it be in the hope that, as desolation deals heavily around us, we may draw more closely to each other.’”

Lady Eleanor concealed her face with her handkerchief, and Helen, who had gradually dropped her voice as she read, stopped altogether at these words.

“Read on, dear,” said the old lady, in a tone whose firmness was slightly shaken.

“‘A heart more worldly than yours, my dear Eleanor, would exclaim that the *parti* was unequal—that I, grown old and childless, with few friends left, and no ambitions to strive for, stood in far more need of *your* affectionate regard, than you, blessed with every tie to existence, did of *mine*; and the verdict would be a just one, for, by the law of that Nemesis we all feel more or less, even in this world, *you*, whom we deemed rash and imprudent, have alone amongst us secured the prize of that happiness we each sought by such different paths.’”

A heavy sigh that broke from her mother made Helen cease reading, but at a motion of her hand she resumed: “‘For all our sakes, then, my dear cousin, only remember so much of the past as brings back pleasant memories. Make my peace with your kind-hearted husband. If I can forgive *him* all the pangs of jealousy he inflicted on *me*, *he* may well pardon any slight transgressions on *my* part, and Lionel, too—but first, tell me how have I offended my young kinsman? I have twice endeavored to make his acquaintance, but in vain. Two very cold and chilling answers to my invitations to

Netherby, are all I have been able to obtain from him; the first, was a plea of duty which I could easily have arranged; but the second note was too plain to be mistaken—“I'll none of you,” was the tone of every line of it. But I will not be so easily repulsed: I am determined to know him, and, more still, determined that he shall know me. If you knew, my dear Eleanor, how proudly my heart beat at hearing his royal highness speak of him—he had seen him at Hounslow at a review. It was a slight incident, but I am certain your son never told it, and so I must. Lionel, in passing with his company, forgot to lower the regimental flag before the prince, on which Lord Maxwell, the colonel, the most passionate man in England, rode up, and said something in an angry tone. “I beg pardon, colonel,” said the prince, “if I interfere with the details of duty, but I have remarked that young officer before, and trust me, he'll come off ‘with flying colors’ on more occasions than the present.” The *mot* was slight, but the flattery was perfect; indeed, there is not another man in the kingdom can compete with his royal highness on this ground. Fascination is the only word that can express the charm of his manner. To bring Lionel more particularly under the prince's notice, has long been a favorite scheme of mine; and, I may say, without arrogance, that my opportunities are not inferior to most men's in this respect; I am an old courtier, now, no small boast for one who still retains his share of favor. If the son have any of his father's gifts, his success with the prince is certain. The manner of the highly-bred Irish gentleman has been already pronounced by his royal highness as the type of what manner should be, and, with your assistance, I have little doubt of seeing Lionel appointed on the staff, here.

“‘Now, I must hazard my reputation a little, and ask what is the name of your second boy, and what is he doing?’”

Helen bust into a fit of laughter at these words, nor could Lady Eleanor's chagrin prevent her joining in the emotion.

“This, he shall certainly have an answer to,” said the old lady, recovering her self-possession and her pride; “he shall hear that my second boy is called Helen.”

“After all, mamma, is it not very kind of him to remember even so much?”

“I remember even more, Helen,” interrupted Lady Eleanor, “and no great kindness in the act either.”

“Shall I read all the possible and impossible chances of pushing my fortune in the army or the navy, mamma?” said

Helen, archly, "for I see that his lordship is most profuse in offers for my advancement; nay, if I have a clerical vocation, here is a living, actually waiting my acceptance."

"Let us rather look for something that may explain the riddle, my dear," said Lady Eleanor, taking the letter in her own hand, while she lightly skimmed over the last page. "No, I can find no clue to it, here—Stay, what have we in this corner?—'Politically speaking, there is no news here; indeed, in that respect, *your* side of the Channel ingrosses all the interest; the great question of the "Union" still occupies all attention. Virtually, *we* know the ministry have the majority, but there will be still a very respectable fight, to amuse the world withal. How does the knight vote? with us. I hope and trust, for although I may tell you, in confidence, the result is certain, his support would be very grateful to the Government, and, while he himself can afford to smile at ministerial flatteries, Lionel is a young fellow whom rapid promotion would well become, and who would speedily distinguish himself, if the occasion were favorable. At all events, let the knight not vote *against* the minister; this would be a crime never to be forgiven, and personally offensive to his royal highness, and I trust Darcy is too good a sportsman to prefer riding the *fast* horse, even should he not wish to mount the winner."

Here the letter concluded, amid protestations of regard most affectionately worded, and warm wishes for a renewal of intimacy, only to cease with life. Across this was written, with a different ink, and in a hurried hand: "I have this moment seen Mr. Pitt—the knight's vote is most important. He may make any terms he pleases—Pitt spoke of a peerage, but I suppose that would not be thought advisable; let me hear *your* opinion. Lionel has been gazetted to a company this morning, *en attendant* better."

Lady Eleanor, who had read these last lines to herself, here laid down the letter without speaking, while the slight flush of her cheek, and the increased brilliancy of her eyes, showed that her feelings were deeply and powerfully excited.

"Well, mamma, have you found the solution of this mystery?" said Helen, as she gazed with affectionate solicitude on her mother's features.

"How unchangeable a thing is nature!" muttered Lady Eleanor, unconsciously, aloud; "that boy was a crafty tuffthunter at Eton."

"Of whom are you speaking, mamma?"

"Lord Netherby, my dear, who would seem to have cultivated his natural gift with great success; but," added she, after a pause, and in a voice scarcely above a whisper, "I am scarcely as easy a dupe now, as when he persuaded me to take ash-berries in exchange for cherries. Let us hear what Lionel says."

"As usual, mamma, four lines in each page, and the last a blank," said Helen, laughing: "'My dear mother, what blandishments have you been throwing over the War Office? they have just given me my company, which, by the ordinary rules of the service, I had no pretension to hope for, these five years to come! Our colonel, too, a perfect Tartar, overwhelms me with civilities, and promises me a leave of absence on the first vacancy. Have you seen Forester, of ours? and how do you like him? A little cold or so, at first, but *you* will not dislike that. His riding will please my father. Get him to sing, if you can; his taste and voice are both first-rate. Your worthy relative, Lord Netherby, bores me with invitations to his houses, town and country. I say "No;" but he won't be denied. Was he not rude, or indifferent, or something or other, once upon a time, to the ancient house of Darcy? Give me the *consigne*, I pray you, for I hear he has the best cock-shooting in England; and let my virtue, if possible, be rewarded by a little indulgence. Tell Helen they are all giving up powder here, and wear their hair as she does; but not one of them half as good-looking.

"Yours, as ever,

"LIONEL DARCY.

"Hounslow, January 1, 1800."

"Is that Sullivan, there?" said Lady Eleanor, as her daughter finished the reading of this brief epistle. "What does he mean by staring so at the window? The old man seems to have lost his senses!"

"Ochone arie! ochone! ochone!" cried Tate, wringing his hands with the gestures of violent grief, as he moved up and down before the windows.

"What has happened, Tate?" said Helen, as she threw open the sash to address him.

"Ochone! he's kilt—he's murdered—cut down like a daisy in a May morning. And he, the iligant, fine young man!"

"Whom do you mean? Speak plainly, Sullivan," said the commanding voice of Lady Eleanor. "What is it?"

"'Tis the young officer from England, my lady, that came down the night before last to see the master. O murder! mur-

ther! if his honor was here, the sorra bit of this grief we'd have to-day—ochone!"

"Well, go on," said his mistress, sternly.

"And if he came down for joy, 'tis sorrow he supped for it,' the young crature! They soon finished him."

"Once for all, sir, speak out plainly, and say what has occurred."

"It's Mr. Bagenal Daly done it all, my lady—divil a one of me cares who hears me say it. He's a cruel man, ould as he is. He made him fight a duel, the darling young man—the 'moral' of Master Lionel himself; and now he's kilt—ochone! ochone!"

"Can this dreadful story be true, Helen?" said Lady Eleanor, as the faint color left her features. "Call Margaret; or stay—Sullivan, is Mr. Daly here?"

"That he is, never fear him. He's looking at his morning's work—he's in the room where they carried the corpse; and the fine corpse it is."

"Go tell Mr. Daly that Lady Eleanor desires to see him at once."

"Go, and lose no time, Tate," said Helen, as, almost fainting with terror, she half pushed the old man on his errand.

The mother and daughter sat silently gazing on each other for several minutes, terror and dismay depicted in the face of each, nor were they conscious of the lapse of time when, the door opening, presented Mr. Bagenal Daly before them. He was dressed in his usual suit of dark brown, and with all his accustomed neatness. His long cravat, which, edged with deep lace, hung negligently over his waistcoat, was spotless in color and accurate in every fold, while his massive features were devoid of the slightest signs of emotion or excitement.

For an instant Lady Eleanor was deceived by all these evidences of tranquillity, but a glance at old Tate's face, as he stood near the door, assured her that from such signs she had nothing to hope. Twice had Mr. Bagenal Daly performed his courteous salutations, which, in the etiquette of a past time, he made separately to each lady, and still Lady Eleanor had not summoned courage to address him. At last he said,

"Have I been mistaken—and must I apologize for a visit at an hour so unseemly? But I heard that your ladyship wished to see me."

"Quite true, Mr. Daly," interrupted Lady Eleanor, her habitual tact supplying a courage her heart was far from feeling. "Will you be seated? Leave the room, Sullivan. My daughter and I," continued

she, speaking with increased rapidity, to cover the emotion of the moment, "have just heard something of a dreadful event which is said to have occurred this morning. Old Sullivan so often exaggerates, that we indulge the hope that there may be little or no foundation for the story. Is it true, sir, there has been a duel fought near this?" Her voice grew fainter as she spoke, and at last became a mere whisper.

"Yes, madam," replied Daly, with an air of perfect calmness. "Two gentlemen met this morning at Cluan Point, and both were wounded."

"Neither of them killed?"

"Wounded, madam," reiterated Daly, as if correcting a misconception.

"Are the wounds deemed dangerous, sir?"

"Mr. Mac Donough's, madam, is not so. The inconvenience of using his left hand on any similar occasion, in future, will be probably the extent of the mishap. The other gentleman has not been equally fortunate—his life is in peril." Mr. Daly paused for a second, and then, perceiving that Lady Eleanor still awaited a further explanation, added, with gravity, "When taking his position on the ground, madam, instead of standing half-front, as I took pains to point out to him, Captain Forester—"

"Forester!—is that his name, sir?" interrupted Helen, as, in a hand trembling with terror, she held out Lionel's letter toward her mother.

"A friend of my son's—is he in the same regiment with Lionel?" asked Lady Eleanor, eagerly.

Daly bowed, and answered, "The same, madam."

A low, faint sigh broke from Lady Eleanor, and, covering her eyes with her hand, she sat for some moments without speaking.

"Has any one seen him, sir?" asked Helen, suddenly, and in a voice that showed energy of character had the mastery over every feeling of grief,—“is there a surgeon with him?"

"No, Miss Darcy," said Daly, with a certain haughtiness of manner. "I believe, however, that, although not a professional person, my knowledge of a gunshot wound is scarcely inferior to most men's. I have sent in two directions for a surgeon; meanwhile, with my servant's aid, I have succeeded in extracting the ball. I beg pardon, ladies, I think I hear the noise of wheels; it is probably the doctor." And, with a deep bow and a measured step, Mr. Bagenal Daly withdrew, leaving Lady Eleanor and her daughter speechless, between grief and terror.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE "HEAD" OF A FAMILY.

WHEN Bagenal Daly reached the courtyard, he was disappointed at finding that, instead of the surgeon, whose arrival was so anxiously looked for, the visitor was no other than old Dr. Hickman, the father of Hickman O'Reilly, M.P. for the county, and grandfather of that very promising young gentleman slightly presented to our reader in an early chapter.

If the acorn be a very humble origin for the stately oak of the forest, assuredly Peter Hickman, formerly of Loughrea, "apothecary and surgeon," was the most unpretending source for the high and mighty house of O'Reilly. More strictly speaking, the process was only a "graft," and it is but justice to him to say, that of this fact no one was more thoroughly convinced than old Peter himself. Industry and thrift had combined to render him tolerably well off in the world, when the death of a brother, who had sought his fortunes in the East—when fortunes were to be found in that region—put him in possession of something above two hundred thousand pounds. Even before this event, he had been known as a shrewd contriver of small speculations, a safe investor of little capital, was conversant, from the habits of his professional life, with the private circumstances of every family of the country, where money was wanting, and where repayment was sure; the very temperament of his patients suggested to him the knowledge by which he guided his operations, and he could bring his skill as a medical man into his service, and study his creditors with the eye of a physiologist. When this great accession of wealth so suddenly occurred, far from communicating his good fortune to his friends and neighbors, he merely gave out that poor Tom had left him "his little savings," "though God knows in that far-away country, if he'd ever see any of it." His guarded caution on the subject, and the steady persistence with which he maintained his former mode of life, gave credence to the story, and the utmost estimate of his wealth would not have gone beyond being a snug old fellow, "that might give up his business any day." This was, however, the very last thing in his thoughts, the title of "Doctor," so courtously bestowed in Ireland on the humbler walks of medicine, was a "letter of marque," enabling him to cruise in latitudes otherwise inaccessible. Any money-eyed embarrassment of the country gentry, any severe pressure to be averted by an op-

portune loan, or the sale of landed property, was speedily made available by him, as a call, to see whether "the cough was easier;" or "how was the gouty ankle;" if the "mistress was getting better of the nerves," "and the children gaining strength by the camomile." And in this way he made one species of gain subservient to another, while his character for kindness and benevolence was the theme of the whole neighborhood.

For several years long he pursued this course without deviating, and in that space had become the owner of estated property to a very great extent, not only in his own, but in three neighboring counties. How much longer he might have persisted in growing rich by stealth, it is difficult to say, when accident compelled him to change his *tactique*. A very large property had been twice put up for sale in the county Mayo, under the will of its late owner, the trustees being empowered to make a great reduction in the price to any purchaser of the whole; a condition which, from the great value of the estates, seemed of little avail, no single individual being supposed able to make such a purchase.

At last, and as a final effort to comply with the wishes of the testator, the estate was offered at ten thousand pounds below the original demand, when a bidder made his appearance, the offer was accepted, and the apothecary of Loughrea became the owner of one of the most flourishing properties of the West, with influence sufficient to return a member for the county.

The murder was now out, and the next act was to build a handsome, but unpretentious dwelling-house on a part of the estate, to which he removed with his son, a widower with one child. The ancient family of O'Reilly had been the owners of the property, and the name was still retained to grace the new demesne, which was called Mount O'Reilly, while Tom Hickman became Hickman O'Reilly, under the plea of some relationship to the defunct, a point which gained little credence in the county, and drew from Bagenal Daly the remark, "that he trusted they had a better title to the acres than the arms of the O'Reillys." When old Peter had made this great spring, he would gladly have retired to Loughrea once more, and pursued his old habits, but, like a blackleg who has accidentally discovered his skill at the game, no one would play with him again, and so he was fain to put up with his changed condition, and be "a gentleman," as he called it, in spite of himself.

He it was who, under the pretense of a

friendly call to see the "knight," now drove into the court-yard of Gwynne Abbey. His equipage was a small four-wheeled chair close to the ground, and drawn by a rough mountain pony, which, in size and shape, closely resembled a water-dog. The owner of this unpretending conveyance was a very diminutive, thin old man, with a long, almost transparent nose, the tip of which was of a raspberry red; a stiff queue, formed of his wiry gray hair carefully brushed back, even from the temples, made a graceful curve on his back, or occasionally appeared in front over his left shoulder. His voice was a feeble treble, with a tremulous quiver through all he said, while he usually finished each sentence with a faint effort at a laugh, a kind of acknowledgment to himself that he was content with his opinion, and this, on remarkable occasions, would be followed by the monosyllable "ay," a word which, brief as it was, struck terror into many a heart, intimating, as it did, that old Peter had just satisfied himself that he had made a good bargain, and that the other party was "done."

The most remarkable circumstance of his appearance was his mode of walking, and even here was displayed his wonted ingenuity. A partial paralysis had for some years affected his limbs, and particularly the muscles which raise and flex the legs; to obviate this infirmity, he fastened a cord with a loop to either foot, and by drawing them up alternately he was enabled to move forward, at a slow pace, to be sure, and in a manner it was rather difficult to witness, for the first time, with becoming gravity. This was more remarkable when he endeavored to get on faster; for then the flexion, a process which required a little time, was either imperfectly performed, or altogether omitted, and consequently he remained stationary, and only hopped from one leg to the other after the fashion of a stage procession. His dress was a rusty black coat with a standing collar, black shorts, and white cotton stockings, over which short black gaiters reached half way up the leg; on the present occasion he also wore a spencer of light gray cloth, as the day was cold and frosty, and his hat was fastened under his chin by a ribbon.

"And so he isn't at home, Tate," said he, as he sat whipping the pony from habit, a process the beast seemed to regard with a contemptuous indifference.

"No, docther," for by this title the old man was always addressed by preference, "the knight's up in Dublin; he went on Monday last."

"And this is the seventh of the month,"

muttered the other to himself; "faith, he takes it easy, anyhow! And you don't know when he'll be home?"

"The sorra know I know, docther; 'tis maybe to-night he'd come—maybe to-morrow—maybe it would be three weeks or a month; and it's not but we want him badly this day, if it was God's will he was here!" These words were uttered in a tone that Tate intended should provoke further questioning, for he was most eager to tell of the duel and its consequences, but the "doctor" never noticed them, but merely muttered a short "Ay."

"How do you do, Hickman?" cried out the deep voice of Bagenal Daly at the same moment. "You didn't chance to see Mulville on the road, did you?"

"How d'ye do, Mister Daly? I hope I see you well. I didn't meet Dr. Mulville this morning—is there anything that's wrong here? Who is it that's ill?"

"A young fellow, a stranger, who has been burning powder with Mr. Mac Donough up at Gluan, and has been hit under the rib here."

"Well, well, what folly it is, and all about nothing, I'll engage."

"So your grandson would tell you," said Daly, sternly; "for if he felt it to be anything, this quarrel should have been his."

"Faix, and I am glad he left it alone," said the other, complacently; "'tis little good comes of the same fighting. I'll be eighty-five if I live to March next, and I never drew sword nor trigger yet against any man."

"One reason for which forbearance is, sir, that you thereby escaped a similar casualty to yourself. A laudable prudence, and likely to become a family virtue."

The old doctor felt all the severity of this taunt against his grandson, but he merely gave one of his half-subdued laughs and said, in a low voice, "Did you get a note from me about a fortnight ago?—Ay!"

"I received one from your attorney," said Daly, carelessly, "and I threw it into the fire without reading it."

"That was hasty—that was rash, Mr. Daly," resumed the other, calmly; "it was about the bond for the four thousand six hundred—"

"D—n me if I care what was the object of it! I happened to have some weightier things to think of than usury and compound interest, as I indeed have at this moment. By-the-by, if you have not forgotten the old craft, come in and see this poor fellow. I'm much mistaken, or his time will be but short."

"Ay, ay, that's a debt there's no escap-

ing!" muttered the old man, combining his vein of moralizing with a sly sarcasm at Daly, while he began the complicated series of maneuvers by which he usually effected his descent from the pony-carriage.

In the large library, and on a bed hastily brought down for the purpose, lay Forester, his dress disordered, and his features devoid of all color. The glazed expression of his eye, and his pallid, half-parted lips, showed that he was suffering from great loss of blood, for, unhappily, Mr. Daly's surgery had not succeeded in arresting this symptom. His breathing was short and irregular, and in the convulsive movement of his fingers might be seen the evidence of acute suffering. At the side of the bed, calm, motionless, and self-possessed, with an air as stern as a soldier on his post, stood Sandy M'Grane; he had been ordered by his master to maintain a perfect silence, and to avoid, if possible, even a reply to Forester's questions, should he speak to him. The failure of the first few efforts on Forester's part to obtain an infraction of this rule, ended in his submitting to his destiny, and supplying by signs the want of speech; in this way, he had just succeeded in procuring a drink of water, when Daly entered, followed by Hickman. As with slow and noiseless steps they came forward, Forester turned his head, and catching a glance of the mechanism by which old Peter regulated his progression, he burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

"You mauna do it, sir," said Sandy, sternly; "ye are lying in a pool of blood this minute, and it's no time for a hearty laugh. Ech! ech! sir," continued he, turning toward his master, "if we had that salve the Delawares used to put on their wounds, I wadna say but we'd stap it yet."

By this time old Peter had laid his hand on the sick man's wrist, and with a large watch laid before him on the bed, was counting his pulse aloud.

"It's a hundred and fifty," said he, in a whisper, which, although intended for Daly's ear, was overheard by Forester; "but it's thin as a thread, and looks like inward bleeding."

"What's to be done, then—have you anything to advise?" said Daly, almost savagely.

"Very little," said Hickman, with a malignant grin, "except writing to his friends. I know nothing else to serve him."

A brief shudder passed over Daly's stern features, rather like the momentary sense of cold than proceeding from any mental

emotion, and then he said, "I spoke to you as a doctor, sir; and I ask you again, is there nothing can be done for him?"

"Well, well, we might plug up the wound, to be sure, and give him a little wine, for he's sinking fast. I've got a case of instruments and some lint in the gig—never go without the tools, Mr. Daly—there's no knowing when one may meet a little accident like this."

"In Heaven's name, then, lose no time!" said Daly. "Whatever you can do, do it at once."

The tone of command in which he spoke seemed to act like a charm on the old doctor, for he turned at once to hobble from the room.

"My servant will bring what you want," said Daly, impatiently.

"No, no," said Peter, shaking his head, "I have them under lock and key in the driving-box; there's no one opens that but myself."

Daly turned away with a muttered execration at the miser's suspicions, and then, fixing his eyes steadily on Sandy's face, he gave a short and significant nod. The servant instinctively looked after the doctor, then, slowly moving across the floor, the nod was repeated, and Sandy, wheeling round, made three strides, and catching the old man round the body with his remaining arm, carried him out of the room with the same indifference to his struggles or his cries as a nurse would bestow on a misbehaving urchin.

When Sandy deposited his burden beside the pony-carriage, old Peter's passion had reached its climax, and assuredly, if the will could have prompted the act, he would have stamped as roundly as he swore.

"It's an awfu' thing," observed Sandy, quaintly, "to see an auld carl, wi' his twa legs in the grave, blaspheming that gate; but come awa', take your gimcracks, and let's get back again, or, by the saul of my body, I'll pit you in the fountain!"

Reasoning on that excellent principle of analogy, that what had happened might happen again even in a worse form, old Hickman unlocked the box and delivered into Sandy's hands a black leather case, bearing as many signs of long years and service as his own.

"Let me walk! let me walk!" cried he, in a supplicating tone.

"Av you ca' it walking," said Sandy, grimly; "but it's mair, fur mair like the step o' a goose than a Christian man."

What success might have attended Peter's request it is difficult to say, for at this mo-

ment the noise of a horse was heard galloping up the avenue, and, immediately after, Mulville, the surgeon sent for by Mr. Daly, entered the court-yard. Without deigning a look toward Hickman, or paying even the slightest attention to his urgent demands for the restoration of his pocket-case, Sandy seized Mulville by the arm, and hurried him away to the house.

The newly-arrived doctor was an army surgeon, and proceeded, with all the readiness experience had taught him, to examine Forester's wound; while Sandy, to save time, opened old Hickman's case on the bed, and arranged the instruments.

"Look here, Mr. Daly," said the doctor, as he drew some lint from the antiquated leather pocket,—“look here, and see how our old friend practices the art of medicine.” He took up, as he spoke, a roll of paper and held it toward Daly: it was a packet of bill stamps of various value, for old Peter could never suffer himself to be taken short, and was always provided with the ready means of transacting money affairs with his patients.

"Here's my d—d old bond," said Daly, laughing, as he drew forth a much-crumpled and time-discolored parchment; "I'd venture to say the man would deserve well of his country who would throw this confounded pocket-book, and its whole contents, into that fire."

"Ye maybe want some o' the tools yet," said Sandy, dryly, for taking his master's observations in the light of a command, he was about to commit the case and the paper to the flames.

"Take care! take care!" said Mulville, in a whisper; "it might be a felony."

"It's devilish little Sandy would care what name they would give it," replied Daly; "he'd put the owner on the top of them, and burn all together, on a very brief hint;" then lowering his voice, he added, "What's his chance?"

"The chance of every young fellow of two or three-and-twenty, to live through what would kill any man of my time of life. With good care and quiet, but quiet above all, he may rub through it. We must leave him now."

"You'll remain here," said Daly—"you'll not quit this, I hope?"

"For a day or two at least, I'll not leave him." And with this satisfactory assurance Daly closed the door, leaving Sandy in guard over the patient.

"Here's your case of instruments, Hickman," said Daly, as the old doctor sat motionless in his gig, awaiting their reappearance; for, in his dread of further vio-

lence, he had preferred thus patiently to await their return, than venture once more into the company of Sandy McGrane. "We've robbed you of nothing except some lint; and," added he, in a whisper to Mulville, "I very much doubt if that case were ever opened and closed before with so slight an offense against the laws of property."

Old Hickman by this time had opened the pocket-book, and was busily engaged inspecting its contents.

"Ay, that's the bond!" said Daly, laughing; "you may well think how small the chance of repayment is, when I did not think it worth while burning it."

"It will be paid in good time," said Hickman, in a low cackle, "and the interest too, maybe—ay!" And with sundry admonitions from the whip, and successive chucks of the rein, the old pony threw up his head, shook his tail crossly, and with a step almost as measured as that of his master, moved slowly out of the court-yard.

"So much for our century and our civilization!" said Daly, as he looked after him; "the old miser that goes there has more power over our country and its gentry than ever a feudal chief wielded in the days of vassalage."

CHAPTER IX.

"DALY'S."

It was upon one of the very coldest evenings of the memorably severe January of 1800, that the doors of Daly's Club House were besieged by carriages of every shape and description; some, brilliant in all the luster of a perfect equipage; others, more plainly denoting the country gentleman, or the professional man; and others again, the chance occupants of the various coach-stands, displayed every variety of that now extinct family, whose members went under the denominations of "whiskeys," "jingles," and "noddies."

A heavy fall of sleet, accompanied with a cutting north wind, did not prevent the assemblage of a considerable crowd, who, by the strange sympathy of gregarious curiosity, were drawn up in front of the building, satisfied to think that something unusual, of what nature they knew not, was going forward within; and content to gaze on the brilliant glare of the lusters as seen through the drawn curtains, and mark the shadowy outlines of figures, as they passed and repassed continually.

Leaving the mob, for it was in reality such, to speculate on the cause of this extraordinary gathering, we shall at once proceed up the ample stair, and enter the great saloon of the club, which, opening by eight windows upon College-green, formed the conversation room of the members.

Here were now assembled between three and four hundred persons, gathered in groups and knots, and talking with all the eagerness some ingrossing topic could suggest. In dress, air, and manner, they seemed to represent sections of every social circle of the capital—some, in full Castle costume, had just escaped from the table of the viceroy, others, in military uniform, or the dress of the club, contrasted with coats of country squires, or the even more ungainly quaintness of the lawyer's costume. They were of every age, from the young man emerging into life, to the old frequenter of the club, who had occupied his own place and chair for half a century; and in manner and style as various, many preserving the courteous observances of the old school in all its polished urbanity, and the younger part of the company exhibiting the traits of a more independent, but certainly less graceful, politeness. Happily for the social enjoyments of the time, political leanings had not contributed their bitterness to private life, and men of opinions the most opposite, and party connections most antagonistic, were here met, willing to lay aside for a season the arms of encounter, or to use them with only the sportive pleasantry of a polished wit. If this manly spirit of mutual forbearance did not characterize the very last debates of the Irish Parliament, it may in a great measure be attributed to the nature of that influence by which the measure of the Union was carried, for bribery not only corrupted the venal, but it soured and irritated the men who rejected its seductions; and in this wise a difference was created between the two parties, wider and more irreconcilable than all which political animosity or mere party dislike could effect.

On the present occasion, however, the animating spirit of the assemblage seemed to partake of nothing less than a feature of political acrimony; and amid the chance phrases which met the ear, and the hearty bursts of laughter that every moment broke forth, it was easy to collect that no question of a party nature occupied their attention.

At the end of the room a group of some twenty persons stood or sat around a chair, in which a thin, elderly gentleman was seated, his fine and delicately-marked fea-

tures far more unequivocally proclaiming rank than even the glittering star he wore on his breast. Without being in reality very old, Lord Drogheda seemed so, for, partly from delicacy of health, and partly, as some affirmed, from an affectation of age (a more frequent thing than is suspected), he had contracted a stoop, and walked with every sign of debility.

"Well, gentlemen, how does time go?" said he, with an easy smile. "Are we not near the hour?"

"Yes; it wants but eleven minutes of ten now, my lord," said one of the group. "Do you mean to hold him sharp to time?"

"Egad, I should think so," interrupted a red-whiskered squire, in splashed top-boots. "I've ridden in from Kildare to-night to see the match, and I protest against any put-off."

Lord Drogheda turned his eyes toward the speaker with a look in which mildness was so marked, it could not be called reproach, but it evidently confused him, as he added, "Of course, if the gentlemen who have heavy wagers on it are content, I must be also."

"I, for one, say 'sharp time,'" cried out a dapperly-dressed young fellow, with an open pocket-book in his hand; "play or pay is the only rule in these cases."

"I've backed my lord at eight to ten, in hundreds," said another, "and certainly I'll claim my bet if the 'knight' is one minute late."

"Then you have just three to decide that question," said one at his side. "My watch is with the post-office."

"Quite time enough left to order my carriage," said Lord Drogheda, rising with an energy very different from his ordinary indolent habit. "If 'the Knight of Gwynne' should be accidentally delayed, gentlemen, I, for my part, prefer being also absent. It will then be a matter of some difficulty for the parties betting to say who is the delinquent." He took his hat as he spoke, and was moving through the crowd, when a sudden cheer from without was heard, and then, almost the instant after, a confused sound of acclamation as the "Knight of Gwynne" entered, leaning on the arm of Con Heffernan. Making his way with difficulty through the crowd of welcoming friends and acquaintances, the "knight" approached the end of the room where Lord Drogheda now awaited him, standing.

"Not late, my lord, though very near it," said he, extending his hand. "If I should apologize, however, I have an excuse

you will not reject—Con Heffernan's burgundy is hard to part with."

"Very true, knight," said his lordship, smiling. "With a friend one sees so seldom, a little dalliance is most pardonable."

This sarcasm was met by a ready laugh, for Heffernan was better known as a guest at other tables than a host at his own; nor did he at whose expense the jest was made, refrain from joining in the mirth, while he added,

"The burgundy, like one of your lordship's *bon mots*, is perhaps appreciated the more highly because of its rarity."

"Very true, Heffernan," replied Lord Drogheda; "we should keep our wit and wine only for our best friends."

"Faith, then," whispered the red-whiskered squire who spoke before, "if the liquor does not gain more by keeping than the wit, I'd recommend Con to drink it off a little faster."

"Or, better still," interposed the knight, "only give it to those who understand its flavor. But we are, if I mistake not, losing very valuable time. What say you to the small room off the library, or will your lordship remain here?"

"Here, if equally agreeable to you. We are both of us too old in the harness to care much for being surrounded by spectators."

"Is it true, Con," said a friend in Heffernan's ear, "that Darcy has laid fifty thousand on this party?"

"I believe you are rather under than over the mark," whispered Heffernan. "The wager has been off and on these last eight or ten years. It was made at Hutchinson's one evening, when we had all drunk a good deal of wine. At first, whist was talked of, but Drogheda objected to Darcy's naming Vicars as his partner."

"More fool he. Vicars is a first-rate player, but confoundedly unlucky."

"Be that as it may, they fixed on piquet as the game, and, if accounts be true, all the better for Darcy. They say he has beaten the best players in France."

"And what is really the stake? One hears so many absurd versions of it."

"The Bally-dermot property."

"The whole of it?"

"Every acre, with the demesne, house, plate, pictures, carriages, wine—begad! I'm not sure if the livery servants are not included—against fifty thousand pounds. You know Drogheda has lent him a very large sum on a mortgage of that property already, and this will make the thing about double or quits."

"Well, Heffernan," cried the knight,

"are you making your book there? When you've quite finished, let me have a pinch of that excellent snuff of yours."

"Why not try mine?" said Lord Drogheda, pushing a magnificently jeweled box, containing a miniature, across the table.

"'Twould be a bad augury, my lord," said Darcy, laughing. "If I remember aright, you won this handsome box from the Duke de Richelieu."

"Ah! you know that story then."

"I was present at the time, and remember the circumstance perfectly. The king was leaning over the duke's chair, watching the game—"

"Quite true. The duke affected not to know that his majesty was there, and when he placed the box on the table, cried, 'A thousand louis against the portrait of the king!' There was no declining such a wager at such a moment, although, intrinsically, the box was not worth half the sum. I accepted, and won it."

"And the duke then offered to give you twice the money for it back again?"

"He did so, and I refused. I shall not readily forget the sweet, sad smile of the king as he tapped the wily courtier on the shoulder, and said, 'Ah! Monsieur le Duc, do you only value your king when you've lost him?' They were prophetic words! Well; well! we've got upon a sorrowful theme; let's change it."

"Here are the cards, at last," said the knight, taking a sealed packet from the waiter's hand, and breaking it open on the table. "Now, Heffernan, order me a glass of claret negus, and take care that no one comes to worry us with news of the House."

"It's a sugar bill, or a new clause in the Corporation Act, or something of that kind, they are working at," said Lord Drogheda, negligently.

"No, my lord," interposed Heffernan, slyly; "it's a bill to permit your lordship's nephew to hold the living of Ardragh with his deanery."

"All right and proper," said his lordship, endeavoring to hide a rising flush on his cheek by an opportune laugh. "Tom is a capital fellow, and a good parson, too."

"And ought never to omit the prayer for the Parliament!" muttered Heffernan, loud enough to be heard by the bystanders, who relished the allusion heartily.

"The deal is with you, knight," said Lord Drogheda, pushing the cards across the table.

The moment afterward, a pin could not have fallen unheard in that crowded assembly. Even they who were not themselves betters, felt the deepest interest in a game where

the stake was so great, and all who could set value on skill and address were curious to watch the progress of the contest. Not a word was spoken on either side as the cards fell upon the table, and although many of the bystanders displayed looks of more eager anxiety, the players showed by their intentness how strenuously each struggled for the victory.

After the lapse of about half an hour, a low, murmuring noise spread through the room, and the news was circulated that the first game was over, and the knight the winner. The players, however, were silent as before, and the deal went over without a word.

"One moment, my lord," said Darcy, as he gently interposed his hand to prevent Lord Drogheda taking up his cards—"a single moment. You will call me faint-hearted for it, but I do not care. I beseech you let the party cease here. It is a great favor; but, as I could not ask it if I had lost the game, give me, I pray, so much of advantage for my good luck."

"You forget, knight, that I, as a loser, could not accede to your proposal; what would be said of any man who, with such a stake at issue, accepted an offer like this?"

"My dear lord, don't you think that you and I might afford to have our actions canvassed, and yet be very little afraid of the criticism?" said Darcy, proudly.

"No, no, my dear Darcy, I really could not do this; beside, you must concede something to mortified vanity. Now, I am anxious to have my revenge."

"Be it so, my lord," said the knight, with a sigh, and the game began.

The looks and glances which were interchanged by those about during this brief colloquy showed how little sympathy there was felt with the generosity of either side. The betters had set their hearts on gain, and cared little for the feelings of the players.

"You see he was right," whispered the red-whiskered squire to his neighbor; "my lord has won the game in one hand." And so it was; in less than five minutes the party was over.

"Now for the conqueror," cried the Knight of Gwynne, who, somewhat nettled at a success which seemed to lessen the generous character of his own proposal, dealt the cards nastily, and as if anxious to conclude.

"Now, Darcy, we have a better opportunity," said Lord Drogheda, smiling; "what say you to draw stakes as we stand?"

"Willingly, most willingly, my lord. If a bad cause saps courage, I have reason

to be low in heart. This foolish wager has cost me the loss of three nights' sleep, and if you are content—"

"But are these gentlemen here satisfied?" said Lord Drogheda; and an almost universal cry of "No" was the reply.

"Then, if we are to play for the bystanders, my lord, let us not delay them," said the knight, as he took up his cards and began to arrange them.

"Darcy has it, by Jove!—the game is his," was muttered from one to another in the crowd behind his chair; and the report, gaining currency, was soon circulated in the larger room without.

"Have you anything heavy on it, Con?" said a fashionably-dressed man to Heffernan, who endeavored to force his way through the crowd to where the knight sat.

"Look at Heffernan," said another; "they say he never bets, but mark the excitement of his face, now."

"What is it, Heffernan?" said the knight, as the other leaned over his chair and tried to whisper something in his ear. "Is that a queen, my lord? In that case I believe the game is mine—What is it, Heffernan?" and he bent his ear to listen; then suddenly dashing the cards upon the table, cried out, "Great Heaven! is this true?—the young fellow I met at Killbeggan?"

"The same," whispered Heffernan, rapidly; "a brother officer of your son Lionel's—a cousin of Lord Castlereagh's—a fine, dashing fellow, too."

"Where is he wounded?" asked Darcy, eagerly.

"Finish your game—I must tell you all about it," said Heffernan, folding up a letter which he had taken from his pocket a few minutes before.

"Your pardon, my lord," said Darcy, with a look full of agitation; "I have just heard very bad news—I play the knave." A murmur ran through the crowd behind him.

"You meant the king, I know, knight," said Lord Drogheda, restoring the card to his hand as he spoke, but a loud expression of dissatisfaction arose from those at his side.

"You are right, my lord, I did intend the king," said the knight; "but these gentlemen insist upon the knave, and, if you'll permit me, I'll play it."

The whole fortune of the game hung upon the card, and after a brief struggle the knight was beaten.

"Even so, my lord," said the knight, smiling calmly, "you have beaten me against luck; fortune will not do everything. The Roman satirist goes even fur-

ther, and says she can do nothing." He rose as he said these words and looked around for Heffernan.

"If you want Con Heffernan, knight," said one of the party, "I think he has gone down to the House."

"The very man," said Darcy: "good-night, my lord,—good-night, gentlemen all."

"I did not believe anything could shake Darcy's nerve, but he certainly played that game ill," said a bystander.

"Heffernan could tell us more about it," said another; "rely on it, Master Con and the devil knew why that knave was played."

CHAPTER X.

AN INTRIGUE DETECTED.

OF all the evil influences which swayed the destinies of Ireland in latter days, none can compare, in extent or importance, with the fatal taste for prodigality that characterized the habits of the gentry. Reckless, wasteful extravagance, in every detail of life, suggested modes of acting and thinking at variance with all individual, and, consequently, all national prosperity. Hospitality was pushed to profusion, liberality became a spendthrift habit. The good and the bad qualities of the Irish temperament alike contributed to this passion; there was the wish to please, the desire to receive courteously, and entertain with splendor within doors, and to appear with proportionate magnificence without.

A proud sense of what they deemed befitting their station, induced the gentry to vie in expenditure with the richly-endowed officials of the Government, and the very thought of prudence or foresight in matters of expense, would have been stigmatized as a meanness by those who believed they were sustaining the honor of their country, while sapping the foundation of its prosperity.

If we have little to plead in defense, or in palliation of such habits, we can at least affirm, that, in many cases, they were practiced with a taste and elegance that shed luster over the period. Unlike the vulgar displays of newly-acquired wealth, they exhibited, in a striking light, the generous and high-spirited features of the native character, which deemed that nothing could be too good for the guest, nor any expenditure for his entertainment either too costly or too difficult. The fatal facility of Irish

nature, and the still more ruinous influence of example, hurried men along on this road to ruin, and as political prospects grew darker, a reckless indifference to the future succeeded, in which little care was taken for the morrow, until, at last, thoughtless extravagance became a habit, and moneyed difficulties the lot of almost every family of Ireland.

That a gentry so embarrassed, and with such prospects of ruin before them, should have been easy victims to ministerial seduction, is far less surprising than that so many were to be seen who could prefer their integrity to the rich bribes of government patronage; and it is a redeeming feature of the day, that, amid all the lavish and heedless course of prodigality and excess, there were some who could face poverty with stouter hearts than they could endure the stigma of gilded corruption; nor is it the history of every parliament that can say as much.

Let us leave this theme, even at the hazard of being misunderstood, for the moment, by our reader, and turn to the Knight of Gwynne, who now was seated at his breakfast in a large parlor of his house in Henrietta street. Sad and deserted as it seems now, this was, in those days, the choice residence of Irish aristocracy, and the names of peers and baronets on every door told of a class which, now, should be sought for in scattered fragments among the distant cities of the continent.

The knight was reading the morning papers, in which, amid the fashionable news, was an account of his own wager with Lord Drogheda, when a carriage drove up hastily to the door, and immediately after, the loud summons of a footman resounded through the street.

While the knight was yet wondering who his early visitor should prove, the servant announced Mr. Con Heffernan.

"The very man I wished to see," cried Darcy, eagerly; "tell me all about this unfortunate business. But, first of all, is he out of danger?"

"Quite safe. I understand, for a time, it was a very doubtful thing; Daly's surgery, it would seem, rather increased the hazard. He began searching for the ball regardless of the bleeding, and the young fellow was very near sinking under loss of blood."

"The whole affair was his doing!" said the knight, impatiently. "How Mr. Mac Donough could have found himself at my table is more than I can well imagine; that, when he got there, something like this would follow, does not surprise me.

Daly is really too bad. Well, well, I hoped to have set off for the abbey to-day, but I must stay here. I find; Drogheda is kind enough to let me redeem Bally-dermot, and I must see Gleeson about it. It's rather a heavy blow just now."

"I am afraid I am not altogether blameless," said Heffernan, timidly. "I ought not to have mentioned that unlucky business till the game was over, but I thought your nerve was proof against anything."

"So it was, Heffernan," said the knight, laughing, "some five-and-twenty years ago; but this shattered wreck has little remains of the old three-decker. I should have won that game."

"It's all past and over now, so never think more about it."

"Yes, I should have won the game. Drogheda saw my advantage; he went on with the very suit in my hand, and when he reached over for his snuff-box, his hand trembled like in an ague-fit."

"Come, don't let the thing dwell in your mind. There is another and heavier game to play, and you're certain to win there, if you do but like it."

"I don't clearly understand you," said Darcy, doubtfully.

"I'll be explicit enough, then," said Heffernan, taking a chair and seating himself directly in front of the knight. "You know the position of the Government at this moment. They have secured a safe and certain majority—the 'Union' is carried. When I say carried, I mean that there is not a doubt on any reasonable mind but that the bill will pass. The lists show a majority of seven, perhaps eight, for the ministry; and if they had but one in their favor, Pitt is determined to go through with it. Now, we all very well know how this has been done. Our people have behaved infamously, disgracefully—there's no mincing the matter. You heard of Fox—?"

"No. What of him?"

"He has just accepted the escheatorship of—I forget what or where, but he vacates his seat to make room for Courtenay."

"Sam Courtenay?—Scrub, as we used to call him?"

"Scrub—exactly so. Well, he comes in for Roscommon, and is to have a place under the new commission of twelve hundred a year. But to go back to what I was saying, Castleragh has bought these fellows at his price or their own; some were dear enough, some were cheap. Barton, for instance, takes it out in Castle dinners, and has sold his birthright for the viceroy's venison."

"May good digestion wait on appetite," repeated Darcy, laughing.

"Well, let's not waste more time on them, but come to what I mean. Castle-*reagh* wants to know how you mean to vote; some have told him you would be on his side; others, myself among the number, say the reverse. In fact, little as you may think about the matter, heavy bets are laid at this moment on the question, and—but I won't mention names; enough if I say a friend of ours—an old friend, too—has a thousand on it."

The knight tapped his snuff-box calmly, and with his blandest smile begged Heffernan to proceed.

"Faith! I've nearly told all I had to say. Every one well knows that, whatever decision you come to, it will be unbiased by everything save your own conscientious sense of right; and, as arguments are pretty nearly equal on the question—for in truth, after having heard and read most of what has been spoken or written on the point—I'm regularly nonplused on which side to see the advantage. The real question seems to be, can we go on as we are?"

"I think not," observed the knight, gravely. "A parliament which has exhibited its venality so openly, can have little pretension to public confidence."

"The very remark I made myself," cried Heffernan, triumphantly.

"The men who sell themselves to-day to the Crown, will, if need be, sell themselves to-morrow to the mob."

"My own words, by Jove!—my very words."

"A dependent parliament, attempting separate and independent legislation, means an absurdity."

"There is no other name for it," cried Heffernan, in ecstasy.

"I have known Ireland for something more than half a century now," said the knight, with a touch of melancholy in his voice, "and yet never before saw so much of social disorder as at present, and perhaps we are only at the beginning of it. The scenes we have witnessed in France have been more bloody and more cruel, but they will leave less permanent results behind them than our own revolution, for such after all it is. The property of the country is changing hands, the old aristocracy are dying out, if not dead; their new successors have neither any hold on the affection of the people, nor a bond of union with each other. See what will come of it; the old game of feudalism will be tried by these men of yesterday, and the peasantry, whose reverence for birth is a reli-

gion, will turn on them, and the time is not very distant, perhaps, when the men who would not harm the landlord's dog, will have little reverence for the landlord's self."

"You have drawn a sad picture," said Heffernan, either feeling or affecting to feel the truthfulness of the knight's delineation.

"Our share in the ruin," said the knight, rising, and pacing the room with rapid strides—"our share is not undeserved. We had a distinct and defined duty to perform, and we neglected it; instead of extending civilization we were the messengers of barbarism among the people."

"Your own estates, I have heard, are a refutation of your theory," interposed Heffernan, insinuatingly.

"My estates—" repeated the knight, and then stopping suddenly, with a changed voice he said: "Heffernan, we have got into a long and very unprofitable theme; let us try back, if we can, and see whence we started. We were talking of the Union."

"Just so," said Heffernan, not sorry to resume the subject which induced his visit.

"I have determined not to vote on the measure," said the knight, solemnly; "my reasons for the course I adopt I hope to be able to justify when the proper time arrives; meanwhile it will prevent unnecessary speculation, and equally unnecessary solicitation, if I tell you frankly what I mean to do. Such is my present resolve."

The word solicitation fell from the knight's lips with such a peculiar expression, that Heffernan at once saw his own game was detected, and, like a clever tactician, resolved to make the best of his forced position.

"You have been frank with *me*, knight, I'll not be less candid with *you*. I came here to convey to you a distinct offer from the Government—not of any personal favor or advantage, *that*, they well knew, you would reject—but, in the event of your support, to take any suggestion you might make on the new bill into their serious and favorable consideration; to advise with you, how, in short, the measure might be made to meet your views, and, so to say, admit you into conclave with the cabinet."

"All this is very flattering," said the knight, with a smile of evident satisfaction, "but I scarcely see how the opinions of a very humble country gentleman can weigh in the grave councils of a Government."

"The best proof is the fact itself," replied Heffernan, artfully. "Were I to tell you of other reasons, you might suspect me of an intention to canvass your support on very different grounds."

"I confess I'm in the dark—explain yourself more fully."

"This is a day for sincerity," said Heffernan, smiling, "and so, here it is—the prince has taken a special liking to your son Lionel, and has given him his company."

"His company! I never heard of it."

"Strange enough that he should not have written to you on the subject, but the fact is unquestionable—and, as I was saying, he is a frequent guest at Carlton House, and admitted into the choice circle of his royal highness's parties: if, in the freedom of that intimacy with which he is honored by the prince, the question should have arisen, how his father meant to vote, the fact was not surprising, no more than that Captain Darcy should have replied—"

"Lionel never pledged himself to control *my* vote, depend upon that, Mr. Heffernan," said the knight, reddening.

"Nor did I say so," interposed Heffernan. "Hear me out—your son is reported to have answered 'My father's family have been too trained in loyalty, sire, not to give their voice with what they believe the best interests of the Empire: your royal highness may doubt his judgment, his honor will, I am certain, never be called in question.'" The prince laughed good-naturedly, and said, "Enough, Darcy—quite enough; it will give me great satisfaction to think as highly of the father as I do of the son; there is a vacancy on the staff, and I can offer you the post of an extra aid-de-camp."

"This is very good news—the best I've heard for many a day, Heffernan, and for its accuracy—"

"Lord Castlereagh is the guarantee," added Heffernan, hastily; "I had it from his own lips."

"I'll wait on him this morning. I can at least express my gratitude for his royal highness's kindness to my boy."

"You'll not have far to go," said Heffernan, smiling.

"How so?—what do you mean?"

"Lord Castlereagh is at the door this moment in that carriage;" and Heffernan pointed to the chariot which, with its blinds closely drawn, stood before the street door.

The knight moved hastily toward the door, and then, turning suddenly, burst into a hearty laugh—a laugh so racy and full of enjoyment, that Heffernan himself joined in it, without knowing wherefore.

"You are a clever fellow, Heffernan!" said the knight, as he lay back in a deep-cushioned chair, and wiped his eyes, now

streaming with tears of laughter—"a devilish clever fellow! The whole affair reminds me of poor Jack Morris."

"Faith! I don't see your meaning," said Heffernan, half fearful that all was not right.

"You knew Jack—we all knew him. Well, poor Morris was going home one night—from the theater. I believe it was—but, just as he reached Ely place, he saw, by the light of a lamp, a gentlemanlike fellow trying to make out an address on a letter, and endeavoring, as well as he could, to spell out the words by the uncertain light. 'Devilish provoking!' said the stranger, half aloud; 'I wrote it myself, and yet cannot read a word of it.' 'Can I be of any service?' said Jack. Poor fellow! he was always ready for anything kind or good-natured. 'Thank you,' said the other; 'but I'm a stranger in Dublin—only arrived this evening from Liverpool—and cannot remember the name, or the street of my hotel, although I noted both down on this letter.' 'Show it to me,' said Jack, taking the document. But, although he held it every way, and tried all manner of guesses, he never could hit on the name the stranger wanted. 'Never mind,' said Jack; 'don't bother yourself about it. Come home with me and have an oyster—I'll give you a bed; 'twill be time enough after breakfast to-morrow to hunt out the hotel.' To make short of it, the stranger complied; after all the natural expressions of gratitude and shame, home they went, supped, finished two bottles of claret, and chatted away till past two o'clock. 'You'd like to get to bed, I see,' said Jack, as the stranger seemed growing somewhat drowsy, and so he rang the bell, and ordered the servant to show the gentleman to his room. 'And, Martin,' said he, 'take care that everything is comfortable, and be sure you have a nightcap.' 'Oh! I've a nightcap myself,' said the stranger, pulling one, neatly folded, out of his coat pocket. 'Have you, by G—d!' said Jack. 'If you have, then, you'll not sleep here. A man that's so ready for a contingency has generally some hand in contriving it.' And so he put him out of doors, and never saw more of him—eh, Heffernan—was Jack right?" And again the old man broke into a hearty laugh, in which Heffernan, notwithstanding his discomfiture, could not refrain from participating.

"Well," said he, as he arose to leave the room, "I feel twenty years younger for that hearty laugh. It reminds me of the jolly days we used to have long ago, with

Price Godfrey and Bagenal Daly. By the way, where is Bagenal now, and what is he doing?"

"Pretty much what he always was doing—mischief and devilment," said the knight, half angrily.

"Is he still the member for Oldcastle? I forget what fate the petition had."

"The fate of the counsel that undertook it is easily remembered," said the knight. "Bagenal called him out for daring to take such a liberty with a man who had represented the borough for thirty years, and shot him in the hip. 'You shall have a plumper, by Jove!' said Bagenal; and he gave him one. Men grew shy of the case afterward, and it was dropped, and so Bagenal still represents the place. Good-by, Heffernan—don't forget Jack Morris." And so saying, the knight took leave of his visitor, and returned to his chair at the breakfast-table.

CHAPTER XI.

THE KNIGHT AND HIS AGENT.

THE news of Lionel's promotion, and the flattering notice which the prince had taken of him, made the knight very indifferent about his heavy loss of the preceding evening. It was, to be sure, an immense sum; but as Gleeson was arranging his affairs, it was only "raising" so much more, and thus preventing the estate from leaving the family. Such was his own very mode of settling the matter in his own mind, nor did he bestow more time on the consideration than enabled him to arrive at this satisfactory conclusion.

If ever there was an agent designed to compensate for the easy, careless habits of such a principal, it was Mr. Gleeson—or, as he was universally known in the world of that day, "Honest Tom Gleeson." In him seemed concentrated all those peculiar gifts which made up the perfect man of business. He was cautious, painstaking, and methodical, of a temper which nothing could ruffle, and with a patience no provocation could exhaust; punctual as a clock, neither precipitate nor dilatory, he appeared prompt to the slow, and seemed almost tardy to the hasty man.

In the management of several large estates—he might have had many more if he would have accepted the charge—Mr. Gleeson had amassed a considerable fortune, but so devotedly did he attach himself to the interests of his employers, so thoroughly identify their fortunes with his own,

that he gave little time to the cares of his immediate property. By his skill and intelligence many country gentlemen had emerged from embarrassments that threatened to engulf their entire fortunes; and his aid in a difficulty was looked upon as a certain guarantee of success. It was not very surprising if a man, endowed with qualities like these, should have usurped something of ascendancy over his employers. To a certain extent, their destiny lay in his hands. Of the difficulties by which they were pressed he alone knew either the nature or amount, while by what straits these should be overcome none but himself could offer a suggestion. If in all his dealings the most strict regard to honor was observable, so did he seem also inexhaustible in his contrivances to rescue an embarrassed or incumbered estate. There was often the greatest difficulty in securing his services—solicitation and interest were even required to engage him—but once retained, he applied his energies to the task, and with such zeal and acuteness that it was said no case, however desperate, had yet failed in his hands.

For several years past he had managed all the knight's estates; and such was the complication and intanglement of the property, loaded with mortgages and rent charges, embarrassed with dowries and annuities, that nothing short of his admirable skill could have supported the means of that expensive and wasteful mode of life which the knight insisted on pursuing, and all restriction on which he deemed unfitting his station. If Gleeson represented the urgent necessity of retrenchment, the very word was enough to cut short the negotiation; until, at last, the agent was fain to rest content with the fruits of good management, and merely venture from time to time on a cautious suggestion regarding the immense expense of the knight's household.

With all his guardedness and care, these representations were not always safe, for though the knight would sometimes meet them with some jocular or witty reply, or some bantering allusion to the agent's taste for money-getting, at other times he would receive the advice with impatience or ill-humor, so that, at last, Gleeson limited all complaints on this score to his letters to Lady Eleanor, with whom he maintained a close and confidential correspondence.

This reserve on Gleeson's part had its effects on the knight, who felt a proportionate delicacy in avowing any act of extravagance that should demand a fresh call for money, and thus embarrass the negotiation

by which the agent was endeavoring to extricate the property.

If Darcy felt the loss of the preceding night, it was far more from the necessity of avowing it to Gleeson, than from the amount of the money, considerable as it was; and he, therefore, set out to call upon him, in a frame of mind far less at ease than he desired to persuade himself he enjoyed.

Mr. Gleeson lived about three miles from Dublin, so that the knight had abundant time to meditate as he went along, and think over the interview that awaited him. His reverie was only broken by the sudden change from the high-road to the noiseless quiet of the neat avenue which led up to the house.

Mr. Gleeson's abode had been an ancient manor-house in the Gwynne family, a building of such antiquity as to date from the time of the Knights Templars, and though once a favored residence of the Darcys, had, from the circumstances of a dreadful crime committed beneath its roof—the murder of a servant by his master—been at first deserted, and subsequently utterly neglected by the owners, so that at last it fell into ruin and decay. The roof was partly fallen in, the windows shattered and broken, the rich ceilings rotten and discolored with damp, it presented an aspect of desolation, when Mr. Gleeson proposed to take it on lease. Nor was the ruin only within doors, but without; the ornamental planting had been torn up, or used as firewood; the gardens pillaged and overrun with cattle, and the large trees—among which were some rare and remarkable ones—were lopped and torn by the country people, who trespassed and committed their depredations without fear or impediment. Now, however, the whole aspect was changed: the same spirit of order that exercised its happy influence in the management of distant properties, had arrested the progress of destruction here, and, happily, in time sufficient to preserve some of the features which, in days past, had made this the most beautiful seat in the county.

It was not without a feeling of astonishment that the knight surveyed the change. An interval of twelve years—for such had been the length of time since he was last there—had worked magic in all around. Clumps had sprung up into ornamental groups, saplings become graceful trees, sickly evergreens that leaned their frail stems against a stake were now richly-leaved hollies or fragrant laurestinas; and the marshy pond that seemed stagnant with rank grass and duckweed, was a clear lake fed by a

silvery cascade, which descended in quaint but graceful terraces from the very end of the neat lawn.

In Darcy's eyes, the only fault was the excessive neatness preceptible in everything; the very gravel seemed to shine with a peculiar luster, the alleys were swept clean, not even a withered leaf was suffered to disfigure them, while the shrubs had an air of trim propriety, like the self-satisfied air of a Sunday citizen.

The brilliant luster of the heavy brass knocker, the white and spotless flags of the stone hall, and the immaculate accuracy of the staid footman who opened the door, were types of the prevailing tastes and habits of the proprietor. A mere glance at the orderly arrangement of Mr. Gleeson's study, would have confirmed the impression of his strict notions of regularity and discipline; not a book was out of place; the boxes, labeled with high and titled names, were ranged with a drill-like precision upon the shelves; the very letters that lay in the baskets beside the table, fell with an attention to staid decorum becoming the rigid habits of the place.

The knight had some minutes to bestow in contemplation of these objects before Gleeson entered; he had only that morning arrived from a distant journey, and was dressing when the knight was announced. With a bland, soft manner, and an air compounded of diffidence and self-importance, Mr. Gleeson made his approaches.

"You have anticipated me, sir," said he, placing a chair for the knight; "I had ordered the carriage to call upon you. May I beg you to excuse the question, but my anxiety will not permit me to defer it—there is no truth, or very little, I trust, in the paragraph I've just read in Carrick's paper—"

"About a party at piquet with Lord Drogheda?" interrupted Darcy.

"The same."

"Every word of it correct, Gleeson," said the knight, who, notwithstanding the occasion, could not control the temptation to laugh at the terrified expression of the agent's face.

"But surely the sum was exaggerated; the paper says, the lands and demesne of Bally-dermot, with the house, furniture, plate, wine, equipage, garden utensils—"

"I'm not sure that we mentioned the watering-pots," said Darcy, smiling; "but the wine hogsheds are certainly included."

"A rental of clear three thousand four hundred and seventy-eight pounds, odd shillings, on a lease of lives renewable for ever—peppercorn fine," exclaimed Gleeson,

closing his eyes, and folding his hands upon his breast, like a martyr resigning himself to the torture.

"So much for going on spades without the head of the suit!" observed the knight; "and yet, any man might have made the same blunder; and then, Heffernan, with his interruption—altogether, Gleeson, the whole was mismanaged sadly."

"The greater part of the land tithed free," moaned Gleeson to himself; "it was a grant from the crown to your ancestor, Everard Darcy."

"If it was the king gave it, Gleeson, it was the queen lost it."

"The lands of Corrabeg, Dunragheedaghan, and Muscarooney, let at fifteen shillings an acre, with a right to cut turf on the Derry-slattery bog! not to speak of Knocksadowd! lost, and no redemption!"

"Yes, Gleeson, that's the point I'm coming to; there is a proviso in favor of redemption, whenever your grief will permit you to hear of it."

Gleeson gave a brief cough, blew his nose with considerable energy, and with an air of submissive sorrow apologized for yielding to his feelings. "I have been so many years, sir, the guardian—if I may so say—of that property, that I cannot think of being severed from its interests without deep, very deep regret."

"By Jove! Gleeson, so do I; you have no monopoly of the sorrow, believe me. I acknowledge, readily, the full extent of my culpability. This foolish bet came to pass at a dinner at Hutchinson's—it was the crowning point of a bragging conversation about play—and Drogheda, it seems, booked it, though I totally forgot all about it. I'm certain he never intended to push the wager on me, but when reminded of it, of course I had nothing else for it but to express my readiness to meet him. I must say he behaved nobly all through; and even when Heffernan's stupid interruption had somewhat ruffled my nerves, he begged I would reconsider the card—he saw I made a mistake—very handsome that!—his backers, I assure you, did not seem as much disposed to extend the courtesy. I relieved their minds, however, I stood by my play, and—"

"Lost an estate of three thousand—"

"Quite correct; I'm sure no man knows the rental better. And now, let us see how to keep it in the family."

The stare of amazement with which Gleeson heard these words might have met a proposition far more extravagant still, and he repeated the speech to himself, as if weighing every syllable in a balance.

"Yes, Gleeson, that was exactly what I said: now that we are engaged in liquidating, let us proceed with the good work. If I have given you enlarged occasion for the exercise of your abilities, I'm only acting like Peter Henessy—old Peter, that held the mill at Brown's barn."

The agent looked up with an expression in which all interest to learn the precedent alluded to was lost in astonishment at the levity of a man who could jest at such a moment.

"I see, you never heard it, and, as the lawyers say, the rule will apply. I'll tell it to you. When Peter was dying, he sent for old Rush of the Priory to give him absolution; he would not have the parish priest, for he was a 'hard man,' as Peter said, with little compassion for human weakness, never loved pork nor 'poteen,' but seemed to have a relish for fasts and vigils. 'Rush will do,' said he to all the family applications in favor of the other—'I'll have Father Rush;' and so he had, and Rush came, and they were four hours at it, for Peter had a long score of reminiscences to bring up, and it was not without considerable difficulty, it is said, that Rush could apply the remedies of the Church to the various infractions of the old sinner. At last, however, it was arranged, and Peter lay back in bed very tired and fatigued, for, I assure you, Gleeson, whatever you may think of it, confessing one's iniquities is excessively wearying to the spirits. 'Is it all right, father?' said he, as the good priest counted over the roll of ragged bank-notes that were to be devoted to the purchase of different masses and offerings. 'It will do well,' said Rush; 'make your mind easy, your peace is made now.' 'And are you sure it's quite safe?' said Peter; 'a pound more or less is nothing now compared to—what you know'—for Peter was polite, and followed the poet's counsel. 'Tis safe and sure, both,' said Rush; 'I have the whole of the sins under my thumb now, and don't fret yourself.' 'Take another thirty shillings then, father,' said he, pushing the note over to him, 'and let Whaley have the two barrels of seed oats—the smut is in them, and they're not worth sixpence; but when we are at it, father dear, let us do the thing complete; what signifies a trifle like that among the rest?' Such was Peter's philosophy, Gleeson, and, if not very laudable as he applied it, it would seem to suit our present emergency remarkably well."

Gleeson vouchsafed but a very sickly smile as the knight finished, and taking up a bundle of papers from the table, pro-

ceeded to search for something amongst them.

"This loss was most inopportune, sir—"

"No doubt of it, Gleeson; it were far better had I won my wager," said the knight, half testily; but the agent, scarce noticing the interruption, went on:

"Mr. Lionel has drawn on me for seven hundred, and so late as Wednesday last I was obliged to meet a bill of his amounting to twelve hundred and eighty pounds. Thus, you will perceive, that he has this year overdrawn his allowance considerably. He seems to have been as unlucky as yourself, sir."

Soft and silky as the accents were, there was a tincture of sarcasm in the way these words were uttered that did not escape Darcy's notice, but he made no reply, and appeared to listen attentively as the other resumed:

"Then, the expenses of the abbey have been enormous this year; you would scarcely credit the outlay for the hunting establishment; and, as I learn from Lady Eleanor, that you rarely, if ever, take the field yourself—"

"Never mind that, Gleeson," broke in the knight, suddenly. "I'll not sell a horse, or part with a dog amongst them. My income must well be able to afford me the luxuries I have always been used to. I'm not to be told that, with a rental of eighteen thousand a year—"

"A rental, sir, I grant you," said Gleeson, interrupting him; "you said quite correctly, the rental is even more than you stated, but consider the charges on that rental, the heavy sums raised on mortgages, the debt incurred by building, the two contested elections, your losses on the turf,—these make sad inroads in the amount of your income."

"I tell you frankly, Gleeson," said the knight, starting up and pacing the room with hasty steps, "I've neither head nor patience for details of this kind. I was induced to believe that my embarrassments, such as they are, were in course of liquidation; that, by raising two hundred and fifty thousand pounds at four and a half, or even five per cent., we should be enabled to clear off the heavy debts, for which we are paying ten, twelve—ay, by Jove! I believe fifteen per cent."

"Upon my word, I believe you do not exaggerate," said Gleeson, in a conciliating accent. "Hickman's bond, though nominally bearing six per cent., is actually treble that sum. He holds 'The Grove' at the rent of a cottier's tenure, and with the right of cutting timber in Clon-a-gauve

wood—a right he is by no means chary of exercising.

“That must be stopped, and at once,” broke in Darcy, with a heightened color. “The old man is actually making a clearing of the whole mountain side; the last time I was up there, Lionel and I counted two hundred and eighteen trees marked for the hatchet. I ordered Finn not to permit one of them to be touched; to go with a message from me to Hickman, saying, that there was a wide difference between cutting timber for farm purposes and carrying on a trade in rivalry with the Baltic. Oaks of twenty, eighty, ay, a hundred and fifty years’ growth, the finest trees on the property, were among those I counted.”

“And did he desist, sir?” asked Gleeson, with a half cunning look.

“Did he!—what a question you ask me! By Heavens! if he barked a sapling in that wood after my warning, I’d have sent the Derra-hinchy boys down to his place, and they would not have left a twig standing on his cockney territory. Devilish lucky he’d be if they stopped there, and left him a house to shelter him.”

“He’s a very unsafe enemy, sir,” observed Gleeson, timidly.

“By Jove! Gleeson, I think you are bent on driving me distracted this morning. You have hit upon perhaps the only theme on which I cannot control my irritability, and I beg of you, once and for all, to change it.”

“I should never have alluded to Mr. Hickman, sir, but that I wished to remark to you that he is in a position which requires all our watchfulness; he has within the last three weeks bought up Drake’s mortgage, and also Helson’s bond for seventeen thousand, and, I know, from a source of unquestionable accuracy, is at this moment negotiating for the purchase of Martin Hamilton’s bond, amounting to twenty-one thousand more; so that, in fact, with the exception of that small debt to Batty and Rowe, he will remain the sole creditor.”

“The sole creditor!” exclaimed Darcy, growing pale as marble—“Peter Hickman the sole creditor!”

“To be sure, this privilege he will not long enjoy,” said Gleeson, with a degree of alacrity he had not assumed before; “when our arrangements are perfected with the London house of Bicknell and Jervis, we can pay off Hickman at once; he shall have a check for the whole amount the very same day.”

“And how soon may we hope for this

happy event, Gleeson?” cried the knight, recovering his wonted voice and manner.

“It will not be distant now, sir; one of the deeds is ready at this moment, or at least will be to-morrow. On your signing it, we shall have some very trifling delays, and the money can be forthcoming by the end of the next week. The other will be perfected and compared by Wednesday week.”

“So that, within three weeks or a month at furthest, Gleeson, we shall have cut the cable with the old pirate?”

“Three weeks, I trust, will see all finished; that is, if this affair of Bally-dermot does not interfere.”

“It shall not do so,” cried the knight, resolutely; “let it go. Drogheda is a gentleman at least, and if our old acres are to fall into other hands, let their possessor have blood in his veins, and he will not tyrannize over the people; but Hickman—”

“Very right, sir, Hickman might foreclose on the 24th of this month.”

“Gleeson, no more of this; I’m not equal to it,” said the knight faintly; and he sat down with a wearied sigh, and covered his face with his hands. The emotion, painful as it was, passed over soon, and the knight, with a voice calm and measured as before, said, “You will take care, Gleeson, that my son’s bills are provided for; London is an expensive place, and particularly for a young fellow situated like Lionel; you may venture on a gentle—mind, a very gentle—remonstrance respecting his repeated calls for money; hint something about arrangements just pending, which require a little more prudence than usual. Do it cautiously, Gleeson; be very guarded. I remember when I was a young fellow being driven to the Jews by an old agent of my grandfather’s; he wrote me a regular homily on thrift and economy, and to show I had benefited by the lesson, I went straightway and raised a loan at something very like sixty per cent.”

“You may rely upon my prudence, sir,” said Gleeson. “I think I can promise that Mr. Lionel will not take offense at my freedom. May I say Tuesday to wait on you with the deeds—Tuesday morning?”

“Of course, whenever you appoint, I’ll be ready. I hoped to have left town this week, but these are too important matters to bear postponement. Tuesday, then, be it.” And, with a friendly shake hands, they parted—Gleeson, to the duties of his laborious life; the knight, with a mind less at ease than was his wont, but still bearing no trace of discomposure on his manly and handsome countenance.

CHAPTER XII.

A FIRST VISIT.

“WHENEVER Captain Forester is quite able to bear the fatigue, Sullivan—mind that you say, quite able—it will give me much pleasure to receive him.”

Such was the answer Lady Eleanor Darey returned to a polite message from the young officer, expressing his desire to visit Lady Eleanor, and thank her for the unwearied kindness she had bestowed on him during his illness.

Lady Eleanor and her daughter were seated in the same chamber in which they have already been introduced to the reader. It was toward the close of a dark and gloomy day, the air heavy and overcast toward the land, while, over the sea, masses of black, misshapen cloud were drifted along hurriedly, the presage of a coming storm. The pine wood blazed brightly on the wide hearth, and threw its mellow luster over the antique carvings and the porcelain ornaments of the chamber, contrasting the glow of in-door comfort with the bleak and cheerless look of all without, where the crashing noise of breaking branches mingled with the yet sadder sound of the swollen torrent from the mountain.

It may be remarked, that persons who have lived much on the seaside, and near a coast abounding in difficulties or dangers, are far more susceptible of the influences of weather than those who pass their lives inland. Storm and shipwreck become, in a measure, inseparably associated. The loud beating of the waves upon the rocky shore, the deafening thunder of the swollen breakers, speak with a voice, to *their* hearts, full of most meaning terror. The moaning accents of the spent wind, and the wailing cry of the petrel, awake thoughts of those who journey over “the great waters,” amid perils more dreadful than all of man’s devising.

Partly from these causes, partly from influences of a different kind, both mother and daughter felt unusually sad and depressed, and had sat for a long interval without speaking, when Forester’s message was delivered, requesting leave to pay his personal respects.

Had the visit been one of mere ceremony, Lady Eleanor would have declined it at once; her thoughts were wandering far away, ingrossed by topics of dear and painful interest, and she would not have constrained herself to change their current and direction for an ordinary matter of conventional intercourse. But this was a different case;

it was her son Lionel’s friend, his chosen companion among his brother officers, the guest, too, who, wounded and almost dying beneath her roof, had been a charge of intense anxiety to her for weeks past.

“There is something strange, Helen, is there not, in this notion of acquaintance with one we have never seen; but now, after weeks of watching and inquiry, after nights of anxiety and days of care, I feel as if I ought to be very intimate with this same friend of Lionel’s.”

“It is more for that very reason, mamma, and simply because he is Lionel’s friend.”

“No, my dear child, not so; it is the tie that binds us to all for whom we have felt interested, and in whose sorrows we have taken a share. Lionel has doubtless many friends in his regiment, and yet it is very unlikely any of them would cause me even a momentary impatience to see and know what they are like.”

“And do you confess to such in the present case?” said Helen, smiling.

“I own it, I have a strange feeling of half curiosity, and should be disappointed if the real Captain Forester does not come up to the standard of the ideal one.”

“Captain Forester, my lady,” said Sullivan, as he threw open the door of the apartment, and, with a step which all his efforts could not render firm, and a frame greatly reduced by suffering, he entered. So little was he prepared for the appearance of the ladies who now stood to receive him, that, despite his habitual tact, a slight expression of surprise marked his features, and a heightened color dyed his cheek, as he saluted them in turn.

With an air which perfectly blended kindness and grace, Lady Eleanor held out her hand, and said: “My daughter, Captain Forester.” And then pointing to a chair beside her own, begged of him to be seated. The unaccustomed exertion, the feeling of surprise, and the nervous irritability of convalescence, all conspired to make Forester ill at ease, and it was with a low, faint sigh he sank into the chair.

“I had hoped, madam,” said he, in a weak and tremulous accent—“I had hoped to be able to speak my gratitude to you—to express, at least, some portion of what I feel for kindness to which I owe my life, but the greatness of the obligation would seem too much for such strength as mine. I must leave it to my mother to say how deeply your kindness has affected us.”

The accents in which these few words were uttered, particularly that which marked the mention of his mother, seemed to strike a chord in Lady Eleanor’s heart,

and her hand trembled as she took from Forester a sealed letter which he withdrew from another.

"Julia Wallincourt," said Lady Eleanor, unconsciously reading half aloud the signature on the envelope of the letter.

"My mother, madam," said Forester, bowing.

"The Countess of Wallincourt!" exclaimed Lady Eleanor, with a heightened color, and a look of excited and even anxious import.

"Yes, madam, the widowed Countess of the Earl of Wallincourt, late Ambassador at Madrid; am I to have the happiness of hearing that my mother is known to you?"

"I had, sir, the pleasure—the honor of meeting Lady Julia D'Esterre; to have enjoyed that pleasure, even once, is quite enough never to forget it." Then turning to her daughter, she added: "You have often heard me speak of Lady Julia's beauty, Helen; she was certainly the most lovely person I ever saw, but the charm of her appearance was even inferior to the fascination of her manner."

"She retains it all, madam," cried Forester, as his eyes sparkled with enthusiastic delight; "she has lost nothing of that power of captivating; and as for beauty, I confess I know nothing higher in that quality than what conveys elevation of sentiment with purity and tenderness of heart; this she possesses still."

"And your elder brother, Captain Forester?" inquired Lady Eleanor, with a manner intended to express interest, but in reality meant to direct the conversation into another channel.

"He is in Spain still, madam; he was Secretary of the Embassy when my father died, and replaced him in the mission."

There was a pause, a long and chilling silence, after these words, that each party felt embarrassing and yet were unable to break; at last Forester, turning toward Helen, asked, "when she had heard from her brother?"

"Not for some days past," replied she; "but Lionel is such an irregular correspondent, we think nothing of his long intervals of silence. You have heard of his promotion, perhaps?"

"No; pray let me learn the good news."

"He has got his company. Some very unexpected—I might say, from Lionel's account, some very inexplicable—piece of good fortune has aided his advancement, and he now writes himself, greatly to his own delight it would appear, Captain Darcy."

"His royal highness the Prince of Wales," said Lady Eleanor, with a look of

pride, "has been pleased to notice my son, and has appointed him an extra aid-de-camp."

"Indeed!" cried Forester; "I am rejoiced at it, with all my heart. I always thought, if the prince were to know him, he'd be charmed with his agreeability; Lionel has the very qualities that win their way at Carlton House; buoyant spirit, courtly address, tact equal to any emergency, all these are his, and the prince likes to see handsome fellows about his court. I am overjoyed at this piece of intelligence."

There was a hearty frankness with which he spoke this that captivated both mother and daughter.

There are few more winning traits of human nature than the unaffected, heartfelt admiration of one young man for the qualities and endowments of another, and never are they more likely to meet appreciation than when exhibited in presence of the mother of the lauded one. And thus the simple expression of Forester's delight at his friend's advancement went further to exalt himself in the good graces of Lady Eleanor, than the display of any powers of pleasing, however ingeniously or artfully exercised.

As through the openings of a dense wood we come unexpectedly upon a view of a wide tract of country, unfolding features of landscape unthought of and unlooked for, so occasionally doth it happen that, in conversation, a chance allusion, a mere word, will develop sources of interest buried up to that very moment, and display themes of mutual enjoyment which were unknown before. This was now the case. Lionel's name, which evoked the mother's pride and the sister's affection, called also into play the generous warmth of Forester's attachment to him.

Thus pleasantly glided on the hours, and none remarked how time was passing, or even heeded the howling storm that raged without, while anecdotes and traits of Lionel were recorded, and comments passed upon his character and temper, such as a friend might utter, and a mother love to hear.

At last Forester rose. More than once during the interview a consciousness crossed his mind that he was outstaying the ordinary limits of a visit, but at each moment some observation of Lady Eleanor, or her daughter, or some newly remembered incident in Lionel's career, would occur and delay his departure. At last he stood up, and warned by the thickening darkness of how time had sped, was endeavoring to utter some words of apology, when Lady Eleanor interrupted him with—

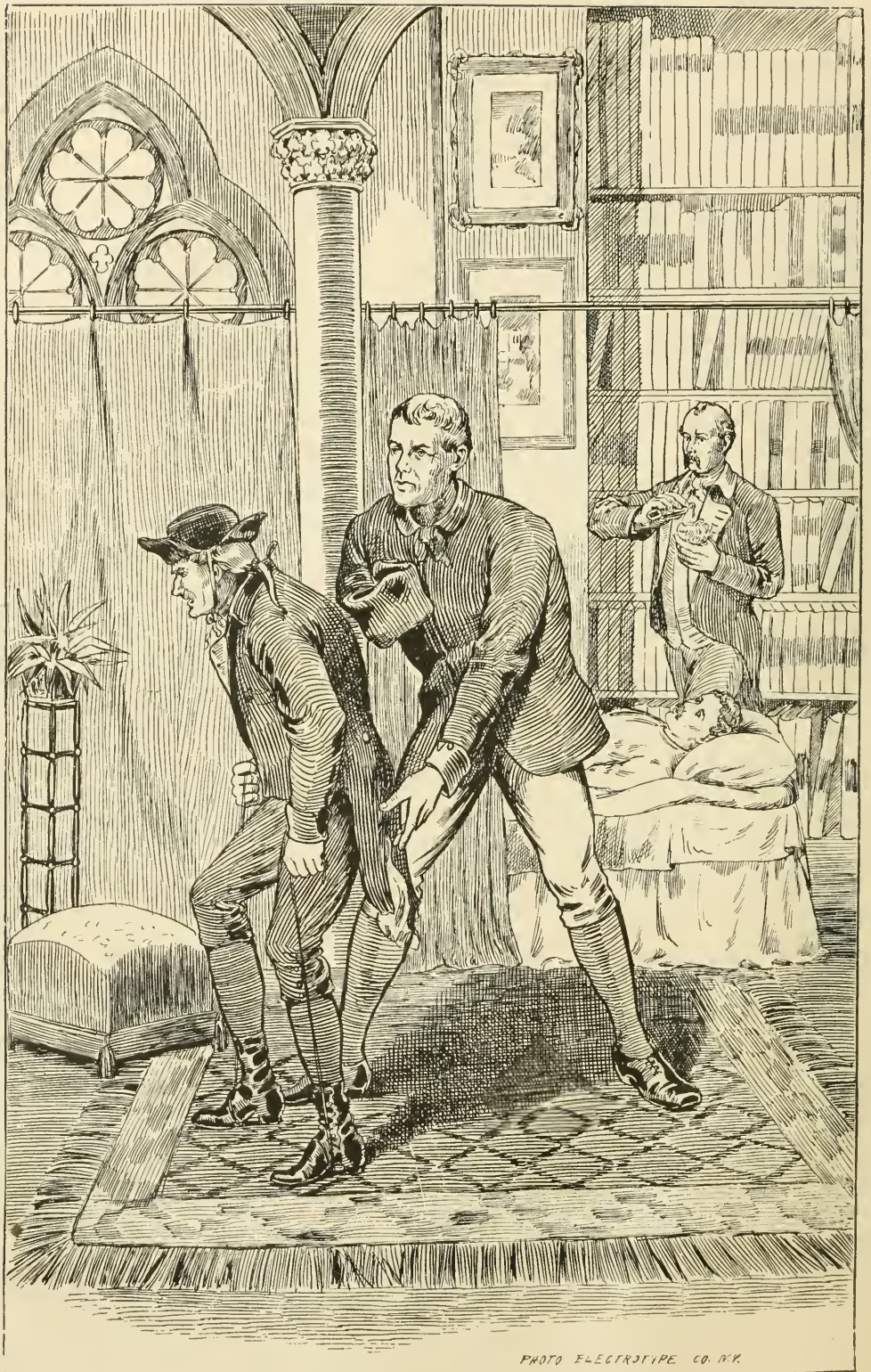


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“Pray do not let us suppose you felt the hours too long, Captain Forester; the theme you selected will always make my daughter and myself insensible to the lapse of time. If I did not fear we should be trespassing on both your kindness and health together, I should venture to request you would dine with us.”

Forester's sparkling eyes and flushed cheek replied to the invitation before he had words to say how gladly he accepted it.

“I feel more reconciled to making this request, sir,” said Lady Eleanor, “because, in your present state of weakness, you cannot enjoy the society of a pleasanter party, and it is a fortunate thing that you can combine a prudent action with a kind one.”

Forester appreciated the flattery of the remark, and, with a broken acknowledgment of its import, moved toward the door.

“No, no,” said Lady Eleanor, “pray don't think of dressing; you have all the privilege of an invalid, and a—friend also.”

The pause which preceded the word brought a slight blush into her cheek, but when it was uttered, she seemed to have resumed her self-possession.

“We shall leave you now with the newspapers, which I suppose you are longing to look at, and join you at the dinner-table.” And as she spoke, she took her daughter's arm, and passed into an adjoining room, leaving Forester in one of those pleasant reveries which so often break in upon the hours of returning health, and compensate for all the sufferings of a sick-bed.

“How strange and how unceasing are the anomalies of Irish life,” thought he, as he sat alone ruminating on the past. “Splendor, poverty, elevation of sentiment, savage ferocity, delicacy the most refined, barbarism the most revolting, pass before the mind's eye in the quick succession of the objects in a magic lantern. Here, in these few weeks, what characters and incidents have been revealed to me! and how invariably have I found myself wrong in every effort to decipher them! Nor are the indications of mind and temper in themselves so very singular, as the fact of meeting them under circumstances, and in situations so unlikely. For instance, who would have expected to see a Lady Eleanor Darcy here, in this wild region, with all the polished grace and dignity of manner the best circles alone possess; and her daughter, haughtier, perhaps, than the mother, more reserved, more timid it may be, and yet with all the elegance of a court in every gesture and every movement. Lionel told me she was handsome—he might have said downright beautiful. Where were these fascinations nur-

tured and cultivated? Is it here, on the margin of this lonely bay, amid scenes of reckless dissipation?”

Of this kind were his musings, nor, amid them all, did one thought obtrude of the cause which threw him first into such companionship, nor of that mission, to discharge which was the end and object of his coming.

CHAPTER XIII.

A TREATY REJECTED.

FORESTER'S recovery was slow, at least so his friends in the capital thought it, for to each letter requiring to know when he might be expected back again, the one reply forever was returned, “As soon as he felt able to leave Gwynne Abbey.” Nor was the answer, perhaps, injudiciously couched.

From the evening of his first introduction to Lady Eleanor and her daughter, his visits were frequent, sometimes occupying the entire morning, and always prolonged far into the night. Never did an intimacy make more rapid progress; so many tastes and so many topics were in common to all, for while the ladies had profited by reading and study in matters which he had little cultivated, yet the groundwork of an early good education enabled him to join in discussions, and take part in conversation which both interested at the time, and suggested improvement afterward; and if Lady Eleanor knew less of the late events which formed the staple of London small-talk, she was well informed on the characters and passages of the early portion of the reign, which gave all the charm of a history to reminiscences purely personal.

With the wits and distinguished men of that day she had lived in great intimacy, and felt a pride in contrasting the displays of intellectual wealth so common then, with the flatter and more prosaic habits since introduced into society. “Eccentricities and absurdities,” she would say, “have replaced in the world the more brilliant exhibitions of cultivated and gifted minds, and I must confess to preferring the social qualities of Horace Walpole to the exaggerations of Bagenal Daly, or the ludicrous caprices of Buck Whaley.”

“I think Mr. Daly charming, for my part,” said Helen, laughing. “I'm certain that he is a miracle of truth, as he is of adventure; if everything he relates is not strictly accurate and matter of fact, it is because the real is always inferior to the

ideal. The things *ought* to have happened as he states."

"It is, at least, *ben trovato*," broke in Forester; "yet I go further, and place perfect confidence in his narratives, and truly, I have heard some strange ones in our morning rides together."

"I suspected as much," said Lady Eleanor. "a new listener is such a boon to him; so then, you have heard how he carried away the Infanta of Spain, compelled the Elector of Saxony to take off his boots, made the Doge of Venice drunk, and instructed the Pasha of Trebizond in the mysteries of an Irish jig."

"Not a word of these have I heard as yet."

"Indeed! then what, in all mercy, has he been talking of—India, China, or North America, perhaps?"

"Still less; he has never wandered from Ireland and Irish life, and I must say, as far as adventure and incident are concerned, it would have been quite unnecessary for him to have strayed beyond it."

"You are perfectly right there," said Lady Eleanor, with some seriousness in the tone; "our home anomalies may shame all foreign wonders; he himself could scarcely find his parallel in any land."

"He has a sincere affection for Lionel, mamma," said Helen, in an accent of deprecating meaning.

"And that very same regard gave the bias to Lionel's taste for every species of absurdity! Believe me, Helen, Irish blood is too stimulating an ingredient to enter into a family oftener than once in four generations. Mr. Daly's has been unadulterated for centuries, and the consequence is, that, although neither deficient in strong sense nor quick perception, he acts always on the impulse that precedes judgment, and both his generosity and his injustice outrun the mark."

"I love that same rash temperament," said Helen, flushing as she spoke; "it is a fine thing to see so much of warm and generous nature survive all that he must have seen of the littleness of mankind."

"There! Captain Forester, there! Have I not reason on my side? You thought me very unjust toward poor Mr. Daly—I know you did; but it demands all my watchfulness to prevent him being equally the model for my daughter, as he is for my son's, imitation."

"There are traits in his character any might be well proud to imitate," said Helen, warmly; "his life has been a series of generous, single-minded actions; and," added she, archly, "if mamma thinks it prudent and safe to warn her children against some

of Mr. Daly's eccentricities, no one is more ready to acknowledge his real worth than she is."

"Helen is right," said Lady Eleanor; "if we could always be certain that Mr. Daly's imitators would copy the truly great features of his character, we might forgive them falling into his weaknesses; and now, can any one tell me why we have not seen him for some days past? He is in the abbey?"

"Yes, we rode out together yesterday morning to look at the wreck near the Sound of Achill; strange enough, I only learned from a chance remark of one of the sailors, that Daly had been in the boat the night before, that took the people off the wreck."

"So like him!" exclaimed Helen, with enthusiasm.

"He is angry with me, I know he is," said Lady Eleanor, musingly. "I asked his advice respecting the answer I should send to a certain letter, and then rejected the counsel. He would have forgiven me, had I run counter to his opinions without asking; but when I called him into consultation, the offense became a grave one."

"I declare, mamma, I side with him; his arguments were clear, strong, and unanswerable, and the best proof of it is, you have never had the courage to follow your own determination, since you listened to him."

"I have a great mind to choose an umpire between us. What say you, Captain Forester, will you hear the case? Helen shall take Mr. Daly's side, I will make my own statement."

"It's a novel idea," said Helen, laughing, "that the umpire should be selected by one of the litigating parties."

"Then you doubt my impartiality, Miss Darcy?"

"If I am to accept you as a judge, I'll not prejudice the court against myself, by avowing my opinions of it," said she, archly.

"When I spoke of your arbitration, Captain Forester," said Lady Eleanor, "I really meant fairly, for upon all the topics we have discussed together, politics, or anything bordering on political opinions, have never come uppermost; and, up to this moment, I have not the slightest notion what are your political leanings, Whig or Tory."

"So the point in dispute is a political one?" asked Forester, cautiously.

"Not exactly," interposed Helen; "the policy of a certain reply to a certain demand is the question at issue; but the advice of any party in the matter might be tinged by his party leanings, if he have any."

"If I judge Captain Forester aright, he has troubled his head very little about party squabbles," said Lady Eleanor; "and in any case, he can scarcely take a deep interest in a question which is almost peculiarly Irish."

Forester bowed, partly in pretended acquiescence of this speech, partly to conceal a deep flush that mounted suddenly to his cheek, for he felt by no means pleased at a remark that might be held to reflect on his political knowledge.

"Be thou the judge, then," said Lady Eleanor. "And, first of all, read that letter." And she took from her work-box her cousin Lord Netherby's letter, and handed it to Forester.

"I reserve my right to dispute that document being evidence," said Helen, laughing; "nor is there any proof of the handwriting being Lord Netherby's. Mamma herself acknowledges she has not heard from him for nearly twenty years."

This cunning speech, meant to intimate the precise relation of the two parties, was understood at once by Forester, who could with difficulty control a smile, although Lady Eleanor looked far from pleased.

There was now a pause, while Forester read over the long letter with due attention, somewhat puzzled to conceive to what particular portion of it the matter in dispute referred.

"You have not read the postscript," said Helen, as she saw him folding the letter, without remarking the few concluding lines.

Forester twice read over the passage alluded to, and at once whatever had been mysterious or difficult was revealed before him. Lord Netherby's wily temptation was made manifest, not the less palpably, perhaps, because the reader was himself involved in the very same scheme.

"You have now seen my cousin's letter," said Lady Eleanor, "and the whole question is, whether the reply should be limited to a suitable acknowledgment of its kind expressions, and a grateful sense of the prince's condescension, or should convey—"

"Mamma means," interrupted Helen, laughingly—"mamma means, that we might also avow our sincere gratitude for the rich temptation offered in requital of my father's vote on the 'Union.'"

"No minister would dare to make such a proposition to the 'Knight of Gwynne,'" said Lady Eleanor, haughtily.

"Ministers are very enterprising nowadays, mamma," rejoined Helen; "I have never heard any one speak of Mr. Pitt's cowardice, and Lord Castlereagh has had

courage to invite old Mr. Hickman to dinner!"

Forester would gladly have acknowledged his relationship to the secretary, but the moment seemed unpropitious, and the avowal would have had the semblance of a rebuke; so he covered his confusion by a laugh, and said nothing.

"We can scarcely condemn the hardihood of a Government that has made Crofton a bishop, and Hawes a general," said Helen, with a flashing eye, and a lip curled in superciliousness. "Nothing short of a profound reliance on the piety of the Church, and the bravery of the army, would support such a policy as that!"

Lady Eleanor seemed provoked at the hardy tone of Helen's speech, but the mother's look was proud, as she gazed on the brilliant expression of her daughter's beauty, now heightened by the excitement of the moment.

"Is it not possible, Miss Darcy," said Forester, in a voice at once timid and insinuating—"is it not possible that the measure contemplated by the Government may have results so beneficial, as to more than compensate for evils like these?"

"A Jesuit, or a Tory, or both," cried Helen. "Mamma, you have chosen your umpire most judiciously; his is exactly the impartiality needed."

"Nay, but hear me out," cried the young officer, whose cheek was crimsoned with shame. "If the measure be a good one—well, let me beg the question, if it be a good one—and yet, the time for propounding it is either inopportune or unfortunate, and, consequently, the support it might claim on its own merits be withheld either from prejudice, party connection, or any similar cause—you would not call a ministry culpable who should anticipate the happy working of a judicious act, by securing the assistance of those whose convictions are easily won over, in preference to the slower process of convincing the men of more upright and honest intentions."

"You have begged so much in the commencement, and assumed so much in the conclusion, sir, that I am at a loss to which end of your speech to address my answer; but I will say this much: it is but sorry evidence of a measure's goodness when it can only meet the approval of the venal. I don't prize the beauty so highly that is only recognized by the blind man."

"Distorted vision, Miss Darcy, may lead to impressions more erroneous than even blindness."

"I may have the infirmity you speak of," said she, quickly, "but assuredly I'll

not wear Government spectacles to correct it."

If Forester was surprised at finding a young lady so deeply interested in a political question, he was still more so on hearing the tone of determination she spoke in, and would gladly, had he known how, have given the conversation a less serious turn.

"We have been all the time forgetting the real question at issue," said Lady Eleanor; "I'm sure I never intended to listen to a discussion on the merits or demerits of the Union, on which you both grow so eloquent; will you, then, kindly return to whence we started, and advise me as to the reply to this letter."

"I do not perceive any remarkable difficulty, madam," said Forester, addressing himself exclusively to Lady Eleanor. "The Knight of Gwynne has doubtless strong opinions on this question; they are either in favor of, or adverse to the Government views; if the former, your reply is easy and most satisfactory; if the latter, perhaps he would condescend to explain the nature of his objections, to state whether it be to anything in the detail of the measure he is adverse to, or to the principle of the bill itself. A declaration like this will open a door to negotiation, without the slightest imputation on either side. A minister may well afford to offer his reasons for any line of policy to one as eminent in station and ability as the Knight of Gwynne, and I trust I am not indiscreet in assuming that the knight would not be derogating from that station in listening to, and canvassing such explanations."

"Lord Castlereagh, 'ant—,'" said Helen, starting up from her seat, and making a low courtesy before Forester, who, feeling himself in a measure detected, blushed till his face became scarlet.

"My dear Helen, at this rate we shall never—But what is this?—who have we here?"

This sudden exclamation was caused by the appearance of a small four-wheeled carriage drawn up at the gate of the flower garden, from which old Hickman's voice could now be heard, inquiring if the Lady Eleanor were at home.

"Yes, Sullivan," said she, with a sigh, "and order luncheon." Then, as the servant left the room, she added, "I am always better pleased when the visits of that family are paid by the old gentleman, whom I prefer to the son or the grandson. They are better performers, I admit, but he is an actor of nature's own making."

"Do you know him, Captain Forester?" asked Helen.

But, before he could reply, the door was opened, and Sullivan announced, by his ancient title, "Doctor Hickman."

Strange and grotesque as in every respect he looked, the venerable character of old age secured him a respectful, almost a cordial reception; and, as Lady Eleanor advanced to him, there was that urbanity and courtesy in her manner which are so nearly allied to the expression of actual esteem. It was true, there was little in the old man's nature to elicit such feelings toward him; he was a grasping miser, covetousness and money-getting filled up his heart, and every avenue leading to it. The passion for gain had alone given the interest to his life, and developed into activity any intelligence he possessed. While his son valued wealth as the only stepping-stone to a position of eminence and rank, old Hickman loved riches for their own sake. The Bank was, in his estimation, the fountain of all honor, and a strong credit there better than all the reputation the world could confer. These were harsh traits. But then he was old; long years and infirmity were bringing him each hour closer to the time when the passion of his existence must be abandoned; and a feeling of pity was excited at the sight of that withered, careworn face, to which the insensate cravings of avarice lent an unnatural look of shrewdness and intelligence.

"What a cold morning for your drive, Mr. Hickman," said Lady Eleanor, kindly. "Captain Forester, may I ask you to stir the fire. Mr. Hickman—Captain Forester."

"Ah, Miss Helen, beautiful as ever!" exclaimed the old man, as, with a look of real admiration, he gazed on Miss Darcy. "I don't know how it is, Lady Eleanor, but the young ladies never dressed so becomingly formerly. Captain Forester, your humble servant; I am glad to see you about again; indeed, I didn't think it very likely once that you'd ever leave the library on your own feet; Mac Donough's a dead shot they tell me—ay, ay!"

"I hope your friends at 'The Grove' are well, sir?" said Lady Eleanor, desirous of interrupting a topic she saw to be particularly distressing to Forester.

"No, indeed, my lady; my son Bob—Mr. Hickman O'Reilly, I mean—God forgive me, I'm sure they take trouble enough to teach me that name—he's got a kind of a water-brash, what we call a pyrosis. I tell him it's the French dishes he eats for dinner, things he never was brought up to, concoctions of lemon-juice, and cloves, and saffron, and garlic, in meat roasted—no, but stewed into chips."

"You prefer our national cookery, Mr. Hickman?"

"Yes, my lady, with the gravy in it; the crag-end, if—your ladyship knows what's the crag-end of a—"

"Indeed, Mr. Hickman," said Lady Eleanor, smiling, "I'm deplorably ignorant about everything that concerns household. Helen affects to be very deep in these matters, but I suspect it is only a superficial knowledge, got up to amuse the knight."

"I beg, mamma, you will not infer any such reproach on my skill in *ménage*. Papa called my *omelette à la curé* perfect."

"I should like to hear Mr. Hickman's judgment on it," said Lady Eleanor, with a sly smile.

"If it's a plain joint, my lady, boiled or roasted, without spices or devilment in it, but just the way Providence intended—"

"May I ask, sir, how you suppose Providence intended to recommend any particular kind of cookery?" said Helen, seriously.

"Whatever is most natural, most simple, the easiest to do," stammered out Hickman, not over pleased at being asked for an explanation.

"Then the Cossack ranks first in the art," exclaimed Forester, "for nothing can be more simple or easier than to take a slice of a live ox, and hang it up in the sun for ten or fifteen minutes."

"Them's barbarians," said Hickman, with an emphasis that made the listeners find it no easy task to keep down a laugh.

"Luncheon, my lady," said old Tate Sullivan, as with a reverential bow he opened the folding-doors into a small breakfast-parlor, where an exquisitely served table was laid out.

"Practice before precept, Mr. Hickman," said Lady Eleanor; "will you join us at luncheon, where I hope you may find something to your liking."

As the old man seated himself at the table, his eye ranged over the cabinet pictures that covered the walls, the richly-chased silver on the table, and the massive wine-coolers that stood on the sideboard, with an eye whose brilliancy betokened far more the covetous taste of the miser than the pleased expression of mere connoisseurship; nor could he recall himself from their admiration to hear Forester's twice-repeated question as to what he would eat:

"Tis elegant fine plate, no doubt of it," muttered he, below his breath; "and the pictures may be worth as much more—ay!"

The last monosyllable was the only part

of his speech audible, and being interpreted by Forester as a reply to his request, he at once helped the old gentleman to a very highly seasoned French dish before him.

"Eh! what's this?" said Hickman, as he surveyed his plate with unfeigned astonishment; "if I didn't see it laid down on your ladyship's table, I'd swear it was a bit of Galway marble."

"It's a *galantine truffée*, Mr. Hickman," said Forester, who was well aware of its merits.

"Be it so, in the name of God!" said Hickman, with resignation, as though to say that any one who could eat it, might take the trouble to learn the name. "Ay, my lady, that's what I like, a slice of Kerry beef, a beast made for man's eating."

"Mr. Hickman's pony is more of an epicure than his master," said Forester, as he arose from his chair, and moved toward the glass door that opened on the garden; "he has just eaten the top of your lemon-tree."

"And by way of dessert, he is now cropping my japonica," cried Helen, as she sprang from the room to rescue her favorite plant. Forester followed her, and Lady Eleanor was left alone with "the doctor."

"Now, my lady, that I have the opportunity—and sure it was luck gave it to me—would you give me the favor of a little private conversation?"

"If the matter be on business, Mr. Hickman, I must frankly own I should prefer your addressing yourself to the knight—he will be home early next week."

"It is—and it is not, my lady—but, there! they're coming back, now, and it is too late;" and so he heaved a heavy sigh, and lay back in his chair, as though worn out and disappointed.

"Well, then, in the library, Mr. Hickman," said Lady Eleanor, compassionately, "when you've eaten some luncheon."

"No more, my lady; 'tis elegant fine beef as ever I tasted, and the gravy in it, but I'm not hungry now."

Lady Eleanor, without a guess as to what might form the subject of his communication, perceived that he was agitated and anxious; and so, requesting Forester and her daughter to continue their luncheon, she added: "And I have something to tell Mr. Hickman, if he will give five minutes of his company in the next room."

Taking a chair near the fire, Lady Eleanor motioned to "the doctor" to be seated, but the old man was so engaged in admiring the room and its furniture, that he seemed insensible to all else. As his eye wandered over the many objects of taste and luxury

on every side, his lips muttered unceasingly, but the sound was inarticulate.

"I cannot pledge myself that we shall remain long uninterrupted, Mr. Hickman," said Lady Eleanor, "so pray lose no time in the communication you have to make."

"I humbly ask pardon, my lady," said the old man, in a voice of deep humility; "I'm old and feeble now, and my senses none of the clearest, but sure it's time for them to be worn out; ninety-one I'll be, if I live to lady-day." It was his habit to exaggerate his age; besides, there was a tremulous pathos in his accents to which Lady Eleanor was far from feeling insensible, and she awaited in silence what was to follow.

"Well, well," sighed the old man, "if I succeed in this, the last act of my long life, I'm well content to go whenever the Lord pleases." And so saying, he took from his coat-pocket the ominous-looking old leather case to which we have already alluded, and searched for some time amid its contents. "Ay! here it is—that is it—it is only a memorandum, my lady, but it will show what I mean." And he handed the paper to Lady Eleanor.

It was some time before she had arranged her spectacles and adjusted herself to peruse the document, but before she had concluded, her hand trembled violently, and all color foresook her cheek. Meanwhile, "the doctor" sat with his filmy eyes directed toward her, as if watching the working of his spell; and when the paper fell from her fingers, he uttered a low "Ay," as though to say his success was certain.

"Two hundred thousand pounds!" exclaimed she, with a shudder; "this cannot be true."

"It is all true, my lady, and so is this, too;" and he took from his hat a newspaper, and presented it to her.

"The Bally-dermot property! The whole estate lost at cards! This is a calumny, sir—the libelous impertinence of a newspaper paragraphist. I'll not believe it."

"'Tis true, notwithstanding, my lady. Harvey Dawson was there himself and saw it all; and as for the other, the deeds and mortgages are at this moment in the hands of my son's solicitor."

"And this may be foreclosed—"

"On the 24th, at noon, my lady," continued Hickman, as he folded the memorandum, and replaced it in his pocket-book.

"Well, sir," said she, as with a great effort to master her emotion, she addressed

him in a steady and even commanding voice, "the next thing is to learn what are your intentions respecting this debt? You have not purchased all these various liabilities of my husband's without some definite object. Speak it out—what is it? Has Mr. Hickman O'Reilly's ambition increased so rapidly that he desires to date his letters from Gwynne Abbey?"

"The saints forbid it, my lady," said the old man, with a pious horror. "I'd never come here this day on such an errand as that. If it was not to propose what was agreeable, you'd not see me here—"

"Well, sir, what is the proposition? Let me hear it at once, for my patience never bears much dallying with."

"I am coming to it, my lady," muttered Hickman, who already felt really ashamed at the deep emotion his news evoked. "There are two ways of doing it—" A gesture of impatience from Lady Eleanor stopped him, but, after a brief pause, he resumed: "Bear with me, my lady. Old age and infirmity are always prolix; but I'll do my best."

It would be as unfair a trial of the reader's endurance as it proved to Lady Eleanor's were we to relate the slow steps by which Mr. Hickman announced his plan, the substance of which, divested of all his own circumlocution and occasional interruptions, was simply this: a promise had been made by Lord Castlereagh to Hickman O'Reilly that if, through his influence, exercised by means of moneyed arrangements or otherwise, the Knight of Gwynne would vote with the Government on the 'Union,' he should be elevated to the peerage, an object which, however inconsiderable in the old man's esteem, both son and grandson had set their hearts upon. For this service they, in requital, would extend the loan to another period of seven years, stipulating only for some trifling advantages regarding the right of cutting timber, some coast fisheries, and other matters to be mentioned afterward, points which, although evidently of minor importance, were recapitulated by the old man with a circumstantial minuteness.

It was only by a powerful effort that Lady Eleanor could control her rising indignation at this proposal, while the very thought of Hickman O'Reilly as a peer, and member of that proud "order" of which her own haughty family formed a part, was an insult almost beyond endurance.

"Go on, sir," said she, with a forced composure, which deceived old Hickman completely, and made him suppose that his negotiation was proceeding favorably.

"I'm sure, my lady, it's little satisfaction all this grandeur would give me. I'd rather be twenty years younger, and in the back parlor of my old shop at Loughrea, than the first peer in the kingdom."

"Ambition is not your failing, then, sir," said she, with a glance which, to one more quick-sighted, would have conveyed the full measure of her scorn."

"That it isn't, my lady; but they insist upon it."

"And is the peerage to be enriched by the enrollment of your name among its members? I thought, sir, it was your son."

"Bob—Mr. Hickman, I mean—suggests that I should be the first lord of the family, my lady, because, then, Beecham's title won't seem so new when it comes to him. 'Tis the only use they can make of me now—ay!" and the word was accented with a venomous sharpness that told the secret anger he had himself awakened by his remark.

"The Knight of Gwynne," said Lady Eleanor, proudly, "has often regretted to me the few opportunities he had embraced through life of serving his country; I have no doubt, sir, when he hears your proposal, that he will rejoice at this occasion of making an *amende*. I will write to him by this post. Is there anything more you wish to add, Mr. Hickman?" said she, as, having risen from her chair, she perceived that the old man remained seated.

"Yes, indeed, my lady, there is, and I don't think I'd have the heart for it if it was't your ladyship's kindness about the other business; and even now, maybe, it would take you by surprise."

"You can scarcely do that, sir, after what I have just listened to," said she, with a smile.

"Well, there's no use in going round about the bush, and this is what I mean. We thought there might be a difficulty, perhaps, about the vote that the knight might have promised his friends, or said something or other how he'd go, and wouldn't be able to get out of it so easily, so we saw another way of serving his views about the money. You see, my lady, we considered it all well amongst us."

"We should feel deeply grateful, sir, to know how far this family has occupied your kind solicitude. But proceed."

"If the knight doesn't like to vote with the Government, of course there is no use in Bob doing it—so he'll be a patriot, my lady—and why not? Ha! ha! ha! they'll be breaking the windows all over Dublin, and he may as well save the glass!—ay!"

"Forgive me, sir, if I cannot see how this has any reference to my family."

"I'm coming to it—coming fast, my lady. We were thinking then how we could help the knight, and do a good turn to ourselves, and the way we hit upon was this—to reduce the interest on the whole debt to five per cent., make a settlement of half the amount on Miss Darcy, and then, if the young lady had no objection to my grandson, Beecham—"

"Stop, sir," said Lady Eleanor; "I never could suppose you meant to offend me intentionally, I cannot permit of your doing so through inadvertence or ignorance. I will, therefore, request that this conversation may cease. Age has many privileges, Mr. Hickman, but there are some it can never confer; one of these is the right to insult a lady and—a mother."

The last words were sobbed rather than spoken: affection and pride, both outraged together, almost choked her utterance, and Lady Eleanor sat down trembling in every limb, while the old man, only half-conscious of the emotion he had evoked, peered at her in stolid amazement through his spectacles. Any one who knew nothing of Old Hickman's character might well have pitied his perplexity at that moment; doubts of every kind and sort passed through his mind as rapidly as his timeworn faculties permitted, and, at last, he settled down into the conviction that Lady Eleanor might have thought his demand respecting fortune too exorbitant, although not deeming the proposition, in other respects, ineligible. To this conclusion the habits of his own mind insensibly disposed him.

"Ay, my lady," said he, after a pause, "'tis a deal of money, no doubt, but it won't be going out of the family, and that's more than could be said if you refuse the offer."

"Sir!" exclaimed Lady Eleanor, in a tone that to any one less obtusely endowed would have been an appeal not requiring repetition; but the old man had only senses for his own views, and went on:

"They tell me that Mr. Lionel is just as free with his money as his father; throws it out with both hands, horse-racing and high play, and every extravagance he can think of. Well, and if that's true, my lady, sure its well worth while to think that you'll have a decent house to put your head under when your daughter's married to Beecham. He has no wasteful ways, but can look after the main chance, as well as any boy ever I seen. This notion about Miss Helen is the only thing like expense I ever knew him take up, and sure—here

he dropped his voice to soliloquy—"sure, maybe, that same will pay well after all—ay!"

"My head! my head is bursting with blood," sighed Lady Eleanor; but the last words alone reached Hickman's ears.

"Ay! blood's a fine thing, no doubt of it, but faith, it won't pay interest on a mortgage; nor I never heard of it staying the execution of a writ! 'Tis little good blood I had in my veins, and yet I contrived to scrape a trifle together notwithstanding—ay!"

"I do not feel myself very well, Mr. Hickman," said Lady Eleanor; "may I request you will send my daughter to me, and excuse me if I wish you a good-morning."

"Shall I hint anything to the young lady about what we were saying?" said he in a tone of most confidential import.

"At your peril, sir!" said Lady Eleanor, with a look that at once seemed to transfix him; and the old man, muttering his adieu, hobbled from the room, while Lady Eleanor leaned back in her chair, overcome by the conflict of her emotions.

"Is he gone?" said Lady Eleanor, faintly, as her daughter entered.

"Yes, mamma; but are you ill? you look dreadfully pale and agitated."

"Wearied—fatigued, my dear, nothing more. Tell Captain Forester I must release him from his engagement to us to-day. I cannot come to dinner." And so saying, she covered her eyes with her hand, and seemed lost in deep thought.

CHAPTER XIV.

"THE MECHANISM OF CORRUPTION."

"WELL, Heffernan," said Lord Castlereagh, as they sat over their wine alone in a small dining-room of the secretary's lodge—"well, even with Hackett, we shall be run close. I don't fancy the thought of another division so nearly matched; our fellows don't see the honor of a Thermopylæ."

"Very true, my lord; and the desertions are numerous; as they always will be, when men receive the bounty before they are enlisted."

"Yes; but what would you do? We make a man a commissioner or a sinecurist for his vote—he vacates his seat on taking office; and, instead of standing the brunt of another election, coolly says, 'That, differing as he must do from his constitu-

ents on an important measure, he restores the trust they had committed into his hands—'"

"He hopes unsullied—don't forget that, my lord."

"Yes—'he hopes unsullied—and prefers to retire from the active career of politics, carrying with him the esteem and regard of his former friends, rather than endanger their good opinion by supporting measures to which they are conscientiously opposed.'"

"Felicitous conjuncture, that unites patriotism and profit!" exclaimed Heffernan. "Happy man, that can draw tears from the mob and two thousand a year from the treasury!"

"And yet I see no remedy for it," sighed the secretary.

"There is one, notwithstanding; but it demands considerable address and skill. You have always been too solicitous about the estimation the men you bought were held in—always thinking of what would be said and thought of them. You pushed the system so far, that the fellows themselves caught up the delusion, and began to fancy they had characters to lose. All this was wrong—radically, thoroughly wrong. When the butcher smears a red streak round a lamb's neck—we call it 'raddling' in Ireland, my lord—any child knows he's destined for the knife; now, when you 'raddled' your flock, you wanted the world to believe you were going to make pets of them, and you said as much and so often, that the beasts themselves believed it and began cutting their gambols accordingly. Why not have paraded them openly to the shambles? It was their bleating you wanted, and nothing else."

"You forget, Heffernan, how many men would have refused our offers, if we had not made a show, at least, of respect for their scruples."

"I don't think so, my lord; you offered a bonus on prudery, and hence you met nothing but coyness. I'd have taken another line with them."

"And what might that be?" asked Lord Castlereagh, eagerly.

"COMPROMISE THEM," said Heffernan, sternly. "I never knew the man yet, nor woman either, that you couldn't place in such a position of entanglement, that every effort to go right should seem a struggle to do wrong, and *vice versa*. You don't agree with me! Well, my lord, I ask you, if, in your experience of public men, you have ever met one less likely to be captured in this way than my friend Darey?"

"From what I have seen and heard of

the Knight of Gwynne, I acknowledge his character has all those elements of frankness and candor which should except him from such an embarrassment."

"Well, he's in the net already," said Heffernan, rubbing his hands gleefully.

"Why, you told me he refused to join us, and actually saw through your negotiation."

"So he did, and, in return for his keensightedness, I've COMPROMISED HIM with his party—you didn't perceive it, but the trick succeeded to perfection. When the knight told me that he would not vote on the Union, or any measure pertaining to it, I waited for Ponsonby's motion, and made Holmes and Dawson spread the rumor at Daly's, and through town, that Darcy was to speak on the division, well knowing he would not rise. About eleven o'clock, just as Toler sat down, Prendergast got up to reply, but there was a shout of 'Darcy! Darcy!' and Prendergast resumed his seat amid great confusion. At that moment I left the bench beside you, and walked over to Darcy's side, of the house, and whispered a few words in his ear—an invitation to sup, I believe it was—but while he was answering me, I nodded toward you, and, as I went down the steps, muttered loud enough to be heard, 'All right!' Every eye was turned at once toward him, and he, having no intention of speaking, nor having made any preparation, felt both confused and amazed, and left the house about five minutes afterward, while Prendergast was bungling out his tiresome reply. Before Darcy reached the club house, the report was current that he was bought, and old Gillespie was circumstantially recounting how that his title was 'Lord Darcy in England'—'Baron Gwynne in that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland.'"

"Not even success, Heffernan," said the secretary, with an air of severity—"not even success will excuse a trick of this kind."

Heffernan looked steadily toward him, as if he half doubted the sincerity of the speech; it seemed something above or beyond his comprehension.

"Yes," said Lord Castlereagh, "you heard me quite correctly. I repeat it, advantages obtained in this fashion are too dearly purchased."

"What an admirable actor John Kemble is, my lord," said Heffernan, with a quiet smile; "don't you think so?"

Lord Castlereagh nodded his assent: the transition was too abrupt to please him, and he appeared to suspect that it conceal-

ed some other object than that of changing the topic.

"Kemble," continued Heffernan, while he sipped his wine carelessly—"Kemble is, I suspect strongly, the greatest actor we have ever had on the English stage. Have you seen him in 'Macbeth?'"

"Several times, and always with renewed pleasure," said the secretary, gradually recovering from his reserve.

"What a force of passion he throws into the part! How terrible he makes the conflict between a great purpose and a weak nature! Do you remember his horror at the murderers who come to tell of Banquo's death? The sight of their bloody hands shocks him, as though they were not the evidences of his own success."

Lord Castlereagh's calm countenance became for a second crimson, and his lip trembled with struggling indignation, and then, as if subduing the temptation of anger, he broke into a low, easy laugh, and with an imitation of Kemble's manner, called out, "There's blood upon thy face!"

"Talking of a bloody hand, my lord," said Heffernan, at once resuming his former easy jocularly, "reminds me of that Mr. Hickman, or Hickman O'Reilly, as the fashion is to call him; is he to have his baronetcy?"

"Not, certainly, if we can secure him without it."

"And I think we ought. It should be quite sufficient remuneration for a man like him to vote with the Government; his father became a Protestant because it was the gentlemanly faith, and I don't see why the son should not choose his politics on the same principle. Have you ever asked him to dinner, my lord?"

"Yes, and his father too. I have had the three generations, but I rather fear the party did not go off well. I had not in those days, Heffernan, the benefit of your admirable counsels, and picked my company unwisely."

"A great mistake with such men as these," said Heffernan, oracularly; "the guests should have been the cream of your lordship's noble acquaintance. I'd have had an earl and a marquis at either side of each of them; I'd have turned their heads with noble names, and pelted them with the peerage the whole time of dinner; when he had taken wine with a chamberlain and some lords in waiting, if your lordship would only address him, in a voice loud to be heard, as 'O'Reilly,' referring to him on a point of sporting etiquette or country gentleman's life, I think you might spare the baronetage the honor of his al-

hance. Do you think, on a proper representation, and with due securities against the repetition of the offense, the chancellor would let himself be called 'Clare?'—only for once, remember—because I'm satisfied, if this could be arranged, O'Reilly is yours."

"I'd rather depute you to ask the question," said Lord Castlereagh, laughing; "assuredly I'll not do so myself. But when do these people come to town?—tomorrow, or next day, I suppose."

"On Friday next they will all be here. Old Hickman comes up to receive something like two hundred and twenty thousand pounds—for Darcy has raised the money to pay off the incumbrances—the son is coming for the debate, and the grandson is to be balloted for at Daly's."

"You have made yourself master of all their arrangements, Heffernan; may I ask if they afford you any clue to assisting us in our object?"

"When can you give a dinner, my lord?" said the other.

"Any day after Wednesday; nay, Wednesday itself; I might easily get off Brooke's dinner for that day."

"The sooner the better; time is of great consequence now. Shall we say Wednesday?"

"Be it so: now for the party."

"A small one; selectness is the type of cordiality. The invitation must be verbal, done in your own admirable way: 'Don't be late, gentlemen, for Beerhaven and Drogheda are to meet you, and you know they sold if the soup suffers'—something in that style. Now let us see who are our men."

"Begin with Beerhaven and Drogheda, they are sure cards."

"Well, then, Massey Hamilton—but he's only a commoner—to be sure his uncle's a duke, but, confound him, he never talks of him! I must draw him out about the Highlands and deer stalking, and the Christmas revels at Clanshattaghan; he's three—Kilgoff four; he's first-rate, and will discuss his noble descent till his carriage is announced. Loughdooner, five—"

"He's another bore, Heffernan."

"I know he is, my lord; but he has seven daughters, and will consequently make up to young Beecham, who is a great prize in the wheel matrimonial. We shall want a bishop to say grace; I think Dunmore is the man; he is the last of your lordship's making, and can't refuse a short invitation."

"Six, and the three Hickmans nine, and ourselves eleven; now for the twelfth—"

"Darcy, of course," said Heffernan; "he must be asked, and, if possible, induced to come; Hickman O'Reilly will be far more easily managed if we make him suppose that we have already secured Darcy ourselves."

"He'll decline, Heffernan; depend upon it, he'll not come."

"You think he saw through my *ruse* in the House—not a bit of it; he is the least suspecting man in Ireland, and I'll make that very circumstance the reason of his coming. Hint to him that rumor says he is coquetting with the Government, and he'll go any lengths to brave public opinion by confronting it; that's Darcy, or I'm much mistaken in my man, and to say truth, my lord, it's an error I rarely fall into." A smile of self-satisfaction lit up Heffernan's features as he spoke; for, like many cunning people, his weak point was vanity.

"You may call me as a witness to character whenever you please," said Lord Castlereagh, who, in indulging the self-glorification of the other, was now taking his own revenge; "you certainly knew Upton better than I did."

"Depend upon it," said Heffernan, as he leaned back in his chair, and delivered his words in a tone of authority—"depend upon it, the great events of life never betray the man; it is the small, every-day dropping occurrences both make him and mar him. I made Upton my friend for life by missing a woodcock he aimed at; *he* brought down the bird, and *I* bagged the sportsman. Ah! my lord, the real science of life is knowing how to be, gracefully, in the wrong; how to make those slips that reflect on your own prudence, by exhibiting the superior wisdom of your acquaintances. Of the men who compassionate your folly or deplore your weakness, you may borrow money; from the fellows who envy your abilities and extol your capacity you'll never get sixpence."

"How came it, Heffernan, that you never took office?" said Lord Castlereagh, suddenly, as if the idea forced itself abruptly upon him.

"I'll tell you, my lord," replied Heffernan, speaking in a lower tone, and as if imparting a deep secret, "they could not spare me—that's the real fact—they could not spare me. Reflect, for a moment, what kind of thing the Government of Ireland is; see the difficulty, nay, the impossibility of any set of men arriving here fresh from England being able to find out their way, or make any guess at the leading characters about them; every retiring official

likes to embarrass his successor—that's all natural and fair; then, what a mass of blunders and mistakes await the newly come viceroy or secretary! In the midst of the bleak expanse of pathless waste I was the sign-post. The new players, who took up the cards when the game was half over, could know nothing of what trumps were in, or what tricks were taken. I was there to tell them all; they soon saw that I could do this; and they also saw that I wanted nothing from any party."

"That must be confessed on every hand, Heffernan. Never was support more generous and independent than yours! and the subject reminds me of a namesake. and, as I hear, a nephew of yours, the Reverend Joshua Heffernan—is not that the name?"

"It is, my lord, my nephew; but I'm not aware of having asked anything for him; I never—"

"But I did, Heffernan, and I do. He shall have the living of Drumslade; I spoke to the lord-lieutenant about it yesterday. There is a hitch somewhere, but we'll get over it."

"What may be the obstacle you allude to?" said Heffernan, with more anxiety than he wished to evince.

"Lord Killgobbin says the presentation was promised to his brother, for his influence over Rochfort."

"Not a bit of it, my lord. It was I secured Rochfort. The case was this. He is separated from his wife Lady Mary, who had a life annuity chargeable on Rochfort's pension from the Ordnance. Cook enabled me to get him twelve thousand pounds on the secret service list, provided he surrendered the pension. Rochfort was only too happy to do so, because it would spite his wife; and the next gazette announced 'that the member for Dunraven had declared his intention of voting with the Government, but, to prevent even the breath of slander on his motives, had surrendered his retiring pension as a Storekeeper-General.' There never was a finer theme for editorial panegyric, and in good sooth your lordship's press made the most of it. What a patriot!"

"What a scoundrel!" muttered Lord Castlereagh; and it would have puzzled a listener, had there been one, to say on whom the epithet was conferred.

"As for Killgobbin or his brother having influence over Rochfort, it's all absurd. Why, my lord, it was that same brother married Rochfort to Lady Mary."

"That is conclusive," said Lord Castlereagh, laughing.

"Faith, I think so," rejoined Heffernan;

"if you do recover after being hanged, I don't see that you want to make a friend of the fellow that pinioned your hands in the 'press-room.' If there's no other reason against Jos's promotion than this—"

"If there were, I'd endeavor to overcome it," said Lord Castlereagh. "Won't you take more wine?—pray let us have another bottle."

"No more, my lord; it's only in such safe company I ever drink so freely," said Heffernan, laughing, as he rose to say "good-night."

"You'll take measures for Wednesday, then; that is agreed upon?"

"All settled," said Heffernan, as he left the room. "Good-by."

"There's a building debt on that same living of seventeen hundred pounds," said Lord Castlereagh, musing; "I'll easily satisfy Killgobbin that we mean to do better for his brother."

"Take office, indeed!" muttered Heffernan, as he lay back in his carriage; "there's something better than that, governing the men that hold office, holding the reins, pocketing the fare, and never paying the breakage when the coach upsets. No, no, my lord, you are a clever fellow for your years, but you must live longer before you measure Con Heffernan."

CHAPTER XV.

THE KNIGHT'S NOTIONS OF FINANCE.

HEFFERNAN'S calculations were all correct, and the knight accepted Lord Castlereagh's invitation, simply because rumor attributed to him an alliance with the Government. "It is a pity," said he, laughing, "so much good calumny should have so little to feed upon, so here goes to give it something."

Darey had as little time as inclination to waste on the topic, as the whole interval was occupied in law business with Gleeson, who arrived each morning with a chariot full of parchments, and almost worried the knight to death by reciting deeds and indentures, to one word of which throughout he could not pay the least attention. He affected to listen, however, as he saw how much Gleeson desired it, and he wrote his name everywhere and to everything he was asked.

"By Jove!" cried he, at last, "I could have run through the whole estate with less fatigue of mind or body than it has cost me to keep a hold of it."

Through all the arrangements, there was but one point on which he felt anxious, and the same question recurred at every moment, "This cannot compromise Lionel in any way?—this will lead to no future charge upon the estate after my death?" Indeed, he would not consent to any plan which in the slightest degree affected his son's interests, being determined that whatever his extravagances, the penalty should end with himself.

While these matters were progressing, old Hickman studiously avoided meeting the knight; a sense of his discomfiture at the abbey—a fact he supposed must have reached Darcy's ears—and the conviction that his long cherished game to obtain the property was seen through, abashed the old man, and led him to affect illness when the knight called.

A pleasant letter which the post had brought from Lionel routed every other consideration from Darcy's mind. His son was coming over to see him, and bringing three or four of his brother officers to have a peep at "the West," and a few days' hunting with the knight's pack. Every line of this letter glowed with buoyancy and high spirits; schemes for amusement alternating with the anticipated amazement of his English friends at the style of living they were to witness at Gwynne Abbey.

"We shall have but eight days with you, my leave from the prince will go no further," wrote he, "but I know well how much may be done in that short space. Above all, secure Daly; I wish our fellows to see him particularly. I do not ask about the stable, because I know the horses are always in condition; but let Dan give the black horse plenty of work every day; and if the brown mare we got from Mullock can be ridden by any one, she must have a saddle on her now. We hope to have four days' hunting; and let the woodcocks take care of themselves in the intervals, for we are bent on massacre."

The postscript was brief, but it surprised Darcy more than all the rest.

"Only think of my spending four days last week down in Essex with a worthy kinsman of my mother's, Lord Netherby: a splendid place, glorious shooting, and the best greyhounds I ever saw run. He understands everything but horses; but I have taken on me to enlighten him a little, and have sent him down four grays from Guildfords' yesterday, better than any we have in the prince's stables; he is a fine fellow, though I didn't like him at first; a great courtier in his way, but *au fond* warm-hearted and generous. Keep my secret

from my mother, but he intends coming over with us. Adieu! dear father. Look to Forester; don't let him run away before we arrive. Cut Dublin and its confounded politics. Netherby says the ministers have an immense majority—the less reason for swelling or decreasing it.

"Yours ever, LIONEL DARCY."

"And so our trusty and well-beloved cousin of Netherby is coming to visit us," said the knight, musing. "Well, Lionel. I confess myself half of your mind. I did not like him at first—the better impression is yet to come. In any case, let us receive him suitably; and, fortunately, here's Gleeson to help the arrangement. Well, Gleeson, I hope matters are making some progress. Are we to see the last of these parchments soon? Here's a letter from my son. Read it, and you'll see I must get back to 'the West' at once."

Gleeson perused the letter, and when he had finished, returned it into the knight's hand without speaking.

"Can we conclude this week?" asked Darcy.

"There are several points yet, sir, of great difficulty. Some I have already submitted for counsel's opinion; one in particular, as regards the serving of notice of repayment—there would appear to be a doubt on this head."

"There can be none in reality," said Darcy, hastily. "I have Hickman's letter, in his own handwriting, averring his readiness to release the mortgage at any day."

"Is the document witnessed, and on a stamp?" asked Gleeson, cautiously.

"Of course it is not. Those are scarcely the forms of a note between two private gentlemen."

"It might of use in equity, no doubt," muttered Gleeson, "or before a jury; but we have no time for these considerations now. The attorney-general thinks—"

"Never mind the attorney-general. Have we the money to repay? Well, does Hickman refuse to accept it?"

"He has not been asked, as yet, sir," said Gleeson, whose business notions were not a little ruffled by this abrupt mode of procedure.

"And, in Heaven's name! Gleeson, why pester yourself and me with overcoming obstacles that may never arise? Wait on Hickman at once—to-day. Tell him we are prepared and desirous of paying off these incumbrances. If he objects, hear his objection."

"He will refer me to his solicitor, sir—Mr. Kennedy, of Hume street—a very re-

spectable man, no higher in the profession, but I may remark, in confidence, one who has no objection to a suit in equity or a trial at bar. It is not money Hickman wants, sir. He is perfectly satisfied with his security."

"What the devil is it, then? He's not Shylock, is he?" said Darcy, laughing.

"Not very unlike, perhaps, sir; but in the present instance, it is your influence with the Government he desires."

"But I have none, Gleeson--actually none. No man knows that better than you. I could not make a gauger or a tide-waiter to-morrow."

"But you might, sir--you might make a peer of the realm if you wished it. Hickman knows this; and whatever scruples *you* might have in adopting the necessary steps, *his* conscience could never recognize them as worthy a moment's consideration."

"This is a topic I'll scarcely discuss with him," said the knight, proudly. "I never, so far as I know, promised to pay a percentage in my principles as well as in my gold. Mr. Hickman has a fair claim on the one; on the other, neither he nor any other man shall make an unjust demand. I am not of Christie Ford's mind," added he, laughingly. "He says, Gleeson, that if the English are bent on taking away *our* parliament, the only revenge we have left is to spoil *their* peerage. This is but a sorry theme to joke upon, after all; and to come back, what say you to trying my plan? I am to meet the old fellow at dinner, on Wednesday next, at Lord Castlereagh's."

"Indeed, sir!" said Gleeson, with a mixture of surprise and agitation greatly disproportioned to the intelligence.

"Yes. Why does that astonish you? The secretary is too shrewd to neglect such men as these; they are the rising influences of Ireland."

Gleeson muttered a half assent, but evidently too much occupied with his own reflections to pay due attention to the knight's remark, continued to himself, "On Wednesday!" then added aloud, "On Monday he is to be in Kildare. He told me he would remain there to receive his rents, and on Wednesday return to town. I believe, sir, there may be good counsel in your words. I'll try on Monday. I'll follow him down to Kildare, and as the papers relative to the abbey property are all in readiness, I'll endeavor to conclude that at once. So, you are to meet at dinner?"

"That same dinner-party seems to puzzle you," said the knight, smiling.

"No, not at all, sir," replied Gleeson, hurriedly. "You were desirous of getting

home next week to meet Mr. Lionel--Captain Darcy I must call him; if this arrangement can be made, there will be no difficulty in your return. But of course you'll not leave town before it is completed."

The knight pledged himself to be guided by his man of business in all respects; but when they parted, he could not conceal from himself that Gleeson's agitated and troubled manner, so very unlike his usual calm deportment, boded difficulties and embarrassments which to his own eyes were invisible.

CHAPTER XVI.

A HURRIED VISIT.

It was on a severe night, with frequent gusts of stormy wind shaking the doors and window-frames, or carrying along the drifted flakes of snow with which the air was charged, that Lady Eleanor, her daughter, and Forester, were seated round the fire. All the appliances of in-door comfort by which they were surrounded seemed insufficient to dispel a sense of sadness that pervaded the little party. Conversation flowed not, as it was wont, in its pleasant current, diverging here and there as fancy or caprice suggested; the sentences were few and brief, the pauses between them long and frequent; a feeling of awkwardness, too, mingled with the gloom, for, at intervals, each would make an endeavor to relieve the weariness of time, and, in the effort, show a consciousness of the constraint.

Lady Eleanor lay back in her deep chair, and, with half-closed lids, seemed lost in thought. Helen was working at her embroidery, and, apparently, diligently too, although a shrewd observer might have remarked on the slow progress the work was making, and how inevitably her balls of colored worsted seemed bent on entanglement; while Forester sat silently gazing on the wood fire, and watching the bright sparks as they flitted and danced above the red flame; his brow was clouded, and his look sorrowful; not without reason, perhaps; it was to be his last evening at the abbey--the last of those hours of happiness which seemed all the fairer when about to part with them forever.

Lady Eleanor seemed grieved at his approaching departure. From the habit of his mind, and the nature of his education, he was more companionable to her than Lionel. She saw in him many qualities of high and sterling value, and even in his prejudices she could trace back several of

those traits which marked her own youth, when, in the pride of her English breeding, she would tolerate no deviation from the habits of her own country. It was true, many of these notions had given way since his residence at the abbey; many of his opinions had undergone modification or change, but still he was distinctively English.

Helen, who possessed no standard by which to measure such prejudices, was far less indulgent toward them; her joyous, happy nature—the heirloom of her father's house—led her rather to jest than argue on these topics, and she contrasted the less apt and ready apprehension of Forester with the native quickness of her brother Lionel, disadvantageously to the former. She was sorry, too, that he was going; more so, because his society was so pleasing to her mother, and that, before him, Lady Eleanor exerted herself in a way which eventually reacted favorably on her own health and spirits. Further than this, her interest in him was weak.

Not so Forester: he was hopelessly, inextricably in love, not the less so, that he would not acknowledge it to himself; far more so, because he had made no impression on the object of his passion. There is a period in every story of affection when the flame grows the brighter, because unreflected, and seems the more concentrated, because unreturned. Forester was in this precise stage of the malady; he was as much piqued by the indifference, as fascinated by the charms of Helen Darcy. The very exertions he made for victory stimulated his own passion; while, in her efforts to interest or amuse him, he could not help feeling the evidence of her indifference to him.

We have said that the conversation was broken and interrupted; at length it almost ceased altogether, a stray remark of Lady Eleanor's, followed by a short reply from Forester, alone breaking the silence. Nor were these always very pertinent, inasmuch as the young aid-de-camp occasionally answered his own reflections, and not the queries of his hostess.

"An interesting time in Dublin; no doubt," said Lady Eleanor, half talking to herself; "for though the forces are unequal, and victory and defeat predestined, there will be a struggle still."

"Yes, madam, a brief one," answered Forester, dreamily, comprehending only a part of her remark.

"A brief and a vain one," echoed Lady Eleanor.

"Say, rather, a glorious one!" inter-

posed Helen; "the last cheer of a sinking crew!"

Forester looked up, startled into attention by the energy of these few words.

"I should say so, too, Helen," remarked her mother, "if they were not accessory to their own misfortunes."

"Nay, nay, mamma, you must not remember their failings in their hour of distress; there is a noble-hearted minority untainted yet."

"There will be a majority of eighteen," said Forester, whose thoughts were wandering away, while he endeavored to address himself to what he believed they were saying, nor was he aware of his error till aroused by the laughter of Lady Eleanor and her daughter.

"Eighteen!" reiterated he solemnly.

"How few!" remarked Lady Eleanor, almost scornfully.

"You should say, how costly, mamma!" exclaimed Helen. "These gentlemen are as precious from their price as their rarity."

"That is scarcely fair, Miss Darcy," said Forester, at once recalled to himself by the tone of mockery she spoke in; "many adopted the views of Government, after duly weighing every consideration of the measure; some, to my own knowledge, resisted offers of great personal advantage, and Lord Castlereagh was not aware of their adhesion—"

"Till he had them *en poche*, I suppose," said Helen, sarcastically; "just as you have been pleased to do with my ball of yellow worsted, and which I shall be thankful if you will restore to me."

Forester blushed deeply, as he drew from his coat-pocket the worsted, which, in a moment of abstraction, he had lifted from the ground, and thrust into his pocket, without knowing.

Had any moderately shrewd observer witnessed his confusion, and her enjoyment of it, he would easily have understood the precise relation of the two parties to each other. Forester's absence of mind betrayed his engaged affection, as palpably as Helen's laughter did her own indifference.

Lady Eleanor did not remark either; her thoughts still rested on the topic of which they had spoken, for it was a subject of no inconsiderable difficulty to her. Whatever her sense of indignant contempt for the bribed adherents of the ministry, her convictions always inclined to these measures, whose origin was from her native country; her predilections were strongly English; not only her happiest days had been passed there, but she was constantly

contrasting the position they would have occupied and sustained in that favored land against the wasteful and purposelless extravagance of their life in Ireland.

Was it too late to amend? was the question ever rising to her mind; how if even yet the knight should be induced to adopt the more ambitious course? Every accidental circumstance seemed favorable to the notion; the government craving his support; her own relatives, influential as they were from rank and station, soliciting it; the prince himself according favors, which could no more be rejected, than acknowledged ungraciously. "What a career for Lionel! What a future for Helen!" such were reflections that would press themselves upon her, but to whose disentanglement her mind suggested no remedy.

"'Tis Mr. Daly, my lady," said Tate, for something like the fourth time, without being attended to. "'Tis Mr. Daly wants leave to visit you."

"Mr. Bagenal Daly, mamma, wishes to know if you'll receive him?"

"Mr. Daly is exactly the kind of person to suggest this impracticable line of policy," said Lady Eleanor, with half-closed eyes; for the name alone had struck her, and she had not heard what was said.

"My dear mamma," said Helen, rising, and leaning over her chair, "it is a visit he proposes; nothing so very impracticable in that, I hope;" and then, at a gesture from her mother, continued to Tate, "Lady Eleanor will be very happy to see Mr. Daly."

Lady Eleanor had scarcely aroused herself from her reverie, when Bagenal Daly entered. His manner was stately, perhaps somewhat colder than usual, and he took his seat with an air of formal politeness.

"I have come, my lady," said he, slowly, "to learn if I can be of any service in the capital; unexpected news has just reached me, requiring my immediate departure for Dublin."

"Not to-night, sir, I hope; it is very severe, and likely, I fear, to continue so."

"To-night, madam; within an hour, I expect to be on the road."

"Could you defer a little longer, and we may be fellow-travelers," said Forester; "I was to start to-morrow morning, but my packing can soon be made."

"I should hope," said Lady Eleanor, smiling, "that you will not leave us unprotected, gentlemen; and that one, at least, will remain here." This speech, apparently addressed to both, was specially intended for Forester, whose cheek tingled with a flush of pleasure as he heard it.

"I have no doubt, madam, that Captain Forester, whose age and profession are more in accordance with gallantry, will respond to your desire."

"If I could really fancy that I was not yielding to my own wishes only," stammered out Forester.

"Nay, I make it a request."

"There, sir, how happy to be entreated to what one's wishes incline them," added Daly; "you may go through a deal of life without being twice so fortunate. I should apologize for so brief a notice of my departure, Lady Eleanor, but the intelligence I have received is pressing;" here he dropped his voice to a whisper, "the ministers have hurried forward their bill, and I shall scarcely be in time for the second reading."

"All accounts agree in saying that the Government majority is certain," observed Lady Eleanor, calmly.

"It is to be feared, madam, that such rumors are well founded, but the party who form the forlorn hope have their devoirs also."

"I am a very indifferent politician, Mr. Daly, but it strikes me, that a body so manifestly corrupt, give the strongest possible reasons for their own destruction."

"Were they all so, madam, I should join in the sentiment as freely as you utter it," replied Daly, proudly; "but it is a heavy sentence that would condemn the whole crew because there was a mutiny in the steerage; besides, these rights and privileges are held only in trust; no man can in honor or justice vote away that of which he is only the temporary occupant; forgive me, I beg, for daring to discuss the topic, but I thought the knight had made you a convert to his own opinions."

"We have never spoken on the subject, Mr. Daly," replied Lady Eleanor, coldly; "the knight dislikes the intrusion of a political matter within the circle of his family, and for that reason, perhaps," added she, with a smile, "my daughter and myself feel for it all the temptation of a forbidden pleasure."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Helen, who heard the last few words of her mother's speech, "I am as violent a partisan as Mr. Daly could ask for; indeed, I am not certain if all my doctrines are not of his own teaching: I fear the premier, distrust the cabinet, and put no faith in the secretary for Ireland; is not that the first article of our creed?—nay, nay, fear was no part of your instruction."

"And yet I have fears, my dear Helen, and very great fears just now," said Daly, in a low whisper, only audible by herself,

and she turned her full and beaming eyes upon him for an explanation. As if anxious to escape the interrogatory, Daly arose hastily. "I must crave your indulgence for an abrupt leave-taking, Lady Eleanor," said he, approaching, as he kissed the hand held out to him; "I shall be able to tell the knight that I left you both well, and under safe protection. Captain Forester, adieu; you need no admonition of mine respecting your charge;" and, with a low and courtly salute, he departed.

"Rely upon it, Captain Forester, he's bent on mischief now. I never saw him particularly mild and quiet in his manner, that it was not the prelude to some desperate ebullition," said Lady Eleanor.

"He is the very strangest of all mortals."

"Say, the most single-minded and straightforward," interposed Helen, "and I'll agree with you."

"When men of strong minds and ambitious views are curbed and held in within the petty sphere of a small social circle, they are, to my thinking, intolerable. It is making a drawing-room pet of a tiger; every step he takes upsets a vase, or smashes a jar. You smile at my simile."

"I'm sure it's a most happy one," said Forester, continuing.

"I enter a dissent," cried Helen, playfully. "He's a tiger, if you will, with his foes, but, in all the relations of private life, gentleness itself; for my part, I can imagine no more pleasing contrast to the modern code of manners than Mr. Bagenal Daly."

"There, Captain Forester, if you would win Miss Darcy's favor, you have now the model for your imitation."

Forester's face flushed, and he appeared overwhelmed with confusion, while Helen went on with her embroidery, tranquil as before.

"I believe," resumed Lady Eleanor—"I believe, after all, I am unjust to him; but much may be forgiven me for being so; he has made my son a wild, thoughtless boy, and my daughter—"

"No indiscretions, mamma," cried Helen, holding up her hand.

"Well, he has made my daughter telle que vous la voyez."

Forester was too well bred to venture on a word of flattery or compliment, but his glowing color and sparkling eyes spoke his admiration.

Lady Eleanor's quick glance remarked this; and, as if the thought had never occurred before, she seemed amazed, either at the fact, or at her own previous inattention.

"Let us finish that second volume you were reading, Captain Forester," said she, glad to cut short the discussion. And, without a word, he took the book and began to read.

CHAPTER XVII.

BAGENAL DALY'S JOURNEY TO DUBLIN.

It is not our desire to practice any mystery with our reader, nor would the present occasion warrant such. Mr. Daly's hurried departure for Dublin was caused by the receipt of tidings which had that morning reached him, conveying the startling intelligence that his friend the knight had accepted terms from the Government, and pledged himself to support their favored measure.

It was a time when men were accustomed to witness the most flagrant breaches of honor and good faith. No station was too high to be above the reach of this reproach, no position too humble not to make its possessor a mark for corruption. It was an epidemic of dishonesty, and people ceased to wonder, as they heard of each new victim to the malady.

Bagenal Daly well knew that no man could be more exempt from an imputation of this nature than the Knight of Gwynne; every act of his life, every sentiment he professed, every trait of his character, flatly contradicted the supposition. But he also knew that though Darcy was unassailable by all the temptations of bribery, come in what shape they might, that his frank and generous spirit would expose him to the stratagems and devices of a wily and insidious party, and that if, by any accident, an expression should fall from him in all the freedom of convivial enjoyment that could be tortured into even the resemblance of a pledge, he well knew that his friend would deem any sacrifice of personal feeling light in the balance, rather than not adhere to it.

Resolved not to lose a moment, he dispatched Sandy to order horses along the line, and having passed the remainder of the day in the preparations for his departure, he left the abbey before midnight. A less determined traveler might have hesitated on setting out in such a night: the long menacing storm had at length burst forth, and the air resounded with a chaos of noise, amid which, the roaring breakers and the crash of falling trees were uppermost; with difficulty the horses were enabled to keep their feet, as the sea washed





PHOTO-ELECTROTYPED BY G. W. W.

heavily over the wall, and deluged the road, while at intervals the fallen timber obstructed the way, and delayed his progress. Difficulty was, however, the most enjoyable stimulant to Daly's nature; he loved an obstacle as other men love a pleasure, and, as he grew older, so far from yielding to the indolence of years, his hardy spirit seemed to revel in the thought, that amid dangers and perils his whole life had been passed, yet never had he suffered himself to be a beaten enemy.

The whole of that night, and all the following day, the violence of the storm was unabated; uprooted trees and wrecked villages met his eye as he passed, while, in the larger towns, the houses were strongly barred and shuttered, and scarcely one living thing to be seen through the streets. Nothing short of the united influence of bribery and intimidation could procure horses in such a season, and had any messenger of less sturdy pretensions than honest Sandy been dispatched to order them, they would have been flatly refused. Bagenal Daly and his man were, however, too well known in that part of Ireland to make such a course advisable, and though postboys and hostlers condoled together, the signal of Daly's appearance silenced every thought of opposition, and the words "I'm ready!" were an order to dash forward none dared to disobey.

So had it continued until he reached Moate, where he found a message from Sandy, informing him that no horses could be procured, and that he must bring on those from Athlone the entire way to Kilbeggan.

"You hear me," cried Daly to the astonished postboy, who, for the last two miles, had spared neither whip nor spur, in the glad anticipation of a speedy shelter—"you hear me. To Kilbeggan."

"Oh, begorra! that's impossible, yer honor. If it was the month of May, and the road was a bowling-green, the bastes couldn't do it."

"Go on!" cried Daly, shutting up the glass, and throwing himself back in the chaise.

But the postboy only buttoned up the collar of his coat around his face, thrust his whip into his boot, and drawing his sleeves over his hands, sat a perfect picture of fatalism.

"I say, go on!" shouted Daly, as he lowered the front window of the chaise.

A low muttering from the driver, still impassive as before, was all the reply, and at the same instant a sharp report was heard, and a pistol bullet whizzed beside his hat.

"Will you go *now*?" cried Bagenal Daly, as he leveled another weapon on the window: but no second entreaty was necessary, and with his head bent down almost to the mane, and with a mingled cry for mercy and imprecation together, he drove the spurs into his jaded beast, and whipped with all his might through the almost deserted town. With the despairing energy of one who felt his life was in peril, the wretched postboy hurried madly forward, urging the tired animals up the hills, and caring neither for rut nor hollow in his onward course, till at length, blown and exhausted, the animals came to a dead stand, and with heaving flanks and outstretched forelegs, refused to budge a step farther.

"There!" cried the postboy, as dropping from the saddle he fell on his knees upon the road, "shoot, and be d—d to you. I can do no more."

The terrified expression of the fellow's face, as the lamp of the chaise threw its light upon him, seemed to change the current of Daly's thoughts, for he laughed loud and heartily as he looked upon him.

"Come, come," said he, good-humoredly, "is not that Kilbeggan where I see the lights yonder?"

"Sorra bit of it," sighed the other, "it is only Horseleap."

"Well, push on to Horseleap, perhaps they've horses there."

"Begorra! you might as well look for black tay in a bog hole; 'tis a poor 'she-been' is the only thing in the village;" and, so saying, he took the bridle on his arm, and walked along before the horses, who with drooping heads tottered after at a foot's pace.

About half an hour of such traveling brought Daly in front of a miserable cabin, over the door of which a creaking sign proclaimed accommodation for man and beast. To the partial truth of this statement the bright glare of a fire that shone between the chinks of the shutters bore witness, and disengaging himself from the chaise Daly knocked loudly for admission. There are few less conciliating sounds to the ears of a hot-tempered man than those hesitating whispers which, while exposed to a storm himself, he hears deliberating on the question of his admission. Such were the mutterings Daly now listened to, and to which he was about to reply by forcing his entrance, when the door was opened by a man in the dress of a peasant, who somewhat sulkily demanded what he wanted.

"Horses, if you have them, to reach Kilbeggan," said Daly, "and if you have not,

a good fire and shelter until they can be procured ;" and, as he spoke, he pushed past the man, and entered the room from which the blazing light proceeded.

With his back to the fire, and hands thrust carelessly into the pockets of his coat, stood a man of eight-and-thirty or forty years of age ; in dress, air, and appearance, he might have been taken for a country horse-dealer ; and so, indeed, his well-worn top-boots and green coat, cut in jockey fashion, seemed to bespeak him. He was rather under the middle size, but powerfully built, his wide chest, long arms, and bowed legs, all indicating the possession of that strength which is never the accompaniment of more perfect symmetry.

Although Daly's appearance unquestionably proclaimed his class in life, the other exhibited no mark of deference or respect to him as he entered, but maintained his position with the same easy indifference as at first.

"You make yourself at home here, good friend, if one might judge from the way you knocked at the door," said he, addressing Daly with a look whose easy familiarity was itself an impertinence.

"I have yet to learn," said Daly, sternly, "that a gentleman must practice any peculiar ceremony when seeking the shelter of a 'shebeen,' not to speak of the right by which such as you address me as your good friend."

An insolent laugh, that Daly fancied was re-echoed by some one without, was the first reply to this speech ; when, after a few minutes, the man added, "I see you're a stranger in these parts."

"If I had not been so, the chance is I should have taught you somewhat better manners before this time. Move aside, sir, and let me see the fire."

But the other never budged in the slightest, standing in the same easy posture as before.

Daly's dark face grew darker, and his heavy brows met in a deep frown, while with a spring that showed no touch of time in his strong frame, he bounded forward, and seized the man by the collar. Few men were Daly's equals in point of strength ; but although he with whom he now grappled made no resistance whatever, Daly never stirred him from the spot, to which he seemed fast and firmly rooted.

"Well, that's enough of it !" said the fellow, as with a rough jerk he freed himself from the grasp, and sent Daly several paces back into the room.

"Not so !" cried Daly, whose passion now boiled over, and drawing a pistol from

his bosom, he leveled it at him. Quick as the motion was, the other was equally ready, for his hand now presented a similar weapon at Daly's head.

"Move aside, or—"

A coarse, insulting laugh drowned Daly's words, and he pulled the trigger, but the pistol snapped without exploding.

"There it is now," cried the fellow, rudely ; "luck's against you, old boy, so you'd better keep yourself cool and easy ;" and with these words he uncocked the weapon, and replaced it in his bosom. Daly watched the moment, and with a bound placed himself beside him, when, bringing his leg in front, he caught the man round the middle, and hurled him headlong on the ground.

He fell as if he had been shot ; but, rolling over, he leaned upon his elbow and looked up, without the slightest sign of passion, or even excitement, on his features.

"I'd know that trip in a thousand ; begad, you're Bagenal Daly, and nobody else !"

Although not a little surprised at the recognition, Daly suffered no sign of astonishment to escape him, but drew his chair to the fire, and stretched out his legs before the blaze. Meanwhile, the other having arisen, leaned over the back of a chair, and stared at him steadfastly.

"I am as glad as a hundred pound note, now, you didn't provoke me to lay a hand on you, Mr. Daly," said he slowly, and in a voice not devoid of a touch of feeling : "'tish't often I bear malice, but I'd never forgive myself the longest day I'd live."

Daly turned his eyes toward him, and, for some minutes, they continued to look at each other without speaking.

"I see you don't remember me, sir," said the stranger, at length ; "but I've a better memory, and a better reason to have it besides—you saved my life once."

"Saved your life !" repeated Daly, thoughtfully ; "I've not the slightest recollection of ever having seen you before."

"It's all true I'm telling, for all that," replied the other ; "and although it happened above five-and-twenty years since, I'm not much changed, they tell me, in look or appearance." He paused at these words, as if to give Daly time to recognize him ; but the effort seemed in vain, as, after a long and patient scrutiny, Daly said, "No, I cannot remember you."

"Let me see, then," said the man, "if I can't refresh your memory. Were you in Dublin in the winter of '75 ?"

"Yes ; I had a house in Stephen's green—"

"And used to drive four black thorough-bred without winkers."

"It's clear that *you* know *me*, at least," said Daly; "go on."

"Well, sir, do you remember, it was about a week before Christmas, that Captain Burke Fitzsimon was robbed of a pair of pistols in the guard-room of the Upper Castle Yard, in noonday, ay, and tied with his own sash to the guard-bed?"

"By Jove! I do. He was regularly laughed out of the regiment."

"Faix, and many that laughed at him mightn't have behaved a deal better than he did," replied the other, with a dogged sternness in his manner. He became silent after these words, and appeared deeply sunk in meditation, when suddenly he drew two splendidly chased pistols from his bosom, and held them out to Daly as he said, "There they are, and as good as they are handsome, true at thirty paces, and never fail."

Daly gazed alternately from the pistols to their owner, but never uttered a word.

"That same day," resumed the man, "you were walking down the quay near the end of Watling street, when there was a cry of 'Stop thief!—stop him!—a hundred guineas to the man who takes him!' and shortly after a man crossed the quay, pursued closely by several people, one of them, and the foremost, being Tom Lambert, the constable, the strongest man they said of his day, in Ireland. The fellow that ran could beat them all, and was doing it too, when, just as he gained Bloody-bridge, he saw a child on the pathway all covered with blood, and a bulldog standing over him worrying him—"

"I have it all," said Daly, interrupting him; "'tis as fresh before me as if it happened yesterday. The robber stopped to save the child, and seizing the bulldog by the throat, hurled him over the wall into the Liffey. Lambert, as you call him, had by this time come close up, and was within two yards of the man, when I, feeling compassion for a fellow that could be generous at such a moment, laid my hand on the constable's arm to stop him; he struck me; but, if he did, he had his reward, for I threw him over the hip on the crown of his head, and he had a brain fever after it that almost brought him to death's door. And where were you all this time, and what were you doing?"

"I was down Barrack street, across the park, and near Knockmaroon gate, before they could find a door to stretch Tom Lambert on."

"You!" said Daly, staring at him,

"why, it was Freney, they told me, performed that exploit for a wager."

"So it was, sir," said the man, standing up and crossing his arms, not without something of pride in his look—"I'm Freney."

Daly arose and gazed at the man with all that curious scrutiny one bestows upon some remarkable object, measuring his strong athletic frame with the eye of a connoisseur, and, as it were, calculating the physical resources of so powerful a figure.

"You see, sir," said the robber, at last, "I was right when I told you that you saved my life; there were thirteen indictments hanging over my head that day, and if I'd been taken they'd have hanged me as round as a turnip."

"You owe it to yourself," said Daly; "had you not stopped for the child, it was just as likely that I'd have tripped you up myself."

"'Tis a feeling I never could get over," said the robber; "'twas a little boy, about the same age as that, that saved the Kells coach the night I stopped it near Dangan. And now, sir, let me ask you what in the world brought you into the village of Horse-leap? for I'm sure," added he, with a laugh, "it was never to look after me."

"You are right there, friend; I'm on my way up to town to be present at the debate in Parliament on the Union—a question that has its interest for yourself too."

"How so, sir," said the other, curiously.

"Plainly enough, man; if they carry the Union, they'll not leave a man worth robbing in the island. You'll have to take to an honest calling, Freney—turn cattle-drover. By the way, they tell me you're a good judge of a horse."

"Except yourself, there's not a better in the island; and if you've no objection, I'll mount and keep you company as far as Maynooth, where you'll easily get horses—and it will be broad daylight by that time—to bring you into Dublin."

"I accept the offer willingly. I'll venture to say we shall not be robbed on the journey."

"Well, sir, the horses won't be here for an hour yet, and if you'll join me in a bit of supper I was going to have when you came in, it will help to pass the time till we are ready to start."

Daly assented, not the less readily that he had not eaten anything since morning, and Freney left the room to hasten the preparations for the meal.

"Come, Freney," said Daly, as the other entered the room a few moments after, "was it the strength of conscious rectitude

that made you stand my fire as you did awhile ago, or did you think me so bad a marksman at four paces?"

"Neither, sir," replied the robber, laughing; "I saw the pan of the lock half open as you drew it from your pocket, and I knew the priming must have fallen out; but for that—"

"You had probably fired, yourself?"

"Just so," rejoined he, with a short nod. "I could have shot you before you leveled at me. Now, sir, here's something far better than burning powder. I am sure you are too old a traveler not to be able to eat a rasher of bacon."

"And this I take to be as free of any allegiance to the king as yourself," said Daly, as he poured out a wine-glassful of "poteen" from a short black bottle.

"You're right, sir," said Freney, with a laugh. "We're both duty free. Let me help you to an egg."

"I never ate better bacon in my life," said Daly, who seemed to relish his supper with considerable gusto.

"I'm glad you like it, sir. It is a notion of mine that Costy Moore of Kileoock cures a pig better than any man in this part of Ireland; and though his shop is next the police-barracks, I went in there myself to buy this."

Daly stared, with something of admiration in his look, at the man, whose epicurism was indulged at the hazard of his neck, and he pledged the robber with a motion of the head that betokened a high sense of his daring. "I've heard you have had some close escapes, Freney."

"I was never taken but once, sir. A woman hid my shoes when I was asleep. I was at the foot of the Galtee mountains; the ground is hard and full of sharp shingle, and I couldn't run. They brought me into Clonmel, and I was in the heaviest irons in the jail before two hours were over. That's the strong jail, Mr. Daly; they've the best walls and the thickest doors there I have ever seen in any jail in Ireland. For," added he, with a sly laugh, "I went over them all, in a friendly sort of a way."

"A kind of professional tour, Freney?"

"Just so, sir; taking a bird's-eye view of the country from the drop, because, maybe, I wouldn't have time for it at another opportunity."

"You're a hardened villain!" said Daly, looking at him with an expression the robber felt to be a finished compliment.

"That's no lie, Mr. Daly; and if I wasn't, could I go on for twenty years, hunted down like a wild beast, with fellows tracking me all day, and lying in watch for

me all night? Where we are sitting now is the only spot in the whole island where I can say I'm safe. This is my brother's cabin."

"Your brother is the same man that opened the door for me?"

Freney nodded, and went on: "He's a poor laboring man, with four acres of wet bog for a farm, and a young woman, in the ague, for a wife, and if it wasn't for myself he'd be starving; and would you believe it, now, he'd not take to the road for one night—just one single night—to be as rich as the Duke of Leinster; and here am I"—and, as he spoke, his chest expanded, and his dark eyes flashed wildly—"here am I, that would rather be on my black mare's back, with my holsters at the saddle, watching the sounds of wheels on a lonely road, than I'd be any gentleman in the land, barring your own self."

"And why me?" said Daly, in a voice whose melancholy cadence made it solemn as a death-bell.

"Just because you're the only man I ever heard tell of that was fond of danger for the fun of it. Didn't I see the leap you took at the Black Lough, just to show the English lord-lieutenant how an Irish gentleman rides, with the rein in your mouth, and your hands behind your back. Isn't that true?"

Daly nodded, and muttered, "I have the old horse still."

"By the good day! I'd spend a week in Newgate to see you on his back."

"Well, Freney," said Daly, who seemed not disposed to encourage a conversation so personal in its allusions, "where have you been lately?—in the south?"

"No, sir; I spent the last fortnight watching an old fox that doubled on me at last—old Hickman, of Loughrea, that used to be."

"Old Hickman!—what of him?" cried Daly, whose interest became at once excited by the mention of the name.

"I found out, sir, that he was to be down here at Kildare to receive his rents—for he owns a fine estate here—and that, besides, Tom Gleeson, the great agent from Dublin, was to meet him, as some said, to pay him a large sum of money for the Knight of Gwynne—some heavy debt, I believe, owing for many a year."

"Yes—go on. What then?"

"Well, I knew the reason Hickman wanted the money here: Lord Tyrawley was going to sell him a part of Gore's Wood, for hard cash—d'ye mind, sir, hard cash—down on the nail, for my lord likes high play at Daly's—"

"D—n Lord Tyrawley!" said Daly, impatiently. "What of Hickman?"

"Well, d—n him too! He's a shabby negur. I stopped him at Ball's-bridge once, and got but three guineas and some shillings for my pains. But to come back to old Hickman: I found he had arrived at the 'Black Dog,' and that Gleeson had come the same evening, and so I disguised myself like an old farmer the next morning, and pretended I wanted his advice about an asthma that I had, just to see the lie of the old premises, and whether he was alone, or had the two bailiffs with him, as usual. There they were, sir, sure enough, and well armed too, and fresh hasps on the door, to lock it inside, all secure as a bank. I saw these things while the old doctor was writing the prescription, for he tore a leaf out of his pocket-book to order me some stuff for the cough—faith, 'tis pills of another kind they'd have given me if they found me out. That was all I got for my guinea in goold, not to speak of the danger;" and so saying, he pulled a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket, and held it out toward Daly. "That's not it, sir; 'tis the other side the writing is on."

But Daly's eyes were fixed upon the paper, which he held firmly between both hands.

"Ay, I see what you are looking at," said Freney; "that was a kind of memorandum the old fellow made of the money Gleeson paid him the day before."

Daly paid no attention to the remark, but muttered half aloud the contents of the document before him: "Check on Ball for eighteen thousand, payable at sight—thirty-six thousand eight hundred and ten pounds in notes of the Bank of England—gold, seventeen hundred guineas."

"There was a lob," cried Freney, as he rubbed his hands together. "I was set up for life if I got half of it! And now, Mr. Daly, just tell me one thing—isn't Mr. Darcy there as bad as myself, to take all this money for his vote?"

"How do you mean?" said Daly, sternly.

"I mean that a gentleman born and bred as he is, oughtn't to sell his country for goold; that if a blackguard like myself takes to the road, it's all natural and reasonable, and the world's little worse off when they hang half a dozen of my kind; but for a real born gentleman of the old stock of the land, to go and take money for his vote in Parliament!"

"And who dares to say he did so?" cried Daly, indignantly.

"Faix, that's the story up in Dublin; they say he'd no other way of clearing off

the debts on his property. Bad cess to me if I'd do it. Here I am, a robber and a highwayman, I don't deny it, but may I wear hemp for a handkerchief if I'd sell my country. Bad luck to the Union, and all that votes for it," said he, as, filling a bumper of whisky, he tossed it off to this laudable sentiment.

"If you hadn't wronged my friend the Knight of Gwynne, I'm not certain that I wouldn't have pledged your toast myself."

"If he's a friend of yours I say nothing against him; but sure when he—"

"Once for all," said Daly, sternly, "this story is false;" while he added, in a low muttering to himself, "corruption must needs have spread widely when such a calumny was even ventured on. And so, Freney, Hickman escaped you?"

"He did, sir," said Freney, sighing; "he made a lodgment in Kildare next day, and more of the money he carried up to town, guarded all the way by the two fellows I told you. Ah! Mr. Daly, if all the world was as cunning as old Peter, I might give up the road as a bad job. There! do you hear that? Listen, sir."

"What is it?" said Daly, after a moment's silence.

"They're my nags, sir, coming up the road. I'd know their trot if I heard it among a troop of dragoons. 'Tis clippers they are."

As he spoke he arose from the table, and lighting a small lantern he always carried with him, hastened to the door, where already the two horses were standing, a bare-legged "gossoon" holding the bridles.

"Well, Jemmy, what's the news to-night?" said Freney.

"Nothing, sir, at all. I passed the down mail at Scery's Mill, and when the coachman heard the step of the horses, he laid on the wheelers wid all his might, and sat down on the footboard, and the two outside passengers lay flat as a pancake on the top when I passed. I couldn't help giving a screech out of me for fun, and the old guard let fly, and sent a ball through my 'caubeen;" and, as he said the words, he exhibited his ragged felt hat, which, in addition to its other injuries, now displayed a round bullet-hole through either side.

"Serve you right," said Freney, harshly; "I wish he'd leveled three inches lower. That young rascal, sir, keeps the whole road in a state of alarm that stops all business on it;" then he added, in a whisper, "but he never failed me in his life. I've only to say when and where I want the horses, and I'd lay my neck on it he's there."

Daly, who had been for some minutes examining the two horses by the lantern with all the skill of an adept, now turned the light full upon the figure of the boy whose encomium was thus pronounced. The urchin, as if conscious that he was passing an inspection, set his tattered hat jauntily on one side, and with one arm a-kimbo, and a leg advanced, stood the very perfection of ragged self-sufficient rascality. Though at most not above fourteen years of age, and short in size, even for that, his features had the shrewd intelligence of manhood; a round wide head, covered with dark red hair, projected over two eyes set wide apart, whose bad expression was ingeniously improved by a habit of squinting at pleasure, a practice with which he now amused himself, as Mr. Daly continued to stare at him. His nose, which a wound had partly separated from the forehead, was short and wide, leaving an unnatural length to the lower part of the face, where an enormous mouth, garnished with large and regular teeth, was seen, a feature that actually gave a look of ferocity even to a face so young.

"It's plain to see what destiny awaits that young scoundrel," said Daly, as he gazed almost sadly at the assemblage of bad passions so palpably displayed in his countenance. "I'd wager the young devil knows it himself, and can see the gallows even now before him."

A wild burst of frantic laughter broke from the urchin, as, in the exuberance of his merriment, he capered round Daly with gambols the most strange and uncouth, and then, mimicking an air of self-admiration, he strutted past, while he broke into one of the slang ditties of the day:

With beauty and manners to please,
I'll seek a rich wife, and I'll find her.
And live like a lord all my days,
And sing, Tally-high-ho the Grinder!

Freney actually screamed with laughter as he watched the mingled astonishment and horror depicted in Daly's face.

"That fellow's fate will lie heavily on your heart yet," said Daly, in a voice whose solemn tones at once arrested Freney's merriment, while the "gossoon," with increased animation, and in a wilder strain, burst forth,

My lord cheats at play like a rogue,
And my lady flings honor behind her,
And why wouldn't I be in vogue,
And sing, Tally-high-ho the Grinder!

"Come," said Daly, turning away, for, amid all his disgust, a sense of the ludi-

crous was stealing over him, and the temptation to laugh was struggling in him—"come, let us be off; you have nothing to wait for, I suppose?"

"Nothing, sir; I'm ready this instant. Here, Jemmy, take this portmanteau, and meet us outside of Maynooth, under the old castle wall."

"Stay," cried Daly, whose misgivings about the safe arrival of his luggage would have made him prefer any other mode of transmission, "he'll scarcely be in time."

"Not in time! I wish I'd a bet of fifty guineas on it that he would not visit every stable on the road, and know every traveler's name and business, and yet be a good half hour before us. Off with you! Away!"

Diving under the two horses, the "gossoon" appeared at the other side of the road, and then, with a wild spring in the air, and an unearthly shout of laughter, he cleared the fence before him and disappeared, while as he went the strain of his slang song still floated in the air, and the refrain, "Tally-high-ho the Grinder," could be heard through the stillness of the night.

"Take the dark horse, sir, you're heavier than me," said Freney, as he held the stirrup.

"A clever hack, faith," said Daly, as he seated himself in the saddle, and gathered up the reins.

"And mounts you well," cried Freney, admiring both horse and rider once more by the light before he extinguished the lantern.

The storm had now considerably abated, and they rode on at a brisk pace, nor did they draw rein till the tall ruined castle of Maynooth could be seen rearing its dark head against the murky sky.

"We part here," said Daly, who for some time had been lost in thought, "and I have nothing but thanks to offer you for this night's service, Freney; but if the time should come that I can do you a good turn—"

"I'll never ask it, sir," said Freney, interrupting him.

"And why not? Are you too proud?"

"Not too proud to be under any obligation to you," said the robber, stopping him, "but too proud of the honor you did me this night by keeping my company, ever to hurt your fame by letting the world know it. No, Mr. Daly, I knew your courage well, but this was the bravest thing ever you did."

He sprang from his horse as he spoke, and gave a long, shrill whistle. A deep silence followed, and he repeated the signal.

and, soon after, the tramp of naked feet was heard on the road, and Jemmy advanced toward them at his ordinary sling trot.

"Take the trunk up to the town."

"No, no," said Daly, "I'll do that myself;" and he relieved the urehin of his burden, taking the opportunity to slip some crown pieces into his willing hand while he did so.

"Good-by, sir," said Freney, taking off his hat with courteous deference.

"Good-by, Freney," said Daly, as he seized the robber's hand and shook it warmly. "I'll soon be shaking hands with twenty fellows not a whit more honest," said Daly, as he looked after him through the gloom. "Hang me if I don't think he's better company, too;" and with this very flattering reflection on some parties unknown, he plodded along toward the town.

Here, again, new disappointment awaited him—a sudden summons had called the members of both political parties to the capital, and horses were not to be had at any price.

"'Tis the Lord's marceiful providence left him only the one arm," said a waiter, as he ushered Daly into a sitting-room, and cast a glance of most meaning terror at the retiring figure of Sandy.

"What do you mean?" asked Daly, hastily.

"It's what he smashed the best chaise in the yard, as if it was a taycup, this morning. Mr. Tisdal ordered it to be ready at seven o'clock, to take him up to town, and, when it came to the door, up comes that long fellow with his one arm, and says: 'This will do for my master,' says he, and cool and asy he gets up into the chaise, and sits down, and, when he was once there, by my conscience you might as well try to drain the canal with a cullender as to get him out again! We had a fight that lasted nigh an hour, and, signs on it, there's many a black eye in the stable-yard to show for it; but he beat them all off, and kept his ground. 'Never mind,' said Mr. Tisdal, and he whispered a word to the master; and what did they do, sir, but nailed him up fast in the chaise, and unharnessed the horses, put them to a jaunting car, and started with Mr. Tisdal before you could turn round."

"And Sandy," cried Daly—"what did he do?"

"Sandy?—av it's that you call him—a divil a doubt but he's sandy and stony too—he made a drive at the front panel wid one leg, and away it went, and he smashed open the door with his fist, and put that

short stump of an arm through the wood as if it was cheese. 'Tis a holy show, the same chaise now! And when he got out, may I never spread a tablecloth if you'd see a crayture in the street—they ran in every direction as if it was the duke's bull was out of the paddock, and it's only a while ago he grew raysonable."

However little satisfactory the exploit was to the innkeeper and his household, it seemed to sharpen Daly's enjoyment of his breakfast, and compensate him for the delay to which he was condemned. The messenger sent to seek for horses returned at last without them, and there was now no alternative but to await, with such patience as he could muster, some chaise for town, and thus reach Dublin before nightfall.

A return chaise from Kilcock was at last secured, and Daly, with his servant on the box, proceeded toward Dublin.

It was dark when they reached the capital, and drove with all the speed they could accomplish to the knight's house in Henrietta street. Great was Daly's discomfort to learn that his friend Darcy had just driven from the door.

"Where to?" said he, as he held his watch in his hand, as if considering the chances of still overtaking him.

"To a dinner-party, sir, at Lord Castlereagh's," said the servant.

"At Lord Castlereagh's!" And nothing but the presence of the man repressed the passionate exclamation that quivered on his lip.

"Yes, sir; his lordship and Mr. Heffernan called here—"

"Mr. Heffernan—Mr. Con Heffernan do you mean?" interrupted he, quickly. "Ah! I have it now—and when was this visit?"

"On Monday last, sir."

"On Monday," said Daly, to himself. "The very day the letter was written to me—there's something in it, after all. Drive to Kildare place, and as fast as you can," said he, aloud, as he sprang into the chaise.

The steps were up, the door banged to, the horses lashed into a gallop, and the next moment saw the chaise at the end of the street.

Short as the distance was—scarcely a mile to Heffernan's house—Daly's impatient anxiety made him think it an eternity. His object was to reach the house before Heffernan started; for he judged rightly that not only was the secretary's dinner planned by that astute gentleman, but that its whole conduct and machinery rested on his dexterity.

"I know the fellow well," muttered

Daly—"ay, and by Heaven! he knows *me*. His mock candor and his counterfeit generosity have but a bad chance with such men as myself, but Darcy's open, unsuspecting temperament is the very metal he can weld and fashion to his liking."

It was in the midst of reflections like these, mingled with passionate bursts of impatience at the pace, which was, notwithstanding, a sharp gallop, that they dashed up to Heffernan's door. To make way for them, a chariot that stood there was obliged to move on.

"Whose carriage is this?" said Daly, as, without waiting for the steps to be lowered, he sprang to the ground.

"Mr. Heffernan's, sir."

"He is at home, then?"

"Yes, sir; but just about to leave for a dinner-party."

"Stand by that chariot, Sandy, and take care that no one enters it till I come back," whispered Daly in his servant's ear. And Sandy took up his post at the door like a sentinel on duty. "Tell your master," said Daly to the servant who stood at the open hall-door, "that a gentleman desires to speak with him."

"He's just going out, sir."

"Give my message," said Daly, sternly.

"With what name, sir?"

"Repeat the words as I have given them to you, and don't dictate to me how I am to announce myself," said he, harshly, as he opened the door and walked into the parlor.

Scarcely had he reached the fireplace when a bustle without proclaimed that Heffernan was passing down-stairs, and the confused sound of voices was heard as he and his servant spoke together. "Ah! very well," said Heffernan, aloud, "you may tell the gentleman, John, that I can't see him at present. I've no notion of keeping dinner waiting half an hour." And so saying, he passed out to enter the carriage.

"Na, na," said Sandy, as the footman offered his arm to assist his master to mount the steps; "ye maun wait a wee. I trow ye hae no seen my master yet."

"What means this insolence! Who is this fellow?—push him aside."

"That's na sae easy to do," replied Sandy, gravely; "and though I hae but one arm, ye'll no be prond of yersel 'gin you try the game."

"Who are you? By what right do you stop me here?" said Heffernan, who, contrary to his wont, was already in a passion.

"I am Bagenal Daly's man; and there's himsel in the parlor, and he'll tell you mair, maybe."

The mention of that name seemed to act

like a spell upon Heffernan, and, without waiting for another word, he turned back hastily, and re-entered the house. He stopped as he laid his hand on the handle of the door, and his face, when the light fell on it, was pale as death, and although no other sign of agitation was perceptible, the expression of his features was very different from ordinary. The pause, brief as it was, seemed sufficient to rally him, for, opening the door with an appearance of haste, he advanced toward Daly, and with an outstretched hand, exclaimed,

"My dear Mr. Daly, I little knew who it was I declined to see. They gave me no name, and I was just stepping into my carriage when your servant told me you were here. I need not tell you that I would not deny myself to *you*."

"I believe not, sir," said Daly, with a strong emphasis on the words. "I have come a long journey to see and speak with you."

"May I ask it as a great favor, that you will let our interview be for to-morrow morning? you may name your hour, or as many of them as you like—or, will you dine with me?"

"We'll dine together to-day, sir," said Daly.

"That's impossible," said Heffernan, with a smile, which all his tact could not make an easy one. "I have been engaged for four days to Lord Castlereagh—a party which I had some share in assembling together—and, indeed, already I am five and twenty minutes late."

"I regret deeply, sir," said Daly, as, crossing his hands behind his back, he slowly walked up and down the room—"I regret deeply that I must deprive the noble secretary's dinner-party of so very gifted a guest. I know something of Mr. Heffernan's entertaining powers, and I have heard even more of them, but, for all that, I must be unrelenting, and—"

"The thing is really impossible."

"You will dine with me to-day," was the cool answer of Daly, as, fixing his eyes steadily on him, he uttered the words in a low, determined tone.

"Once for all, sir—" said Heffernan, as he moved toward the door.

"Once for all," repeated Daly, "I will have my way. This is no piece of caprice—no sudden outbreak of that eccentricity which you and others affect to fasten on me. No, Mr. Heffernan: I have come a hundred and fifty miles with an object, and not all the wily dexterity of even you shall balk me. To be plain, sir, there are reports current in the clubs and society

generally that you have been the means of securing the Knight of Gwynne to the side of Government. I know—ay, and you know—how many of these rumors originate on the shallow foundation of men being seen together in public, and cultivating an intimacy on purely social grounds. Now, Mr. Heffernan, Darcy's opinions, it is well known, are not those of the ministry, and the only result of such calumnies will be that he, the head of a family, and a country gentleman of the highest rank, will be drawn into a dangerous altercation with some of those lounging puppies that circulate such slanders. I am his friend, and, as it happens, with no such ties to life and station as he possesses. I will, if possible, place myself in a similar position—and to do so I know no readier road than by keeping your company; I will give the gentlemen every pretext to talk of me as they have done of him; and if I hear a mutter, or if I see a signal that the most suspicious nature can torture into an affront, I will teach the parties that if they let their tongues run glibly they at least shall keep their hair-triggers in order. Now, sir, you'll not only dine with me to-day, but you'll do so in the large room of the club. I've given you my reasons, and I tell you flatly that I will hear nothing in opposition to them, for I am quite ready to open the ball with Mr. Con Heffernan."

Heffernan's courage had been proved on more than one occasion, but somehow he had his own reasons, it would seem, for declining the gage of battle here. That they were valid ones would appear from the evident struggle compliance cost him, as with a quivering lip and a whisper, he said,

"There may be much force in what you say, Mr. Daly—your motives, at least, are unquestionable. I will offer, therefore, no further opposition." So saying, he opened the door to permit Daly to pass out. "To the club," said he to the footman, as they both seated themselves in the chariot.

"The club, sir!" repeated the astonished servant.

"Yes, to Daly's Club," said Bagenal himself. And they drove off.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LORD CASTLEREAGH'S DINNER-PARTY.

THE day of Lord Castlereagh's dinner-party had arrived, and the guests, all save Mr. Heffernan, were assembled in the drawing-room. The party was small and select,

and his lordship had gone through the usual routine of introductions, when Hamilton asked if he still expected any one.

"Yes; Mr. Heffernan promised to make one of our twelve; he is generally punctuality itself, and I cannot understand what detains him."

"He said he'd call for me on his way," said Lord Beerhaven, "and I waited some time for him; but as I would not risk spoiling your lordship's *entrées*, I came away at last."

This speech was made by one who felt no small uneasiness on his own part respecting the cookery, and took the occasion of suggesting his fears, as a hint to order dinner.

"Shall we vote him present, then?" said Lord Castlereagh, who saw the look of dismay the further prospect of waiting threw over the party.

"By all means," said Lord Beerhaven; "Heffernan never eats soup."

"I don't think he cares much for fish, either," said Hamilton.

"I think our friend Con is fond of walnuts," said the knight, dryly.

"Them's the unwholesomest things he could eat," muttered old Hickman, who, although seated in a corner of the room, and partly masked by his son and grandson, could not be altogether secluded from earshot.

"Are they indeed?" said the bishop, turning sharply round; for the theme of health was one that engaged all his sympathies, and although his short apron covered a goodly rotundity of form, eating exacted to the full as many pains as it afforded pleasures to the churchman.

"Yes, my lord," said Hickman, highly gratified to obtain such exalted notice, "there's an essential oil in them that destroys the mucous membrane—"

"Destroys the mucous membrane!" said the bishop, interrupting him.

"Mine is pretty much in that way already," said Lord Beerhaven, querulously; "five-and-twenty minutes past six."

"No, no, my dear Darcy," said Lord Drogheda, who, having drawn the knight aside, was speaking in an earnest but low tone, "I never was easier in my life, on the score of money; don't let the thing give you any trouble—consult Gleeson about it, he's a clever fellow—and take your own time for the payment."

"Gleeson is a clever fellow, my lord, but there are straits that prove too much even for his ingenuity."

"Ah! I know what you mean," said Lord Drogheda, secretly; "you've heard of that Spanish-American affair—yes, he

made a bad hit there—some say he'll lose fifty thousand by it."

Dinner was at this moment announced, and the knight was unable to learn further on a subject the little he had heard of which gave him great sorrow. Unfortunately, too, his position at table was opposite, not next, to Lord Drogheda, and he was thus compelled to wait for another opportunity of interrogating him.

Lord Castlereagh has left behind him one reputation, which no political or party animosity has ever availed to detract from, that of being the most perfect host that ever dispensed the honors of a table. Whatever seeming reserve or coldness he maintained at other times, here he was courteous to cordiality; his manner, the happy union of thorough good-breeding and friendly ease. Gifted with a most retentive memory, and well versed on almost every topic that could arise, he possessed that most difficult art, the power of developing the resources and information of others, without ever making any parade of his own acquirements; or, what is still harder, without betraying the effort which, in hands less adroit, becomes that most vulgar of all tricks, called "drawing out."

With all these advantages, and well suited as he was to meet every emergency of a social meeting, he felt on the present occasion far less at ease than was his wont. The party was one of Heffernan's contriving—the elements were such as he himself would never have dreamed of collecting together, and he relied upon his "ancient" to conduct the plan he had so skillfully laid down. It was, as he muttered to himself, "Heffernan's bill," and he was not coming forward to explain its provisions, or state its object.

Happily for the success of such meetings in general, the adjuncts contribute almost equally with the intellectual resources of the party; and here Heffernan, although absent, had left a trace of his skill. The dinner was admirable. Lord Castlereagh knew nothing of such matters; the most simple, nay, the most ill-dressed meats would have met equal approval from him with the greatest triumphs of the art; and as to wine, he mixed up his madeira, his claret, and his burgundy together, in a fashion which sadly deteriorated him in the estimation of many of his more cultivated acquaintances.

All the detail of the dinner was perfect, and Lord Beerhaven, his fears on that score allayed, emerged from the cloud of his own dreary anticipations, and became one of the pleasantest of the party. And thus the in-

fluence of good cheer and easy converse extended its happy sway until even Mr. Hickman O'Reilly began to suffer less anxiety respecting his father's presence, and felt relieved at the preoccupation the good things of the table exacted from the old "doctor."

The party was of that magnitude which, while enabling the guests to form into the twos and threes of conversational intimacy, yet affords, from time to time, the opportunity of generalizing the subject discussed, and drawing, as it were, into a common center the social abilities of each. And there Lord Castlereagh shone conspicuously, for at the same time that he called forth all the anecdotic stores of Lord Beerhaven, and the witty repartee for which Hamilton was noted, he shrouded the obtrusive common-places of old Hickman, or gave a character of quaint originality to remarks which, with less flattering introduction, had been deemed low-lived and vulgar.

The wine went freely round, and claret, whose flavor might have found acceptance with the most critical, began to work its influence upon the party, producing that pleasant amalgamation in which individual peculiarities are felt to be the attractive, and not the repelling, properties of social intercourse.

"What splendid action that horse you drive has, Mr. Beecham O'Reilly," said Lord Loughdooner, who had paid the most marked attention to him during dinner. "That's the style of moving they're so mad after in London—high and fast at the same time."

"I gave three hundred and fifty for him," lisped out the youth, carelessly, "and think him cheap."

"Cheap at three hundred and fifty!" exclaimed old Hickman, who had heard the fact for the first time. "May I never stir from the spot, but you told me forty pounds."

"When you can pick up another at that price let me know, I beg you," said Lord Loughdooner, coming to the rescue, with a smile that seemed to say, How well you quizzed the old gentleman. "I say, Hamilton, who bought your gray?"

"Ecclesmere bought him for his uncle." "Why, he starts, or shies, or something of that sort, don't he?"

"No, my lord, he 'comes down,' which is what the uncle does not; and as he stands between Ecclesmere and the marquise—"

"That's what I've always maintained," said the bishop to Lord Castlereagh. "The potato disposes to acidity. I know the

poor people correct that by avoiding animal food—a most invaluable fact.”

“There are good grounds for your remark,” said Lord Castlereagh to the knight, while he smiled an easy assent to the bishop without attending to him, “and the social relations of the country will demand the earliest care of the Government whenever measures of immediate importance permit this consideration. We have been unfortunate in not drawing closer to us men who, like yourself, are thoroughly acquainted with the condition of the people generally. It is not too late—”

“Too late for what?” interrupted Lord Drogheda. “Not too late for more claret, I trust; and the decanter has been standing opposite to me these ten minutes.”

“A thousand pardons! O’Reilly, will you touch that bell?—Thanks.”

The tone of easy familiarity with which he spoke covered Hickman with a flush of ecstatic pleasure.

“They ginger them up so, nowadays,” said Lord Loughdooner to Beecham O’Reilly.

“Ginger!” chimed in Hickman—“the devil a finer thing for the stomach. I ask your pardon, my lord, for saying his name; but I’ll give you a receipt for the windy bile worth a guinea note.”

“Take a pinch of snuff, Dr. Hickman,” said Lord Castlereagh, who saw the mortification of the two generations at the old man’s vulgarity.

“Thank you, my lord. ’Tis blackguard I like best; them brown snuffs ruins the nose entirely. I was saying about the mixture,” said he, addressing the bishop. “Take a pint of infusion of gentian, and put a pinch of coriander seeds, and the peel of a Chaney orange—”

“I recommend a bumper of that claret, my lord,” said Lord Castlereagh, determined to cut short the prescription, which now was being listened to by the whole board; “and when I add the health of the primate, I’m sure you’ll not refuse me.” The toast was drunk with all suitable honors, and the secretary resumed, in a whisper: “He wants our best wishes on that score, poor fellow, if they could serve him. He’s not long to be with us, I fear.”

“Indeed, my lord,” said the bishop, eagerly.

“Alas! too true,” sighed Lord Castlereagh; “he’ll be a severe loss too. I wanted to have some minutes’ talk with you on the matter. These are times of no common emergency, and the men we promote are of great consequence at this moment. Say to-morrow, about one.”

“I’ll be punctual,” said the bishop, taking out his tablets to make a note of what his memory would retain to the end of his life.

Lord Castlereagh caught the knight’s eye at the instant, and they both smiled, without being able to control their emotion.

“And so,” said Lord Castlereagh, hastening to conceal his laugh, “my young relation continues to enjoy the hospitalities of your house. I don’t doubt in the least that he reckons that wound the luckiest incident of his life.”

“My friend Darcy paid even more dearly for it,” said Lord Drogheda, overhearing the remark; “but for Heffernan’s tidings, I should certainly have lost my wager.”

“I assure you, knight,” broke in Hickman O’Reilly, “it was through no fault of mine that the altercation ended so seriously. I visited Captain Forester in his room, and thought I obtained his pledge to take no further notice of the affair.”

“And I, too, told him the style of fellow Mac Donough was,” said Beecham, affectedly.

“I have heard honorable mention of both facts, gentlemen,” said Darcy, dryly; “that nothing could have less contributed to a breach of the peace than Mr. Beecham O’Reilly’s conduct, my friend Daly is willing to vouch for.”

“I wish his own had been equally prudent and pacific,” said Hickman O’Reilly, reddening at the taunt conveyed in the knight’s speech.

“Daly is unquestionably the best friend on the ground—”

“On or off the ground, my Lord Loughdooner,” interrupted the knight, warmly; “he may be, now and then, somewhat hasty or rash; but rich as our country is in men of generous natures, Bagenal Daly is second to none.”

“I protest, gentlemen,” said the bishop, gravely, “I wish I could hear a better reason for the panegyric than his skill as a duelist.”

“True for you, my lord,” muttered old Hickman, in a whisper; “he’s readier with a pistol-bullet than with the interest on his bond.”

“He’d favor you with a ‘discharge in full,’ sir, if he heard the observation,” said Hamilton, laughing.

“A letter, my lord,” said a servant, presenting a sealed epistle to the secretary.

“Heffernan’s writing, gentlemen; so I shall, with your permission, read it.” He broke the seal, and read aloud: “‘My dear lord, an adventure, which would be laughable if it were not so provoking, prevents my

coming to dinner, so I must leave the managerie—” Here he dropped his voice, and crumpling up the letter, laughingly remarked, “Oh, we shall hear it all later on, I’ve no doubt.”

“By-the-by, my lord, there’s a House to-night, is there not?”

“No, bishop; we moved an adjournment for to-morrow evening. You’ll come down for the debate, won’t you?”

The bishop nodded significantly and sipped his wine. There was now a pause. This was the great topic of the day, and yet, up to this moment, not even a chance allusion to politics had been dropped, and all recoiled from adventuring, even by a word, on a theme which might lead to disagreement or discordance. Old Hickman, however, dated his origin in life too far back for such scruples, and leaning across the table, said, with an accent to which wine imparted a tone of peculiar cunning, “I wish you well through it, my lord; for, by all accounts, it is dirty work.”

The roar of laughter that followed the speech actually shook the table, Lord Castlereagh giving way to it with as much zest as the guests themselves. Twice he essayed to speak, but each time a fresh burst of mirth interrupted him, while old Hickman, unable to divine the source of the merriment, stared at each person in turn, and at last muttered his consolatory “Ay,” but with a voice that showed he was far from feeling satisfied.

“I wish you’d made that speech in the House, Mr. Hickman,” said Lord Drogheda; “I do believe you’d have been the most popular man in Ireland.”

“I confess,” said Lord Castlereagh, wiping his eyes, “I cannot conceive a more dangerous opponent to the bill.”

“If he held your own bill, with a protest on it,” whispered Hamilton, “your opinion would not be easily gainsaid.”

“May I ask for a cup of coffee?” said the bishop, rising, for he saw that although as yet no untoward results had followed, at any moment something unpleasant might occur. The party rose with him and adjourned to the drawing-room.

“Singular old man!” said Lord Castlereagh, in a whisper to the knight. “Shrewd and cunning, no doubt, but scarcely calculated, as our friend Drogheda thinks, to distinguish himself in the House of Commons.”

“Do you think the Upper House would suit him better, my lord?” said Darcy, stily.

“I see, knight,” said Lord Castlereagh, laughing, “you have caught up the popular joke of the day.”

“I trust, my lord, it may be no more than a joke.”

“Can you doubt it?”

“At the present moment,” said the knight, gravely, “I see no reason for doubting anything merely on the score of its unlikelihood; your lordship’s colleagues have given us some sharp lessons on the subject of credulity, and we should be more unteachable than the savage, if we had not learnt something by this time.”

Lord Castlereagh was about to answer, when Lord Drogheda came forward to say “good-night.” The others were going, too, and in the bustle of leave-taking some moments were passed.

“Your carriage has not come yet, sir,” replied a servant to the knight.

“Shall we take you home, Darcy,” said Lord Drogheda; “or are you going to the club?”

“Let me say no to that offer, knight,” interposed Lord Castlereagh, “and give me the pleasure of your company till the carriage arrives.”

Darcy acceded to a request, the courteous mode of making which had already secured its acceptance, and the knight sat down at the fire *tête-à-tête* with the secretary.

“I was most anxious for a moment like this,” said Lord Castlereagh, with the air of one abandoning himself to the full liberty of sincerity. “It very seldom happens to men placed like myself to have even a few brief minutes’ intercourse with any one out of the rank of partisans or opponents. I will not disguise from you how highly I should value the alliance of yourself to our party; I place the greatest price upon such support, but there is something better and more valuable than even a vote in a strong division, and that is, the candid judgment of a man who has enjoyed your opportunities and your powers of forming an opinion. Tell me now frankly—for we are here in all freedom of intercourse—what do you object to? What do you fear from this contemplated enactment?”

“Let me rather hear,” said the knight, smiling, “what do you hope from it—how you propose it to become the remedy of our existing evils? Because I shall thereby see whether your lordship and myself are like-minded on the score of the disease, before we begin to discuss the remedy.”

“Be it so, then,” said the secretary, gayly; and at once, without hesitation, he commenced a short and most explicit statement of the Government intentions. Arguments that formed the staple of long parliamentary harangues he condensed into a sentence or two; views that, dilated upon,

sufficed to fill the columns of a newspaper, he displayed palpably and boldly, exhibiting powers of clear and rapid eloquence for which so few gave him credit in public life. Not an epithet nor an expression could have been retrenched from a detail which denoted faculties of admirable training, assisted by a memory almost miraculous. Stating in order the various objections to the measure, he answered each in turn, and wherever the reply was not sufficiently ample and conclusive, he adroitly took occasion to undervalue either the opinion, or the source from which it originated, exhibiting, while restraining, considerable powers of sarcasm, and a thorough insight into the character of the public men of the period.

If the knight was unconvinced by the arguments, he was no less astonished by the abilities of the secretary. Up to that hour he had been a follower of the popular notion of the Opposition party, which agreed in deerying his talents, and making his displays as a speaker the touchstone of his capacity. Darcy was too clever himself to linger longer in this delusion. He saw the great and varied resources of the youthful statesman tested by a question of no common difficulty, and he could not control the temptation of telling him, as he concluded,

“ You have made me a convert to the union.—”

“ Have I, indeed ? ” cried the secretary, in an ecstasy of pleasure.

“ Hear me out, my lord—to the union of great political abilities with the most captivating powers of conversation—yes, my lord, I am old enough to make such a remark without the hazard of being deemed impertinent or a flatterer—*your* success in life is certain.”

“ But the bill ! ” cried Lord Castlereagh, while his handsome face was flushed between delight and eagerness—“ the bill ! ”

“ Is an admirable bill for England, my lord, and were there not two sides to a contract, would be perfect—indeed, until I heard the lucid statement you have just made, I never saw one tenth part of the advantages it must render to your country, nor, consequently—for we move not in parallel lines—the great danger with which it is fraught to mine. Let me now explain more fully.”

With these words the knight entered upon the question of the Union in all its relations to Ireland, and while never conceding, nor even extenuating the difficulties attendant upon a double legislature, he proceeded to show the probable train of events that must result on the passing of the mea-

sure, strengthening his anticipations by facts derived from deep knowledge of the country.

Far be it from us to endeavor to recapitulate his arguments ; some of them, now forgotten, were difficult enough to answer, others, treasured up, have been fashionable fallacies in our own day. Such as they were, they were the reasons why an Irish gentleman demurred to surrendering privileges that gave his own country rank, place, and pre-eminence, without the evidence of any certain or adequate compensation.

“ Do not tell me, my lord, that we shall hold our influence and our station in the Imperial Parliament. There are many reasons against such a belief. We shall be in the minority, a great minority ; a minority branded with provincialism as our badge, and accused of prejudice and narrow-sightedness, from the very fact of our nationality. No, no : we shall occupy a very different position in your country ; and who will take our places here ? That’s a point your lordship has not touched upon, but I’ll tell you. The demagogue, the public disturber, the licensed hawk of small grievances, every briefless lawyer of bad fortune and worse language, every mendicant patriot that can minister to the passions of a people deserted by their natural protectors—the day will come, my lord, when these men will grow ambitious, their aspirations may become troublesome ; if you coerce them, they are martyrs—conciliate them, and they are privileged. What will happen then ? You will be asked to repeal the Union, you will be charged with all the venality by which you carried your bill, every injustice with which it is chargeable, and with a hundred other faults and crimes with which it is unconnected. You will be asked, I say, to repeal the Union, and make of this miserable rabble, these dregs and sweepings of party, a parliament. You shake your head. No, no, it is by no means impossible—nay, I don’t think it even remote. I speak as an old man, and age, if it have many deficiencies as regards the past, has, at least, some prophetic foresight for the future. You will be asked to repeal the Union, to give a parliament to a country which you have drained of its wealth, from which you have seduced the aristocracy ; to restore a deliberative body to a land whose resources for self-legislation you have studiously and industriously ruined. Think, then, twice of a measure from which, if it fail, there is no retreat, and the opposition to which may come in a worse form than a vote in the House of Commons. I see you deem my anticipations have more

gloom than truthfulness—I hope it may be so.”

“The Knight of Gwynne’s carriage,” cried a servant, throwing wide the door.

“How opportune!” said Darcy, laughing; “it is so satisfactory to have the last shot at the enemy.”

“Pray don’t go yet—a few moments more.”

“Not a second, my lord; I dare not. The fact is, I have strenuously avoided this subject; an old friend of mine, Bagenal Daly, has wearied me of it—he is an Anti-Unionist, but on grounds I scarcely concur in. Your lordship’s defense of the measure I also demur to. I am like poor old Murray, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, who, when called on for his opinion in a case where Judge Wallace was in favor of a rule, and Judge Mayne against it, he said, ‘I agree with my brother Mayne, for the cogent reasons laid down by my brother Wallace.’”

“So,” said the secretary, laughing heartily, “I have convinced you against myself.”

“Exactly, my lord. I came here this evening intending not to vote on the bill—indeed, I accepted your lordship’s hospitality without a thought upon a party question—I am equally certain you will acquit me of being a spy in the camp. To-morrow I intend to vote against you.”

“I wish I could have the same esteem for my friends that I now pledge for my—”

“Don’t say enemy, my lord; we both aspire to the same end—our country’s good. If we take different roads, it is because each thinks his own path the shortest. Good-night.”

Lord Castlereagh accompanied the knight to his carriage, and again shook his hand cordially as they parted.

CHAPTER XIX.

A DAY OF EXCITEMENT.

GREAT was the knight’s astonishment, and not less his satisfaction, as he entered the breakfast-room the morning after his dinner with the secretary, to find Bagenal Daly there before him. They met with all the cordial warmth of men whose friendship had continued without interruption for nigh half a century; each well disposed to prize good faith and integrity at a time when so many lapsed from the path of honor and principle.

“Well, Darcy,” cried Daly, the first

greetings over, “there is little hope left us; that rascally newspaper already proclaims the triumph—a majority of twenty-eight.”

“They calculate on many more; you remember what old Hayes, of the Recruiting Staff, used to say: ‘There was no getting fellows to enlist when the bounty was high; make it half-a-crown,’ said he, ‘and I’ll raise a battalion in a fortnight.’”

“Is Castlereagh adopting the policy?”

“Yes, and with infinite success! Some that held out for English peerages are fain to take Irish baronetcies, expectant bishops put up with deaneries, and an acquaintance of ours, that would take nothing below a separate command, is now satisfied to make his son a clerk in the War Office.”

“I’m sorry for it,” said Daly, as he arose and paced the room backward and forward—“sincerely sorry. I had fostered the hope that if they succeeded in corrupting our gentry, they had polluted *their own* peerage. I wish every fellow had been bought by an earldom at least. I would like to think that this Judas peerage might become a jest and a scoff among their order.”

“Have no such expectation, Bagenal,” said the knight, reflectively; “their origin will be forgiven before the first generation dies out. To all purposes of worldly respect and esteem, they’ll be as high and mighty lords of the best blood of all the Howards. The penalty will fall upon England in another form.”

“How? Where?”

“In the Lower House politics will become a trade to live by, and the Irish party, with such an admirable market for grievances, will be a strong and compact body in Parliament, too numerous to be bought by anything save great concessions. Englishmen will never understand the truth of the condition of the country from these men, nor how little personal importance they possess at home. They will be regarded as the exponents of Irish opinion—they will browbeat, denounce, threaten, fawn, and flatter by turns; and Ireland, instead of being easier to govern, will be rendered ten times more difficult, by all the obscuring influences of falsehood and misrepresentation. But let us quit the theme. How have you left all at the abbey?”

“Well and happy; here are my dispatches.” And he laid on the table several letters, the first the knight had received since his arrival, save a few hurried lines from Lady Eleanor. Darcy broke the envelopes, and skimmed the contents of each.

“How good!” cried he, handing Lord

Netherby's letter across the table; "this is really amusing!"

"I have seen it," said Daly, dryly. "Lady Eleanor asked my opinion as to what answer she should make."

"Insolent old miser!" broke in Darcy, who, without attending to Daly's remark, had been reading Lady Eleanor's account of Dr. Hickman's proposal.—"I say, Bagenal, you'll not believe this? What social earthquakes are we to look for next? Read that." And with a trembling hand he presented the letter to Daly.

If the knight's passion had been more openly displayed, Daly's indignation seemed to evoke deeper emotion, for his brows met, and his stern lips were clenched, as he perused the lines.

"Darcy," said he, at length, "O'Reilly must apologize for this—he must be made to disavow any share in the old man's impertinence—"

"No, no," interrupted Darcy, "never speak of it again; rest assured Lady Eleanor received the offer suitably. The best thing we can do is to forget it; if," added he, after a pause, "the daring that prompted such a proposition has not a deeper foundation than mere presumption. You know these Hickmans have purchased up my bonds and other securities."

"I heard as much."

"Well, Gleeson is making arrangements for the payment. One large sum, something like 20,000*l.*—"

"Was paid the day before yesterday," said Daly; "here is a memorandum of the moneys."

"How the deuce came you by the information? I have heard nothing of it yet."

"That entails somewhat of a story," said Daly; "but I'll be brief with it." And in a few words he narrated his meeting with the robber Freney, and how he had availed himself of his hospitality and safe convoy as far as Maynooth.

"Ireland forever!" said the knight, in a burst of happy laughter; "for every species of incongruity, where was ever its equal? An independent member of the legislature sups with a highwayman, and takes a loan of his hackney!"

"Ay, faith," said Daly, joining in the laugh; "and had I not been one of the Opposition, I had been worth robbing, and consequently not so civilly treated. By Jove! Darcy, I felt an evening with Freney to be a devilish good preparation for the company I should be keeping up in town."

"I'll wager ten pounds your talked politics together."

"That we did, and he is as stout an Anti-Unionist as the best of us, though he told me he signed a petition in favor of the bill when confined in Clonmel jail."

"Is that true, Bagenal; did they hawk a petition for signature among the prisoners of a jail?"

"He took his oath of it to me, and I intend to declare it in the House."

"What if asked for your authority?"

"I'll give it," said Daly, determinedly.

"Ay, faith, and if I catch a sneer or a scoff amongst them, I'll tell them that a highwayman is about as respectable and somewhat more courageous than a bribed representative."

If the knight enjoyed the absurdity of Daly's supper with the noted Freney, he laughed till the tears came at the account of his dining with Con Heffernan. Darcy could appreciate the dismay of Heffernan, and the cool, imperturbable tyranny of Daly's manner throughout, and would have given largely to have witnessed the *tête-à-tête*.

"I will do him the justice to say," said Daly, "that when he found escape impossible, he behaved as well as any man, his conversation was easy and unaffected, and his manner perfectly well-bred. Freney was more anecdotic, but Heffernan saw deeper into mankind."

"I hope you hinted the comparison?" said Darcy, slyly.

"Yes, I observed upon the superiority practical men possess in all the relations of social intercourse, and quoted Freney and himself as instances!"

"And he took it well?"

"Admirably. Once, and only once, did he show a little disposition to turn restive; it was when I remarked upon their discrepancy in point of destiny, the one being employed to empty, the other to fill, the pockets of his majesty's lieges. He winced, but it was over in a second. His time was up at ten o'clock, but we sat chatting till near twelve, and we parted with what the French term a 'sense of the most distinguished consideration' on each side."

"By Jove! I envy the fellows who sat at the other tables and saw you."

"They were most discreet in their observations," remarked Daly, significantly. "One young fellow, it is true, coughed twice or thrice as a signal to a friend across the room, but I ordered the waiter to bring me a plate, and taking three or four bullets out of my pocket, sent them over to him with my respectful compliments, as 'admirable pills for a cough.' The cure was miraculous."

"Excellent! Men have taken out a patent for a poorer remedy. And now, Bagenal, for the reason of your journey. What, in the name of everything strange and eccentric, brought you up to town? Don't affect to tell me you came for the debate."

"And why not?" said Daly, who, unwilling to reveal the true cause, preferred to do battle on this pretense. "I admit as freely as ever I did. I'm no lover of Parliament. I have slight respect or esteem for deliberative assemblies split up into factions and parties. A government, to my thinking, should represent unity as the chief element of strength; but such as it is—bad enough and base enough, in all conscience—yet it is the last remnant of national power left, the frail barrier between us and downright provincialism. But I had another reason for coming up—half a dozen other reasons, for that matter—one of them was, to see your invaluable business man, Gleeson, who, from some caprice or other about a higher rate of interest, has withdrawn my sister's fortune from the funds, to invest it in some confounded mortgage. I suppose it's all right and judicious to boot; but Maria, like every other Daly I ever heard of, has a will of her own, and has commissioned me to have the money restored to its former destination. I verily believe, Darcy, the most troublesome animal on the face of the globe is an old maid with a small funded capital. At one moment, deploring the low rate of interest and dying for a more profitable use of the money; at another, decrying all deposit save the bank, she inveighs against public theft and private credit, and takes off three and a half per cent. of her happiness in pure fretting."

"Is she quite well?" said the knight, in an accent which a more shrewd observer than Daly might have perceived was marked by some agitation.

"I never knew her better; as fearless as we both remember her at sixteen; and save those strange intervals of depression she has labored under all through her life, the same gay-hearted spirit she was when the flattered heiress and beauty, long, long years ago."

The knight heaved a sigh. It might have been for the years thus passed, the pleasant days of early youth and manhood so suddenly called up before him; it might have been that other and more tender memories were crowding on his mind; but he turned away and leaned on the chimney-piece, lost in deep thought.

"Poor girl," said Daly, "there is no

question of it, Darcy, but she must have formed some unfortunate attachment; she had pride enough always to rescue her from the dangers of an unsuitable marriage, but her heart, I feel convinced, was touched, and yet I never could find a clue to it. I suspected something of the kind when she refused Donington—a handsome fellow, and an old title. I pressed her myself on the subject—it was the only time I did so—and I guessed at once, from a chance phrase she dropped, that there had been an old attachment somewhere. Well, well, what a lesson might be read from both our fortunes! The beauty—and you remember how handsome she was—the beauty with a splendid fortune, a reduced maiden lady; and myself—he heaved a heavy sigh, and with clasped hands sank back in the chair, as he added—"the shattered wreck of every hope I once set out with."

The two old men's eyes met, and, although undesignedly, exchanged looks of deepest, most affectionate interest. Daly was the first to rally from his brief access of despondency, and he did so with the physical effort he would have used to shake a load from his shoulders.

"Well, Darcy, let us be up and stirring; there's a meeting at Barrington's at two; we must not fail to be there."

"I wish to see Gleeson in the meanwhile," said the knight; "I am uneasy to learn what has been done with Hickman, and what day I can leave town."

"Send Sandy out with a note, and tell him to come to dinner here at six."

"Agreed; nothing could be better; we can talk over our business matters comfortably, and be down at the House by nine or ten."

The note was soon written, and Sandy dispatched, with orders to wait for Gleeson's return, in case he should be absent when he arrived.

The day for the evening of which was fixed the second reading of the Bill of Union, was a busy one in Dublin. Accounts the most opposite and contradictory were everywhere in circulation; some, asserting that the ministerial majority was certain; others, equally positive, alleging that many of their supposed supporters had lapsed in their allegiance, and that the most enormous offers had been made, without success, to parties hitherto believed amongst the ranks of the Government. The streets were crowded, not by persons engaged in the usual affairs of trade and traffic, but by groups and knots talking eagerly over the coming event, and discussing every rumor that chance or scandal suggested.



"THREE GROANS FOR THE CASTLE HACK" CAME FROM THE MOB. (P. 82.)

Various meetings were held in different parts of the town: at some, the Government party were canvassing the modes of reaching the House in safety, and how best they might escape the violence of the mob; at others, the Opposition deliberated on the prospects before them, and by what stratagems the debate might be prolonged till the period when, the Wicklow election over, Mr. Grattan might be expected to take his seat in the House, since, by a trick of "the Castle party," the writ had been delayed till that very morning.

Con Heffernan's carriage was seen everywhere, and some avowed that at five o'clock he was driving with the third pair of post-ers he had that day employed. Bagenal Daly was also a conspicuous character "on town;" on foot and alone, he was at once recognized by the mob, who cheered him as an old but long-lost-sight-of acquaintance. The densest crowd made way for him as he came, and every mark of respect was shown him by those who set a higher price on his eccentricity and daring than even upon his patriotism; and a murmuring commentary on his character followed him as he went.

"By my conscience! it's well for them they haven't to fight for the Union, or they wouldn't like old Bagenal Daly agin them!"

"He looks as fresh and bould as ever he did," said another; "sorra a day oulder than he was twenty-eight years ago, when I seen him tried for his life at Newgate."

"Was you there, Mickey?" cried two or three, in a breath.

"Faix was I, as near as I am to you. 'Twas a coalheaver he kilt, a chap that was called Big Sam; and they say he was bribed by some of the gentlemen at Daly's Club House to come up to Bagenal Daly in the street and insult him about the beard he wears on his upper lip, and sure enough so he did—it was Ash-Wednesday more by token—and Sam had a smut on his face just to imitate Mr. Daly's. 'We are a purty pair, ain't we?' says Sam, grinning at him, when they met on Essex bridge. And wid that he slips his arm inside Mr. Daly's to hook wid his."

"To walk beside him, is't?"

"Just so, divil a less. 'Come round to the other side of me,' says Daly, 'for I want to step into Kertland's shop.' And in they went together, and Daly asks for a pound of strong white soap, and pays down one-and-eightpence for it, and out they comes again quite friendly as before. 'Where to now?' says Sam, for he held a grip of him like a bailiff. 'Across the bridge,' says Daly, and so it was. When

they reached the middle arch of the bridge, Daly made a spring and got himself free, and then stooping down, caught Sam by the knees, and, before you could say 'Jack Robinson,' hurled him over the battlements into the Liffey. 'You can wash your face now,' says he, and he threw the soap after him; divil a word more he said, but walked on, as cool as you saw him there."

"And Sam?" said several together.

"Sam was drowned: there came a fresh in the river, and they took him up beyond the North Wall—a corpse."

"Millia murther! what did Daly do?"

"He took his trial for it, and sorra excuse he gave one way or other, but that he 'didn't know the blackguard couldn't swim.'"

"And they let him off?"

"Let him off? Arrah, is it hang a gentleman?"

"True for you," chimed in the by-standers; "them that makes the laws knows better than that!"

Such was one of the narratives his reappearance in Dublin again brought up; and, singular enough, by the respect shown him by the mob, derived much of its source in that same feeling of awe and dread they manifested toward one they believed privileged to do whatever he pleased. Alas, for human nature! the qualities which find favor with the multitude are never the finer and better traits of the heart, but rather the sterner features that emanate from a strong will and firm purpose.

If the voices of the closely-compacted mass which filled the streets and avenues of Dublin on that day could have been taken, it would have been found that Bagenal Daly had an overwhelming majority; while, on a converse scrutiny, it would appear, that not a gentleman of Ireland entertained for that mob sentiments of such thorough contempt as he did. Nor was the sentiment concealed by him. The crowd which, growing as it went, followed him from place to place throughout the city, would break forth at intervals into some spontaneous shout of admiration, and a cheer for Bagenal Daly, commanded by some deep throat, would be answered in a deafening roar of voices. Then would Daly turn, and, as the moving mass fell back, scowl upon their unwashed faces with such a look of scorn, that even they half felt the insult. In such wise was his progress through the streets of Dublin, now moving slowly onward, now turning to confront the mob that in slavish adulation still tracked his steps.

It was at a moment like this, when, stand-

ing at bay, he scowled upon the dense throng, Heffernan's carriage drove slowly past, and Con, leaning from the window, called out in a dramatic tone, "Thy friends, Siccus Dentatus, thy friends!"

Daly started, and as his cheek reddened, answered, "Ay, and by my soul, for the turning of a straw, I'd make them your enemies." And as if responsive to the threat, a groan for "the Castle back, three groans for Con Heffernan!" were shouted out in tones that shook the street. For a second or two Daly's face brightened, and his eyes sparkled with the fire of enterprise, and he gazed on the countless mass with a look of indecision; but suddenly folding his arms, he dropped his head and muttered, "No, no, it wouldn't do; robbery and pillage would be the whole of it;" and, without raising his eyes again, walked slowly homeward.

The hours wore on, and six o'clock came, but no sign of Gleeson, nor had Sandy returned with any answer.

"And yet I am positive he is not from home," said Darcy. "He pledged himself not to leave this until the whole business was completed. Honest Tom Gleeson is a man to keep to the strictest letter of his word."

"I'd not think that less likely," said Daly, sententiously, "if the world had spared him the epithet. I hate the cant of calling a man by some title that should be common to all men—at least, to all gentlemen."

"I cannot agree with you," said Darcy. "I deem it a proud thing for any one so to have impressed his reputation for honorable dealing on society that the very mention of his name suggests his character."

"Perhaps I am soured by what we have seen around us," said Daly; "but the mention of every virtue latterly has been generally followed by the announcement of the purchase of its possessor. I never hear of a good character that I don't think it is a puffing advertisement of 'a high-priced article to be had cheap for cash.'"

"You'll think better of the world after a glass or two of madeira," said Darcy, laughing; "and rather than hear you inveigh against mankind, I'll let Gleeson eat his soup cold." And so saying, he rang the bell and ordered dinner.

The two friends dined pleasantly, and although, from time to time, some stray thought of Gleeson's absence would obtrude, they chatted away agreeably till past nine o'clock.

"I begin to suspect that Sandy may have met some acquaintance, and lingered

to pledge 'old times' with him," said Darcy, looking at his watch. "It is now nearly twenty minutes past nine."

"I'll stake my life on it, Sandy is true to his mission. He'd not turn from the duty intrusted to him to hob-nob with a prince of the blood. Here he comes, however; there was a knock at the door."

But no; it was a few hurried lines in pencil from the House, begging of them to come up at once, as the Ministerial party was mustering in strength, and the Opposition benches filling but slowly. While deliberating on what course to take, a second summons came from one of the leading men of the party. It was brief, but significant: "Come up quickly. They are evidently pushed hard. Toler has sent a message to O'Donnell, and they are gone out, and Harvey says Castlereagh has six of his fellows ready to provoke us.—W. T."

"That looks like business, Darcy," cried Daly, in a transport of delight. "Let us lose no time; there's no knowing how soon so much good valor may ooze out."

"But Gleeson—"

"If he comes, let him follow us to the House. "We can walk—there's no use waiting for the carriage." Then added, in a mutter to himself, "I'd give a hundred down to have a shot at the attorney-general. There, that's Sandy's voice in the hall;" and at the same instant the trusty servant entered.

"Well, have you seen him?"

"Is he at home?"

"No, sir, he's no at hame, that's clear. When I asked for him, they told me he was in bed, asleep, for that he was just arrived after a long journey; and so I waited a bit, and gaed out for a walk into the shrubberies, where I could have a look at his chamber windows, and sure enough they were a' closed. I waited a while longer, but he was still sleeping, and they dared na wake him; and so it came to nigh five o'clock, and then I was fain to send up the bit letter by the flunkie, and ask for the answer; but none came."

"Did you say that the letter was from me?" said the knight, hastily.

"Na, sir; but I tauld them what most people mind as well, that Mister Bagenal Daly sent me. It's a name few folk are fond to trifle wi'."

"Go on, Sandy," said Daly. "What then?"

"Weel, sir, I sat down on the stair at the foot of the big clock, and said to mysel, 'I'll gie ye ten minutes mair, but not a second after.' And sure enough ye might hear every tick of her through the

house, a' was so still and silent. Short as the time was, I thought it wad never gae past, for I did no tak my eyes aff o' her face. When the ten minutes was up, I stole gently up the stair, and opened the door. A' was dark inside, so I opened the window, and there was the bed—empty; naeboddy had lain in it syne it was made. There was a bit ashes in the grate, and some burned paper on the hearth, but na other sign that onybody was there at a', sae I crept back again, and met the flunkie as he was coming up, for he had just missed me, and was in a real fright where I was gone to. I saw by his face that he was found out, and so I laid my hand on his shoulder, and said, 'Ye ha tauld me ane lee; ye maun tak care no to tell me anither. Where is yer maister?' Then came out the truth. Mr. Gleeson was gane awa to England. He sailed for Liverpool in the *Shamrock*."

"Impossible!" said Darcy. "He could not be away from Dublin at this moment."

"It's even sae," replied Sandy, gravely; "for when I heard a' that I could from the flunkie, I put him into the library, and locked the door an him, and then went round to the stable-yard, where the coachman was sitting in the harness-room, smoking. 'And so he's off to England,' said I to him, as if I kenned it a'."

"'Just sae,' said he, wi' the pipe in his mouth."

"'And he's nae to be back for some time,' said I, speerin' at him."

"'On Friday,' said he; and he smoked away, and never a word mair could I get out o' him."

"'Why, Sandy,' said the knight, laughing, "they'd make you a prefect of police, if they had you in France."

"'I dinna ken, sir,' said Sandy, not exactly appreciating what the nature of the appointment might portend."

"'I only hope Gleeson may not hear of the perquisition on his return,' said the knight, in a whisper to Daly. "'Our friend Sandy pushes his spirit of inquiry somewhat far."

"'I don't know that,' said Daly, thoughtfully; "he's a shrewd fellow, and rarely makes a mistake of that kind. But come, let us lose no more time."

"'I half suspect the reason of this mystery about Gleeson,' said the knight, who stood musing deeply on the event; "a few words Drogheda let fall yesterday, going into dinner—some unfortunate speculation in South America—this may require his keeping out of the way for a little time."

But why not say so, manfully?—I'm sure I'm ready to assist him."

"'Come along, Darcy, we must walk; they say no carriage can get through the mob.'" And, with these words, he took the knight's arm and sallied forth, while Sandy followed, conveying a large cloth cloak over his arm, which only partially concealed an ominous-looking box of mahogany wood, strapped with brass.

A crowd awaited them as they reached the street, by which they were escorted through the denser mass that thronged the great thoroughfare, the mere mention of their names being sufficient to force a passage even where the mob stood thickest.

The space in front of the Parliament House and before the college was filled with soldiers; while patrols of cavalry traversed every avenue leading to it, for information had reached the Government that violence might be apprehended from a mob whose force and numbers were alluded to by members within the House in terms meant to intimidate, while the presence of the soldiery was retorted by the Opposition, as a measure of tyranny and oppression of the Castle party. Brushing somewhat roughly through the armed line, Daly, with the knight beside him, entered the space, and was passing onward, when a bustle and a confused uproar behind him arrested his steps. Believing that it might be to Sandy's progress some objection was offered, Daly wheeled round, when he saw two policemen in the act of dragging away a boy, whose loud cries for help from the mob were incessant, while he mingled the name of Mr. Daly through his entreaties.

"'What is it?'" said Daly. "'Does the fellow want me?'"

"'Never mind him,' said Darcy; "the boy has caught up your name, and that's all."

But the urchin struggled and kicked with all his might; and, although overpowered by superior strength, gave battle to the last, screaming at the top of his voice, "'One word with Mr. Daly—just one word!'"

Bagenal Daly turned back, and, approaching the scene of contest, said, "'Have you anything to say to me? I am Mr. Daly."

"'If they'd let go my hands, I've something to give you,' said the boy, who, although sorely bruised and beaten, seemed to care less for his own troubles than for the object of his enterprise."

At a word from Daly, the policemen relinquished their hold, and stood guard on either side, while the boy, giving himself a shake, leered up in Daly's face with an expression he could not fail to recognize.

"There's a way to treat a young gentleman at home for the Christmas holidays!" said the imp, with a compassionating glance at his torn and tattered garments, while the words and the tone they were uttered in sent a shout of laughter through the mob.

"What, Jemmy!" said Daly, stooping down and accosting him in a whisper, for it was no other than that reputable youth himself, "you here!"

"Just so, sir. Ain't I in a nice way to appear at the Privy Council?"

The police were growing impatient at the continued insolence of the fellow, and were about to lay hold on him once more, when Daly interposed, and said, in a still lower voice, "Have you anything to tell me?"

"I've a bit of paper for you somewhere, from one you know, if them blackguards the 'polis' has not made me lose it."

"Be quick, then," said Daly, "and see after it." For Darcy was chafed at a delay he could not see any reason for.

"Here it is," said the imp, taking a piece of dirty and crumpled paper from the lining of his hat; "there, you have it now safe and sure. Give my best respects to Alderman Darby," added he to the police; "say I was too hurried to call;" and with that, he dived between the legs of one of them, dashed through the line of soldiers, and was speedily concealed among the dense crowd outside, where shouts of approving laughter welcomed him.

"A rendezvous or a challenge, Bagenal—which?" said the knight, laughing, as Daly stood endeavoring, by the light of a lamp in the corridor, to decipher the torn scrawl.

The other made no reply, but, holding the paper close to his eyes, stood silent and motionless. At last an expression of impatient anger burst from him: "That imp of h—I has almost effaced the words—I cannot make them out!" Then he added, in a low muttering, "I trust in Heaven I have not read them aright. Come here, Darcy." And so saying, he grasped the knight's hand, and led him along to one of the many small chambers used as offices of the House.

"Ah! they're looking anxiously out for you, sir," said a young man who stood with his back to the fire reading a paper. "Mr. Pensonby has just been here."

"Leave us together here for a few minutes," said Daly, "and let there be no interruption." And as he spoke, he motioned to the door with a gesture there was no mistaking. The clerk left the room, and they were alone.

"Maurice Darcy," said Daly, as he turned

the key in the lock, "you have a stout heart and a courage I never saw fail, and you need both at this moment."

"What is it, Bagenal?" gasped the knight, as a deadly pallor covered his face. "Is my wife—are my children—"

"No, no; be calm, Darcy, they are all well."

"Go on, then," cried he, with a firmer voice, "I'll listen to you patiently."

"Read that," said Daly, as he held the paper near the candle; and the knight read aloud: "'Honored sir,—I saw the other night you were troubled when I spoke of Gleeson, and I take the occasion of—"

"'Warning you,' I think the words are," broke in Daly.

"So it is;—warning you honest Tom is away to America!" The paper fell from Darcy's hand, and he staggered back into a seat.

"With they say above a hundred thousand pounds, Darcy," continued Daly, taking up the fragment. "If the news be true—"

"If so, I'm ruined; he received the whole loan on Saturday last—he could not delay Hickman's payment beyond Wednesday without suspicion."

"Ah! I see it all, and the American packet does not sail till to-morrow morning from Liverpool."

"But it may all be false," said Darcy. "Who writes you this story?"

"It is signed 'F.' and Freney is the man; I know the fellow that brought it."

"I'll not believe a word of it, Bagenal," said the knight, impetuously. "I'll not credit the calumny of a highwayman against the honor of one I have known and respected for years. It is false, depend upon it."

"Yet how it tallies with Sandy's tidings; there is something in it. Hush, Darcy, don't speak, there is some one passing."

The sounds of feet and voices were heard at the same instant without, and among them the clear, distinct accents of Hickman O'Reilly.

"Yes," said he, "if the news had come a little earlier, Lord Castlereagh would have found some of our patriots less stern in virtue. Gleeson will have carried away half a province with him."

"There!" whispered Daly, "you heard that—the news is about already."

But Darcy was now totally overcome, and, with his head resting on the table, neither spoke nor stirred. "Bagenal," said he, at length, but in a voice faint as a whisper, "I am too ill to face the House, let us turn homeward."

"I'll see for a carriage," said Daly, who issued forth to take the first he could find.

"I say, Hamilton," cried a member, as he alighted from his chariot, "there's the Knight of Gwynne and Bagenal Daly in Castlereagh's carriage."

"Daly said he could drive a coach and six through the bill," replied the other; "perhaps he's gone to practice with a pair first."

CHAPTER XX.

THE ADJOURNED DEBATE.

ALTHOUGH the debate had commenced at seven o'clock, none of the great speakers on either side arose before eleven. Some fierce skirmishes had, indeed, occurred; personalities and sarcasms the most cutting had been interchanged with a freedom that showed that if shame were in a great measure departed, personal daring and intrepidity were qualities still in repute. The Ministerial party, no longer timid or wavering, took no pains to conceal their sense of coming victory, and even Lord Castlereagh, usually so guarded on every outward observance, entered the House and took his seat with a smile of conscious triumph that did not escape observation from either friends or opponents.

The tactics of the Treasury benches, too, seemed changed: not waiting, as hitherto, to receive and repel the attack of the Opposition, they now became themselves the assailants, and evinced, by the readiness and frequency of their assaults, the perfect organization they had attained. The Opposition members, who opened the debate, were suffered to proceed without any attempt at reply, an ironical cheer, a well-put question, some homethrust as to former opinions, alone breaking the thread of an argument which, even from its monotony, was becoming less effective.

Sir Henry Parnell, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and who had been dismissed from office for his opinions on the Union, was the first speaker; with a moderation, in part the result of his former position with regard to those who had been his colleagues, he limited himself to a strict examination of the measure in its bearings and consequences, and never, even for a moment, digressed into anything like reflection on the motives of its advocates. His speech was able and argumentative, but evidently unsatisfactory to his party, who seemed impatient and uneasy till he concluded, and hailed Ponsonby, who rose

after him, with cheers that showed their expectations were now, at least, more likely to be realized.

Whether the occasion alone was the cause, or that catching the excitement of his supporters, Ponsonby deviated from the usually calm and temperate character he was accustomed to assume in the House, and became warm and impassioned. Disdaining to examine the relative merits or demerits of the proposed bill, he boldly pronounced Parliament incompetent to decide it, and concluded by declaring that, if carried, the measure might endanger, not only the ties of amity between the two nations, but dissolve those of allegiance also. A loud burst of mingled indignation and irony broke from the Treasury benches at this daring flight, when the speaker, at once collecting himself, turned the whole force of his attack on the secretary. With slow and measured intonation, he depicted the various stages of his political career, recalling to memory the liberal pledges he had once contracted, and the various shades of defection by which he had at last reached the position in which he could "betray Ireland."

None were prepared for the degree of eloquent power Ponsonby displayed on this occasion; and the effect of such a speech from one habitually calm, even to coldness, was overwhelming. It was not Lord Castlereagh's intention to have spoken at this early hour of the debate; but, apologizing for occupying the time of the House by a personality, he arose, not self-possessed and at ease, but flushed and excited.

Without adverting for a second to the measure in debate, he launched forth into a most violent invective on his adversary. With a vehement passion, that only his nearest friends knew him to possess, he exposed every act of his political life; taunted him with holding opinions liberal enough to be a patriot, but sufficiently plastic to be marketable; he accused his very calmness as being an hypocritical affectation of fairness, while, in reality, it was but the tacit admission of his readiness to be bought; and at length pushed his violent sarcasm so far, that a loud cry of "Order!" burst forth from the Opposition, while cheers of defiance were heard along the densely-crowded ranks of the Ministerial party.

From this moment the discussion assumed a most bitter character: assertions and denials, uttered in language the most insulting, were heard at every moment, and no speaker could proceed without some interruption which demanded several minutes

to subdue. More than one member was seen to cross the floor, and interchange a few words with an adversary, the import of which, as he returned to his place, no physiognomist need have doubted. It was not debate or discussion, it was the vehement outpouring of personal and political hatred, by men whose passions were no longer restrainable, and many of whom saw in this the last occasion of their ever being able to confront their enemies. Language that could not be uttered with impunity elsewhere, was heard at every moment; open declarations were made that, the bill once carried, allegiance and loyalty were dissolved; and Sir Neil O'Donnell went so far as to say that he regarded the measure as an act of treason, and would place himself at the head of his regiment to oppose and annul it.

It was in a momentary pause of this bitter conflict that rumor announced the arrival of the Knight of Gwynne and Bagenal Daly at the House. Never were reinforcements more gladly hailed by a weakened and disabled army; cheers of triumphant delight broke from the Opposition benches, answered by others, not less loud and taunting, from the Ministerial side, and every eye was turned eagerly toward the door by which they were expected to enter.

To such a pitch of violence had partisanship carried the members on both sides, expressions of open defiance and insult were exchanged in the midst of this scene of tumult, nor was the authority of the speaker able to restore order for several minutes; when at last the doors were thrown open, and Hickman O'Reilly entered, and walked up the body of the House. Shouts of loud laughter now resounded from either side; such an apparition at the moment was the most ludicrous contrast to that expected, and a boisterous gayety succeeded to the late scene of acrimony and intemperance.

The individual himself seemed somewhat puzzled at these unlooked-for marks of public notice, and stared around him in astonishment, till his eyes rested on the spot where Lord Castlereagh sat whispering with Mr. Cory. Brief as was the glance, it seemed to have conveyed some momentous intelligence to the gazer, for he became at first scarlet and then pale as death; he looked again, but the secretary had turned his head away, and Cory was coolly unfolding the plaits of a white cambric handkerchief, and apparently only occupied with that object. At this moment Hickman was standing with one foot upon the steps which led toward the Treasury benches: he wheeled abruptly round, and walked over to

the other side of the House, where he sat down between Egan and Ponsonby.

The cheers of the Opposition now burst forth anew, and with a deafening clamor, while from back and cross benches, and everywhere within reach, hands were eagerly stretched forward to grasp O'Reilly's. Never was support less expected, never an alliance less speculated on, and the cries of exultation were almost maddening. How long the scene of tumultuous excitement might have lasted, it is difficult to say, when Lord Castlereagh rose with a calm dignity of manner that never in the most trying moments forsook him: "He begged to remind the gentlemen opposite, that if these triumphant expressions were not indecorous, they were at least premature; that the momentous occasion on which they were met demanded all the temperate and calm consideration which they could bestow upon it; that the time for the adoption of any course would not be distant, and would sufficiently show to which side, with most propriety, the expression of triumph belonged."

The hint was significant, the foreshadowed victory was too plainly and too palpably predicted to admit of a doubt, and a chilling silence succeeded to the former uproar. The individual whose address this long scene of tumult had interrupted was now suffered to proceed; he was a law-sergeant, a man of inferior capacity and small professional repute, whose advocacy of the Government plan had raised him to an unbecoming and dangerous eminence at the Bar. Without the slightest pretensions as a speaker, or one quality that should adorn a statesman, he possessed other gifts scarcely less valuable at that day: he was a ready pistol; he came of a fighting family, not one of whom did not owe some advancement in life to a cool hand and a steady eye; and he occupied his place in the Ministerial van by virtue of this signal accomplishment. As incapable of feeling the keen sarcasm of his opponents as he was of using a similar weapon, he was yet irascible from temperament and overbearing in manner; and was used by his party as men employ a fire-ship—with a strong conviction that it may damage more than the enemy.

To cover the deficiencies of his oratory, as well as to add poignancy to his personalities, it was the invariable custom of his friends to cheer him vociferously at the end of every sentence which contained anything like attack on the Opposition, and to this species of backing he was indebted for the courage that made him assail men incomparably above him in every quality of intellect.

Mr. Plunkett was now the object of his invective, nor was the boldness of such a daring its least recommendation. Few of the Government side of the House would have ventured to cross weapons with this master of sarcasm and irony; none but the Sergeant Nickolls could have done so without a strong fear of consequences. He, however, was unconcerned for the result as it affected himself personally, and as for the withering storm that awaited him, the triple hide of his native dullness was an armor of proof that nothing could penetrate. From Plunkett he passed on to Bushe, from Bushe to Grattan; no game flew too high for his shafts, nor was any invective coarse enough to level at the great leaders of the Opposition. If the overbearing insolence of his harangue delighted his own party, it called down peals of laughter from his opponents, who cheered every figurative absurdity and every illogical conclusion with shouts of ironical admiration.

Lord Castlereagh saw the mischief, and would gladly have cut short the oration; but the speaker was reveling in an imaginary victory, and would listen to no suggestions whatever. Passing from the great names of the Irish party, he launched forth in terms of insult toward the county members, whom he openly accused of holding their opinions under a mistaken hope that they were a marketable commodity; and that as some stanch adherents of the Crown had reaped the honors due to "their loyalty," these quasi patriots were only waiting for their price. The allusion was so palpable, that every eye was turned to where Hickman O'Reilly sat, and whose confusion was now overwhelming.

"Ay," continued the speaker, now carried beyond all self-restraint by the evident sensation he had caused, "there are gentlemen opposite whose confessions would reveal much of this kind of independence. I have my eye on some of them; men who will be patriots if they cannot be peers, ready to put on the cap of liberty for the mob, if they cannot get the coronet from the Crown. Many, too, are absent from this debate; they stand out; perhaps, for high terms; they have got peerages for their wives, and now, like a hackney coachman, not content with their fare, they want 'something for themselves.' I heard of two such a while ago; they even came as far as the lobby of this House, where they halted and hesitated; a miter or a regiment, a blue ribbon or a red one, would have turned the scale, perhaps. Why are they not here now? I ask; what has become of them?"

"Name! name!" screamed the Opposition, in a torrent of mad excitement, while the Government party, outrageous at the blundering folly of the whole harangue, endeavored to pull the speaker back into his seat. Never was such a scene; one party lashed to madness by suspected treachery and open insult; the other indignant at the stupidity of a man who, in his attempts at attack, had raked up every calumny against his own friends. Already more than one hand was laid on his arms to press him down into his seat, when he, with the obstinacy of thorough dullness, shook himself free, and called out, "I'm ready to name."

Again the cries of "Name!" were shouted, mingled with no less vociferous cries of "No, no!" and the struggle now had every appearance of a personal one, when the speaker, calling to order, asked if it was the sense of the House that the sergeant should give the names he alluded to.

"I'll soon cut the matter short," called out the sergeant, in a voice that resounded through every corridor of the House. "I mean the Knight of Gwynne and Bagenal Daly."

A cry of "Order! order!" now arose from all parts of the House, the direct mention of any member by name being a liberty unprecedented.

"I beg to correct myself," said the sergeant. "I should have said the honorable members for Mayo and Oldeastle. I ask again, why are they not here?"

"Better you had never put the question," said a deep, low voice from beneath the gallery; and at the same instant Bagenal Daly advanced along one of the passages, and took his place at the table directly in front of the sergeant. A tremendous cheer now broke from the Opposition benches, which the Ministerial party in vain essayed to return.

"I perceive, sir," said the sergeant, with an effort to resume his former ease—"I perceive I have succeeded in conjuring up one at least of these truant spirits, and I cannot do better than leave him to make his explanations to the House."

With this lame, disjointed conclusion the learned sergeant sat down, and although the greatest exertions were made by his friends to cover this palpable failure, the cries of derision drowned all other sounds, and before they were silenced a shout of "Daly! Daly! Bagenal Daly!" resounded through the building.

Daly arose slowly and saluted the speaker with a most deferential courtesy. It was several minutes before the tumult had

sufficiently subsided to make his words audible; but when silence prevailed he was heard to regret, in terms of unaffected ease, that any circumstance might occur which should occupy the time of the House by observations from one so rude and unlettered as himself, nor would he now venture on the trespass were the occasion merely a personal one. From this he proceeded to state that great emergencies were always occurring in which even the humblest opinions should be made known as evidencing the probable impressions upon others as lowly circumstanced as he who now addressed them.

"Such is the present one," said he, raising his voice, and looking around him with a glance of bold defiance. "You are about to take away the right of self-government from a nation, and every man in the land, not only such as sit here, sir, but every man to whose future ambition a seat in this House may form a goal, every man has a deep interest in your proceedings. It is a grave and weighty question, whose conditions impose the conviction that we are unfit to legislate for ourselves—that we are too weak, or too venal, or too ignorant, or too dishonest. To that conclusion you must come, or no other. Absence from Ireland must suggest enlightenment on her interests; distance must lend knowledge as well as enchantment, or an English parliament cannot be better than our own. I have listened attentively, but unconvinced, to all arguments on this head; I have heard over and over again the long catalogue of benefits to accrue to this country when the power of realizing them herself has been wrested from her, and I have thought of Lear and his daughters! It would seem to me, however, that the social welfare and the commercial prosperity of a people are themes too vulgar for the high consideration of our times. The real question at issue is not whether a parliament should or should not continue to sit here, but what shall I, and others like me, benefit by voting it away forever?"

"Order! order!" called out several voices.

But Daly resumed: "I ask pardon. It is more parliamentary to put the case differently, and I shall, under correction, do so. Well, sir, we may benefit largely. I trust I am not disorderly in saying that peerages, bishoprics, regiments, frigates, commissionerships, and Heaven knows what more will reward us, when our utility to the state has met the approval of an imperial parliament. I can well credit every promise of such gratitude, and have only to ask in turn,

are these the arguments that should sway us now? Is it because we are bungling legislators that they wish for us in London?—is it because we are venal they seek our company, because we are inefficient they ask for our co-operation? Are they so supremely right-minded, honorable, and far-seeing, that they need the alloy of our dullness to make them mortal? And suppose such the case, will it be gratifying to us to become the helots to this people? Will our national pride be flattered because our eloquence is sneered at, our law derided, our political knowledge a scoff, and our very accent a joke? Do not tell me such things are unlikely; we are far weaker on the point than we like to confess. For myself, I can imagine the sense of shame—of deep, heartfelt, abasing shame—I should feel at seeing some of those I see here rise in a British House of Commons to address that body, while the rumor should run, 'he is the member for Meath or for Wicklow.' I can picture to myself such a man: a man of low origin and mean capacity; a man who carves his path in life less from his own keen abilities than that others shirk from his contact, and leave him unopposed in every struggle; a pettifogger at the Bar; a place-hunter at the parliament; half beggar, half bravo, with a petition for the minister, and a pistol for the Opposition. Imagine a man like this, and reflect upon the feeling of every gentleman at hearing the rumor announce, 'Ay, that's a learned sergeant, a leader at the Bar of Ireland.'

The last words were delivered in a tone of direct personality, as, turning toward where Nickolls sat, Daly threw at him a look of defiance. The whole House arose as if one man, with cheers and counter-cheers, and loud yells of insult, mingled with cries of "Order!" nor was it till after a long and desperate wordy altercation that the clamor was subdued, and decorum at length restored. Then it was remarked that Nickolls had left the House.

The speaker immediately ordered the sergeant of the House to place Daly under arrest, a measure which, however dictated by propriety, seemed to call forth a burst of indignation from the Opposition benches.

"I hope, sir," said Daly, rising with an air of most admirably feigned humility—"I hope, sir, you will not execute this threat—the inconvenience to me will be very great—I was about to pair off with the honorable and learned member for Newry."

The mention of the town for which the sergeant sat in Parliament renewed the laughter which now prevailed on both sides of the House.

"I cannot understand the mirth of the gentlemen opposite," said Daly, with affected simplicity, "without it be from their astonishment that the Government can spare so able and so eloquent an advocate as the honorable and learned gentleman, but let them reassure themselves and look around, and, believe me, they'll find the Treasury benches filled by gentlemen as like him as possible."

The speaker reissued the order to the sergeant-at-arms, and Daly now came forward to the table and begged in all form to know the reason of such severity. "If, sir," said he, in conclusion—"if I could believe it possible that you anticipate any personal collision between myself and any member of this House, I have only to say, that I am bound over in the sum of two thousand pounds to keep the peace within the limits of this kingdom. I take out a license at two pounds fifteen to kill game, it is true, but I'd not pay sixpence for the privilege to shoot a lawyer."

The fact of the heavy recognizances to which Daly alluded was at once confirmed by several members, and after a brief conversation with the speaker the matter was dropped.

It was, as may be supposed, a considerable time before the debate could assume its due decorum and solemnity after an incident like this; for although hostile collisions were neither few nor unfrequent, an insult of so violent a character had never before been witnessed.

At length, however, order was restored, and another speaker addressed the House. All had assumed its wonted propriety, when a messenger delivered into Daly's hands a small sealed note: he glanced at the contents and rose immediately—Lord Castlereagh's quick eye caught the motion, and he at once called on the speaker to interfere. "I have myself seen a letter conveyed to the honorable member's hands," said he; "it requires no peculiar gift of divination to guess the object."

"I will satisfy the noble lord at once," said Daly; "there is the letter I have received—I pledge my word of honor the subject is purely a private one, having no reference whatever to anything that has passed here." He held out the letter as he spoke, but Lord Castlereagh declined to peruse it, and expressed his regret at having made the remark. Daly bowed courteously to him and left the House.

"Well, Sandy," said he, as soon as he reached the corridor, where his faithful follower stood waiting his coming, "what success?"

"No sae bad," said Sandy. "I've got a wherry, ane of them Wicklow craft; she's only half-decked, but she's a stout-looking sea-boat and broad in the beam."

"And the wind—how's that?"

"As it should be, west, or west wi' a point north."

"Is there enough of it?"

"Enough! I trow there is," said Sandy, with a grin; "if there be no a blast too much. Hear till it now." And, as if waiting for the remark, a tremendous gust of wind shook the strong building, while the clanking sound of falling slates and chimney-pots resounded through the street. "There's music for ye," said Sandy; "there came a clap, like that when I had a'maist made the bargain, and the carles would no budge without ten guineas mair. I promised them fifty, and the handsel whatever your honor liked after."

"It's all right—quite right," said Daly, wishing to stop details he never listened to with patience.

"It's a' right, I know weel enough," said Sandy, querulously; "but it wad no be a' right av ye went yersel; they'd have a gude penny, forbye what I say."

"And what say the fellows of this wind—is it like to last?"

"It will blow hard from the west for three or four days mair, and then draw round to the north."

"But we shall get to Liverpool before noon to-morrow."

"Maybe," said Sandy, with a low, dry laugh.

"Well, I mean, if we do get there. You told them I'd double the pay if we catch the American ship in the Mersey. I'd triple it, let them know that."

"They canna do mair than they can do; ten pounds is as good as ten hundred."

While this conversation was going forward, they had walked on together, and were now at the entrance door of the House, where a group of four persons stood under the shadow of the portico.

"Mr. Daly, I presume," said one, advancing, and touching his hat in salutation. "We have waited somewhat impatiently for your coming."

"I should regret it, sir, if I was aware you did me the honor to expect me."

"I am the friend of Sergeant Nickolls, sir," said the other, in a voice meant to be eloquently meaning.

"For your sake, the fact is to be deplored," answered Daly, calmly. "But proceed."

With a great effort to subdue his passion, the other resumed: "It does not require

your experience in such matters to know that the insult you have passed upon a high-minded and honorable gentleman—the gross and outrageous insult—should be atoned for by a meeting. We are here for this purpose, ready to accompany you as soon as you have provided yourself with a friend to wherever you appoint.”

“Are you aware,” said Daly, in a whisper, “that I am bound over in heavy recognizances—”

“Ah, indeed!” interrupted the other; “that, perhaps, may explain—”

“Explain what, sir?” said Daly, as he grasped the formidable weapon which, more club than walking-stick, he invariably carried.

“I meant nothing—I would only observe—”

“Never observe, sir, when there is nothing to be remarked. I was informing you that I am bound over to keep the peace in this same kingdom of Ireland—circumstances compel me to be in England to-morrow morning—circumstances of such moment, that I have myself hired a vessel to convey me thither—and, although the object of my journey is far from agreeable, I shall deem it one of the happiest coincidences of my life if it can accommodate your friend’s wishes. Nothing prevents my giving him the satisfaction he desires on English ground. I have sincere pleasure in offering him and every gentleman of his party, a passage over—the tide serves in half an hour. Eh, Sandy.”

“At a quarter to twelve, sir.”

“The wind is fair.”

“It is a hurricane,” replied the other, almost shuddering.

“It blows fresh,” was Daly’s cool remark.

For a moment or two the stranger returned to his party, with whom he talked eagerly, and the voices of the others were also heard speaking in evident excitement.

“You have the pistols safe, Sandy?” whispered Daly.

“They’re a’ safe, and in the wherry—but you’ll no want them this time, I trow,” said Sandy, with a shrug of his shoulders; “yon folk would rather bide where they are the night, than tak a bit o’ pleasure in the Channel.”

Daly smiled, and turned away to hide it, when the stranger again came forward. “I have consulted with my friends, Mr. Daly, who are also the friends of Sergeant Nickolls; they are of opinion that, under the circumstances of your being bound over, this affair cannot with propriety go further, although it might not, perhaps,

be unreasonable to expect that you, feeling the peculiar situation in which you stand, might express some portion of regret at the utterance of this most severe attack.”

“You are really misinformed on the whole of the business,” said Daly. “In the few words I offered to the House, I was but responding to the question of your friend, who asked, I think, somewhat needlessly, ‘Where was Bagenal Daly?’ I have no regrets to express for any terms I applied to him, though I may feel sorry that the forms of the House prevented my saying more. I am ready to meet him now; or, as he seems to dislike a breeze, when the weather is calmer. Tell him so; but tell him besides, that if he utters one syllable in my absence that the most malevolent gossip of a club-room can construe into an imputation on me, by G—d I’ll break every bone in his cowardly carcase! Come, Sandy, lead on. Good evening, sir. I wish you a bolder friend, or better weather.” So saying, he moved forward, and was soon hastening toward the North Wall, where the wherry was moored.

“It’s unco like the night we were wrecked in the Gulf,” said Sandy. “I mind the moon had that same blude color, and the clouds were a’ below, and none above her.”

“So it is, Sandy—there’s a heavy sea outside, I’m sure. How many men have we?”

“Four, and a bit o’ a lad, that’s as gude as anither. Lord save us! there was a flash! I wish it wud come to rain, and beat down the sea, we’d have aye wind enough after.”

“Where does she lie?”

“Yonder, sir, where you see the light bobbing. By my certie, but the chieils were no far wrang. A bit fighting’s hard bought by a trip to sea on such a night as this.”

CHAPTER XXI.

TWO OF A TRADE.

WHEN the newspapers announced the division on the adjourned debate, they also proclaimed the flight of the defaulter; and, wide as was the disparity between the two events in point of importance, it would be difficult to say which more engaged the attention of the Dublin public on that morning, the majority for the minister, or the published perfidy of “Honest Tom Gleeson.”

Such is, however, the all-ingrossing in-

terest of a local topic, aided, as in the present case, by almost incredulous amazement, the agent's flight was talked of and discussed in circles where the great political event was heard as a matter of course. Where had he fled to? What sum had he carried away with him? Who would be the principal losers? were all the questions eagerly discussed, but none of which excited so much diversity of opinion as the single one, What was the cause of his defalcation? His agencies were numerous and profitable, his mode of life neither extravagant nor ostentatious; how could a man with so few habits of expense have contracted debts of any considerable amount, or what circumstances could induce him to relinquish a station of respectability and competence for a life-long of dishonorable exile?

Such has been our progress of late years in the art of revealing to the world at large the hidden springs of every action and event around us, that a secret is in reality the only thing now impossible. Forty-five years ago, this wonderful exercise of knowledge was in a great measure unknown; the guessers were then a large and respectable class in society, and men were content with what mathematicians call approximation. In our own more accurate days, what between the newspaper, the club-room, and "Change," such mystery is no longer practicable. One day, or two, at farthest, would now proclaim every item in a man's schedule, and afford that most sympathetic of all bodies, the world, the fruitful theme of expatiating on his folly or his criminality. In the times we refer to, however, it was only the "Con Heffernans" of society that ventured even to speculate on the secret causes of these events.

Although the debate had lasted from eight o'clock in the evening to past eleven on the following morning, before twelve Mr. Heffernan's carriage was at the door, and the owner, without any trace of fatigue, set off to ascertain so much as might be learned of this strange and unexpected catastrophe. It was no mere passion to know the current gossip of the day, no prying taste for the last piece of scandal in circulation—Con Heffernan was above such weaknesses; but he had a habit, one which some men practice even yet with success, of, whenever the game was safe, taking credit to himself for casualties in which he had no possible connection, and attributing events in which he had no share to his own direct influence. After all, he was in this only imitating the great navigators of the globe, who have established the rule that

discovery gives a right only second to actual creation.

This was, however, a really provoking case; no one knew anything of Gleeson's embarrassments. Several of those for whom he acted as agent were in Dublin, but they were more amazed than all others at his flight; most of them had settled accounts with him very lately, some men owed him small sums. "Darcy, perhaps, knows something about him," was a speech Heffernan heard more than once repeated; but Darcy's house was shut up, and the servant announced "he had left town that morning." Hickman O'Reilly was the next chance; not that he had any direct intercourse with Gleeson, but his general acquaintanceship with moneyed men and matters made him a likely source of information; while a small sealed note addressed to Dr. Hickman was in possession of a banker with whom Gleeson had transacted business the day before his departure. But O'Reilly had left town with his son. "The doctor, sir, is here still; he does not go before to-morrow," said the servant, who, knowing that Heffernan was a person of some consequence in the Dublin world, thought proper to give this piece of unasked news.

"Will you give Mr. Con Heffernan's compliments, and say he would be glad to have the opportunity of a few minutes' conversation?" The servant returned immediately, and showed him up-stairs into a back drawing-room, where, before a table covered with law papers and parchments, sat the venerable doctor. He had not as yet performed the usual offices of a toilet, and with unshaven chin and uncombed hair, looked the most melancholy contrast of age, neglect, and misery, with the gorgeous furniture of a most splendid apartment.

He lifted his head as the door opened, and stared fixedly at the new comer, with an expression at once fierce and anxious, so that Heffernan, when speaking of him afterward, said that, "Dressed as he was, in an old flannel morning-gown, dotted with black tufts, he looked for all the world like a sick tiger making his will."

"Your humble servant, sir," said he, coldly, as Heffernan advanced with an air of cordiality; nor were the words and the accents they were uttered in lost upon the man they were addressed to. He saw how the land lay in a second, and said, eagerly, "He has not left town, I trust, sir. I sincerely hope your son has not gone."

"Yes, sir, he's off—I'm sure I don't know what he'd wait for."

"Too precipitate—too rash by far, Mr.

Hickman," said Heffernan, seating himself and wiping his forehead with an air of well-assumed chagrin.

"Maybe so," repeated the old man two or three times over, while he lowered his spectacles to his nose, and began hunting among his papers, as though he had other occupation in hand of more moment than the present topic.

"Are you aware, sir," said Heffernan, drawing his chair close up, and speaking in a most confidential whisper—"are you aware, sir, that your son mistook the signal—that when Mr. Corry took out his handkerchief and opened it on his knee, that it was in token of Lord Castlereagh's acquiescence of Mr. O'Reilly's demand—that, in short, the peerage was at that moment his own if he wished it?"

The look of dogged incredulity in the old man's face would have silenced a more sensitive advocate than Heffernan; but he went on: "If any one should feel angry at what has occurred, I am the person; I was the guarantee for your son's vote, and I have now to meet Lord Castlereagh without one word of possible explanation."

"Hickman told me," said the old man, with a voice steady and composed, "that if Mr. Corry did not raise the handkerchief to his mouth the terms were not agreed upon—that opening it before him only meant the bargain was not quite off—more delay—more talk, Mr. Heffernan—and I think there was enough of that already."

"A complete mistake, sir—a total misconception on his part."

"Just like Beecham being black-balled at the club," said the doctor, with a sarcastic bitterness all his own.

"With that, of course, we cannot be charged," said Heffernan. "Why was he put up without our being apprised of it? the black-balling was Bagenal Daly's doing—"

"So I heard," interrupted the other; "they told me that; and here, look here, here's Daly's bond for four thousand six hundred. Maybe he won't be so ready with his bank-notes as he was with his black ball—ay!"

"But, to go back to the affair of the House—"

"We won't go back to it, sir, if it's the same to you. I'm glad, with all my heart, the folly is over—sorra use I could see in it, except the expense, and there's plenty of that. The old families, as they call them, can't last forever, no more than old houses and old castles; there's an end of everything in time, and if Hickman waits, maybe his turn will come as others did before

him. Where's the Darcys now, I'd like to know?—" Here he paused and stammered, and at last stopped dead short, an expression of as much confusion as age and wrinkles would permit covering his hard, contracted features.

"You say truly," said Heffernan, finishing what he guessed to be the sentiment—"you say truly, the Darcys have run their race; when men's incumbrances have reached the point that his have, family influence soon decays. Now this business of Gleeson's—" Had he fired a shot close to the old man's ear he could not have startled him more effectually than by the mention of this name.

"What of Gleeson?" said he, drawing in his breath and holding on the chair with both hands.

"You know that he is gone—fled away no one knows where?"

"Gleeson! honest Tom Gleeson ran away!" exclaimed Hickman; "no, no, that's impossible—I'd never believe that."

"Strange enough, sir, that the paragraphs here have not convinced you," said Heffernan, taking up the newspaper which lay on the table, and where the mark of snuffy fingers denoted the very passage in question.

"Ay! I didn't notice it before," muttered the doctor, as he took up the paper, affecting to read, but in reality to conceal his own confusion.

"They say the news nearly killed Darcy; he only heard it when going into the House last night, and was seized with an apoplectic fit and carried home insensible." This latter was, it is perhaps needless to say, pure invention of Heffernan, who found it necessary to continue talking as a means of detecting old Hickman's game. "Total ruin to that family of course results. Gleeson had raised immense sums to pay off the debts, and carried all away with him."

"Ay!" muttered the doctor, as he seemed greatly occupied in arranging his papers on the table.

"You'll be a loser too, sir, by all accounts," added Heffernan.

"Not much—a mere trifle," said the doctor, without looking up from the papers. "But maybe he's not gone after all—I won't believe it yet."

"There seems little doubt on that head," said Heffernan; "he changed three thousand pounds in notes for gold at Ball's after the bank was closed on Tuesday, and then went over to Finlay's, where he said he had a lodgment to make. He left his great-coat behind him, and never came back for

it. I found that paper—it was the only one—in the breast pocket.”

“What is it? what is it?” repeated the old man, clutching eagerly at it.

“Nothing of any consequence,” said Heffernan, smiling; and he handed him a printed notice, setting forth that the United States bark, the *Congress*, of five hundred tons burden, would sail for New York on Wednesday, the 16th instant, at an hour before high water. “That looked suspicious, didn’t it?” said Heffernan; “and on inquiry I found he had drawn largely out of, not only the banks in town, but from the provincial ones also. Now, that note addressed to yourself, for instance—”

“What note?” said Hickman, starting round as his face became pale as ashes; “give it to me—give it at once!”

But Heffernan held it firmly between his fingers, and merely shook his head, while, with a gentle smile, he said, “The banker who intrusted this letter to my hands was well aware of what importance it might prove in a court of justice, should this disastrous event demand a legal investigation.”

The old doctor listened with breathless interest to every word of this speech, and merely muttered at the close the words, “The note, the note!”

“I have promised to restore the paper to the banker,” said Heffernan.

“So you shall—let me read it,” cried Hickman, eagerly; and he clutched from Heffernan’s fingers the document, before the other had seemingly determined whether he would yield to his demand.

“There it is for you, sir,” said the doctor; “make what you can of it;” and he threw the paper across the table.

The note contained merely the words, “Ten thousand pounds.” There was no signature nor any date, but the handwriting was Gleeson’s.

“Ten thousand pounds,” repeated Heffernan, slowly; “a large sum!”

“So it is,” chimed in Hickman, with a grin of self-satisfaction, while a consciousness that the mystery, whatever it might be, was beyond the reach of Heffernan’s skill, gave him a look of excessive cunning, which sat strangely on features so old and time-worn.

“Well, Mr. Hickman,” said Heffernan, as he rose to take leave, “I have neither the right nor the inclination to pry into any man’s secrets. This affair of Gleeson’s will be sifted to the bottom one day or other, and that small transaction of the ten thousand pounds as well as the rest. It was not to discuss him or his fortunes I came here. I hoped to have seen Mr.

O’Reilly, and explained away a very serious misconception. Lord Castlereagh regrets it, not for the sake of the loss of Mr. O’Reilly’s support, valuable as that unquestionably is, but because a wrong interpretation would seem to infer that the conduct of the Treasury bench was disingenuous. You will, I trust, make this explanation for me, and in the name of his lordship.”

“Faith, I won’t promise it,” said old Hickman, looking up from a long column of figures which he was for some minutes poring over; “I don’t understand them things at all; if Bob wanted to be a lord, ’tis more than ever I did—I don’t see much pleasure there is in being a gentleman. I know, for my part, I’d rather sit in the back parlor of my little shop in Loughrea, where I could have a chat over a tumbler of punch with a neighbor, than all the grandeur in life.”

“These simple, unostentatious tastes do you credit before the world, sir,” said Heffernan, with a well put-on look of admiration.

“I don’t know whether they do or not,” said Hickman, “but I know they help to make a good credit with the bank, and that’s better—ay!”

Heffernan affected to relish the joke, and descended the stairs, laughing as he went; but scarcely had he reached his carriage, however, than he muttered a heavy malediction on the sordid old miser, whose iniquities were not less glaring because Con had utterly failed to unravel anything of his mystery.

“To Lord Castlereagh’s,” said he to the footman, and then lay back to ponder over his late interview.

The noble secretary was not up when Con arrived, but had left orders that Mr. Heffernan should be shown up to his room whenever he came. It was now about five o’clock in the afternoon, and Lord Castlereagh, wrapped up in a loose morning gown, lay on the bed where he had thrown himself, without undressing, on reaching home. A debate of more than fifteen hours, with all its strong and exciting passages, had completely exhausted his strength, while the short and disturbed sleep had wearied rather than refreshed him. The bed and the table beside it were covered with the morning papers and open letters and dispatches, for, tired as he was, he could not refrain from learning the news of the day.

“Well, my lord,” said Heffernan, with his habitual smile, as he stepped noiselessly across the floor, “I believe I may wish you joy at last—the battle is gained now.”

"Heigho!" was the reply of the secretary, while he extended two fingers of his hand in salutation. "What hour is it, Heffernan?"

"It is near five, but really there's not a creature to be seen in the streets, and, except old Killgobbin airing his pocket handkerchief at the fire, not a soul at the club. Last night's struggle has nearly killed every one."

"Who is this Mr. Gleeson that has run off with so much money—did you know him?"

"Oh yes, we all knew 'honest Tom Gleeson.'"

"Ah! that was his sobriquet, was it?" said the secretary, smiling.

"Yes, my lord, such was he—or such, at least, was he believed to be, till yesterday evening. You know it's the last glass of wine always makes a man tipsy."

"And who is ruined, Heffernan—any of our friends?"

"As yet there's no saying. Drogheda will lose something considerable, I believe, but at the banks the opinion is that Darcy will be the heaviest loser of any."

"The knight?"

"Yes, the Knight of Gwynne."

"I am sincerely sorry to hear it," said Lord Castlereagh, with an energy of tone he had not displayed before; "if I had met half a dozen such men as he is, I should have had some scruples—" He paused, and at the instant caught sight of a very peculiar smile on Heffernan's features; then suddenly changing the topic, he said, "What of Nickolls—is he shot?"

"No, my lord, there was no meeting. Bagenal Daly, so goes the story, proposed going over to the Isle of Man in a row-boat."

"What, last night!" said the secretary, laughing.

"Yes, when it was blowing the roof off the Custom House; he offered him his choice of weapons, from a blunderbuss to a harpoon, and his own distance, over a handkerchief, or fifty yards with a rifle."

"And was Nickolls deaf to all such seductions?"

"Quite so, my lord; even when Daly said to him, 'I think it a public duty to shoot a fellow like you, for, if you are suffered to live, the Government will make a judge of you one of these days.'"

"What profound solicitude for the purity of the judgment seat!"

"Daly has reason to think of these things; he has been in the dock already, and perhaps suspects he may be again."

"Poor Darcy," said Lord Castlereagh to

himself, in a half whisper, "I wish I knew you were not a sufferer by this fellow's flight. By-the-by, Heffernan, sit down and write a few lines to Forester; say that Lord Cornwallis is greatly displeased at his protracted absence. I am tired of making excuses for him, and as I dine there to-day, I shall be tormented all the evening."

"Darcy's daughter is very good-looking, I hear," said Heffernan, smiling slyly, "and should have a large fortune if matters go right."

"Very possibly, but old Lady Wallin-court is the proudest dowager in England, and looks to the blood-royal for alliances. Forester is entirely dependent on her, and that reminds me of a most solemn pledge I made her to look after her 'dear Dick,' and prevent any entanglement in this barbarous land, as if I had nothing else to think of! Write at once, Heffernan, and order him up; say he'll lose his appointment by any further delay, and that I am much annoyed at his absence."

While Heffernan descended to the library to write, Lord Castlereagh turned once more to sleep until it was time to dress for the viceroy's dinner.

CHAPTER XXII.

"A WARNING" AND "A PARTING."

IF we wanted any evidence of how little avail all worldly wisdom is, we might take it from the fact, that our severest calamities are often impending us at the moments we deem ourselves most secure from misfortune. Thus was it that while the events were happening whose influence was to shadow over all the sunshine of her life, Lady Eleanor Darcy never felt more at ease. That same morning the post had brought her a letter from the knight—only a few lines, hastily written—but enough to allay all her anxiety. He spoke of law arrangements, then almost completed, by which any immediate pressure regarding money might be at once obviated, and promised, for the very first time in his life, to submit to any plan of retrenchment she desired to adopt. Had it been in her power, she could not have dictated lines more full of pleasant anticipation. The only drawback on the happiness of her lot in life was the wasteful extravagance of a mode of living which savored far more of feudal barbarism than of modern luxury.

Partly from long habit and association, partly from indolence of character, but

more than either from a compassionate consideration of those whose livelihood might be impaired by any change in his establishment, the knight had resisted all suggestion of alteration. He viewed the very speculations around him as vested rights, and the most he could pledge himself to was, that when the present race died out he would not appoint any successors.

The same post that brought this pleasant letter, conveyed one of far less grateful import to Forester. It was a long epistle from his mother, carefully worded, and so characteristic withal, that if it were any part of our object to introduce that lady to our readers, we could not more easily do so than through her own letter. Such is not, however, our intention; enough if we say that it was a species of domestic homily, where moral principles and worldly wisdom found themselves so inextricably interwoven, no mean skill could have disentangled them. She had learned, as careful mothers somehow always contrive to learn, that her son was domesticated in the house with a very charming and beautiful girl, and the occasion seemed suitable to inforce some of those excellent precepts, which hitherto had been deficient in force for want of a practical example.

Had Lady Wallincourt limited herself to cautious counsels about falling in love with some rustic beauty in a remote region, Forester might have treated the advice as one of those matter-of-course events, which cause no more surprise than the receipt of a printed circular; but she went further. She deemed this a fitting occasion to instruct her son into the mystery of that craft which, in her own experience of life, she had seen make more than one man's fortune, and by being adepts in which many of her own family had attained to high and lasting honors. This science was neither more nor less than success in female society. "I will not insult either your good taste or your understanding," wrote she, "by any warning against falling in love in Ireland. Beauty is—France excepted—pretty equally distributed through the world; neither is there any nationality in good looks, for, nowadays, admixture of race has obliterated every peculiarity of origin. In all then that concerns manner, tone, and breeding, your own country possesses the true standard; every deviation from this is a fault. What is conventional must be right, because it is the exponent of general opinion on those topics for which each feels interested. Now the Irish, my dear boy, the Irish are never conventional; they are clannish, provincial, peculiar, but never

conventional. Their pride would seem to be rather to ruffle than fall in with the general sympathies of society. They forget that the social world is a great compact, and they are always striving for individual successes by personal distinction: this is the very acme of vulgarity.

"If they, however, are very indifferent models for imitation, they afford an excellent school for your own training; they are a shrewd, quick-sighted race, with a strong sense of the ludicrous, and are what the French call *malin* to a degree. To win favor among them without any subservient imitation of their own habits, which would be contemptible, is not over easy.

"If I am rightly informed, you are at present well circumstanced to profit by my counsels. I am told of a very agreeable and very pretty girl with whom you ride and walk out constantly, and far from feeling any maternal uneasiness—for I trust I know my son—I am rejoiced at the circumstance. Make the most of such an advantage by exercising your own abilities and powers of pleasing, give yourself the habit of talking your very best on every topic, without pedantry or any sign of premeditation. Practice that blending of courteous deference to a woman's opinions with a subdued consciousness of your own powers, which I have so often spoken to you of in your dear father's character. Seldom venture on an axiom, never tell an anecdote—be most guarded in any indulgence of humor; a laugh is the most dangerous of all triumphs. It is the habit to reproach us with our frigidity—I believe not without reason—cultivate, then, a certain amount of warmth which may suggest the idea of earnestness, apart from all suspicion of enthusiasm, which I have often told you is low-lived. Watch carefully by what qualities your success is more advanced; examine yourself as to what defects you experience in your own character; make yourself esteemed as a means of being estimable; win regard, and the habit of pleasing will give a charm to your manner, even when you are not desirous to secure affection. Your poor dear father often confessed the inestimable advantages of his first affairs of the heart, and used to say, whenever by any adroit exercise of his captivation he had gained over an adverse maid of honor, I owe that to Louisa, for such was the name of the young lady—I forget now who she was. The mechanism of the heart is alike in all lands; the means of success in Ireland will win victory where the prize is higher. In all this, remember I by no means advise you to sport with any young lady's feelings, nor

to win more of her affection than may assure you that the entire could also become yours—a polite chess-player will rest satisfied to say ‘check,’ without pushing the adversary to ‘mate.’

“It will soon be time you should leave the army, and I hope to find you have acquired some other education by the pursuit than mere knowledge of dress.”

This is a short specimen of the maternal Machiavelism by which “the most fascinating woman of her set” hoped to instruct her son, and teach him the road to fortune.

Such is the fatal depravity of every human heart, that any subtle appeal to selfishness, if it fail to flex the victim to the will, at least shakes the strong sense of conscious rectitude, and makes our very worthiness seem weakness.

Forester’s first impression was almost anger as he read these lines, the second time he perused them he was far less shocked, and at last was puzzled whether more to wonder at the keen worldly knowledge they betrayed or the solicitude of that affection which consented to unvail so much of life for his guidance. The result of all these conflicting emotions was depression of spirits, and a discontent with himself and all the world; nor could the fascinations of that little circle in which he lived so intimately, subdue the feeling.

Lady Eleanor saw this, and exerted herself with all her wonted powers to amuse and interest him; Helen too, delighted at the favorable change in her mother’s spirits, contributed to sustain the tone of light-hearted pleasantry, while she could not restrain a jest upon Forester’s unusual gloominess.

The manner, whose fascinations had hitherto so many charms, now almost irritated him; the poison of suspicion had been imbibed, and he continually asked himself, what if the very subtlety his mother’s letter spoke of was now practiced by her? If all the varied hues of captivation her changing humor wore were but the deep practiced lures of coquetry? His self-love was piqued by the thought, as well as his perceptive shrewdness, and he set himself, as he believed, to decipher her real nature; but, such is the blindness of mere egotism, in reality to misunderstand and mistake her.

How often it happens in life that the moment a doubt prevails as to some trait or feature of our character, we should exactly seize upon that very instant to indulge in some weakness or passing levity that may strengthen a mere suspicion or make it certainty.

Helen never seemed gayer than on this evening, scarcely noticing Forester, save when to jest upon his morose and silent mood; she talked, and laughed, and sang in all the free joyousness of a happy heart, unconsciously displaying powers of mind and feeling which, in calmer moments, lay dormant and concealed.

The evening wore on, and Helen had just risen from her harp—where she was playing one of those wild, half-sad, half-playful, melodies of her country—when a gentle tap came to the door, and, without waiting for leave to enter, old Tate appeared.

The old man was pale, and his features wore an expression of extreme terror; but he was doing his very utmost, as it seemed, to struggle against some inward fear, as, with a smile of far more melancholy than mirth, he said, “Did ye hear it, my lady? I’m sure ye heard it.”

“Heard what, Tate?” said Lady Eleanor.

“The—but I see Miss Helen’s laughing at me. Ah! don’t then, miss, darlin’—don’t laugh.”

“What was it, Tate? Tell us what you heard.”

“The banshee, my lady! Ay, there’s the way—I knew how ’twould be, you’d only laugh when I told you.”

“Where was it you heard it?” said Lady Eleanor, affecting seriousness to gratify the old man’s superstition.

“Under the east window, my lady; then it moved across the flower-garden, and down to the shore beneath the big rocks.”

“What was it like, Tate?”

“’Twas like a funeral ‘coyne’ first, miss, when ye heard it far away in the mountain; and then it rose, and swelled fuller and stronger, till it swam all round me, and at last died away to the light, soft cry of an infant.”

“Exactly, Tate; it was Captain Forester sighing. I never heard a better description in my life.”

“Ah! don’t laugh, my lady—don’t now, Miss Helen, dear. I never knew luck nor grace come of laughing when the warnin’ was come. ’Tis the captain, there, looks sad and thoughtful—the Heavens bless him for it! He knows it is no time for laughing.”

Forester might have accepted the eulogy in better part, perhaps, had he understood it; but as it was, he turned abruptly about and asked Lady Eleanor for an explanation of the whole mystery.

“Tate thinks he has heard—”

“Thinks!” interrupted the old man,

with a sorrowful gesture of both hands. "Musha! I'd take the Gospel on it; I heard it as plain as I hear your ladyship now."

Lady Eleanor smiled, and went on—"the cry of the banshee, that dreadful warning which, in the superstition of the country, always betokens death, or at least some great calamity, to the house it is heard to wail over."

"A polite attention, to say the least," said Forester, smiling sarcastically, "of the witch, or fairy, or whatever it is, to announce to people an approaching misfortune. And has every cabin got its own ban—what do you call it?"

"The cabins has none," said Tate, with a look of severe reproach the most remote possible from his habitual air of deference; "'tis only the oldest and most ancient families, like his honor the knight's, has a banshee. But it's no use talking; I see nobody believes me."

"Yes, Tate, I do," cried Helen, with an earnestness of manner, either really felt, or assumed to gratify the poor old man's superstitious veneration; "just tell me how you heard it first."

"Like that!" whispered Tate, as he held up his hand to enforce silence; and at the same instant a low, plaintive cry was heard, as if beneath the very window. The accent was not of pain or suffering, but of melancholy so soft, so touching, and yet so intense, that it stilled every voice within the room, where now each long-drawn breath was audible.

There is a lurking trait of superstition in every human heart, which will resist, at some one moment or other, every effort of reason and every scoff of irony. An instant before, and Forester was ready to jest with the old man's terrors, and now his own spirit was not all devoid of them. The feeling was, however, but of a moment's duration; suspicion again assumed its sway, and, seizing his hat, he rushed from the room, to search the flower-garden and examine every spot where any one might lie concealed.

"There he goes now, as if he could see her; and maybe 'twould be as well for him he didn't," said Tate as, in contempt of the English incredulity, he gazed after the eager youth. "Is his honor well, my lady?—when did you hear from him?"

"We heard this very day, Tate; he is perfectly well."

"And Master Lionel—the captain, I mane—but I only can think he's a child still."

"Quite well, too," said Helen. "Don't

alarm yourself, Tate; you know how sadly the wind can sigh through these old walls at times, and under the yew-trees, too, it sounds drearily; I've shuddered to myself often, as I've heard it."

"God grant it!" said old Tate, piously; but the shake of his head and the muttering sounds between his teeth, attested that he laid no such flattering unction to his heart as mere disbelief might offer. "'Tisn't a death-cry, anyhow, Miss Helen," whispered he to Miss Darey, as he moved toward the door; "for I went down to the back of the abbey, where Sir Everard was buried, and all was still there."

"Well, go to bed now, Tate, and don't think more about it; if the wind—"

"Ah! the wind! the wind!" said he, querulously; "that's the way it always is, as if God Almighty had no other way of talking to our hearts than the cry of the night-wind."

"Well, Captain Forester, what success? Have you confronted the specter?" said Lady Eleanor, as he re-entered the apartment.

"Except having fallen into a holly-bush, where I rivaled the complaining accents of the old witch, I have no adventure to recount; all is perfectly still and tranquil without."

"You have got your cheek scratched for following the Syren," said Lady Eleanor, laughing; "pray put another log on the fire, it is fearfully chilly here."

Old Tate withdrew slowly and unwillingly; he saw that his intelligence had failed to produce a proper sense of terror on their minds; and his own load of anxiety was heavier, from want of participation.

The conversation, by that strange instinct which influences the least as well as the most credulous people, now turned on the superstitions of the peasantry, and many a legend and story were remembered by Lady Eleanor and her daughter, in which these popular beliefs formed a chief feature.

"It is unfair and unwise," said Lady Eleanor, at the conclusion of one of these stories, "to undervalue such influences, the sailor, who passes his life in dangers, watches the elements with an eye and an ear that training have rendered almost preternaturally observant, and he sees the sign of storm where others would but mark the glow of a red sunset; so among a primitive people communing much with their own hearts in solitary, unfrequented places, imagination becomes developed in undue proportion, and the mind seeks relief in creative efforts from the wearying sense of loneliness; but even these are less idle

fancies than conclusions come to from long and deep thought. Some strange process of analogy would seem the parent of superstitions which we know to be common to all lands."

"Which means, that you half believe in a banshee!" said Forester, smiling.

"Not so; but that I cannot consent to despise the frame of mind which suggests these beliefs, although I have no faith in the apparitions. Poor Tate there had never dreamed of hearing the banshee cry if some painful thought of impending misfortune had not suggested her presence; his fears may not be unfounded, although the form they take be preternatural."

"I protest against all such plausibilities," said Helen. "I'm for the banshee, as the republicans say in France, 'one and indivisible.' I'll not accept of natural explanations. Mr. Bagenal Daly says we may well believe in spirits, when we put faith in the mere ghost of a parliament."

"Helen is throwing out a bait for a political discussion," said Lady Eleanor, laughing, "and so I'll even say good-night. Good-night, Captain Forester, and pleasant dreams of the banshee."

Forester rose and took his leave, which, somehow, was colder than usual. His mother's counsels had got possession of his mind, and distrust perverted every former source of pleasure.

"Her manner is all coquetry," said he, angrily, to himself, as he walked toward his room.

Poor fellow! and what if it were? Coquetry is but gilding, to be sure; but it can never be well laid on if the substance beneath is not a precious metal.

There was, at the place where the river opened into the sea, a small inlet of the bay guarded by two bold and rocky headlands, between which the tide swept with uncommon violence, accumulating in time a kind of bar, over which, even in calm weather, the waves were lashed into breakers, while the waters within were still as a mountain lake. The ancient ruin we have already alluded to passingly, stood on a little eminence fronting this small creek, and although unmarked by any architectural beauty, or any pretensions, save the humble possession of four rude walls pierced by narrow windows, and a low doorway formed of three large stones, was yet, in the eyes of the country people, endowed with some superior holiness—so it is certain the little churchyard around bespoke. It was crowded with graves, whose humble monuments consisted in wooden crosses, decorated in recent cases with little gar-

lands of paper or wild flowers, as piety or affection suggested. The fragments of ship-timber around showed that they who slept beneath had been mostly fishermen, for the chapel was peculiarly esteemed by them; and at the opening of the fishing season a mass was invariably offered here for the success of the herring-fishery, by a priest from a neighboring parish, whose expenses were willingly and liberally rewarded by the fishermen.

In exact proportion with the reverence in which this spot was regarded by day was the fear and dread entertained of it by night. Stories of ghosts and evil spirits were rife far and near of that lonely ruin, and the hardiest seamen who would brave the wild waves of the Atlantic would not venture alone within these deserted walls after dark. Helen remembered, as a child, having been once there after sunset, induced by an intense curiosity to hear or see something of those sounds and shapes her nurse had told of, and what alarm her absence created among the household increased when it was discovered where she had been.

The same strange desire to hear if it might be that sad and wailing voice which all had so distinctly heard in the drawing-room, led her, when she had wished her mother good-night, to leave her chamber, and crossing the flower-garden, to descend to the beach by a small door which opened on a little pathway down to the sea. When the superstitions whose terrors have affrighted childhood are either conquered by reason or uprooted by worldly influence, they still leave behind them a strange passion for the marvelous, which in imaginative temperaments is frequently greatly developed, and becomes a great source of enjoyment or suffering to its possessor. Helen Darey's nature was of this kind, and she would gladly have accepted all the terrors and horrors of her nursery days to feel once again that intense awe, that anxious heart-beating expectancy, a ghost story used to create within her.

The night was calm and starlit, the sea was tranquil and unruffled, except where the bar broke the flow of the tide, and marked by a long line of foam the struggling breakers, whose hoarse splash was heard above the rippling on the strand. Even in the rocky caves all was still, not an echo resounded within those dreary caverns where at times the thunder's self was not louder. Helen reached the little churchyard; she knew every path and foot-track through it, and at last, strolling leisurely onward, entered the ruin and sat down within the deep window that looked over the sea.

For some time her attention was directed seaward, watching the waves as they reflected back the spangled heaven, or sank again in dark shadow, when suddenly she perceived the figure of a man, who appeared slowly pacing the beach immediately beneath where she sat.

What could have brought any one there at such an hour she could not imagine; and however few her terrors of the world of spirits, she would gladly at this moment have been safe within the abbey. While she debated with herself how to act—whether to remain in her present concealment, or venture on a sudden flight—the figure halted exactly under the window. Her doubts and fears were now speedily resolved, for she perceived it was Forester, who, induced by the beauty of the night, had thus strolled out upon the shore. “What if I should put his courageous incredulity to the test?” thought Helen; “the moment is propitious now. I could easily imitate the cry of the banshee!” The temptation was too strong to be resisted, and without further thought she uttered a low thrilling wail, in an accent of most touching sorrow. Forester started and looked up, but the dark walls were in deep shadow: whatever his real feeling at the moment, he lost no time in clambering up the bank on which the ruin stood, and from which he rightly judged the sound proceeded. Helen was yet uncertain whether to attribute this step to terror or the opposite, when she heard his foot as he traversed the thickly-studded graveyard—a moment more and he would be in the church itself, where he could not fail to discover her by her white dress. But one chance offered of escape, which was to leap from the window down upon the strand—it was deeper than she fancied, nearly twice her own height, but then detection, for more than one good reason, was not to be thought of.

Helen was not one of those who long hesitate when their minds are to be made up; she slipped noiselessly between the stone mullion and the side of the window, and sprang out; unfortunately, one foot turned on a small stone, and she fell on the sand, while a slight accent of pain unconsciously broke from her. Before she could rise, Forester was beside her; with one arm round her waist, he half pressed, as he assisted her to recover her feet.

“So, fair spirit,” said he, jocularly, “I have tracked you, it would seem;” then, for the first time discovering it was Helen, he muttered in a different tone, “I ask pardon, Miss Darcy—I really did not know—”

“I am sure of that, Captain Forester,” said she, disengaging herself from his aid. “I certainly deserve a lesson for my silly attempt to frighten you, and I believe I have sprained my ankle. Will you kindly send Florence to me?”

“I cannot leave you here alone, Miss Darcy; pray take my arm and let me assist you back to the abbey.”

The tone of deference he now spoke in, and the increasing pain, concurred to persuade her, and she accepted the proffered assistance.

“The absurdity of this adventure is not repaid by the pleasure of having frightened you,” said she, laughing; “if I could only say how terrified you were—”

“You might indeed have said so,” interrupted Forester, “had I guessed the figure I saw leap out was yours.”

“It was even higher than I thought,” said she, avoiding to remark the fervent accents in which these words were spoken.

Forester was silent; his heart was full to bursting; the passion so lately dashed by doubts and suspicions returned with tenfold force now that he felt her arm within his own, as step by step they moved along.

“You are in great pain, I fear,” said he, tremulously.

“No, not now. I am so much more ashamed of my folly than a sufferer from it, that I could forgive the sprain, if I could the silly notion that caused it. ’Twas an unlucky fancy, to say the least of it.”

Again there was a pause, and although they walked but slowly, they were fast approaching the little gate that opened into the flower-garden. Forester was silent. Was it from this cause, or by some secret freemasonry of the female heart, that she suspected what was passing in his mind, and exerted herself to move on more rapidly?

“Take time, Miss Darcy; not so fast; if not for your sake, for mine at least.”

The last few words were scarcely above a whisper, but every one of them reached her to whom they were addressed; whether affecting not to hear them, or preferring to mistake their meaning, Helen made no answer.

“I said for *my* sake,” resumed he, with a courage that demanded all his energy. “because on these few moments the whole fortune of my future life is placed. I love you.”

“Nay, Captain Forester,” said she, smiling. “this is not quite fair; I failed in my attempt to terrify you, and have paid the penalty; let there not be a further one of my listening to what I should not hear.”

"And why not hear it, Helen? Is the devotion of one, even humble as I am, a thing to offend? Is it the less sincere that I feel how much you are above me in every way? Will not my very presumption prove how fervent is the passion that has made me forget all save itself—all, save you?"

Truth has its own accents, however weak the words in syllables. Helen laughed not now, but walked on with quicker steps; while the youth, the barrier once passed, poured forth with heartfelt eloquence his tale of love, recalling to her mind by many a slight, unnoticed trait, his long-pledged devotion; how he had watched and worshiped her, seeking to win favor in her eyes, and seem not all unworthy of her heart.

"It is true," said he, "I cannot, dare not ask in return for an affection which should repay my own; but let me hope that what I now speak, the devotion I pledge, is no rejected offering; that although you care not for me, you will not crush forever one who lives but in your smile, that you will give me time to show myself more worthy of the prize I strive for. There is no trial I would not dare—"

"I must interrupt you, Captain Forester," said Helen, with a voice that all her efforts had not rendered quite steady; "it would be an ungenerous requital for the sentiments you say you feel—"

"Say!—nay, Helen, I swear it, by every hope that now thrills within me—"

"It would be," resumed she, tremulously, "an ungenerous requital for this, were I to practice any deception on you. I am sincerely, deeply sorry to hear you speak as you have done. I had long since learned to regard you as the friend of Lionel, almost like a brother. The pleasure your society afforded me I am most attached to increased the feeling; and as intimacy increased between us, I thought how happy were it if the ambitions of life did not withdraw from home the sons whose kindness can be as thoughtful and as tender as that of the daughters of the house. Shall I confess it? I almost wished my brother like you—but yet all this was not love—nay, for I will be frank, at whatever cost—I had never felt this toward you, if I suspected your sentiments toward me—"

"But, dearest Helen—"

"Here me out. There is but one way in which the impropriety of such a meeting as this can be obviated, chance though it be, and that is, by perfect candor. I have told you the simple truth, not with any undervaluing sense of the affection you

proffer, still less with any coquetry of reserve. I should be unworthy of the heart you offer me, since I could not give my own in exchange."

"Do you deny me all hope?" said he, in an accent almost bursting with grief.

"I am not arrogant enough to say I shall never change; but I am honest enough to tell you that I do not expect it."

"Farewell, then, Helen! I do not love you less that you have taught me to think more humbly of myself. Good-by—for-ever!"

"It is better it should come to this," said Helen, faintly; and she held out her hand toward him. "Good-by, Forester!"

He pressed one long and burning kiss upon her hand, and turned away while she, pushing open the door, entered the little garden. Scarcely, however, was the door closed behind her, when the calm courage in which she spoke forsook her, and she burst into tears.

So is it, the heart can be moved, even its most tender chords, when the touch that stirs it is less of love than sorrow.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOME SAD REVELATIONS.

It was on the fourth day after the memorable debate we have briefly alluded to, that the Knight of Gwynne was sitting alone in one of the large rooms of his Dublin mansion. Although his servants had strict orders to say he had left town, he had not quitted the capital, but passed each day, from sunrise till late at night, in examining his various accounts, and endeavoring, with what slight business knowledge he possessed, to ascertain the situation in which he stood, and how far Gleeson's flight had compromised him. There is no such chaotic confusion to the unaccustomed mind as the entangled web of long-standing moneyed embarrassments, and so Darcy found it. Bills for large sums had been passed, to provide for which, renewals had been granted, and this for a succession of years, until the debt accumulating had been met by a mortgage or a bond: many of these bills were missing—where were they? was the question, and what liability might yet attach to them?

Again, loans had been raised more than once to pay off these incumbrances, the interest on which was duly charged in his account, and yet there was no evidence of these payments having been made; nor

among the very last sent papers from Gleeson was there any trace of that bond, to release which the enormous sum of seventy thousand pounds had been raised. That the money was handed to Hickman, Bagenal Daly was convinced; the memorandum given him by Freney was a corroboration of the probability at least, but still there was no evidence of the transaction here. Even this was not the worst, for the knight now discovered that the rental charged in his accounts was more than double the reality, Gleeson having for many years back practiced the fraud of granting leases at a low, sometimes a merely nominal rent, while he accepted renewal fines from the tenants, which he applied to his own purposes. In fact, it at length became manifest to Darcy's reluctant belief that his trusted agent had for years long pursued a systematic course of perfidy, merely providing money sufficient for the exigencies of the time, while he was, in reality, selling every acre of his estate.

The knight's last hope was in the entail. "I am ruined—I am a beggar, it is true!" muttered he, as each new discovery broke upon him, "but my boy, my dear Lionel, at my death will have his own again." This cherished dream was not of long duration, for to his horror he discovered a sale of a considerable part of the estate in which Lionel's name was signed as a concurring party. This was the crowning point of his affliction; the ruin was now utter, without one gleam of hope remaining.

The property thus sold was that in the possession of the O'Reillys, and the sale was dated the very day Lionel came of age. Darcy remembered well having signed his name to several papers on that morning. Gleeson had followed him from place to place, through the crowds of happy and rejoicing people assembled by the event, and at last, half vexed at the importunity, he actually put his name to several papers as he sat on horseback on the lawn: this very identical deed was thus signed; the writing was straggling and irregular as the motion of the horse shook his hand. So much for his own inconsiderate rashness; but how, or by what artifice, was Lionel's signature obtained?

Never had Lionel Darcy practiced the slightest deception on his father; never concealed from him any difficulty or any embarrassment, but frankly confided to him his cares, as he would to one of his own age. How, then, had he been drawn into a step of this magnitude without apprising him? There was one explanation, and this was, that Gleeson per-

suaded the young man, that by thus sacrificing his own future rights he would be assisting his father, who, from motives of delicacy, could not admit of any negotiation in the matter, and that by ceding so much of his own property, he should relieve his father from present embarrassment.

Through all the revelation of the agent's guilt now opening before him, not one word of anger, one expression of passion, escaped the knight till his eyes fell upon this paper; but then, grasping it in both hands, he shook in every limb with indignant rage, and in accents of bitterest hate invoked a curse upon his betrayer. The very sound of his own voice in that silent chamber startled him, while a sick tremor crept through his frame at the unhallowed wish he uttered. "No, no," said he, with clasped hands, "it is not for one like me, whose sensual carelessness has brought my own to ruin, to speak thus of another; may Heaven assist me, and pardon him that injured me."

The stunning effects of heavy calamity are destined in all likelihood to give time to rally against the blow—to permit exhausted nature to fortify herself by even a brief repose against the harassing influences of deep sorrow. One who saw far into the human heart tells us, that it is not the strongest natures are the first to recover from the shock of great misfortunes, but that "light and frivolous spirits regain their elasticity sooner than those of loftier character."

The whole extent of his ruin unfolded itself gradually before Darcy's eyes, until at length the accumulated load became too great to bear, and he sat in almost total unconsciousness gazing at the mass of law papers and accounts before him, only remembering at intervals, and then faintly, the nature of the investigation he was engaged in, and by an effort recalling himself again to the task: in this way passed the entire day we speak of. Brief struggles to exert himself in examining the various papers and letters on the table were succeeded by long pauses of apparent apathy, until, as evening drew near, these intervals of indifference grew longer, and he sat for hours in this scarce-waking condition.

It was long past midnight as a loud knocking was heard at the street door, and ere Darcy could sufficiently recall his wandering faculties from their reverie, he felt a hand grasp his own—he looked up and saw Bagenal Daly.

"Well, Darcy," said he, in a low whisper, "how stand matters here?"

"Ruined!" said he, in an accent hardly

audible, but with a look that thrilled through the stern heart of Daly.

"Come, come, there must be a long space between *your* fortune and ruin yet. Have you seen any legal adviser?"

"What of Gleeson. Bagenal, has he been heard of?" said the knight, not attending to Daly's question.

"He has had the fitting end of a scoundrel. He leaped overboard in the Channel—"

"Poor fellow!" said Darcy, while he passed his hand across his eyes; "his spirit was not all corrupted, Bagenal; he dared not to face the world."

"Face the world! the villain, it was the gallows he had not courage to face. Don't speak one word of compassion about a wretch like him, or you'll drive me mad. There's no iniquity in the greatest crimes to compare with the slow, dastardly scoundrelism of your fair-faced swindler. It seems so at least. The sailors told us that he went below immediately on their leaving the river, and having locked the cabin door, spent his time in writing till they were in sight of the Holyhead light, when a sudden splash was heard, and a cry of "A man overboard!" called every one to the deck; then it was discovered that the fellow had opened one of the stern-windows and thrown himself into the sea. They brought me this open letter, the last, it is said, he ever wrote, and, though unaddressed, evidently meant for you. You need not read it; it contains nothing but the whining excuses of a scoundrel, who bases his virtue on the fact that he was more coward than cheat. Strangest thing of all, he had no property with him beyond some few clothes, a watch, and about three hundred guineas in a purse. These were deposited by the skipper with the authorities in Liverpool—not a paper, not a document of any kind. Don't read that puling scrawl, Darcy; I have no patience with your pity!"

"I wish he had escaped with life, Bagenal," said Darcy, feelingly; "it is a sad aggravation of all my sorrow to think of this man's suicide."

"And so he might, had he had the courage to take his chance. The *Congress* passed us as we went up the river; she had her studding-sails set, and, with the strong tide in her favor, was cutting through the water as fast as ever a runaway scoundrel could wish or ask for. Gleeson's servant contrived to reach her in time, and got away safe, not improbably with a heavy booty, if the truth were known."

Daly continued to dwell on the theme, repeating circumstantially the whole of the

examination before the Liverpool justices, where the depositions of the case were taken, and the investigation conducted with strict accuracy; but Darcy paid little attention. The sad end of one for whom through years long he had entertained feelings of respect and friendship, seemed to obliterate all memory of his crime, and he had no other feelings in his heart than those of sincere grief for the suicide.

"There is but one circumstance in the whole I cannot understand," said Daly, "and that is why Gleeson paid off Hickman's bond last week, when he had evidently made up his mind to fly—seventy thousand was such a sum to carry away with him, all sound and safe as he had it."

"But where's the evidence of such a payment?" said Darcy, sorrowfully; "the bond is not to be found, nor is it among the papers discovered at Gleeson's house."

"It may be found yet," said Daly, confidently. "That the money was paid I have not a particle of doubt on my mind; Freney's information, and the memorandum I showed you, are strong in corroborating the fact; old Hickman dared not deny it, if the bond never were to turn up."

"Heaven grant it!" said Darcy, fervently; "that will at least save the abbey, and rescue our old house from the pollution I dreaded."

"All that, however, does not explain the difficulty," said Daly, thoughtfully; "I wish some shrewder head than mine had the matter before him. But now that I have told you so much, let me have some supper, Darcy, for we forgot to victual our sloop, and had no sea-store but whisky on either voyage."

Though this was perfectly true, Daly's proposition was made rather to induce the knight to take some refreshment, which it was so evident he needed, than from any personal motive.

"They carried the second reading by a large majority; I read it in Liverpool," said Daly, as the servant laid the table for supper.

The knight nodded an assent, and Daly resumed: "I saw also that an address was voted by the patriotic members of Daly's to Hickman O'Reilly, Esquire, M.P., for his manly and independent conduct in the debate, when he taunted the Government with their ineffectual attempts at corruption, and spurned indignantly every offer of their patronage."

"Is that the case?" said the knight, smiling faintly.

"All fact; while the mob drew his carriage home, and nearly smoked the entire

of Merrión square into blackness with burning tar-barrels."

"He has improved on Johnson's definition, Bagenal, and made patriotism the first as well as the last refuge of a scoundrel."

"I looked out in the House that evening, but could not see him, for I wanted him to second a motion for me."

"Indeed! of what nature?"

"A most patriotic one, to this effect: that all bribes to members of either House should be in money, that we might have at least the benefit of introducing so much capital into Ireland."

"You forget, Bagenal, how it would spoil old Hickman's market; loans would then be had for less than ten per cent."

"So it would, by Jove! That shows the difficulty of legislating for conflicting interests."

This conversation was destined only to occupy the time the servant was engaged about the table, but when he had withdrawn, the knight and his friend at once returned to the eventful theme that engaged all their anxieties, and where the altered tone of their voices and eager looks betokened the deepest interest.

It would have been difficult to find two men more generally well informed, and less capable of comprehending or unraveling the complicated tissue of a business matter. At the same time, by dint of much mutual inquiry and discussion, they attained to that first and greatest of discoveries, namely, their own insufficiency to conduct the investigation, and the urgent necessity of employing some able man of law to go through all Gleeson's accounts, and ascertain the real condition of Darcy's fortune. With this prudent resolve, they parted; Darcy to his room, where he sat with unclosed eyes till morning; while Daly, who had disciplined his temperament more rigidly, soon fell fast asleep, and never awoke till roused by the voice of his servant Sandy.

"You must find out the fellow that brought the note from Freney," said Daly, the moment he opened his eyes.

"I was thinking so," said Sandy, sententially.

"You'd know him again?"

"I'd ken his twa eyes amang a thousand."

"Very well, then, set off after breakfast and search for him; you used to know where devils of this kind were to be found."

"Maybe I havna quite forgot it yet," replied he, dryly; "but it winna do to gae there before nightfall."

"Lose no more time than you can help about it," said Daly; "bring him here if you can find him."

We have not the necessity, and more certainly it is far from our inclination, to dwell upon the accumulated calamities of the knight, nor recount more particularly the sad disclosures which the few succeeding days made regarding his fortunes. His own words were correct: he was utterly ruined. Every species of iniquity which perfidy could practice upon unbounded confidence had been effected. His property subdivided and leased at nominal rents, debts long supposed to have been paid yet outstanding; mortgages alleged to have been redeemed still impending; while of the large sums raised to meet these incumbrances, not one shilling had been paid by Gleeson, save perhaps the bond for seventy thousand; but even of this there was no evidence, except the vague assertion of one whose testimony the law would reject.

Such, in brief, were the sad results of that investigation to which the knight's affairs were submitted, nor could all the practiced subtlety of the lawyer suggest once reasonable chance of extrication from the difficulty.

"Your friend is a ruined man, sir," said he to Daly, as they both arose after a seven hours' examination of the various documents; "there is a strong presumption that many of these signatures are forged, and that the Knight of Gwynne never even saw the papers; but he appears to have written his name so carelessly, and in so many ways, as to have no clear recollection of what he did sign, and what he did not. It would be very difficult to submit a good case for a jury."

That the payment of the seventy thousand had been made he regarded as more than doubtful, coupling the fact of Gleeson's immediate flight with the temptation of so large a sum, while nothing could be less accurate than the robber's testimony. "We must watch the enemy closely on this point," said he; "we must exhibit not the slightest apparent doubt upon it. They must not be led to suspect that we have not the bond in our possession. This question will admit of a long contest, and does not press like the others. As to young Darcy's concurrence in the sale—"

"Ay, that is the great matter in my friend's eyes."

"He must be written to at once—let him come over here without loss of time, and if it can be shown that this signature is a forgery, we might make it the ground of a compromise with the O'Reillys, who, to

obtain a good title, would be glad to admit us to liberal terms."

"Darcy will never listen to that, depend upon it," said Daly; "his greatest affliction is for his son's ruin."

"We'll see, we'll see—the game shall open its own combinations as we go on; for the present all the task of your friend, the knight, is to carry a bold face to the world; let no rumor get abroad that matters are in their real condition. Our chance of extrication lies in the front we can show to the enemy."

"You are making a heavier demand than you are aware of—Darcy detests anything like concealment. I don't believe he would practice the slightest mystery that would involve insincerity for twelve hours to free the whole estate."

"Very honorable, indeed; but at this moment we must waive a punctilio."

"Don't give it that name to him—that's all," said Daly, sternly. "I am as little for subterfuge as any man, and yet I did my best to prevent him resigning his seat in the House; this morning he would send a request to Lord Castlereagh, begging he might be permitted to accept an escheatorship; I need not say how willingly the proposal was accepted, and his name will appear in the *Gazette* to-morrow morning."

"This conduct, if persisted in, will ruin our case," said the lawyer, despondingly. "I cannot comprehend his reasons for it."

"They are simple enough—his own words were, 'I can never continue to be a member of the legislature, when the only privilege it could confer is freedom from arrest.'"

"A very valuable one at this crisis, if he knew but all," muttered the other. "You will write to young Darcy at once."

"That he has done already, and to Lady Eleanor also; and as he expects me at seven, I'll take my leave of you till to-morrow."

"Well, Daly," said the knight, as his friend entered the drawing-room before dinner, "how do you like the lawyer?"

"He's a shrewd fellow, and I suppose, for his calling, an honest one; but the habit of making the wrong seem right leads to a very great inclination to reverse the theorem, and make the right seem wrong."

"He thinks badly of our case, isn't that so?"

"He'd think much better of it, and of us too, I believe, if both were worse."

"I am just as well pleased that it is not so," said Darcy, smiling; "a bad case is far more endurable than a bad conscience. But here comes dinner, and I have got my appetite back again."

CHAPTER XXV.

A GLANCE AT "THE FULL MOON."

To rescue our friend Benjamin Daly from any imputation the circumstance might suggest, it is as well to observe here, that when he issued the order to his servant to seek out the boy who brought the intelligence of Gleeson's flight, he was merely relying on that knowledge of the obscure recesses of old Dublin which Sandy possessed, and not by any means upon a distinct acquaintance with gentlemen of the same rank and station as Jimmy.

When Daly first took up his residence in the capital, many, many years before, he was an object of mob worship. He had every quality necessary for such. He was immensely rich, profusely spendthrift, and eccentric to an extent that some characterized as insanity. His dress, his equipage, his liveries, his whole retinue and style of living were strange and unlike other men's, while his habits of life bid utter defiance to every ordinance of society.

In the course of several years' foreign travel he had made acquaintances the most extraordinary and dissimilar, and many of these were led to visit him in his own country. Dublin being less resorted to by strangers than most cities, the surprise of its inhabitants was proportionably great as they beheld not only Hungarian and Russian nobles, with gorgeous equipages and splendid retinues, driving through the streets, but Turks, Armenians, and Greeks, in full costume; and, on one occasion, Daly's companion on a public promenade was no less remarkable a person than a North American chief, in all the barbaric magnificence of his native dress. To obviate the inconvenience of that mob accompaniment such spectacles would naturally attract, Daly entered into a compact with the leaders of the various sets or parties of low Dublin, by which, on payment of a certain sum, he was guaranteed in the enjoyment of appearing in public without a following of several hundred ragged wretches in full cry after him. Nothing could be more honorable and fair than the conduct of both parties in this singular treaty; the subsidy was regularly paid through the hands of Sandy M'Grane, while the subsidized literally observed every article of the contract, and not only avoided any molestation on their own parts, but were a formidable protective force in the event of any annoyance from others of a superior rank in society.

The hawkers of the various newspapers

were the deputies with whom Sandy negotiated this treaty, they being recognized as the legitimate interpreters of mob opinion through the capital; men who combined an insight into local grievances with a corresponding knowledge of general politics; and certain it is, their sway must have been both respected and well protected, for a single transgression of the compact with Daly never occurred.

Bagenal Daly troubled his head very little in the matter, it is true; for his own sake he would never have thought of such a bargain, but he detested the thought of foreigners carrying away with them from Ireland any unpleasant memories of mob outrage or insult; and desired that the only remembrance they should preserve of his native country should be of its cordial and hospitable reception. A great many years had now elapsed since these pleasant times, and Daly's name was scarcely more than a tradition among those who now lounged in rags and idleness through the capital. A fact of which he could have had little doubt himself, if he had reflected on that crowd which followed his own steps but a few days before. Of this circumstance, however, he took little or no notice, and gave his orders to Sandy with the same conscious power he had wielded nearly fifty years back.

A small public-house, called the Moon, in Duck alley, a narrow lane off the Cross Puddle, was the resort of this Rump Parliament, and thither Sandy betook himself on a Saturday evening, the usual night of meeting, as there being no issue of newspapers the next morning, nothing interfered with a prolonged conviviality. Often and often had he taken the same journey at the same hour; but now, such is the effect of a long interval of years, the way seemed narrower and more crooked than ever, while as he went not one familiar face welcomed him as he passed; nor could he recognize, as of yore, his acquaintances amid the various disguises of black eyes and smashed noses, which were frequent on every side. It was the hour when crime and guilt, drunken rage and grief, mingled together their fearful agencies; and every street and alley was crowded by half-naked wretches quarreling and singing; some screaming in accents of heart-broken anguish; others shouting their blasphemies with voices hoarse from passion; age and infancy, manhood in its prime, the mother and the young girl, were all there reeling from drunkenness, or faint from famine; some struggling in deadly conflict, others bathing the lips and temples of ebbing life.

Through this human hell Sandy wended his way, occasionally followed by the taunting ribaldry of such as remarked him; such testimonies were very unlike his former welcomes in these regions; but for this honest Sandy cared little; his real regret was to see so much more evidence of depravity and misery than before. Drunkenness and its attendant vices were no new evils, it is true, but he thought all these were fearfully aggravated by what he now witnessed; loud and violent denunciations against every rank above their own, imprecations on the Parliament and the gentry that "sould Ireland:" as if any political perfidy could be the origin of their own degraded and revolting condition! Such is, however, the very essence of that spirit that germinates amid destitution and crime, and it is a dangerous social crisis when the masses begin to attribute their own demoralization to the vices of their betters. It well behooves those in high places to make their actions and opinions conform to their great destinies.

Sandy's northern blood revolted at these brutal excesses, and the savage menaces he heard on every side; but perhaps his susceptibilities were more outraged by one trait of popular injustice than all the rest, and that was to hear Hickman O'Reilly extolled by the mob for his patriotic rejection of bribery, while the Knight of Gwynne was held up to execration by every epithet of infamy; ribald jests and low ballads conveying the theme of attack upon his spotless character.

The street lyrics of the day were divided in interest between the late rebellion and the act of Union; the former being, however, the favorite theme, from a species of irony peculiar to this class of poetry, in which certain living characters were held up to derision or execration. The chief chorist appeared to be a fiend-like old woman, with one eye, and a voice like a cracked bassoon; she was dressed in a cast-off soldier's coat and a man's hat, and neither from face nor costume had few feminine traits. This fair personage, known by the name of Rhouldlum, was, on her appearing, closely followed by a mob of admiring amateurs, who seemed to form both her body-guard and her chorus. When Sandy found himself fast wedged up in this procession, the enthusiasm was at its height, in honor of an elegant new ballad called "The two Majors;" the air, should our reader be musically given, was the well-known one, "There was a miller had three sons:"

“Says Major Sirr to Major Swan,
You have two rebels, give me one,
They pay the same for one as two,
I'll get five pounds, and I'll share with you.
Tol! lol! lol! lay.”

“That's the way the blackguards sowld yer blood, boys!” said the bag, in recitative; “pitch caps, the ridin' house, and the gallows was iligant tratement for wearin' the green.”

“Go on, Rhoudlum, go on wid the song,” chimed in her followers, who cared more for the original text than prose vulgate.

“Arn't I goin' on wid it?” said the bag, as fire flashed in her eyes; “is it the likes of you is to fache me how to modulate a strain?” And she resumed:

“Says Major Swan to Major Sirr,
One man's a woman! ye may take her.
'Tis little we gets for them at all—
Oh! the curse of Cromwell be an ye all!
Tol! lol! lol! lay.”

The grand Demosthenic abruptness of the last line was the signal for an applauding burst of voices, whose sincerity it would be unfair to question.

“Where are you pushin' to! bad scran to ye! ye ugly varmint!” said the lady, as Sandy endeavored to force his passage through the crowd. “Hurroo! by the mortal, it's Daly's man!” screamed she, in transport, as the accidental light of a window showed Sandy's features.

Few, if any, of those around had ever seen him; but his name and his master's were among the favored traditions of the place, and however unwilling to acknowledge the acquaintance, Sandy had no help for it but to exchange greetings and ask the way to “the Moon,” which he found he had forgotten.

“There it is fornint ye, Mr. M'Granes,” said the lady, in the most dulcet tones; “and if it's thinking of trating me ye are, 'tis a ‘crapper’ in a pint of porter I'd take; nothing stronger would sit on my heart now.”

“Ye shall hae it,” said Sandy; “but come into the house.”

“I darn't do it, sir; the committee is sittin'—don't ye see, besides, the moon lookin' at you?” And she pointed to a rude representation of a crescent moon, formed by a kind of transparency in the middle of a large window, a signal which Sandy well knew portended that the council were assembled within.

“Wha's the man, noo?” said Sandy, with one foot on the threshold.

“The ould stock still, darlint,” said Rhoudlum—“don't ye know his voice?”

“That's Paul Donellan—I ken him noo.”

“Be my conscience! there's no mistake. Ye can hear his screech from the Poddle to the Pigeon House when the wind's fair.”

Sandy put a shilling into the bag's hand, and without waiting for farther parley, entered the little dark hall, and turning a corner he well remembered, pressed a button and opened the door into the room where the party were assembled.

“Who the blazes are you? What brings you here?” burst from a score of rude voices together, while every hand grasped some projectile to hurl at the devoted intruder.

“Ask Paul Donellan who I am, and he'll tell ye,” said Sandy, sternly, while, with a bold contempt for the hostile demonstrations, he walked straight up to the head of the room.

The recognition on which he reckoned so confidently was not forthcoming, for the old decrepid creature who, cowering beneath the wig of some defunct chancellor, presided, stared at him with eyes bleared with age and intemperance, but seemed unable to detect him as an acquaintance.

“Holy Paul doesn't know him!” said half a dozen together, as in passionate indignation they arose to resent the intrusion.

“He may remember this better,” said Sandy, as seizing a full bumper of whisky from the board, he threw it into the lamp beneath the transparency, and in a moment the moon flashed forth and displayed its face at the full. The spell was magical, and a burst of savage welcome broke from every mouth, while Donellan, as if recalled to consciousness, put his hand trumpet-fashion to his lips, and gave a shout that made the very glasses ring upon the board. Place was now made for Sandy at the table, and a wooden vessel called “a noggin” set before him, whose contents he speedily tested by a long draught.

“I may as weel tell you,” said Sandy, “that I am Bagenal Daly's man. I mind the time it wad na hae been needful to say so much—my master's picture used to hang upon that wall.”

Had Sandy proclaimed himself the Prince of Wales the announcement could not have met with more honor, and many a coarse and rugged grasp of the hand attested the pleasure his presence there afforded.

“We have the picture still,” said a young fellow, whose frank, good-humored face contrasted strongly with many of those

around him; "but that old divil, Paul, always told us it was a likeness of himself when he was young."

"Confound the scoundrel!" said Sandy, indignantly, "he was no mair like my maister than a Dutch skipper is like a chief of the Delawares. Has the creature lost his senses a'togither?"

"By no manner of manes. He wakes up every now and then wid a speech, or a bid of poethry, or a sentiment."

"Ay," said another, "or if a couple came in to be married, see how the old chap's eyes would brighten, and how he would turn the other side of his wig round, before you could say 'Jack Robinson.'"

This was literally correct, and was the simple maneuver by which Holy Paul converted himself into a clerical character, the back of his wig being cut in horse-shoe fashion, in rude imitation of that worn by several of the bishops.

"Watch him now—watch him now!" said one in Sandy's ear; and the old fellow passed his hand across his eyes as if to dispel some painful thought, while his careworn features were lit up with a momentary flash of sardonic drollery.

"Your health, sir," said he to Sandy; "or, as Terence has it, 'Hie tibi, Dave—here's to you, Davy.'"

"A toast, Paul! a toast! Something agin the Union—something agin old Darcy."

"Fill up, gentlemen," said Paul, in a clear and distinct voice. "I beg to propose a sentiment which you will drink with a bumper. Are you ready?"

"Ready!" screamed all together.

"Here then—repeat after me:

"Whether he's out or whether he's in,
It doesn't signify one pin;
Here's every curse of every sin
On Maurice Darcy, Knight of Gwynne."

"Hold!" shouted Sandy, as he drew a double-barreled pistol from his bosom. "By the saul o' my body the man that drinks that toast shall hae mair in his waim than hot water and whisky. Maurice Darcy is my maister's friend, and a better gentleman never stepped in leather—who dar say no?"

"Are we to drink it, Paul?"

"As I live by drink," cried Paul, stretching out both hands, "this is my *alter ego*, my duplicate self, Sanders M'Granes, 'revisiting the glimpses of the moon,' *post totidem annos!*" And a cordial embrace now followed which at once dispelled the threatened storm.

"Mr. M'Grane's health in three times three, gentlemen;" and, rising, Paul gave

the signal for each cheer as he alone could give it.

Sandy had now time to throw a glance around the table, where, however, not one familiar face met his own; that they were of the same calling and order as his quondam associates in the same place he could have little doubt, even had that fact not been proclaimed by the names of various popular journals affixed to their hats, and by whose titles they were themselves addressed. The conversation, too, had the same sprinkling of politics, town gossip, and late calamities he well remembered of yore, interspersed with lively commentaries on public men, which, if printed, would have been suggestive of libel.

The new guest soon made himself free of the guild by a proposal to treat the company, on the condition that he might be permitted to have five minutes' conversation with their president in an adjoining room. He might have asked much more in requital for his liberality, and without a moment's delay, or even apprising Paul of what was intended, the *Dublin Journal* and the *Free Press* took him boldly between them and carried him into a closet off the room where the carouse was held.

"I know what you are at," said Paul, as soon as the door closed. "Daly wants a rising of the Liberty boys for the next debate—don't deny it, it's no use. Well, now listen, and don't interrupt me. Tom Conolly came down from the Castle yesterday and offered me five pounds for a good mob to rack a house, and two ten if they'd draw Lord Clare home; but I refused—I did, on the virtue of my oath. There's patriotism for ye!—yer soul, where's the man wid only one shirt and a supplement to his back would do the same?"

"You're wrang—we dinna want them devils at a'; it's a sma' matter of inquiry I can about. Ye ken Freney?"

"Is it the Captain? Whew!" said Paul, with a long whistle.

"It's no him," resumed Sandy, "but a wee bit of a callant they ca' Jamie."

"Jemmy the diver—the divil's own grandson, that he is."

"Where can I find him?" said Sandy, impatiently.

"Wait a bit, and you'll be sure to see him at home in his lodgings in Newgate."

"I must find him out at once; put me on his track, and I'll gie a goold guinea in yer hand, mon. I mean the young rascal no harm; it's a question I want him to answer me, that's all."

"Well, I'll do my best to find him for you, but I must send down to the country.

I'll have to get a man to go beyond Kilkullen."

"We'll pay any expense."

"Sure I know that." And here Paul began a calculation to himself of distances and charges only audible to Sandy's ears at intervals. "Two and four, and six, with a glass of punch at Naas—half an hour at Tims'—the coach at Athy—ay, that will do it. Have ye the likes of a pair of ould boots or shoes? I've nothing but them, and the soles is made out of two pamphlets of Roger Connor's, and them's the dryest things I could get."

"I'll gie ye a new pair."

"You're the son of Fingal of the Hills, divil a less. And now if ye had a cast-off waistcoat—I don't care for the color—orange or green, blue or yellow, *Tros Tyriusve mihi*, as we said in 'Trinity.'"

"Ye shall hae a coat to cover your old bones. But let us hae nae mair o' this—when may I expect to see the boy?"

"The evening after next, at eight o'clock, at the corner of Essex bridge, Capel street—'on the Rialto'—eh? that's the cue. And now let us join the revelers—*per Jove*, but I'm dry." And so saying, the miserable old creature broke from Sandy, and, assisted by the wall, tottered back to the room to his drunken companions, where his voice was soon heard high above the discord and din around him.

And yet this man, so debased and degraded, had been once a scholar of the University, and carried off its prizes from men whose names stood high among the great and valued of the land.

CHAPTER XXV.

BAGENAL DALY'S COUNSELS.

EVERY hour seemed to complicate the Knight of Gwynne's difficulties, and to increase that intricacy by which he already was so much embarrassed. The forms of law, never grateful to him, became now perfectly odious, obscuring instead of explaining the questions on which he desired information. He hated, besides, the small and narrow expedients so constantly suggested in cases where his own sense of right convinced him of the justice of his cause, nor could he listen with common patience to the detail of all those legal subtleties by which an adverse claim might be, if not resisted, at least protracted indefinitely.

His presence, far from affording any assistance, was, therefore, only an embarrass-

ment both to Daly and the lawyer, and they heard with unmixed satisfaction of his determination to hasten down to the west, and communicate more freely with his family, for as yet his letter to Lady Eleanor, far from disclosing the impending ruin, merely mentioned Gleeson's flight as a disastrous event in the life of a man esteemed and respected, and adverting but slightly to his own difficulties in consequence.

"We must leave the abbey, Bagenal, I foresee that," said Darcy, as he took his friend aside a few minutes before starting.

Daly made no reply, for already his own convictions pointed the same way.

"I could not live there with crippled means and broken fortune; 'twould kill me in a month, by Jove, to see the poor fellows wandering about idle and unemployed, the stables nailed up, the avenue grass-grown, and not hear the cry of a hound when I crossed the court-yard. But what is to be done? Humbled as I am, I cannot think of letting it to some Hickman O'Reilly or other, some vulgar upstart, feasting his low companions in those old halls, or plotting our utter ruin at our own hearth-stone; could we not make some other arrangement?"

"I have thought of one," said Daly, calmly; "my only fear is, how to ask for Lady Eleanor's concurrence to a plan which must necessarily press most heavily on her."

"What is it?" said Darcy, hastily.

"Of course, your inclination would be, for a time at least, perfect seclusion."

"That, above all and everything."

"Well, then, what say you to taking up your abode in a little cottage of mine on the Antrim coast? it is a wild and lonely spot, it's true, but you may live there without attracting notice or observation. I see you are surprised at my having such a possession. I believe I never told you, Darcy, that I bought Sandy's cabin from him the day he entered my service, and fitted it up, intending it as an asylum for the poor fellow if he should grow weary of my fortunes, or happily survive me. By degrees I have added a room here and a closet there, till it has grown into a dwelling that any one, as fond of salmon-fishing as you and I were, would not despise; come, will you have it?" Darcy grasped his friend's hand without speaking, and Daly went on: "That's right; I'll give orders to have everything in readiness at once; I'll go down, too, and induct you. Ay, Darcy, and if the fellows could take a peep at us over our lobster and a glass of Isla whisky, they'd stare to think those

two jovial old fellows, so merry and contented, started, the day they came of age, with the two best estates in Ireland."

"If I had not brought ruin on others, Bagenal—"

"No more of that, Darcy; the most scandal-loving gossip of the club will never impute, for he dare not, more than carelessness to your conduct, and I promise you, if you'll only fall back on a good conscience, you'll not be unhappy under the thatched roof of my poor shealing. My sincerest regards to Lady Eleanor and Helen. I see there is a crowd collecting at the sight of the four posters, so don't delay."

Darcy did no more than squeeze the cordial hand that held his own, and passing hastily out, he stepped into the traveling carriage at the door, not unobserved, indeed, for about a hundred ragged creatures had now assembled, who saluted his appearance with groans and hisses, accompanied with ruffianly taunts about bribery and corruption; while one, more daring than the rest, mounted on the step, and with his face to the window, cried out: "My lord, my lord, won't you give us a trifle to drown your new coronet?"

The words were scarcely out, when, seizing him by the neck with one hand, and taking a leg in the other, Daly hurled the fellow into the middle of the mob, who, such is their consistency, laughed loud and heartily at the fellow's misfortunes; meanwhile, the postilions plied whip and spur, and ere the laughter had subsided the carriage was out of sight.

"There is a gentleman in the drawing-room wishes to speak to you, sir," said a servant to Daly, who had just sat down to a conference with the lawyer.

"Present my respectful compliments, and say that I'm engaged on most important and pressing business."

"Had you not better ask his name?" said the lawyer.

"No, no, there is nothing but interruptions here; at one moment it is Heffernan, with a polite message from Lord Castle-reagh; then some one from the club, to know if I have any objection to waive a standing order, and have that young O'Reilly balloted for once more; and here was George Falkner himself a while ago, asking if the knight had really taken office, with a seat in the cabinet. I said it was perfectly correct; that he was at liberty to state it in his paper."

"You did!"

"Yes; and that he might add that I myself had refused the see of Llandaff, preferring the command of the West India

squadron. But, what's this? What do you want now, Richard?"

"The gentleman up-stairs, sir, insists on my presenting his card."

"Oh, indeed!—Captain Forester!—I'll see him at once." And so saying, Daly hastened up-stairs to the drawing-room, where the young officer awaited him.

Daly was not in a mood to scrutinize very closely the appearance of his visitor, but he could not fail to feel struck at the alteration in his looks since last they met; his feature were paler and marked by sorrow, so much so, that Daly's first question was, "Have you been ill?" and as Forester answered in the negative, the old man fixed his eyes steadily on him, and said, "You have heard of our misfortune, then?"

"Misfortune! no. What do you mean?"

Daly hesitated, uncertain how to reply, whether leaving to time and some other channel to announce the knight's ruin, or at once communicate it with his own lips.

"Yes, it is the better way," said he, half aloud, while taking Forester's hand he led him over to a sofa, and pressed him down beside him. "I seldom have made an error in guessing a man's character, throughout a long and somewhat remarkable life. I think I am safe in saying that you feel a warm interest in my friend Darcy's family?"

"You do me but justice; gratitude alone, if I had no stronger motive, secures them every good wish of mine."

"But you have stronger motives, young man," said Daly, looking at him with a piercing glance; "if you had not, I'd think but meanly of you, nor did I want that blush to tell me so."

Forester looked down in confusion. The abruptness of the address so completely unmanned him that he could make no answer. While Daly went on: "I force no confidences, young man, nor have I any right to ask them; enough for my present purpose that I know you care deeply for this family; now, sir, but a week back the ambition to be allied with them had satisfied the proudest wish of the proudest house—to-day they are ruined."

Overwhelmed with surprise and sorrow, Forester sat silently, while Daly rapidly, but circumstantially, narrated the story of the knight's calamity, and the total wreck of his once princely fortune.

"Yes," said Daly; as with flashing eyes he arose and uttered aloud—"yes, the broad acres won by many a valiant deed, the lands which his ancestors watered with their blood, lost forever; not by great crimes, not forfeited by any bold but luck-

less venture, for there is something glorious in that—but stolen, filched away by theft. By heaven! our laws and liberties do but hedge round crime with so many defenses, that honesty has nothing left but to stand shivering outside. Better were the days when the strong hand avenged the deep wrong, or if the courage were weak, there was the throne to appeal to against oppression. Forester, I see how this news afflicts you; I judged you too well to think that your own dashed hopes entered into your sorrow. No, no, I know you better. But come, we have other duties than to mourn over the past. Has Lord Castle-rough received Darcy's note, resigning his seat in Parliament?"

"He has; a new writ is preparing for Mayo."

"Sharp practice; I think I can detect the fair round hand of Mr. Heffernan there—no matter, a few days more, and the world will know all; ay, the world, so full of honorable sentiments and noble aspirations, will smile and jest on Darcy's ruin, that they may with better grace taunt the vulgar assumption of Hickman O'Reilly. I know it well—some would say I bought the knowledge dearly. When I set out in life, my fortune was nearly equal to the knight's, my ideas of living and expenditure based on the same views as his own, that same barbaric taste for profusion, which has been transmitted to us from father to son. Ay, we retained everything of feudalism save its chivalry! Well, I never knew a day nor an hour of independence till the last acre of that great estate was sold and gone from me forever. Fawning, flattery, intrigue, and trickery beset me wherever I went; ruined gamblers, match-making mothers, bankrupt speculators, plotting political adventurers dogged me at every step; nor could I break through the trammels by which they fettered me, except at the price of my ruin; when there was no longer a stake to play for, they left the table. Poor Darcy, however, is not a lonely stem like me, riven and lightning-struck; he has a wife and children; but for that, I would not fear to grasp his stout hand, and say, 'Come on to fortune.' Poor Maurice, whose heart could never stand the slightest wrong done the humblest cottier on his land, how will he bear up now? Forester, you can do me a great service. Could you obtain leave for a day or two?"

"Command me how and in what way you please," said the youth, eagerly.

"I understand that proffer, and accept it as freely as it is given."

"Nay, you are mistaken," said Forester, faltering. "I will be candid with you; you have a right to all my confidence, for you have trusted in me. Your suspicions are only correct in part—my affection is indeed engaged, but I have received none in return—Miss Darcy has rejected me."

"But not without hope?"

"Without the slightest hope."

"By Heaven, it is the only gleam of light in all the gloomy business," said Daly, energetically; "had Helen's love been yours, this calamity had been ten thousand times worse. Nay, nay, this is not the sentiment of cold and selfish old age; you wrong me, Forester, but the hour is come when every feeling within that noble girl's heart is due to those who have loved and cherished her from childhood. Now is the time to repay the watchful care of infancy, and recompense the anxious fears that spring from parental affection; not a sentiment, not a thought should be turned from that channel now. It would be treason to win one smile, one passing look of kind meaning from those eyes, every beam of which is claimed by 'Home.' Helen is equal to her destiny, that I know well, and you, if you would strive to be worthy of her, do not endeavor to make her falter in her duty. Trust me, there is but one road to a heart like hers—the path of high and honorable ambition."

"You are right," said Forester, in a sad and humble voice—"you are right; I offered her a heart before it was worthy of her acceptance."

"That avowal is the first step toward rendering it such one day," said Daly, grasping his hand in both his own. "Now to my request; you can obtain this leave, can you?"

"Yes, yes: how can I make it of any service to you?"

"Simply thus: I have offered, and Darcy has accepted, an humble cottage on the northern coast, as a present asylum for the family. The remote and secluded nature of the place will at least withdraw them from the impertinence of curiosity, or the greater impertinence of vulgar sympathy. A maiden sister of mine is the present occupant, and I wish to communicate the intelligence to her, that she may make any preparations which may be necessary for their coming, and also provide herself with some other shelter. Maria is as great a Bedouin as myself, and with as strong a taste for vagabondage; she'll have no difficulty in housing herself, that's certain. The only puzzle is how to apprise her of the intended change; there is not a post-

office within eight or ten miles of the place, nor if there were, would she think of sending to look for a letter: there's nothing for it but a special envoy; will you be the man?"

"Most willingly; only give me the route, and my instructions."

"You shall have both. Come and dine with me here at five—order horses to your carriage for eight o'clock, and I'll take care of the rest."

"Agreed," said Forester; "I'll lose no time in getting ready for the road—the first thing is my leave."

"Is there a difficulty there?"

"There shall be none," said Forester, hurriedly, as he seized his hat; and, bidding Daly "good-by," hastened down-stairs and into the street. "They'll refuse me, I know that," muttered he, as he went along; "and if they do, I'll pitch up the appointment on the spot; this slight service over, I'm ready to join my regiment." And so saying, he turned his steps toward the Castle, resolved on the course to follow.

Meanwhile Daly, after a brief consultation with the lawyer, sat down to write to his sister. Simple and easy as the act is to many—far too much so, as most men's correspondence would testify—letter-writing, to some people, is an affair of no common difficulty. Perhaps every one in this world has some stumbling-block of this kind ever before him; some men cannot learn chess, some never can be taught to ride, others, if they were to get the world for it, could not carve a hare. It would be unfair to quote newly-introduced difficulties, such as how to bray in the House of Commons, the back step in the polka, and so on—the original evils are enough for our illustration.

Bagenal Daly's literary difficulties were manifold; he was a discursive thinker, passionate and vehement whenever the occasion prompted, and as unable to control such influences when writing as speaking; and with very liberal ideas on the score of spelling, he wrote a hand which, if only examined upside down, might have passed for Hebrew, with an undue proportion of points; besides these defects, he entertained a thorough contempt for all writing as an exponent of men's sentiments. His opinion was, that speech was the great prerogative of living men, all other modes of expression being feeble and miserable expedients; and to do him justice, he conformed, as far as in him lay, to his own theory, and made his writing as like his speaking as could be. Brevity was the great quality he studied, and for this reason we venture to present the epistle to our readers:

"DEAR MOLLY,—

"The bill is carried—or, what comes to the same, the third reading comes on next Tuesday, and they'll have a majority—d—n their majority, I forget the number. I was told that bribes were plenty as blackberries. I wish they'd leave as many stains after them. They offered me nothing—they were right there. There is a kind of bottle-nosed whale the Indians never harpoon; they call him 'Hik-naritchka,'—more bone than blubber. Darcy might have been an earl, or a marquis, or a duke, perhaps; they wanted one gentleman so much, they'd have bid high for him. Poor fellow, he is ruined now! that scoundrel Gleeson has run away with everything, forged, falsified, and thieved to any extent. Your unlucky four thousand, of course, is gone to the devil with the rest. I'm sick of cant. People talk of badgers and such like, and yet no one says a word about exterminating attorneys! The rascal jumped over in the Channel, and was drowned—the shark got a bitter pill that swallowed him. I have told Darcy he might have 'the Corvy;' you can easily find a wigwam down the coast. Forester, who brings this, knows all. We must all economise, I suppose. I've given up maceabaw already, and taken to blackgnard, in compliment to the secretary. I must sell or shoot old Drummer at last, he can't draw his breath, and won't draw the grig. I only remain here till the House is up, when I must be up too, and stirring—there is a confounded bond—no matter, more at another time. Yours ever,

BAGENAL DALY.

"St. George is to be the Chief Baron—an improvement of the allegory. 'Justice will be deaf as well as blind.' Devil take them all."

The chorus of a Greek play, so seemingly abstruse and incoherent to our present thinking, was, we are told, made easily comprehensible by the aid of gesture and pantomime; and in the same way, by supplying the fancied accompaniment of her brother's voice and action, Miss Daly was enabled to read and understand this strange epistle. Bagenal gave himself little trouble in examining how far it conveyed his meaning; but like a careless traveler who huddles his clothes into his portmanteau, and is only anxious to make the lock meet, his greatest care was to fold up the document and inclose it within an envelope—that done, he hoped it was all right—in any case, his functions were concluded regarding it, for, as he

muttered to himself, he only contracted to write, not to read his own letter.

Forester was punctual to the hour appointed; and if not really less depressed than before, the stimulating sense of having a service to perform made him seem less so. His self-esteem was flattered, too, by his own bold line of acting, for he had just resigned his appointment on the staff, his application for leave having been unsuccessful. The fact that his rash conduct might involve him in trouble or difficulty was not without its own sense of pleasure, for, so is it in all rebellion, the great prompter is personal pride. He would gladly have told Daly what had happened, but a delicate fear of increasing the apparent load of obligation prevented him, and he consequently confined his remarks on the matter to his being free, and at liberty to go wherever his friend pleased.

"Here, then," said Daly, leading him across the room to a table, on which a large map of Ireland lay open, "I have marked your route the entire way; follow that dark line with your eye northward to Coleraine; so far you can travel with your carriage and post horses—how to cross this bit of desert here I must leave to yourself; there may be a road for a wheeled carriage or not—in my day there was none; that is, however, a good many years back; the point to strive for should be somewhere hereabouts. This is Dunluce Castle—well, if I remember aright, the spot is here—you must ask for 'the Corvy,' the fishermen all know the cabin by that name; it was originally built out of the wreck of a French vessel that was lost there, and the word Corvy is a northern version of Corvette. Once there—and I know you'll not find any difficulty in reaching it—my sister will be glad to receive you; I need not say the accommodation does not rival Gwynne Abbey, no more than poor Molly does Helen Darey; you will be right welcome, however, so much I can pledge myself, not the less so that your journey was undertaken from a motive of true kindness. I don't well know how much or how little I have said in that letter; you can explain all I may have omitted—the chief thing is to get the cabin ready for the Dareys as soon as may be. Give her this pocket-book; I was too much hurried to-day to transact business at the bank, but the north road is a safe one, and you'll not incur any risk. And now one glass to the success of the enterprise, and I'll not detain you longer; I'll give you old Martin's toast—

"May better days soon be our lot,
Or better courage, if we have them not."

Forester pledged the sentiment in a bumper, and they parted.

"Good stuff in that young fellow," muttered Daly, as he looked after him; "I wish he had some Irish blood, though; these Saxons require a deal of the hammer to warm them, and never come to a white heat after all."

CHAPTER XXVI.

"THE CORVY."

IF the painter's license enables him to arrange the elements of scenery into new combinations, disposing and grouping anew, as taste or fancy may dictate, the novelist enjoys the lesser privilege of conveying his reader at will from place to place, and thus, by varying the point of view, procuring new aspects to his picture; less in virtue of this privilege than from sheer necessity, we will now ask of our readers to accompany us on our journey northward.

Whether it be the necessary condition of that profusion of nature's gifts, so evident in certain places, or a mere accident, certain it is there is scarcely any one spot remarkable for great picturesque beauty to arrive at which some bleak and uninteresting tract must not be traversed. To this rule, if it be such, the northern coast of Ireland offers no exception.

The country, as you approach "the Causeway," has an aspect of dreary desolation, that only needs the leaden sky and the drifting storm of winter to make it the most melancholy of all landscapes. A slightly undulating surface extends for miles on every side, scarcely a house is to be seen, and save where the dip of the ground affords shelter, not a tree of any kind. A small isolated spot of oats, green even in the late autumn, is here or there to be descried, or a flock of black sheep wandering half wild o'er these savage wastes; vast masses of cloud, dark and lowering as rain and thunder can make them, hang gloomily overhead, for the table-land is still a lofty one, and the horizon is formed by the edge of those giant cliffs that stand the barriers of the western ocean, and against whose rocky sides the waves beat with the booming of distant artillery.

It was in one of those natural hollows of the soil, whose frequency seems to acknowledge a diluvian origin, that the little cottage which Sandy once owned, stood. Sheltered on the south and east by rising banks, it was open on the other sides, and afforded a view seaward, which extended

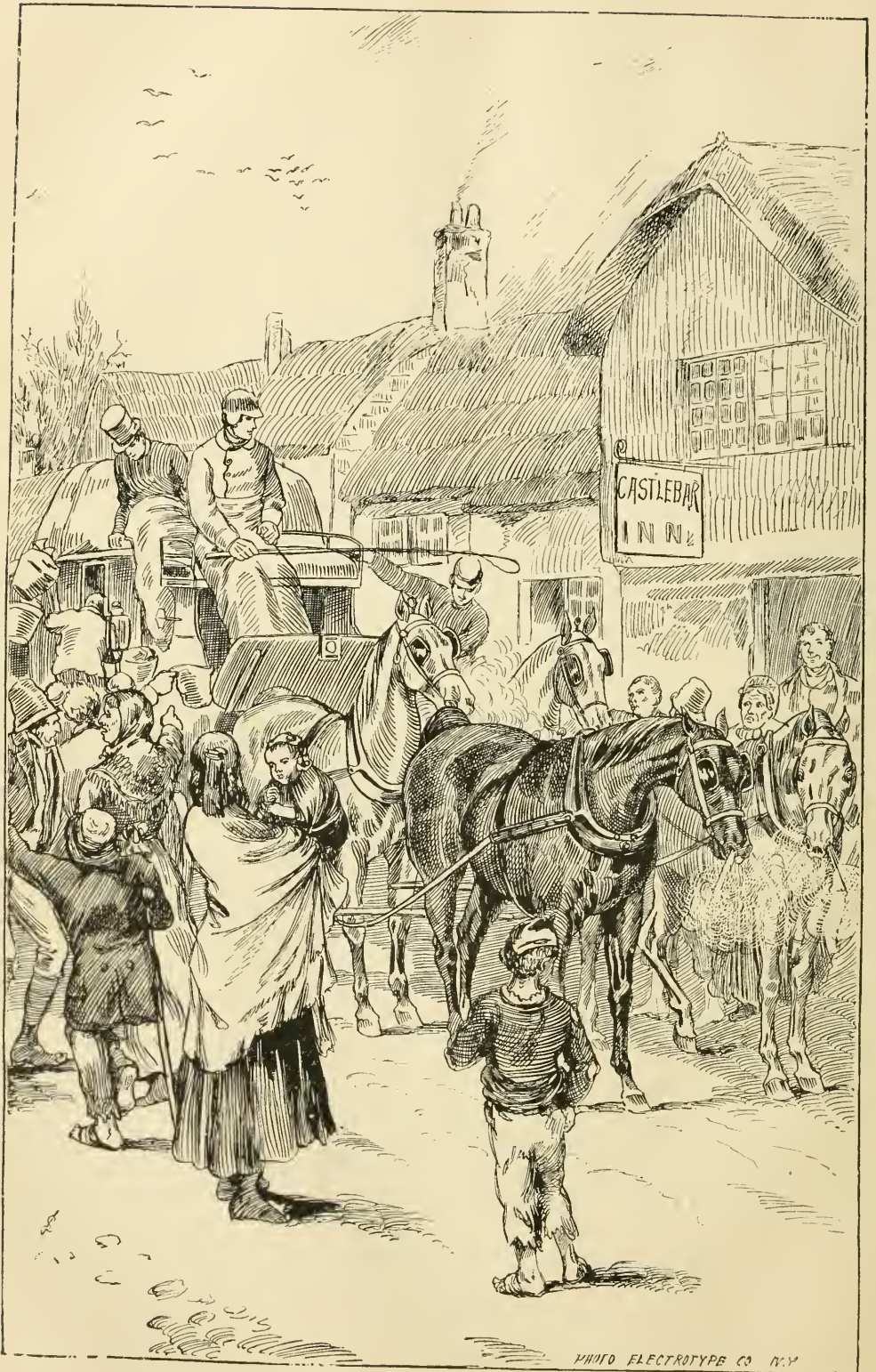


PHOTO ELECTROTYPE CO. N.Y.

THE KNIGHT'S RETURN SCENE AT CASTLEBAR. (P. 121)

from the rocky promontory of Port Rush to the great bluff of Fairhead, whose summit is nigh one thousand seven hundred feet above the sea.

Perhaps, in all the sea-board of the empire, nothing of the same extent can vie in awful sublimity with this iron-bound coast. Gigantic cliffs of four and five hundred feet, straight as a wall, are seen perforated beneath by lofty tunnels, through which the wild waters plunge madly. Fragments of basalt, large enough to be called islands, are studded along the shore, the outlines fanciful and strange as beating waves and winds can make them, while, here and there, in some deep-creviced bay, the water flows in with long and measured sweep, and at each moment retiring, leaves a trace upon the strand, fleeting as the blush upon the cheek of beauty; and here a little group of fisher children may be seen at play, while the nets are drying on the beach, the only sight or sound of human life, save that dark moving speck, alternately seen as the great waves roll on, he such, and, while tossing to and fro, seems by some charmed influence fettered to the spot. Yes, it is a fishing-boat, that has ventured out at the half ebb, with the wind off shore—hazardous exploit, that only poverty suggests the courage to encounter!

In front of one of these little natural bays stood "the Corvy;" and the situation might have been chosen by a painter, for while combining every grand feature of the nearer landscape, the Scottish coast, and even Staffa, might be seen of a clear evening; while westward, the rich sunsets were described in all their golden glory, tipping the rolling waves with freckled luster, and throwing a haze of violet-colored light over the white rocks. And who is to say, that while the great gifts of the artist are not his who dwells in some rude cot like this, yet the heart is not sensitively alive to all the influences of such a scene—its lonely grandeur, its tranquil beauty, or its fearful sublimity; and that the peasant, whose associations from infancy to age are linked with every barren rock and fissured crag around, has not created for himself his own store of fancied images, whose power is not less deeply felt that it has asked for no voice to tell its workings.

"The Corvy" was a strange specimen of architecture, and scarcely capable of being classified in any of the existing orders. Originally, the hut was formed of the stern of the corvette, which, built of timbers of great size and strength, alone of all the vessel resisted the waves. This being placed keel uppermost, as most consisting with

terrestrial notions of building, and accommodated with a door and two windows, the latter being filled with two ship lenses, comprised the entire edifice. Rude and uncouth as it unquestionably was, it was regarded with mingled feelings of envy and admiration by all the fishermen for miles round, for while they had contributed their tackle and their personal aid to place the mass where it stood, they never contemplated its becoming the comfortable dwelling they soon beheld, nor were these jealous murmurings allayed by the assumption of a lofty flag-staff, which, in the pride of conquest, old McGrane displayed above his castle, little wotting that the banner that floated overhead waved with the lilies of France, and not the Union Jack of England.

Sandy's father, however, possessed those traits of character which confer ascendancy, whether a man's lot be cast among the great or the humble, and he soon not only subdued those ungenerous sentiments, but even induced his neighbors to assist him in placing a small brass cannon on the keel, or, as he now termed it, the ridge of his dwelling, where, however little serviceable for warlike purposes, it made a very specious and imposing ornament.

Such was the inheritance to which Sandy succeeded, and such the possession he ceded for a consideration to Bagenal Daly, on that eventful morning their acquaintance began. In course of time, however, it fell to ruin, and lay untenanted and uncared for, when Miss Daly, in one of her rambling excursions, chanced to hear of it, and, being struck by the beauty of the situation, resolved to refit it as a summer residence. Her first intentions on this head were humble enough: two small chambers at either side of the original edifice—now converted into a species of hall and a kitchen—comprised the whole, and thither she betook herself, with that strange secret pleasure a life of perfect solitude possesses for certain minds. For a year she endured the inconveniences of her narrow dwelling tolerably well; but, as she grew more attached to the spot, she determined on making it more comfortable; and, communicating the resolve to her brother, he not only concurred in the notion, but half anticipated his assent by dispatching an architect to the spot, under whose direction a cottage containing several comfortable rooms was added, and with such attention to the circumstances of the ground, and such regard for the ancient character of the building, that the traces of its origin could still be discovered, and its old name of "The Corvy" be, even yet,

not altogether inapplicable. The rude bulk was now, however, the center of a long cottage, the timbers, partly covered by the small-leaved ivy, partly concealed by a rustic porch, displaying overhead the great keel and the flag-staff, an ornament which no remonstrance of the unhappy architect could succeed in removing. As a sort of compromise, indeed, the carronade was dismounted, and placed beside the hall door. This was the extreme stretch of compliance to which Daly assented.

The hall, which was spacious and lofty in proportion with other parts of the building, was fitted with weapons of war and the chase, brought from many a far-off land, and assembled with an incongruity that was no mean type of the owner. Turkish scimitars and lances, yataghans, and Malay creeses were grouped with Indian bows, tomahawks, and whale harpoons, while richly embroidered pelisses hung beside coats of Esquimaux seal, or boots made from the dried skin of the sun-fish. A long Swiss rifle was suspended by a blue silk scarf from one wall, and, over it, a damp, discolored parchment bore testimony to its being won as the prize in the great shooting-match of the Oberland, nearly forty years before. Beneath these, and stretching away into a nook contrived for the purpose, was the bark canoe in which Daly and Sandy made their escape from the tribe of the Sioux, by whom they were held in captivity for six years. Two very unprepossessing figures, costumed as savages, sat in this frail bark, paddle in hand, and to all seeming resolutely intent on their purpose of evasion. It would have been pardonable, however, for the observer not to have identified in these tattooed and wild-looking personages a member of parliament and his valet, even though assisted to the discovery by their Indian names, which, with a laudable care for public convenience, had been written on a card, and suspended round the neck of each. Opposite to them, and in a corner of the hall, stood a large black bear, with fiery eyeballs and snow-white teeth, so admirably counterfeiting life as almost to startle the beholder; while over his head was a fearful, misshapen figure, whose malignant look and distorted proportions at once proclaimed it an Indian idol. But why enumerate the strange and curious objects which, notwithstanding their seeming incongruity, were yet all connected with Daly's history, and formed, in fact, a kind of pictorial narrative of his life? Here stood the cup—a splendid specimen of Benvenuto's chisel, given him by the Doge of Venice—and there was the

embossed dagger presented by a king of Spain, with a patent of grandee of the first class; while in a small glass case, covered with dust, and scarce noticeable, was a small and beautifully shaped satin slipper, with a rosette of, now, faded silver. But of this only one knew the story, and *he* never revealed it.

If we have taken an unwarrantable liberty with our reader by this too prolix description, our excuse is, that we might have been far more tiresome had we been so disposed, leaving, as we have, the greater part of this singular chamber unnoticed; while our *amende* is ready, and we will spare any further detail of the rest of the cottage, merely observing that it was both commodious and well-arranged, and furnished not only with taste, but even elegance. And now to resume our long-neglected story.

It was about eight o'clock of a cold, raw February night, with occasional showers of sleet, and sudden gusts of fitful wind—that happy combination which makes up the climate of the north of Ireland, and, with a trifling abatement of severity, constitutes its summer as well as its winter—that Miss Daly sat reading in that strange apartment we have just mentioned, and which, from motives of economy, she occupied frequently during the rainy season, as the necessity of keeping it aired required constant fires, not so necessary in the other chambers.

A large hearth displayed the cheerful blaze of burning bog-deal, and an old Roman lamp, an ancient patera, threw its luster on the many curious and uncouth objects on every side. If the flashing jets of light that broke from the dry wood gave at times a false air of vitality to the stuffed figures around, in compensation, it made the only living thing there seem as unreal as the rest.

Wrapped up in the great folds of a wide Greek capote she had taken from the wall, and the hood of which she had drawn over her head, Miss Daly bent over the yellow pages of an old quarto volume. Of her figure no trace could be marked, nor any guess concerning it, save that she was extremely tall. Her features were bold and commanding, and in youth must have been eminently handsome. The eyebrows were large and arched, the eyes dark and piercing, and the whole contour of the face had that character of thoughtful beauty so often seen in the Jewish race. Age and solitude, perhaps, had deepened the lines around the angles of the mouth, and brought down the brows, so as to give a look of severity to features which, from this cause, became strikingly resembling her brother's. If

time had made its sad inroad on those lineaments once so lovely, it seemed to spare even the slightest touch to that small white hand which, escaping from the folds of her mantle, was laid upon the volume before her. The taper fingers were covered with rings, and more than one bracelet of great price glittered upon her wrist; nor did this taste seem limited to these displays, for in the gold combs that fastened, on either temple, her masses of gray hair, rich gems were set profusely, forming the strangest contrast to the coarse folds of that red-brown cloak in which she was enveloped.

However disposed to profit by her studies, Miss Daly was occasionally broken in upon by the sound of voices from the kitchen, which, by an unlucky arrangement of the architect, was merely separated from the hall by a narrow corridor. Sometimes the sound was of laughter and merriment; far oftener, however, the noises betokened strife; for so it is, in the very smallest household—there were but two in the present case—unanimity will not always prevail. The contention was no less a one than that great national dispute, which has separated the island into two wide and opposing parties—Miss Daly's butler, or man of all work, being a stout representative of southern Ireland; her cook, an equally rigid upholder of the northern province. If little Dan Nelligan had the broader cause, he was the smaller advocate, being scarcely four feet in height, while Mrs. McKerrigan was fifteen stone of honest weight, and with a *torso* to rival the Farnese Hercules. Their altercations were daily, almost hourly, for, living in a remote, unvisited spot, they seemed to console themselves for want of collision with the world by mutual disputes and disagreements.

To these family jars habit had so reconciled Miss Daly, that she seldom noticed them; indeed, the probability is that, like the miller who wakes up when the mill ceases its clamors, she might have felt a kind of shock had matters taken a quieter course. People who employ precisely the same weapons cannot long continue a warfare without the superiority of one or the other being sure to evince itself. The diversity of the forces, on the contrary, suggests new combinations, and with dissimilar armor the combat may be prolonged to any extent. Thus was it here; Dan's forte was aggravation, that peculiarly Irish talent which makes much out of little, and, when cultivated with the advantages of natural gifts, enables a man to assume that proud

political position of an agitator, and in time a liberator.

Mrs. McKerrigan, slow of thought and slower of speech, was ill-suited to repel the assaults of so wily and constant a foe; she consequently fell back on the prerogatives of her office in the household, and repaid all Dan's declamation by changes in his diet. A species of retribution the heaviest she could have hit upon.

Such was the present cause of disturbance, and such the reason for Dan's loud denunciations on the "black north," uttered with a volubility and vehemence that pertain to a very different portion of the empire. Twice had Miss Daly rung the little hand-bell that stood beside her, to enforce order, but it was unnoticed in the clamor of the fray, while louder and louder grew the angry voice of Dan Nelligan, which at length was plainly audible in the hall.

"Look now, see then, may the devil howld a looking-glass to your sins, but I'll show it to the mistress. I may, may I? That's what you're grumbling, ye ould black-mouthed Prasbytarian! 'Tis the fine supper to put before a crayture wet to the skin!"

"Dinna ye hear the bell, Nelly?" This was an epithet of insult the little man could not endure. "Ye'd ken the tinkle o' that, av ye heard it at the mass."

"Oh, listen to the ould heretic! Oh, holy Joseph! there's the way to talk of the blessed ould ancient religion! Give me the dish; I'll bring it into the parlor this minit, I will. I'll lave the place—my time's up in March. I wouldn't live in the house wid you for a mine of goold!"

"Are ye no goin' to show the fish to the ledly?" growled out the cook, in her quiet baritone.

At this moment Miss Daly's bell announced that endurance had reached its limit, and Dan, without waiting to return the fire, hastened to the hall, muttering as he went, loud enough to be heard: "There, now, that's the mistress ringing, I'm sure; but sorra bit one can hear wid your noise and ballyragging!"

"What is the meaning of this uproar?" said Miss Daly, as the little man entered, with a very different aspect from what he wore in the kitchen.

"'Tis Mrs. McKerrigan, my lady: she was abusin' the ould families in the county Mayo, and I couldn't bear it, and because I wouldn't hear the master trated that way, she gives me nothing but fish the day after a black fast, though she does be ating beef under my nose when I darn't touch meat,

and it's what, she put an ould baste of a cod before me this evening for my supper, and here's Lent will be on us in a few days more."

"How often have I told you," said Miss Daly, sternly, "that I'll not suffer these petty, miserable squabbles to reach me? Go back to the kitchen, and, mark me, if I hear a whisper, or muttering ever so low in your voice, I'll put you to spend the night upon the rocks."

Dan skulked from the room like a culprit remanded to jail, but no sooner had he reached the kitchen, than, assuming a martial air and bearing, he strutted up to the fire and turned his back to it.

"Ay," said he, in a stage soliloquy, "it was what it must come to sooner or later, and now she may go on her knees, and divil a foot I'll stay! It's not like the last time, sorra bit! I know what she's at—'Tis my way, Danny, you must have a pound at Ayster'—bother! I'm used to that now."

"There's the bell again, ye ould blethering deevil."

But Mrs. McKerrigan ran no risk of a reply now, for at the first tinkle Dan was back in the hall.

"There is some one knocking at the wicket without: see who it may be at this late hour of the night," said Miss Daly, without raising her head from the book, for strange as were such sounds in that solitary place, her attention was too deeply fixed on the page before her to admit of even a momentary distraction of thought. Dan left the room with becoming alacrity, but in reality bent on anything rather than the performance of his errand. Of all the traits of his southern origin, none had the same predominance in his nature as a superstitious fear of spirits and goblins, a circumstance not likely to be mitigated by his present lonely abode, independently of the fact that more than one popular belief attributed certain unearthly sights and sounds to the old timbers of "the Corvy," whose wreck was associated with tales of horror sufficient to shake stouter nerves than "Danny's."

When he received this order from his mistress, he heard it pretty much as a command to lead a forlorn hope, and sat himself down at the outside of the door, to consider what course to take. While he was thus meditating, the sounds became plainly audible, a loud and distinct knocking was heard high above the whistling wind and drifting rain, accompanied from time to time by a kind of shout, or, as it seemed to Dan's ears, a scream like the cry of a drowning man.

"Dinna ye hear that, ye ould daft body?" said Nancy, as, pale with fear, and trembling in every limb, Dan entered the kitchen.

"I do, indeed, Mrs. Mac"—this was the peace appellation he always conferred on Nancy—"I hear it, and my heart's beatin' for every stroke I listen to; 'tisn't afraid I am, but a kind of a notion I have, like a dhrame, you know"—(here he gave a sort of hysterical giggle)—"as if the ould French captain was coming to look after his hand, that was chopped off with the hatchet when he grasped hold of the rock."

"He canna hae muckle use for it noo," responded Nancy, dryly, as she smoked away as unconcerned as possible.

"Or the mate!" said Dan, giving full vent to his store of horrors; "they say, when he got hold of the rope, that they gave it out as fast as he hauled on it, till he grew faint, and sank under the waves."

"He's no likely to want a piece of spun-yarn at this time o' day," rejoined Nancy, again. "He's knocking brawly whoever he be; had ye no better do the leddy's bidding, and see who's there?"

"Would it be plazing to you, Mrs. Mac," said Dan, in his most melting accents, "to come as far as the little grass-plot, just out of curiosity ye know, to say ye seen it?"

"Na, na, my bra' wee mon, ye maun een gae by yoursel; I dinna ken mickle about sperits and ghaists, but I hae a gude knowledge of the rheumatiz without seekin' it on a night like this; there's the leddy's bell again, she's no pleased w' yer delay."

"Say I was puttin' on my shoes, Nancy," said Dan, as his teeth chattered with fear, while he took down an old blunderbuss from its place above the fire, and which had never been stirred for years past.

"Lay her back agen where ye found her," said Nancy, dryly; "'tis na every fule kens the like o' them! Take your mass-book, and the gimeracks ye hae ower your bed, but dinna try mortal weapons with them creatures."

Ironical as the tone of this counsel unquestionably was, Dan was in no mood to reject it altogether, and he slipped from its place within his breast to a more ostensible position a small blessed token, or "gospel," as it is called, which he always wore round his neck. By this time the clank of the bell kept pace with the knocking sounds without, and poor Dan was fairly at his wits' end which enemy to face. Some vague philosophy about the "devil you know, and the devil you don't," seemed to decide his course, for he rushed from the kitchen in a state of frenzied desperation,

and, with the blunderbuss at full cock, took the way toward the gate.

The wicket, as it was termed, was in reality a strong oak gate, garnished at top with a row of very formidable iron spikes, and as it was hung between two jagged and abrupt masses of rock, formed a very sufficient outwork, though a very needless one, since the slightest turn to either side would have led to the cottage without any intervening barrier to pass. This fact it was which now increased Dan Nelligan's terrors, as he reasoned that nobody but a ghost or evil spirit would be bothering himself at the wicket, when there was a neat footpath close by.

"Who's there?" cried Dan, with a voice that all his efforts could not render steady.

"Come out and open the gate," shouted a deep voice, in return.

"Not till you tell me where you come from, and who you are, if you are 'lucky?'"

"That I'm not," cried the other, with something very like a deep groan; "if I were, I'd scarce be here now."

"That's honest, anyhow," muttered Dan, who interpreted the phrase in its popular acceptance among the southern peasantry. "And what are you come back for, alannah!" continued he, in a most conciliating tone.

"Open the gate, and don't keep me here answering your stupid questions."

Though these words were uttered with a round, strong intonation that sounded very like the present world, Dan made no other reply than an endeavor to repeat a Latin prayer against evil spirits, when suddenly, and with a loud malediction on his obstinacy, Dan saw "the thing," as he afterward described it, take a flying leap over the gate, at least ten feet high, and come with a bang on the grass, not far from where he stood. To fire off his blunderbuss straight at the drifting clouds over his head and take to flight was Dan's only impulse, screaming out, "The captain's come! he's come!" at the very top of his lungs. The little strength he possessed only carried him to the kitchen door, where, completely overcome with terror, he dropped senseless on the ground.

While this was occurring, Miss Daly, alarmed by the report of fire-arms, but without any personal fears of danger, threw open the hall door, and called out, "Who is there?" and as the dark shadow of a figure came nearer, "Who are you, sir?"

"My name is Forester, madam—a friend of your brother's, for I perceive I have the honor to address Miss Daly."

By this time the stranger had advanced into the full light of the lamp within, where his appearance, tired and travel-stained as he was, corroborated his words.

"You have had a very uncourteous welcome, sir," said Miss Daly, extending her hand and leading him within the cottage.

"The reception was near being a warm one, I fear," said Forester, smiling: "for as I unfortunately, growing rather impatient, threw my carpet-bag over the gate, intending to climb it afterward, some one fired at me, not with a good aim, however, for I heard the slugs rattling on a high cliff behind me."

"Old Dan, I am certain, mistook you for a ghost or a goblin," said Miss Daly, laughing, as if the affair were an excellent joke devoid of all hazard; "we have few visitors down here from either world."

"Really, madam, I will confess it—if the roads are only as impassable for ghosts as for men of mortal mold, I'm not surprised at it. I left Coleraine at three o'clock to-day, where I was obliged to exchange my traveling carriage for a car, and I have been traveling ever since, sometimes on what seemed a highway, far oftener, however, across fields, with now and then an intervening wall to throw down, which we did, I own, unceremoniously; while lifting the horse twice out of deep holes, mending a shaft, and splicing the traces, lost some time. The driver, too, was once missing, a fact I only discovered after leaving him half a mile behind. In fact, the whole journey was full of small adventures up to the moment when we came to a dead stand at the foot of a high cliff, where the driver told me the road stopped, and that the rest of my way must be accomplished on foot; and on my asking what direction to take, he brought me some distance off to the top of a rock, whence I could perceive the twinkling of a light, and said, 'That's the Corvy.' I did my best to secure his services as a guide, but no offer of money nor persuasions could induce him to leave his horse and come any further; and now, perhaps, I can guess the reason—there is some superstition about the place at nightfall."

"No, no, you're mistaken there, sir; few of these people, however they may credit such tales, are terrified by them. It was the northern spirit dictated the refusal; his contract was to go so far, it would have 'put him out of his way' to go further, and his calculation was that all the profit he could fairly derive—and he never speculated on anything unfair—would not repay him. Such are the people of this province."

"The trait is honest, I've no doubt, but it can scarcely be the source of many amiable ones," said Forester, smarting under the recent inconvenience.

"We'll talk of that after supper," said Miss Daly, rising, "and I leave you to make a good fire while I go to give some orders."

"May I not have the honor to present my credentials first?" said Forester, handing Bagenal Daly's letter to her.

"My brother is quite well, is he not?"

"In excellent health—I left him but two days since."

"The dispatch will keep, then," said she, thrusting it into a letter-rack over the chimney-piece, while she left the room to make the arrangement she spoke of.

Miss Daly's absence was not of long duration, but, brief as it was, it afforded Forester time enough to look around at the many strange and incongruous decorations of the apartment; nor had he ceased his wonderment when Dan, pale and trembling in every limb, entered, tray in hand, to lay the supper table.

With many a sidelong, stealthy look, Dan performed his duties, and it was easy to see that, however disposed to regard the individual before him as of this world's company, "the thing that jumped out of the sky," as he called it, was yet an unexplained phenomenon.

"I see you are surprised by the motley companionship that surrounds me," said Miss Daly; "but as a friend of Bagenal's; and acquainted, doubtless, with his eccentric habits, they will astonish you less. Come, let me hear about him—is he going to pay me a visit down here?"

"I fear not, at this moment," said Forester, with an accent of melancholy; "his friendship is heavily taxed at the present juncture. You have heard, perhaps, of the unhappy event which has spread such dismay in Dublin?"

"No! what is it? I hear of nothing, and see nobody here."

"A certain Mr. Gleeson, the trusted agent of many country gentlemen, has suddenly fled—"

Before Forester could continue, Miss Daly arose and tore open her brother's letter. For a few seconds Forester was struck with the wonderful resemblance to her brother, as, with indrawn breath and compressed lips, she read; but gradually her color faded away, her hands trembled, and the paper fell from them, while, with a voice scarcely audible, she whispered—"And it has come to this!" Covering her face with the folds of her cloak, she sat for

some minutes buried in deep sorrow, and when she again looked up, years seemed to have passed over, and left their trace upon her countenance; it was pale and haggard, and a braid of gray hair, escaping beneath her cap, had fallen across her cheek, and increased the sad expression.

"So is it," said she aloud, but speaking as though to herself—"so is it: the heavy hand is laid on all in turn; happier they who meet misfortune early in life, when the courage is high and the heart unshrinking; if the struggle be life-long, the victory is certain, but after years of all the world can give of enjoyment—You know Maurice?—you know the knight, sir?"

"Yes, madam, slightly; but with Lady Eleanor and her daughter I have the honor of intimate acquaintance."

"I will not ask how he bears up against a blow like this. If his own fate only hung in the balance, I could tell that myself; but for his wife, to whom they say he is so devotedly attached—you know it was a love match, so they called it in England, because the daughter of an earl married the first commoner in Ireland. And Bagenal advises their coming here! Well, perhaps he is right; they will at least escape the insolence of pity in this lonely spot. Oh! sir, believe me, there is a weighty load of responsibility on those who rule us; these things are less the faults of individuals than of a system. You began here by confiscation, you would finish by corruption. Stimulating to excesses of every kind a people ten times more excitable than your own—now flattering, now goading—teaching them to vie with you in display while you mocked the recklessness of their living, you chafed them into excesses of alternate loyalty or rebellion."

However satisfied of its injustice, Forester made no reply to this burst of passion, but sat without speaking as she resumed:

"You will say there are knaves in every country, and that this Gleeson was of our rearing; but I deny it, sir. I tell you he was a base counterfeit we have borrowed from yourselves. That meek, submissive manner, that patient drudgery of office, that painstaking, petty rectitude, make up 'your respectable men;' and in this garb of character the business of life goes on with you. And why? Because you take it at its worth. But here, in Ireland, we go faster; trust means full confidence, confidence without limit or bound, and then, too often, ruin without redemption. Forgive me, sir; age and sorrow both have privileges, and I, perhaps, have more cause than most others to speak warmly on this

theme. Now, let me escape my egotism by asking you to eat, for I see we have forgotten our supper all this time."

From that moment Miss Daly never adverted further to the burden of her brother's letter, but led Forester to converse about his journey and the people whom, even in his brief experience, he perceived to be so unlike the peasantry of the west.

"Yes," said she, in reply to an observation of his, "these diversities of character observable in different places, are doubtless intended, like the interminable varieties of natural productions, to increase our interest in life, and, while extending the sphere of speculation, to contribute to our own advancement. Few people, perhaps not any, are to be found without some traits of amiability; here there is much to be respected, and, when habit has dulled the susceptibility of first impressions, much also to be liked. But shall I not have the pleasure of showing you my neighbors and my neighborhood?"

"My visit must be of the shortest; I rather took than obtained my leave of absence."

"Well, even a brief visit will do something; for my neighbors all dwell in cottages, and my neighborhood comprises the narrow strip of coast between this hut and the sea, whose splash you hear this minute. To-morrow you will be rested from your journey, and if the day permits we'll try the Causeway."

Forester accepted the invitation so frankly proffered, and went to his room, not sorry to lay his head upon a pillow after two weary nights upon the road.

Forester was almost shocked as he entered the breakfast-room on the following morning to see the alteration in Miss Daly's appearance. She had evidently passed a night of great sorrow, and seemed with difficulty to bear up against the calamitous tidings of which he was the bearer. She endeavored, it is true, to converse on matters of indifference—the road he had traveled, the objects he had seen, and so on—but the effort was ever interrupted by broken snatches of reflection that would vent themselves in words, and all of which bore on the knight and his fortunes.

To Forester's account of her brother Bagenal's devotion to his friend she listened with eager interest, asking again and again what part he had taken, whether his counsels were deemed wise ones, and if he still enjoyed to the fullest extent the confidence of his old friend.

"It is no friendship of yesterday, sir," said she, with a heightened color and a

flashing eye; "they knew each other as boys, they walked the mountains together as young men, speculating on the future paths fate might open before them, and the various ambitions which, even then, stirred within them. Bagenal was ever rash, headstrong, and impetuous, rarely firm in purpose till some obstacle seemed to defy its accomplishment. Maurice—the knight I mean—was not less resolute when roused, but more often so much disposed to concede to others, that he would postpone his wishes to their own; and once believing himself in any way pledged to a course, would forget all, save the fulfillment of the implied promise. Such were the two dispositions, which, acting and reacting on each other, effected the ruin of both; the one wasted in eccentricity what the other squandered in listless indifference; and with abilities enough to have won distinction for humble men, they have earned no other reputation than that of singularity or conivialism.

"As for Bagenal," she said, after a pause, "wealth was never but an incumbrance to him; he was one of those persons who never saw any use for money, save in the indulgence of mere caprice; he treated his great fortune as a spoiled child will do a toy, and never rested till he had pulled it to pieces, and perhaps derived the same moral lesson too—astonishment at the mere trifle which once amused him. But Maurice Darey—whose tastes were ever costly and cultivated, who regarded splendor not as the means of vulgar display, but as the fitting accompaniment of a house illustrious by descent and deeds, and deemed that all about and around him should bear the impress of himself, generous and liberal as he was—how is he to bear this reverse? Tell me of Lady Eleanor; and Miss Darey, is she like the knight, or has her English blood given the character to her beauty?"

"She is very like her father," said Forester; "but more so even in disposition than in features."

"How happy I am to hear it," said Miss Daly, hastily; "and she is, then, high-spirited and buoyant? What gifts in an hour like this!"

"You say truly, madam, she will not sink beneath the stroke, believe me."

"Well, this news has reconciled me to much of your gloomier tidings," said Miss Daly; "and now let us wander out upon the hills; I feel as if we could talk more freely as we stroll along the beach."

Miss Daly arose as she spoke, and led the way through the little garden wicket, which opened on a steep pathway down to the shore.

"This will be a favorite walk with Helen, I'm certain," said she; "the caves are all accessible at low water, and the view of Fairhead finer than from any other point. I must instruct you to be a good and a safe guide. I must teach you all the art and mystery of the science, make you learned in the chronicles of Dunluce, and rake up for you legends of ghostcraft and shipwreck enough to make the fortunes of a romancer."

"I thank you heartily," said Forester; "but I cannot remain here to meet my friends."

"Oh, I understand you," said Miss Daly, who in reality put a wrong interpretation on his words; "but you shall be my guest. There is a little village about four miles from this, where I intend to take up my abode. I hope you will not decline hospitality which, if humble, is at least freely proffered."

"I regret deeply," said Forester, and he spoke in a tone of sorrow, "that I cannot accept your kindness. I stand in a position of no common difficulty at this moment." He hesitated, as if doubting whether to proceed or not, and then, in a more hurried voice, resumed: "There is no reason why I should obtrude my own petty cares and trials where greater misfortunes are impending; but I cannot help telling you that I have been rash enough, in a moment of impatience, to throw up an appointment I held on the viceroy's staff, and I know not how far the step may yet involve me with my relatives."

"Tell me how came you first acquainted with the Darcys?" said Miss Daly, as if following out in her own mind a train of thought.

"I will be frank with you," said Forester, "for I cannot help being so; there are cases where confidence is not a virtue but a necessity. Every word you speak, every tone of your voice is so much your brother's, that I feel as if I were confiding to him in another form. I learned to know the Knight of Gwynne in a manner which you may deem, perhaps, little creditable to myself, though I trust you will see that I neither abused the knowledge, nor perverted the honor of the acquaintanceship. It was in this wise."

Briefly, but without reserve, Forester narrated the origin of his first journey to the west, and without implicating the honor of his relative, Lord Castlereagh, explained the nature of his mission, to ascertain the sentiments of the knight, and the possibility of winning him to the side of the Government. His own personal adventures could not, of course, be omitted in such a narra-

tive, but he touched on the theme as slightly as he could, and only dwelt on the kindness he had experienced in his long and dangerous illness, and the long debt of gratitude which bound him to the family.

Of the intimacy that succeeded he could not help speaking, and whether from his studied avoidance of her name, or that, when replying to any question of Miss Daly's concerning Helen Darey, his manner betrayed agitation, certain it is, that when he concluded, Miss Daly's eyes were turned toward him with an expression of deep significance that called the color to his cheek.

"And so, sir," said she, in a slow and measured voice, "you went down to play the tempter, and were captured yourself. Come, come, I know your secret; you have told it by signs less treacherous than words; and Helen—for I tell you freely my interest is stronger for her—how is she disposed toward you?"

Forester never spoke, but hung his head abashed and dejected.

"Yes, yes, I see it all," said Miss Daly, hurriedly; "you would win the affection of a generous and high-souled girl by the arts which find favor in your more polished world, and you have found that the fascinations of manner, and the glittering *écât* of an aid-de-camp, have failed. Now, take my counsel. But first let me ask, is this affection the mere prompting of an idle or capricious moment, or do you love her with a passion round which the other objects of your life are to revolve and depend? I understand that pressure of the hand; it is enough. My advice is simple. You belong to a profession second to none in its high and great rewards; do not waste its glorious opportunities by the life of a courtier—be a soldier in feeling as well as in garb; let her whose heart you would win, feel, that in loving you, she is paying the tribute to qualities that make men esteem and respect you—that she is not bestowing her hand upon the mere favorite of a court, but on one whose ambitions are high, and whose darings are generous. Oh! leave nothing, or as little as you may, to mere influence—let your boast be, and it will be a proud one, that with high blood and a noble name you have started fairly in the race, and distanced your competitors. This is my counsel. What think you of it?"

"I will follow it," said Forester, firmly; "I will follow it, though I own to you, it suggests no hope, where hope would be happiness."

"Well, then," said Miss Daly, "you shall spend this day with me, and I will

not keep you another; you have made me your friend by this confidence, and I will use the trust with delicacy and with fidelity."

"May I write to you?" said Forester, "and will you let me hear from you again?"

"With pleasure; I should have asked it myself had you not done so. Now, let us talk of the first steps to be taken in this affair, and here is a bench where we can rest ourselves while we chat."

Forester sat down beside her, and in the freedom of one to whom fortune had so unexpectedly presented a confidant, opened all the secret store of his cares, and hopes, and fears. It was late when they turned again toward "the Corvy," but the youth's step was lighter, and his brow more open, while his heart was higher than many a previous day had found him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE KNIGHT'S RETURN.

WE must now, for a brief space, return to the knight, as with a heavy heart he journeyed homeward. Never did the long miles seem so wearisome before, often and often as he had traveled them. The little accidental delays, which once he had met with a ready jest, and in a spirit of kindly indulgence, he now resented as so many intentional insults upon his changed and ruined fortune. The gossiping landlords, to whom he had ever extended so much of freedom, he either acknowledged coldly, or repelled with distance; their liberties were now construed into want of deference and respect; the very jestings of the postboys to each other seemed so many covert impertinences, and equivocal allusions to himself, for even so much will the stroke of sudden misfortune change the nature, and convert the contented and happy spirit into a temperament of gloomy sorrow and suspicion.

Unconscious of his own altered feelings, and looking at every object through the dim light of his own calamity, he hurried along, not of as old, recognizing each well-known face, saluting this one, inquiring after that; he sat back in his carriage, and with his hat drawn almost over his eyes, neither noticed the way nor the wayfarers.

In this mood it was he entered Castlebar. The sight of his well-remembered carriage drew crowds of beggars to the door of the inn, every one of whom had some special prayer for aid, or some narrative of sickness for his hearing. By the time the horses

drew up, the crowd numbered some hundreds of every variety, not only in age, but in raggedness, all eagerly calling on him by name, and imploring his protection on grounds the most strange and dissimilar.

"I knew the sound of the wheels; ax Biddy if I didn't say it was his honor was coming!" cried one, in a sort of aside intended for the knight himself.

"Ye're welcome home, sir; long may you reign over us," said an old fellow with a beard like a pilgrim. "I dreamed I seen you last night standing at the door there, wid a half-crown in your fingers. 'Ould Luke,' says you, 'come here!—'"

A burst of rude laughter drowned this sage parable, while a good-looking young woman, with an expression of softness in features degraded by poverty and its consequences, courtesied low, and tried to attract his notice, as she held up a miserable-looking infant to the carriage window. "Clap them, acushla! 'tis proud he is to see you back again, sir; he never forgets the goold guinea ye gave him on New Year's day! Don't be pushin' that way, you rude craytures; you want to hunt the child, and it's the image of his honor."

"Many returns of the blessed sayson to you," growled out a creature in a bonnet, but in face and figure far more like a man than a woman; "throw us out a fippenny to buy two ounces of tay. Asy, asy, don't be drivin' me under the wheels—ugh! it's no place for a faymale, among such rapscallions."

"What did they give you, Maurice? how much did you get, honey?" cried a tall and almost naked fellow, that leaned over the heads of several others, and put his face close to the glass of the carriage, which, for safety's sake, the knight now let down, while he called aloud to the postboys to make haste and bring out the horses.

"Tell us all about it, Maurice, my boy—are you a lord, or a bishop?" cried the tall fellow, with an eagerness of face that told his own sad bereavement, for he was deranged in intellect, from a fall from one of the cliffs on the coast. "By my conscience, I think I must change my politics myself soon; my best pantaloons is like Nat Fitzgibbon—it has resigned its sate! Out with a bit of silver here!—quick, I didn't kiss the king's face this ten days."

To all these entreaties Darcy seemed perfectly deaf; if his eyes wandered over the crowd, they noticed nothing there, nor did he appear to listen to a word around him, while he again asked why the horses were not coming.

"We're doing our best, your honor,"

cried a postboy, "but it's mighty hard to get through these devils; they won't stir till the beasts is trampling them down."

"Drive on, then, and let them take care of themselves," said the knight, sternly.

"Oh, blessed Father! there's a way to talk of the poor! Oh, heavenly Vargin! but you are come back cruel to us after all!"

"Drive on?" shouted out Darcy, in a voice of angry impatience.

The postboys sprang into their saddles, cracked their whips, and dashed forward, while the mob, rent in a hundred channels, fled on every side, with cries of terror and shouts of laughter, according as the distance suggested danger or security. All escaped safely, except the poor idiot, Flury, who, having one foot on the step when the carriage started, was thrown backward, when, to save himself, he grasped the spring, and was thus half dragged, half carried along to the end of the street, and there, failing strength and fear combining, he relinquished his hold and fell senseless to the ground, where the wheel grazed but did not injure him as he lay.

With a cry of terror the knight called out "Stop!" and flinging wide the door, sprang out. To lift the poor fellow up to a sitting posture was the work of a second, while he asked, in accents the very kindest, if he were hurt.

"Sorra bit, Maurice," said the fellow, whose faculties sooner rallied than if they were habitually under better control. "I was on the wrong side of the coach, that's all; 'tis safer to be within. The clothes is not the better of it," said he, looking at his steeve, now hanging in stripes.

"Never mind that, Flury; we'll soon repair that misfortune; it does not signify much."

"Doesn't it, faith?" said the other, shaking his head dubiously; "'tis asy talking, but I can't turn my coat without showing the hole in it. 'Tis only the rich can do that."

The knight bit his lip, for even from the fool's sarcasm he could gather the imputations already rife upon his conduct. Another and a very different thought succeeded to this, and he blushed with shame to think how far his sense of his own misfortune had rendered him indifferent, not only to the kindly feelings, but the actual misery of others. The right impulses of high-minded men are generally rapid in their action, like the spring of the bent bow when the cord is cut asunder. It did not cost Darcy many minutes to be again the warm-hearted, generous soul nature had made him.

"Come, Flury," said he to the poor fellow, as he stood ruefully surveying his damaged drapery, "give that among the people there in the town, and keep this for yourself."

"This is goold, Maurice—yellow goold!"

"So it is; but you're not the less welcome to it; tell them, too, that I have had troubles of my own lately, and that's the reason I hurried on without exchanging a word with them."

"How do you know, Maurice, but I'll keep it all to myself?"

"I'd trust you with a heavier sum," said the knight, smiling.

"I know why—I know why, well enough—because I'm a fool. Never mind, there's greater fools nor me going. What did they give you up there for your vote, Maurice—tell me, how much was it?"

The knight shook his head, and Flury resumed: "Didn't I say it? Wasn't I right? By my ould hat! there's two fools in the country now—Maurice Darcy and Red Flury, and Maurice the biggest of the two! Whoop, the more the merrier, there's room for us all!" And with this wise reflection, Flury gave a very wild caper and a wilder shout, and set off at the speed of a hare toward Castlebar.

The knight resumed his journey, and in a more contented mood. The little incident had called on him for an exertion, and his faculties only needed the demand to respond to the call. He summoned to his aid, besides, every comforting reflection in his power; he persuaded himself that there were some hopes remaining still, and tried to believe the evil not beyond remedy. "After all," thought he, "we are together; it is not death has been dealing with us, nor is there any stain upon our fair fame; and save these, all ills are light, and can be borne."

From thoughts like these he was aroused by the heavy clank of the iron gate, as it fell back to admit the carriage within the park, while a thousand welcomes saluted him.

"Thank you, Darby!—thank you, Mary! All well up at the abbey?"

But the carriage dashed past at full speed, and the answer was drowned in the tumult. The postboys, true to the etiquette of their calling, had reserved their best pace for the finish, and it was at the stride of a hunting gallop they now tore along.

It was a calm night, with a young faint moon and a starry sky, which, without displaying in bright light the details of the scenery, yet exhibited them in strong bold

masses, making all seem even more imposing and grander than in reality; the lofty mountain appeared higher, the dark woods vaster, and the wide-spreading lawn seemed to stretch away into immense plains. Darcy's heart swelled with pride as he looked, while a pang shot through him as he thought, if even at that hour, he could call them his own.

They had now reached a little glen, where the postboys were obliged to walk their blown cattle; emerging from this, they passed a thick grove of beech, and at once came in sight of the abbey. Darcy leaned anxiously from the window to catch the first sight of home, when, what was his amazement, to perceive that the whole was lighted up from end to end. The great suite of state rooms were a blaze of lustres, which even at that distance glittered in their starry brilliancy, and showed the shadows of figures moving within. He well knew that Lady Eleanor never saw company in his absence—what could this mean? Tortured with doubts that in his then state of mind took every painful form, he ordered the postilions to get on faster, and at the very top of their speed they tore along, over the wide lawn, across the terrace drive, up the steep ascent to the gate tower into the court-yard.

This was also brilliantly lighted by lamps from the walls, and also by the lights of numerous carriage lamps which crowded the ample space.

"What is this? Can no one tell me?" muttered the knight, as he leaped from the carriage, and scizing a livery servant who was passing, said, "What is going on here? What company has the abbey?"

"Full of company," said the man, in an English accent; "there's my Lord——"

"Who do you mean?"

"The Earl of Netherby, sir, and Sir Harry Beauclerk, and Colonel Crofton, and——"

"When did they arrive?" said the knight, interrupting a catalogue, every name of which, although unknown, sent a feeling like a stab through his heart.

"They came the evening before last, sir; Mr. Lionel Darcy, who arrived the same morning——"

"Is he here?" cried the knight; and without waiting for more, hastened forward.

The servants, of whom there seemed a great number about, were in strange liveries, and unknown to the knight; nor was it without undergoing a very cool scrutiny from them, that Darcy succeeded in gaining admittance to his own house. At last

he reached the foot of the great stair, whence the sounds of music and the din of voices filled the air; servants hurried along with refreshments, or carried orders to others in waiting; all was bustle and excitement, in the midst of which Darcy stood only half conscious of the reality of what he saw, and endeavoring to reason himself into a conviction of what he heard. It was at this moment that several officers of a newly-quartered regiment passed up, admiring, as they went, the splendor of the house, and the magnificent preparations they witnessed on every side.

"I say, Dallas," cried one, "you're always talking of your uncle Beverly; does he do the thing in this style, eh?"

"By Jove!" interposed a short, thick-set major, with a bushy beard and eyebrows, "this is what I call going the pace; do they give dinners here?"

"Yes, that they do," said a white-faced, ghostly-looking ensign; "I heard all about this place from Giles, of the 40th; he was quartered six months in this county, and used to grub here half the week. The old fellow isn't at home now, but they say he's a trump."

"Let's drink his health, Watkins," cried the first speaker; "here's champagne going up;" and so saying, the party gathered around two servants, one of whom carried an ice-pail with some bottles, and the other a tray of glasses.

"Does any one know his name, though?" said the major, as he held his glass to be filled.

"Yes, it's something like—— Oh, you know that fellow that joined us at Coventry?"

"Brereton, is it?"

"No, hang it! I mean the fellow that had the crop-eared cob with the white legs. Never mind, here he goes, anyhow."

"Oh, I know who you mean—it was Jack Quin."

"That's the name; and our friend here is called 'Gwynne,' I think. Here, gentlemen, I give you Gwynne's health, and all the honors; may he live a few centuries more——"

"With a warm heart and a cool cellar," added one.

"Pink champagne and red coats to drink it," chimed in the ensign.

"May I join you in that pleasant sentiment, gentlemen?" said the knight, bowing courteously, as he took a glass from the tray and held it toward the servant.

"Make no apology, sir," said the major, eyeing him rather superciliously, for the traveling dress concealed the knight's ap-

pearance, and distinguished him but slightly from many of those lounging around the doors.

"Capital ginger beer that! eh?" said the ensign, as winking at his companions he proceeded to quiz the stranger.

"I have certainly drunk worse," said the knight, gravely—"at an infantry mess."

There was a pause before he uttered the last few words, which gave them a more direct application; a stare, half stupid, half impertinent, was, however, all they elicited, and the group moved on, while the knight, disencumbering himself of his traveling gear, slowly followed them.

"Grim old gentlemen these, ain't they?" said the major, gazing at the long line of family portraits that covered the walls; "that fellow with the truncheon does not seem to like the look of us."

"Here's a bishop, I take it, with the great wig."

"That's a chancellor, man—don't you see the mace?—but he's not a whit more civil-looking than the other. Commend me to the shepherdess yonder in blue satin; but come on, we're losing time, I hear the flourish of a new dance. I say," said he in a whisper, "do you see who we've got behind us?" And they turned and saw the knight as he mounted the stairs behind them.

"A friend of the family, sir?" asked the major, in a voice that might bear the equivocal meaning of either impertinence or mere inquiry.

The knight seemed to prefer taking it in the latter acceptance, as he answered mildly, "I have that honor."

"Ah! indeed; well, we've the misfortune to be strangers in these parts; only arrived in the neighborhood last week, and were invited here through our colonel. Would you have any objection to present us?—Major Hopecot, of the 5th, Captain Mills, Mr. Dalias, Mr. Fothergill, Mr. Watkins."

"How the major *is* going it," lisped the ensign, while his goggle eyes rolled fearfully, and the others seemed struggling to control their enjoyment of such drollery.

"It will afford me much pleasure, sir, to do your bidding," said the knight, calmly.

"Take the head of the column, then," resumed the major, making way for him to pass; and the knight entered, with the others after him.

"My father, my dearest father!" cried a voice at the moment, and, escaping from her partner, Helen was in a moment in his arms. The next instant Lionel was also at his side.

"My dear children!—my sweet Helen—and Lionel, how well you're looking, boy.

Ah! Eleanor, what a pleasant surprise you have managed for me."

"Then perhaps you never got our letter," said Lady Eleanor, as she took his arm and walked forward. "I wrote the moment I heard from Lionel."

"And I, too, wrote you a long letter from London," said Lionel.

"Neither reached me; but the last few days I have been so busy, and so much occupied. How are you, Connolly? Delighted to see you, Martin. And Lady Julia, is she here? I must take a tour and see all my friends. First of all, I have a duty to perform; let me introduce these gentlemen. But where are they? Oh, I see them yonder." And, as he spoke, he led Lady Eleanor across the room to the group of officers, who, overwhelmed with shame at their discovery, stood uncertain whether they should remain or retire.

"Let me introduce Major Hopecot and the officers of the 5th," said he, bowing courteously. "These gentlemen are strangers, Lady Eleanor; will you take care that they find partners."

While the abashed subalterns left their major to make his speeches to Lady Eleanor, the knight moved round the room with Helen still leaning on his arm. By this time Darcy's arrival was generally known, and all his old friends came pressing forward to see and speak to him.

"Lord Netherby," whispered Helen in the knight's ear, as a tall and very thin old man, with an excessive affectation of youthfulness, tripped forward to meet him.

"My dear lord," exclaimed Darcy, "what a pleasure, and what an honor to see you here."

"You would not come to *me*, knight, so there was nothing else for it," replied the other, laughing, as he shook hands with a great display of cordiality. "And you were quite right," continued he; "I could not have received you like this. There's not so splendid a place in England, nor has it ever been my fortune to witness so much beauty." A half bow accompanied the last words, as he turned toward Helen.

"Take care, my lord," said the knight, smiling; "the flatteries of a courtier are very dangerous things, when heard out of the atmosphere that makes them commonplace. We may take you literally, and have our heads turned by them."

At this moment Lionel joined them, to introduce several of his friends and brother officers who accompanied him from England, all of whom were received by the knight with that winning courtesy of manner of which he was a perfect master, for,

not affecting either the vices or frivolities of youth as a claim to the consideration of younger men, the knight possessed the happy temper that can concede indulgence without asking to partake of it, and, while losing nothing of the relish for wit and humor, chasten both by the fruits of a life's experience.

"Now, Helen, you must go back to your partner; that young guardsman looks very sulkily at me for having taken you off—yes, I insist on it. Lionel, look to your friends, and I'll join Lord Netherby's whist-table, and talk whenever permitted. Where's poor Tate?" whispered he in Lady Eleanor's ear, as she just came up.

"Poor fellow! he has been ill for some days back; you know what a superstitious creature he is; and about a week since he got a fright—some warning of a banshee, I think—but it shook his nerves greatly, and he has kept his bed almost ever since. Lionel brought over some of these servants with him, but Lord Netherby's people are legion, and the servants' hall now numbers something like seventy, I hear."

The knight heaved a sigh, but, catching himself, tried to conceal it by a cough. Lady Eleanor had heard it, however, and stole a quick glance toward him, to evade which he turned abruptly round and spoke to some one near.

"Seventy, my dear Eleanor!" said he, after a pause, and as if he had been reflecting over his last observation; "and what a Babel, too, it must be! I heard French, German, and Italian in the hall; I think we can promise Irish ourselves."

"Yes," said Lionel, "it is the most amusing scene in the world. They had a ball last night in the lower gallery, where boleros and jigs succeeded each other, while the refreshments ranged from iced lemonade to burnt whisky."

"And what did our worthy folk think of their visitors?" said Darcy, smiling.

"Not over much. Paddy Lennan looked with great contempt at the men sipping *orgeat*, and when he saw the waltzing, merely remarked, 'We've a betther way of getting round the girls in Ireland;' while old Pierre Dulange, Netherby's valet, persists in addressing the native company as 'Messieurs les sauvages.'"

"I hope, for the sake of the public peace, they've not got an interpreter among them."

"No, no, all's safe on that score, and freedom of speech has suggested the most perfect code of good manners; for it would seem, as they can indulge themselves in the most liberal reflections on each other, they have no necessity of proceeding to overtacts."

"Now," said the knight, "let me not interrupt the revelry longer. To your place, Lionel, and leave me to pay my devours to my friends and kind neighbors."

The knight's presence seemed alone wanting to fill up the measure of enjoyment. Most of those present were his old familiar friends, glad to see once more amongst them the great promoter of kind feeling and hospitality, while from such as were strangers he easily won golden opinions, the charm of courtesy being with him like a well-fitting garment, which graced but did not impede the wearer's motions.

He had a hundred questions to ask and to answer. The news of the capital traveled in those days by slow and easy stages, and the moment was sufficiently eventful to warrant curiosity, and so, as he passed from group to group, he gave the current gossip of the time as each in turn asked after this circumstance or that.

At length he took his place beside Lord Netherby, as he sat engaged at a whist-table, where the gathering crowd that gradually collected soon converted the game into a social circle of eager talkers.

Who could have suspected that easy, unconstrained manner, that winning smile, that ready laugh, the ever-present jest, to cover the working of a heart so nigh to breaking? And yet he talked pleasantly and freely, narrating with all his accustomed humor the chit-chat of the time; and while, of course, the great question of the hour occupied every tongue and ear, all Lord Netherby's practiced shrewdness could not enable him to detect the exact part the knight himself had taken.

"And so they have carried the bill," said Conolly, with a sigh, as he listened to Darcy's account of the second reading. "Well, though I never was a Parliament man, nor expected to be one, I'm sorry for it. You think that strange, my lord?"

"By no means, sir. A man may love monarchy without being the heir apparent."

"Quite true," chimed in the knight. "I would even go further, and say that, without any warm devotion to a king, a man may hate a regicide."

Lord Netherby's eyes met Darcy's, and the wily peer smiled with a significance that seemed to say, "I know you *now*."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE HUNT-BREAKFAST.

THE ball lasted till nigh daybreak, and while the greater number of the guests de-

parted, some few remained by special invitation at the abbey, to join a hunting party on the following day. For this Lionel had made every possible preparation, desiring to let his English friends witness a favorable specimen of Irish sport and horsemanship. The stud and kennel were both in high condition, the weather favorable, and, as the old huntsman said, "'Twould be hard if a fox wouldn't be agreeable enough to give the strange gentlemen a run."

In high anticipation of the coming morning, and with many a prayer against a frost, they separated for the night. All within the abbey were soon sound asleep, all save the knight himself, who, the restraint of an assumed part withdrawn, threw himself on a sofa in his dressing-room, worn out and exhausted by his struggle. Ruin was inevitable, that he well knew; but as yet the world knew it not, and for Lionel's sake he resolved to keep his own secret a few days longer. The visit was to last but eight days; two were already over; for the remaining six, then, he determined—whatever it might cost him—to preserve all the appearances of his former estate, to wear the garb and seeming of prosperity, and do the princely honors of a house that was never again to be his home.

"Poor Lionel!" thought he, "'twould break the boy's heart if such a disclosure should be made now; the high and daring promptings of his bold spirit would not quail before misfortune, although his courage might not sustain him in the very moment of the reverse. I will not risk the whole fortune of his future happiness in such a trial; he shall know nothing till they are gone; one week of triumphant pleasure he shall have, and then let him brace himself to the struggle, and breast the current manfully."

While endeavoring to persuade himself that Lionel's lot was uppermost in his mind, his heart would force the truth upon him that Lady Eleanor and Helen's fate was, in reality, a heavier stroke of fortune. Lionel was a soldier, ardent and daring, fond of his profession, and far more ambitious of distinction than attached to the life of pleasure a court and a great capital suggested; but they, who had never known the want of every luxury that can embellish life, whose whole existence had been like some fairy dream of pleasure, how were they to bear up against the dreadful shock? Lady Eleanor's health was frail and delicate in the extreme; Helen's attachment to her mother such that any impression on her would invariably recoil upon herself. What might be the consequences of the

disclosure to them Darcy could not, dare not contemplate.

As he revolved all these things in his mind, and thought upon the difficulties that beset him, he was at a loss whether to deplore the necessity of wearing a false face of pleasure a few days longer, or rejoice at the occasion of even this brief reprieve from ruin. Thus passed the weary hours that preceded daybreak, and while others slept soundly, or reviewed in their dreams the pleasures of the past night, Darcy's gloomy thoughts were fixed upon the inevitable calamity of his fate, and the years, few but sad, that in all likelihood were now before him.

The stir and bustle of the servants preparing breakfast for the hunting party broke in upon his dreary reverie, and he suddenly bethought him of the part he had assigned himself to play. He dreaded the possibility of an interview with Lady Eleanor, in which she would inevitably advert to Gleeson, and the circumstances of his flight; this could not be avoided, however, were he to pass the day at home, and so he resolved to join the hunting-field, where, perhaps, some lingering trace of his old enthusiasm for the sport might lead him to hope for a momentary relief of mind.

"Lionel, too, will be glad to see me in the saddle—it's some years since I crossed the sward at a gallop—and I am curious to know if a man's nerve is stouter when the world looks fair before him, or when the night of calamity is lowering above his head." Muttering these words to himself, he passed out into the hall, and, crossing which, entered the court-yard, and took his way toward the stables. It was still dark, but many lights were moving to and fro, and the groom population were all about and stirring. Darcy opened the door and looked down the long range of stalls, where above twenty saddle-horses were now standing, the greater number of them highly bred and valuable animals, and all in the highest possible condition. Great was the astonishment of the stablemen as the knight moved along, throwing a glance as he went at each stall, while a muttered "Welcome home to yer honor," ran from mouth to mouth.

"The bastes is looking finely, sir," said Bob Carney, who, as stud-groom and huntsman, had long presided over his department.

"So they are, Bob, but I don't know half of them; where did this strong brown horse come from?"

"That's Clipper, yer honor; I knew you wouldn't know him. He took up finely after his run last winter."

“And the fore leg, is it strong again?”

“As stout as a bar of iron; one of the boys had him out two days ago, and he took the yellow ditch flying—we measured nineteen feet between the mark of his hoofs.”

“He ought to be strong enough to carry me, Bob.”

“Don’t ride him, sir, he’s an uncertain devil; and though he’ll go straight over everything for maybe twenty minutes or half an hour, he’ll stop short at a drain not wider than a potato furrow, and the power of man wouldn’t get him over it.”

“That’s a smart gray, yonder—what is she?”

“She’s the one we tried as a leader one day; yer honor remembers you bid me shoot her, or get rid of her, for she kicked the traces, and nearly the wheel-horse all to smash; and now she’s the sweetest thing to ride, for cleven stone, in the whole county. There’s an English colonel to try her to-day; my only advice to him is, let her have her own way of it, for if he begins pulling at her, ’tis maybe in Donegal he’ll be before evening.”

“And what have you for me?” said the knight, “for I scarcely know any of my old friends here.”

“There’s the mouse-colored cob—”

“No, no,” said the knight, laughing; “I want to keep my place, Bob. You must give me something better than that.”

“Faith, an’ your honor might have worse; but if it’s for riding you are, take Black Peter, and you’ll never find the fence too big, or the ground too heavy for him. I was going to give him to the English lord; I suppose, after all, he’ll be better pleased with the cob.”

“Well, then, Peter for me. And now let’s see what Mr. Lionel has to ride.”

“There she is, and a beauty!” said Bob, as, with a dexterous jerk, he chucked a sheet off her haunches, and displayed the shining flanks and splendid proportions of a thorough-bred mare. “That’s Cushleen,” said he, as he fixed his eyes on the knight’s face to enjoy the reflection of his own delight. “That’s the darlin’ can do it!—a child can hold her, but it takes a man to sit on her back—racing speed over a flat, and a jump!—’tis more like the bound of a football than anything else.”

“She has the eye of a hot one, Bob.”

“And why wouldn’t she? But she knows when to be so. Let her take her place at the head of the whole field, with a light finger to guide, and a stout heart to direct her, and she’s a kitten; but the devil a tiger was ever as fierce if another passes her, or a

cowardly hand would try to hold her back. And there’s a nate tool, that black horse—that’s for another of the English gentlemen. Master Lionel calls him Sir Harry. They tell me he’s a fine rider, and has a pack of hounds himself in his own place, and I am mistaken if he has the baste in his stable will give him a better day’s sport. The chestnut here is for Miss Helen, for she’s coming to see them throw off, and it’ll be a fine sight; we’ll be thirty-six out of your honor’s stables, Mr. Conolly is bringing nine more, and all the Martins, and the Lynches, and Dalys, and Mr. Hickman O’Reilly and his son, though, to be sure, *they* won’t do much for the honor of ould Ireland.”

The knight turned away laughing, and re-entered the house.

Early as it yet was, the inmates of the abbey were stirring, and a great breakfast, laid for above thirty, was prepared in the library, for the supper-tables occupied the dining-rooms, and the *débris* of the magnificent entertainment of the night before still lingered there. Two cheerful fires blazed on the ample hearths, and threw a mellow luster over that spacious room, where old Tate now busied himself in those little harmless duties he fancied indispensable to the knight’s comfort, for the poor fellow, on hearing of his master’s return, had once more resumed his office.

The knight’s meeting with him was one of true friendship; difference of station interposed no barrier to affection, and Darcy shook the old man’s hand as cordially as though they were brothers. Yet each was sad with a secret sorrow, which all their efforts could scarce conceal from the other. In vain the knight endeavored to turn away old Tate’s attention by inquiries after his health, questions about home, or little flatteries about his preparations—Tate’s filmy eyes were fixed upon his master with a keenness that age could not dim.

“’Tis maybe tired your honor is,” said he, in a voice half meant as inquiry, half insinuation; “the parliament, they tell me, destroys the health entirely.”

“Very true, Tate; late hours, heated rooms, and some fatigue, will not serve a man of my age; but I am tolerably well for all that.”

“God be praised for it!” said Tate, piously, but in a voice that showed it was rather a wish he expressed than a conviction, when, suspecting that he had suffered some portion of his fears to escape, he added more cheerfully, “And isn’t Master Lionel grown an illigant, fine young man! When I seen him comin’ up the stairs, it was just as if the forty-eight years that’s gone

over was only a dhrame, and I was looking at your honor the day you came home from college; he has the same way with his arms, and carries his head like you, and the same light step. Musha!" muttered he, below his breath, "the ould families never die out, but keep their looks to the last."

"He's a fine fellow, Tate!" said the knight, turning toward the window, for while flattered by the old man's praises of his son, a deep pang shot through his heart at the wide disparity of fortune with which life opened for both of them. At the instant an arm was drawn round him, and Helen stood at his side: she was in her riding-habit, and looking in perfect beauty. Darey gazed at her for a few seconds, and with such evident admiration, that she, as if accepting the compliment, drew herself up, and, smiling, said, "Yes, nothing short of conquest. Lionel told his friends to expect a very unformed country girl; they shall see, at least, she can ride."

"No hare-brained risks, Helen, dearest. I'm to take the field to-day, and you mustn't shake my nerve, for I want to bring no disgrace on my county."

"I was but jesting, my own dear papa," said she, drawing closer to him, "but I really felt so curious to see these English horsemen's performance, that I asked Lionel to train Alice for me."

"And Lionel, of course, but too happy to show his pretty sister—"

"Nay, nay, if you will quiz, I must only confess that my head is quite turned already; our noble cousin overwhelms me with flatteries, which, upon the principle the Indian accepts glass beads and spangles as gems and gold, I take as real value. But here he comes."

And Lord Netherby, attired for the field in all the accuracy of costume, slipped toward them. After came Colonel Crofton, a well-known fashionable of the clubs and a hanger-on of the peer; then Sir Harry Beauclerk, a young baronet of vast fortune, gay, good-tempered, and extravagant; while several others of lesser note, brother officers of Lionel's, and men about town, brought up the rear, one only deserving remark, a certain captain, or, as he was better known, Tom Nolan—a strange, ambiguous kind of fellow, always seen in the world, constantly met at the best houses, and yet nobody being able to explain why he was asked, nor—as it very often happened—who asked him.

Lady Eleanor never appeared early in the day, but there was a sprinkling of lady-visitors through the room, guests at the abbey; a very pretty, but not over-afflicted

widow, a Mrs. Somerville, with several Mrs. and Miss Lynches, Brownes, and Martins, comprising the beauties of the neighborhood. Lionel was the last to make his appearance, so many directions had he to give about earth-stoppers and cover hacks, drags, phaetons, fresh horses, and all the contingent requirements of a day's sport. Besides, he had pledged himself most faithfully to give Mrs. Somerville's horse, a very magnificent barb, a training canter himself, with a horse sheet round his legs, for she was a timid rider—on some occasions—though certain calumnious people averred that, when alone, she would take any fence in the whole barony.

At length they were seated, and such a merry, happy party! There was but one sad heart in the company, and that none could guess at. And what a running fire of pleasant railery rattled round the table! How brimful of wit and good-humor were they all! How ready each to take the jest against himself, and even heighten its flavor by some new touch of drollery. Harmless wagers respecting the places they would occupy at the finish, gentle quizzings about safe riding through the gaps, and joking counsels as to the peculiar difficulties of an Irish country were heard on all sides; while the knight recounted the Galway anecdote of Dick Perse taking an immense leap and disappearing afterward. "Call the ground, Dick!" cried Lord Clanricarde, who was charging up at top speed—"call the ground! What's at the other side?"

"I *am*, thank God!" was the short reply, and the words came from the depth of a gravel-pit."

At last, venison pasties and steaks, rolls and coffee, with their due accompaniment of liqueurs, came to an end, and a very sufficient uproar without, of men, dogs, and horses, commingled, bespoke the activity of preparation there, while old Bob Carney's voice topped every other, as he swore at or commended men and beasts indiscriminately.

"What a glorious morning for our sport!" said the knight, as he threw open the sash, and let into the room the heavy perfume of the earth, borne on a southerly wind. The sea was calm as an inland lake, and the dark clouds over it were equally motionless. "We shall be unlucky, my lord, if we do not show you some sport on such a day. Ah, there go the dogs!" And, as he spoke, the hounds issued from beneath the deep arch of the gateway, and with Bob and the whipper-in at their head, took their way across the lawn.

"To horse! to horse!" shouted Lionel,

gayly, from the court-yard, for the riding party were not to proceed to the cover by the short path the hounds were gone, but to follow by a more picturesque and circuitous route.

"I hope sincerely that beast is not intended for me," said Lord Netherby, as a powerful black horse crossed the court-yard in a series of bounds, and finished by landing the groom over his head.

"Never fear, my lord," said Lionel, laughing; "Billy Pitt is meant for Beauclerk."

"You surely never named that animal after the minister, knight?" said his lordship.

"Yes, my lord," said Darcy, with a smile; "it's just as unsafe to back one as the other. But here comes the heavy brigade. Which is your choice—Black Peter or Mouse?"

"If I may choose, I will confess this is more to my liking than anything I have seen yet. You know that I don't mean to take any part in the debate, so I may as well secure a quiet seat under the gallery. But, my dear Miss Darcy what a mettlesome thing you've got there!"

"She's only fidgety; if I can hold her when they throw off, I'll have no trouble afterward." And the graceful girl sat back easily in her saddle, as the animal bounded and swerved with every stroke of her long riding-habit.

"There goes Beauclerk!" cried Lionel, as the young baronet shot like an arrow through the archway on the back of Billy Pitt; for no sooner had he touched the saddle, than the unmanageable animal broke away from the groom's hands, and set off at full speed down the lawn.

"I say, Darcy," cried Colonel Crofton, "isn't Beauclerk a step over you in the 'Army List?'"

But Lionel never heard the question, for he was most busily occupied about Mrs. Somerville and her horse.

"Who drives the phaeton?—where's a safe whip to be found for Mrs. Martin?" said the knight; and seizing on a young guardsman, he promoted him to the box, with a very pretty girl beside him. A drag, with four grays, was filling at the same instant, with a mixed population of horsemen and spectators, among whom Captain Nolan seemed the presiding spirit, as, seated beside a brother officer of Lionel's on the box, he introduced the several parties to each other, and did "the honors" of the conveyance.

Troops of horses, sheeted and hooded, now passed out, with a number of grooms

and stable-boys, on their way to cover; and at last the great cavalcade moved forward, the knight, his daughter, and Lord Netherby gayly cantering on the grass, to permit the carriages to take the road. The drag came last; and although but newly met, the company were already in the full enjoyment of that intimacy which high spirits and pleasure beget, while Tom Nolan contributed his utmost to the merriment by jests, which lost nothing of their poignancy from any scruples of their maker.

"There they go at last," said he, as Lionel and Mrs. Somerville cantered forth, followed by two grooms. "I never heard of a stirrup so hard to arrange as that, in all my life!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE HUNT.

THE cover lay in a small valley, almost deep enough to be called a glen, watered by a stream, which in winter and summer took the alternate character of torrent or rivulet; gently sloping hills rose on either side, their banks clad with low furze and fern, and behind them a wide plain extended to the foot of the great mountains of Connemara.

Both sides of the little glen were now occupied by groups on foot or horseback, as each calculated on the likelihood of the fox taking this direction or that. On the narrow road which led along the crest of the lower hill were many equipages to be seen, some of which were filled with ladies, whose waving feathers and gay colors served to heighten the effect of the landscape. The horsemen were dotted about, some on the ridge of the rising ground, some lower down on the sloping sides, and others walked their horses through the dense cover, watching as the dogs sprang and bounded from copse to copse, and made the air vibrate with their deep voices.

The arrival of the knight's party created no slight sensation, as carriages and horsemen came dashing up the hill, and took their station on an eminence, from whence all who were not mounted might have a view of the field. No sooner was he recognized, than such as had the honor of personal acquaintance moved forward to pay their respects, and welcome him home again; among whom Beecham O'Reilly appeared, but with such evident diffidence of manner and reserve, that Darcy, from motives of delicacy, was forced to take a more than ordinary notice of him.

"We were sorry not to have your company at the abbey last night; you've had a cold, I hear," said the knight.

"Yes, sir; this is the first day I've ventured out."

"Let me introduce you to Lord Netherby. One of our foremost riders, my lord, Mr. Beecham O'Reilly. You may see that the merit is not altogether his own—splendid horse you have there."

"He's very powerful," said the young man, accepting the praise with an air of easy indifference.

"In my country," interposed Lord Netherby, "we should value him at three hundred guineas, if his performance equal his appearance."

"I say, Lionel, come here a moment," cried the knight. "What do you think of that horse?—but don't you know your old playfellow, Beecham? Have you both forgotten each other?"

"How are you, Beecham? I'd never have guessed you. To be sure, it is six years since we met. You were in Dublin, I think, when I was over on leave last?"

"No, at Oxford," said Beecham with a slight flush as he spoke; for although he accepted the warm shake-hands Lionel professed, his manner was one of constraint all through. Young Darcy was, however, too much occupied in admiring the horse to bestow much attention on the rider.

"He'd carry you well," said Beecham, as if interpreting what was passing in his mind, "and as I have no fancy for him—a worse horse will carry my weight as well—I'd sell him."

"At what price?"

"Lord Netherby has valued him at three hundred," said the young man. "I gave nearly as much myself."

The knight, who heard this conversation, without being able to interrupt it, was in perfect misery. The full measure of his ruin rushed suddenly on his mind, and the thought that, at the very moment his son was meditating this piece of extravagance, he was himself actually a beggar, sickened him to the heart. Meanwhile, Lionel walked his horse slowly round, the better to observe the animal he coveted, and then cantered back to his place at Mrs. Somerville's side.

Beecham seemed to hesitate for a second or two, then riding forward, he approached Lionel: "Perhaps you would try him today, Captain Darcy?" The words came hesitatingly and with difficulty.

"Oh, no! he's beyond my reach," said Lionel, laughing.

"I'd really take it as a favor if you

would ride him; I'm not strong enough to hold him, consequently cannot do him justice."

"Take the offer, Darcy," said Lord Netherby, in a whisper, as he rode up to his side; "I have a great liking for that horse myself, and will buy him if you report favorably."

"In that case, my lord, I'll do it with pleasure. I accept your kind proposal, and will change nags if you agree."

Beecham at once dismounted, and, beckoning to his servant, ordered him to change the saddles.

While this little scene was enacting, old Conolly rode up to the knight, with a warning to keep the ladies in the road. "The fox will take the country toward Burnadarig," said he; "the start's with the wind; and as the fences are large and the ground heavy, they had better not attempt to follow the run."

"We will take your advice, Tom," said the knight. "Come here, Helen—Colonel Crofton, will you kindly bring Mrs. Somerville up here, and tell Lord Netherby to join us?—the day will be for the fast ones only. There they go—are they off?"

"Not yet, not yet," said Conolly, as, standing in his stirrups, he looked down into the glen; "they're hunting him through that furze cover this half hour. I know that fox well; he never breaks till the dogs are actually on him."

By this time the scene in the valley was becoming highly exciting; the hounds, yelping and barking, bounded hither and thither; some, with uplifted throats, bayed deeply a long protracted note; others, with noses to the earth, ran swiftly along, and then stopping, burst into a sharp cry, as if of pain, while old Bob Carney's voice, encouraging this one, and cursing that, was high above the tumult.

"Tiresome work, this is," said Sir Harry Beauclerk; for his horse, mad with impatience, was white with sweat, and trembled in every limb.

"You'll have it very soon, sir," said old Conolly; "the dogs are together now. I wish that young gentleman there would move a little up the hill." This was said of a young officer, who took his station at the exit of the cover. "There they go, now! Tally-ho!" cried he, in ecstasy, and the shout re-echoed from a hundred voices, as the hounds, in full cry, burst from the cover, and were seen, in one compact mass, rising the opposite hill.

In a second every horse was away, save that little group around the knight, and which, notwithstanding all the efforts of

the servants, bounded and plunged in mad impatience. Beauclerk was the first down the hill, and over the brook, which he cleared gallantly. Conolly followed close; and then came Crofton in a group of others, among whom rode O'Reilly, all riding well and safely; and last of all was Lionel, mounted on the brown thorough-bred, and holding him together, in spite of all his eagerness to get on.

The knight forgot everything that lay heavily on his heart as he watched his son nearing the brook, which he took flying. "He knows his horse; now! see!" cried Darcy, as his whole face beamed with enthusiastic delight; "look a little this way, my dear Mrs. Somerville, Lionel's gaining on them!"

Mrs. Somerville scarcely needed the direction, for, notwithstanding her horse's plunging, she had never taken her glass from her eye.

"Is that a wall on the side of the hill? I really believe it is!" said Lord Netherby, with an accent of amazement and horror.

"A stone wall, and a stout one. I know it well," said Darcy. "There goes Sir Harry Beauclerk at it. Too fast, sir! too fast!" screamed out the knight, as if his advice could be heard and followed at that distance.

"He's down! he's down!" cried several voices together, as horse and rider balanced for a second on the top, and rolled headlong on the opposite side, while Helen grasped her father's arm, but never uttered a word.

"His horse is away—there he goes!—but the young man is on his legs again!" called out the knight; "see how the rest are scattering now—they've no fancy for it;" for so it was, Beauclerk's catastrophe, mounted, as they knew him to be, on one of the most perfect of hunters, had terrified the field, and they broke up into different groups, searching an exit where they could.

"There he goes—that's the way to take it!" cried Darcy, as Lionel, emerging from the little valley, was seen ascending the hill in a sharp canter; "see, my lord! Do you mark how he holds his horse together? the hind legs are well forward—beautifully done!"

"Oh, beautifully done!" re-echoed Mrs. Somerville, as the young man, with one cut of his whip, rose the horse to the wall, topped, poised for an instant on its summit, and bounded down with the seeming lightness of a bird.

"They're all together again," said Helen. "Mr. Conolly has found a gap, and there they go."

For a few moments the whole field were in sight, as they rode in a waving line, only a few stragglers in their rear; but the gradual dip of the ground soon hid them from view, and nothing remained save the occasional glance of a red coat, as some rider, "thrown out" for a moment, sought to recover his place by an adroit "cast."

"I suppose we are not destined to see much more of the day's sport?" said Mrs. Somerville, with a pouting look; for she would infinitely rather have braved all the hazards of the field, than have remained behind with the spectators.

"I trust we shall have another peep at them," said the knight. "By following this by-road to Burris-hill, the chances are that we see them winding along at our feet; the fox generally runs from this cover to the scrub beneath Nephin. We may go slowly, for, if I be right in my calculation, they have a wide circuit to make yet."

The knight, after a few words to the parties in the carriage, took the lead with Lord Netherby, while Mrs. Somerville and Helen followed, an indiscriminate crowd of carriages and horsemen bringing up the rear.

This was an arrangement artfully accomplished by the earl, who had been most impatiently awaiting some opportunity of conferring with the knight on the question of politics, and ascertaining how far he himself might adventure on claiming the merit of converting him, when he returned to England. He had already remarked that Darcy's name did not appear in the division on the second reading of the bill of Union, and the fact seemed so far indicative of a disposition not to oppose the Government. The subject was one to be approached with skill, and it was at last by an adroit congratulation on the pleasant contrast of a country life with the fatigues of Parliament, that he opened the discussion.

"I believe, my lord," said the knight, laughing, "that Irish gentlemen are very likely to enjoy in future a fair proportion of that agreeable retirement you have so justly lauded. The wisdom of our rulers has thought fit to relieve us of the burden of self-government in Parliament, and left us, if we can succeed in effecting it, to govern ourselves at home."

"That will be unquestionably the lot of many, knight. I am quite aware that men of second-rate importance will no longer possess any at all; but estated gentlemen, of high position and liberal fortunes, like yourself for instance, will not lose their influence by the greater extent of the field in which it is exercised."

Darcy sighed, but made no reply; the thought of his utter ruin came too painfully across him to permit of an answer. Lord Netherby interpreted his silence as doubt, and continued: "You are unjust, not only to yourself but to us, by any discredit of this point. Men of real knowledge about Ireland and her interests will have a greater position than ever they enjoyed before; no longer buried and lost among the impracticable horde of theorists and false patriots of a Dublin Parliament, they will be known and appreciated by a deliberative assembly, where the greatest men of the empire hold council."

"I am forced to differ with you on every point, my lord," said the knight, calmly; "we are united to England, not that we may make an integral portion of your empire, but simply that we may be more easily governed. Up to this hour, you have ruled this country through the instrumentality of certain deputed individuals here amongst us; your system has had but indifferent success. You are now about to try another method, and govern us through the means of party. Into the subdivisions of these parties Irishmen will fall—with such success, personally, as their abilities and weight may obtain for them—but party, I assert, will now rule Ireland, not with any regard to Irish interests or objects, but simply to put this man into power, and to put that man out. Now I, my lord, humble as my station is, have no fancy for such contests as these—contests in which the advantages of my country will always be subordinate to some cabinet intrigue or ministerial stratagem. To-day, the Government may find it suit their views to administer the affairs of Ireland ably, justly, and fearlessly—to-morrow, a powerful faction may spring up here, who, by intimidation without, and by votes within the House, shall be able to thwart the administration in their home measures. What will happen then? This faction will be bought off. By concessions to them *in Ireland*, they will obtain all their demands, for the sake of pliancy about interests of which they care little and know nothing. This will succeed for a time; the 'King's Government' will go well and flippantly on; you may tax the people, promote your followers, and bully your opponents to your heart's content, but, meanwhile, Ireland will be gaining on you; your allies, grown exacting by triumph, will ask more than you dare, or even have to give; and the question will then arise, that the party who aspires to power must bid for it by further concession, and who is to vouch for the moderation of

such demands, or what limit will there be to them? I see a train of such evils in the vista; and although I neither pretend to think our domestic legislature safe nor faultless, I think the dangers we have before us are even greater than such as would spring from an Irish Parliament."

Lord Netherby listened with great impatience—as perhaps the reader may have done also—to this declaration of the knight's views, and was about to reply, when suddenly a cheer from some country people, stationed on a rocky height at a short distance, drew all eyes toward the valley, where now the hounds were seen in full cry, three horsemen alone following. One of these was the huntsman, Lionel another; the third was in plain clothes, and not known to any of the party. He was mounted on a powerful horse, and, even at that distance, could be seen to manage him with the address of a perfect rider. The rest of the field were far behind, some still standing on the verge of a mountain torrent, which appeared to have formed the obstacle to the run, and into which more than one seemed to have fallen.

Groups were gathered here and there along the bank, and dismounted horses galloped wildly to and fro, showing that the catastrophes had been numerous. While Lord Netherby looked with some alarm at the fearful chasm which had arrested all but three out of the entire field, the knight followed Lionel with anxious eyes, as he led over the most desperate line of country in the west.

"I never knew a fox take that line but once," said Darcy, pointing to a wide expanse of bleak country, which stretched away to the base of the great mountain of Nephin. "I was a child at the time, but I remember the occurrence well: horse, men, and hounds tailed off one by one, some sorely injured, others dead beat, for the fellow was a most powerful dog-fox, and ran straight ahead for thirty-four miles of a desperate country. The following morning, at a little after daybreak, the fox was seen in a half trot near Ballycrov, still followed by two of the dogs, and he lived many years afterward as a pensioner at the abbey; the dogs were never worth anything from that day."

While the knight related this anecdote, the hounds and the hunters were gradually receding from view; and although, at intervals, some thought they could catch glimpses of them, at last they disappeared altogether.

"I am sorry, Helen," said the knight,

“that our visitors should have been so unfortunate in their sport.”

“I am more grieved to think that Lionel should follow over such a country,” said Lord Netherby.

“He’s well mounted, my lord; and though many would call him a reckless rider, he has as much judgment as he has daring. I am tolerably easy about him.”

Helen did not seem so confident as her father; and as for Mrs. Somerville, she was considerably paler than usual, and managed her mettlesome horse with far less than her customary address.

As well to meet their friends who were thrown out, as to show some of the scenery of the coast, the knight proposed they should retrace their steps for a short distance, and take a view of the bay on their way back to the abbey. Leaving them, therefore, to follow their route, and not delaying our reader by an account of the various excuses of the discomfited, or the banterings of Tom Nolan, we will turn to the wide plain, where, still in full cry, the dogs pursued their game.

The knight had not exaggerated when calling it a dreadful country to ride over; yawning trenches, deep enough to engulf horse and rider, were cut in the bog, and frequently so close together, that, in clearing one, a few strides more presented another; the ground itself, only in part reclaimed, was deep and heavy, demanding great strength both of horse and horseman. Through this dangerous and intricate track the fox serpented and wound his way with practiced cunning, while at every turning some unlucky hound would miss his spring, or lose his footing in the slippery soil, and their cries could be heard far over the plain, as they struggled in vain to escape from a deep trench. It was in such an endeavor that a hound was catching at the bank with his forelegs, as the huntsman dashed forward to take the leap; the horse suddenly taking fright, swerved, and, before he could recover, the frail ground gave way, and the animal plunged headlong down, fortunately flinging his rider over the head on the opposite bank.

“All safe, Bob!” cried Lionel, as he turned in his saddle. But he had no time for more, for the strange rider was fast nearing on him, and the chase had now become a trial of speed and skill. By degrees they emerged from this unsafe tract and gained the grass country, where high ditches and stone walls presented a more fair, but scarcely less dangerous kind of fencing. Here the stranger made an effort to pass Lionel and take the lead, and more

than once they took their leaps exactly side by side.

As they rode along close to each other, Lionel from time to time caught glimpses of his companion, who was a strong-built man of five-and-thirty, frank and fresh-looking, but clearly not of the rank of gentleman. His horse was a powerful thorough-bred, with more bone than is usually found in Irish breeding, and trained to perfection.

“Now, sir,” said the stranger, “we’re coming near the Crumpawn river; that line of mist yonder is over the torrent. I warn you, the leap is a big one.”

Lionel turned a haughty glance toward the man, for there was a tone of assumed superiority in the words he could ill brook. That instant, however, his eyes were directed to the front, where the roaring of a mountain stream mingled with the sharp cry of the hounds, as they struggled in the torrent, or fell back in their efforts to climb the steep bank.

“Ride him fairly at it—no flinching—and d—me if I care what your father was, I’ll say you’re a gentleman.”

Lionel bit his lip almost through with passion; and had the occasion permitted, the heavy stroke of his whip had fallen on a very different quarter from his horse’s flank, but he never uttered a word.

“Badly done! Never punish your horse at the stride!” said the fellow, who seemed bent on provoking him.

Lionel bounded in his saddle at this taunt on his riding; but there was no time for bandying words of anger; the roar of rushing water, and the misty foam, proclaimed the torrent near.

“The best man is first over!” shouted the stranger, as he rushed at the terrific chasm. Lionel dashed forward; so close were they they could have touched; when, with a wild cheer, the stranger gave his horse a tremendous cut, and the animal bounded from the earth like a stag, and, soaring over the mad torrent, descended lightly on the sward beyond.

Lionel had lifted his horse at the very same instant, but the treacherous bank gave way beneath the animal’s fore-legs; he struggled dreadfully to regain his footing, and, half rearing and half backing, tried to retire, but the effort was in vain, the slippery earth carried him with it, and down both horse and rider came into the stream.

“Keep his head to the current, and sit steady!” shouted the stranger, who now watched the struggle with breathless eagerness. “Well done! well done!—don’t press him, he’ll do it himself.”

The counsel was wise, for the noble animal needed neither spur nor whip, but breasted the white torrent with vigorous effort, sometimes plunging madly above, and again sinking, all save the head, beneath the flood. At last they reached the side, and the strong beast, with one bold spring, placed his fore-legs on the high bank. This was the most dangerous moment, for, unable to follow with his hind-legs, he stood opposed to the whole force of the current, that threatened every instant to engulf him. Lionel's efforts were tremendous: he lifted, he spurred, he strained, he shouted, but all in vain; the animal, worn out by exertion, faltered, and would have fallen back, when the stranger, springing from his saddle, leaned over the bank, and, seizing Lionel by the collar, jerked him from his horse. The beast, relieved of the weight, at once rallied and bounded up the bank, where Lionel now found himself, stunned, but not senseless.

"Let them say what they like," muttered the stranger, as he stood over him, "you're a devilish fine young fellow! D—me if I'll ever think so much about good blood again!"

Lionel was too weak and too much exhausted to reply, and even his fingers could scarcely close upon the whip he tried to grasp; yet, for all that, the stranger's insolence sickened him to the very heart. Pride of race was the strongest feeling of his nature, and this fellow seemed determined to outrage it at every turn.

"Here, take a pull at this; you'll be all right presently," said the man, as he presented a little leather flask to the youth's lips. But Lionel repulsed the offer rudely, and turned his head away. "The more fool you!" said he coarsely; "your grandfather mixed many a worse-flavored one, and charged more for it;" and, so saying, he emptied the measure at a draught.

Lionel pondered on the words for some seconds, and suddenly the thought occurred to him that the stranger had mistaken him for another. "Ah! I see it all now!" thought he, and he turned his head to undeceive him, when, what was surprise, as he looked up, to see that the fellow was gone. Mounted on his own horse, he was leading Lionel's by the bridle, and, at a smart trot, moving down the glen.

The young man sprang to his feet and shouted aloud; he even tried to follow him, but both efforts were fruitless. At the turn of the road the man halted, and, looking round, waved his hat as in sign of adieu; then, moving forward, disappeared, while Lionel, his passion giving way to his sense

of the absurdity of the whole adventure, burst into a fit of hearty laughter.

"I'll be laughed at to the day of my death about this," thought he, as he turned his steps to seek the path homeward on foot.

It was late in the evening when Lionel reached the abbey. The guests had for the most part left the dinner-room, and were dropping by twos and threes into the drawing-room, when he made his appearance in the midst of them, splashed and travel-stained from head to foot.

A burst of merry laughter rang out as they beheld his torn habiliments and mud-colored dress, in which none joined more heartily than the knight himself as he called aloud, "Well, Lionel, did you kill him, boy, or run him to earth below Nephin?"

"By Jove, sir! if old Carney is safe, I think nobody has been killed to-day."

"Well, Bob is all right, he came back three hours ago; he has lamed Sealtheen, but she'll get over it."

"But your own adventures," interposed Lord Netherby, "for so they ought to be, judging from the state of your toilet. Let us hear them."

"Yes, by all means," added Beauclerk; "the huntsman says that the last he saw of you was riding by the side of some one in green, with three of the pack in front, the rest tailed off, and himself in a bog-hole."

"But there was no one in green in the field," said Crofton; "at least, I did not see any one riding except the red-coats."

"Let us not be too critical about the color of the dress," said Lord Netherby; "I am sure it would puzzle any of us to pronounce on the exact hue of Lionel's at this moment."

"Well, Lionel, will you decide it?" said the knight; "is the green man apocryphal, or not?"

"I'll decide nothing," said Lionel, "till I get something to eat. Any one that wishes to hear my exploits must come into the dinner-room;" and, so saying, he arose and walked into the parlor, where, under Tate's superintendence, a little table was already spread for him beside the fire. To the tempting fare before him the young man devoted all the energy of a hunter's appetite, regardless of the crowd who had followed him from the drawing-room, and stood in a circle around him.

Many were the jests, and sharp the railery, on his singular appearance, and certainly it presented a most ludicrous contrast with the massive decorations of the table at which he sat, and the full dress of the party around him.

"I remember," said Lord Netherby,

“seeing the King of France—when such a functionary existed—eat his dinner in public on the terrace of Versailles, but I confess, great as was my admiration of the monarch’s powers, I think Lionel exceeds them.”

“Another leg?” said Beauclerk, who, with knife and fork in hand, performed the duty of carver.

“Why don’t you say another turkey?” said Nolan; then turning to Mrs. Somerville, he added, “I am sure that negus is perfect.”

The pretty widow, who had been contributing, as she thought unobserved, to Lionel’s comfort, blushed deeply, and Lionel, at last roused from his apathy, said, “I am ready now, ladies and gentlemen all, to satisfy every reasonable demand upon your curiosity. But first, where is Mr. Beecham O’Reilly?”

“He went home,” said the knight; “he resisted all my efforts to detain him to dinner.”

“Perhaps he only came over to sell that horse,” said Nolan, in a half whisper.

“I wish I had bought him, with all my heart,” said Lionel.

“Do you like him so much,” said the knight, with a meaning smile.

“I sincerely hope you do,” said Lord Netherby, “for he is yours already—at least, if you will do me the honor to accept him; I often hoped to have mounted you one day—”

“I accept him, my lord,” interposed Lionel, “most willingly and most gratefully. You have, literally speaking, mounted me ‘one day,’ and I very much doubt if I ever mount the same animal another.”

“What! is he lame?—or staked?—did he break down?—is he a devil to ride?” broke from several of the party.

“Not one of all these; but if you’ll bestow five minutes’ patience on me I’ll perhaps inform you of a mode of being unhorsed, novel at least to most fox-hunters.” With this, Lionel narrated the conclusion of the run, the leap of the Crumpawn river, and the singular departure of his companion at the end.

“Is this a practical joke, knight?” said Lord Netherby.

“I think so, my lord; one of those admirable jests which the statutes record among their own Joe Millers.”

“Then you suspect he was a robber?”

“I confess it looks very like it.”

“I read the riddle otherwise,” said Lionel; “the fellow, whoever he was, mistook me for somebody else, and there was evidently something more like a re-

prisal than a theft in the whole transaction.”

“But you have really lost him?” said Beauclerk.

“When I assure you that I came home on foot, I hope that question is answered.”

“By Jove! you have most singular ways of doing matters in this country,” cried the colonel; “but I suppose when a man is used to Ireland, he gets pretty much accustomed to hear of his horse being stolen away as well as the fox.”

“Oh! we’ll chance upon him one of these days yet,” said the knight; “I am half of Lionel’s mind myself now—the thing does not look like a robbery.”

“There’s no end of the eccentricity of these people,” muttered Lord Netherby to himself; “they can get into a towering passion, and become half mad about trifles, but they take a serious loss as coolly as possible.” And with this reflection on national character he moved into the drawing-room, where soon afterward the party retired to talk over Lionel’s adventure, with every turn that fancy or raillery could give it.

CHAPTER XXX.

BAGENAL DALY’S VISITORS.

IT was at a late hour of a night, some days after this event occurred, that Bagenal Daly sat closeted with Darcy’s lawyer, endeavoring, by deep and long thought, to rescue him from some at least of the perils that threatened him. Each day, since the knight’s departure, had added to the evil tidings of his fortune. While Gleeson had employed his powers of attorney to withdraw large sums from the banker’s hands, no information could be had concerning the great loan he had raised from the London Company, nor was there to be found among the papers left behind him the bond passed to Hickman, and which he should have received had the money been paid. That such was the ease Bagenal Daly firmly believed; the memorandum given him by Freney was corroborated by the testimony of the clerks in two separate banking-houses, who both declared that Gleeson drew these sums on the morning before he started for Kildare, and to one of Daly’s rapid habits of judgment such evidence was quite conclusive. This view of the subject was, unhappily, not destined to continue undisturbed, for on the very morning after the knight’s departure from Dublin came a formal letter from Hickman’s solicitor, de-

manding payment of the interest on the sum of seventy-four thousand eight hundred and twenty pounds, odd shillings, at five per cent., owing by seven weeks, and accompanying which was a notice of foreclosure of the mortgage on the ensuing 17th of March, in case the full sum aforesaid were not duly paid.

To meet these demands Daly well knew Darcy had no disposable property; the large sums raised by Hickman, at a lower rate of interest, were intended for that purpose; and although he persisted in believing that this debt, at least, was satisfied, the lawyer's opinion was strongly opposed to that notion.

Mr. Bicknell was a shrewd man, deep not only in the lore of his professional knowledge, but a keen scrutinizer of motives, and a far-seeing observer of the world. He argued thus: Gleeson would never have parted with such a sum on the eve of his own flight; a day was of no consequence, he could easily have put off the payment to Hickman to the time of the American ship's sailing—why, then, hand over so large an amount, all in his possession? It was strange, of course, what had become of the money; but then they heard that his servant had made his escape. Why might not he have possessed himself of it after his master's suicide? Who was to interfere or prevent it? Besides, if he had paid Hickman, the bond would, in all likelihood be forthcoming; to retain possession of it could have been no object with Gleeson; he had met with nothing but kind and friendly treatment from Darcy, and was not likely to repay him by an act of useless, gratuitous cruelty.

As to the testimony of the bank clerks, it was as applicable to one view of the case as the other. Gleeson would, of course, draw out everything at his disposal; and although the sums tallied with those in the memorandum, that signified little, as they were the full amount in each banker's hands to the knight's credit. Lastly, as to the memorandum, it was the only real difficulty in the case; but that paper might have been in Gleeson's possession, and in the course of business discussion either might have been dropped inadvertently, or have been given to Hickman as explaining the moneys already prepared for his acceptance.

Mr. Bicknell's reasonings were confirmed by the application of Hickman's solicitors, who were men of considerable skill and great reputed caution. "Harris and Long make no such mistakes as this, depend upon that, sir; they see their case very clearly,

or would never adventure on such an application."

"D—n their caution! The question is not of their shrewdness."

"Yes, but it is, though; we are weighing probabilities, let us see to which side the balance inclines. Would they serve notice of foreclosure, not knowing whether or not we had the receipt in our possession? That is the whole matter."

"I don't pretend to say what they would do, but I know well what I should."

"And pray what may that be?"

"Hold possession of the abbey, stand fast by the old walls—call in the tenantry—and they are ready to answer such a call at a moment, if need be—and while I proclaimed to the wide world by what right I resisted, I'd keep the place against any force they dared to bring. These are ticklish times, Bicknell; the Government have just cheated this country—they'd scarcely risk the hazard of a civil war for an old usurer—old Hickman would be left to his remedies in Banco or Equity, and who knows what might turn up one day or other to strengthen the honest cause!"

"I scarcely concur in your suggestion, sir."

"How the devil should you? There are neither declarations to draw, nor affidavits to swear, no motions, nor rules, nor replies, no declarations, no special juries! No, Bicknell, I never suspected your approval of my plan. It would not cost a single skin of parchment."

Though Daly spoke this sarcasm bitterly, it produced no semblance of irritation in the man of law, who was composedly occupied in perusing a document before him.

"I have made memoranda," said Bicknell, "of certain points for counsel's opinion, and as soon as we can obtain some information as to the authenticity of young Darcy's signature, we shall see our way more clearly. The case is not only a complicated but a gloomy one; our antagonists are acute and wealthy, and I own to you the prospect is far from good."

"The better counsel mine," said Daly, sternly; "I have little faith in the justice that hangs upon the intelligence of what you facetiously call twelve honest men; methinks the world is scarcely so well supplied with the commodity that they are sure to answer the call of the sheriff. It is probable, however, nay, it is more than probable, Darcy will be of your mind, and reject my advice; if so, there is nothing for it but the judge and jury, and he will be despoiled of his property by the law of the land."

Bicknell knew too well the eccentric nature of Daly's character, in which no feature was more prominent than his hatred of everything like the recognized administration of the law, to offer him any opposition, and merely repeating his determination to seek the advice of able counsel, he took his leave.

"There is some deep mystery in this business," said Daly to himself, as he paced the room alone; "Bicknell is right in saying that Gleeson would not have committed an act of unnecessary cruelty, nor, if he had paid the money, would he have failed to leave the bond among his papers. Every circumstance of this fellow's flight is enveloped in doubt, and Freney, the only man who appears to have suspected his intention, by some mischance is not now to be found—Sandy has not succeeded in meeting with the boy, notwithstanding all his efforts. What can this be owing to? What machinery is at work here? Have the Hickmans their share in this?" Such were the broken sentences he muttered, as, in turn, suspicions tracked each other in his mind.

Daly was far too rash, and too impetuous in temper, to be well qualified for an investigation of so much difficulty. Unable to weigh probabilities with calmness, he was always the victim of his own prejudices in favor of certain things and people, and to escape from the chaotic trouble of his own harassed thoughts, he was ever ready to adopt some headlong and desperate expedient, in preference to the quieter policy of more patient minds.

"Yes, faith," said he, "my plan is the best after all, and who knows but by showing the bold front we may reduce old Hickman's pretensions, or at least make a compromise with him. There are plenty of arms and ammunition—eight stout fellows would hold the inner gate tower against a battalion—we could raise the country from Murrisk to Killery Harbor, and one gun fired from the Boat Quay would ring the fishermen from Clare Island and Achill to the rescue—we'd soon make a signal they'd recognize, old Hickman's house, with all its porticoes and verandahs, would burn like tinder. If they are for law, let them begin then."

The door opened as he spoke these words, and Sandy entered cautiously. "There is a countryman without who says he's come a long way to see your honor, and maun see you this night."

"Where from?"

"Fra' the west, I think, for he said the roads were heavy down in them parts."

"Let him come in," said Daly; and, with his hands crossed behind his back, he continued to walk the room. "Some poor fellow for a renewal of his lease, or an abatement, or something of that kind—they'll never learn that I'm no longer the owner of that estate that still bears my name, and they cling to me as though I had the power to assist them, when I'm defenseless for myself. Well, what is it? Speak out, man—what do you want with me?"

The individual to whom this question was addressed stood with his back to the door, which he had cautiously shut close on entering, but, instead of returning an answer to the question, he cast a long and searching glance around the room, as if to ascertain whether any other person was in it. The apartment was large, and being dimly lighted, it took some time to assure him that they were alone, but when he had so satisfied himself, he walked slowly forward into the light, and throwing open his loose coat of gray frieze, exhibited the well-known figure of Freney the robber.

"What, Freney!—the man of all Ireland I wish to see."

"I thought so, sir," said the other, wiping his forehead with his hand, for he was flushed and heated, and seemed to have come off a long journey. "I know you sent for me, but I was unable to meet your messenger, and I can seldom venture to send that young villain Jemmy into the capital—the police are beginning to know him, and he'll be caught one of these days."

"You weren't in Kildare, then?" said Daly.

"No, sir, I was in the far west, down in Mayo; I had a little business in Ballina a short time back, and some fellow who knew me, and thought the game a safe one, stole my brown horse out of the inn-stable, in the broad noonday, and sold him at the fair green at Ballinasloe. When I tell you that he was the best animal I ever crossed, I needn't say what the loss was to me—the nags you saw were broken-down hackneys in comparison—he was strong in bone and untiring, and I kept him for the heavy country around Boyle and down by Longford. It is not once, nor twice, but a dozen times, Matchlock has saved me from a loop and a leap in the air, but the rascal that took him well knew the theft was safe—Freney, the highwayman, could scarcely lodge informations with a magistrate."

"And you never could hear traces of him?"

"Yes, that I did, but it cost me time and

trouble too. I found that he was twice sold within one week. Dean Harris bought him, and sold him the day after." Here Freney gave a low cunning laugh, while his eyes twinkled with malignant drollery.

"He didn't think as highly of him as you did, Freney?"

"Perhaps he hadn't as good reason," said the robber, laughing. "He was riding home from an early dinner with the bishop, and as he was cantering along the side of the road, a chaise with four horses came tearing past; Matchlock, true to his old instinct, but not knowing who was on his back, broke into a gallop, and in half a dozen strides brought the dean close up to the chaise window, when the traveler inside sent a bullet past his ear, that very nearly made a vacancy in the best living of the diocese. As I said, sir, the dean had had enough of him; he sold him the next morning, and that day week he was bought by a young fellow in the west, whom I found out to be a grandson of old Hickman."

"Was he able to ride a horse like this?" said Daly, doubtfully.

"Ride him?—ay; and never a man in the province brought a beast to a leap with a lighter hand, and a closer seat in the saddle. We were side by side for three miles of a stiff country, and I don't believe I'm much of a coward; at any rate, I set very little value on my neck; but I'll tell you what, sir, he pushed me hard."

"How was this, then? Had you a race together?"

"It was something very like it, sir," said Freney, laughing; "for when I reached Westport, I heard that young O'Reilly was to ride a new brown horse that day with the hounds, and a great hunt was expected, to show some English gentlemen who were staying at Gwynne Abbey. So I went off early to Hooley's Forge, near the cross-roads, to see the meet, and look out for my man. I didn't want any one to tell me which he was, for I'd know Matchlock at half a mile distance. There he was, in splendid condition too, and looking as I never saw him look before; by my conscience, Mr. Daly, there's a wide difference between the life of a beast in the stables of a county member, and one that has to stretch his bones in the shealing of such as myself. My plan was to go down to the cover, and the moment the fox broke away, to drive a bullet through my horse's head, and be off as hard as I could; for, to tell you the truth, it was spite more than the value of him was grieving me; so I took my own horse by the bridle, and walked down to where they were all gathered. I was

scarcely there when the dogs gave tongue, and away they went—a grand sight it was, more than a hundred red coats, and riding close every man of them. Just then up comes Matchlock, and takes the fence into the field where I was standing, a stone wall and a ditch, his rider handling him elegantly, and with an easy smile, sitting down in his saddle as if it was child's play. Faith, I couldn't bring myself to fire the shot, partly for the sake of the horse, more too, maybe, for the sake of the rider. 'I'll go a bit beside him,' said I to myself, for it was a real pleasure to me to watch the way how both knew their business well. I'm making a long story of it, but the end of it was this: I took the Crumpawn river just to dare him, and devil a bit but he fell in—no fault of his, but the bank was rotten—and down they went; the young fellow had a narrow escape of it, but he got through it at last, and, as he lay on the grass more dead than alive, I saw Matchlock grazing just close to me—temptations are bad things, Mr. Daly, particularly when a man has never trained himself off them—so I slipped the bridle over his head, and rode away with him beside me."

"Carried him off?"

"Clean and clever; he's at the hall-door this minute, and by the same token, sixty-four miles he has covered this day."

"There's only one part of the whole story surprises me; it is that this fellow should have ridden so boldly and so well. I know such courage is often no more than habit; yet even that lower quality of daring I never should have given him credit for. Was he hurt by his fall?"

"Stunned, perhaps, but nothing the worse."

"Well, well, enough of him. I wanted to see you, Freney, to learn anything you may know of this fellow Gleeson's flight. It's a sad affair for my friend, the Knight of Gwynne."

"So I've heard, sir. It's bad enough for myself, too."

"For you! He was not your man of business, was he?" said Daly, with a sly laugh.

"No, sir, I generally manage my money matters myself; but he happened to have a butler, one Garrett by name, who betted smartly on the turf, and played a little with the bones besides. He was a steady-going chap, that knew a thing or two, but honest enough in booking up when he lost; he borrowed two hundred from me on the very day they started; he owed me nearly three besides, and I never saw him since. They say that when his master jumped

overboard, Jack Garrett laid hands on all his property, and sailed for America, but I don't believe it, sir."

"Well, but, Freney, you may believe it, for I was the means of an investigation at Liverpool, in which the fact transpired; and the name of John Garrett was entered in the ship agent's books. I read it there myself."

"No matter for that, he dared not venture into the States. I know something of Jack's doings among the Yankees, and depend upon it, Mr. Daly, he's not gone; it's only a blind to stop pursuit."

Daly shook his head dubiously, for having satisfied himself of Garrett's escape when at Liverpool, he felt annoyed at any discredit attaching to what he deemed his own discovery.

"Take my word for it, Mr. Daly, I'm right this time; you cannot think what an advantage a man like me possesses in guessing at the way another rogue would play his game. Why, sir, I know every turn and double such a fellow as Garrett would make. Now, I'd wager Matchlock against a car-horse, that he has not left England, and I'd take an even bet he'll be at the Spring meeting at Doncaster."

"This may be all as you say, Freney," said Daly, after a pause, "and yet I see no reason to suppose it can interest me or my friend either. He might know something of Gleeson's affairs; he might, perhaps, be able to tell something of the payment of that sum at Kildare—if so—"

"If so," interrupted Freney, "money would buy the secret; at all events, I'm determined he shall not escape me so easily. I'll follow the fellow to the very threshold of Newgate, but I'll have my own—it is for that purpose I'm on my way now. A fishing-boat will sail from Howth by tomorrow's tide, and land me somewhere on the Welsh coast, and, if I can serve you, why, it's only doing two jobs at the same time. What are the points you are anxious to discover?"

Daly reflected for a few moments, and then with distinctness detailed the several matters on which he desired information, not only regarding the reasons of Gleeson's embarrassments, but the nature of his intimacy with old Hickman, of which he entertained deep suspicions.

"I see it all," said Freney. "You think that Gleeson was in league with the doctor?"

Daly nodded.

"That was my own notion too. Ah, sir, if I'd only the king's pardon in my pocket this night, and the power of an honest man

for one month, I'd stake my head on it, but I would have the whole mystery as clear as water."

"You'll want some money, Freney," said Daly, as he turned to the table, and, taking up a key, unlocked the writing-case. "I'm not as rich just now as a member of parliament might be after such a bill as the Union, but I hope this may be of some service;" and he took a fifty-pound note from the desk to hand it to him, but Freney was gone. He had slipped noiselessly from the room; the bang of the hall-door was heard at the instant, and immediately after the tramp of a horse, as he trotted down the street.

"The world all over!" said Daly to himself. "If the man of honor and integrity has his flaws and defects, even fellows like that have their notions of principle and delicacy too. Confound it! mankind will never let me love or hate them."

CHAPTER XXXI.

"A LEAVE-TAKING."

AT Gwynne Abbey, time sped fast and pleasantly; each day brought its own enjoyments, and of the knight's guests there was not one who did not in his heart believe that Maurice Darcy was the very happiest man in the kingdom.

Lord Netherby, the frigid courtier, felt, for the first time, perhaps, in his life, how much cordiality can heighten the pleasures of social intercourse, and how the courtesy of kind feeling can add to the enjoyments of refined and cultivated tastes. Lady Eleanor had lost nothing of the powers of fascination for which her youth had been celebrated, and there was, in the very seclusion of her life, that which gave the charm of novelty to her remarks on people and events. The knight himself, abounding in resources of every kind, was a companion the most fastidious or exacting could not weary of, and as for Helen, her captivations were acknowledged by those who, but a week before, would not have admitted the possibility of any excellence that had not received the stamp of London approval.

Crofton could never expatiate sufficiently on the delights of an establishment which, with the best cook, the best cellar, and the best stable, called not upon him for the exercise of the small talents and petty attentions by which his invitations to great houses were usually purchased; while the

younger men of the party agreed in regarding their friend Lionel as the most to be envied of all their acquaintance.

Happiness, perhaps, shines more brightly by reflected light; certainly Lionel Darcy never felt more disposed to be content with the world, and, although not devoid of a natural pride at exhibiting to his English friends the style of his father's house and habits, yet was he far more delighted at the praises he heard on every side of the knight himself. Maurice Darcy possessed that rarest of all gifts, the power of being a delightful companion to younger men, without ever detracting in the slightest degree from the most rigid tone of good taste and good principle. The observation may seem an illiberal one, but it is unhappily too true, that even among those who from right feeling would be incapable of anything mean or sordid, there often prevails a laxity in expression, and a libertinism of sentiment very far remote from their real opinions, and, consequently, such as flatter this tendency are frequently the greatest favorites among them. The knight, not less from high principle than pride, rejected every such claim; his manly joyous temperament needed no aids to its powers of interesting and amusing; his sympathies went with young men in all their enthusiasm for sport; he gloried in the exuberance of their high spirits, and felt his own youth come back in the eager pleasure with which he listened to their plans of amusement.

It may well be believed with what sorrow to each the morning dawned that was to be the last of their visit. These last times are sad things! They are the deaths of our affections and attachments, for assuredly the memory we retain of past pleasures is only the unreal spirit of a world we are to know of no more. Not alone the records of friends lost or dead, but of ourselves, such as we once were, and can never again be: of a time when hope was fed by credulity, and could not be exhausted by disappointment. They must have had but a brief experience of life who do not see in every separation from friends the many chances against their meeting again, least of all, of meeting unchanged with all around them as they parted.

These thoughts, and others like them, weighed heavily on the hearts of those who now assembled for the last time beneath the roof of Gwynne Abbey.

It was in vain that Lionel suggested various schemes of pleasure for the day, the remembrance that it was the last was ever

present, and while every moment seemed precious, there was a fidgety impatience to be about and stirring, mingled with a desire to loiter and linger over the spot so associated with pleasant memories.

A boating party to Clare Island, long planned and talked over, could find now no advocates. All Lionel's descriptions of the shooting along the rocky shores of the bay were heard unheeded; every one clung to the abbey, as if to enjoy to the very last the sense of home happiness they had known there. Even those less likely to indulge feelings of attachment were not free from the depressing influence of a last day. Nor were these sentiments confined to the visitors only. Lady Eleanor experienced a return of her former spirits in her intercourse with those whose habits and opinions all reminded her of the past, and would gladly have prolonged a visit so full of pleasant recollections. The request was, however, in vain; the earl was to be in waiting early in the following week, Lionel's leave was only regimental, and equally limited, and each of the others had engagements and projects no less fixed and immutable.

In little knots of two and three they spent the day, wandering about from place to place, to take a last look at the great cliff, to visit for the last time the little wood path, whose every turning presented some new aspect of the bay and the shore. Lord Netherby attached himself to the knight, devoting himself with a most laudable martyrdom to a morning in the farm-yard and the stable, where, notwithstanding all his efforts, his blunders betrayed how ill-suited were his habits to country life and its interests. He bore all, however, well and heroically, for he had an object in view, and that, with him, was always sufficient to induce any degree of endurance. Up to this moment he had scarcely enjoyed an opportunity of conversing with the knight on the subject of politics. The few words they had exchanged at the cover side, were all that passed between them, and although they conveyed sentiments very remote from his own, he did not entirely despair of gaining over one who evidently was less actuated by party motives than impressed by the force of strong personal convictions.

"Such a man will, of course," thought the earl, "be in the Imperial Parliament, and carry with him great influence on every question connected with Ireland; his support of the ministry will be all the more valuable that his reputation is intact from every stain of corruption. To withdraw

him from his own country by the seductions of London life, would not be easy, but he may be attached to England by ties still more binding." Such were some of the reasonings which the wily peer revolved in his mind, and to whose aid a fortunate accident had in some measure contributed.

"I believe I have never shown you our garden, my lord," said the knight, who, at last taking compassion on the suffering complaisance of the earl, proposed this change. "The season is scarcely the most flattering, but we are early in this part of Ireland. What say you if we walk thither?"

The plan was at once approved of, and after a short circuit through a shrubbery, they crossed a large orchard, and ascending a gentle slope, they entered the garden, which rose in successive terraces behind the abbey, and commanded a wide prospect over the bay and the sea beyond it. Lord Netherby's admiration was not feigned, as he turned his eyes around and beheld the extent and beauty of that cultivated scene, which, in the brightness of a spring morning, glittered like a gem on the mountain's side. The taste alone was not the engrossing thought of his mind, but he reflected on the immense expenditure such a caprice must have cost, terraced as the ground was into the very granite rock, and the earth all supplied artificially. The very keeping these parterres in order was a thing of no mean cost. Not all the terrors of his own approaching fate could deprive Darcy of a sense of pride as he watched the expression of the earl's features, surprise and wonder depicted in every lineament.

"How extensive the park is," said the courtier at length, half ashamed, as it seemed, of giving way to his amazement; "are those trees yonder within your grounds?"

"Yes, my lord; the wood at that point where you see the foam splashing up is our limit in that direction; on this side we stretch away somewhat further."

"Whose property, then, have we yonder, where I see the village?"

"It is all the Gwynne estate," said the knight, with difficulty repressing the sigh that rose as he spoke.

"And the town?"

"The town also. The worthy monks took a wide circuit, and, by all accounts, did not misuse their wealth. I sadly fear, my lord, their successors were not as blameless."

"A noble possession, indeed!" said the earl, half aloud, and not attending to Darcy's remark. "Are you certain, my

dear knight, that you have made your political influence at all commensurate with the amount of either your property or your talents? An English gentleman with an estate like this, and ability such as yours, might command any position he pleased."

"In other words, my lord, he might barter his independence for the exercise of a precarious power, and, in ceasing to dispense the duties of a landed proprietor, he might become a very considerable ingredient in a party."

"I hope you do not deem the devoir of a country gentleman incompatible with the duties of a statesman?"

"By no means; but I greatly regret the gradual desertion of social influence in the search after political ascendancy. I am not for the working of a system that spoils the gentry, and yet does not make them statesmen."

"And yet the very essence of our constitution is to connect the power of Government with the possession of landed property."

"And justly so, too; none other offers so little in return as a mere speculation. None is so little exposed to the casualties which affect every other kind of wealth. The legitimate influence of the landed gentry is the safeguard of the state; but if, by the attractions of power, the flatteries of a court, or the seductions of party, you withdraw them from the rightful sphere of its exercise, you reduce them to the level of the borough members, without, perhaps, their technical knowledge or professional acquirements. I am for giving them a higher position—the heritage of the bold barons, from whom they are descended; but to maintain this, they must live on their own estates, dispense the influences of their wealth and their morals in their own native districts, be the friend of the poor man, the counselor of the misguided, the encourager of the weak; know and be known to all around, not as the corrupt dispensers of Government patronage, but the guardians of those whose rights are in their keeping for defense and protection. I would have them with their rightful influence in the senate; an influence which should preponderate in both houses. Their rank and education would be the best guarantee for the safety and wisdom of their counsels, their property the best surety for the permanence of the institutions of the state. Suddenly acquired wealth can scarcely be entrusted with political power: it lacks the element of prudent caution, by which property is maintained as well as accumulated; it wants also the prestige of antiquity as a

claim to respect ; and, legislate as you will, men will look back as well as forward."

Lord Netherby made no reply ; he thought the knight, perhaps, was venting his own regrets at the downfall of a political ascendancy he wished to see vested in men of his own station ; a position they had long enjoyed, and which, in some respects, had placed them above the law.

"You lay more store by such ties, knight," said the earl, in a low, insinuating voice, "than we are accustomed to do. Blood and birth have suffered less admixture with mere wealth here, than with us."

"Perhaps we do, my lord," said Darcy, smiling ; "it is the compensation for our poverty. Unmixed descent is the boast of many who have retained nothing of their ancestors save the name."

"But you yourself can scarcely be an advocate for the maintenance of these opinions : this spirit of clan and chieftainship is opposed not only to progress, but to liberty."

"I have given the best proof of the contrary," said Darcy, laughing, "by marrying an English woman ; a dereliction, I assure you, that cost me many a warm supporter in this very country."

"Indeed ! By the way, I am reminded of a subject I wished to speak of to you, and which I have been hesitating whether I should open with my cousin Eleanor or yourself : the moment seems, however, propitious ; may I broach it ?"

Darcy bowed courteously, and the other resumed :

"I will be brief, then. Young Beauclerk, a friend of your son Lionel, has been, as every one young and older than himself must be, greatly taken by the charms of Miss Darcy. Brief as the acquaintance here has been, the poor fellow is desperately in love, and, while feeling how such an acknowledgment might prejudice his chance of success on so short an intimacy, he cannot leave this without the effort to secure for his pretensions a favorable hearing hereafter. In fact, my dear knight, he has asked of me to be his intercessor with you—not to receive him as a son-in-law, but to permit him to pay such attentions as, in the event of your daughter's acceptance, may enable him to make the offer of his hand and fortune. I need not tell you that in point of position and means he is unexceptionable : a very old baronetcy—not one of these yesterday creations made up of state physicians and surgeons in ordinary—an estate of above twelve thousand a year. Such are claims to look high with ; but I confess I think he could not lay them

at the feet of one more captivating than my fair Helen."

Darcy made no reply for several minutes ; he pressed his hand across his eyes, and turned his head away, as if to escape observation ; then, with an effort that seemed to demand all his strength, he said,

"That is impossible, my lord. There are reasons—there are circumstances why I cannot entertain this proposition. I am not able to explain them—a few days more, and I need not trouble myself on that subject."

The evident agitation of manner the knight displayed astonished his companion, who, while he forebore to ask more directly for its reason, yet gently hinted that the obstacles alluded to might be less stringent than Darcy deemed them.

Darcy shook his head mournfully, and Lord Netherby, though most anxious to divine the secret of his thoughts, had too much breeding to continue the subject.

Without any abruptness, which might have left an unpleasant impression after it, the polished courtier once more adverted to Beauclerk, but rather in a tone of regret for the youth's own sake than with any reference to the knight's refusal.

"There was a kind of selfishness in my advocacy, knight," said he, smiling. "I was—I am—very much depressed at quitting a spot where I have tasted more true happiness than it has been my fortune for many years to know, and I wish to carry away with me the reflection that I had left the germ of even greater happiness behind me ; if Helen, however—"

"Hush !" said Darcy ; "here she comes, with her mother."

"My dear Lady Eleanor," said Lord Netherby, "you have come to see me forget all the worldliness it has cost me a life to learn, and actually confess that I cannot tear myself away from the abbey."

"Well, my lord," interposed Tom Nolan, who had just come up with a large walking party, "I suppose it's only ordering away the posters, and saying another day."

"No, no, by Jove !" cried Crofton ; "my lord is in waiting, and I'm on duty."

While the groups now gathered together from different parts of the garden, Lord Netherby joined Beauclerk, who awaited him in a distant alley, and soon after the youth was seen returning alone to the abbey.

The time of bustle and leave-taking—that moment when many a false smile and merry speech ill conceals the secret sorrow—was come, and each after each spoke his farewell ; and Lord Netherby kindly pledg-

ing himself to make Lionel's peace at the Horse Guards for an extended absence of some days, thus conferred upon Lady Eleanor the very greatest of favors.

"Our next meeting is to be in London, remember," said the peer, in his blandest accents. "I stand pledged to show my countrymen that I have nothing extenuated in speaking of Irish beauty;—nay, Helen, it is my last time, forgive it."

"There they go," said Darcy, as he looked after the retiring equipages. "Now, Eleanor, and my dear children, come along with me into the library. I have long been struggling against a secret sorrow; another moment would be more than I could bear."

They turned silently toward the abbey, none daring, even by a look, to interrogate him whose sad accents foreboded so much of evil; yet as they walked they drew closer around him, and seemed even by that gesture to show that, come what might, they would meet their fortune boldly.

Darcy moved on for some minutes sunk in thought, but, as he ascended the wide steps of the terrace, appearing to read the motives of those who clung so closely to his side, he smiled sadly, and said, "Ay! I knew it well—in weal or woe—together!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

"SAD DISCLOSURES."

THE vicissitudes of life are never more palpably displayed before us than when the space of a few brief hours has converted the scene of festivity and pleasure into one of gloom and sorrow, when the same silent witnesses of our joy should be present at our affliction. Thus was it now in the richly-adorned chambers of Gwynne Abbey, so lately filled with happy faces and resounding with pleasant voices—all was silent. In the court-yard, but a day before crowded with brilliant equipages and gay horsemen, the long shadows lay dark and unbroken, and the plash of the fountain was the only sound in the stillness. Over that wide lawn no groups on foot or horseback were to be seen; the landscape was fair and soft to look upon, the mild radiance of a spring morning beamed on the water and the shore, the fresh budding trees, and the tall towers; and the passing traveler who might have stopped to gaze upon that princely dwelling and its swelling woods, might have thought it an earthly

paradise, and that they who owned it must needs be above worldly cares and afflictions.

The scene within the walls was very unlike this impression. In a darkened room, where the close-drawn curtains excluded every ray of sunshine, sat Helen Darcy by the bedside of her mother. Lady Eleanor had fallen asleep after a night of intense suffering, both of mind and body, and her repose even yet exhibited, in short and fitful starts, the terrible traces of an agony not yet subdued. Helen was pale as death, two dark circles of almost purple hue surrounded her eyes, and her cheeks seemed wasted—yet she had not wept. The overwhelming amount of misfortune had stunned her for a moment or two, but, recalled to active exertion by her mother's illness, she addressed herself to her task, and seemed to have no thought or care save to watch and tend her. It was only at last, when, wearied out by suffering, Lady Eleanor fell into a slumber, that Helen's feelings found their vent, and the tears rolled heavily along her cheek, and dropped one by one upon her neck.

Her sorrow was indeed great, for it was unalloyed by one selfish feeling; her grief was for those a thousand times more dear to her than herself, nor through all her affliction did a single thought intrude of how this ruin was also her own.

The knight was in the library, where he had passed the night, lying down at short intervals to catch some moments' rest, and again rising to walk the room and reflect upon the coming stroke of fortune. Lionel had parted from him at a late hour, promising to go to bed, but unable to endure the gloom of his own thoughts in his chamber, he wandered out into the woods, and strolled on without knowing or caring whither, till day broke. The bodily exertion at length induced sleep, and after a few hours' deep repose he joined his father, with few traces of weariness or even sorrow.

It was not without a struggle on either side that they met on that morning, and as Darcy grasped his son's hand in both his own, his lip trembled, and his strong frame shook with agitation. Lionel's ruddy cheek and clear blue eye seemed to reassure the old man's courage, and after gazing on him steadfastly with a look where fatherly love and pride were blended, he said, "I see, my boy, the old blood of a Darcy has not degenerated—you are well to-day?"

"Never was better in my life," said Lionel, boldly; "and if I could only think that you, my mother, and Helen had no cause

for sorrow. I'd almost say I never felt my spirits higher."

"My own brave-hearted boy," said Darcy, throwing his arms around the youth's neck, while the tears gushed from his eyes and a choking stopped his utterance.

"I see your letters have come," said Lionel, gently disengaging himself, and affecting a degree of calmness his heart was very far from feeling. "Do they bring us any news?"

"Nothing to hope from," said Darcy, sorrowfully. "Daly has seen Hickman's solicitors, and the matter is as I expected: Gleeson did not pay the bond debt; his journey to Kildare was, probably, undertaken to gain time until the moment of the American ship's sailing. He must have meditated this step for a considerable time, for it now appears that his losses in South America occurred several years back, though carefully screened from public knowledge. The man was a cold, calculating scoundrel, who practiced peculation systematically and slowly; his resolve to escape was not a sudden notion—these are Bagenal Daly's impressions at least, and I begin to feel their force myself."

"Does Daly offer any suggestion for our guidance, or say how we should act?" said Lionel, far more eager to meet the present than speculate on either the past or the future.

"Yes; he gives us a choice of counsels, honestly confessing that his own advice meets little support or sympathy with the lawyers. It is to hold forcible possession of the abbey, to leave Hickman to his remedy by law, and to defy him when he has even got a verdict; he enumerates very circumstantially all our means of defense, and exhibits a very hopeful array of lawless probabilities in our favor. But this is a counsel I would never follow; it would not become one who has in a long life endeavored to set the example among the people of obedience and observance to law to obliterate by one act of rashness and folly the whole force of his teaching. No, Lionel, we are clean-handed on this score, and if the lesson be a heavy one for ourselves, let it not be profitless for our poor neighbors. This is your own feeling too, any boy, I'm certain."

Lionel bit his lip, and his cheek grew scarlet; when, after a pause, he said, "And the other plan, what is that?"

"The renewed offer of his cottage on the northern coast, a lonely and secluded spot, where we can remain at least until we determine on something better."

"Perhaps that may be the wiser course,"

muttered the youth, half aloud; "my mother and Helen are to be thought of first. And yet, father, I cannot help thinking Daly's first counsel has something in it."

"Something in it! ay, Lionel, that it has—the whole story of our country's misery and degradation. The owner of the soil has diffused little else among the people than the licentious terror of his own unbridled passion; he has taught lawless outrage, when he should have inculcated obedience and submission. The corruption of our people has come from above downward; the heavy retribution will come one day; and when the vices of the peasant shall ascend to the master the social ruin will be complete. To this dreadful consummation let us lend no aid. No, no, Lionel, sorrow may be lessened by time, but remorse is undying and eternal."

"I must leave the Guards at once," said the young man, pacing the room slowly, and endeavoring to speak with an air of calm composure, while every feature of his face betrayed the agitation he suffered; "an exchange will not be difficult to manage."

"You have some debts, too, in London; they must be cared for immediately."

"Nothing of any large amount; my horses and carriages when sold will more than meet all I owe. Have you formed any guess as to what income will be left you to live on?" said he, in a voice which anxiety made weak and tremulous.

"Without Daly's assistance I cannot answer that point; the extent of this fellow Gleeson's iniquity seems but half explored. The likelihood is, that your mother's jointure will be the utmost we can save from the wreck. Even that, however, will be enough for all we need, although from motives of delicacy on her part it was originally set down at a very small sum—not more than a thousand per annum."

A long silence now ensued. The knight, buried in thought, sat with his arms crossed and his eyes bent upon the ground. Lionel leaned on the window-frame and looked out upon the lawn; nothing stirred, no sound was heard save the sharp ticking of the clock upon the mantel-piece, which marked with distinctness every second, as if reminding them of the fleeting moments that were to be their last beneath that roof.

"This is the 24th, if I remember aright," said Darcy, looking up at the dial; "at noon to-day we are no longer masters here."

"The Hickmans will scarcely venture to push matters to such extremities; an as-



LIONEL SHOUTED, AND EVEN TRIED TO FOLLOW HIM, BUT BOTH EFFORTS WERE FRUITLESS. (P. 134)

surance that we are willing to surrender peaceable possession will, I trust, be sufficient to prevent the indecency of a rapid flight from our own house and home."

"There are legal forms of possession to be gone through, I believe," said the knight, sorrowfully; "certain observances the law exacts, which would be no less painful for us to witness than the actual presence of our successors."

"Who can this be? I saw a carriage disappear behind the copse yonder. There it is again, coming along by the lake."

"Daly—Bagenal Daly, I hope and trust!" exclaimed Darcy, as he stood straining his eyes to catch the moving object.

"I think not; the horses do not look like posters. Heaven grant we have no visitors at such a time as this!"

The carriage, although clearly visible the moment before, was now concealed from view by an angle of the wood, nor would it again be in sight before reaching the abbey.

"Your mother's indisposition is reason sufficient not to receive them," said Darcy, almost sternly. "I would not continue the part I have played during the last week, no, not for an hour longer, to be assured of rescue from every difficulty. The duplicity went nigh to break my heart; ay, and it would have done so, or driven me mad, had the effort been sustained any further."

"You did not expect any one, did you?" asked Lionel, eagerly.

"Not one: there are a mass of letters with invitations and civil messages there on the table, but no proffered visits among them."

Lionel walked to the table and turned over the various notes which lay along with newspapers and pamphlets scattered about.

"Ay," muttered the knight, in a low tone, "they read strangely now, these plans of pleasure and festivity, when ruin is so near us; the kind pressings to spend a week here and a fortnight there. It reminds me, Lionel"—and here a smile of sad but sweet melancholy passed across his features—"it reminds me of the old story they tell of my grand-uncle Robert. He commanded the *Dreadnought*, under Drake, at Cape St. Vincent, and at the close of a very sharp action was signaled to come on board the admiral's vessel to dinner. The poor *Dreadnought* was like a sieve, the sea running in and out through her shot-holes, and her sails hanging like rags around her, her deck covered with wounded, and slippery with gore. Captain Darcy, however, hastened to obey the command of his superior, changed his dress, and ordered his boat to be manned; but this was no easy

matter—there was scarcely a boat's crew to be had without taking away the men necessary to work the ship. The difficulty soon became more pressing, for a plank had suddenly sprung from a double-headed shot, and all the efforts of the pumps could not keep the vessel afloat, with a heavy sea rolling at the same time.

"The admiral's signal is repeated, sir," said the lieutenant on duty.

"Very well, Mr. Hay; keep her before the wind," was the answer.

"The ship is settling fast, sir," said the master; "no boat could live in that sea; they're all damaged by shot."

"Signal the flag-ship," cried out Darcy; "signal the admiral that I am ready to obey him, but we're sinking."

"The bunting floated at the mast-head for a moment or two, but the waves were soon many fathoms over it, and the *Dreadnought* was never seen more."

"So it would seem," said Lionel, with a half bitter laugh. "we are not the first of the family who went down head-foremost. But I hear a voice without. Surely old Tate is not fool enough to admit any one."

"Is it possible—" But before the knight could finish, the old butler entered to announce Mr. Hickman O'Reilly. Advancing toward the knight with a most cordial air, he seemed bent on anticipating any possible expression of displeasure at his unexpected appearance.

"I am aware, knight," said he, in an accent the most soft and conciliating, "how indelicate a visit from me at such a moment may seem, but if you accord me a few moments of private interview, I hope to dispel the unpleasant impression." He looked toward Lionel as he spoke, and though he smiled his blandest of all smiles, evidently hinted at the possibility of his leaving them alone together.

"I have no confidences apart from my son, sir," said Darcy, coldly.

"Oh, of course not—perfectly natural at Captain Darcy's age—such a thought would be absurd; still, there are circumstances which might possibly excuse my request—I mean—"

Lionel did not suffer him to finish the sentence, but turning abruptly round left the room, saying, as he went, "I have some orders to give in the stable, but I'll not go further away if you want me."

"Now, sir," said the knight, haughtily. "we are alone, and not likely to be interrupted: may I ask as a great favor, that in any communication you may have to make, you will be as brief as consists with your object; for, to say truth, I have many

things on my mind, and many important calls to attend to."

"In the first place, then," said Hickman, assuming a manner intended to convey the impression of perfect frankness and candor, "let me make a confession, which however humiliating to avow, would be still more injurious to hold in reserve. I have neither act nor part in the proceedings my father has lately taken respecting your mutual dealings. Not only that he has not consulted me, but every attempt on my part to ascertain the course of events, or mitigate their rigor, has been met by a direct, not unfrequently a rude, repulse." He waited at this pause for the knight to speak, but a cold and dignified bow was all the acknowledgment returned. "This may appear strange and inexplicable in your eyes," said O'Reilly, who mistook the knight's indifference for incredulity, "but perhaps I can explain."

"There is not the slightest necessity to do so, Mr. O'Reilly; I have no reason to doubt one word you have stated; for not only am I ignorant of what the nature and extent of the proceedings you allude to may be, but I am equally indifferent as to the spirit that dictates, or the number of advisers that suggest them; pardon me if I seem rude or uncourteous, but there are circumstances in life in which not to be selfish would be to become insensible; my present condition is, perhaps, one of them. A breach of trust on the part of one who possessed my fullest confidence has involved all, or nearly all, I had in the world. The steps by which I am to be deprived of what was once my own are, as regards myself, matters of comparative indifference; with respect to others"—here he almost faltered—"I hope they may be dictated by proper feeling and consideration."

"Be assured they shall, sir," said Mr. O'Reilly; and then, as if correcting a too hasty avowal, added, "but I have the strongest hopes that matters are not yet in such an extremity as you speak of. It is true, sir, I will not conceal from you, my father is not free from the faults of age; his passion for money-getting has absorbed his whole heart to the exclusion of many amiable and estimable traits; to enforce a legal right with him seems a duty, and not an option; and, I may mention here, that your friend, Mr. Daly, has not taken any particular pains toward conciliating him; indeed, he has scarcely acted a prudent part as regards you, by the unceasing rancor he has exhibited toward our family."

"I must interrupt you, sir," said the knight, "and assure you that, while there

are unfortunately but too many topics which could pain me at this moment, there is not one more certain to offend me than any reflection, even the slightest, on the oldest friend I have in the world."

Mr. O'Reilly denied the most remote intention of giving pain, and proceeded: "I was speaking of my father," said he, "and however unpleasant the confession from a son's lips, I must say that the legality of his acts is the extent to which they claim his observance. When his solicitors informed him that the interest was unpaid on your bond, he directed the steps to enforce the payment, and subsequently to foreclose the deed. These are, after all, mere preliminary proceedings, and in no way preclude an arrangement for a renewal."

"Such a proposition—let me interrupt you—such a proposition is wholly out of the question; the ruin that has cost us our house and home has spared nothing. I have no means by which I could anticipate the payment of so large a sum, nor is it either my intention or my wish to reside longer beneath this roof."

"I hope, sir, your determination is not unalterable; it would be the greatest affliction of my life to think that the loss to this country of its oldest family was even in the remotest degree ascribed to us. The Darcys have been the boast and pride of western Ireland for centuries; our county would be robbed of its fairest ornament by the departure of those who hold a princely state, and derive a more than princely devotion among us."

"If our claims had no other foundation, Mr. O'Reilly, our altered circumstances would now obliterate them. To live here with diminished fortune—But I ask pardon for being led away in this manner—may I beg that you will now inform me to what peculiar circumstances I owe the honor of your visit?"

"I thought," said O'Reilly, insinuatingly, "that I had mentioned the difference of feeling entertained by my father and myself respecting certain proceedings at law."

"You are quite correct, you did so; but I may observe, without incivility, that however complimentary to your own sense of delicacy such a difference is, for me the matter has no immediate interest."

"Perhaps, with your kind permission, I can give it some," replied O'Reilly, drawing his chair close, and speaking in a low and confidential voice; "but, in order to let my communication have the value I would wish it, may I bespeak for myself a favorable hearing, and a kind construction on

what I shall say? If by an error of judgment—”

“Ah!” said Darcy, sighing, while a sad smile dimpled his mouth—“ah! no man should be more lenient to such than myself.”

As if reassured by the kindly tone of these few words, O'Reilly resumed:

“Some weeks ago my father waited upon Lady Eleanor Darcy with a proposition, which, whether on its own merits, or from want of proper tact in his advocacy of it, met with a most unfavorable reception. It is not because circumstances have greatly altered in that brief interval—which I deeply regret to say is the case—that I dare to augur a more propitious hearing, but simply because I hope to show that in making it we were actuated by a spirit of honorable, if not of laudable ambition. The rank and position my son will enjoy in this county, his fortune and estate are such as to make any alliance, save with your family, a question of no possible pretension. I am well aware, sir, of the great disparity between a new house and one ennobled by centuries of descent. I have thought long and deeply on the interval that separates the rank of the mere country gentleman from the position of him who claims even higher station than nobility itself, but we live in changeful times; the peerage has its daily accessions of rank, as humble as my own; its new creations are the conscripts drawn from wealth as well as distinction in arms or learning, and in every case the new generation obliterates the memory of its immediate origin. I see you agree with me; I rejoice to find it.”

“Your observations are quite just,” said Darcy, calmly, and O'Reilly went on:

“Now, sir, I would not only reiterate my father's proposal, but I would add to it what I hope and trust will be deemed no ungenerous offer, which is, that the young lady's fortune should be this estate of Gwynne Abbey, not to be endowed by her future husband, but settled on her by her father as her marriage portion. I see your meaning—it is no longer his to give, but we are ready to make it so; the bond we hold shall be thrown into the fire the moment your consent is uttered. We prefer a thousand times it should be thus, than that the ancient acres of this noble heritage should even for a moment cease to be the property of your house. Let me recapitulate a little—”

“I think that is unnecessary,” said Darcy, calmly; “I have bestowed the most patient attention to your remarks, and have

no difficulty in comprehending them. Have you anything to add?”

“Nothing of much consequence,” said O'Reilly, not a little pleased by the favorable tone of the knight's manner; “what I should suggest in addition is that my son should assume the name and arms of Darcy—”

The noise of footsteps and voices without at this moment interrupted the speaker, the door suddenly opened, and Bagenal Daly entered. He was splashed from head to foot, his high riding-boots stained with the saddle and the road, and his appearance vouching for a long and wearisome journey.

“Good morrow, Darcy,” said he, grasping the knight's hand with the grip of his iron fingers. “Your servant, sir: I scarcely expected to see you here *so soon*.”

The emphasis with which he spoke the last words brought the color to O'Reilly's cheek, who seemed very miserable at the interruption.

“You came to take possession,” continued Daly, fixing his eyes on him with a steadfast stare.

“You mistake, Bagenal,” said the knight, gently; “Mr. O'Reilly came with a very different object—one which I trust he will deem no breach of confidence or propriety in me if I mention it to you.”

“I regret to say, sir,” said O'Reilly, hastily, “that I cannot give my permission in this instance. Whatever the fate of the proposal I have made to you, I beg it to be understood as made under the seal of honorable secrecy.”

Darcy bowed deeply, but made no reply.

“Confound me,” cried Daly, “if I understand any compact between two such men as you as to require all this privacy, unless you were hardy enough to renew your old father's proposal for my friend's daughter, and now had modesty enough to feel ashamed of your own impudence.”

“I am no stranger, sir, to the indecent liberties you permit your tongue to take,” said Hickman, moving toward the door. “but this is neither the time nor place to notice them.”

“So then I was right,” cried Daly; “I guessed well the game you would play—”

“Bagenal,” interposed the knight. “I must stop this. Mr. Hickman is now beneath my roof—”

“Is he, faith?—not in his own estimation then. Why, his fellows are taking an inventory of the furniture at this very moment.”

“Is this true, sir?” said Darcy, turning a fierce look toward O'Reilly, whose face became suddenly of an ashy paleness.

"If so," muttered he, "I can only assure you that it is without any orders of mine."

"How good," said Daly, bursting into an insolent laugh; "why, Darcy, when you meet with a fellow in your plantations with a gun in his hand and a hucher at his heels, are you disposed to regard him as one in search of the picturesque or a poacher? So, when a gentleman travels about the country with a sub-sheriff in his carriage and two bailiffs in the rumble, does it seem exactly the guise of one paying morning calls to his neighbors?"

"Mr. O'Reilly, I ask you to explain this proceeding."

"I confess, sir," stammered out the other, "I came accompanied by certain persons in authority, but who have acted in this matter entirely without my permission. The proposal I have made this day was the cause of my visit."

"It is a subject on which I can no longer hold any secrecy," said the knight haughtily. "Bagenal, you were quite correct in your surmise. Mr. O'Reilly not only intended us the honor of an alliance, but offered to merge the ancient glories of his house by assuming the more humble name and shield of Darcy."

"What! eh! did I hear aright?" said Daly, with a broken voice; while walking to the window, he looked down into the lawn beneath, as if calculating the height from the ground. "By Heaven, Darcy, you're the best-tempered fellow in Europe—that's all," muttered he, as he walked away.

The door opened at this moment, and the shock bullet-head of a bailiff appeared.

"That's Mr. Daly! there he is!" cried out O'Reilly, who, pale with passion and trembling all over, supported himself against the back of a chair with one hand, while with the other he pointed to where Daly stood.

"In that case," said the fellow, entering, while he drew a slip of paper from his breast, "I'll take the opportunity of sarvin' him where he stands."

"One step nearer! one step!" said Daly, as he took a pistol from the pocket of his coat.

The man hesitated and looked at O'Reilly, as if for advice or encouragement, but terror and rage had now deprived him of all self-possession, and he neither spoke nor signed to him.

"Leave the room, sir," said the knight, with a motion of his hand to the bailiff; and the ruffian, whose office had familiarized him long with scenes of outrage and

violence, shrank back ashamed and abashed, and slipped from the room without a word.

"I believe, Mr. O'Reilly," continued Darcy, with an accent calm and unmoved—"I believe our conference is now concluded. I will not insult your own acuteness by saying how unnecessary I feel any reply to your demand."

"In that case," said O'Reilly, "may I presume that there is no objection to proceed with those legal formalities which, although begun without my knowledge, may be effected now as well as at any other period?"

"Darcy, there is but one way of dealing with that gentleman—"

"Bagenal, I must insist upon your leaving this matter solely with me."

"Depend upon it, sir, your interests will not gain by your friend's counsels," said O'Reilly, with an insolent sneer.

"Such another remark from your lips," said Darcy, sternly, "would make me follow them, if they went so far as—"

"Throwing him neck and heels out of that window," broke in Daly, "for I own to you it's the course I'd have taken half an hour ago."

"I wish you good-morning, Mr. Darcy," said O'Reilly, addressing him for the first time by the name of his family instead of his usual designation; and without vouchsafing a word to Daly, he retired from the room.

It was not until O'Reilly's carriage drove past the window that either Darcy or his friend uttered a syllable; they stood apparently lost in thought up to that moment, when the noise of wheels and the tramp of horses aroused them.

"We must lose no time, Bagenal," said the knight, hastily; "I cannot count very far on that gentleman's delicacy or forbearance. Lady Eleanor must not be exposed to the indignities the law will permit him to practice toward us; we must, if possible, leave this to-night." And so saying, he left the room to make arrangements in accordance with his resolve.

Bagenal Daly looked after him for a moment. "Poor fellow!" muttered he, "how manfully he bears it!" when a sudden flush that covered his cheek bespoke a rapid change of sentiment, and at the same instant he left the room, and, crossing the hall and the court-yard, walked hastily toward the stables.

"Saddle a horse for me, Carney, and as fast as may be."

"Here's a mare ready this minute, sir; she was going out to take her gallop."

"I'll give it, then," said Daly, as he but-

toned up his coat; and then, breaking off a branch of the old willow that hung over the fountain, sprang in the saddle with an alertness that would not have disgraced a youth of twenty.

"There he goes," muttered the old huntsman, as he looked after him, "and there isn't a man between this and Killybegs can take as much out of a baste as himself. 'Tis quiet enough the mare will be when he turns her head into this yard again."

Whatever Daly's purpose, it seemed one which brooked little delay, for no sooner was he on the sward, than he pushed the mare to a fast gallop, and was seen sweeping along the lawn at a tremendous pace. In less than ten minutes he saw O'Reilly's carriage, as, in a rapid trot, the horses advanced along the level avenue, and almost the moment after he had stationed himself in the road, so as to prevent their proceeding further. The coachman, who knew him well, came to a stop at his signal, and, before his master could ask the reason, Daly was beside the window of the chariot.

"I would wish a word with you, Mr. O'Reilly," said he, in a low, subdued voice, so as to be inaudible to the sub-sheriff, who was seated beside him. "You made use of an expression a few moments ago, which, if I understood aright, convinces me I have unwittingly done you great injustice."

O'Reilly, whose ashy cheek and affrighted air bespoke a heart but ill at ease, made no reply, and Daly went on:

"You said, sir, that neither the time nor place suited the notice you felt called upon to take of my remarks on your conduct. May I ask, as a very great favor, what time and what place will be more convenient to you? And I cannot better express my own sense of regret for a hasty expression, than by assuring you that I shall hold myself bound to be at your service in both respects."

"A hostile meeting, sir—is that your proposition?" said O'Reilly, aloud.

"How admirably you read a riddle," said Daly, laughing.

"There, Mr. Jones!" cried O'Reilly, turning to his companion, "I call on you to witness the words—a provocation to a duel offered by this gentleman."

"Not at all," rejoined Daly; "the provocation came from yourself; at least, you used a phrase which men with blood in their veins understand but one way. My error—and I'll not forgive myself in haste for it—was the belief that an upstart need not of necessity be a poltroon. Drive on," cried he to the coachman, with a sneering

laugh; "your master is looking pale." And, with these words, he turned his horse's head, and cantered slowly back toward the abbey.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TATE SULLIVAN'S FAREWELL.

THE sorrows and sufferings of noble minds are melancholy themes to dwell upon; they may "point a moral," but they scarcely "adorn a tale," least of all such a tale as ours is intended to be. While, therefore, we would spare our readers and ourselves the pain of this narration, we cannot leave that old abbey, which we remember so full of happiness, without one parting look at it, in company with those about to quit it forever.

From the time of Mr. O'Reilly's leaving-taking, the day, notwithstanding its gloomy presage, went over rapidly. The knight busied himself with internal arrangements, while Lionel took into his charge all the preparations for their departure on the morrow, Bagenal Daly assisting each in turn, and displaying an amount of calm foresight and circumspection in details which few would have given him credit for. Meanwhile, Lady Eleanor slept long and heavily, and awoke, not only refreshed in body, but with an appearance of quiet energy and determination she had not shown for years past. Great indeed was the knight's astonishment on hearing that she intended joining them at dinner; in her usual habit she dined early, and with Helen alone for her companion, so that her present resolve created the more surprise.

Dinner was ordered in the library, and poor old Tate, by some strange motive of sympathy, took a more than common pains in all the decorations of the table. The flowers which Lady Eleanor was fondest of decked the center—alas! there was no need to husband them now! on the morrow who was to care for them?—a little bouquet of fresh violets marked her place at the table, and more than a dozen times did the old man hesitate how the light should fall through the large window, and whether it would be more soothing to his mistress to look abroad upon that fair and swelling landscape so dear to her, or more painful to gaze upon the scenes she should never see more.

"If it was myself," muttered old Tate, "I'd like to be looking at it as long as I could, and make it follow me in my dirames after; but sure there's no knowing how

great people feels! they say they never has the same kind of thought as us!"

Poor fellow, he little knew how leveling is misfortune, and that the calamities of life evoke the same sufferings in the breast of the king and the peasant. With a delicacy one more highly born might have been proud of, the old butler alone waited at dinner, well judging that his familiar face would be less irksome to them than the prying looks of the other servants.

If there are people who can expend much eloquent indignation on those social usages which exact a certain amount of decorous observance in all the trials and crosses of life, there is a great deal to be said in favor of that system of conventional good breeding whose aim is to repress selfish indulgence, and make the individual feel that whatever his own griefs, the claims of the world demand a fortitude and a bearing that shall not obtrude his sorrows on his neighbors. That the code may be abused, and become occasionally hypocritical in practice, is no argument against it: we would merely speak in praise of that well-bred forbearance which always merges private afflictions in the desire to make others happy. To instance our meaning, we would speak of those who now met at dinner in the old library of Gwynne Abbey.

It would be greatly to mistake us to suppose that we uphold any show or counterfeit of kindness where there is no substance of the feeling behind it; we merely maintain that the very highest and most acute sympathy is not inconsistent with a bearing of easy, nay, almost cheerful character. So truly was it the case here, that old Tate Sullivan more than once stood still in amazement at the tranquil faces and familiar quietude of those who, in his own condition of life, could have found no accents loud or piercing enough to bewail their sorrow, and whom, even with his long knowledge of them, he could scarcely acquit of insensibility.

There is a contagion in an effort of this kind most remarkable. The light and gentle attempts made by Lady Eleanor to sustain the spirits of the party, were met by sallies of manly good-humor by the knight himself, in which Lionel and Helen were not slow to join, while Bagenal Daly could scarcely repress his enthusiastic delight at the noble and high-souled courage that sustained them one and all.

While by a tacit understanding they avoided any allusion to the painful circumstances of their late misfortune, the knight adroitly turned the conversation to their

approaching journey northward, and drew from Daly a description of "the Corvy" that actually evoked a burst of downright laughter. From this he passed on to speak of the peasantry, so unlike in every trait those of the south and west; the calm, reflective character of their minds, uninfluenced by passion and unmarked by enthusiasm, were a strong contrast to the headlong impulse and ardent temperament of the "real Irish."

"You'll scarcely like them at first, my dear Helen—"

"Still less on a longer acquaintance," broke in Helen. "I'll not quarrel with the caution and reserve of the Scotchman—the very mists on his native mountains may teach him doubt and uncertainty of purpose; but here at home, what have such frames of mind and thought in common with our less calculating natures?"

"It were far better had they met oftener," said the knight, thoughtfully; "impulse is only noble when well directed; the passionate pilots are more frequently the cause of shipwreck than of safety."

"Nothing so wearisome as the trade-winds," said Helen, with a saucy toss of the head; "eh, Lionel, you are of my mind?"

"They do push one's temper very hard now and then," said Daly, with a stern frown; "that impassive habit they have of taking everything as in the common order of events is, I own, somewhat difficult to bear with. I remember being run away with on a blood mare from a little village called Ballintra. The beast was in high condition, and I turned her, without knowing the country, at the first hill I could see; she breasted it boldly, and, though full a quarter of a mile in length, never shortened stride to the very summit. What was my surprise, when I gained the top, to see that we were exactly over the sea. It was a cliff, which, projecting for some distance out, was fissured by an immense chasm, through which the waves passed; not very wide, but deep enough to make it a very awful leap. Over it she went, and then, when I expected her to dash onward, and was already preparing to fling myself from the saddle, she stood stock still, trembling all over, and snorting with fear at the danger around her. At the same instant, a hard-featured old fellow popped his head up from amid the tall fern which he had been cutting for thatch for his cabin, and looked at me, not the slightest sign of astonishment in his cold, rigid countenance.

"Ye'll no get back so easy, my bonnie

mon,' said he, with the slightest possible approach to a smile.

"Get back! no, faith, I'll not try it," said I, looking at the yawning gulf, through which the wild waves boiled, and the opposite bank several feet higher than the ground I stood upon.

"I thought sae,' was the rejoinder; when, rising slowly, he leisurely walked round the mare, as she stood riveted by fear to the one spot. 'I'll gie ye sax shilling for the hide o' her forbye the shoes,' added he, with a voice as imperturbable as though he were pricing the commonest commodity of a market.

"I confess it was fortunate that the ludicrous was stronger in me at the moment than indignation, for if I had not laughed at him I might have done worse."

"I could not endure such a peasantry," said Helen, as soon as the mirth the anecdote called forth had subsided.

"It's quite true," said Daly, "they have burlesqued Scotch prudence in the same way that the Anglo-Hibernian has travestied the Irish temperament. It is the danger of all imitators, they always transgress the limits of their model."

"It is fortunate," broke in the knight, "that traits which conciliate so little the stranger should win their way on nearer intimacy; and such I believe to be the case with the Ulster peasant."

"You are right," said Daly; "no man can detest more cordially than I do the rudeness that is assumed to heighten a contrast with any good quality behind it. In most instances the kernel is not worth the trouble of breaking off the husk; but with the Northern this is not the case; in his independence he neither apes the equality of the Frenchman, nor the license of the Yankee. That he suffices for himself, and seeks neither patron nor protector, is the source of honest pride, and if this sometimes takes the guise of stubbornness, let us remember that the virtue was reared in poverty, without encouragement or example."

"And the gentry," said Lady Eleanor, "have they any trace of these peculiarities observable among the people?"

"Gentry!" said Daly, impetuously; "I know of none. There are some thrifty families who, by some generations of hard saving, have risen to affluence and wealth. They are keen fellows, given to money-getting—millers some of them, bleachers most, with a tenantry of weavers, and estates like the grass-plot of a laundry. They are as crafty and as calculating as the peasant, shrewd as stockbrokers at a bargain, and as pretentious as a prince palatine with a ter-

ritory the size of Merrion square. Gentry! they have neither ancestry nor tradition; they hold their estates from certain guilds, whose very titles are a parody upon gentle breeding—fishmongers and clothworkers!"

"I will not be their champion against you, Bagenal, but I cannot help feeling how heavily they might retort upon us. These same prudent and prosaic landlords have not spent their fortunes in wasteful extravagance and absurd display; they have not rackrented their tenantry that they might rival a neighbor."

"I am sincerely rejoiced," interposed Lady Eleanor, smiling, "that my English relative, Lord Netherby, was not a witness to this discussion, lest he should fancy that, between the wastefulness of the south and the thrift of the north, this poor island was but ill provided with a gentry. Pray, Mr. Daly, how does your sister like the north? She is our neighbor, is she not?"

"Yes—that is to say, a few miles distant," said Daly, confusedly, for he had never acknowledged that "the Corvy" had been Miss Daly's residence; "of the neighborhood she knows nothing; she is not free from my own prejudices, and lives a very secluded life."

The conversation now became broken and unconnected, and the party soon after retired to the drawing-room, where, while Lady Eleanor and Helen sat together, the knight, Daly, and Lionel gathered in a little knot, and discussed, in a low tone, the various steps for the coming journey, and the probable events of the morrow.

It was agreed upon that Daly should accompany the Darceys to the north, whither Sandy was already dispatched, but that Lionel should remain at the abbey for some days longer, to complete the arrangements necessary for the removal of certain family papers and the due surrender of the property to its new owner; after which he should repair to London, and procure his exchange into some regiment of the line, and, if possible, one on some foreign station—the meeting with friends and acquaintances, under his now altered fortunes, being judged as a trial too painful and too difficult to undergo.

Again they all met around the tea-table, and once more they talked in the same vein of mutual confidence; each, conscious of the effort by which he sustained his part, and wondering how the others summoned courage to do what cost himself so much. They chatted away till near midnight, and when they shook hands at separating, it was with feelings of affection to which sorrow had only added fresh and stronger ties.

Daly stood for some time alone in the library, wondering within himself at the noble fortitude with which they severally sustained their dreadful reverse. It is only the man of stout heart can truly estimate the higher attributes of courage, but even to him these efforts seemed surprising. "Ay," muttered he, "each nobly upholds the other; it is opposing a hollow square to fortune; so long as they stand firm and together, well! let one but quail and falter, let the line be broken, and they would be swept away at once and forever." Taking a candle from the table, he left the room, and ascended the wide staircase toward his chamber. All was still and noiseless, and, to prevent his footsteps being heard, he entered the little corridor which opened on the gallery of the refectory, the same from which Forester first caught sight of the party at the dinner-table.

He had scarcely, with careful hand, closed the door behind him, when, looking over the balustrades of the gallery, he beheld a figure moving slowly along in the great apartment beneath, guided by a small lamp, which threw its uncertain light rather on the wall than on the form of him who carried it. Suddenly stopping before one of the large portraits which in a long succession graced the chamber, the light was turned fully round, so as to display the broad and massive features of old Tate Sullivan. Curious to ascertain what the old man might be about in such a place at such an hour, Daly extinguished the candle to watch him unobserved. Tate was dressed in his most accurate costume: his long cravat, edged with deep lace, descended in front of his capacious white waistcoat, silver buckles, of a size that showed there was no parsimony of the precious metal, shone in his shoes, and his newly-powdered wig displayed an almost snowy luster; his gestures were in accordance with the careful observances of his toilet; he moved along the floor with a slow, sliding step, bowing deeply and reverentially as he went, and with all the courtesy he would have displayed if ushering a goodly company into the state drawing-room.

Bagenal Daly was not left long to speculate on honest Tate's intentions; and, although to a stranger's eyes the motives might have seemed strange and dubious, the mystery was easily solved to him who knew the old man well and thoroughly. He was there to take a last look, and bid farewell to those venerable portraits, who for more than half a century were enshrined in his memory like saints. Around them were associated all the little incidents of

his peaceful life; they were the chroniclers of his impressions in boyhood, in manhood, and in age; he could call to mind the first moments he gazed on them in awe-struck veneration; he could remember the proud period when the duty first devolved upon him of describing them to the strangers who came to see the abbey; of the history of all and each of them he was well read, versed in their noble achievements, their triumphs in camp or cabinet. To his eyes they formed a long line of heroic characters, of which the world had produced no equal; they realized in his conception the proud eulogy of the Bayards, "where all the men were brave, and all the women virtuous;" and it is not improbable that his devotion to his master was in a great measure ascribable to that awe-struck admiration with which he regarded his glorious ancestors.

The old man stood, and holding the lamp above his head, gazed in respectful admiration at the grim figure of a knight in armor. There might have been little to charm the lover of painting in the execution of the picture, and the mere castle-builder could scarcely have indulged his fancy in weaving a story from the countenance of the portrait, for the vizor was down, and he stood in all the unmoved sternness of his iron prison, with his glaived hands clasped upon the cross of a long straight sword. Tate gazed on him for some moments. Heaven knows with what qualities of mind or person the old man had endowed him, for while to others he was only Sir Gavin Darcy, first Knight of Gwynne, Tate in all likelihood had invested him with traits of character and appearance, of which that external shell was the mere envelope.

"We're going, Sir Gavin," muttered the old man, as if addressing the portrait; "'tis the ould stock is laving the place, never to see it more; 'tis your own proud heart will be sorry to-day to look down upon us. Ah, ah!" muttered he, "the world is changed; there was times when a Darcy wouldn't quit the house of his fathers without a blow for it—and they say we are better now!" With a heavy sigh he passed on, and stood before the next picture. "Yes, my lady," said he, "ye may well cry that lost the two beautiful boys the same morning, fighting side by side; but there's heavier grief here now; the brave youths sleep in peace and in honor, but we have no home to shelter us!"

With a slow step, and bent-down head, he tottered on, and placing the lamp upon the floor, crossed his arms upon his breast. "'Tis you that can help us now," said he,

as he cast a timid and imploring glance at the goodly countenance and rotund figure of Bernhard Emmoric, fourth Abbot of Gwynne; "'tis your reverence can offer a prayer for your own blood that's in sore trouble and distress. Do it, my lord; do it in the name of the Vargin. Smiling and happy you look, but it's sorrowful your heart is in you, to see what's going on here. Them, them was the happy days, when it wasn't the cry of grief was heard beneath this roof, but the heavenly chants of holy men, and the prayers of the blessed mass." He knelt down as he said this, and with trembling lips and tearful eyes recited some verses from his breviary.

This done, he arose, and, as if with renovated courage, proceeded on his way:

"Reginald Herbert de Guyon! ah! second Baron of Gwynne, Lord Protector of Munster, Knight of Malta, Chevalier of St. John of Jerusalem, Standard-Bearer to the Queen! and well you deserve it all! 'Tis yourself sits your horse like a proud nobleman!" He stood with eyes riveted upon the picture, while his face glowed with intense enthusiasm, and at last, as a bitter sneer passed across his lips, he added, "Ay, faith! and them that comes after us won't like the look of you. 'Tis you that'll never disguise from them your real mind, and every day they'll dine in the hall, that same frown will darken, and that same hand will threaten them."

He moved on now, and passed several portraits without stopping, muttering as he went, "'Tis more English than Irish blood is in your veins, and you won't feel as much for us as the rest;" then, halting suddenly, he stood before a tall figure, dressed in black velvet, with a deep collar of point lace. A connoisseur of higher pretensions than poor Tate might have gazed with even greater rapture at that splendid canvas, for it was from the hand of Vandyke, and in his very best manner. The picture represented the person of Sir Everard Darcy, Lord Privy Seal to Charles I. It was a specimen of manly beauty and high blood, such as the great Fleming loved to paint, and even yet the proud and lofty forehead, the deep-set brown eyes, the thin compressed lip, the long and somewhat projecting chin, seemed to address themselves to the beholder with traits of character more than mere painting is able to convey. Tate approached the spot with an almost trembling veneration, and bowed deeply before the haughty figure. "There was a time, Sir Everard, when your word could make a duke or a marquis—when your whisper in the king's ear could bring

grief or joy to any heart in the empire. Could you do nothing for us now? They say you never were at a loss, no matter what came to pass—that you were always ready-witted to save your master from trouble—and oh! if the power hasn't left you, stand by us now. It is not because your eyes are so bright, and that quiet smile is on your lips, that your heart does not feel, for I know well that the day you were beheaded you had the same look on you as you have now. I think I see you this minute, as you lifted your head off the block to settle the lace collar that the villain the executioner rumbled with his bloody fingers; I think I hear the words you spoke: 'Honest Martin, for all your practice, you are but a clumsy valet.' Well, well! 'tis a happier and a prouder day that same than to-morrow's dawn will bring to ourselves. Yes, yes, my darlings," said Tate, with a benevolent smile, as he waved his hand toward a picture where two beautiful children were represented, sitting on the grass, and playing with flowers, "be happy and amuse yourselves, in God's name; 'tis the only time for happiness your lives ever gave you. Ah! and here's your father, with a smile on his face and a cheerful brow, for he had both till the day misfortune robbed him of his children;" and he stood in front of a portrait of an officer in an admiral's uniform. He was a distinguished member of the Darcy family; but from the nature of his services, which were all maritime, and the great number of years he had spent away from Ireland, possessed less of Tate's sympathy than most of the others.

"They say you didn't like Ireland; but I don't believe them. There never was a Darcy didn't love the ould island; but I know well whose fault it was if you didn't—it was that dark villain that's standing at your side, ould Harry Inchiquin, the renegade, that turned many a man against his country. Ye may frown and scowl at me; but if you were alive this minute, I'd say it to your face. It was you that first brought gambling and dicing under this blessed roof; it was you that sent the ould acres to the hammer; 'twas you that loved rioting, and dueling, and every wickedness, just like old Bagenal Daly himself, that never could sleep in his bed if he hadn't a fight on hand."

"What ho! you old reprobate!" called out Daly, in a voice which, echoing under the arched roof, seemed rather to float through the atmosphere than issue from any particular quarter.

"O marceiful Father!" cried Tate, as,

falling on his knees, the lamp dropped from his fingers, and became extinguished—"O merciful Father! sure I didn't mane it; 'tis what the lying books said of you—bad luck to the villains that wrote them! O God! pardon me; I never thought you'd hear me; and if it's in trouble you are, I'll say a mass for you every day till Aaster, and one every Friday as long as I live."

A hoarse burst of laughter broke from Daly, while pacing the gallery with heavy tread he went forth, banging the door behind him. The terror was too great for poor Tate's endurance, and, with a faint cry for mercy, he rolled down upon the floor almost insensible.

When morning broke, he was found seated in the refectory, pale and careworn; but no entreaty, nor no pressing, could elicit from him one word of a secret in which he believed were equally involved the honor of the dead and the safety of himself.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A GLANCE AT PUBLIC OPINION IN THE YEAR 1800.

AMONG the arrangements for the departure of the family from the abbey, all of which were confided to Bagenal Daly, was one which he pressed with a more than ordinary zeal and anxiety; this was, that they should set out at a very early hour of the morning—at dawn of day, if possible. Lady Eleanor's habits made such a plan objectionable, and it was only by representing the great sacrifice of feeling a later departure would exact, when crowds of country people would assemble to take their farewells of them forever, that she consented. While Daly depicted the unnecessary sorrow to which they would expose themselves by the sight of their old and attached tenantry, he strenuously preserved silence on the real reason which actuated him, and to explain which a brief glance at the state of public feeling at the period is necessary.

To such a pitch of acrimony and animosity were parties borne by the agitation which preceded the carrying of the "Union," that all previous character and conduct of those who voted on the question were deemed as nothing in comparison with the line they adopted on the one absorbing subject. If none who advocated the Ministerial plan escaped the foulest animadversions, all who espoused the opposite side were exalted to the dignity of patriots; argument and reason went for little, principle

for still less; a vote was deemed the touchstone of honesty. Such rash and hasty judgments suited the temper of the times, and it may be said, in extenuation, were not altogether without some show of reason. Each day revealed some desertion from the popular party of men who, up to that moment, had rejected all the seductions of the Crown; country gentlemen, hitherto supposed inaccessible to all the temptations of bribery, were found suddenly addressing speculative letters to their constituencies, wherein they ingeniously discussed all the contingencies of a measure they had once opposed without qualification. Noblemen of high rank and fortune were seen to pay long visits at the Castle, and, by a strange fatality, were found to have modified their opinions exactly at the period selected by the Crown to bestow on them designations of honor or situations of trust and dignity. Lawyers in high practice at the bar, men esteemed by their profession, and held in honor by the public, were seen to abandon their position of proud independence, and accept Government appointments, in many cases inferior both in profit and rank to what they had surrendered.

There seemed a kind of panic abroad. Men feared to walk without the protective mantle of the Crown being extended over them; the barriers of shame were broken down by the extent to which corruption had spread. The examples of infamy were many, and several were reconciled to the ignominy of their degradation by their associates in disgrace. That in such general corruption the judgments of the public should have been equally wholesale, is little to be wondered at; the regret is rather that they were so rarely unjust and ill-bestowed.

Public confidence was utterly uprooted; there was a national bankruptcy of honor, and none were trusted; all the guarantees for high principle and rectitude a lifetime had given, all the hostages to good faith years of unimpeached honor bestowed, were forgotten in a moment, and such as opposed the Government measure with less of acrimony or activity than their neighbors, were set down "as waiting for or soliciting the bribery of the Crown."

To this indiscriminating censure the Knight of Gwynne was a victim. It may be remarked that in times of popular excitement, when passions are rife and the rude enthusiasm of the mass has beaten down the more calmly weighed opinion of the few, that there is a strange pleasure felt in the detection of any real or supposed lapse of one once esteemed. It were well

if this malignant delight were limited to the mere mob, but it is not so; men of education and position are not exempt from its taint. It would seem as if society were so thoroughly disorganized that every feeling was perverted, and all the esteem for what is good and great had degenerated into a general cry of exultation over each new instance of tarnished honor.

Accustomed as we now are to the most free and unfettered criticism of all public men and their acts, it would yet astonish any one not conversant with that period to look back to the newspapers of the time, and see the amount of violence and personality with which every man obnoxious to a party was visited; coarse invective stood the place of argument, a species of low humor had replaced the light brilliancy of wit. The public mind, fed on grosser materials, had lost all appetite for the piquancy of more highly flavored food, and the purveyors were not sorry to find a market for a commodity which cost them so little to procure. In this spirit was it that one of the most popular of the Opposition journals announced for the amusement of its readers a series of sketches under the title of "The Gallery of Traitors,"—a supposed collection of portraits to be painted for the viceroy, and destined to decorate one of the chambers of the Castle.

Not satisfied with aspersing the reputation, and mistaking the views of any who sided with the minister, the attack went further, and actually ascribed the casualties which occurred to such persons or their families as instances of divine vengeance. In this diabolical temper the Knight of Gwynne was held up to reprobation; it was a bold thought to venture on calumniating a man every action of whose life had placed him above even slander, but its boldness was the warranty of success. The whole story of his arrival in Dublin, his dinner with the secretary, his intimacy with Heffernan, was related circumstantially. The night on which Heffernan intrapped him by the trick already mentioned, was quoted as the eventful moment of his change. Then came the history of his appearance in the House on the evening of the second reading, his hesitation to enter, his doubts and waverings were all described, ending with a minute detail of his compact with Lord Castlereagh, by which his voting was dispensed with, and his absence from the division deemed enough.

Gleeson's flight and its consequences were soon known. The rum of Darcy's large fortune was a circumstance not likely to lose by public discussion, particularly when

the daily columns of a newspaper devoted a considerable space to the most minute details of that catastrophe. It was asserted that the knight had sold himself for a marquissate and a seat in the English peerage. That his vote was deemed so great a prize by the minister that he might have made even higher terms, but in the confidence of possessing a large fortune he had only bargained for rank, and rejected every offer of mere emolument, and now came the dreadful retribution on his treachery, the downfall of his fortune by the villany of his agent. To assume a title when the very expense of the patent could not be borne was an absurdity, and this explained why Maurice Darcy remained ungazetted. Such was the plausible calumny generally circulated, and, alas! for the sake of charity, scarcely less generally believed.

There are epidemics of credulity as of infidelity, and such a plague raged at this period. Anything was believed, were it only bad enough. While men, therefore, went about deploring, with all the sanctity of self-esteem, the fall of Maurice Darcy, public favor, by one of those caprices all its own, adopted the cause of his colleague, Hickman O'Reilly. His noble refusal of every offer (and what a catalogue of seductions did they not enumerate!) was given in the largest type. They recounted, with all the eloquence of their calling, the glittering coronets rejected, the places of honor and profit declined, the dignities proffered in vain, preferring as he did the untitled rank of a country gentleman, and the unpurchasable station of a true friend to Ireland.

He was eulogized in capital letters, and canonized among the martyrs of patriotism; public orators belabored him with praises, and ballad-singers chanted his virtues through the streets. Nor was this turn of feeling a thing to be neglected by one so shrewd in worldly matters. His sudden accession to increased fortune and the position attendant on it, would, he well knew, draw down upon him many a sneer upon his origin, and some unpleasant allusions to the means by which the wealth was amassed. To anticipate such an ungrateful inquiry he seized the lucky accident of his popularity, and turned it to the best account.

Whole "leaders" were devoted to the laudation of his character: the provincial journals, less scrupulous than the metropolitan, boldly asserted their knowledge of the various bribes tendered to him, and threw out dark hints of certain disclosures which, although at present refrained from

out of motives of delicacy, should Mr. O'Reilly ultimately be persuaded to make, the public would be horrified at the extent to which corruption had been carried.

The O'Reilly liveries, hitherto a modest snuff color, were now changed to an emerald green; an Irish motto ornamented the garter of the family crest; while the very first act of his return to the west was a splendid donation to the chapel of Ballyraggan, or, as it was subsequently and more politely named, the Church of St. Barnabas of Trèves; all measures dictated by a high-spirited independence, and a mind above the vulgar bigotry of party.

Had O'Reilly stopped here—had he contented himself with the preliminary arrangements for being a patriot, it is probable that Bagenal Daly had never noticed them, or done so merely with some passing sarcasm; but the fact was otherwise. Daly discovered, in the course of his journey westward, that the rumors of the knight's betrayal of his party were generally disseminated in exact proportion with the new-born popularity of O'Reilly; that the very town of Westport, where Darcy's name was once adored, was actually placarded with insulting notices of the knight's conduct, and scandalous aspersions on his character; jeering allusions to his altered fortunes were sung in the villages as he passed along, and it was plain that the whole current of popular opinion had set strong against him.

To spare his friend Darcy a mortification which Daly well knew would be one of the greatest to his feelings, the early departure was planned and decided on. It must not be inferred that because the knight would have felt deeply the unjust censure of the masses, he was a man to care or bend beneath the angry menace of a mob; far from it. The ingratitude toward himself would have called forth the least of his regrets; it was rather a heartfelt sorrow at the hopeless ignorance and degradation of those who could be so easily deceived—at that populace whose fickleness preferred the tinsel and trappings of patriotism to the acts and opinions of one they had known and respected for years.

Long before day broke, Daly was stirring and busied with all the preparations of the journey; the traveling carriage, covered with its various boxes and imperials, stood before the door in the court-yard, the horses were harnessed and bridled in the stables; everything was in readiness for a start; and yet, save himself and the stablemen, all within the abbey seemed buried in slumber.

Although it was scarcely more than five o'clock, Daly's impatience at the continued quietude around him began to manifest itself; he walked hastily to and fro, endeavoring to occupy his thoughts by a hundred little details, till at last he found himself returning to the same places and with the self-same objects again and again, while he muttered broken sentences of angry comments on people who could sleep so soundly at such a time.

It was in one of these fretful moods he had approached the little flower-garden of the sub-prior's house, when the twinkling of a light attracted him; it came from the window of Lady Eleanor's favorite drawing-room, and glittered like a star in the gloom of the morning. Curious to see who was stirring in that part of the house, he drew near, and opening the wicket, noiselessly approached the window. He there beheld Lady Eleanor, who, supported on Helen's arm, moved slowly along the room, stopping at intervals, and again proceeding; she seemed to be taking a last farewell of the various well-known objects endeared to her by years of companionship; her handkerchief was often raised to her eyes as she went, but neither uttered a syllable. Ashamed to have obtruded even thus upon a scene of private sorrow, Daly turned back again to the court-yard, where now the loud voice of the knight was heard giving his orders to the servants.

The first greetings over, the knight took Daly's arm and walked beside him.

"I have been thinking over the matter in the night, Bagenal," said he, "and am convinced it were far better that you should remain with Lionel; we can easily make our journey alone—the road is open, and no difficulty in following it—but that poor boy will need advice and counsel. You will probably receive letters from Dublin by post, with some instructions how to act; in any case my heart fails me in leaving Lionel to himself."

"I'll remain, then," replied Daly; "I'll see you the first stage out of Westport, and then return here. It is, perhaps, better as you say."

"There is another point," said Darcy, after a pause, and with evident hesitation in his manner; "it is perfectly impossible for me to walk through this labyrinth without your guidance, Bagenal—I have neither head nor heart for it—you must be the pilot, and if you quit the helm for a moment—"

"Trust me, Maurice, I'll not do it," said Daly, grasping his hand with a firm grip.

"I know that well," said the knight, as

his voice trembled with agitation; "I never doubted the will, Bagenal, it was the power only I suspected. I see you will not understand me. Confound it! why should old friends, such as we are, keep beating about the bush, or fencing like a pair of diplomatists? I wanted to speak to you about that bond of yours: there is something like seven thousand pounds lying to my credit at Henshaw's; take what is necessary, and get rid of that scoundrel Hickman's claim. If they should arrest you—"

"I wish he had done so yesterday—my infernal temper, that never will let matters take due course, stopped the fellow; you can't see why, but I'll tell you. I paid the money to Hickman's law-agent, in Dublin, the morning I started from town, and they had not time to stop the execution of the writ down here. Yes, Darcy, there was one drop more in the stoup, and I drained it! The last few acres I possessed in the world, the old estate of Hardress Daly, is now in the ownership of one Samuel Kerney, grocer, of Bride street. I paid off Hickman, however, and found something like one hundred and twenty-eight pounds afterward in my pocket. But let us talk of something else—you must not yield to these people without a struggle; Bicknell says there are abundant grounds for a trial at bar in the affair. If collusion between Hickman and Gleeson should be proved—that many of the leases were granted with false signatures annexed—"

"I'll do whatever men of credit and character counsel me," said the knight; "if there be any question of right, I'll neither compromise nor surrender it—I can promise no more. But here comes Lionel—to announce breakfast, perhaps."

And so it was; the young man came toward them with an easy smile, presenting a hand to each. If sorrow had sunk deeply into his heart, few traces of grief were apparent in his manly, handsome countenance.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the party, the breakfast did not pass over as lightly as the dinner of the previous day; the eventful moment of parting was now too near not to exclude every other subject, and even when by an exertion some allusion to a different topic would be made, a chance question, the entrance of a servant for orders, or the tramp of horses in the court-yard, would suddenly bring back the errant thoughts, and place the sad reality in all its force before them.

Breakfast was over, and yet no one stirred; a heavy, dreary reverie seemed to have settled on all except Daly—and he, from del-

icacy, restrained the impatience that was working within him. In vain he sought to catch Darcy's eye, and then Lionel's—both were bent downward. Lady Eleanor at last looked up, and at once seemed to read what was passing in his mind.

"I am ready," said she, in a low, gentle voice, "and I see Mr. Daly is not sorry at it. Helen, dearest, fetch me my gloves."

She arose, and the others with her. The calmness in which she spoke on the theme that none dared approach, seemed almost to electrify them, when suddenly a low sob was heard, and the mother fell, in a burst of anguish, into the arms of her son.

"Eleanor, my dearest Eleanor!" said Darcy, as his pale cheek shook and his lip trembled. As if recalled to herself by the words, she raised her head, and, with a smile of deep-meaning sorrow, said,

"It is the first tear I have yet shed; it shall be the last." Then, taking Daly's arm, she walked steadily forward.

"I have often wondered," said she, "at the prayer of a condemned felon for a few hours longer of life, but I can understand it now. I feel as if I could give life itself for another day within these walls, where often I have pined with *ennui*. You will watch over Lionel for me, Mr. Daly. When the world went fairly with us, calamities came softened—as the summer rain falls lighter in sunshine—but now, now that we have lost so much, we cannot afford more."

Daly's stern features grew sterner and darker; his lips were compressed more firmly; he tried to say a few words, but a low, indistinct muttering was all that came.

The next moment the carriage door was closed on the party—they were gone.

Lionel stood gazing after them till they disappeared; and then, with a slow step, re-entered the abbey.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BAGENAL DALY'S RETURN.

LIONEL DARCY bore up manfully against his altered fortunes so long as others were around him, and that the necessity for exertion existed; but once more alone within that silent and deserted house, all his courage failed him at once, and he threw himself upon a seat, and gave way to grief. Never were the brighter prospects of opening life more cruelly dashed, and yet his sorrow was for others. Every object about brought up thoughts of that dear mother and sister, to whom the refinements of life

were less luxuries than wants. How were they to engage in the stern conflict with daily poverty—to see themselves bereft of all the appliances which filled up the hours of each day? Could his mother, frail and delicate as she was, much longer sustain the effort by which she first met the stroke of fortune? Would not the reaction, whenever it came, be too terrible to be borne? And Helen, too—his sweet and lovely sister—she whom he had loved to think of as the admired of a splendid court; on whose appearance in the world he had so often speculated, castle-building over the sensations her beauty and her gracefulness would excite—what was to be her lot? Deep and heartfelt as his sorrow was for them, it was only when he thought of his father that Lionel's anguish burst its bounds, and he broke into a torrent of tears. From very boyhood he had loved and admired him, but never had the high features of his character so impressed Lionel Darey, as when the reverse of fortune called up that noble spirit whose courage displayed itself in manly submission and the generous effort to support the hearts of others. How cruel did the decrees of fate seem to him, that such a man should be visited so heavily, while vice and meanness prospered on every side. He knew not that virtue has no nobler attribute than its power of sustaining unmerited affliction, and that the destiny of the good man is never more nobly carried out than when he points the example of patience in suffering.

Immersed in such gloomy thoughts, he wandered on from room to room, feeding, as it were, the appetite for sorrow, by the sight of every object that could remind him of past happiness; nor were they few. There was the window-seat he loved to sit in as a boy, when all the charm of some high-wrought story could not keep his eyes from wandering at intervals over the green hills, where the lambs were playing, or adown by that dark stream, where circling eddies marked the leaping trout. Here was Helen's favorite room, a little octagon boudoir, from every window of which a different prospect opened; it seemed to breathe of her sweet presence even yet; the open desk, from which she had taken some letter, lay there upon the table, the pen she had last touched, the chair she sat upon, all, even to the little nosegay of scarce faded flowers, the last she had plucked, teemed with her memory. He walked on with bent-down head and tardy step, and entered the little room which, opening on the lawn, was used by the knight to receive such of the tenantry as came to him for assistance or advice; many an hour had he

sat there beside his father, and, while listening with the eager curiosity of youth to the little stories of the poor man's life, his trials and his difficulties, imbibed lessons of charity and benevolence never to be forgotten.

The great square volume in which the knight used to record his notes of the neighboring poor, lay on the table; his chair was placed near it; all was in readiness for his coming who was to come there no more! As Lionel stood in silent sorrow, surveying these objects, the shadow of a man darkened the window. He turned suddenly, and saw the tall, scarecrow figure of Flury, the madman. A large placard decorated the front of his hat, on which the words "Down with the Darcys!" were written in capital letters, and he carried in his hand a bundle of papers, like handbills, which he shook with a menacing air at Lionel.

"What is this, Flury?" said the youth, opening the window, and at the same time snatching one of the papers from his hand.

"It's the full account of the grand auction of government hacks," said Flury, with the sing-song intonation of a street-crier, "no longer needed for the service of the Crown, and to be sowld without resarve."

"And who sent you here with this?" said the young man, moderating his tone to avoid startling the other.

"Connor Egan, Hickman's man, gave me a pint and a noggin of spirits to cry the auction, and tould me to come up here, for maybe you'd like to hear of it yerselves."

Lionel threw his eyes over the offensive lines, where, in coarse ribaldry, names the most venerable were held up to scorn and derision. If it was some satisfaction to find that his father was linked in the ruffianly attack with men of honor as unblemished as his own, he was not less outraged at the vindictive cowardice that had suggested this insult.

"There'll be a fine sight of people there, by all accounts," said Flury, gravely, "for the auction-bills is far and near over the country, and the Castlebar coach has one on each door."

"Is popular feeling always as corrupt a thing as this?" muttered Lionel, with a bitter sneer, while at the same time the door of the room was opened, and Daly entered. His face was marked by a severe cut on one cheek, from which the blood had flowed freely; a dark blue stain, as of a blow, was on his chin, and one hand he carried enveloped in his handkerchief; his clothes were torn besides in many places, and bore traces of a severe personal conflict.

"What has happened?" said Lionel, as he looked in alarm at the swollen and blood-stained features. "Did you fall?"

"Fall! no such thing, boy," replied Daly, sternly; "but some worthy folk in Castlebar planned a little surprise for me this morning. They heard, it seems, that we passed through the town by daybreak, but that I was to return before noon; and so they placed some cars and turf creels in the main street, opposite the inn, in such a way that, while seeming merely accident, would effectually stop a horseman from proceeding. When I arrived at the spot, I halted, and called out to the fellows to move on, and let me pass. They took no heed of my words, and then I saw in a moment what was intended. I had no arms; I purposely left my pistols behind me, for I feared something might provoke me, though not anticipating such as this. So I got down and drew this wattle from the side of a turf creel—you see it is a strong blackthorn, and good stuff, too. Before I was in the saddle the word was passed, and the whole street was full of people, and I now perceived that, by the same maneuver as they employed in front, they had also closed the rear upon me, and cut off my retreat. 'Now for it! now for it!' they shouted. 'Where's Bully Dodd?—where's the Bully?' I suppose you know the fellow?"

"The man that was transported?"

"The same. The greatest ruffian the country was cursed with. He came at the call, without coat or waistcoat, his shirt-sleeves tucked up to his shoulders, and a handkerchief round his waist, ready for a fight. There was an old quarrel between us, for it was I captured the fellow the day after he burnt down Dawson's house. He came toward me, the mob opening a way for him, with a pewter pot of porter in his hand.

"'We want you to dhrink a toast for us, Mr. Daly,' said he, with a marked courtesy, and a grin that amused the fellows around him. 'You were always a patriot, and won't make any objections to it.'

"'What is the liquor?'" said I.

"'Good porter—divil a less,' cried the mob; 'Mol Heavyside's best.' And so I took the vessel in my hands, and before they could say a syllable drained it to the bottom, for I was very thirsty with the ride, and in want of something to refresh myself.

"'But you didn't dhrink the toast,' said Dodd, savagely.

"'Where was the toast? He didn't say the words,' shouted the mob.

"'Off with his hat, and make him drink it,' cried out several others from a distance. They saved me one part of the trouble, for they knocked off my hat with a stone.

"'Here's health and long life to Hickman O'Reilly!' cried out Dodd, 'that's the toast.'

"'And what have I to wish him either?'" said I, while at the same time I tore open the pewter measure, and then with one strong dash of my hand drove it down on the ruffian's head, down to the very brows. I lost no time afterward, but striking right and left, plunged forward; the mob fled as I followed, and by good luck, the car-horses getting frightened, sprang forward also, and so I rode on with a few slight cuts a stone or two struck me, nothing more; but they'll need a plumber to rid my friend Dodd of his helmet."

"And we used to call this town our own," said Lionel, bitterly.

"Nothing is a man's own but his honor, sir. That base cowardice yonder believes itself honest and independent, as if a single right feeling, a single good or virtuous thought, could consort with habits like theirs; but they are less base than those who instigate them. The real scoundrels are the Hickmans of this world, the men who compensate for low birth and plebeian origin by calumniating the well-born and the noble. What is Flury wanting here?" said he, as, attracted by Daly's narrative, the poor fellow had drawn near to listen.

"I am glad you put the pewter pot on the bully's head, he's a disgrace to the town," said Flury, with a laugh; and he turned away as if enjoying the downfall of an enemy.

"Oh! I see," said Daly, taking up one of the papers that had fallen to the ground, "this is the first act of the drama; come along, Lionel, let us talk of matters nearer to our hearts."

They walked along together to the library, each silently following his own train of thought, and for some time neither seemed disposed to speak. Lionel at length broke silence, as he said,

"I have been thinking over it, and am convinced my father will never be able to endure this life of inactivity before him."

"That is exactly the fear I entertain myself for him; altered fortunes will impress themselves more in the diminished sphere to which his influence and utility will be reduced, than in anything else; but how to remedy this?"

"I have been considering that also, but you must advise me if the plan be a likely one. He held the rank of colonel once—"

"To be sure he did, and with good right, he raised the regiment himself. Darcy's Light Horse were as handsome a set of fellows as the service could boast of."

"Well, then, my notion is, that although the Government did not buy his vote on the Union, there would be no just reason why they should not appoint him to some one of those hundred situations which the service includes. His former rank, his connection and position, his unmerited misfortunes, are, in some sense, claims. I can scarcely suppose his opposition in Parliament would be remembered against him at such a moment.

"I hardly think it would," said Daly, musingly; "there is much in what you propose. Would Lord Netherby support such a request if it were made?"

"He could not well decline it; almost the last thing he said at parting was, that whatever favor he enjoyed should be gladly employed in our behalf. Besides, we really seek nothing to which we may not lay fair and honest claim. My intention would be to write at once to Lord Netherby, acquainting him briefly with our altered fortunes."

"The more briefly on that topic the better," said Daly, dryly.

"To mention my father's military rank and services, to state that having raised and equipped a company at his own expense, without accepting the slightest aid from the Government, now, in his present change of condition, he would be proud of any recognition of those services which once he was but too happy to render unrewarded to the Crown. There are many positions, more or less lucrative, which would well become him, and which no right-minded gentleman could say were ill bestowed on such a man."

"All true," said Daly, whose eye brightened as he gazed on the youth whose character seemed already about to develop itself under the pressure of misfortune with traits of more thoughtful meaning than yet appeared in him.

"Then I will write to Lord Netherby at once," resumed Lionel; "there can be no indelicacy in making such a request; he is our relative, the nearest my mother has."

"He is far better, he's a lord in waiting, and a very subtle courtier," said Daly. "Write this day, and, if you like it, I'll dictate the letter."

Lionel accepted the offer with all the pleasure possible. He had been from boyhood a firm believer in the resources and skill of Daly in every possible contingency of life, and looked on him as one of those

persons who invariably succeed when everybody else fails.

There is a species of promptitude in action, the fruit generally of a strong will and a quick imagination, which young men mistake for a much higher gift, and estimate at a price very far above its value. Bagenal Daly had, however, other qualities than these, but truth compels us to own, that in Lionel's eyes his supremacy on such grounds was no small merit. He had ever found him ready for every emergency, prompt to decide, no less quick to act, and without stopping to inquire how far success followed such rapid resolves, this very energy charmed him. It was, then, in perfect confidence on the skill and address of his adviser that Lionel sat down, pen in hand, to write at his dictation.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE LAW AND ITS CHANCES.

WE left Mr. Daly at the conclusion of our last chapter in the exercise of what to him was always a critical matter—the functions of a polite letter-writer. His faults, it is but justice to say, were much less those of style than of the individual himself; for if he rarely failed to convey a clear notion of his views and intentions, he still more rarely omitted to impart considerable insight into his own character.

His abrupt and broken sentences, his sudden outbreaks of intelligence or passion, were not inaptly conveyed by the character of a handwriting, which was bold, careless, and hurried. Indifferent to everything like neatness or accuracy, generally blotted, and never very legible, these defects, if they did not palliate, they might, in a measure, explain something of his habits of thought and action, but now, when about to dictate to another, the case was different, and those interruptions which Daly would have set down by a dash of his pen, were to be conveyed by the less significant medium of mere blanks.

"I'm ready," said Lionel, at length, as he sat for some time in silent expectation of Daly's commencement. But that gentleman was walking up and down the room with his hands behind his back, occasionally stopping to look out upon the lawn.

"Very well, begin—" My dear Lord Netherby, or 'My dear lord'—it doesn't signify which, though I suppose he would be of another mind, and find a whole world

of difference between the two. Have you that?—very well. Then go on to mention, in such terms as you like yourself, the sudden change of fortune that has befallen your family, briefly, but decisively.”

“Dictate it, I’ll follow you,” said Lionel, somewhat put out by this mode of composition.

“Oh! it doesn’t matter exactly what the words are—say, that a d—d scoundrel, Gleeson—Honest Tom we always called him—has cut and run with something like a hundred thousand pounds, after forging and falsifying every signature to our leases for the last ten or fifteen years; we are, in consequence, ruined—obliged to leave the abbey, take to a cottage—a devilish poor one, too.”

“Don’t go so fast—‘we are, in consequence—”

“Utterly smashed—broken up—no home, and devilish little to live upon—my mother’s jointure being barely sufficient for herself and Helen. I want, therefore, to remind you—your lordship, that is—to remind your lordship of the kind pledge which you so lately made us, at a time when we little anticipated the early necessity we should have to recall it. My father, some forty-five or six years back, raised the Darcy Light Horse, equipped, armed, and mounted six hundred men at his own expense. This regiment, of which he took the head, did good service in the Low Countries, and, although distinguished in many actions, he received nothing but thanks—happily not wanting more, if so much. Times are changed now with him, and it would be a seasonable act of kindness, and a suitable reward to an old officer—highly esteemed as he is, and has been through life—to make up for past neglect by some appointment—the service has many such—Confound them! the pension-list shows what fellows there are—‘governors and deputy governors,’ ‘acting adjutants’ of this, and ‘deputy assistant commissaries’ of that.”

“I’m not to write that, I suppose?”

“No, you needn’t—it would do no harm, though, to give them a hint on the subject—but never mind it now. As for myself, I’ll leave the Guards, and take service in the line. I am only anxious for a regiment on a foreign station, and if in India, so much the better.’ Is that down? Well—eh! that will do, I think. You may just say, that the matter ought to be arranged without any communication with your father, inasmuch as, from motives of delicacy, he might feel bound to decline what was tendered as an offer, though he

would hold himself pledged to accept what was called by the name of duty. Yes, Lionel, that’s the way to put the case—active service, by all means, active service—no guard-mounting at Windsor or Carlton House—no Hounslow Heath engagements.”

Lionel followed, as well as he was able, the suggestions, to which sundry short interjections and broken “hems!” and “ha’s!” gave no small confusion, and at last finished a letter, which, if it conveyed some part of the intention, was even a stronger exponent of the character of him who dictated it.

“Shall I read it over to you?”

“Heaven forbid! If you did, I’d alter every word of it. I never reconsidered a note that I did not change my mind about it, and I don’t believe I ever counted a sum of money over more than once without making the tot vary each time. Send it off as it is—‘Yours truly, Lionel Darcy.’”

It was about ten days after the events we have just related, that Bagenal Daly sat in consultation with Darcy’s lawyer in the back parlor of the knight’s Dublin residence. Lionel, who had been in conclave with them for several hours, had just left the room, and they now remained in thoughtful silence, pondering over their late discussion.

“That young man,” said Bicknell, at length, “is very far from being deficient in ability, but he is wayward and reckless as the rest of the family; he seems to have signed his name everywhere they told him, and to anything. Here are leases forever at nominal rents—no fines in renewal—rights of fishery disposed of, oak timber, marble quarries, property of every kind made away with. Never was there such wasteful, ruinous expenditure coupled with speculation and actual robbery at the same time.”

“What’s to be done?” said Daly, interrupting a catalogue of disasters he could scarcely listen to with patience; “have you anything to propose?”

“We must move in equity for an inquiry into the validity of these documents; many of the signatures are probably false; we can lay a case for a jury—”

“Well, I don’t want to hear the details—you mean to go to law; now, has Darcy wherewithal to sustain a suit? These Hickmans are rich.”

“Very wealthy people, indeed,” said Bicknell, dryly. “The knight cannot engage in a legal contest with them without adequate means. I am not sufficiently in possession of Mr. Darcy’s resources to pronounce on the safety of such a step.”

"I can tell you, then; they have nothing left to live upon save his wife's jointure. Lady Eleanor has something like a thousand a year in settlement—certainly not more."

"If they can contrive to live on half this sum," said the lawyer, cautiously, "we may, perhaps, find the remainder enough for our purposes. The first expenses will be, of course, very heavy; drafts to prepare, searches to make, witnesses to examine, with opinion of high counsel, will all demand considerable outlay."

"This is a point I can give no opinion upon," said Daly; "they have been accustomed to live surrounded with luxuries of every kind; whether they can at once descend to actual poverty, or would rather cling to the remnant of their former comforts, is not in my power to tell."

"The very bond under which they have foreclosed," said Bicknell, "admits of great question. Unfortunately, that fellow Gleeson destroyed all the papers before his suicide, or we could ascertain if a clause of redemption were not inserted; there was no registry of the judgment, and we are consequently in the hands of the enemy."

"I cannot help saying," said Daly, sternly, "that if it were not for the confounded subtleties of your craft, roguery would have a less profitable sphere of employment; so many hitches, so many small crotchety conjunctures influence the mere question of right and wrong, that a man is led at last to think less of justice itself than of the petty artifices to secure a superiority."

"I must assure you that you are in a great error," said Bicknell, calmly; "the complication of a suit is the necessary security the law has recourse to against the wiles and stratagems of designing men. What you call its hitches and subtleties, are the provisions against craft by which mere honesty is protected; that they are sometimes employed to defeat justice, is saying no more than that they are only human contrivances, for what good institution cannot be so perverted?"

"So much the better if you can think so. Now, what are Darcy's chances of success?—never mind recapitulating details, which remind me a great deal too much of my own misfortunes, but say, in one word, is the prospect good or bad, or has it a tinge of both?"

"It may be any of the three, according to the way in which the claim is prosecuted; if there be sufficient means—"

"Is that the great question?"

"Undoubtedly; large fees to the leading counsel, retainers, if a record be kept for

trial at the Assizes, and payment to special juries, all are expensive, and all necessary."

"I'll write to Darcy to-night, then—or, better still, I'll write to Lady Eleanor, repeating what you have told me, and asking her advice and opinion; meanwhile, lose no time in consulting Mr. Boyle—you prefer him?"

"Certainly, in a case like this he cannot be surpassed; besides, he is already well acquainted with all the leading facts, and has taken a deep interest in the affair. There are classes and gradations of ability at the bar irrespective of degrees of actual capacity; we have the heavy artillery of the Equity Court, the light field-pieces of the King's Bench, and the Congreve rockets of Assize display; to misplace or confound them would be a grave error."

"I know where I'd put them all, if *my* pleasure were to be consulted," muttered Daly, in an under growl.

"Now, if we have a case for a jury, we must secure Mr. O'Halloran—"

"He who made a speech to the mob in Smithfield the other day?"

"The same; I perceive you scarcely approve of my suggestion, but his success at the bar is very considerable; he knows a good deal of law, and a great deal more about mankind. A rising man, sir, I assure you."

"It must be in a falling state of society, then," said Daly, bitterly; "time was when the first requisite of a barrister was to be a gentleman. An habitual respect for the decorous observances of polite life was deemed an essential in one whose opinions were as often to be listened to in questions of right feeling as of right doing. His birth, his social position, and his acquirements, were the guarantees he gave the world that, while discussing subtleties, he would not be seduced into anything low or unworthy. I am sorry that notion has become antiquated."

"You would not surely exclude men of high talents from a career because their origin was humble?" said Bicknell.

"And why not, sir? Upon what principle was the body-guard of noble persons selected to surround the person of the sovereign, save that blood was deemed the best security for allegiance? and why should not the law, only second in sacred respect to the person of the monarch, be as rigidly protected? The Church excludes from her ministry all who even by physical defect may suggest matter of ridicule or sarcasm to the laity; for the same reason I would reject from all concern with the administration of justice those coarser minds

whose habits familiarize them with vulgar tastes and low standards of opinion."

"I confess this seems to me very questionable doctrine, not to speak of the instances which the law exhibits of her brightest ornaments derived from the very humblest walks in life."

"Such cases are, probably, esteemed the more because of that very reason," said Daly, haughtily; "they are like the pearl in the oyster-shell, not very remarkable in itself, but one must go so low down to seek for it. I have an excuse for warmth; I have lost the greater part of a large fortune in contesting a right pronounced by high authority to be incontrovertible. Besides," added he, with a courteous smile, "if Mr. Bicknell may oppose my opinion, he has the undoubted superiority that attaches to liberality, his own family claiming alliance with the best in the land."

This happy turn seemed to divert the course of a conversation which half threatened angrily. Again the business topic was resumed, and after a short discussion, Bicknell took his leave, while Daly prepared to write his letter to Lady Eleanor.

He had not proceeded far in his task when Lionel entered with a newspaper in his hand.

"Have you heard the news of the notorious robber being taken?" said he.

"Who do you mean? Barrington is it?"

"No; Freney."

"Freney! taken? — when — how — where?"

"It's curious enough," said Lionel, coolly, seating himself to read the paragraph, without noticing the eagerness of Daly's manner; "the fellow seems to have had a taste for sporting matters, which no personal fear could eradicate. His capture took place this wise. He went over to Doncaster, to be present at the Spring Meeting, where he betted freely, and won largely. There happened, however, to come a reverse to his fortune, and on the last day of the running he lost everything, and was obliged to apply for assistance to a former companion, who, it would seem, was some hundred pounds in his debt; this worthy, having no desire to refund, threatened the police; Freney became exasperated, knocked him down on the spot, and then, turning smartly round, chucked one of the jockeys from his saddle, sprang on the horse's back, and made off like lightning. The other, only stunned for a moment, was soon on his legs again, and the cry of 'Freney! it was Freney, the robber!' resounded throughout the race-course. The

scene must then have been a most exciting one, for the whole mounted population, with one accord, gave chase. Noblemen and country gentlemen, fox-hunters, farmers, and blacklegs, away they went, Freney about a quarter of a mile in front, and riding splendidly."

"That I'm sure of," said Daly, earnestly. "Go on!"

"Mellington took the lead of every one, mounted on that great steeple-chase horse he is so proud of—no fences too large for him, they say; but the robber—and what a good judge of country the fellow must be—left the heavy ground, and preferred even breasting a long hill of grass-land, with several high rails, to the open country below, where the clay soil distressed his horse. By this maneuver, says the newspaper, he was obliged to make a circuit which again brought the great body of his pursuers close up with him; and now his dexterity as a horseman became apparent, for while riding at top speed, and handling his horse with the most perfect judgment, he actually contrived to divest himself of his heavy great-coat. He had but just accomplished this very difficult task, when Lord Mellington once more came up. There was a heavy dyke in front, with a double post and rail, and at this they rushed desperately, each, apparently, calculating on the other being thrown, or at least checked.

"Freney, now only a dozen strides in advance, turned in his saddle, and drawing a pistol from his breast, took an aim—as steadily, too, as if firing at a mark. Lord Mellington saw the dreadful purpose of the robber; he shouted aloud, and pulling up with all his might, he bent down to the very mane of his horse. Freney pulled the trigger, and with one mad plunge Lord Mellington's horse came head-foremost to the ground with his rider under him. Freney was not long the victor; the racer he bestrode breasted the high rail, and, unable to clear it, fell heavily forward, smashing the frail timbers before him, and pitching the rider on his head. He was up in a second and away; for about twenty yards his speed was immense; then reeling, he staggered forward and fell senseless: before he rallied he was taken, and in handcuffs. There is a description of the fellow," said Lionel, "and, by Jove! one would think they were describing some wild denizen of the woods, or some strange animal of savage life, so eloquent is the paragraph about his appearance and personal strength."

"A well-knit fellow, no doubt, and more

than a match for most in single combat," said Daly, musing.

"You have seen him, then?"

"Ay, that I have, and must see him again. Where is he confined?"

"In Newgate."

"That is so far fortunate, because the jailer is an old acquaintance of mine."

"I have a great curiosity to see this Freney."

"Come along with me, then," said Daly, as he arose and rang the bell to order a carriage; "you shall gratify your curiosity, but I must ask you to leave us alone together afterward, for, strange as it may seem, we have a little affair of confidence between us."

It did, indeed, appear not a little strange that any secret negotiation or understanding should exist between two such men, but Lionel did not venture to ask any explanation of the difficulty, but silently prepared to accompany him. As they went along toward Newgate, Daly related several anecdotes of Freney, all of which tended to show that the fellow had all his life felt that strange passion for danger so attractive to certain minds, and that his lawless career was more probably adopted from this tendency than any mere desire of money-getting. Many of his robberies resembled feats of daring rather than cautious schemes to obtain property. "Society," added Daly, "is truly not much benefited because the highwayman is capricious, but still, one cannot divest oneself of a certain interest for a rascal who has always shown himself ready to risk his neck, and who has never been charged with any distinct act of cruelty. When I say this much, I must caution you against indulging a sympathy for a law-breaker because he is not a perfect monster of iniquity; such fellows are very rare, and we are always too well inclined to admire the few good qualities of a bad man, just as we are astonished at a few words spoken plain by a parrot.

"The things themselves are neither strange nor rare,

We wonder how the devil they came there."

While Daly wisely cautioned his young companion against the indulgence of a false and mawkish sympathy for the criminal, he, in his own heart, could not help feeling the strongest interest for any misfortune of a spirit so wild and so reckless.

Daly's card, passed through the iron grating of the strong door, soon procured them admission, and they were conducted into a small and neatly furnished room, where a mild-looking, middle-aged man was seated,

reading. He rose as they entered, and saluted them respectfully.

"Good evening, Dunn, I hope I see you well. My friend, Captain Darcy—Mr. Dunn. We have just heard that the noted Freney has taken up his lodgings here, and are curious to see him."

"I'm afraid I must refuse your request, Mr. Daly; my orders are most positive about the admission of any one to the prisoner: there have been I can't say how many people here on the same errand since four o'clock, when he arrived."

"I think I ought to be free of the house," said Daly, laughing; "I matriculated here at least, if I didn't take out a high degree."

"So you did, sir," said Dunn, joining in the laugh. "Freney is in the very same cell you occupied for four months."

"Come, come, then, you can't refuse me paying a visit to my old quarters."

"There is another objection, and a stronger one—Freney himself declines seeing any one, and asked a special leave of the sheriff to refuse all comers admission to him."

"This surprises me," said Daly; "why, the fellow has a prodigious deal of personal vanity, and I cannot conceive his having adopted such a resolution."

"Perhaps I can guess his meaning," said the jailer, shrewdly; "the greater number of those who came here, and also who tried to see him in Liverpool, were artists of one kind or other, wanting to take busts or profiles of him. Now, my surmise is, Freney would not dislike the notoriety, if it were not that it might be inconvenient one of these days. To be plain, sir, though he is doubly ironed, and in the strongest part of the strongest jail in Ireland, he is at this moment meditating on an escape, in the event of which he calculates all the trouble and annoyance it would give him to have his picture or his cast stuck up in every town and village of the kingdom. This, at least, is my reading of the mystery, but I think it is not without some show of probability."

"Well, the objection could scarcely apply to me," said Daly; "if his portrait be not taken by a more skillful artist than I am, he may be very easy on the score of recognition. Pray let me send in my name to him, and if he refuses to see me, I'll not press the matter further."

Partly from an old feeling of kindness toward Daly, Dunn gave no further opposition, but in reality he was certain that Freney's refusal would set the matter at rest. His surprise was consequently great when the turnkey returned with a civil message

from Freney that he would be very glad to see Mr. Daly.

"Your friend can remain here," said Dunn, in a voice that plainly showed he was not quite easy in his mind as to the propriety of the interview; and Daly, to alleviate suspicious natural enough in one so circumstanced, assented, and walked on after the turnkey, alone.

"That's the way he spends his time; listen to him now," whispered the turnkey, as they stopped at the door of the cell, from within which the deep tones of a man's voice were heard singing to himself, as he slowly paced the narrow chamber, his heavy fetters keeping a melancholy time to the melody:

"Twas a'fter two when he quitted Naas,
But he gave the spur and he went the pace,
"As many as like may now give chase,"
Says he, "I give you warning,
You may raise the country far and near,
From Malin Head down to Cape Clear,
But the divil a man of ye all I fear,
I'll be far away before morning."

By break of day he reach'd Kildare,
The black horse never turn'd a hair;
Says Freney, "We've some time to spare,
This stage we've rather hasten'd."
So he eat four eggs and a penny rowl,
And he mix'd of whisky such a bowl!
The drink he shared with the beast, by my sowl,
For Jack was always decent.

"You might tighten the girths," Jack Freney cried,
"For I've soon a heavy road to ride."
'Twas the truth he tould, for he never lied,
The way was dark and rainy.
"Good-by," says he, "I'll soon be far,
And many a mile from Mullingar."
So he kiss'd the girl behind the bar,
'Tis the divil you wor, Jack Freney!

"Sorra lie in that, anyway," said the robber, as he repeated the last line over once more, with evident self-satisfaction.

"Who comes there?" cried he, sternly, as the heavy bolts were shot back, and the massive door opened.

"Why don't you say, 'Stand and deliver!' " said the turnkey, with a laugh as harsh and grating as the creak of the rusty hinges.

"And many a time I did to a better man," said Freney.

"You may leave us now," said Daly, to the turnkey.

"Mr. Daly, your sarvant," said the robber, saluting him; "you're the only man in Ireland I wanted to see."

"I wish our meeting had been anywhere else," said Daly, sorrowfully, as he took his seat on a stool opposite the bed where Freney sat.

"Well, well, so it is, sir; it's just what every one prophesied this many a day: as if there was much cunning in saying that I'd be hanged some time or other; why, if they wanted to surprise me, they'd have tould me I'd never be taken. You heard how it was, I suppose?"

Daly nodded, and Freney went on:

"The English horse wouldn't rise to the rail; if I was on the chestnut mare or Black Billy, I wouldn't be where I am now."

"I have several things to ask you about, Freney; but first, how can I serve you? You must have counsel in this business."

"No, sir, I thank you; it's only throwing good money after bad; I'll plead guilty, it will save time with us all."

"But you give yourself no chance, man."

"Faix, I spoiled my chance long ago. Mr. Daly. Do you know, sir"—here he spoke in a low, determined tone—"there's not a mail in Ireland I didn't stop at one time or other. There's few country gentlemen I haven't lightened of their guineas; the court wouldn't hold the witnesses against me if I were to stand my trial."

"With all that, you must still employ a lawyer; these fellows are as crafty in *their* walk as ever you were in *yours*. Who will you have? Name the man, and leave the rest to me."

Freney seemed to deliberate for a few moments, and he threw his eyes down at the heavy irons on his legs, and he gazed at the strong stanchions of the windows, and then said, in a low voice,

"There's a chap called Hosey M'Garry, in a cellar in Charles street; he's an ould man with one eye, and not a tooth in his head, but he's the only man that could sarve me now."

"Hosey M'Garry," repeated Daly, "Charles street," as he wrote down the address with his pencil; "a strange name and residence for a lawyer."

"I didn't say he was, sir," said Freney, laughing.

"And who and what is he, then?"

"The only man, now alive, that can make a cowld chisel to cut iron without noise."

"Ah! that's what you're thinking of; you'd rather trust to the flaws of the iron than of the indictment. Perhaps you are not far wrong, after all."

"If I was in the court below without the fetters," said Freney, eagerly, "I could climb the wall with a holdfast and a chisel, and get down the same way on the other side; once there, Mr. Daly, I'd sing the ould ballad,

"For the devil a man of ye all I fear, I'll be far away before morning."

"And how are these tools to reach you here? If they admit any of your friends, won't they search them first?"

"So they will, barrin' it was a gentleman," replied Freney, while his eyes twinkled with a peculiarly cunning luster.

"So, then, you rely on *me* for this piece of service?" said Daly, after a pause.

"Troth, you're the only gentleman of my acquaintance," said Freney, quaintly.

"Well, I suppose I must not give you a bad impression of the order; I'll do it."

"I knew you would," rejoined Freney, calmly; "you might bring two files at the same time, and a phial of sweet-oil to keep down the noise. Hush! here's Gavin coming to turn you out—he said ten minutes."

"Well, then, you shall see me to-morrow, Freney, and I'll endeavor to see your friend in the mean time." This was said as the turnkey stood at the open door.

"This gentleman wants to have a look at you, Freney," said the jailer, "as if he couldn't see you for nothing some Saturday morning soon."

"Maybe he'd not know me in a night-cap," replied Freney, laughing, while he turned the lamplight full on Lionel Darcy's features.

"The very fellow that rode off with the horse!" exclaimed Lionel, as he saw him.

"Young O'Reilly!" said Freney. "What signifies that charge now? Won't it satisfy you if they hang me for something else?"

"That's Captain Darcy, man," broke in Daly. "Is all your knowledge of mankind of so little use to you that you cannot distinguish between a born gentleman and an upstart?"

"By my oath," said the robber, aloud, "I'm as glad as a ten-pound note to know that it wasn't a half-bred one that showed the spirit you did! Hurrah! there's hopes for ould Ireland yet, when the blood and bone is still left in her! And wasn't it real luck that I saw you this night? If I didn't, I'd have done you a bad turn. One word, Mr. Daly, one word in your ear."

The robber drew Daly toward him, and whispered eagerly for some seconds.

A violent exclamation burst from Daly as he listened, and then he cried out, "What! are you sure of this? Don't deceive me, man?"

"May I never, but it's true."

"Why, then, not have told it before?"

"Because"—here he faltered—"because—faix, I'll tell the truth—I thought that young gentleman was Hickman's grandson, and I couldn't bring myself to do him a spite after what I had seen."

"The time is up, gentlemen," said the turnkey, who, out of the delicacy of his official feeling, was slowly pacing the corridor up and down while they talked together.

"If this be but true," muttered Daly to himself, "there's another cast of the dice for it yet."

"I am sorry for that fellow," said Lionel, aloud; "he did me a good turn once; I might have gone down the torrent were it not for his aid."

"So you might, man," said Daly, speaking in a half-soliloquy; "he gives the only chance of victory I've seen yet."

These words, so evidently inapplicable to Lionel's observations, were a perfect enigma, but he did not dare to ask for any explanation, and walked on in silence beside him.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A SCENE OF HOME.

If the climate of northern Ireland be habitually one of storm and severity, it must be confessed that, in the rare but happy intervals of better weather, the beauty of the coast scenery is unsurpassed. Indented with little bays, whose sides are formed of immense cliffs of chalk, or the more stately grandeur of that columnar basalt which extends for miles on either side of the Causeway, the most vivid coloring unites with forms the wildest and most fantastic; crag and precipice, sandy beach and rocky shore, alternate in endless variety; while islands are there, some green and sheep-clad; others, dark and frowning, form the home of nothing but the sea-gull.

It was on such an evening of calm as displayed the scene to its greatest advantage, when a long column of burnished golden light floated over the sea, tipping each crested wave, and darkened into deeper beauty between them, that the knight, Lady Eleanor, and Helen, sat under the little porch of their cottage and gazed upon the fair and gorgeous picture.

If the leafy grove or the dark wood seem sweeter to our senses when the thrilling notes of the blackbird or the thrush sing in their solitude, so the deepest silence, the most unbroken stillness, has a wonderful effect of soothing to the mind beside the

sea-shore we have so often seen terrible in the fury of the storm. A gentle calm steals over us as we listen to the long sweeping of the waves, heaving and breaking in measured melody, and our thoughts, enticed by some dreaming ecstacy, wander away over the boundless ocean, not to the far-off lands of other climes alone, but into worlds of brighter and more beauteous mold.

They sat in silence, at first only occupied by the lovely scene that stretched away before them, but at last each deeply immersed in his own thoughts—thoughts which, unconnected with the objects around, yet by some strange mystery were tintured by all their calm and tranquil beauty. A fisherman was mending his net upon the little beach below, and his children was playing around him, now running merrily along the strand, now dabbling in the white foam left by the retreating waves; the father looked up from time to time to watch them, but without interrupting the low monotonous chant by which he lightened his labor.

Toward the little group at length their eyes were turned. "Yes," said the knight, as if interpreting what was passing in the minds of those at his side, "that is about as near to human happiness as life affords. I believe there would be very few abortive ambitions if men were content to see their children occupy the same station as themselves; and yet, when the time of one's own reverses arrives, how very little of true happiness is lost by the change of fortune."

"My dearest father!" said Helen, as in a transport of delight she threw her arms around him, "how happy your words make me! You are then contented?"

"Do I not look so, my sweet Helen? And your mother, too, when have you seen her so well?—when do you remember her walking, as she did to-day, to the top of the great cliff of Dunluce?"

"With no other ill consequence," said Lady Eleanor, smiling, "than a most acute attack of vanity, for I begin to fancy myself quite young again."

"Well, mamma, don't forget we have a visit to pay some of these days to Ballintra—that's the name of the place, I think, Miss Daly resides at."

"Yes, we really must not neglect it. There was a delicacy in her note of welcome to us here, judging that we might not be prepared for a personal visit, which prepossesses me in her favor. You promised to make our acknowledgments, but I believe you forgot all about it."

"No, not that," said the knight, hesitatingly; "but in the midst of so many

things to do and think about, I deferred it from to-day."

"Shall we go to-morrow, then?" cried Helen eagerly.

"I think it were better if your father went first, lest the way should prove too long for us. I am so proud of my pedestrianism, Helen, I'll not risk any failure."

"Be it so," said the knight, quietly. "And now of this other matter Bagenal presses so strongly upon us. I feel the greatest repugnance to assume any name but that I have always borne, and, I hope, not disgraced; he says we shall be objects of impertinent curiosity here to the neighborhood."

"Ruins to dispute the honors of lionship with Dunluce," said Lady Eleanor, smiling faintly.

"Just so; that might, however, be borne patiently; they will soon leave off talking of us when we give them little matter for speculative gossip. Besides, we are so far away from anything that could be called neighborhood."

"But he suggests some other reasons, if I mistake not," said Lady Eleanor.

"He does, but so darkly and mysteriously, that I cannot even guess his drift. Here is his letter." And the knight took several papers from his pocket, from among which he selected one, whose large and blotted writing unmistakably pronounced it Bagenal Daly's. "Yes, here it is: 'Bicknell says that Hickman's people are fully persuaded that you have left Ireland with the intention of never returning; that this impression should be maintained, because it will induce them to be less guarded than if they believed you were still here, directing any legal proceeding. The only case, therefore, he will prepare for trial, will be one respecting the leases falsely signed. The bond and its details must be unraveled by time; here also your incognito is all-essential—it need only be for a short time, and on scruples of delicacy so easily got over; your grandfather called himself Gwynne, and wrote it also.' That is quite true, Eleanor, so he did; his letters are signed Matthew Gwynne, Knight of ——. I remember the signature well."

"I think with Mr. Daly," said Lady Eleanor, "it will save us a world of observant impertinence; this place is tranquil and solitary enough just now, but in summer the coast and the causeway have many visitors, and although the 'Corvy' is out of the common track, if our names be bruited about, we shall not escape that least graceful of all attentions, the tender commiseration of mere acquaintances."

"Mamma is right," said Helen; "we should be hunted out by every tourist to report on how we bore our reverses, and tormented with anonymous condolences in prose, and short stanzas on the beauty of resignation."

"Well, and, my dear Helen, perhaps the lessons might not be so very inapplicable," said the knight, smiling affectionately.

"But very inefficient, sir," replied Helen, with a toss of her head; "I'm not a bit resigned."

"Helen, dearest," interposed Lady Eleanor, rebukingly.

"Not a bit, mamma; I am happy, happier than I ever knew myself before, if you like that phrase better, because we are together, because this life realizes to me all I ever dreamed of, that quiet and tranquil pleasure people might, but somehow never please to taste of—but, if you ask me am I resigned to see you and my dear father in a station so much beneath your expectations and your habits, I cannot say that I am."

"Then, my dear girl, you accuse us of bearing our misfortunes badly, if we cannot partake of your enjoyments on account of our own vain regrets?"

"No, no, papa, don't mistake me; if I grieve over the altered fortunes that limit your sphere of usefulness as well as of pleasure, it is because I know how well you understood the privileges and demands of your high station, and how little a life, so humble as this is, can exact of qualities that were not given to be wasted in obscurity."

"My sweet child," said the knight, fondly, "it is a very dangerous practice to blend up affection with principle; depend upon it, the former will always coerce the latter, and bend it to its will; and as for those good gifts you speak of, had I really as many of them as your fond heart would endow me with, believe me there is no station so humble as not to admit of their exercise. There never yet was a walk in life without its sphere of duties; now I intend that not only are we to be happy here, but that we should contribute to the well-being of those about us."

There was a pause after the knight had done speaking, during which he busied himself in turning over some letters, the seals of which were still unbroken; he knew the handwriting on most of them, and yet hesitated about inflicting on himself the pain of reading allusions to that condition he had once occupied. "Yes," muttered he to himself, "we are always flattering ourselves of how essential we are

to our friends, our party, and so forth, and yet, when any events occur which despoil us of our brief importance, we see the whole business of the world go on as currently as ever. What a foretaste this gives one of death! So it is, the stream of life flows on whether the bubble on its surface float or burst."

"That's Lord Netherby's hand, is it not?" said Lady Eleanor, as she lifted a letter which had fallen to the ground.

"Yes," said Darcy, carelessly; "written probably soon after his return to England; I have no doubt it contains a most courtly acknowledgment of our poor hospitality, and an assurance of undying regard."

"If it be of that tenor, I have no curiosity to read it," said Lady Eleanor, handing the letter to the knight.

"Helen would like to study so great a master of epistolary flatteries," said the knight, smiling, "and provided she will keep the whole for her private reading, I am willing to indulge her."

"I accept the favor with thanks," said Helen, receiving the letter; "you know I plead guilty to liking our noble relative. I'm not skilled enough to distinguish between an article trebly gilded and one of pure gold, and his lordship, to my eyes, looked as like the true metal as possible: he said so many pretty things to mamma, and so many fine things of you and Lionel—"

"And paid so many compliments to the fair Helen herself," interposed the knight.

"With so much of good tact—"

"And good taste, Helen," added Lady Eleanor, smiling; "why not say that?"

"Well, I see I shall have to defend myself as well as my champion, so I'll even go and read my letter."

And so saying, she arose, and sauntered down to the shore; under the shelter of a tall rock, from whence the view extended for miles along, she sat down. "What a contrast!" said she, as she broke the seal; "a courtier's letter in such a scene as this!"

Lord Netherby's letter was, as the knight suspected, written soon after his return to England, expressing, in his own most courtly phrase, the delightful memory he retained of his visit to Ireland. Gracefully contrasting the brilliant excitement of that brief period with the more staid quietude of the life to which he returned, he lightly suggested that none other than one native to the soil could support an existence so overflowing with pleasurable emotions. With all the artifice of a courtier, he recalled certain little incidents, too small, as

mere matters of memory, to find a resting-place in the mind, but all of them indicative of the deep impression made upon him who remarked them.

He spoke also of the delight with which his royal highness the prince listened to his narrative of life in Ireland. "In truth," wrote his lordship, "I do not believe that the exigencies of his station ever cost him more, than when he reflected on the impossibility of his witnessing such perfection in the life of a country-house as I feebly endeavored to convey to him. Again and again has he asked me to repeat the tale of the hunt—the brilliant ball the night of your arrival—and I have earned a character for story-telling of which Kelly and Sheridan are beginning to feel jealous, by the mere retail of your anecdotes. Lionel's return is anxiously looked for by all here; and the prince has more than once expressed himself impatient to see him back again. My sweet favorite Helen, too—when is she to be presented? There will be a court in the early part of next month, of which I shall not fail to apprise you, most earnestly entreating that my cousin Eleanor will not think the journey too far which shall bring her once again among those scenes she so gracefully adorned, and where her triumphs will be renewed in the admiration of her lovely daughter. I need not tell you that my house in town is entirely at her disposal, either as *my* guests, or, if you prefer it, I shall be *theirs*, whenever I am not in waiting."

Here the writer detailed, with an eloquence all his own, the advantage to Helen of making her *entrée* into life under circumstances so favorable, remarking, with that conventional philosophy just then the popular cant of the day, that the enthusiasm of the world was never long-lived, and that even his beautiful cousin Helen should not be above profiting by the favorable reception the kindly disposition of the court was sure to procure for her. This was said in a tone of half-serious banter, but at the same time the invitation was reiterated with an evident desire for its acceptance.

As the letter drew near its conclusion, the lines became more closely written, as though some circumstances hitherto forgotten had suddenly occurred to the writer; and so it proved.

"I was about, my dear knight, to write myself, with what truth I will not say, your 'most affectionate friend, Netherby,' when I received a letter which requires some mention at my hands. It is, indeed, one of the most extraordinary documents

I have ever perused; nothing very wonderful in that, when I tell you from whom it comes—your old sweetheart, Julia Wallincourt, or, as you will better remember her, Julia D'Esterre; she is still very beautiful, and just as capricious, just as *maligne* as when she endeavored, by every artifice of her coquetry, to make you jilt my cousin Eleanor. There's no doubt of it, Darcy, this woman loved you! at least, as much as she could love anything, except the pleasure of torturing her fellow-creatures. Well, it would seem that a younger son of hers, popularly known as Dick Forester, paid you a visit in Ireland, and, no very unnatural occurrence, fell desperately in love with your daughter—not so Helen with him. She probably regarded him as one of that class upon which London has so stamped its impress of habit and manner, that all individualism is lost in the quiet observance of certain proprieties. He must have been a rare contrast to the high-souled enthusiasm and waywardness of her own brother! Certain it is, she refused him; and he, taking the thing much more to heart than a young guardsman usually does a similar catastrophe, hastened home, and endeavored to interest his mother in his suit. Lady Julia had an old vengeance to exact, and, like a true woman, could not forego it; she not only positively refused all intercession on her part, but went what you and I will probably feel to be a very unnecessary length, and actually declared she never would consent to such an alliance. We used to remember (some years ago), at Eton, of a certain Dido who never forgave, and we are told how, for many years after, the *lethalis arundo lateri adhesit*, but assuredly the poet was speaking less of the woes of an individual than of the sorrows of fine ladies in all ages. Unfortunately, the similitude between her ladyship and Dido ends here: the classic fair one exhibited, as we are told, the most delicate fondness for the son of her lover. But, to grow serious: Lady Wallincourt's conduct must have been peremptory and harsh; she actually went the length of writing to the Duke of York, to request an exchange for her son into a regiment serving in India: whether Forester obtained some clue to this maneuver or not, he anticipated the stroke by selling out and leaving the army altogether; whither he is gone, or what has become of him since, no one can tell. Such, my dear knight, is the emergency in which Lady Wallincourt addresses her letter to me—a letter so peculiarly her own, so full of reproaches against you, and vindication of herself, that I actually scruple

to transmit to you this palpable evidence of still-enduring affection.

"Were you both thirty years younger, I should claim great credit to my morality for the forbearance. Let that pass, however, and let me rather ask you, if you know or have heard anything of this wayward boy? Personally, I am unacquainted with him; but his friends agree in saying that he is high-spirited, honorable, and brave; and it would be a great pity that his affection for a young lady, and his anger with an old one, should mar all the prospects of his life. Could you, by any means, find a clue to him? I do not, of course, ask you to interfere in person, lest it might seem that you encouraged an attachment which you have far more reason to discountenance for your daughter than has Lady Wallincourt for her son; however, your doing so would go far to reconcile the young man to his mother, by showing that, if there was a difficulty on one side, a still greater obstacle existed on the other."

Requesting a speedy answer, and begging that the whole might be in strict confidence between them, the letter concluded:

"I do not doubt, my dear knight," said the postscript, "that you will see in all this a reason the more for coming up to town. Helen's appearance at the drawing-room would be the best, if not the only, rebuke Lady Wallincourt's insolence could receive. By all means, come.

"Another complication! Lady W., on first hearing of her son's duel, and the kind treatment he met with after being wounded, wrote a letter of grateful acknowledgments, which she inclosed to her son, neither knowing nor caring for the address of her benefactor. When she did hear it at length, she was excessively angry that she had been, as she terms it, 'the first to make advances.' *Ainsi, telles sont les femmes du monde!*"

Such was Lord Netherby's letter. With what a succession of emotions Helen read it we confess ourselves unable to depict. If she sometimes hesitated to read on, an influence, too powerful to control, impelled her to continue, while a secret interest in Forester's fortunes—a feeling she had never known till now—induced her to learn his fate. More than once, in the alteration of her condition, had she recalled the profuser of affection she had with such determination rejected, and with what gratitude did she remember the firmness of her decision!

"Poor fellow!" thought she, "I deemed it the mere caprice of one whose gratitude

for kindness had outrun his calmer convictions. And so he really loved me!"

We must avow the fact: Helen's indifference to Forester had, in the main, proceeded from a false estimate of his character; she saw in him nothing but a well-bred, good-looking youth, who, with high connections and moderate abilities, had formed certain ambitious views, to be realized rather by the adventitious aid of fortune than his own merits. He was, in her eyes, a young politician, cautious and watchful, trained up to regard Lord Castlereagh as the model of statesmen, and political intrigue as the very climax of intellectual display. To know that she had wronged him was to make a great revolution in her feelings toward him; to see that this reserved and calmly-minded youth should have sacrificed everything—position, prospects, all—rather than resign his hope, faint as it was, of one day winning her affection!

If these were her first thoughts on reading that letter, those that followed were far less pleasurable. How should she ever be able to show it to her father? The circumstances alluded to were of a nature he never could be cognisant of without causing the greatest pain both to him and herself. To ask Lady Eleanor's counsel would be even more difficult. Helen witnessed the emotion the sight of Lady Wallincourt's name had occasioned her mother the day Forester first visited them; the old rivalry had, then, left its trace on her mind as well as on that of Lady Julia! What embarrassment on every hand! Where could she seek counsel, and in whom? Bagenal Daly, the only one she could have opened her heart to, was away; and was it quite certain she would have ventured to disclose, even to him, the story of that affection, which already appeared so different from at first? Forester was not now in her eyes the fashionable guardsman, indulging a passing predilection, or whiling away the tedious hours of a country-house by a flirtation, in which he felt interested because repulsed; he was elevated in her esteem by his misfortunes, and the very uncertainty of his fate augmented her concern. And yet, she must forego the hope of saving him, or else, by showing the letter to her father, acknowledge her acquaintance with events she should never have known, or knowing, should never reveal.

There was no help for it, the letter could not be shown. In all likelihood neither the knight nor Lady Eleanor would ever think more about it; and if they did, there was still enough to speak of in the courte-

ous sentiments of the writer, and the polite attention of his invitation; a civility which even Helen's knowledge of life informed her was rather proffered in discharge of a debt, than as emanating from any real desire to play their host in London.

Thus satisfying herself that no better course offered for the present, she turned homeward, but with a heavier heart and more troubled mind than had ever been her fortune in life to have suffered.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SOME CHARACTERS NEW TO THE KNIGHT AND THE READER.

SOON after breakfast the following morning the knight set out to pay his promised visit to Miss Daly, who had taken up her abode at a little village on the coast, about three miles distant. Had Darcy known that her removal thither had been in consequence of his own arrival at "the Corvy," the fact would have greatly added to an embarrassment sufficiently great on other grounds; of this, however, he was not aware; her brother Bagenal accounting for her not inhabiting "the Corvy," as being lonely and desolate; whereas the village of Ballintry was, after its fashion, a little watering-place much frequented in the season by visitors from Coleraine, and other towns still more inland.

Thither now the knight bent his steps by a little footpath across the fields, which, from time to time, approached the sea-side, and wound again through the gently undulating surface of that ever-changing tract.

Not a human habitation was in sight; not a living thing was seen to move over that wide expanse; it was solitude the very deepest, and well suited the habit of his mind who now wandered there alone. Deeply lost in thought he moved onward, his arms folded on his breast, and his eyes downcast; he neither bestowed a glance upon the gloomy desolation of the land prospect, nor one look of admiring wonder at the giant cliffs, which, straight as a wall, formed the barriers against the ocean.

"What a strange turn of fortune," said he, at length, as relieving his overburdened brain by speech. "I remember well the last day I ever saw her, it was just before my departure from England for my marriage. I remember well driving over to Castle Daly to say good-by; perhaps, too, I had some lurking vanity in exhibiting

that splendid team of four grays, with two outriders; how perfect it all was! and a proud fellow I was that day! Maria was looking very handsome; she was dressed for riding, but ordered the horses back as I drove up. What spirits she had!—with what zest she seized upon the enjoyments her youth, her beauty, and her fortune gave her!—how ardently she indulged every costly caprice, and every whim, as if reveling in the pleasure of extravagance even for its own sake! Fearless in everything, she did indeed seem like a native princess, surrounded by all that barbaric splendor of her father's house, the troops of servants, the equipages without number, the guests that came and went unceasingly, all rendering homage to her beauty. 'Twas a gorgeous dream of life! and well she understood how to realize all its enchantment. We scarcely parted good friends on that same last day," said he, after a pause: "her manner was almost mordant. I can recall the cutting sarcasms she dealt around her—strange exuberance of high spirits carried away to the wildest flights of fancy—and after all, when, having dropped my glove, I returned to the luncheon-room to seek it, I saw her in a window, bathed in tears; she did not perceive me, and we never met after! Poor girl! were those outpourings of sorrow the compensation nature exacted for the exercise of such brilliant powers of wit and imagination? or had she really, as some believed, a secret attachment somewhere? Who knows? And now we are to meet again, after years of absence—so fallen, too! If it were not for these gray hairs and this wrinkled brow, I could believe it all a dream:—and what is it but a dream, if we are not fashioned to act differently because of our calamities? Events are but shadows if they move us not."

From thoughts like these he passed on to others—as to how he should be received, and what changes time might have wrought in her.

"She was so lovely, and might have been so much more so, had she but curbed that ever-rising spirit of mockery that made the sparkling luster of her eyes seem like the scathing flash of lightning rather than the soft beam of tranquil beauty. How we quarreled and made up again! what everlasting treaties ratified and broken! and now to look back on this with a heart and a spirit weary, how sad it seems! Poor Maria! her destiny has been less happy than mine! She is alone in the world; I have affectionate hearts around me to make a home beneath the humble roof of a cabin."

The knight was aroused from his musings by suddenly finding himself on the brow of a hill, from which the gorge descended abruptly into a little cove, around which the village of Ballintrae was built. A row of whitewashed cottages, in winter inhabited by the fishermen and their families, became, in the summer season, the residence of the visitors, many of whom deserted spacious and well-furnished mansions to pass their days in the squalid discomfort of a cabin. If beauty of situation and picturesque charms of scenery could ever atone for so many inconveniences incurred, this little village might certainly have done so. Land-locked by two jutting promontories, the bay was sheltered both east and westward, while the rising ground behind defended it from the sweeping storms which the south brings in its seasons of rain; in front the distant island of Isla could be seen, and the Scottish coast was always discernible in the clear atmosphere of the evening.

While Darcy stood admiring the well-chosen spot, his eye rested upon a semi-circular panel of wood, which, covering over a short and graveled avenue, displayed in very striking capitals the words "Fumbally's Boarding House." The edifice itself, more pretentious in extent and character than the cabins around, was ornamented with green jalousies to the windows, and a dazzling brass knocker surmounting a plate of the same metal, whereupon the name, "Mrs. Jones Fumbally," was legible, even from the road. Some efforts of planting had been made in the two square plots of yellowish grass in front, but they had been lamentable failures; and, as if to show that the demerit was of the soil and not of the proprietors, the dead shrubs were suffered to stand where they had been stuck down, while, in default of leaves or buds, they put forth a plentiful covering of stockings, nightcaps, and other wearables, which flaunted as gayly in the breeze as the owners were doing on the beach.

Across the high-road and on the beach, which was scarcely more than fifty yards distant, stood a large wooden edifice on wheels, whose make suggested some secret of its original destination, had not that fact been otherwise revealed, since, from beneath the significant name of "Fumbally," an acute decipherer might read the still uncrased inscription of "A panther with only two spots from the head to the tail," an unhappy collocation which fixed upon the estimable lady the epithet of the animal in question.

Various garden seats and rustic benches

were scattered about, some of which were occupied by lounging figures of gentlemen, in costumes ingeniously a cross between the sporting world and the naval service; while the ladies displayed a no less elegant *negligé*, half sea-nymph, half shepherdess.

So much for the prospect landward, while toward the waves themselves there was a party of bathers, whose flowing hair and lengthened drapery indicated their sex. These maintained through all their sprightly gambols an animated conversation with a party of gentlemen on the rocks, who seemed, by the telescopes and spy-glasses which lay around them, to be equally prepared for the inspection of near and distant objects, and alternately turned from the criticism of a fair naiad beneath to a Scotch collier working "north about" in the distance.

Darcy could not help feeling that if the cockneyism of a boarding-house, and the blinds and the brass knocker, were sadly repugnant to the sense of admiration the scene itself would excite, there was an ample compensation in the primitive simplicity of the worthy inhabitants, who seemed to revel in all the unsuspecting freedom of our first parents themselves; for while some stood on little promontories of the rocks in most Canova-like drapery, little frescoes of naked children flitted around and about, without concern to themselves, or astonishment to the beholders.

Never was the good knight more convinced of his own prudence in paying his first visit alone, and he stood for some time in patient admiration of the scene, until his eye rested on a figure who, seated at some distance off on a little eminence of the rocky coast, was as coolly surveying Darcy through his telescope. The mutual inspection continued for several minutes, when the stranger, deliberately shutting up his glass, advanced toward the knight.

The gentleman was short, but stoutly knit, with a walk and a carriage of his head that, to Darcy's observant eye, bespoke an innate sense of self-importance; his dress was a green coat, cut jockey fashion, and ornamented with very large buttons, displaying heads of stags, foxes, and badgers, and other emblems of the chase, short Russia duck trowsers, a wide-leaved straw hat, and a very loose cravat, knotted sailor-fashion on his breast. As he approached the knight, he came to a full stop about half a dozen paces in front, and putting his hand to his hat, held it straight above his head, pretty much in the way stage imitators of Napoleon were wont to perform the salutation.

"A stranger, sir, I presume?" said he, with an insinuating smile and an air of dignity at the same moment. Darcy bowed a courteous assent, and the other went on: "Sweet scene, sir—lovely nature—animated and grand."

"Most impressive, I confess," said Darcy, with difficulty repressing a smile.

"Never here before, I take it?"

"Never, sir."

"Came from Coleraine, possibly? Walked all the way, eh?"

"I came on foot, as you have divined," said Darcy, dryly.

"Not going to make any stay, probably; a mere glance, and go on again. Isn't that so?"

"I believe you are quite correct; but may I, in return for your considerate inquiries, ask one question on my own part? You are, perhaps, sufficiently acquainted with the locality to inform me if a Miss Daly resides in this village, and where?"

"Miss Daly, sir, did inhabit that cottage yonder, where you see the oars on the thatch, but it has been let to the Moors of Ballymena; they pay two ten a week for the three rooms and the use of the kitchen; smart that, ain't it?"

"And Miss Daly resides at present—"

"She's one of us," said the little man, with a significant jerk of his thumb to the blue board with the gilt letters; "not much of that after all; but she lives under the sway of 'Mother Fum,' though, from one caprice or another, she don't mix with the other boarders. Do you know her yourself?"

"I had that honor some years ago."

"Much altered, I take it, since that; down in the world, too! She was an heiress in those days, I've heard, and a beauty. Has some of the good looks still, but lost all the shiners."

"Am I likely to find her at home at this hour?" said Darcy, moving away, and anxious for an opportunity to escape his communicative friend.

"No, not now; never shows in the morning. Just comes down to dinner, and disappears again. Never takes a hand at whist—peuny points tell up, you know—seem a trifle at first, but hang me if they don't make a figure in the budget afterward. There, do you see that fat lady with the black bathing-cap?—no, I mean the one with the blue baize patched on the shoulder, the Widow Mackie—she makes a nice thing of it—won twelve and fourpence since the first of the month. Pretty creature that yonder, with one stocking on, Miss Boyle, of Carriek-ma-clash."

"I must own," said Darcy, dryly, "that, not having the privilege of knowing these ladies, I do not conceive myself at liberty to regard them with due attention."

"Oh! they never mind that, here; no secrets among us."

"Very primitive, and doubtless very delightful; but I have trespassed too long on your politeness. Permit me to wish you a very good morning."

"Not at all; have nothing in the world to do. Paul Dempsey—that's my name—was always an idle man; Paul Dempsey, sir, nephew of old Paul Dempsey, of Dempsey Grove, in the county of Kilkenny; a snug place, that I wish the proprietor felt he had enjoyed sufficiently long. And your name, if I might make bold, is—"

"I call myself Gwynne," said Darcy, after a slight hesitation.

"Gwynne — Gwynne — there was a Gwynne, a tailor, in Ballyragget; a connection, probably?"

"I am not aware of any relationship," said Darcy, smiling.

"I'm glad of it; I owe your brother or your cousin there—that is, if he was either—a sum of seven-and-nine for these ducks. There are Gwynnes in Ross besides, and Quins; are you sure it is not Quin? Very common name Quin."

"I believe we spell our name as I have pronounced it."

"Well, if you come to spend a little time here, I'll give you a hint or two. Don't join Leonard—that blue-nosed fellow, yonder, in whisky. He'll be asking you, but don't—at it all day." Here Mr. Dempsey pantomimed the action of tossing off a dram. "No whist with the widow! If you were younger, I'd say no small plays with Bess Boyle—has a brother in the Antrim militia, a very quarrelsome fellow."

"I thank you sincerely for your kind counsel, although not destined to profit by it. I have one favor to ask: could you procure me the means to inclose my card for Miss Daly, as I must relinquish the hope of seeing her on this occasion?"

"No, no—stop and dine. Capital eod and oysters—always good. The mutton *rayther* scraggy, but with a good will and good teeth manageable enough; and excellent malt—"

"I thank you for your hospitable proposal, but cannot accept it."

"Well, I'll take care of your card; you'll probably come over again soon. You're at M'Grotty's, ain't you?"

"Not at present; and as to the card, with your permission I'll inclose it." This Darcy was obliged to insist upon; as, if he

left his name as Gwynne, Miss Daly might have failed to recognize him, while he desired to avoid being known as Mr. Darcy.

"Well, come in here; I'll find you the requisites. But I wish you'd stop and see the 'Panther.'"

Had the knight overheard this latter portion of Mr. Dempsey's invitation he might have been somewhat surprised, but it chanced that the words were lost; and, preceded by honest Paul, he entered the little garden in front of the house.

When Darcy had inclosed his card and committed it to the hands of Mr. Dempsey, that gentleman was far too deeply impressed with the importance of his mission to delay a moment in executing it, and then the knight was at last left at liberty to retrace his steps unmolested toward home. If he had smiled at the persevering curiosity and eccentric communicativeness of Mr. Dempsey, Darcy sorrowed deeply over the fallen fortunes which condemned one he had known so courted and so flattered once, to companionship like this. The words of the classic satirist came full upon his memory, and never did a sentiment meet more ready acceptance than the bitter, heart-wrung confession—"Unhappy poverty! you have no heavier misery in your train than that you make men seem ridiculous." A hundred times he wished he had never made the excursion; he would have given anything to be able to think of her as she had been, without the detracting influence of these vulgar associations. "And yet," said he, half aloud, "a year or so more, if I am still living, I shall probably have forgotten my former position, and shall have conformed myself to the new and narrow limits of my lot, doubtless as she does."

The quick tramp of feet on the heather behind him aroused him, and, in turning, he saw a person coming toward, and evidently endeavoring to overtake him. As he came nearer, the knight perceived it was the gentleman already alluded to by Dempsey as one disposed to certain little traits of conviviality—a fact which a nose of a deep copper color, and two blood-shot, bleary eyes, corroborated. His dress was a blue frock with a standing collar, military fashion, and dark trowsers; and, although bearing palpable marks of long wear, were still neat and clean-looking. His age, as well as appearances might be trusted, was probably between fifty and sixty.

"Mr. Gwynne, I believe, sir," said the stranger, touching his cap as he spoke. "Miss Daly begged of me to say that she has just received your card, and will be happy to see you."

Darcy stared at the speaker fixedly, and appeared, while unmindful of his words, to be occupied with some deep emotion within him. The other, who had delivered his message in a tone of easy unconcern, now fixed his eyes on the knight, and they continued for some seconds to regard each other. Gradually, however, the stranger's face changed; a sickly pallor crept over the features stained by long intemperance, his lip trembled, and two heavy tears gushed out and rolled down his seared cheeks.

"My G—d!—can it be? It surely is not!" said Darcy, with almost tremulous earnestness.

"Yes, colonel, it is the man you once remembered in your regiment as Jack Leonard; the same who led a forlorn hope at Quebec—the man broke with disgrace and dismissed the service for cowardice at Trois Rivières."

"Poor fellow!" said Darcy, taking his hand; "I heard you were dead."

"No, sir, it's very hard to kill a man by mere shame; though if suffering could do it, I might have died."

"I have often doubted about that sentence, Leonard," said Darcy, eagerly. "I wrote to the commander-in-chief to have inquiry made, suspecting that nothing short of some affection of the mind, or some serious derangement of health, could make a brave man behave badly."

"You were right, sir; I was a drunkard, not a coward. I was unworthy of the service; I merited my disgrace, but not on the grounds for which I met it."

"Good Heaven! then I was right!" said Darcy, in a burst of passionate grief; "my letter to the war office was unanswered. I wrote again, and received for reply that an example was necessary, and Lieutenant Leonard's conduct pointed him out as the most suitable case for heavy punishment."

"It was but just, colonel; I was a poltroon when I took more than half a bottle of wine. If I were not sober now I could not have the courage to face you here where I stand."

"Poor Jack!" said Darcy, wringing his hand cordially; "and what have you done since?"

Leonard threw his eyes down upon his threadbare garments, his patched boots, and the white-worn seams of his old frock, but not a word escaped his lips. They walked on for some time side by side without speaking, when Leonard said,

"They know nothing of me here, colonel. I need not ask you to be—cautious." There

was a hesitation before he uttered the last word.

"I do not desire to be recognized either," said Darcy, "and prefer being called Mr. Gwynne to the name of my family; and here, if I mistake not, comes a gentleman most eager to learn anything of anybody."

Mr. Dempsey came up at this moment with a lady leaning on each of his arms.

"Glad to see you again, sir; hope you've thought better of your plans, and are going to try Mother Fum's fare. Mrs. M'Quirk, Mr. Gwynne—Mr. Gwynne, Miss Drew. Leonard will do the honors till we come back." So saying, and with a princely wave of his straw hat, Mr. Dempsey resumed his walk with the step of a conqueror.

"That fellow must be a confounded annoyance to you," said Darcy, as he looked after him.

"Not now, sir," said the other, submissively; "I'm used to him; besides, since Miss Daly's arrival, he is far quieter than he used to be—he seems afraid of her. But I'll leave you now, colonel. He touched his cap respectfully, and was about to move away, when Darcy, pitying the confusion which overwhelmed him, caught his hand cordially, and said,

"Well, Jack, for the moment, good-by; but come over and see me; I live at the little cottage called 'the Cory.'"

"Good Heaven, sir! and is it true what I read in the newspaper about your misfortunes?"

"I conclude it is, Jack, though I have not read it; they could scarcely have exaggerated."

"And you bear it like this!" said the other, with a stare of amazement; then added, in a broken voice, "though, to be sure, there's a wide difference between loss of fortune and ruined character."

"Come, Jack, I see you are not so good a philosopher as I thought you. Come and dine with me to-morrow at five."

"Dine with *you*, colonel!" said Leonard, blushing deeply.

"And why not, man? I see you have forgotten the injustice I once did you, and I am happier this day to know it was I was in the wrong than that a British officer was a coward."

"Oh, Colonel Darcy, I did not think this poor broken heart could ever throb again with gratitude, but you have made it do so; you have kindled the flame of pride where the ashes were almost cold." And with a burning blush upon his face he turned away. Darcy looked after him for a second, and then entered the house.

Darcy had barely time to throw one glance

around the scanty furniture of the modest parlor into which he was ushered, when Miss Daly entered. She stopped suddenly short, and for a few seconds each regarded the other without speaking; time had, indeed, worked many changes in the appearance of each for which they were unprepared, but no less were they unprepared for the emotions this sudden meeting was to call up.

Miss Daly was plainly but handsomely dressed, and wore her silvery hair beneath a cap in two long bands on either cheek, with something of an imitation of a mode she followed in youth; the tones of her voice, too, were wonderfully little changed, and fell upon Darcy's ear with a strange, melancholy meaning.

"We little thought, knight," said she, "when we parted last, that our next meeting would have been as this, so many years and many sorrows have passed over us since that day!"

"And a large measure of happiness, too, Maria," said Darcy, as, taking her hand, he led her to a seat; "let us never forget, amid all our troubles, how many blessings we have enjoyed."

Whether it was the words themselves that agitated her, or something in his manner of uttering them, Miss Daly blushed deeply and was silent. Darcy was not slow to see her confusion, and suddenly remembering how inapplicable his remark was to her fortunes, though not to his own, added, hastily, "I, at least, would be very ungrateful if I could not look back with thankfulness to a long life of prosperity and happiness; and if I bear my present reverses with less repining, it is, I hope and trust, from the sincerity of this feeling."

"You have enjoyed the sunny path in life," said Miss Daly, in a low, faint voice, "and it is, perhaps, as you say, reason for enduring altered fortunes better." She paused, and then, with a more hurried voice, added, "One does not bear calamity better from habit—that is all a mistake; when the temper is soured by disappointment, the spirit of endurance loses its firmest ally. Your misfortunes will, however, be but short-lived, I hope; my brother writes me he has great confidence in some legal opinions, and certain steps he has already taken in Chancery."

"The warm-hearted and the generous are always sanguine," said Darcy, with a sad smile; "Bagenal would not be your brother if he could see a friend in difficulty without venturing on everything to rescue him. What an old friendship ours has been! class fellows at school, companions in

youth, we have run our race together, to end with fortune how similar! I was thinking, Maria, as I came along, of Castle Daly, and remembering how I passed my holidays with you there. Is your memory as good as mine?"

"I scarcely like to think of Castle Daly," said she, almost pettishly, "it reminds me so much of that wasteful, reckless life which laid the foundation of our ruin; tell me how Lady Eleanor Darcy bears up, and your daughter, of whom I have heard so much, and desire so ardently to see; is she more English or Irish?"

"A thorough Darcy," said the knight, smiling, "but yet with traits of soft submission and patient trust our family has been but rarely gifted with; her virtues are all the mother's, every blemish of her character has come from the other side."

"Is she rash and headstrong? for those are Darcy failings."

"Not more daring or courageous than I love her to be," said Darcy, proudly. "Not a whit more impetuous in sustaining the right, or denouncing the wrong, than I glory to see her; but too ardent, perhaps, too easily carried away by first impressions, than is either fashionable or frequent in the colder world."

"It is a dangerous temper," said Miss Daly, thoughtfully.

"You are right, Maria: such people are for the most part like the gamester who has but one throw for his fortune, if he loses which, all is lost with it."

"Too true! too true!" said she, in an accent whose melancholy sadness seemed to come from the heart. "You must guard her carefully from any rash attachment; a character like hers is strong to endure, but not less certain to sink under calamity."

"I know it; I feel it," said Darcy; "but my dear child is still too young to have mixed in that world which is already closed against her; her affections could never have strayed beyond the limits of our little home circle; she has kept all her love for those who need it most."

"And Lady Eleanor?" said Miss Daly, as if suddenly desirous to change the theme; "Bagenal tells me her health has been but indifferent; how does she bear our less genial climate, here?"

"She's better than for many years past; I could even say she's happier. Strange it is, Maria, but the course of prosperity, like the calms in the ocean, too frequently steep the faculties in an apathy that becomes weariness; but when the clouds are drifted along faster, and the waves rustle at the prow, the energies of life are again excited,

and the very occasion of danger begets the courage to confront it. We cannot be happy when devoid of self-esteem, and there is but little opportunity to indulge this honest pride when the world goes fairly with us, without any effort of our own; reverses of fortune—"

"Oh, reverses of fortune!" interrupted Miss Daly, rapidly, "people think much more about them than they merit; it is the world itself makes them so difficult to bear; one can think and act as freely beneath the thatch of a cabin as the gilded roof of a palace. It is the mock sympathy, the affected condolence for your fallen estate, that tortures you; the never-ending recurrence to what you once were contrasted with what you are, the cruelty of that friendship that is never content, save when reminding you of a station lost forever, and seeking to unfit you for your humble path in the valley, because your step was once proudly on the mountain-top."

"I will not concede all this," said the knight, mildly; "my fail has been too recent not to remind me of many kindnesses."

"I hate pity," said Miss Daly; "it is like a recommendation to mercy after the sentence of an unjust judge! Now tell me of Lionel."

"A fine, high-spirited soldier, as little affected by his loss as though it touched him not, and yet, poor boy, to all appearance a bright career was about to open before him—well received by the world, honored by the personal notice of his prince."

"Ha! now I think of it, why did you not vote against the minister?"

"It was on that evening," said Darcy, sorrowfully—"on that very evening—I heard of Gleeson's flight."

"Well"—then suddenly correcting herself, and restraining the question that almost trembled on her lip, she added, "and you were, doubtless, too much shocked to appear in the House?"

"I was ill," said Darcy, faintly; "indeed, I believe I can say with truth, my own ruin preyed less upon my mind than the perfidy of one so long confided in."

"And they made this accidental illness the ground of a great attack against your character, and sought to discover in your absence the secret of your corruption. How basely-minded men must be, when they will invent not only actions, but motives to calumniate." She paused, and then muttered to herself, "I wish you had voted against that bill."

"It would have done little good," said the knight, answering her soliloquy; "my vote could neither retard nor prevent the





SHE TOOK THE LETTER AND SAUNTERED DOWN TO THE SHORE. (P. 168)

measure, and as for myself, personally, I am proud enough to think I have given sufficient guarantees by a long life of independent action, not to need this crowning test of honesty. Now to matters nearer to us both: when will you come and visit my wife and daughter? or shall I bring them here to you?"

"No, no, not here. I am not ashamed of this place for myself, though I should be so if they were once to see it."

"But you feel less lonely," said Darcy, in a gentle tone, as if anticipating the reason of her choice of residence.

"Less lonely!" replied she, with a haughty laugh; "what companionship or society have I with people like these? It is not that!—it is my poverty compels me to live here. Of them and of their habits I know nothing; from me and from mine they take good care to keep aloof. No, with your leave I will visit Lady Eleanor at your cottage—that is, if she has no objection to receive me."

"She will be but too happy," said Darcy, "to know and value one of her husband's oldest and warmest friends."

"You must not expect me soon, however," said she hastily; "I have grown capricious in everything, and never can answer for performing a pledge at any stated time, and therefore never make one."

Abrupt and sudden as had been the changes of her voice and manner through this interview, there was a tone of unusual harshness in the way this speech was uttered; and as Darcy rose to take his leave, a feeling of sadness came over him to think that this frame of mind must have been the slow result of years of heart-consuming sorrow.

"Whenever you come, Maria," said he, as he took her hand in his, "you will be most welcome to us."

"Have you heard any tidings of Forester?" said Miss Daly, as if suddenly recalling a subject she wished to speak on.

"Forester of the Guards? Lionel's friend, do you mean?"

"Yes, you know that he has left the army, thrown up his commission, and gone no one knows where?"

"I did not know of that before. I am sincerely sorry for it. Is the cause surmised?"

Miss Daly made no answer, but stood with her eyes bent on the ground, and apparently in deep thought; then looking up suddenly, she said, with more composure than ordinary, "Make my compliments to Lady Eleanor, and say, that at the first favorable moment I will pay my per-

sonal respects to her—kiss Helen for me—good-by." And, without waiting for Darcy to take his leave, she walked hastily by, and closed the door after her.

"This wayward manner," said Darcy, sorrowfully, to himself, "has a deeper root than mere capriciousness; the heart has suffered so long, that the mind begins to partake of the decay." And with this sad reflection he left the village, and turned his solitary steps toward home.

If Darcy was grieved to find Miss Daly surrounded by such unsuitable companionship, he was more than recompensed at finding that her taste rejected nearer intimacy with Mrs. Fumbally's household. More than once the fear crossed his mind that, with diminished circumstances, she might have lapsed into habits so different from her former life, and he could better look upon her struggling as she did against her adverse fortune, than assimilating herself to those as much below her in sentiment as in station. He was happy to have seen his old friend once more, he was glad to refresh his memory of long-forgotten scenes by the sight of her who had been his playfellow and his companion, but he was not free of a certain dread that Miss Daly would scarcely be acceptable to his wife, while her wayward, uncertain temper would form no safe companionship for his daughter. As he pondered on these things, he began to feel how altered circumstances beget suspicion, and how he, who had never known the feeling of distrust, now found himself hesitating and doubting, where formerly he had acted without fear or reserve.

"Yes," said he, aloud, "when wealth and station were mine, the consciousness of power gave energy to my thoughts, but now I am to learn how narrow means can fetter a man's courage."

"Some truth in that," said a voice behind him; "would cut a very different figure myself if old Bob Dempsey, of Dempsey Grove, were to betake himself to a better world."

Darcy's check reddened between shame and anger to find himself overheard by his obtrusive companion, and, with a cold salute, he passed on. Mr. Dempsey, however, was not a man to be so easily got rid of; he possessed that happy temper that renders its owner insensible to shame and unconscious of rebuke; besides that, he was always "going your way," quite content to submit to any amount of rebuff rather than be alone. If you talked, it was well; if you listened, it was better; but if you affected open indifference to him, and neither exchanged a word nor vouchsafed

the slightest attention, even that was supportable, for he could give the conversation a character of monologue or anecdote which occupied himself at least.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A TALE OF MR. DEMPSEY'S GRANDFATHER.

THE Knight of Gwynne was far too much occupied in his own reflections to attend to his companion, and exhibited a total unconcern to several piquant little narratives of Mrs. Mackie's dexterity in dealing the cards, of Mrs. Fumbally's parsimony in domestic arrangements, of Miss Boyle's effrontery, of Leonard's intemperance, and even of Miss Daly's assumed superiority.

"You're taking the wrong path," said Mr. Dempsey, suddenly interrupting one of his own narratives, at a spot where the two roads diverged, one proceeding inland, while the other followed the line of the coast.

"With your leave, sir," said Darcy, coldly, "I will take this way, and, if you'll kindly permit it, I will do so alone."

"Oh! certainly," said Dempsey, without the slightest sign of umbrage; "would never have thought of joining you had it not been from overhearing an expression so exactly pat to my own condition, that I thought we were brothers in misfortune; you scarcely bear up as well as I do, though."

Darcy turned abruptly round, as the fear flashed across him, and he muttered to himself, "This fellow knows me; if so, the whole county will soon be as wise as himself, and the place become intolerable." Oppressed with this unpleasant reflection, the knight moved on, nor was it till after a considerable interval that he was conscious of his companion's presence, for Mr. Dempsey still accompanied him, though at the distance of several paces, and as if following a path of his own choosing.

Darcy laughed good-humoredly at the pertinacity of his tormentor; and half amused by the man, and half ashamed of his own rudeness to him, he made some casual observation on the scenery to open a reconciliation.

"The coast is much finer," said Dempsey, "close to your cottage."

This was a home-thrust for the knight, to show him that concealment was of no use against so subtle an adversary.

"The *Corvy*' is, as you observe, very happily situated," replied Darcy, calmly;

"I scarcely know which to prefer, the coast-line toward Dunluce, or the bold cliffs that stretch away to Bengore."

"When the wind comes north-by-west," said Dempsey, with a shrewd glance of his greenish gray eyes, "there's always a wreck or two between the Skerries and Portrush."

"Indeed! Is the shore so unsafe as that?"

"Oh, yes. You may expect a very busy winter here when the homeward-bound Americans are coming northward."

"D—n the fellow! does he take me for a wrecker?" said Darcy to himself, not knowing whether to laugh or be angry.

"Such a curiosity that old *'Corvy*' is, they tell me," said Dempsey, emboldened by his success; "every species of weapon and arm in the world, they say, gathered together there."

"A few swords and muskets," said the knight carelessly, "a stray dirk or two, and some harpoons, furnish the greater part of the armory."

"Oh, perhaps so! The story goes, however, that old Daly—brother, I believe, of our friend at Mother Fum's—could arm twenty fellows at a moment's warning, and did so on more than one occasion, too."

"With what object, in Heaven's name?"

"Buccaneering, piracy, wrecking, and so on," said Dempsey, with all the unconcern with which he would have enumerated so many pursuits of the chase.

A hearty roar of laughter broke from the knight, and when it ceased, he said, "I would be sincerely sorry to stand in your shoes, Mr. Dempsey, so near to yonder cliff, if you made that same remark in Mr. Daly's hearing."

"He'd gain very little by me," said Mr. Dempsey; "one and eightpence, an old watch, an oyster-knife, and my spectacles, are all the property in my possession, except when, indeed," added he, after a pause, "Bob remits the quarter's allowance."

"It is only just," said Darcy, gravely, "to a gentleman who takes such pains to inform himself on the affairs of his neighbors, that I should tell you that Mr. Bagenal Daly is not a pirate, nor am I a wrecker. I am sure you will be generous enough for this unasked information not to require of me a more lengthened account either of my friend or myself."

"You're in the revenue, perhaps?" interrupted the undaunted Dempsey; "I thought so when I saw you first."

Darcy shook his head in dissent.

"Wrong again. Ah! I see it all; the old story. Saw better days—you have just come down here to lie snug and quiet; out

of the way of writs and latitats—went too fast—by Jove, that touches myself, too! If I hadn't happened to have had a grand-father, I'd have been a rich man this day. Did you ever chance to hear of Dodd and Dempsey, the great wine merchants? My father was son of Dodd and Dempsey—that is Dempsey, you know—and it was his father, Sam Dempsey, ruined him."

"No very uncommon circumstance," said the knight, sorrowfully, "for an Irish father."

"You've heard the story, I suppose?—of course you have, every one knows it."

"I rather think not," said the knight, who was by no means sorry to turn Mr. Dempsey from cross-examination into mere narrative.

"I'll tell it to you; I am sure I ought to know it well, I've heard my father relate it something like a hundred times."

"I fear I must decline so pleasant a proposal," said Darcy, smiling. "At this moment I have an engagement."

"Never mind. To-morrow will do just as well," interrupted the inexorable Dempsey. "Come over and take your mutton-chop with me at five, and you shall have the story into the bargain."

"I regret that I cannot accept so very tempting an invitation," said Darcy, struggling between his sense of pride and a feeling of astonishment at his companion's coolness.

"Not come to dinner!" exclaimed Dempsey, as if the thing was scarcely credible. "Oh, very well, only remember"—and here he put an unusual gravity into his words—"only remember the *onus* is now on you."

The knight burst into a hearty laugh at this subtle retort, and, willing as he ever was to go with the humor of the moment, replied,

"I am ready to accept it, sir, and beg that you will dine with *me*."

"When and where?" said Dempsey.

"To-morrow, at that cottage yonder: five is your hour, I believe—we shall say five."

"Booked!" exclaimed Dempsey, with an air of triumph; while he muttered, with a scarcely subdued voice, "Knew I'd do it!—never failed in my life!"

"Till then, Mr. Dempsey," said Darcy, removing his hat courteously, as he bowed to him—"till then—"

"Your most obedient," replied Dempsey, returning the salute; and so they parted.

"The Corvy," on the day after the knight's visit to Port Ballinray, was a scene of rather amusing bustle; the knight's dinner-party, as Helen quizzingly called it,

affording occupation for every member of the household. In former times, the only difficult details of an entertainment were in the selection of the guests—bringing together a company likely to be suitable to each other, and endowed with those various qualities which make up the success of society; now, however, the question was the more material one, the dinner itself.

It is always a fortunate thing when whatever absurdity our calamities in life excite should be apparent only to ourselves. The laugh which is so difficult to bear from the world, is then an actual relief from our troubles. The Darcys felt this truth, as each little embarrassment that arose was food for mirth; and Lady Eleanor, who least of all could adapt herself to such contingencies, became as eager as the rest about the little preparations of the day.

While the knight hurried hither and thither, giving directions here and instructions there, he explained to Lady Eleanor some few circumstances respecting the character of his guests. It was, indeed, a new kind of company he was about to present to his wife and daughter; but while conscious of the disparity in every respect, he was not the less eager to do the hospitalities of his humble house with all becoming honor. It is true his invitation to Mr. Dempsey was rather forced from him than willingly accorded; he was about the very last kind of person Darcy would have asked to his table, if perfectly free to choose; but, of all men living, the knight knew least how to escape from a difficulty the outlet to which should cost him any sacrifice of feeling.

"Well, well, it is but once and away; and, after all, the talkativeness of our little friend Dempsey will be so far a relief to poor Leonard, that he will be brought less prominently forward himself, and be suffered to escape unremarked—a circumstance which, from all that I can see, will afford him sincere pleasure."

At length all the preparations were happily accomplished; the emissary dispatched to Kilrush at daybreak had returned with a much-coveted turkey; the fisherman had succeeded in capturing a lordly salmon; oysters and lobsters poured in abundantly; and Mrs. McKerrigan, who had been left as a fixture at the "Corvy," found her only embarrassment in selection from that profusion of "God's gifts," as she phrased it, that now surrounded her. The hour of five drew near, and the ladies were seated in the hall, the doors of which lay open, as the two guests were seen making their way toward the cottage.

"Here they come, papa," said Helen; "and now for a guess. Is not the short man with the straw hat Mr. Dempsey, and his tall companion Mr. Leonard?"

"Of course it is," said Lady Eleanor; "who could mistake the garrulous pertinacity of that little thing that gesticulates at every step, or the plodding patience of his melancholy associate?"

The next moment the knight was welcoming them in front of the cottage. The ceremony of introduction to the ladies being over, Mr. Dempsey, who probably was aware that the demands upon his descriptive powers would not be inconsiderable when he returned to "Mother Fum's," put his glass to his eye, and commenced a very close scrutiny of the apartment and its contents.

"Quite a show-box, by Jove!" said he, at last, as he peered through a glass cabinet, where Chinese slippers, with models in ivory and carvings in box, were heaped promiscuously together; "upon my word, sir, you have a very remarkable collection. And who may be our friend in the boat here?" added he, turning to the grim visage of Bagenal Daly himself, who stared with a bold effrontery that would not have disgraced the original.

"The gentleman you see there," said the knight, "is the collector himself, and the other is his servant. They are represented in the costumes in which they made their escape from a captivity among the red men."

"Begad!" said Dempsey, "that fellow with the tortoise painted on his forehead has a look of our old friend Miss Daly; shouldn't wonder if he was a member of her family."

"You have well guessed it—he is the lady's brother."

"Ah, ah!" muttered Dempsey to himself, "always thought there was something odd about her—never suspected Indian blood, however. How Mother Fum will stare when I tell her she's a squaw! Didn't they show these things at the rooms in Mary's street? I think I saw them advertised in the papers."

"I think you must mistake," said the knight; "they are the private collection of my friend."

"And where may Woc-woc—confound his name—the 'Howling Wind,' as he is pleased to call himself, be passing his leisure hours just now?"

"He is at present in Dublin, sir; and, if you desire, he shall be made aware of your polite inquiries."

"No, no—hang it, no—don't like the

look of him! Should have no objection, though, if he'd pay old Bob Dempsey a visit, and frighten him out of this world for me."

"Dinner, my lady," said old Tate, as he threw open the doors into the dining-room, and bowed with all his accustomed solemnity.

"Hum," muttered Dempsey, "my lady, won't go down with me!—too old a soldier for that!"

"Will you give my daughter your arm?" said the knight to the little man, for already Lady Eleanor had passed on with Mr. Leonard.

As Mr. Dempsey arranged his napkin on his knee, he endeavored to catch Leonard's eye, and telegraph to him his astonishment at the elegance of the table equipage which graced the board. Poor Leonard, however, seldom looked up; a deep sense of shame, the agonizing memory of what he once was, recalled vividly by the sight of those objects, and the appearance of persons which reminded him of his past condition, almost stunned him. The whole seemed like a dream; even though intemperance had degraded him, there were intervals in which his mind, clear to see and reflect, sorrowed deeply over his fallen state. Had the knight met him with a cold and repulsive deportment, or had he refused to acknowledge him altogether, he could better have borne, it than all the kindness of his present manner. It was evident, too, from Lady Eleanor's tone to him, that she knew nothing of his unhappy fortune, or that if she did, the delicacy with which she treated him was only the more benevolent. Oppressed by such emotions, he sat endeavoring to eat, and trying to listen and interest himself in the conversation around him; but the effort was too much for his strength, and a vague, half-whispered assent, or a dull, unmeaning smile, were about as much as he could contribute to what was passing.

The knight, whose tact was rarely at fault, saw every struggle that was passing in Leonard's mind, and adroitly contrived that the conversation should be carried on without any demand upon him, either as talker or listener. If Lady Eleanor and Helen contributed their aid to this end, Mr. Dempsey was not backward on his part, for he talked unceasingly. The good things of the table, to which he did ample justice, afforded an opportunity for catechising the ladies in their skill in household matters, and Miss Darcy, who seemed immensely amused by the novelty of such a character, sustained her part to admiration, entering deeply into culinary details, and

communicating receipts invented for the occasion. At another time, perhaps, the knight would have checked the spirit of *persiflage* in which his daughter indulged, but he suffered it now to take its course, well pleased that the mark of her ridicule was not only worthy of the sarcasm, but insensible to its arrow.

"Quite right—quite right not to try Mother Fum's when you can get up a little thing like this—and such capital sherry; look how Tom takes it in—slips like oil over his lip!"

Leonard looked up; an expression of rebuking severity for a moment crossed his features, but his eyes fell the next instant, and a low, faint sigh escaped him.

"I ought to know what sherry is—'Dodd and Dempsey's' was the great house for sherry."

"By the way," said the knight, "did not you promise me a little narrative of Dodd and Dempsey, when we parted yesterday?"

"To be sure I did. Will you have it now?"

Lady Eleanor and Helen rose to withdraw, but Mr. Dempsey, who took the movement as significant, immediately interposed, by saying,

"Don't stir, ma'am—sit down, ladies, I beg; there's nothing broad in the story—it might be told before the maids of honor."

Lady Eleanor and Helen were thunder-struck at the explanation, and the knight laughed till the tears came.

"My dear Eleanor," said he, "you really must accept Mr. Dempsey's assurance, and listen to his story now."

The ladies took their seats once more, and Mr. Dempsey having filled his glass, drank off a bumper; but whether it was that the narrative itself demanded a greater exertion at his hands, or that the cold quietude of Lady Eleanor's manner abashed him, but he found a second bumper necessary before he commenced his task.

"I say," whispered he to the knight, "couldn't you get that decanter out of Leonard's reach before I begin?—he'll not leave a drop in it while I am talking."

As if he felt that, after his explanation, the tale should be more particularly addressed to Lady Eleanor, he turned his chair round so as to face her, and thus began:

"There was once upon a time, ma'am, a lord-lieutenant of Ireland who was a duke. Whether he was Duke of Rutland, or Bedford, or Portland, or any other title it was he had, my memory doesn't serve me; it is enough, however, if I say he was immense-

ly rich, and, like many other people in the same way, immensely in debt. The story goes that he never traveled through England, and caught sight of a handsome place, or fine domain, or a beautiful cottage, that he didn't go straightway to the owner and buy it down out of the face, as a body might say, whether he would or no. And so in time it came to pass that there was scarcely a county in England without some magnificent house belonging to him. In many parts of Scotland he had them too, and, in all probability, he would have done the same in Ireland if he could. Well, ma'am, there never was such rejoicings as Dublin saw the night his grace arrived to be our viceroy! To know that we had got a man with one hundred and fifty thousand a year, and a spirit to spend double the money, was a downright blessing from Providence, and there was no saying what might not be the prosperity of Ireland under so auspicious a ruler.

"To do him justice, he didn't balk public expectation. Open house at the Castle, ditto at the Lodge in the Park, a mansion full of guests in the county Wicklow, a pack of hounds in Kildare, twelve horses training at the Curragh, a yacht like a little man-of-war in Dunleary harbor, large subscriptions to everything like sport, and a pension for life to every man that could sing a jolly song, or write a witty bit of poetry! Well, ma'am, they say, who remember those days, that they saw the best of Ireland, and surely I believe, if his grace had only lived, and had his own way, the peerage would have been as pleasant, and the bench of bishops as droll, and the ladies of honor as—Well, never mind, I'll pass on." Here Mr. Dempsey, to console himself for the abruptness of his pause, poured out and drank another bumper of sherry. "Pleasant times they were," said he, smacking his lips, "and faith, if Tom Leonard himself was alive then, the color of his nose might have made him commander of the forces; but, to continue, it was Dodd and Dempsey's house supplied the sherry—only the sherry, ma'am; old Stewart, of Belfast, had the port, and Kinnahan the claret and lighter liquors. I may mention, by the way, that my grandfather's contract included brandy, and that he wouldn't have given it up for either of the other two. It was just about this time that Dodd died, and my grandfather was left alone in the firm, but whether it was out of respect for his late partner, or that he might have felt himself lonely, but he always kept up the name of Dodd on the brass plate, and signed the name along

with his own; indeed, they say that he once saluted his wife by the name of Mrs. Dodd and Dempsey. But, as I was saying, it was one of those days when my grandfather was seated on a high stool in the back office of his house in Abbey street, that a fine, tall young fellow, with a blue frock coat, all braided with gold, and an elegant cocked-hat, with a plume of feathers in it, came tramping into the room, his spurs jingling, and his brass saber clinking, and his sabertasche banging at his legs.

“‘Mr. Dempsey?’ said he.

“‘D. and D.,’ said my grandfather; ‘that is, Dodd and Dempsey, your grace,’ for he half suspected it was the duke himself.

“‘I am Captain M’Claverty, of the Scots Grays,’ said he, ‘first aid-de-camp to his excellency.’

“‘I hope you may live to be colonel of the regiment,’ said my grandfather, for he was as polite and well-bred as any man in Ireland.

“‘That’s too good a sentiment,’ said the captain, ‘not to be pledged in a glass of your own sherry.’

“‘And we’ll do it, too,’ said old Dempsey. And he opened the desk, and took out a bottle he had for his own private drinking, and uncorked it with a little pocket corkscrew he always carried about with him, and he produced two glasses, and he and the captain hob-nobbed and drank to each other.

“‘Begad!’ said the captain, ‘his grace sent me to thank you for the delicious wine you supplied him with, but it’s nothing to this—not to be compared to it.’

“‘I’ve better again,’ said my grandfather. ‘I’ve wine that would bring the tears into your eyes when you saw the decanter getting low.’

The captain stared at him, and maybe it was that the speech was too much for his nerves, but he drank off two glasses one after the other as quick as he could fill them out.

“‘Dempsey,’ said he, looking round cautiously, ‘are we alone?’

“‘We are,’ said my grandfather.

“‘Tell me, then,’ said M’Claverty, ‘how could his grace get a taste of this real sherry, for himself, alone, I mean? Of course, I never thought of his giving it to the judges, and old Lord Dunboyne, and such like.’

“‘Does he ever take a little sup in his own room, of an evening?’

“‘I am afraid not, but I’ll tell you how I think it might be managed; you’re a snug fellow, Dempsey—you’ve plenty of

money muddling away in the bank at three and a half per cent.—couldn’t you contrive, some way or other, to get into his excellency’s confidence, and lend him ten or fifteen thousand, or so?’

“‘Ay, or twenty,’ said my grandfather—‘or twenty, if he likes it.’

“‘I doubt if he would accept such a sum,’ said the captain, shaking his head; ‘he has bags of money rolling in upon him every week or fortnight; sometimes we don’t know where to put them.’

“‘Oh, of course,’ said my grandfather; ‘I meant no offense, I only said twenty, because, if his grace would condescend, it isn’t twenty, but a fifty thousand I could give him, and on the nail, too.’

“‘You’re a fine fellow, Dempsey—a devilish fine fellow; you’re the very kind of fellow the duke likes—open-handed, frank, and generous.’

“‘Do you really think he’d like me?’ said my grandfather; and he rocked on the high stool, so that it nearly came down.

“‘Like you! I’ll tell you what it is,’ said he, laying his hand on my grandfather’s knee, ‘before one week was over, he couldn’t do without you. You’d be there morning, noon, and night; your knife and fork always ready for you, just like one of the family.’

“‘Blood alive!’ said my grandfather, ‘do you tell me so?’

“‘I’ll bet you a hundred pounds on it, sir!’

“‘Done,’ said my grandfather, ‘and you must hold the stakes;’ and with that he opened his black pocket-book, and put a note for the amount into the captain’s hand.

“‘This is the 31st of March,’ said the captain, taking out his pencil and tablets. ‘I’ll just book the bet.’

“‘And, indeed,’ added Mr. Dempsey, ‘for that matter, if it was a day later it would have been only more suitable.’

“‘Well, ma’am, what passed between them afterward I never heard said, but the captain took his leave, and left my grandfather so delighted and overjoyed, that he finished all the sherry in the drawer, and when the head clerk came in to ask for an invoice, or a thing of the kind, he found old Mr. Dempsey with his wig on the high stool, and he bowing round it, and calling it your grace. There’s no denying it, ma’am, he was blind drunk.

“‘About ten days or a fortnight after this time, my grandfather received a note from Teesum and Twist, the solicitors, stating that the draft of the bond was already drawn up for the loan he was about

to make to his grace, and begging to know to whom it was to be submitted.

“‘The captain will win his bet, devil a lie in it,’ said my grandfather; ‘he’s going to bring the duke and myself together.’”

“Well, ma’am, I won’t bother you with the law business, though if my father was telling the story he would not spare you one item of it all, who read this, and who signed the other, and the objections that was made by them thieving attorneys! and how the solicitor-general struck out this and put in that clause; but to tell you the truth, ma’am, I think that all the details spoil what we may call the poetry of the narrative; it is finer to say he paid the money, and the duke pocketed it.

“Well, weeks went over and months long, and not a bit of the duke did my grandfather see, nor M’Claverty either; he never came near him. To be sure his grace drank as much sherry as ever; indeed, I believe out of love to my grandfather they drank little else; from the bishops and the chaplain, down to the battle-ax guards, it was sherry, morning, noon, and night; and though this was very pleasing to my grandfather, he was always wishing for the time when he was to be presented to his grace, and their friendship was to begin. My grandfather could think of nothing else, daylight and dark; when he walked, he was always repeating to himself what his grace might say to him, and what he would say to his grace; and he was perpetually going up at eleven o’clock, when the guard was relieved in the Castle yard, suspecting that every now and then a footman in blue and silver would come out, and, touching his elbow, whisper in his ear, ‘Mr. Dempsey, the duke’s waiting for you.’ But, my dear ma’am, he might have waited till now, if Providence had spared him, and the devil a taste of the same message would ever have come near him, or a sight of the same footman in blue! It was neither more nor less than a delusion, or an illusion, or a confusion, or whatever the name of it is. At last, ma’am, in one of his prowlings about the Phoenix Park, who does he come on but M’Claverty; he was riding past in a great hurry, but he pulled up when he saw my grandfather, and called out, ‘Hang it! who’s this? I ought to know you.’”

“‘Indeed you ought,’ said my grandfather; ‘I’m Dodd and Dempsey, and by the same token there’s a little bet between us, and I’d like to know who won and who lost.’”

“‘I think there’s small doubt about that,’ said the captain; ‘didn’t his grace borrow twenty thousand of you?’”

“‘He did, no doubt of it.’”

“‘And wasn’t it *my* doing?’”

“‘Upon my conscience, I can’t deny it.’”

“‘Well, then, I won the wager, that’s clear.’”

“‘Oh! I see now,’ said my grandfather; ‘that was the wager, was it? Oh, bedad! I think you might have given me odds, if that was our bet.’”

“‘Why, what did you think it was?’”

“‘Oh, nothing at all, sir; it’s no matter now; it was another thing was passing in my mind. I was hoping to have the honor of making his acquaintance, flattered as I was by all you told me about him.’”

“‘Ah! that’s difficult, I confess,’ said the captain; ‘but still one might do something. He wants a little money just now; if you could make interest to be the lender, I wouldn’t say that what you suggest is impossible.’”

“Well, ma’am, it was just as it happened before. The old story, more parchment, more comparing of deeds, and a heavy check on the bank for the amount.

“When it was all done, M’Claverty came in one morning in plain clothes to my grandfather’s back office.

“‘Dodd and Dempsey,’ said he, ‘I’ve been thinking over your business, and I’ll tell you what my plan is. Old Vereker, the chamberlain, is little better than a beast, thinks nothing of anybody that isn’t a lord or a viscount, and, in fact, if he had his will, the Lodge in the Phoenix would be more like Pekin in Tartary than anything else; but I’ll tell you, if he won’t present you at the levee, which he flatly refuses at present, I’ll do the thing in a way of my own. His grace is going to spend a week up at Ballyrigan House, in the county of Wicklow, and I’ll contrive it, when he’s taking his morning walk through the shrubbery, to present you. All you’ve to do is to be ready at a turn of the walk; I’ll show you the place, you’ll hear his foot on the gravel, and you’ll slip out, just this way. Leave the rest to me.’”

“‘It’s beautiful,’ said my grandfather; ‘begad, that’s elegant.’”

“‘There’s one difficulty,’ said M’Claverty—‘one infernal difficulty.’”

“‘What’s that?’ asked my grandfather.

“‘I may be obliged to be out of the way. I lost five fifties at Daly’s the other night, and I may have to cross the water for a few weeks.’”

“‘Don’t let that trouble you,’ said my grandfather; ‘there’s the paper.’ And he put the little bit of music into his hand, and sure enough a pleasanter sound than

the same crisp squeak of a new note no man ever listened to.

“‘It’s agreed upon now?’ said my grandfather.

“‘All right,’ said M’Claverty; and with a jolly slap on the shoulder, he said, ‘Good-morning, D. and D.,’ and away he went.

“‘He was true to his word; that day three weeks my grandfather received a note in pencil; it was signed J. M’C., and ran thus: ‘Be up at Ballyriggeran at eleven o’clock on Wednesday, and wait at the foot of the hill, near the birch copse, beside the wooden bridge. Keep the left of the path, and lie still.’ Begad, ma’am, it’s well nobody saw it but himself, or they might have thought that Dodd and Dempsey was turned highwayman.

“‘My grandfather was prouder of the same note, and happier that morning, than if it was an order for fifty butts of sherry. He read it over and over, and he walked up and down the little back office, picturing out the whole scene, settling the chairs till he made a little avenue between them, and practicing the way he’d slip out slyly and surprise his grace. No doubt; it would have been as good as a play to have looked at him.

“‘One difficulty preyed upon his mind, what dress ought he to wear? Should he be in a court suit, or ought he rather to go in his robes as an alderman? It would never do to appear in a black coat, a light gray spencer, punch-colored shorts and gaiters, white hat with a strip of black crape on it, mere Dodd and Dempsey! That wasn’t to be thought of. If he could only ask his friend M’Hale, the fishmonger, who was knighted last year, he could tell all about it. M’Hale, however, would blab; he’d tell it to the whole livery, every alderman of Skinner’s alley would know it in a week! No, no, the whole must be managed discreetly; it was a mutual confidence between the duke and ‘D. and D.’ ‘At all events,’ said my grandfather, ‘a court dress is a safe thing;’ and out he went and bespoke one, to be sent home that evening, for he couldn’t rest till he tried it on, and felt how he could move his head in the straight collar, and bow, without the sword tripping him up and pitching him into the duke. I’ve heard my father say, that in the days that elapsed till the time mentioned for the interview, my grandfather lost two stone in weight. He walked half over the county Dublin, lying in ambush in every little wood he could see, and jumping out whenever he could see or hear any one coming; little surprises which were some-

times taken as practical jokes, very unbecoming a man of his age and appearance.

“‘Well, ma’am, Wednesday morning came, and at six o’clock my grandfather was on the way to Ballyriggeran, and at nine he was in the wood, posted at the very spot M’Claverty told him, as happy as any man could be whose expectations were so overwhelming. A long hour passed over, and another; nobody passed but a baker’s boy with a bulldog after him, and an old woman that was stealing brushwood in the shrubbery. My grandfather remarked her well, and determined to tell his grace of it, but his own business soon drove that out of his head, for eleven o’clock came, and now there was no knowing the moment the duke might appear. With his watch in his hand, he counted the minutes, ay, even the seconds: if he was a thief going to be hanged, and looking out over the heads of the crowd for a fellow to gallop in with a reprieve, he couldn’t have suffered more; his heart was in his mouth. At last, it might be about half-past eleven, he heard a footstep on the gravel, and then a loud, deep cough, ‘a fine kind of cough,’ my grandfather afterward called it; he peeped out, and there, sure enough, at about sixty paces, coming down the walk, was a large, grand-looking man—not that he was dressed as became him, for, strange as you may think it, the lord-lieutenant had on a shooting-jacket, and a pair of plaid trowsers, and cloth boots, and a big lump of a stick in his hand—and lucky it was that my grandfather knew him, for he bought a picture of him. On he came nearer and nearer, every step on the gravel-walk drove out of my grandfather’s head half a dozen of the fine things he had got off by heart to say during the interview, until at last he was so overcome by joy, anxiety, and a kind of terror, that he couldn’t tell where he was, or what was going to happen to him, but he had a kind of instinct that reminded him he was to jump out when the duke was near him, and ‘pon my conscience so he did, clean and clever, into the middle of the walk, right in front of his grace. My grandfather used to say, in telling the story, that he verily believed his feelings at that moment would have made him burst a blood-vessel, if it wasn’t that the duke put his hands to his sides and laughed till the woods rang again; but between shame and fright, my grandfather didn’t join in the laugh.

“‘In Heaven’s name!’ said his grace, ‘who or what are you?—this isn’t May-day.’

“‘My grandfather took this speech as a rebuke for standing so bold in his grace’s

presence, and being a shrewd man, and never deficient in tact, what does he do, but drops down on his two knees before him. 'My lord,' said he, 'I am only Dodd and Dempsey.'

'Whatever there was droll about the same house of Dodd and Dempsey, I never heard, but his grace laughed now till he had to lean against a tree. 'Well, Dodd and Dempsey, if that's your name, get up. I don't mean you any harm. Take courage, man; I am not going to knight you. By the way, are you not the worthy gentleman who lent me a trifle of twenty thousand more than once?'

'My grandfather couldn't speak, but he moved his lips, and he moved his hands, this way, as though to say the honor was too great for him, but it was all true.

'Well, Dodd and Dempsey, I've a very high respect for you,' said his grace; 'I intend, some of these fine days, when business permits, to go over and eat an oyster at your villa on the coast.'

'My grandfather remembers no more; indeed, ma'am, I believe that at that instant his grace's condescension had so much overwhelmed him, that he had a kind of vision before his eyes of a whole wood full of lord-lieutenants, with about thirty thousand people opening oysters for them as fast as they could eat, and he himself running about with a pepper-caster, pressing them to eat another 'black fin.' It was something of that kind, for when he got on his legs, a considerable time must have elapsed, as he found all silent around him, and a smart rheumatic pain in his knee-joints from the cold of the ground.

'The first thing my grandfather did when he got back to town, was to remember that he had no villa on the sea-coast, nor any more suitable place to eat an oyster than his house in Abbey street, for he couldn't ask his grace to go to 'Killeen's.' Accordingly he set out next day in search of a villa, and before a week was over he had as beautiful a place about a mile below Howth as ever was looked at; and that he mightn't be taken short, he took a lease of two oyster-beds, and made every preparation in life for the duke's visit. He might have spared himself the trouble. Whether it was that somebody had said something of him behind his back, or that politics were weighing on the duke's mind—the Catholics were mighty troublesome then—or, indeed, that he forgot it altogether, clean, but so it was, my grandfather never heard more of the visit, and if the oysters waited for his grace to come and eat them, they might have filled up Howth harbor.

'A year passed over, and my grandfather was taking his solitary walk in the park, very nearly in the same place as before—for you see, ma'am, he couldn't bear the sight of the sea-coast, and the very smell of shell-fish make him ill—when somebody called out his name. He looked up, and there was M'Claverty in a gig.

'Well, D. and D., how goes the world with you?'

'Very badly, indeed,' says my grandfather; his heart was full, and he just told him the whole story.

'I'll settle it all,' said the captain; 'leave it to me. There's to be a review to-morrow in the park; get on the back of the best horse you can find—the duke is a capital judge of a nag—ride him briskly about the field; he'll notice you, never fear; the whole thing will come up before his memory, and you'll have him to breakfast before the week's over.'

'Do you think so?—do you really think so?'

'I'll take my oath of it. I say, D. and D., could you do a little thing at a short date just now?'

'If it wasn't too heavy,' said my grandfather with a faint sigh.

'Only a hundred.'

'Well,' said he, 'you may send it down to the office. Good-by.' And with that he turned back toward town again; not to go home, however, for he knew well there was no time to lose, but straight he goes to Dycer's—it was old Tom was alive in those days, and a shrewder man than Tom Dycer there never lived. They tell you, ma'am, there's chaps in London, that if you send them your height, and your width, and your girth round the waist, they'll make you a suit of clothes that will fit you like your own skin, but, 'pon my conscience, I believe if you'd give your age and the color of your hair to old Tom Dycer, he could provide you a horse the very thing to carry you. Whenever a stranger used to come into the yard, Tom would throw a look at him out of the corner of his eye—for he had only one, there was a feather on the other—Tom would throw a look at him, and he'd shout out, 'Bring out 42; take out that brown mare with the white fetlocks.' That's the way he had of doing business, and the odds were five to one but the gentleman rode out half an hour after on the beast Tom intended for him. This suited my grandfather's knuckle well, for when he told him that it was a horse to ride before the lord-lieutenant he wanted, 'Bédad,' says Tom, 'I'll give you one you might ride before the Emperor of Chaney—here, Dennis, trot out 176.'

To all appearance, ma'am, 176 was no common beast, for every man in the yard, big and little, set off, when they heard the order, down to the stall where he stood, and at last two doors were flung wide open, and out he came with a man leading him. He was seventeen hands two if he was an inch, bright gray, with flea-bitten marks all over him; he held his head up so high at one end, and his tail at the other, that my grandfather said he'd have frightened the stoutest fox-hunter to look at him; besides, my dear, he went with his knees in his mouth when he trotted, and gave a skelp of his hind-legs at every stride, that it wasn't safe to be within four yards of him.

"'There's action!' says Tom—'there's bone and figure! Quiet as a lamb, without stain or blemish, warranted in every harness, and to carry a lady.'

"'I wish he'd carry a wine-merchant safe for about one hour and a half,' said my grandfather to himself. 'What's his price?'

"'But Tom wouldn't mind him, for he was going on reciting the animal's perfections, and telling him how he was bred out of Kick the Moon, by Moll Flanders, and that Lord Dunraile himself only parted with him because he didn't think him showy enough for a charger. 'Though, to be sure,' said Tom, 'he's greatly improved since that. Will you try him in the school, Mr. Dempsey?' said he; 'not but I tell you that you'll find him a little mettlesome or so there; take him on the grass, and he's gentleness itself—he's a kid, that's what he is.'

"'And his price?' said my grandfather.

"'Dyceer whispered something in his ear.'

"'Blood alive!' said my grandfather.

"'Devil a farthing less. Do you think you're to get beauty and action, ay, and gentle temper, for nothing?'

"'My dear, the last words, 'gentle temper,' wasn't well out of his mouth when 'the kid' put his two hind-legs into the little pulpit where the auctioneer was sitting, and sent him flying through the window behind him into the stall.

"'That comes of tickling him,' said Tom; 'them blackguards never will let a horse alone.'

"'I hope you don't let any of them go out to the reviews in the park, for I declare to heaven, if I was on his back then, Dodd and Dempsey would be D.D. sure enough.'

"'With a large snaffle, and the saddle well back,' says Tom, 'he's a lamb.'

"'God grant it,' says my grandfather; 'send him over to me to-morrow about eleven.' He gave a check for the money—

we never heard how much it was—and away he went.

"That must have been a melancholy evening for him, for he sent for old Rogers, the attorney, and after he was measured for breeches and boots, he made his will and disposed of his effects. 'For there's no knowing,' said he, 'what 176 may do for me.' Rogers did his best to persuade him off the excursion:

"'Dress up one of Dyceer's fellows like you; let him go by the lord-licutenant prancing and rearing, and then, you yourself can appear on the ground, all splashed and spurred, half an hour after.'

"'No,' says my grandfather, 'I'll go myself.'

"For, so it is, there's no denying, when a man has got ambition in his heart it puts pluck there. Well, eleven o'clock came, and the whole of Abbey street was on foot to see my grandfather; there wasn't a window hadn't five or six faces in it, and every blackguard in the town was there to see him go off, just as if it was a show.

"'Bad luck to them,' says my grandfather; 'I wish they had brought the horse round to the stable-yard, and let me get up in peace.'

"And he was right there; for the stirrup, when my grandfather stood beside the horse, was exactly even with his chin; but somehow, with the help of the two clerks and the book-keeper, and the office stool, he got up on his back with as merry a cheer as ever rung out to welcome him, while a dirty blackguard, with two old pocket-handkerchiefs for a pair of breeches, shouted out, 'Old Dempsey's going to get an appetite for the oysters!'

"Considering everything, 176 behaved very well; he didn't plunge, and he didn't kick, and my grandfather said, 'Providence was kind enough not to let him rear!' but somehow, he wouldn't go straight, but sideways, and kept lashing his long tail on my grandfather's legs, and sometimes round his body, in a way that terrified him greatly, till he became used to it.

"'Well, if riding be a pleasure,' says my grandfather, 'people must be made different from me.'

"For, saving your favor, ma'am, he was as raw as a griskin, and there wasn't a bit of him the size of a half-crown he could sit on without a cry out; and no other pace would the beast go but this little jig, jig, from side to side, while he was tossing his head and flinging his name about, just as if to say, 'Couldn't I pitch you sky-high, if I liked? Couldn't I make a Congreve rocket of you, Dodd and Dempsey?'

“When he got on the ‘Fifteen Acres,’ it was only the position he found himself in that destroyed the grandeur of the scene; for there was fifty thousand people assembled at least, and there was a line of infantry of two miles long, and the artillery was drawn up at one end, and the cavalry stood beyond them, stretching away toward Knockmaroon.

“My grandfather was now getting accustomed to his sufferings, and he felt that, if 176 did no more, with God’s help he could bear it for one day, and so he rode on quietly outside the crowd, attracting, of course, a fair share of observation, for he wasn’t always in the saddle, but sometimes a little behind or before it. Well, at last there came a cloud of dust, rising at the far end of the field, and it got thicker and thicker, and then it broke, and there were white plumes dancing, and gold glittering, and horses all shaking their gorgeous trappings, for it was the staff was galloping up, and then there burst out a great cheer, so loud that nothing seemed possible to be louder, until bang—bang—bang, eighteen large guns went thundering together, and the whole line of infantry let off a clattering volley, till you’d think the earth was crashing open.

“‘Devil’s luck to ye all—couldn’t you be quiet a little longer?’ says D. and D., for he was trying to get an easy posture to sit in, but just at this moment 176 pricked up his ears, made three bounds in the air, as if something lifted him up, shook his head like a fish, and away he went: wasn’t it wonderful that my grandfather kept his seat? He remembers, he says, that at each bound he was a yard over his back, but as he was a heavy man, and kept his legs open, he had the luck to come down in the same place, and a sore place it must have been! for he let a screech out of him each time that would have pierced the heart of a stone. He knew very little more what happened, except that he was galloping away somewhere, until at last he found himself in a crowd of people, half dead with fatigue and fright, and the horse thick with foam.

“‘Where am I?’ says my grandfather.

“‘You’re in Lucan, sir,’ says a man.

“‘And where’s the review?’ says my grandfather.

“‘Five miles behind you, sir.’

“‘Blessed heaven!’ says he; ‘and where’s the duke?’

“‘God knows,’ said the man, giving a wink to the crowd, for they thought he was mad.

“‘Won’t you get off and take some re-

freshment?’ says the man, for he was the owner of a little public.

“‘Get off!’ says my grandfather; ‘it’s easy talking! I found it hard enough to get on. Bring me a pint of porter where I am.’ And so he drained off the liquor, and he wiped his face, and he turned the beast’s head once more toward town.

“When my grandfather reached the Park again, he was, as you may well believe, a tired and a weary man; and, indeed, for that matter, the beast didn’t seem much fresher than himself, for he lashed his sides more rarely, and he condescended to go straight, and he didn’t carry his head higher than his rider’s. At last they wound their way up through the fir copse at the end of the field, and caught sight of the review, and, to be sure, if poor D. and D. left the ground before under a grand salute of artillery and small-arms, another of the same kind welcomed him back again. It was an honor he’d have been right glad to have dispensed with, for when 176 heard it, he looked about him to see which way he’d take, gave a loud neigh, and, with a shake that my grandfather said he’d never forget, he plunged forward, and went straight at the thick of the crowd: it must have been a cruel sight to have seen the people running for their lives. The soldiers that kept the line laughed heartily at the mob, but they hadn’t the joke long to themselves, for my grandfather went slap at them into the middle of the field; and he did that day what I hear has been very seldom done by cavalry, he broke a square of the 79th Highlanders, and scattered them over the field. In truth, the beast must have been the devil himself, for wherever he saw most people, it was there he always went. There were, at this time, three heavy dragoons and four of the horse-police, with drawn swords, in pursuit of my grandfather; and, if he were the enemy of the human race, the cries of the multitude could not have been louder, as one universal shout arose of ‘Cut him down! Cleave him in two!’ And do you know, he said, afterward, he’d have taken it as a mercy of Providence if they had. Well, my dear, when he had broke through the Highlanders, scattered the mob, dispersed the band, and left a hole in the big drum you could have put your head through, 176 made for the staff, who, I may remark, were all this time enjoying the confusion immensely. When, however, they saw my grandfather heading toward them, there was a general cry of ‘Here he comes! here he comes! Take care, your grace!’ And there arose among the group

around the duke a scene of plunging, kicking, and rearing, in the midst of which in dashed my grandfather. Down went an aid-de-camp at one side; 176 plunged, and off went the town-major at the other, while a stroke of a saber, kindly intended for my grandfather's skull, came down on the horse's back and made him give plunge the third, which shot his rider out of the saddle, and sent him flying through the air like a shell, till he alighted under the leaders of a carriage, where the duchess and the ladies of honor were seated.

"Twenty people jumped from their horses now to finish him; if they were hunting a rat, they couldn't have been more venomous.

"'Stop, stop,' said the duke; 'he's a capital fellow, don't hurt him. Who are you, my brave little man? You ride like Chifney for the Derby.'

"'God knows who I am!' says my grandfather, creeping out, and wiping his face. 'I was Dodd and Dempsey when I left home this morning; but I am bewitched, devil a lie in it.'

"'Dempsey, my lord duke,' said M'Claverty, coming up at the moment. 'Don't you know him?' and he whispered a few words in his grace's ear.

"'Oh, yes, to be sure,' said the viceroy. 'They tell me you have a capital pack of hounds, Dempsey. What do you hunt?'

"'Horse, foot, and dragoons, my lord,' said my grandfather; and, to be sure, there was a jolly roar of laughter after the words, for poor D. and D. was just telling his mind, without meaning anything more.

"'Well, then,' said the duke. 'if you've always as good sport as to-day, you've capital fun of it.'

"'Oh! delightful indeed!' said my grandfather; 'never enjoyed myself more in my life.'

"'Where's his horse?' said his grace.

"'He jumped down into the sand quarry and broke his neck, my lord duke.'

"'The heavens be praised!' said my grandfather; 'if it's true, I am as glad as if I got fifty pounds.'

The trumpets now sounded for the cavalry to march past, and the duke was about to move away, when M'Claverty again whispered something in his ear.

"'Very true,' said he; 'well thought of. I say, Dempsey, I'll go over some of these mornings and have a run with your hounds.'

"My grandfather rubbed his eyes and looked up, but all he saw was about twenty staff officers with their hats off, for every man of them saluted my father as they passed,

and the crowd made way for him with as much respect as if it was the duke himself. He soon got a car to bring him home, and notwithstanding all his sufferings that day, and the great escape he had of his life, there wasn't as proud a man in Dublin as himself.

"'He's coming to hunt with my hounds!' said he; 'tisn't to take an oyster and a glass of wine, and be off again!—no, but he's coming down to spend the whole day with me.'

"The thought was ecstasy; it only had one drawback. Dodd and Dempsey's house had never kept hounds. Well, ma'am, I needn't detain you long about what happened; it's enough if I say that in less than six weeks my grandfather had bought up Lord Tyrawley's pack, and his hunting-box, and his horses, and I believe his grooms; and though he never ventured on the back of a beast himself, he did nothing from morning to night but listen and talk about hunting, and try to get the names of the dogs by heart, and practice to cry 'tally-ho!' and 'stole away!' and 'ho-ith! ho-ith!' with which, indeed, he used to start out of his sleep at night, so full he was of the sport. From the first of September he never had a red coat off his back.

'Pon my conscience, I believe he went to bed in his spurs, for he didn't know what moment the duke might be on him, and that's the way the time went on till spring; but not a sign of his grace, not a word, not a hint that he ever thought more of his promise! Well, one morning my grandfather was walking very sorrowfully down near the Curragh, where his hunting-lodge was, when he saw them roping in the course for the races, and he heard the men talking of the magnificent cup the duke was to give for the winner of the three-year old stakes, and the thought flashed on him, 'I'll bring myself to his memory that way.' And what does he do, but he goes back to the house and tells his trainer to go over to the racing stables, and buy not one, or two, but the three best horses that were entered for the race. Well, ma'am, their engagements were very heavy, and he had to take them all on himself, and it cost him a sight of money. It happened that this time he was on the right scent, for down comes M'Claverty the same day with orders from the duke to take the odds, right and left, on one of the three, a little mare called Let-Me-Along-Before-the-People; she was one of his own breeding, and he had a conceit out of her. Well, M'Claverty laid on the money here and there, till he stood what between the duke's bets and all the

officers of the staff and his own the heaviest winner or loser on that race.

“She’s Martin’s mare, isn’t she?” said M-Claverty.

“No, sir, she was bought this morning by Mr. Dempsey, of Tear Fox Lodge.”

“The devil she is,” said M-Claverty; and he jumped on his horse, and he cantered over to the lodge.

“Mr. Dempsey at home?” says he.

“Yes, sir.”

“Give him this card, and say, I beg the favor of seeing him for a few moments.”

“The man went off, and came back in a few minutes, with the answer, ‘Mr. Dempsey is very sorry, but he’s engaged.’”

“Oh, oh! that’s it!” says M-Claverty to himself; ‘I see how the wind blows. I say, my man, tell him I’ve a message from his grace the lord-lieutenant.’”

“Well, the answer came for the captain to send the message in, for my grandfather couldn’t come out.

“Say it’s impossible,” said M-Claverty; ‘it’s for his own private ear.’”

“Dodd and Dempsey was strong in my grandfather that day! he would listen to no terms.

“No,” says he, ‘if the goods are worth anything, they never come without an invoice. I’ll have nothing to say to him.’”

“But the captain wasn’t to be balked; for, in spite of everything, he passed the servant, and came at once into the room where my grandfather was sitting—ay, and before he could help it, was shaking him by both hands as if he was his brother.

“Why the devil didn’t you let me in?” said he; ‘I came from the duke with a message for you.’”

“Bother!” says my grandfather.

“I did though,” says he; ‘he’s got a heavy book on your little mare, and he wants you to make your boy ride a waiting race, and not win the first heat—you understand?’”

“I do,” says my grandfather, ‘perfectly; and he’s got a deal of money on her, has he?’”

“He has,” said the captain; ‘and every one at the Castle, too, high and low, from the chief secretary down to the second coachman—we are all backing her.’”

“I am glad of it!—I am sincerely glad of it,” said my grandfather, rubbing his hands.

“I knew you would be, old boy,” cried the captain, joyfully.

“Ah, but you don’t know why; you’d never guess.”

“M-Claverty stared at him, but said nothing.

“Well, I’ll tell you,” resumed my grandfather; ‘the reason is this: I’ll not let her run, no, divil a step! I’ll bring her up to the ground, and you may look at her, and see that she’s all sound and safe, in top condition, and with a skin like a looking-glass, and then I’ll walk her back again! And do you know why I’ll do this?’ said he, while his eyes flashed fire, and his lip trembled; ‘just because I won’t suffer the house of Dodd and Dempsey to be humbugged as if we were greengrocers! Two years ago, it was to “eat an oyster with me;” last year, it was a “day with my hounds;” maybe now his grace would join the race dinner; but that’s all past and gone—I’ll stand it no longer.’”

“Confound it, man,” said the captain, ‘the duke must have forgotten it. You never reminded him of his engagement. He’d have been delighted to have come to you if he only recollected.’”

“I am sorry my memory was better than his,” said my grandfather, ‘and I wish you a very good morning.’”

“Oh, don’t go; wait a moment: let us see if we can’t put this matter straight. You want the duke to dine with you?”

“No, I don’t; I tell you I have given it up.”

“Well, well, perhaps so; will it do if you dine with him?”

“My grandfather had his hand on the lock—he was just going—he turned round, and fixed his eyes on the captain.

“Are you in earnest? or is this only more of the same game?” said he sternly.

“I’ll make that very easy to you,” said the captain; ‘I’ll bring the invitation to you this night; the mare doesn’t run till to-morrow; if you don’t receive the card, the rest is in your own power.’”

“Well, ma’am, my story is now soon told: that night, about nine o’clock, there comes a footman all splashed and muddy, in a Castle livery, up to the door of the lodge, and he gave a violent pull at the bell, and when the servant opened the door, he called out in a loud voice, ‘From his excellency the lord-lieutenant,’ and into the saddle he jumped, and away he was like lightning; and, sure enough, it was a large card, all printed, except a word here and there, and it went something this way:

“I am commanded by his excellency the lord-lieutenant to request the pleasure of Mr. Dempsey’s company at dinner on Friday, the 23d instant, at the Lodge, Phoenix Park, at seven o’clock.

“GRANVILLE VEREKER,

Chamberlain.

“Swords and Bags.”

“‘At last!’ said my grandfather, and he wiped the tears from his eyes; for to say the truth, ma’am, it was a long chase without ever getting once a ‘good view.’ I must hurry on; the remainder is easy told. Let-Me-Along-Before-the-People won the cup, my grandfather was chaired home from the course in the evening, and kept open house at the lodge for all comers while the races lasted; and at length the eventful day drew near on which he was to realize all his long-coveted ambition. It was on the very morning before, however, that he put on his court suit for about the twentieth time, and the tailor was standing trembling before him while my grandfather complained of a wrinkle here, or a pucker there.

“‘You see,’ said he, ‘you’ve run yourself so close that you’ve no time now to alter these things before the dinner.’

“‘I’ll have time enough, sir,’ says the man, ‘if the news is true.’

“‘What news?’ says my grandfather, with a choking in his throat, for a sudden fear came over him.

“‘The news they have in town this morning.’

“‘What is it?—speak it out, man!’

“‘They say—But sure you’ve heard it it, sir?’

“‘Go on!’ says my grandfather; and he got him by the shoulders and shook him. ‘Go on, or I’ll strangle you!’

“‘They say, sir, that the ministry is out, and—’

“‘And well—’

“‘And that the lord-lieutenant has resigned, and the yacht is coming round to Dunleary to take him away this evening, for he won’t stay longer than the time to swear in the lords justices—he’s so glad to be out of Ireland.’

“My grandfather sat down on the chair, and began to cry, and well he might, for not only was the news true, but he was ruined besides. Every farthing of the great fortune that Dodd and Dempsey made was lost and gone—scattered to the winds; and when his affairs were wound up, he, that was thought one of the richest men in Dublin, was found to be something like nine thousand pounds worse than nothing. Happily for him, his mind was gone too, and though he lived a few years after, near Finglass, he was always an innocent, didn’t remember anybody, nor who he was, but used to go about asking the people if they knew whether his grace the lord-lieutenant had put off his dinner-party for the 23d; and then he’d pull out the old card to show them, for he kept it in a

little case, and put it under his pillow every night till he died.”

While Mr. Dempsey’s narrative continued, Tom Leonard indulged freely and without restraint in the delights of the knight’s sherry, forgetting not only all his griefs, but the very circumstances and people around him. Had the party maintained a conversational tone, it is probable that he would have been able to adhere to the wise resolutions he had planned for his guidance on leaving home; unhappily, the length of the tale, the prosy monotony of the speaker’s voice, the deepening twilight which stole on ere the story drew to a close, were influences too strong for prudence so frail: an instinct told him that the decanter was close by, and every glass he drained either drowned a care or stifled a compunction.

The pleasant buzz of voices which succeeded to the anecdote of Dodd and Dempsey aroused Leonard from his dreary stupor. Wine, and laughter, and merry voices, were adjuncts he had not met for many a day before, and, strangely enough, the only emotions they could call up were some vague, visionary sorrowings over his fallen and degraded condition.

“By Jove!” said Dempsey, in a whisper to Darcy, “the lieutenant has more sympathy for my grandfather than I have myself—I’ll be hanged if he isn’t wiping his eyes! So you see, ma’am,” added he, aloud, “it was a taste for grandeur ruined the Dempseys; the same ambition that has destroyed states and kingdoms has brought your humble servant to a trifle of thirty-eight pounds four and nine per annum for all his worldly comforts and virtuous enjoyments; but, as the old ballad says,

“Though classic ’tis to show one’s grief,
And cry like Carthaginian Marius,
I’ll not do this, nor ask relief
Like that ould beggar, Belisarius.

No, ma’am, ‘Never give in while there’s a score behind the door,’—that’s the motto of the Dempseys. If it’s not on their coat-of-arms, it’s written in their hearts.”

“Your grandfather, however, did not seem to possess the family courage,” said the knight, slyly.

“Well, and what would you have? Wasn’t he brave enough for a wine-merchant?”

“The ladies will give us some tea, Leonard,” said the knight, as Lady Eleanor and her daughter had, some time before, slipped unobserved from the room.

“Yes, colonel, always ready.”

“That’s the way with him,” whispered

Dempsey; "he'd swear black and blue this minute that you commanded the regiment he served in. He very often calls me the quarter-master."

The party rose to join the ladies, and while Leonard maintained his former silence, Dempsey once more took on himself the burden of the conversation by various little anecdotes of the Fumbally household, and sketches of life and manners at Port Ballintray.

So perfectly at ease did he find himself, so inspired by the happy impression he felt convinced he was making, that he volunteered a song "if the young lady would only vouchsafe a few chords on the piano" by way of accompaniment—a proposition Helen acceded to.

Thus passed the evening, a period in which Lady Eleanor more than once doubted if the whole were not a dream, and the persons before her the mere creations of disordered fancy; an impression certainly not lessened as Mr. Dempsey's last words at parting conveyed a pressing invitation to a "little thing he'd get up for them at Mother Fum's."

CHAPTER XL.

SOME VISITORS AT GWYNNE ABBEY.

It is a fact not only well worthy of mention, but pregnant with its own instruction, that persons who have long enjoyed all the advantages of an elevated social position better support the reverses which condemn them to humble and narrow fortunes, than do the vulgar-minded, when, by any sudden caprice of the goddess, they are raised to a conspicuous and distinguished elevation.

There is in the gentleman, and still more in the gentlewoman—as the very word itself announces—an element of placidity and quietude that suggests a spirit of accommodation to whatever may arise to ruffle the temper or disturb the equanimity. Self-respect and consideration for others are a combination not inconsistent or unfrequent, and there are few who have not seen, some time or other, a reduced gentleman dispensing in a lowly station the mild graces and accomplishments of his order, and, while elevating others, sustaining himself.

The upstart, on the other hand, like a mariner in some unknown sea without chart or compass, has nothing to guide him; impelled hither or thither as caprice or passion dictate, he is neither restrained by a

due sense of decorum, nor admonished by a conscientious feeling of good breeding. With the power that rank and wealth bestows he becomes not distinguished, but eccentric; unsustained by the companionship of his equals, he tries to assimilate himself to them rather by their follies than their virtues, and thus presents to the world that mockery of rank and station which makes good men sad, and bad men triumphant.

To these observations we have been led by the altered fortunes of those two families of whom our story treats. If the Darcys suddenly found themselves brought down to a close acquaintanceship with poverty and its fellows, they bore the change with that noble resignation that springs from true regard for others at the sacrifice of ourselves. The little shifts and straits of narrowed means were ever treated jestingly, the trials that a gloomy spirit had converted into sorrows, made matters of merriment and laughter, and as the traveler sees the Arab tent in the desert spread beside the ruined temple of ancient grandeur, and happy faces and kind looks beneath the shade of ever-vanished splendor, so did this little group maintain in their fall the kindly affection and the high-souled courage that made of that humble cottage a home of happiness and enjoyment.

Let us now turn to the west, where another and very different picture presented itself. Although certain weighty questions remained to be tried at law between the Darcys and the Hickmans, Bicknell could not advise the knight to contest the mortgage under which the Hickmans had now taken possession of the abbey.

The reputation for patriotism and independence so fortunately acquired by that family came at a most opportune moment. In no country of Europe are the associations connected with the proprietorship of land more regarded than in Ireland; this feeling, like most others truly Irish, has the double property of being either a great blessing or a great curse, for while it can suggest a noble attachment to country, it can also, as we see it in our own day, be the fertile source of the most atrocious crime.

Had Hickman O'Reilly succeeded to the estate of the Darcys at any other moment than when popular opinion called the one a "patriot" and the other a "traitor," the consequences would have been serious; all the disposable force, civil and military, would scarcely have been sufficient to secure possession. The thought of the "old ancient family" deposed and exiled by the

men of yesterday, would have excited a depth of feeling enough to stir the country far and near. Every trait that adorned the one, for generations, would be remembered, while the humble origin of the other would be offered as the bitterest reproach, by those who thought in embodying the picture of themselves and their fortune they were actually summing up the largest amount of obloquy and disgrace. Such is mob principle in everything! Aristocracy has no such admirers as the lowly born, just as the liberty of the press is inexpressibly dear to that part of the population who know not how to read.

When last we saw Gwynne Abbey the scene was one of mourning, the parting hour of those whose affections clung to the old walls, and who were to leave it forever. We must now return there for a brief space under different auspices, and when Mr. Hickman O'Reilly, the high-sheriff of the county, was entertaining a large and distinguished company in his new and princely residence.

It was the Assize week, and the judges, as well as the leading officers of the Crown, were his guests; many of the gentry were also there, some from indifference to whom their host might be; others, from curiosity to see how the upstart, Bob Hickman, would do the honors; and there were many who felt far more at their ease in the abbey now, than when they had the fears of Lady Eleanor Darcy's quietude and coldness of manner before them.

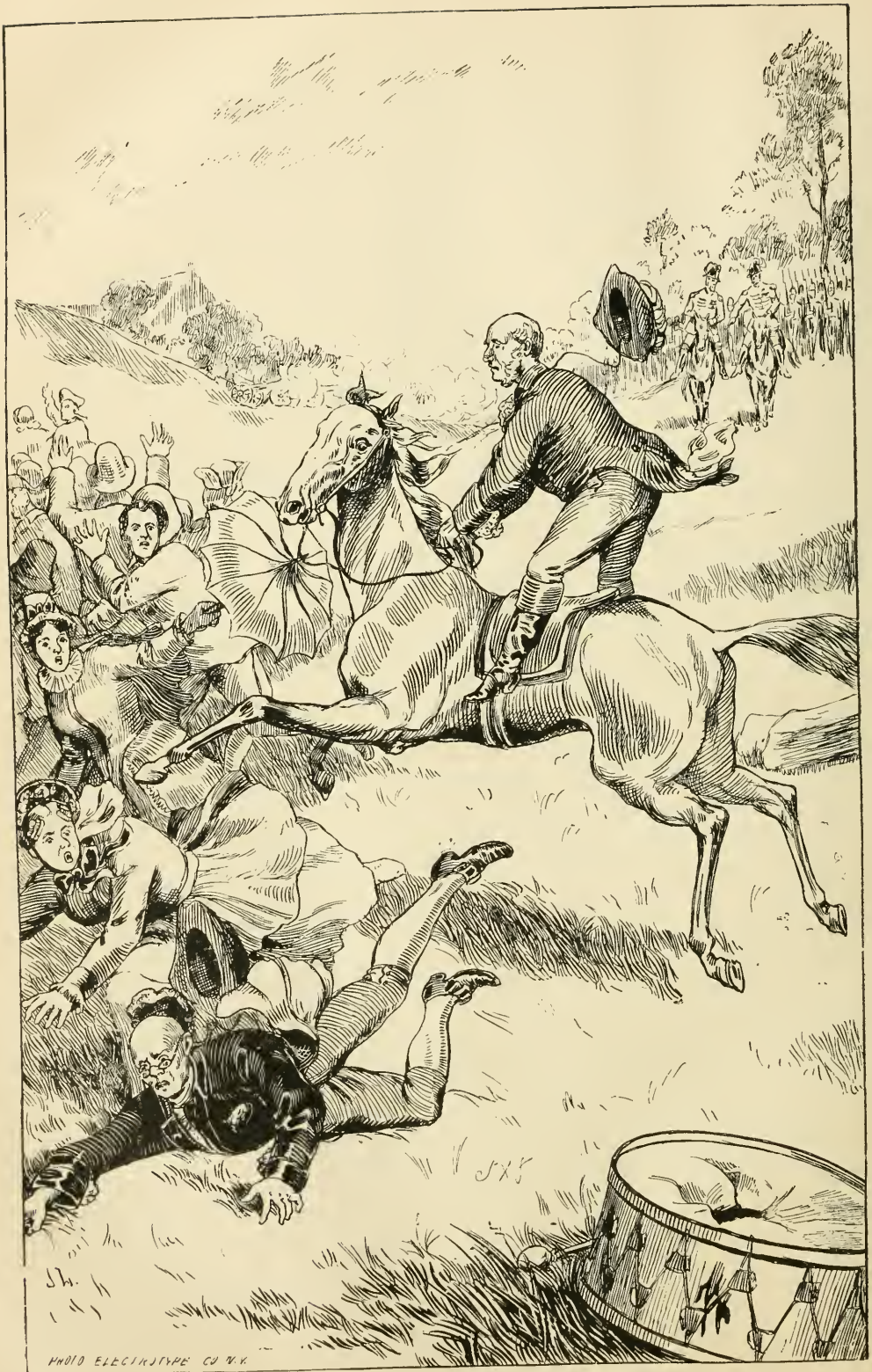
No expense was spared to rival the style and retinue of the abbey under its former owners. O'Reilly well knew the value of first impressions in such matters, and how the report that would soon gain currency would decide the matter for or against him. So profusely, and with such disregard to money was everything done, that, as a mere question of cost, there was no doubt that never in the knight's palmiest days had anything been seen more magnificent than the preparations. Luxuries, brought at an immense cost, and by contraband, from abroad; wines, of the rarest excellence, abounded at every entertainment; equipages, more splendid than any ever seen there before, appeared each morning; and troops of servants without number moved hither and thither, displaying the gorgeous liveries of the O'Reillys.

The guests were for the most part the neighboring gentry, the military, and the members of the bar; but there were others also, selected with peculiar care, and whose presence was secured at no inconsiderable pains. These were the leading "diners-

out" of Dublin, and recognized "men about town," whose names were seen on club committees, and whose word was law on all questions of society. Among them, the chief was Con Heffernan, and he now saw himself for the first time a guest at Gwynne Abbey. The invitation was made and accepted with a certain coquetting that gave it the character of a reconciliation; there were political differences to be got over, mutual recriminations to be forgotten; but as each felt, for his own reasons, not indisposed to renew friendly relations, the matter presented little difficulty, and when Mr. O'Reilly received his guest, on his arrival, with a shake of both hands, the action was meant and taken as a receipt in full for all past misunderstanding, and both had too much tact ever to go back on "bygones."

There had been a little correspondence between the parties, the early portions of which were marked "Confidential," and the latter, "Strictly Confidential and Private." This related to a request made by O'Reilly to Heffernan to entreat his influence in behalf of Lionel Darcy. Nothing could exceed the delicacy of the negotiation, for after professing that the friendship which had subsisted between his own son and young Darcy was the active motive for the request, he went on to say, that in the course of certain necessary legal investigations, it was discovered that young Lionel, in the unguarded carelessness of a young and extravagant man, had put his name to bills of a large amount, and even hinted that he had not stopped there, but had actually gone the length of signing his father's name to documents for the sale of property. To obtain an appointment for him in some regiment serving in India would at once withdraw him from the likelihood of any exposure in these matters. To interest Heffernan in the affair was the object of O'Reilly's correspondence, and Heffernan was only too glad, at so ready an opportunity, to renew their ruptured relations.

Lions were not as fashionable in those days as at present, but still the party had its share in the person of Counselor O'Halloran, the great orator of the bar, and the great speaker at public meetings, the rising patriot who, not being deemed of importance enough to be bought, was looked on as incorruptible. He had come down special to defend O'Reilly in a record of Darcy *versus* Hickman, the first case submitted for trial by Bicknell, and one which, small in itself, would yet, if determined in the knight's favor, form a rule of great importance respecting those that were to follow.



DEMPSEY'S ADVENTURE AT THE REVIEW. (P. 187.)

It was in the first burst of Hickman O'Reilly's indignation against Government that he had secured O'Halloran as his counsel, never anticipating that any conjuncture would bring him once more into relations with the ministry. His appointment of high-sheriff, however, and his subsequent correspondence with Heffernan, ending with the invitation to the abbey, had greatly altered his sentiments, and he more than once regretted the precipitancy with which he had selected his advocate.

Whether "the counselor" did or did not perceive that his reception was one of less cordiality and more embarrassment than might be expected, it is not easy to say, for he was one of those persons who live too much out of themselves to betray their own feelings to the world. He was a large and well-looking man, but whose features would have been coarse in their expression were it not for the animated intelligence of his eye, and the quaint humor that played about the angles of his mouth, and added to the peculiar drollery of an accent to which Kerry had lent all its native archness. His gestures were bold, striking, and original; his manner of speaking, even in private, impressive—from the deliberate slowness of his utterance, and the air of truthfulness sustained by every agency of look, voice, and expression. The least observant could not fail to remark in him a conscious power, a sense of his own great gifts either in argument or invective, for he was no less skillful in unraveling the tangled tissue of a knotted statement, than in overwhelming his adversary with a torrent of abusive eloquence. The habits of his profession, but, in particular, the practice of cross-examination, had given him an immense insight into the darker recesses of the human heart, and made him master of all the subtleties and evasions of inferior capacities. This knowledge he brought with him into society, where his powers of conversation had already established for him a high repute. He abounded in anecdote, which he introduced so easily and naturally, that the *à propos* had as much merit as the story itself. Yet with all these qualities, and in a time when the members of his profession were more than ever esteemed and courted, he himself was not received, save on sufferance, into the better society of the capital. The stamp of a "low tone," and the assertion of democratic opinions, were two insurmountable obstacles to his social acceptance; and he was rarely, if ever, seen in those circles which arrogated to themselves the title of best. Whether it was a conscious sense of what

was "in him" powerful enough to break down such barriers as these, and that, like Nelson, he felt the day would come when he would have a "*Gazette of his own*," but his manner at times displayed a spirit of haughty daring and effrontery that formed a singular contrast with the slippery and insinuating softness of his *nisi prius* tone and gesture.

If we seem to dwell longer on this picture than the place the original occupies in our story would warrant, it is because the character is not fictitious, and there is always an interest to those who have seen the broad current of a mighty river rolling onward in its mighty strength, to stand beside the little streamlet which, first rising from the mountain, gave it origin—to mark the first obstacles that opposed its course—and to watch the strong impulses that molded its destiny to overcome them.

Whatever fears Hickman O'Reilly might have felt as to how his counsel, learned in the law, would be received by the Government agent, Mr. Heffernan, were speedily allayed. The gentlemen had never met before, and yet, ere the first day went over, they were as intimate as old acquaintances, each, apparently, well pleased with the strong good sense and natural humor of the other. And so, indeed, it may be remarked in the world, that when two shrewd, far-reaching individuals are brought together, the attraction of quick intelligence and craft is sufficient to draw them into intimate relations at once. There is something wonderfully fraternal in roguery.

This was the only social difficulty O'Reilly dreaded, and happily it was soon dispelled, and the general enjoyment was unclouded by even the slightest accident. The judges were *bons vivants*, who enjoyed good living and good wine; he of the Common Pleas, too, was an excellent shot, and always exchanged his robes for a shooting-jacket on entering the park, and dispatched hares and woodcocks as he walked along, with as much unconcern as he had done Whiteboys half an hour before. The solicitor-general was passionately fond of hunting, and would rather any day have drawn a cover than an indictment; and so with the rest, they seemed all of them sporting gentlemen of wit and pleasure, who did a little business at law by way of "distraction." Nor did O'Halloran form an exception; he was as ready as the others to snatch an interval of pleasure amid the fatigues of his laborious day. But, somehow, he contrived that no amount of business should be too much for him; and

while his ruddy cheek and bright eye bespoke perfect health and renewed enjoyment, it was remarked that the lamp burned the whole night long unextinguished in his chamber, and that no morning found him ever unprepared to defend the interest of his client.

There was, as we have said, nothing to throw a damper on the general joy; fortune was bent on dealing kindly with Mr. O'Reilly, for while he was surrounded with distinguished and delighted guests, his father, the doctor, the only one whose presence could have brought a blush to his cheek, was confined to his room by a severe cold, and unable to join the party.

The Assize calendar was a long one, and the town the last in the circuit, so that the judges were in no hurry to move on; besides, Gwynne Abbey was a quarter which it was very unlikely would soon be equaled in style of living and resources. For all these several reasons the business of the law went on with an easy and measured pace, the court opening each day at ten, and closing about three or four, when a magnificent procession of carriages and saddle-horses drew up in the main street to convey the guests back to the abbey.

While the other trials formed the daily subject of table-talk, suggesting those stories of fun, anecdote, and incident, with which no other profession can enter into rivalry, the case of Darcy *versus* Hickman was never alluded to, and, being adroitly left last on the list for trial, could not possibly interfere with the freedom so essential to pleasant intercourse.

The day fixed on for this record was a Saturday. It was positively the last day the judges could remain, and having accepted an engagement to a distant part of the country for that very day at dinner, the court was to sit early, and there being no other cause for trial, it was supposed the cause would be concluded in time to permit their departure. Up to this morning the high-sheriff had never omitted, as in duty bound, to accompany the judges to the court-house, displaying in the number and splendor of his equipages a costliness and magnificence that excited the wonder of the assembled gentry. On this day, however, he deemed it would be more delicate, on his part, to be absent, as the matter in litigation so nearly concerned himself. And half seriously, and half in jest, he made his apologies to the learned baron who was to try the cause, and begged for permission to remain at the abbey. The request was most natural, and at once acceded to, and although Heffernan had ex-

pressed the greatest desire to hear the counselor, he determined to pass the morning, at least, with O'Reilly, and endeavor afterward to be in time for the address to the jury.

At last the procession moved off; several country gentlemen, who had come over to breakfast, joining the party, and making the cavalcade, as it entered the town, a very imposing body. It was the market-day, too, and thus the square in front of the court-house was crowded with a frieze-coated and red-cloaked population, earnestly gesticulating and discussing the approaching trial, for to the Irish peasant the excitement of a law process has the most intense and fascinating interest. All the ordinary traffic of the day was either neglected or carelessly performed, in the anxiety to see those who dispensed the dread forms of justice, but more particularly to obtain a sight of the young "counselor," who, for the first time, had appeared on this circuit, but whose name as a patriot and an orator was widely renowned.

"Here he comes!—Here he comes!—Make way there!" went from mouth to mouth, as O'Halloran, who had entered the inn for a moment, now issued forth in wig and gown, and carrying a heavily-laden bag in his hand. The crowd opened for him respectfully and in dead silence, and then a hearty cheer burst forth, that echoed through the wide square, and was taken up by hundreds of voices in the neighboring streets.

It needed not the reverend companionship of Father John M'Enerty, the parish priest of Curraghglass, who walked at his side, to secure him this hearty burst of welcome, although of a truth the circumstance had its merit also, and many favorable comments were passed upon O'Halloran for the familiar way he leaned on the priest's arm, and the kindly intelligence that subsisted between them.

If anything could have added to the pleasure of the assembled crowd at the instant, it was an announcement by Father John, who, turning round on the steps of the court-house, informed them in a kind of confidential whisper that was heard over the square, that "if they were good boys, and didn't make any disturbance in the town," the counselor would give them a speech when the trial was over.

The most deafening shout of applause followed this declaration, and whatever interest the questions of law had possessed for them before, was now merged in the higher anxiety to hear the great counselor himself discuss the "veto," that long-agi-

tated question each had taught himself to believe of nearest importance to himself.

"When last I visited this town," said Bicknell to the senior counsel employed in the knight's behalf, "I witnessed a very different scene. Then we had triumphal arches, and bonfire illuminations, and addresses. It was young Darcy's birthday, and a more enthusiastic reception it is impossible to conceive than he met in these very streets from these very people."

"There is only one species of interest felt for dethroned monarchs," said the other, caustically—"how they bear their misfortunes."

"The man you see yonder waving his hat to young O'Reilly, was one of a deputation to congratulate the heir of Gwynne Abbey! I remember him well—his name is Mitchell."

"I hope not the same I see upon our jury-list here," said the counselor, as he unfolded a written paper, and perused it attentively.

"The same man; he holds his house under the Darcys, and has received many and deep favors at their hands."

"So much the worse, if we should find him in the jury-box. But have we any chance of young Darcy yet? Do you give up all hope of his arrival?"

"The last tidings I received from my clerk were, that he was to follow him down to Plymouth by that night's mail, and still hoped to be in time to catch him ere the transport sailed."

"What a rash and reckless fellow he must be, that would leave a country where he has such interests at stake."

"If he felt that a point of honor or duty was involved, I don't believe he'd sacrifice a jot of either to gain this cause, and I'm certain that some such plea has been made use of on the present occasion."

"How they cheer! What's the source of their enthusiasm at this moment? There it goes, that carriage with the green liveries and the Irish motto round the crest. Look at O'Halloran, too! how he shakes hands with the townfolk; canvassing for a verdict already! Now, Bicknell, let us move on; but, for my part, I feel our cause is decided outside the court-house. If I'm not very much mistaken, we are about to have an era of 'popular justice' in Ireland, and our enemies could not wish us worse luck."

CHAPTER XLI.

A SCENE AT THE ASSIZES.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Hickman O'Reilly affected an easy unconcern regarding the issue

of the trial, he received during the morning more than one dispatch from the court-house narrating its progress. They were brief but significant; and when Heffernan, with his own tact, inquired if the news were satisfactory, the reply was made by putting into his hands a slip of paper with a few words written in pencil: "They are beaten—the verdict is certain."

"I concluded," said Heffernan, as he handed back the paper, "that the case was not deemed by you a very doubtful matter."

"Neither doubtful nor important," said Hickman, calmly; "it was an effort, in all probability suggested by some crafty lawyer, to break several leases on the ground of forgery in the signatures. I am sure nothing short of Mr. Darcy's great difficulties would ever have permitted him to approve of such a proceeding."

"The shipwrecked sailor will cling to a hen-coop," said Heffernan. "By the way, where are these Darcys? What has become of them?"

"Living in Wales, or in Scotland, some say."

"Are they utterly ruined?"

"Utterly, irretrievably; a course of extravagance maintained for years at a rate of about double his income—loans obtained at any sacrifice—sales of property effected without regard to loss, have overwhelmed him, and the worst of it is, the little remnant of fortune left is likely to be squandered in vain attempts to recover at law what he has lost by recklessness."

Heffernan walked on for some moments in silence, and, as if pondering over Hickman's words, repeated several times, half aloud: "No doubt of it—no doubt of it." Then added, in a louder tone: "The whole history of this family, Mr. O'Reilly, is a striking confirmation of a remark I heard made, a few days since, by a distinguished individual—to *you* I may say it was Lord Cornwallis. 'Heffernan,' said he, 'this country is in a state of rapid transition; everything progresses but the old gentry of the land; they alone seem rooted to ancient prejudices, and fast confirmed in bygone barbarisms.' I ventured to ask him if he could suggest a remedy for the evil, and I'll never forget the tone with which he whispered in my ear. 'Yes; supersede them!' And that, sir," said Heffernan, laying his hand confidentially on O'Reilly's arm—"that is and must be the future policy regarding Ireland."

Mr. Heffernan did not permit himself to risk the success of his stroke by a word more, nor did he even dare to cast a look at his companion and watch how his spell

was working. As the marksman feels when he has shot his bolt that no after-thought can amend the aim, so did he wait quietly for the result, without a single effort on his part.

"The remark is a new one to me," said O'Reilly, at length; "but so completely does it accord with my own sentiments, I feel as if I either had, or might have, made it myself. The old school you speak of were little calculated to advance the prosperity of the country; the attachment of the people to them was fast wearing out."

"Nay," interposed Heffernan, "it was that very same attachment, that rude remnant of feudalism, made the greatest barrier against improvement. The law of the land was powerless in comparison with the obligations of this clanship. It is time, full time, that the people should become English in feeling, as they are in law and in language, and to make them so, the first step is, to work the reformation in the gentry. Now, at the hazard of a liberty which you may deem an impertinence, I will tell you frankly, Mr. O'Reilly, that you, you yourself, are admirably calculated to lead the van of this great movement. It is all very natural, and perhaps very just, that in a moment of chagrin with a minister or his party, a man should feel indignant, and—although acting under a misconception—throw himself into a direct opposition; yet a little reflection will show that such a line involves a false position. Popularity with the masses could never recompense a man like you for the loss of that higher esteem you must sacrifice for it; the *devoirs* of your station impose a very different class of duties from what this false patriotism suggest; besides, if from indignation—a causeless indignation I am ready to prove it—you separate yourself from the Government, you are virtually suffering your own momentary anger to decide the whole question of your son's career. You are shutting the door of advancement against a young man with every adventitious aid of fortune in his favor; handsome, accomplished, wealthy; what limit need there be to his ambition? And finally some fellow like our friend 'the counselor,' without family, friends, or fortune, but with lungs of leather, and a ready tongue, will beat you hollow in the race, and secure a wider influence over the mass of the people than a hundred gentlemen like you! You will deem it, probably, enough to spend ten or fifteen thousand on a contested election, and to give a vote for your party in parliament; he, on the other hand, will write letters, draw up petitions,

frame societies, meetings, resolutions, and make speeches, every word of which will sink deeply into the hearts of men whose feelings are his own. You, and others in your station, will be little better than tools in his hands, and powerful as you think yourselves to-day, with your broad acres and your cottier freeholders, the time may come when these men will be less at *your* bidding than *his*, and for this simple reason, the man of nothing will always be ready to bid higher for mob support than he who has a fortune to lose."

"You have put a very strong case," said O'Reilly; "perhaps I should think it stronger, if I had not heard most of the arguments before, from yourself; and know by this time how their application to me has not sustained your prophecy."

"I am ready to discuss that with you, too," said Heffernan. "I know how it all happened: had I been with you the day you dined with Castlereagh, the misunderstanding never could have occurred; but there was a fatality in it all. Come," said he, familiarly, and he slipped his arm, as he spoke, within O'Reilly's, "I am the worst diplomatist in the world, and I fear I never should have risen to high rank in the distinguished corps of engineers if such had been my destination. I can lay down the parallels and the trenches patiently enough, I can even bring up my artillery and my battering-train, but, hang it! somehow, I never can wait for a breach to storm through. The truth is, if it were not for a very strong feeling on the subject I have just spoken of, you never would have seen me here this day. No man is happier or prouder to enjoy your hospitality than I am, but, I acknowledge, it was a higher sentiment induced me to accept your invitation. When your note reached me, I showed it to Castlereagh.

"What answer have you sent?" said he.

"Declined, of course," said I.

"You are wrong, Heffernan," said his lordship, as he took from me the note which I held ready sealed in my hand; "in my opinion, Heffernan, you are quite wrong."

"I may be so, my lord; but I confess to you I always act from the first impulse, and if it suggests regret afterward, it at least saves trouble at the time."

"Heffernan," said the secretary, as he calmly read over the lines of your letter, "there are many reasons why you should go; in the first place, O'Reilly has really a fair grudge against us, and this note shows that he has the manliness to forget it.

Every line of it bespeaks the gentleman, and I'll not feel contented with myself until you convey to him my own sorrow for what is past, and the high sense I entertain of his character and conduct."

"He said a great deal more; enough, if I tell you he induced me to rescind my first intention, and to become your guest; and I may say, that I never followed advice the consequences of which have so thoroughly sustained my expectations."

"This is very flattering," said O'Reilly; "it is, indeed, more than I looked for; but, as you have been candid with me, I will be as open with you: I had already made up my mind to retire, for a season at least, from politics. My father, you know, is a very old man, and not without the prejudices that attach to his age; he was always adverse to those ambitious views a public career would open, and a degree of coldness had begun to grow up between us in consequence. This estrangement is now happily at an end; and, in his consenting to our present mode of life, and its expenditure, he is, in reality, paying the recompense of his former opposition. I will not say what changes time may work in my own opinions, or my line of acting, but I will pledge myself that, if I do resume the path of public life, you are the very first man I will apprise of the intention."

A cordial shake-hands ratified this compact, and Heffernan, who now saw that the fortress had capitulated, only stipulating for the honors of war, was about to add something very complimentary, when Beecham O'Reilly galloped up, with his horse splashed and covered with foam.

"Don't you want to hear O'Halloran, Mr. Heffernan?" cried he.

"Yes, by all means."

"Come along, then; don't lose a moment; there's a phaeton ready for you at the door, and, if we make haste, we'll be in good time."

O'Reilly whispered a few words in his son's ear, to which the other replied, aloud,

"Oh! quite safe—perfectly safe. He was obliged to join his regiment, and sail at a moment's notice."

"Young Darcy, I presume?" said Heffernan, with a look of malicious intelligence. But no answer was returned, and O'Reilly continued to converse eagerly in Beecham's ear.

"Here comes the carriage, Mr. Heffernan?" said the young man, "so slip in, and let's be off;" and, giving his horse to a servant, he took his seat beside Heffernan, and drove off at a rapid pace toward the town.

After a quick drive of some miles they entered the town, and had no necessity to ask if O'Halloran had begun his address to the jury. The streets which led to the square before the court-house, and the square itself, was actually crammed with country-people, of all sexes and ages; some standing with hats off, or holding their hands close to their ears, but all, in breathless silence, listening to the words of "the counselor," which were not less audible to those without than within the building.

Nothing short of Beecham O'Reilly's present position in the county, and the fact that the gratification they were then deriving was of his family's procuring for them, could have enabled him to force a passage through that dense crowd, which wedged up all the approaches. As it was, he could only advance step by step, the horses and even the pole of the carriage actually forcing the way through the throng.

As they went thus slowly, the rich tones of the speaker swelled on the air with a clear, distinct, and yet so soft and even musical intonation, that they fell deeply into the hearts of the listeners. He was evidently bent as much on appealing to those outside the court as to the jury, for his speech was less addressed to the legal question at issue, than to the social condition of the peasantry; the all but absolutism of a landlord—the serf-like slavery of a tenantry, dependent on the will or the caprice of the owners of the soil! With the consummate art of a rhetorician, he first drew the picture of an estate happily circumstanced, a benevolent landlord surrounded by a contented tenantry, the blessings of the poor man, "rising like the dews of the earth, and descending again in rain to refresh and fertilize the source it sprang from." Not vaguely nor unskillfully, but with thorough knowledge of his subject, he descanted on the condition of the peasant, his toils, his struggles against poverty and sickness borne with long suffering and patience, from the firm trust that, even in this world, his destinies were committed to no cruel or unfeeling task-master. Although generally a studied plainness and even homeliness of language pervaded all he said, yet, at times, some bold figure, some striking and brilliant metaphor would escape him, and then, far from soaring—as it might be suspected he had—above the comprehension of the hearers, a subdued murmur of delight would follow the words, and swelling louder and louder, burst forth at last into one great roar of applause. If a critical ear might cavil at the incompleteness or inaptitude of his similes, to the

warm imagination and excited fancy of the Irish peasant they had no such blemishes.

It was at the close of a brilliant peroration on this theme, that Heffernan and Beecham O'Reilly reached the court-house, and with difficulty forcing their way, obtained standing-room near the bar.

The orator had paused, and turning round, he caught Beecham's eye: the glance exchanged was but of a second's duration, but, brief as it was, it did not escape Heffernan's notice, and with a readiness he knew well how to profit by, he assumed a quiet smile, as though to say that he, too, had read its meaning. The young man blushed deeply; whatever his secret thoughts were, he felt ashamed that another should seem to know them, and in a hesitating whisper said,

"Perhaps my father has told you—?"

A short nod from Heffernan—a gesture to imply anything or nothing—was all his reply, and Beecham went on:

"He's going to do it, now."

Heffernan made no answer, but, leaning forward on the rail, settled himself to listen attentively to the speaker.

"Gentlemen of the jury," said O'Halloran, in a low and deliberate tone, "if the only question I was interested in bringing before you this day was the cause you sit there to try, I would conclude here. Assured as I feel what your verdict will and must be, I would not add a word more, nor weaken the honest merit of your convictions by anything like an appeal to your feelings. But I cannot do this. The law of the land, in the plenitude of its liberty, throws wide the door of justice, that all may enter and seek redress for wrong, and with such evident anxiety that he who believes himself aggrieved should find no obstacle to his right, and that even he who frivolously and maliciously advances a charge against another, suffers no heavier penalty for his offense than the costs of the suit. No, my lords, for the valuable moments lost in a vexatious cause, for the public time consumed, for insult and outrage cast upon the immutable principles of right and wrong, you have nothing more severe to inflict than the costs of the action!—a pecuniary fine, seldom a heavy one, and not unfrequently to be levied upon insolvency! What encouragement to the spirit of revengeful litigation! How suggestive of injury is the system! How deplorable would it be if the temple could not be opened without the risk of its altar being desecrated! But, happily, there is a remedy—a great and noble remedy—for an evil like this. The same glorious institu-

tions that have built up for our protection the bulwark of the law, have created another barrier against wrong—grander, more expansive, and more enduring still; one neither founded on the variable basis of nationality or of language, not propped by the artifices of learned, or the subtleties of crafty men; not following the changeful fortunes of a political condition, or tempered by the tone of the judgment-seat, but of all lands, of every tongue, and nation, and people, great, enduring, and immutable—the law of public opinion. To the bar of this judgment-seat, one higher and greater than even your lordships, I would now summon the plaintiff in this action. There is no need that I should detail the charge against him, the accusation he has brought this day is our indictment—his allegation is his crime."

The reader, by this time, may partake of Mr. Heffernan's prescience, and divine what the secret intelligence between the counselor and Beecham portended, and that a long-meditated attack on the Knight of Gwynne, in all the relations of his public and private life, was the chief duty of Mr. O'Halloran in the action. Taking a lesson from the great and illustrious chief of a neighboring state, O'Reilly felt that usurpation can never be successful till legitimacy becomes odious. The "prestige" of the "old family" clung too powerfully to every class in the county to make his succession respected. His low origin was too recent, his moneyed dealings too notorious, to gain him acceptance, except on the ruins of the Darcys. The new edifice of his own fame must be erected out of the scattered and broken materials of his rival's house. If any one was well calculated to assist in such an emergency, it was O'Halloran.

It was by—to use his own expression—"weeding the country of such men" that the field would be opened for that new class of politicians who were to issue their edicts in newspapers, and hold their parliaments in public meetings. Against exclusive or exaggerated loyalty the struggle would be violent, but not difficult; while against moderation, sound sense and character, the counselor well knew the victory was not so easy of attainment. He himself, therefore, had a direct personal object in this attack on the Knight of Gwynne, and gladly accepted the special retainer that secured his services.

By a series of artful devices, he so arranged his case that the Knight of Gwynne did not appear as an injured individual seeking redress against the collusive guilt

of his agent and his tenantry, but as a ruined gambler, endeavoring to break the leases he had himself granted and guaranteed, and, by an act of perfidy, involve hundreds of innocent families in hopeless beggary. To the succor of these unprotected people Mr. Hickman O'Reilly was represented as coming forward, this noble act of devotion being the first pledge he had offered of what might be expected from him as the future leader of a great county.

He sketched with a masterly but diabolical ingenuity the whole career of the knight, representing him at every stage of life as the pampered voluptuary seeking means for fresh enjoyment, without a thought of the consequences; he exhibited him dispensing, not the graceful duties of hospitality, but the reckless waste of a tasteless household, to counterbalance by profusion the insolent hauteur of his wife, "that same Lady Eleanor who would not deign to associate with the wives and daughters of his neighbors!" "I know not," cried the orator, "whether you were more crushed by *his* gold or by *her* insolence: it was time that you should weary of both. You took the wealth on trust, and the rank on guess—what now remains of either?"

He drew a frightful picture of a suffering and poverty-enslaved tenantry, sinking fast into barbarism from hopelessness—unhappily, no Irishman need depend upon his imagination for the sketch. He contrasted the hours of toil and sickness with the wanton spendthrift in his pleasures—the gambler setting the fate of families on the die, reserving for his last hope the consolation that he might still betray those whom he had ruined, and that when he had dissipated the last shilling of his fortune, he still had the resource of putting his honor up to auction! "And who is there will deny that he did this?" cried O'Halloran. "Is there any man in the kingdom has not heard of his conduct in Parliament, that foul act of treachery which the justice of Heaven stigmatized by his ruin! How on the very night of the debate he was actually on his way to inflict the last wound upon his country, when the news came of his own overwhelming destruction! And, like as you have seen some time in our unhappy land the hired informer transferred from the witness-table to the dock, this man stands now forth to answer for his own offenses!

"It was full time that the rotten edifice of this feudal gentry should fall—honor to you on whom the duty devolves to roll away the first stone!"

A slight movement in the crowd behind the bar disturbed the silence in which the court listened to the speaker, and a murmur of disapprobation was heard, when a hand, stretched forth, threw a little slip of paper on the table before O'Halloran. It was addressed to him; and believing it came from the attorney in the cause, he paused to read it. Suddenly his features became of an ashy paleness, his lip trembled convulsively, and in a voice scarcely audible from emotion, he addressed the bench.

"My lords—I ask the protection of this court. I implore your lordships to see that an advocate, in the discharge of his duty, is not the mark of an assassin. I have just received this note—" He attempted to read it, but, after a pause of a second or two, unable to utter a word, he handed the paper to the bench.

The judge perused the paper, and immediately whispered an order that the writer, or, at least, the bearer of the note, should be taken into custody.

"You may rest assured, sir," said the senior judge, addressing O'Halloran, "that we will punish the offender, if he be discovered, with the utmost penalty the law permits. Mr. Sheriff, let the court be searched."

The sub-sheriff was already, with the aid of a strong police force, engaged in the effort to discover the individual who had thus dared to interfere with the administration of justice; but all in vain. The court and the galleries were searched without eliciting anything that could lead to detection; and although several were taken up on suspicion, they were immediately afterward liberated on being recognized as persons well known and in repute. Meanwhile the business of the trial stood still, and O'Halloran, with his arms folded, and his brows bent in a sullen frown, sat without speaking, or noticing any one around him.

The curiosity to know the exact words the paper contained was meanwhile extreme, and a thousand absurd versions gained currency, for, in the absence of all fact, invention was had recourse to: "Young Darcy is here—he was seen this morning on the mail—it was he himself gave the letter." Such were among the rumors around, while Con Heffernan, coolly tapping his snuff-box, asked one of the lawyers near him, but in a voice plainly audible on either side, "I hope our friend Bagenal Daly is well; have you seen him lately?"

From that moment an indistinct murmur ran through the crowd that it was Daly had come back to "the West" to challenge

the whole bar, and the bench, if necessary. Many added that there could no longer be any doubt of the fact, as Mr. Heffernan had seen and spoken to him.

Order was at last restored, but so completely had this new incident absorbed all the interest of the trial, that already the galleries began to thin, and of the great crowd that filled the body of the court, many had taken their departure. The counselor arose, agitated, and evidently disconcerted, to finish his task: he spoke, indeed, indignantly of the late attempt to coerce the free expression of the advocate "by a brutal threat," but the theme seemed one he felt no pleasure in dwelling upon, and he once more addressed himself to the facts of the case.

The judge charged briefly, and the jury, without retiring from the box, brought in a verdict for Hickman O'Reilly.

When the judges retired to unrobe, a messenger of the court summoned O'Halloran to their chamber. His absence was very brief, but when he returned his face was paler, and his manner more disturbed than ever, notwithstanding an evident effort to seem at ease and unconcerned. By this time Hickman O'Reilly had arrived in the town, and Heffernan was complimenting the counselor on the admirable display of his speech.

"I regret sincerely that the delicate nature of the position in which I stood prevented my hearing you," said O'Reilly, shaking his hand.

"You have indeed had a great loss," said Heffernan; "a more brilliant display I never listened to."

"Well, sir," interposed the little priest of Curraghglass, who, not altogether to the counselor's satisfaction, had now slipped an arm inside of his, "I hope the evil admits of remedy; Mr. O'Halloran intends to address a few words to the people before he leaves the town."

Whether it was the blank look that suddenly O'Reilly's features assumed, or the sly malice that twinkled in Heffernan's gray eyes, or that his own feelings suggested the course, but the counselor hastily whispered a few words in the priest's ear, the only audible portion of which was the conclusion: "Be that as it may, I'll not do it."

"I'm ready now, Mr. O'Reilly," said he, turning abruptly round.

"My father has gone over to say 'good-by' to the judges," said Beechan; "but I'll drive you back to the abbey—the carriage is now at the door."

With a few more words in a whisper to

the priest, O'Halloran moved on with young O'Reilly toward the door.

"Only think, sir," said Father John, dropping behind with Heffernan, from whose apparent intimacy with O'Halloran he augured a similarity of politics, "it is the first time the counselor was ever in our town, the people have been waiting since two o'clock to hear him on the 'veto'—sorra one of them knows what the same 'veto' is—but it will be a cruel disappointment to see him leave the place without so much as saying a word."

"Do you think a short address from *me* would do instead?" said Heffernan, slyly; "I know pretty well what's doing up in Dublin."

"Nothing could be better, sir," said Father John, in ecstasy; "if the counselor would just introduce you in a few words, and say that, from great fatigue, or a sore throat, or anything that way, he deputed his friend Mr. ———"

"Heffernan's my name."

"His friend Mr. Heffernan to state his views about the 'veto'—mind, it must be the 'veto'—you can touch on the reform in parliament, the oppression of the penal laws, but the 'veto' will bring a cheer that will beat them all."

"You had better hint the thing to the counselor," said Heffernan; "I am ready whenever you want me."

As the priest stepped forward to make the communication to O'Halloran, that gentleman, leaning on Beechan O'Reilly's arm, had just reached the steps of the court-house, where now a considerable police force was stationed, a measure possibly suggested by O'Reilly himself.

The crowd, on catching sight of "the counselor," cheered vociferously, and, although they were not without fears that he intended to depart without speaking, many averred that he would address them from the carriage. Before Father John could make known his request, a young man, dressed in a riding costume, burst through the line of police, and, springing up the steps, seized O'Halloran by the collar.

"I gave you a choice, sir," said he, "and you made it;" and, at the same instant, with a heavy horsewhip, struck him several times across the shoulders, and even the face. So sudden was the movement, and so violent the assault, that, although a man of great personal strength, O'Halloran had received several blows almost before he could defend himself, and when he had rallied, his adversary, though much lighter and less muscular, showed in skill, at least, he was his superior. The struggle, however,

was not to end here, for the mob, now seeing their favorite champion attacked, with a savage howl of vengeance dashed forward, and the police, well aware that the youth would be torn limb from limb, formed a line in front of him with fixed bayonets. For a few moments the result was doubtful; nor was it until more than one retired into the crowd bleeding and wounded, that the mob desisted, or limited their rage to yells of vengeance.

Meanwhile "the counselor" was pulled back within the court-house by his companions, and the young man secured by two policemen; a circumstance which went far to allay the angry tempest of the people without.

As, pale and powerless from passion, his livid cheek marked with a deep blue welt, O'Halloran sat in one of the waiting-rooms of the court, O'Reilly and his son endeavored, as well as they could, to calm down his rage: expressing, from time to time, their abhorrence of the indignity offered, and the certain penalty that awaited the offender. O'Halloran never spoke; he tried twice to utter something, but the words died away without sound, and he could only point to his cheek with a trembling finger, while his eyes glared like the red orbs of a tiger.

As they stood thus, Heffernan slipped noiselessly behind O'Reilly, and said in his ear,

"Get him off to the abbey; your son will take care of him. I have something for yourself to hear."

O'Reilly nodded significantly, and then, turning, said a few words in a low, persuasive tone to O'Halloran, concluding thus: "Yes, by all means, leave the whole affair in my hands. I'll have no difficulty in making a bench. The town is full of my brother magistrates."

"On every account I would recommend this course, sir," said Heffernan, with one of those peculiarly meaning looks by which he so well knew how to assume a further insight into any circumstance than his neighbors possessed.

"I will address the people," cried O'Halloran, breaking his long silence with a deep and passionate utterance of the words; "they shall see in me the strong evidence of the insolent oppression of that faction that rules this country; I'll make the land ring with the tyranny that would stifle the voice of justice, and make the profession of the Bar a forlorn hope to every man of independent feeling."

"The people have dispersed already," said Beecham, as he came back from the

door of the court; "the square is quite empty."

"Yes, I did that," whispered Heffernan in O'Reilly's ear; "I made my servant put on the counselor's great-coat, and drive rapidly off toward the abbey. The carriage is now, however, at the back entrance to the court-house; so, by all means, persuade him to return."

"When do you propose bringing the fellow up for examination, Mr. O'Reilly?" said O'Halloran, as he arose from his seat.

"To-morrow morning. I have given orders to summon a full bench of magistrates, and the affair shall be sifted to the bottom."

"You may depend upon that, sir," said the counselor, sternly. "Now I'll go back with you, Mr. Beecham O'Reilly." So saying, he moved toward a private door of the building where the phaeton was in waiting, and, before any attention was drawn to the spot, he was seated in the carriage, and the horses stepping out at a fast pace toward home.

"It's not Bagenal Daly?" said O'Reilly, the very moment he saw the carriage drive off.

"No! no!" said Heffernan, smiling.

"Nor the young Darcy—the captain?"

"Nor him either. It's a young fellow we have been seeking for in vain the last month. His name is Forester."

"Not Lord Castlereagh's Forester?"

"The very man. You may have met him here as Darcy's guest."

O'Reilly nodded.

"What makes the affair worse is, that the relationship with Castlereagh will be taken up as a party matter by O'Halloran's friends in the press; they will see a Castle plot, where, in reality, there is nothing to blame save the rash folly of a hot-headed boy."

"What is to be done?" said O'Reilly, putting his hand to his forehead, in his embarrassment to think of some escape from the difficulty.

"I see but one safe issue—always enough to any question, if men have resolution to adopt it."

"Let me hear what you counsel," said O'Reilly, as he cast a searching glance at his astute companion.

"Get him off as fast as you can."

"O'Halloran! You mistake him, Mr. Heffernan; he'll prosecute the business to the end."

"I'm speaking of Forester," said Heffernan, dryly; "it is *his* absence is the important matter at this moment."

"I confess I am myself unable to appre-

ciate your view of the case," said O'Reilly, with a cunning smile; "the policy is a new one to me which teaches that a magistrate should favor the escape of a prisoner who has just insulted one of his own friends."

"I may be able to explain my meaning to your satisfaction," said Heffernan, as, taking O'Reilly's arm, he spoke for some time in a low but earnest manner. "Yes," said he, aloud, "your son Beecham was the object of this young man's vengeance; chance alone turned his anger on 'the counselor.' His sole purpose in 'the West' was to provoke your son to a duel, and I know well what the result of your proceedings to-morrow would effect. Forester would not accept of his liberty on bail, nor would he enter into a security on his part to keep the peace. You will be forced, actually forced, to commit a young man of family and high position to a jail; and what will the world say? That in seeking satisfaction for a very gross outrage on the character of his friend, a young Englishman of high family was sent to prison! In Ireland the tale will tell badly; *we* always have more sympathy than censure for such offenders. In England, how many will know of his friends and connections, who never heard of your respectable bench of magistrates—will it be very wonderful if they side with their countryman against the stranger?"

"How am I to face O'Halloran if I follow this counsel?" said O'Reilly with a thoughtful but embarrassed air.

"Then, as to Lord Castlereagh," continued Heffernan, not heeding the question, "he will take your interference as a personal and particular favor. There never was a more favorable opportunity for you to disconnect yourself with the whole affair. The hired advocate may calumniate as he will, but he can show no collusion or connivance on your part. I may tell you, in confidence, that a more indecent and gross attack was never uttered than this same speech. I heard it, and from the beginning to the end it was a tissue of vulgarity and falsehood. Oh! I know what you would say: I complimented the speaker on his success, and all that; so I did, perfectly true, and he understood me too—there is no greater impertinence, perhaps, than in telling a man that you mistook his bad eider for champagne! But enough of him. You may have all the benefit, if there be such, of the treason, and yet never rub shoulders with the traitor. You see I am eager on this point, and I confess I am very much so. Your son Beecham could not have a worse enemy in the world of club and

fashion than this same Forester; he knows and is known to everybody."

"But I cannot perceive how the thing is to be done," broke in O'Reilly, pettishly; "you seem to forget that O'Halloran is not the man to be put off with any lame, disjointed story."

"Easily enough," said Heffernan, coolly; "there is no difficulty whatever. You can blunder in the warrant of his committal; you can designate him by a wrong Christian name, call him Robert, not Richard; he may be admitted to bail, and the sum a low one. The rest follows naturally; or, better than all, let some other magistrate—you surely know more than one to aid in such a pinch—take the case upon himself, and make all the necessary errors; that's the best plan."

"Conolly, perhaps," said O'Reilly, musingly; "he is a great friend of Darcy's, and would risk something to assist this young fellow."

"Well thought of," cried Heffernan, slapping him on the shoulder; "just give me a line of introduction to Mr. Conolly on one of your visiting cards, and leave the rest to me."

"If I yield to you in this business, Mr. Heffernan," said O'Reilly, as he sat down to write, "I assure you it is far more from my implicit confidence in your skill to conduct it safely to the end, than from any power of persuasion in your arguments. O'Halloran is a formidable enemy."

"You never were more mistaken in your life," said Heffernan, laughing; "such men are only noxious by the terror they inspire; they are the rattlesnakes of the world of mankind, always giving notice of their approach, and never dangerous to the prudent. He alone is to be dreaded who, tiger-like, utters no cry till his victim is in his fangs."

There was a savage malignity in the way these words were uttered that made O'Reilly almost shudder. Heffernan saw the emotion he had unguardedly evoked, and laughing, said,

"Well, am I to hold over the remainder of my visit to the abbey as a debt unpaid? for I really have no fancy to let you off so cheaply."

"But you are coming back with me—are you not?"

"Impossible! I must take charge of this foolish boy, and bring him up to Dublin; I only trust that I have a vested right to come back and see you at a future day."

O'Reilly responded to the proposition with courteous warmth, and with mutual pledges, perhaps of not dissimilar sincerity,

they parted, the one to his own home, the other to negotiate in a different quarter, and in a very different spirit of diplomacy.

CHAPTER XLII.

MR. HEFFERNAN'S COUNSELS.

MR. HEFFERNAN possessed many worldly gifts and excellences, but upon none did he so much pride himself, in the secret recesses of his heart,—he was too cunning to indulge in more public vauntings,—as in the power he wielded over the passions of men much younger than himself. Thoroughly versed in their habits of life, tastes, and predilections, he knew how much always to concede to the warm and generous temperament of their age, and to maintain his influence over them, less by the ascendancy of ability, than by a more intimate acquaintance with all the follies and extravagances of fashionable existence.

Whether he had, or had not been, a principal actor in the scenes he related with so much humor, it was difficult to say: for he would gloss over his own personal adventures so artfully, that it was not easy to discover whether the motives were cunning or delicacy. He seemed, at least, to have done everything that wildness and eccentricity had ever devised; to have known intimately every man renowned for such exploits; and to have gone through a career of extravagance and dissipation quite sufficient to make him an unimpeachable authority in every similar case. The reserve which young men feel with regard to those older than themselves, was never experienced in Con Heffernan's company; they would venture to tell him anything, well aware that, however absurd the story or embarrassing the scrape, Heffernan was certain to cap it by another, twice as extravagant in every respect.

Although Forester was by no means free from the faults of his age and class, the better principles of his nature had received no severe or lasting injury, and his estimation for Heffernan proceeded from a very different view of his character from that which we have just alluded to. He knew him to be the tried and trusted agent of his cousin, Lord Castlereagh, one for whose abilities he entertained the greatest respect; he saw him consulted and advised with on every question of difficulty, his opinions asked, his suggestions followed; and if, occasionally, the policy was somewhat tortuous, he was taught to believe that the

course of politics, like that "of true love, never did run smooth." In this way, then, did he learn to look up to Heffernan, who was too shrewd a judge of motives to risk a greater ascendancy by any hazardous appeal to the weaker points of his character.

Fortune could not have presented a more welcome visitor to Forester's eyes than Heffernan, as he entered the room of the inn where the youth had been conducted by the sergeant of the police; and where he sat, bewildered by the difficulties in which his own rashness had involved him. The first moments of meeting were occupied by a perfect shower of questions, as to how Heffernan came to be in that quarter of the world? when he had arrived? and with whom he was staying? All questions which Heffernan answered by the laughing subterfuge of saying, "Your good genius, I suppose, sent me to get you out of your scrape, and fortunately I am able to do so. But what in the name of everything ridiculous could have induced you to insult this man O'Halloran? You ought to have known that men like him cannot fight; they would be made riddles of, if they once consented to back by personal daring the insolence of their tongues. They set out by establishing for themselves a kind of outlawry from honor, they acknowledge no debts within the jurisdiction of that court, otherwise they would soon be bankrupt."

"They should be treated like all others without the pale of law, then," said Forester, indignantly.

"Or, like Sackville," added Heffernan, laughing, "when they put their swords 'on the peace establishment,' they should put their tongues on the 'civil list.' Well, well, there are new discoveries made every day; some men succeed better in life by the practice of cowardice than others ever did, or ever will do, by the exercise of valor."

"What can I do here? Is there anything serious in the difficulty?" said Forester, hurriedly; for he was in no humor to enjoy the abstract speculations in which Heffernan indulged.

"It might have been a very troublesome business," replied Heffernan, quietly; "the judge might have issued a bench warrant against you, if he did not want your cousin to make him chief baron; and Justice Conolly might have been much more technically accurate, if he was not desirous of seeing his son in an infantry regiment. It's all arranged now, however; there is only one point for your compliance, you must get out of Ireland as fast as may be. O'Halloran will apply for a rule in the King's Bench,

but the proceedings will not extend to England."

"I am indifferent where I go to," said Forester, turning away; "and provided this foolish affair does not get abroad, I am well content."

"Oh! as to that, you must expect your share of notoriety. O'Halloran will take care to display his martyrdom for the people! It will bring him briefs now; Heaven knows what greater rewards the future may have in store from it!"

"You heard the provocation," said Forester, with an unsuccessful attempt to speak calmly—"the gross and most unpardonable provocation?"

"I was present," replied Heffernan, quietly.

"Well, what say you? Was there ever uttered an attack more false and foul? Was there ever conceived a more fiendish and malignant slander?"

"I never heard anything worse."

"Not anything worse! No, nor ever one-half so bad."

"Well, if you like it, I will agree with you; not one-half so bad. It was untrue in all its details, unmanly in spirit. But, let me add, that such philippics have no lasting effect; they are like unskillful mines that, in their explosion, only damage the contrivers. O'Reilly, who was the real deviser of this same attack, whose heart suggested, whose head invented, and whose coffers paid for it, will reap all the obloquy he hoped to heap upon another. Take myself, for instance, an old time-worn man of the world, who has lived long enough never to be sudden in my friendships or my resentments, who thinks that liking and disliking are slow processes; well, even I was shocked, outraged at this affair; and, although having no more intimacy with Darcy than the ordinary intercourse of social life, confess I could not avoid acting promptly and decisively on the subject. It was a question, perhaps, more of feeling than actual judgment—a case, in which the first impulse may generally be deemed the right one." Here Heffernan paused, and drew himself up with an air that seemed to say, "If I am confessing to a weakness in my character, it is, at least, one that leans to virtue's side."

Forester awaited with impatience for the explanation, and, not perceiving it to come, said, "Well, what did you do in the affair?"

"My part was a very simple one," said Heffernan. "I was Mr. O'Reilly's guest, one of a large party, asked to meet the judges and the attorney-general. I came

in, with many others, to hear O'Halloran; but if I did, I took the liberty of not returning again. I told Mr. O'Reilly frankly, that, in point of fact, the thing was false, and, as policy, it was a mistake. Party contests are all very well, they are necessary, because without them there is no banner to fight under; and the man of mock liberality to either side would take precedence of those more honest but less cautious than himself; but these things are great evils when they enlist libelous attacks on character in their train. If the courtesies of life are left at the door of our popular assemblies, they ought at least to be resumed when passing out again into the world."

"And so you actually refused to go back to his house?" said Forester, who felt far more interested in this simple fact than in all the abstract speculation that accompanied it.

"I did so; I even begged of him to send my servant and my carriage after me; and, had it not been for your business, before this time I had been some miles on my way toward Dublin."

Forester never spoke, but he grasped Heffernan's hand, and shook it with earnest cordiality.

"Yes, yes," said Heffernan, as he returned the pressure; "men can be strong partisans, anxious and eager for their own side, but there is something higher and nobler than party." He arose as he spoke, and walked toward the window, and then, suddenly turning round, and with an apparent desire to change the theme, asked, "But how came you here? What good or evil fortune prompted you to be present at this scene?"

"I fear you must allow me to keep that a secret," said Forester, in some confusion.

"Scarcely fair, that, my young friend," said Heffernan, laughing, "after hearing my confession in full."

Forester seemed to feel the force of the observation, but, uncertain how to act, he maintained a silence for several minutes.

"If the affair were altogether my own, I should not hesitate," said he, at length, "but it is not so. However, we are in confidence here, and so I will tell you. I came to this part of the country at the earnest desire of Lionel Darcy. I don't know whether you are aware of his sudden departure for India. He had asked for leave of absence, to give evidence on this trial, the application was made a few days after a memorial he sent in for a change of regiment. The demand for leave was unheeded, but he received a preemptory order to

repair to Portsmouth, and take charge of a detachment under sailing-orders for India; they consisted of men belonging to the 11th Light Dragoons, of which he was gazetted to a troop. I was with him at Chatham when the letter reached him, and he explained the entire difficulty to me, showing that he had no alternative, save neglecting the interest of his family, on the one hand, or refusing that offer of active service he had so urgently solicited on the other. We talked the thing over one entire night through, and at last, right or wrong, persuaded ourselves that any evidence he could give would be of comparatively little value; and that the refusal to join would be deemed a stain upon him as an officer, and, probably, be the cause of greater grief to the knight himself, than his absence at the trial. Poor fellow! he felt far more deeply for quitting England without saying good-by to his family, than for all the rest."

"And so he actually sailed in the transport?" said Heffernan.

"Yes, and without time for more than a few lines to his father, and a parting request to me to come over to Ireland and be present at the trial. Whether he anticipated any attack of this kind or not, I cannot say, but he expressed the desire so strongly I half suspect as much."

"Very cleverly done, faith!" muttered Heffernan, who seemed far more occupied with his own reflections than attending to Forester's words; "a deep and subtle stroke, Master O'Reilly, ably planned, and as ably executed."

"I am rejoiced that Lionel escaped this scene, at all events," said Forester.

"I must say, it was neatly done," continued Heffernan, still following out his own train of thought; "'Non contigit cuique,' as the Roman says; it is not every man can take in Con Heffernan—I did not expect Hickman O'Reilly would try it." He leaned his head on his hand for some minutes, then said aloud, "The best thing for you will be to join your regiment."

"I have left the army," said Forester, with a flush, half of shame, half of anger.

"I think you were right," replied Heffernan, calmly, while he avoided noticing the confusion in the young man's manner. "Soldiering is no career for any man of abilities like yours; the lounging life of a barrack-yard, the mock duties of parade, the tiresome dissipations of the mess, suit small capacities and minds of mere routine. But you have better stuff in you, and, with your connections and family interest, there are higher prizes to strive for in the wheel of fortune."

"You mistake me," said Forester, hastily; "it was with no disparaging opinion of the service I left it. My reasons had nothing in common with such an estimate of the army."

"There's diplomacy, for instance," said Heffernan, not minding the youth's remark; "your brother has influence with the foreign-office."

"I have no fancy for the career."

"Well, there are government situations in abundance. A man must do something in our work-a-day world, if only to be companionable to those who do. Idleness begets *ennui* and falling in love, and although the first only wearies for the time, the latter lays its impress on all a man's after-life, fills him with false notions of happiness, instils wrong motives for exertion, and limits the exercise of capacity to the small and valueless accomplishments that find favor beside the work-table and the piano."

Forester received somewhat haughtily the unmasked counsels of Mr. Heffernan respecting his future mode of life, nor was it improbable that he might himself have conveyed his opinion thereupon in words, had not the appearance of the waiter to prepare the table for dinner interposed a barrier.

"At what hour shall I order the horses, sir?" asked the man of Heffernan.

"Shall we say eight o'clock?—or is that too early?"

"Not a minute too early for me," said Forester; "I am longing to leave this place, where I hope never again to set foot."

"At eight, then, let them be at the door, and whenever your cook is ready we dine."

CHAPTER XLIII.

AN UNLOOKED-FOR PROMOTION.

THE same post that brought the knight the tidings of his lost suit, conveyed the intelligence of his son's departure for India, and although the latter event was one over which—if in his power—he would have exercised no control, yet was it by far the more saddening of the two announcements.

Unable to apply any more consolatory counsels, his invariable reply to Lady Eleanor was, "It was a point of duty; the boy could not have done otherwise; I have too often expressed my opinion to him about the 'devoirs' of a soldier to permit of his hesitating here. And as for our suit, Mr. Bicknell says the jury did not deliberate ten minutes on their verdict; whatever

right we might have on our side, it was pretty clear we had no law. Poor Lionel is spared the pain of knowing this at least." He sighed heavily and was silent; Lady Eleanor and Helen spoke not either, and except their long-drawn breathings nothing was heard in the room.

Lady Eleanor was the first to speak. "Might not Lionel's evidence have given a very different coloring to our cause if he had been there?"

"It is hard to say; I am not aware whether we failed upon a point of fact or law: Mr. Bicknell writes like a man who felt his words were costly matters, and that he should not put his client to unnecessary expense. He limits himself to the simple announcement of the result, and that the charge of the bench was very pointedly unfavorable. He says something about a motion for a new trial, and regrets Daly's having prevented his engaging Mr. O'Halloran, and refers us to the newspapers for detail."

"I never heard a question of this O'Halloran," said Lady Eleanor, "nor of Mr. Daly's opposition to him before."

"Nor did I either; though in all likelihood, if I had, I should have been of Bagenal's mind myself. Employing such men has always appeared to me on a par with the barbarism of engaging the services of savage nations in a war against civilized ones; and the practice is defended by the very same arguments—if they are not with you, they are against you."

"You are right, my dear father," said Helen, while her countenance glowed with unusual animation; "leave such allies to the enemy if he will, no good cause shall be stained by the scalping-knife and the tomahawk."

"Quite right, my dearest child," said he, fondly; "no defeat is so bad as such a victory."

"And where was Mr. Daly? He does not seem to have been at the trial."

"No; it would appear as if he were detained by some pressing necessity in Dublin. This letter is in his handwriting; let us see what he says."

Before the knight could execute his intention, old Tate appeared at the door, and announced the name of Mr. Dempsey.

"You must present our compliments," said Darcy, hastily, "and say that a very particular engagement will prevent our having the pleasure of receiving his visit this evening."

"This is really intolerable," said Lady Eleanor, who, never much disposed to look

favorably on that gentleman, felt his present appearance anything but agreeable.

"You hear what your master says," said Helen to the old man, who, never having in his whole life received a similar order, felt proportionately astonished and confused.

"Tell Mr. Dempsey we are very sorry, but—"

"For all that, he won't be denied," said Paul, himself finishing the sentence, while, passing unceremoniously in front of Tate, he walked boldly into the middle of the room. His face was flushed, his forehead covered with perspiration, and his clothes, stained with dust, showed that he had come off a very long and fast walk. He wiped his forehead with a flaring cotton handkerchief, and then, with a long-drawn puff, threw himself back into an arm-chair.

There was something so actually comic in the cool assurance of the little man, that Darcy lost all sense of annoyance at the interruption, while he surveyed him and enjoyed the dignified coolness of Lady Eleanor's reception.

"That's the devil's own bit of a road," said Paul, as he fanned himself with a music book, "between this and Coleraine. Whenever it's not going up a hill, it's down one. Do you ever walk that way, ma'am?"

"Very seldom indeed, sir."

"Faith, and I'd wager, when you do, that it gives you a pain just here below the calf of the leg, and a stitch in the small of the back."

Lady Eleanor took no notice of this remark, but addressed some observation to Helen, at which the young girl smiled, and said, in a whisper,

"Oh, he will not stay long."

"I am afraid, Mr. Dempsey," said the knight, "that I must be uncourteous enough to say that we are unprepared for a visitor this evening. Some letters of importance have just arrived, and as they will demand all our attention, you will, I am sure, excuse the frankness of my telling you that we desire to be alone."

"So you shall in a few minutes more," said Paul, coolly. "Let me have a glass of sherry-and-water, or, if wine is not convenient, ditto of brandy, and I'm off. I didn't come to stop. It was a letter that you forgot at the post-office, marked 'with speed,' on the outside, that brought me here; for I was spending a few days in Coleraine with old Hewson."

The kindness of this thoughtful act at once eradicated every memory of the vulgarity that accompanied it, and as the knight took the letter from his hands, he

hastened to apologize for what he said by adding his thanks for the service.

"I offered a fellow a shilling to bring it, but being harvest-time he wouldn't come," said Dempsey. "Phew! what a state the roads are in! dust up to your ankles!"

"Come, now, pray help yourself to some wine-and-water," said the knight, "and while you do so, I'll ask permission to open my letter."

"There's a short cut down by Port-nahapple mill, they tell me, ma'am," said Dempsey, who now found a much more complaisant listener than at first; "but, to tell you the truth, I don't think it would suit you or me; there are stone walls to climb over and ditches to cross. Miss Helen, there, might get over them, she has a kind of a thorough-bred stride of her own, but fencing destroys me outright."

"It was a very great politeness to think of bringing us the letter, and I trust your fatigues will not be injurious to you," said Lady Eleanor, smiling faintly.

"Worse than the damage to a pair of very old shoes, ma'am, I don't anticipate; I begin to suspect they've taken their last walk this evening."

While Mr. Dempsey contemplated the coverings of his feet with a very sad expression, the knight continued to read the letter he held in his hand with an air of extreme intentness.

"Eleanor, my dear," said he, as he retired into the deep recess of a window, "come here for a moment."

"I guessed there would be something of consequence in that," said Dempsey, with a sly glance from Helen to the two figures beside the window. "The envelope was a thin one, and I read 'War-office' in the corner of the inside cover."

Not heeding the delicacy of this announcement, but only thinking of the fact, which she at once connected with Lionel's fortunes, Helen turned an anxious and searching glance toward the window, but the knight and Lady Eleanor had entered a small room adjoining, and were already concealed from view.

"Was he ever in the militia, miss?" asked Dempsey, with a gesture of his thumb to indicate of whom he spoke.

"I believe not," said Helen, smiling at the pertinacity of his curiosity.

"Well, well," resumed Dempsey, with a sigh, "I would not wish him a hotter march than I had this day, and little notion I had of the same tramp only ten minutes before. I was reading the *Saunders* of Tuesday last, with an account of that business done at Mayo between O'Halloran and

the young officer—you know what I mean?"

"No, I have not heard it; pray tell me," said she, with an eagerness very different from her former manner.

"It was a horsewhipping, miss, that a young fellow in the Guards gave O'Halloran, just as he was coming out of court; something the counselor said about somebody in the trial—names never stay in my head, but I remember it was a great trial at the Westport assizes, and that O'Halloran came down special, and faith, so did the young captain too; and if the lawyer laid it on very heavily, within the court, the red-coat made up for it outside. But I believe I have 'the paper in my pocket, and, if you like, I'll read it out for you."

"Pray do," said Helen, whose anxiety was now intense.

"Well, here goes," said Mr. Dempsey; "but with your permission I'll just wet my lips again. That's elegant sherry."

Having sipped and tasted often enough to try the young lady's patience to its last limit, he unfolded the paper, and read aloud:

"When Counselor O'Halloran had concluded his eloquent speech in the trial of *Darcy v. Hickman*—for a full report of which see our early columns—a young gentleman, pushing his way through the circle of congratulating friends, accosted him with the most insulting and opprobrious epithets, and, failing to solicit from the learned gentleman a reciprocity—that means, miss, that O'Halloran didn't show fight—struck him repeatedly across the shoulders, and even the face, with a horse-whip. He was immediately committed under a bench warrant, but was liberated almost at once. Perhaps our readers may understand these proceedings more clearly when we inform them that Captain Forester, the aggressor in this case, is a near relative of our Irish Secretary. Lord Castle-reagh. That's very neatly put, miss, isn't it?" said Mr. Dempsey, with a sly twinkle of the eye; "it's as much as to say that the Castle chaps may do what they please. But it won't end there, depend upon it; the counselor will see it out."

Helen paid little attention to the observation, for, having taken up the paper as Mr. Dempsey laid it down, she was deeply engaged in the report of the trial and O'Halloran's speech.

"Wasn't that a touching-up the old Knight of Gwynne got?" said Dempsey, as, with his glass to his eye, he peered over her shoulder at the newspaper. "Faith, O'Halloran flayed him alive! He's the boy can do it!"

Helen scarce seemed to breathe as, with a heart almost bursting with indignant anger, she read the lines before her.

"Strike him!" cried she, at length, unable longer to control the passion that worked within her; "had he trampled him beneath his feet, it had not been too much?"

The little man started and stared with amazement at the young girl, as, with flashing eyes and flushed cheek, she arose from her seat, and tearing the paper into fragments, stamped upon them with her foot.

"Blood alive, miss, don't destroy the paper! I only got a loan of it from Mrs. Kennedy, of the post-office; she slipped it out of the cover, though it was addressed to Lord O'Neil. Oh, dear! oh, dear! it's a nice article now!"

These words were uttered in the very depth of despair, as, kneeling down on the carpet, Mr. Dempsey attempted to collect and arrange the scattered fragments.

"It's no use in life! Here's the Widow Wallace's pills in the middle of the counselor's speech! and the last day's drawing of the lottery mixed up with that elegant account of old Darcy's—"

A hand which, if of the gentlest mold, now made a gesture to enforce silence, arrested Mr. Dempsey's words, and at the same moment the knight entered with Lady Eleanor. Darcy started as he gazed on the excited looks and the air of defiance of his daughter, and, for a second, a deep flush suffused his features, as with an angry frown he asked of Dempsey, "What does this mean, sir?"

"D—n me if I know what it means!" exclaimed Paul, in utter despair at the confusion of his own faculties. "My brain is in a whirl."

"It was a little political dispute between Mr. Dempsey and myself, sir," said Helen with a faint smile. "He was reading for me an article from the newspaper, whose views were so very opposite to mine, and his advocacy of them so very animated, that—in short, we both became warm."

"Yes, that's it," cried Dempsey, glad to accept any explanation of a case in which he had no precise idea wherein lay the difficulty—"that's it; I'll take my oath it was."

"He is a fierce Unionist," said Helen, speaking rapidly to cover her increasing confusion, "and has all the conventional cant by heart, 'old-fashioned opinions,' 'musty prejudices,' and so on."

"I did not suspect you were so eager a politician, my dear Helen," said the knight, as, half-chidingly, he threw his eyes to-

ward the scattered fragments of the torn newspaper.

The young girl blushed till her neck became crimson; shame, at the imputation of having so far given way to passion; sorrow, at the reproof, whose injustice she did not dare to expose; and regret, at the necessity of dissimulation, all overwhelming her at the same moment.

"I am not angry, my sweet girl," said the knight, as he drew his arm around her, and spoke in a low, fond accent. "I may be sorry—sincerely sorry—at the social condition that has suffered political feeling to approach our homes and our firesides, and thus agitate hearts as gentle as yours by these rude themes. For your sentiments on these subjects I can scarcely be a severe critic, for I believe they are all my own."

"Let us forget it all," said Helen, eagerly, for she saw that Mr. Dempsey, having collected once more the torn scraps, was busy in arranging them into something like order. In fact, his senses were gradually recovering from the mystification into which they had been thrown, and he was anxious to vindicate himself before the party. "All the magnanimity, however, must not be mine," continued she, "and until that odious paper is consumed, I'll sign no treaty of peace." So saying, and before Dempsey could interfere to prevent it, she snatched up the fragments, and threw them into the fire. "Now, Mr. Dempsey, we are friends again," said she, laughing.

"The Lord grant it!" ejaculated Paul, who really felt no ambition for so energetic an enemy. "I'll never tell a bit of news in your company again, so long as my name is Paul Dempsey. Every officer of the Guards may horsewhip the Irish bar—I was forgetting—not a syllable more."

The knight, fortunately, did not hear the last few words, for he was busily engaged in reading the letter he still held in his hands; at length he said,

"Mr. Dempsey has conferred one great favor on us by bringing us this letter, and as its contents are of a nature not to admit of any delay—"

"He will increase the obligation by taking his leave," added Paul, rising, and, for once in his life, really well pleased at an opportunity of retiring.

"I did not say that," said Darcy, smiling.

"No, no, Mr. Dempsey," added Lady Eleanor, with more than her wonted cordiality; "you will, I hope, remain for tea."

"No, ma'am, I thank you; I have a

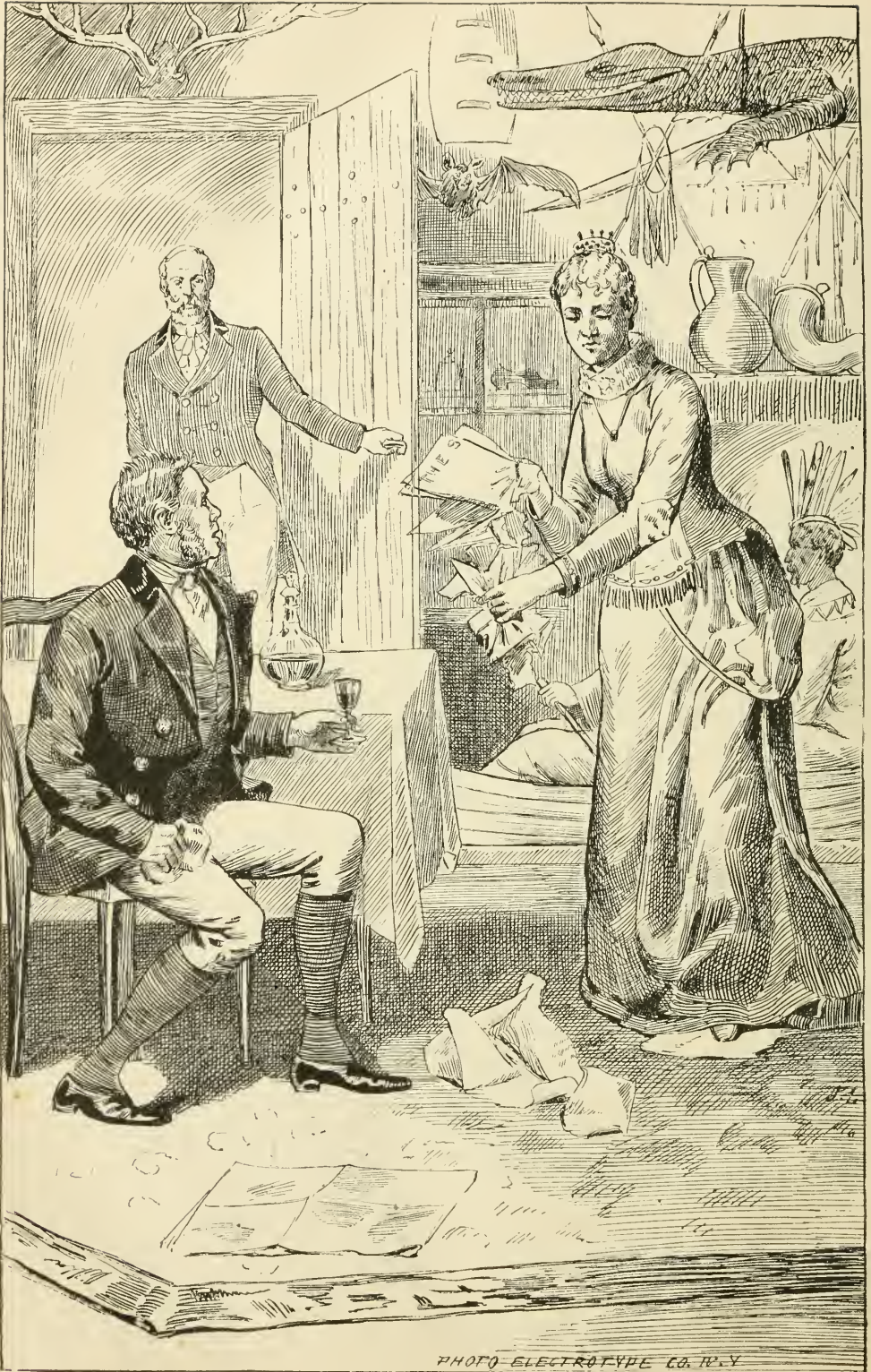


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little engagement—I made a promise. If I get safe out of the house without some infernal blunder or other, it's only the mercy of Providence." And with this burst of honest feeling, Paul snatched up his hat, and without waiting for the ceremony of leave-taking, rushed out of the room, and was soon seen crossing the wide common at a brisk pace.

"Our little friend has lost his reason," said the knight, laughing. "What have you been doing to him, Helen?"

A gesture to express innocence of all interference was the only reply, and the party became suddenly silent.

"Has Helen seen that letter?" said Lady Eleanor, faintly; and Darcy handed the epistle to his daughter. "Read it aloud, my dear," continued Lady Eleanor, "for, up to this, my impressions are so confused, I know not which is reality, which mere apprehension."

Helen's eyes glanced to the top of the letter, and saw the words, "War-office;" she then proceeded to read:

"Sir,—In reply to the application made to the commander-in-chief of the forces in your behalf, expressing your desire for an active employment, I have the honor to inform you, that his royal highness having graciously taken into consideration the eminent services rendered by you in former years, and the distinguished character of that corps, which, raised by your exertions, still bears your name, has desired me to convey his approval of your claim, and his desire, should a favorable opportunity present itself, of complying with your wish. I have the honor to remain, your most humble and obedient servant,

"HARRY GREVILLE,
"Private Secretary."

On an inclosed slip of paper was the single line in pencil: "H. G. begs to intimate to Colonel Darcy the propriety of attending the next levee of H. R. H., which will take place on the 14th."

"Now, you, who read riddles, my dearest Helen, explain this one to us. I made no application of the kind alluded to, nor am I aware of any one having ever done so for me. The thought never once occurred to me, that his majesty or his royal highness would accept the services of an old and shattered hulk, while many a glorious three-decker lies ready to be launched from the stocks. I could not have presumed to ask such a favor, nor do I well know how to acknowledge it."

"But is there anything so very strange,"

said Helen, proudly, "that those highly placed by station should be as highly gifted by nature, and that his royal highness, having heard of your unmerited calumnies, should have seen that this was the fitting moment to remember the services you have rendered the Crown? I have heard that there are several posts of high trust and honor conferred on those who, like yourself, have won distinction in the service."

"Helen is right," said Lady Eleanor, drawing a long breath, and as if released of a weighty load of doubt and uncertainty; "this is the real explanation; the phrases of official life may give it another coloring to our eyes, but such, I feel assured, is the true solution."

"I should like to think it so," said Darcy, feelingly; "it would be a great source of pride to me at this moment, when my fortunes are lower than ever they were—lower than ever I anticipated they might be—to know that my benefactor was the monarch. In any case I must lose no time in acknowledging this mark of favor. It is now the fourth of the month; to be in London by the fourteenth, I should leave this to-morrow."

"It is better to do so," said Lady Eleanor, with an utterance from which a great effort had banished all agitation; "Helen and I are safe and well here, and as happy as we can be when away from you and Lionel."

"Poor Lionel!" said the knight, tenderly, "what good news for him it would be were they to give me some staff appointment—I might have him near us. Come, Eleanor," added he, with more gaiety of manner, "I feel a kind of presentiment of good tidings. But we are forgetting Bagenal Daly all this time; perhaps this letter of his may throw some light on the matter."

Darcy now broke the seal of Daly's note, which, even for him, was one of the briefest. This was so far fortunate, since his writing was in his very worst style, blotted and half-erased in many places, scarcely legible anywhere. It was only by assembling a "committee of the whole house" that the Darcys were enabled to decipher even a portion of this unhappy document. As well as it could be rendered, it ran somewhat thus:

"The verdict is against us; old Bretson never forgave you carrying away the medal from him in Trinity some fifty years back; he charged dead against you; I always said he would. *Summum jus, summa injuria*. The chief justice—the greatest wrong! and the jury the fellows who lived under you, in your own town, and their fathers and

grandfathers! at least, as many of the rascals as had such. Never mind, Bicknell has moved for a new trial; they have gained the 'Habere' this time, and so has O'Halloran—you heard of the thrashing—"

Here two tremendous patches of ink left some words that followed quite unreadable.

"What can this mean?" said Darcy, repeating the passage over three or four times, while Helen made no effort to enlighten him in the difficulty. Baffled in all his attempts, he read on: "'I saw him in his way through Dublin last night.' Who can he possibly mean?" said Darcy, laying down the letter, and pondering for several minutes.

"O'Halloran, perhaps," said Lady Eleanor, in vain seeking a better elucidation.

"Oh, not him, of course!" cried Darcy; "he goes on to say, that 'he is a devilish high-spirited young fellow, and for an Englishman a warm-blooded animal.' Really, this is too provoking; at such a time as this he might have taken pains to be a little clearer," exclaimed Darcy.

The letter concluded with some mysterious hints about intelligence that a few days might disclose, but from what quarter, or on what subject, nothing was said, and it was actually with a sense of relief Darcy read the words, "Yours ever, Bagenal Daly," at the foot of the letter, and thus spared himself the torment of further doubts and guesses.

Helen was restrained from at once conveying the solution of the mystery by recollecting the energy she had displayed in her scene with Mr. Dempsey, and of which the shame still lingered on her flushed cheek.

"He adds something here about writing by the next post," said Lady Eleanor.

"But before that arrives I shall be away," said the knight; and the train of thought thus evoked soon erased all memory of other matters. And now the little group gathered together to discuss the coming journey, and talk over the plans by which anxiety was to be beguiled and hope cherished till they met again.

"Miss Daly will not be a very importunate visitor," said Lady Eleanor, dryly, "judging at least from the past; she has made one call here since we came, and then only to leave her card."

"And if Helen does not cultivate a more conciliating manner, I scarce think that Mr. Dempsey will venture on coming either," said the knight, laughing.

"I can readily forgive all the neglect," said Helen, haughtily, "in compensation for the tranquillity."

"And yet, my dear Helen," said Darcy, "there is a danger in that same compact. We should watch carefully to see whether, in the isolation of a life apart from others, we are not really indulging the most refined selfishness, and dignifying with the name of philosophy a solitude we love for the indulgence of our own egotism. If we are to have our hearts stirred and our sympathies strongly moved, let the themes be great ones, but above all things let us avoid magnifying the petty incidents of daily occurrence into much consequence: this is what the life of monasteries and convents teaches; and a worse lesson there need not be."

Darcy spoke with more than usual seriousness, for he had observed some time past how Helen had imbibed much of Lady Eleanor's distance toward her humble neighbors, and was disposed to retain a stronger memory of their failings in manner than of their better and heartier traits of character.

The young girl felt the remark less as a reproof than a warning, and said,

"I will not forget it."

CHAPTER XLIV.

A PARTING INTERVIEW.

WHEN Heffernan, with his charge, Forester, reached Dublin, he drove straight to Castlereagh's house, affectedly to place the young man under the protection of his distinguished relative, but in reality burning with eager impatience to recount his last stroke of address, and to display the cunning artifice by which he had embroiled O'Reilly with the great popular leader. Mr. Heffernan had a more than ordinary desire to exhibit his skill on this occasion; he was still smarting under the conscious sense of having been duped by O'Reilly, and could not rest tranquilly until revenged. Under the mask of a most benevolent purpose, O'Reilly had induced Heffernan to procure Lionel Darcy an appointment to a regiment in India. Heffernan undertook the task, not, indeed, moved by any kindness of feeling toward the youth, but as a means of reopening once more negotiations with O'Reilly; and now to discover that he had interested himself simply to withdraw a troublesome witness in a suit—that he had been, in his own phrase, "jockeyed"—was an insult to his cleverness he could not endure.

As Heffernan and Forester drove up to

the door, they perceived that a traveling-carriage, ready packed and loaded, stood in waiting, while the bustle and movement of servants indicated a hurried departure.

"What's the matter, Hutton?" asked Heffernan of the valet who appeared at the moment; "is his lordship at home?"

"Yes, sir, in the drawing-room; but my lord is just leaving for England. He is now a cabinet minister."

Heffernan smiled, and affected to hear the tidings with delight, while he hastily desired the servant to announce him.

The drawing-room was crowded by a strange and anomalous-looking assemblage, whose loud talking and laughing entirely prevented the announcement of Con Heffernan's name from reaching Lord Castlereagh's ears. Groups of personal friends come to say good-by—deputations eager to have the last word in the ear of the departing secretary—tradesmen begging recommendations to his successor—with here and there a disappointed suitor, earnestly imploring future consideration, were mixed up with hurrying servants, collecting the various minor articles which lay scattered through the apartment.

The time which it cost Heffernan to wedge his way through the dense crowd was not wholly profitless, since it enabled him to assume that look of cordial satisfaction at the noble secretary's promotion which he was so very far from really feeling. Like most men who cultivate mere cunning, he underrated all who do not place the greatest reliance upon it, and in this way conceived a very depreciating estimate of Lord Castlereagh's ability. Knowing how deeply he had himself been trusted, and how much employed in state transactions, he speculated on a long career of political influence, and that, while his lordship remained as secretary, his own skill and dexterity would never be dispensed with. This pleasant illusion was now suddenly dispelled, and he saw all his speculations scattered to the wind at once; in fact, to borrow his own sagacious illustration, "he had to submit to a new deal with his hand full of trumps."

He was still endeavoring to disentangle himself from the throng, when Lord Castlereagh's quick eye discovered him.

"And here comes Heffernan," cried he, laughingly; "the only man wanting to fill up the measure of congratulations. Pray, my lord, move one step and rescue our poor friend from suffocation."

"By Jove! my lord, one would imagine you were the rising and not the setting sun, from all this adulating assemblage," said

Heffernan, as he shook the proffered hand of the secretary, and held it most ostentatiously in his cordial pressure. "This was a complete surprise for me," added he. "I only arrived this evening with Forester."

"With Dick? Indeed! I'm very glad the truant has turned up again. Where is he?"

"He passed me on the stairs, I fancy to his room, for he muttered something about going over in the packet along with you."

"And where have you been, Heffernan, and what doing?" asked Lord Castlereagh, with that easy smile that so well became his features.

"That I can scarcely tell you here," said Heffernan, dropping his voice to a whisper, "though I fancy the news would interest you." He made a motion toward the recess of a window, and Lord Castlereagh accepted the suggestion, but with an indolence and half-apathy which did not escape Heffernan's shrewd perception. Partly piqued by this, and partly stimulated by his own personal interest in the matter, Heffernan related, with unwonted eagerness, the details of his visit to the West, narrating with all his own skill the most striking characteristics of the O'Reilly household, and endeavoring to interest his hearer by those little touches of native archness in description of which he was no mean master.

But often as they had before sufficed to amuse his lordship, they seemed a failure now, for he listened, if not with impatience, yet with actual indifference, and seemed more than once as if about to stop the narrative by the abrupt question, "How can this possibly interest me?"

Heffernan read the expression, and felt it as plainly as though it were spoken.

"I am tedious, my lord," said he, whilst a slight flush colored the middle of his cheek; "perhaps I only weary you."

"He must be a fastidious hearer who could weary of Mr. Heffernan's company," said his lordship, with a smile so ambiguous that Heffernan resumed with even greater embarrassment.

"I was about to observe, my lord, that this same member for Mayo has become much more tractable. He evidently sees the necessity of confirming his new position, and, I am confident, with very little notice, might be converted into a staunch government supporter."

"Your old favorite theory, Heffernan," said the secretary, laughing; "to warm these Popish grubs into Protestant butterflies by the sunshine of kingly favor, forgetting the while that 'the winter of their discontent' is never far distant. But please

to remember besides, that gold mines will not last forever—the fountain of honor will at last run dry, and if—”

“I ask pardon, my lord,” interrupted Heffernan. “I only alluded to those favors which cost the minister little, and the Crown still less—that social acceptance from the court here upon which some of your Irish friends set great store. If you could find an opportunity of suggesting something of this kind, or if your lordship’s successor—”

“Heaven pity him!” exclaimed Lord Castlereagh. “He will have enough on his hands, without petty embarrassments of this sort. Without you have promised, Heffernan,” added he, hastily. “If you have already made any pledge, of course we must sustain your credit.”

“I, my lord! I trust you know my discretion better than to suspect me. I merely threw out the suggestion from supposing that your lordship’s interest in our poor concerns here might outlive your translation to a more distinguished position.”

There was a tone of covert impertinence in the accent, as well as the words, which, while Lord Castlereagh was quick enough to perceive, he was too shrewd to mark by any notice.

“And so,” said he, abruptly changing the topic, “this affair of Forester’s shortened your visit?”

“Of course. Having cut the knot, I left O’Reilly and Conolly to the tender mercies of O’Halloran, who, I perceive by to-day’s paper, has denounced his late client in round terms. Another reason, my lord, for looking after O’Reilly at this moment. It is so easy to secure a prize deserted by her crew.”

“I wish Dick had waited a day or two,” said Lord Castlereagh, not heeding Heffernan’s concluding remark, “and then I should have been off. As it is, he would have done better to adjourn the horse-whipping *sine die*. His lady-mother will scarcely distinguish between the two parties in such a conflict, and probably deem the indignity pretty equally shared by both parties.”

“A very English judgment on an Irish quarrel,” observed Heffernan.

“And you yourself, Heffernan—when are we to see you in London?”

“Heaven knows, my lord. Sometimes I fancy that I ought not to quit my post here, even for a day; then again I begin to fear lest the new officials may see things in a different light, and that I may be thrown aside as the propagator of antiquated notions.”

“Mere modesty, Heffernan,” said Lord Castlereagh, with a look of most comical gravity. “You ought to know by this time that no government can go on without you. You are the fly-wheel that regulates motion and perpetuates impulse to the entire machine. I’d venture almost to declare that you stand in the inventory of articles transmitted from one viceroy to another, and as we read of ‘one throne covered with crimson velvet, and one state couch with gilt supporter’s, so we might chance to fall upon the item of ‘one Con Heffernan, Kildare place.’”

“In what capacity, my lord?” said Heffernan, endeavoring to conceal his anger by a smile.

“Your gifts are too numerous for mention. They might better be summed up under the title of ‘State Judas.’”

“You forget, my lord, he carried the bag. Now I was never purse-bearer even to the Lord Chancellor. But I can pardon the simile, coming as I see it does, from certain home convictions. Your lordship was doubtless assimilating yourself to another historical character of the same period, and would, like him, accept the iniquity, but ‘wash your hands’ of its consequences.”

“Do you hear that, my lord?” said Lord Castlereagh, turning round, and addressing the Bishop of Kilmore. “Mr. Heffernan has discovered a parallel between my character and that of Pontius Pilate.” A look of rebuking severity from the prelate was directed toward Heffernan, who meekly said,

“I was only reproving his lordship for permitting me to discharge *all* the duties of Secretary for Ireland, and yet receive none of the emoluments.”

“But you refused office in every shape and form,” said Lord Castlereagh, hastily. “Yes, gentlemen, as the last act of my official life amongst you”—here he raised his voice, and moved into the center of the room—“I desire to make this public declaration, that as often as I have solicited Mr. Heffernan to accept some situation of trust and profit under the Crown, he has as uniformly declined. Not, it is needless to say, from any discrepancy in our political views, for I believe we are agreed on every point, but upon the ground of maintaining his own freedom of acting and judging.”

The declamatory tone in which he spoke these words, and the glances of quiet intelligence that were exchanged through the assembly, were in strong contrast with the forced calmness of Heffernan, who, pale and red by turns, could barely suppress the

rage that worked within him ; nor was it without an immense effort he could mutter a feigned expression of gratitude for his lordship's panegyric, while he muttered to himself,

" You shall rue this yet ! "

CHAPTER XLV.

THE FIRE.

It was late in the evening as the Knight of Gwynne entered Dublin, and took up his abode for the night in an obscure inn, at the north side of the city. However occupied his thoughts up to that time by the approaching event in his own fortune, he could not help feeling a sudden pang as he saw once more the well-known landmarks that reminded him of former days of happiness and triumph. Strange as it may now sound, there was a time when Irish gentlemen were proud of their native city ; when they regarded its university with feelings of affectionate memory, as the scene of early efforts and ambitions ; and could look on its Parliament House as the proud evidence of their national independence ! Socially, too, they considered Dublin—and with reason—second to no city of Europe ; for there was a period, brief but glorious, when the highest breeding of the courtier mingled with the most polished wit and refined conversation, and when the splendor of wealth—freely displayed as it was—was only inferior to the more brilliant luster of a society richer in genius and in beauty than any capital of the world.

None had been a more favored participant in these scenes than Darcy himself ; his personal gifts, added to the claims of his family and fortune, secured him early acceptance in the highest circles, and if his abilities had not won the very highest distinctions, it seemed rather from his own indifference than from their deficiency.

In those days, his arrival in town was the signal for a throng of visitors to call, all eagerly asking on what day they might secure him to dine or sup, to meet this one or that. The thousand flatteries society stores up for her favorites, all awaited him. Parties, whose fulfillment hung listlessly in doubt, were now hastily determined on, as " Darcy is come " got whispered abroad ; and many a scheme of pleasure but half-planned found a ready advocacy when the prospect of obtaining him as a guest presented itself.

The consciousness of social success is a

great element in the victory. Darcy had this, but without the slightest taint of vain boastfulness or egotism ; his sense of his own distinction was merely sufficient to heighten his enjoyment of the world, without detracting, ever so little, from the manly and unassuming features of his character. It is true he endeavored, and even gave himself pains to be an agreeable companion, but he belonged to a school and a time when conversation was cultivated as an art, and when men preferred making the dinner-table and the drawing-room the arena of their powers, to inditing verses for an " Annual," or composing tales for a fashionable " Miscellany."

We have said enough, perhaps, to show what Dublin was to him once. How very different it seemed to his eyes now ! The season was late summer, and the city dusty and deserted, few persons in the streets, scarcely a carriage to be seen, an air of listlessness and apathy was over everything—for it was the period when the country was just awakening after the intoxicating excitement of the parliamentary struggle—awakening to discover that it had been betrayed and deserted !

As soon as Darcy had taken some slight refreshment he set out in search of Daly. His first visit was to Henrietta street, to his own house, or rather what had been his, for it was already let, and a flaring brass plate on the door proclaimed it the office of a fashionable solicitor. He knocked, and inquired if any one " knew where Mr. Bagenal Daly now resided ? " but the name seemed perfectly unknown. He next tried Bicknell's ; but that gentleman had not returned since the circuit ; he was repairing the fatigues of his profession by a week or two's relaxation at a watering place.

He did not like, himself, to call at the club, but he dispatched a messenger from the inn, who brought word back that Mr. Daly had not been there for several weeks, and that his present address was unknown. Worried and annoyed, Darcy tried in turn each place where Daly had been wont to frequent, but all in vain. Some had seen him, but not lately ; others suggested that he did not appear much in public on account of his moneyed difficulties ; and one or two limited themselves to a cautious declaration of ignorance, with a certain assumed shrewdness, as though to say that they could tell more if they would.

It was near midnight when Darcy returned to the inn, tired and worn out by his unsuccessful search. The packet in which he was to sail for England was to leave the port early in the morning, and he sat down

in the travelers' room, exhausted and fatigued, till his chamber should be got ready for him.

The inn stood in one of the narrow streets leading out of Smithfield, and was generally resorted to by small farmers and cattle-dealers repairing to the weekly market. Of these, three or four still lingered in the public room, conning over their accounts and discussing the prices of "short-horns and black faces" with much interest, and anticipating all the possible changes the new political condition of the country might be likely to induce.

Darcy could scarcely avoid smiling as he overheard some of these speculations, wherein the prospect of a greater export trade was deemed the most certain indication of national misfortune. His attention was, however, suddenly withdrawn from the conversation by a confused murmur of voices, and the tramp of many feet in the street without. The noise gradually increased, and attracted the notice of the others, and suddenly the words "Fire! fire!" repeated from mouth to mouth, explained the tumult.

As the tide of men was borne onward, the din grew louder, and at length the narrow street in front of the inn became densely crowded by a mob hurrying eagerly forward, and talking in loud, excited voices.

"They say that Newgate is on fire, sir," said the landlord, as, hastily entering, he addressed Darcy; "but if you'll come with me to the top of the house, we'll soon see for ourselves."

Darcy followed the man to the upper story, whence, by a small ladder, they obtained an exit on the roof. The night was calm and starlit, and the air was still. What a contrast! that spangled heaven, in all its tranquil beauty, to the dark streets below, where, in tumultuous uproar, the commingled mass was seen by the uncertain glimmer of the lamps, few and dim as they were. Darcy could mark that the crowd consisted of the very lowest and most miserable-looking class of the capital, the dwellers in the dark alleys and purlieus of the ill-favored region. By their excited gestures and wild accents, it was clear to see how much more of pleasure than of sorrow they felt at the occasion that now roused them from their dreary garrets and damp cellars. Shouts of mad triumph and cries of menace burst from them as they went. The knight was roused from a moody contemplation of the throng by the landlord saying aloud,

"True enough, the jail is on fire: see,

yonder, where the dark smoke is rolling up, that is Newgate."

"But the building is of stone—almost entirely of stone, with little or no wood in its construction," said Darcy; "I cannot imagine how it could take fire."

"The floors, the window-frames, the rafters are of wood, sir," said the other; "and then," added he, with a cunning leer, "remember what the inhabitants are!"

The knight little minded the remark, for his whole gaze was fixed on the cloud of smoke, dense and black as night, that rolled forth, as if from the ground, and soon enveloped the jail and all the surrounding buildings in darkness.

"What can that mean?" said he, in amazement.

"It means that this is no accident, sir," said the man, shrewdly; "it's only damp straw and soot can produce the effect you see yonder; it is done by the prisoners—see, it is increasing! and here come the fire-engines!"

As he spoke, a heavy, cavernous sound was heard rising from the street, where now a body of horse-police were seen escorting the fire-engines. The service was not without difficulty, for the mob offered every obstacle short of open resistance; and once it was discovered that the traces were cut, and considerable delay thereby occasioned.

"The smoke is spreading; see, sir, see how it rolls this way, blacker and heavier than before!"

"It is but smoke, after all," said Darcy; but, although the words were uttered half contemptuously, his heart beat anxiously as the dense volume hung suspended in the air, growing each moment blacker as fresh masses arose. The cries and yells of the excited mob were now wilder and more frantic, and seemed to issue from the black, ill-omened mass that filled the atmosphere.

"That's not smoke, sir; look yonder!" said the man, seizing Darcy's arm, and pointing to a reddish glare that seemed trying to force a passage through the smoke, and came not from the jail, but from some building at the side, or in front of it.

"There again!" cried he, "that is fire!"

The words were scarcely uttered, when a cheer burst from the mob beneath; a yell more dissonant and appalling could not have broken from demons than was that shout of exultation, as the red flame leaped up and flashed toward the sky. As the strong host of a battle will rout and scatter the weaker enemy, so did the fierce element dispel the less powerful; and now the lurid glow of a great fire lit up the air, and marked out with terrible distinctness the

waving crowd that jammed up the streets—the windows filled with terrified faces—and the very housetops crowded by terror-stricken and distracted groups.

The scene was truly an awful one; the fire raged in some houses exactly in front of the jail, pouring with unceasing violence its flood of flame through every door and window, and now sending bright jets through the roofs, which, rent with a report like thunder, soon became one undistinguishable mass of flame. The cries for succor, the shouts of the firemen, the screams of those not yet rescued, and the still increasing excitement of the mob, mingling their hellish yells of triumph through all the dread disaster, made up a discord the most horrible; while, ever and anon, the police and the crowd were in collision, vain efforts being made to keep the mob back from the front of the jail, whither they had fled as a refuge from the heat of the burning houses.

The fire seemed to spread, defying all the efforts of the engines. From house to house the lazy smoke was seen to issue for a moment, and then, almost immediately after, a new cry would announce that another building was in flames. Meanwhile, the smoke, which in the commencement had spread from the courtyard and windows of the jail, was again perceived to thicken in the same quarter, and suddenly, as if by a preconcerted signal, it rolled out from every barred casement and loop-holed aperture—from every narrow and deep cell within the lofty walls—and the agonized yell of the prisoners burst forth at the same moment, and the air seemed to vibrate with shrieks and cries.

“Break open the jail!” resounded on every side. “Don’t let the prisoners be burned alive!” was uttered in accents whose humanity was far inferior to their menace; and, as if with one accord, a rush was made at the strongly barred gates of the dark building. The movement, although made with the full force of a mighty multitude, was in vain. In vain the stones resounded upon the thickly-studded door—in vain the strength of hundreds pressed down upon the oaken barrier. They might as well have tried to force the strong masonry at either side of it!

“Climb the walls!” was now the cry, and the prisoners re-echoed the call in tones of shrieking entreaty. The mob, savage from their recent repulse at the gate, now seized the ladders employed by the firemen, and planted them against the great inclosure-wall of the jail. The police endeavored to charge, but, jammed up by the crowd,

their bridles in many instances cut, their weapons wrested from them, they were almost at the mercy of the mob. Orders had been dispatched for troops, but as yet they had not appeared, and the narrow streets being actually choked up with people, would necessarily delay their progress. If there were any persons in that vast mass disposed to repel the violence of the mob, they did not dare to avow it, the odds were so fearfully on the side of the multitude.

The sentry who guarded the gate was trampled down. Some averred he was killed in the first rush upon the gate; certain it was his cap and coat were paraded on a pole, as a warning of what awaited his comrades within the jail, should they dare to fire on the people. This horrible banner was waved to and fro above the stormy multitude. Darcy had but time to mark it, when he saw the crowd open, as if cleft asunder by some giant hand, and, at the same instant, a man rode through the open space, and tearing down the pole, felled him who carried it to the earth by a stroke of his whip. The red glare of the burning houses made the scene distinct as daylight, but the next moment a rolling cloud of black smoke hid all from view, and left him to doubt the evidence of his eyesight.

“Did you see the horseman!” asked Darcy, in eager curiosity, for he did not dare to trust his uncorroborated sense.

“There he is!” cried the other. “I know him by a white band on his arm. See, he mounts one of the ladders!—there!—he is near the top!”

A cheer that seemed to shake the very atmosphere now rent the air, as, pressing on like soldiers to a breach, the mob approached the walls. Some shots were fired by the guard, and their effect might be noted by the more savage yells of the mob, whose exasperation was now like madness.

“The shots have told—see!” cried the man. “Now the people are gathering in close groups, here and there.”

But Darcy’s eyes were fixed on the walls, which were already crowded with the mob, the dark figures looking like spectres as they passed and repassed through the dense canopy of smoke.

“The soldiers! the soldiers!” screamed the populace from below, and at the instant a heavy lumbering sound crept on, and the head of a cavalry squadron wheeled into the square before the jail. The remainder of the troop soon defiled; but instead of advancing, as was expected, they opened their ranks, and displayed the formidable appearance of two eight-pounders, from which the limbers were removed with lightning

speed, and their mouths turned full upon the crowd. Meanwhile, an infantry force was seen entering the opposite side of the square, thus showing the mob that they were taken in front and rear, no escape being open save by the small alleys which led off from the street before the prison. The military preparations took scarcely more time to effect than we have employed to relate; and now began a scene of tumult and terror the most dreadful to witness! The order to prime and load, followed by the clanking crash of four hundred muskets, the closed ranks of the cavalry, as if with difficulty restrained from charging down upon them, and the lighted fuzes of the artillery, all combined to augment the momentary dread, and the shouts of vengeance so lately heard were at once changed into piercing cries for mercy. The blazing houses, from which the red fire shot up unrestrained, no longer attracted notice—the jail itself had no interest for those whose danger was become so imminent.

An indiscriminate rush was made toward the narrow lanes for escape, and from these arose the most piercing and agonizing cries, for while pressed down and trampled, many were trodden under foot never again to rise; others were wounded or burned by the falling timbers of the blazing buildings, and the fearful cry of "The soldiers! the soldiers!" still goaded them on by those behind.

"Look yonder," cried Darcy's companion, seizing him by the arm—"look there—near the corner of the market! See, the troops have not perceived that ladder, and there are two fellows now descending it."

True enough. At a remote angle of the jail, not concealed from view by the smoke, stood the ladder in question.

"How slowly they move!" cried Darcy, his eyes fixed upon the figures with that strange anxiety so inseparable from the fate of all who are engaged in hazardous enterprise. "They will certainly be taken."

"They must be wounded," cried the other; "they seem to creep rather than step—I know the reason, they are in fetters."

Scarcely was the explanation uttered when the ladder was seen to be violently moved, as if from above, and the next moment was hurled back from the wall, on which several soldiers were now perceived firing on those below.

"They are lost!" said the knight; "they are either captured or cut down by this time."

"The square is cleared already," said the other; "how quietly the troops have

done their work! And the fire begins to yield to the engines."

The square was indeed cleared; save the groups beside the fire-engines, and here and there a knot gathered around some wounded man, the space was empty, the troops having drawn off to the sides, around which they stood in double file. A dark cloud rested over the jail itself, but no longer did any smoke issue from the windows, and already the fire, its rage in part expended, in part subdued, showed signs of decline.

"If the wind was from the west," said the landlord, "there's no saying where that might have stopped this night!"

"It is a strange occurrence altogether," said the knight, musingly.

"Not a bit strange, sir," replied the other, whose neighborhood made him acquainted with classes and varieties of men of whom Darcy knew nothing; "it was an attempt by the prisoners."

"Do you think so?" asked Darcy.

"Ay, to be sure, sir; there's scarcely a year goes over without one contrivance or another for escape; last autumn two fellows got away by following the course of the sewers and gaining the Liffey; they must have passed two days underground, and up to their necks in water a great part of the time."

"Ay, and besides that," observed another—for already some ten or twelve persons were assembled on the roof as well as Darcy and the landlord—"they had to wade the river at the ebb-tide, when the mud is at least eight or ten feet deep."

"How that was done, I cannot guess," said Darcy.

"A man will do many a thing for liberty, sir," remarked another, who was buttoned up in a frieze coat, although the night was hot and sultry; "these poor devils there were willing to risk being roasted alive for the chance of it."

"Quite true," said Darcy; "fellows that have a taste for breaking the law need not be supposed desirous of observing it as to their mode of death; and yet they must have been daring rascals to have made such an attempt as this."

"Maybe you know the old song, sir," said the other laughing:

"There's many a man no bolts can keep,
No chains be made to bind him,
And though fetters be heavy, and cells be deep,
He'll fling them far behind him."

"I have heard the ditty," answered the knight, "and if my memory serves me, the last lines run thus:

“Though iron bolts may rust and rot,
And stone and mortar crumble ;
Frenzy, beware ! for well I wot
Your pride may have a tumble.”

“Devil a lie in that, anyhow, sir,” said the other, laughing heartily, “and an uglier tumble a man needn’t have than to slip through Tom Galvin’s fingers. But I see the fire is out now, so I’ll be jogging homeward ; good-night, sir.”

“Good-night,” said Darcy ; and then, as the other moved away, turning to the landlord, he asked if he knew the stranger.

“No, sir,” was the reply ; “he came up with some others to have a look at the fire.”

“Well, I’ll to my bed,” said Darcy ; “let me be awakened at four o’clock. I see I shall have but a short sleep, the day is breaking already.”

CHAPTER XLVI.

BOARDING-HOUSE CRITICISM.

It was not until after the lapse of several days that Darcy’s departure was made known to the denizens of Port Ballinraty. If the event was slow of announcement, they endeavored to compensate for the tardiness of the tidings by the freedom of their commentary on all its possible and impossible reasons. There was not a casualty, in the whole catalogue of human vicissitudes, unquoted ; deaths, births, and marriages were ransacked in newspapers ; all sudden and unexpected turns of fortune were well weighed ; accidents and offenses scanned with cunning eyes, and the various paragraphs to which editorial mysteriousness gave an equivocal interpretation were commented on with a perseverance and an ingenuity worthy of a higher theme.

It may be remarked that no class of persons are viewed more suspiciously, or excite more sharp criticism from their neighbors, than those who, with evidently narrow means, prefer retirement and estrangement from the world to mixing in the small circle of some petty locality. A hundred schemes are put in motion to ascertain by what right such superiority is asserted—why, and on what grounds, they affect to be better than their neighbors, and so on ; the only offense all the while consisting in an isolation which cannot with truth imply any such imputation.

When the Knight of Gwynne found himself by an unexpected turn of fortune condemned to a station so different from his previous life, he addressed himself at once

to the difficulties of his lot ; and, well aware that all reserve on his part would be set down as the cloak of some deep mystery, he affected an air of easy cordiality with such of the boarding-house party as he ever met, and endeavored, by a tone of well-assumed familiarity, to avoid all detection of the difference between him and his new associates.

It was in this spirit that he admitted Mr. Dempsey to his acquaintance, and even asked him to his cottage. In this diplomacy he met with little assistance from Lady Eleanor and his daughter ; the former, from a natural coldness of manner and an instinctive horror of everything low and underbred. Helen’s perceptions of such things were just as acute, but, inheriting the gay and lively temperament of her father’s house, she better liked to laugh at the absurdities of vulgar people than indulge a mere sense of dislike to their society. Such allies were too dangerous to depend on, and hence the knight conducted his plans unaided and unsupported.

Whether Mr. Dempsey was bought off by the flattering exception made in his favor, and that he felt an implied superiority on being deemed their advocate, he certainly assumed that position in the circle of Mrs. Fumbally’s household, and, on the present occasion, sustained his part with a certain mysterious demeanor that imposed on many.

“Well, he’s gone, at all events !” said a thin old lady with a green shade over a pair of greener eyes, “that can’t be denied, I hope ! Went off like a shot on Tuesday morning. Sandy M-Shane brought him into Coleraine, for the Dublin coach, and, by the same token, it was an outside place he took—”

“I beg your pardon, ma’am,” interposed a fat little woman, with a choleric red face and a tremulous under-lip—she was an authoress in the provincial papers, and occasionally invented her English as well as her incidents—“it was the Derry mail he went by. Archy M-Clure trod on his toe, and asked pardon for it, just to get him into conversation, but he seemed very much dejected, and wouldn’t interlooute.”

“Very strange, indeed !” rejoined the lady of the shade, “because I had my information from Williams, the guard of the coach.”

“And I mine from Archy M-Clure himself.”

“And both were wrong,” interposed Paul Dempsey, triumphantly.

“It’s not very polite to tell us so, Mr. Dempsey,” said the thin old lady, bridling.

"Perhaps the politeness may equal the voracity," said the fat lady, who was almost boiling over with wrath.

"This Gwynne wasn't all right, depend upon it," interposed a certain little man in powder; "I have my own suspicions about him."

"Well, now, Mr. Dunlop, what's your opinion? I'd like to hear it."

"What does Mrs. M'Candlish say?" rejoined the little gentleman, turning to the authoress—for, in the boarding-house, they both presided judicially in all domestic inquisitions regarding conduct and character—"what does Mrs. M'Candlish say?"

"I prefer letting Mr. Dunlop expose himself before me."

"The case is doubtful—dark—mysterious," said Dunlop, with a solemn pause after each word.

"The more beyond my conjunctions," said the lady. "You remember what the young gentleman says in the Latin poet, 'Sum Davy, non sum Euripides.'"

"I'll tell you my opinion, then," said Mr. Dunlop, who was evidently mollified by the classical allusion, and, with firm and solemn gesture, he crossed over to where she sat, and whispered a few words in her ear.

A slight scream, and a long-drawn "Oh!" was all the answer.

"Upon my soul I believe so," said Mr. Dunlop, thrusting both hands into the furthest depths of his coat-pockets; "nay, more, I'll maintain it!"

"I know what you are driving at," said Dempsey, laughing; "you think he's the gauger that went off with Mrs. Murdock of Ballyquirk—"

"Mr. Dempsey! Mr. Dempsey! the ladies, sir! the ladies!" called out two or three reproving voices from the male portion of the assembly, while, as if to corroborate the justice of the appeal, the thin lady drew her shade down two inches lower, and Mr. Dunlop's face became what painters call "of a warm tint."

"Oh! never talk of a rope where a man's father was hanged," muttered Paul to himself, for he felt all the severity of his condemnation, though he knew that the point of law was against him.

"There's a rule in this establishment; Mr. Dempsey," said Mr. Dunlop, with all the gravity of a judge delivering a charge—"a rule devised to protect the purity, the innocence"—here the ladies held down their heads—"the beauty—"

"Yes, sir, and I will add, the helplessness of that sex—"

"Paul's right, by Jove!" hiccuped Jack Leonard, whose faculties, far immersed in the effects of strong whisky-and-water, suddenly flashed out into momentary intelligence—"I say he's right! Who says the reverse?"

"Oh, Captain Leonard!—oh dear, Mr. Dunlop!" screamed three or four female voices in concert, "don't let it proceed further."

A faint and an anxious group were gathered around the little gentleman, whose warlike indications grew stronger as pacific entreaties increased.

"He shall explain his words," said he, with a cautious glance to see that his observation was not overheard; then, seeing that his adversary had relapsed into oblivion, he added, "he shall withdraw them;" and finally, emboldened by success, he vociferated, "or he shall eat them. I'll teach him," said the now triumphant victor, "that it is not in Mark Dunlop's presence ladies are to be insulted with impunity. Let the attempt be made by whom it will—he may be a lieutenant on half pay, or on full pay!—I tell him, I don't care a rush."

"Of course not!" "Why would you?" and so on, were uttered in ready chorus around him, and he resumed:

"And as for this Gwynne, or Quin, who lives up at the Corvy yonder, for all the airs he gives himself, and his fine ladies too, my simple belief is he's a government spy."

"Is that your opinion, sir?" said a deep and almost solemn voice, and at the same instant Miss Daly appeared at the open window. She leaned her arm on the sill, and calmly stared at the now terrified speaker, while she repeated the words, "Is that your opinion, sir?"

Before the surprise her words had excited subsided, she stood at the door of the apartment. She was dressed in her riding-habit, for she had that moment returned from an excursion along the coast.

"Mr. Dunlop," said the lady, advancing toward him, "I never play the eavesdropper; but you spoke so loud, doubtless purposely, that nothing short of deafness could escape hearing you. You were pleased to express a belief respecting the position of a gentleman with whom I have the honor to claim some friendship."

"I always hold myself ready, madam, to render an account to any individual of whom I express an opinion—to himself, personally, I mean."

"Of course you do, sir. It is a very laudable habit," said she, dryly; "but in

this case—don't interrupt me—in the present case, it cannot apply, because the person traduced is absent. Yes, sir, I said traduced."

"Oh, madam, I must say the word would better suit one more able to sustain it. I shall take the liberty to withdraw." And so saying, he moved toward the door: but Miss Daly interposed, and by a gesture of her hand, in which she held a formidable horsewhip, gave a very unmistakable sign that the passage was not free.

"You'll not go yet, sir. I have not done with you," said she, in a voice every accent of which vibrated in the little man's heart. "You affect to regret, sir, that I am not of the sex that exacts satisfaction, as it is called; but I tell you, I come of a family that never gave long scores to a debt of honor. You have presumed—in a company, certainly, where the hazard to contradiction was small—to asperse a gentleman of whom you know nothing—not one single fact—not one iota of his life, character, or fortune. You have dared to call him by words, every letter of which would have left a welt on your shoulders if uttered in his hearing. Now, as I am certain he would pay any little debts I might have perchance forgotten in leaving a place where I had resided, so will I do likewise by him, and here, on this spot, and in this fair company, I call upon you to unsay your falsehood, or—" Here she made one step forward, with an air and gesture that made Mr. Dunlop retire with a most comic alacrity. "Don't be afraid, sir," continued she, laughing. "My brother, Mr. Bagenal Daly, will arrive here soon. He's no new name to your ears. In any case, I promise you, that whatever you find objectionable in my proceedings toward you, he will be most happy to sustain. Now, sir, the hand wants four minutes to six. If the hour strike before you call yourself a wanton, gratuitous calumniator, I'll flog you round the room."

A cry of horror burst from the female portion of the assembly at a threat the utterance of which was really not less terrific than the meaning.

"Such a spectacle," continued Miss Daly, sarcastically, "I should scruple to inflict on this fair company; but the taste that could find pleasure in witless, pointless slander, may not, it is possible, dislike to see a little castigation. Now, sir, you have just one minute and a quarter."

"I protest against this conduct, madam. I here declare—"

"Declare nothing, sir, till you have avowed yourself by your real name and

character. If you cannot restrain your tongue, I'll very soon convince you that its consequences are far from agreeable. Is what you have spoken false?"

"There may come a heavy reckoning for all this, madam," said Dunlop, trembling between fear and passion.

"I ask you again, and for the last time, are your words untrue? Very well, sir. You held a commission in Germany, they say, and probably, as a military man, you may think it undignified to surrender, except on compulsion."

With these words Miss Daly advanced toward him with a firm and determined air, while a cry of horror arose through the room, and the fairer portion intrepidly threw themselves in front of their champion, while Dempsey and the others only restrained their laughter for fear of personal consequences. Pushing fiercely on, Miss Daly was almost at his side, when the door of the room was opened, and a deep and well-known voice called out to her,

"Maria, what the devil is all this?"

"Oh, Bagenal," cried she, as she held out her hand, "I scarcely expected you before eight o'clock."

"But in the name of everything ridiculous, what has happened? Were you about to horsewhip this pleasant company?"

"Only one of its members," said Miss Daly, coolly—"a little gentleman who has thought proper to be more lavish of his calumny than his courage. I hand him over to you, now, and faith, though I don't think that he had any fancy for me, he'll gain by the exchange! You'll find him yonder," said she, pointing to a corner where already the majority of the party were gathered together.

Miss Daly was mistaken, however, for Mr. Dunlop had made his escape during the brief interchange of greetings between the brother and sister. "Come, Bagenal," said she, smiling, "it's all for the best. I have given him a lesson he'll not readily forget—had you been the teacher, he might not have lived to remember it."

"What a place for you!" said Bagenal, as he threw his eye superciliously around the apartment and its occupants; then taking her arm within his own, he led her forth, and closed the door after them.

Once more alone, Daly learned with surprise, not unmixed with sorrow, that his sister had never seen the Darceys, and save by a single call, when she left her name, had made no advances toward their acquaintance. She showed a degree of repugnance, too, to allude to the subject, and rather endeavored to dismiss it by saying shortly,

"Lady Eleanor is a fine lady, and her daughter a wit. What could there be in common between us?"

"But for Darcy's sake?"

"For *his* sake I stayed away," rejoined she hastily; "they would have thought me a bore, and, perhaps, have told him as much. In a word, Bagenal, I didn't like it, and that's enough. Neither of us were trained to put much constraint on our inclinations. I doubt if the lesson would be easily learned at our present time of life."

Daly muttered some half-intelligible bitterness about female obstinacy and wrong-headedness, and walked slowly to and fro. "I must see Maurice at once," said he, at length.

"That will be no easy task; he left this for Dublin on Tuesday last."

"And has not returned? When does he come back?"

"His old butler, who brought me the news, says not for some weeks."

"Confusion and misery!" exclaimed Daly; "was there ever anything so ill-timed! And he's in Dublin?"

"He went thither, but there would seem some mystery about his ultimate destination; the old man hinted at London."

"London!" said he, with a heavy sigh. "It's now the 18th, and on Saturday she sails."

"Who sails?" asked Miss Daly, with more of eagerness than she yet exhibited.

"Oh, I forgot, Molly, I hadn't told you, I'm about to take a voyage—not a very long one, but still distant enough to make me wish to say 'Good-by' ere we separate. If God wills it, I shall be back early in the spring."

"What new freak is this, Bagenal?" said she, almost sternly; "I thought that time and the world's crosses might have taught you to care for quietness, if not for home."

"Home!" repeated he, in an accent the sorrow of which sank into her very heart; "when had I ever a home? I had a house and lands, and equipages, horses, and liveried servants, all that wealth could command, or my own reckless vanity could prompt, but these did not make a home!"

"You often promised we should have such one day, Bagenal," said she, tenderly, while she stole her hand within his: "you often told me that the time would come when we should enjoy poverty with a better grace than ever we dispensed riches."

"We surely are poor enough to make the trial now," said he, with a bitterness of almost savage energy.

"And if we are, Bagenal," replied she, "there is the more need to draw more closely to each other; let us begin at once."

"Not yet, Molly, not yet," said he, passing his hand across his eyes. "I would grasp such a refuge as eagerly as yourself, for," added he, with deep emotion, "I am to the full as weary! but I cannot do it yet."

Miss Daly knew her brother's temper too long and too well, either to offer a continued opposition to any strongly expressed resolve, or to question him about a subject on which he showed any desire of reserve.

"Have you no Dublin news for me?" she said, as if willing to suggest some less touching subject for conversation.

"No, Molly; Dublin is deserted. The few who still linger in town seem only half awake to the new condition of events. The Government party are away to England; they feel, doubtless, bound in honor to disperse their gold in the land it came from; and the patriots—Heaven bless the mark!—they look as rueful as if they began to suspect that patriotism was too dear a luxury after all."

"And this burning of Newgate—what did it mean? Was there, as the newspaper makes out, anything like a political plot connected with it?"

"Nothing of the kind, Molly. The whole affair was contrived among the prisoners. Frency, the well-known highwayman, was in the jail, and, although not tried, his conviction was certain."

"And they say he has escaped. Can it be possible that some persons of influence, as the journals hint, actually interested themselves for the escape of a man like this?"

"Everything is possible in a state of society like ours, Molly."

"But a highwayman—a robber—a fellow that made the roads unsafe to travel!"

"All true," said Daly, laughing. "Nobody ever kept a hawk for a singing bird; but he's a bold villain to pounce upon another."

"I like not such appliances; they scarcely serve a good name, and they make a bad one worse."

"I'm quite of your mind, Molly," said Daly, thoughtfully; "and if honest men were plenty, he would be but a fool who held any dealings with the knaves. But here comes the car to convey me to the Corvy. I will make a hasty visit to Lady Eleanor, and be back with you by supper-time."

CHAPTER XLVII.

DALY'S FAREWELL.

NEITHER of the ladies was at home when Bagenal Daly, followed by his servant Sandy, reached the Corvy, and sat down in the porch to await their return. Busy with his own reflections, which, to judge from the deep abstraction of his manner, seemed weighty and important, Daly never looked up from the ground, while Sandy leisurely walked round the building to note the changes made in his absence, and comment, in no flattering sense, on the art by which the builder had concealed so many traits of the Corvy's origin.

"Ye'd no ken she was a ship ava!" said he to himself, as he examined the walls over which the trellised creepers were trained, and the latticed windows festooned by the honeysuckle and the clematis, and gazed in sadness over the altered building. "She's no a bit like the auld Corvy!"

"Of course she's not!" said Daly, testily, for the remark had suddenly aroused him from his musings. "What the devil would you have? Are *you* like the raw and ragged fellow I took from this bleak coast, and led over more than half the world?"

"Troth, I am no the same man noo that I was sax-and-forty years agane, and sorry I am to say it."

"Sorry—sorry! not to be half-starved, and less than half-clad; hauling a net one day, and being dragged for yourself the next—sorry!"

"Even sae, sore sorry. Eight-and-sixty may be aye sorry not to be twa-and-twenty. I ken nae rise in life can pay off that score. It's nae ower pleasant to think on, but I'm no the man I was then. No, nor for that matter, yerself neither."

Daly was too long accustomed to the familiarity of Sandy's manner to feel offended at the remark, though he did not seem by any means to relish its application. Without making any reply, he arose and entered the hall. On every side were objects reminding him of the past, strange and sad commentary on the words of his servant. Sandy appeared to feel the force of such allies, and, as he stood near, watched the effect the various articles produced on his master's countenance.

"A bonnie rifle she is," said he, as if interpreting the admiring look Daly bestowed upon a richly ornamented gun. "Do you mind the day your honor shot the corbie at the Tegern See?"

"Where the Tyrol fellows set on us, on

the road to Innspruck, and I brought down the bird to show them that they had to deal with a marksman as good at least as themselves."

"Just sae, it was a bra' shot; your hand was as firm, and your eye as steady then as any man's."

"I could do the feat this minute," said Daly, angrily, as turning away he detached a heavy broadsword from the wall.

"She was aye over weighty in the hilt," said Sandy, with a dry malice.

"You used to draw that bowstring to your ear," said Daly, sternly, as he pointed to a Swiss bow of portentous size.

"I had twa hands in those days," said the other, calmly, and without the slightest change of either voice or manner.

Not so with him to whom they were addressed. A flood of feelings seemed to pour across his memory, and laying his hand on Sandy's shoulder, he said, in an accent of very unusual emotion, "You are right, Sandy, I must be changed from what I used to be."

"Let us awa to the auld life we led in those days," said the other, impetuously, "and we'll soon be ourselves again! Doesn't that remind yer honor of the dark night on the Ottawa, when you sent the canoe, with the pine-torch burning in her bow, down the stream; and drew all the fire of the Indian fellows on her."

"It was a grand sight," cried Daly, rapturously, "to see the dark river glittering with its torchlight, and the chiefs, as they stood rifle in hand peering into the dense pine copse, and making the echoes ring with their war-cries."

"It was unco near at one time," said Sandy, as he took up the fold of the blanket with which his effigy in the canoe was costumed. "There's the twa bullet-holes, and here, the arrow-head in the plank, where I had my head! If ye had missed the Delaware chap wi' the yellow cloth on his forehead—"

"I soon changed its color for him," said Daly, savagely.

"Troth did ye; ye gied him a bonny war paint; how he sprang into the air; I think I see him noo; many a night when I'm lying awake I think I can hear the dreadful screech he gave, as he plunged into the river."

"It was not a cry of pain, it was baffled vengeance," said Daly.

"He never forgave the day ye gripped him by the twa hands in yer ain one, and made the squaws laugh at him. Eh, how that auld deevil they can'd Black Buffalo yelled! Her greasy cheeks shook and swell-

ed over her dark eyes, till the face looked like nothing but a tar lake in Demerara when there's a hurricane blowin' over it."

"You had rather a tenderness in that quarter, if I remember right," said Daly, dryly.

"I'll no deny she was a bra sauncie woman, and kened weel to mak a haggis wi' an ape's head and shoulders." Sandy smacked his lips, as if the thought had brought up pleasant memories.

"How I escaped that bullet is more than I can guess," said Daly, as he inspected the blanket where it was pierced by a shot; and as he spoke he threw its wide folds over his shoulders, the better to judge of the position.

"Ye aye wore it more on this side," said Sandy, arranging the folds with tasteful pride; "an' troth, it becomes you well. Tak the bit tomahawk in your hand, noo. Ech! but yer like yersel once more."

"We may have to don this gear again, and sooner than you think," said Daly, thoughtfully.

"Nae a bit sooner than I'd like," said Sandy. "The salvages, as they ca' them, hae neither baillies nor policemen, they hae nae cranks about lawyers and 'tornies; a grip o' a man's hair and a sharp knife is even as mickle a reason as a hempen cord and a gallows tree! Ech, it warms my bluid again to see you stridin' up and doon—if you had but a smudge o' yellow ochre, or a bit o' red round your eyes, ye'd look awful well."

"What are you staring at?" said Daly, as Sandy opened a door stealthily, and gazed down the passage toward the kitchen.

"I'm thinking that as there is naebody in the house but the twa lasses, maybe your honor would try a war-cry—ye ken ye could do it bra'ly once."

"I may need the craft soon again," said Daly, thoughtfully.

"Mercy upon us! here's the leddies!" cried Sandy. But before Daly could disencumber himself of his weapons and costume, Helen entered the hall.

If Lady Eleanor started at the strange apparition before her, and involuntarily turned her eye toward the canoe, to see that its occupant was still there, it is not much to be wondered at, so strongly did the real and the counterfeit man resemble each other. The first surprise over, he was welcomed with sincere pleasure. All the eccentricities of character which in former days were commented on so sharply were forgotten, or their memory replaced by the proofs of his ardent devotion.

"How well you are looking!" was his

first exclamation, as he gazed at Lady Eleanor and Helen alternately, with that steady stare which is one of the prerogatives of age toward beauty.

"There is no such tonic as necessity," said Lady Eleanor, smiling, "and it would seem as if health were too jealous to visit us, when we had every other blessing."

"It is worth them all, madam. I am an old man, and have seen much of the world, and I can safely aver, that what are called its trials lie chiefly in our weaknesses. We can all of us carry a heavier load than fortune lays on us—" He suddenly checked himself, as if having unwittingly lapsed into something like rebuke, and then said, "I find you alone; is it not so?"

"Yes; Darcy has left us, suddenly and almost mysteriously, without you can help us to a clearer insight. A letter from the War-office arrived here on Tuesday, acknowledging, in most complimentary terms, the fairness of his claim for military employment, and requesting his presence in London. This was evidently in reply to an application, although the knight made none such."

"But he has friends, mamma—warm-hearted and affectionate ones—who might have done so," said Helen, as she fixed her gaze steadily on Daly.

"And you, madam, have relatives of high and commanding influence," said he, avoiding to return Helen's glance—"men of rank and station, who might well feel proud of such a *protégé* as Maurice Darcy. And what have they given him?"

"We can tell you nothing; the official letter may explain more to your clear-sightedness, and I will fetch it." So saying, Lady Eleanor arose and left the room, Scarcely had the door closed, when Daly stood up, and, walking over, leaned his arm on the back of Helen's chair.

"You received my letter, did you not?" said he, hurriedly. "You know the result of the trial?"

Helen nodded assent, while a secret emotion covered her face with crimson, as Daly resumed:

"There was ill-luck everywhere: the case badly stated; Lionel absent; I myself detained in Dublin, by an unavoidable necessity—everything unfortunate, even to the last incident. Had I been there, matters would have taken another course. Still, Helen, Forester was right; and depend upon it, there is no scanty store of generous warmth in a heart that can throb so strongly beneath the aiguilleted coat of an *aid-de-camp*. The holiday habits of that tinsel life teach few lessons of self-de-

vation, and the poor fellow has paid the penalty heavily."

"What has happened?" said Helen, in a voice scarcely audible.

"He is disinherited, I hear. All his prospects depended on his mother; she has cast him off, and, as the story goes, is about to marry. Marriage is always the last vengeance of a widow."

"Here is the letter," said Lady Eleanor, entering; "let us hope you can read its intentions better than we have."

"Flattering, certainly," muttered Daly, as he coned over the lines to himself. "It's quite plain they mean to do something generous. I trust I may learn it before I sail."

"Sail! you are not about to travel, are you?" asked Lady Eleanor, in a voice that betrayed her dread of being deprived of such support.

"Oh! I forgot I hadn't told you. Yes, madam, another of those strange riddles which have beset my life compels me to take a long voyage—to America."

"To America!" echoed Helen; and her eye glanced as she spoke to the Indian war-cloak and the weapons that lay beside his chair.

"Not so, Helen," said Daly, smiling, as if replying to the insinuated remark; "I am too old for such follies now. Not in heart, indeed, but in limb," added he, sternly; "for I own I could ask nothing better than the prairie or the pine forest. I know of no cruelty in savage life that has not its counterpart amid our civilization, and for the rude virtues that are nurtured there, they are never warmed into existence by the hotbed of selfishness."

"But why leave your friends?—your sister?"

"My sister!" He paused, and a tinge of red came to his cheek as he remembered how she had failed in all attention to the Darceys. "My sister, madam, is self-willed and headstrong as myself. She acknowledges none of the restraints or influence by which the social world consents to be bound and regulated; her path has ever been wild and erratic as my own. We sometimes cross, we never contradict, each other." He paused, and then muttered to himself, "Poor Molly! how different I knew you once! And so," added he, aloud, "I must leave without seeing Darcy! and there stands Sandy, admonishing me that my time is already up. Good-by, Lady Eleanor; good-by, Helen." He turned his head away for a second, and then, in a voice of unusual feeling, said: "Farewell is always a sad word, and doubly sad when spoken by

one old as I am; but if my heart is heavy at this moment, it is the selfish sorrow of him who parts from those so dear. As for you, madam, and your fortunes, I am full of good hope. When people talk of suffering virtue, believe me, the element of courage must be wanting; but where the stout heart unites with the good cause, success will come at last."

He pressed his lips to the hands he held within his own, and hurried, before they could reply, from the room.

"Our last friend gone!" exclaimed Lady Eleanor, as she sank into a chair.

Helen's heart was too full for utterance, and she sat down silently, and watched the retiring figure of Daly and his servant till they disappeared in the distance.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE DUKE OF YORK'S LEVEE.

WHEN Darcy arrived in London, he found a degree of political excitement for which he was little prepared. In Ireland the Union had absorbed all interest and anxiety, and with the fate of that measure were extinguished the hopes of those who had speculated on national independence. Not so in England; the real importance of the annexation was never thoroughly considered till the fact was accomplished, nor, until then, were the great advantages and the possible evils well and maturely weighed. Then, for the first time, came the anxious question, What next? Was the Union to be the compensation for large concessions to the Irish people, or was it rather the seal of their incorporation with a more powerful nation, who, by this great stroke of policy, would annihilate forever all dreams of self-existence? Mr. Pitt inclined to the former opinion, and believed the moment propitious to award the Roman Catholic claims, and to a general remission of those laws which pressed so heavily upon them. To this opinion the king was firmly and, as it proved, insurmountably opposed; he regarded the act of Union as the final settlement of all possible disagreements between the two countries, as the means of uniting the two churches, and finally, of excluding at once and forever the admission of Roman Catholics to Parliament. This wide difference led to the retirement of Mr. Pitt, and subsequently to the return of the dangerous indisposition of the king, an attack brought on by the anxiety and agitation this question induced.

The hopes of the Whig party stood high ; the prince's friends, as they were styled, again rallied around Carlton House, where, already, the possibility of a long regency was discussed. Besides these causes of excitement were others of not less powerful interest ; the growing power of Bonaparte, the war in Egypt, and the possibility of open hostilities with Russia, who had now thrown herself so avowedly into the alliance of France.

Such were the stirring themes Darcy found agitating the public mind, and he could not help contrasting the mighty interests they involved with the narrow circle of consequences a purely local legislature could discuss or decide upon. He felt at once that he trod the soil of a more powerful and more ambitious people, and he remembered with a sigh his own anticipations, that in the English Parliament the Irish members would be but the camp-followers of the Crown or the Opposition.

If he was English in his pride of government and his sense of national power and greatness, he was Irish in his tastes, his habits, and his affections. If he gloried in the name of Briton as the type of national honor and truth throughout the globe, he was still more ardently attached to that land where, under the reflected grandeur of the monarchy, grew up the social affections of a poorer people. There is a sense of freedom and independence in the habits of semi-civilization very fascinating to certain minds, and all the advantages of more polished communities are deemed shallow compensation for the ready compliance and cordial impulses of the less cultivated.

With all his own high acquirements the knight was of this mind, and if he did not love England less, he loved Ireland more.

Meditating on the great changes of fortune Ireland had undergone even within his own memory, he moved along through the crowded thoroughfares of the mighty city, when he heard his name called out, and at the same instant a carriage drew up close by him.

"How do you do, knight?" said a friendly voice, as a hand was stretched forth to greet him. It was Lord Castlereagh, who had only a few weeks previous exchanged his office of Irish Secretary for a post at the Board of Trade. The meeting was a cordial one on both sides, and ended in an invitation to dine on the following day, which Darcy accepted with willingness, as a gauge of mutual good feeling and esteem.

"I was talking about you to Lord Netherby only yesterday," said Lord Castlereagh,

"and, from some hints he dropped, I suspect the time is come that I may offer you any little influence I possess, without it taking the odious shape of a bargain ; if so, pray remember that I have as much pride as yourself on such a score, and will be offended if you accept from another what might come equally well through *me*."

The knight acknowledged this kind speech with a grateful smile and a pressure of the hand, and was about to move on, when Lord Castlereagh asked if he could not drop him in his carriage at his destination, and thus enjoy, a few moments longer, his society.

"I scarcely can tell you, my lord," said Darcy, laughing, "which way I was bent on following. I came up to town to present myself at the Duke of York's levee, and it is only a few moments since I remembered that I was not provided with a uniform."

"Oh, step in then," cried Lord Castlereagh, hastily ; "I think I can manage that difficulty for you ; there is a levee this very morning ; some pressing intelligence has arrived from Egypt, and his royal highness has issued a notice for a reception for eleven o'clock. You are not afraid," said Lord Castlereagh, laughing, as Darcy took his seat beside him—"you are not afraid of being seen in such company now."

"If I am not, my lord, set my courage down to my principle ; for I never felt your kindness so dangerous," said the knight, with something of emotion.

A few moments of rapid driving brought them in front of the duke's residence, where several carriages and led horses were now standing, and officers in full dress were seen to pass in and out, with signs of haste and eagerness.

"I told you we should find them astir here," said Lord Castlereagh. "Holloa, Fane, have you heard anything new to-day?"

The officer thus addressed touched his hat respectfully, and approaching the window of the carriage, whispered a few words in Lord Castlereagh's ear.

"Is the news confirmed?" said his lordship, calmly.

"I believe so, my lord ; at least Edgecumbe says he heard it from Dundas, who got it from Pitt himself."

"Bad tidings these, knight," said Lord Castlereagh, as the aid-de-camp moved away ; "Pulteney's expedition against Ferrol has failed. These conjoint movements of army and navy seem to have a most unlucky fortune."

"What can you expect, my lord, from



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an ill-assorted 'Union?' said Darcy, slyly.

"They'll work better after a time," said Lord Castlereagh, smiling good-humoredly at the hit; "for the present, I acknowledge the success is not flattering. The general always discovers that the land batteries can only be attacked in the very spot where the admiral pronounces the anchorage impossible; each feels compromised by the other; hence envy and every manner of uncharitableness."

"And what has been the result here? Is it a repulse?"

"You can scarcely call it that, since they never attacked. They looked at the place, sailed round it, and, like the king of France in the story, they marched away again. But here we are at length at the door; let us try if we cannot accomplish a landing better than Lord Keith and General Moore."

Through a crowd of anxious faces whose troubled looks tallied with the evil tidings, Lord Castlereagh and Darcy ascended the stairs and reached the ante-chamber, now densely thronged by officers of every grade of the service. His lordship was immediately recognized and surrounded by many of the company, eager to hear his opinion.

"You don't appear to credit the report, my lord," said Darcy, who had watched with some interest the air of quiet incredulity which he assumed.

"It is all true, notwithstanding," said he, in a whisper; "I heard it early this morning at the council, and came here to see how it would be received. They say that war will be soon as unpopular with the red-coats as with the no-coats; and really, to look at these somber faces, one would say there was some truth in the rumor. But here comes Taylor." And so saying, Lord Castlereagh moved forward, and laid his hand on the arm of an officer in a staff uniform.

"I don't think so, my lord," said he, in reply to some question from Lord Castlereagh; "I'll endeavor to manage it, but I'm afraid I shall not succeed. Have you heard of Elliot's death? The news has just arrived."

"Indeed! So then the government of Chelsea is to give away. Oh, that fact explains the presence of so many veteran generals! I really was puzzled to conceive what martial ardor stirred them."

"You are severe, my lord," said Darcy; "I hope you are unjust."

"One is rarely so in attributing a selfish motive anywhere," said the young nobleman, sarcastically. "But, Taylor, can't

you arrange this affair? Let me present my friend meanwhile: The Knight of Gwynne—Colonel Taylor."

Before Taylor could more than return the knight's salutation, he was summoned to attend his royal highness, and, at the same moment, the folding-doors at the end of the apartment were thrown open and the reception began.

Whether the sarcasm of Lord Castlereagh was correct, or that a nobler motive was in operation, the number of officers was very great, and although the duke rarely addressed more than a word or two to each, a considerable time elapsed before Lord Castlereagh, with the knight following, had entered the room.

"It is against a positive order of his royal highness, my lord," said an aid-de-camp, barring the passage; "none but field-officers, and in full uniform, are received by his royal highness."

Lord Castlereagh whispered something, and endeavored to move on, but again the other interposed, saying, "Indeed, my lord, I'm deeply grieved at it, but I cannot—I dare not transgress my orders."

The duke, who had been up to this moment engaged in conversing with a group, suddenly turned, and perceiving that the presentations were not followed up, said, "Well, gentlemen, I am waiting." Then recognizing Lord Castlereagh, he added, gayly, "Another time, my lord, another time: this morning belongs to the service, and the color of your coat excludes you."

"I ask your royal highness's pardon," said Lord Castlereagh, in a tone of great deference, while he made the apology an excuse for advancing a step into the room, "I have but just left the council, and was anxious to inform you that your royal highness's suggestions have been fully adopted."

"Indeed! is that the case?" said the duke, with an elated look, while he drew his lordship into the recess of a window. The intelligence, to judge from the duke's expression, must have been both important and satisfactory, for he looked intensely eager and pleased by turns.

"And so," said he, aloud, "they really have determined on Egypt? Well, my lord, you have brought me the best tidings I've heard for many a day."

"And like all bearers of good dispatches," said Lord Castlereagh, catching up the tone of the duke, "I prefer a claim to your royal highness's patronage."

"If you look for Chelsea, my lord, you are just five minutes too late. Old Sir Harry Belmore has this instant got it."

"I could have named as old and perhaps a not less distinguished soldier to your royal highness, with this additional claim—a claim I must say, your royal highness never disregards—"

"That he has been unfortunate with the unlucky," said the duke, laughing, and good-naturedly alluding to his own failure in the expedition to the Netherlands; "but who is your friend?"

"The Knight of Gwynne—an Irish gentleman."

"One of your late supporters, eh, Castlereagh?" said the duke, laughing. "How came he to be forgotten till this hour? Or did you pass him a bill of gratitude payable at nine months after date?"

"No, my lord, he was an opponent; he was a man that I never could buy, when his influence and power were such as to make the price of his own dictating. Since that day fortune has changed with him."

"And what do you want with him now?" said the duke, while his eyes twinkled with a sly malice; "are you imitating the man that bowed down before the statues of Hercules and Apollo at Rome, not knowing when the time of those fellows might come up again? Is that your game?"

"Not exactly, your royal highness; but I really feel some scruples of conscience that, having assisted so many unworthy candidates to pensions and peerages, I should have done nothing for the most upright man I met in Ireland."

"If we could make him a commissary-general," said the duke, laughing, "the qualities you speak of would be of service just now; there never was such a set of rascals as we have got in that department! But come, what can we do with him? What's his rank in the army? Where did he serve?"

"If I dare present him to your royal highness without a uniform," said Lord Castlereagh, hesitatingly, "he could answer these queries better than I can."

"Oh! by Jove! it is too late for scruples now—introduce him at once."

Lord Castlereagh waited for no more formal permission, but, hastening to the ante-chamber, took Darcy's hand, and led him forward.

"If I don't mistake, sir," said the duke, as the old man raised his head after a deep and courteous salutation, "this is not the first time we have met. Am I correct in calling you Colonel Darcy?"

The knight bowed low in acquiescence.

"The same officer who raised the 28th Light Dragoons, known as Darcy's Light Horse?"

The knight bowed once more.

"A very proud officer in command," said the duke, turning to Lord Castlereagh with a stern expression on his features; "a colonel who threatened a prince of the blood with arrest for a breach of duty."

"He had good reason, your royal highness, to be proud," said the knight, firmly; "first, to have a prince to serve under his command; and, secondly, to have held that station and character in the service to have rendered so unbecoming a threat pardonable."

"And who said it was?" replied the duke, hastily.

"Your royal highness has just done so."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean, my lord duke," said Darcy, with a calm and unmoved look, "that your royal highness would never have recurred to the theme to one humbled as I am, if you had not forgiven it."

"As freely as I trust you forgive me, Colonel Darcy," said the duke, grasping his hand and shaking it with warmth. "Now for *my* part: what can I do for you?—what do you wish?"

"I can scarcely ask your royal highness; I find that some kind friend has already applied on my behalf. I could not have presumed, old and useless as I am, to prefer a claim myself."

"There's your own regiment vacant," said the duke, musing. "No, by Jove! I remember Lord Netherby asking me for it the other day for some relative of his own. Taylor, is the colonelcy of the 28th promoted?"

"Your royal highness signed it yesterday."

"I feared as much. Who is it?—perhaps he'd exchange."

"Colonel Maurice Darcy, your royal highness, unattached."

"What! have I been doing good by stealth? Is this really so?"

"If it be, your royal highness," said Darcy, smiling, "I can only assure you that the officer promoted will not exchange."

"The depot is at Gosport, your royal highness," said Taylor, in reply to a question from the duke.

"Well, station it in Ireland, Colonel Darcy may prefer it," said the duke; "for, as the regiment forms part of the expedition to Egypt, the depot need not be moved for some time to come."

"Your royal highness can increase the favor by only one concession—dare I ask it?—to permit me to take the command on service."

The duke gazed with astonishment at the

old man, and gradually his expression became one of deep interest, as he said,

“Colonel Darcy could claim as a right what I feel so proud to accord him as a favor. Make a note of that, Taylor,” said the duke, raising his voice, so as to be heard through the room; “Colonel Darcy to take the command on service at his own special request.” Yes, gentlemen,” added he, louder, “these are times when the exigencies of the service demand alike the energy of youth and the experience of age; it is, indeed, a happy conjuncture that finds them united. My Lord Castlereagh and Colonel Darcy, are you disengaged for Wednesday?”

They both bowed respectfully.

“Then on Wednesday I’ll have some of your brother officers to meet you, colonel. Now, Taylor, let us get through our list.”

So saying, the duke bowed graciously, and Lord Castlereagh and the knight retired, each too full of pleasure to utter a word as he went.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE TWO SIDES OF A MEDAL.

ALTHOUGH the knight lost not an hour in writing to Lady Eleanor, informing her of his appointment, the letter, hastily written, and intrusted to a waiter to be posted, was never forwarded, and the first intelligence of the event reached her in a letter from her courtly relative, Lord Netherby.

So much depends upon the peculiar tact and skill of the writer, and so much upon our own frame of mind at the time of reading, that it is difficult to say whether we do not bear up better under the announcement of any sudden and sorrowful event from the hand of one less cared for, than from those nearest and dearest to our hearts. The consolations that look like the special pleadings of affection, become, as it were, the mere expressions of impartiality. The points of view being so different, give a different aspect to the picture, and gleams of light fall where, seen from another quarter, all was shadow and gloom. So it was here. What, if the tidings had come from her husband, had been regarded in the one painful light of separation and long absence, assumed, under Lord Netherby’s style, the semblance of a most gratifying event, with, of course, that alloy of discomfort from which no human felicity is altogether free: so very artfully was this done, that Lady Eleanor half felt as if, in indulging in her own sorrow, she were merely giving way to a selfish

regret, and as Helen, the better to sustain her mother’s courage, affected a degree of pleasure she was really far from feeling, this added to the conviction that she ought, if she could, to regard her husband’s appointment as a happy event.

“Truly, mamma,” said Helen, as she sat with the letter before her, “*le style c’est l’homme.*” His lordship is quite heroic when describing all the fêtes and dinners of London; all the honors showered on papa in visiting-cards and invitations; how excellencies called, and royal highnesses shook hands: he even chronicles the distinguishing favor of the gracious prince, who took wine with him. But listen to him when the theme is really one that might evoke some trait, if not of enthusiasm, at least of national pride: ‘As for the expedition, my dear cousin, though nobody knows exactly for what place it is destined, everybody is aware that it is not intended to be a fighting one. Demonstrations are now the vogue, and it is become just as bad taste for our army to shed blood, as it would be for a well-bred man to mention a certain ill-conducted individual before ears polite. Modern war is like a game at whist between first-rate players; when either party has four by honors, he shows his hand, and saves the trouble of a contest. The naval service is, I grieve to say, rooted to its ancient prejudices, and continues its abominable pastime of broadsides and boardings; hence its mob popularity at this moment! The army will, however, always be the gentlemanlike cloth, and I thank my stars I don’t believe we have a single relative afloat. Guy Herries was the last; he was shot or piked, I forget which, in boarding a Spanish galliot off Cape Verde. “*Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?*” Rest satisfied, therefore, if the gallant knight has little glory, he will have no dangers; our expeditions never land. Jekyll says they are only intended to give the service an appetite for fresh meat and soft bread, after four months’ biscuit and salt beef. At all events, my dear cousin, reckon on seeing my friend the knight gazetted as major-general on the very next promotions. The prince is delighted with him; and I carried a message from his royal highness yesterday to the war-office in his behalf. You would not come to see me, despite all the seductions I threw out, and now the season is nigh over. May I hope better things for the next year, when perhaps I can promise an inducement the more, and make your welcome more graceful by dividing its cares with one far more competent than myself to fulfill them.’—What does he mean, *mon cousin?*”

"Read on, my dear; I believe I can guess the riddle."

"The person I allude to was, in former days, if not actually a friend, a favored intimate of yours; indeed I say that this fact is but another claim to my regard?—Is it possible, mamma, his lordship thinks of marrying?"

"Even so, Helen," said Lady Eleanor, sighing, for she remembered how, in his very last interview with her at Gwynne Abbey, he spoke of his resolve on making Lionel his heir; but then, those were the days of their prosperous fortune, the time when, to all seeming, they needed no increase of wealth.

If Helen was disposed to laugh at the notion of Lord Netherby's marrying, a glance at the troubled expression of her mother's features would have checked the emotion. The heritage was a last hope, which was not the less cherished that she had never imparted it to another.

"Shall I read on?" said Helen, timidly; and at a signal from Lady Eleanor she resumed: "I know how much 'badinage' a man at my time of life must expect from his acquaintances, and how much of kind remonstrance from his friends, when he announces his determination to marry. A good deal of this must be set down to the score of envy, some of it proceeds from mere habit on these occasions, and lastly, one's bachelor friends very naturally are averse to the closure against them of a house "ou on dine." I have thought of all this, and, per contra, I have set down the isolation of one, if not deserted, at least somewhat neglected by his relatives, and fancied, that if not exactly of that age when people marry for love, I am not yet quite so old but I may become the object of true and disinterested affection.

"Lady —, I have pledged my honor not to write her name, even to you, is, in rank and fortune, fully my equal, in every other quality my superior. The idlers at "Boodle's" can neither sneer at a "mésalliance," nor hint at the "faiblesse" of an "elderly gentleman." It is a marriage founded on mutual esteem, and, so far as station is concerned, on equality; and when I say that his royal highness has expressed his unqualified approval of the step, I believe I can add no more. I owe you, my dear cousin, this early and full explanation of my motives on many accounts; if the result should change the dispositions I once believed unalterable, I beg it may be understood as proceeding far more from necessity than the sincere wish of your very affectionate relative,

NETHERBY.

"My regret at not seeing Helen here this season is, in a measure, alleviated by Lady — telling me that brunettes were more the rage; her ladyship, who is no common arbiter, says that no "blonde" attracted any notice; even Lady Georgiana Maydew drew no admiration. My fair cousin is, happily, very young, "et les beaux jours viendront," even before hers have lost their brilliancy.

"I am sorry Lionel left the Coldstreams; with economy he could very well have managed to hold his ground, and we might have obtained something for him in the Household. As for India, the only influential person I know is my wine-merchant; he is, I am told, a director of the Honorable Company, but he'd certainly adulterate my madeira if I condescended to ask him a favor."

"Well, Helen, I think you will agree with me, selfishness is the most candid of all the vices; how delightfully unembarrassed is his lordship's style, how frank, honest, and straightforward!"

"After his verdict upon 'blondés,' mamma," said Helen, laughing, "I dare not record my opinion of him—I cannot come into court on impartial evidence. This, however, I will say, that if his lordship be not an unhappy instance of the school, I am sincerely rejoiced that Lionel is not being trained up a courtier; better a soldier's life with all its hazards and its dangers, than a career so certain to kill every manly sentiment."

"I agree with you fully, Helen; life cannot be circumscribed within petty limits and occupied by petty cares, without reducing the mind to the same miniature dimensions; until at last, so immeasurably greater are our own passions and feelings than the miserable interests around us, we end by self-worship and egotism, and fancy ourselves leviathans because we swim in a fish-pond. But who can that be crossing the grass-plot yonder? I thought our neighbors of Port Ballintray had all left the coast."

"It is the gentleman who dined here, mamma, the man that never spoke—I forget his name—"

Helen had not time to finish, when a modest tap was heard at the door, and the next moment Mr. Leonard presented himself. He was dressed with more than his wonted care, but the effort to make poverty respectable was everywhere apparent; the blue frock was brushed to the very verge of its frail existence, the gloves were drawn on at the hazard of their integrity, and his

hat, long inured to every vicissitude of weather, had been cocked into a strange counterfeit of modish smartness. With all these signs of unusual attention to appearances, his manner was modest even to humility, and he took a chair with the diffidence of one who seemed to doubt the propriety of being seated in such a presence.

Notwithstanding Lady Eleanor's efforts at conversation, aided by Helen, who tried in many ways to relieve the embarrassment of their visitor, this difficulty seemed every moment greater, and he seemed, as he really felt, to have summoned up all his courage for an undertaking, and in the very nick of the enterprise, to have left himself beggared of his energy. A vague assent, a look of doubt and uncertainty, a half-muttered expression of acquiescence in whatever was said, was all that could be obtained from him; but still, while his embarrassment appeared each instant greater, he evinced no disposition to take his leave. Lady Eleanor, who, like many persons whose ordinary manner is deemed cold and haughty, could exert at will considerable powers of pleasing, did her utmost to put her visitor at his ease, and by changing her topics from time to time, detect, if possible, some clue to his coming. It was all in vain: he followed her, it is true, as well as he was able, and with a bewildered look of constrained attention, seemed endeavoring to interest himself in what she said, but it was perfectly apparent, all the while, that his mind was preoccupied, and by very different thoughts.

At length she remained silent, and resuming the work she was engaged on when he entered, sat for some time without uttering a word, or even looking up. Mr Leonard coughed slightly, but, as if terrified at his own rashness, soon became mute and still. At last, after a long pause, so long that Lady Eleanor and Helen, forgetful of their visitor, had become deeply immersed in their own reflections, Mr. Leonard arose slowly, and with a voice not free from a certain tremor, said, "Well, madam, then I suppose I may venture to say that I saw you and Miss Darcy both well."

Lady Eleanor looked up with astonishment, for she could not conceive the meaning of the words, nor in what quarter they were to be reported.

"I mean, madam," said Leonard, "that when I present myself to the colonel, I may take the liberty to mention having seen you."

"Do you speak of my husband, sir—Colonel Darcy?" said Lady Eleanor, with

a very different degree of interest in her look and accent.

"Yes, madam," said Leonard, with a kind of forced courage in his manner, "I hope to be under his command in a few days."

"Indeed, sir!" said Lady Eleanor, with animation; "I did not know that you had served, still less that you were about to join the army once more."

Leonard blushed deeply, and he suddenly grew deadly pale, while, in a voice scarcely louder than a mere whisper, he muttered, "So then, madam, Colonel Darcy has never spoken of me to you?"

Lady Eleanor, who misunderstood the meaning of the question, seemed slightly confused as she replied, "I have no recollection of it, sir—I cannot call up at this moment having heard your name from my husband."

"I ought to have known it—I ought to have been certain of it," said Leonard, in a voice bursting from emotion, while the tears gushed from his eyes; "he could not have asked me to his house to sit down at his table as a mere object of your pity and contempt! and yet I am nothing else."

The passionate vehemence in which he now spoke seemed so different from his recent manner, that both Lady Eleanor and Helen had some doubts as to his sanity, when he quickly resumed: "I was broke for cowardice—dismissed the service with disgrace—degraded! Well may I call it so, to be what I became. I would tell you that I was not guilty—that Colonel Darcy knows—but I dare not choose between the character of a coward and—a drunkard. I had no other prospect before me than a life of poverty and repining—maybe of worse—of shame and ignominy! when, last night, I received these letters; I scarcely thought they could be for me, even when I read my name on them. Yes, madam, this letter from the War-office permits me to serve as a volunteer with the 8th Regiment of Foot; and this, which is without signature, incloses me fifty pounds to buy my outfit and join the regiment. It does not need a name; there is but one man living could stoop to help such as I am, and not feel dishonored by the contact; there is but one man brave enough to protect him branded as a coward."

"You are right, sir," cried Helen; "this must be my father's doing."

Leonard tried to speak, but could not; a trembling motion of his lips, and a faint sound issued, but nothing articulate. Lady Eleanor stopped him as he moved toward the door, and taking his hand pressed

it cordially, while she said, "Be of good heart, sir; my husband is not less quick to perceive than he is ever ready to befriend. Be assured he would not now be your ally if he had not a well-grounded hope that you would merit it. Farewell, then; remember you have a double tie to duty, and that *his* credit, as well as *your own*, is on the issue."

Leonard muttered a faint "I will," and departed.

"How happily timed is this little incident, Helen," said Lady Eleanor, as she drew her daughter to her side; "how full of pleasant hope it fills the heart, at a moment when the worldly selfishness of the courtier's letter had left us low and sorrow-struck. These are indeed the sunny spots in life, that never look so brilliant as when seen amid lowering skies and darkening storms."

CHAPTER L.

AN UNCEREMONIOUS VISIT.

As winter drew near, with its dark and leaden skies, and days and nights of storm and hurricane, so did the worldly prospect of Lady Eleanor and her daughter grow hourly more gloomy. Bicknell's letters detailed new difficulties and embarrassments on every hand. Sums of money, supposed to have been long since paid and acknowledged by Gleeson, were now demanded with all the accruing interest; rights hitherto unquestioned were now threatened with dispute, as Hickman O'Reilly's success emboldened others to try their fortune. Of the little property that still remained to them, the rents were withheld until their claim to them should be once more established by law. Disaster followed disaster, till at length the last drop filled up the measure of their misery, as they learned that the knight's personal liberty was at stake, and more than one writ was issued for his arrest.

The same post that brought this dreadful intelligence, brought also a few lines from Darcy, the first that had reached them since his departure.

His note was dated from the "*Hermione* frigate, off the Needles," and contained little more than an affectionate farewell. He wrote in health, and apparently in spirits, full of the assurance of a speedy and happy meeting, nor was there any allusion to their embarrassments, save in the vague mention of a letter he had writ-

ten to Bicknell, and who would himself write to Lady Eleanor.

"It is not, dearest Eleanor," wrote he, "the time we would have selected for a separation, when troubles thicken around us; yet who knows if the incident may not fall happily, and turn our thoughts from the loss of fortune to the many blessings we enjoy in mutual affection and in our children's love, all to thicken around us at our meeting? I confess, too, I have a pride in being thought worthy to serve my country still, not in the tiresome monotony of a depot, but in the field! among the young, the gallant, and the brave! Is it not enough to take off half this load of years, and make me fancy myself the gay colonel you may remember cantering beside your carriage in the park—I shame to say how long ago! I wonder what the French will think of us, for nearly every officer in command might be superannuated, and Abercrombie is as venerable in white hairs as myself! There are, however, plenty of young and dashing fellows to replace us, and the spirit of the whole army is admirable.

"Whither we are destined, what will be our collective force, and what the nature of the expedition, are profound secrets, with which even the generals of brigades are not intrusted; so that all I can tell you is, that some seven hundred and fifty of us are now sailing southward, under a steady breeze from the north-north-west; that the land is each moment growing fainter to my eyes, while the pilot is eagerly pressing me to conclude this last expression of my love to yourself and dearest Helen. Adieu.

"Ever yours,

"MAURICE DARCY."

As with eyes half dimmed by tears Lady Eleanor read these lines, she could not help muttering a thanksgiving that her husband was at least beyond the risk of that danger of which Bicknell spoke—an indignity, she feared, he never could have survived.

"And better still," cried Helen, "if a season of struggle and privation awaits us, that we should bear it alone, and not before *his* eyes, for whom such a prospect would be torture. Now let us see how to meet the evil." So saying, she once more opened Bicknell's letter, and began to peruse it carefully, while Lady Eleanor sat, pale and in silence, nor even by a gesture showing any consciousness of the scene.

"What miserable trifling do all these legal subtleties seem," said the young girl, after she had read for some time; "how trying to patience to canvass the petty de-

tails by which a clear and honest cause must be asserted! Here are fees to counsel, briefs, statements, learned opinions, and wise consultations multiplied to show that we are the rightful owners of what our ancestors have held for centuries, while every step of usurpation by these Hickmans would appear almost unassailable. With what intensity of purpose, too, does that family persecute us. All these actions are instituted by them; these bonds are all in their hands. What means this hate?"

Lady Eleanor looked up, and as her eyes met Helen's a faint flush colored her cheek, for she thought of her interview with the old doctor, and that proposal by which their conflicting interests were to be satisfied.

"We surely never injured them," resumed the young girl, eagerly; "they were always well and hospitably received by us. Lionel even liked Beecham, when they were boys together—a mild and quiet youth he was."

"So I thought him, too," said Lady Eleanor, stealing a cautious glance at her daughter. "We saw him," continued she, more boldly, "under circumstances of no common difficulty—struggling under the embarrassment of a false social position, with such a grandfather!"

"And such a father! Nay, mamma, of the two you must confess the doctor was our favorite. The old man's selfishness was not half so vulgar as his son's ambition."

"And yet, Helen," said Lady Eleanor, calmly, "such are the essential transitions by which families are formed; wealthy in one generation, aspiring in the next, recognized gentry—mayhap titled—in the third. It is but rarely that the whole series unfolds itself before our eyes at once, as in the present instance, and consequently it is but rarely that we detect so palpably all its incongruities and absurdities. A few years more," added she, with a deep sigh, "and these O'Reillys will be regarded as the rightful owners of Gwynne Abbey by centuries of descent; and if an antiquary detect the old leopards of the Darcys frowning from some sculptured keystone, it will be to weave an ingenious theory of intermarriage between the houses."

"An indignity they might well have spared us," said Helen, proudly.

"Such are the world's changes," continued Lady Eleanor, pursuing her own train of thought. "How very few remember the origin of our proudest houses, and how little does it matter whether the foundations have been laid by the rude courage of

some lawless baron of the tenth century, or the crafty shrewdness of some Hickman O'Reilly of the nineteenth."

If there was a tone of bitter mockery in Lady Eleanor's words, there was also a secret meaning which, even to her own heart, she would not have ventured to avow. By one of those strange and most inexplicable mysteries of our nature, she was endeavoring to elicit from her daughter some expression of dissent to her own recorded opinion of the O'Reillys, and seeking for some chance word which might show that Helen regarded an alliance with that family with more tolerant feelings than she did herself.

Her intentions on this head were not destined to be successful. Helen's prejudices on the score of birth and station were rather strengthened than shaken by the changes of fortune; she cherished the prestige of their good blood as a source of proud consolation that no adversity could detract from. Before, however, she could reply, the tramp of a horse's feet—a most unusual sound—was heard on the gravel without; and immediately after the heavy foot of some one, as if feeling his way in the dark toward the door. Without actual fear, but not without intense anxiety, both mother and daughter heard the heavy knocking of a loaded horsewhip on the door; nor was it until old Tate had twice repeated his question, that a sign replied he might open the door.

"Look to the pony there!" cried a voice, as the old man peered out into the dark night. And before he could reply or resist, the speaker pushed past him and entered the room. "I crave your pardon, my Lady Eleanor," said she—for it was Miss Daly who, drenched with rain, and all splashed with mud, now stood before them—"I crave your pardon for this visit of so scant ceremony. Has the knight returned yet?"

The strong resemblance to her brother Bagenal, increased by her gesture and the tones of her voice, at once proclaimed to Lady Eleanor who her visitor was; and as she rose graciously to receive her, she replied, that "the knight, so far from having returned, had already sailed with the expedition under General Abererombie."

Miss Daly listened with breathless eagerness to the words, and as they concluded, she exclaimed aloud, "Thank God!" and threw herself into a chair. A pause, which, if brief, was not devoid of embarrassment, followed; and while Lady Eleanor was about to break it, Miss Daly again spoke, but with a voice and manner very different

from before. "You will pardon, I am certain, the rudeness of my intrusion, Lady Eleanor, and you, too, Miss Darey, when I tell you that my heart was too full of anxiety to leave any room for courtesy. It was only this afternoon that an accident informed me that a person had arrived in this neighborhood with a writ to arrest the Knight of Gwynne. I was five and twenty miles from this when I heard the news, and although I commissioned my informant to hasten thither with the tidings, I grew too full of dread, and had too many fears of a mischance, to await the result, so that I resolved to come myself."

"How full of kindness!" exclaimed Lady Eleanor, while Helen took Miss Daly's hand and pressed it to her lips. "Let our benefactress not suffer too much in our cause. Helen, dearest, assist Miss Daly to a change of dress. You are actually wet through."

"Nay, nay, Lady Eleanor, you must not teach me fastidiousness. It has been my custom for many a year not to care for weather, and in the kind of life I lead such training is indispensable." Miss Daly removed her hat as she spoke, and, pushing back her dripping hair, seemed really insensible to the discomforts which caused her hosts so much uneasiness.

"I see clearly," resumed she, laughing, "I was right in not making myself known to you before; for though you may forgive the eccentricities that come under the mask of good intentions, you'd never pardon the thousand offenses against good breeding and the world's prescription, which spring from the wayward fancies of an old maid who has lived so much beyond the pale of affection, she has forgotten all the arts that win it."

"If you are unjust to yourself, Miss Daly, pray be not so to us; nor think that we can be insensible to friendship like yours."

"Oh, as for this trifling service, you esteem it far too highly; besides, when you hear the story, you'll see how much more you have to thank your own hospitality than my promptitude."

"This is, indeed, puzzling me," exclaimed Lady Eleanor.

"Do you remember having met and received at your house a certain Mr. Dempsey?"

"Certainly, he dined with us on one occasion, and paid us some three or four visits. A tiresome little vulgar man, with a most intense curiosity devouring him to know everything of everybody."

"To this gift, or infirmity, whichever it

be, we are now indebted. Since the breaking-up of the boarding-house at Port Ballinray, which, this year, was somewhat earlier than usual"—here Miss Daly smiled slightly, as though there lay more in the words than they seemed to imply—"Mr. Dempsey betook himself to a little village near Glenarni, where I have been staying, and where the chief recommendation as a residence lay possibly in the fact that the weekly mail-car to Derry changed horses there. Hence, an opportunity of communing with the world he valued at its just price. It so chanced that the only traveler who came for three weeks, arrived the night before last, drenched to the skin, and so ill from cold, hunger, and exhaustion, that, unable to prosecute his journey further, he was carried from the car to his bed. Mr. Dempsey, whose heart is really as kind as inquisitive, at once tendered his services to the stranger, who, after some brief intercourse, commissioned him to open his portmanteau, and taking out writing materials, to inform his friends in Dublin of his sudden indisposition, and his fears that his illness might delay, or perhaps render totally abortive, his mission to the north. Here was a most provoking mystery for Mr. Dempsey. The very allusion to a matter of importance, in this dubious half-light, was something more than human nature should be tried with, and if the patient burned with the fever of the body, Mr. Dempsey suffered under the less tolerable agony of mental torment—imagining every possible contingency that should bring a stranger down into a lonely neighborhood, and canvassing every imaginable inducement, from seduction to highway robbery. Whether the sick man's sleep was merely the heavy debt of exhausted nature, or whether Mr. Dempsey aided his repose by adding a few drops to the laudanum prescribed by the doctor, true it is, he lay in a deep slumber, and never awoke till late the following day; meanwhile Mr. Dempsey recompensed his Samaritanism by a careful inspection of the stranger's trunk and its contents; and, in particular, made a patient examination of two parchment documents, which, fortunately for his curiosity, were not sealed, but simply tied with red tape. Great was his surprise to discover that one of these was a writ to arrest a certain Paul Dempsey, and the other directed against the resident of the Corvy, whom he now, for the first time, learned was the Knight of Gwynne.

"Self-interest, the very instinct of safety itself, weighed less with him than his old passion for gossip; and no sooner had he

learned the important fact of who his neighbor was, than he set off straight to communicate the news to me. I must do him the justice to say, that when I proposed his hastening off to you with the tidings, that the little man acceded with the utmost promptitude, but as his journey was to be performed on foot, and by certain mountain paths not always easily discovered in our misty climate, it is probable he could not reach this for some hours."

When Miss Daly concluded, Lady Eleanor and her daughter renewed their grateful acknowledgments for her thoughtful kindness. "These are sad themes by which to open our acquaintance," said Lady Eleanor; "but it is among the prerogatives of friendship to share the pressure of misfortune, and Mr. Daly's sister can be no stranger to ours."

"Nor how undeserved they were," added Miss Daly, gravely.

"Nay, which of us can dare say so much?" interrupted Lady Eleanor; "we may well have forgotten ourselves in that long career of prosperity we enjoyed—for ours was, indeed, a happy lot! I need not speak of my husband to one who knew him once so well. Generous, frank, and noble-hearted as he always was—his only failing the excessive confidence that would go on believing in the honesty of others, from the prompting of a spirit that stooped to nothing low or unworthy—he never knew suspicion."

"True," echoed Miss Daly, "he never did suspect."

There was such a plaintive sadness in her voice, that it drew Helen's eyes toward her; nor could all her efforts conceal a tear that trickled along her cheek.

"And to what an alternative are we now reduced!" continued Lady Eleanor, who, with all the selfishness of sorrow, loved to linger on the painful theme.—"to rejoice at separation, and to feel relieved in thinking that he is gone to peril life itself, rather than endure the lingering death of a broken heart!"

"Yes, young lady," said Miss Daly, turning toward Helen, "such are the recompenses of the most endearing affection—such the penalties of loving. Would you not almost say, 'It were better to be such as I am, unloved, uncared for—without one to share a joy or grief with.' I half think so myself," added she, suddenly rising from her chair. "I can almost persuade myself that this load of life is easier borne when all its pressure is one's own."

"You are not about to leave us?" said Lady Eleanor, taking her hand affectionately.

"Yes," replied she, smiling sadly, "when my heart has disburdened itself of an immediate care, I become but sorry company, and sometimes think aloud. How fortunate I have no secrets!—Bring my pony to the door," said she, as Tate answered the summons of the bell.

"But wait at least for daylight," said Helen, eagerly; "the storm is increasing, and the night is dark and starless. Remember what a road you've come."

"I often ride at this hour, and with no better weather," said she, adjusting the folds of her habit; "and as to the road, Puck knows it too well to wander from the track, daylight or dark."

"For our sakes, I entreat you not to venture till morning," cried Lady Eleanor.

"I could not if I would," said Miss Daly, steadily. "By to-morrow, at noon, I have an engagement at some distance hence, and much to arrange in the mean time. Pray do not ask me again. I cannot bear to refuse you, even in such a trifle, and as to me or my safety, waste not another thought about it. They who have so little to live for are wondrous secure from accident."

"When shall we see you? Soon, I hope and trust!" exclaimed both mother and daughter together.

Miss Daly shook her head; then added, hastily, "I never promise anything. I was a great castle-builder once, but time has cured me of the habit, and I do not like, even by a pledge, to forestall the morrow. Farewell, Lady Eleanor. It is better to see but little of me, and think the better, than grow weary of my waywardness on nearer acquaintance. Adieu, Miss Darcy; I am glad to have seen you; don't forget me." So saying, she pressed Helen's hands to her lips, but ere she let them drop, she squeezed a letter into her grasp; the moment after, she was gone.

"Oh, then, I remember her the beauty wonst!" said Tate, as he closed the door, after peering out for some seconds into the dark night; "and proud she was, too—riding a white Arabian, with two servants in scarlet liveries after her! The world has quare changes; but hers is the greatest ever I knew!"

CHAPTER LI.

A TETE-A-TETE AND A LETTER.

LONG after Miss Daly's departure, Lady Eleanor continued to discuss the eccentricity of her manners, and the willful abrupt-

ness of her address, for although deeply sensible and grateful for her kindness, she dwelt on every peculiarity of her appearance with a pertinacity that more than once surprised her daughter. Helen, indeed, was very far from being a patient listener, not only because she was more tolerant in her estimate of their visitor, but because she was eager to read the letter so secretly intrusted to her hands. A dread of some unknown calamity, some sad tidings of her father or Lionel, was ever uppermost in her thoughts; nor could she banish the impression that Miss Daly's visit had another and very different object than that which she alleged to Lady Eleanor.

It may be reckoned among the well-known contrarieties of life, that our friends are never more disposed to be long-winded and discursive than at the very time we would give the world to be alone and to ourselves. With a most malicious intensity they seem to select that moment for indulging in all those speculations by which people while away the weary hours. In such a mood was Lady Eleanor Darey. Not only did she canvass and criticise Miss Daly, as she appeared before them, but went off into long rambling reminiscences of all she had formerly heard about her; for, although they had never met before, Miss Daly had been the reigning belle of the West before her own arrival in Ireland.

"She must have been handsome, Helen, don't you think so?" said she, at the end of a long enumeration of the various eccentricities imputed to her.

"I should say very handsome," replied Helen.

"Scarcely feminine enough, perhaps," resumed Lady Eleanor; "the features too bold, the expression too decided; but this may have been the fault of a social tone, which required everything in exaggeration, and would tolerate nothing save in excess."

"Yes, mamma," said Helen, vaguely assenting to a remark she had not attended to.

"I never fancied that style, either in beauty or in manner," continued Lady Eleanor. "It wants, in the first place, the great element of pleasing; it is not natural."

"No mamma!" rejoined Helen, mechanically as before.

"Besides," continued Lady Eleanor, gratified at her daughter's ready assent, "for one person to whom these mannerisms are becoming, there are at least a hundred slavish imitators ready to adopt without taste, and follow without discrimination.

Now Miss Daly was the fashion once. Who can say to what heresies she has given origin, to what absurdities in dress, in manner, and in bearing?"

Helen smiled, and nodded an acquiescence without knowing to what.

"There is one evil attendant on all this," said Lady Eleanor, who, with the merciless ingenuity of a thorough poser, went on ratiocinating from her own thoughts; "one can rarely rely upon even the kindest intentions of people of this sort, so often are their best offices but mere passing, fitful impulses; don't you think so?"

"Yes, mamma," said Helen, roused by this sudden appeal to a more than usual acquiescence, while totally ignorant as to what.

"Then, they have seldom any discretion, even when they mean well."

"No, mamma."

"While they expect the most implicit compliance on your part with every scheme they have devised for your benefit."

"Very true," chimed in Helen, who assented at random.

"Sad alternative," sighed Lady Eleanor, "between such rash friendship and the lukewarm kindness of our courtly cousin."

"I think not!" said Helen, who fancied she was still following the current of her mother's reflections.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lady Eleanor, in astonishment, while she looked at her daughter for an explanation.

"I quite agree with you, mamma," cried Helen, blushing as she spoke, for she was suddenly recalled to herself.

"The more fortunate is the acquiescence, my dear," said Lady Eleanor, dryly, "since it seems perfectly instinctive. I find, Helen, you have not been a very attentive listener, and as I conclude I must have been a very unamusing companion, I'll even say good-night; nay, my sweet child, it is late enough not to seek excuse for weariness—good-night."

Helen blushed deeply, dissimulation was a very difficult task to her, and for a moment seemed more than her strength could bear. She had resolved to place the letter in her mother's hands, when the thought flashed across her, that if its contents might occasion any sudden or severe shock, she would never forgive herself. This mental struggle, brief as it was, brought the tears to her eyes, an emotion Lady Eleanor attributed to a different cause, as she said,

"You do not suppose, my dearest Helen, that I am angry, because your thoughts took a pleasanter path than my own?"

"Oh, no! no!" cried Helen, eagerly, "I know you are not. It is my own—" She stopped, another word would have revealed everything, and with an affectionate embrace she hurried from the room.

"Poor child!" exclaimed her mother; "the courage that sustained us both so long is beginning to fail her now; and yet I feel as if our trials were but commencing."

While Lady Eleanor dwelt on these sad thoughts, Helen sat beside her bed weeping bitterly.

"How shall I bear up," thought she, "if deprived of that confiding trust a mother's love has ever supplied—without one to counsel or direct me?"

Half fearing to open the letter, lest all her resolves should be altered by its contents, she remained a long time balancing one difficulty against another. Wearied and undecided, she turned at last to the letter itself, as if for advice. It was a strange hand, and addressed to "Miss Daly." With trembling fingers she unfolded the paper, and read the writer's name—"Richard Forester."

A flood of grateful tears burst forth as she read the words: a sense of relief from impending calamity stole over her mind, while she said, "Thank God! my father and Lionel—" She could say no more, for sobbing choked her utterance. The emotions, if violent, passed rapidly off; and as she wiped away her tears, a smile of hope lit up her features. At any other time she would have speculated long and carefully over the causes which made Forester correspond with Miss Daly, and by what right she herself should be intrusted with his letter. Now her thoughts were hurried along too rapidly for reflection. The vague dread of misfortune, so suddenly removed, suggested a sense of gratitude, that thrilled through her heart like joy. In such a frame of mind she read the following lines:

"At Sea.

"MY DEAR MISS DALY,

"I cannot thank you enough for your letter, so full of kindness, of encouragement, and of hope. How much I stand in need of them! I have strictly followed every portion of your counsel—would that I could tell you as successfully as implicitly! The address of this letter will, however, be the shortest reply to that question. I write these lines from the *Hermione* frigate. Yes, I am a volunteer in the expedition to the Mediterranean; and only think who is my commanding officer—the knight himself." I had enrolled myself

under the name of Conway; but when called up on deck this morning for inspection, such was my surprise on seeing the Knight of Gwynne, or, as he is now called, Colonel Darey, I almost betrayed myself. Fortunately, however, I escaped unnoticed—a circumstance I believe I owe chiefly to the fact that several young men of family are also volunteers, so that my position attracted no unusual attention. It was a most anxious moment for me as the colonel came down the line, addressing a word here and there as he went; he stopped within one of me, and spoke for some seconds to a young fellow, whose appearance indicated delicate health. How full of gentleness and benevolence were his words; but when he turned and fixed his eyes on me, my heart beat so quick, my head grew so dizzy, I thought I should have fainted. He remained at least half a minute in front of me, and then asked the orderly for my name.—'Conway! Conway!' repeated he more than once. 'A very old name. I hope you'll do it credit, sir,' added he, and moved on; how much to my relief I need not say. What a strange rencounter! Often as I wonder at the singular necessity that has made me a private soldier, all my astonishment is lost in thinking of the Knight of Gwynne's presence amongst us; and yet he looks the soldier even as much as he did the country gentleman, when I first saw him, and, strangely too, seems younger and more active than before. To see him here, chatting with the officers under his command, moving about, taking interest in everything that goes on, who would suspect the change of fortune that has befallen him! Not a vestige of discontent; not even a passing look of impatience on his handsome features; and yet, with this example before me, and the consciousness that my altered condition is nothing in comparison with his, I am low-spirited and void of hope! But a few weeks ago, I would have thought myself the luckiest fellow breathing, if told that I were to serve under Colonel Darey, and now, I feel ashamed and abashed, and dread a recognition every time I see him. In good truth, I cannot forget the presumption that led me first to his acquaintance. My mind dwells on that unhappy mission to the West, and its consequences. My foolish vanity in supposing that I, a mere boy, uninformed, and without reflection, should be able to influence a man, so much my superior in every way! and this, bad as it is, is the most favorable view of my conduct, for I dare not recall the dishonorable means by which I was to buy his

support. Then, I think of my heedless and disreputable quarrel. What motives and what actions in the eyes of her whose affection I sought! How worthily am I punished for my presumption!

"I told you that I strictly followed the advice of your last letter. Immediately on receiving it I wrote a few lines to my mother, entreating her permission to see and speak to her, and expressing an earnest hope that our interview would end in restoring me to the place I so long enjoyed in her affection. A very formal note, appointing the following day, was all the reply.

On arriving at Berkeley square, and entering the drawing-room, I found, to my great astonishment, I will not say more, that a gentleman, a stranger to me, was already there, seated at the fire, opposite my mother, and with that easy air that bespoke his visit was not merely accidental, but a matter of pre-arrangement. Whatever my looks might have conveyed, I know not, but I was not given the opportunity for a more explicit inquiry, when my mother, in her stateliest of manners, arose and said,

"Richard, I wish to present you to my esteemed friend, Lord Netherby; a gentleman to whose kindness you are indebted for any favorable construction I can put upon your folly, and who has induced me to receive you here to-day."

"If I knew, madam, that such influence had been necessary, I should have hesitated before I laid myself under so deep an obligation to his lordship, to whose name and merits I confess myself a stranger."

"I am but too happy, Captain Forester," interposed the earl, "if any little interest I possess in Lady Wallincourt's esteem enables me to contribute to your reconciliation. I know the great delicacy of an interference, in a case like the present, and how officious and impertinent the most respectful suggestions must appear, when offered by one who can lay no claim, at least to *your* good opinion."

"A very significant emphasis on the word 'your,' a look toward my mother, and a very meaning smile from her in reply, at once revealed to me what, till then, I had not suspected; that his lordship meditated a deeper influence over her ladyship's heart than the mere reconciliation of a truant son to her esteem.

"I believe, my lord," said I, hastily, and I fear not without some anger—"I believe I should not have dared to decline your kind influence in my behalf, had I suspected the terms on which you would exert it. I really was not aware before

that you possessed, so fully, her ladyship's confidence."

"If you read the morning papers, Captain Forester," said he, with the blandest smile, "you could scarcely avoid learning that my presence here is neither an intrusion nor an impertinence."

"My dear mother," cried I, forgetting all, save the long-continued grief by which my father's memory was hallowed, "is this really the case?"

"I can forgive your astonishment," replied she, with a look of anger, "that the qualities you hold so highly in your esteem should have met favor from one so placed and gifted as the Earl of Netherby."

"Nay, madam; on the contrary. My difficulty is to think, how any new proffer of attachment could find reception in a heart I fondly thought closed against such appeals; too full of its own memories of the past to profane the recollection by—"

"I hesitated and stopped. Another moment, and I would have uttered a word which for worlds I would not have spoken!

"My mother became suddenly pale as marble; and lay back in her chair as if faint and sick. His lordship adjusted his neck-cloth and his watch-chain, and walked toward the window with an air of as much awkwardness as so very courtly a personage could exhibit.

"You see, my lord," said my mother—and her voice trembled at every word—"you see, I was right: I told you how much this interview would agitate and distress me."

"But it need not, madam," interposed I; "or, at all events, it may be rendered very brief. I sought an opportunity of speaking to you, in the hope, that whatever impressions you may have received of my conduct in Ireland, were either exaggerated or unjust: that I might convince you, however I may have erred in prudence or judgment, I have transgressed neither in honor nor good faith."

"Vindications," said my mother, "are very weak things in the face of direct facts. Did you, or did you not, resign your appointment on the viceroy's staff—I stop not to ask with what scant courtesy—that you might be free to rove over the country, on some knight-errant absurdity? Did you, after having one disreputable quarrel in the same neighborhood, again involve yourself and your name in an affair with a notorious mob-orator and disturber, and thus become the "celebrity" of the newspapers for at least a fortnight? And lastly, when I hoped, by absence from England, and foreign service, to erase the

memory of these follies—to give them no harsher name—did you not refuse the appointment, and, without advice or permission, sell out of the army altogether?’

“Without adverting to the motives, madam, you have so kindly attributed to me, I beg to say “yes” to all your questions. I am no longer an officer in his majesty’s service.’

“Nor any longer a member of *my* family, sir,” said my mother, passionately; ‘at least, so far as the will rests with me. A gentleman so very independent in his principles is doubtless not less so in his circumstances. You are entitled to five thousand pounds only, by your father’s will: this, if I mistake not, you have received and spent many a day ago. I will not advert to what my original intentions in your behalf were; they are recorded, however, in this paper, which you, my lord, have read.’ Here her ladyship drew forth a document, like a law-paper, while the earl bowed a deep acquiescence, and muttered something like—

“Very generous and noble-minded, indeed!’

“Yes, sir,” resumed my mother, ‘I had no other thought or object, save in establishing you in a position suitable to your name and family; you have thought fit to oppose my wishes on every point, and here I end the vain struggle.’ So saying, she tore the paper in pieces, and threw the fragments into the fire.

“A deep silence ensued, which I, for many reasons, had no inducement to break. The earl coughed and hemmed three or four times, as though endeavoring to hit upon something that might relieve the general embarrassment, but my mother was again the first to speak.

“I have no doubt, sir, you have determined on some future career. I am not indiscreet enough to inquire what, but that you may not enter upon it quite unprovided, I have settled upon you the sum of four hundred pounds yearly. Do not mistake me, nor suppose that this act proceeds from any lingering hope on my part that you will attempt to retrace your false steps, and recover the lost place in my affection. I am too well acquainted with the family gift of determination, as it is flatteringly styled, to think so. You owe this consideration entirely to the kind interference of the Earl of Netherby. Nay, my lord, it is but fair that you should have any merit the act confers, where you have incurred all the responsibility.’

“I will relieve his lordship of both,” said I. ‘I beg to decline your ladyship’s

generosity and his lordship’s kindness, with the self-same feeling of respect.’

“My dear Captain Forester, wait one moment,” said Lord Netherby, taking my arm. ‘Let me speak to you, even for a few moments.’

“You mistake him, my lord,” said my mother, with a scornful smile, while she arose to leave the room—‘you mistake him much.’

“Pray hear me out,” said Lord Netherby, taking my hand in both his own. ‘It is no time, nor a case for any rash resolves,’ whispered he; ‘Lady Wallincourt has been misinformed—her mind has been warped by stories of one kind or other. Go to her, explain fully and openly everything.’

“Her ladyship is gone, my lord,” exclaimed I, stopping him.

“Yes, she had left the room while we were yet speaking. This was my last adieu from my mother! I remember little more, though Lord Netherby detained me still some time, and spoke with much kindness; indeed, throughout, his conduct was graceful and good-natured.

“Why should I weary you longer? Why speak of the long dreary night, and the longer day that followed this scene—swayed by different impulses—now hoping and fearing alternately—not daring to seek counsel from my friends, because I well knew what worldly advice would be given—I was wretched. In the very depth of my despondency, like a ray of sunlight darting through some crevice of a prisoner’s cell, came your own words to me, ‘Be a soldier in more than garb or name, be one in the generous ardor of a bold career. Let it be your boast that you started fairly in the race, and so distanced your competitors.’ I caught at the suggestion with avidity. I was no more depressed or downhearted. I felt as if, throwing off my load of care, a better and a brighter day was about to break for me; the same evening I left London for Plymouth, and became a volunteer.

“Before concluding these lines, I would ask why you tell me no more of Miss Darcy than that ‘she is well, and, the reverse of her fortune considered, in spirits.’ Am I to learn no more than that? will you not say if my name is ever spoken by, or before her? How am I remembered? Has time, have my changed fortunes softened her stern determination toward me? Would that I could know this—would that I could divine what may lurk in her heart of compassionate pity for one who resigned all for her love, and lost. With all my gratitude for your kindness, when I well-

nigh believed none remained in the world for me,

"I am, yours in sincere affection,
"RICHARD FORESTER.

"I forgot to ask if you can read one strange mystery of this business, at least so the words seem to imply? Lord Netherby said, when endeavoring to dissuade me from leaving my mother's house, 'Remember, Captain Forester, that Lady Wallincourt's prejudices regarding your Irish friends have something stronger than mere caprice to strengthen them. You must not ask her to forget as well as forgive, all at once.' Can you interpret this riddle for me? for although at the time it made little impression, it recurs to my mind now twenty times a day."

Here concluded Forester's letter. A single line in pencil was written at the foot, and signed "M. D.:" "I am a bad prophet, or the volunteer will turn out better than the aid-de-camp."

CHAPTER LII.

A DINNER AT CON HEFFERNAN'S.

WHEN the Union was carried, and the new order of affairs in Ireland assumed an appearance of permanence, a general feeling of discontent began to exhibit itself in every class in the capital. The patriots saw themselves neglected by the Government, without having reaped in popularity a recompense for their independence. The mercantile interest perceived, even already, the falling off in trade from the removal of a wealthy aristocracy; and the supporters of the minister, or such few as still lingered in Dublin, began to suspect how much higher terms they might have exacted for their adhesion, had they only anticipated the immensity of the sacrifice to which they contributed.

Save that comparatively small number, who had bargained for English peerages and English rank, and had thereby bartered their nationality, none were satisfied.

Even the moderate men—that intelligent fraction who believe that no changes are fraught with one-half the good or evil their advocates or opponents imagine—even they were disappointed on finding that the incorporation of the Irish Parliament with that of England was the chief element of the new measure, and no more intimate or solid Union contemplated. The shrewd

men of every party saw, not only how difficult would be the future government of the country, but that the critical moment was come which should decide into whose hands the chief influence would fall. Among these speculators on the future, Mr. Heffernan held a prominent place. No man knew better the secret machinery of office, none had seen more of that game, half fair, half foul, by which an administration is sustained. He knew, moreover, the character and capability of every public man in Ireland, had been privy to their waverings and hesitations, and even their bargains with the Crown; he knew where gratified ambition had rendered a new peer indifferent to a future temptation, and also, where abortive negotiations had sowed the seeds of a lingering disaffection.

To construct a new party from these scattered elements—a party which, possessing wealth and station, had not yet tasted any of the sweets of patronage, was the task he now proposed to himself. By this party, of whom he himself was to be the organ, he hoped to control the minister, and support him by turns. Of those already purchased by the Government, few would care to involve themselves once more in the fatigue of a public life. Many would gladly repose on the rewards of their victory—many would shrink from the obloquy their reappearance would inevitably excite. Mr. Heffernan had then to choose his friends either from that moderate section of politicians, whom scruples of conscience or inferiority of ability had left unbought, or the more energetic faction, suddenly called into existence by the success of the French Revolution, and of which O'Halloran was the leader. For many reasons his choice fell on the former. Not only because they possessed that standing and influence which, derived from property, would be most regarded in England, but that their direction and guidance would be an easier task; whereas the others, more numerous and more needy, could only be purchased by actual place of pension, while in O'Halloran, Heffernan would always have a dangerous rival, who, if he played subordinate for a while, it would only be at the price of absolute rule hereafter.

From the moment Lord Castlereagh withdrew from Ireland, Mr. Heffernan commenced his intrigue. At first, by a tour of visits through the country, in which he contrived to sound the opinions of a great number of persons, and subsequently, by correspondence, so artfully sustained, as to induce many to commit themselves to a direct line of action which, when discuss-

ing, they had never speculated on seeing realized.

With a subtlety of no common kind, and an indefatigable industry, Heffernan labored in the cause during the summer and autumn, and with such success, that there was scarcely a county in Ireland where he had not secured some leading adherent, while for many of the boroughs he had already entered into plans for the support of new candidates of his own opinions.

The views he put forward were simply these: Ireland can no longer be governed by an oligarchy, however powerful. It must be ruled either by the weight and influence of the country gentlemen, or left to the mercy of the demagogue. The gentry must be rewarded for their adhesion, and enabled to maintain their pre-eminence, by handing over to them the patronage, not in part or in fractions, but wholly and solely. Every civil appointment must be filled up by them—the church—the law—the revenue—the police, must all be theirs. “The great aristocracy,” said he, “have obtained the marquises and earldoms; bishoprics and governments have rewarded their services. It is now *our* turn, and if our prizes be less splendid and showy, they are not devoid of some sterling qualities.

“To make Ireland ungovernable without us, must be our aim and object—to embarrass and confound every administration—to oppose the ministers—pervert their good objects and exaggerate their bad. Pledged to no distinct line of acting, we can be patriotic when it suits us, and declaim on popular rights when nothing better offers. Acting in concert, and diffusing an influence in every county and town and corporation, what ministry can long resist us, or what government anxious for office would refuse to make terms with us? With station to influence society—wealth to buy the press—activity to watch and counteract our enemies, I see nothing which can arrest our progress. We must and will succeed.”

Such was the conclusion of a letter he wrote to one of his most trusted allies; a letter written to invite his presence in Dublin, where a meeting of the leading men of the new party was to be held, and their engagements for the future determined upon.

For this meeting Heffernan made the greatest exertions, not only that it might include a great portion of the wealth and influence of the land, but that a degree of *éclat* and splendor should attend it, the more likely to attract notice, from the secrecy maintained as to its object and intention. Many were invited on the consideration of the display their presence would

make in the capital; and not a few were tempted by the opportunity for exhibiting their equipages and their liveries at a season when the recognized leaders of fashion were absent.

It is no part of our object here to dwell on this well-known intrigue, one which at the time occupied no small share of public attention, and even excited the curiosity and the fears of the government. Enough when we say that Mr. Heffernan's disappointments were numerous and severe. Letters of apology, some couched in terms of ambiguous cordiality, others less equivocally cold, came pouring in for the last fortnight. The noble lord destined to fill the chair regretted deeply that domestic affairs of a most pressing nature would not permit of his presence. The baronet who should move the first resolution would be compelled to be absent from Ireland; the second was laid up with the gout. Scarcely a single person of influence had promised his attendance; the greater number had given vague and conditional replies, evidently to gain time and consult the feeling of their country neighbors.

These refusals and subterfuges were a sad damper to Mr. Heffernan's hopes. To any one less sanguine, they would have led to a total abandonment of the enterprise. He, however, was made of sterner stuff, and resolved, if the demonstration could effect no more, it could at least be used as a threat to the Government—a threat of not less power because its terrors were involved in mystery. With all these disappointments time sped on, the important day arrived, and the great room of the Rotunda, hired specially for the occasion, was crowded by a numerous assemblage, to whose proceedings no member of the public press was admitted. Notice was given that in due time a declaration, drawn up by a committee, would be published, but until then the most profound secrecy wrapped their objects and intentions.

The meeting, convened for one o'clock, separated at five; and, save the unusual concourse of carriages, and the spectacle of some liveries, new to the capital, there seemed nothing to excite the public attention. No loud-tongued orator was heard from without: nor did a single cheer mark the reception of any welcome sentiment; and as the members withdrew, the sarcastic allusions of the mob intimated that they were supposed to be a new sect of “Quakers.” Heffernan's carriage was the last to leave the door, and it was remarked, as he entered it, that he looked agitated and ill—signs which few had ever remarked in him be-

fore. He drove rapidly home, where a small and select party of friends had been invited by him to dinner.

He made a hasty toilet, and entered the drawing-room a few moments after the first knock at the street door announced the earliest guest. It was an old and intimate friend, Sir Giles St. George, a south-country baronet of old family, but small fortune, who for many years had speculated on Heffernan's interest in his behalf. He was a shrewd, coarse man, who, from eccentricity and age, had obtained a species of moral "writ of ease," absolving him from all observance of the usages in common among all well-bred people—a privilege he certainly did not seem disposed to let rest from disuse.

"Well, Con," said he, as he stood with his back to the fire, and his hands deeply thrust into his breeches-pockets—"well, Con, your convention has been a damnable failure. Where the devil did you get up such a rabble of briefless barristers, ungowned attorneys, dissenting ministers, and illegitimate sons? I'd swear, out of your seven hundred, there were not five-and-twenty possessed of a fifty-pound freehold—not five who could defy the sheriff in their own county."

Heffernan made no reply, but with arms crossed, and his head leaned forward, walked slowly up and down the room, while the other resumed,

"As for old Killowen, who filled the chair, that was enough to damn the whole thing. One of King James's lords, forsooth!—why, man, what country gentleman of any pretension could give precedence to a fellow like that, who neither reads, writes, nor speaks the king's English—and your great gun, Mr. Hickman O'Reilly—"

"False-hearted scoundrel!" muttered Heffernan, half aloud.

"Faith and he may be, but he's the cleverest of the pack. I liked his speech well. There was good common sense in his asking for some explicit plan of proceeding—what you meant to do, and how to do it. Eh, Con, that was to the point."

"To the point!" repeated Heffernan, scornfully; "yes, as the declaration of an informer, that he will betray his colleagues, is to the point!"

"And then his motion to admit the reporters," said St. George, as with a malignant pleasure he continued to suggest matter of annoyance.

"He's mistaken, however," said Heffernan, with a sarcastic bitterness that came from his heart. "The day for rewards is

gone by. He'll never get the baronetcy by supporting the Government in this way. It is the precarious, uncertain ally they look more after. There is consummate wisdom, Giles, in not saying one's last word. O'Reilly does not seem aware of that. Here come Godfrey and Hume," said he, as he looked out of the window. "Burton has sent an apology."

"And who is our sixth?"

"O'Reilly—and here's his carriage. See how the people stare admiringly at his green liveries; they scarcely guess that the owner is meditating a change of color. Well, Godfrey, in time for once. Why, Robert, you seem quite fagged by your day's exertion. Ah! Mr. O'Reilly, delighted to find you punctual. Let me present you to my old friend Sir Giles St. George. I believe, gentlemen, you need no introduction to each other. Burton has disappointed us—so we may order dinner at once."

As Mr. Heffernan took the head of the table, not a sign of his former chagrin remained to be seen. An air of easy conviviality had entirely replaced his previous look of irritation, and in his laughing eye and mellow voice there seemed the clearest evidence of a mind perfectly at ease, and a spirit well disposed to enjoy the pleasures of the board. Of his guests, Godfrey was a leading member of the Irish bar, a man of good private fortune and a large practice, who, out of whim rather than from any great principle, had placed himself in continual opposition to the Government, and felt grievously injured and affronted when the minister, affecting to overlook his enmity, offered him a silk gown. Hume was a commissioner of customs, and had been so for some thirty years; his only ambition in life being to retire on his full salary, having previously filled his department with his sons and grandsons. The gentle remonstrances of the secretary against his plan had made him one of the disaffected, but without courage to avow or influence to direct his animosity. Of Mr. O'Reilly the reader needs no further mention. Such was the party who now sat at a table most luxuriously supplied; for although Heffernan was very far from a frequent inviter, yet his dinners were admirable arranged, and the excellence of his wine was actually a mystery among the *bons vivants* of the capital. The conversation turned of course upon the great event of the day, but so artfully was the subject managed by Heffernan that the discussion took rather the shape of criticism on the several speakers, and their styles of delivery, than on the matter of the meeting itself.

"How eager the Castle folks will be to know all about it," said Godfrey. "Cooke is, I hear, in a sad taking to learn the meaning of the gathering."

"I fancy, sir," said St. George, "they are more indifferent than you suppose. A meeting held by individuals of a certain rank and property, and convened with a certain degree of ostentation, can scarcely ever be formidable to a government."

"You forget the Volunteers," said Heffernan.

"No; I remember their assembling well enough, and a very absurd business they made of it. The Bishop of Downe was the only man of nerve amongst them; and as for Lord Charlemont, the thought of an attainder was never out of his head till the whole association was disbanded."

"They were very formidable, indeed," said Heffernan, gravely. "I can assure you that the Government were far more afraid of their defenders than of the French."

"A government that is ungrateful enough to neglect its supporters," chimed in Hume, "men that have spent their best years in its service, can scarcely esteem itself very secure. In the department I belong to myself, for instance—"

"Yours is a very gross case," interrupted Heffernan, who from old experience knew what was coming, and wished to arrest it.

"Thirty-four years, come November next, have I toiled as a commissioner."

"Unpaid!" exclaimed St. George, with a well-simulated horror—"unpaid!"

"No, sir; not without my salary, of course. I never heard of any man holding an office in the revenue for the amusement it might afford him. Did you, Godfrey?"

"As for me," said the lawyer, "I spurn their patronage. I well know the price men pay for such favors."

"What object could it be to *you*," said Heffernan, "to be made attorney-general or placed on the bench, a man independent in every sense; so I said to Castlereagh, when he spoke to me on the subject: 'Never mind, Godfrey,' said I, 'he'll refuse your offers; you'll only offend him by solicitation;' and when he mentioned the 'rolls'—" here Heffernan paused, and filled his glass leisurely. An interruption contrived to stimulate Godfrey's curiosity, and which perfectly succeeded, as he asked, in a voice of tremulous eagerness—"Well, what did you say?"

"Just as I replied before—'he'll refuse you.'"

"Quite right, perfectly right—you have my unbounded gratitude for the answer,"

said Godfrey, swallowing two bumpers as rapidly as he could fill them.

"Very different treatment from what I met—an old and tried supporter of the party," said Hume, turning to O'Reilly, and opening upon him the whole narrative of his long-suffering neglect.

"It's quite clear, then," said St. George, "that we are agreed—the best thing for us would be a change of ministry."

"I don't think so at all," interposed Heffernan.

"Why, Con," interrupted the baronet, "they should have *you* at any price—however, these fellows have learned the trick—the others know nothing about it. You'd be in office before twenty-four hours."

"So I might to-morrow," said Heffernan. "There's scarcely a single post of high emolument and trust that I have not been offered and refused. The only things I ever stipulated for in all my connection with the Government were certain favors for my personal friends." Here he looked significantly toward O'Reilly, but the glance was intercepted by the commissioner, who cried out, "Well, could they say I had no claim? Could they deny thirty-four years of toil and slavery?"

"And in the case for which I was most interested," resumed Heffernan, not heeding the interruption, "the favor I sought would have been more justly bestowed from the rank and merits of the party, than as a recompense for any services of mine."

"I won't say that, Heffernan," said Hume, with a look of modesty, who with the most implicit good faith supposed he was the party alluded to; "I won't go that far; but I will and must say, that after four-and-thirty years' service as a commissioner—"

"A man must have laid by a devilish pretty thing for the rest of his life," said St. George, who felt all the bitterness of a narrow income augmented by the croaking complaints of the well-salaried official.

"Well, I hope better days are coming for all of us," said Heffernan, desirous of concluding the subject ere it should take an untoward turn.

"You have got a very magnificent seat in the West, sir," said St. George, addressing O'Reilly, who during the whole evening had done little more than assent or smile concurrence with the several speakers.

"The finest thing in Ireland," interrupted Heffernan.

"Nay, that is saying too much," said O'Reilly, with a look of half-real, half-affected bashfulness. "The abbey certainly stands well, and the timber is well-grown."

"Are you able to see Clew Bay from the small drawing-room still, for I remember remarking that the larches on the side of the glen would eventually intercept the prospect?"

"You know the abbey, then?" asked O'Reilly, forgetting to answer the question addressed to him.

"Oh, I know it well. My family is connected—distantly, I believe, with the Darcys, and in former days we were intimate. A very sweet place it was; I am speaking of thirty years ago, and of course it must have improved since that."

"My friend here has given it every possible opportunity," said Heffernan, with a courteous inclination of the head.

"I've no doubt of it," replied St. George, "but neither money nor bank securities will make trees grow sixty feet in a twelve-month. The improvements I allude to were made by Maurice Darcy's father; he sank forty thousand pounds in draining, planting, subsoiling, and what not. He left a rent-charge in his will to continue his plans, and Maurice and his son—what's the young fellow called—Lionel, isn't it? well, they are, or rather they were, bound to expend a very heavy sum annually on the property."

A theme less agreeable to O'Reilly's feelings could scarcely have been started, and though Heffernan saw as much, he did not dare to interrupt it suddenly, for fear of any unpalatable remark from St. George. Whether from feeling that the subject was a painful one, or that he liked to indulge his loquacity in detailing various particulars of the Darcys and their family circumstances, the old man went on without ceasing. Now, narrating some strange caprice of an ancestor in one century; now, some piece of good fortune that occurred to another. "You know the old prophecy in the family, I suppose, Mr. O'Reilly?" said he, "though to be sure you are not very likely to give it credence."

"I scarcely can say I remember what you allude to."

"By Jove, I thought every old woman in the West would have told it to you. How is this the doggrel runs—ay, here it is,—

"A new name in this house shall never begin
Till twenty-one Darcys have died in Gwynne.

Now, they say that, taking into account all of the family who have fallen in battle, been lost at sea, and so on, only eleven of the stock died at the abbey."

Although O'Reilly affected to smile at the old rhyme, his check became deadly pale, and his hand shook as he lifted the glass to

his lips. It was no vulgar sense of fear, no superstitious dread that moved his cold and calculating spirit, but an emotion of suppressed anger that the ancient splendor of the Darcys should be thus placed side by side with his own unhonored and unknown family.

"I don't think I ever knew one of these good legends have even so much of truth—though the credit is now at an end," said Heffernan, gayly.

"I'll engage old Darcy's butler wouldn't agree with you," replied St. George. "Ay, and Maurice himself had a great dash of old Irish superstition in him, for a clever, sensible fellow as he was."

"It only remains for my friend here, then, to fit up a room for the Darcys and invite them to die there at their several conveniences," said Con, laughing. "I see no other mode of fulfilling the destiny."

"There never was a man played his game worse," resumed St. George, who with a pertinacious persistence continued the topic. "He came of age with a large unincumbered estate, great family influence, and a very fair share of abilities. It was the fashion to say he had more, but I never thought so, and now, look at him!"

"He had very heavy losses at play," said Heffernan, "certainly."

"What if he had? They never could have materially affected a fortune like his. No, no. I believe 'Honest Tom' finished him—raising money to pay off old debts, and then never clearing away the liabilities. What a stale trick! and how invariably it succeeds!"

"You do not seem, sir, to take into account an habitually expensive mode of living," insinuated O'Reilly, quietly.

"An item, of course—but only an item in the sum total," replied St. George. "No man can eat and drink above ten thousand a year, and Darcy had considerably more. No; he might have lived as he pleased, had he escaped the acquaintance of honest Tom Gleeson. By-the-by, Con, is there any truth in the story they tell about this fellow, and that he really was more actuated by a feeling of revenge toward Darcy than a desire for money?"

"I never heard the story. Did you, Mr. O'Reilly?" asked Heffernan.

"Never," said O'Reilly, affecting an air of unconcern, very ill consorting with his pale cheek and anxious eye.

"The tale is simply this. That as Gleeson waxed wealthy, and began to assume a position in life, he one day called on the knight to request him to put his name up for ballot at 'Daly's.' Darcy was thunder-

struck, for it was in those days when the club was respectable—but still the knight had tact enough to dissemble his astonishment, and would, doubtless, have got through the difficulty, had it not been for Bagenal Daly, who was present, and called out, ‘Wait till Tuesday, Maurice, for I mean to propose M’Cleery, the breeches-maker, and then the thing won’t seem so remarkable!’ Gleeson smiled, and slipped away, with an oath to his own heart, to be revenged on both of them. If there be any truth in the story, he did ruin Daly, by advising some money-lender to buy up all his liabilities.”

“I must take the liberty to correct you, sir,” said O’Reilly, actually trembling with anger. “If your agreeable anecdote has no better foundation than the concluding hypothesis, its veracity is inferior to its ingenuity. The gentleman you are pleased to call a money-lender, is my father; the conduct you allude to was simply the advance of a large sum on mortgage.”

“Foreclosed, like Darcy’s, perhaps,” said St. George, his irascible face becoming blood-red with passion.

“Come, come, Giles, you really can know nothing of the subject you are talking of—besides, to Mr. O’Reilly the matter is a personal one.”

“So it is,” muttered St. George; “and if report speaks truly, as unpleasant as personal.”

This insulting remark was not heard by O’Reilly, who was deeply engaged in explaining to the lawyer beside him the minute legal details of the circumstance.

“Sirewd a fellow as Gleeson was,” said St. George, interrupting O’Reilly, by addressing the lawyer, “they say he has left some flaw open in the matter, and that Darcy may recover a very large portion of the lost estate.”

“Yes; if for instance this bond should be destroyed. He might move in Equity—”

“He’d move heaven and earth, sir, if it’s Bagenal Daly you mean,” said St. George, who had stimulated his excitement by drinking freely. “Some will tell you that he is a steadfast, firm friend; but I’ll vouch for it, a more determined enemy never drew breath.”

“Very happily for the world we live in, sir,” said O’Reilly, “there are agencies more powerful than the revengeful and violent natures of such men as Mr. Daly.”

“He’s every jot as quick-sighted as he’s determined, and when he wagered a hog’s-head of claret that Darcy would one day sit again at the head of his table in Gwynne Abbey—”

“Did he make such a bet?” asked O’Reilly with a faint laugh.

“Yes; he walked down the club-room, and offered it to any one present, and none seemed to fancy it but young Kelly, of Kileclare, who, being a new member just come in, perhaps thought there might be some *éclat* in booking a bet with Bagenal Daly.”

“Would you like to back his opinion, sir?” said O’Reilly, with a simulated softness of voice; “for although I rarely wager, I should have no objection to convenience you here, leaving the amount entirely at your option.”

“Which means,” said St. George, as his eyes sparkled with wine and passion, “that the weight of *your* purse is to tilt the beam against that of *my* opinion. Now, I beg leave to tell you—”

“Let me interrupt you, Giles; I never knew my burgundy disagree with any man before, but I’d smash every bottle of it tomorrow if I thought it could make so pleasant a fellow so wrong-headed and unreasonable. What say you if we qualify it with some cognac and water?”

“Maurice Darcy is my relative,” said St. George, pushing his glass rudely from him “and I have yet to learn the unreasonableness of wishing well to a member of one’s own family. His father and mine were like brothers! Ay, by Jove! I wonder what either of them would think of the changes time has wrought in their sons’ fortunes:” his voice dropped into a low, muttering sound, while he mumbled on, “one, a beggar and an exile, the other”—here his eye twinkled with a malicious intelligence as he glanced around the board—“the other the guest of Con Hefferman.” He arose as he spoke, and fortunately the noise thus created prevented his words being overheard. “You’re right, Con,” said he, “that burgundy has been too much for me. The wine is unimpeachable, notwithstanding.”

The others rose also; although pressed in all the customary hospitality of the period to have “one bottle more,” they were resolute in taking leave, doubtless not sorry to escape the risk of any unpleasant termination to the evening’s entertainment.

The lawyer and the commissioner agreed to see St. George home, for although long seasoned to excesses, age had begun to tell upon him, and his limbs were scarcely more under control than his tongue. O’Reilly had dropped his handkerchief, he was not sure whether in the drawing or the dinner room, and this delayed him a few moments behind the rest, and although he declared at each moment the loss of 10

consequence, and repeated his "good-night," Heffernan held his hand and would not suffer him to leave.

"Try under Mr. O'Reilly's chair, Thomas. — Singular specimen of a by-gone day, the worthy baronet!" said he, with a shrug of his shoulders. "Would you believe it, he and Darcy have not been on speaking terms for thirty years, and yet how irritable he showed himself in his behalf!"

"He seems to know something of the family affairs, however," said O'Reilly, cautiously.

"Not more than club gossip: all that about Daly and his wager is a week old."

"I hope my father may never hear it," said O'Reilly, compassionately: "he has all the irritability of age, and these reports invariably urge him on to harsh measures, which, by the least concession, he would never have pursued. The Dareys, indeed, have to thank themselves for any severity they have experienced at our hands. Teasing litigation and injurious reports of us have met all our efforts at conciliation."

"A compromise would have been much better, and more reputable for all parties," said Heffernan, as he turned to stir the fire, and thus purposely averted his face while making the remark.

"So it would," said O'Reilly, hurriedly; then stopping abruptly short, he stammered out, "I don't exactly know what you mean by the word, but if it implies a more amicable settlement of all disputed points between us, I perfectly agree with you."

Heffernan never spoke: a look of cool self-possession and significance was all his reply. It seemed to say, "Don't hope to cheat me; however, you may rely on my discretion."

"I declare my handkerchief is in my pocket all this while," said O'Reilly, trying to conceal his rising confusion with a laugh. "Good-night, once more—you're thinking of going over to England to-morrow evening?"

"Yes, if the weather permits, I'll sail at seven. Can I be of any service to you?"

"Perhaps so: I may trouble you with a commission. Good-night."

"So, Mr. Hickman, you begin to feel the hook! Now let us see if we cannot play the fish, without letting him know the weakness of the tackle!" said Heffernan, as he looked after him, and then slowly retraced his steps to the now deserted drawing-room.

"How frequently will chance play the game more skillfully for us than all our cleverness," said he, while he paced the room alone. "That old bear, St. George,

who might have ruined everything, has done me good service. O'Reilly's suspicions are awakened—his fears are aroused: could I only find a clue to his terror I could hold him as fast by his fears as by this same baronetcy. 'This baronetcy,' added he, with a sneering laugh, "that I am to negotiate for, and—be refused!"

With this sentiment of honest intentions on his lips, Mr. Heffernan retired to rest, and, if this true history is to be credited, to sleep soundly till morning.

CHAPTER LIII.

PAUL DEMPSEY'S WALK.

WITH the most eager desire to accomplish his mission, Paul Dempsey did not succeed in reaching the Corvy until late on the day after Miss Daly's visit. He set out originally by paths so secret and circuitous that he lost his way, and was obliged to pass his night among the hills, where, warned by the deep thundering of the sea that the cliffs were near, he was fain to await daybreak ere he ventured further. The trackless waste over which his way led was no bad emblem of poor Paul's mind, as, cowering beneath a sand-hill, he shivered through the long hours of night. Swayed by various impulses, he could determine on no definite line of action, and wavered, and doubted, and hesitated, till his very brain was addled by its operations.

At one moment he was disposed, like good Lancelot Gobbo, to "run for it," and, leaving Darcy and all belonging to him to their several fates, to provide for his own safety; when suddenly a dim vision of meeting Maria Daly in this world, or the next, and being called to account for his delinquency, routed such determinations. Then he revelled in the glorious opportunity for gossip afforded by the whole adventure. How he should astonish Cole-raine and its neighborhood by his revelations of the knight and his family. Gossip in all its moods and tenses, from the vague indicative of mere innuendo, to the full subjunctive of open defamation! Not indeed that Mr. Dempsey loved slander for itself; on the contrary, his temperament was far more akin to kindness than its opposite; but the passion for retailing one's neighbor's foibles or misfortunes is an impulse that admits no guidance; and, as the gambler would ruin his best friend at play, so would the professed gossip calumniate the very nearest and dearest to him on earth.

There are in the social, as in the mercantile world, characters who never deal in the honest article of commerce, but have a store of damaged, injured, or smuggled goods, to be hawked about surreptitiously, and always to be sold in the "strictest secrecy." Mr. Dempsey was a peddler in this wise, and, if truth must be told, he did not dislike his trade.

And yet, at moments, thoughts of another and more tender kind were wafted across Paul's mind, not resting indeed long enough to make any deep impression, but still leaving behind them, as pleasant thoughts always will, little twilights of happiness. Paul had been touched—a mere graze—skin deep—but still touched, by Helen Darcy's beauty and fascinations. She had accompanied him more than once on the piano while he sang, and whether the long-fringed eyelashes and the dimpled cheek had done the mischief, or that the thoughtful tact with which she displayed Paul's good notes and glossed over his false ones had won his gratitude, certain is it, he had already felt a very sensible regard for the young lady, and more than once caught himself, when thinking about her, speculating on the speedy demise of Bob Dempsey, of Dempsey's Grove, and all the consequences that might ensue therefrom.

If the enjoyment Mr. Dempsey's various peculiarities afforded Helen suggested on her part the semblance of pleasure in his society, Paul took these indications all in his own favor, and even catechised himself how far he might be deemed culpable in winning the affections of a charming young lady, so long as his precarious condition forbid all thought of matrimony. Now, however, that he knew who the family really were, such doubts were much allayed, for, as he wisely remarked to himself, "Though they are ruined, there's always nice picking in the wreck of an Indiaman!" Such were the thoughts by which his way was beguiled, when late in the afternoon he reached the Corvy.

Lady Eleanor and her daughter were out walking when Mr. Dempsey arrived, and, having cautiously reconnoitered the premises, ventured to approach the door. All was quiet and tranquil about the cottage; so, reassured by this, he peered through the window into the large hall, where a cheerful fire now blazed and shed a mellow glow over the strange decorations of the chamber. Mr. Dempsey had often desired an opportunity of examining these curiosities at his leisure. Not, indeed, prompted thereto by any antiquarian taste, but, from a casual glance at the inscriptions, he cal-

culated on the amount of private history of the Dalys he should obtain. Stray and independent facts, it is true, but to be arranged by the hand of a competent and clever commentator.

With cautious hand he turned the handle of the door and entered.

There he stood, in the very midst of the coveted objects, and never did humble book-worm gaze on the rich titles of an ample library with more enthusiastic pleasure. He drew a long breath to relieve his overburdened heart, and glugged his eyes in ecstacy on every side. Enthusiasm takes its tone from individuality, and doubtless Mr. Dempsey felt at that moment something as Belzoni might, when, unexpectedly admitted within some tomb of the Pyramids, he found himself about to unravel some secret history of the Pharaohs.

"Now for it," said he, half aloud; "let us do the thing in order; and first of all, what have we here?" He stooped and read an inscription attached to a velvet coat embroidered with silver:

"Coat worn by B. D. in his duel with Colonel Matthews—62—the puncture under the sword-arm being a fierce outside the guard; a very rare point, and which cost the giver seriously."

"He killed Matthews, of course," added Dempsey; "the passage can mean nothing else, so let us be accurate as to fact and date." So saying, he proceeded to note down the circumstance in a little memorandum-book. "So!" added he, as he read his note over; "now for the next. What can this misshapen lump of metal mean?"

"A piece of brute gold, presented with twelve female slaves by the chiefs of Doolawocheeeka on B. D.'s assuming the sovereignty of the island."

"Brute gold," said Mr. Dempsey; "devilish little of the real thing about it, I'll be sworn! I suppose the ladies were about equally refined and valuable."

"Glove dropped by the Infanta Donna Isidora within the arena at Madrid, a few moments after Ruy Peres da Castres was gored to death."

A prolonged low whistle from Mr. Dempsey was the only comment he made on this inscription, while he stooped to examine the fragment of a bull's horn, from which a rag of scarlet cloth was hanging. The inscription ran, "Portion of horn broken as the bull fell against the barrier of the circus. The cloth was part of Da Castres' vest."

A massive antique helmet, of immense size and weight, lay on the floor beside

this. It was labeled, "Casque of Rudolph v. Hapsbourg, presented to B. D. after the tilt at Regensburg by Edric Conrad Wilhelm Kur Furst von Bayern. A. D. 1750."

A splendid goblet of silver gilt, beautifully chased and ornamented, was inscribed on the metal as being the gift of the Doge of Venice to his friend Bagenal Daly, and underneath was written on a card, "This cup was drained to the bottom at a draught by B. D. after a long and deep carouse, the liquor strong 'Vino di Cypro.' The doge tried it and failed; the mark within shows how far he drank."

"By Jove! what a pull," exclaimed Dempsey, who, as he peered into the capacious vessel, looked as if he would not object to try his own prowess at the feat.

Wonderment at this last achievement seemed completely to have taken possession of Mr. Dempsey, for while his eyes ranged over weapons of every strange form and shape—armor, idols, stuffed beasts and birds, they invariably came back to the huge goblet with an admiring wonder, that showed that here at least there was an exploit whose merits he could thoroughly appreciate.

"A half-gallon can is nothing to it!" muttered he, as he replaced it on its bracket.

The reflection was scarcely uttered, when the quick tramp of a horse and the sound of wheels without startled him. He hastened to the window just in time to perceive a jaunting-car drive up to the wicket, from which three men descended. Two were common-looking fellows in dark upper coats and glazed hats; the third, better dressed, and with a half-gentlemanlike air, seemed the superior. He threw off a loose traveling coat, and discovered, to Mr. Dempsey's horror, the features of his late patient at Larne, the sheriff's officer from Dublin. Yes, there was no doubt about it. That smart conceited look, the sharp and turned-up nose, the scrubby whisker, proclaimed him as the terrible Anthony Nickie, of Jervas street, a name which Mr. Dempsey had read on his portmanteau, before guessing how its owner was concerned in his own interests.

What a multitude of terrors jostled each other in his mind as the men approached the door! and what resolves did he form and abandon in the same moment! To escape by the rear of the house while the enemy was assailing the front—to barricade the premises, and stand a siege—to arm himself—and there was a choice of weapons, and give battle, were all rapid impulses, no sooner conceived than given up. A loud

summons of the door-bell announced his presence, and, ere the sounds died away, Tate's creaking footstep and winter cough resounded along the corridor. Mr. Dempsey threw a last despairing glance around, and the thought flashed across him, how happily would he exchange his existence with any of the grim images and uncouth shapes that grinned and glared on every side: ay, even with that saw-mouthed crocodile that surmounted the chimney! Quick as his eye traversed the chamber, he fancied that the savage animals were actually enjoying his misery, and Sandy's counterpart appeared to show a diabolical glee at his wretched predicament. It was at this instant he caught sight of the loose folds of the Indian blanket which enveloped Bagenal Daly's image. The danger was too pressing for hesitation; he stepped into the canoe, and cowering down under the warlike figure, awaited his destiny. Scarcely had the drapery closed around him when Tate admitted the new arrival.

"The Corvy?" said Mr. Nickie to the old butler, who with decorous ceremony bowed low before him. "The Corvy, ain't it?"

"Yes, sir," replied Tate.

"All right, Mac," resumed Nickie, turning to the elder of his two followers, who had closely dogged him to the door. "Bring that carpet-bag and the small box off the car, and tell the fellow he'll have time to feed his horse at that cabin on the road-side."

He added something in a whisper, too low for Tate to hear, and then taking the carpet-bag, he flung it carelessly in a corner, while he walked forward and deposited the box on the table before the fire.

"His honor is coming to dine, maybe?" asked Tate, respectfully; for old habit of his master's hospitality had made the question almost a matter of course, while age had so dimmed his eyesight, that even Anthony Nickie, passed with him for a gentleman.

"Coming to dine," repeated Nickie, with a coarse laugh; "that's a bargain there's always two words to, my old boy. I suppose you've heard it is manners to wait to be asked, eh? without," added he, after a second's pause—"without I'm to take this as an invitation."

"I believe your honor might, then," said Tate, with a smile. "'Tis many a one I kept again the family came home for dinner, and sorrow word of it they knew till they seen them dressed in the drawing-room! And the dinner table!" said Tate, with a sigh, half in regret over the past,

half preparing himself with a sufficiency of breath for a lengthened oration—"the dinner-table! it's wishing it I am still! after laying for ten, or maybe twelve, his honor would come in and say, 'Tate, we'll be rather crowded here, for here's Sir Gore Molony and his family. You'll have to make room for five more.' Then Miss Helen would come springing in with, 'Tate, I forgot to say, Colonel Martin and his officers are to be here at dinner.' After that it would be my lady herself, in her own quiet way, Mr. Wilkinson—she nearly always called me that—"couldn't you contrive a little space here for Lady Burke and Miss Mac Donnell?" But the captain beat all, for he'd come in after the soup was removed, with five or six gentlemen from the hunt, splashed and wet up to their necks: over he'd go to the side-table, where I'd have my knives and forks, all beautiful, and may I never, but he'd fling some here, others there, till he'd clear a space away, and then he'd cry, 'Tate, bring back the soup, and set some sherry here.' Maybe that wasn't the table for noise, drinking wine with every one at the big table, and telling such wonderful stories, that the servants didn't know what they were doing, listening to them. And the master!—the heavens be about him!—sending me over to get the names of the gentlemen, that he might ask them to take wine with him. Oh, dear—oh, dear, I'm sure I used to think my heart was broke with it; but sure it's nigher breaking now that it's all past and over."

"You seem to have had very jolly times of it in those days," said Nickie.

"Faix, your honor might say so if you saw forty-eight sitting down to dinner every day in the parlor for seven weeks running; and Master Lionel—the captain that is—at the head of another table in the library, with twelve or fourteen more—nice youths they wor!"

While Tate continued his retrospections, Mr. Nickie had unlocked his box, and cursorily throwing a glance over some papers, he muttered to himself a few words, and then added aloud,

"Now for business."

CHAPTER LIV.

MR. ANTHONY NICKIE, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW.

WE have said that Mr. Dempsey had barely time to conceal himself when the door was opened—so narrow indeed was his

escape, that had the new arrival been a second sooner, discovery would have been inevitable; as it was, the pictorial Daly and Sandy rocked violently to and fro, making their natural ferocity and grimness something even more terrible than usual. Mr. Nickie remarked nothing of this. His first care was to divest himself of certain traveling incumbrances, like one who purposes to make a visit of some duration, and then, casting a searching look around the premises, he proceeded,

"Now for Mr. Darcy—"

"If ye'r maning the Knight of Gwynne, sir,—his honor—"

"Well, is his honor at home?" said the other, interrupting with a saucy laugh.

"No, sir," said Tate, almost overpowered at the irreverence of his questioner.

"When do you expect him then—in an hour or two hours?"

"He's in England," said Tate, drawing a long breath.

"In England! What do you mean, old fellow? he has surely not left this lately?"

"Yes, sir, 'twas the king sent for him, I heard the mistress say."

A burst of downright laughter from the stranger stopped poor Tate's explanation.

"Why, it's *you* his majesty ought to have invited," cried Mr. Nickie, wiping his eyes, "*you yourself*, man; devilish fit company for each other you'd be."

Poor Tate had not the slightest idea of the grounds on which the stranger suggested his companionship for royalty, but he was not the less insulted at the disparagement of his master thus implied.

"'Tis little I know about kings or queens," growled out the old man, "but they must be made of better clay than ever I seen yet, or they're not too good company for the Knight of Gwynne."

After a stare for some seconds, half surprise, half insolence, Nickie said, "You can tell me, perhaps, if this cottage is called the 'Corvy?'"

"Ay, that's the name of it."

"The property of one Bagenal Daly, Esquire, isn't it?"

Tate nodded an assent.

"Maybe he is in England too," continued Nickie. "Perhaps it was the queen sent for him—he's a handsome man, I suppose?"

"Faix, you can judge for yourself," said Tate, "for there he is, looking at you this minute."

Nickie turned about hastily, while a terrible fear shot through him that his remarks might have been heard by the individual himself; for, though a stranger to

Daly personally, he was not so to his reputation for hare-brained daring and rashness, nor was it till he had stared at the wooden representative for some seconds that he could dispel his dread of the original.

"Is that like him?" asked he, affecting a sneer.

"As like as two pavs," said Tate, "barring about the eyes; Mr. Daly's is brighter and more wild-looking. The blessed Joseph be near us!" exclaimed the old man, crossing himself devoutly, "one would think the crayture knew what we were saying. Sorra lie in't, there's neither luck nor grace in talking about you!"

This last sentiment, uttered in a faint voice, was called forth by an involuntary shuddering of poor Mr. Dempsey, who, feeling that the whole scrutiny of the party was directed toward his hiding-place, trembled so violently, that the plumes nodded, and the bone necklace jingled with the motion.

While Mr. Nickie attributed these signs to the wind, he at the same time conceived a very low estimate of poor Tate's understanding, an impression not altogether unwarranted by the sidelong and stealthy looks which he threw at the canoe and its occupants.

"You seem rather afraid of Mr. Daly," said he, with a sneering laugh.

"And so would you be, too, if he was as near you as that chap is," replied Tate, sternly. "I've known braver-looking men than either of us not like to stand before him. I mind the day—"

Tate's reminiscences were brought to a sudden stop by perceiving his mistress and Miss Darcy approaching the cottage; and hastening forward, he threw open the door, while by way of introduction he said,

"A gentleman for the master, my lady."

Lady Eleanor flushed up, and as suddenly grew pale. She guessed at once the man and his errand.

"The Knight of Gwynne is from home, sir," said she, in a voice her efforts could not render firm.

"I understand as much, madam," said Nickie, who was struggling to recover the easy self-possession of his manner with the butler, but whose awkwardness increased at every instant. "I believe you expect him in a day or two?"

This was said to elicit if there might be some variance in the statement of Lady Eleanor and her servant.

"You are misinformed, sir. He is not in the kingdom, nor do I anticipate his speedy return."

"So I told him, my lady," broke in the

old butler. "I said the king wanted him—"

"You may leave the room, Tate," said Lady Eleanor, who perceived with annoyance the sneering expression old Tate's simplicity had called up in the stranger's face. "Now, sir," said she, turning toward him, "may I ask if your business with the Knight of Gwynne is of that nature that cannot be transacted in his absence, or through his law agent?"

"Scarcely, madam," said Nickie, with a sententious gravity, who, in the vantage ground his power gave him, seemed rather desirous of prolonging the interview. "Mr. Darcy's part can scarcely be performed by deputy, even if he found any one friendly enough to undertake it."

Lady Eleanor never spoke, but her hand grasped her daughter's more closely, and they both stood pale and trembling with agitation. Helen was the first to rally from this access of terror, and with an assured voice she said,

"You have heard, sir, that the Knight of Gwynne is absent; and as you say your business is with him alone, is there any further reason for your presence here?"

Mr. Nickie seemed for a moment taken aback by this unexpected speech, and for a few seconds made no answer; his nature and his calling, however, soon supplied presence of mind, and with an air of almost insolent familiarity, he answered,

"Perhaps there may be, young lady." He turned, and opening the door, gave a sharp whistle, which was immediately responded to by a cry of "Here we are, sir," and the two followers already mentioned entered the cottage.

"You may have heard of such a thing as an execution, ma'am," said Nickie, addressing Lady Eleanor, in a voice of mock civility. "The attachment of property for debt. This is part of my business at the present moment."

"Do you mean here, sir—in this cottage?" asked Lady Eleanor, in an accent scarcely audible from terror.

"Yes, ma'am, just so. The law allows fourteen days for redemption, with payment of costs, until which time these men here will remain on the premises; and although these gimcracks will scarcely pay my client's costs, we must only make the best of it."

"But this property is not ours, sir. This cottage belongs to a friend."

"I am aware of that, ma'am. And that friend is about to answer for his own sins on the present occasion, and not yours. These chatiels are attached as the property

of Bagenal Daly, Esquire, at the suit of Peter Hickman, formerly of Loughrea, surgeon and apothecary."

"Is Mr. Daly aware—does he know of these proceedings?" gasped Lady Eleanor, faintly.

"In the multiplicity of similar affairs, ma'am, it is quite possible he may have let this one escape his memory; for, if I don't mistake, he has two actions pending in the king's bench—an answer in equity—three cases of common assault—and a contempt of court—all upon his hands for this present session, not to speak of what this may portend."

Here he took a newspaper from his pocket, and having doubled down a paragraph, handed it to Lady Eleanor.

Overwhelmed by grief and astonishment, she made no motion to take the paper, and Mr. Nickie, turning to Helen, read aloud:

"There is a rumor prevalent in the capital this morning, to which we cannot, in the present uncertainty as to fact, make any more than a guarded allusion. It is indeed one of those strange reports which we can neither credit nor reject—the only less probable thing than its truth, being, that any one could deliberately fabricate so foul a calumny. The story in its details we forbear to repeat; the important point, however, is to connect the name of a well-known and eccentric late M.P. for an Irish borough with the malicious burning of Newgate, and the subsequent escape of the robber Freney.

"The reasons alleged for this most extraordinary act are so marvelous, absurd, and contradictory, that we will not trifle with our readers' patience by recounting them. The most generally believed one, however, is, that the senator and the highwayman had maintained, for years past, an intercourse of a very confidential nature, the threat to reveal which, on his trial, Freney used as compulsory means of procuring his escape."

"Carrick goes further," added Mr. Nickie, as he restored the paper to his pocket, "and gives the name of Bagenal Daly, Esq., in full; stating, besides, that he sailed for Halifax on Sunday last."

Lady Eleanor and Helen exchanged looks of intelligent meaning, as he finished the paragraph. To them Daly's hurried departure had a most significant importance.

"This, ma'am, among other reasons," resumed Nickie, "was another hint to my client to press his claim; for Mr. Daly's departure once known, there would soon be a scramble for the little remnant of his property. With your leave, I'll now put

the keepers in possession. Perhaps you'll not be offended," added he, in a lower tone, "if I remark that it's usual to offer the men some refreshment. Come here, M'Dermot," said he, aloud—"a very respectable man, and married, too—the ladies will make you comfortable, Mick, and I'm sure you'll be civil and obliging."

A grunt and a gesture with both hands was the answer.

"Falls, we'll station you in the kitchen; mind you behave yourself."

"I'll just take a slight inventory of the principal things—a mere matter of form, ma'am—I know you'll not remove one of them," said Mr. Nickie, who, like most coarsely minded people, was never more offensive than when seeking to be complimentary. He did not notice, however, the indignant look with which his speech was received, but proceeded regularly in his office.

There is something insupportably offensive and revolting in the business-like way of those who execute the severities of the law. Like the undertaker, they can sharpen the pangs of misfortune by vulgarizing its sorrows. Lady Eleanor gazed, in but half-consciousness, at the scene: the self-satisfied assurance of the chief, the ruffian contentedness of his followers, grating on every prejudice of her mind. Not so Helen: more quick to reason on impressions, she took in, at a glance, their sad condition, and saw that in a few days, at furthest, they should be houseless as well as friendless in the world—no one near to counsel or to succor them! Such were her thoughts as almost mechanically her eyes followed the sheriff's officer through the chamber.

"Not that, sir," cried she, hastily, as he stopped in front of a miniature of her father, and was noting it down in his list, among the objects of the apartment—"not that, sir."

"And why not, miss?" said Nickie, with a leer of impudent familiarity.

"It is a portrait of the Knight of Gwynne, sir, and *our* property."

"Sorry for it, miss, but the law makes no distinction with regard to property on the premises. You can always recover by a replevin."

"Come, Helen, let us leave this," said Lady Eleanor, faintly; "come away, child."

"You said, sir," said Helen, turning hastily about—"you said, sir, that these proceedings were taken at the suit of Doctor Hickman. Was it his desire that we should be treated thus?"

"Upon my word, young lady, he gave no special directions on the subject, nor, if he had, would it signify much. The law, once set in motion, must take its course; I suppose you know that."

Helen did not hear his speech out, for, yielding to her mother, she quitted the apartment.

Mr. Nickie stood for a few moments gazing at the door by which they had made their exit, and then, turning toward M'Dermot, with a knowing wink he said, "We'll be better friends before we part, I'll engage, little as she likes me now."

"Faix, I never seen yer equal at getting round them," answered the sub., in a voice of fawning flattery, the very opposite of his former gruff tone.

"That's the way I always begin, when they take a sauey way with them," resumed Nickie, who felt evidently pleased at the other's admiration. "And when they're brought down a bit, to a sense of their situation, I can just be as kind as I was cool."

"Never fear ye!" said M'Dermot, with a sententious shake of the head. "Devil a taste of her would lave the room, if it wasn't for the mother."

"I saw that plain enough," said Nickie, as he threw a self-approving look at himself in a tall mirror opposite.

"She's a fine young girl, there's no denying it," said M'Dermot, who anticipated, as the result of his chief's attention, a more liberal scale of treatment for himself. "But I don't know how ye'll ever get round her, though to be sure if *you* can't, who can?"

"This inventory will keep me till night," said Nickie, changing the theme quite suddenly, "and I'll miss Dempsey, I'm afraid."

"I hope not; sure you have his track—haven't you?"

"Yes, and I have four fellows after him, along the shore here, but they say he's cunning as a fox. Well, I'll not give him up in a hurry, that's all. Is that rain I hear against the glass, Mick?"

"Ay, and dreadful rain too!" said the other, peeping through the window, which now rattled and shook with a sudden squall of wind. "You'll not be able to leave this so late."

"So I'm thinking, Mick," said Nickie, laying down his writing materials, and turning his back to the fire; "I believe I must stay where I am."

"'Tis yourself is the boy!" cried Mick, with a look of admiration at his master.

"You're wrong, Mick," said he, with a scarce repressed smile, "all wrong; I wasn't thinking of her."

"Maybe not," said M'Dermot, shaking his head doubtfully; "maybe she's not thinking of you this minute! But afther all, I don't know how ye'll do it. Any one would say the vardie was again you."

"So it is, man, but can't we move for a new trial?" So saying, he turned suddenly about, and pulled the bell.

M'Dermot said nothing, but stood staring at his chief, with a well-feigned expression of wonderment, as though to say, "What is he going to do next?"

The summons was speedily answered by old Tate, who stood in respectful attention within the door. Not the slightest suspicion had crossed the butler's mind of Mr. Nickie's calling, or of his object with the knight, or his manner would certainly have displayed a very different politeness. "Didn't you ring, sir?" said he, with a bow to Nickie, who now seemed vacillating, and uncertain how to proceed.

"Yes—I did—ring—the—bell," replied he, hesitating between each word of the sentence. "I was about to say that, as the night was so severe—a perfect hurricane it seems—I should remain here. Eh, did you speak?"

"No, sir," replied Tate, respectfully.

"You can inform your mistress then, and say, with Mr. Nickie's respectful compliments—mind that—that if they have no objection, he would be happy to join them at supper."

Tate stood as if transfixed, not a sign of anger, not even of surprise in his features. The shock had actually stupefied him.

"Do ye hear what the gentleman's saying to you?" asked Mick, in a stern voice.

"Sir?" said Tate, endeavoring to recover his routed faculties—"sir!"

"Tell the old fool what I said," muttered Nickie, with angry impatience; and then, as if remembering that his message might, possibly, be not over courteously worded by Mr. M'Dermot, he approached Tate, and said, "Give your mistress Mr. Nickie's compliments, and say, that not being able to return to Coleraine, he hopes he may be permitted to pass the evening with her and Miss Darcy." This message, uttered with great rapidity, as if the speaker dare not trust himself with more deliberation, was accompanied by a motion of the hand, which half pushed the old butler from the room.

Neither Mr. Nickie nor his subordinate exchanged a word during Tate's absence. The former, indeed, seemed far less confident of his success than at first, and M'Dermot waited the issue, for his cue, what part to take in the transaction.

If Tate's countenance, when he left the room, exhibited nothing but confusion and bewilderment, when he re-entered it his looks were composed and steadfast.

"Well?" said Nickie, as the old butler stood for a second without speaking—"well?"

"Her ladyship says that you and the other men, sir, may receive any accommodation the house affords." He paused for a moment or two, and then added, "Her ladyship declines Mr. Nickie's society."

"Did she give you that message herself?" asked Nickie, hastily; "are those her own words?"

"Them's her words," said Tate, dryly.

"I never heard the likes—"

"Stop, Mick, hold your tongue," said Nickie to his over-zealous follower, while he muttered to himself, "My name isn't Anthony Nickie, or I'll make her repent that speech! Ay, faith," said he, aloud, as turning to the portrait of the knight he appeared to address it, "you shall come to the hammer as the original did before you." If Tate had understood the purport of this sarcasm, it is more than probable the discussion would have taken another form; as it was, he listened to Mr. Nickie's orders about the supper with due decorum, and retired to make the requisite preparations. "I will make a night of it, by——" exclaimed Nickie, as with clenched fist he struck the table before him. "I hope you know how to sing, Mick?"

"I can do a little that way, sir," grinned the ruffian, "when the company is pressin'. If it wasn't too loud—"

"Too loud! you may drown the storm out there, if you're able. But wait till we have the supper and the liquor before us, as they might cut off the supplies." And with this prudent counsel, they suffered Tate to proceed in his arrangements, without uttering another word.

CHAPTER LV.

A CONVIVIAL EVENING.

WHILE Tate busied himself in laying the table, Mr. Nickie, with bent brows and folded arms, passed up and down the apartments, still ruminating on the affront so openly passed upon him, and cogitating how best to avenge it. As passing and re-passing he cast his eyes on the preparations, he halted suddenly, and said, "Lay another cover here." Tate stood, uncertain whether he had heard aright the words, when Nickie

repeated, "Don't you hear me? I said, lay another cover. The gentleman will sup here."

"Oh! indeed," exclaimed Tate, as, opening his eyes to the fullest extent, he appeared to admit a new light upon his brain; "I beg pardon, sir. I was thinking that this gentleman might like to sup with the other gentleman, out in the kitchen beyond!"

"I said he'd sup here," said Nickie, vehemently, for he felt the taunt in all its bitterness.

"I say, old fellow," said M'Dermot in Tate's ear, "you needn't be sparing of the liquor. Give us the best you have, and plenty of it. It is all the same to yer master, you know, in a few days. I was saying, sir," said he to Nickie, who, overhearing him, turned sharply round—"I was saying, sir, that he might as well give up the ould bin with the cobweb over it. It's the creditors suffers now, and we've many a way of doin' a civil turn."

"His mistress has shut the door on that," said Nickie, savagely, "and she may take the consequences."

"Oh, never mind him," whispered M'Dermot to Tate; "he's the best hearted crature that ever broke bread, but passionate, d'ye mind, passionate."

Poor Tate, who had suddenly become alive to the characters and objects of his guests, was now aware that his mistress's refusal to admit the chief might possibly be productive of very disastrous consequences; for, like all low Irishmen, he had a very ample notion of the elastic character of the law, and thought that its pains and penalties were entirely at the option of him who executed it.

"Her ladyship never liked to see much company," said he, apologetically.

"Well, maybe so," rejoined M'Dermot, "but in a quiet, homely sort of a way, sure she needn't have refused Mr. Anthony; little she knows, there's not the like of him for stories about the Court of Conscience and the sessions."

"I don't doubt it," exclaimed Tate, who, in assenting, felt pretty certain that his fascinations would scarcely have met appreciation in the society of his mistress and her daughter.

"And if ye heard him sing 'Hobson's Choice,' with a new verse of his own at the end!"

Tate threw a full expression of wondering admiration into his features, and went on with his arrangements in silence.

"Does he know anything of Dempsey, do you think?" said Nickie, in a whisper to his follower.

"Not he," muttered the other, scorn-

fully; "the crayture seems half a nat'ral." Then, in a voice pitched purposely loud, he said, "Do you happen to know one Dempsey in these parts?"

"Paul Dempsey?" added Nickie.

"A little, short man, with a turned-up nose, that walks with his shoulders far back and his hands spread out? Ay, I know him well; he dined here one day with the master, and sure enough he made the company laugh hearty!"

"I'd be glad to meet thim, if he's as p'asant as you say," said Nickie, slyly.

"There's nothing easier, then," said Tate; "since the boarding-house is closed there at Ballinratty, he's up in Coleraine for the winter. I hear he waits for the Dublin mail, at M'Grotty's door, every evening, to see the passengers, and that he has a peep at the way-bill before the agent himself."

"Has he so many acquaintances that he is always on the lookout for one?"

"Faix, if they'd let him," cried Tate, laughing, "I believe he'd know every man, woman, and child in Ireland. For curiosity he beats all ever I seen."

As Tate spoke, a sudden draught of wind seemed to penetrate the chamber—at least the canoe and its party shook perceptibly.

"We'll have a rare night of it," said Nickie, drawing nearer to the fire. Then resuming, added, "And you say I'll have no difficulty to find him?"

"Not the least, bedad! It would be far harder to escape him, from all I hear. He watches the coach, and never leaves it till he sees the fore boot and the hind one empty; not only looking the passengers in the face, but tumbling over the luggage, reading all the names, and where they're going. Oh, he's a wonderful man for knowledge!"

"Indeed," said Nickie, with a look of attention to draw on the garrulity of the old man.

"I've reason to remember it well," said Tate, putting both hands to his loins. "It was the day he dined here I got the rheumatiz in the small of my back. When I went to open the gate without there for him, he kept me talking for three-quarters of an hour in the teeth of an east wind that would shave a goat—asking me about the master and the mistress, and Miss Helen, ay, and even about myself at last—if I had any brothers—and what their names was—and who was Mister Daly—and whether he didn't keep a club-house. By my conscience, it's well for him ould Bagenal didn't hear him!"

A clattering sound from the canoe suddenly interrupted Tate's narrative; he stop-

ped short, and muttered, in a tone of unfeigned terror,

"That's the way always—may I never see glory! ye can't speak of him but he hears ye!"

A rude laugh from Nickie, chorused still more coarsely by M'Dermot, arrested Tate's loquacity, and he finished his arrangements without speaking, save in a few broken sentences.

If Mr. Nickie could have been conciliated by material enjoyments, he might decidedly have confessed that the preparations for his comfort were ample and hospitable. A hot supper diffused its savory steam on a table where decanters and flasks of wine of different sorts and sizes attested that the more convivial elements of a feast were not forgotten. Good-humor was, however, not to be restored by such amends. He was wounded in his self-love, outraged in his vanity, and he sat down in a dogged silence to the meal, a perfect contrast in appearance to the coarse delight of his subordinate.

While Tait remained to wait on them, Nickie's manner and bearing were unaltered. A sullen, sulky expression sat on features which, even when at the best, conveyed little better than a look of shrewd keenness; nor could the appetite with which he ate suggest a passing ray of satisfaction to his face.

"I am glad we are rid of that old fellow at last," said he, as the door closed upon Tate. "Whether fool or knave, I saw what he was at; he would have been disrespectful if he dared."

"I didn't mind him much, sir," said M'Dermot, honestly confessing that the good cheer had absorbed his undivided attention.

"I did, then; I saw his eyes fixed on us—on you particularly. I thought he would have laughed outright when you helped yourself to the entire duck."

Nickie spoke this with an honest severity, meant to express his discontent with his companion fully as much as with the old butler.

"Well, it was an excellent supper, anyhow," said M'Dermot, taking the bottle which Nickie pushed toward him somewhat rudely, "and here's wishing health and happiness and long life to ye, Mr. Anthony. May ye always have as plentiful a board, and better company round it."

There was a fawning humility in the fellow's manner that seemed to gratify the other, for he nodded a return to the sentiment, and, after a brief pause, said,

"The servants in these grand houses—

and that old fellow, you may remark, was with the Darcys when they were great people—they give themselves airs to everybody they think below the rank of their master.”

“Faix, they might behave better to *you*, Mr. Anthony,” said M'Dermot.

“Well, they're run their course now,” said Nickie, not heeding the remark. “Both master and man have had their day. I've seen more executions on property in the last six months than ever I did in all my life before. Creditors won't wait now as they used to do. No influence now to make gaugers, and tide-waiters, and militia officers! no privilege of parliament to save them from arrest.”

“My blessings on them for that, anyhow,” said M'Dermot, finishing his glass. “The Union's a fine thing.”

“The fellows that got the bribes—and to be sure there was plenty of money going—won't stay to spend it in Ireland; devil a one will remain here, but those that are run out and ruined.”

“Bad luck to it for a bill!” said M'Dermot, who felt obliged to sacrifice his consistency in his desire to concur with each new sentiment of his chief.

“The very wine we're drinking, maybe, was given for a vote. Pitt knew well how to catch them.”

“Success attend him,” chimed in M'Dermot.

“And just think of them now,” continued Nickie, whose ruminations were never interrupted by the running commentary—“just think of them! selling the country—trade—prosperity—everything, for a few hundred pounds.”

“The blackguards!”

“Some, to be sure, made a fine thing out of it. Not like old Darcy here; they were early in the market, and got both rank and money too.”

“Ay, that was doin' it in style!” exclaimed Mike, who expressed himself this time somewhat equivocally for safety's sake.

“There's no denying it, Castlereagh was a clever fellow!”

“The best man ever I seen—I don't care who the other is.”

“He knew when to bid, and when to draw back; never became too pressing, but never let any one feel himself neglected; watched his opportunities slyly and, when the time came, pounced down like a hawk on his victim.”

“Oh, the thieves' breed! What a hard heart he had!” muttered M'Dermot, perfectly regardless of whom he was speaking.

Thus did Mr. Nickie ramble on, in the popular cant, over the subject of the day; for, although the Union was now carried, and its consequences—whatever they might be—so far inevitable, the men whose influence effected the measure were still before the bar of public opinion—an ordeal not a whit more just and discriminating than it usually is. While the current of these reminiscences ran on, varied by some anecdote here, or some observation there, both master and man drank deeply. So long as good liquor abounded, Mr. M'Dermot could have listened with pleasure, even to a less entertaining companion; and as for Nickie, he felt a vulgar pride in discussing, familiarly and by name, the men of rank and station who took a leading part in Irish politics. The pamphlets and newspapers of the day had made so many private histories public, had unveiled so many family circumstances before the eyes of the world, that his dissertations had all the seeming authenticity of personal knowledge.

It was at the close of a rather violent denunciation of the “traitors”—as the Government party was ever called—that Nickie, striking the table with his fist, called on M'Dermot to sing.

“I say, Mac,” cried he, with a faltering tongue, and eyes red and bleared from drinking—“the old lady—wouldn't accept my society—she didn't think—An-thony Nickie, Esquire—good enough—to sit down—at her table. Let us show her what she has lost, my boy. Give her ‘Bob Uniake's Boots,’ or ‘The Major's Prayer.’”

“Or what d'ye think of the new ballad to Lord Castlereagh, sir?” suggested M'Dermot, modestly. “It was the last thing Rhoudlim had when I left town.”

“Is it good?” hiccuped Nickie.

“If ye heerd Rhoudlim—”

“D—n Rhoudlim!—she used to sing that song Parsons made on the attorneys. Parsons never liked us, Mac. You know what he said to Holmes, who went to him for a subscription of five shillings, to help to bury Mat Costegan. ‘Wasn't he an attorney?’ says Parsons. ‘He was,’ says the other. ‘Well, here's a pound,’ says he; ‘take it and bury four!’”

“Oh, by my conscience, that was mighty nate!” said M'Dermot, who completely forgot himself.

Nickie frowned savagely at his companion, and for a moment seemed about to express his anger more palpably, when he suddenly drank off his glass, and said, “Well, the song—let us have it now.”

“I'm afraid—I don't know more than a verse here and there,” said Mac, bashfully

stroking down his hair, and mincing his words—"but with the help of a chorus—"

"Trust me for that," cried Nickie, who now drank glass after glass without stopping; "I'm always ready for a song." So saying, he burst out into a half lachrymose chant—

"An old maid had a roguish eye !
And she was call'd the great Ramshoodera !
Rich was she and poor was I !
Fol de dol de die do !"

"I forget the rest, Mickie, but it goes on about a nabob and a bear, and—a—what's this ye call it, a pottle of green gooseberries that Lord Clangoiff sold to Mrs. Kelfoyle."

"To be sure; I remember it well," said Mac, humoring the drunken lucubrations; "but my chant is twice as aisy to sing—the air is the 'Black Joke;' any one can chorus."

"Well, open the proceedings," hiccuped Nickie; "state the case."

And thus encouraged, Mr. M'Dermot cleared his throat, and in a voice loud and coarse enough to be heard above the howling din, began :

"Though many a mile he's from Erin away,
Here's health and long life to my Lord Castle-
reagh,
With his bag full of guineas so bright !
'Twas he that made bishops and deans by the
score,
And peers, of the fashion of Lord Donoughmore!
And a colonel of horse, of our friend Billy Lake,
And Wallscourt, a lord—t'other day but Joe
Blake,
With his bag full of guineas so bright.

"Come Beresford, Bingham, Luke Fox, and Ty-
rone,
Come Kearney, Bob Johnston, and Arthur Ma-
lone,
With your bag full of guineas so bright ;
Lord Charles Fitzgerald and Kit Fortescue,
And Henry Deane Grady—we'll not forget you ;
Come Cuffe, Isaac Corry, and General Dunne,
—And you Jemmy Vandeleur—come every one,
With your bag full of guineas so bright.

"Come Talbot and Townsend. Come Toler and
Trench,
Tho' made for the gallows ! ye're now on the
bench,
With your bag full of guineas so bright.
But if ever again this black list I'll begin,
The first name I'll take is the ould Knight of
Gwynne,
Who rcbb'd of his property, stripp'd of his pelf,
Would be glad to see Erin as poor as himself,
With no bag full of guineas so bright.

"If the parliament's gone, and the world it has
scoff'd us,
What a blessing to think that we've Tottenham
Loftus,
With his bag full of guineas so bright,

Oh ! what consolation through every disaster,
To know that your lordship is made our postmas-
ter,

And your uncle a bishop, your aunt—but why
mention,

Two thousand a year, 'of a long service pension'
Of a bag full of guineas so bright.

"But what is the change, since your lordship ap-
pears !

You found us all paupers, you left us all peers,

With your bag full of guineas so bright.

Not a man in the island, however he boast,

But has a good reason to fill to the toast—

From Cork to the Causeway, from Houth to Clew
Bay,

A health and long life to my Lord Castlereagh,
With his bag full of guineas so bright."

The boisterous accompaniment by which Mr. Nickie testified his satisfaction at the early verses had gradually subsided into a low droning sound, which at length, toward the conclusion, lapsed into a prolonged heavy snore. "Fast!" exclaimed M'Dermot, holding the candle close to his eyes. "Fast!" Then taking up the decanter, he added, "And if ye had gone off before, it would have been no great harm. Ye never had the bottle out of yer grip for the last hour and half!" He heaped some wood on the grate, refilled his glass, and then disposing himself so as to usurp a very large share of the blazing fire, prepared to follow the good example of his chief. Long habit had made an arm-chair to the full as comfortable as a bed to the worthy functionary, and his arrangements were scarcely completed, when his nose announced by a deep sound that he was a wanderer in the land of dreams.

Poor Mr. Dempsey—for if the reader may have forgotten him all this while, we must not—listened long and watchfully to the heavy notes, nor was it without considerable fear that he ventured to unvail his head and take a peep under Daly's arm at the sleepers. Reassured by the seeming heaviness of the slumberers, he dared a step further, and, at last, seated himself bolt upright in the canoe, glad to relieve his cramped-up legs, even by this momentary change of position. So cautious were all his movements, so still and noiseless every gesture, that had there been a waking eye to mark him, it would have been hard enough to distinguish between his figure and those of his inanimate neighbors.

The deep and heavy breathing of the sleepers was the only sound to be heard; they snored as if it were a contest between them; still it was long before Dempsey could summon courage enough to issue from his hiding-place, and with stealthy steps approach the table. Cautiously lifting the candle, he first held it to the face

of one and then of the other of the sleepers. His next move was to inspect the supper-table, where, whatever the former abundance, nothing remained save the veriest fragments: the bottles too were empty, and poor Dempsey shook his head mournfully, as he poured out and drank the last half-glass of sherry in a decanter. This done, he stood for a few minutes reflecting what step he should take next. A sudden change of position of Nickie startled him from these deliberations, and Dempsey covered down beneath the table in terror. Scarcely daring to breathe, Paul waited while the sleeper moved from side to side, muttering some short and broken words; at length he seemed to have settled himself to his satisfaction, for so his prolonged respiration bespoke. Just as he had turned for the last time, a heavy roll of papers fell from his pocket to the floor. Dempsey eyed the packet with a greedy look, but did not dare to reach his hand toward it, till well assured that the step was safe.

Taking a candle from the table, Paul re-seated himself on the floor, and opened a large roll of documents tied with red tape: the very first he unrolled seemed to arrest his attention strongly, and although passing on to the examination of the remainder, he more than once recurred to it, till at length, creeping stealthily toward the fire, he placed it among the burning embers, and stirred and poked until it became a mere mass of blackened leaves.

"There," muttered he, "Paul Dempsey's his own man again. And now what can he do for his friends? Ha, ha! 'Execution against effects of Bagenal Daly, Esq.," said he, reading half aloud; "and this lengthy affair here, 'Instructions to A. N. relative to the inclosed;' let us see what that may be." And so saying, he opened the scroll—a bright flash of flame burst out from among the slumbering embers, and ere it died away Paul read a few lines of the paper. "What scoundrels!" muttered he, as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead, for already had honest Paul's feelings excited him to the utmost. The flame was again flickering, in another moment it would be out, when, stealing forth his hand, he placed an open sheet upon it, and then, as the blaze caught, he laid the entire bundle of papers on the top, and watched them till they were reduced to ashes.

"Maybe it's a felony—I'm sure it's a misdemeanor at least—what I've done now," muttered he; "but there was no resisting it. I wish I thought it was no heavier crime to do the same by these worthy gentlemen here."

Indeed, for a second or two, Paul's hesitation seemed very considerable. Fear, or something higher in principle, got the victory at length, and after a long silence, he said,

"Well, I'll not harm them." And with this benevolent sentiment he stood up, and detaching Darcy's portrait from the wall, thrust it into his capacious pocket. This done, he threw another glance over the table, lest some unseen decanter might still remain; but no, except a water-jug of pure element, nothing remained.

"Good-night, and pleasant dreams t'ye both," muttered Paul, as, blowing out one candle, he took the other, and slipped, without the slightest noise, from the room.

CHAPTER LVI.

MR. DEMPSEY BEHIND THE SCENES.

No very precise or determined purpose guided Mr. Dempsey's footsteps as he issued from the hall and gained the corridor, from which the various rooms of the cottage opened. Benevolent intentions of the very vaguest kind toward Lady Eleanor were commingled with thoughts of his own safety, and perhaps more strongly than either, an intense curiosity to inspect the domestic arrangements of the family, not without the hope of finding something to eat.

He had now been about twenty-four hours without food, and to a man who habitually lived in a boarding-house, and felt it a point of honor to consume as much as he could for his weekly pay, the abstinence was far from agreeable. If then his best inspirations were blended with some selfishness, he was not quite unpardonable. Mr. Dempsey tried each door as he went along, and although they were all unlocked, the interiors responded to none of his anticipations. The apartments were plainly but comfortably furnished—in some, books lay about, and an open piano told of recent habitation. In one, which he judged rightly to be the knight's dressing-room, a table was covered over with letters and law papers, documents which honest Paul beheld with some feeling akin to Aladdin, when he surveyed the inestimable treasures he had no means of carrying away with him from the mine. A faint gleam of light shone from beneath a door at the end of the corridor, and thither with silent footsteps he now turned. All was still—he listened as he drew near—but except the loud ticking of a clock, nothing was to be heard. Paul tried to reconnoiter

by the keyhole, but it was closed. He waited for some time, unable to decide on the most fitting course, and at length opened the door and entered. Stopping short at the threshold, Paul raised the candle, to take a better view of the apartment. Perhaps any one save himself would have returned on discovering it was a bedroom. A large old-fashioned bed, with a deep and massive curtain closely drawn, stood against one wall; beside it, on a table, was a night-lamp, from which the faint glimmer he had first noticed proceeded. Some well-stuffed arm-chairs were disposed here and there, and on the tables lay articles of female dress. Mr. Dempsey stood for a few seconds, and perhaps some secret suspicion crept over him that this visit might be thought intrusive. It might be Lady Eleanor's, or perhaps Miss Darcy's chamber. Who was to say she was not actually that instant in bed asleep? Were the fact even so, Mr. Dempsey only calculated on a momentary shock of surprise at his appearance, well assured that his explanation would be admitted as perfectly satisfactory. Thus wrapt in his good intentions, and shrouding the light with one hand, he drew the curtain with the other. The bed was empty—the coverings were smooth—the pillows unpressed. The occupant, whoever it might be, had not yet taken possession. Mr. Dempsey's fatigue was only second to his hunger, and having failed to discover the larder, it is more than probable he would have contented himself with the gratification of a sleep, had he not just at that instant perceived a light flickering beside and beneath the folds of a heavy curtain, which hung over a doorway at the furthest end of the room. His spirit of research once more encouraged, he moved toward it, and drawing it very gently, admitted his eye in the interspace. A glass door intervened between him and a small chamber, but permitted him to see without being heard by those within. Flattening his features on the glass, he stared at the scene, and truly one less inspired by the spirit of inquiry might have felt shocked at being thus placed. Lady Eleanor sat in her dressing gown on a sofa, while, half kneeling, half lying at her feet, was Helen, her head concealed in her mother's lap, and her long hair loosely flowing over her neck and shoulders. Lady Eleanor was pale as death, and the marks of recent tears were on her cheeks; but still her features were the expression of deep tenderness and pity, rather than of selfish sorrow. Helen's face was hidden, but her attitude, and the low sobbing sounds that at intervals broke the

stillness, told how her heart was suffering.

"My dear, dear child," said Lady Eleanor, as she laid her hand upon the young girl's head, "be comforted. Rest assured that in making me the partner in your sorrow, I will be the happier participator in your joy, whenever its day may come. Yes, Helen, and it will come."

"Had I told you earlier—"

"Had you done so," interrupted Lady Eleanor, "you had been spared much grief, for I could have assured you, as I now do, that you are not to blame—that this young man's rashness, however we may deplore it, had no promptings from us."

Helen replied, but in so low a tone, that Mr. Dempsey could not catch the words; he could hear, however, Lady Eleanor uttering at intervals words of comfort and encouragement, and at last she said,

"Nay, Helen, no half-confidence, my child. Acknowledge it fairly, that your opinion of him is not what it was at first; or, if you will not confess it, leave me to my own judgment. And why should you not?" added she, in a stronger voice; "wiser heads may reprove his precipitancy—criticise what would be called his folly—but you may be forgiven for thinking that his Quixotism could deserve another and a fonder title. And I, Helen, grown old and chilly-hearted—each day more distrustful of the world—less sanguine in hope—more prone to suspect—even I, feel that devotion like his has a strong claim on your affection. And shall I own to you that on the very day he brought us that letter, a kind of vague presentiment that I should one day like him, stole across me. What was the noise?—did you not hear something stir?" Helen had heard it, but paid no further attention, for there was no token of any one being near.

Noise, however, there really was, occasioned by Mr. Dempsey, who, in his eagerness to hear, had pushed the door partly open. For some moments back, honest Paul had listened with as much embarrassment as curiosity, sorely puzzled to divine of whom the mother and daughter were speaking. The general tenor of the conversation left the subject no matter of difficulty. The individual was the only doubtful question. Lady Eleanor's allusion to a letter, and her own feelings at the moment, at once reminded him of her altered manner to himself on the evening he brought the epistle from Coleraine, and how she, who up to that time had treated him with unvarying distance and reserve, had as suddenly become all the reverse.



“Blood alive!” said he to himself. “I never as much as suspected it!” His eagerness to hear further was intense; and although he had contrived to keep the door ajar, his curiosity was doomed to disappointment, for it was Helen who spoke, and her words were uttered in a low, faint tone, utterly inaudible where he stood. Whatever pleasure Mr. Dempsey might have at first derived from his contraband curiosity, was more than repaid now by the tortures of anxiety. He suspected that Helen was making a full confession of her feelings toward him, and yet he could not catch a syllable. Lady Eleanor, too, when she spoke again, it was in an accent almost equally faint, and all that Paul could gather was, that the mother was using expressions of cheerfulness and hope, ending with the words—

“His own fortunes look now as darkly as ours—mayhap the same bright morning will dawn for both together, Helen. We have hope to cheer us, for him and for us.”

“Ah! true enough,” muttered Paul; “she’s alluding to old Bob Dempsey, and if the Lord would take him, we’d all come right again.”

Helen now arose and seated herself beside her mother, with her head leaning on her shoulder; and Mr. Dempsey might have been pardoned if he thought she never looked more beautiful. The loose folds of her night-dress less concealed than delineated the perfect symmetry of her form; while, through the heavy masses of the luxuriant hair that fell upon her neck and shoulders, her skin seemed more than ever delicately fair. If Paul’s mind was a perfect whirl of astonishment, delight, and admiration, his doubts were no less puzzling. What was *he* to do? Should he at once discover himself—throw himself at Helen’s feet in a rapture, confessing that he had heard her avowal, and declare that the passion was mutual? This, although with evident advantages on the score of dramatic effect, had also its drawback. Lady Eleanor, who scarcely looked as well in dishabille as her daughter, might feel offended. She might take it ill, also, that he had been a listener. Paul had heard of people who actually deemed eavesdropping unbecoming! who knows, among her own eccentricities, if this one might not find place? Paul, therefore, resolved on a more cautious advance, and for his guidance, applied his ear more to the aperture. This time, however, without success, for they spoke still lower than before; nor, after a long and patient waiting, could he hear more than that the subject was their present embar-

rassment, and the necessity of immediately removing from the Corvy—but where to, and how, they could not determine.

There was no time to ask Bicknell’s advice; before an answer could arrive, they would be exposed to all the inconvenience, perhaps insult, which Mr. Nickie’s procedure seemed to threaten. The subject appeared one to which all their canvassing had brought no solution, and at last Lady Eleanor said,

“How thankful I am, Helen, that I never wrote to Lord Netherby; more than once, when our difficulties seemed to thicken, I half made up my mind to address him. How much would it add to my present distress of mind, if I had yielded to the impulse! The very thought is now intolerable.”

“Pride! pride!” muttered Paul.

“And I was so near it,” ejaculated Lady Eleanor.

“Yes,” said Helen, sharply; “our noble cousin’s kindness would be a sore aggravation of our troubles.”

“Worse than the mother, by Jove!” exclaimed Paul. “Oh dear! if I had a cousin a lord, maybe he’d not hear of me.”

Lady Eleanor spoke again, but Paul could only catch a stray word here and there, and again she reverted to the necessity of leaving the cottage at once.

“Could we even see this Mr. Dempsey,” said she, “he knows the country well, and might be able to suggest some fitting place for the moment, at least till we could decide on better.”

Paul scarcely breathed that he might catch every syllable.

“Yes,” said Helen, eagerly, “he would be the very person to assist us, but, poor little man, he has his own troubles, too, at this moment.”

“She’s a kind creature,” muttered Paul; “how fond I am growing of her.”

“It is no time for the indulgence of scruples, otherwise, Helen, I’d not place much reliance on the gentleman’s taste.”

“Proud as Lucifer,” thought Paul.

“His good nature, mamma, is the quality we stand most in need of, and I have a strong trust that he is not deficient there.”

“What a situation to be placed in!” sighed Lady Eleanor: “that we should turn with a shudder from seeking protection, where it is our due, and yet ask counsel and assistance from a man like this!”

“I feel no repugnance whatever to accepting such a favor from Mr. Dempsey, while I should deem it a great humiliation to be suitor to the Earl of Netherby.”

"And yet he is our nearest relative living—with vast wealth and influence, and I believe not indisposed toward us. I go too fast, perhaps," said she, scornfully; "his obligations to my own father were too great and too manifold, that I should say so."

"What a Tartar!" murmured Paul.

"If the proud earl could forget the services my dear father rendered him, when, a younger son, without fortune or position, he had no other refuge than our house—if he could wipe away the memory of benefits once received—he might perhaps be better minded toward us; but obligation is so suggestive of ill-will."

"Dearest mamma," said Helen, laughing, "if your hopes depend upon his lordship's forgetfulness of kindness, I do think we may afford to be sanguine. I am well inclined to think that he is not weighed down by the load of gratitude that makes men enemies. Still," added she, more seriously, "I am very averse to seeking his aid, or even his counsel; I vote for Mr Dempsey."

"How are we to endure the prying impertinence of his curiocity? Have you thought of that, Helen?"

Paul's cheek grew scarlet, and his very fingers' ends tingled.

"Easily enough, mamma. Nay, if our troubles were not so urgent, it would be rather amusing than otherwise—and with all his vulgarity.—"

"The little vixen," exclaimed Paul, so much off his guard that both mother and daughter started.

"Did you hear that, Helen? I surely heard some one speak."

"I almost thought so," replied Miss Darcy, taking up a candle from the table, and proceeding toward the door. Mr. Dempsey had but time to retreat behind the curtain of the bed, when she reached the spot where he had been standing. "No, all is quiet in the house," said she, opening the door into the corridor and listening. "Even our respectable guests would seem to be asleep." She waited for a few seconds, and then returned to her place on the sofa.

Mr. Dempsey had either heard enough to satisfy the immediate cravings of his curiosity, or, more probably, felt his present situation too critical, for when he drew the curtain once more close over the glass door he slipped noiselessly into the corridor, and entering the first room he could find, opened the window and sprang out.

"You shall not be disappointed in Paul Dempsey anyhow," said he, as he buttoned up the collar of his coat, and pressed his

hat more firmly on his head. "No, my lady, he may be vulgar and inquisitive, though I confess it's the first time I ever heard of either; but he is not the man to turn his back on a good-natured action, when it lies full in front of him. What a climate, to be sure! it blows from the four quarters of the globe all at once—and the rain soaks in and deluges one's very heart's blood. Paul, Paul, you'll have a smart twinge of rheumatism from this night's exploit."

It may be conjectured that Mr. Dempsey, like many other gifted people, had a habit of compensating for the want of society by holding little dialogues or discourses with himself, a custom from which he derived no small gratification, for, while it lightened the weariness of a lonely way, it enabled him to say many more flattering and civil things to himself than he usually heard from an ungrateful world.

"They talk of Demerara," said he. "I back Antrim against the world for a hurricane. The rainy season here lasts all the year round, and if practice makes perfect—There, now I'm wet through, I can't be worse. Ah! Helen, Helen, if you knew how unfit Paul Dempsey is to play Paris! By the way, who was the fellow that swam the Hellespont for love of a young lady? Not Laertes, no—that's not it—Leander, that's the name—Leander."

Paul muttered the name several times over, and by a train of thought, which we will not attempt to follow or unravel, began humming to himself the well-known Irish ditty of

"Teddy, ye gander,
Yer like a Highlander."

He soon came to a stop in the words, but continued to sing the air, till at last he broke out in the following version of his own:

"Paul Dempsey, ye gander,
You're like that Leander,
Who, for somebody's daughter—for somebody's
daughter,
Did not mind it one pin
To be wet to the skin,
With a dip in salt water—a dip in salt water.

"Were you wiser, 'tis plain,
You'd be now in Coleraine,
A nightcap on your head—a nightcap on your head
With a jorum of rum,
Made by old Mother Fum.
At the side of your bed—at the side of your bed.

"For tho' love is divine,
When the weather is fine,
And a season of bliss—a season of bliss:
'Tis a different thing
For a body to sing
On a night such as this—a night such as this.

“Paul Dempsey! remember,
On the ninth of December
You’ll be just forty-six; you’ll be just forty-six,
And the world will say,
That at your time o’ day,
You’re too old for these tricks—you’re too old for
these tricks.

“And tho’ water may show
One’s loves, faith, I know
I’d rather prove mine—I’d rather prove mine
With my foot on the fender;
’Tis then I grow tender,
O’er a bumper of wine—o’er a bumper of wine!

“A bumper of wine!” sighed he. “On
my conscience, it would be an ugly toast
I’d refuse to drink this minute, if the
liquor was near.

“Ah! when warm and snug,
With my legs on the rug,
By a turf-fire red—a turf-fire red—
But how can I rhyme it?
With this horrid climate,
Destroying my head—destroying my head?

“With a coat full of holes,
And my shoes without soles,
And my hat like a tea-pot—my hat like a tea-pot—

“Oh, murther, murther!” screamed he
aloud, as his shins came in contact with a
piece of timber, and he fell full length to
the ground, sorely bruised, and perfectly
enveloped in snow. It was some minutes
before he could rally sufficiently to get up;
and although he still shouted for help,
seeing a light in a window near, no one
came to his assistance, leaving poor Paul
to his own devices.

It was some consolation for his sufferings
to discover that the object over which he
had stumbled was the shaft of a jaunting-
car, such a conveyance being at that mo-
ment what he most desired to meet with.
The driver at last made his appearance,
and informed him that he had brought
Nickie and his two companions from Larne,
and was now only waiting their summons
to proceed to Coleraine.

Paul easily persuaded the man that he
could earn a fare in the mean time, for that
Nickie would probably not leave the Corvy
till late on the following day, and that, by
a little exertion, he could manage to drive to
Coleraine and back before he was stirring.
It is but fair to add, that poor Mr. Dempsey
supported his arguments by lavish
promises of reward, to redeem which he
speculated on mortgaging his silver watch,
and, probably, his umbrella, when he
reached Coleraine.

It was yet a full hour before daybreak,
as Lady Eleanor, who had passed the night
in her dressing-room, was startled by a

sharp tapping noise at her window; Helen
lay asleep on the sofa, and too soundly
locked in slumber to hear the sounds.
Lady Eleanor listened, and while half
fearing to disturb the young girl, wearied
and exhausted as she was, she drew near to
the window. The indistinct shadow of a
figure was all that she could detect through
the gloom, but she fancied she could hear
a weak effort to pronounce her name.

There could be little doubt of the inten-
tions of the visitor; whoever he should
prove, the frail barrier of a window could
offer no resistance to any one disposed to
enter by force, and, reasoning thus, Lady
Eleanor unfastened the casement, and cried,
“Who is there?”

A strange series of gestures, accompanied
by a sound between a sneeze and the crow-
ing of a cock, was all the reply, and when
the question was repeated in a louder tone,
a thin quivering voice muttered, “Pau—
an—I De—de—dempsey, my la—dy.”

“Mr. Dempsey, indeed!” exclaimed La-
dy Eleanor. “Oh! pray come round to
the door at your left hand, it is only a few
steps from where you are standing.”

Short as the distance was, Mr. Dempsey’s
progress was of the slowest, and Lady
Eleanor had already time to awaken Helen,
ere the half frozen Paul had crossed the
threshold.

“He has passed the night in the snow,”
cried Lady Eleanor to her daughter, as she
led him toward the fire.

“No, my lady,” stammered out Paul,
“only the last hour and a half; before that
I was snug under old Daly’s blanket.”

A very significant interchange of looks
between mother and daughter seemed to
imply that poor Mr. Dempsey’s wits were
wandering.

“Call Tate; let him bring some wine
here at once, Helen.”

“It’s all drunk; not a glass in the de-
canter,” murmured Paul, whose thoughts
recurred to the supper-table.

“Poor creature, his mind is quite astray,”
whispered Lady Eleanor, her compassion
not the less strongly moved, because she
attributed his misfortune to the exertions
he had made in their behalf. By this
time the group was increased by the arrival
of old Tate, who, in a flannel nightcap
fastened under the chin, and a very ancient
dressing-gown of undyed wool, presented a
lively contrast to the shivering condition of
Mr. Dempsey.

“It’s only Mr. Dempsey!” said Lady
Eleanor, sharply, as the old butler stood
back, crossing himself and staring with
sleepy terror at the white figure.

"May I never! But so it is," exclaimed Tate, in return to an attempt at a bow on Dempsey's part, which he accomplished with a crackling noise like breaking glass.

"Some warm wine at once," said Helen, while she heaped two or three logs upon the hearth.

"With a little ginger in it, miss," grinned Paul. But the polite attempt at a smile nearly cut his features, and ended in a most lamentable expression of suffering.

"This is the finest thing in life agin' the cowl'd," said Tate, as he threw over the shivering figure a Mexican mantle, all worked and embroidered with quills, that gave the gentle Mr. Dempsey the air of an enormous porcupine. The clothing, the fire, and the wine, of which he partook heartily, soon restored him, and ere long he had recounted to Lady Eleanor the whole narrative of his arrival at the Corvy—his concealment in the canoe—the burning of the law papers, and even down to the discovery of the jaunting-car, omitting nothing, save the interview he had witnessed between the mother and daughter.

Lady Eleanor could not disguise her anxiety on the subject of the burnt documents, but Paul's arguments were conclusive in reply:

"Who's to tell of it? Not your ladyship, not Miss Helen; and as to Paul, meaning myself, my discretion is quite Spanish. Yes, my lady," said he, with a tragic gesture, that threw back the loose folds of his costume, "there is an impression abroad, which I grieve to say is wide-spread, that the humble individual who addresses you is one of those unstable, fickle minds that accomplish nothing great: but I deny it, deny it indignantly. Let the occasion but arise—let some worthy object present itself, or herself"—he gave a most melting look toward Helen, which cost all her efforts to sustain without laughter—"and then, madam, Don Paulo Dempsey will come out in his true colors."

"Which I sincerely hope may not be of the snow tint," said Lady Eleanor, smiling.

"But pray, Mr. Dempsey, to return to a theme more selfish. You are sufficiently aware of our unhappy circumstances here at this moment, to see that we must seek some other abode, at least for the present. Can you then say where we can find such?"

"Miss Daly's neighborhood, perhaps," broke in Helen.

"Never do—not to be thought of," interrupted Paul; "there's nothing for it but the Panther—"

"The what, sir?" exclaimed Lady Eleanor, in no small surprise.

"The Panther, my lady. Mother Fum's is snug, quiet, and respectable; social, if you like—selfish, if you please it. Solitary or gregarious; just as you fancy."

"And where, sir, is the Panther?" said Lady Eleanor, who in her innocence supposed this to be the sign of some village inn.

"In the Diamond of Coleraine, my lady, opposite M'Grotty's, next but one to Kitty Black's hardware, and two doors from the post-office; central and interesting. Mail-car from Newtown, Lim.—takes up passengers, within view of the windows, at two every day. Letters given out at four—see every one in the town without stirring from your window. Huston's, the apothecary, always full of people at post hour. Gribbin's tobacco shop assembles all the radicals at the same time to read the *Patriot*. Plenty of life and movement."

"Is there nothing to be found more secluded, less—"

"Less fashionable, your ladyship would observe. To be sure there is, but there's objections—at least I am sure you would dislike the prying, inquisitive spirit—Eh? Did you make an observation, miss?"

"No, Mr. Dempsey," said Helen, with some difficulty preserving a suitable gravity. "I would only remark that you are perfectly in the right, and that my mother seeks nothing more than a place where we can remain without obtrusiveness or curiosity directed toward us."

"There will always be the respectful admiration that beauty exacts," replied Paul, bowing courteously, "but I can answer for the delicacy of Coleraine as for my own."

If this assurance was not quite as satisfactory to the ladies as Mr. Dempsey might have fancied it ought to be, there was really no alternative: they knew nothing of the country, which side to direct their steps, or whither to seek shelter: besides, until they had communicated with Bicknell, they could not with safety leave the neighborhood to which all the letters were addressed.

It was then soon determined to accept Mr. Dempsey's suggestion and safe-conduct, and leaving Tate for the present to watch over such of their effects as they could not conveniently carry with them, to set out for Coleraine. The arrangements were made as speedily as the resolve, and day had scarcely dawned ere they quitted

"Corvy."

CHAPTER LVII.

MR. HEFFERNAN OUT-MANEUVURED.

IT was on the very same evening that witnessed these events, that Lord Castlereagh was conducting Mr. Con Heffernan to his hotel, after a London dinner-party. The late secretary for Ireland had himself volunteered the politeness, anxious to hear some tidings of people and events which, in the busy atmosphere of a crowded society, were unattainable. He speedily ran over a catalogue of former friends and acquaintances, learning, with that surprise with which successful men always regard their less fortunate contemporaries, that this one was still where he had left him, and that the other jogged on his daily road as before, when he suddenly asked,

“And the Darcys, what of them?”

Heffernan shrugged his shoulders without speaking.

“I am sorry for it,” resumed the other; “sorry for the gallant old knight himself, and sorry for a state of society in which such changes are assumed as evidences of progress and prosperity. These upstart Hickmans are not the elements of which a gentry can be formed.”

“O'Reilly still looks to you for the baronetcy, my lord,” replied Heffernan, with a half sneer. “You have him with or against you on that condition, at least so I hear.”

“Has he not had good fortune enough in this world to be satisfied? He has risen from nothing to be a man of eminence, wealth, and county influence; would it not be more reasonable in him to mature his position by a little patience, than endanger it by fresh shocks to public opinion? Even a boa, my dear Heffernan, when he swallows a goat, takes six months to digest his meal. No! no! such men must be taught reserve, if their own prudence does not suggest it.”

“I believe you are right, my lord,” said Heffernan, thoughtfully; “O'Reilly is the very man to forget himself in the sunshine of court favor, and mistake good luck for desert.”

“With all his money, too,” rejoined Lord Castlereagh, “his influence will just be proportioned to the degree of acceptance his constituents suppose him to possess with us here. He has never graduated as a patriot, and his slight popularity is only ‘speciali gratia.’ His patent of gentleman has not come to him by birth.”

“For this reason the baronetcy—”

“Let us not discuss that,” said Lord

Castlereagh, quickly. “There is an objection in a high quarter to bestow honors which would seem to ratify the downfall of an ancient house.” He seemed to have said more than he was ready to admit, and to change the theme turned the conversation on the party they had just quitted.

“Sir George Hannaper always does these things well.”

Mr. Heffernan assented blandly, but not over eagerly. London was not “his world,” and the tone of a society so very different to what he was habituated had not made on him the most favorable impression.

“And after all,” said Lord Castlereagh, musingly, “there is a great deal of tact—ability, if you will—essential to the success of such entertainments, to bring together men of different classes and shades of opinion, people who have never met before, perhaps are never to meet again, to hit upon the subjects of conversation that may prove generally interesting, without the risk of giving undue preponderance to any one individual’s claims to superior knowledge. This demands considerable skill.”

“Perhaps the difficulty is not so great *here*, my lord,” said Heffernan, half timidly, “each man understands his part so well; information and conversational power appear tolerably equally distributed; and when all the instruments are so well tuned, the leader of the orchestra has an easy task.”

“Ah! I believe I comprehend you,” said Lord Castlereagh, laughing; “you are covertly sneering at the easy and unexciting quietude of our London habits. Well, Heffernan, I admit we are not so fond of solo performances as you are in Dublin; few among us venture on those ‘obligato passages’ which are so charming to Irish ears; but don’t you think the concerted pieces are better performed?”

“I believe, my lord,” said Heffernan, abandoning the figure in his anxiety to reply, “that we would call this dull in Ireland. I’m afraid that we are barbarous enough to set more store by wit and pleasantry than on grave discussion and shrewd table-talk. It appears to me that these gentlemen carry an air of business into their conviviality.”

“Scarcely so dangerous an error as to carry conviviality into business,” said Lord Castlereagh, slyly.

“There’s too much holding back,” said Heffernan, not heeding the taunt; “each man seems bent on making what jockeys call ‘a waiting race.’”

“Confess, however,” said Lord Castle-

reagh, smiling, "there's no struggle, no hustling at the winning-post: the best horse comes in first—"

"Upon my soul, my lord," said Heffernan, interrupting, "I have yet to learn that there is such a thing. I conclude from your lordship's observation that the company we met to-day were above the ordinary run of agreeability."

"I should certainly say so."

"Well, then, I can only affirm that we should call this a failure in our less polished land. I listened with becoming attention; the whole thing was new to me, and I can safely aver I neither heard one remark above the level of common-place, nor one observation evidencing acute perception of passing events or reflection on the past. As to wit or epigram—"

"Oh, we do not value these gifts at *your* price; we are too thrifty a nation, Heffernan, to expend all our powder on fire-works."

"Faith, I agree with you, my lord; the man who would venture on a rocket would be treated as an incendiary."

"Come, come, Heffernan, I'll not permit you to say so. Did you ever in any society see a man more appreciated than our friend Darcy was the last evening we met him, his pleasantry relished, his racy humor well taken, and his stores of anecdote enjoyed with a degree of zest I have never seen surpassed?"

"Darcy was always too smooth for our present taste," said Heffernan, caustically. "His school was antiquated years ago; there was a dash of the French courtier through the Irishmen of his day."

"That made the most polished gentlemen of Europe, I've been told," said Lord Castlereagh, interrupting. "I know your taste inclines to a less chastened and more adventurous pleasantry, shrewd insight into an antagonist's weak point, a quick perception of the ridiculous—"

"Allied with deep knowledge of men and motives, my lord," said Heffernan, catching up the sentence; "a practical acquaintance with the world in its widest sense; that cultivated keenness that smacks of reading intentions before they are avowed, and divining plans before they are more than conceived. These solid gifts are all essential to the man who would influence society, whether in a social circle or in the larger sphere of active life."

"Ah! but we were talking of merely social qualities," said Lord Castlereagh, stealing a cautious look of half malice, "the wit that sets the table in a roar."

"And which, like lightning, my lord, must now and then prove dangerous, or

men will cease to be dazzled by its brilliancy. Now, I rather incline to think that the knight's pleasantry is like some of the claret we were drinking to-day, a little spoiled by age."

"I protest strongly against the judgment," said Lord Castlereagh, with energy: "the man who at his time of life consents to resume the toils and dangers of a soldier's career must not be accused of growing old."

"Perhaps your lordship would rather shift the charge of senility against the Government which appoints such an officer," said Heffernan, maliciously.

"As to that," said Lord Castlereagh, laughingly, "I believe the whole thing was a mistake. Some zealous but indiscreet friend of Darcy's made an application in his behalf, and without his cognisance, pressing the claim of an old and meritorious officer, and directly asking for a restitution to his grade. This was backed by Lord Netherby, one of the lords in waiting, and without much inquiry—indeed, I fancy without any—he was named colonel, in exchange from the unattached list. The knight was evidently flattered by so signal a mark of favor, and, if I read him aright, would not change his command for a brigade at home. In fact, he has already declined prospects not less certain of success."

"And is this really the mode in which officers are selected for an enterprise of hazard and importance?" said Heffernan, affecting a tone of startled indignation as he spoke.

"Upon my word, Heffernan," said Lord Castlereagh, subduing the rising tendency to laugh outright, "I fear it is too true. We live in days of back-stairs and court favor. I saw an application for the office of under-secretary for Ireland, so late as yesterday—"

"You did, my lord!" interrupted Heffernan, with more warmth than he almost ever permitted himself to feel. "You did, from a man who has rendered more unrewarded services to the Government than any individual in the kingdom."

"The claim was a very suitable one," said Lord Castlereagh, mildly. "The gentleman who preferred it could point to a long list of successful operations, whose conduct rested mainly or solely on his own consummate skill and address; he could even allege the vast benefit of his advice to young and not over-informed chief secretaries—"

"I would beg to observe, my lord—"

"Pray allow me to continue," said Lord Castlereagh, laying his hand gently on the

other's arm. "As one of that helpless class so feelingly alluded to, I am ready to evince the deepest sense of grateful acknowledgments. It may be that I would rather have been mentioned more flatteringly; that the applicant had spoken of me as an apter and more promising scholar—"

"My lord, I must and will interrupt you. The memorial, which was presented in my name, was sent forward under the solemn pledge that it should meet the eyes of Mr. Pitt alone; that whether its prayer was declined or accorded, none, save himself, should have cognisance of it. If, after this, it was submitted to your lordship's critical examination, I leave it to your good taste and your sense of decorum how far you can avow or make use of the knowledge so obtained."

"I was no party in the compact you allege, nor, I dare to say, was Mr. Pitt," said Lord Castlereagh, proudly; but, momentarily resuming his former tone, he went on: "The prime minister, doubtless, knew how valuable the lesson might be to a young man entering on public life which should teach him not to lay too much store by his own powers of acuteness; not to trust too implicitly to his own qualities of shrewdness and perception; and that, by well reflecting on the aid he received from others, he might see how little the subtraction would leave for his own peculiar amount of skill. In this way I have to acknowledge myself greatly Mr. Hefferman's debtor, since, without the aid of this document, I should never have recognized how ignorant I was of every party and every public man in Ireland; how dependent on his good guidance; how I never failed, save in rejecting—never succeeded, save in profiting by his wise and politic counsels."

"Is your lordship prepared to deny these assertions?" said Hefferman, with an imperturbable coolness.

"Am I not avowing my grateful sense of them?" said Lord Castlereagh, smiling blandly. "I feel only the more deeply your debtor, because, till now, I never knew the debt—both principal and interest must be paid together; but seriously, Hefferman, if you wanted office, was I not the proper channel to have used in asking for it? Why disparage your pupil while extolling your system?"

"You did my system but little credit, my lord," replied Hefferman, with an accent as unmoved as before; "you bought votes when you should have bought the voters themselves; you deemed the Bill of Union the consummation of Irish policy—it is only the first act of the piece. You were

not the first general who thought he beat the enemy when he drove in the pickets."

"Would my tactics have been better had I made one of my spies a major-general, Mr. Hefferman?" said Lord Castlereagh, sneeringly.

"Safer, my lord—far safer," said Hefferman, "for he might not have exposed you afterward. But I think this is my hotel; and I must say it is the first time in my life that I have closed an interview with your lordship without regret."

"Am I to hope it will be the last?" said Lord Castlereagh, laughing.

"The last interview, my lord, or the last occasion of regretting its shortness?" said Hefferman, with a slight anxiety of voice.

"Whichever Mr. Hefferman opines most to his advantage," was the cool reply.

"The former, with your permission, my lord," said Hefferman, as a flush suffused his cheek. "I wish your lordship a very good-night."

"Good-night, good-night! Stay, Thomas, Mr. Hefferman has forgotten his gloves."

"Thanks, my lord; they were not left as a gage of battle, I assure you."

"I feel certain of it," said Lord Castlereagh, laughing. "Good-night, once more."

The carriage rolled on, and Mr. Hefferman stood for an instant gazing after it through the gloom.

"I might have known it," muttered he to himself; "these lords are the only people who do stick to each other nowadays." Then, after a pause, he added, "Drogheda is right, by Jove! there's no playing against 'four by honors.'"

And with this reflection he slowly entered the hotel, and repaired to his chamber.

CHAPTER LVIII.

A BIT OF "BY-PLAY."

REVERSES of fortune might be far more easily supported, if they did not entail, as their inevitable consequence, the association with those, all of whose tastes, habits, and opinions, run in a new and different channel. It is a terrible aggravation to the loss of those comforts which habit has rendered necessities, to unlearn the usages of a certain condition, and adopt those of a class beneath us—or, what is still worse, engage in the daily, hourly conflict between our means and our requirements.

Perhaps Lady Eleanor Darcy and her

daughter never really felt the meaning of their changed condition, nor understood its poignancy, till they saw themselves as residents of Mrs. Fumbally's boarding-house, whither Mr. Dempsey's polite attentions had conducted them. It was to no want of respect on that lady's part that any portion of this feeling could be traced. "The Panther" had really behaved with the most dignified consideration; and while her new guests were presented as Mrs. and Miss Gwynne, intimated, by a hundred little adroit devices of manner, that their real rank and title were regarded by her as inviolable secrets—not the less likely to be respected, that she was herself ignorant of both. Heaven knows what secret anguish the retention of these facts cost poor Paul! secrecy being with him a quality something like Acre's courage, which "oozed out of his fingers' ends." Mr. Dempsey hated those miserly souls that can treasure up a fact for their own personal enjoyment, and yet never invite a neighbor to partake of it; and it was a very inefficient consolation to him, in this instance, to throw a mysterious cloak over the strangers, and, by an air of profound consciousness, seek to impose on the other boarders. He made less scruple about what he deemed his own share of the mystery, and scarcely had Mrs. Fumbally performed the honors of the two small chambers destined for Lady Eleanor and Helen, than Paul followed her to the little apartment familiarly termed her "den," and shutting the door, with an appearance of deep caution, took his place opposite to her at the fire.

"Well, Mr. Dempsey," said Mrs. Fumbally, "now that all is done and settled—now that I have taken these ladies into the 'establishment'"—a very favorite designation of Mrs. Fum's when she meant to be imposing—"I hope I am not unreasonable in expecting a full and complete account from you of who they are, whence they came, and, in fact, every particular necessary to satisfy me concerning them."

"Mrs. Gwynne! Miss Gwynne! mother and daughter—Captain Gwynne, the father, on the recruiting staff in the Isle of Skye, or, if you like it better, with his regiment at St. John's. Mrs. G—— a Miss Rickaby, one of the Rickabys of Pwhlmdlwm, North Wales—ancient family—small estate—all spent—obliged to live retired—till—till—no matter what—a son comes of age—to sign something—or anything that way—"

"This is all fiddle-faddle, Mr. Dempsey," said Mrs. Fum, with an expression

that seemed to say, "Take care how you trifle with me."

"To be sure it is," rejoined Paul; "all lies, every word of it. What do you say, then, if we have her the Widow Gwynne—husband shot at Bergenop-Zoom—"

"I say, Mr. Dempsey, that if you wish me to keep your secret before the other boarders—"

"The best way is never to tell it to you—eh, Mrs. Fum? Well, come, I will be open. Name, Gwynne—place of abode unknown—family ditto—means supposed to be ample—daughter charming—so very much so, indeed, that if Paul Dempsey were only what he ought—the Dempsey of Dempsey's Grove—"

"Oh, is that it?" said Mrs. Fumbally, endeavoring to smile—"is that it?"

"That's it," rejoined Paul, as he drew up his shirt-collar, and adjusted his cravat.

"Isn't she very young, Mr. Dempsey," said Mrs. Fum, slyly.

"Twenty, or thereabouts, I take it," said Paul, carelessly—"quite suitable as regards age."

"I never thought you'd marry, Mr. Dempsey," said Mrs. Fum, with a languishing look, that contrasted strangely with the habitually shrewish expression of the "Panther's" face.

"Can't help it, Mrs. Fum. The last of the Romans! No more Dempseys when I'm gone, if I don't. Elder branch all dropped off—last twig of the younger myself."

"Ah! these are considerations, indeed!" sighed the lady. "But don't you think that a person more like yourself in taste—more similar in opinion of the world? She looks proud, Mr. Dempsey; I should say, overbearingly proud."

"Rather proud myself, if that's all," said Dempsey, drawing himself up, and protruding his chin with a most comic imitation of dignity.

"Only becomingly so, Mr. Dempsey—a proper sense of self-respect, a due feeling for your future position in life—I never saw more than that, I must say. Now, I couldn't help remarking the way that young lady threw herself into the chair, and the glance she gave at the room. It was number eight, Mr. Dempsey, with the chintz furniture, and the looking-glass over the chimney! well, really, you'd say, it was poor Leonard's room, with the settee bed in the corner—the look she gave it!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Dempsey, who really felt horrified at this undervaluing judgment of what every boarder regarded as the very sanctum of the Fumbally temple.

"Truth, every word of it!" resumed Mrs. Fum. "I thought my ears deceived me, as she said to her mother, 'Oh, it's all very neat and clean!'—neat and clean. Mr. Dempsey! The elegant rug which I worked myself—the pointer—and the wild duck."

"Like life, by Jove, if it wasn't that the dog has only three legs."

"Perspective, Mr. Dempsey, don't forget it's perspective, and if the bird's wings are maroon, I couldn't help it, it was the only color to be had in the town."

"The group is fine—devilish fine!" said Paul, with the air of one whose word was final.

"'Neat and clean' were the expressions she used! I could have cried as I heard it." Here the lady, probably in consideration for the omission, wiped her eyes, and dropped her voice to a very sympathetic key.

"She meant it well, depend upon it, Mrs. Fum, she meant it well."

"And the old lady," resumed Mrs. Fumbally, deaf to every consolation, "lay back in her chair this way, and said, 'Oh, it will all do very well—you'll not find us troublesome, Mrs. Flumary!' I haven't been the head of this establishment eight-and-twenty years to be called Flumary. How these airs are to be tolerated by the other boarders, I'm sure is more than I can say."

It appeared more than Mr. Dempsey could say also, if one might pronounce from the woo-begone expression of his face; for, up to this moment totally wrapped up in the mysterious portion of the affair, he had lost sight of all the conflicting interests this sudden advent would call into activity.

"That wasn't all," continued Mrs. Fumbally, "for when I told them the dinner hour was five, the old lady interrupted me with—'For the present—with your permission—we should prefer dining at six.' Did any one ever hear the like? I'll have a pretty rebellion in the house when it gets out! Mrs. Mackay will have her tea up-stairs every night—Mr. Dunlop will always breakfast in bed. I wouldn't be surprised if Miss Boyle stood out for broth in the middle of the day."

"Oh!" exclaimed Paul, holding up both hands in horror.

"I vow and protest, I expect that next!" exclaimed Mrs. Fum, as folding her arms, and fixing her eyes rigidly on the grate, she sat, the ideal of abused and injured benevolence. "Indeed, Mr. Dempsey," said she, after a long silence on both sides, "it would be a great breach of the regard many years

of intimacy with you has formed, if I did not say, that your affections are misplaced. Beauty is a perishable gift."

Paul looked at Mrs. Fumbally, and seemed struck with the truth of her remark.

"But the qualities of the mind, Mr. Dempsey, those rare endowments that make happy the home and hearth. You're fond of beef hash with pickled onions," said she, smiling sweetly; "well, you shall have one to-day."

"Good creature!" muttered Paul, while he pressed her hand affectionately. "The best heart in the world!"

"Ah, yes," sighed the lady, half soliloquizing, "conformity of temper—the pliancy of the reed—the tender attachment of the ivy."

Paul coughed, and drew himself up proudly, and, as if a sudden thought occurred to him that he resembled an oak of the forest, he planted his feet firmly, and stood stiff and erect.

"You are not half careful enough about yourself, Mr. Dempsey—never attend to changing your damp clothes—and I assure you the climate here requires it; and when you come in, cold and wet, you should always step in here, on your way upstairs, and take a little something warm and cordial. I don't know if you approve of this," suiting the action to the words. Mrs. Fum had opened a small cupboard in the wall, and taken out a quaint-looking flask, and a very diminutive glass.

"Nectar, by Jove—downright nectar."

"Made with some white currants and ginger," chimed in Mrs. Fum, simply, as if to imply—See what skill can effect—behold the magic power of intelligence!

"White currants and ginger!" echoed Paul, holding out the glass to be refilled.

"A trifle of spirits, of course."

"Of course! couldn't be comforting without it."

"That's what poor dear Fumbally always called, 'Ye know, ye know.' It was his droll way of saying 'Noyau!'" Here Mrs. F. displayed a conflict of smiles and tears; a perfect April landscape on her features. "He had such spirits."

"I don't wonder, if he primed himself with this, often," said Dempsey, who at last relinquished his glass, but with evident unwillingness.

"He used to say that his was a happy home!" sobbed Mrs. Fum, while she pressed her handkerchief to her face.

Paul did not well know what he should say, or if, indeed, he was called upon to utter a sentiment at all; but he thought

he could have drunk another glass to the late Fum's memory, if his widow hadn't kept such a tight grip of the flask.

"Oh, Mr. Dempsey, who could have thought it would come to this?" The sorrowful drooping of her eyelids, as she spoke, seemed to intimate an allusion to the low state of the decanter, and Dempsey at once replied,

"There's a very honest glass in it still."

"Kind—kind creature!" sobbed Mrs. Fum, as she poured out the last of the liquor. And Paul was sorely puzzled, whether the encomium applied to the defunct or himself. "Do you know, Mr. Dempsey"—here she gave a kind of hysterical giggle, that might take any turn, hilarious or the reverse, as events should distate—"do you know, that as I see you there, standing before the fire, looking so pleasant and cheerful, so much at home, as a body might say, I can't help fancying a great resemblance between you and my poor dear Fum. He was older than you," said she, rapidly, as a slight cloud passed over Paul's features;—"older and stouter, but he had the same jocose smile, the same merry voice, and even that little fidgety habit with the hands. I know you'll forgive me—even that was his."

This was in all probability strictly correct, inasmuch as for several years before his demise the gifted individual had labored under a perpetual "delirium tremens."

"He rather liked this kind of thing," said Paul, pantomiming the action of drinking with his now empty glass.

"In moderation—only in moderation."

"I've heard that it disagreed with him," rejoined Paul, who, not pleased with his counterpart, resolved on showing his knowledge of his habits.

"So it did," sighed Mrs. Fum; "and he gave it up in consequence."

"I heard that, too," said Paul; and then muttered to himself, "on the morning he died."

A gentle tap at the door now broke in upon the colloquy, and a very slatternly servant woman, with bare legs and feet, made her appearance.

"What d'ye want, Biddy?" asked her mistress, in an angry voice. "I'm just settling accounts with Mr. Dempsey, and you bounce in as if the house was on fire."

"It's just himsel's wanted," replied the northern maiden; "the leddie canna get on ava without him, he maun come up to number 'eight,' as soon as he can."

"I'm ready," quoth Paul, as he turned to arrange his cravat, and run his hand through his hair; "I'm at their service."

"Remember, Mr. Dempsey, remember, that what I've spoken to you this day is in the strictest confidence. If matters have proceeded far with the young lady upstairs, if your heart, if hers be really engaged, forget everything—forget me."

Mrs. Fumbally's emotion had so overpowered her toward the end of her speech, that she rushed into an adjoining closet and clapped to the door, an obstacle that only acted as a sound-board to her sobs, and from which Paul hastened with equal rapidity to escape.

An entire hemisphere might have separated the small chamber where Mr. Dempsey's late interview took place from the apartment on the first floor, to which he now was summoned, and so, to do him justice, did Paul himself feel; and not all the stimulating properties of that pleasant cordial could allay certain tremors of the heart, as he turned the handle of the door.

Lady Eleanor was seated at a writing-table, and Helen beside her, working, as Mr. Dempsey entered, and, after a variety of salutations, took a chair, about the middle of the room, depositing his hat and umbrella beside him.

"It would seem, Mr. Dempsey," said Lady Eleanor, with a very benign smile, "it would seem that we have made a very silly mistake; one, I am bound to say, you are quite exonerated from any share in, and the confession of which will, doubtless, exhibit my own and my daughter's cleverness in a very questionable light before you. Do you know, Mr. Dempsey, we believed this to be an inn."

"An inn!" broke in Paul, with uplifted hands.

"Yes, and it was only by mere accident we have discovered our error, and that we are actually in a boarding-house. Pray now, Helen, do not laugh, the blunder is quite provoking enough already."

Why Miss Darcy should laugh, and what there could be to warrant the use of the epithet "provoking," Paul might have been broken on the wheel without being able to guess, while Lady Eleanor went on.

"Now, it would seem customary for the guests to adopt, here, certain hours in common—breakfasting, dining together, and associating like the members of one family."

Paul nodded an assent, and she resumed.

"I need scarcely observe to you, Mr. Dempsey, how very unsuited either myself or Miss Darcy would be to such an assembly, if even present circumstances did not more than ever enjoin a life of strict retirement."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Paul, in a tone of deprecation, "there never was anything more select than this. Mother Fum never admits without a reference; I can show you the advertisement in the Derry papers. We kept the Collector out for two months, till he brought us a regular bill of health, as a body might say."

"Could you persuade them to let us remain in 'Quarantine,' then, for a few days?" said Helen, smiling.

"Oh, no! Helen, nothing of the kind; Mr. Dempsey must not be put to any troublesome negotiations on our account. There surely must be an hotel of some sort in the town."

"This is a nice mess!" muttered Paul, who began to anticipate some of the miseries his good nature might cost him.

"A few days, a week at furthest, I hope, will enable us to communicate with our law adviser, and decide upon some more suitable abode. Could you, then, for the meanwhile, suggest a comfortable inn, or if not, a lodging in the town?"

Paul wrung his hands in dismay, but uttered not a syllable.

"To be candid, Mr. Dempsey," said Helen, "my father has a horror of these kind of places, and you could recommend us no country inn, however humble, where he would not be better pleased to hear of our taking refuge."

"But, Fumbally's! the best-known boarding-house in the North."

"I should be sincerely grieved to be understood as uttering one syllable in its disparagement," rejoined Lady Eleanor; "I could not ask for a more satisfactory voucher of its respectability; but, ours are peculiar circumstances."

"Only a pound a week," struck in Paul, "with extras."

"Nothing could be more reasonable; but pray understand me, I speak of course in great ignorance, but it would appear to me that persons living together in this fashion have a kind of right to know something of those who present themselves, for the first time, amongst them. Now, there are many reasons why neither my daughter nor myself would like to submit to this species of inquiry."

"I'll settle all that," broke in Paul; "leave that to me, and you'll have no further trouble about it."

"You must excuse my reliance even on such discretion," said Lady Eleanor, with more hauteur than before.

"Are we to understand that there is neither inn nor lodging-house to be found?" asked Helen.

"Plenty of both, but full of bagmen," ejaculated Paul, whose contrivances were all breaking down beneath him.

"What is to be done?" exclaimed Lady Eleanor to her daughter.

"Lord bless you!" cried Paul in a whining voice, "if you only come down amongst them with that great frill round your neck you wore the first day I saw you at the Corvy, you'll scare them so, they'll never have courage to utter a word. There was Miss Daly—when she was here—"

"Miss Daly—Miss Maria Daly!" exclaimed both ladies together.

"Miss Maria Daly," repeated Dempsey, with an undue emphasis on every syllable. "She spent the summer with us on the coast."

"Where had she resided up to that time, may I ask?" said Lady Eleanor, hastily.

"At the Corvy—always at the Corvy, until your arrival."

"Oh! Helen, think of this," whispered Lady Eleanor, in a voice tremulous with agitation. "Think what sacrifices we have exacted from our friends—and now, to learn that while we stand hesitating about encountering the inconveniences of our lot, that we have been subjecting another to that very same difficulty from which we shrink." Then, turning to Mr. Dempsey, she added,

"I need not observe, sir, that while I desire no mystery to be thrown around our arrival here, I will not be the less grateful for any restraint the good company may impose on themselves as to inquiries concerning us. We are really not worth the attention, and I should be sorry to impose upon kind credulity by any imaginary claim to distinction."

"You'll dine below, then?" asked Paul, far more eager to ascertain this fact than any reasons that induced it.

Lady Eleanor bowed, and Dempsey, with a face beaming with delight, arose to withdraw and communicate the happy news to Mrs. Fumbally.

CHAPTER LIX.

A GLANCE AT MRS. FUMBALLY'S.

GREAT as Lady Eleanor's objection was to subjecting herself or her daughter to the contact of a boarding-house party, when the resolve was once taken the matter cost her far less thought or anxiety than it occasioned to the other inmates of the "establishment." It is only in such segments of the great world that curiosity

reaches its true intensity, and the desire to know every circumstance of one's neighbor becomes an absorbing passion. A distrustful impression that nobody is playing on "the square"—that every one has some special cause of concealment—some hidden shame, seems the presiding tone of these places.

Mrs. Fumbally's was no exception to the rule, and now that the residents had been so long acquainted, that the personal character and fortune of each was known to all, the announcement of a new arrival caused the most lively sensations of anxiety.

Directories were ransacked for the name of Gwynne, and every separate owner of the appellation canvassed and discussed. Army lists were interrogated and combed over. Dempsey himself was examined for two hours before a "committee of the whole house," and though his inventive powers were no mean gifts, certain discrepancies, certain unexplained difficulties, did not fail to strike the acute tribunal, and he was dismissed as unworthy of credit. Baffled, not beaten, each retired to dress for dinner—a ceremony, he it remarked, only in use on great occasions—fully impressed with the conviction that the Gwynne case was a legitimate object of search and discovery.

It is not necessary here to allude to the strange display of costume that day called forth, nor what singular extravagances in dress each drew from the armory of his fascinations. The collector closed the custom-house an hour earlier, that he might be properly powdered for the occasion. Miss Boyle abandoned, "for the nonce," her accustomed walk on the Bayside, where the officers used to lounge, and in the privacy of her chamber prepared for the event. There is a tradition of her being seen, with a formidable array of curl-papers, so late as four in the afternoon. Mr. Dunlop was in a perpetual trot all day, between his tailor and his bootmaker, sundry alterations being required at a moment's notice. Mrs. Fumbally herself, however, eclipsed all competitors, as, in a robe of yellow satin, spotted with red, she made her appearance in the drawing-room; her head-dress being a turban of the same prevailing colors, but ornamented by a drooping plume of feathers and spangles so very umbrageous and pendant, that she looked like a weeping ash clad in tinsel. A crimson brooch of vast proportions—which, on near inspection, turned out to be a portrait of the departed Fumbally, but whose colors were, unhappily, not "fast ones"—confined a scarf of green velvet, from which envious time had worn off all the pile, and left a "sear and yellow" stubble everywhere perceptible.

Whether Mrs. Fum's robe had been devised at a period when dresses were worn much shorter, or that, from being very tall, a sufficiency of the material could not be obtained—but true it is, her costume would have been almost national in certain Scotch regiments, and necessitated, for modesty's sake, a peculiar species of ducking trip, that, with the nodding motion of her head, gave her the gait of a kangaroo.

Scarcely had the various individuals time to give a cursory glance at their neighbors' finery, when Lady Eleanor appeared leaning on her daughter's arm. Mr. Dempsey had waited for above half an hour outside the door to offer his escort, which being coldly but civilly declined, the ladies entered.

Mrs. Fumbally rose to meet her guests, and was about to proceed in due form with a series of introductions, when Lady Eleanor cut her short by a very slight but courteous salutation to the company collectively, and then sat down.

The most insufferable assumption of superiority is never half so chilling in its effect upon underbred people as the calm quietude of good manners.

And thus the party were more repelled by Lady Eleanor and her daughter's easy bearing than they would have felt at any outrageous pretension. The elegant simplicity of their dress, too, seemed to rebuke the stage finery of the others, and very uneasy glances met and were interchanged at this new companionship. A few whispered words, an occasional courageous effort to talk aloud, suddenly ending in a cough, and an uneasy glance at the large silver watch over the chimney, were all that took place, when the uncombed head of a waiter, hired specially for the day, gave the announcement that dinner was served.

"Mr. Dempsey—Mr. Dunlop," said Mrs. Fumbally, with a gesture toward Lady Eleanor and her daughter. The gentlemen both advanced a step and then stood stock still, as Lady Eleanor, drawing her shawl around her with one hand, slipped the other within her daughter's arm. Every eye was now turned toward Mr. Dunlop, who was a kind of recognized type of high life, and he, feeling the urgency of the moment, made a step in advance, and with extended arm, said, "May I have the honor to offer my arm?"

"With your leave, I'll take my daughter's, sir," said Lady Eleanor, coldly; and without paying the least attention to the various significant glances around her, she walked forward to the dinner-room.

The chilling reserve produced by the new

arrivals had given an air of decorous quietude to the dinner, which, if gratifying to Lady Eleanor and Helen, was very far from being so to the others, and as the meal proceeded, certain low mutterings—the groundswell of a coming storm—announced the growing feeling of displeasure amongst them. Lady Eleanor and Miss Darcy were too unconscious of having offered any umbrage to the party, to notice these indications of discontent; nor did they remark that Mr. Dempsey himself was becoming overwhelmed by the swelling waves of popular indignation.

A very curt monosyllable had met Lady Eleanor in the two efforts she had made at conversation with her neighbor, and she was perhaps not very sorry to find that table-talk was not a regulation of the “establishment.”

Had Lady Eleanor or Helen been disposed to care for it, they might have perceived that the dinner itself was not less anomalous than the company, and like them suffered sorely from being over dressed. They, however, affected to eat, and seem satisfied with everything, resolved that having encountered the ordeal, they would go through with it to the last. The observances of the table had one merit in the Fumbally household: they were conducted with no unnecessary tediousness. The courses—if we dare so apply the name to an irregular skirmish of meats, hot, cold, and *réchauffé*—followed rapidly, the guests ate equally so, and the table presented a scene, if not of convivial enjoyment, at least of bustle and animation, that supplied its place. This movement, so to call it, was sufficiently new to amuse Helen Darcy, who, less pained than her mother at their companionship, could not help relishing many of the eccentric features of the scene; everything in the dress, manner, tone of voice, and bearing of the company, presenting such a striking contrast to all she had been used to. This enjoyment on her part, although regulated by the strictest good breeding, was perceived, or rather suspected, by some of the ladies present, and looks of very unmistakable anger were darted toward her from the end of the table, so that both mother and daughter felt the moment a very welcome one, when a regiment of small decanters were set down on the board, and the ladies rose to withdraw.

If Lady Eleanor had consulted her own ardent wishes, she would at once have retired to her room, but she had resolved on the whole sacrifice, and took her place in the drawing-room, determined to follow in

every respect the usages around her. Mrs. Fumbally addressed a few civil words to her, and then left the room to look after the cares of the household. The group of seven ladies who remained, formed themselves into a coterie apart, and producing from sundry bags and baskets little specimens of female handiwork, began arranging their cottons and worsteds with a most praiseworthy activity.

While Lady Eleanor sat with folded hands, and half-closed lids, sunk in her own meditations, Helen arose and walked toward a book-shelf, where some well-thumbed volumes were lying. An odd volume of “Delphine,” a “Treatise on Domestic Cookery,” and “Moore’s Zeluco,” were not attractive, and she sauntered to the piano, on which were scattered some of the songs from the “Siege of Belgrade,” the then popular piece; certain comic melodies lay also among them, inscribed with the name of Lawrence M’Farland, a gentleman whom they had heard addressed several times during dinner. While Helen turned over the music pages, the eyes of the others were riveted on her, and when she ran her fingers over the keys of the cracked old instrument, and burst into an involuntary laugh at its discordant tones, a burst of unequivocal indignation could no longer be restrained.

“I declare, Miss M’Corde,” said an old lady with a paralytic shake in her head, and a most villainous expression in her one eye—“I declare I would speak to her, if I was in your place.”

“Unquestionably,” exclaimed another, whose face was purple with excitement; and thus encouraged, a very thin and very tall personage, with a long, slender nose tipped with pink, and light red hair in ringlets, arose from her seat, and approached where Helen was standing.

“You are perhaps not aware, ma’am,” said she, with a mincing, lisping accent, the very essence of gentility, “that this instrument is not a ‘house piano.’”

Helen blushed slightly at the address, but could not for her life guess what the words meant. She had heard of grand pianos and square pianos, of cottage pianos, but never of “house pianos,” and she answered in the most simple of voices, “Indeed.”

“No, ma’am, it is not; it belongs to your very humble servant”—here she courtesied to the ground—“who regrets deeply that its tone should not have more of your approbation.”

“And I, ma’am,” said a fat old lady, waddling over, and wheezing as though she

should choke, "I have to express my sorrow that the book-shelf, which you have just ransacked, should not present something worthy of your notice. The volumes are mine."

"And perhaps, ma'am," cried a third, a little meager figure, with a voice like a nutmeg-grater, "you could persuade the old lady, whom I presume is your mother, to take her feet off that worked stool. When I made it, I scarcely calculated on the honor it now enjoys!"

Lady Eleanor looked up at this instant, and, although unconscious of what was passing, seeing Helen, whose face was now crimson, standing in the midst of a very excited group, she arose hastily, and said,

"Helen, dearest, is there anything the matter?"

"I should say there was, ma'am," interposed the very fat lady—"I should be disposed to say there was a great deal the matter. That to make use of private articles as if they were for house use—to thump one lady's piano—to toss another lady's books—to make oneself comfortable in a chair specially provided for the oldest boarder—with one's feet on another lady's footstool—these are liberties, ma'am, which become something more than freedom when taken by unknown individuals."

"I beg you will forgive my daughter and myself," said Lady Eleanor, with an air of real regret; "our total ignorance—"

"I thought as much, indeed," muttered she of the shaking head; "there is no other word for it."

"You are quite correct, ma'am," said Lady Eleanor, at once addressing her in the most apologetic of voices—"I cannot but repeat the word; our very great ignorance of the usages observed here is our only excuse, and I beg you to believe us incapable of taking such liberties in future."

If anything could have disarmed the wrath of this holy alliance, the manner in which these words were uttered might have done so. Far from it, however. When the softer sex are deficient in breeding, mercy is scarcely one of their social attributes. Had Lady Eleanor assumed toward them the manner with which, in other days, she had repelled vulgar attempts at familiarity, they would, in all probability, have shrunk back, abashed and ashamed; but, her yielding suggested boldness, and they advanced, with something like what in Cossack warfare is termed a "hurra," an indiscriminate clang of voices being raised, in reprobation of every supposed outrage the unhappy strangers had inflicted on the company. Amid this Babel of accu-

sation, Lady Eleanor could distinguish nothing, and while, overwhelmed by the torrent, she was preparing to take her daughter's arm and withdraw, the door, which led into the dining-room, was suddenly thrown open, and the convivial party entered *en masse*.

"Here's a shindy—by George!" cried Mr. M'Farland—"the pickle and the wit of the establishment—I say, see how the new ones are getting it!"

While Mr. Dempsey hurried away to seek Mrs. Fumbally herself, the confusion and uproar increased. The loud, coarse laughter of the "gentlemen" being added to the wrathful violence of the softer sex. Lady Eleanor, however, had drawn her daughter to her side, and without uttering a word, proceeded to leave the room. To this course a considerable obstacle presented itself in the shape of the collector, who, with expanded legs, and hands thrust deep into his side-pockets, stood against the door.

"Against the ninth general rule, ma'am, which you may read in the frame over the chimney!" exclaimed he, in a voice somewhat more faltering and thicker than became a respectable official. "No lady or gentleman can leave the room, while any dispute in which they are concerned remains unsettled. Isn't that it, M'Farland?" cried he, as the young gentleman alluded to took down the law-table from its place.

"All right," replied M'Farland; "the very best rule in the house. Without it, all the rows would take place in private! Now for a court of inquiry. Mr. Dunlop, you are for the prosecution, and can't sit."

"May I beg, sir, you will permit us to pass out?" said Lady Eleanor, in a voice whose composure was slightly shaken.

"Can't be, ma'am; in contravention of all law," rejoined the collector.

"Where is Mr. Dempsey?" whispered Helen, in her despair; and though the words were uttered in a low voice, one of the ladies overheard them. A general titter ran immediately around, only arrested by the fat lady exclaiming aloud, "Shameless minx!"

A very loud hubbub of voices outside now rivaled the tumult within, amid which one most welcome was distinguished by Helen.

"Oh, mamma, how fortunate, I hear Tate's voice."

"It's me—it's Mrs. Fumbally," cried that lady, at the same moment tapping sharply at the door.

"No matter, can't open the door now. Court is about to sit," replied the collector.

"Mrs. Gwynne stands arraigned for—for what is't? There's no use in making that clatter; the door shall not be opened."

This speech was scarcely uttered, when a tremendous bang was heard, and the worthy collector, with the door over him, was hurled on his face in the midst of the apartment, upsetting in his progress a round table and a lamp over the assembled group of ladies.

Screams of terror, rage, pain, and laughter, were now commingled, and while some assisted the prostrate official to rise, and sprinkled his temples with water, others bestowed their attentions on the diminished fair, whose luster was sadly diminished by lamp-oil and bruises, while a third section, of which M'Farland was chief, lay back in their chairs and laughed vociferously; meanwhile, how and when, nobody could tell, but Lady Eleanor and her daughter had escaped and gained their apartments in safety.

A more rueful scene than the room presented need not be imagined. The collector, whose nose bled profusely, sat pale, half fainting, in one corner, while some kind friends labored to stop the bleeding, and restore him to animation. Lamentations of the most poignant grief were uttered over silks, satins, and tabinets, irretrievably ruined; while the paralytic lady, having broken the ribbon of her cap, her head rolled about fearfully, and even threatened to come clean off altogether. As for poor Mrs. Fumbally, she flew from place to place, in a perfect agony of affliction; now, wringing her hands over the prostrate door, now, over the fragments of the lamp, and now endeavoring to restore the table, which, despite all her efforts, would not stand upon two legs. But the most miserable figure of all was Paul Dempsey, who saw no footing for himself anywhere. Lady Eleanor and Helen must detest him to the day of his death. The boarders could never forgive him. Mrs. Fum would as certainly regard him as the author of all evil, and the collector would inevitably begin dunning him for an unsettled balance of fourteen and ninepence, lost at "spoiled five," two winters before.

Already, indeed, symptoms of his unpopularity began to show themselves. Angry looks and spiteful glances were directed toward him, amidst muttered expressions of displeasure. How far these manifestations might have proceeded there is no saying, had not the attention of the company been drawn to the sudden noise of a carriage stopping at the street door.

"Going, flitting, evacuating the terri-

tory!" exclaimed M'Farland, as from an open window he contemplated the process of packing a post-chaise with several heavy trunks and portmanteaus.

"The Gwynnes!" muttered the collector, with his handkerchief to his face.

"Even so! flying with camp equipage and all. There stands your victor, that little old fellow with the broad shoulders. I say, come here a moment," called he aloud, making a sign for Tate to approach. "The collector is not in the least angry for what's happened; he knew you didn't mean any thing serious. Pray, who are these ladies, your mistresses I mean?"

"Lady Eleanor Darcy and Miss Darcy, of Gwynne Abbey," replied Tate, sturdily, as he gave the names with a most emphatic distinctness.

"The devil it was!" exclaimed M'Farland.

"By my conscience, yer may well wonder at being in such company, sir," said Tate, laughing, and resuming his place just in time to assist Lady Eleanor to ascend the steps. Helen quickly followed, the door was slammed to, and Tate mounting with the alacrity of a town footman, the chaise set out at a brisk pace down the street.

CHAPTER LX.

THE COAST IN WINTER.

ALTHOUGH Tate Sullivan had arrived in Coleraine, and provided himself with a chaise, expressly to bring his mistress and her daughter back to the Corvy—from which the sheriff's officers had retired in discomfiture, on discovering the loss of their warrants—Lady Eleanor, dreading a renewal of the law proceedings, had determined never to return thither.

From the postilion they learned that a small but not uncomfortable lodging could be had near the little village of Port Ballintray, and to this spot they now directed their course. The transformation of a little summer watering-place into the dismal village of some poor fishermen in winter, is a sad spectacle; nor was the picture relieved by the presence of the fragments of a large vessel, which, lately lost with all its crew, hung on the rocks, thumping and clattering with every motion of the waves. By the faint moonlight, Lady Eleanor and her daughter could mark the outlines of figures, as they waded in the tide, or clamored along the rocks, stripping the last

remains of the noble craft, and contending with each other for the spoils of the dead.

If the scene itself was a sorrowful one, it was no less painful to their eyes from feeling a terrible similitude between their own fortunes and that of the wrecked vessel: the gallant ship meant to float in its pride over the ocean, now a broken and shattered wreck, falling asunder with each stroke of the sea!

"How like, and yet how unlike!" sighed Lady Eleanor; "if these crushed and shattered timbers have no feeling in the hour of adversity, yet are they denied the glorious hopefulness that in the saddest moments clings to humanity. Ours is shipwreck too, but taken at its worst, in only temporary calamity!"

Helen pressed her mother's hands with fervor to her lips—perhaps never had she loved her with more intensity than at that instant.

The chaise drew up at the door of a little cabin, built at the foot of, and, as it actually seemed, against a steep rocky cliff of great height. In summer, it was regarded as one of the best among the surrounding lodgings, but now it looked dreary enough. A fishing-boat, set up on one end, formed a kind of sheltering porch to the doorway, while spars, masts, and oars were lashed upon the thatch, to serve as a protection against the dreadful gales of winter.

A childless widow was the only occupant, whose scanty livelihood was eked out by letting lodgings to the summer visitors—a precarious subsistence, which, in bad seasons, and they were not unfrequent, failed altogether. It was with no small share of wonderment that Mary Spellan, or "old Molly," as the village more usually called her, saw a carriage draw up to the cabin door late of a dark night in winter, nor was this feeling unalloyed by a very strong tincture of suspicion, for Molly was an Antrim woman, and had her proportion of the qualities, good and bad, of the "Black North."

"They'll no be makin' a stay on't," said she to the post-boy, who, in his capacity of interpreter, had got down to explain to Molly the requirements of the strangers. "They'll be here to-day and awa to-morrow, I'm thenkin'," said she, with habitual and native distrust. "And what for will I make a 'hottle'?"—(no greater indignity could be offered to the lodging-house keeper than to compare the accommodation in any respect with that of an hotel)—"of my wee bit house, takin' out linen and a' the rest o' it—for maybe a day or twa."

Lady Eleanor, who watched from the window of the chaise the course of the negotiations, without hearing any part of the colloquy, was impatient at the slow progress events seemed to take, and supposing that the post-boy's demands were made with more regard to their habits than to old Molly's means of accommodation, called out,

"Tell the good woman that we are easily satisfied, and if the cabin be but clean and quiet—"

"What's the leddie sayin'?" said Molly, who heard only a stray word, and that not over pleasing to her.

"She's saying it will do very well," said the postboy, conciliatingly, "and 'tis maybe a whole year she'll stay with you."

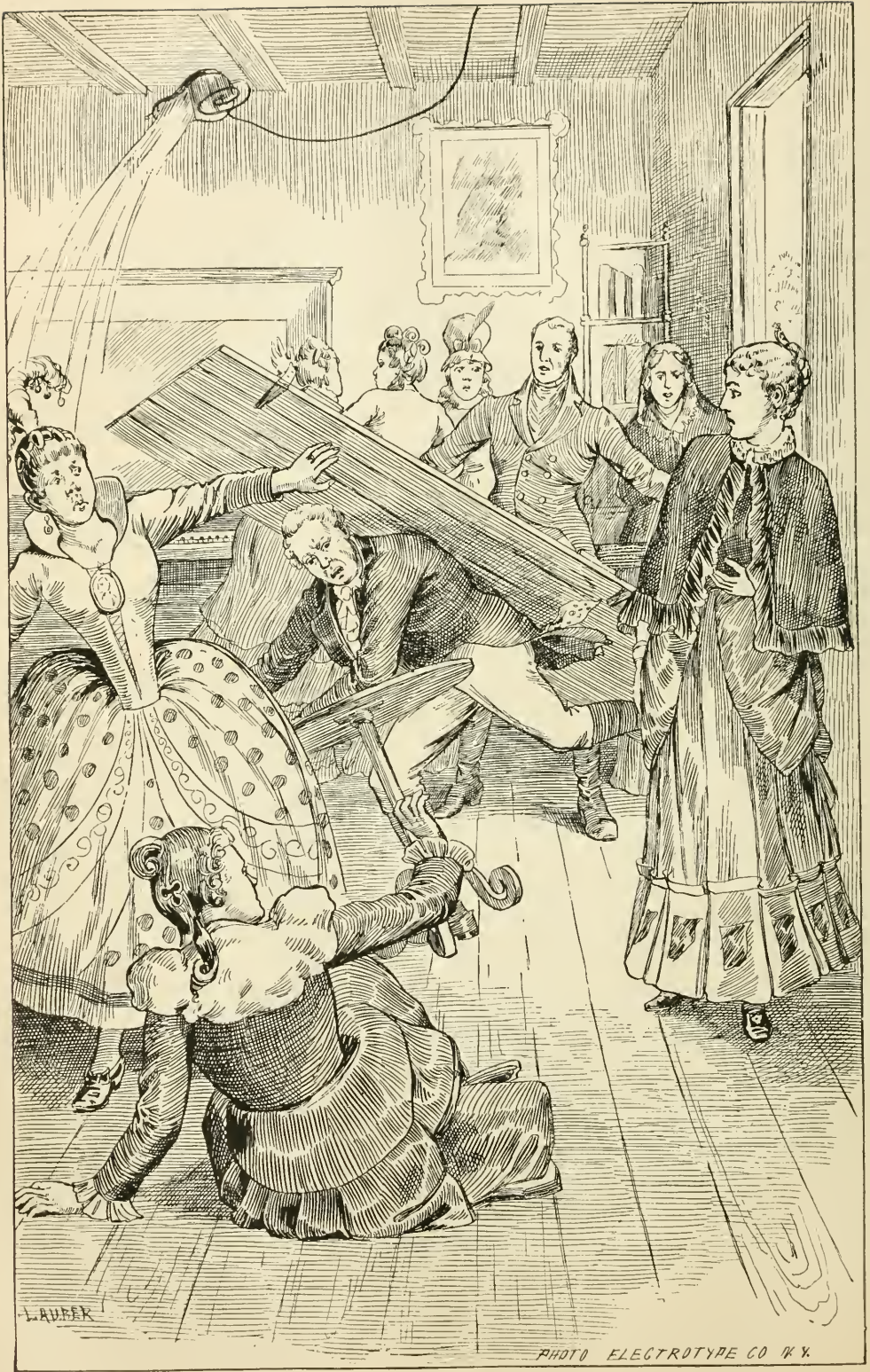
"Ech, dearee me!" sighed Molly, "it's wearisome enough to ha' them a' the summer, without hae'ing them in the winter too. Tell her to come ben, and see if she likes the place." And with this not over courteous proposal, Molly turned her back, and rolled, rather than walked, into the cabin.

The three little rooms, which comprised the whole suite destined for strangers, were, in all their poverty, scrupulously clean; and Molly, gradually thawed by the evident pretensions of her guests, volunteered little additions to the furniture, as she went along, concluding with the very characteristic remark,

"But ye maun consider, that it's no my habit, or my likin' either, to hae lodgers in the winter, and af ye come, ye maun e'en pay for your whistle, like ither folk."

This was the arrangement that gave Lady Eleanor the least trouble, and though the terms demanded were in reality exorbitant, they were acceded to, without hesitation, by those who never had had occasion to make similar compacts, and believed that the sum was a most reasonable one.

As is ever the case, the many wants and inconveniences of a restricted dwelling were far more placidly endured by those long habituated to every luxury, than by their followers; and so, while Lady Eleanor and Helen submitted cheerfully to daily privations of one kind or other, Tate lived a life of everlasting complaint and grumbling over the narrow accommodation of the cabin, continually irritating old Molly by demands impossible to comply with, and suggesting the necessity of changes, perfectly out of her power to effect. It is but justice to the faithful old butler to state, that to this line of conduct he was prompted by what he deemed due to his mistress, and her high station, rather than by any



LAUBER

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A TREMENDOUS BANG WAS HEARD, AND THE WORTHY COLLECTOR, WITH THE DOOR OVER HIM WAS HURLED INTO THE ROOM. (P. 271.)

vain hope of ever succeeding, his complaints being less demands for improvement than after the fashion of those "protests," which dissentient members of a legislature think it necessary to make, in cases where opposition is unavailing.

These half-heard mutterings of Tate were the only interruptions to a life of sad but tranquil monotony. Lady Eleanor and her daughter lived as though in a long dream; the realities around them so invested with sameness and uniformity, that days, weeks, and months blended into each other, and became one commingled mass of time, undivided and unmarked. Of the world without they heard but little—of those dearest to them, absolutely nothing. The very newspapers maintained a silence on the subject of the expedition under Abercrombie, so that of the knight himself they had no tidings whatever. Of Daly they only heard once, at the end of one of Bicknell's letters, one of those gloomy records of the law's delay! that he said, "You will be sorry to learn, that Mr. Bagenal Daly, having omitted to appear personally, or by counsel, in a cause lately called on here, has been cast in heavy damages, and pronounced in contempt, neither of which inflictions will probably give him much uneasiness, if, as report speaks, he has gone to pass the remainder of his days in America. Miss Daly speaks of joining him, when she learns that he has fixed on any spot of future residence." The only particle of consolation extractable from the letter was in a paragraph at the end, which ran thus: "O'Reilly's solicitor has withdrawn all the proceedings lately commenced, and there is an evident desire to avoid farther litigation. I hear that for the points now in dispute, an arbitration will be proposed. Would you feel disposed, or free to accept such an offer, if made? Let me know this, as I should be prepared at all events."

Even this half-confession of a claim gave hope to the drooping spirits of Lady Eleanor, and she lost no time in acquainting Bicknell with her opinion, that while they neither could nor would compromise the rights of their son, that, for any interests actually their own, and terminating with their lives, they would willingly adopt any arrangement that should remove the most pressing evils of poverty, and permit them to live united for the rest of their days.

The severe winter of northern Ireland closed in with all its darkening skies and furious storms—scattered fragments of wrecked vessels, spars, and shipgear, strew-

ed the rocky coast for miles. The few cottages here and there were closed and barricaded as if against an enemy, the roofs fastened down by ropes and heavy implements of husbandry, to keep safe the thatch; the boats of the fishermen drawn up on land, grouped round the shealings in sad, but not unpicturesque confusion. The ever restless sea, beating like thunder upon that iron shore; the dark impending clouds lowering over cliff and precipice, were all that the eye could mark. No cattle were on the hills, the sheep nestling in the little glens and valleys were almost undistinguishable from the depth of gloom around: not a man was to be seen.

The little village of Port Ballinrath, which a few months before abounded in all the sights and sounds of human intercourse, was now perfectly deserted. Most of the cottages were fastened on the inside; in some, the doors, burst open by the storm, showed still more unquestionably that no dwellers remained; the little gardens, tended with such care, were now uprooted and devastated; fallen trellises and ruined porches were seen on every side, and even Mrs. Fumbally's, the pride and glory of the place, had not escaped the general wreck, and the flaunting archway, on which, in bright letters, her name was inscribed, hung pensively by one pillar, and waved like a sad pendulum, "counting the weary minutes over!"

While nothing could less resemble the signs of habitation than the aspect of matters without, within a fire burned on more than one hearth, and a serving-woman was seen moving from place to place, occupied in making those arrangements which bespoke the speedy arrival of visitors.

It was long after nightfall that a traveling carriage and four—a rare sight in such a place, even in the palmiest days of summer—drew up at the front of the little garden, and after some delay, a very old and feeble man was lifted out, and carried between two servants into the house; he was followed by another, whose firm step and erect figure indicated the prime of life; while after him again came a small man, most carefully protected by coats and comforters against the severity of the season. He walked lame, and in the shuddering look he gave around in the short transit from the carriage to the house door, showed that such prospects, however grand and picturesque, had few charms for him.

A short interval elapsed after the luggage was removed from the carriage, and then one of the servants mounted the box, the horses' heads were turned, and the con-

veyance was seen retiring by the road to Coleraine.

The effective force of Mrs. Fum's furniture was never remarkable, in days of gala and parade; it was still less imposing now, when nothing remained save an invalided garrison of deal chairs and tables, a few curtainless beds, and a stray chest of drawers or two of the rudest fashion.

The ample turf fire on the hearth of the chief sitting-room, cheering and bright as was its aspect, after the dark and rainy scene without doors, could not gladden the air of these few and comfortless movables into a look of welcome, and so one of the newly-arrived party seemed to feel, as he threw his glance over the meager-looking chamber, and in a half-complaining, half-inquiring tone said,

"Don't you think, sir, they might have done this a little better? These windows are no defense against the wind or rain, the walls are actually soaked with wet; not a bit of carpet, not a chair to sit upon! I'm greatly afraid for the old gentleman; if he were to be really ill in such a place—"

A heavy fit of coughing from the inner room now seemed to corroborate the suspicion.

"We must make the best of it, Nalty," said the other. "Remember, the plan was of your own devising; there was no time for much preparation here, if even it had been prudent or possible to make it; and as to my father, I warrant you his constitution is as good as yours or mine; anxiety about this business has preyed upon him; but let your plan only succeed, and I warrant him as able to undergo fatigue and privation as either of us."

"His cough is very troublesome," interposed Nalty, timidly.

"About the same I have known it every winter since I was a boy," said the other, carelessly. "I say, sir," added he, louder, while he tapped the door with his knuckles—"I say, sir, Nalty is afraid you have caught fresh cold."

"Tell him, his annuity is worth three years' purchase," said the old man from within, with a strange, unearthly effort at a laugh. "Tell him, if he'll pay five hundred pounds down, I'll let him run his own life against mine in the deed."

"There, you hear that, Nalty! What say you to the proposal?"

"Wonderful old man! astonishing!" muttered Nalty, evidently not flattered at the doubts thus suggested as to his own longevity.

"He doesn't seem to like that, Bob, eh?" called out the old man, with another cackle.

"After that age they get a new lease, sir—actually a new lease of life," whispered Nalty.

Mr. O'Reilly—for it was that gentleman, who, accompanied by his father and confidential lawyer, formed the party—gave a dry assent to the proposition, and drawing his chair closer to the fire, seemed to occupy himself with his own thoughts. Meanwhile, the old doctor continued to maintain a low muttering conversation with his servant, until at length the sounds were exchanged for a deep snoring respiration, and he slept.

The appearance of a supper, which, if not very appetizing, was at least very welcome, partially restored the drooping spirits of Mr. Nalty, who now ate and talked with a degree of animation quite different from his former mood.

"The ham is excellent, sir, and the veal very commendable," said he, perceiving that O'Reilly sat with his untouched plate before him, "and a glass of sherry is very grateful after such a journey."

"A weary journey, indeed," said O'Reilly, sighing; "the roads in this part of the island would seem seldom traveled, and the inns never visited; however, if we succeed, Nalty—"

"So we shall, sir, I have not the slightest doubt of it; it is perfectly evident that they have no money to go on. 'The sinews of war' are expended, all Bicknell's late proceedings indicate a failing exchequer; that late record, for instance, at Westport, should never have been left to a common jury."

"All this may be true, and yet we may find them unwilling to adopt a compromise; there is a spirit in this class of men very difficult to deal with."

"But we have two expedients," interrupted Nalty.

"Say, rather, a choice between two; you forget that if we try my father's plan, the other can never be employed."

"I incline to the other mode of procedure," said Nalty, thoughtfully; "it has an appearance of frankness and candor very likely to influence people of this kind; besides, we have such a strong foundation to go upon—the issue of two trials at bar, both adverse to them, O'Grady's opinion on the ejection cases equally opposed to their views. The expense of a suit in equity to determine the validity of the entail, and show how far young Darcy can be a plaintiff: then the cases for a jury; all costly matters, sir! Bicknell knows this well; indeed, if the truth were out, I suspect Sam is getting frightened about his own costs;

he has sold out of the funds twice to pay fees."

"Yet the plan is a mere compromise, after all," said O'Reilly; "it is simply saying, relinquish your right, and accept so much money."

"Not exactly, sir; we deny the right, we totally reject the claim; we merely say, forego proceedings that are useless, spare yourselves and us the cost and publicity of legal measures, whose issue never can benefit you, and, in return for your compliance, receive an annuity or a sum, as may be agreed upon."

"But how is Lady Eleanor to decide upon a course so important, in the absence of her husband and her son? Is it likely, is it possible she would venture on so bold a step?"

"I think so; Bicknell half acknowledged that the funds of the suit were her jointure, and that Darcy, out of delicacy toward her, had left it entirely at her option to continue or abandon the proceedings."

"Still," said O'Reilly, "a great difficulty remains; for supposing them to accept our terms, that they give up the claim and accept a sum in return, what, if at some future day evidence should turn up to substantiate their views—they may not, it is true, break the engagement—though I don't see why they should not—but let us imagine them to be faithful to the contract—what will the world say? in what position shall we stand when the matter gains publicity?"

"How can it, sir?" interposed Nalty, quickly; "how is it possible, if there be no trial? The evidence, as you call it, is no evidence, unless produced in court. You know, sir," said the little man, with twinkling eyes and pleased expression, "that a great authority at common law only declined the testimony of a ghost because the spirit wasn't in court to be cross-examined. Now all they could bring would be rumor, newspaper allegations and paragraphs, asterisks and blanks."

"There may come a time when public opinion, thus expounded, will be as stringent as the judgments of the law courts," said O'Reilly, thoughtfully.

"I am not so certain of that, sir; the license of an unfettered press will always make its decisions inoperative; it is 'the chartered libertine' the poet speaks of."

"But what if, yielding to public impression, it begins to feel that its weight is in exact proportion to its truth, that well-founded opinions, just judgments, correct anticipations, obtain a higher praise and price than scandalous anecdotes and furious

attacks? What, if that day should arrive, Nalty? I am by no means convinced that such an era is distant."

"Let it come, sir," said the little man, rubbing his hands, "and when it does there will be enough employment on its hands without going back on our transgressions; the world will always be wicked enough to keep the moralist at his work of correction; but to return to our immediate object, I perceive you are inclined to Dr. Hickman's plan."

"I am so far in its favor," said O'Reilly, "that it solves the present difficulty, and prevents all future danger. Should my father succeed in persuading Lady Eleanor to this marriage, the interest of the two families is inseparably united. It is very unlikely that any circumstance, of what nature soever, would induce young Darcy to dispute his sister's claim, or endanger her position in society. This settlement of the question is satisfactory in itself, and shows a good face to the world, and I confess I am curious to know what peculiar objection you can see against it."

"It has but one fault, sir."

"And that?"

"Simply, it is impossible."

"Is it the presumption of a son of mine seeking an alliance with the daughter of Maurice Darcy that appears so very impossible?" said Hickman, with a hissing utterance of each word, that bespoke a fierce conflict of passion within him.

"Certainly not, sir," replied Nalty, hastily excusing himself. "I am well aware which party contributes most to such a compact. Mr. Beecham O'Reilly might look far higher—"

"Wherein lies the impossibility you speak of, then?" rejoined O'Reilly, sternly.

"I need scarcely remind *you*, sir," said Nalty, with an air of deep humility, "*you* that have seen so much more of life than I have, of what inveterate prejudices these old families—as they like to call themselves—are made up. That, creating a false standard of rank, they adhere to its distinctions with a tenacity far greater than what they exhibit toward the real attributes of fortune. They seem to adopt for their creed the words of the old song,

"The king may make a baron bold,
Or an earl of any fool, sir;
But with all his power and all his gold,
He never can make an O'Toole, sir."

"These are very allowable feelings when sustained by wealth and fortune," said O'Reilly, calmly.

"I verily believe their influence is greater in adversity," said Nalty; "they seem to have a force of consolation that no misery can rob them of; besides, in this case—for we should not lose sight of the matter that concerns us most—we must not forget that they regard your family in the light of oppressors. I am well aware that you have acted legally and safely throughout, but still—let us concede something to human prejudices and passions—is it unreasonable to suppose that they charge you and yours with their own downfall?"

"The more natural our desire to repair the apparent wrong."

"Very true on *your* part, but not perhaps the more necessary on theirs to accept the amende."

"That will very much depend, I think, on the way of its being proffered. Lady Eleanor, cold, haughty, and reserved as she is to the world, has always extended a degree of cordiality and kindness toward my father; his age, his infirmities, a seeming simplicity in his character, have had their influence. I trust greatly to this feeling, and to the effect of a request made by an old man, as if from his death-bed. My father is not deficient in the tact to make an appeal of this kind very powerful; at all events, his heart is in the scheme, and nothing short of that would have induced me to venture on this long and dreary journey at such a season. Should he only succeed in gaining an influence over Lady Eleanor, through pity or any other motive, we are certain to succeed; The knight, I feel sure, would not oppose; and as for the young lady, a handsome young fellow with a large fortune can scarcely be deemed very objectionable."

"How was the proposition met before?" said Nalty, inquiringly; "was their refusal conveyed in any expression of delicacy? Was there any acknowledgment of the compliment intended them?"

"No, not exactly," said O'Reilly, blushing; for, while he hesitated about the danger of misleading his adviser, he could not bear to repeat the insolent rejection of the offer. "The false position in which the families stood toward each other made a great difficulty, but, more than all, the influence of Bagenal Daly increased the complexity; now he, fortunately for us, is not forthcoming, his debts have driven him abroad, they say."

"So, then, they merely declined the honor in cold and customary phrase," said Nalty, carelessly.

"Something in that way," replied O'Reilly, affecting an equal unconcern; "but we

need not discuss the point, it affords no light to guide us regarding the future."

If Nalty saw plainly that some concealment was practiced toward him, he knew his client too well to venture on pushing his inquiries further, so he contented himself with asking when and in what manner O'Reilly proposed to open the siege.

"To-morrow morning," replied the other; "there's no time to be lost. A few lines from my father to Lady Eleanor will acquaint her with his arrival in the neighborhood, after a long and fatiguing search for her residence. We may rely upon him performing his part well; he will allude to his own breaking health in terms that will not fail to touch her, and ask permission to wait upon her. As for us, Nalty, we must not be foreground figures in the picture. You, if known to be here at all, must be supposed to be my father's medical friend. I must be strictly in the shade."

Nalty gave a grim smile at the notion of his new professional character, and begged O'Reilly to proceed.

"Our strategy goes no further; such will be the order of battle. We must trust to my father for the mode he will engage the enemy afterward, for the reasons which have led him to take this step; the approaching close of a long life, unburdened with any weighty retrospect, save that which concerns the Darcy family; for, while affecting to sorrow over their changed fortunes, he can attribute their worst evils to bad counsels and rash advice, and insinuate how different had been their lot had they only consented to regard us—as they might and ought to have done—in the light of friends.—Hush! who is speaking there?"

They listened for a second or two, and then came the sound of the old man's voice, as he talked to himself in his sleep; his accents were low and complaining, as if he were suffering deeply from some mental affliction, and, at intervals, a heavy sob would break from him.

"He is ill, sir; the old gentleman is very ill!" said Nalty, in real alarm.

"Hush!" said O'Reilly, as, with one hand on the door, he motioned silence with the other.

"Yes, my lady," muttered the sleeper, but in a voice every syllable of which was audible, "eighty-six years have crept to your feet, to utter this last wish and die. It is the last request of one that has already left the things of this world, and would carry from it nothing but the thought that will track him to the grave!" A burst of grief, too sudden and too natural to admit of a doubt of its sincerity, followed the words,

and O'Reilly was about to enter the room, when a low dry laugh arrested his steps, and the old man said,

"Ay! Bob Hickman, didn't I tell you that would do? I knew she'd cry, and I told you if she cried one tear the day was ours!"

There was something so horrible in the baseness of a mind thus reveling in its own duplicity, that even Nalty seemed struck with dread. O'Reilly saw what was passing in the other's mind, and affecting to laugh at these "effects of fatigue and exhaustion," half led, half pushed him from the room, and said "Good-night."

CHAPTER LXI.

THE DOCTOR'S LAST DEVICE.

"TELL Mister Bob—Mr. O'Reilly I mean—to come to me," were the first words of old Dr. Hickman, as he awoke on the following morning.

"Well, sir, how have you slept?" said his son, approaching the bedside, and taking a chair; "have you rested well?"

"Middling, only middling, Bob. The place is like a vault, and the rats have it all their own way. They were capering about the whole night, and made such a noise trying to steal off with one of my shoes."

"Did they venture that far?"

"Ay, did they! but I couldn't let it go with them. I know you're in a hurry to stand in them yourself, Bob, and leave me and the rats to settle it between us, ay!"

"Really, sir, these are jests—"

"Too like earnest to be funny, Bob; so I feel them myself. Ugh! ugh! The damp of this place is freezing the very heart's blood of me. How is Nalty this morning?"

"Like a fellow taken off a wreck, sir, after a week's starvation. He is sitting at the fire there, with two blankets round him, and vows to heaven, every five minutes, that if he was once back in Old Dominick street, a thousand guineas wouldn't tempt him to such another expedition."

The old doctor laughed till it made him cough, and when the fit was over, laughed again, wiping his weeping eyes, and chuckling in the most unearthly glee at the lawyer's discomfiture.

"Wrapped up in blankets, eh, Bob?" said he, that he might hear further of his fellow-traveler's misery.

O'Reilly saw that he had touched the right key, and expatiated for some minutes upon Nalty's sufferings, throwing out, from time to time, adroit hints that only certain strong and hale constitutions could endure privations like these. "Now you, sir," continued he, "you look as much yourself as ever; in fact, I half doubt how you are to play the sick man, with all these signs of rude health about you."

"Leave that to me, Bob; I think I've seen enough of them things to know them now. When I've carried my point, and all's safe and secure, you'll see me like the pope we read of, that looked all but dead till they elected him, and then stood up stout and hearty five minutes after—we'll have a miracle of this kind in our own family."

"I suspect, sir, we shall have difficulty in obtaining an interview," said O'Reilly.

"No!" rejoined the old man, with a scarcely perceptible twinkle of his fishy eyes.

"Nalty's of my opinion, and thinks that Lady Eleanor will positively decline it."

"No," echoed he once more.

"And that, without any suspicion of our plan, she will yet refuse to receive you."

"I'm not going to ask her, Bob," croaked the old doctor, with a species of chuckling crow in his voice.

"Then you have abandoned your intention," exclaimed O'Reilly, in dismay, "and the whole journey has been incurred for nothing."

"No!" said the doctor, whose grim old features were lit up with a most spiteful sense of his superior cunning.

"Then I don't understand you, that's clear," exclaimed O'Reilly, testily, "You say that you do not intend to call upon her—"

"Because she's coming here to see me," cried the old man, in a scream of triumph; "read that, it's an answer to a note I sent off at eight o'clock. Joe waited and brought back this reply." As he spoke, he drew from beneath his pillow a small note, and handed it to his son. O'Reilly opened it with impatience, and read: "Lady Eleanor Darcy begs to acknowledge the receipt of Dr. Hickman's note, and, while greatly indisposed to accept of an interview which must be so painful to both parties, without any reasonable prospect of rendering service to either, feels reluctant to refuse a request made under circumstances so trying. She will therefore comply with Dr. Hickman's entreaty, and, to spare him the necessity of venturing abroad in this severe weather, will call upon him at twelve

o'clock, should she not learn in the meanwhile that the hour is inconvenient."

"Lady Eleanor Darey come out to call upon you, sir!" said O'Reilly, with an amazement in part simulated to flatter the old man's skill, but far more really experienced. "This is indeed success."

"Ay, you may well say so," chimed in the old man; "for besides that I always look ten years older when I'm in bed and unshaved, with my nightcap a little off—this way; the very sight of these miserable walls, green with damp and mold, this broken window, and the poverty-struck furniture, will all help, and I can get up a cough, if I only draw a long breath."

"I vow, sir, you beat us all; we are mere children compared to you. This is a masterstroke of policy."

"What will Nalty say now, eh, Bob?"

"Say, sir?—what can any one say, but that the move showed a master's hand, as much above our skill to accomplish, as it was beyond our wit to conceive? I should like greatly to hear how you intend to play the game out," said O'Reilly, throwing a most flattering expression of mingled curiosity and astonishment into his features.

"Wait till I see what trumps the adversary has in hand, Bob; time enough to determine the lead when the cards are dealt."

"I suppose I must keep out of sight, and perhaps Nalty also."

"Nalty ought to be in the house if we want him; as my medical friend, he could assist to draw up any little memorandum we might determine upon; a mere note, Bob, between friends, not requiring the interference of lawyers, eh?" There was something fiendish in the low laugh which accompanied these words. "What brings that fellow into the room so often, putting turf on, and looking if the windows are fast? I don't like him, Bob." This was said in reference to a little chubby man, in a waiter's jacket, who really had taken every imaginable professional privilege to obtrude his presence.

"There, there, that will do," said O'Reilly, harshly; "you needn't come till we ring the bell."

"Leave the turf-basket where it is. Don't you think we can mind the fire for ourselves?"

"Let Joe wait, that will be better, sir," whispered O'Reilly; "we cannot be too cautious here." And with a motion of the hand he dismissed the waiter, who, true to his order, seemed never to hear "an aside."

"Leave me by myself, Bob, for half an hour; I'd like to collect my thoughts—to settle and think over this meeting. It's

past eleven now, and she said twelve o'clock in the note."

"Well, I'll take a stroll over the hills, and be back for dinner about three; you'll be up by that time."

"That will I, and very hungry, too," muttered the old man. "This dying scene has cost me the loss of my breakfast; and faith, I'm so weak and low, my head is quite dizzy. There's an old saying, mocking is catching, and sure enough there may be some truth in it, too."

O'Reilly affected not to hear the remark, and moved toward the door, when he turned about and said,

"I should say, sir, that the wisest course would be to avoid anything like coercion, or the slightest approach to it. The more the appeal is made to her feelings of compassion and pity—"

"For great age and bodily infirmity," croaked the old man, while the filmy orbs shot forth a flash of malicious intelligence.

"Just so, sir. To others' eyes you do indeed seem weak and bowed down with years. It is only they who have opportunity to recognize the clearness of your intellect and the correctness of your judgment can see how little inroad time has made."

"Ay, but it has, though," interposed the old man, irritably. "My hand shakes more than it used to do; there's many an operation I'd not be able for as I once was."

"Well, well, sir," said his son, who found it difficult to repress the annoyance he suffered from his continual reference to the old craft. "Remember that you are not called upon now to perform these things."

"Sorry I am it is so," rejoined the other. "I gave up seven hundred a year when I left Loughrea to turn gentleman with you at Gwynne Abbey; and faith, the new trade isn't so profitable as the old one! So it is," muttered he to himself. "and now there's a set of young chaps come into the town, with their medical halls, and great bottles of pink and blue water in the windows! What chance would I have to go back again?"

O'Reilly heard these half-uttered regrets in silence; he well knew that the safest course was to let the feeble brain exhaust its scanty memories without impediment. At length, when the old doctor seemed to have wearied of the theme, he said,

"If she make allusion to the Dalys, sir, take care not to confess our mistake about that cabin they call the Corvy, and which you remember we discovered that Daly had

settled upon his servant. Let Lady Eleanor suppose that we withdrew proceedings out of respect to her."

"I know, I know," said the old man, querulously, for his vanity was wounded by these reiterated instructions.

"It is possible, too, sir, she'd stand upon the question of rank; if so, say that Heffernan—no, say that Lord Castlereagh will advise the king to confer the baronetcy on the marriage—don't forget that, sir—on the marriage."

"Indeed; then I'll say nothing about it," said he, with an energy almost startling. "It's that weary baronetcy cost me the loan to Heffernan on his own bare bond; I'm well sick of it! Seven thousand pounds at five and a half per cent., and no security!"

"I only thought, sir, it might be introduced incidentally," said O'Reilly, endeavoring to calm down this unexpected burst of irritation.

"I tell you I won't. If I'm bothered any more about the same baronetcy, I'll make a clause in my will against my heir accepting it. How bad you are for the coronet with the two balls; faith, I remember when the family arms had three of them; ay, and we sported them over the door, too. Eh, Bob, shall I tell her that?"

"I don't suppose it would serve our cause much, sir," said O'Reilly, repressing with difficulty his swelling anger. Then, after a moment, he added, "I could never think of obtruding any advice of mine, sir, but that I half feared you might, in the course of the interview, forget many minor circumstances, not to speak of the danger that your natural kindness might expose you to in any compact with a very artful woman of the world."

"Don't be afraid of that anyhow, Bob," said he, with a most hideous grin. "I keep a watchful eye over my natural kindness, and, to say truth, it has done me mighty little mischief up to this. There, now, leave me quiet and to myself."

When the old man was left alone his head fell slightly forward, and his hands, clasped together, rested on his breast. His eyes, half closed and downcast, and his scarcely-heaving chest, seemed barely to denote life, or at most that species of life in which the senses are steeped in apathy. The grim, hard features, stiffened by years and a stern nature, never moved; the thin, close-drawn lips never once opened; and to any observer the figure might have seemed a lifeless counterfeit of old age. And yet, within that brain, fast yielding to time and infirmity, where reason came and went like

the flame of some flickering taper, and where memory brought up objects of dreamy fancy as often as bygone events—even there, plot and intrigue held their ground, and all the machinery of deception was at work, suggesting, contriving, and devising wiles that in their complexity were too puzzling for the faculties that originated them. Is there a Nemesis in this, and do the passions by which we have swayed and controlled others rise up before us in our weak hours, and become the tyrants of our terror-stricken hearts?

It is not our task, were it even in our power, to trace the strange commingled web of reality and fiction that composed the old man's thoughts. At one time he believed he was supplicating the knight to accord him some slight favor, as he had done more than once successfully. Then he suddenly remembered their relative stations, so strangely reversed; the colossal fortune he had himself accumulated; the hopes and ambitions of his son and grandson, whose only impediments to rank and favor lay in himself, the humble origin of all this wealth. How strange and novel did the conviction strike him that all the benefit of his vast riches lay in the pleasure of their accumulation. That for him fortune had no seductions to offer. Rank, power, munificence, what were they? he never cared for them.

No; it was the game he loved even more than the stake. That tortuous course of policy, by which he had outwitted this man and doubled on that. The schemes skillfully conducted—the plots artfully accomplished—these he loved to think over; and while he grieved to reflect upon the reckless waste he witnessed in the household of his son, he felt a secret thrill of delight that he, and he alone, was capable of those rare devices and bold expedients by which such a fortune could be amassed. Once and only once did any expression of his features sympathize with these ponderings; and then a low, harsh laugh broke suddenly from him, so fleeting that it failed to arouse even himself. It came from the thought that if, after his death, his son or grandson would endeavor to forget his memory, and have it forgotten by others, that every effort of display, every new evidence of their gorgeous wealth, would as certainly evoke the criticism of the envious world, who, in spite of them, would bring up the "old doctor" once more, and, by the narrative of his life, humble them to the dust.

This desire to bring down to a level with himself those around him had been the passion of his existence. For this he had

toiled and labored, and struggled through imaginary poverty when possessed of wealth; had endured scoffs and taunts—had borne everything—and to this desire could be traced his whole feeling toward the Darcys. It was no happiness to him to be the owner of their princely estate if he did not revel in the reflection that they were in poverty. And this envious feeling he extended to his very son. If now and then a vague thought of the object of his present journey crossed his mind, it was speedily forgotten in the all-absorbing delight of seeing the proud Lady Eleanor humbled before him, and the inevitable affliction the knight would experience when he learned the success of this last device. That it would succeed he had little doubt; he had come too well prepared with arguments to dread failure. Nay, he thought, he believed he could compel compliance if such were to be needed.

It was in the very midst of these strangely confused musings that the doctor's servant announced to him the arrival of Lady Eleanor Darcy. The old man looked around him on the miserable furniture, the damp, discolored walls, the patched and mended window panes, and for a moment he could not imagine where he was. The repetition of the servant's announcement, however, cleared away the cloud from his faculties, and with a slight gesture of his hand he made a sign that she should be admitted. A momentary pause ensued, and he could hear his servant expressing a hope that her ladyship might not catch cold, as the snow-drift was falling heavily, and the storm very severe. A delay of a few minutes was caused to remove her wet cloak. What a whole history did these two or three seconds reveal to old Hickman as he thought of that Lady Eleanor Darcy of whose fastidious elegance the whole "West" was full—whose expensive habits and luxurious tastes had invested her with something like an Oriental reputation for magnificence—of her coming on foot and alone, through storm and snow, to wait upon him.

He listened eagerly, her footstep was on the stairs, and he heard a low sigh she gave, as, reaching the landing-place, she stood for a moment to recover breath.

"Say Lady Eleanor Darcy," said she, unaware that her coming had been already telegraphed to the sick man's chamber.

A faint complaining cry issued from the room as she spoke, and Lady Eleanor said, "Stay. Perhaps Dr. Hickman is too ill; if so, at another time. I'll come this evening, or to-morrow."

"My master is most impatient to see your ladyship," said the man. "He has talked

of nothing else all the morning, and is always asking if it is nigh twelve o'clock."

Lady Eleanor nodded as if to concede her permission, and the servant entered the half-darkened room. A weak, murmuring sound of voices followed, and the servant returned, saying, in a cautious whisper, "He is awake, my lady, and wishes to see your ladyship now."

Lady Eleanor's heart beat loudly and painfully; many a sharp pang shot through it, as, with a strong effort to seem calm, she entered.

CHAPTER LXII.

A DARK CONSPIRACY.

DOCTOR HICKMAN was so little prepared for the favorable change in Lady Eleanor's appearance since he had last seen her, as almost to doubt that she was the same, and it was with a slight tremor of voice he said,

"Is it age with me, my lady, or altered health, that makes the difference, but you seem to me not what I remember you? You are fresher, pardon an old man's freedom, and I should say far handsomer, too?"

"Really, Mr. Hickman, you make me think my excursion well repaid by such flatteries," said she, smiling pleasantly, and not sorry thus for a moment to say something that might relieve the awkward solemnity of the scene. "I hope, sir, that this air, severe though it be, may prove as serviceable to yourself. Have you slept well?"

"No, my lady, I scarcely dozed the whole night; this place is a very poor one. The rain comes in there—where you see that green mark—and the wind whistles through these broken panes—and rats, bother them, they never ceased the night through. A poor, poor spot it is, sure enough!"

It never chanced to cross his mind while bemoaning these signs of indigence and discomfort, that she, to whom he addressed the complaint, had been reduced to as bad, even worse hardships, by his own contrivance. Perhaps, indeed, the memory of such had not occurred at that moment to Lady Eleanor, had not the persistence with which he dwelt on the theme somewhat ruffled her patience, and eventually reminded her of her own changed lot. It was then with a slightly irritated tone she remarked,

"Such accommodation is a very unpleasant contrast to the comforts you are accustomed to, sir, and these sudden lessons in adversity are, now and then, very trying things."

“What does it signify?” sighed the old man, heavily, “a day sooner, a few hours less of sunshine, and the world can make little difference to one like me! Happy for me if, in confronting them, I have done anything toward my great purpose, the only object between me and the grave!”

Lady Eleanor never broke the silence which followed these words, and though the old man looked as if he expected some observation or rejoinder, she said not a word. At length he resumed, with a faint moan,

“Ah, my lady, you have much to forgive us for.”

“I trust, sir, that our humbled fortunes have not taught us to forget the duties of Christianity,” was the calm reply.

“Much, indeed, to pardon,” continued he, “but far less, my lady, than is laid to our charge. Lawyers and attorneys make many a thing a cause of bitterness, that a few words in kindness would have settled. And what two men of honest intentions could arrange amicably in five minutes, is often worked up into a tedious lawsuit, or a ruinous inquiry in chancery. So it is!”

“I have no experience in these affairs, sir, but I conclude your remarks are quite correct!”

“Faith, you may believe them, my lady, like the Bible, and yet, knowing these fellows so well, having dealings with them since—since—oh, God knows how long—upon my life, they beat me entirely after all. ’Tis like taking a walk with a quarrelsome dog: devil a cur he sees but he sets on him, and gets you into a scrape at every step you go! That’s what an attorney does for you. Take out a writ against that fellow—process this one, distrain the other—get an injunction here—apply for a rule there. Oh, dear!—oh, dear! I’m well weary of it for law! All the bitterness it has given me in my life long—all the sorrow and affliction it costs me now.” He wiped his eyes as he concluded, and seemed as if overcome by grief.

“It must needs be a sorry source of reparation, sir,” rejoined Lady Eleanor, with a calm, steady tone, “when even those so eminently successful can see nothing but affliction in their triumphs.”

“Don’t call them triumphs, my lady; that’s not the name to give them. I never thought them such.”

“I’m glad to hear it, sir—glad to know that you have laid up such store of pleasant memories for seasons like the present.”

“There was that proceeding, for instance, in December last.—Now, would you believe it, my lady, Bob and I never knew a

syllable about it till it was all over. You don’t know what I’m speaking of; I mean the writ against the knight.”

“Really, Dr. Hickman, I must interrupt you; however gratifying to me to hear that you stand exculpated for any ungenerous conduct toward my husband, the pleasure of knowing it is more than counterbalanced by the great pain the topic inflicts upon me.”

“But I want to clear myself, my lady; I want you to think of us a little more favorably than late events may have disposed you.”

“There are few so humble, sir, as not to have opinions of more consequence than mine.”

“Ay, but it’s yours I want—yours, that I’d rather have than the king’s on his throne. ’Tis in that hope I’ve come many a weary mile far away from my home, maybe never to see it again! and all that I may have your forgiveness, my lady, and not only your forgiveness, but your approbation.”

“If you set store by any sentiments of mine, sir, I warn you not to ask more than I have in my power to bestow. I can forgive, I have forgiven, much; but ask me not to concur in acts which have robbed me of the companionship of my husband and my son.”

“Wait a bit; don’t be too hard, my lady; I’m on the verge of the grave: a little more, and the dark sleep that never breaks will be on me, and if, in this troubled hour, I take a wrong word, or say a thing too strong—forgive me for it. My thoughts are often before me, on the long journey I’m so soon to go.”

“It were far better, Dr. Hickman, that we should speak of something less likely to be painful to us both, and if that cannot be, that you should rest satisfied with knowing, that however many are the sources of sorrow a humbled fortune has opened to us, the disposition to bear malice is not among their number.”

“You forgive me, then, my lady—you forgive me all?”

“If your own conscience can only do so, as freely as I do, believe me, sir, your heart will be tranquil.”

The old man pressed his hands to his face, and appeared overcome by emotion. A dead silence ensued, which at length was broken by old Hickman muttering broken words to himself, at first indistinctly, and then more clearly.

“Yes, yes,—I made—the offer—I begged—I supplicated. I did all—all. But no, they refused me! There was no other

way of restoring them to their own house and home—but they wouldn't accept it. I would have settled the whole estate—free of debt—every charge paid off, upon them. There's not a peer in the land could say he was at the head of such a property."

"I must beg, sir, that I may be spared the unpleasantness of overhearing what I doubt is only intended for your own reflection; and, if you will permit me, to take my leave—"

"Oh, don't go—don't leave me yet, my lady. What was it I said?—where was my poor brain rambling? Was I talking about Captain Darey?—Ah! that was the most painful part of all."

"My God! what is it you mean?" said Lady Eleanor, as a sickness like fainting crept over her—"speak, sir—tell me this instant!"

"The bills, my lady—the bills that he drew in Gleeson's name."

"In Gleeson's name! It is false, sir, a foul and infamous calumny; my son never did this thing—do not dare to assert it before me, his mother."

"They are in that pocket-book, my lady—seven of them for a thousand pounds each. There are two more somewhere among my papers—and it was to meet the payment that the captain did this." Here he took from beneath his pillow a parchment document, and held it toward Lady Eleanor, who, overwhelmed with terror and dismay, could not stretch her hand to take it.

"Here, my lady, somewhere here," said he, moving his finger vaguely along the lower margin of the document—"here you'll see Maurice Darey written—not by himself, indeed, but by his son. This deed of sale includes part of Westport, and the townlands of Cooldrennon and Shoughnakelly. Faith and my lady, I paid my hard cash down on the nail for the same land, and have no better title than what you see! The knight has only to prove the forgery; of course he couldn't do so against his own son."

"Oh! sir, spare me—I entreat of you to spare me!" sobbed Lady Eleanor, as, convulsed with grief, she hid her face.

A knocking was heard at this moment at the door, and on its being repeated louder, Hickman querulously demanded, "Who was there?"

"A note for Lady Eleanor Darey," was the reply; "her ladyship's servant waits for an answer."

Lady Eleanor, without knowing wherefore, seemed to feel that the tidings required prompt attention, and with an effort to subdue her emotion, she broke the seal, and read:

"LADY ELEANOR,—Be on your guard—there is a dark plot against you. Take counsel in time—and if you hear the words, 'Tis eighty-six years have crept to your feet, to die,' you can credit the friendship of this warning."

"Who brought this note?" said she, in a voice that became full and strong, under the emergency of danger.

"Your butler, my lady."

"Where is he? send him to me." And as she spoke, Tate mounted the stairs.

"How came you by this note, Tate?"

"A fisherman, my lady, left it this instant, with directions to be given to you at once, and without a moment's delay."

"'Tis nothing bad, I hope and trust, my lady," whispered the old man. "The darling young lady is not ill?"

"No, sir, she is perfectly well, nor are the tidings positively bad ones. There is no answer, Tate." So saying, she once more opened the paper and read it over.

Without seeing wherefore, Lady Eleanor felt a sudden sense of hardihood take possession of her; the accusation by which, a moment previous, she had been almost stunned, seemed already lighter to her eyes, and the suspicion that the whole interview was part of some dark design, dawned suddenly on her mind. Nor was this feeling permanent: a glance at the miserable old man, who, with head bent down, and half-closed eyes, lay before her, dispelling the doubts even more rapidly than they were formed. Indeed, now that the momentary excitement of speaking had passed away, he looked far more wan and wasted than before; his chest, too, heaved with a fluttering, irregular action, that seemed to denote severe and painful effort, while his fingers, with a restless and fidgety motion, wandered here and there, pinching the bed-clothes, and seeming to search for some stray object.

While the conflict continued in Lady Eleanor's mind, the old man's brain once more began to wander, and his lips murmured, half articulately, certain words. "I would give it all!" said he, with a sudden cry; "every shilling of it for that—but it cannot be—no, it cannot be."

"I must leave you, sir," said Lady Eleanor, rising; "and although I have heard much to agitate and afflict me, it is some comfort to my heart to think that I have poured some balm into yours; you have my forgiveness for everything."

"Wait a second, my lady, wait one second," gasped he, as with outstretched hands he tried to detain her. "I'll have

strength for it in a minute—I want—I want to ask you once more what you refused me once—and it isn't—it isn't that times are changed, and that you are in poverty now, makes me hope for better luck. It is because this is the request of one, on his death-bed—one, that cannot turn his thoughts away from this world, till he has his mind at ease. There, my lady, take that pocket-book and that deed, throw them into the fire, there. They're the only proofs against the captain—no eye but yours must ever see them.—If I could see my own beautiful Miss Helen once more in the old house of her fathers—”

“I will not hear of this, sir,” interposed Lady Eleanor, hastily. “No time or circumstances can make any change in the feelings with which I have already replied to this proposal.”

“Hefferman tells me, my lady, that the baronetcy is certain—don't go—don't go—It's the voice of one you'll never hear again calls on you. 'Tis eighty-six years have crept to your feet, to die!”

A faint shriek burst from Lady Eleanor—she tottered, reeled, and fell fainting to the ground.

Terrified by the sudden shock, the old man rung his bell with violence, and screamed for help, in accents where there was no counterfeited anxiety; and in another moment his servant rushed in, followed by Nalty, and in a few seconds later by O'Reilly himself, who, hearing the cries, believed that the effort to feign a death-bed had turned into a dreadful reality.

“There—there—she is ill—she is dying! It was too much—the shock did it!” cried the old man, now horror-struck at the ruin he had caused.

“She is better—her pulse is coming back,” whispered O'Reilly; “a little water to her lips—that will do.”

“She is coming to—I see it now,” said old Hickman; “leave the room, Bob; quick, before she sees you.”

As O'Reilly gently disengaged his arm, which, in placing the fainting form on the sofa, was laid beneath her head, Lady Eleanor slowly opened her eyes, and fixed them upon him. O'Reilly suddenly became motionless; the calm and steady gaze seemed to have paralyzed him; he could not stir, he could not turn away his own eyes, but stood like one fascinated and spell-bound.

“Oh, dear—oh, dear!” muttered the old man, “she'll know him now, and see it all!”

“Yes,” exclaimed Lady Eleanor, pushing back from her the officious hands that ministered about her. “Yes, sir, I do see

it all! Oh, let me be thankful for the gleam of reason that has guided me in this dark hour. And you, too, do you be thankful that you have been spared from working such deep iniquity!”

As she spoke, she arose, not a vestige of illness remaining, but a deep flush mantling in the cheek that, but a moment back, was deathly pale. “Farewell, sir. You had a brief triumph over the fears of a poor weak woman; but I forgive you, for you have armed her heart with a courage it never knew before.”

With these words she moved calmly toward the door, which O'Reilly in respectful silence held open; and then, descending the stairs with a firm step, left the house.

“Is she gone, Bob?” said the old man, faintly, as the door clapped heavily. “Is she gone?”

O'Reilly made no reply, but leaned his head on the chimney, and seemed lost in thought.

“I knew it would fail,” said Nalty, in a whisper to O'Reilly.

“What's that he's saying, Bob?—what's Nalty saying?”

“That he knew it would fail, sir,” rejoined O'Reilly, with a bitterness that showed he was not sorry to say a disagreeable thing.

“Ay! but Nalty was frightened about his annuity; he thought, maybe, I'd die in earnest. Well, we've something left yet.”

“What's that?” asked O'Reilly, almost sternly.

“The indictment for forgery,” said Hickman, with a savage energy.

“Then you must look out for another lawyer, sir,” said Nalty. “That I tell you frankly and fairly.”

“What?—I didn't hear.”

“He refuses to take the conduct of such a case,” said O'Reilly; “and, indeed, I think on very sufficient grounds.”

“Ay!” muttered the old doctor. “Then I suppose there is no help for it!—Here, Bob, put these papers in the fire.”

So saying, he drew a thick roll of documents from beneath his pillow, and placed it in his son's hands. “Put them in the blaze, and let me see them burned.”

O'Reilly did as he was told, stirring the red embers till the whole mass was consumed.

“I am glad of that, with all my heart,” said he, as the flame died out. “That was a part of the matter I never felt easy about.”

“Didn't you?” grunted the old man, with a leer of malice. “What was it you burned, d'ye think?”

"The bills—the bonds with young Darcy's signature," replied O'Reilly, almost terrified by an unknown suspicion.

"Not a bit of it, Bob. The blaze you made there was a costly fire to you, as you'll know one day.—That was my will."

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE LANDING AT ABOUKIR.

WE must now ask of our reader to leave for a season this scene of plot and intrigue, and turn with us to a very different picture. The same morning which, on the iron-bound coast of Ireland, broke in storm and hurricane, dawned fair and joyous over the shady shores of Egypt, and scarcely ruffled the long rolling waves as they swept into the deep Bay of Aboukir. Here now a fleet of one hundred and seventy ships lay at anchor, the expedition set forth by England to arrest the devouring ambition of Buonaparte, and rescue the land of the Pyramids from bondage.

While our concern here is less with the great event than with the fortune of one of its humble followers, we would fain linger a little over the memory of this glorious achievement of our country's arms. For above a week after the arrival of the fleet, the gale continued to blow with unabated fury; a sea mountains high rolled into the bay, accompanied by sudden squalls of such violence that the largest ships of the fleet could barely hold on by their moorings, while many smaller ones were compelled to slip their cables, and stand out to sea. If the damage and injury were not important enough to risk the success of the expedition, the casualties, ever inseparable from such events, threw a gloom over the whole force, a feeling grievously increased by the first tidings that met them—the capture of one of the officers and a boat's crew, who were taken while examining the shore, and seeking out the fittest spot for a landing.

On the 7th of March the wind and sea subsided, the sky cleared, and a glorious sunset gave promise of a calm, so soon to be converted into a storm, not less terrible than that of the elements. As day closed, the outlying ships had all returned to their moorings, the accidents of the late gale were repaired, and the soaked sails hung flapping in the evening breeze to dry; while the decks swarmed with moving figures, all eagerly engaged in preparation for that event, which each well knew could

not now be distant. How many a heart throbbed high with ecstasy and hope, that soon was to be cold—how many an eye wandered over that strong line of defenses along the shore, that never was to gaze upon another sunset! And yet, to mark the proud step, the flashing look, the eager speech of all around, the occasion might have been deemed one of triumphant pleasure rather than the approach of an enterprise full of hazard and danger. The disappointments which the storm had excited, by delaying the landing, were forgotten altogether, or only thought of to heighten the delight which now they felt.

The rapid exchange of signals between the line-of-battle ships showed that preparations were on foot, and many were the guesses and surmises current as to the meaning of this or that ensign, each reading the mystery by the light of his inward hopes. On one object, however, every eye was fixed with a most intense anxiety. This was an armed launch, which, shooting out from beneath the shadow of a three-decker, swept across the bay with muffled oars. Nothing louder than a whisper broke the silence on board of her, as they stole along the still water, and held on their course toward the shore. Through the gloom of the falling night, they were seen to track each indenture of the coast—now, lying on their oars to take soundings; now, delaying, to note some spot of more than ordinary strength. It was already midnight before "the reconnoissance" was effected, and the party returned to the ship, well acquainted with the formidable preparations of the enemy, and all the hazard that awaited the hardy enterprise. The only part of the coast approachable by boats, was a low line of beach, stretching away to the left, from the Castle of Aboukir, and about a mile in extent; and this was commanded by a semicircular range of sand-hills, on which the French batteries were posted, and whose crest now glittered with the bivouac fires of a numerous army. From the circumstances of the ground, the guns were so placed as to be able to throw a cross-fire over the bay, while a lower range of batteries protected the shore, the terrible effect of whose practice might be seen on the torn and furrowed sands; sad presage of what a landing party might expect! Besides these precautions, the whole breastwork bristled with cannon and mortars of various caliber, imbedded in the sand, nor was a single position undefended, or one measure of resistance omitted, which might increase the hazard of an attacking force.

Time was an important object with the English general; re-enforcements were daily looked for by the French; indeed, it was rumored that tidings had come of their having sailed from Toulon, for, with an unparalleled audacity and good fortune combined, a French frigate had sailed the preceding day through the midst of our fleet, and, amid the triumphant cheerings of the shore batteries, hoisted the tricolor in the face of our assembled ships. Scarcely had the launch reached the admiral's ship, when a signal ordered the presence of all officers in command to attend a council of war. The proceedings were quickly terminated, and in less than half an hour the various boats were seen returning to their respective ships, the resolution being taken to attack that very morning, or, in the words of the general order, "to bring the troops as soon as possible before the enemy." Never were tidings more welcomed; the delay, brief as it was, had stimulated the ardor of the men to the highest degree, and they actually burned with impatience to be engaged. The dispositions for attack were simple, and easily followed. A sloop of war, anchored just beyond the reach of cannon-shot, was named as the point of rendezvous. By a single blue light at her mizen, the boats were to move toward her—three lights at the main-top would announce that they were all assembled—a single gun would then be the signal to make for the shore.

Strict orders were given that no unusual lights should be seen from the ships, nor any unwonted sight or sound betray extraordinary preparation. The men were mustered by the half-light in use on board, the ammunition distributed in silence, and every precaution taken that the attack should have the character of a surprise. These orders were well and closely followed; but so short was the interval, and so manifold the arrangements, it was already daylight before the rendezvous was accomplished.

If the plan of debarkation was easily comprehended, that of the attack was not less so. Nelson once summed up a "general order" by saying, "The captain will not make any mistake who lays his ship alongside of an enemy of heavier metal." So Abercrombie's last instructions were, "Whenever an officer may be in want of orders, let him assault an enemy's battery." These were to be carried by the bayonet alone, and, of the entire force, not one man landed with a loaded musket.

A few minutes after seven the signal was given, and the boats moved off. The

sun was high, a light breeze fanned the water, the flags and streamers of the ships-of-war floated proudly out as the flotilla stood for the shore; in glorious rivalry they pulled through the surf, each eager to be first, and all the excitement of a race was imparted to this enterprise of peril.

Conspicuous among the leading boats were two, whose party equipped in a brilliant uniform of blue and silver, formed part of the cavalry force. The inferiority of the horses supplied was such that only two hundred and fifty were mounted, and the remainder had asked and obtained permission to serve on foot. A considerable portion of this corps was made up of volunteers, and several young men of family and fortune were said to serve in the ranks, and from the circumstance of being commanded by the Knight of Gwynne, were called "Darcy's Volunteers." It was a glorious sight to see the first boat of this party, in the stern of which sat the old knight himself, shoot out ahead, and amid the cheering of the whole flotilla, lead the way in shore.

Returning the various salutes which greeted him, the old man sat bare-headed, his silvery hair floating back in the breeze, and his manly face beaming with high enthusiasm.

"A grand spectacle for an unconcerned eye-witness," said an officer to his neighbor.

The words reached Darcy's ears, and he called out, "I differ with you, captain. To enjoy all the thrilling ecstacy of this scene a man must have his stake on the venture. It is our personal hopes and fears are necessary ingredients in the exalted feeling. I would not stand on yonder cliff and look on, for millions; but such a moment as this is glorious." As he spoke, a long line of flame ran along the heights, and at the same instant the whole air trembled as the entire batteries opened their fire. The sea hissed and glittered with round shot and shell; while, in a perfect hurricane, they rained on every side.

The suddenness of the cannonade, and the confusion consequent on the casualties that followed, seemed for a moment to retard the advance, or, as it appeared to the French, to deter the invading force altogether; for as they perceived some of the boats to lie on their oars, and others withdrawn to the assistance of their comrades, a deafening cheer of triumph rang out from the batteries, and was heard over the bay. Scarcely had it been uttered when the British answered by another, whose hoarse roar bespoke the coming vengeance.

The flotilla had now advanced within a line of buoys laid down to direct the fire, and here grape and musketry mingled their clattering with the deeper thunder of cannon.

"This is sharp work, gentlemen," said the knight, as the spray twice splashed over the boat, from shot that fell close by. "They'll have our range soon. Do you mark how accurately the shots fall over that line of surf?"

"That's a sand-bank, sir," said the cockswain who steered. "There's barely draught of water there for heavy launches."

"I perceive there is some shelter yonder beneath that large battery."

"They can trust that spot," cried the cockswain, smiling. "There's a heavy surf there, and no boat could live through it. But stay, there is a boat about to try it." Every eye was now turned toward a yawl, which, with twelve oars, vigorously headed on through the very midst of a broken and foam-covered tract of water, where jets of sea sprang up from hidden rocks, and cross currents warred and contended against each other.

The hazardous venture was not alone watched by those in the boats, but, from the crowning ridge of batteries, from every cliff and crag on shore, wondering enemies gazed on the hardihood of the daring.

"They'll do it yet, sir—they'll do it yet," cried the cockswain, wild with excitement. "There's deep water inside that reef."

The words were scarcely out, when a tremendous cannonade opened from the large battery. The balls fell on every side of the boat, and at length one struck her on the stem, rending her open from end to end, and scattering her shivered planks over the surfy sea.

A shout, a cheer, a drowning cry from the sinking crew, and all was over.

So sudden and so complete was this dreadful catastrophe, that they who witnessed it almost doubted the evidence of their senses, nor were the victors long to enjoy this triumph; the very discharge which sunk the boat having burst a mortar, and ignited a mass of powder near, a terrible explosion followed. A dense column of smoke and sand filled the air, and when this cleared away, the face of the battery was perceived to be rent in two.

"We can do it now, lads," cried Darcy. "They'll never recover from the confusion yonder in time to see us." A cheer met his words, and the cockswain turned the boat's head in the direction of the reef.

Closely followed by their comrades in the second boat, they pulled along through the

surf like men whose lives were on the venture; four arms to every oar, the craft bounded through the boiling tide; twice the keel was felt to graze the rocky bed, but the strong impulse of the boat's "way" carried her through, and soon they floated in the still water within the reef.

"It shoals fast here," cried the cockswain.

"What's the depth?" asked Darcy.

"Scarcely above three feet. If we throw over our six-pounder—"

"No, no. It's but wading, after all. Keep your muskets dry, move together, and we shall be the first to touch the shore." As he said this, he sprang over the side of the boat into the sea, and waving his hat above his head, began his progress toward the land. "Come along, gentlemen, we've often done as much when salmon-fishing in our own rivers." Thus, lightly jesting, and encouraging his party, he waded on, with all the seeming carelessness of one bent on some scheme of pleasure.

The large batteries had no longer the range, but a dreadful fire of musketry was poured in from the heights, and several brave fellows fell mortally wounded, ere the strand was reached. Cheered by the approving shouts of thousands from the boats, they at length touched the beach, and wild and disorderly as had been their advance when breasting the waves, no sooner had they landed than discipline resumed its sway, and the words, "Fall in, men," were obeyed with the prompt precision of a parade. A strong body of tirailleurs, scattered along the base of the sand-hills, and through the irregularities of the ground, galled them with a drooping and destructive fire as they formed; nor was it till an advanced party had driven these back, that the dispositions could be well and properly taken. By this time several other boats had touched the shore, and already detachments from the 40th, 28th, and 42d regiments were drawn up along the beach, and, from these, frequent cries and shouts were heard, encouraging and cheering the "volunteers," who alone, of all the force, had yet come to close quarters with the enemy.

A brief but most dangerous interval now followed; for the boats, assailed by a murderous fire, had sustained severe losses, and a short delay inevitably followed, assisting the wounded, or rescuing those who had fallen into the sea. Had the French profited by this pause, to bear down upon the small force now drawn up, inactive on the beach, the fate of that great achievement might have been periled; as it happened, however, nothing was further from their

thought than coming into immediate contact with the British, and they contented themselves with a distant but still destructive cannonade. It is not impossible that the audacity of those who first landed, and who—a mere handful—assumed the offensive, might have been the reason of this conduct; certain it is, the boats, for a time retarded, were permitted again to move forward and disembark their men, with no other resistance than the fire from the batteries.

The three first regiments which gained the land were, strangely enough, representatives of the three different nationalities of the empire, and scarcely were the words, "Forward! to the assault!" given, when an emulative struggle began, which should first reach the top and cross bayonets with the French. On the left, and nearest to the causeway that led up the heights, stood the Highlanders. These formed under an overwhelming shower of grape and musketry, and, with pibrochs playing, marched steadily forward. The 40th made an effort to pass them, which caused a momentary confusion, ending in an order for this regiment to halt, and support the 42d, and while this was taking place, the 28th rushed to the ascent in broken parties, and following the direction the "volunteers" had taken in pursuit of the tirailleurs, they mounted the heights together.

So suddenly was the tirailleur force repelled, that they had scarcely time to give the alarm, when the 28th passed the crest of the hill, and prepared to charge. The Irish regiment, glorying in being the first to reach the top, cheered madly, and bore down. The French poured in a single volley, and fell back; not to retreat, but to entice pursuit. The stratagem succeeded. The 28th pursued them hotly, and almost at once found themselves engaged in a narrow gorge of the sand-hills, and exposed to a terrific cross-fire. To retreat was impossible; their own weight drove them on, and the deafening cheers of their comrades drowned every word of command. Grape at half-musket distance plowed through their ranks, while one continuous crash of small-arms showed the number and closeness of their foes.

It was at this moment that Darcy, whose party was advancing by a smaller gorge, ascended a height, and beheld the perilous condition of his gallant countrymen. There was but one way to liberate them, and that involved their own destruction: to throw themselves on the French flank, and while devoting themselves to death, enable the 28th to retire or make head against the

opposing force. While Darcy, in a few hurried words, made known his plan to those around him, the opportunity for its employment most strikingly presented itself. A momentary repulse of the French had driven a part of their column to the high-road leading to Alexandria, where already several baggage carts and ammunition wagons were gathered. This movement seemed so like retreat, that Darcy's sanguine nature was deceived, and calling out, "Come along, lads—they are running already!" he dashed onward, followed by his gallant band. His attack, if inefficient for want of numbers, was critical in point of time. The same instant that the French were assailed by him in flank, the 42d had gained the summit and attacked them in front; fresh battalions each moment arrived, and now along the entire crest of the ridge the fight raged fiercely. One after the other the batteries were stormed, and carried by our infantry at the bayonet's point, and, in less than an hour from the time of landing, the British flag waved over seven of the nine heavy batteries.

The battle, severe as it was on the heights, was maintained with even greater slaughter on the shore. The French, endeavoring, too late, to repair the error of not resisting the actual landing, had now thrown an immense force by a flank movement on the British battalions; and this attack of horse, foot, and artillery combined, was, for its duration, the great event of the day. For a brief space it appeared impossible for the few regiments to sustain the shock of such an encounter; and had it not been for the artillery of the gun-boats stationed along the shore, they must have yielded. Their fire, however, was terribly destructive, sweeping through the columns as they came up, and actually cutting lanes in the dense squadrons.

Re-enforcements poured in, besides, at every instant, and after a bloody and anxious struggle, the British were enabled to take the offensive, and advance against their foes. The French, already weakened by loss, and dispirited by failure, did not await the conflict, but retired slowly, it is true, and in perfect order, on one of the roads leading into the great highway to Alexandria.

Victory had even more unequivocally pronounced for the British on the heights. By this time every battery was in their possession. The enemy were in full flight toward Alexandria, the tumultuous mass occasionally assailed by our light infantry, to whom, from our deficiency in cavalry, was assigned the duty of harassing the re-

treat. It was here that Darcy's Volunteers, now reduced to one-third of their original number, highly distinguished themselves, not only attacking the flank of the retiring enemy, but seizing every opportunity of ground to assail them in front, and retard their flight.

In one of these onslaughts, for such they were, the "volunteers" became inextricably entangled with the enemy, and although fighting with the desperation of tigers, volley after volley tore through them; and the French, maddened by the loss they had already suffered at their hands, hastened to finish them by the bayonet. It was only by the intervention of the French officers, a measure in itself not devoid of peril, that any were spared; and those few, bleeding and mangled, were hurried along as prisoners, the only triumph of that day's battle!

The strange spectacle of an affray in the very midst of a retiring column, was seen by the British in pursuit, and the memory of this scene is preserved among the incidents of that day's achievements.

Many and desperate attempts were made to rescue the prisoners. The French, however, received the charges with deadly volleys, and as their flanks were now covered by a cloud of tirailleurs, they were enabled to continue their retreat on Alexandria, protected by the circumstances of the ground, every point of which they had favorably occupied. The battle was now over; guns, ammunition, and stores were all landed; on the heights, the English ensign waved triumphantly; and, far as the eye could reach, the French masses were seen in flight, to seek shelter within the lines of Alexandria.

It was a glorious moment as the last column ascended the cliffs, to find their gallant comrades masters of the French position in its entire extent. Here, now, two brigades reposed with piled arms, guns, mortars, camp equipage, and military chests strewn on every side, all attesting the completeness of a victory which even a French bulletin could hardly venture to disavow. It is perhaps fortunate that, at times like this, the feeling of high excitement subdues all sense of the regret so natural to scenes of suffering; and thus, amid many a sight and sound of woe, glad shouts of triumph were raised, and heartfelt bursts of joyous recognition broke forth as friends met, and clasped each other's hands. Incidents of the battle, traits of individual heroism, were recorded on every side: anecdotes then told for the first time, to be remembered, many a year after, among the annals of regimental glory!

It is but seldom, at such moments, that

men can turn from the theme of triumph to think of the more disastrous events of the day; and yet a general feeling of sorrow prevailed on the subject of the brave "volunteers," of whose fate none could bring any tidings; some asserting that they had all fallen to a man on the road leading to Alexandria, others affirming that they were carried off prisoners by the French cavalry.

A party of light infantry, who had closely followed the enemy till nightfall, had dispatched some of their wounded to the rear, and by these the news came, that, in an open space beside the high-road, the ground was covered with bodies in the well-known blue and silver of the "volunteers." One only of these exhibited signs of life, and him they had placed among the wounded in one of the carts, and brought back with them. As will often happen, single instances of suffering excite more of compassionate pity than wide-spread affliction; and so here. When death and agony were on every hand—whole wagons filled with maimed and dying comrades—a closely-wedged group gathered around the dying volunteer, their saddened faces betraying emotions that all the terrible scenes of the day had never evoked.

"It's no use, sir," said the surgeon to the field-officer who had called him to the spot. "There is internal bleeding, besides this ghastly saber-cut."

"Who knows him?" said the officer, looking around; but none made answer. "Can no one tell his name?"

There was a silence for a few seconds; when the dying man lifted his failing eyes upward, and turned them slowly around on the group. A slight tremor shook his lips, as if with an effort to speak; but no sound issued. Yet in the terrible eagerness of his features might be seen the working of a spirit fiercely struggling for utterance.

"Yes, my poor fellow," said the officer, stooping down beside him, and taking his hand. "I was asking for your name."

A faint smile and a slight nod of the head seemed to acknowledge the speech.

"He is speaking—hush! I hear his voice," cried the officer.

An almost inaudible murmur moved his lips—then a shivering shook his frame—and his head fell heavily back.

"What is this?" said the officer.

"Death," said the surgeon, with the solemn calm of one habituated to such scenes. "His last words were strange—did you hear them?"

"I thought he said 'court-martial.'"

The surgeon nodded, and turned to move away.

“See here, sir,” said a sergeant, as opening the dead man’s coat he drew forth a white handkerchief, “the poor fellow was evidently trying to write his name with his own blood; here are some letters clear enough. L-e-o, and this is an n, or m.”

“I know him now,” cried another. “This was the volunteer who joined us at Malta; but Colonel Darcy got him exchanged into his own corps. His name was Leonard.”

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE FRENCH RETREAT.

LET us now turn to the Knight of Gwynne, who, wounded and bleeding, was carried along in the torrent of the retreat. Poor fellow, he had witnessed the total slaughter or capture of the gallant band he had so bravely led into action but a few hours before, and now, with one arm powerless, and a saber-cut in the side, could barely keep up with the hurried steps of the flying army.

From the few survivors among his followers, not one of whom was unwounded, he received every proof of affectionate devotion. If they were proud of the gallant old officer as their leader, they actually loved him like a father. The very last incident of their struggle was an effort to cut through the closing ranks of the French, and secure his escape; and although one of the volunteers almost lifted him into the saddle, from which he had torn the rider, Darcy would not leave his comrades, but cried out, “What signifies a prisoner more or less, lads? The victory is ours, let that console us.” The brave fellow, who had periled his life for his leader, was cut down at the same instant. Darcy saw him bleeding and disarmed, and had but time to throw him his last pistol, when he was driven onward, and, in the mingled confusion of the movement, beheld him no more.

The exasperation of a defeat so totally unlooked for, had made the French almost savage in their vindictiveness, and nothing but the greatest efforts on the part of the officers could have saved the prisoners from the cruel vengeance of the infuriated soldiery. As it was, insulting epithets, oaths, and obnoxious threats, met them at every moment of the halt, and at each new success of the British their fury broke out afresh, accompanied by menacing gestures, that seemed to dare and defy every fear of discipline.

Darcy, whom personal considerations were ever the last to influence, smiled at these brutal demonstrations, delighted at heart to witness such palpable evidence of insubordination in the enemy, nor could he, in the very midst of outrages which periled his life, avoid comparing to his followers the French troops of former days with these soldiers of the republic. “I remember them at Quebec,” said he, “under Montcalm. It may be too much to say, that the spirit of a monarchy had imparted a sense of chivalry to its defenders, but certainly it is fair to think, that the bloody orgies of a revolutionary capital have made a ruffian and ruthless soldiery.”

Nor was this the only source of consolation open, for he beheld on every side of him, in the disorder of the force, the moral discouragement of the army, and the meager preparations made for the defense of Alexandria. Wounded and weary, he took full note of these various circumstances, and made them the theme of encouragement to his companions in captivity. “There is little here, lads,” said he, “to make us fear a long imprisonment. The gallant fellows, whose watch-fires crown yonder hills, will soon bivouac here. All these preparations denote haste and inefficiency. These stockades will offer faint resistance, their guns seem in many instances unserviceable, and from what we have seen of their infantry to-day, we need never fear the issue of a struggle with them.”

In the brief intervals of an occasional halt, he lost no opportunity of remarking the appearance of the enemy’s soldiery—their bearing and their equipment—and openly communicated to his comrades his opinion that the French army was no longer the formidable force it had been represented to be, and that the first heavy reverse would be its dismemberment. In all the confidence a foreign language suggests, he spoke his mind freely and without reserve, not sparing the officers in his criticisms, which now and then took a form of drollery that drew laughter from the other prisoners. It was at the close of some remark of this kind, and while the merriment had not yet subsided, that a French major, who had more than once shown interest for the venerable old soldier, rode close up to his side and whispered a few words of friendly caution in his ear, while by an almost imperceptible gesture, he pointed to a group of prisoners who accompanied the knight’s party, and persisted in pressing close to where he walked. These were four dragoons of Hompesch’s regiment, then serving with the British army, but a corps which had

taken no part in the late action. Darcy could not help wondering at their capture, a feeling not devoid of distrust, as he remarked that neither their dress nor accoutrements bore any trace of the fierce struggle, while their manner exhibited a degree of rude assurance and effrontery, rather than the regretful feelings of men taken prisoners.

Darcy's attention was not permitted to dwell much more on the circumstance, for, at the same instant, the column was halted, in order that the wounded might pass on, and in the sad spectacle that now presented itself, all memory of his own griefs was merged. The procession was a long one, and seemed even more so than it was, from the frequent halts in front, the road being choked up by tumbrils and wagons, all confusedly mixed up in the hurry of retreat. Night was now falling fast, but still there was light enough to descry the ghastly looks of the poor fellows, suffering in every variety of agony. Some sought vent to their tortures by shouts and cries of pain; others preserved a silence, that seemed from their agonized features an effort as dreadful as the very wounds themselves; many were already mad with suffering, and sang and blasphemed, with shrieks of mingled recklessness and misery. What a terrible reverse to the glory of war, and how far deeper into the heart do such scenes penetrate than all the triumphs the most successful campaign has ever gathered! While Darcy still gazed on this sad sight, he was gently touched on the arm by the same officer who had addressed him before, saying, "There is an English soldier here among the wounded, who wishes to speak with you; it is against my orders to permit it, but be brief and cautious." With a motion to a litter some paces in the rear, the officer moved on to his place in the column, nor waited for any reply.

The knight lost not a second in profiting by the kind suggestion, but, in the now thickening gloom, it was some time before he could discover the object of his search. At length he caught sight of the well-known uniform of his corps—the blue jacket slashed with silver—as it was thrown loosely over the figure, and partly over the face of a wounded soldier. Gently removing it, he gazed with steadfastness at the pale and bloodless countenance of a young and handsome man, who, with half-closed eyelids, lay scarcely breathing before him. "Do you know me, my poor fellow?" whispered Darcy, bending down over him—"do you know me? For I feel as if we should know each other well, and had met before

this." The wounded man met his glance with a look of kind acknowledgment, but made no effort to speak; a faint sigh broke from him, as with a tremulous hand he pushed back the jacket and showed a terrible bayonet stab in the chest, from which, at each respiration, the blood welled out in florid rivulets.

"Where is the surgeon?" said Darcy to the soldier beside the litter.

"He is here, monsieur," said a sharp-looking man, who, without coat, and with shirt-sleeves tucked up, came hastily forward.

"Can you look to this poor fellow for me?" whispered Darcy, while he pressed into the not unwilling hand of the doctor a somewhat weighty purse.

"We can do little more than put a pad on a wounded vessel just now," said the surgeon, as with practiced coolness he split up with a scissors the portions of dress around the wound. "When we have been once housed in the hospital—*Parbleu!*" cried he, interrupting himself, "this is a severe affair."

Darcy turned away while the remorseless fingers of the surgeon probed the gaping incision, and then whispered low, "Can he recover?"

"Ah! *mon Dieu!* who knows? There is enough mischief here to kill half a squadron; but some fellows get through anything. If we had him in a quiet chamber of the *Faubourg*, with a good nurse, and all still and tranquil about him, there's no saying; but here, with some seven hundred others—many as bad, some worse than himself—the chances are greatly against him. Come, however, we'll do our best for him." So saying, he proceeded to pass ligatures on some bleeding arteries; and although speaking rapidly all the while, his motions were even still more quick and hurried. "How old is he?" asked the surgeon, suddenly, as he gazed attentively at the youth.

"I can't tell you," said Darcy. "He belonged to my own corps, and by the lace on his jacket, I see, must have been a volunteer; but I shame to say I don't remember even his name."

"He knows *you*, then," replied the doctor, who, with the shrewd perception of his craft, watched the working of the sick man's features. "Is't not so?" said he, stooping down and speaking with marked distinctness. "You know your colonel?"

A gesture, too faint to be called a nod of the head, and a slight motion of the eyebrows, seemed to assent to this question; and Darcy, whose laboring faculties strug-

gled to bring up some clew to the memory of a face he was convinced he had known before, was about to speak again, when a mounted orderly, with a led horse beside him, rode up to the spot, and looking round for a few seconds, as if in search of some one, said,

"The English colonel, I believe?" The knight nodded. "You are to mount this horse, sir," continued the orderly, "and proceed to the head-quarters at once."

The doctor whispered a few hasty sentences, and while promising to bestow his greatest care upon the sick man, assured Darcy that at the head-quarters he would soon obtain admission of the wounded volunteer into the officers' hospital.

Partly comforted by this, and partly yielding to what he knew was the inevitable course of fortune, the knight took a farewell look of his follower, and mounted the horse provided for him.

Darcy was too much engrossed by the interest of the wounded soldier's case to think much on what might await himself; nor did he notice for some time that they had left the high-road by which the troops were marching for a narrower causeway, leading, as it seemed, not into, but at one side of Alexandria. It mattered so little to him, however, which way they followed, that he paid no further attention, nor was he aware of their progress till they entered a little mud-built village, which swarmed with dogs, and miserable-looking, half-clothed Arabs.

"How do they call this village?" said the knight, speaking now for the first time to his guide.

"El Etscher," replied the soldier; "and here we halt." At the same moment he dismounted at the door of a low, mean-looking house; and having ushered Darcy into a small room dimly lighted by a lamp, departed.

The knight listened to the sharp tramp of the horses' feet as they moved away, and, when they had gone beyond hearing, the silence that followed fell heavily and drearily on his spirits. After sitting for some time in expectation of seeing some one sent after him, he arose and went to the door, but there now stood a sentry posted. He returned at once within the room, and partly overcome by fatigue, and partly from the confusion of his own harassed thoughts, he leaned his head on the table and slept soundly.

"Pardon, Monsieur le Colonel," said a voice at his ear, as, some hours later in the night, he was awakened from his slumbers. "You will be pleased to follow me."

Darcy looked up and beheld a young officer, who stood respectfully before him; and though for a second or so he could not remember where he was, the memory soon came back, and without a word he followed his conductor.

The officer led the way across a dirty, ill-paved court-yard, and entered a building beyond it of greater size, but apparently not less dilapidated than that they had quitted. From the hall, which was lighted with a large lamp, they could perceive through an open door a range of stables filled with horses; at the opposite side a door corresponding with this one, at which a dragon stood with his carbine on his arm. At a word from the officer, the soldier moved aside and permitted them to enter.

The room into which they proceeded was large, but almost destitute of furniture. A common deal table stood in the middle, littered with military cloaks, swords, and shakos. In one corner was a screen, from behind which the only light proceeded, and, with a gesture toward this, the officer motioned Darcy to advance, while with noiseless footsteps he himself withdrew.

Darcy moved forward, and soon came within the space inclosed by the screen, and in front of an officer in a plain uniform, who was busily engaged in writing. Maps, returns, printed orders, and letters lay strewed about him, and in the small brazier of burning wood beside him might be seen the charred remains of a great heap of papers. Darcy had full a minute to contemplate the figure before him ere he was noticed. The Frenchman was short and muscular, with a thick, bushy head of hair, bald in the center of the head. His features were full of intelligence and quickness, but more unmistakably denoted violence of temper, and the coarse nature of one not born to his present rank, which seemed, at least, that of a field officer. His hands were covered with rings, but their shape and color scarcely denoted that such ornaments were native to them.

"Ha—the English colonel—sit down, sir," said he to Darcy, pointing to a chair, without rising from his own. Darcy seated himself with the easy composure of one who felt that in any situation his birth and breeding made him unexceptionable company.

"I wished to see you, sir. I have received orders, that is," said he, speaking with the greatest rapidity and a certain thickness of utterance very difficult to follow, "to send for you here, and make certain inquiries, your answers to which will entirely decide the conduct of the

commander-in-chief in your behalf. You are not aware, perhaps, how completely you have put this in our power?"

"I suppose," said Darcy, smiling, "my condition as a prisoner of war makes me subject to the usual hardships of such a lot; but I am not aware of anything peculiar to my case that would warrant you in proposing even one question which a gentleman and a British officer could refuse to answer."

"There is exactly such an exception," replied the Frenchman, hastily. "The proofs are very easy, and nearer at hand than you think of."

"You have certainly excited my curiosity, sir," said the knight, with composure; "you will excuse my saying that the feeling is unalloyed by any fear."

"We shall see that presently," said the French officer, rising and moving toward the door of an apartment which Darcy had not noticed. "Auguste," cried he, "is that report ready?" The answer was not audible to the knight. But the officer resumed, "No matter; it is sufficient for our purpose." And hastily taking a paper from the hands of a subaltern, he returned to his place within the screen. "A gentleman so conversant with our language, it would be absurd to suppose ignorant of our institutions. Now, sir, to make a very brief affair of this, you have, in contravention to a law passed in the second year of the republic, ventured to apply opprobrious epithets to the forces of France; ridiculing the manner, bearing, and conduct of our troops, and instituting comparisons between the free citizens of a free state and the miserable minions of a degraded monarchy. If a Frenchman, your accusation, trial, and sentence would have probably been nigh accomplished before this time. As a foreigner and a prisoner of war—"

"I conclude such remarks as I pleased to make were perfectly open to me," added Darcy, finishing the sentence.

"Then you admit the charge," said the Frenchman, eagerly, as if he had succeeded in entrapping a confession.

"So far, sir, as the expressions of my poor judgment on the effectiveness of your army, and its chances against such a force as we have yonder, I am not only prepared to avow, but if you think the remarks worth the trouble of hearing, to repeat them."

"As a prisoner of war, sir, according to the eighty-fourth article of the Code Militaire, the offense must be tried by a court-martial, one-half of whose members shall have the same rank as the accused."

"I ask nothing better, sir, nor will I ever believe that any man who has carried a sword could deem the careless comments of a prisoner on what he sees around him a question of crime and punishment."

"I would advise you to reflect a little, sir, ere you suffer matters to proceed so far. The witnesses against you—"

"The witnesses!" exclaimed the knight, in amazement.

"Yes, sir; four dragoons of a German regiment, thoroughly conversant with your language and ours, have deposed to the words—"

"I avow everything I have spoken, and am ready to abide by it."

"Take care, sir—take care."

"Pardon me, sir," said Darcy, with a look of quiet irony, "but it strikes me that the exigencies of your army must be far greater than I deemed them, or you had never had recourse to a system of attempted intimidation."

"You are in error there," said the Frenchman. "It was the desire to serve, not to injure you, suggested my present course. It remains with yourself to show that my interest was not misplaced."

"Let me understand you more clearly. What is expected of me?"

"The answers to questions, which doubtless every countryman of yours and mine could reply to from the public papers, but which, to us here, remote from intercourse and knowledge, are matters of slow acquirement." While the French officer spoke he continued to search among the papers before him for some document, and at length, taking up a small slip of paper, resumed: "For instance, the *Moniteur* asserts that you meditate sending a force from India, to cross the Red Sea and the desert, and menace us by an attack in the rear as well as in front. This reads so like a fragment of an Oriental tale, that I can forgive the smile with which you hear it."

"Nay, sir; you have misinterpreted my meaning," said the knight, calmly. "I am free to confess I thought this intelligence was no secret. The form of our government, the public discussions of our Houses, the freedom of our press, are little favorable to mystery. If you have nothing to ask of me more difficult to answer than this—"

"And the expedition of Acre—is this also correct?"

"Perfectly so. A combined movement, which shall compel you to evacuate the country, is in preparation."

"Parbleu! sir," said the Frenchman, stamping his foot with impatience, "these

are somewhat bold words for a man in your situation to one in mine."

"I fancy, sir, that circumstance affects the issue I allude to very slightly indeed: even though the officer to whom I address myself should be General Menou, the commander-in-chief."

"And if I be, sir, and if you know it," said Menou—for it was he—his face suffused with anger, "is it consistent with the respect due to *my* position, and to *your own* safety, to speak thus?"

"For the first, sir, although a mere surmise on my part, I humbly hope I have made no transgression; for the last, I have very little reason to feel any solicitude, knowing that if you hurt a hair of my head, a heavy reprisal will await such of your own officers as may be taken, and the events of yesterday may have told you that a contingency of this sort is neither improbable nor remote."

Menou made no answer to this threatening speech, but with folded arms paced the apartment for several minutes. At length he turned hastily round, and, fixing his eyes on the knight, said, with a rude oath, "You are a fortunate man, sir, that you did not hold this language to my predecessor in the command. General Kléber would have had you in front of a *peleton* of grenadiers within five minutes after you uttered it."

"I have heard as much," said the knight, with a slight smile.

Menou rang a bell which stood beside him, and an aid-de-camp entered.

"Captain le Messurier," said he, in the ordinary tone of discipline, "this officer is under arrest. You will take the necessary steps for his safe keeping, and his due appearance when summoned before a military tribunal." He bowed to Darcy as he spoke, and, reseating himself at the table, took up his pen to write.

"At the hazard of being thought very hardy, sir," said the knight, as he moved toward the door, "I would humbly solicit a favor."

"A favor!" exclaimed Menou, staring in surprise.

"Yes, sir; it is that the services of a surgeon should be promptly rendered—"

"I have given orders on that score already. My own medical man shall attend to you."

"I speak not of myself, sir. It is of a volunteer of my corps, a young man who now lies badly wounded; his case is not without hope, if speedily looked to."

"He must take his chance with others," said the general, gruffly, while he made a gesture of leave-taking; and Darcy, unable to prolong the interview, retired.

"I am sorry, sir," said the aid-de-camp, as he went along, "that my orders are peremptory, and you must, if the state of your health permit, at once leave this."

"Is it thus your prisoners of war are treated, sir?" said Darcy, scornfully, "or am I to hope—for hope I do—that the exception is created especially for me?"

The officer was silent, and although the flush of shame was on his cheek, the severe demands of duty overcame all personal feeling, and he did not dare to answer.

The knight was not one of those on whom misfortune can press without eliciting in return the force of resistance, and, if not forgetting, at least combating, the indignities to which he had been subjected, he resigned himself patiently to his destiny, and after a brief delay set forth for his journey to Akrish, which he now learned was to be the place of his confinement.

CHAPTER LXV.

TIDINGS OF THE WOUNDED.

THE interests of our story do not require us to dwell minutely on the miserable system of intrigue by which the French authorities sought to compromise the life and honor of a British officer. The Knight of Gwynne was committed to the charge of a veteran officer of the republic, who, though dignified with the title of the Governor of Akrish, was, in reality, invested with no higher functions than that of jailer over the few unhappy prisoners whom evil destiny had thrown into French hands.

By an alternate system of cruelty and concession, efforts were daily made to entrap Darcy either into some expression of violence or impatience at this outrage on all the custom of war, or induce him to join a plot for escape submitted to him by those who, apparently prisoners like himself, were in reality the spies of the republic. Sustained by a high sense of his own dignity, and not ignorant of the character under which revolutionized France accomplished her triumphs, the knight resisted every temptation, and in all the gloom of this remote fortress—ominously secluded from the world—denied access to any knowledge of passing events—cut off from all communication with his country and his comrades—he never even for a moment forgot himself, nor became entangled in the perfidious schemes spread for his ruin. It was no common aggravation of the miseries of imprisonment, to know that each day

and hour had its own separate machinery of perfidy at work. At one moment, he would be offered liberty on the condition of revealing the plans of the expedition; at another, he would be suddenly summoned to appear before a tribunal of military law, when it was hinted he would be arraigned for having commanded a force of liberated felons—for in this way were the volunteers once designated—in the hope that the insult would evoke some burst of passionate indignation. If the torment of these unceasing annoyances preyed upon his health and spirits, already harassed by sad thoughts of home, the length of time to which the intrigues were protracted showed Darcy that the wiles of his enemies had not met success in their own eyes, and this gleam of hope, faint and slender as it was, sustained him through many a gloomy hour of captivity.

While the knight continued thus to live in the long sleep of a prisoner's existence, events were hastening to their accomplishment by which his future liberty was to be secured. The victorious army of Abercrombie had already advanced and driven the French back beneath the lines of Alexandria. The action which ensued was terribly contested, but ended in the complete triumph of the British, whose glory was, however, dearly bought by the death of their gallant leader.

The Turkish forces now joined the English under General Hutchinson, and a series of combined movements commenced, by which the French saw themselves so closely hemmed in, that no course was open save a retreat upon Cairo.

Whether from the changed fortune of their arms—for the French had now sustained one unbroken series of reverses—or that the efforts to entrap the knight had shown so little prospect of success, the manner of the governor had, for some time back, been altered much in his favor, and several petty concessions were permitted, which, in the earlier days of his captivity, were strictly denied. Occasionally, too, little hints of the campaign would be dropped, and acknowledgments made, "that fortune had not been as uniformly favorable to the 'Great Nation' as was her wont." These significant confessions received a striking confirmation when, at daybreak one morning, an order arrived for the garrison to abandon the fort of Akrish, and for the prisoners, under a strong escort, to fall back upon Damanhour.

The movements indicated haste and precipitancy, so much so, indeed, that ere the small garrison had got clear of the town,

the head of a retreating column was seen entering it by the road from Alexandria, and now no longer any doubt remained that the British had compelled them to fall back.

As the French retired, their forces continued to come up each day, and in the long convoy of wounded, as well as in the shattered condition of gun-carriages and wagons, it was easy to read the signs of a recent defeat. Nor was the matter long doubtful to Darcy, for by some strange anomaly of human nature, the very men who would exaggerate the smallest accident of advantage into a victory and triumph, were now just as loud in proclaiming that they had been dreadfully beaten. Perhaps the avowal was compensated for by the license it suggested to inveigh against the generals, and in the true spirit of a republican army, to threaten them openly with the speedy judgments of the home government.

Among those who occasionally halted to exchange a few words of greeting with the officer in conduct of the prisoners, the knight recognized with satisfaction the same officer who, in the retreat from Aboukir, had so kindly suggested caution to him. At first he seemed half fearful of addressing him, to speak his gratitude, lest even so much might compromise the young captain in the eyes of his countrymen. The hesitation was speedily overcome, however, as the young Frenchman gayly saluted him, and said,

"Ah, mon general, you had scarcely been here to-day if you had but listened to my counsels. I told you that the republic, one and indivisible, did not admit criticism of its troops."

"I scarcely believed you could shrink from such an ordeal," said the knight, smiling.

"Not in the *Moniteur*, perhaps," rejoined the Frenchman, laughing. "Yours, however, had an excess of candor which, if only listened to at your own head-quarters, might have induced grave errors."

"I comprehend," interrupted Darcy, gayly catching up the ironical humor of the other. "I comprehend, and you would spare an enemy such an injurious illusion."

"Just so; I wish your army had been equally generous, with all my heart," added he, as coolly as before; "here we are in full retreat on Cairo."

"On Damanhour, you mean," said Darcy.

"Not a bit of it; on Cairo, general. There's no need of mincing the matter; we need fear no eavesdropper here, Ah, by-

the-by, your German friends were retaken, and by a detachment of their own regiment, too. We saw the fellows shot the morning after the action."

"Now that you are kind enough to tell me what is going forward, perhaps you could let me know something of my poor comrades, whom you took prisoners on the night of the 9th."

"Yes. They are with few exceptions dead of their wounds, two men exchanged about a week since, and then, what strange fellows your countrymen are! they sent us back a major of brigade in exchange for a wounded soldier, who, when he left our camp, did not seem to have life enough to bring him across the lines!"

"Did you see him?" asked Darcy eagerly.

"Yes; I commanded the escort. He was a young fellow of scarcely more than four-and-twenty, and must have been good-looking, too."

"Of course you could not tell his name," said the knight, despondingly.

"No; I heard it, however, but it has escap'd me. There was a curious story brought back about him by our brigade-major, and one which, I assure you, furnished many a hearty laugh at your land of noble privileges and aristocratic forms."

"Pray let me hear it."

"Oh, I cannot tell you one-half of it; the finale interested the major most, because it concerned himself, and this he repeated to us at least a dozen times. It would seem, then, that this youth—a rare thing, I believe, in your service—was a man of birth, but, according to your happy institutions, was a man of nothing more, for he was a younger son. Is not that your law?"

Darcy nodded, and the other resumed.

"Well, in some fit of spleen, at not being born a year or two earlier, or for some love affair with one of your blonde insensibles, or from weariness of your gloomy climate, or from any other true British cause of despair, our youth became a soldier. Parbleu! your English chivalry has its own queer notions, when it regards the service as a last resource of the desperate! No matter, he enlisted, came out here, fought bravely, and was taken prisoner in the very same attack with yourself; but, while Fortune dealt heavily with one hand, she was caressing with the other, for, the same week she condemned him to a French prison, she made him a peer of England, having taken off the elder brother, an ambassador at some court, I believe, by a fever. So goes the world. Good and ill-luck battling against

each, and one never getting uppermost without the other recruiting strength for a victory in turn."

"These are strange tidings indeed," said the knight, musing, "and would interest me deeply if I knew the name of the individual."

"That I am unfortunate enough to have forgotten," said the Frenchman, carelessly; "but I conclude he must be a person of some importance, for we heard that the vessel which was to sail with dispatches was delayed several hours in the bay, to take him back to England."

Although the whole recital contained many circumstances which the knight attributed to French misrepresentation of English habitudes, he was profoundly struck by it, and dwelt fondly on the hope, that if the young peer should have served under his command, he would not neglect, on arriving in England, to inform his friends of his safety.

These thoughts, mingling with others of his home, and of his son Lionel, far away in a distant quarter of the globe, filled his mind as he went, and made him ponder deeply over the strange accidents of a life that, opening with every promise, seemed about to close in sorrow and uncertainty. Full of movement and interest as was the scene around, he seldom bestowed on it even a passing glance; it was an hour of gloomy reverie, and he neither marked the long train of wagons with their wounded, the broken and shattered gun-carriages, or the miserable aspect of the cavalry, whose starved and galled animals could scarcely crawl. The knight's momentary indifference was interpreted in a very different sense by the officer who commanded the escort, and who seemed to suspect that this apathy concealed a shrewd insight into the real condition of the troops and the signs of distress and discomfiture so palpable on every side. As, impressed with this conviction, he watched the old man with prying curiosity, a smile, faint and fleeting enough, once crossed Darcy's features. The Frenchman's face flushed as he beheld it, and he quickly said,

"They are the same troops that landed at the Arabs' tower, and who carry such inscriptions on their standards as these." He snatched a flag from the sergeant beside him as he spoke, and pointed to the proud words embroidered there: "Le Passage de la Scrvia"—"Le Passage de l'Isenzo"—"Le Pont de Lodi." Then, in a low, muttering voice, he added, "But Buonaparte was with us then."

Had he spoken for hours, the confession

of their discontent with their generals could not have been more manifest, and a sudden gleam of hope shot through Darcy's breast, to think his captivity might soon be over.

There was every reason to indulge in this pleasing belief; disorganization had extended to every branch of the service. An angry correspondence, in which even personal chastisement was broadly hinted at, passed between the two officers highest in command, and this not secretly, but publicly known to the entire army. Peculation of the most gross and open kind was practiced by the commissaries, and as the troops became distressed by want, they retaliated by daring breaches of discipline, so that at every parade men stood out from the ranks, boldly demanding their rations, and answering the orders of the officers by insulting cries of "Bread! bread!"

All this while the British were advancing steadily, overcoming each obstacle in turn, and with a force whose privations had made no inroad upon the strictest discipline; they felt confident of success. The few prisoners who occasionally fell into the hands of the French, wore all the assurance of men who felt that their misfortunes could not be lasting, and in good-humored raillery bantered the captors on the British beef and pudding they would receive, instead of horseflesh, so soon as the capitulation was signed.

The French soldiers were, indeed, heartily tired of the war; they were tired of the country, of the leaders, whose incompetency, whether real or not, they believed; tired, above all, of absence from France, from which they felt exiled. Each step they retired from the coast seemed to them another day's journey from their native land, and they did not hesitate to avow to their prisoners that they had no wish or care save to return to their country.

Such was the spirit of the French army as it drew near Cairo, than which no greater contrast could exist than that presented by the advancing enemy. Let us now return to the more immediate interests of our story, and while we beg to corroborate the brief narrative of the French officer, we hope it is unnecessary to add that the individual whose suddenly changed fortune had elevated him from the ranks of a simple volunteer to that of a peer of England, was our old acquaintance Dick Forester.

From the moment when the tidings reached him, to that in which he lay still suffering from his wounds, in the richly-furnished chamber of a London hotel, the

whole train of events through which he had so lately passed seemed like the incoherent fancies of a dream. The excited frame of mind in which he became a volunteer with the army had not time to subside ere came the spirit-stirring hour of the landing at Aboukir. The fight, in all its terrible but glorious vicissitudes—the struggle in which he periled his own life to save his leader's—the moments that seemed those of ebbing life in which he lay upon a litter before Darcy's eyes, and yet unable to speak his name—and then the sudden news of his brother's death, overwhelming him at once with sorrow for his loss—and all the thousand fleeting thoughts of his own future, should life be spared him—these were enough, and more than enough, to disturb and overbalance a mind already weakened by severe illness.

Had Forester known more of his only brother, it is certain that the predominance of the feeling of grief would have subdued the others, and given at least the calm of affliction to his troubled senses. But they were almost strangers to each other; the elder having passed his life almost exclusively abroad, and the younger, separated by distance and a long interval of years, being a complete stranger to his qualities and temper.

Dick Forester's grief, therefore, was no more than that which ties of so close kindred will ever call up, but unmixed with the tender attachment of a brother's love. His altered fortunes had not thus the strong alloy of heartfelt sorrow to make them distasteful; but still there was an unreality in everything—a vague uncertainty in all his endeavors at close reasoning, which harassed and depressed him. And when he awoke from each short disturbed sleep, it took several minutes before he could bring back his memory to the last thought of his waking hours. The very title "my lord," so scrupulously repeated at each instant, startled him afresh at each moment he heard it; and as he read over the names of the high and titled personages whose anxieties for his recovery had made them daily visitors at his hotel, his heart faltered between the pleasure of flattery, and a deeper feeling of almost scorn for the sympathies of a world that could minister to the caprices of rank what it withheld from the real sufferings of the same man in obscurity. His mother he had not yet seen, for Lady Netherby, much attached to her eldest son, and vain of abilities by which she reckoned on his future distinction, was, herself, seriously indisposed. Lord Netherby, however, had been a frequent visitor,

and had already seen Forester several times, although always very briefly, and only upon the terms of distant politeness.

Although in a state that precluded everything like active exertion, and which, indeed, made the slightest effort a matter of peril, Forester had already exchanged more than one communication with the Horse Guards on the subject of the knight's safety, and received the most steady assurances that his exchange was an object on which the authorities were most anxious, and engaged at the very moment in negotiations for its accomplishment. There were two difficulties: one, that no officer of Darcy's precise rank was then a prisoner with the British; and secondly, that any very pressing desire expressed for his liberation would serve to weaken the force of that conviction they were so eager to impress, that the campaign was nearly ended, and that nothing but capitulation remained for the French.

Forester was not more gratified than surprised at the tone of obliging and almost deferential politeness which pervaded each answer to his applications. He had yet to learn how a vote in the "Lords" can make secretaries civil, and under-secretaries most courteous, and while his few uncertain lines were penned with diffidence and distrust, the replies gradually inducted him into that sense of confidence which a few months later he was to feel like a birth-right.

How far these thoughts contributed to his recovery it would be difficult to say, nor does it exactly lie in our province to inquire. The likelihood is, that the inducements to live are strong aids to overcome sickness, for, as a witty observer has remarked, "There is no such *manque de savoir vivre* as dying at four-and-twenty."

It is very probable Forester experienced all this, and that the dreams of the future in which he indulged were not only his greatest, but his pleasantest aid to recovery. A brilliant position, invested with rank, title, fortune, and a character for enterprise, are all flattering adjuncts to youth, while in the hope of succeeding, where his dearest wishes were concerned, lay a source of far higher happiness. How to approach this subject again most fittingly, was now the constant object of his thoughts. He sometimes resolved to address Lady Eleanor, but so long as he could convey no precise tidings of the knight, this would be an ungracious task. Then he thought of Miss Daly, but he did not know her address. All these doubts and hesitations invariably ending in the resolve, that as

soon as his strength permitted he would go over to Ireland, and finding out Bicknell, obtain accurate information as to Lady Eleanor's present residence, and also learn if, without being discovered, he could in any way be made serviceable to the interests of the family.

Perhaps we cannot better convey the gradually dawning conviction of his altered fortune on his mind, than by mentioning that while he canvassed these various chances, and speculated on their course, he never dwelt on the possibility of Lady Netherby's power to influence his determination. In the brief note he received from her each morning, the tone of affectionate solicitude for his health was always accompanied by some allusive hint of the "duties" recovery would impose, and each inquiry after his night's rest was linked with a not less anxious question; as to how soon he might feel able to appear in public. Constitutionally susceptible of all attempts to control him, and from his childhood disposed to rebel against dictation, he limited his replies to brief accounts of his progress, or inquiries after her own health, resolved in his heart that now that fortune was his own, to use the blessings it bestows according to the dictates of affection and a conscientious sense of right, and be neither the toy of a faction nor the tool of a party. In Darcy—could he but see him once more—he looked for a friend and adviser, and whatever the fortune of his suit, he felt that the knight's counsels should be his guidance as to the future, reposing not even more trust on unswerving rectitude, than on the vast range of his knowledge of life, and the common-sense views he could take of the most complex, as of the very simplest questions.

It was now some seven weeks after his return, and Forester, for we would still desire to call him by the name our reader has known him, was sitting upon a sofa, weak and nervous, as the first day of a convalescent's appearance in the drawing-room usually is, when his servant, having deposited on the table several visiting-cards of distinguished inquirers, mentioned that the Earl of Netherby wished to pay his respects. Forester moved his head in token of assent, and his lordship soon after entered.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE DAWN OF CONVALESCENCE.

STEPPING noiselessly over the carpet, with an air at once animated and regardful

of the sick man, Lord Netherby was at Forester's side before he could arise to receive him; and pressing him gently down with both hands, said, in a voice of most silvery cadence,

"My dear lord—you must not stir for the world—Halford has only permitted me to see you under the strict pledge of prudence; and now, how are you? Ah! I see—weak and low. Come, you must let me speak for you, or at least interpret your answers to my own liking. We have so much to talk over, it is difficult where to begin."

"How is Lady Netherby?" said Forester, with a slight hesitation between the words.

"Still very feeble and very nervous. The shock has been a dreadful one to her. You know that poor Augustus was coming home on leave—when—when this happened."

Here his lordship sighed, but not too deeply, for he remembered that the law of primogeniture is the sworn enemy to grief.

"There was some talk, too, of his being sent on a special embassy to Paris—a very high and important trust—and so really the affliction is aggravated by thinking what a career was opening to him. But, as the Dean of Walworth beautifully expressed it, 'We are cut down like flowers of the field.' Ah!"

A sigh and a slight wave with a handkerchief, diffusing an odor of eau-de-Portugal through the chamber, closed this affecting sentiment.

"I trust in a day or two I shall be able to see my mother," said Forester, whose thoughts were following a far more natural channel. "I can walk a little to-day, and before the end of the week Halford promises me that I shall drive out."

"That's the very point we are most anxious about," said Lord Netherby, eagerly; "we want you, if possible, to take your seat in 'the Lords' next week. There is a special reason for it. Rumor runs that the Egyptian expedition will be brought on for discussion on Thursday next. Some malecontents are about to disparage the whole business, and, in particular, the affair at Alexandria. Ministers are strong enough to resist this attack, and even carry the war back into the enemy's camp; but we all think it would be a most fortunate moment for you, when making your first appearance in the House, to rise and say a few words on the subject of the campaign. The circumstances under which you joined—your very dangerous wound—have given you a kind of prerogative to

speak, and the occasion is most opportune. Come, what say you? Would such an effort be too great?"

"Certainly not for my strength, my lord, if not for my shame sake; for really I should feel it somewhat presumptuous in me, a man who carried his musket in the ranks, to venture on a discussion, far more a defense, of the great operations in which he was a mere unit; one of those rank and file who figured, without other designation, in lists of killed and wounded."

"This is very creditable to your modesty, my dear lord," said the old peer, smiling most blandly, "but pardon me if I say it displays a great forgetfulness of your present position. Remember that you now belong to the Upper House, and that the light of the peerage shines on the past as on the future."

"By which I am to understand," replied Forester, laughing, "that the events which would have met a merited oblivion in Dick Forester's life, are to be remembered with honor to the Earl of Wallin-court."

"Of course they are," cried Lord Netherby, joining in the laugh. "If an unlikely scion of royalty ascends the throne, we look out for the evidences of his princely tastes in the sports of his boyhood. Nay, if a clever writer or painter wins distinction from the world, do we not 'try back' for his triumphs at school, or his chalk sketches on coach-house gates, to warrant the early development of genius?"

"Well, my lord," said Forester, gayly, "I accept the augury, and as nothing more nearly concerns a man's life than the fate of those who have shown him friendship, let me inquire after some friends of mine, and some relations of yours—the Darcys."

"Ah, those poor Darcys!" said Lord Netherby, wiping his eyes, and heaving a very profound sigh, as though to say that the theme was one far too painful to dwell upon—"theirs is a sad story, a very sad story indeed!"

"Anything more gloomy than the loss of fortune, my lord?" asked Forester, with a trembling lip, and a cheek pale as death. Lord Netherby stared to see whether the patient's mind was not beginning to wander. That there could be that thing worse than loss of fortune he had yet to learn—assuredly he had never heard of it. Forester repeated his question.

"No, no, perhaps not, if you understand by that phrase what I do," said Lord Netherby, almost pettishly. "If, like me, you take in all the long train of ruin and decay such loss implies: pecuniary distress—

moneyed difficulties—fallen condition in society—inferior association—”

“Nay, my lord, in the present instance, I can venture to answer for it, such consequences have not ensued. You do your relatives scarcely justice to suppose it.”

“It is very good and very graceful, both, in you,” said Lord Netherby, with an almost angelic smile, “to say so. Unfortunately, these are not merely speculative opinions on my part. While I make this remark, understand me as by no means imputing any blame to them. What could they do?—that is the question—what could they do?”

“I would rather ask of your lordship, what have they done? When I know that, I shall be, perhaps, better enabled to reply to your question.”

In all likelihood it was more the manner than the substance of this question which made Lord Netherby hesitate how to reply to it, and at last he said:

“To say in so many words what they have done, is not so easy. It would, perhaps, give better insight into the circumstances were I to say what they have not done.”

“Even as you please, my lord. The negative charge, then,” said Forester, impatiently.

“Lord Castlereagh, my lord!” said a servant, throwing open the door, for he had already received orders to admit him when he called, though, had Forester guessed how inopportune the visit could have proved, he would never have said so.

In the very different expressions of Lord Netherby and the sick man’s face, it might be seen how differently they welcomed the new arrival.

Lord Castlereagh saluted both with a courteous and cordial greeting, and although he could not avoid seeing that he had dropped in somewhat mal-à-propos, he resolved rather to shorten the limit of his stay than render it awkward by any expressions of apology. The conversation, therefore, took that easy, careless tone, in which each could join with freedom. It was after a brief pause, when none exactly liked to be the first to speak, that Lord Netherby observed:

“The very moment you were announced, my lord, I was endeavoring to persuade my young friend here to a line of conduct in which, if I have your lordship’s co-operation, I feel I shall be successful.”

“Pray let me hear it,” said Lord Castlereagh, gayly, and half interrupting what he feared was but the opening of an over lengthy exposition.

Lord Netherby was not to be defeated so easily, nor defrauded of a theme whereupon to expend many loyal sentiments, and so he opened a whole battery of arguments on the subject of the young peer’s first appearance in the House, and the splendid opportunity, as he called it, of a maiden speech.

“I see but one objection,” said Lord Castlereagh, with a well-affected gravity.

“I see one hundred,” broke in Forester, impatiently.

“Perhaps *my* one will do,” rejoined Lord Castlereagh.

“Which is—if I may take the liberty—” lisped out Lord Netherby.

“That there will be no debate on the subject. The motion is withdrawn.”

“Motion withdrawn!—since when?”

“I see you have not heard the news this morning,” said Lord Castlereagh, who really enjoyed the discomfiture of one very vain of possessing the earliest intelligence.

“I have heard nothing,” exclaimed he, with a sigh of despondency.

“Well, then, I may inform you that the *Pike* has brought us very stirring intelligence. The war in Egypt is now over. The French have surrendered under the terms of a convention, and a treaty has been ratified that permits their return to France. Hostages for the guarantee of the treaty have been already interchanged, and—” here he turned toward Forester, and added—“it will doubtless interest you to hear that your old friend the Knight of Gwynne is one of them, an evidence that he is not only alive, but in good health also.”

“This is, indeed, good news you bring me,” said Forester, with a flashing eye and a heightened complexion. “Has any one written? Do Colonel Darey’s friends know of this?”

“I have myself done so,” said Lord Castlereagh. “Not that I may attribute the thoughtful attention to myself, for I received his royal highness’s commands on the subject. I need scarcely say that such a communication must be gratifying to any one.”

“Where are they at present?” said Forester, eagerly.

“That was a question of some difficulty to me, and I accordingly called on my Lord Netherby to ascertain the point. I found he had left home, and now have the good fortune to catch him here.” So saying, Lord Castlereagh took from the folds of a pocket-book a sealed but unaddressed letter, and dipping a pen in the ink before him, prepared to write.

There were, indeed, very few occurrences

in life which made Lord Netherby feel ashamed. He had never been obliged to blush for any solecism in manner, or any offense against high breeding, nor had the even tenor of his days subjected him to any occasion of actual shame, so that the confusion he now felt had the added poignancy of being a new as well as a painful sensation.

"It may seem very strange to you, my lord," said he, in a broken and hesitating voice; "not but that, on a little reflection, the case will be easily accounted for; but—so it is—I—really must own—I must frankly acknowledge—that I am not at this moment aware of my dear cousin's address."

If his lordship had not been too much occupied in watching Lord Castlereagh's countenance, he could not have failed to see, and be struck by, the indignant expression of Forester's features.

"How are we to reach them, then, that's the point?" said Lord Castlereagh, over whose handsome face not the slightest trace of passion was visible. "If I mistake not, Gwynne Abbey they have left many a day since."

"I think I can lay my hand on a letter. I am almost certain I had one from a law-agent, called—called—"

"Bicknell, perhaps," interrupted Forester, blushing between shame and impatience.

"Quite right—you are quite right," replied Lord Netherby, with a significant glance at Lord Castlereagh, cunningly intended to draw off attention from himself. "Well, Mr. Bicknell wrote to me a very tiresome and complicated epistle about law affairs—motions, rules, and so forth—and mentioned at the end that Lady Eleanor and Helen were living in some remote village on the northern coast."

"A cottage called the Corvy," broke in Forester, "kindly lent to them by an old friend, Mr. Bagenal Daly."

"Will that address suffice," said Lord Castlereagh, "with the name of the nearest post-town?"

"If you will make me the postman, I'll vouch for the safe delivery," said Forester, with an animation that made him flushed and pale within the same instant.

"My dear young friend—my dear Lord Wallincourt!" exclaimed Lord Netherby, laying his hand upon his arm. He said no more; indeed he firmly believed the enunciation of his new title must be quite sufficient to recall him to a sense of due consideration for himself.

"You are scarcely strong enough, Dick," said Lord Castlereagh, coolly. "It is a

somewhat long journey for an invalid, and Halford, I'm sure, wouldn't agree to it."

"I'm quite strong enough," said Forester, rising and pacing the room with an attempted vigor that made his debility seem still more remarkable; "if not to-day, I shall be to-morrow. The traveling, besides, will serve me—change of air and scene. More than all, I am determined on doing it."

"Not if I refuse you the dispatches, I suppose?" said Lord Castlereagh, laughing.

"You can scarcely do that," said Forester, fixing his eyes steadfastly on him. "Your memory is a bad one, or you must recollect sending me down once upon a time to that family on an errand of a different nature. Don't you think you owe an amend to them and to me?"

"Eh! what was that? I should like to know what you allude to," said Lord Netherby, whose curiosity became most painfully eager.

"A little secret between Dick and myself," said Lord Castlereagh, laughing. "To show I do not forget which, I'll accede to his present request, always provided that he is equal to it."

"Oh, as to that—"

"It must be 'Halfordo non obstante,' or not at all," said Lord Castlereagh, rising. "Well," continued he, as he moved toward the door, "I'll see the doctor on my way homeward, and, if he incline to the safety of the exploit, you shall hear from me before four o'clock. I'll send you some extracts, too, from the official papers, such as may interest your friends, and you may add '*bien des choses de ma part,*' in the way of civil speeches and gratulation."

Lord Netherby had moved toward the window as Lord Castlereagh withdrew, and seemed more interested by the objects in the street than anxious to renew the interrupted conversation.

Forester—if one were to judge from his preoccupied expression—appeared equally indifferent on the subject, and both were silent. Lord Netherby at last looked at his watch, and, with an exclamation of astonishment at the lateness of the hour, took up his hat. Forester did not notice the gesture, for his mind had suddenly become awake to the indelicacy, to say no worse, of leaving London for a long journey without one effort to see his mother. A tingling feeling of shame burned in his cheek and made his heart beat faster, as he said, "I think you have your carriage below, my lord?"

"Yes," replied Lord Netherby, not aware whether the question might portend something agreeable or the reverse.

"If you'll permit me, I'll ask you to drive me to Berkeley square. I think the air and motion will benefit me; and perhaps Lady Netherby will see me."

"Delighted—charmed to see you—my dear young friend," said Lord Netherby, who having, in his own person, some experience of the sway and influence her ladyship was habituated to exercise, calculated largely on the effect of an interview between her and her son. "I don't believe you could possibly propose anything more gratifying nor more likely to serve her. She is very weak and very nervous; but to see you will, I know, be of immense service. I'm sure you'll not agitate her," added he, after a pause. If the words had been "not contradict," they would have been nearer his meaning.

"You may trust me, for both our sakes," said Forester smiling. "By the by, you mentioned a letter from a law agent of the Dareys, Mr. Bicknell; was it expressive of any hope of a favorable termination to the suit, or did he opine that the case was a bad one?"

"If I remember aright, a very bad one; bad, from the deficiency of evidence—worse, from the want of funds to carry it on. Of course, I only speak from memory, and the epistle was so cramp, so complex, and with such a profusion of detail intermixed, that I could make little out of it, and retain even less. I must say that, as it was written without my cousin's knowledge or consent, I paid no attention to it. It was, so to say, quite unauthorized."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Forester, in an accent whose scorn was mistaken by the hearer, as he resumed.

"Just so; a mere lawyer's *ruse*, to carry on a suit. He proposed, I own, a kind of security for any advance I should make, in the person of Miss Daly, whose property, amounting to some three or four thousand pounds, was to be given as security! There always is some person of this kind on these occasions—some tame elephant—to attract the rest: but I paid no attention to it. The only thing, indeed, I could learn of the lady was, that she had a fire-eating brother who paid bond debts with a pistol, and small ones with a horsewhip."

"I know Mr. Daly and his sister too. He is a most honorable and high-minded gentleman; of her, I only needed to hear the trait your lordship has just mentioned, to say that she is worthy to be his sister in every respect."

"I was not aware that they were acquaintances of yours."

"Friends, my lord, would better express

the relationship between us; friends, firm and true, I sincerely believe them. Pray, if not indiscreet, may I ask the date of this letter?"

"Some day of June last, I think. The case was to come on for trial next November in Westport, and it was for funds to carry on the suit, it would seem, they were pressed."

"You didn't hear a second time?"

"No, I've told you that I never answered this letter. I was quite willing, I am so at this hour, to be of any service to my dear cousin, Lady Eleanor Darey, and to aid her to the fullest extent; but, to prosecute a hopeless lawsuit, to throw away some thousands in an interminable equity investigation—to measure purses, too, against one of the richest men in Ireland, as I hear their antagonist is—this I could never think of."

"But who has pronounced this claim hopeless?" said Forester, impatiently.

A cold shrug of the shoulders was all Lord Netherby's reply.

"Not Miss Daly, certainly," rejoined Forester, "who was willing to peril everything she possessed in the world upon the issue."

The sarcasm intended by this speech was deeply felt by Lord Netherby, as with an unwonted concession to ill-humor, he replied,

"There is nothing so courageous as indigence!"

"Better never be rich, then," cried Forester, "if cowardice be the first lesson it teaches. But I think better of affluence than this. I saw that same Knight of Gwynne when at the head of a princely fortune, and I never, in any rank of life, under any circumstances, saw the qualities which grace and adorn the humblest, more eminently displayed."

"I quite agree with you; a more perfectly conducted household it is impossible to conceive."

"I speak not of his retinue, nor of his graceful hospitalities, my lord, nor even of his generous munificence and benevolence; these are rich men's gifts everywhere. I speak of his trusting, confiding temper; the hopeful trust he entertained of something good in men's natures at the moment he was smarting from their perfidy and ingratitude; the forgiveness toward those that injured, the unvarying kindness toward those that forgot him."

"I declare," said Lord Netherby, smiling, "I must interdict a continuance of this panegyric, now that we have arrived, for you know Colonel Darey was a first love of Lady Netherby."

Nothing but a courtier of Lord Netherby's stamp could have made such a speech, and while Forester became scarlet with shame and anger, a new light suddenly broke upon him, and the rancor of his mother respecting the knight and his family were at once explained.

"Now to announce you," said Lord Netherby, gayly; "let that be my task." And so saying, he lightly tripped up the stairs before Forester.

CHAPTER LXVII.

A BOUDOIR.

WHEN, having passed through a suite of gorgeously furnished rooms, Forester entered the dimly-lighted boudoir where his lady-mother reclined, his feelings were full of troubled emotion. The remembrance of the last time he had been there was present to his mind, mingled with anxious fears as to his approaching reception. Had he been more conversant with the "world," he needed not to have suffered these hesitations. There are few conditions in life between which so wide a gulf yawns, as that of the titled heir of a house and the younger brother. He was, then, as little prepared for the affectionate greeting that met him, as for the absence of all trace of illness in her ladyship's appearance. Both were very grateful to his feelings as he drew his chair beside her sofa, and a soft remembrance of former days of happiness stole over his pleased senses. Lord Netherby, with a fitting consideration, had left them to enjoy this interview alone, and thus their emotions were unrestrained by the presence of the only one who had witnessed their parting. Perhaps, the most distinguishing trait of the closest affection is, that the interruptions to its course do not involve the misery of reconciliation to enable us to return to our own place in the heart; but that the moment of grief, or anger, or doubt, over, we feel that we have a right to resume our influence in the breast whose thoughts have so long mingled with our own. The close ties of filial and parental love are certainly of this nature, and it must be a stubborn heart whose instincts do not lend to that forgiveness which as much blots out as it pardons past errors. Such was not Lady Netherby's. Pride of station, the ambition of leadership in certain circles, had so incorporated themselves with the better dictates of her mind, that she rarely, if ever, permitted mere feeling

to influence her; but if, for a moment, it did get the ascendancy, her heart could feel as acutely as though it had been accustomed to such indulgence. In a word, she was as affectionate as the requirements of her rank permitted. Oh! this rank—this rank! how do its conventionalities twine and twist themselves round our natures till love and friendship are actually subject to the cold ordinance of a fashion! How many hide the dark spots of their heart behind the false screen they call their "rank!" The rich man, in the Bible, clothed in his purple, and faring sumptuously, was but acting in conformity with his "rank!"—nay, more, he was charitable as became his "rank," for the poor were fed with the crumbs from his table.

Forester was well calculated by natural advantages to attract a mother's pride. He was handsome and well-bred, had even more than a fair share of abilities, which gained credit for something higher from a native quickness of apprehension, and even already, the adventurous circumstances of his first campaign had invested his character with a degree of interest that promised well for his success in the world. If her manner to him was then kind and affectionate, it was mingled also with something of admiration, which her woman's heart yielded to the romantic traits of the youth.

She listened with eager pleasure to the animated description he gave of the morning at Aboukir, and the brilliant panorama of the attack, nor was the enjoyment marred by the mention of the only name that could have pained her, the last words of Lord Netherby having sealed Forester's lips with respect to the Knight of Gwynne.

The changeful fortunes of his life as a prisoner were mingled with the recital of the news by which his exchange was effected, and this brought back once more the subject by which their interview was opened—the death of his elder brother. Lady Netherby perhaps felt she had done enough for sorrow, for she dwelt but passingly on the theme, and rather addressed herself to the future which was now about to open before her remaining son, carefully avoiding, however, the slightest phrase that should imply dictation, and only seeming to express the natural expectation "the world" had formed of what his career should be.

"Lord Netherby tells me," said she, "that the Duke of York will, in all likelihood, name you as an extra aid-de-camp, in which case you probably would remain in the service. It is an honor that could not well be declined."

"I scarcely like to form fixed intentions which have no fixed foundations," said Forester; "but if I might give way to my own wishes, it would be to indulge in perfect liberty—to have no master."

"Nor any mistress either, to control you, for some time, I suppose," rejoined she, smiling, as if carelessly, but watching how her words were taken. Forester affected to partake in the laugh, but could not conceal a slight degree of confusion. Lady Netherby was too clever a tactician to let even a momentary awkwardness interrupt the interview, and resumed: "You will be dreadfully worried by all the 'lionizing' in store for you, I'm certain; you are to be feasted and fêted to any extent, and will be fortunate if the congratulations on your recovery do not bring back your illness."

"I shall get away from it all, at once," said Forester, rising, and walking up and down, as if the thought had suggested the impatient movement.

"You cannot avoid presenting yourself at the levee," said Lady Netherby anxiously, for already a dread of her son's willful temper came over her. "His royal highness's inquiries after you do not leave an option on this matter?"

"What if I'm too ill?" said he doggedly; "what if I should not be in town?"

"But where else could you be, Richard?" said she, with a resumption of her old imperiousness of tone and manner.

"In Ireland, madam," said Forester, coldly.

"In Ireland! And why, for any sake, in Ireland?"

Forester hesitated, and grew scarlet; he did not know whether to evade inquiry by a vague reply, or at once avow his secret determination. At length, with a faltering, uncertain voice, he said: "A matter of business will bring me to that country; I have already conversed with Lord Castlereagh on the subject. Lord Netherby was present."

"I am sure he could never concur—I'm certain." So far her ladyship had proceeded, when a sudden fear came over her that she had ventured too far, and, turning hastily, she rang the bell beside her. "Davenport," said she to the grave-looking groom of the chambers, who as instantaneously appeared, "is my lord at home?"

"His lordship is in the library, my lady."

"Alone?"

"No, my lady, a gentleman from Ireland is with his lordship."

"A gentleman from Ireland!" repeated she, half aloud, as though the very mention of that country were destined to per-

secute her; then quickly added, "Say I wish to speak with him here."

The servant bowed and withdrew; and now a perfect silence reigned in the apartment. Forester felt that he had gone too far to retreat, even were he so disposed, and although dreading nothing more than a "scene," awaited, without speaking, the course of events. As much yielding to an involuntary impatience as to relieve the awkwardness of the interval, he arose and walked into the adjoining drawing-room, carelessly tossing over books and prints upon the tables, and trying to affect an ease he was very far from experiencing.

It was while he was thus engaged that Lord Netherby entered the boudoir, and seeing her ladyship alone, was about to speak in his usual tone, when, at a gesture from her, he was made aware of Forester's vicinity, and hastily subdued his voice to a whisper. Whatever the nature of the tidings which, in a hurried and eager tone, his lordship retailed, her manner on hearing evinced mingled astonishment and delight, if the word dare be applied to an emotion whose source was in anything rather than an amiable feeling.

"It seems too absurd—too monstrous in every way," exclaimed she, at the end of an explanation which took several minutes to recount. "And why address himself to you? That seems also inexplicable."

"This," rejoined Lord Netherby, aloud—"this was his own inspiration. He candidly acknowledges that no one either counseled or is even aware of the step he has taken."

"Perhaps the *à propos* may do us good service," whispered she, with a glance darted at the room where Forester was now endeavoring, by humming an air, to give token of his vicinity, as well as assume an air of indifference.

"I thought of that," said Lord Netherby, in the same low voice. "Would you see him? A few moments would be enough?"

Lady Netherby made no answer, but with closed eyes and compressed lips seemed to reflect deeply for several minutes. At last she said, "Yes, let him come. I'll detain Richard in the drawing-room; he shall hear everything that is said. If I know anything of him, the insult to his pride will do far more than all our arguments and entreaties."

"Don't chill my little friend by any coldness of manner," said his lordship, smiling, as he moved toward the door; "I have only got him properly thawed within the last few minutes."

"My dear Richard," said she, as the door closed after Lord Netherby, "I must keep you prisoner in the drawing-room for a few minutes, while I receive a visitor of Lord Netherby's. Don't close the doors; I can't endure heat, and this room becomes insupportable without a slight current of air. Besides, there is no secret, I fancy, in the communication. As well as I understand the matter, it does not concern us; but Netherby is always doing some piece of silly good-nature, for which no one thanks him!"

The last reflection was half soliloquy, but said so that Forester could and did hear every word of it. While her ladyship, therefore, patiently awaited the arrival of her visitor in one room, Forester threw himself into a chair, and taking up a book at hazard, endeavored to pass the interval without further thought about the matter.

Sitting with his back toward the door of the boudoir, Forester accidentally had placed himself in such a position, that a large mirror between the windows reflected to him a considerable portion of the scene within. It was then with an amount of astonishment far above ordinary, that he beheld the strange-looking figure who followed Lord Netherby into the apartment of his mother. He was a short, dumpy man, with a bald head, over which the long hairs of either side were studiously combed into an ingenious kind of network, and meeting at an angle above the cranium, looked like the uncovered rafters of a new house. Two fierce-looking gray eyes that seemed ready for fun or malice, rolled and revolved unceasingly over the various decorations of the chamber, while a large thick-lipped mouth, slightly opened at either end, vouched for one who neglected no palpable occasion for self-indulgence or enjoyment. There was, indeed, throughout his appearance, a look of racy satisfaction and contentment, that consorted but ill with his costume, which was a suit of deep mourning; his clothes having all the gloss and shine of a recent domestic loss, and made, as seems something to be expected on these occasions, considerably too large for him, as though to imply that the defunct should not be defrauded in the full measure of sorrow. Deep crape weepers encircled his arms to the elbows, and a very banner of black hung mournfully from his hat.

"Mr. —" Here Lord Netherby hesitated, forgetful of his name.

"Dempsey, Paul Dempsey, your grace," said the little man, as, stepping forward, he performed the salutation before Lady Netherby, by which he was accustomed to precede an invitation to dance.

"Pray be seated, Mr. Dempsey. I have just briefly mentioned to her ladyship the circumstances of our interesting conversation, and with your permission will proceed with my recital, begging, that if I fall into any error, you will kindly set me right. This will enable Lady Netherby, who is still an invalid, to support the fatigue of an interview, wherein her advice and counsel will be of great benefit to us both."

Mr. Dempsey bowed several times, not sorry, perhaps, that in such an awful presence he was spared the office of chief orator.

"I told you, my dear," said Lord Netherby, turning toward her ladyship, "that this gentleman has for a considerable time back enjoyed the pleasure of intimacy with our worthy relative, Lady Eleanor Darcy—"

The fall of a heavy book in the adjoining room interrupted his lordship, between whom and Lady Netherby a most significant interchange of glances took place. He resumed, however, without a pause:

"—Lady Eleanor and her accomplished daughter. If the more urgent question were not now before us, it would gratify you much to learn, as I have just done, the admirable patience she has exhibited under the severe trials she has met—the profound insight she obtained into the condition, hopeless as it proves to be, of their unhappy circumstances—and the resignation in which, submitting to changed fortune, she not only has, at once, abandoned the modes of living she was habituated to, but actually descended to what I can fancy must have been the hardest infliction of all—vulgar companionship, and the society of a boarding-house."

"A most respectable establishment, though," broke in Paul; "Fumbally's is well known all over Ulster—"

A very supercilious smile from Lady Netherby cut short a panegyric Mr. Dempsey would gladly have extended.

"No doubt, sir, it was the best thing of the kind," resumed his lordship; "but remember who Lady Eleanor Darcy was; ay, and is. Think of the station she had always held, and then fancy her in daily intercourse with those people—"

"Oh! it is very horrid, indeed," broke in Lady Netherby, leaning back, and looking overcome even at the bare conception of the enormity.

"The little miserable notoriety of a fishing village—"

"Coleraine, my lord—Coleraine," cried Dempsey.

"Well, be it so. What is Coleraine?"

"A very thriving town on the river Bann,





" TO SAY IN SO MANY WORDS, WHAT TH Y HAVE DONE IS NOT SO EASY." (P. 299)

with a smart trade in yarn, two breweries, three meeting-houses, a pound, and a Sunday-school," repeated Paul, as rapidly as though reading from a volume of a topographical dictionary.

"All very commendable and delightful institutions, on which I beg heartily to offer my congratulations; but, you will allow me to remark, scarcely enough to compensate for the accustomed appliances of a residence at Gwynne Abbey. But I see we are trespassing on Lady Netherby's strength. You seem faint, my dear."

"It's nothing—it will pass over in a moment or so. This sad account of these poor people has distressed me greatly."

"Well, then, we must hasten on. Mr. Dempsey became acquainted with our poor friends in this their exile; and although from his delicacy and good taste he will not dwell on the circumstance, it is quite clear to me, has shown them many attentions; I might use a stronger word, and say—kindnesses."

"Oh! by Jove, I did nothing. I could do nothing—"

"Nay, sir, you are unjust to yourself; the very intentions by which you set out on your present journey, are the shortest answer to that question. It would appear, my dear, that my fair relative, Miss Darcy, has not forfeited the claim she possessed to great beauty and attraction; for here, in the gentleman before us, is an evidence of their existence. Mr. Dempsey, who 'never told his love,' as the poet says, waited in submission himself for the hour of his changing fortune; and until the death of his mother—"

"No, my lord; my uncle. Bob Dempsey, of Dempsey's Grove."

"His uncle, I mean. Mr. Dempsey, of Dempsey's Hole."

"Grove—Dempsey's Grove," interpolated Paul, reddening.

"Grove, I should say," repeated Lord Netherby, unmoved. "By which he has succeeded to a very comfortable independence, and is now in a position to make an offer of his hand and fortune."

"Under the conditions, my lord—under the conditions," whispered Paul.

"I have not forgotten them," resumed Lord Netherby, aloud. "It would be ungenerous not to remember them, even for your sake, Mr. Dempsey, seeing how much my poor, dear relative, Lady Eleanor, is bent on prosecuting this unhappy suit, void of hope, as it seems to be, and not having any money of her own—"

"Ready money—cash," interposed Paul.

So I mean—ready money to make the

advances necessary—Mr. Dempsey wishes to raise a certain sum by loan, on the security of his property, which may enable the Darcys to proceed with their claim; this deed to be executed on his marriage with Miss Darcy. Am I correct, sir?"

"Quite correct, my lord; you've only omitted, that, to save expensive searches, lawyers' fees, and other devilments of the like nature, that your lordship should advance the blunt yourself."

"I was coming to that point. Mr. Dempsey opines that, taking the interest it is natural we should do in our poor friends, he has a kind of claim to make this proposition to us. He is aware of our relationship—mine, I mean—to Lady Eleanor. She spoke to you, I believe, on that subject, Mr. Dempsey?"

"Not exactly to me," said Paul, hesitating, and recalling the manner in which he became cognizant of the circumstances; "but I heard her say that your lordship was under very deep obligation to her own father—that you were, so to say, a little out at elbows once, very like myself, before Bob died, and that, then—"

"We all lived together like brothers and sisters," said his lordship, reddening. "I'm sure I can't forget how happily the time went over."

"Then, Lady Eleanor, I presume, sir, did not advert to these circumstances as a reason for your addressing yourself to Lord Netherby?" said her ladyship, with a look of stern severity.

"Why, my lady, she knows nothing about my coming here. Lord bless us! I wouldn't have told her for a thousand pounds!"

"Nor Miss Darcy either?"

"Not a bit of it! Oh, by Jove! if you think they're not as proud as ever they were, you are much mistaken; and, indeed, on this very same subject I heard her say that nothing would induce her to accept a favor from your lordship, if even so very improbable an event should occur as your offering one."

"So that we owe the honor of your visit to the most single-minded of motives, sir," said Lady Netherby, whose manner had now assumed all its stateliness.

"Yes, my lady, I came as you see—Dempsius cum Dempzio—so that if I succeed, I can say, like that fellow in the play, 'Alone, I did it.'"

Lord Netherby, who probably felt that the interview had lasted sufficiently long for the only purpose he had destined or endured it, was now becoming somewhat desirous of terminating the audience, nor

was his impatience allayed by those sportive sallies of Mr. Dempsey in allusion to his own former condition as a defendant.

At length he said, "You must be aware, Mr. Dempsey, that this is a matter demanding much time and consideration. The Knight of Gwynne is absent."

"That's the reason there is not an hour to lose," interposed Paul.

"I am at a loss for your meaning."

"I mean, that if he comes home before it's all settled, that the game is up. He would never consent, I'm certain."

"So you think that the ladies regard you with more favorable eyes?" said her ladyship, smiling a mixture of superciliousness and amusement.

"I have my own reasons to think so," said Paul, with great composure.

"Perhaps you take too hopeless a view of your case, sir," resumed Lord Netherby, blandly; "I am, unhappily, very ignorant of Irish family rank; but I feel assured that Mr. Dempsey, of Dempsey's Hole—"

"Grove—Dempsey's Grove," said Paul, with a look of anger.

"I ask your pardon, humbly—I would say of Dempsey's Grove—might be an accepted suitor in the very highest quarters. At all events, from news I have heard this morning, it is more than likely that the knight will be in London before many weeks, and I dare not assume either the responsibility of favoring your views, or incurring his displeasure by an act of interference. I think her ladyship concurs with me."

"Perfectly. The case is really one which, however we may, and do, feel the liveliest interest in, lies quite beyond our influence or control."

"Mr. Dempsey may rest assured that, even from so brief an acquaintance, we have learned to appreciate some of his many excellent qualities of head and heart."

Lady Netherby bowed an acquiescence cold and stately; and his lordship rising at the same time, Paul saw that the audience drew to a close. He arose then slowly, and with a faint sigh—for he thought of his long and weary journey, made to so little profit.

"So I may jog back again as I came," muttered he, as he drew on his gloves. "Well, well, Lady Eleanor knew him better than I did. Good-morning, my lady. I hope you are about to enjoy better health. Good-by, my lord."

"Do you make any stay in town, Mr. Dempsey?" inquired his lordship, in that bland voice that best became him.

"Till I pack my portmanteau, my lord,

and pay my bill at the 'Tavistock'—not an hour longer."

"I'm sorry for that. I had hoped, and Lady Netherby also expected, we should have had the pleasure of seeing you again."

"Very grateful, my lord; but I see how the land lies as well as if I was here a month." And with this significant speech Mr. Dempsey repeated his salutations and withdrew.

"What presumption!" exclaimed Lady Netherby, as the door closed behind him. "But how needlessly Lady Eleanor Darcy must have lowered herself to incur such acquaintanceship!"

Lord Netherby made no reply, but gave a glance toward the still open door of the drawing-room. Her ladyship understood it at once, and said,

"Oh, let us release poor Richard from his bondage. Tell him to come in."

Lord Netherby walked forward; but scarcely had he entered the drawing-room, when he called out, "He's gone!"

"Gone! when?—how?" cried Lady Netherby, ringing the bell. "Did you see Lord Wallincourt when he was going, Davenport?" asked she, at once assuming her own calm deportment.

"Yes, my lady."

"I hope he took the carriage."

"No, my lady, his lordship went on foot."

"That will do, Davenport. I don't receive to-day."

"I must hasten after him," said Lord Netherby, as the servant withdrew. "We have, perhaps, incurred the very hazard we hoped to obviate."

"I half feared it," exclaimed Lady Netherby, gravely; "lose no time, however, and bring him to dinner; say that I feel very poorly, and that his society will cheer me greatly; if he is unfit to leave the house, stay with him; above all things, let him not be left alone."

Lord Netherby hastened from the room, and his carriage was soon heard at a rapid pace proceeding down the square.

Lady Netherby sat with her eyes fixed on the carpet, and her hands clasped closely, lost in thought. "Yes," said she, half aloud, "there is a fate in it! This Lady Eleanor may have her vengeance yet!"

It was about an hour after this, and while she was still revolving her own deep thoughts, that Lord Netherby re-entered the room.

"Well, is he here?" asked she, impatiently.

"No, he's off to Ireland; the very moment he reached the hotel he ordered four

horses to his carriage, and while his servant packed some trunks, he himself drove over to Lord Castlereagh's, but came back almost immediately. "They must have used immense dispatch, for Long told me that they would be nigh Barnet when I called."

"He's a true Wallincourt," said her ladyship, bitterly. "Their family motto is 'Rash in Danger,' and they have well deserved it."

CHAPTER LXVIII.

A LESSON FOR EAVESDROPPING.

FORESTER—for so to the end we must call him—but exemplified the old adage in his haste. The debility of long illness was successfully combated for some hours by the fever of excitement, but, as that wore off, symptoms of severe malady again exhibited themselves, and when on the second evening of his journey he arrived at Bangor, he was dangerously ill. With a head throbbing, and a brain almost mad, he threw himself upon a bed, perhaps the thought of his abortive effort to reach Ireland the most agonizing feeling of his tortured mind. His first care was to inquire after the sailing of the packet, and learning that the vessel would leave within an hour, he avowed his resolve to go at every hazard. As the time drew nigh, however, more decided evidences of fever set in, and the medical man who had been called to his aid, pronounced that his life would pay the penalty were he to persist in his rash resolve. His was not a temper to yield to persuasion on selfish grounds, and nothing short of his actual inability to endure moving from where he lay at last compelled him to cede; even then he ordered his only servant to take the dispatches which Lord Castlereagh had given him, and proceed with them to Dublin, where he should seek out Mr. Bicknell, and place them in his hands, with strict injunctions to have them forwarded to Lady Eleanor Darcy at once. The burning anxiety of a mind weakened by a tedious and severe malady, the fever of traveling, and the impatient struggles he made to be clear and explicit in his directions, repeated as they were full twenty times over, all conspired to exaggerate the worst features of his case, and ere the packet sailed, his head was wandering in wild delirium.

Linwood knew his master too well to venture on a contradiction, and although with very grave doubts that he should ever see him again alive, he set out, resolving to

spare no exertions to be back soon again in Bangor. The transit of the Channel forty-five years ago was, however, very different from that at present, and it was already the evening of the following day when he reached Dublin.

There was no difficulty in finding out Mr. Bicknell's residence; a very showy brass-plate on a door in a fashionable street, proclaimed the house of the well-known man of law. He was not at home, however, nor would be for some hours; he had gone out on a matter of urgent business, and left orders that except for some most pressing reason, he was not to be sent for. Linwood did not hesitate to pronounce his business such, and at length obtained the guidance of a servant to the haunt in question.

It was in a street of a third or fourth-rate rank, called Stafford street, that Bicknell's servant now stopped, and having made more than one inquiry as to name and number, at last knocked at the door of a somber-looking, ruinous old house, whose windows, broken or patched with paper, bespoke an air of poverty and destitution. A child in a ragged and neglected dress opened the door, and answering to the question "If Mr. Bicknell were there," in the affirmative, led Linwood up-stairs, creaking as they went with rottenness and decay.

"You're to rap there, and he'll come to you," said the child, as they reached the landing, where two doors presented themselves; and so saying, she slipped noiselessly and stealthily down the stairs, leaving him alone in the gloomy lobby. Linwood was not without astonishment at the place in which he found himself, but there was no time for the indulgence of such a feeling, and he knocked at first gently, and then, as no answer came, more loudly, and at last, when several minutes elapsed without any summons to enter, he tapped sharply at the panel with his cane. Still there was no reply; the deep silence of the old house seemed like that of a church at midnight, not a sound was heard to break it. There was a sense of dreariness and gloom over the ruinous spot, and the fast-closing twilight, that struck Linwood deeply, and it is probable, had the mission with which he was intrusted been one of less moment than his master seemed to think it, that Linwood would quietly have descended the stairs, and deferred his interview with Mr. Bicknell to a more suitable time and place. He had come, however, bent on fulfilling his charge, and so, after waiting what he believed to be half an

hour, and which might possibly have been five or ten minutes, he applied his hand to the lock, and entered the room.

It was a large, low-ceilinged apartment, whose motheaten furniture seemed to rival with the building itself, and which, though once not without some pretension to respectability, was now crumbling to decay, or coarsely mended by some rude hand. A door, not quite shut, led into an inner apartment, and from this room the sound of voices proceeded, whose conversation, in all probability, had prevented Linwood's summons from being heard.

Whether the secret instincts of his calling were the prompter—for Linwood was a valet—or that the strange circumstances in which he found himself had suggested a spirit of curiosity, but Linwood approached the door and peeped in. The sin of eavesdropping, like most other sins, would seem only difficult at the first step; the subsequent ones come easily, for, as the listener established himself in a position to hear what went forward, he speedily became interested in what he heard.

By the gray half-light three figures were seen. One was a lady, so at least her position and attitude bespoke her, although her shawl was of a coarse and humble stuff, and her straw bonnet showed signs of time and season. She sat back in a deep leather chair, with hands folded, and her head slightly thrown forward, as if intently listening to the person who, at a distance of half the room, addressed her. He was a thick-set, powerful man, in a jockey-cut coat and top-boots; a white hat, somewhat crushed and travel-stained, was at his feet, and across it a heavy horsewhip; his collar was confined by a single fold of a spotted handkerchief, that thus displayed a brawny throat and a deep beard of curly black hair, that made the head appear unnaturally large. The third figure was of a little, dapper, smart-looking personage, with a neatly-powdered head and a scrupulously white cravat, who, standing partly behind the lady's chair, bestowed an equal attention on the speaker.

The green-coated man, it was clear to see, was of an order in life far inferior to the others, and in the manner of his address, his attitude as he sat, and his whole bearing, exhibited a species of rude deference to the listeners.

"Well, Jack," cried the little man, in a sharp, lively voice, "we knew all these facts before; what we were desirous of, was something like proof—something that might be brought out into open court and before a jury."

"I'm afraid, then, sir," replied the other, "I can't help you there. I told Mr. Daly all I knew and all I suspected, when I was up in Newgate, and if he hadn't been in such a hurry that night to leave Dublin for the North, I could have brought him to the very house this fellow Garret was living in."

"Who is Garret?" broke in the lady, in a deep, full voice.

"The late Mr. Gleeson's butler, ma'am," said the little man; "a person we have never been able to come at. To summon him as a witness would avail us nothing; it is his private testimony that might be of such use to us."

"Well, you see, sir," continued the green-coat, or, as he was familiarly named by the other, Jack, whom, perhaps, our reader has already recognized as Frenay, the others being Miss Daly and Bicknell—"well, you see, sir, Mr. Daly was angry at the way things was done that night—and sure enough he had good cause—and sorra bit of a word he'd speak to me when I was standing with the tears in my eyes to thank him; no, nor he wouldn't take the mare that was ready saddled and bridled in Healey's stables waiting for him, but he turned on his heel with 'D—n you, for a common highwayman; it's what a man of blood and birth ever gets by stretching a hand to save you.'"

"He should have thought of that before," remarked Miss Daly, solemnly.

"Faith, and if he did, ma'am, your humble servant would had to dance upon nothing!" rejoined Frenay, with a laugh that was very far from mirthful.

"And what was the circumstance which gave Mr. Daly so much displeasure, Jack?" asked Bicknell. "I thought that everything went on exactly as he had planned it."

"Quite the contrary, sir: nothing was the way it ought to be. The fire was never thought of—"

"Never thought of! Do you mean to say it was an accident?"

"No, I don't sir; I mean that all we wanted was to make believe that the jail was on fire, which was easy enough with burning straw; the rest was all planned safe and sure. And when we saw the real flames shooting up, sorra one was more frightened than some of ourselves; each accusing the other, cursing and shouting, and crying like mad! Ay, indeed! there was an ould fellow in for sheep-stealing, and nothing would convince him but that it was the 'devil took us at our word,' and sent his own fire for us. Not one of these

was more puzzled than myself. I turned it every way in my mind, and could make nothing of it; for though I knew well that Mr. Daly would burn down Dublin from Barrack street to the North wall if he had a good reason for it, I knew also he'd not do it out of mere devilment. Besides, ma'am, the way matters was going, it was likely that none of us would escape. There was I—saving your presence—with eight-pound fetters on my legs. Ay, faix! I went down the ladder in them afterward."

"But the fire."

"I'm coming to it, sir. I was sitting this way, with my chin on my hands, at the window of my cell, trying to get a taste of fresh air, for the place was thick of smoke, when I seen the flames darting out of the windows of a public-house at the corner, the sign of the 'Cracked Padlock,' and, at the same minute, out came the fire through the roof, a great red spike of flame higher than the chimney. 'That's no accident,' says I to myself, 'whatever them that's doing it means;' and sure enough the blaze broke out in the other corner of the street just as I said the words. Well, ma'am, of all the terrible yells and cries that was ever heard, the prisoners set up then, for, though there was eight lying for execution on Saturday, and twice as many more very sure of the same end after the sessions, none of us liked to face such a dreadful thing as fire. Just then, ma'am, at that very minute, there came, as it might be under my window, a screech so loud and so piercing that it went above all the other cries, just the way the yellow fire darted through the middle of the thick, lazy smoke. Sorra one could give such a screech but a throat I knew well, and so I called out at the top of my voice, 'Ah, ye limb of the devil, this is your work!' and as sure as I'm here, there came a laugh in my ears, and whether it was the devil himself gave it or Jemmy, I often doubted since."

"And who is Jemmy?" asked Bicknell.

"A bit of a 'gossoon' I had to mind the horses, and meet me with a beast here and there as I wanted. The greatest villain for wickedness that was ever pinioned."

"And so he was really the cause of the fire?"

"Ay, was he! He not only hid the tinder and chips—"

Just as Freney had got thus far, he drew his legs up close beneath him, sunk down his head as if into his neck, and with a spring such as a tiger might have given, cleared the space between himself and the door, and rolled over on the floor, with the trembling figure of Linwood under him.

So terribly sudden was the leap, that Miss Daly and Bicknell scarcely saw the bound ere they beheld him with one hand upon the victim's throat, while with the other he drew forth a clasp-knife, and opened the blade with his teeth.

"Keep back, keep back," said Freney, as Bicknell drew nigh; and the words came thick and guttural, like the deep growl of a mastiff.

"Who are you, and what brings you here?" said Freney, as, setting his knee on the other's chest, he relinquished the grasp by which he had almost choked him.

"I came to see Mr. Bicknell," muttered the nearly lifeless valet.

"What did you want with me?"

"Wait a bit," interposed Freney. "Who brought you here? how came you to be standing by that door?"

"Mr. Bicknell's servant showed me the house, and a child brought me to this room."

"There, sir," said Freney, turning his head toward Bicknell, without releasing the strong pressure by which he pinned the other down—"there, sir, so much for your caution. You told me if I came to this lady's lodgings here, that I was safe, and now here's this fellow has heard us, and everything we've said, maybe these two hours."

"I only heard about Newgate," muttered the miserable Linwood; "I was but a few minutes at the door, and was going to knock. I came from Lord Wallincourt with papers of great importance for Mr. Bicknell. I have them, if you'll let me—"

"Let him get up," said Miss Daly, calmly.

Freney stood back, and retired between his victim and the door, where he stood, with folded arms and bent brows, watching him.

"He has almost broke in my ribs," said Linwood, as he pressed his hand to his side, with a grimace of true suffering.

"So much for eavesdropping. You need expect no pity from me," said Miss Daly, sternly. "Where are these papers?"

"My lord told me," said the man, as he took them from his breast, "that I was to give them into Mr. Bicknell's own hands, with strictest directions to have them forwarded at the instant. But for that," added he, whining, "I had never come to this."

"Let it be a lesson to you about listening, sir," said Miss Daly. "Had my brother been here—"

"Oh, by the powers!" broke in Freney. "he'd have pitched you neck and crop into

the water-hogshead below, if your master was the lord-lieutenant."

By this time Bicknell was busy reading the several addresses on the packets, and the names inscribed in the corners of each.

"If I'm not mistaken, madam," said he to Miss Daly, "this Lord Wallincourt is the new peer, whose brother died at Lisbon. The name is Forester."

"Yes, sir, you are right," muttered Linwood.

"The same Mr. Richard Forester my brother knew, the cousin of Lord Castle-rough?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Linwood.

"Where is he? Is he here?"

"No, ma'am, he's lying dangerously ill, if he be yet alive, at Bangor. He wanted to bring these papers over himself, but was only able to get so far when the fever came on him again."

"Is he alone?"

"Quite alone, ma'am; no one knows even his name. He would not let me say who he was."

Miss Daly turned toward Bicknell, and spoke for several minutes in a quick and eager voice. Meanwhile, Freney, now convinced that he had not to deal with a spy or a thief-catcher, came near and addressed Linwood.

"I didn't mean to hurt ye till I was sure ye deserved it, but never play that game any more."

Linwood appeared to receive both apology and precept with equal discontent.

"Another thing," resumed Freney; "I'm sure you are an agreeable young man in the housekeeper's room and the butler's parlor, very pleasant and conversable, with a great deal of anecdote and amusing stories; but, mind me, let nothing tempt ye to talk about what ye heard me say to-night. It's not that I care about myself—it's worse than jail-breaking they can tell of me—but I won't have another name mentioned. D'ye mind me?"

As if to enforce the caution, he seized the listener between his finger and thumb, and whether there was something magnetic in the touch, or that it somehow conveyed a foretaste of what disobedience might cost, but Linwood winced till the tears came, and stammered out,

"You may depend on it, sir, I'll never mention it."

"I believe you," said the robber, with a grin, and fell back to his place.

"I will not lose a post, rely upon it, madam," said Bicknell; "and am I to suppose you have determined on this jour-

"Yes," said Miss Daly, "the case admits of little hesitation; the young man is alone, friendless, and unknown. I'll hasten over at once—I am too old for slander, Mr. Bicknell. Besides, let me see who will dare to utter it."

There was a sternness in her features as she spoke that made her seem the actual image of her brother. Then, turning to Linwood, she continued,

"I'll go over this evening to Bangor in the packet; let me find you there."

"I'll see him safe on board, ma'am," said Freney, with a leer, while, slipping his arm within the valet's, he half led, half drew him from the room.

CHAPTER LXIX.

A LESSON IN POLITICS.

IN the deep bay-window of a long, gloomy-looking dinner-room of a Dublin mansion, sat a party of four persons around a table plentifully covered with decanters and bottles, and some stray remnants of a dessert, which seemed to have been taken from the great table in the middle of the apartment. The night was falling fast, for it was past eight o'clock of an evening in autumn, and there was barely sufficient light to descry the few scrubby-looking ash and alder trees that studded the barren grass plot between the house and the stables. There was nothing to cheer in the aspect without, nor, if one were to judge from the long pauses that ensued after each effort at conversation, the few and monotonous words of the speakers, were there any evidences of a more enlivening spirit within doors. The party consisted of Dr. Hickman and his son Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Hefferman, and "Counselor" O'Halloran.

At first, and by the dusky light in the chamber, it would seem as if but three persons were assembled, for the old doctor, whose debility had within the last few months made rapid strides, had sunk down into the recess of the deep chair, and save by a low quavering respiration, gave no token of his presence. As these sounds became louder and fuller, the conversation gradually dropped into a whisper, for the old man was asleep. In the subdued tone of the speakers, the noiseless gestures as they passed the bottle from hand to hand, it was easy to mark that they did not wish to disturb his slumbers. It is no part of our task to detail how these individuals came to be thus associated. The assumed object

which at this moment drew them together was the approaching trial at Galway of a record brought against the Hickmans by Darcy. It was Bicknell's last effort, and with it must end the long and wearisome litigation between the houses.

The case for trial had nothing which could suggest any fears as to the result. It was on a motion for a new trial that the cause was to come on. The plea was misdirection and want of time, so that, in itself, the matter was one of secondary importance. The great question was, that a general election now drew nigh, and it was necessary for O'Reilly to determine on the line of political conduct he should adopt, and thus give O'Halloran the opportunity of a declaration of his client's sentiments in his address to the jury.

The conduct of the Hickmans since their accession to the estate of Gwynne Abbey had given universal dissatisfaction to the county gentry. Playing at first the game of popularity, they assembled at their parties people of every class and condition; and while affronting the better-bred by low association, dissatisfied the inferior order by contact with those who made their inferiority more glaring. The ancient hospitalities of the abbey were remembered in contrast with the ostentatious splendor of receptions in which display and not kindness was intended. Vulgar presumption and purse-pride had usurped the place once occupied by easy good breeding and cordiality, and even they who had often smarted under the cold reserve of Lady Eleanor's manner, were now ready to confess that she was born to the rank she assumed, and not an upstart, affecting airs of superiority. The higher order of the county gentry accordingly held aloof, and at last discontinued their visits altogether; of the second-rate, many who were flattered at first by invitations, became dissatisfied at seeing the same favors extended to others below them, and they, too, ceased to present themselves, until, at last, the society consisted of a few sycophantic followers, who swallowed the impertinence of the host with the aid of his claret, and buried their own self-respect, if they were troubled with such a quality, under the weight of good dinners.

Hickman O'Reilly, for a length of time, affected not to mark the change in the rank and condition of his guests, but as one by one the more respectable fell off, and the few left were of a station that the fine servants of the house regarded as little above their own, he indignantly declined to admit any company in future, reduced the establishment to the few merely necessary for

the modest requirements of the family, and gave it to be known that the uncongenial tastes and habits of his neighbors made him prefer isolation and solitude to such association.

For some time he had looked to England as the means of establishing for himself and his son a social position. The refusal of the minister to accord the baronetcy was a death-blow to this hope, while he discovered that mere wealth, unassisted by the sponsorship of some one in repute, could not suffice to introduce Beecham into the world of fashion. Although these things had preyed on him severely, there was no urgent necessity to act in respect of them till the time came, as it now had done, for a general election.

The strict retirement of his life must now give way before the requirements of an election candidate, and he must consent to take the field once more as a public man, or, by abandoning his seat in Parliament, accept a condition of what he knew to be complete obscurity. The old doctor was indeed favorable to the latter course—the passion for hoarding had gone on increasing with age. Money was, in his estimation, the only species of power above the changes and caprice of the world. Bank-notes were the only things he never knew to deceive; and he took an almost fiendish delight in contrasting the success of his own penurious practices with all the disappointments his son O'Reilly had experienced in his attempts at what he called "high life." Every slight shown him, each new instance of coldness or aversion of the neighborhood, gave the old man a diabolical pleasure, and seemed to revive his youth in the exercise of a malignant spirit.

O'Reilly's only hope of reconciling his father to the cost of a new election was in the prospect held out that the seat might at last be secured in perpetuity for Beecham, and the chance of a rich marriage in England thus provided. Even this view he was compelled to sustain by the assurance that the expense would be a mere trifle, and that, by the adoption of popular principles, he should come in almost for nothing. To make the old doctor a convert to these notions, he had called in Heffernan and O'Halloran, who both, during the dinner, had exerted themselves with their natural tact, and now that the doctor had dropped asleep, were reposing themselves, and recruiting the energies so generously expended.

Hence the party seemed to have a certain gloom and weight over it, as the shadow of coming night fell on the figures seated,

almost in silence, around the table. None spoke, save an occasional word or two, as they passed round the bottle. Each retreated into his own reflections, and communed with himself. Men who have exhibited themselves to each other, in a game of deceit and trick, seem to have a natural repugnance to any recurrence to the theme when the occasion is once over. Even they whose hearts have the least self-respect will avoid the topic if possible.

"How is the bottle?—with you, I believe," said O'Reilly to Heffernan, in the low tone to which they had all reduced the conversation.

"I have just filled my glass; it stands with the counselor."

O'Halloran poured out the wine and sipped it slowly. "A very remarkable man," said he, sententiously, with a slight gesture of his head to the chair where the old doctor lay coiled up asleep. "His faculties seem as clear, and his judgment as acute, as if he were only five-and-forty, and I suppose he must be nearly twice that age."

"Very nearly," replied O'Reilly; "he confesses commonly to eighty-six, but when he is weak or querulous, he often says ninety-one or two."

"His memory is the most singular thing about him," said Heffernan. "Now, the account of Swift's appearance in the pulpit with the gown thrust back, and his hands stuck in the belt of the cassock, browbeating the lord mayor and aldermen for coming in late to church; it came as fresh as if he were talking of an event of last week."

"How good the imitation of voice was, too," added Heffernan: "Giving two hours to your dress, and twenty minutes to your devotions, you come into God's house looking more like mountebanks than Christian men!"

"I've seldom seen him so much inclined to talk and chat away as this evening," said O'Reilly; "but I think you chimed in so well with his humor, it drew him on."

"There was something of dexterity," said Heffernan, "in the way he kept bringing up these reminiscences and old stories, to avoid entering upon the subject of the election. I saw that he wouldn't approach that theme, no matter how skillfully you brought it forward."

"You ought not to have alluded to the Darcys, however," said O'Halloran. "I remarked that the mention of their name gave him evident displeasure; indeed, he soon after pushed his chair back from the table and became silent."

"He always sleeps after dinner," ob-

served O'Reilly, carelessly. "It was about his usual time."

Another pause now succeeded, in which the only sounds heard were the deep-drawn breathings of the sleeper.

"You saw Lord Castlereagh, I think you told me?" said O'Reilly, anxious to lead Heffernan into something like a declaration of opinion.

"Oh, repeatedly; I dined either with him, or in his company, three or four times every week of my stay in town."

"Well, is he satisfied with the success of his measure?" asked O'Halloran, caustically. "Is this Union working to his heart's content?"

"It is rather early to pass a judgment on that point, I think."

"I'm not of that mind," rejoined O'Halloran, hastily. "The fruits of the measure are showing themselves already. The men of fortune are flying the country; their town houses are to let; their horses are advertised for sale at Dyce's. Dublin is, even now, beginning to feel what it may become when the population has no other support than itself."

"Such will always be the fortune of a province. Influence will and must converge to the capital," rejoined Heffernan.

"But what, if the great element of a province be wanting? what, if we have not that inherent respect and reverence for the metropolis, provincials always should feel? what, if we know that our interests are misunderstood, our real wants unknown, our peculiar circumstances either undervalued or despised?"

"If the case be as you represent it—"

"Can you deny it? Tell me that."

"I will not deny or admit it. I only say, if it be such, there is still a remedy, if men are shrewd enough to adopt it."

"And what may that remedy be?" said O'Reilly, calmly.

"An Irish party!"

"Oh, the old story; the same plot over again we had this year at the Rotunda?" said O'Reilly, contemptuously.

"Which only failed from our own faults," added Heffernan, angrily. "Some of us were lukewarm and would do nothing; some waited for others to come forward; and some again wanted to make their hard bargain with the minister, before they made him feel the necessity of the compact."

O'Reilly bit his lip in silence, for he well understood at whom this reproof was leveled.

"The cause of failure was very different," said O'Halloran, authoritatively. "It was

one which has dissolved many an association, and rendered many a scheme abortive, and will continue to do so, as often as it occurs. You failed for want of a 'principle.' You had rank and wealth, and influence more than enough to have made your weight felt and acknowledged, but you had no definite object or end. You were a party, and you had not a purpose."

"Come, come," said Heffernan, "you are evidently unaware of the nature of our association, and seem not to have read the resolutions we adopted."

"No—on the contrary, I read them carefully; there was more than sufficient in them to have made a dozen parties. Had you adopted one steadfast line of action, set out with one brief intelligible proposition—I care not what—slave emancipation, or Catholic emancipation, repeal of tests acts, or parliamentary reform—any of them, taken your stand on that, and that alone, you must have succeeded. Of course, to do this, is a work of time and labor; some men will grow weary and sink by the way, but others take up the burden, and the goal is reached at last. There must be years long of writing and speaking, meeting, declaring, and plotting; you must consent to be thought vulgar and low-minded—ay, and to become so, for active partisans are only to be found in low places. You will be laughed at and jeered, abused, mocked, and derided at first; later on, you will be assailed more powerfully, and more coarsely; but, all this while, your strength is developing, your agencies are spreading. Persuasion will induce some; notoriety others; hopes of advantage many more, to join you. You will then have a press as well as a party, and the very men that sneered at your beginnings, will have to respect the persistence and duration of your efforts. I don't care how trumpety the arguments used; I don't value one straw the fallacy of the statements put forward. Let one great question, one great demand for anything be made for some five-and-twenty or thirty years. Let the press discuss, and the parliament debate it. You are sure of its being accorded in the end. Now, it will be a party ambitious of power that will buy your alliance at any price. Now, a tottering government anxious to survive the session and reach the snug harbor of the long vacation. Now, it will be the high 'bid' of a popular administration. Now, it will be the last hope of second-rate capacities, ready to supply their own deficiencies, by incurring a hazard. However it come, you are equally certain of it."

There was a pause as O'Halloran concluded. Heffernan saw plainly to what the counselor pointed, and that he was endeavoring to recruit for that party of which he destined the future leadership for himself, and Con had no fancy to serve in the ranks of such an army. O'Reilly, who thought that the profession of a popular creed might be serviceable in the emergency of an election, looked with more favor on the exposition, and after a brief interval, said,

"Well, supposing I were to see this matter in your light, what support could you promise me? I mean at the hustings."

"Most of the small freeholders now—all of them, in time; the priests to a man—the best election agents that ever canvassed a constituency. By degrees the forces will grow stronger, according to the length and breadth of the principle you adopt—make it emancipation, and I'll insure you a lease of the county." Heffernan smiled dubiously. "Ah, never mind Mr. Heffernan's look, these notions don't suit him. He's one of the petty traders in politics, who like small sales and quick returns."

"Such dealing makes fewest bankrupts," said Heffernan, coolly.

"I own to you," said O'Halloran, "the rewards are distant, but they're worth waiting for. It is not the miserable bribe of a situation, or a title, both beneath what they would accord to some state apothecary; but power, actual power, and real patronage are in the vista."

A heavy sigh and a rustling sound in the deep arm-chair announced that the doctor was awaking, and, after a few struggles to throw off the drowsy influence, he sat upright, and made a gesture that he wished for wine.

"We've been talking about political matters, sir," said O'Reilly. "I hope we didn't disturb your doze."

"No; I was sleeping sound," croaked the old man, in a feeble whine, "and I had a very singular dream! I dreamed I was sitting in a great kitchen of a big house, and there was a very large, hairy turnspit sitting opposite to me, in a nook beside the fire, turning a big spit with a joint of meat on it. 'Who's the meat for?' says I to him. 'For my Lord Castlereagh,' says he, 'devil a one else.' 'For himself alone?' says I. 'Just so,' says he; 'don't you know, that's the Irish Parliament that we're roasting and basting, and, when it's done, says he, 'we'll sarve it up to be carved.' 'And who are you?' says I to the turnspit. 'I'm Con Heffernan,' says he,

'and the devil a bit of the same meat I'm to get after cooking it, till my teeth's watering.'"

A loud roar of laughter from O'Halloran, in which Heffernan endeavored to take a part, met this strange revelation of the doctor's sleep; nor was it for a considerable time after that the conversation could be resumed without some jesting allusion of the counselor to the turnspit and his office.

"Your dream tallies but ill, sir, with the rumors through Dublin," said O'Reilly, whose quick glance saw through the mask of indifference by which Heffernan concealed his irritation.

"I didn't hear it. What was it, Bob?"

"That the ministry had offered our friend here the secretaryship for Ireland."

"Sure, if they did—" He was about to add, "That he'd have as certainly accepted it," when a sense of the impropriety of such a speech arrested the words.

"You are mistaken, sir," interposed Heffernan, answering the unspoken sentence. "I did refuse. The conditions on which I accorded my humble support to the bill of the Union have been shamefully violated, and I could not, if I even wished it, accept office from a Government that have been false to their pledges."

"You see my dream was right, after all," chuckled the old man. "I said they kept him working away in the kitchen, and gave him none of the meat afterward."

"What if I had been stipulating for another, sir?" said Heffernan, with a forced smile. "What if the breach of faith I allude to had reference not to me, but to your son yonder, for whom, and no other, I asked—I will not say a favor—but a fair and reasonable acknowledgment of the station he occupies?"

"Ah! that weary title," exclaimed the doctor, crankily. "What have we to do with these things?"

"You are right, sir," chimed in O'Halloran. "Your present position, self-acquired and independent, is a far prouder one than any to be obtained by ministerial favor."

"I'd rather he'd help us to crush these Darcys," said the old man, as his eyes sparkled and glistened like the orbs of a serpent. "I'd rather my Lord Castlereagh would put his heel upon *them*, than stretch out the hand to *us*."

"What need to trouble your head about them?" said Heffernan, conciliatingly; "they are low enough in all conscience now."

"My father means," said O'Reilly, "that

he is tired and sick of the incessant appeals to law this family persist in following; that these trials irritate and annoy him."

"Come, sir," cried O'Halloran, encouragingly, "you shall see the last of them in a few weeks. I have reason to know that an old maiden sister of Bagenal Daly's has supplied Bicknell with the means of the present action. It is the last shot in the locker. We'll take care to make the gun recoil on the hand that fires it."

"Darcy and Daly are both out of the country," observed the old man, cunningly.

"We'll call them up for judgment, however," chimed in O'Halloran. "That same Daly is one of those men who infested our country in times past, and by the mere recklessness of their hold on life, bullied and oppressed all who came before them. I am rejoiced to have an opportunity of showing up such a character."

"I wish we had done with them all," sighed the doctor.

"So you shall, with this record. Will you pledge yourself not to object to the election expenses if I gain you the verdict?"

"Come, that's a fair offer," said Heffernan, laughing.

"Maybe, they'll come to ten thousand," said the doctor, cautiously.

"Not above one-half the sum, if Mr. O'Reilly will consent to take my advice."

"And why wouldn't he?" rejoined the old man querulously. "What signifies which side he takes, if it saves the money?"

"Is it a bargain, then?"

"Will you secure me against more trials at law? Will you pledge yourself that I'm not to be tormented by these anxieties and cares?"

"I can scarcely promise that much; but I feel so assured that your annoyance will end here, that I am willing to pledge myself to give you my own services without fee or reward in future, if any action follow this one."

"I think that is most generous," said Heffernan.

"It is as much as saying, he'll enter into recognizances for an indefinite series of five-hundred-pound briefs," added O'Reilly.

"Done, then. I take you at your word," said the doctor, while stretching forth his lean and trembling hand, he grasped the nervous fingers of the counselor in token of ratification.

"And now woe to the Darcys!" muttered O'Halloran, as he arose to say good-night. Heffernan rose at the same time, resolved to accompany the counselor, and

try what gentle persuasion could effect in the modification of views which, he saw, were far too explicit to be profitable.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE CHANCES OF TRAVEL.

NEITHER our space nor our inclination prompt us to dwell on Forester's illness; enough when we say that his recovery, slow at first, made at length good progress, and within a month after the commencement of the attack, he was once more on the road, bent on reaching the North, and presenting himself before Lady Eleanor and her daughter.

Miss Daly, who had been his kind and watchful nurse for many days and nights ere his wandering faculties could recognize her, contributed more than all else to his restoration. The impatient anxiety under which he suffered was met by her mild but steady counsels; and although she never ventured to bid him hope too sanguinely, she told him that his letter had reached Helen's hand, and that he himself must plead the cause he had opened.

"Your greatest difficulty," said she, in parting with him in Dublin, "will be in the very circumstance which, in ordinary cases, would be the guaranty of your success. Your own rise in fortune has widened the interval between you. This, to your mind, presents but the natural means of overcoming the obstacles I allude to; but remember there are others whose feelings are to be as intimately consulted—nay, more so than your own. Think of those who never yet made an alliance without feeling that they were on a footing of perfect equality; and reflect that even if Helen's affections were all your own, Maurice Darcy's daughter can enter into no family, however high and proud it may be, save as the desired and sought-for by its chief members. Build upon anything lower than this, and you fail. More still," added she, almost sternly, "your failure will meet with no compassion from me. Think not, because I have gone through life a lone, uncared-for thing, that I undervalue the strength and power of deep affection, or that I could counsel you to make it subservient to views of worldliness and advantage. You know me little if you think so. But I would tell you this; that no love, deserving of the name, ever existed without those high promptings of the heart that made all difficulties easy to encounter—ay, even those

worst of difficulties, that spring from false pride and prejudice. It is by no sudden outbreak of temper, no selfish threat of this or that insensate folly, that your lady-mother's consent should be obtained. It is by the manly dignity and consistency of a character that in the highest interests of a higher station give a security for sound judgment and honorable motives. Let it appear from your conduct that you are not swayed by passion or caprice. You have already won men's admiration for the gallantry of your daring. There is something better still than this, the esteem and regard that are never withheld from a course of honorable and independent action. With these on your side, rely upon it, a mother's heart will not be the last in England to acknowledge and glory in your fame. And now, good-by—you have a better traveling companion than me—you have hope with you."

She returned the cordial pressure of his hand, and was turning away, when, after what seemed a kind of struggle with her feelings, she added,

"One word more, even at the hazard of wearying you. Above all and everything, be honest, be candid; not only with others, but with yourself! Examine well your heart, and let no sense of false shame, let no hopes of some chance or accident deceive you, by which your innermost feelings are to be guessed at, and not avowed. This is the blackest of calamities: this can even embitter every hour of a long life."

Her voice trembled at the last words, and as she concluded she wrung his hand once more affectionately, and moved hurriedly away. Forester looked after her with a tender interest. For the first time in his life he heard her sob. "Yes," thought he, as he lay back and covered his eyes with his hand, "she, too, has loved, and loved unhappily."

There are few sympathies stronger, not even those of illness itself, than connect those whose hearts have struggled under unrequited affection; and so, for many an hour as he traveled, Forester's thoughts recurred to Miss Daly, and the last troubled accents of her parting speech. Perhaps he did not dwell the less on that theme because it carried him away from his own immediate hopes and fears—emotions that rendered him almost irritable by their intensity.

While on the road, Forester traveled with all the speed he could accomplish. His weakness did not permit of his being many hours in a carriage, and he endeavored to compensate for this by rapid traveling at

the time. His impatience to get forward was, however, such, that he scarcely arrived at any halting-place without ordering horses to be at once got ready; so that, when able, he resumed the road without losing a moment.

In compliance with this custom, the carriage was standing all ready with its four posters at the door of the inn of Castle Blayney, while Forester, overcome by fatigue and exhaustion, had thrown himself on a bed and fallen asleep. The rattling crash of a mail-coach and its deep-toned horn suddenly awoke him: he started, and looked at his watch. Was it possible? It was nearly midnight; he must have slept more than three hours! Half gratified by the unaccustomed rest, half angry at the lapse of time, he arose to depart. The night was the reverse of inviting; a long-threatened storm had at last burst forth, and the rain was falling in torrents, while the wind, in short and fitful gusts, shook the house to its foundation, and scattered tiles and slates over the dreary street.

So terrible was the hurricane, many doubts were entertained that the mail could proceed further; and when it did at length set forth, gloomy prognostics of danger—dark pictures of precipices—swollen torrents and broken bridges, were rife in the bar and the landlord's room. These arguments, if they could be so called, were all renewed when Forester called for his bill, as a preparation to depart, and all the perils that ever happened by land or by water, recapitulated to deter him.

"The middle arch of the Slany Bridge was tottering when the up-mail passed three hours before. A horse and cart were just fished out of Mooney's pond, but no driver as yet discovered. The forge at the cross roads was blown down, and the rafters were lying across the highway." These, and a dozen other like calamities, were bandied about, and pitched like shuttle-cocks from side to side, as the impatient traveler descended the stairs.

Had Forester cared for the amount of the reckoning, which he did not, he might have entertained grave fears of its total, on the principle well known to travelers, that the speed of its coming is always in the inverse ratio of the sum, and that every second's delay is sure to swell its proportions. Of this he never thought once, but he often reflected on the tardiness of waiters, and the lingering tediousness of the moments of parting.

"It's coming, sir: he's just adding it up," said the head waiter, for the sixth time within three minutes, while he moved

to and fro, with the official alacrity that counterfeits dispatch. "I'm afraid you'll have a bad night, sir. I'm sure the horses won't be able to face the storm over Grange Connel."

Forester made no reply, but walked up and down the hall in moody silence.

"The gentleman that got off the mail thought so too," added the waiter; "and now he's pleasanter at his supper, in the coffee-room, than sitting out there, next to the guard, wet to the skin, and shivering with cold."

Less to inspect the stranger thus alluded to, than to escape the impertinent loquacity of the waiter, Forester turned the handle of the door, and entered the coffee-room. It was a large, dingy-looking chamber, whose only bright spot seemed within the glow of a blazing turf fire, where, at a little table, a gentleman was seated at supper. His back was turned to Forester; but even in the cursory glance the latter gave, he could perceive that he was an elderly personage, and one who had not abandoned the almost by-gone custom of a queue.

The stranger, dividing his time between his meal and a newspaper—which he devoured more eagerly than the viands before him—paid no attention to Forester's entrance; nor did he once look round. As the waiter approached, he asked hastily, "What chance there was of getting forward?"

"Indeed, sir, to tell the truth," drawled out the man, "the storm seems getting worse, instead of better. Miles Finerty's new house, at the end of the street, is just blown down."

"Never mind Miles Finerty, my good friend, for the present," rejoined the old gentleman, mildly, "but just tell me, are horses to be had?"

"Faith! and to tell your honor no lie, I'm afraid of it." Here he dropped to a whisper. "The sick-looking gentleman, yonder, has four waiting for him since nine o'clock; and we've only a lame mare and a pony in the stable."

"Am I never to get this bill?" cried out Forester, in a tone that illness had rendered peculiarly querulous. "I have asked, begged for it, for above an hour—and here I am still."

"He's bringing it now, sir," cried the waiter, stepping hastily out of the room, to avoid further questioning. Forester, whose impatience had now been carried beyond endurance, paced the room with hurried strides, muttering between his teeth every possible malediction on the whole race of

innkeepers, barmaids, waiters—even down to Boots himself. These imprecating expressions had gradually assumed a louder and more vehement tone, of which he was by no means aware, till the old gentleman, at the pause of a somewhat wordy denunciation, gravely added,

“Insert a clause upon postboys, sir, and I’ll second the measure.”

Forester wheeled abruptly round. He belonged to a class, a section of society, whose cherished prestige is neither to address nor be addressed by an unintroduced stranger; and had the speaker been younger, or of any age more nearly his own, it is more than likely a very vague stare of cool astonishment would have been his only acknowledgment of the speech. The advanced age, and something in the very accent of the stranger, were, however, guaranties against this conventional rudeness, and he remarked, with a smile, “I have no objection to extend the provisions of my bill in the way you propose, for perhaps half an hour’s experience may teach me how much they deserve it.”

“You are fortunate, however, to have secured horses. I perceive that the stables are empty.”

“If you are pressed for time, sir,” said Forester, on whom the quiet, well-bred manners of the stranger produced a strong impression, “it would be a very churlish thing of me to travel with four horses while I can spare a pair of them.”

“I am really very grateful,” said the old gentleman, rising and bowing courteously; “if this be not a great inconvenience—”

“By no means; and if it were,” rejoined Forester, “I have a debt to acquit to my own heart on this subject. I remember once, when traveling down to the west of Ireland, I reached a little miserable country town at nightfall, and, just as here, save that then there was no storm—” The entrance of the long-expected landlord, with his bill, here interrupted Forester’s story. As he took it, and thus afforded time for the stranger to fix his eyes steadfastly upon him, unobserved, Forester quickly resumed: “I was remarking that, just as here, there were only four post-horses to be had, and that they had just been secured by another traveler a few moments before my arrival. I forget the name of the place—”

“Perhaps I can assist you,” said the other, calmly. “It was *Kilbeggan*.”

Had a miracle been performed before his eyes, Forester could not have been more stunned—and stunned he really was, and unable to speak for some seconds. At length, his surprise yielding to a vague

glimmering of belief, he called out, “Great Heavens! it cannot be—it surely is not—”

“Maurice Darcy, you would say, sir,” said the knight, advancing with an offered hand. “As surely as I believe you to be my son Lionel’s brother officer and friend, Captain Forester.”

“Oh, Colonel Darcy! this is, indeed, happiness,” exclaimed the young man, as he grasped the knight’s hand in both his own, and shook it affectionately.

“What a strange rencontre,” said the knight, laughing; “quite the incident of a comedy! One would scarcely look for such meetings twice—so like in every respect. Our parts are changed, however; it is your turn to be generous, if the generosity trench not too closely on your convenience?”

Forester could but stammer out assurances of delight and pleasure, and so on, for his heart was too full to speak calmly or collectedly.

“And Lionel, sir, how is he—when have you heard from him?” said the young man, anxious, by even the most remote path, to speak of the knight’s family.

“In excellent health. The boy has had the good fortune to be employed in a healthy station, and, from a letter which I found awaiting me at my army agent’s, is as happy as can be. But to recur to our theme: will you forgive my selfishness if I say that you will add indescribably to the favor if you permit me to take these horses at once? I have not seen my family for some time back, and my impatience is too strong to yield to ceremony.”

“Of course—certainly; my carriage is, however, all ready, and at the door. Take it as it is, you’ll travel faster and safer.”

“But you yourself,” said Darcy, laughing—“you were about to move forward when we met.”

“It’s no matter; I was merely traveling for the sake of change,” said Forester confusedly.

“I could not think of such a thing,” said Darcy. “If our way led together, and you would accept of me as a traveling companion, I should be but too happy; but to take the long-boat, and leave you on the desolate rock, is not to be thought of.” The knight stopped, and although he made an effort to continue, the words faltered on his lips, and he was silent. At last, and with an exertion that brought a deep blush to his cheek, he said, “I am really ashamed, Captain Forester, to acknowledge a weakness, which is as new to me as it is unmanly. The best amends I can make for feeling, is to confess it. Since we met that

same night circumstances of fortune have considerably changed with me. I am not, as you then knew me, the owner of a good house and a good estate. Now, I really would wish to have been able to ask you to come and see me; but, in good truth, I cannot tell where or how I should lodge you if you said 'yes.' I believe my wife has a cabin on this northern shore, but, however it may accommodate us, I need not say I could not ask a friend to put up with it. There is my confession, and now that it is told, I am only ashamed that I should hesitate about it."

Forester once more endeavored, in broken, disjointed phrases, to express his acknowledgment, and was in the very midst of a mass of contradictory explanations, hopes, and wishes, when Linwood entered with, "The carriage is ready, my lord."

The knight heard the words with surprise, and as quickly remarked that the young man was dressed in deep mourning. "I have been unwittingly addressing you as Captain Forester," said he gravely; "I believe I should have said—"

"Lord Wallincourt," answered Forester, with a slight tremor in his voice; "the death of my brother—" Here he hesitated, and at length was silent.

The knight, who read in his nervous manner and sickly appearance the signs of broken health and spirits, resolved at once to sacrifice mere personal feeling in a cause of kindness, and said, "I see, my lord, you are scarcely as strong as when I had the pleasure to meet you first, and I doubt not that you require a little repose and quietness. Come along with me then, and if even this cabin of ours be inhospitable enough not to afford you a room, we'll find something near us on the coast, and I have no doubt we'll set you on your legs again."

"It is a favor I would have asked, if I dared," said Forester, feebly. He then added, "Indeed, sir, I will confess it, my journey had no other object than to present myself to Lady Eleanor Darcy. Through the kindness of my relative, Lord Castle-reagh, I was enabled to send her some tidings of yourself, of which my illness prevented my being the bearer, and I was desirous of adding my own testimony, so far as it could go." Here again he faltered.

"Pray continue," said the knight, warmly; "I am never happier than when grateful, and I see that I have reason for the feeling here."

"I perceive, sir, you do not recognize me," said the young man thoughtfully, while he fixed his deep, full eyes upon the knight's countenance.

Darcy stared at him in turn, and, passing his hand across his brow, looked again. "There is some mystification here," said he, quickly, "but I cannot see through it."

"Come, Colonel Darcy," said Forester, with more animation than before. "I see that you forget me; but perhaps you remember this." So saying, he walked over to a table where a number of cloaks and traveling gear were lying, and taking up a pistol, placed it in Darcy's hand. "This you certainly recognize?"

"It is my own!" exclaimed the knight; "the fellow of it is yonder. I had it with me the day we landed at Aboukir."

"And gave it to me when a French dragoon had his saber at my throat," continued Forester.

"And is it to your gallantry that I owe my life, my brave boy?" cried the old man, as he threw his arm around him.

"Not one-half so much as I owe my recovery to your kindness," said Forester. "Remember the wounded volunteer you came to see on the march. The surgeon you employed never left me till the very day I quitted the camp, and although I have had a struggle for life twice since then, I never could have lived through the first attack but for his aid.

"Is this all a dream?" said the knight, as he leaned his head upon his hand, "or are these events real? Then you were the officer whose exchange was managed, and of which I heard soon after the battle?"

"Yes, I was exchanged under a cartel, and sailed for England the day after. And you, sir—tell me of your fate?"

"A slight wound and a somewhat tiresome imprisonment tells the whole story—the latter a good deal enlivened by seeing that our troops were beating the French day after day, and the calculation that my duration could scarcely last till winter. I proved right, for last month came the capitulation, and here I am. But all these are topics for long evenings to chat over. Come with me; you can't refuse me any longer. Lady Eleanor has the right to speak *her* gratitude to you; I see you won't listen to *mine*."

The knight seized the young man's arm and led him along as he spoke. "Nay," said he, "there is another reason for it. If you suffered me to go off alone, nothing would make me believe that what I have now heard was not some strange trick of fancy. Here, with you beside me, feeling your arm within my own, and hearing your voice, it is all that I can do to believe it. Come, let me be convinced again. Where did you join us?"

Forester now went over the whole story of his late adventures, omitting nothing from the moment he had joined the frigate at Portsmouth to the last evening, when, as a prisoner, he had sent for Darcy to speak to him before he died. "I thought 'hen," said he, "I could scarcely have more than an hour or two to live; but when you came and stood beside me, I was not able to utter a word, I believe, at the time. It was rather a relief to me than otherwise that you did not know me."

"How strange is this all!" said the knight, musing. "You have told me a most singular story; only one point remains yet unelucidated. How came you to volunteer—you were in the Guards?"

"Yes," said Forester, blushing and faltering; "I had quitted the Guards, intending to leave the army some short time previous—but—but—"

"The thought of active service brought you back again. Out with it, and never be ashamed. I remember now having heard from an old friend of mine, Miss Daly, how you had left the service; and, to say truth, I was sorry for it—sorry for *your* sake, but sorrier because it always grieves me when men of gentle blood are not to be found where hard knocks are going. None ever distinguish themselves with more honor, and it is a pity that they should lose the occasion to show the world that birth and blood inherit higher privileges than stars and titles."

While the miles rolled over they thus conversed, and as each became more intimately acquainted, and more nearly interested in the other, they drew toward the journey's end. It was late on the following night when they reached Port Ballintray, and as the darkness threatened more than once to mislead them, the postilion halted at the door of a little cabin to procure a light for his lamps.

While the travelers sat patiently awaiting the necessary preparation, a voice from within the cottage struck Darcy's ear; he threw open the door as he heard it, and sprang out, and rushing forward, the moment afterward pressed his wife and daughter in his arms.

Forester, who in a moment comprehended the discovery, hastened to withdraw from a scene where his presence could only prove constraint, and leaving a message to say that he had gone to the little inn, and would wait on the knight next morning, he hurried from the spot, his heart bursting with many a conflicting emotion.

CHAPTER LXXI.

HOME.

PERHAPS, in the course of a long and, till its very latter years, a most prosperous life, the Knight of Gwynne had never known more real unbroken happiness than now that he laid his head beneath the lowly thatch of a fisherman's cottage, and found a home beside the humble hearth where daily toil had used to repose. It was not that he either felt, or assumed to feel, indifferent to the great reverse of his fortune, and to the loss of that station to which all his habits of life and thought had been conformed. Nor had he the innate sense that his misfortunes had been incurred without the culpability of, at least, neglect on his own part. No, he neither deceived nor exonerated himself. His present happiness sprang from discovering in those far dearer to him than himself, powers of patient submission, traits of affectionate forbearance, signs of a hopeful, trusting spirit, that their trials were not sent without an aim and object—all gifts of heart and mind, higher, nobler, and better than the palmiest days of prosperity had brought forth.

It was that short and fleeting season, the late autumn, a time in which the climate of northern Ireland makes a brief but brilliant amende for the long dreary months of the year. The sea, at last calm and tranquil, rolled its long waves upon the shore in measured sweep, waking the echoes in a thousand caves, and resounding with hollow voice beneath the very cliffs. The wild and fanciful outlines of the Skerry Islands were marked, sharp and distinct, against the dark blue sky, and reflected not less so in the unruffled water at their base. The White Rocks, as they are called, shone with a luster like dulled silver, and above them, the ruined towers of old Dunluce hung, balanced over the sea, and, even in decay, seemed to defy dissolution.

The most striking feature of the picture was, however, the myriad of small boats, amounting in some instances to several hundreds, which filled the little bay at sunset. These were the fishermen from Innisshowen, coming to gather the seaweed on the western shore their eastern aspect denied them; a hardy and a daring race, who braved the terrible storms of that fearful coast without a thought of fear. Here were they now, their little skiffs crowded with every sail they could carry—for it was a trial of speed, who should be first up after the turn of the ebb tide—their taper masts

bending and springing like whips, the white water curling at the bows, and rustling over the gunwales; while the fishermen themselves, with long harpoon spears, contested for the prizes—large masses of floating weed, which not unfrequently were seized upon by three or four rival parties at the same moment.

A more animated scene cannot be conceived than the bay thus presented. The boats tacking and beating in every direction, crossing each other so closely as to threaten collision—sometimes, indeed, carrying off a bowsprit or a rudder; while, from the restless motions of those on board, the frail skiffs were at each instant endangered—accidents that occurred continually, but whose peril may be judged by the hearty cheers and roars of laughter they excited. Here might be seen a wide-spreading surface of tangled seaweed, vigorously towed in two different directions by contending crews, whose exertions to secure it were accompanied by wildest shouts and cries. There a party were hauling in the prey, while their comrades, with spars and spears, kept the enemy aloof, and here, on the upturned keel of a capsized boat, were a dripping group, whose heaviest penalty was the ridicule of their fellows.

Seated in front of the little cottage, the Darceys and Forester watched this strange scene with all the interest its moving, stirring life could excite; and while the ladies could enjoy the varying picture only for itself, to the knight and the youth it brought back the memory of a more brilliant and a grander display, one to which heroism and danger had lent the most exciting of all interests.

"I see," said Darcy, as he watched his companion's countenance—"I see whither your thoughts are wandering. They are off to the old castle of Aboukir, and the tall cliffs at Marmorica." Forester slightly nodded an assent, but never spoke, while the knight resumed—"I told you it would never do to give up the service. The very glance of your eyes at yonder picture, tells me how the great original is before your mind. Come, a few weeks more of rest and quiet, you will be yourself again. Then, must you present yourself before the gallant duke, and ask for a restitution to your old grade. There will be sharp work ere long. Buonaparte is not the man to forgive Alexandria and Cairo. If I read you aright, you prefer such a career to all the ambition of a political life."

Forester was still silent, but his changing color told that the knight's words had affected him deeply, but whether as they

were intended, it was not so plain to see. The knight went on: "I am not disposed to vain regrets; but if I were to give way to such, it would be, that I am not young enough to enter upon the career I now see opening to our arms. Our insular position seems to have molded our destiny, in great part; but, rely on it, we are as much a nation of soldiers as of sailors." Warming with his theme, Darcy continued, while sketching out the possible turn of events, to depict the noble path open to a young man who, to natural talents and acquirements, added the high advantages of fortune, rank, and family influence.

"I told you," said he, smiling, "that I blamed you once, unjustly as it happened, because, as a guardsman, you did not seize the occasion to exchange guard-mounting for the field. But now I shall be sorely grieved if you suffer yourself to be withdrawn from a path that has already opened so brightly, by any of the seductions of your station, or the fascinations of mere fashion."

"Are you certain," said Lady Eleanor, speaking in a voice shaken by agitation—"are you certain, my dear, that these same counsels of yours would be in strict accordance with the wishes of Lord Wallincourt's friends, or is it not possible that *their* ambitions may point very differently for his future?"

"I can but give the advice I would offer to Lionel," said Darcy, "if my son were placed in similarly fortunate circumstances. A year or two, at least, of such training will be no bad discipline to a young man's mind, and help to fit him to discuss those terms which, if I see aright, will be rife in our assemblies for some years to come—" Darcy was about to continue, when Tate advanced with a letter, whose address bespoke Bicknell's hand. It was a long-expected communication, and, anxious to peruse it carefully, the knight arose and, making his excuses, re-entered the cottage.

The party sat for some time in silence. Lady Eleanor's mind was in a state of unusual conflict, since, for the first time in her life, had she practiced any concealment with her husband, having forborne to tell him of Forester's former addresses to Helen. To this course she had been impelled by various reasons, the most pressing among which were the evident change in the young man's demeanor since he last appeared amongst them, and, consequently, the possibility that he had outlived the passion he then professed; and secondly, by observing that nothing in Helen betrayed the slightest desire to encourage any renewal of those pro-

fessions, or any chagrin at the change in his conduct. As a mother and as a woman, she hesitated to avow what should seem to represent her daughter as being deserted, while she argued that if Helen were as indifferent as she really seemed, there was no occasion whatever for the disclosure. Now, however, that the knight had spoken his counsels so strongly, the thought occurred to her, that Forester might receive the advice in the light of a rejection of his former proposal, and suppose that these suggestions were only another mode of refusing his suit. Hence a struggle of doubt and uncertainty arose within her, whether she should at once make everything known to Darcy, or still keep silence, and leave events to their own development. The former course seemed the most fitting, and entirely forgetful of all else, she hastily arose, and followed her husband into the cabin.

Forester was now alone with Helen, and for the first time since that well-remembered night when he had offered his heart and been rejected. The game of dissimulating feelings is always easiest before a numerous audience; it is rarely possible in a *tête-à-tête*. So Forester soon felt, and although he made several efforts to induce a conversation, they were all abrupt and disjointed, as were Helen's own replies to them. At length came a pause, and what a thing is a pause at such a moment! The long lingering seconds in which a duelist watches his adversary's pistol, wavering over the region of his heart or brain, is less torturing than such suspense. Forester arose twice, and again sat down—his face pale and flushed alternately. At length, with a thick and rapid utterance, he said,

"I have been thinking over the knight's counsels—dare I ask if they have Miss Darcy's concurrence?"

"It would be a great, a very great presumption in me," said Helen, tremulously, "to offer an opinion on such a theme. I have neither the knowledge to distinguish between the opposite careers, nor have I any feeling for those sentiments which men alone understand in warfare."

"Nor, perhaps," added Forester, with a sudden irony, "sufficient interest in the subject to give it a thought."

Helen was silent; her slightly compressed lips and heightened color showed that she was offended at the speech, but she made no reply.

"I crave your pardon, Miss Darcy," said he, in a low, submissive accent, that told how heartfelt it was. "I most humbly ask you to forgive my rudeness. The very fact

that I had no claim to that interest should have protected you from such a speech. But see what comes of kindness to those who are little used to it. They get soon spoiled, and forget themselves."

"Lord Wallincourt will have to guard himself well against flattery, if such humble attentions as ours disturb his judgment."

"I will get out of the region of it," said he, resolutely; "I will take the knight's advice. It is but a plunge, and all is over."

"If I dare to say so, my lord," said Helen, archly, "this is scarcely the spirit in which my father hoped his counsels would be accepted. His chivalry on the score of military life may be overstrained, but it has no touch of that recklessness your lordship seems to lend it."

"And why should not this be the spirit in which I join the army?" said he, passionately; "the career has not for me those fascinations which others feel. Danger I like, for its stimulus, as other men like it; but I would rather confront it when, and where, and how I please, than at the dictate of a colonel, and by the ritual of a dispatch."

"Rather be a letter of marque, in fact, than a ship-of-the-line—more credit to your lordship's love of danger than discipline."

Forester smiled, but not without anger, at the quiet persiflage of her manner. It took him some seconds ere he could resume.

"I perceive," said he, in a tone of deeper feeling, "that whatever my resolves, to discuss them must be an impertinence, when they excite no other emotion than ridicule—"

"Nay, my lord," interposed Helen, eagerly; "I beg you to forgive my levity. Nothing was further from my thoughts than to hurt one to whom we owe our deepest debt of gratitude. I can never forget you saved my father's life; pray do not let me seem so base, to my heart, as to undervalue this."

"Oh! Miss Darcy," said he, passionately, "it is I who need forgiveness—I, whose temper, rendered irritable by illness, suspect reproach and sarcasm in every word of those who are kindest to me."

"You are unjust to yourself," said Helen, gently; "unjust, because you expect the same powers of mind and judgment that you enjoyed in health. Think how much better you are than when you came here. Think what a few days more may do. How changed—"

"Has Miss Darcy changed since last I met her?" asked he, in a tone that sank into the very depth of her heart.

Helen tried to smile, but emotions of a

sadder shade spread over her pale features as she said,

"I hope so, my lord; I trust that altered fortunes have not lost their teaching. I fervently hope that sorrow and suffering have left something behind them better than unavailing regrets and heart repinings."

"Oh! believe me," cried Forester, passionately, "it is not of this change I would speak. I dared to ask with reference to another feeling."

"Be it so," said Helen, trembling, as if nerving herself for a strong and long-looked-for effort—"be it so, my lord, and is not my answer wide enough for both? Would not any change—short of a dishonorable one—make the decision I once came to a thousand times more necessary now?"

"Oh! Helen, these are cold and cruel words. Will you tell me that my rank and station are to be like a curse upon my happiness?"

"I spoke of *our* altered condition, my lord. I spoke of the impossibility of your lordship recurring to a theme which the sight of that thatched roof should have stifled. Nay, hear me out. It is not of *you* or *your* motives that is here the question. It is of *me* and *my* duties. They are here, my lord—they are with those whose hearts have been twined round mine from infancy. Mine, when the world went well and proudly with us; doubly, trebly mine when affection can replace fortune, and the sympathies of the humblest home make up for all the flatteries of the world. I have no reason to dwell longer on this, to one who knows those of whom I speak, and can value them too."

"But is there no place in your heart, Helen, for other affections than these? or is that place already occupied?"

"My lord, you have borne my frankness so well, I must even submit to yours with a good grace. Still, this is a question you have no right to ask, or I to answer. I have told you that whatever doubt there might be as to *your* road in life, *mine* offered no alternative. That ought surely to be enough."

"It shall be," said Forester, with a low sigh, as, trembling in every limb, he arose from the seat. "And yet, Helen," said he, in a voice barely above a whisper, "there might come a time when these duties, to which you cling with such attachment, should be rendered less needful by altered fortunes. I have heard that your father's prospects present more of hope than heretofore, have I not? Think, that if the knight should be restored to his own again, that then—"

"Nay—it is scarcely worthy of your lordship to exact a pledge which is to hang upon a decision like this. A verdict may give back my father's estate; it surely should not dispose of his daughter's hand."

"I would exact nothing, Miss Darcy," said Forester, stung by the tone of this reply. "But I see you cannot feel for the difficulties which beset him who has staked his all upon a cast. I asked what might your feelings be, were the circumstances which now surround you altered?"

Helen was silent for a second or two; and then, as if having collected all her energy, she said, "I would that you had spared me—had spared yourself—the pain I now must give us both; but to be silent longer, would be to encourage deception." It was not till after another brief interval that she could continue: "Soon after you left this, my lord, you wrote a letter to Miss Daly. This letter—I stop not now to ask with what propriety toward either of us—she left in my hands. I read it carefully; and if many of the sentiments it contained served to elevate your character in my esteem, I saw enough to show me that your resolves were scarcely less instigated by outraged pride, than what you fancied to be a tender feeling. This perhaps might have wounded me, had I felt differently toward you. As it was, I thought it for the best: I deemed it happier that your motives should be divided ones, even though you knew it not. But as I read on, my lord—as I perused the account of your interview with Lady Wallincourt—then a new light broke suddenly upon me; I found what, had I known more of life, should not have surprised, but what, in my ignorance, did indeed astonish me, that my father's station was regarded as one which could be alleged as a reason against your feeling toward his daughter. Now, my lord, *we* have our pride too; and had your influence over me been all that ever you wished it, I tell you freely that I never would permit my affection to be gratified at the price of an insult to my father's house. If I were to say that your sentiments toward me should not have suffered it, would it be too much?"

"But, dearest Helen, remember that I am no longer dependent on my mother's will—remember that I stand in a position and a rank which only needs you to share with me to make it all that my loftiest ambition ever coveted."

"These are, forgive me if I tell you, very selfish reasonings, my lord. They may apply to *you*; they hardly address themselves to *my* position. The pride which could not stoop to ally itself with our

house in our days of prosperity, should not assuredly be wounded by suing us in our humbler fortunes."

"Your thoughts dwell on Lady Netherby, Miss Darcy," said Forester, irritably; "she is scarcely the person most to be considered here."

"Enough for me, if I think so," said Helen, haughtily. "The lady your lordship's condescension would place in the position of a mother, should at least be able to regard me with other feelings than those of compassionate endurance. In a word, sir, it cannot be. To discuss the topic longer, is but to distress us both. Leave me to my gratitude to you, which is unbounded. Let me dwell upon the many traits of noble heroism I can think of in your character with enthusiasm—ay, and with pride—pride that one so high and so gifted should have ever thought of one so little worthy of him. But do not weaken my principle by hoping that my affection can be won at the cost of my self-esteem."

Forester bowed with a deep, respectful reverence; and when he lifted up his head, the sad expression of his features was that of one who had heard an irrevocable doom pronounced upon his dearest, most cherished hopes. Lady Eleanor at the same moment came forward from the door of the cottage, so that he had barely time to utter a hasty good-by ere she joined her daughter.

"Your father wishes to see Lord Wallin-court, Helen. Has he gone?" But before Helen could reply the knight came up.

"I hope you have not forgotten to ask him to dinner, Eleanor?" said he. "We did so yesterday, and he never made his appearance the whole evening."

"Helen, did you?" But Helen was gone while they were speaking; so that Darcy, to repair the omission, hastened after his young friend with all the speed he could command.

"Have I found you?" cried Darcy, as, turning an angle of the rocky shore, he came behind Forester, who, with folded arms and bent-down head, stood like one sorrow-struck. "I just discovered that neither my wife nor daughter had asked you to stop to dinner; and as you are punctilious, fully as much as they are forgetful, there was nothing for it but to run after you."

"You are too kind, my dear knight—but not to-day; I'm poorly—a headache."

"Nay; a headache always means a mere excuse. Come back with me: you shall be as stupid a *convive* as you wish, only be a good listener, for I have got a great bud-

get from my man of law, Mr. Bicknell, and am dying for somebody to inflict it upon."

With the best grace he could muster—which was still very far from a good one—Forester suffered himself to be led back to the cottage, endeavoring, as he went, to feel or feign an interest in the intelligence the knight was full of. It seemed that Bicknell was very anxious not only for the knight's counsel on many points, but for his actual presence at the trial. He appeared to think that Darcy being there, would be a great check upon the line of conduct he was apprised O'Halloran would adopt. There was already a very strong reaction in the West in favor of the old gentry of the land, and it would be, at least, an evidence of willingness to confront the enemy, were the knight to be present.

"He tells me," continued the knight, "that Daly regretted deeply not having attended the former trial—why, he does not exactly explain, but he uses the argument to press me now to do so."

Forester might, perhaps, have enlightened him on this score, had he so pleased, but he said nothing.

"Of course, I need not say, nothing like intimidation is meant by this advice. The days for such are, thank God, gone by in Ireland; and it was, besides, a game I never could have played at; but yet, it might be what many would expect of me, and, at all events, it can scarcely do harm. What is your opinion?"

"I quite agree with Mr. Bicknell," said Forester, hastily; "there is a certain license these gentlemen of wig and gown enjoy, that is more protected by the bench than either good morals or good manners warrant."

"Nay, you are now making the very error I would guard against," said Darcy, laughing. "This legal sparring is rather good fun, even though they do not always keep the gloves on. Now, will you come with me?"

"Of course; I should have asked your leave to do so, had you not invited me."

"You'll hear the great O'Halloran, and I suspect that is as much as I shall gain myself by this action. We have merely some points of law to go upon; but, as I understand, nothing new or material in evidence to adduce. You ask, then, why persist? I'll own to you I cannot say; but there seems the same punctilio in legal matters as in military; and it is a point of honor to sustain the siege until the garrison have eaten their boots. I am not so far from that contingency now, that I should

be impatient; but, meanwhile, I perceive the savor of something better, and here comes Tate to say it is on the table."

CHAPTER LXXII.

AN AWKWARD DINNER-PARTY.

WHEN the reader is informed that Lady Eleanor had not found a fitting moment to communicate to the knight respecting Forester, nor had Helen summoned courage to reveal the circumstances of their late interview, it may be imagined that the dinner itself was as awkward a thing as need be. It was, throughout, a game of cross purposes, in which Darcy alone was not a player, and therefore more puzzled than the rest, at the constraint and reserve of his companions, whose efforts at conversation were either mere unmeaning commonplaces, or half-concealed retorts to inferred allusions.

However quick to perceive, Darcy was too well versed in the tactics of society to seem conscious of this, and merely redoubled his efforts to interest and amuse. Never had his entertaining qualities less of success. He could scarcely obtain any acknowledgment from his hearers; and stores of pleasantry, poured out in rich profusion, were listened to with a coldness bordering upon apathy.

He tried to interest them by talking over the necessity of their speedy removal to the capital, where, for the advantages of daily consultation, Bicknell desired the knight's presence. He spoke of the approaching journey to the West, for the trial itself—he talked of Lionel, of Daly, of their late campaigns—in fact, he touched on everything, hoping by some passing gleam of interest to detect a clew to their secret thoughts. To no avail. They listened with decorous attention, but no signs of eagerness or pleasure marked their features; and when Forester rose to take his leave, it was full an hour and a half before his usual time of going.

"Now for it, Eleanor," said the knight, as Helen soon after quitted the room, "what's your secret, for all this mystery must mean something? Nay, don't look so impenetrable, my dear; you'll never persuade any man who displayed all his agreeability to so little purpose, that his hearers had not a hidden source of preoccupation to account for their indifference. What is it, then?"

"I am really myself in the dark, without my conjectures have reason, and that Lord Wallincourt may have renewed to Helen the proposal he once made her, and with the same fortune."

"Renewed—proposal!"

"Yes, my dear Darcy, it was a secret I had intended to have told you this very day, and went for the very purpose of doing so, when I found you engaged with Bicknell's letters and advices, and scrupled to break in upon your occupied thoughts. Captain Forester did seek Helen's affections, and was refused; and I now suspect Lord Wallincourt may have had a similar reverse."

"This last is, however, mere guess," said Darcy.

"No more. Of the former Helen herself told me—she frankly acknowledged that her affections were disengaged, but that he had not touched them. It would seem that he was deeper in love than she gave him credit for. His whole adventure as a volunteer sprang out of this rejected suit, and higher fortunes have not changed his purpose."

"Then Helen did not care for him?"

"That she did not once, I am quite certain; that she does not now, is not so sure. But I know that even if she were to do so, the disparity of condition would be an insurmountable barrier to her assent."

Darcy walked up and down with a troubled and anxious air, and at length said,

"Thus is it, that the pride we teach our children, as the defense against low motives and mean actions, displays its false and treacherous principles; and all our flimsy philosophy is based less on the affections of the human heart, than on certain conventional usages we have invented for our own enslavement. There is but one code of right and wrong, Eleanor, and that one neither recognizes the artificial distinctions of grade, nor makes a virtue of the self-denial; that is a mere offering to worldly pride."

"You would scarcely have our daughter accept an alliance with a house that disdains our connection?" said Lady Eleanor, proudly.

"Not, certainly, when the consideration had been once brought before her mind. It would then be but a compromise with principle. But why should she have ever learned the lesson? Why need she have been taught to mingle notions of worldly position and aggrandizement with the emotions of her heart? It was enough—it should have been enough—that his rank and position were nearly her own, not to

trifle with feelings immeasurably higher and holier than these distinctions suggest."

"But the world, my dear Darcy; the world would say—"

"The world would say, Eleanor, that her refusal was perfectly right, and if the world's judgments were purer, they might be a source of consolation against the year-long bitterness of a sinking heart. Well, well!" said he, with a sigh, "I would hope that her heart is free: go to her, Eleanor—learn the truth, and if there be the least germ of affection there, I will speak to Wallincourt to-morrow, and tell him to leave us. These half-kindled embers are the slow poison of many a noble nature, and need but daily intercourse to make them deadly."

While Lady Eleanor retired to communicate with her daughter, the knight paced the little chamber in moody reverie. As he passed and repassed before the window, he suddenly perceived the shadow of a man's figure as he stood beside a rock near the beach. Such an apparition was strange enough to excite curiosity in a quiet, remote spot, where the few inhabitants retired to rest at sunset. Darcy, therefore, opened the window, and moved toward him; but ere he had gone many paces, he was addressed by Forester's voice:

"I was about to pay you a visit, knight, and only waited till I saw you alone."

"Let us stroll along the sands, then," said Darcy, "the night is delicious." And so saying, he drew his arm within Forester's, and walked along at his side.

"I have been thinking," said Forester, in a low, sad accent—"I have been thinking over the advice you lately gave me, and although, I own, at the time, it scarcely chimed in with my own notions, now, the more I reflect upon it, the more plausible does it seem. I have lived long enough out of fashionable life to make the return to it anything but a pleasure: for politics I have neither talent nor temper, and soldiering, if it does not satisfy every condition of my ambition, offers more to my capacity and my hopes than any other career."

"I would that you were more enthusiastic in the cause," said Darcy, who was struck by the deep depression of his manner; "I would that I saw you embrace the career more from a profound sense of duty and devotion, than as a 'pis aller.'"

"Such it is," sighed Forester, and his arm trembled within Darcy's as he spoke; "I own it frankly, save in actual conflict itself, I have no military ardor in my nature. I accept the road in life, because one must take some path."

"Then, if this be so," said Darcy, "I recall my counsels. I love the service, and you also, too well to wish for such a mésalliance; no, campaigning will never do with a spirit that is merely not averse. Return to London, consult your relative, Lord Castlereagh—I see you smile at my recommendation of him, but I have learned to read his character very differently from what I once did. I can see now, that however the tortuous course of a difficult policy may have condemned him to stratagems wherein he was an agent—often an unwilling one—that his nature is eminently chivalrous and noble. His education and his prejudices have made him less rash than we, in our nationality, like to pardon, but the honor of the empire lies next his heart. Political profligacy, like any other, may be leniently dealt with, while it is fashionable, but there are minds that never permit themselves to be enslaved by fashion, when once they have gained a consciousness of their own power; such is his. He is already beyond it, and ere many years roll over, he will be equally beyond his competitors too. And now, to yourself. Let him be your guide. Once launched in public life, its interests will soon make themselves felt, and you are young enough to be plastic. I know that every man's early years, particularly those who are the most favored by fortune, have their clouds and dark shadows. You must not seek an exemption from the common lot: remember how much you have to be grateful for; think of the advantages for which others strive a life long, and never reach—all yours, at the very outset; and then, if there be some sore spots, some secret sorrows under all, take my advice, and keep them for your own heart. Confessions are admirable things for old ladies, who like the petty martyrdom of small sufferings, but men should be made of sterner stuff. There is a high pride in bearing one's load alone, don't forget that."

Forester felt that if the knight had read his inmost feelings, his counsels could not have been more directly addressed to his condition; he had, indeed, a secret sorrow, and one which threw its gloom over all his prosperity. He listened attentively to Darcy's reasonings, and followed him, as in the full sincerity of his nature he opened up the history of his own life, now commenting on the circumstances of good fortune, now adverting to the mischances which had befallen him. Never had the genial kindness of the old man appeared more amiable. The just judgments, the high and honorable sentiments, not shaken by

what he had seen of ingratitude and wrong, but hopefully maintained and upheld, the singular modesty of his character, were all charms that won more and more upon Forester; and when, after a *lôte-à-lôte* prolonged till late in the night, they parted, Forester's muttered ejaculation was, "Would that I were his son!"

"It is as I guessed," said Lady Eleanor, when the knight re-entered the chamber; "Helen has refused him. I could not press her on the reasons, nor ask whether her heart approved all that her head determined. But she seemed calm and tranquil; and if I were to pronounce from appearance, I should say that the rejection has not cost her deeply."

"How happy you have made me, Eleanor," exclaimed Darcy, joyfully; "for while, perhaps, there is nothing in this world I should like better than to see such a man my son-in-law, there is no misery I would not prefer to witnessing my child's affections engaged where any sense of duty, or pride, rendered the engagement hopeless. Now, the case is this: Helen can afford to be frank and sisterly toward the poor fellow, who really did love her, and after a few days he leaves us."

"I thought he would go to-morrow," said Lady Eleanor, somewhat anxiously.

"No; I half hinted to him something of the kind, but he seemed bent on accompanying me to the West, and really I did not know how to say nay."

Lady Eleanor appeared not quite satisfied with an arrangement that promised a continuation of restraint, if not of positive difficulty, but made no remark about it, and turned the conversation on their approaching removal to Dublin.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

AN UNEXPECTED PROPOSAL.

OUR time is now brief with our reader, and we would not trespass on him longer by dwelling on the mere details of those struggles to which Helen and Forester were reduced by daily association and companionship.

One hears much of Platonism, and, occasionally, of those brother and sisterly affections which are adopted to compensate for dearer and tenderer ties. Do they ever really exist? Has the world ever presented one single successful instance of the compact? We are far, very far, from doubting that friendship, the truest and closest,

can subsist between individuals of opposite sex. We only hazard the conjecture that such friendships must not spring out of "unhappy love." They must not be built out of the ruins of wrecked affection. No—no; when Cupid is bankrupt, there is no use in attempting to patch up his affairs by any composition with the creditors.

We are not quite so sure that this is exactly the illustration Forester would have used to convey his sense of our proposition; but that he was thoroughly of our opinion, there is no doubt. Whether Helen was one of the same mind or not, she performed her task more easily and more gracefully. We desire too sincerely to part with our fair readers on good terms, to venture on the inquiry whether there is not more frankness and candor in the character of men than women? There is certainly a greater difficulty in the exercise of this quality in the gentler sex, from the many restraints imposed by delicacy and womanly feeling; and the very habit of keeping within this artificial barrier of reserve, gives an ease and tranquillity to female manner under circumstances where men would expose their troubled and warring emotions. So much, perhaps, for the reason that Miss Darcy displayed an equanimity of temper very different from the miserable Forester, and exerted powers of pleasing and fascination which, to him at least, had the singular effect of producing even more suffering than enjoyment.

The intimacy hitherto subsisting between them was rather increased than otherwise. It seemed as if their relations to each other had been fixed by a treaty, and now that transgression or change was impossible. If this was slavery in its worst form to Forester, to Helen it was liberty unbounded. No longer restrained by any fear of misconception, absolved, in her own heart, of any designs upon his, she scrupled not to display her capacity for thinking and reflecting with all the openness she would have done to her brother Lionel; while, to relieve the deep melancholy that preyed upon him, she exerted herself by a thousand little stratagems of caprice or fancy, that, however successful at the time, were sure to increase his gloom when he quitted her presence. Such, then, with its varying vicissitudes of pleasure and pain, was the condition of their mutual feeling for the remainder of their stay on the northern coast. Many a time had Forester resolved on leaving her forever, rather than perpetuate the lingering torture of an affection that increased with every hour; but the effort was more than his strength could

compass, and he yielded, as it were, to a fate, until at last her companionship had become the whole aim and object of his existence.

As winter closed in, they removed to Dublin, and established themselves temporarily in an old-fashioned family hotel, selected by Bicknell, in a quiet, unpretending street. Neither their means nor inclination would have prompted them to select a more fashionable resting-place, while the object of strict seclusion was here secured. The ponderous gloom of the staid old house, where, from the heavy sideboard of almost black mahogany, to the wrinkled visage of the grim waiter, all seemed of a bygone century, were rather made matters of mutual pleasantry among the party, than sources of dissatisfaction; while the knight assured them that this was in his younger days the noisy resort of the gay and fashionable of the capital.

"Indeed," added he, "I am not quite sure that this is not where the 'Townsend's,' as the club was then called, used to meet in Swift's time. Bicknell will tell us all about it, for he's coming to dine with us."

Forester was the first to appear in the drawing-room before dinner. It is possible that he hurried his toilet in the hope of speaking a few words to Helen, who not unfrequently came down before her mother. If so, he was doomed to disappointment, as the room was empty when he entered, and there was nothing for it but to wait, impatiently indeed, and starting at every footstep on the stairs and every door that shut or opened.

At last he heard the sound of approaching steps, softened by the deep old carpet. They came—he listened—the door opened, and the waiter announced a name, what and whose, Forester paid no attention to, in his annoyance that it was not hers he expected. The stranger, a very plump, joyous little personage in deep black, did not appear quite unknown to Forester, but as the recognition interested him very little, he merely returned a formal bow to the other's more cordial salute, and turned to the window where he was standing.

"The knight, I believe, is dressing?" said the new arrival, advancing toward Forester.

"Yes—but I have no doubt he will be down in a few moments."

"Time enough—no hurry in life. They told me below stairs that you were here, and so I came up at once. I thought that I might introduce myself. Paul Dempsey—Dempsey's Grove. You've heard of me before, eh?"

"I have had that pleasure," said Fores-

ter, with more animation of manner, for now he remembered the face and figure of the worthy Paul, as he had seen both in the large mirror of his mother's drawing-room.

"Ha! I guessed as much," rejoined Paul, with a chuckling laugh; "the ladies are here too, ain't they?"

Forester assented, and Paul went on.

"Only heard of it from Bicknell half an hour ago. Took a car, and came off at once. And when did *you* come?"

Forester stared with amazement at a question whose precise meaning he could not guess at, and to which he could only reply by a half-smile, expressive of his difficulty.

"You were away, weren't you?" asked Dempsey.

"Yes; I have been out of England," replied Forester, more than ever puzzled how this fact could or ought to have any interest for the other.

"Never be ashamed of it. Soldiering's very well in its way, though I'd never any taste for it myself—none of that martial spirit that stirred the bumpkin as he sang—

Perhaps a recruit
Might chance to shoot
Great General Buonaparte!

Well, well! it seems you soon got tired of glory, of which, from all I hear, a little goes very far with any man's stomach; and no wonder. Except a French bayonet, there's nothing more indigestible than commissary bread."

"The service is not without some hardships," said Forester, blandly, and preferring to shelter himself under a generality, than invite further inquisitiveness.

"Cruelties, you might call them," rejoined Dempsey, with energy. "The frightful stories we read in the papers!—and I suppose they are all true. Were you ever touched up a bit yourself?" This Paul said in his most insinuating manner, and as Forester's stare showed a total ignorance of his meaning, he added—"A little four and twenty, I mean," mimicking, as he spoke, the action of flogging.

"Sir!" exclaimed Forester, with an energy almost ferocious. And Dempsey made a spring backward, and entrenched himself behind a sofa-table.

"Blood alive!" he exclaimed, "don't be angry. I wouldn't offend you for the world; but I thought—"

"Never mind, sir—your apology is quite sufficient," said Forester, who had no small difficulty to repress laughing at the terri-

fied face before him. "I am quite convinced there was no intention to give offense."

"Spoke like a man," said Dempsey, coming out from his ambush with an outstretched hand; and Forester, not usually very unbending in such cases, could not help accepting the salutation so heartily proffered.

"Ah! my excellent friend, Mr. Dempsey," said the knight, entering at the same moment, and gayly tapping him on the shoulder. "A man I have long wished to see, and thank for many kind offices, in my absence. I'm glad to see you are acquainted with Mr. Dempsey. Well, and how fares the world with you?"

"Better, rather better, knight," said Paul, who had scarcely recovered the fright Forester had given him. "You've heard that Old Bob's off? Didn't go till he couldn't help it, though; and now your humble servant is the head of the house."

While the knight expressed his warm congratulations, Lady Eleanor and Helen came in, and by their united invitation, Paul was persuaded to remain for dinner—an event which, it must be owned, Forester could not possibly comprehend.

Bicknell's arrival, soon after, completed the party which, however discordant in some respects, soon exhibited signs of perfect accord and mutual satisfaction. Mr. Dempsey's presence having banished all business topics for discussion, he was permitted to launch out into his own favorite themes, not the least amusing feature of which was the perfect amazement of Forester at the man and his intimacy.

As the ladies withdrew to the drawing-room, Paul became more moody and thoughtful, now and then interchanging glances with Bicknell, and seeming as if on the verge of something, and yet half doubting how to approach it. Two or three hastily swallowed bumpers, and a look, which he believed of encouragement, from Bicknell, at length rallied Mr. Dempsey, and after a slight hesitation, he said,

"I believe, knight, we are all friends here; it is, strictly speaking, a cabinet council?"

If Darcy did not fathom the meaning of the speech, he had that knowledge of the speaker which made his assent to it almost a matter of course.

"That's what I thought," resumed Paul; "and it is a moment I have been anxiously looking for. Has our friend here said anything?" added he, with a gesture toward Bicknell.

"I, sir? I said nothing, I protest!"

exclaimed the man of law, with an air of deprecation. "I told you, Mr. Dempsey, that I would inform the knight of the generous proposition you made about the loan; but, till the present moment, I have not had the opportunity."

"Pooh, pooh! a mere trifle," interrupted Paul. "It is not of that I was thinking: it is of a very different subject I would speak. Has Lady Eleanor, or Miss Darcy—has she told you nothing of me?" said he, addressing the knight.

"Indeed they have, Mr. Dempsey, both spoken of you repeatedly, and always in the same terms of grateful remembrance."

"It isn't that, either," said Paul, with a half sigh of disappointment.

"You are unjust to yourself, Mr. Dempsey," said Darcy good-humoredly, "to rest a claim to our gratitude on any single instance of kindness; trust me that we recognize the whole debt."

"But it's not that," rejoined Paul, with a shake of the head. "Lord bless us! how close women are about these things," muttered he to himself. "There is nothing for it but candor, I suppose, eh?"

This being put in the form of a direct question, and the knight having as freely assented, Paul resumed:

"Well, here it is. Being now at the head of an ancient name, and very pretty independence—Bicknell has seen the papers—I have been thinking of that next step a man takes who would wish to—wish to—hand down a little race of Dempseys. You understand?" Darcy smiled approvingly, and Paul continued: "And, as conformity of temper, taste, and habits are the surest pledges of such felicity, I have set the eyes of my affections upon—Miss Darcy."

So little prepared was the knight for what was coming, that up to that moment he had been listening with a smile of easy enjoyment; but when the last word was spoken he started as if he had been stung by a reptile, nor could all his habitual self-control master the momentary flush of irritation that covered his face.

"I know," said Paul, with a dim consciousness that his proposition was but half acceptable, "that we are not exactly, so to say, the same rank and class, but the Dempseys are looking up, and—"

"The Darcys looking down," you would add," said the knight, with a gleam of his habitual humor in his eye.

"And, like the buckets in a well, the full and empty ones meet half way," added Dempsey, laughing. "I know well, as I said before, we are not the same kind of people, and perhaps this would have de-

tered me from indulging any thoughts on the subject, but for a chance, a bit of an accident, as a body may call it, that gave me courage."

"This is the very temple of candor, Mr. Dempsey," said the knight, smiling. "Pray proceed, and let us hear the source of your encouragement; what was it?"

"Say, who was it, rather," interposed Paul.

"Be it so, then. Who was it? You have only made my curiosity stronger."

"Lady Eleanor—ay, and Miss Helen herself."

A start of anger and a half-spoken exclamation, were as quickly interrupted by a fit of laughing, and the knight leaned back in his chair, and shook with the emotion.

"You doubt it; you think it absurd," said Dempsey, himself laughing, and not exhibiting the slightest irritation. "What if they say it's true—will that content you?"

"I'm afraid it would not," said Darcy, equivocally; "there's nothing less likely to do so. Still, I assure you, Mr. Dempsey, if the ladies, are of the mind you attribute to them, I shall find it very difficult to disbelieve anything I ever hear hereafter."

"I'm satisfied to stand or fall by their verdict," said Paul, resolutely. "I'm not a fool, exactly; and do you think if I had not something stronger than mere suspicion to guide me, that I'd have gone that same journey to London. Oh, I forgot—I did not tell you about my going to Lord Netherby."

"You went to Lord Netherby, and on this subject?" said Darcy, whose face became suffused with shame, an emotion doubly painful from Forester's presence.

"That I did," rejoined the unabashed Paul, "and a long conversation we had over the matter. He introduced me to his wife, too. Lord bless us, but that is a bit of pride!"

"You are aware that the lady is Lord Wallincourt's mother," interposed Darcy, sternly.

"Faith, so that she isn't mine," said the inexorable Paul, "I don't care! There she was, lying in state, with a greyhound with silver bells on his neck at her feet; and when I came into the room, she lifts up her head and gives me a look, as much as to say, 'Oh, that's him.'—'Mr. Dempsey, of Dempsey's Hole'—for hole he would call it, in spite of me,—'Mr. Dempsey, my love,' said my lord, bowing as ceremoniously as if he never saw her before; and so, taking the hint, I began a little course of salutations, when she called out, 'Tell him

not to do that, Netherby—tell him not to do that—'"

This was too much for Mr. Dempsey's hearers, who, however differently minded as to the narrative, now concurred in one outbreak of hearty laughter.

"Well, my lord," said Darcy, turning to Forester, "you certainly have shown evidence of a most enviable good temper. Had your lordship—"

"His lordship!" exclaimed Paul, in amazement. "Isn't that your son—Captain Darcy?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Dempsey," said the knight; "I thought, as I came into the drawing-room, that you were acquainted, or I should have presented you to the Earl of Wallincourt."

"Oh, ain't I in it now!" cried Paul, in an accent of grief, most ludicrously natural. "Oh! by the powers, I'm up to the knees in trouble! And that was your mother! oh dear! oh dear!"

"You see, my worthy friend," said Darcy, smiling, "how easy a thing deception is. Is it not possible that your misconceptions do not end here?"

"I'll never get over it, I know I'll not!" exclaimed Paul, wringing his hands as he arose from the table. "Bad luck to it for grandeur," muttered he between his teeth; "I never had a minute's happiness since I got the taste for it." And with this honest avowal he rushed out of the room.

It was some time before the party in the dining-room adjourned up-stairs; but when they did, they found Mr. Dempsey seated at the fire, recounting to the ladies his late unhappy discomfiture—a narrative which even Lady Eleanor's gravity was not enabled to withstand. A kind audience was always a boom of the first water to honest Paul, and very little pressing was needed to induce him to continue his revelations, for the knight wisely felt that such pretensions as his could not be buried so satisfactorily as beneath the load of ridicule.

Mr. Dempsey's scruples soon vanished and thawed under the warmth of encouraging voices and smiles, and he began the narrative of his night at the "Corvy," his painful durance in the canoe, his escape, the burning of the law papers, and each step of his progress to the very moment that he stood a listener at Lady Eleanor's door. Then he halted abruptly and said, "Now I'm dumb! racks and thumb-screws wouldn't get more out of me."

"You cannot mean, sir," said Lady Eleanor, calmly but haughtily, "that you overheard the conversation that passed between my daughter and myself?"

"Every word of it!" replied Paul, bluntly.

"Oh, really sir, I can scarcely compliment you on the spirit of your curiosity; for although the theme we talked on, if I remember aright, was the speedy necessity of removing—the urgency of seeking some place of refuge—"

"If I hadn't heard which, I could not have assisted you in your departure," rejoined the unabashed Paul; "the old Loyola maxim, 'Evil, that good may come of it.'"

Helen sat pale and terrified all this time; for although Lady Eleanor had forgotten the discussion of any other topic on that night save that of their legal difficulties, she well remembered a theme nearer and dearer to her heart. Whether from the distress of these thoughts, or in the hope of propitiating Mr. Dempsey to silence, so it was, she fixed her eyes upon him with an expression Paul thought he could read, and he gave a look of such conscious intelligence in return, as brought the blush to her cheek. "I'm not going to say one word about it," said he, in a stage whisper, that even the knight himself overheard.

"Then I must myself insist upon Mr. Dempsey's revelations," said Darcy, not at all satisfied with the air of mystery Dempsey threw around his intercourse.

Another look from Helen here met Paul's, and he stood uncertain how to act.

"Really, sir," said Lady Eleanor, "however little the subject we discussed was intended for other ears than our own, I must beg of you now to repeat what you remember of it."

"Well, what can I do?" exclaimed Paul, looking at Helen with an expression of the most helpless misery; "I know you are angry, and I know that, when you like it, you can blaze up like a Congreve rocket. Oh, faith! I don't forget the day I showed you the newspaper about the English officer thrashing O'Halloran!"

Helen grew scarlet, and turned away, but not before Forester had caught her eyes, and read in them more of hope than his heart had known for many a day before.

"These are more mysteries, Mr. Dempsey, and if you continue to scatter riddles as you go, we shall never get to the end of this affair."

"Perhaps," interposed Bicknell, hoping to close the unpleasant discussion, "perhaps Mr. Dempsey, feeling that he had personally no interest in the conversation between Lady Eleanor and Miss Darcy—"

"Hadn't he, then?" exclaimed Paul—"maybe not. If I hadn't, then, who had?"

tell me that. Wasn't it then and there I first heard of the kind intentions toward me?"

"Toward you, sir! Of what are you speaking?"

"Blood alive! will you tell me that I'm not Paul Dempsey, of Dempsey's Grove?" exclaimed he, driven beyond all patience by what he deemed equivocation. "Will you tell me that your ladyship didn't allude to the day I brought the letter from Coleraine, and say that you actually began to like me from that hour? Didn't you tell Miss Helen not to be down-hearted, because there were better days in store for us? Miss Darcy remembers it, I see, ay, and your ladyship does now. Didn't you call me rash, and headstrong, and ambitious? I forgive it all; I believe it is true. And wasn't I your bond-slave from that hour? Oh, mercy on me! the pleasant time I had of it at Mother Fum's! And then came the days and nights I was watching over you at Ballintra. Ay, faith, and money was very scarce with me when I gave old Denny Nolan five shillings for the loan of his nankeen jacket to perform the part of waiter at the little inn. Do you remember a little note in the shape of a friendly warning? Eh, now, my lady, I think your memory is something fresher."

If the confusion of Lady Eleanor and her daughter was extreme at this outpouring of Mr. Dempsey's confessions, the amazement of Darcy and the utter stupefaction of Forester were even greater; to throw discredit upon him, would be to acknowledge the real bearing of the circumstances, which would be far worse than all his imputations. So there was no alternative but to lie under every suspicion his narrative might suggest.

Forester felt annoyed as much that such a person should have obtained this assumed intimacy, as by the pretensions he well knew were only absurd, and took an early leave under the pretense of fatigue. Bicknell soon followed; and now the knight, arresting Dempsey's preparations for departure, led him back toward the fire, and placing a chair for him between Lady Eleanor and himself, obliged him to recount his scattered reminiscences once more, and, what was a far less pleasing duty to him, to listen to Lady Eleanor while she circumstantially unraveled the web of his delusion, and, in order, explained on what unsubstantial grounds he had built the edifice of his hope. Perhaps honest Paul was not more afflicted at any portion of the disentanglement than that which, in disavowing his pretensions, yet confessed that some

other held the favorable place, while that other's name was guarded as a secret. This was, indeed, a sore blow, and he couldn't rally from it; and willingly would he have bartered all the gratitude they expressed for his many friendly offices to know his rival's name.

"Well," exclaimed he, as Lady Eleanor concluded, "it's clear I wasn't the man; only think of my precious journey to London, and the interview with that terrible old countess! all for nothing. No matter—it's all past and over. As for the loan, I've arranged it all; you shall have the money when you like."

"I must decline your generous offer, not without feeling your debtor for it; but I have determined to abandon these proceedings. The Government have promised me some staff appointment, quite sufficient for my wishes and wants; and I will neither burden my friends, nor wear out myself by tiresome litigation."

"That's the worst of all," exclaimed Dempsey; "I thought you would not refuse me this."

"Nor would I, my dear Dempsey, but that I have no occasion for the sum. To-morrow I set out to witness the last suit I shall ever engage in, and, as I believe there is little doubt of the issue, I have nothing of sanguine feeling to suffer by disappointment."

"Well, then, to-morrow I'll start for Dempsey's Grove," said Paul, sorrowfully. "With very different expectations I quitted it a few days ago. Good-by, Lady Eleanor; good-by, Miss Helen. I suppose there's no use in guessing?"

Mr. Dempsey's leave-taking was far more rueful than his wont, and woe seemed to have absorbed all other feeling; but when he reached the door, he turned round and said,

"Now, I am going—never like to see me again; do tell me the name."

A shake of the head, and a merry burst of laughter, was all the answer, and Paul departed.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE LAST STRUGGLE.

THAT the age of chivalry is gone, we are reminded some twenty times in each day of our common-place existence. Perhaps the changed tone of society exhibits nowhere a more practical, but less picturesque advantage, than in the fact that the "joust" of ancient times is now replaced by the

combat of the law court. Some may regret—we will not say if we are not of the number—that the wigg'd baron of the exchequer is scarcely so pleasing an arbiter as the queen of love and beauty. Others may deem the knotted subtleties of black-letter a sorry recompense for the "wild crash and tumult of the fray." The crier of the Common Pleas would figure to little advantage beside the gorgeously clad herald of the lists; nor are the artificial distinctions of service so imposing that a patent of precedency could vie with the white cross on the shield of a crusader. Still there are certain counterbalancing interests to be considered; and it is possible that the veriest decrifer of the law's uncertainty "would rather stake life and fortune on the issue of a 'trial of law,' than on the thews and sinews of the doughtiest champion that ever figured in an 'ordeal of battle.'"

In one respect there is a strong similarity between the two institutions. Each, in its separate age, possessed the same sway and influence over men's minds, investing with the deepest interests events of which they were hitherto ignorant, and enlisting partisans of opinion in cases where, individually, there was nothing at stake.

An important trial has all the high interest of a most exciting narrative, whose catastrophe is yet to come, and where so many influential agencies are in operation to mold it. The proofs themselves, the veracity of witnesses, their self-possession and courage under the racking torture of cross-examination, the ability and skill of the advocate, the temper of the judge, his character of rashness or patience—of doubt or decisiveness; and then, more vague than all besides, the verdict of twelve perhaps rightly-minded, but as certainly very ordinarily endowed men, on questions sometimes of the greatest subtlety and obscurity. The sum of such conflicting currents makes up a "cross sea," where everything is possible, from the favoring tide that leads to safety, to the swell and storm of utter shipwreck.

At the winter assizes of Galway, in the year 1802, all the deep sympathies of a law-loving population were destined to be most heartily engaged by the record of Darcy *versus* Hickman, now removed by a change of *venue* for trial to that city. It needed not the unusual compliment of Galway being selected as a likely spot for the due administration of justice, to make the plaintiff somewhat popular on this occasion. The reaction, which for some time back had taken place in favor of the "real

gentry," had gone on gaining in strength, so that public opinion was already inclining to the side of those who had earned a sort of prescriptive right to public confidence. The clap-traps of patriotism, associated as they were often found to be with cruel treatment of tenants and dependants, were contrasted with the independent bearing of men who, rejecting dictation and spurning mob popularity, devoted the best energies of mind and fortune to the interests of all belonging to them. All the vindictiveness and rancor of a party press could not obliterate these traits, and character sufficed to put down calumny.

Hickman O'Reilly, accompanied by the old doctor, had arrived in Galway the evening before the trial, in all the pomp of a splendid traveling carriage, drawn by four posters. The whole of "Nolan's" Head Inn had been already engaged for them and their party, who formed a tolerably numerous suite of lawyers, solicitors, and clerks, together with some private friends, curious to witness the proceedings.

In a very quiet but comfortable old inn called the "Devil and the Bag of Nails"—a corruption of the ancient Satyr and the Bacchanals—Mr. Bicknell had pitched his camp, having taken rooms for the knight and Forester, who were to arrive soon after him, but whose presence in Ireland was not even suspected by the enemy.

There was a third individual who repaired to the West on this occasion, but who studiously screened himself from observation, waiting patiently for the issue of the combat to see on which side he should carry his congratulation: need we say his name was Con Heffernan.

Bicknell had heard of certain threats of the opposite party, which, while he did not communicate them to Darey, were sufficient to give him deep uneasiness, as they went so far as to menace a very severe reprisal for these continued proceedings by a criminal action against Lionel Darey. Of what nature, and on what grounds sustained, he knew not, but he was given to understand that, if his principal would even now submit to some final adjustment out of court, that the Hickmans would treat liberally with him, and, while abandoning these threatened proceedings against young Darey, show Bicknell all the grounds for such a procedure.

It was past midnight when Darey and Forester arrived; but before the knight retired to rest, he had learnt all Bicknell's doubts and scruples, and unhesitatingly decided on proceeding with his suit. He felt that a compromise would now involve the

honor of his son, of which he had not the slightest dread of any investigation; and, however small the prospect of success, the trial must take place to evidence his utter disregard—his open defiance of this menace.

Morning came, and long before the judges took their seats, the court was crowded in every part. The town was thronged with the equipages of the neighboring gentry, all eager to witness the trial; while the country people, always desirous of an exciting scene, thronged every avenue and passage of the building, and even the wide area in front of it. Nothing short of that passion for law and its interests, so inherent in an Irish heart, could have held that vast multitude thus enchained, for the day was one of terrific storm, the rain beating, the wind howling, and the sea roaring as it swept into the bay, and broke in showers of foam upon the rocky shore. Each moment ran the rumor of some new disaster in the town—now it was a chimney fallen, now a roof blown in, now an entire house, with all its inmates, destroyed; fires, too, the invariable accompaniment of hurricane, had broken out in various quarters, and cries for help and screams of wretchedness were mingled with the wilder uproar of the elements. Yet of that dense mob, few, if any, quitted their places for these sights and sounds of woe. The whole interest lay within that somber building, and on the issue of an event of whose particulars they knew absolutely nothing, and the details of which it was impossible they could follow did they even hear them.

The ordinary precursors to the interest of these scenes are the chance appearances of those who are to figure prominently in them, and such, indeed, attracted far more of attention on this occasion than all the startling accidents by fire and storm then happening on every side. Each lawyer of celebrity on the circuit was speedily recognized, and greeted by tokens of welcome or expressions of disfavor, as politics or party inclined. The attorneys were treated with even greater familiarity, themselves not disdain to exchange a repartee as they passed, in which combats, be it said, they were not always the victors. At last came old Dr. Hickman, feebly crawling along, leaning one arm on his son's, and the other on the stalwart support of Counselor O'Halloran. The already begun cheer for the popular "counselor" was checked by the arrival of the sheriff, preceding and making way for the judges, whose presence ever imposed a respectful demeanor. The buzz and hum of voices, subdued for a moment,

had again resumed its sway, when once more the police exerted themselves to make a passage through the throng, calling out, "Make way for the attorney-general!" and a jovial, burly personage, with a face redolent of convivial humor and rough merriment, came up, rather dragging than linked with the thin, slight figure of Bicknell, who with unwonted eagerness was whispering something in his ear.

"I'll do it with pleasure, Bicknell," rejoined the full, mellow voice, loud enough to be heard by those on either side; "I know the sheriff very well, and he will take care to let him have a seat on the bench. What's the name?"

"The Earl of Wallincourt," whispered Bicknell, a little louder.

"That's enough, I'll not forget it." So saying, he released his grasp of the little man, and pursued his vigorous course. In a few moments after, Bicknell was seen, accompanied by Forester alone, "the knight" having determined not to present himself till toward the close of the proceedings, if even then.

The buzz and din, incident to a tumultuous assembly, had just subsided to the decorous quietude of a court of justice, by the judges entering and taking their seats, when, after a few words interchanged between the attorney-general and the sheriff, the latter courteously addressed Lord Wallincourt, and made way for him to ascend the steps leading to the bench. The incident was in itself too slight and unimportant for mention, save that it speedily attracted the attention of O'Halloran, whose quick glance at once recognized his ancient enemy. So sudden was the shock, and so poignant did it seem, that he actually desisted from the occupation he was engaged in, of turning over his brief, and sat down pale and trembling with passion.

"You are not ill?" asked O'Reilly, eagerly, for he had not remarked the incident.

"Not ill," rejoined O'Halloran, in a low, deep whisper; "but do you see who is sitting next Judge Wallace, on the left of the bench?"

"Forester, I really believe," exclaimed O'Reilly; for so separated were the two "united" countries at that period, that his accession to rank and title was a circumstance of which neither O'Reilly nor his lawyer had ever heard.

"We'll change the *venue* for him, too, before the day is over," said O'Halloran, with a savage leer. "Do not let him see that we notice him."

While these brief words were interchang-

ed, the business of the court was opened, and some routine matters over, the record of *Darcy versus Hickman* called on. After this, the names of the special jury list were recited, and the invariable scene of dispute and wrangling, incident to their choice, followed. In law, as in war, the combat opens by a skirmish; a single cannon-shot, or a leading question, if thrown out, are meant rather to ascertain "the range," than with any positive intention of damage; but, gradually, the light troops fall back, forces concentrate, and a mighty movement is made. In the present instance, the preliminaries were unusually long, the plaintiff's counsel not only stating all the grounds of the present suit, but recapitulating, with painful accuracy, the reasons for the change of *venue*, and reviewing, and, of course, rebutting by anticipation every possible or impossible objection that might be made by his learned friend on "the other side." For our purpose, it is enough if we condense the matter into a single statement, that the action was to show that Hickman, in purchasing portions of the Darcy estate, was, and must have been, aware that the Knight of Gwynne's signature appended to the deed of sale was a forgery, and that he never had concurred in, nor was even cognizant of, this disposal of his property. A single case was selected to establish this fact, on which, if proved, further proceedings in equity would be founded.

The plaintiff's case opened by an examination of a number of witnesses, old tenants of the Darcy property. These were not only called to prove the value of their holdings, as being very far above the price alleged to have been paid by Hickman, but also that they themselves were in total ignorance that the estate had been conveyed away to another proprietor, and never knew till the flight and death of Gleeson took place, that for many years previous they had ceased to be tenants of Maurice Darcy, to become those of Dr. Hickman.

The examination and cross-examination of these witnesses presented all the varying and changeful fortunes ever observable in such scenes. At one moment, some obdurate old farmer resisting, with ludicrous pertinacity, all the efforts of the examining counsel to elicit the very testimony he himself wished to give; at another, the native humor of the peasant was seen baffling and foiling all the trained skill and practiced dexterity of the pleader. Many a merry burst of laughter, many a jest that set the court in a roar, were exchanged.

It was in Ireland, remember: but still the business of the day advanced, and a great weight of evidence was adduced, which, however suggestive to common intelligence, went legally only so far as to show that the tenantry were, almost to a man, of an opinion which, whether well-founded or not in reason, turned out to be incorrect.

Darcy's counsel, a man of quickness and intelligence, made a very able speech, summing up the evidence, and commenting on every leading portion of it. He dwelt powerfully on the fact that, at the time of this alleged sale, the knight, so far from being a distressed and embarrassed man, and consequently likely to effect a sale at a great loss, was, in reality, in possession of a princely fortune, his debts few and insignificant, and his income far above any possible expenditure. If he studiously avoided advertng to Gleeson's perfidy, as solely in fault, he assumed to himself credit for the forbearance, alleging that less scrupulous advisers might have gone perhaps further, and inferred connivance in a case so dubious and dark. "My client, however," said he, "gave me but one instruction in this cause, and it was this: 'If the law of the land, justly administered, as I believe it will be, restores to me my own, I shall be grateful; but if the pursuit of what I feel my right, involve the risk of reflecting on one honest man's fame, or imputing falsely aught of dishonor to an unblemished reputation, I tell you frankly, I don't think a verdict so obtained can carry with it anything but shame and disgrace.'" "

With these words he sat down, amid a murmur of approving voices, for there were many there who knew the knight by reputation, if not personally, and were aware how well such a speech accorded with every feature of his character.

There was a brief delay as he resumed his seat. It was already late, the court had been obliged to be lighted up a considerable time previous, and the question of an adjournment was now discussed. The probable length of O'Halloran's reply would best guide the decision, and the chief baron asked if the learned counsel's statement were likely to be long.

"Yes, my lord," replied he; "it is not a case to be dismissed briefly, and I have many witnesses to call."

Another brief discussion took place on the bench, and the chief baron announced that, as there were many important causes still standing over for trial, they should best consult public convenience by proceeding, and that, after a few moments devoted to refreshment, the case should go on.

The judges retired, and many of the leading counsel took the same opportunity to recruit strength exhausted by several hours of severe toil. The Hickmans and O'Halloran never quitted their places; a decanter of sherry and a sandwich from the hotel were served where they sat, but the old man took nothing. The interest of the scene appeared too absorbing to admit of even a sense of hunger or weariness, and he sat with his hands folded, and his eyes mechanically fixed upon the now empty jury-box, for there, the whole day, were his looks riveted, to read, if he might, the varying emotions in the faces of those who held so much of his fortune in their keeping.

While the noise and hubbub which characterize a court at such intervals was at its highest, a report was circulated that increased in no small degree the excitement of the scene, and gave a character of intense anxiety to an assemblage so lately broken up by varied and dissimilar passions. It was this: a large vessel had struck on a reef in the bay, and the sea was now breaking over her. She had been seen from an early hour endeavoring to beat to the southward; but the wind had drawn more to the westward as the storm increased, and a strong shore current had also drawn her on land. In a last endeavor to clear the headlands of Clare, she missed stays, and being struck by a heavy sea, her rudder was carried away. Totally unmanageable now, she was drifted along, till she struck on a most dangerous reef about a mile from shore. Signals of distress were seen at her mast-head, but no boat could venture out. The storm was already a hurricane, and even in the very harbor two fishing-boats had sunk.

As the dreadful tidings flew from mouth to mouth, a terrible confirmation was heard in the booming of guns of distress, which at brief intervals sounded amid the crashing of the storm.

It was at this moment of intense excitement that the crier proclaimed silence for the approaching entry of the judges. If the din of human voices became hushed and low, the deafening thunder of the elements seemed to increase, and the roaring of the enraged sea appeared to fill the very atmosphere.

As the judges resumed their seats, and the vast crowd ceased to stir or speak, O'Halloran arose. His voice was singularly low and quiet; but yet every word he uttered was distinctly heard through all the clamor of the storm. "My lords," said he, "before entering upon my client's case, I

would bespeak the kind indulgence of the court in respect to a matter purely personal to myself. Your lordships are too well aware that I should insist upon it, that in a cause where the weightiest interests of property are engaged, the mind of the advocate should be disembarassed and free—not only free as regards the exercise of whatever knowledge and skill he may possess—not merely free from the supposition of any individual hazard the honest discharge of his duty might incur—but free from the greater thralldom of disturbed and irritated emotions, originating in the deepest sense of wounded honor.

“Far be it from me, my lords, long used in the practice of these courts, and long intimate with the righteous principle on which the laws are administered in them, to utter a syllable that in the remotest degree might seem to impugn the justice of the bench; but a mere frail and erring creature, with feelings common to all around me, I wish to protest against continuing my client's case while your lordships' bench is occupied by one who, in my person, has grossly outraged the sanctity of the law. Yes, my lords,” said he, raising his voice, till the deep tones swelled and floated through the vast space, “as the humble advocate of a cause, I now proclaim that, in addressing that bench, I am incapable to render justice to the case before me, so long as I see associated with your lordships a man more worthy to figure in the dock than to take his seat among the ermined judges of the land. A moment more, my lords. I am ready to make oath, that the individual on your lordships' left is Richard Forester, commonly called the Honorable Richard Forester;—how suitable the designation, your lordships shall soon hear—”

“I beg to interrupt my learned friend,” interposed the attorney-general, rising. “He is totally in error; and I would wish to save him from the embarrassment of misdescription. The gentleman he alludes to is the Earl of Wallincourt, a peer of the realm.”

“Proceed with your client's case, Mr. O'Halloran,” said the chief baron, who saw that to discuss the question further was now irrelevant. O'Halloran sat down, overwhelmed with rage; a whispered communication from behind told him that the attorney-general was correct, and that Forester was removed beyond the reach of his vengeance. After a few moments, he rallied, and again rose. Turning slowly over the pages of a voluminous brief, he stood waiting, with practiced art, till expectancy had hushed each murmur around,

when suddenly the crier called, “Way, there,—make way for the high sheriff!” and that functionary, with a manner of excessive agitation, leaned over the bar, and addressed the bench. “My lords, I most humbly entreat your lordships' forgiveness for thus interrupting the business of the court; but the extreme emergency will, I hope, pardon the indecorum. A large vessel has struck on the rocks in the bay: each moment it is expected she must go to pieces. A panic seems to prevail among even our hardy fishermen; and my humble request is, that if there be any individual in this crowded assembly possessing naval knowledge, or any experience in calamities of this nature, he will aid us by his advice and co-operation.”

The senior judge warmly approved the humane suggestion of the sheriff; and several persons were seen now forcing their way through the dense mass,—the far greater part, be it owned, more excited by curiosity than stimulated by any hope of rendering efficient service. Notwithstanding Bicknell's repeated entreaties, and remembrances of his late severe illness, Forester also quitted the court, and accompanied the sheriff to the beach. And now O'Halloran, whose impatience during this interval displayed little sympathy with the sad occasion of the interruption, asked, in a manner almost querulous, if their lordships were ready to hear him? The court assented, and he began. Without once adverting to the subject on which he so lately addressed them, he opened his case by a species of narrative of the whole legal contest which for some time back had been maintained between the opposite parties in the present suit. Nothing could be more calm or more dispassionate than the estimate he formed of such struggles; neither inclining the balance to one party nor the other, but weighing with impartiality all the reasons that might prompt men, on one side, to continue a course of legal investigations, and the painful necessity, on the other, to provide a series of defenses—costly, onerous, and harassing. “I have only to point out to the court the defendant in this action, to show how severe such a duty may become. Here, my lords, beside me, sits the gentleman, bowed down with more years than are allotted to humanity generally. Look upon him, and say if it be not difficult to determine what course to follow—the abandonment of a just right, or its maintenance, at the cost of rendering the few last years—why do I say years?—days, hours of a life, careworn, distracted, and miserable!”

Dwelling long enough on this theme to interest without wearying the jury, he adroitly addressed himself to the case of those who, by a system of litigious persecution, would seek to obtain by menace what they must despair of by law. Beginning by vague and wide generalities, he gradually accumulated a mass of allegations and inferences which, concentrating to a point, he suddenly checked himself, and said, "Now, my lords, it may be supposed that I will imitate the delicate reserve of my learned friend opposite; and, while filling your minds with dark and mysterious suspicions, profess a perfect ignorance of all intention to apply them. But I will not do this: I will be candid and free-spoken; nay, more, my lords, I will finish what my learned friend has left incomplete; and I will proclaim to the court, and this jury, what he wished, but did not dare, to say, that we, the defendants in this action, were not only cognizant of a forgery, but were associated in the act! There it is, my lords; and I accept my learned friend's bland smile as the warm acknowledgment of the truth of my assertion. My learned friend is obliged to me. I see that he cannot conceal his joy at the inaptitude of my avowal. But we have a case, my lords, that can happily dispense with the dexterity of an advocate, and make its truth felt, even through means as unskillful as mine. They disclaim, it is true—they disclaimed in words the wish to make this inference; but even take their disclaimer as such, and what is it? An avowal of their weakness—an open expression of the poverty of their proofs. Yes, my lords, their disclaimers were like the ominous sounds which break from time to time upon our ear—but signal-guns of distress. Like that fated vessel, whose sad destiny is perhaps this moment accomplishing, they have been storm-tossed and cast away—their proud ensign torn, and their rudder gone; but, unlike her, they cannot brave their fate without seeking to involve others in the calamity."

A terrible gust of wind, so sudden and violent as to be like a thunderclap, now struck the building, and with one tremendous crash the great window of the courthouse was driven in, and scattered in fragments of glass and timber throughout the court. A scene of the wildest confusion ensued, for almost immediately the lights became extinguished, and from the dark abyss arose a terrible chaos of voices in every agony of fear and suffering. Some announced that the roof was giving way and was about to crush them; others, in

all the bodily torture of severe wounds, cried for help.

It was nearly an hour before the court could resume its sitting, which at length was done in one of the adjoining courts, the usual scene of the criminal trials. Here, now, lights were procured, and after a considerable delay the cause proceeded. If the various events of the night, added to the fatigue of the day, had impressed both the bench and the jury with signs of greatest exhaustion, O'Halloran showed no evidence of abated vigor. On the contrary, like one whose vengeance had been thwarted by opposing accident, he exhibited a species of impatient ardor to resume his work of defamation. With a brief apology for any want of due coherence in an argument so frequently interrupted, he launched out into the most ferocious attack upon the plaintiff in the suit; and while repudiating the affected reserve of the opposite counsel, boldly proclaimed that they would not imitate it. Nay, further, that they were only awaiting the sure verdict in their favor, to commence a criminal action against the parties for the very crime they dared to insinuate against them.

"I shall now call my witnesses, my lord; and if the Grand Cross of the Bath, which this day's paper tells me is to be conferred upon the plaintiff, be not meant, like the brand which foreign justice impresses on its felons, as a mark of ignominy, I am at loss to understand how it has descended on this man. Call Nathaniel Leery."

The examination of the witnesses was in perfect keeping with the infamous scurrility of the speech, and the testimony elicited went to prove everything the advocate desired. Though exposed by cross-examination, and their perjury proved, O'Halloran kept a perpetual recapitulation of their assertions before the jury, and so artfully, that few, save the practiced minds of a legal auditory, could have distinguished in that confused web of truth and falsehood.

The business proceeded with difficulty, for, added to the uproar of the storm, was a continued tumult of voices in the outer hall of the court, and where now several sailors, saved from the wreck, had been brought for shelter. By frequent loud cries from this quarter the court was interrupted, and more than once its proceedings completely arrested—inconveniences which the judges submitted to with the most tolerant patience—when at length a loud murmur arose, which gradually swelling louder and louder, all respect for the sacred precincts of the judgment-seat seemed lost in



the wild tumult. In a tone of sharp reproof the chief baron called on the sheriff to allay the uproar, and, if necessary, to clear the hall. The order was scarcely given, when one deafening shout was raised from the street, and, soon caught up, echoed by a thousand voices, while shrill cries of—"He has saved them! he has saved them!" rent the air.

"What means this, Mr. Sheriff?"

"It is my Lord Wallincourt, my lord, who has just rescued from the wreck three men who persisted in being lost together, rather than separate. Hitherto only one man was taken at each trip of the boat, but this young nobleman offered a thousand pounds to the crew who would accompany him, and it appears they have succeeded."

"Really, my lords," said O'Halloran, who had overheard the honorable mention of a hated name, "I must abandon my client's cause. These interruptions, which I conclude your influence is powerless to remove, have so interfered with the line of defense I had laid down for adoption, and have so confused the order of the proofs I had prepared, that I should but injure, and not serve, my respected client by continuing to represent his interests."

A bland assurance from the court that order should be rigidly enforced, and a pressing remonstrance from O'Reilly, overcame a resolve scarcely maturely taken, and he consented to go on.

"We will now, my lords," said he, "call a very material witness—a respectable tenant on the property—who will prove that on a day in November, antecedent to Gleeson's death, he had a conversation with the Knight of Gwynne—really, my lords, I cannot proceed; this is no longer a court of justice."

The remainder of his words were lost in an uproar like that of the sea itself, and like that element, the great mass swelled forward, and a rush of people from the outer hall bore into the court, till seats and barriers gave way before that overwhelming throng.

For some minutes the scene was one of almost personal conflict. The mob, driven forward by those behind, were obliged to endure a buffeting by the more recognized possessors of the place; nor was it till police and military had lent their aid that the court was again restored to quiet, while several of the rioters were led off in custody.

"Who are these men, and to what purpose are they here?" said the chief baron, as Bicknell officiously exerted himself to make way for some persons behind.

"I come to tender my evidence in this cause," said a deep, solemn voice, as a man advanced to the witness-table, displaying to the amazed assembly a bold, intrepid countenance, on which streaks of blue and yellow color were fantastically mingled, like the war-paint of a savage.

"Who are you, sir?" rejoined O'Halloran, with his habitual scowl.

"My name is Bagenal Daly. I believe their lordships are not ignorant of my rank and station; and this gentleman at my side is also here to afford his testimony. This, my lords, is Thomas Gleeson!"

One cry of amazement rang through the assembly, through which a wild shriek pierced with a clear and terrible distinctness; and now the attention was suddenly turned toward old Hickman, who had fallen forward senseless on the table.

"My client is very ill—he is dangerously ill, my lord. I beg to suggest an adjournment of the cause," said O'Halloran; while O'Reilly, with a face like death, continued to whisper eagerly in his ear. "I appeal to the plaintiff himself, if he be here, and is not devoid of the feelings attributed to him, and I ask that the cause may be adjourned."

"It is not a case in which the defendant's illness can be made use of to press such a demand," said one of the judges, mildly; "but, if the opposite party consent—"

"He is worse, my lord."

"I say, if the opposite party—"

"He is dead!" said O'Halloran, solemnly; and letting go the lifeless hand, it fell with a heavy bang upon the table.

"Take your verdict," said O'Halloran, with the look of a demon; and, bursting his way through the crowd, disappeared.

CHAPTER LXXV.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN Forester entered the knight's room in the inn, where, in calm quietude, he sat awaiting the verdict, he hesitated for a moment how he should break the joyful tidings of Daly's arrival.

"Speak out," said Darcy. "If not exactly without hope, I am well prepared for the worst."

"Can you say you are equally ready to hear the best?" asked Forester, eagerly.

"The best is a very strong word, my young friend," said Darcy, gravely.

"And yet, I speak advisedly—the best."

"If so, perhaps I am not so prepared. My heart has dwelt so long on these troubles, recognizing them as I felt they must be, that I would, perhaps, ask a little time to think how I should hear tidings so remote from all expectation. Of course, I do not speak of the mere verdict here."

"Nor I," interposed Forester, impatiently. "I speak of what restores you to your ancient house and rank, your station, and your fortune."

"Can this be true?"

"Ay, Maurice, every word of it," broke in Daly, who, having listened so far, could no longer restrain himself. The two old men fell into each other's arms with all the cordial affection with which they had embraced as schoolfellows sixty years before.

Great as was Darcy's amazement at seeing his oldest friend thus suddenly restored, it was nothing in comparison to what he felt as Daly narrated the event of the shipwreck, and his rescue from the sinking vessel by Forester.

"And your companions, who were they?" asked Darcy, eagerly.

"You shall hear."

"I guess one of them already," interposed the knight. "The trusty Sandy. Is it not so?"

"The other you will never hit upon," said Daly, nodding an assent.

"I'm thinking over all our friends, and yet none seem likely."

"Come, Maurice, prepare yourself for surprise. What think you, if he to whose fate I had linked myself, resolving that, live or die, we should not separate, if this man was—Gleeson—honest Tom Gleeson?"

The words seemed stunning in their effect, for Darcy leaned back, and passing his hands over his closed lids, murmured, "I hope my poor faculties are not wandering—I trust this may be no delusion."

"He is yonder," said Daly, taking the knight's hand in his strong grasp. "Sandy mounts guard over him. Not that the poor devil thinks of, or desires escape. He was too weary of a life of deception and sin when we caught him, to wish to prolong it. Now rouse yourself, and listen to me."

It would, doubtless, be a heavy tax on our kind reader's patience were we to relate, circumstantially, the conversation that, now commencing, lasted during the entire night, and till late in the following morning. Enough if we say that Daly, having, through Freny's instrumentality, discovered that Gleeson had not committed suicide, but only spread this rumor for concealment's sake, resolved to pursue him to

America. Fearing that any suspicion of his object might escape, he did not even trust Bicknell with the secret; but, by suffering him to continue law proceedings as before, totally blinded the Hickmans as to the possibility of the event.

It would in itself be a tale of marvel to recount the strange adventures which Daly encountered in his search and pursuit of Gleeson, who had originally taken up his residence in the States—was recognized there, and fled into Canada, where he wandered about from place to place, conscience-stricken and miserable. He was wretchedly poor besides, for on the bills and securities he carried away, many being on eminent houses in America, payment was stopped, and being unable to risk proceedings, he was reduced to beggary.

It now appeared that, at a very early period of life, when a clerk in the office of old Hickman's agent, he had committed a forgery. It was for a small sum, and only done in anticipation of meeting the bill by his salary due a few weeks later. So far the fraud was palliated by the intention. By some mischance the document fell into the possession of Dr. Hickman, whose name it falsely bore. He immediately took steps to trace its origin, and having succeeded, he sent for Gleeson. When the youth, pale and terror-stricken by suspicion, made his appearance, he was amazed that, instead of finding a prosecutor ready prepared for his ruin, he discovered a benevolent patron, who, having long watched the zeal and assiduity with which he discharged his duties, desired to be of use to him in life. Hickman told him, that if he were disposed to make the venture on his own account, he would use his influence to procure him some small agencies, and even assist him with funds, to make advances to those landlords who might employ him. The interview lasted long. There was much excellent advice and wise admonition on one side, profuse expression of gratitude and lasting fidelity on the other. "Very well, very well," said old Hickman, at the close of a very devoted speech, in which Gleeson professed the most attached, and the most honorable motives—for he was not at all aware that his bill was known of—"I am not ignorant of mankind; they are rarely, if ever, very bad or very good; they can be occasionally faithful to their friends; but there is one thing they are always—careful of themselves. See this"—here he took from his pocket-book the forged paper, and held it before the almost sinking youth—"there is what can bring you to the gallows any day! Is this the first time?"

"It is, so help me——" cried he, falling on his knees.

"Never mind swearing. I believe you. And the last also?"

"And the last!"

"I see it must be, by the date," rejoined Hickman.

"I can pay it, sir; I have the money ready—on Tuesday—"

"Never mind that," replied Hickman, folding it up, and replacing it in the pocket-book. "You shall pay me in something better than money—in gratitude. Come and dine with me alone to-day, and we'll talk over the future."

It has never been our taste to present pictures of depravity to our readers; we would more willingly turn from them, or, where that is impossible, make them as sketchy as may be. It will be sufficient, then, if we say that Gleeson's whole career was the plan and creation of Hickman. The rigid and scrupulous honor, the spotless decorum, the unshaken probity, were all devices to win public confidence and esteem. That they were eminently successful, the epithet of "honest Tom Gleeson," by which he was universally known, is the guaranty. The union of such qualities with consummate skill, and the most unwearied zeal, soon made him the most distinguished man in his walk, and made his services not only an evidence of success, but of a rectitude in obtaining success that men of character prized still more highly.

Possessed of the titles of immense estates, invested with unbounded confidence by the owners, cognizant of every legal flaw that could excite uneasiness, aware of every hitch and strait of their circumstances, he was less the servant than the master of those who employed him.

It was a period when habits of extravagance prevailed to the widest extent. The proprietors of estates deemed spending their incomes their only duty, and left its cares to the agents. The only reproach, then, ever laid to Gleeson's door was, that when a question of a sale or a loan was agitated, honest Tom's scruples were often a most troublesome impediment to his less scrupulous employer. In fact, Gleeson stood before the public as a kind of guardian of estates property! the providence of dowagers, widows, and younger children!

Such a man, with his neck in a halter, at any moment at the mercy of old Dr. Hickman, was an agent for ruin almost inconceivable. Through his instrumentality the old usurer laid out his immense stores of wealth at enormous interest, obtained

possession of vast estates at a mere fraction of their worth, till at length, grown hardy by long impunity, and daring by the recognition of the world, bolder expedients were ventured on. Darcy's ruin was long the cherished dream of Hickman; and when, after many a wily scheme and long negotiation, he saw Gleeson engaged as his agent, he felt certain of victory. His first scheme was to make Gleeson encourage young Lionel in every project of extravagance, by putting his name to bills, assuring him that his father permitted him an almost unlimited expenditure. This course once entered upon, and well aware that the young man kept no record of such transactions, his name was forged to several acceptances of large amount, and, subsequently, to sales of property to meet them.

Meanwhile, great loans were raised by Darcy to pay off incumbrances, and never so employed. Till, at length, the knight decided upon the negotiation which was to clear off Hickman's mortgage, the debt of all others he hated most to think of. So quietly was this carried on, that Hickman heard nothing of it; for Gleeson, long wearied by a life of treachery and perfidy, and never knowing the day or the hour when disclosure might come, had resolved on escaping to America with this large sum of money, leaving his colleague in crime to carry on business alone.

"The doctor" was not, however, to be thus duped. Secret and silent as the arrangements for flight were, he heard of them all; and hastening out to Gleeson's house, coolly told him that any attempt at escape would bring him to the gallows. Gleeson attempted a denial. He alleged that his intended going over to England was merely on account of this sum, which Darcy was negotiating for, to pay off the mortgage.

A new light now broke on Hickman. He saw that his terrified confederate could not much longer be relied upon, and it was agreed between them that Gleeson should pay the money to redeem the mortgage, and, having obtained the release, show it to the Knight of Gwynne. This done, he was to carry it back to Hickman, and, for the sum of 10,000*l.*, replace it in his hands, thus enabling the doctor to deny the payment and foreclose the mortgage, while honest Tom, weary of perfidy, and seeking repose, should follow his original plan and escape to America.

The money was paid, as Freney surmised and Daly believed; but Gleeson, still dreading some act of treachery, instead of returning the release, and claiming the price,

started a day earlier than he promised. The rest is known to the reader. Whether the Hickmans credited the story of the suicide or not, they were never quite free of the terror of a disclosure; and, in pressing the matrimonial arrangement, hoped forever to set at rest the disputed possession.

It would probably not interest our readers were we to dwell longer on Gleeson or his motives. That some vague intention existed of one day restoring to Darcy the release of his mortgage, is perhaps not unlikely. A latent spark of honor, long buried beneath the ashes of crime, often shines out brightly in the last hour of existence. There might be, too, a cherished project of vengeance against the man that tempted and destroyed him. Be it as it may, he guarded the document as though it had been his last hope; and, when tracked, pursued, and overtaken near Fort Erie by a party of the Delawares, of whom the Howling Wind, alias Bagenal Daly, was chief, it was found stitched up in the breast of his waistcoat.

Our space does not permit us to dwell upon Bagenal Daly's adventures, though we may assure our readers that they were both wild and wonderful. One only regret darkened the happiness of his exploit. It was that he was compelled so soon to leave the pleasant society of the redskins, and the intellectual companionship of "Blue Fox" and "Hissing Lightning;" while Sandy, discovering himself to be a widower, would gladly have contracted new-ties, to cement the alliance of the ancient house of M'Grane with that of the royal family of Hickinbooki, or the "Slimy Whip Snake," a fair princess of which had bid high for his affections. Indeed, the worthy Sandy had become romantic on the subject, and suggested that, if the lady would condescend to adopt certain articles of attire, he would have no objection to take her back to the Corvy. These were sacrifices, however, that not even love was called upon to make, and the project was abortive.

So far have we condensed Bagenal Daly's narrative, which, orally delivered, lasted till the sun was high, and the morning fine and bright. He had only concluded, when a servant in O'Reilly's livery brought a letter, which he said was to be given to the Knight of Gwynne, but required no answer. Its contents were the following:

"SIR,—The melancholy catastrophe of yesterday evening might excuse me in your eyes from any attention to the claims of mere business. But the discovery of certain documents lately in the possession of my

father, demand at my hands the most prompt and complete reparation. I now know, sir, that we were unjustly possessed of an estate and property that were yours. I also know that severe wrongs have been inflicted upon you through the instrumentality of my family. I have only to make the best amende in my power, by immediately restoring the one, and asking forgiveness for the other. If you can and will accord me the pardon I seek, I shall, as soon as the sad duties which devolve upon me here are completed, leave this country for the Continent, never to return. I have already given directions to my legal adviser to confer with Mr. Bicknell, and no step will be omitted to secure a safe and speedy restoration of your house and estate to its rightful owner. In deep humiliation, I remain,

Your obedient servant,
"H. O'REILLY."

"Poor fellow!" said Darcy, throwing down the letter before Daly, "he seems to have been no party to the fraud, and yet all the penalty falls upon him."

"Have no pity for the upstart rascal, Maurice; I'll wager a hundred—thank Heaven, Mr. Gleeson has put me in possession of a few—that he was as deep as his father. Give me this paper, and I'll ask honest Tom the question."

"Not so. Bagenal; I should be sorry to think worse of any man than I must do. Let him have at least the benefit of a doubt; and as to honest Tom, set him at liberty; we no longer want him; the papers he has given are quite sufficient—more than we are ever like to need."

Daly had no fancy for relinquishing his hold of the game that cost him so much trouble to take, but the knight's words were usually a law to him, and with a muttering remark of "I'll do it, because I'll have my eye on him," he left the room to liberate his captive.

"There he goes," exclaimed Daly, as, re-entering the room, he saw a chaise rapidly drive from the door. "There he goes, Maurice, and I own to you I have an easier conscience for having let loose Freney on the world, than for liberating honest Tom Gleeson; but who have we here, with four smoking posters?—ladies, too!"

A traveling carriage drew up at the door of the little inn, and immediately three ladies descended. "That's Maria!" cried Daly, rushing from the room, and at once returned with his sister, Lady Eleanor, and Miss Darcy.

Miss Daly had, three days before, received a letter from Bagenal, detailing his

capture of Gleeson, and informing her that he hoped to be back in Ireland almost as soon as his letter. With these tidings she hastened to Lady Eleanor, and concerted the journey which now brought them all together.

Story-tellers have but scant privilege to linger where all is happiness, unbroken and perfect. Like Mother Cary's chickens, their province is rather with menacing storm than the signs of fair weather. We have, then, but space to say, that a more delighted party never met than those who now assembled in that little inn; but one face showed any signs of passing sorrow—that was poor Forester's. The general joy, to which he had so much contributed by his exertions, rather threw a gloomier shade over his own unhappiness, and in secret he resolved to say "good-by" that same evening.

Amid a thousand plans for the future, all tinged with their own bright color, they sat round the fire at evening, when Miss Daly, whose affection for the youth was strengthened by what she had seen during his illness, remarked that he alone seemed exempt from the general happiness.

"To whom we owe so much," said Lady Eleanor, kindly. "My husband is indebted to him for his life."

"I can say as much too," said Daly; "not to speak of Gleeson's gratitude."

"Nay!" exclaimed the young man, blushing, "I did not know the service I was rendering. I little guessed how grateful I should myself have reason to be, for being its instrument."

"All this is very well," said Miss Daly, abruptly, "but it is not honest—no, it is not honest. There are other feelings concerned here than such amiable generalities as joy, pity, and gratitude. Don't frown, Helen,—that is better, love—a smile becomes you to perfection."

"I must stop you," said Forester, blushing deeply. "It will be enough if I say, that any observation you can make must give me the deepest pain,—not for myself—"

"But for Helen? I don't believe it. You may be a very sharp politician, and a very brave soldier, but you know very little about young ladies. Yes, there's no denying it,—their game is all deceit."

"Oh! Colonel Darcy—Lady Eleanor, will you not speak a word?" exclaimed Forester, pale and agitated.

"A hundred, my dear boy," cried the knight, "if they would serve you; but Helen's one is worth them all."

"Miss Darcy, dare I hope? Helen,

dearest," added he, in a whisper, as, taking her hand, he led her toward a window.

"My lord, the carriage is ready," said his servant, throwing wide the door.

"You may order the horses back again," said Daly dryly; "my lord is not going this evening."

HAS our reader ever made a long voyage? Has he ever experienced in himself the strange but most complete alteration in all his sentiments and feelings when far away from land—on the wild, bleak waters—and that same "himself," when in sight of shore, with seaweed around the prow, and land-breezes on his cheek. But a few hours back, and that ship was his world: he knew her from "bow to taffrail;" he greeted the cook's galley as though it were the "restaurant" his heart delighted in: he even felt a kind of friendship for the pistons as they jerked up and down into a bowing acquaintance. But, now, how changed are his sentiments; how fixedly are his eyes turned to the pier of the harbor! and how impatient is he at those tacking zig-zag approaches by which nautical skill and care approximate the goal.

Already landed in imagination, the cautious maneuvers of the crew are an actual martyrdom; he has no bowels for anything save his own enfranchisement, and he cannot comprehend the tiresome detail of preparations which, after all, perhaps, are scarcely five minutes in endurance. At last, the gangway launched, see him, how he elbows forward, fighting his way, carpet-bag in hand, regardless of passport-people, police, and porters; he'll scarce take time to mutter a "Good-by, captain," in the haste to leave a scene all whose interest is over, and whose adventure is past.

Such is the end of a voyage, and such, or very nearly such, the end of a novel! You, most amiable reader, are the passenger—we, the skipper. A few weeks ago you deemed us tolerable company, *faute de mieux*, perhaps. We'll not ask why, at all events. We had you out on the wide, wild waters of uncertainty, free to sail where'er our fancy listed. In our very waywardness there was a mock semblance of power, for the creatures we presented to you were our own, their lives and fortunes in our hands. Now all that is over—we have neared the shore—and all our hold on you is bygone.

How can we hope to excite interest in events already accomplished? Why linger over details which you have already filled up? Of course, say you, all ends happily

now. Virtue is rewarded—as novelists understand rewarding—by matrimony; and vice punished in single blessedness. The hero marries the heroine, and if they don't live happy—etc.

But what became of Bagenal Daly? says some one, who would compliment us by expressing so much of interest. Bagenal, then, only waited to see the knight restored to his own, to retire with his sister to the "Corvy," where, attended by Sandy, he passed the remainder of his days in peace and quietude; his greatest enjoyment being to seize on a chance tourist to the Causeway, and make him listen to narratives of his early life, but which age had now so far commingled, that the merely strange became actually marvelous.

Paul Dempsey grieved for a week, but consoled himself on hearing that his rival had been a "lord;" and subsequently, in a "moment of enthusiasm," he married Mrs. Fumbally. The Hickmans left Ireland for the continent, where they are still to be found, rambling about from city to city, and expressing the utmost sympathy with their country's misfortunes, but, to avoid any admixture of meaner feeling, suffering no taint of lucre to mingle with their compassion.

As for Lionel Darcy, his name is to be found in the dispatches from the East, and with a mention that shows that he has degenerated in nothing from the proud character of his race.

Of all those who figured before our reader, but one remains on the stage where they all performed; and he, perhaps, has no claim to be especially remembered. There is always, however, somewhat of respectability attached to the oldest inhabitant, that chronicler of cold winters and warm summers, of rainy springs and stormy Octobers. Con Heffernan, then, lives, and still wields no inconsiderable share of his ancient influence. Each party has discovered his treachery, but neither can dispense with his services. He is the last link remaining between the men of Ireland's "great day" and the very different race who now usurp the direction of her destiny.

Of the period of which we have endeavored to picture some meager resemblance, unhappily the few traces remaining are those most to be deplored. The poverty, the misery, and the anarchy survive; the genial hospitality, the warm attachment to country, the cordial generosity of Irish feeling, have sadly declined. Let us hope that from the depth of our present sufferings better days are about to dawn, and a period approaching when Ireland shall be "great" in the happiness of her people, "glorious" in the development of her inexhaustible resources, and "free" by that best of freedom, free from the trammels of an unmeaning party warfare, which has ever subjected the welfare of the country to the miserable intrigues of a few adventurers.

DAVENPORT DUNN:

A MAN OF OUR DAY.

CHAPTER I.

HYDROPATHIC ACQUAINTANCES.

WE are at Como, on the lake—that spot so beloved of opera dancers—the day-dream of prima donnas—the Elysium of retired barytones! And with what reason should this be the Paradise of all who have lived and sighed, and warbled and pironetted, within the charmed circle of the footlights? The crystal waters mirroring every cliff and crag with intense distinctness; the vegetation variegated to the very verge of extravagance; orange-trees overloaded with fruit; arbutus only too much bespangled with red berries; villas, more coquettish than ever scene-painter conceived, with vistas of rooms within, all redolent of luxury; terraces, and statues, and vases, and fountains, and marble balconies, steeped in a thousand balmy odors, make up a picture which well may fascinate those whose ideal of beauty is formed of such gorgeous groupings. There is something of unreality in the brilliant coloring and variety of the scene, suggesting the notion that at any moment the tenor may emerge, velvet mantle and all, from the copse before you; or a prima donna, in all the dishevelment of her back hair, rush madly to your feet. There is not a portal from which an angry father may not issue; not a shady walk that might not be trod by an incensed basso!

The rustic bridges seem made for the tiny feet of short-petticoated damsels, daintily tripping, with white-napkin covered baskets, to soft music; and every bench appears but waiting for that wearied old peasant, in blue stockings, a staff, and a leather belt, that has vented his tiresomeness in the same spot for the last half cen-

tury. Who wonders, if the distracted princess of “the scene” should love a picture that recalls the most enthusiastic triumphs of her success? Why should not the retired “Peri” like to wander at will through a more enchanting garden than ever she pirouetted in?

Conspicuous amongst the places where these stage-like elements abound is the Villa d’Este; situated in a little bay, with two jutting promontories to guard it, the ground offers every possible variety of surface and elevation. From the very edge of the calm lake, terrace rises above terrace, clad with all that is rich and beautiful in vegetation; rocks, and waterfalls, and ruins, and statues abound. Everything that money could buy, and bad taste suggest, are there heaped with a profusion that is actually confounding. Every stone stair leads to some new surprise; every table-land opens some fresh and astonishing prospect. Incongruous, inharmonious, tea-gardenish as it is, there is still a charm in the spot which no efforts of the vilest taste seem able to eradicate. The vines *will* cluster in graceful groupings; the oranges *will* glow in gorgeous contrast to their dark mantle of leaves; water *will* leap with its own spontaneous gladness, and fall in diamond showers over a grassy carpet no emerald ever rivaled; and, more than all, the beautiful lake itself *will* reflect the picture, with such softened effects of light and shadow, that all the perversions of human ingenuity are totally lost in the transmission.

This same Villa d’Este was once the scene of a sad drama; but it is not to this era in its history we desire now to direct our reader’s attention, but to a period much later, when no longer the home of an exiled princess, or the retreat where shame and sor-

row abandoned themselves to every excess, its changed fortune had converted it into an establishment for the water cure!

The prevailing zeal of our day is to simplify everything, even to things which will not admit of simplicity. What with our local atheneums, our mechanics' institutes, our lecturing lords and discoursing baronets, we have done a great deal. Science has been popularized, remote geographies made familiar, complex machinery explained, mysterious inscriptions rendered intelligible. How could it be expected that in the general enthusiasm for useful knowledge medicine should escape, or that its secrets should be exempt from a scrutiny that has spared nothing? Hence have sprung up those various sects in the curative art which, professing to treat rationally and openly what hitherto has been shrouded in mysticism and *déception*, have multiplied themselves into grape cures, milk cures, and water cures, and heaven knows how many other strange devices "to cheat the ills that flesh is heir to."

We are not going to quarrel with any of these new religions: we forgive them much for the simple service they have done, in withdrawing their followers from the confined air, the laborious life, the dreary toil, or the drearier dissipation of cities, to the fresh and invigorating breezes, the cheerful quietude, and the simple pleasures of a country existence.

We care little for the regimen or the ritual, be it lentils or asses' milk, Tyrol grapes, or pure water, so that it be administered on the breezy mountain side, or in the healthful air of some lofty "plateau," away from the cares, the ambitions, the strife, and the jarrings of the active world, with no seductions of dissipation, neither the prolonged stimulants, nor the late hours of fashion.

It was a good thought, too, to press the picturesque into the service of health, and show the world what benefits may flow, even to nerves and muscles, from elevated thoughts and refined pleasures. All this is, however, purely digressory, since we are more concerned with the social than the medical aspects of hydropathy, and so we come back at once to Como. The sun has just risen, on a fresh morning in autumn, over the tall mountain east of the lake, making the whole western shore, where the Villa d'Este stands, all a-glitter with his rays. Every rock, and crag, and promontory are picked out with a sharp distinctness, every window is a-blaze, and streams of light shoot into many a grove and copse, as though glad to pierce their

way into cool spots where the noonday sun himself can never enter. On the opposite shore, a dim and mysterious shadow wraps every object, faint outlines of tower and palace loom through the darkness, and a strange hazy depth incloses the whole scene. Such is the stillness, however, that the opening of a casement, or the plash of a stone in the water, is heard across the lake, and voices come from the mysterious gloom with an effect almost preternaturally striking.

On a terrace high up above the lake, sheltered with leafy fig-trees and prickly pears, there walks a gentleman, sniffing the morning air, and evidently bent on inhaling health at every pore.

Nothing in his appearance indicates the invalid; every gesture, as he moves, rather displays a conscious sense of health and vigor. Somewhat above the middle size, compactly but not heavily built, it is very difficult to guess his years; for though his hair and the large whiskers which meet beneath his chin are perfectly white, his clear blue eyes and regular teeth show no signs of age. Singularly enough, it is his dress that gives the clew to this mystery. His tightly-fitting frock, his bell-shaped hat, and his shapely trowsers, all tell of a fashion antecedent to our loosely-hanging vestments and uncared-for garments: for the Viscount Lackington was a lord in waiting to the "First Gentleman" in Europe at a time when paletots were unknown, and Jim Crows had not been imagined.

Early as was the hour, his dress was perfect in all its details, and the accurate folds of his immaculate cravat, and the spotless brilliancy of his boots, would have done credit to Bond street in days when Bond street cherished such glories. Let our modern critics sneer as they will at the dandyism of that day, the gentleman of the time was a very distinctive individual, and, in the subdued color of his habiliments, their studious simplicity, and, above all, their unvarying uniformity, utterly defied all the attempts of spurious imitators.

Our story opens only a few years back, and Lord Lackington was then one of the very few who perpetuated the traditions in costume of that celebrated period; but he did so with such unerring accuracy, that men actually wondered where those marvellously shaped hats were made, or how those creaseless coats were ever fashioned. Even to the perfume of his handkerchief, the faintest and most evanescent of odors, all were mysteries that none could penetrate.

As he surveyed the landscape through

his double eye-glass, he smiled graciously and blandly, and gently inclined his head, as though to say, "Very prettily done, water and mountains. I'm quite satisfied with you, trees; you please me very much indeed! Trickle away, little fountain—the picture is the better for it." His lordship had soon, however, other objects to engage his attention than the inanimate constituents of the scene. The spot which he had selected for his point of view was usually traversed, in their morning walks, by the other residents of the "Cure," and this circumstance permitted him to receive the homage of such early risers as were fain to couple with their pursuit of health the recognition of a great man.

Like poverty, hydropathy makes us acquainted with strange associates. The present establishment was too recently formed to have acquired any very distinctive celebrity, but it was sufficiently crowded. There was a great number of third-rate Italians from the Lombard towns and cities, a sprinkling of inferior French, a few English, a stray American or so, and an Irish family, on their way to Italy, sojourning here rather for economy than health, and fancying that they were acquiring habits and manners that would serve them through their winter's campaign.

The first figure which emerged upon the plateau was that of a man so swathed in great-coat, cap, and worsted wrappers, that it was difficult to guess what he could be. He came forward at a shambling trot, and was about to pass on without looking aside, when Lord Lackington called out,

"Ah! Spicer, have you got off that eleven pounds yet?"

"No, my lord, but very near it. I'm seven stone ten, and at seven eight I'm all right."

"Push along, then, and don't lose your training," said his lordship, dismissing him with a bland wave of the hand. And the other made an attempt at a salutation, and passed on.

"Madame la marquise, your servant. You ascend these mountain steeps like a chamois!"

This compliment was addressed to a little, very fat old lady, who came snorting along like a grampus.

"Benedetto dottore!" cried she. "He will have it that I must go up to the stone cross yonder every morning before breakfast, and I know I shall burst a blood-vessel yet in the attempt."

A chair, with a mass of horse-clothing and furs, surmounted by a little yellow

wizened face, was next borne by, to which Lord Lackington bowed courteously, saying, "Your excellency improves at every hour."

His excellency gave a brief nod and a little faint smile, swallowed a mouthful from a silver flask presented by his servant, and disappeared.

"Ah! the fair syren sisters! what a charming vision!" said his lordship, as two bright-checked, laughing-eyed girls bounced upon the terrace in all the high-hearted enjoyment of good health and good spirits.

"Molly, for shame!" cried what seemed the elder, a damsel of about nineteen, as the younger, holding out her dress with both hands, performed a kind of minute courtesy to the viscount, to which he responded with a bow that might have done credit to Versailles.

"Perfectly done—grace and elegance itself. The foot a little—a very little more in advance."

"Just because you want to look at it," cried she, laughing.

"Molly, Molly!" exclaimed the other, rebukingly.

"Let him deny it if he can. Lucy," retorted she. "But here's papa."

And as she spoke, a square-built, short, florid man, fanning his bald head with a straw hat, puffed his way forward.

"My lord, I'm your most obaydient," said he, with a very unmistakably Irish enunciation.

"O'Reilly, I'm delighted to see you. These charming girls of yours have just put me in good humor with the whole creation. What a lovely spot this is; how beautiful!"

Though his lordship's arm and outstretched hand directed attention to the scenery, his eyes never wandered from the pretty features of the laughing girl beside him.

"It's like Banthry!" said Mr. O'Reilly—"it's the very ditto of Banthry."

"Indeed!" exclaimed my lord, still pursuing his scrutiny.

"Only Banthry's bigger and wider. Indeed, I may say finer."

"Nothing, in *my* estimation, can exceed this!" said his lordship, with a distinctive smile, addressed to the young lady.

"I'm glad you think so," said she, with a merry laugh. And then, with a pirouette, she sprang up the steep steps on the rocky path before her, and disappeared, her sister as quickly following, leaving Mr. O'Reilly alone with his lordship.

"What heaps of money she laid out

here," exclaimed O'Reilly, as he looked at the labyrinth of mad ruins, and rustic bridges, and hanging gardens on every side of him.

"Large sums—very large indeed!" said my lord, whose thoughts were evidently on some other track.

"Pure waste—nothing else; the place never could pay. Vines and fig-trees, indeed—I'd rather see a crop of oats."

"I have a weakness for the picturesque, I must own," said my lord, as his eyes still followed the retreating figures of the girls.

"Well, I like a waterfall; and, indeed, I like a summer-house, myself," said O'Reilly, as though confessing to a similar trait on his own part.

"This is the first time you have been abroad, O'Reilly?" said his lordship, to turn the subject of the conversation.

"Yes, my lord, my first and, with God's blessing, my last too! When I lost Mrs. O'Reilly, two years ago, of a complaint that beat all the doctors—"

"Ah, yes, you mentioned that to me; very singular, indeed!"

"For it wasn't in the heart itself, my lord, but in the bag that holds it."

"Oh yes, I remember the explanation perfectly; so you thought you'd just come abroad for a little distraction."

"Distraction indeed! 'tis the very word for it," broke in Mr. O'Reilly, eagerly. "My head is bewildered between the lingo and the money, and they keep telling me, 'You'll get used to it, papa darling—you'll be quite at home yet.' But how is that ever possible?"

"Still, for your charming girls' sake," said my lord, caressing his whiskers and adjusting his neckcloth, as if for immediate captivation—"for their sake, O'Reilly, you've done perfectly right!"

"Well, I'm glad your lordship says so. 'Tis nobody ought to know better!" said he, with a heavy sigh.

"They really deserve every cultivation. All the advantages that—that—that sort of thing can bestow!"

And his lordship smiled benignly, as though offering his own aid to the educational system.

"What they said to me was this," said O'Reilly, dropping his voice to a tone of the most confiding secrecy; "'Don't be keeping them down here in Mary's Abbey, but take them where they'll see life. You can give them forty thousand pounds between them, Tim O'Reilly, and with that and their own good looks—'"

"Beauty, O'Reilly—downright loveliness," broke in my lord.

"Well, indeed, they are handsome," said O'Reilly, with an honest satisfaction, "and that's exactly why I thought the advice was good. 'Take them abroad,' they said; 'take them into Germany and Italy—but more especially Italy'—for they say there's nothing like Italy for finishing young ladies."

"That is certainly the general impression!" said his lordship, with the barest imaginable motion of his nether lip.

"And here we are, but where we're going afterward, and what we'll do when we're there, that thief of a courier we have may know, but I don't."

"So that you gave up business, O'Reilly, and resigned yourself freely to a life of ease," said my lord, with a smile that seemed to approve the project.

"Yes, indeed, my lord; but whether it's to be a life of pleasure, I don't know. I was in the provision trade thirty-eight years, and do you know I miss the pigs greatly."

"Every man has a hankering of that sort. Old cosmopolite as I am, I have every now and then my longing for that window at Brookes's, and that snug dinner-room at Boodle's."

"Yes, my lord," said O'Reilly, who hadn't the faintest conception whether these localities were not situated in China.

"Ah, Twining, never thought to see you here," called out his lordship to a singularly tall man, who came forward with such awkward contortions of legs and arms, as actually to suggest the notion that he was struggling against somebody. Mr. O'Reilly modestly stole away while the friends were shaking hands, and we take the same opportunity to present the new arrival to our reader.

Mr. Adderley Twining was a gentleman of good family and very large fortune, whose especial pleasure it was to pass off to the world for a gay, light-hearted, careless creature, of small means and most lavish liberality. To be, in fact, perpetually struggling between a most generous temperament and a narrow purse. His cordiality was extreme, his politeness unbounded; and as he was most profuse in his pledges for the present and his promises for the future, he attained to a degree of popularity which to his own estimation was immense. This was, in fact, the one sole self-deception of his very crafty nature, and the belief that he was a universal favorite was the solitary mistake of this shrewd intelligence. Although a married man, there was so constantly some "difficulty" or other—these were his own words—about

Lady Grace, that they seldom were seen together; but he spoke of her when absent in terms of the most fervent affection, but whose health, or spirits, or tastes, or engagements unhappily denied her the happiness of traveling along with him. Whenever it chanced that they were together, he scarcely mentioned her.

"And what breeze of fortune has wafted you here, Twining?" said his lordship, delighted to chance upon a native of his own world.

"Health, my lord—health," said he, with one of his ready laughs, as though everything he said or thought had some comic side in it that amused him, "and a touch of economy too, my lord."

"What humbug all that is, Twining. Who the deuce is so well off as yourself?" said Lord Lackington, with all that peculiar bitterness with which an embarrassed man listens to the grumblings of a wealthy one.

"Only too happy, my lord—rejoiced if you were right. Capital news for me, eh?—excellent news!" And he slapped his lean legs with his long thin fingers, and laughed immoderately.

"Come, come, we all know that—besides a devilish good thing of your own—you got the Wrexley estate, and old Poole's Dorsetshire property. Hang me if I ever open a newspaper without reading that you are somebody's residuary legatee."

"I assure you solemnly, my lord, I am actually hard up, pressed for money, downright inconvenienced." And he laughed again, as though it were uncommonly dull.

"Stuff—nonsense!" said my lord angrily, for he really was losing temper; and to change the topic he curtly asked, "And where do you mean to pass the winter?"

"In Florence, my lord, or Naples. We have a little den in both places."

The "den" in Florence was a sumptuous palace on the Arno. Its brother at Naples was a royal villa near Posilippo.

"Why not Rome? Lady Lackington and myself mean to try Rome."

"Ah, all very well for you, my lord, but for people of small fortune—"

There was that in the expression of his lordship's face that told Twining this vein might be followed too far, and so he stopped in time, and laughed away pleasantly.

"Spicer tells me," resumed Lord Lackington, "that Florence is quite deserted; nothing but a kind of second and third rate set of people go there. Is that so?"

"Excellent people, capital society, great fun!" said Twining, in a burst of merriment.

"Spicer calls them 'snobs,' and he ought to know."

"So he ought, indeed, my lord—no one better. Admirably observed, and very just."

"He's in training again for that race that never comes off," said his lordship. "The first time I ever saw him—it was at Leamington—and he was performing the same farce, with hot baths and blankets, and jotting down imaginary bets in a small note-book."

"How good—capital! Your lordship has him perfectly—you know him thoroughly—great fun! Spicer, excellent creature!"

"How those fellows live is a great mystery to me. You chance upon them everywhere, in Baden or Aix in summer, in Paris or Vienna during the winter. Now if they were amusing rogues, like that fellow I met at your house in Hampshire—"

"Oh, Stockley, my lord; rare fellow, quite a genius!" laughed Twining.

"Just so—Stockley; one would have them just to help over the boredom of a country house; but this creature Spicer is as devoid of amusing gifts, as tiresome, and as worn out, as if he owned ten thousand a year."

"How good, by Jove!" cried Twining in ecstasy. And he slapped his gaunt limbs and threw his long arms wildly about in a transport of delight.

"And who are here, Twining—any of our set?"

"Not a soul, my lord; the place isn't known yet, that's the reason I came here—so quiet and so cheap, make your own terms with them. Good fun—excellent!"

"I came to meet a man of business," said his lordship, with a strong emphasis on the pronoun. "He couldn't prolong his journey farther south, and so we agreed to rendezvous here."

"I have a little affair also to transact—a mere trifle, a nothing, in fact—with a lawyer, who promises to meet me here by the end of the month, so that we have just time to take our baths, drink the waters, and all that sort of thing, while we are waiting."

And he rubbed his hands, and laughed away again.

"What a boon for my wife to learn that Lady Grace is here! She was getting so hipped with the place—not so much the place as the odious people—that I suspect she'd have left me to wait for Dunn all alone."

"Dunn! Dunn! not Davenport Dunn?" exclaimed Twining.

"The very man—do you know him?"

"To be sure, he's the fellow I'm waiting for. Capital fun, isn't it?"

And he slapped his legs again, while he repeated the name of Dunn over and over again.

"I want to know something about this same Mr. Dunn," said Lord Lackington, confidentially.

"So do I; like it of all things," cried Twining. "Clever fellow—wonderful fellow—up to everything—acquainted with everybody. Great fun!"

"He occupies a very distinguished position in Ireland, I fancy," said his lordship, with such a marked stress on the locality as to show that such did not constitute an imperial reputation.

"Yes, yes, man of the day there; do what he likes; very popular—immensely popular!" said Twining, as he laughed on.

"So that you know no more of him than his public repute—no more than I know myself," said his lordship.

"Not so much as your lordship, I'm certain," said Twining, as though it would have been unbecoming in him to do so; "in fact, my business transactions are such mere nothings, that it's quite a kindness on his part to undertake them—trifles, no more!"

And Twining almost hugged himself in the ecstasy which his last words suggested.

"*Mine*," said Lord Lackington, haughtily, "are of consequence enough to fetch him hither—a good thousand miles away from England; but he is pretty certain of its being well worth his while to come."

"Quite convinced of that—could swear it," said Twining, eagerly.

"Here are a mob of insufferable bores," said his lordship, testily, as a number of people were heard approaching, for somehow—it is not easy to say exactly why—he had got into a train of thought that seemed to worry him, and was not disposed to meet strangers; and so, with a brief gesture of good-by to Twining, he turned into a path and disappeared.

Twining looked after him for a second or two, and then slapping his legs, he muttered, pleasantly, "What fun!" and took the road toward the house.

CHAPTER II.

HOW TWO "FINE LADIES" PASS THE MORNING.

IN a room of moderate size, whose furniture was partly composed of bygone

finery and some articles of modern comfort—a kind of compromise between a royal residence and a hydropathic establishment—sat two ladies at an open window, which looked out upon a small terrace above the lake. The view before them could scarcely have been surpassed in Europe. Inclosed, as in a frame, between the snow-clad Alps and the wooded mountains of the Brianza, lay the lake, its shores one succession of beautiful villas, whose gardens descended to the very water. Although the sun was high, the great mountains threw the shadows half way across the lake; and in the dim depth of shade, tower and crag, battlement and precipice, were strangely intermixed, giving to the picture a mysterious grandeur that contrasted strongly with the bright reality of the opposite shore, where fruit and flowers, gay tapestries from casements, and floating banners, added color to the scene.

Large white-sailed boats stole peacefully along, loaded, half-mast high, with watermelons and garden stores; the golden produce glittering in the sun, and glowing in the scarcely rippled water beneath them, while the low chant of the boatmen floated softly and lazily through the air—meet sounds in a scene where all seemed steeped in a voluptuous repose.

The two ladies whom we have mentioned were not impassioned spectators of the scene. Whenever their eyes ranged over it, no new brilliancy awoke in them, no higher color tinged their cheek. One was somewhat advanced in life, but with many traces of beauty, and an air which denoted a lifelong habit of homage and deference. There was that in her easy, lounging attitude, and the splendor of her dress, which seemed to intimate that Lady Lackington would still be graceful, and even extravagant, though there were none to admire the grace or be dazzled by the costliness. Her companion, though several years younger, looked, from the effects of delicate health and a suffering disposition, almost of her own age. She, too, was handsome; but it was a beauty which so much depended on tint and color, that her days of indisposition left her almost bereft of good looks. All about her, her low, soft voice, her heavily raised eyelids, her fair and blue-veined hands, the very carriage of her head, pensively thrown forward, were so many protestations of one who asked for sympathy and compassion; and who, whether with reason or without, firmly believed herself the most unhappy creature in existence.

If there was no great similarity of disposition to unite them, there was a bond fully as strong. They were both English of the same order, both born and bred up in a ritual that dictates its own notions of good or bad, of right and wrong, of well-bred and vulgar, of riches and poverty. Given any person in society, or any one event of their lives, and these two ladies' opinion upon either would have been certain to harmonize and agree. The world for them had but one aspect; for the simple reason, that they had always seen it from the one same point of view. They had not often met; they had seen very little of each other for years; but the freemasonry of class supplied all the place of affection, and they were as fond and as confiding as though they were sisters.

"I must say," said the viscountess, in a tone full of reprobation, "that is shocking—actually shameful; and, in *your* place, I'd not endure it!"

"I have become so habituated to sorrow," sighed Lady Grace—

"That you will sink under it at last, my dear, if this man's cruelties be not put an end to. You really must allow me to speak to Lackington."

"It wouldn't be of the slightest service, I assure you. In the first place, he is so plausible, he'd persuade any one that there was nothing to complain of, that he lived up to his fortune, that his means were actually crippled; and secondly, he'd give such pledges for the future, such promises, that it would be downright rudeness to throw a doubt on their sincerity."

"Why did you marry him, my dear?" said Lady Lackington, with a little sigh.

"I married him to vex Ridout; we had a quarrel at that *fête* at Chiswick, you remember, Tollertin's *fête*. Ridout was poor, and felt his poverty. I don't believe I treated his scruples quite fairly. I know I owed to him that I had no contempt for riches—that I thought Belgrave square, and the opera, and diamonds, and a smart equipage, all very commendable things: and Jack said, 'Then, there's your man. Twining has twenty thousand a year.' 'But, he has not asked me,' said I, laughing. Ridout turned away without a word. Half an hour later, Mr. Adderley Twining formally proposed for my hand, and was accepted."

"And Jack Ridout is now the Marquis of Allerton," said Lady Lackington.

"I know it!" said the other, bitterly.

"With nigh forty thousand a year."

"I know it!" cried she again.

"And the handsomest house and the finest park in England."

The other burst into tears, and hid her face between her hands.

"There's a fate in these things, my dear," said Lady Lackington, with a slight paleness creeping over her cheek. "That's all we can say about them."

"What have you done with that sweet place in Hampshire?"

"Dingley? It is let to Lord Mauley."

"And you had a house in St. James's square."

"It is Burridge's Hotel, now."

Lady Lackington fanned her swarthy face for some seconds, and then said, "And how did you come here?"

"We saw—that is, Twining saw—an advertisement of this new establishment in the *Galvani*. We had just arrived at Liège, when he discovered a vetturino returning to Milan with an empty carriage; he accordingly bargained with him to take us on here—I forget for what sum—so that we left our own carriage, and half my luggage, at the Pavilion Hotel, and set off on our three weeks' journey. We have been three weeks all but two days on the road! My maid of course refused to travel in this fashion, and went back to Paris. Coureel, his own man, rebelled too, which Twining, I must say, seemed overjoyed at, and gave him such a character for honesty in consequence, as he never could have hoped for; and so we came on, with George the footman, and a Belgian creature I picked up at the hotel, who, except to tear out my hair when she brushes it, and bruise me whenever she hooks a dress, has really no other gift under heaven."

"And you actually came all this way by vetturino?"

Lady Grace nodded a sad assent, and sighed deeply.

"What does he mean by it, my dear? The man must have some deep, insidious design in all this;—don't you think so?"

"I think so myself, sometimes," replied she, sorrowfully. And now their eyes met, and they remained looking steadily at each other for some seconds. Whatever Lady Grace's secret thoughts, or whatever the dark piercing orbs of her companion served to intimate, true is it that she blushed till her cheek became crimson; and as she rose, and walked out upon the terrace, her neck was aflame with the emotion.

"He never married?" said Lady Lackington.

"No!" said Lady Grace, without turning her head. And there was a silence on both sides.

Oh dear! how much of the real story of our lives passes without expression—how much of the secret mechanism of our hearts moves without a sound in the machinery!

“Poor fellow!” said Lady Lackington, at last, “his lot is just as sad as your own. I mean,” added she, “that he feels it so.”

There was no answer, and she resumed. “Not but men generally treat these things lightly enough. They have their clubs, and their houses of parliament, and their shooting. Are you ill, dearest?” cried she, as Lady Grace tottered feebly back and sank into a chair.

“No,” said she, in a faint voice, “I’m only tired!” And there was an inexpressible melancholy in the tone as she spoke it.

“And I’m tired too!” said Lady Lackington, drearily. “There is a tyranny in the routine of these places quite insupportable—the hours, the discipline, the diet, and, worse than all, the dreadful people one meets with.” Though Lady Grace did not seem very attentive, this was a theme the speaker loved to improve, and so she proceeded to discuss the house and its inhabitants in all freedom. French, Russians, and Italians—all were passed in review, and very smartly criticised, till she arrived at “those atrocious O’Reillys, that my lord will persist in threatening to present to me. Now one knows horrid people when they are very rich, or very well versed in some speculation or other—mines, or railroads, or the like—and when their advice is so much actual money in your pocket—just, for instance, as my lord knows that Mr. Davenport Dunn—”

“Oh! he’s a great ally of Mr. Twining; at least, I have heard his name a hundred times in connection with business matters.”

“You never saw him?”

“No.”

“Nor I, but once; but I confess to have some curiosity to know him. They tell me he can do anything he pleases with each house of parliament, and has no inconsiderable influence in a sphere yet higher. It is quite certain that the old Duke of Wycombe’s affairs were all set to rights by his agency, and Lady Muddleton’s divorce bill was passed by his means.”

The word “divorce” seemed to rally Lady Grace from her fit of musing, and she said, “Is that certain?”

“Julia herself says so, that’s all. He got a bill, or an act, or a clause, or whatever you call it, inserted, by which she succeeded in her suit, and she is now as free—as free—”

“As I am not!” broke in Lady Grace, with a sad effort at a smile.

“To be sure, there is a little scandal in the matter, too. They say that old Lord Brookdale was very soft himself in that quarter.”

“The chancellor!” exclaimed Lady Grace.

“And why not, dear? You remember the old refrain, ‘No age, no station’—what is it?—and the next line goes—‘To sovereign beauty mankind bends the knee.’ Julia is rather proud of the triumph herself; she says it is like a victory in China, where the danger is very little and the spoils considerable!”

“Mr. Spicer, my lady,” said a servant, entering, “wishes to know if your ladyship will receive him.”

“Not this morning; say I’m engaged at present. Tell him—But perhaps you have no objection—shall we have him in?”

“Just as you please. I don’t know him.”

Lady Lackington whispered a word or two, and then added aloud, “And one always finds them ‘useful,’ my dear!”

Mr. Spicer, when denuded of top-coat, cap, and woollen wrapper, as we saw him last, was a slightly made man, middle-sized, and middle-aged, with an air sufficiently gentlemanlike to pass muster in any ordinary assemblage. To borrow an illustration from the pursuits he was versed in, he bore the same relation to a man of fashion that a “weed” does to a “winner of the Derby”—that is to say, to an uneducated eye, there would have seemed some resemblance; and just as the “weed” counterfeits the racer in a certain loose awkwardness of stride and an ungainly show of power, so did he appear to have certain characteristics of a class that he merely mixed with on sufferance, and imitated in some easy “externals.” The language of any profession is, however, a great leveler; and whether the cant be of the “House,” Westminster Hall, the College of Physicians, the mess table, or the “turf,” it is exceedingly difficult at first blush to distinguish the real practitioner from the mere pretender. Now Spicer was what is called a gentleman rider, and he had all the slang of his craft, which is, more or less, the slang of men who move in a very different sphere.

As great landed proprietors of ambitious tendencies will bestow a qualification to sit in Parliament upon some man of towering abilities and small fortune, so did certain celebrities of the turf confer a similar social qualification on Spicer; and

by enabling him to "associate with the world," empower themselves to utilize his talents and make use of his capabilities. In this great parliament of the field, therefore, Spicer sat; and though for a very small and obscure borough, yet he had his place, and was "ready when wanted."

"How d'ye do, Spicer?" said Lady Lackington, arranging the folds of her dress as he came forward, and intimating by the action that he was not to delude himself into any expectation of touching her hand. "My lord told me you were here."

Spicer bowed, and muttered, and looked, as though he were waiting to be formally presented to the other lady in company; but Lady Lackington had not the most remote intention of bestowing on him such a mark of recognition, and merely answered the mute appeal of his features by a dry "Won't you sit down?"

And Mr. Spicer did sit down, and of a verity his position denoted no excess of ease or enjoyment. It was not that he did not attempt to appear perfectly at home, that he did not assume an attitude of the very calmest self-possession, maybe he even passed somewhat the frontier of lackadaisical territory he assumed, for he slapped his boot with his whip in a jaunty affectation of indifference.

"Pray, don't do that!" said Lady Lackington; "it worries one!"

He desisted, and a very awkward silence of some seconds ensued; at length she said, "There was something or other I wanted to ask you about; you can't help me to it, can you?"

"I'm afraid not, my lady. Was it anything about sporting matters?"

"No, no; but now that you remind me, all that information you gave me about Glaucus was wrong, he came in 'a bad third.' My lord laughed at me for losing my money on him, and said he was the worst horse of the lot."

"Very sorry to differ with his lordship," said Spicer, deferentially, "but he was the favorite up to Tuesday evening, when Scott declared that he'd win with Rig the Market. I then tried to get four to one on Flycatcher, to square your book, but the stable was nobbled."

"Did you ever hear such jargon, my dear?" said Lady Lackington. "You don't understand one syllable of it, I'm certain."

Spicer smirked and made a slight approach to a bow, as though even this reference to him would serve for an intro-

duction; but Lady Grace met the advance with a haughty stare and a look that said, as plainly as any words, "At your peril, sir?"

"Well, one thing is certain!" said Lady Lackington, "nothing that you predicted turned out afterward. Glaucus was beaten, and I lost my three hundred pounds—only fancy, dearest, three hundred pounds, with which one could do so many things! I wanted it in fifty ways, and I never contemplated leaving it with the legs at Newmarket."

"Not the legs, I assure you, my lady—not the legs. I made your book with Colonel Stamford and Gore Middleton."

"As if I cared who won it!" said she, haughtily.

"I never knew that you tempted fortune in this fashion!" said Lady Grace, languidly.

"I do so very rarely, my dear. I think mining shares are better, or Guatemala state bonds. I realized very handsomely indeed upon them two years ago. To be sure it was Dunn that gave me the hint: he dined with us at the Hôtel de Windsor, and I asked him to pay a small sum for me to Hore's people, and when I counted the money out to him, he said, 'Why not buy in some of those Guanaxualo shares: they'll be up to—' I forget what he said—'before a month. Let Storr wait, and you'll pay him in full.' And he was quite right, as I told you. I realized about eight hundred pounds on my venture."

"If Glaucus had won, my lady—"

"Don't tell me what I should have gained," broke she in. "It only provokes one the more, and above all, Spicer, no more information. I detest 'information.' And now, what was it I had to say to you; really *your* memory would seem to be failing you completely. 'What could it be?'"

"It couldn't be that roan filly—"

"Of course it couldn't. I really must endeavor to persuade you that my thoughts occasionally stray beyond the stable. By the way, you sold those gray carriage horses for nothing. You always told me they were the handsomest pair in London, and yet you say I'm exceedingly lucky to get one hundred and eighty pounds for them."

"You forget, my lady, that Bloomfield was a roarer—"

"Well, you really are in a tormenting mood this morning, Spicer. Just bethink you, now, if there's anything more you have to say, disagreeable and unpleasant, and say it at once; you have made Lady Grace quite ill—"

"No, only tired!" sighed her friend, with a melancholy smile.

"Now I remember," cried Lady Lackington, "it was about that house at Florence. I don't think we shall pass any time there, but in case we should, I should like that Zapponi palace, with the large terrace on the Arno, and there must be no one on the ground-floor, mind that: and I'll not give more than I gave formerly—perhaps not so much. But, above all, remember, that if we decide to go on to Rome, that I'm not bound to it in the lease, and he must new-carpet that large drawing-room, and I must have the little boudoir hung in blue, with muslin over it, not pink. Pink is odious, except in a dressing-room. You will yourself look to the stables; they require considerable alteration, and there's something about the dining-room—what was it?—Lord Lackington will remember it. But perhaps I have given you as many directions as your head will bear."

"I almost think so too, my lady," muttered he, with a half-dogged look.

"And be sure, Spicer, that we have that cook—Antoine—if we should want him. Don't let him take a place till we decide where we shall stop."

"You are aware that he insists on a hundred and fifty francs a month, and his wine."

"I should like to know what good you are, if I am to negotiate with these creatures myself!" said she, haughtily. "I must say, Lady Grace will suspect that I have rather overrated your little talents, Spicer." And Lady Grace gave a smile that might mean any amount of approval or depreciation required. "I shall not want that saddle now, and you must make that man take it back again."

"But I fear, my lady—"

"There, don't be tiresome! What is that odious bell? Oh, it's the dinner of these creatures. You dine at the table d'hôte, I think, so pray don't let us keep you. You can drop in to-morrow. Let me see, about two, or half-past. Good-by—good-by."

And so Mr. Spicer retired. The bow Lady Grace vouchsafed being in reality addressed rather to one of the figures on her fan than to himself.

"One gets a habit of these kind of people," said Lady Lackington, as the door closed after him; "but really it is a bad habit."

"I think so too," said Lady Grace, languidly.

"To be sure, there are now and then

occasions when you can't employ exactly a servant. There are petty negotiations which require a certain delicacy of treatment, and there they are useful. Besides," said she, with a half-sneering laugh, "there's a fashion in them, and, like Blenheim spaniels, every one must have one, and the smaller the better!"

"Monsignore Clifford, my lady, to know if you receive," said a servant, entering.

"Oh, certainly. I'm charmed, my dear Grace, to present to you the most agreeable man of all Rome. He is English, but 'went over,' as they call it, and is now high in the pope's favor."

These words, hurriedly uttered as they were, had been scarcely spoken when the visitor entered the room. He was a tall, handsome man, of about five-and-thirty, dressed in deep black, and wearing a light blue ribbon across his white neckcloth. He advanced with all the ease of good breeding, and taking Lady Lackington's hand, he kissed the tips of her fingers with the polished grace of a courtier.

After a formal presentation to Lady Grace, he took a seat between the two ladies.

"I am come on, for *me*, a sad errand, my lady," said he, in a voice of peculiar depth and sweetness, in which the very slightest trace of a foreign accent was detectible—"it is to say good-by!"

"You quite shock me, Monsignore. I always hoped you were here for our own time."

"I believed and wished it also, my lady; but I have received a peremptory order to return to Rome. His holiness desires to see me at once. There is some intention, I understand, of naming me as the nuncio at Florence. Of course this is a secret as yet." And he turned to each of the ladies in succession.

"Oh, that would be charming—at least for any one happy enough to fix their residence there, and my friend Lady Grace is one of the fortunate."

Monsignore bowed in gratitude to the compliment, but contrived, as he bent his head, to throw a covert glance at his future neighbor, with the result of which he did not seem displeased.

"I must of course, then, send you back those interesting books, which I have only in part read?"

"By no means, my lady; they are yours, if you will honor me by accepting them. If the subject did not forbid the epithet, I should call them trifles."

"Monsignore insists on my reading the 'Controversy,' dear Lady Grace: but how



"THERE ISN'T A DAY PASSES THAT I DON'T MAKE THE CLERKS IN THE 'LONG ROOM' FEEL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US." (P. 355.)

I am to continue my studies without his guidance—”

“We can correspond, my lady,” quickly broke in the other. “You can state to me whatever doubts—difficulties, perhaps, were the better word—occur to you; I shall be but too happy and too proud to offer you the solution; and if my Lady Grace Twining would condescend to accept me in the same capacity—”

She bowed blandly, and he went on.

“There is a little tract here, by the Cardinal Balbi—‘Flowers of St. Joseph’ is the title. The style is simple but touching—the invitation scarcely to be resisted.”

“I think you told me I should like the cardinal personally,” broke in Lady Lackington.

“His eminence is charming, my lady—such goodness, such gentleness, and so much of the very highest order of conversational agreeableness.”

“Monsignore is so polite as to promise us introductions at Rome,” continued she, addressing Lady Grace, “and amongst those, too, who are never approached by our countrymen.”

“The Alterini, the Fornisari, the Babbetti,” proudly repeated Monsignore.

“All ultra-exclusives, you understand,” whispered Lady Lackington to her friend, “who wouldn’t tolerate the English.”

“How charming!” ejaculated Lady Grace, with a languid enthusiasm.

“The Roman nobility,” continued Lady Lackington, “stands proudly forward, as the only society in Europe to which the traveling English cannot obtain access.”

“They have other prejudices, my lady—if I may so dare to call sentiments inspired by higher influences—than those which usually sway society. These prejudices are all in favor of such as regard our Church, if not with the devotion of true followers, at least with the respect and veneration that rightfully attach to the first-born of Christianity.”

“Yes,” said Lady Lackington, as though not knowing very well to what, she gave her assent, and then added, “I own to you I have always experienced a sort of awe—a sense of—what shall I call it?”

“Devotion, my lady,” blandly murmured Monsignore, while his eyes were turned on her with a paraphrase of the sentiment.

“Just so. I have always felt it on entering one of your churches—the solemn stillness, the gloomy indistinctness, the softened tints, the swelling notes of the organ—you know what I mean.”

“And when such emotions are etherealized, when, rising above material influences, they are associated with thoughts of what is alone thought-worthy, with hopes of what alone dignifies hope, imagine, then, the blessed beatitude, the heavenly ecstasy they inspire.”

Monsignore had now warmed to his work, and very ingeniously sketched out the advantages of a creed that accommodated itself so beautifully to every temperament—that gave so much and yet exacted so little—that poisoned no pleasures—discouraged no indulgences—but left every enjoyment open with its price attached to it, just as objects are ticketed in a bazaar. He had much to say, too, of its soothing consolations—its devices to alleviate sorrow and cheat affliction—while such was its sympathy for poor suffering humanity, that even the very caprices of temper—the mere whims of fancied depression—were not deemed unworthy of its pious care.

It is doubtful whether these ladies would have accorded to a divine of their own persuasion the same degree of favor and attention that they now bestowed on Monsignore Clifford. Perhaps his manner in discussing certain belongings of his Church was more entertaining; perhaps, too—we hint it with deference—that there was something like a forbidden pleasure in thus trespassing into the domain of Rome. His light and playful style was, however, a fascination amply sufficient to account for the interest he excited. If he dwelt but passingly on the dogmas of his Church, he was eloquently diffuse on its millinery. Copes, stoles, and vestments he reveled in; and there was a picturesque splendor in his description of ceremonial that left the best “effects” of the opera far behind. How gloriously, too, did he expatiate on the beauty of the Madonna, the costliness of her gems, and the brilliancy of her diadem! How incidentally did he display a rapturous veneration for loveliness, and a very pretty taste in dress! In a word, as they both confessed, “he was charming.” There was a downy softness in his enthusiasm, a sense of repose even in his very insistence, peculiarly pleasant to those who like to have their sensations, like their perfumes, as weak and as faint as possible.

“There is a tact and delicacy about these men from which our people might take a lesson,” said Lady Lackington, as the door closed after him.

“Very true,” sighed Lady Grace; “ours are really dreadful.”

CHAPTER III.

A FATHER AND A DAUGHTER.

A DREARY evening late in October, a cold thin rain falling, and a low wailing wind sighing through the leafless branches of the trees in Merrion square, made Dublin seem as sad-looking and deserted as need be. The principal inhabitants had not yet returned to their homes for the winter, and the houses wore that melancholy look of vacancy and desertion so strikingly depressing. One sound alone awoke the echoes in that silence: it was a loud knocking at the door of a large and pretentious mansion in the middle of the north side of the square. Two persons had been standing at the door for a considerable time, and by every effort of knocker and bell endeavoring to obtain admittance. One of these was a tall, erect man of about fifty, whose appearance but too plainly indicated that most painful of all struggles between poverty and a certain pretension. White-seamed and threadbare as was his coat, he wore it buttoned to the top with a sort of military smartness, his shabby hat was set on with a kind of jaunty air, and his bushy whiskers, combed and frizzed out with care, seemed a species of protest against being thought as humble as certain details of dress might bespeak him. At his side stood a young girl, so like him that a mere glance proclaimed her to be his daughter, and although in her appearance also narrow means stood confessed, there was an unmistakable something in her calm, quiet features, and her patient expression, that declared she bore her lot with a noble and high-hearted courage.

"One trial more, Bella, and I'll give it up," cried he, angrily, as, seizing the knocker, he shook the strong door with the rapping, while he jingled the bell with equal violence. "If they don't come now, it is because they've seen who it is, or maybe—"

"There, see, papa, there's a window opening above," said the girl, stepping out into the rain as she spoke.

"What d'ye mean, do ye want to break in the door?" cried a harsh voice, as the wizened, hag-like face of a very dirty old woman appeared from the third story.

"I want to know if Mr. Davenport Dunn is at home," cried the man.

"He is not; he's abroad—in France."

"When is he expected back?" asked he again.

"Maybe in a week, maybe in three weeks."

"Have any letters come for Mr. Kellett?—Captain Kellett?"—said he, quickly correcting himself.

"No!"

And a bang of the window as the head was withdrawn, finished the colloquy.

"That's pretty conclusive any way, Bella," said he, with an attempt to laugh. "I suppose there's no use in staying here longer. Poor child," added he, as he watched her preparations against the storm, "you'll be wet to the skin! I think we must take a car, eh, Bella? I *will* take a car." And he put an emphasis on the word that sounded like a firm resolve.

"No, no, papa; neither of us ever feared rain."

"And, by George! it can't spoil our clothes, Bella," said he, laughing with a degree of jocularity that sounded astonishing even to himself, for he quickly added, "but I *will* have a car; wait a moment here under the porch and I'll get one."

And before she could interpose a word, he was off and away at a speed that showed the vigor of a younger man.

"It won't do, Bella," he said, as he came back again; "there's only one fellow on the stand, and he'll not go under half a crown. I pushed him hard for one and sixpence, but he'd not hear of it, and so I thought—that was, I knew well—you would be angry with me."

"Of course, papa; it would be mere waste of money," said she, hastily. "An hour's walk—at most an hour and a half—and there's an end of it. And now let us set out, for it is growing late."

There were few in the street as they passed along; a stray creature or so, houseless and ragged, slinked onward; an odd loiterer stood for shelter in an archway, or a chance passer-by, with ample coat and umbrella, seemed to defy the pelting storm, while cold and dripping they plodded along in silence.

"That's old Barrington's house, Bella," said he, as they passed a large and dreary-looking mansion at the corner of the square; "many's the pleasant evening I spent in it."

She muttered something, but inaudibly, and they went on as before.

"I wonder what's going on here to-day. It was Sir Dyke Morris used to live here when I knew it." And he stopped at an open door, where a flood of light poured forth into the street. "That's the Bishop of Derry, Bella, that's just gone in. There's a dinner-party there to-day," whispered he, as, half reluctant to go, he still peered into the hall.

She drew him gently forward, and he seemed to have fallen into a reverie, as he muttered at intervals,

"Great times—fine times—plenty of money—and fellows that knew how to spend it."

Drearily plashing onward through wind and rain, their frail clothes soaked through, they seldom interchanged a word.

"Lord Drogheda lived there, Bella," said he, stopping short at the door of a splendidly illuminated hotel: "and I remember the time I was as free and welcome in it as in my own house. My head used to be full of the strange things that happened there once. Brown, and Barry Fox, and Tisdall, and the rest of us, were wild chaps! Faith, my darling, it wasn't for Mr. Davenport Dunn I cared in those times, or the like of him. Davenport Dunn, indeed!"

"It is strange that he has not written to us," said the girl in a low voice.

"Not a bit strange; it's small trouble he takes about us. I'll bet a five-pound note—I mean, I'll lay sixpence," said he, correcting himself with some confusion—"that since he left this he never as much as bestowed a thought on us. When he got me that beggarly place in the Custom House, he thought he'd done with me out and out. Sixty pounds a year! God be with the time I gave Peter Harris, the butler, just double the money!"

As they talked thus they gained the outskirts of the city, and gradually left the lamps and the well-lighted shops behind. Their way now led along a dreary road by the seaside, toward the little bathing village of Clontarf, beyond which, in a sequestered spot called the Green Lanes, their humble home stood. It was a long and melancholy walk; the sorrowful sounds of the sea beating on the shingly strand mingling with the dreary plashing of the rain, while farther out a continuous roar, as the waves rolled over the "North Bull," added all the terrors of storm to the miseries of the night.

"The winter is setting in early," said Kellett. "I think I never saw a severer night."

"A sad time for poor fellows out at sea!" said the girl, as she turned her head toward the dreary waste of cloud and water now commingled into one.

"'Tis exactly like our own life, out there," cried he; "a little glimpse of light glimmering every now and then through the gloom, but yet not enough to cheer the heart and give courage; but all black darkness on every side."

"There will come a daybreak at last," said the girl, assuredly.

"Faith! I sometimes despair about it in our own case," said he, sighing drearily. "To think of what I was once, and what I am now! buffeted about and ill used by a set of scoundrels that I'd not have suffered to sit down in my kitchen. Keep that rag of a shawl across your chest; you'll be destroyed entirely, Bella."

"We'll soon be within shelter now, and nothing the worse for this weather either of us," replied she, almost gayly. "Over and over again have you told me what severe seasons you have braved in the hunting field; and, after all, papa, one can surely endure as much for duty as in pursuit of pleasure—not to say that our little cottage never looks more home-like than after a night like this."

"It's snug enough for a thing of the kind," murmured he, half reluctantly.

"And Betty will have such a nice fire for us, and we shall be as comfortable and as happy as though it were a fine house, and we ourselves fine folk to live in it."

"The Kelletts of Kellett's Court, and no better blood in Ireland," said he, sternly. "It was in the same house my grandfather, Morgan Kellett, entertained the Duke of Portland, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; and this day, as I stand here, there isn't a chap in the Castle-yard would touch his hat to me!"

"And what need have we of them, papa? Will not our pride of good blood teach us other lessons than repining? Can't we show the world that a gentleman born bears his altered fortunes with dignity?"

"Ye're right, Bella, that's the very thing they must acknowledge. There isn't a day passes that I don't make the clerks in the 'long room' feel the difference between us. 'No liberties—no familiarities, my lads,' I say, 'keep your distance. For though my coat is threadbare, and my hat none of the best, the man inside them is Paul Kellett of Kellett's Court.' And if they ask where that is, I say, 'Look at the Gazetteer'—it's mighty few of them has their names there—'Kellett's Court, the ancient seat of the Kellett family, was originally built by Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke.'"

"Well, here we are, papa, in a more humble home; but you'll see how cheery it will be."

And so saying, she pushed open a little wicket, and, passing through a small garden, gained the door of a little one-storied cottage, almost buried in honeysuckle.

"Yes, Betty, wet through!" said she, laughing, as the old woman held up her hands in horror; "but get papa his slippers and that warm dressing-gown, and I'll be back in a minute."

"Arrah! why didn't you take a car for her?" said the old woman, with that familiarity which old and tried service warrants. "Sure the child will get her death from this!"

"She wouldn't let me; she insisted on walking on her feet."

"Ayeh, ayeh!" muttered the crone, as she placed his slippers on the fender, "sure ye oughtn't to mind her. She'd get a fever rather than cost you a shilling. Look at the shoes she's wearin'."

"By the good day! you'll drive me mad—clean mad!" cried he, savagely. "Don't you know in your heart that we haven't got it? Devil a rap farthing; that we're as poor as a church mouse; that if it wasn't for this beggarly place—"

"Now, Betty," cried the girl, entering—"now for our tea, and that delicious potato-cake that I see browning there before the fire."

Poorly, even meanly, dressed as she was, there was in her that gentle look, and graceful, quiet bearing, that relieved the somber aspect of a room which spoke but too plainly of narrow fortune; and as her father looked at her, the traces of recent displeasure passed from his face, and her eyes brightened up, while he said,

"You bring a blessing with the very sound of your voice, darling." And he kissed her twice as he spoke.

"It is so comfortable to be here, and so snug," said she, seating herself at his side, "and to know that to-morrow is Sunday, and that we have our holiday each of us. Come, papa, confess this little room and its bright fire are very cheery! And I have got a newspaper for you. I told Mrs. Hawksey there was nothing such a treat to you as a newspaper, and she gave me one."

"Ah! the *Trumpet of Liberty*," said he, opening it. "We'll have it after tea, Bella. Is there anything about our own county in it—Cork, I mean?"

"I have not looked in it yet; but we'll go through it honestly, papa, for I know how conscientious you are not to lose a paragraph."

"Tis that same makes a man agreeable in society. You know everything if you read the papers: accidents and marriages, the rate of the money market, the state of the crops, who is dining with the queen, and who is skating on the Serpentine, who

is ruined at Newmarket, and who drowned at sea, and then all about the playhouses, and the wonderful panoramas; so that, let conversation turn how it will, you're ready for it, and that's the reason, Bella, you must go through every bit of it. It's like hunting, and the very field perhaps you don't try, is just the one you find a fox in!"

"Well, you'll see. I'll beat every cover for you!" said she, laughing; "and Mrs. Hawksey desires to have it back, for there is something about the alderman having said or done—I don't know what or where."

"How I hate the very name of an alderman!" said Kellett, peevishly; "regular vagabonds, with gilt coaches and red cloaks, running about prating of taxes and the pipe-water! The devil a thing I feel harder to bear in my poverty than to think you're a visiting governess in an alderman's family. Paul Kellett's daughter a visiting governess!"

"And very proud am I to be thought equal to the charge," said she, resolutely—"not to say how grateful to you for having enabled me to undertake it."

"Myself in the customs is nothing; that, I'd put up with. Many a reduced gentleman did the same. Sam Crozier was a marker at a billiard-table in Tralee, and Ennis Magrath was an overseer on the very road he used to drive his four-in-hand. 'Many a time,' says he, 'I cursed that fresh-broken stone, but I never thought I'd be measuring it!' 'Tis the Encumbered Court has brought us all down, Bella, and there's no disgrace in being ruined with thousands of others. Just begin with the sales of estates, and tell us who is next for sentence. God forgive me, but I feel a kind of pleasure in hearing that we're all swamped together."

The girl smiled as though the remark were merely uttered in levity and deserved no more serious notice, but a faint sigh, which she could not repress, betrayed the sorrow with which she had heard it.

She opened the paper and glanced at its contents. They were as varied and multifarious as are usually to be found in weekly "channels of information." What struck her, however, most, was the fact that, turn where she would, the name of Davenport Dnan was ever conspicuous. Sales of property displayed him as the chief creditor or petitioner; charities paraded him as the first among the benevolent; joint-stock companies exhibited him as their managing director; mines, and railroads, and telegraph companies, harbor

committees, and boards of all kinds, gave him the honors of large type; while in the fashionable intelligence from abroad, his arrivals and departures were duly chronicled, and a letter of our own correspondent from Venice communicated the details of a farewell dinner given him, with a "lord" in the chair, by a number of those who had so frequently partaken of his splendid hospitalities while he resided in that city.

"Well—well—well!" said Kellett, with a pause between each exclamation, "this is more than I can bear. Old Jerry Dunn's son—the brat of a boy I remember in the charter school! He used to be sent at Christmas time up to Ely place, when my father was in town, to get five shillings for a Christmas-box; and I mind well the day he was asked to stay and dine with my sister Matty and myself, and he taught us a new game with six little bits of sticks, how we were to do something, I forget what; but I know how it ended—he won every sixpence we had. Matty had half a guinea in gold and some tenpenny pieces, and I had, I think, about fifteen shillings, and sorrow a rap he left us; and worse still, I mortgaged my school maps, and got a severe thrashing for having lost them from old White in Jervas street; and poor Matty's doll was confiscated in the same way, and carried off with a debt of three-and-fourpence on her head. God forgive him, but he gave us a sorrowful night, for we cried till daybreak."

"And did you like him as a playfellow?" asked she.

"Now that's the strangest thing of all," said Kellett, smiling. "Neither Matty nor myself liked him; but he got a kind of influence over us that was downright fascination. No matter what we thought of doing before he came, when he once set foot in the room everything followed his dictation. It wasn't that he was overbearing or tyrannical in the least, just as little could you say that he was insinuating or flattering, but somehow, by a kind of instinct, we fell into his ways, and worked out all his suggestions just as if we were mere agents of his will. Resistance or opposition we never dreamed of while he was present; but after he was gone away, once or twice there came the thought that there was something very like slavery in all this submission, and we began to concert how we might throw off the yoke.

"I won't play toll-bar any more," said I, resolutely; "all my pocket-money is sure to go before it is over."

"And I," said Matty, "won't have poor 'Mopsy' tried for a murder again; every

time she's hanged, some of the wax comes off her neck."

"We encouraged each other vigorously in these resolves, but before he was half an hour in the house 'Mopsy' had undergone the last sentence of the law, and I was insolvent."

"What a clever rogue he must have been!" said Bella, laughing.

"Wasn't he clever!" exclaimed Kellett. "You could not say how—nobody could say how—but he saw everything the moment he came into a new place, and marked every one's face, and knew, besides, the impression he made on them, just as if he was familiar with them for years."

"Did you continue to associate with him as you grew up?" asked she.

"No; we only knew each other as children. There was a distressing thing—a very distressing thing—occurred one day: I'm sure to this very hour I think of it with sorrow and shame, for I can't believe he had any blame in it. We were playing in a room next my father's study, and running every now and then into the study; and there was an old-fashioned penknife—a family relic, with a long bloodstone handle—lying on the table, and when the play was over, and Davy, as we called him, had gone home, this was missing. There was a search made for it high and low, for my father set great value on it. It was his great-great-grandmother's, I believe; at all events, no one ever set eyes on it afterward, and nothing would persuade my father but that Davy stole it! Of course he never told us that he thought so, but the servant did, and Matty and myself cried two nights and a day over it, and got really sick.

"I remember well: I was working by myself in the garden, Matty was ill and in bed, when I saw a tall old man, dressed like a country shopkeeper, shown into the back parlor, where my father was sitting. There was a bit of the window open, and I could hear that high words were passing between them, and, as I thought, my father getting the worst of it, for the old fellow kept repeating, 'You'll rue it, Mister Kellett—you'll rue it yet!' And then my father said, 'Give him a good horse-whipping, Dunn; take my advice, and you'll spare yourself some sorrow, and save him from even worse hereafter.' I'll never forget the old fellow's face as he turned to leave the room. 'Davy will live to pay you off for this,' said he; 'and if you're not to the fore, it will be your children, or your children's children, will have to quit the debt!'

"We never saw Davy from that hour;

indeed, we were strictly forbidden ever to utter his name, and it was only when alone together that Matty and I would venture to talk of him, and cry over—and many a time we did—the happy days when we had him for our playfellow. There was a species of martyrdom now, too, in his fate, that endeared him the more to our memories—every play he had invented, every spot he was fond of, every toy he liked, were hallowed to our minds like relics. At last poor Matty and I could bear it no longer, and we sat down and wrote a long letter to Davy, assuring him of our fullest confidence in his honor, and our broken-heartedness at separation from him. We inveighed stoutly against parental tyranny, and declared ourselves ready for open rebellion, if he, that was never deficient in a device, could only point out the road. We bribed a stable-boy, with all our conjoined resources of pocket-money, to convey the epistle, and it came back next morning to my father, inclosed in one from Davy himself, stating that he could never countenance acts of disobedience, or be any party to a system by which children should deceive their parents. I was sent off to a boarding-school the same week, and poor Matty committed to the charge of Miss Morse, a vinegar-faced old maid, that poisoned the eight best years of her life !”

“And when did you next hear of him ?”

“Of Davy ? Let me see : the next time I heard of him was when he attempted to enter college as a sizar, and failed. Somebody or other mentioned it at Kelllett's Court, and said that old Dunn was half out of his mind, insisting that some injustice was dealt out to his son, and vowing he'd get the member for somewhere to bring the matter before Parliament. Davy was wiser, however ; he persuaded his father that, by agitating the question, they would only give notoriety to what, if left alone, would speedily be forgotten ; and Davy was right. I don't think there's three men now in the kingdom that remember one word about the sizarship, or if they do, that would be influenced by it in any dealings they might have with Mr. Davenport Dunn.”

“What career did he adopt after that ?”

“He became a tutor, I think, in Lord Glengariff's family. There was some scandal about him there—I forget it now.—and then he went off to America, and spent some years there, and in Jamaica, where he was employed as an overseer, I think ; but I can't remember it all. My own knowledge of him next was seeing the name ‘D. Dunn, Solicitor,’ on a neat brass-plate in Tralee,

and hearing that he was a very acute fellow in election contests, and well up to dealing with the priests.”

“And now he has made a large fortune ?”

“I believe you well ; he's the richest man in Ireland. There's scarce a county he hasn't got property in. There's not a town, nor a borough, where he hasn't some influence, and in every class too—gentry, clergy, shopkeepers, people : he has them all with him, and nobody seems to know how he does it.”

“Pretty much, I suppose, as he used to manage Aunt Matty and yourself long ago,” said she, laughingly.

“Well, indeed, I suppose so,” said he, with a half sigh ; “and if it be, all I can say is, they'll be puzzled to find out his secret. He's the deepest fellow I ever heard or read of ; for there he stands to-day, without name, family, blood, or station, higher than those that had them all—able to do more than them : and, what's stranger still, thought more about in England than the best man among us.”

“You have given me quite an interest about him, papa ; tell me, what is he like ?”

“He's as tall as myself, but not so strongly built ; indeed, he's slightly round-shouldered ; he is dark in the complexion, and has the blackest hair and whiskers I ever saw, and rather good-looking than otherwise—a calm, cold, patient-looking face you'd call it ; he speaks very little, but his voice is soft, and low, and deliberate, just like one that wouldn't throw away a word, and he never moves his hands or arms, but lets them hang down heavily at either side.”

“And his eyes ? Tell me of his eyes ?”

“They're big, black, sleepy-looking eyes, seldom looking up, and never growing a bit brighter by anything that he says or hears about him. Indeed, any one seeing him for the first time would say, ‘There's a man whose thoughts are many a mile away ; he isn't minding what's going on about him here.’ But that is not the case ; there isn't a look, a stir, nor a gesture that he doesn't remark. There's not a chair drawn closer to another, not a glance interchanged, that he hasn't noticed ; and I've heard it said, ‘Many wouldn't open a letter before him, he's so sure to guess the contents, from just reading the countenance.’”

“The world is always prone to exaggerate such gifts,” said she, calmly.

“So it may be, dear, but I don't fancy it could do so here. He's one of those

men that, if he had been born to high station, would be a great politician, or a great general. You see that somehow, without any effort on his part, things come up just as he wished them. I believe, after all," said he, with a heavy sigh, "it's just luck! Whatever one man puts his hand to in this world goes on right and smoothly, and another has every mishap and misfortune that can befall him. He may strive, and toil, and fret his brains over it, but devil a good it is. If he is born to ill luck, it will stick to him!"

"It's not a very cheery philosophy!" said she gently.

"I suppose not, dear: but what is very cheery in this life, when you come to find it out? Isn't it nothing but disappointment and vexation?"

Partly to rally him out of this vein of depression, and partly from motives of curiosity, she once more adverted to Dunn, and asked how it happened that they crossed each other again in life.

"He's what they call 'carrying the sale' of Kellett's Court, my dear. You know we're in the encumbered estates now; and Dunn represents Lord Lackington and others that hold the mortgages over us. The property was up for sale in November, then in May last, and was taken down by Dunn's order. I never knew why. It was then, however, he got me this thing in the Revenue—this beggarly place of sixty-five pounds a year; and told me, through his man Hanks—for I never met himself about it—that he'd take care my interests were not overlooked. After that the courts closed, and he went abroad; and that's all there's between us, or, indeed, likely to be between us; for he never wrote me as much as one line since he went away, nor noticed any one of my letters, though I sent him four, or, indeed, I believe five."

"What a strange man this must be," said she musingly. "Is it supposed that he has formed any close attachments? Are his friends devoted to him?"

"Attachments—friendships! faith, I'm inclined to think it's little time he'd waste on one or the other. Why, ehild, if what we hear be true, he goes through the work of ten men every day of his life."

"Is he married?" asked she, after a pause.

"No; there was some story about a disappointment he met early in life; when he was at Lord Glengariff's, I think, he fell in love with one of the daughters, or she with him—I never knew it rightly—but it ended in his being sent away; and they

say he never got over it. Just as if Davenport Dunn was a likely man either to fall in love, or cherish the memory of a first passion! I wish you saw him, Bella," said he, laughing, "and the notion would certainly amuse you."

"But still men of his stamp have felt—ay, and inspired—the strongest passions. I remember reading once—"

"Reading, my darling—reading is one thing, seeing or knowing is another. The fellows that write these things must invent what isn't likely—what is nigh impossible—or nobody would read it. What we see of a man or woman in a book is just the exact reverse of what we'll ever find in real life."

The girl could easily have replied to this assertion—indeed, the answer was almost on her lips, when she restrained herself, and, hanging down her head, fell into a musing fit.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE WHO WOULD BE A "SHARP FELLOW."

ONE of the chief, perhaps the greatest, pleasures which Kellett's humble lot still secured him, was a long country walk of a Sunday in company with one who had been his friend in more prosperous times. A reduced gentleman like himself, Annesley Beecher could only go abroad on this one day in the week, and thus by the pressure of adverse fortune were they thrown more closely together.

Although by no means a favorite with Bella, she was far too considerate for her father, and too mindful of the few enjoyments that remained to him, ever to interpose her real opinion. She therefore limited herself to silence, as old Kellett would pronounce some glowing eulogy of his friend, calling him "good," and "amiable," and "kind-hearted," and extolling, as little short of miraculous, "the spirits he had, considering all he went through." But he would add, "He was always the same, and that's the reason everybody liked him; everybody, that is, almost everybody!" And he would steal a sly glance at his daughter, half imploringly, as though to say, "How long are you to sit in that small minority?"

Whether the weather would permit of Beecher's coming out to see them—whether he'd be able to "stay and take his bit of dinner with them," were subjects of as great anxiety to poor Kellett each succeeding Sunday morning as though

there ever had been a solitary exception to the wished-for occurrence, and Bella would never destroy the pleasure of anticipation by the slightest hint that might impair the value he attached to the event.

"There's so many trying to get him," he would say; "they pester his life out with invitations. The chancellor, and Lord Killybegs, and the Bishop of Drumna, always asking him to name his day; but he'd rather come out and take his bit of roast mutton with ourselves, and his glass of punch after it, than he'd eat venison and drink claret with the best of them. There's not a table in Dublin, from the Castle down, that wouldn't be proud of his company; and why not?" He would pause after uttering a challenge of this sort, and then, as his daughter would show no signs of acceptance, he would mutter on, "A real gentleman born and bred, and how anybody can *mislike* him is more than I am really able to comprehend!"

These little grumblings, which never produced more than a smile from Bella, were a kind of weekly homily, which poor Kellett liked to deliver, and he felt, when he had uttered it, as one who had paid a just tribute to worth and virtue.

"There's Beecher already, by Jove!" cried Kellett, as he sprang up from the breakfast-table to open the little wicket which the other was vainly endeavoring to unhasp. "How early he is."

Let us take the opportunity to present him to our readers—a duty the more imperative, since, to all outward semblance at least, he would appear little to warrant the flattering estimate his friend so lately bestowed upon him. About four or five and thirty, somewhat above the middle size, and with all the air and bearing of a man of fashion, Beecher had the gay, easy, light-hearted look of one with whom the world went habitually well; and when it did not, more was the shame of the said world! since a better, nobler, more generous fellow than himself never existed; and this *he* knew, however others might ungraciously hold an opposite opinion. There was not the slightest detail in his dress that could warrant the supposition of narrow fortune: his coat and his waistcoat of one color and stuff were faultless in make, the massive watch-chain that festooned across his chest, in the last mode, his thick walking-boots the perfection of that compromise between strength and elegance so popular in our day, even to his cane, whose head was of massive gold, with his arms embossed—all bespoke a certain affluence

and abundance, the more assured, from the absence of ostentation.

His hat was slightly, very slightly, set on one side, a piece of "tigerism" pardonable, perhaps, as it displayed the rich brown curls of very silky hair, which he had disposed with consummate skill before his glass ere he issued forth. His large, full blue eyes, his handsome mouth, and a certain gentleness in his look generally, were what he himself would have called the "odds in his favor;" and very hard it would indeed have been at first sight to form an estimate in any way unfavorable to him. Beau Beecher, as he was called once, had been deemed the best-looking fellow about town, and when he entered the Life Guards, almost twenty years before the time we now present him, had been reckoned the handsomest man and best rider in the regiment. Brother of Lord Lackington, but not by the same mother, he had inaugurated that new school of dandyism which succeeded to the Brummell period, and sought fame and notoriety by splendor and extravagance, rather than by the fastidious and personal elegance that characterized the former era. In this way Lord Lackington and his brother were constantly contrasted, and although each had their followers, it was generally admitted that they were both regarded as admirable types of style and fashion. Boodle's would have preferred the peer, the Guards' Club and all Tattersall's have voted for the Honorable Annesley Beecher.

Beecher started in life with all the advantages and disadvantages which attach to the position of a younger son of a noble family. On the one side he had good connections, a sure status in society, and easy admission into club life; on the other, lay the counterbalancing fact of the very slender fortune which usually falls to the lot of the younger born. The sum, in his case, barely sufficed to carry him through his minority, so that the day he came of age he had not a shilling in the world. Most men open their career in life with some one ambition or other in their hearts. Some aspire to military glory and the fame of a great general, some yearn after political eminence, and fashion to themselves the triumphs of successful statesmanship. There are lesser goals in the walks of the learned professions which have each their votaries; and sanguine spirits there are who found, in imagination, distant colonies beyond the sea, or lead lives of adventure in exploring unvisited and unknown regions. Annesley Beecher had no sympathy with any of these. The one great and ab-

sorbing wish of his heart was to be a "sharp fellow;" one who in all the dealings and traffic of life was sure to get the upper hand of his adversary, who, in every trial where craft was the master, and in whatever situation wherein cunning performed a part, was certain to come out with the creditable reputation of being, "for a gentleman, the downiest cove to be met with anywhere."

This unhappy bent was owing to the circumstance of his being early thrown among men who, having nothing but their wits to depend upon, had turned these same wits to very discreditable purposes. He became, it is needless to say, their easy dupe; and when utterly bereft of the small patrimony which he once possessed, was admitted as an humble brother of the honorable guild who had despoiled him.

Men select their walk in life either from the consciousness of certain qualities likely to attain success, or by some overweening admiration of those already eminent in it. It was this latter decided Beecher's taste. Never was there one who cherished such profound respect for a crafty fellow, for all other intellectual superiorities he could limit his esteem: for a rogue, his veneration was unbounded. From the man that invented a bubble company, to him who could turn the king at *écarté*—from the gifted individual who could puff up shares to an exorbitant value, to the no less fine intelligence that could "make everything safe on the Derby," he venerated them all. His early experiences had been unhappy ones, and so constantly had he found himself duped and "done" on every hand, that he ended by believing that honesty was a pure myth; the nearest approach to the quality being a certain kind of fidelity to one's "pal," as he would have called it, and an unwillingness to put "your own friend in the hole," while there were so many others available for that pleasant destiny. This little flickering flame of principle, this farthing candle of good feeling, was the solitary light that illuminated the gloom of his character.

He had joined the regiment Kellett formerly belonged to at Malta, a few weeks before the other had sold out, and having met accidentally in Ireland, they had renewed the acquaintance, stimulated by that strange sympathy which attracts to each other those whose narrow circumstances would seem, in some shape or other, the effects of a cruelty practiced on them by the world. Kellett was rather flattered by the recognition of him who recalled the brighter hours of his life, while he enter-

tained a kind of admiration for the worldly wit and cleverness of one who, in talk at least, was a match for the "shrewdest fellow going." Beecher liked the society of a man who thus looked up to him, and who could listen unweariably to his innumerable plans for amassing wealth and fortune, all of which only needed some little preliminary aid—some miserable thousand or two to start with, to make them as "rich as Rothschild."

Never was there such a Tantalus view of life as he could picture—stores of gold, mines of unbounded wealth—immense stakes to be won here, *rouge et noir* banks to be broke there—all actually craving to be appropriated, if one only had a little of that shining metal which, like the water thrown down in a pump, is the needful preliminary to securing a supply of the fluid afterward.

The imaginative faculty plays a great part in the existence of the reduced gentleman! Kellett actually reveled in the gorgeous visions this friend could conjure up. There was that amount of plausibility in his reasonings that satisfied scruple as to practicability, and made him regard Beecher as the most extraordinary instance of a grand financial genius lost to the world—a great chancellor of the exchequer born to devise budgets in obscurity!

Bella took a very different measure of him: she read him with all a woman's nicest appreciation, and knew him thoroughly; she saw, however, how much his society pleased her father, how their Sunday strolls together rallied him from the dreary depression the week was sure to leave behind it, and how these harmless visions of imaginary prosperity served to cheer the gloom of actual poverty. She, therefore, concealed so much as she could of her own opinion, and received Beecher as cordially as she was able.

"Ah, Paul, my boy, how goes it? Miss Kellett, how d'ye do?" said Beecher, with that easy air and pleasant smile that well became him. "I thought by starting early I should just catch you at breakfast, while I also took another hour out of my Sunday—the one day the law mercifully bestows on such poor devils as myself—ha, ha, ha!" And he laughed heartily, as though insolvency was as droll a thing as could be.

"You bear up well, anyhow, Beecher," said Kellett, admiringly.

"What's the odds so long as you're happy!" cried the other, gayly. "Never say die. They take it out in fifty per cent., but they can't work the oracle against our

good spirits, eh, Kellett? The *mens samit in corpore*—what d'ye call him, my lad?—that's the real thing."

"Indeed, I suppose it is!" said Kellett, not very clear as to what he concurred in.

"There are few fellows, let me tell you, would be as light-hearted as I am, with four writs and a judge's warrant hanging over them—eh, Miss Bella, what do you say to that?" said Beecher.

She smiled half sadly and said nothing.

"Ask John Scott—ask Bicknell Morris, or any of the "legs" you like—if there's a man of them all ever bore up like me. 'Beecher's a bar of iron;' they'll tell you; 'that fellow can bear any amount of hammering;' and maybe I haven't had it! And all Lackington's fault!"

"That's the worst of all!" said Kellett, who had listened to the same accusation in the self-same words at least a hundred times before.

"Lackington is the greatest fool going! He doesn't see the advantage of pushing his family influence. He might have had me in for 'Mallow.' Grog Davis said to him one day, 'Look now, my lord, Annesley is the best horse in your stable, if you'd only stand to win on him, he is!' But Lackington would not hear of it. He thinks me a flat! You won't believe it, but he does!"

"Faith! he's wrong there," said Kellett, with all the emphasis of sincerity.

"I rather suspect he is, Master Kellett. I was trained in another school—brought up amongst fellows would skin a cat, by Jove! What I say is, let A. B. have a chance—just let him in once, and see if he won't do the thing!"

"Do you wish to be in Parliament, Mr. Beecher?" asked Bella, with a smile of half repressed drollery.

"Of course I do. First, there's the protection—no bad thing as times go; then it would be uncommon strange if I couldn't 'tool the coach into the yard' safely. They'd have to give me a devilish good thing. You'd see what a thorn I'd be in their sides. Ask Grog Davis what kind of fellow I am; he'll tell you if I'm easily put down. But Lackington is a fool; he can't see the road before him!"

"You reckon, then, on being a debater!" said she, quietly.

"A little of everything, Miss Bella," said he, laughing; "like the modern painters, not particular for a shade or two. I'd not go wasting my time with that old tory lot—they're all worked out, aged and weighted, as John Scott would call them—I'd go in with the young 'uns—the Man-

chester two-year-olds, universal—what d'ye call it?—and vote by ballot. They're the fellows have 'the tin,' by Jove! they have."

"Then I scarcely see how Lord Lackington would advance his family influence by promoting your views," said she again.

"To be sure he would. It would be the safest hedge in the world for him. He'd square his book by it, and stand to win, no matter what horse came in. Besides, why should they buy *me*, if I wasn't against them? You don't nobble the horse in your own stable—eh, Kellett, old boy?"

"You're a wonderful fellow, Beecher!" said Kellett, in a most honest admiration of his friend.

"If they'd only give me a chance, Paul—just one chance!"

It was not very easy to see what blot in the game of life he purposed to himself to "hit" when he used this expression, "if they only give me a chance;" vague and indistinct as it was, still for many a year had it served him as a beacon of hope. A shadow vision of creditors "done," horses "nobbled," awkward testimonies "squared," a millenary period of bills easily discounted, with an indulgent angel presiding over the bankrupt court,—these and like blessings doubtless all flitted before him as the fruits of that same "chance" which destiny held yet in store for him.

Hope is a generous fairy; she deigns to sit beside the humblest firesides—she will linger even in the damp cell of the prison, or rest her wings on the wave-tossed raft of the shipwrecked, and in such mission is she thrice blessed! But by what strange caprice does she visit the hearts of men like this? Perhaps it is that the very spirit of her ministering is to despair of nothing.

We are by no means sure that our reader will take the same pleasure, that Kellett did in Beecher's society, and therefore we shall spare him the narrative of their walk. They strolled along for hours, now by the shingly shore, on which the waves swept smoothly, now inland, through leafy lanes and narrow roads, freckled with patchy sunlight. The day was calm and still—one of those solemn autumnal days which lend to scenery a something of sadness in their unvarying quiet. Although so near a great city, the roads were little traveled, and they sauntered for hours scarcely meeting any one.

Wherever the smoke rose above the tall beech-trees, wherever the ornamented porch of some lone cottage peeped through the

copse, or the handsome entrance-gate proclaimed the well-to-do owner of some luxurious abode, Kellett would stop to tell who it was lived there—the wealthy merchant, the affluent banker, the alderman or city dignitary, who had amassed his fortune by this or that pursuit. Through all his stories there ran the vein of depreciation which the once landed proprietor cherished toward the men who were the “first of their name.” He was sure to remember some trait of their humble beginnings in life; how this one had come up barefooted to Dublin fifty years before; how that, had held horses in the street for hire. It was strange, but scarcely one escaped some commentary of this kind; not that there was a spark of ill nature in the man, but that he experienced a species of self-consolation in thinking that in all his narrow fortune he had claims of kindred and connection which none of them could compete with. Beecher’s thoughts took, meanwhile, a different course; whenever not awakened to interest by some trait of their sharpness or cunning, to which he listened with avidity, he reveled in the idea of their wealth, as a thing of which they might be despoiled: “Wouldn’t that fellow take shares in some impossible speculation?—Couldn’t the other be induced to buy some thousand pounds’ worth of valueless scrip? Would this one kindly permit himself to ‘be cleared out’ at hazard?—Might that one be persuaded to lose a round sum at *écarté*?”

And thus did they view life, with widely different sympathies, it is true, but yet in a spirit that made them companionable to each other. One “grew his facts,” like raw material which the other manufactured into those curious wares by which he amused his fancy. Poverty is a stronger bond than many believe it; when men begin to confess it to each other, they take something very like an oath of fidelity.

“By the way,” said Beecher, as he bade his friend good-night, “you told me you knew Dunn—Davenport Dunn?”

“To be sure I do; and know him well.”

“Couldn’t you introduce me to him; that’s a fellow might be able to assist me? I’m certain he could give me a chance; eh, Kellett?”

“Well; I expect him back in Ireland every day. I was asking after him no later than yesterday; but he’s still away.”

“When he comes back, however, you can mention me, of course; he’ll know who I am.”

“I’ll do it with pleasure. Good-night, Beecher—good-night; and I hope”—this

was soliloquy as he turned back toward the door—“I hope Dunn will do more for you than he ever has for *me*! or, faith, it’s not worth while to make the acquaintance.”

Bella retired to her room early, and Kellett sat moodily alone by his fire. Like a great many other “embarrassed gentlemen,” he was dragging on life amidst all the expedients of loans, bonds, and mortgages, when the bill for sale of the encumbered estates became the law of the land. What with the legal difficulties of disposing him, what with the changeful fortunes of a good harvest, or money a little more plentiful in the market, he might have gone on to the last in this fashion, and ended his days where he began them, in the old house of his fathers, when suddenly this new and unexpected stroke of legislation cut short all his resources at once, and left him actually a beggar on the world.

The panic created at the first moment by a law that seemed little short of confiscation; the large amount of landed property thus suddenly thrown into the market; the prejudice against Irish investment, so strongly entertained by the moneyed classes in England, all tended vastly to depreciate the value of those estates which came first for sale; and many were sold at prices scarcely exceeding four or five years of their rental. An accidental disturbance in the neighborhood, some petty outrage in the locality, was enough to depreciate the value; and purchasers actually fancied themselves engaged in speculations so hazardous that nothing short of the most tempting advantages would requite them for their risk.

One of the very first estates for sale was Kellett’s Court. The charges on the property were immense, the accumulated debts of three generations of spendthrifts; the first charge, however, was but comparatively small, and yet even this was not covered by the proceeds of the sale. A house that had cost nearly forty thousand pounds, standing on its own demesne, surrounded by an estate yielding upward of three thousand a year, was knocked down for fifteen thousand four hundred pounds.

Kellett was advised to appeal against this sale on various grounds: he was in possession of an offer of more than double for the same property in times less prosperous; he could show a variety of grounds—surprise and others—to invalidate the ruinous contract; and it was then that he once again, after a whole life, found himself in contact with Davenport Dunn, the attorney for many parties whose interests

were compromised in the sale. By no possible accident could the property be sold at such a price as would leave any surplus to himself; but he hoped, indeed he was told, that he would be favorably considered by those whose interest he was defending; and this last throw for fortune was now the subject of his dreary thoughts.

There was, too, another anxiety, and a nearer one, pressing on his heart. Kellett had a son, a fine, frank, open-hearted young fellow, who had grown up to manhood, little dreaming that he would ever be called on to labor for his own support. The idle lounging habits of a country life had indisposed him to all study, so that even his effort to enter college was met by a failure, and he was turned back on the very threshold of the university. Jack Kellett went home, vowing he'd never more trouble his head about Homer and Lucian, and he kept his word; he took to his gun and his pointers with renewed vigor, waiting until such time as he might obtain his gazette to a regiment on service. His father had succeeded in securing a promise of such an appointment, but, unhappily, the reply only arrived on the very week that Kellett's Court was sold, and an order for the Horse Guards to lodge the purchase-money of his commission came at the very hour when they were irretrievably ruined.

Jack disappeared the next morning, and the day following brought a letter, stating that he had enlisted in the "Rifles," and was off to the Crimea. Old Kellett concealed the sorrow that smote him for the loss of his boy, by affecting indignation at being thus deserted. So artfully did he dress up this self-deception, that Bella was left in doubt as to whether or not some terrible scene had not occurred between the father and son before he left the house. In a tone that she never ventured to dispute, he forbade her to allude to Jack before him, and thus did he treasure up this grief for himself alone and his own lonely hours, cheating his sorrow by the ingenious devices of that constraint he was thus obliged to practice on himself. Like a vast number of men with whom the world has gone hardly, he liked to brood over his misfortunes, and magnify them to himself. In this way he opened a little bank of compassion, that answered every draft he drew on it. Over and over to himself—like a miser reveling over his hoarded wealth—did he count all the hardships of his destiny. He loved thus to lug his misery in solitude, while he whispered to his heart, "You are a courageous fellow, Paul Kel-

lett; there are not many who could carry your cheerful face, or walk with a head as high as you do to-day. The man that owned Kellett's Court, and was one of the first in his county, living in a poor cottage, with sixty pounds a year!—that's the test of what stuff a man's made of. Show me another man in Ireland could do it! Show me one that could meet the world as uncomplainingly, and all the while never cease to be what he was born—a gentleman." This was the philosophy he practiced; this the lesson he taught; this the pæan he chanted in his own heart. The various extremities to which he might—being anything other than what he was—have been tempted, the excesses he might have fallen into, the low associates he might have kept, the base habits he might have contracted, all the possible and impossible contingencies that might have befallen him, and all his difficulties therein, formed a little fiction world that he gloried to lose himself in contemplating.

It is not often that selfishness can take a form so blameless; nor is it always that self-deception can be so harmless. In this indulgence we now leave him.

CHAPTER V.

THE WORLD'S CHANGES.

WHILE Mr. Davenport Dunn's residence was in Merrion square, his house of business was in Henrietta street, one of those roomy old mansions which, before the days of the Union, lodged the aristocracy of Ireland, but which have now fallen into utter neglect and decay. Far more spacious in extent, and more ornate in decoration than anything modern Dublin can boast, they remain, in their massive doors of dark mahogany, their richly stuccoed ceilings, and their handsome marble chimney-pieces, the last witnesses of a period when Dublin was a real metropolis.

From the spacious dinner-room below to the attics above, all this vast edifice was now converted into offices, and members of Mr. Dunn's staff were located even in the building at the rear, where the stables once had stood. Nothing can so briefly convey the varied occupations of his life, as a glance at some of the inscriptions which figured on the different doors: "Inland Navigation Office," "Grand Munster Junction Drainage," "Compressed Fuel Company," "Reclaimed Lands," "Encumbered Estates," "Coast

Fishery," "Copper and Cobalt Mining Association," "Refuge Harbor Company," "Slate and Marble Quarries," "Tyrawley and Erris Bank of Deposit," "Silver and Lead Mines." These were but a few of the innumerable "associations," "companies," and "industrial speculations" which denoted the cares and employments of that busy head. Indeed, the altered fortunes of that great mansion itself presented no bad type of the changed destinies of the land. Here, once, was the abode of only too splendid hospitality, of all that refined courtesy and polished manners could contribute to make society as fascinating as it was brilliant. Here were wit and beauty, and a high, chivalrous tone of manners, blended, it is true, with wildest extravagance and a general levity of thought, that imparted to intercourse the glowing tints of an orgy, and in their stead were now the active signs of industry, all the means by which wealth is amassed and great fortunes acquired; every resource of the country explored, every natural advantage consulted and developed—the mountains, the valleys, the rivers, the sea-coasts, the vast tracts of bog and moss, the various mines and quarries, the products once deemed valueless, the districts formerly abandoned as irreclaimable, all brought out into strong light, and all investigated in a spirit which hitherto had been unknown to Ireland. What a change was here, and what necessities must have been the fate of those who had so altered all their habits and modes of thought as to conform to a system so widely different from all they had hitherto followed. It was like re-colonizing an empire, so subversive were all the innovations of what had preceded them.

"Eh, Barton, we used to trip up these stairs more flippantly once on a time," said a very handsome old man, whose well-powdered hair and queue were rather novelties in modern appearance, to a feeble figure who, assisted by his servant, was slowly toiling his way upward.

"How d'ye do, Glengariff," said the other, with a weak smile. "So we used; and they were better days in every sense of the word."

"Not a doubt of it," said the other. "Is that your destination?" And he pointed to a door inscribed with the title "Encumbered Estates."

"Ay!" said Barton, sighing.

"It's mine, too, I'm sorry to say," cried Lord Glengariff; "as I suppose ere long it will be that of every country gentleman in the land!"

"We might have known it must come to this!" muttered the other, in a weak voice.

"I don't think so," broke in his lordship, quickly. "I see no occasion at all for what amounts to an act of confiscation; why not give us time to settle with our creditors? Why not leave us to deal with our encumbrances in our own way? The whole thing is a regular political swindle, Barton; they wanted a new gentry that could be more easily managed than the old fellows, who had no station, no rank, but right ready to buy both one and the other by supporting—"

"Can I be of any service to your lordship?" interrupted a very over-dressed and much-gold-chained man, of about forty, with a great development of chest, set off to advantage by a very pretentious waistcoat.

"Ah, Hanks! is Dunn come back yet?" asked Lord Glengariff.

"No, my lord; we expect him on Saturday. The telegraph is dated St. Cloud, where he is stopping with the emperor."

Glengariff gave Barton a slight pinch in the arm, and a look of intense meaning at the words.

"Nothing has been done in that matter of mine?" said Barton, feebly. "Jonas Barton is the name," added he, coloring at the necessity of announcing himself.

"Jonas Barton, of Curryglass House?"

"Yes, that's it."

"Sold yesterday under the court, sir—for, let me see—" And he opened a small memorandum book. "Griffith's valuation," muttered he between his teeth, "was rather better than the commissioner's—yes, sir, they got a bargain of that property yesterday: it went for twenty-two thousand six hundred—"

"Great God, sir! the whole estate?"

"The whole estate; there is a tithe-rent charge—"

"There, there, don't you see he does not hear you," said Lord Glengariff, angrily. "Have you no room where he can sit down for half an hour or so." And so saying, he assisted the servant to carry the now lifeless form into a small chamber beside them. The sick man rallied soon, and as quickly remembered where he was.

"This is bad news, Glengariff," said he, with a sickly effort at a smile. "Have you heard who was the buyer?"

"No, no; what does it matter? Take my arm and get out of this place. Where are you stopping in town? Can I set you down?" said the other, in hurry and confusion.

"I'm with my son-in-law at Ely place; he is to call for me here, so you can leave me, my dear friend, for I see you are impatient to get away."

Lord Glengariff pressed his hand cordially, and descended the stairs far more rapidly than he had mounted them.

"Lord Glengariff—one word, my lord," cried Mr. Hanks, hastening after him, and just catching him at the door.

"Not now, sir—not now," said Lord Glengariff.

"I beg a thousand pardons, my lord, but Mr. Dunn writes me peremptorily to say that it cannot be effected—"

"Not raise the money, did you say?" asked he, growing suddenly pale.

"Not in the manner he proposed, my lord. If you will allow me to explain—"

"Come over to my hotel. I am at Bilton's!" said Lord Glengariff. "Call on me there in an hour!" And so saying, he got into his carriage and drove off.

In the large drawing room of the hotel sat a lady working, and occasionally reading a book which lay open before her. She was tall and thin, finely featured, and though now entered upon that period of life when every line and every tint confess the ravage of time, was still handsome. This was Lady Augusta Arden, Lord Glengariff's only unmarried daughter, the very type of her father in temperament as well as appearance.

"By George! it is confiscation. It is the inauguration of that communism the French speak of," cried Lord Glengariff, as he entered the room. "There's poor Barton, of Curryglass, one of the oldest names in his county, sold out, and for nothing—absolutely nothing. No man shall persuade me that this is just or equitable; no man shall tell me that the legislature shall step in and decide at any moment how I am to deal with my creditors."

"I never heard of that Burton."

"I said Barton—not Burton; a man whose estate used to be called five thousand a year," said he, angrily. "There he is now, turned out on the world. I verily believe he hasn't a guinea left! And what is all this for? To raise up in the country a set of spurious gentry—fellows that were never heard of, whose names are only known over shopboards—as if the people should be better treated or more kindly dealt with by them than by us, their natural protectors! By George! if Ireland should swarm with Davenport Dunns, I'd call it a sorry exchange for the good blood she had lost in exterminating her old gentry."

"Has he come back?" asked Lady Augusta, as she bent her head more deeply over her work, and her cheeks grew a shade more red.

"No. He's dining with royalties, and driving about in princely carriages on the Continent. Seeing what the pleasures of his intimacy have cost us here at home, I'd say that these great personages ought to look sharp, or, by George! he'll sell them out as he has done us." He laughed a bitter laugh at his jest, but his daughter did not join in the emotion.

"I scarcely think it fair," said she, at length, "to connect Mr. Dunn with a legislation which he is only called upon to execute."

"With all my heart. Acquit him as much as you will, but, for my part, I feel very little tenderness for the hand that accomplishes the last functions of the law against me. These fellows have displayed a zeal and an alacrity in their work that shows how they relish the sport. After all," said he, after a pause, "this Dunn is neither better nor worse than the rest of them, and in one respect he has the advantage over them—he has not forgotten himself quite so much as the others. To be sure, we knew him in his very humblest fortunes, Augusta; he was meek enough then."

She stooped to pick up her work, which had fallen; and her neck and face were crimson as she resumed it.

"Wonderful little anticipation had he then of the man he was to become one of these days. Do you know, Augusta, that they say he is actually worth two millions?—two millions!"

She never spoke; and after an interval Lord Glengariff burst out into a strange laugh.

"You'd scarcely guess what I was laughing at, Augusta. I was just remembering the wretched hole he used to sleep in. It was a downright shame to put him there over the stable, but the cottage was under repair at the time, and there was no help for it. 'I can accommodate myself anywhere, my lord,' he said. Egad, he has contrived to fulfill the prediction in a very different sense. Just fancy—two millions sterling!"

It was precisely what Lady Augusta was doing at the moment, though, perhaps, not quite in the spirit his lordship suspected.

"Suppose even one half of it be true, with a million of money at command, what can't a man have nowadays?"

And so they both fell a-thinking of all that same great amount of riches could

buy—what of power, respect, rank, flattery, political influence, fine acquaintance, fine diamonds, and fine dinners.

“If he play his cards well, he might be a peer,” thought my lord.

“If he be as ambitious as he ought to be, he might aspire to a peer’s daughter,” was the lady’s reflection.

“He has failed in my negotiation, however,” said Lord Glengariff, peevishly; “at least, Hanks just told me that it can’t be done. I detest that fellow Hanks. It shows great want of tact in Dunn having such a man in his employment—a vulgar, self-sufficient, over-dressed fellow, who can’t help being familiar out of his own self-satisfaction. Now Dunn himself knows his place. Don’t you think so?”

She muttered something not very intelligible, but which sounded like concurrence.

“Yes,” he resumed, “Dunn does not forget himself—at least with *me*.” And to judge from the carriage of his head as he spoke, and the air with which he carried the pinch of snuff to his nose, he had not yet despaired of seeing the world come back to the traditions which once had made it worth living in.

“I am willing to give him every credit for his propriety of conduct, Augusta,” added he, in a still more lofty tone; “for we live in times when really wealth and worldly prosperity have more than their rightful supremacy, and such men as Dunn are made the marks of an adulation that is actually an outrage—an outrage upon *us*!”

And the last little monosyllable was uttered with an emphasis of intense significance.

Just as his lordship had rounded his peroration, the servant presented him with a small three-cornered note. He opened it, and read:

“MY LORD,—I think the bearer of this, T. Driscoll, might possibly do what you wish for; and I send him, since I am sure that a personal interview with your lordship would be more efficacious than any negotiation.

“By your lordship’s most obedient to command,
SIMPSON HANKES.”

“Is the person who brought this below?” asked Lord Glengariff.

“Yes, my lord; he is waiting for the answer.”

“Show him into my dressing-room.”

Mr. Terence Driscoll was accordingly introduced into that sanctum; and while he

employs his few spare moments in curious and critical examination of the various gold and silver objects which contribute to his lordship’s toilet, and wonderingly snuffs at essences and odors of whose existence he had never dreamed, let us take the opportunity of a little examination of himself. He was a short, fat old man, with a very round red face, whose jovial expression was rather heightened than marred by a tremendous squint: for the eyes kept in incessant play and movement, which intimated a restless drollery that his full, capacious mouth well responded to. In dress and general appearance, he belonged to the class of the comfortable farmer, and his massive silver watch-chain and huge seal displayed a consciousness of his well-to-do condition in life.

“Are you Mr. Driscoll?” said Lord Glengariff, as he looked at the letter to prompt him to the name. “Pray, take a seat!”

“Yes, my lord, I’m that poor creature Terry Driscoll: the neighbors call me Tearin’ Terry, but that’s all past and gone, heaven be praised! It was a fever I had, my lord, and my rayson wandered, and I did many a thing that destroyed me entirely; I tore up the lease of my house, I tore up Peter Driscoll’s, my uncle’s will; ay, and worse than all, I tore up all my front teeth!”

And, in evidence of this great feat of dentistry, Mr. Driscoll gave a grin that exposed his bare gums to view.

“Good heavens, how shocking!” exclaimed Lord Glengariff, though not impossibly the expression was extorted by the sight rather than the history of the calamity.

“Shockin’ indeed, my lord—that’s the name for it!” said Terry, sighing; “but ye see I wasn’t compos when I did it. I thought they were a set of blackguards that I couldn’t root out of the land—squatters that wouldn’t pay sixpence, nor do a day’s work. That was the delusion that was upon me!”

“I hold here a letter from Mr. Hanks,” said his lordship, pompously, and in a tone that was meant to recall Mr. Driscoll from the personal narrative he had entered upon with such evident self-satisfaction. “He mentions you as one likely—that is to say—one in a position—a person, in fact—”

“Yes, my lord, yes,” interrupted Terry, with a grin of unbounded acquiescence.

“And adds,” continued his lordship, “your desire to communicate personally with myself.” The words were very few and not very remarkable, and yet Lord

Glengariff contrived to throw into them an amount of significance really great. They seemed to say, "Bethink thee well, Terry Driscoll, of the good fortune that this day has befallen thee. Thy boldness has been crowned with success, and there thou sittest now, being the poor worm that thou art, in converse with one who wears a coronet."

And so, indeed, in all abject humility, did Mr. Driscoll appear to feel the situation. He drew his feet closer together, and stole his hands up the wide sleeves of his coat, as though endeavoring to diminish, as far as might be, his corporeal presence.

His lordship saw that enough had been done for subjection, and blandly added, "And I could have no objection to the interview; none whatever."

"It's too good you are, my lord, too good and too gracious, to the like of me," said Terry, barely raising his eyes to throw a glance of mingled shame and drollery on his lordship; "but I come by rayson of what Mr. Hunkes tould me, that it was a trifle of a loan—a small matter of money your lordship was wantin', just at this moment."

"I prefer doing these kind of things through my solicitors. I know nothing of business, sir—absolutely nothing," said his lordship, haughtily. "The present case, however, might form an exception. The sum I require is, as you justly remark, a mere trifle, and the occasion is not worthy of legal interference."

"Yes, my lord," chimed in Driscoll, who had a most provoking habit of employing the affirmative in all situations.

"I suppose he mentioned to you the amount?" asked his lordship, quickly.

"No, indeed, my lord; all he said was, 'Terry,' says he, 'go over to Bilton's Hotel with this note, and ask for Lord Glengariff. He wants a little ready cash,' says he, 'and I tould him you're a likely man to get it for him. It's too small a matter for us here,' says he, 'to be bothered about,'"

"He hadn't the insolence to make use of these words toward *me!*" said Lord Glengariff, growing almost purple with passion.

"Faix, I'm afeard he had, my lord," said Terry, looking down; "but I'm sure he never meant any harm in it; 'twas only as much as to say, 'There, Terry, there's something for *you*; you're a poor strugglin' man, and are well plazed to turn a penny in a small way. If you can accommodate my lord, there,' says he, 'he'll not forget it to you.'"

The conclusion of this speech was far

more satisfactory to his lordship than its commencement seemed to promise; and Lord Glengariff smiled half graciously as he said, "I'm not in the habit of neglecting those who serve me."

"Yes, my lord," said Driscoll again.

"I may safely say, that any influence I possess has always been exercised in favor of those who have been, so to say, supporters of my family."

Had his lordship uttered a sentiment of the most exalted and self-denying import, he could not have assumed a prouder air than when he had finished these words.

"And now, Mr. Driscoll, to business. I want five thousand pounds."

A long, low whistle from Terry, as he threw up both his hands in the air, abruptly stopped his lordship.

"What do you mean; does the sum appear so tremendous, sir?"

"Five thousand! Where would I get it? Five thousand pounds? By the mortal man! your lordship might as well ax me for five millions. I thought it was a hundred; or, maybe, a hundred and fifty; or, at the outside, two hundred pounds, just to take you over to London for what they call the sayson, or to cut a figure at Paris; but, five thousand! By my conscience, that's the price of an estate nowadays!"

"It is upon estated property I intend to raise this loan, sir," said his lordship angrily.

"Not Cushnacreeena, my lord?" asked Terry, eagerly.

"No, sir; that is secured by settlement."

"Nor Ballyrennin?"

"No; the townland of Ballyrennin is, in a manner, tied up."

"Tory's mill, maybe?" inquired Terry, with more eagerness.

"Well, sir," said his lordship, drawing himself up, "I must really make you my compliments upon the very accurate knowledge you appear to possess about my estate. Since what period, may I venture to ask, have you conceived this warm interest in my behalf?"

"The way of it was this, my lord," said Driscoll, drawing his chair closer, and dropping his voice to a low, confidential tone. "After I had the fever—the fever and ague I tould you about—I got up out of bed the poor crayture you see me, not able to think of anything, or do a hand's turn for myself, but just a burden on my friends or anybody that would keep me. Well, I tried all manner of ways to make myself useful, and I used to go errands here and



HE WAS SURE TO REMEMBER SOME TRAIT OF THEIR HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN LIFE ; HOW THIS ONE HAD COME UP BAREFOOTED TO DUBLIN FIFTY YEARS BEFORE ; HOW THAT, HE HAD HELD HORSES IN THE STREET FOR HIRE. (P. 363)

there over the country for any one that wanted to know what land was to be sold, where there was a lot of good sheep, that had a drove of bullocks or a fancy bull; and, just getting into the habit of it, I learned a trifle of what was doing in the three counties, so that the people call me 'Terry's Almanac'—that's the name they gave me, better than 'Tearin' Terry, anyhow! At all events, I got a taste for finding out the secrets of all the great families; and to be sure, if I only had the memory, I'd know a great deal, but my head is like a cullender, and everything runs out as fast as you put it in. 'That's how it is, my lord, and no lie in it.' And Terry wiped his forehead and heaved a heavy sigh, like a man who had just accomplished a very arduous task.

"So, then, I begin to understand how Hanks sent you over here to me," said his lordship.

"Yes, my lord," muttered Terry with a bow.

"I had been under the impression—the erroneous impression—that you were yourself prepared to advance this small sum."

"Me! Terry Driscoll lend five thousand pounds! Arrah, look at me, my lord—just take a glance at me, and you'll see how likely it is I'd have as many shillings! 'Twas only by rayson of being always about—on the tramp, as they call it—that Mr. Hanks thought I could be of use to your lordship. 'Go over,' says he, 'and just tell him who and what you are.' There it is now!"

Lord Glengariff made no reply, but slowly walked the room in deep meditation; a passing feeling of pity for the poor fellow before him had overcome any irritation his own disappointment had occasioned, and for the moment the bent of his mind was compassionate.

"Well, Driscoll," said he, at length, "I don't exactly see how you can serve me in this matter."

"Yes, my lord," said Terry, with a pleasant leer of his restless eyes.

"I say I don't perceive that you can contribute in any way to the object I have in view," said his lordship, half peevish at being, as he thought, misapprehended. "Hanks ought to have known as much himself."

"Yes, my lord," chimed in Terry.

"And you may tell him so from me. He is totally unfitted for his situation, and I am only surprised that Dunn, shrewd fellow that he is, should have ever placed a man of this stamp in a position of such trust. The first requisite in such a man is,

to understand the deference he owes to us."

There was an emphasis on the last monosyllable that pretty clearly announced how little share Terry Driscoll enjoyed in this copartnery.

"That because I have a momentary occasion for a small sum of ready money, he should send over to confer with me a half-witted—I mean a man only half recovered from a fever—a poor fellow still suffering from—"

"Yes, my lord," interposed Terry, as he laid his hand on his forehead in token of the seat of his calamity.

"It is too gross—it is outrageous—but Dunn shall hear of it—Dunn shall deal with this fellow when he comes back. I'm sorry for you, Driscoll—very sorry, indeed: it is a sad bereavement, and though you are not exactly a case for an asylum—perhaps, indeed, you might have objections to an asylum—"

"Yes, my lord."

"Well, in that case, private friends are. I opine—private friends—and the kind sympathies of those who have known you—eh, don't you think so?"

"Yes, my lord."

"That is the sensible view to take of it. I am glad you see it in this way. It shows that you really exercise a correct judgment—a very wise discretion in your case—and for a man in your situation—your painful situation—you see things in their true light."

"Yes, my lord." And this time the eyes rolled with a most peculiar expression.

"If you should relapse, however—if, say, former symptoms were to threaten again—remember that I am on the committee, or a governor, or something or other of one of these institutions, and I might be of use to you. Remember that, Driscoll." And with a wave of his hand his lordship dismissed Terry, who, after a series of respectful obeisances, gained the door and disappeared.

CHAPTER VI.

SYBELLA KELLETT.

WHEN change of fortune had reduced the Kellests so low that Sybella was driven to become a daily governess, her hard fate had exacted from her about the very heaviest of all sacrifices. It was not, indeed, the life of unceasing toil—dreary and mo-

notonous as such toil is,—it was not the humility of a station for which the world affords not one solitary protection,—these were not what she dreaded: as little was it the jarring sense of dependence daily and hourly imposed. No, she had courage and a high determination to confront each and all of these. The great source of her suffering was in the loss of that calm and unbroken quiet to which the retired habits of a remote country-house had so long accustomed her. With scarcely anything which could be called a society near them, so reduced in means as to be unable to receive visitors at home, Kellett's Court had been for many years a lonely house. The days succeeded each other with such similarity that time was unfelt, seasons came and went, and years rolled on unconsciously. No sights nor sounds of the great world without invaded these retired precincts. Of the mighty events which convulsed the politics of states—of the great issues that engaged men's minds throughout Europe—they heard absolutely nothing. The passing story of some little incident of cotier life represented to them all that they had of news; and thus time glided noiselessly along, till they came to feel a sense of happiness in that same unbroken round of life.

They who have experienced the measured tread of a conventual existence—where the same incidents daily recur at the same periods—where no events from without obtrude—where the passions and the ambitions and cares of mankind have so little of reality to the mind that they fail to impress with any meaning—are well aware that in the peaceful calm of spirit thus acquired there is a sense of happiness, which is not the less real that it wears the semblance of seriousness, almost of sadness.

In all that pertained to a somber monotony, Kellett's Court was a convent. The tall mountains to the back, the deep woods to the front, seemed barriers against the world without; and there was a silence and a stillness about the spot as though it were some lone island in a vast sea, where no voyagers ever touched, no traveler ever landed. This same isolation, strong in its own sense of security, was the charm of the place, investing it with a kind of romance, and imparting to Sybella's own life a something of storied interest. The very few books the house contained she had read and re-read till she knew them almost by heart. They were lives of voyagers—hardy men of enterprise and daring, who had pushed their fortunes in far-away lands

—or else sketches of life and adventure in distant countries.

The annals of these sea-rovers were full of all the fascination of which gorgeous scenery and stirring incident form the charm. There were lands such as no painter's genius ever fancied, verdure and flowers of more than fairy brilliancy, gold and gems of splendor that rivaled Aladdin's cave, strange customs and curious observances mingled with deeds of wildest daring, making up a succession of pictures wherein the mind alternated between the voluptuous repose of tropical enjoyment and the hair-breadth 'scapes of buccaneering existence. The great men whose genius planned, and whose courage achieved, these enterprises, formed for her a sort of hero worship. Their rough virtues—their splendid hospitality—their lion-hearted defiance of danger—were strong appeals to her sympathy, while in their devoted loyalty she found a species of chivalry that elevated them in her esteem. Woman-like, too, she inclined to make success the true test of greatness, and glorified to herself those bold spirits who never halted nor turned aside when on their road to victory. The splendid self-dependence of such men as Drake and Dampier struck her as the noblest attribute of mankind; that resolute trust in their own stout hearts imparted to them a degree of interest almost devotional; and over and over did she bethink her what a glorious destiny it would have been to have had a life associated and bound up with some such man as one of these. The very contest and controversy his actions would have evoked, heightened the illusion, and there savored of heroism in sharing a fame that flung down its proud defiance to the world.

Estrangement from the world often imparts to the stories of the past, or even to the characters of fiction, a degree of interest which, by those engaged in the actual work of life, is only accorded to their friends or relatives; and thus, to this young girl in her isolation, such names as Raleigh and Cavendish—such characters as Cromwell, Lorenzo de Medici, and Napoleon—stood forth before her in all the attributes of well-known individuals. To have so far soared above the ordinary accidents of life as to live in an atmosphere above all other men—to have seen the world and its ways from an eminence that gave wider scope to vision and more play to speculation—to have meditated over the destinies of mankind from the height of a station that gave control over their actions—seemed so glorious a privilege, that the

blemishes and even the crimes of men so gifted were merged in the greatness of the mighty task they had imposed upon themselves; and thus was it that she claimed for these an exemption from the judgments that had visited less distinguished wrong-doers most heavily. "How can I, or such as I am, pronounce upon one like this man?—what knowledge have I of the conflict waged within his deep intelligence?—how can I fathom the ocean of his thoughts, or even guess at the difficulties that have opposed, the doubts that have beset him? I can but vaguely fashion to myself the end and object of his journey; how then shall I criticise the road by which he travels, the halts he makes, the devious turnings and windings he seems to fall into?" In such plausibilities she merged every scruple as to those she had deified to her own mind. "Their ways are not our ways," said she; "their natures are as little our natures."

From all the dream-land of these speculations was she suddenly and rudely brought to face the battle of life itself, an humble soldier in the ranks. No longer to dwell in secret converse with the mighty spirits who had swayed their fellow-men, she was now to enter upon that path of daily drudgery whose direst infliction was the contact with that work-o'-day world wherewith she had few sympathies.

Mrs. Hawkshaw had read her advertisement in a morning paper, and sent for her to call upon her. Now Mrs. Hawkshaw was an alderman's lady, who lived in a fine house, and had fine clothes, and fine servants, and fine plate, and everything, in short, fine about her but a fine husband, for he was a rough, homespun, good-natured sort of man, who cared little for anything save a stocking factory he owned at Balbriggan, and the stormy incidents that usually shook the "livery" he belonged to.

There were six little Hawkshaws to be governed, and geographied, and catechised, and civilized in all the various forms by which untaught humanity is prepared for the future work of life; there were rudiments of variously-colored knowledge to be imparted, habits instilled, and tempers controlled, by one who, though she brought to her task the most sincere desire to succeed, was yet deep in a world of her own thoughts—far lost in the mazy intricacies of her own fancies. That poor Miss Kellett, therefore, should pass for a very simple-minded, good creature, quite unfit for her occupation, was natural enough; and that Mrs. Hawkshaw should "take her

into training" was almost an equally natural consequence.

"She seems to be always like one in a dream, my dear," said Mrs. Hawkshaw to her husband. "The children do exactly as they please; they play all false, and she never corrects them; they draw landscapes in their copy-books, and she says, 'Very nicely done, darlings.'"

"Her misfortunes are preying upon her, perhaps."

"Misfortunes! why, they have been in poverty this many a year. My brother Terry tells me that the Kelletts hadn't above two hundred a year, and that latterly they lost even this."

"Well, it is a come-down in the world, anyhow," said Hawkshaw, sighing, "and I must say she bears it well."

"If she only feels it as little as she appears to do everything else, the sacrifice doesn't cost her much," said the lady, tartly. "I told her she was to come here last Sunday and take charge of the children; she never came; and when I questioned her as to the reason, she only smiled and said, 'She never thought of it: in fact, she was too happy to be alone on that day to think of anything.' And here she comes now, nearly an hour late." And, as she spoke, a weary step ascended the steps to the door, and an uncertain, faltering hand raised the knocker.

"It is nigh eleven o'clock, Miss Kellett," said Mrs. Hawkshaw, as she met her on the stairs.

"Indeed—I am so sorry—I must have forgotten—I don't think I knew the hour," said the other, stammeringly.

"Your hour is ten, Miss Kellett."

"I think so."

"How is your father, Miss Kellett?" asked the alderman, abruptly, and not sorry to interpose at the juncture.

"He is well, sir, and seems very happy," said she, gratefully, while her eyes lighted up with pleasure.

"Give him my regards," said Hawkshaw, good-naturedly, and passed down the stairs; while his wife coldly added:

"The children are waiting for you," and disappeared.

With what determined energy did she address herself now to her task—how resolutely devote her whole mind to her duty. She read, and heard, and corrected, and amended with all the intense anxiety of one eager to discharge her trust honestly and well. She did her very utmost to bring her faculties to bear upon every detail of her task, and it was only when one of the girls asked who was he whose name

she had been writing over and over again in her copy-book, that she forgot her self-imposed restraint, and in a fervor of delight at the question, replied, "I'll tell you, Mary, who Savonarola was."

In all the vigor of true narrative power, the especial gift of those minds where the play of fancy is only the adornment of the reasoning faculty, she gave a rapid sketch of the prophet priest, his zeal, his courage, and his martyrdom; with that captivating fascination which is the first-born of true enthusiasm, she awakened their interest so deeply, that they listened to all she said as to a romance, whose hero had won their sympathies, and even dimly followed her, as she told them that such men as this stood out from time to time in the world's history like great beacons blazing on a rocky eminence, to guide and warn their fellow men. That, in their own age, characters of this stamp were either undervalued or actually depreciated and condemned, was but the common lot of humanity; their own great destinies raised them very often above the sympathies of ordinary life, and men caught eagerly at the blemishes of those so vastly greater than themselves—hence all the disesteem they met with from contemporaries.

"And are there none like this now, Miss Bella?" asked one of the girls; "or is it that in our country such are not to be met with?"

"They are of every land and of every age, ay, and of every station! Country, time, birth, have no prerogative. At one moment the great light of the earth has been the noblest born in his nation, at another a peasant—miles apart in all the accidents of fortune, brothers by the stamp which makes genius a tie of family. Tomorrow you shall hear of one, the noblest-hearted man in all England, and yet whose daily toil was the vulgar life of an excise-man. This great man's nature is known to us, teaching men a higher lesson than all that his genius has bequeathed us."

In the willingness with which they listened to her, Bella found fresh support for her enthusiasm. If, therefore, there was this solace to the irksome nature of her task, it rendered that task itself more and more wearisome and distasteful. Her round of duty led her among many who did not care for these things; some heard them with apathy, others with even mockery. How often does it happen in life that feelings, which if freely expanded had spread themselves broadly over the objects of the world, become by repression compressed into principles!

This was the case with her; the more opposition thwarted, the more resolutely was she bent on carrying out her notions. All her reading tended to this direction, all her speculation, all her thought.

"There must be men among us even now," said she, "to whom this great prerogative of guidance is given: superior minds who feel the greatness of their mission, and perhaps know how necessary it is to veil their very ascendancy, that they may exercise it more safely and more widely. What concession may they not be making to vulgar prejudice? what submission to this or that ordinance of society? how many a devious path must they tread to reach that goal that the world will not let them strive for more directly? and, worse than all, through what a sea of misrepresentation, and even calumny, must they wade? how must they endure the odious imputations of selfishness, of pride, of hard-heartedness, nay, perhaps, of even crime?—and all this, without the recognition of as much as one who knows their purpose and acknowledges their desert."

CHAPTER VII.

AN ARRIVAL AT MIDNIGHT.

NIGHT had just closed in over the lake of Como, and, if the character of the scene in daylight had been such as to suggest ideas of dramatic effect, still more was this the case as darkness wrapped the whole landscape, leaving the great Alps barely traceable against the starry sky, while faintly glimmering lights dotted the dark shores from villa and palace, and soft sounds of music floated lazily on the night air, only broken by the plashing stroke of some gondolier as he stole across the lake.

The Villa d'Este was a-glitter with light. The great saloon which opened on the water blazed with lamps; the terraces were illuminated with many-colored lanterns; solitary candles glimmered from the windows of many a lonely chamber; and even through the dark copses and leafy parterres some lamp twinkled, to show the path to those who preferred the scented night air to the crowded and brilliant assemblage within doors. The votaries of hydro-pathy are rarely victims of grave malady. They are generally either the exhausted sons and daughters of fashionable dissipation, the worn-out denizens of great cities, or the tired slaves of exciting professions—the men of politics, of literature, or of

law. To such as these, a life of easy indolence, the absence of all constraint, the freedom which comes of mixing with a society where not one face is known to them, are the chief charms, and, with that, the privilege of condescending to amusements and intimacies of which, in their more regular course of life, they had not even stooped to partake. To English people this latter element was no inconsiderable feature of pleasure. Strictly defined as all the ranks of society are in their own country—marshaled in classes so rigidly that none may move out of the place to which birth has assigned him—they feel a certain expansion in this novel liberty, perhaps the one sole new sensation of which their natures are susceptible. It was in the enjoyment of this freedom that a considerable party were now assembled in the great saloons of the villa. There were Russians and Austrians of high rank, conspicuous for their quiet and stately courtesy; a noisy Frenchman or two; a few pale, thoughtful-looking Italians, men whose noble foreheads seem to promise so much, but whose actual lives appear to evidence so little; a crowd of Americans, as distinctive and as marked as though theirs had been a nationality stamped with centuries of transmission; and, lastly, there were the English, already presented to our reader in an early chapter—Lady Lackington and her friend Lady Grace—having, in a caprice of a moment, descended to see “what the whole thing was like.”

“No presentations, my lord, none whatever,” said Lady Lackington, as she arranged the folds of her dress, on assuming a very distinguished position in the room. “We have only come for a few minutes, and don’t mean to make acquaintances.”

“Who is the little pale woman, with the turquoise ornaments?” asked Lady Grace.

“The Princess Labanoff,” said his lordship, blandly bowing.

“Not she who was suspected of having poisoned—”

“The same.”

“I should like to know her. And the man—who is that tall, dark man, with the high forehead?”

“Glumthal, the great Frankfort millionaire.”

“Oh, present him, by all means. Let us have him here,” said Lady Lackington, eagerly. “What does that little man mean by smirking in that fashion—who is he?” asked she, as Mr. O’Reilly passed and repassed before her, making some horrible grimaces, that he intended to have represented as fascinations.

“On no account, my lord,” said Lady Lackington, as though replying to a look of entreaty from his lordship.

“But you’d really be amused,” said he, smiling. “It is about the best bit of low comedy—”

“I detest low comedy.”

“The father of your fair friends, is it not?” asked Lady Grace, languidly.

“Yes. Twining admires them vastly,” said his lordship, half maliciously. “If I might venture—”

“Oh dear no; not to *me*,” said Lady Grace, shuddering. “I have little tolerance for what are called characters. You may present your Hebrew friend, if you like.”

“He’s going to dance with the princess; and there goes Twining, with one of my beauties, I declare,” said Lord Lackington. “I say, Spicer, what is that dark lot, near the door.”

“American trotters, my lord; just come over.”

“You know them, don’t you?”

“I met them yesterday at dinner, and shall be delighted to introduce your lordship. Indeed, they asked me if you were not the lord that was so intimate with the Prince of Wales.”

“How stupid! They might have known, even without the aid of a peerage, that I was a schoolboy when the prince was a grown man. The tall girl is good-looking—what’s her name?”

“She’s the daughter of the Honorable Leonidas Shinbone, that’s all I know—rather a belle at Saratoga, I fancy.”

“Very dreadful!” sighed Lady Grace, fanning herself; “they do make such a mess of what might be very pretty toilet. You couldn’t tell her, perhaps, that her front hair is dressed for the back of her head.”

“No, sir; I never play at cards,” said Lord Lackington, stiffly, as an American gentleman offered him a pack to draw from.

“Only a little bluff or a small party of poker,” said the stranger, “for quarter dollars, or milder if you like it.”

A cold bow of refusal was the reply.

“I told you he was the lord,” said a friend in a drawling accent. “He looks as if he’d mow us all down like grass.”

Doctor Lanfranchi, the director of the establishment, here interposed, and, by a few words, induced the Americans to retire and leave the others unmolested.

“Thank you, doctor,” said Lady Lackington, in acknowledgment; “your tact is always considerate—always prompt.”

"These things never happen in the season, my lady," said he, with a very slight foreign accentuation of the words. "It is only at times like this that people—very excellent and amiable people, doubtless—"

"Oh, to be sure they are," interrupted she, impatiently; "but let us speak of something else. Is that your clairvoyant princess yonder?"

"Yes, my lady; she has just revealed to us what was doing at the Crimea. She says that two of the English advanced batteries have slackened their fire for want of ammunition, and that a deserter was telling Todleben of the reason at the moment. She is *en rapport* with her sister, who is now at Sebastopol."

"And are we to be supposed to credit this?" asked my lord.

"I can only aver that I believe it, my lord," said Lanfranchi, whose massive head and intensely acute features denoted very little intellectual weakness.

"I wish you'd ask her why are we lingering so long in this dreary place?" sighed Lady Lackington, peevishly.

"She answered that question yesterday, my lady," replied he, quietly.

"How was that? Who asked her? What did she say?"

"It was the Baron von Glumthal asked: and her answer was, 'Expecting a disappointment.'"

"Very gratifying intelligence, I must say. Did you hear that, my lord?"

"Yes, I heard it, and I have placed it in my mind in the same category as her Crimean news."

"Can she inform us when we are to get away?" asked her ladyship.

"She mentioned to-morrow evening as the time, my lady," said the doctor, calmly.

A faint laugh of derisive meaning was Lady Lackington's only reply; and the doctor gravely remarked, "There is more in these things than we like to credit; perhaps our very sense of inferiority in presence of such prediction is a bar to our belief. We do not willingly lend ourselves to a theory which at once excludes us from the elect of prophecy."

"Could she tell us who'll win the Derby?" said Spicer, joining the colloquy. But a glance from her ladyship at once recalled him from the indiscreet familiarity.

"Do you think she could pronounce whose is the arrival that makes such a clatter outside?" said Lord Lackington, as a tremendous chorus of whip-cracking announced the advent of something very im-

portant; and the doctor hurried off to receive the visitor. Already a large traveling carriage, drawn by eight horses, and followed by a "fourgon" with four, had drawn up before the great entrance, and a courier, gold-banded and whiskered, and carrying a most imposingly swollen money-bag, was ringing stoutly for admittance. When Doctor Lanfranchi had exchanged a few words with the courier, he approached the window of the carriage, and bowing courteously, proceeded to welcome the traveler.

"Your apartments have been ready since the sixteenth, sir; and we hoped each day to have seen you arrive."

"Have your visitors all gone?" asked the stranger, in a low quiet tone.

"No, sir; the fine weather has induced many to prolong their stay. We have the Princess Labanoff, Lord Lackington, the Countess Grembinski, the Duke of Terra di Monte, the Lady Grace——"

The traveler, however, paid little attention to the catalogue, but with the aid of the courier on one side and his valet on the other, slowly descended from the carriage. If he availed himself of their assistance, there was little in his appearance that seemed to warrant its necessity. He was a large, powerfully-built man, something beyond the prime of life, but whose build announced considerable vigor. Slightly stooped in the shoulders, the defect seemed to add to the fixity of his look, for the head was thus thrown more forward, and the expression of the deep-set eyes, overshadowed by shaggy gray eyebrows, rendered more piercing and direct. His features were massive and regular—their character that of solemnity and gravity; and as he removed his cap, he displayed a high, bold forehead, with what phrenologists would have called an extravagant development of the organs of locality. Indeed, these overhanging masses almost imparted an air of retreating to a head that was singularly straight.

"A number of letters have arrived for you, and you will find them in your room, sir," continued Lanfranchi, as he escorted him toward the stairs. A quiet bow acknowledged this speech, and the doctor went on: "I was charged with a message from Lord Lackington, too, who desired me to say, 'That he hoped to see you as soon as possible after your arrival.' May I inform him when you could receive him?"

"Not to-night; some time to-morrow about twelve o'clock, or half-past, if that will suit him," said the stranger, coldly.

“Is Baron Glumthal here? Well, tell him to come up to me, and let them send me some tea.”

“May I mention your arrival to his lordship, for I know his great anxiety?”

“Just as you please,” said the other, in the same quiet tone; while he bowed in a fashion to dismiss his visitor.

Having glanced casually at the addresses of a number of letters, he only opened one or two, and looked cursorily over their contents, and then opening a window which looked over the lake, he placed a chair on the balcony and sat down, as if to rest and reflect in the fresh and still night air. It was a calm and quiet atmosphere—not a leaf stirred, not a ripple moved the glassy surface of the lake—so that as he sat he could overhear Doctor Lanfranchi’s voice beneath announcing his arrival to Lord Lackington.

“If he can receive Glumthal, why can’t he see *me*?” asked the viscount, testily. “You must go back and tell him that I desire particularly to meet him this evening.”

“If you wish, my lord—”

“I do, sir,” repeated he, more peremptorily. “Lady Lackington and myself have been sojourning here the last three weeks awaiting his arrival, and I am at a loss to see why our patience is to be pushed further. Pray take him my message, therefore.”

The doctor, without speaking, left the room at once.

Lanfranchi was some minutes in the apartment before he discovered where the stranger was sitting, and then approaching him softly he communicated his lordship’s request.

“I am afraid you must allow me to take my own way. I have contracted an unfortunate habit in that respect,” said the stranger, with a quiet smile. “Give my compliments to his lordship, and say, that at twelve to-morrow I am at his orders; and tell Baron Glumthal that I expect him now.”

Lanfranchi withdrew; and having whispered the message to the baron, proceeded to make his communication to the viscount.

“Very well, sir,” said Lord Lackington, haughtily interrupting; “something like an apology. Men of this sort have a business-like standard even for their politeness, and there is no necessity for me to teach them something better;” and then, turning to Twining, he added, “That was Dunn’s arrival we heard a while ago.”

“Oh, indeed! Very glad—quite re-

joiced on your account more than my own. Dunn—Dunn; remarkable man—very,” said Twining, hurriedly.

“Thank heaven! we may be able to get away from this place to-morrow or next day,” said Lord Lackington, sighing drearily.

“Yes, of course; very slow for your lordship—no society—nothing to do.”

“And the weather beginning to break!” said Lord Lackington, peevishly.

“Just so, as your lordship most justly observes—the weather beginning to break.”

“Look at that troop of horses,” said the viscount, as the postilions passed beneath the window in a long file with the cattle just released from the traveling carriages. “There goes ten—no, but twelve posters. He travels right royally—doesn’t he?”

“Very handsomely, indeed; quite a pleasure to see it,” said Twining, gleefully.

“These fellows have little tact, with all their worldly shrewdness, or they’d not make such ostentatious display of their wealth.”

“Quite true, my lord. It is indiscreet of them.”

“It is so like saying, ‘This is *our* day!’” said the viscount.

“So it is, my lord; and a very pleasant day they have of it, I must say; clever men—shrewd men—know the world thoroughly.”

“I’m not so very sure of that, Twining,” said his lordship, smiling half superciliously. “If they really had all the worldly knowledge you attribute to them, they’d scarcely venture to shock the feelings of society by assumptions of this sort. They would have more patience, Twining, more patience.”

“So they would, my lord. Capital thing—excellent thing, patience; always rewarded in the end—great fun.” And he rubbed his hands and laughed away pleasantly.

“And they’ll defeat themselves, that’s what will come of it, sir,” said Lord Lackington, not heeding the other’s remark.

“I quite agree with your lordship,” chimed in Twining.

“And shall I tell you why they’ll defeat themselves, sir?”

“Like it of all things; take it as a great favor on your lordship’s part.”

“For this reason, Twining, that they have no ‘prestige’—no, Twining, they have no prestige. Now, sir, wealth unassociated with prestige is just like—what shall I say?—it is, as it were, a sort of local rank—a kind of thing like being brigadier in the Bombay Army, but only a lieutenant when you’re at home; so long,

therefore, as these fellows are rich, they have their influence. Let them suffer a reverse of fortune, however, and where will they be, sir?"

"Can't possibly say; but quite certain your lordship knows—perfectly sure of it," rattled out Twining.

"I do, sir. It is a subject on which I have bestowed considerable thought. I may go further and say, one which I have reduced to a sort of theory. These men are signs of the times,—emblems of our era; just like the cholera, the electric telegraph, or the gold fields of Australia. We must not accept them as normal, do you perceive; they are the abnormal incidents of our age."

"Quite true; most just; very like the electric telegraph!" muttered Twining.

"And by that very condition, only exercising a passing influence on our society, sir," said his lordship, pursuing his own train of thought.

"Perfectly correct; rapid as lightning."

"And when they do pass away, sir," continued the viscount, "they leave no trace of their existence behind them. The bubble burst, the surface of the stream remains without a ripple. I myself may live to see—you in all probability will live to see."

"Your lordship far more likely—sincerely trust as much," said Twining, bowing.

"Well, sir, it matters little which of us is to witness the extinction of this plutocracy." And as his lordship enunciated this last word, he walked off like one who had totally exhausted his subject.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. DUNN.

MR. DAVENPORT DUNN sat at breakfast in his spacious chamber overlooking the Lake of Como. In addition to the material appliances of that meal, the table was covered with newly-arrived letters, and newspapers, maps, surveys, railroad, sections, and parliamentary blue-books littered about, along with chalk drawings, oil miniatures, some carvings in box and ivory, and a few bronzes of rare beauty and design. Occasionally skimming over the newspapers—now sipping his tea—now examining some object of art through a magnifier—he dallied over his meal like one who felt the time thus passed a respite from the task of the day. At last he walked out, and, leaning over the balcony, gazed at the glorious landscape at his feet.

It was early morning, and the great masses of misty clouds were slowly beginning to move up the Alps, disclosing as they went spots of bright green verdure, dark-sided ravines and cataracts, amid patches of pine forest, or dreary tracts of snow still lying deep in the mountain clefts. Beautiful as was the picture of the lake itself, and the wooded promontories along it, his eyes never turned from the rugged grandeur of the Alpine range, which he continued to gaze at for a long time. So absorbed was he in his contemplation, that he never noticed the approach of another, and Baron Glumthal was already leaning over the balustrade beside him ere he had perceived him.

"Well, is it more assuring now that you have looked at it?" asked the German, in English, of which there was the very slightest trace of a foreign accent.

"I see nothing to deter one from the project," said Dunn, slowly. "These questions resolve themselves purely into two conditions—time and money. The Grand Army was only a corporal's guard, multiplied by hundreds of thousands."

"But the difficulties—"

"Difficulties!" broke in Dunn; "thank Heaven for them, baron, or you and I would be no better off in this world than the herd about us. Strong heads and stont hearts are the breaching artillery of mankind—you can find rank and file any day."

"When I said difficulties, I might have used a stronger word."

"And yet," said Dunn, smiling, "I'd rather contract to turn the Alps yonder, than to drive a new idea into the heads of a people. See here, now," said he, entering the room, and returning with a large plan in his hand, "this is Chiavenna. Well, the levels show that a line drawn from this spot comes out below Andeer, at a place called Mühlen—the distance something less than twenty-two miles. By Brumall's contract, you will perceive that if he don't meet with water—"

"But in that lies the whole question," broke in the other.

"I know it, and I am not going to blink it. I mean to take the alternatives in turn."

"Shall I spare you a deal of trouble, Dunn?" said the German, laying his hand on his arm. "Our house has decided against the enterprise. I have no need to explain the reasons."

"And can you be swayed by such counsels?" cried Dunn, eagerly. "Is it possible that you will suffer yourselves to be made the dupes of a Russian intrigue?"

“Say, rather, the agents of a great policy,” said Glumthal, “and you will be nearer the mark. My dear friend,” added he, in a lower and more confidential tone, “have I to tell *you* that *your* whole late policy in England is a mistake—your Crimean war a mistake—your French alliance a mistake—and your present attempt at a reconciliation with Austria the greatest mistake of all?”

“You would find it a hard task to make the nation believe this,” said Dunn, smiling.

“So I might; but not to convince your statesmen of it. They see it already. They perceive even now some of the perils of the course they have adopted.”

“The old story. I have heard it at least a hundred times,” broke in Dunn. “We have been overturning the breakwaters that the ocean may swamp us. But I tell *you*, baron, that the more democratic we grow in England, the safer we become. We don’t want these alliances we fancied ourselves once in need of. That family compact redounded but little to our advantage.”

“So it might. But there is another compact now forming, which bodes even less favorably to you. The Church, by her concordat, is replacing the old Holy Alliance. You’ll need the aid of the only power that cannot be drawn into this league—I mean the only great power—Russia.”

“If you will wait till we are so minded, baron,” said Dunn, laughing, “you have plenty of time to help me with my tunnel here.” And he pointed to his plans.

“And where will the world be—I mean your world and mine—before the pick of the workman reaches so far?”—and he placed his finger on the Splügen Alps—“answer me that. What will be the government of France—I don’t ask who? Where will Naples be? What king will be convoking the Hungarian Diet? Who will be the Russian viceroy on the Danube?”

“Far more to the purpose were it if I could tell you how would the Three per Cents. stand,” broke in Dunn.

“I’m coming to that,” said the other, dryly. “No, no,” said he, after a pause; “let us see this unhappy war finished—let us wait till we know who are to be partners in the great game of European politics. Lanfranchi tells me that the French and Russians who meet here come together on the best of terms; that intimacies, and even friendships, spring up rapidly between them. This fact, if repeated in Downing

street, might be heard with some misgiving.”

Though Dunn affected indifference to this remark, he winced, and walked to the window to hide his irritation.

Immediately beneath where he stood, a trellised vine-walk led down to the lake, where the boats were usually in waiting; and from this alley now a number of voices could be heard, although the speakers were entirely hidden by the foliage. The gay and laughing tones indicated a pleasure-party; and such it was, bent on a picnic to Bellaggio. Some were loud in praises of the morning, and the splendid promise of the day; others discussed how many boats they should want, and how the party was to be divided.

“The Americans with the Russians,” said Twining, slapping his legs and laughing; “great friends—capital allies—what fun! Ourselves and the O’Reillys.—Spicer, look out, and see if they are coming.”

“And do you mean to say you’ll not come?” whispered a very soft voice, after the crowd had passed on.

“Charmante Molly!” said Lord Lackington, in his most dulcet of accents, “I am quite heart-broken at the disappointment; but when I tell you that this man has come some hundreds of miles to meet me here—that the matter is one of deepest importance—”

“And who is he? Could you make him come too?”

“Impossible, *ma belle*. He is quite unsuited to this kind of thing—a mere creature of parchments. The very sight of him would only suggest thoughts of foreclosing mortgages and renewal fines.”

“How I hate him!”

“Do, dearest—hate him to your heart’s content—and for nothing more than the happiness of which he robs me.”

“Well, I’m sure, I did think—” And she stopped and seemed confused.

“And what, pray, was it that you did think?” said his lordship, most winningly.

“I thought two things, then, if you must know,” said she, archly. “First, that a great personage like your lordship would make a very small one like this Mr. Dunn understand it was his duty to await your convenience; and my second thought was—But perhaps you don’t care to hear it?”

“Of all things. Pray go on.”

“Well, then, my second was, that if I asked you to come, you’d not refuse me.”

“What an inexorable charmer it is!” cried he, in stage fashion. “Do you fancy you could ever forgive yourself if, yielding

to this temptation, I were really to miss this man?"

"You told me yourself, only yesterday," said she, "*ce que femme veut*—Besides, you'll have him all day to-morrow, and the next, and—"

"Well, so be it. See how I hug my chains," said he, drawing her arm within his, and moving on toward the boat.

"Were you to be of that party, baron?" asked Dunn, pointing to the crowd beside the lake.

"So I was. The princess engaged me last night; they are going to the Pliniana and Bellaggio. Why not join us?"

"Oh, I have a score of letters to write, and double as many to read. In fact, I have kept all my work for a quiet day in this nice tranquil spot. I wish I could take a week here."

"And why not do it? Haven't you yet learned that it is the world's duty to wait on *us*? For my own part, I have always found that one emerges from these secluded places with renewed energy and awakened vigor. I heard Staddon once say that when anything puzzled him, he went to pass a day at Maria Zell, and he never came away without hitting on the solution. They are beckoning to me, so good-by!"

"Anything puzzled him!" muttered Dunn, repeating the words of the other's story. "If he but knew that what puzzles *me* at this moment is myself!"

The very nature of the correspondence that then littered his table might well warrant what he felt. Who, and what was he, to whom great ministers wrote confidentially, and secretaries of state began, "My dear Dunn?" How had he risen to this eminence? What were the gifts by which he held, and was to maintain it? Most men who have attained to high station from small beginnings, have so conformed to the exigencies of each new change in life as to carry but little of what they started with to their position of eminence; gradually assimilating to the circumstances around them as they went, they flung the past behind them, only occupied with those qualities which should fit them for the future. Not so Davenport Dunn; he was ever present to his own eyes as the son of the very humblest parentage—the poor boy educated by charity, struggling drearily through years of poverty—the youth discouraged and slighted—the man repulsed and rejected. Certain incidents of his life never left him; there they were, as if photographed on his heart; and at will he could behold himself, as he was turned away ignominiously from Kellett's

house; or a morning scarce less sad, as he learned his rejection for the sizarship; or the day still more bitter that Lord Glenariff put him out of doors, with words of insult and shame. Like avenging spirits, these memories traveled with him wherever he journeyed. They sat beside him as he dined at great men's tables; they loitered with him in his lonely walks, and whispered into his ear in the dark hours of the night. No high-hearted hope, no elevating self-reliance, had sustained him through these youthful reverses; each new failure, on the contrary, seemed to have impressed him more and more strongly with the conviction that the gifts which win success in life had not been vouchsafed him; that his abilities were of that humble order which never elevate their possessor above mere mediocrity; that if he meant to strive for the great prizes of life, it must be less by addressing himself to great intellectual efforts than by a patient study of men themselves—of their frailties, their weaknesses, and their follies. Whatever he had seen of the world had shown him how invariably the greatest minds were alloyed with some deteriorating influence, and that passions of one kind or other, ambitions more or less worthy, even the subtlety of flattery, swayed those whose intellects soared loftily among their fellows. "I cannot share in the tilt with these," said he. "Mine are no gifts of eloquence or imaginative power; I am not versed in the mysteries of science, nor deep-read in the intricacies of law. Let me, however, see if I cannot, by dexterity, accomplish what is denied to my strength. Every man, whatever his station, covets wealth. The noblest and the meanest, the man dignified by exalted aspirations, the true creature of selfish enjoyments, are all alike enlisted in the pursuit. Let me consider how this common tendency may be best turned to account. To enrich others, it is not necessary that I should be wealthy myself. The geographer may safely dictate the route by which the explorer is to journey through a desert he has never traveled himself. The great problems of finance can be worked by suggestions in a garret, though their application may demand millions." Starting thus from an humble attorney in a country town, he gradually grew to be known as a most capable adviser in all monetary matters: rich men consulted him about profitable investments and safe employment of their capital; embarrassed men confided to him their difficulties, and sought his aid to meet them; speculators asked his advice as to this or that venture;

and even those who gambled on the eventful fortunes of a ministry were fain to be guided by his wise predictions. "Dunn has got me the money on reasonable terms"—"Dunn has managed to let me have five per cent."—"Dunn assures me I may risk this"—"Dunn tells me that they'll carry the bill next session,"—such and such things were the phrases one heard at every turn, till his opinion became a power in the land, and he grew to feel it so.

This first step led to another and higher one. Through the moneyed circumstances of men he came to learn their moral natures: against what temptations this one was proof; to what that other would yield; what were the goals for which each were striving; what the secret doubts and misgivings that beset them. What the doctor was to the world of sickness and infirmity did he become to the world of human passion and desire. Men came to him with the same unreserve—they stripped before him and laid bare the foul spots of their heart's disease, as though it were but repeating the story to themselves. Terrible and harrowing as are the tales which reach the physician's ears, the stories revealed to his were more terrible and harrowing still. They came to him with narratives of reckless waste and ruin; with histories of debt that dated a century back; with worse, far worse—with tales of forgery and fraud. Crimes for which the law would have exacted its last expiation were whispered to him in that dreary confessional—his private office—and the evidences of guilt placed in his hands that he might read and reflect over them. And as the doctor moves through life with the sad knowledge of all the secret suffering around him—how little that "flush" indicates of health, how faintly beats the heart that seems to swell with happiness—so did this man walk a world that was a mere hospital ward of moral rottenness. Why should the priest and the physician be the only men to trade upon the infirmities of human nature? Why should they be the sole depositaries of those mysteries by which men's actions can be swayed and molded? By what temptations are men so assailable as those that touch their material fortunes, and why not make this moral country an especial study? Such were his theory and his practice.

There is often a remarkable fitness—may we call it a "pre-established harmony?"—between men and the circumstances of their age, and this has led to the opinion that it is by the events themselves the agents are developed; we incline to think

differently, as the appearance of both together is rather in obedience to some overruling edict of Providence which has alike provided the work and the workmen. It would be a shallow reading of history to imagine Cromwell the child of the Revolution, or Napoleon as the accident of the battle of the sections.

Davenport Dunn sprang into eminence when, by the action of the Encumbered Estates Court, a great change was operated in the condition of Ireland. To grasp at once the immense consequences of a tremendous social revolution—to foresee even some of the results of this sweeping confiscation—required no common knowledge of the country, and no small insight into its habits. The old feudalism that had linked the fate of a starving people with the fortunes of a ruined gentry was to be extinguished at once, and a great experiment tried. Was Ireland to be more governable in prosperity than in adversity? This was a problem which really might not seem to challenge much doubt, and yet was it by no means devoid of difficulty to those minds who had long based their ideas of ruling that land on the principles of fomenting its dissensions and separating its people. Davenport Dunn saw the hesitation of the moment, and offered himself at once to solve the difficulty. The transfer of property might be conducted in such a way as to favor the views of a particular party in the state: the new proprietary might be selected, and the aim of a government consulted in the establishment of this new squirearchy. He thought so at least, and what is more, he persuaded a chief secretary to believe him.

Nothing reads more simply than the sale of an encumbered estate: "In the matter of Sir Roger O'Moore, Bart., Brian O'Moore, and Margaret Halliday, owners, and Paul Maybey, petitioner, the commissioners will, on Friday next, at the hour of noon,"—and so on; and then come the descriptive particulars of Carriekross, Dummaymagan, and Lantygoree, with Griffith's valuation and the ordnance survey, concluding with a recital of all the penalties, reservations, covenants, clauses, etc., with the modest mention of twenty odd pounds some shillings tithe-rent charge, for a finish. To dispossess of this a man that never really owned it for the last forty years, and invest it in another, who never saw it, was the easy operation of the auctioneer's hammer, and with a chief commissioner to ratify the sale, few things seemed easier than the whole

process. Still there are certain aspects in the transaction which suggest reflection. What were the ties, what the relations, between the original owner and the tenantry who held under him? What kind of social system had bound them—what were the mutual services they rendered each other? For the reverence and respect tendered on one side, and for the thousand little charities and kindnesses bestowed on the other, what was to be the compensation? How was that guidance and direction, more or less inherent in those who are the heads of a neighborhood, to be replaced? Was it quite certain that the incoming proprietor would care to study the habits, the tastes, and the tempers of the peasantry on his estate, learn their ways, or understand their difficulties? And, lastly, what new political complexion would the country wear? Would it become more Conservative or more Whig, more Democratic or more Saxon?

Davenport Dunn's opinion was, that the case was precisely that of a new colony, where the first settlers, too busy about their material interests to care for mere speculative questions, would attach themselves heartily to any existing government, giving their adhesion to whatever afforded protection to their property and safety to their lives. "Take this new colony," said he, "into your especial care, and their sons and grandsons will be yours afterward. A new regiment is being raised—write your own legends on their colors, and they are your own." He sketched out a system by which this new squirearchy was to be dealt with—how courted, flattered, and rewarded. He showed how, in attaching them to the state, the government of the country might be rendered more easy, and the dreaded influence of the priest be antagonized most effectually; and, finally, demonstrated that Ireland, which had been the stereotyped difficulty of every administration, might now be turned into a stronghold against opposition.

To replace the great proprietary whose estates were now in the market by a new constituency in accordance with his views, was therefore his general scheme, and he addressed himself to this task with all his peculiar energy. He organized the registry of all the enumbered estates of Ireland, with every detail which could illustrate the various advantages; he established an immense correspondence with English capitalists eager for new investments; he possessed himself of intimate knowledge of all the variations and fluctu-

ations which attend the money market at certain periods, so that he knew the most favorable moments to suggest speculation; and, lastly, he had craft enough to carry his system into operation without any suspicion being attached to it; and was able to say to a viceroy, "Look and judge for yourself, my lord, whose influence is now paramount in Ireland."

Truly, it was not easy for a government to ignore him—his name turned up at every moment. From the stirring incident of a great county election to the small contest for a poor-law guardianship, he figured everywhere, until every question of policy became coupled with the inevitable demand, "What does Dunn think of it?"

Like all men of strong ambition, he encouraged few or no intimacies; he had actually no friendships. He wanted no counsels—nor would he have stooped to have laid a case for advice before any one. Partly in consequence of this he was spoken of generally in terms of depreciation and discredit. Some called him lucky—a happy phrase that adapts itself to any fancy; some said he was a common-place, vulgar fellow, with certain business aptitudes, but quite incapable of any wide or extended views; some again went further, and said he was the mere tool of certain clever heads that did not care to figure in the foreground; and not a few wondered that "a man of this kind" should have ever attained to any eminence or station in the land.

"You'll see how his excellency will turn him to account; he knows how to deal with fellows of this stamp," said a private secretary in the Castle.

"I have no doubt, sir, Mr. Davenport Dunn would agree with you," said the attorney-general, with a sneer; "but the opinion would be bad in law!"

"He's not very much of a churchman, I suspect," whispered a bishop; "but we find him occasionally useful."

"He serves *our* purpose!" pompously spoke a country gentleman, who really, in the sentiment, represented a class.

Such was the man who now sat alone, communing with himself, in his room at the Villa d'Este. Let us believe that he had enough to think of.

CHAPTER IX.

A DAY ON THE LAKE OF COMO.

WE fully sympathize with Lord Laekington, who preferred the picnic and the

society of Miss Molly O'Reilly to the cares of business and an interview with Davenport Dunn. The lake of Como, on a fine day of summer or early autumn, and with a heart moderately free from the anxieties and sorrows of life, is a very enjoyable locality, and essentially so to a man of the world like the noble viscount, who liked to have the more romantic features of the scene blended with associations of ease and pleasure, and be able to turn from the contemplation of Alpine ruggedness to the sight of some terraced garden, glowing in the luxuriance of its vegetation. Never, perhaps, was there ever a spot so calculated to appeal successfully to the feelings of men of his stamp. There was mountain grandeur and desolation—snow-peak and precipice; but all in the back distance, not near enough to suggest even the fear of cold, or the disagreeable idea of a sledge journey. There were innumerable villas of every style and class: some, spacious and splendid enough for royal residences; others, coquettish little chalets, where lovers might pass the honeymoon. There were tasteful pavilions over the very lake—snug spots where solitude might love to ponder, a student read, or an idler enjoy his cigar, in the most enviable of scenes. Trellised vine-walks zigzagged up the hills to some picturesque shrine whose modest little spire rose above the olive-trees, or some rude steps in the rock led down to a little nook, whose white sands glistened beneath the crystal waters—such a bath as no sybarite, in all his most glowing fancy, ever imagined. And amid all, and through all, there was that air of wealth—that assurance of affluence and abundance—which comes so home to the hearts of men whose sense of enjoyment can only be gratified where there is to be no sacrifice to their love of ease. In the noble viscount's estimation, the place was perfect. It was even associated with the solitary bit of romance of his whole life. It was here that he passed the first few weeks after his wedding; and though he had preserved very little of those feelings which imparted happiness to that period, though her ladyship did not recall to his mind the attractions which once had fascinated him—new glazed and new lacquered over and over again as was the vase—"the scent of the roses had clung to it still." The distance that lends enchantment to the material, has also its influence on the moral picture. Memory softens and subdues many a harsh tint, mellows many an incongruity, and blends into a pleasant harmony many things which, in their proximity, were the

reverse of agreeable. Not that we would be understood to say that Lord Lackington's honeymoon was not like yours, an elysium of happiness and bliss: we would simply imply that, in recalling it, he only remembered the rose-tints, and never brought up one of the shadows. He had, in his own fashion, poetized that little episode of his life, when, dressed in a fancy and becoming costume, he played gondolier to his young bride, sealed the mountain to fetch her Alp-roses, and read aloud "Childe Harold," as he interpolated Harrow recollections of its author. Not one of these did he now remember—he'd as soon have dreamed of being marker at a billiard-table, as of playing the barcarole; and as to mountain excursions, he'd not have bargained for any success that required the exertion of a steep staircase.

"There's a little villa in a bay, somewhere hereabouts," said he, as the boat glided smoothly along; "I should like much to show it to you." This was addressed to Molly O'Reilly, who sat beside him. "Do you happen to know La Pace?" asked he of one of the boatmen.

"To be sure I do, excellenza. Who doesn't? My own father was barcarole there to a great milordo, I can't say how many years back. Ah," added he, laughing, "what stories he used to have of that same milordo, who was always dressing himself up to be a gondolier or a chamois hunter."

"We haven't asked for your father's memoirs, my good fellow; we only wanted you to show us where La Pace lies," said the viscount, testily.

"There it is, then, excellenza," said the man, as they rounded a little promontory of rock, and came in full view of a small cove, in the center of which stood the villa.

Untenanted and neglected as it was, there was yet about it that glorious luxuriance of vegetation—that rare growth of vines and olive, and oleander and cactus, which seems to more than compensate all the care and supervision of men. The overloaded orange-trees dipped their weary branches in the lake, where the golden balls rose and fell as the water surged about them. The tangled vines sprawled over the ground, staining the deep grass with their purple blood. Olive berries lay deep around, and a thousand perfumes loaded the air as the faint breeze stirred it.

"Let me show you a true Italian villa," said the viscount, as the boat glided up to the steps cut in the marble rock. "I once passed a few weeks here; a caprice seized me to know what kind of life it would be

to loiter amidst olive groves, and have no other company than the cicala and the green lizard."

"Faith, my lord," said O'Reilly, "if you could live upon figs and lemons you'd have nothing to complain of, but I'm thinking you found it lonely."

"I scarcely remember, but my impression is, I liked it," said he, with a slight hesitation. "I used to lie under the great cedar yonder, and read Petrarch."

"Capital fun—excellent—live here for two hundred a year, or even less—plenty of fish in the lake—keep the servants on watermelons," said Twining, slapping his legs, as he made this domestic calculation to himself.

"With people one liked about one," said Miss O'Reilly, "I don't see why this shouldn't be a delicious spot."

"There's not a hundred yards of back-ground. You couldn't give a horse walking exercise here, if your life was on it," said Spicer, contemptuously.

"Splendid grapes, wonderful oranges, finest melons I ever saw, all going to waste, too," said Twining, laughing, as if such utter neglect was a very droll thing. "Get this place a bargain—might have it for a mere nothing."

"So you might, O'Reilly," said the viscount; "it is one of those deserted spots that are picked up for a tenth of their value; buy it, fit it up handsomely, and we'll come and spend the autumn with you, won't we, Twining?"

"Upon my life we will, I'll swear it; be here 1st September to the day, and stay till—as long as you please. Great fun."

"Delicious spot to come and repose in from the cares and worries of life," said Lord Lackington, as he stretched upon a bench and began peeling an orange.

"I'd get the blue devils in a week—I'd be found hanging some fine morning—"

"For shame, papa," broke in Molly. "My lord says he'd come on a visit to us, and you know we'd only be here in the autumn."

"Just so—come here for the wine season—get in your olives and look after your oil—great fun," chimed in Twining, merrily.

"I declare I'd like it of all things, would not you?" said the elder girl to Spicer, who had now begun to reflect that there was a kind of straw-yard season for men as well as for hunters—when the great object was to live cheap and husband your resources; and as he ruminated over the lazy quietness of an existence that would cost nothing—when even his *Bell's Life* should be

inserted amongst the family extraordinaries—he vouchsafed to approve the scheme, and in his mumbling tone, in imitation of Heaven knows what celebrated sporting character, he grumbled out, "Make the governor go in for it, by all means!"

Twining had entered into the project most eagerly. One of the most marked traits of his singular mind was not merely to enjoy his own pre-eminence in wealth over so many others, but to chuckle over all the possible mistakes which *he* had escaped and *they* had fallen into. To know that there was a speculation whose temptation he had resisted and which had engulfed all who had engaged in it—to see the bank fail whose directorship he had refused—or the railroad smashed whose preference shares he had rejected—this was an intense delight to him, and on such occasions was it that he slapped his lean legs most enthusiastically, and exclaimed, "What fun!" with the true zest of enjoyment.

To plant a man of O'Reilly's stamp in such a soil seemed, therefore, about the best practical joke he had ever heard of, and so he walked him over the villa, discoursing eloquently on all the advantages of the project—the great social position it would confer—the place he would occupy in the country—the soundness of the investment—the certainty of securing great matches for the girls. "What a view that window opened of the Splügen Alps!—what a delicious spot, this little room, to sip one's claret of an autumn evening! Think of the dessert growing almost into the very dining-room, and your trout leaping within a yard of the breakfast-table! Austrians charmed to have you—make you a Count—a Hof something or other, at once—give you a cross—great fun, eh?—Graf O'Reilly—sound admirably—do it by all means."

While Twining's attack was being conducted in this fashion, Lord Lackington was not less industriously pursuing his plan of campaign elsewhere. He had sauntered with Molly into the garden and a little pavilion at the end of it, where the lake was seen in one of its most picturesque aspects. It was a well-known spot to him; he had passed many an evening on that low window-seat, half-dreamingly forgetting himself in the peaceful scene—half consciously recalling pleasant nights at Brookes's, and gay dinners at Carlton House. Here was it that he first grew hipped with matrimony, and so sated with its happiness, that he actually began to long for any little disaster that might dash

the smooth monotony of his life; and yet now, by one of those strange tricks memory plays us, he fancied that the moments he had once passed here had never been equalled in all his after life.

"I'm certain, though you won't confess," said she, after one of his most eloquent bursts of remembered enjoyment—"I'm certain you were very much in love, those days."

"An ideal passion, perhaps, a poetized vision of that bright creature who should, one day or other, sway this poor heart," and he flattened the creases of his spotless white waistcoat; "but if you mean that I knew of any, had ever seen any, until now, this very moment—"

"Stop! remember your promise," said she, laughing.

"But, charmante Molly, I'm only mortal," said he, with an air of such superb humility, that made her at once remember it was a peer who said it.

"Mortals must keep their words," said she, pertly. "The condition on which I consented to accept your companionship was—but I needn't remind you."

"No, do not, dear Molly, for I shall be delighted to forget it. You are aware that no law ever obliged a man to do what was impossible; and that to exact any pledge from him to such an end is in itself an illegality. You little suspected, therefore, that it was you, not I, was the delinquent."

"All I know is, that you assured me you'd not—you'd not talk nonsense," said she, blushing deeply, half angry, half ashamed.

"Oh! never guessed you were here," broke in Twining, as he peeped through the window. "Sweet spot—so quiet and secluded—capital fun!"

"There is *such* a view from this, papa," said Molly, in some confusion at Twining's bantering look; "come round and see it."

"I have just been telling this dear girl of yours, O'Reilly, that you ought to make this place your own," said Lord Lackington. "Don't fancy you'd be out of the world here. Why, there's the Villa d'Este, a European celebrity at once—it will be thronged next year to suffocation. The *Galigiani*, I see, has already mentioned myself and Lady Lackington as among the visitors. These things have their effect. The press in our day is an estate."

"Indeed, I'm sure of it. There was a cousin of my wife's drew his two hundred a year out of the *Tyrawley Express*—a daily little paper that maybe your lordship never seen."

"When I said an estate, sir, I rather alluded to a recognized condition of power and influence than to mere wealth. Not, I will add, that I am one of those who approve of this consummation; nor can I see how men of my order can ever so regard it."

"Well," said O'Reilly, sighing, as though the confession cost something, "there's nothing equal to a newspaper. I'm reading *Saunders* this eight-and-forty years, and I own to you I never found one I liked so much. For you see, my lord, it's the same with a paper as with your house—you ought to know where to lay your hand on what you want. Now, you might as well put me in Buckingham Palace, and tell me to find my bedroom, as give me the *Times* and bid me discover the viceregal court. If they mention it at all, it's among the accidents and offenses."

"Castle festivities—Patrick's Hall—great fun!" said Twining, laughing pleasantly, for he cherished some merry recollections of these hospitalities.

"Have you—But of course you were too young for presentation," said his lordship to Molly.

"We weren't out; but, in any case, I'm sure we'd not have been there," said Molly.

"The pleasure of that presentation may perhaps be reserved for me, who knows?" said the viscount, graciously. "If our people come in, it is the post they'd offer me."

"Lord-lieutenant!" said Molly, opening her eyes to the fullest.

"Even so, ma belle. Shall we rehearse the ceremony of presentation? Twining, do you perform the chamberlain. Stand aside, O'Reilly—be a gentleman at large, or an Ulster king-at-arms. Now for it."

And so saying, he drew himself proudly up to an attitude of considerable dignity, while Twining, muttering to himself, "What fun!" announced aloud, "Miss Molly O'Reilly, your excellency;" at which, and before she was aware, his excellency stepped one step in advance, and saluted her on either cheek with a cordiality that covered her with blushes.

"That's not it, at all, I'm certain," said she, half angrily.

"On my life, it's the exact ceremony, and no more," said the viscount. Then resuming the performance, he added, "Take care, Twining, that she is put on your list for the balls. O'Reilly, your niece is charming."

"My niece—sure she's—"

"You forget, my worthy friend, that

we are enacting viceroy, and cannot charge our memory with the ties of kindred."

Spicer now came up to say that a thunderstorm was threatening, and that the wisest course would probably be to land the luncheon and remain where they were till the hurricane should pass over. The proposition was at once approved of, and the party were soon busily occupying themselves in the cares for the entertainment; all agreeing that they felt no regret at being separated from the other boat, which had proceeded up the lake; in fact, as Mr. O'Reilly said, "they were snugger as they were, without the Roosians,"—a sentiment in various ways acknowledged by the rest.

Strange freemasonry is there in conviviality: the little preparations for this picnic dinner disseminated amidst them all the fellowship of old acquaintance, and, as they assisted and aided each other, a degree of kindness grew up that bound them together like a family. Each vied with each in displaying his power of usefulness and agreeability; even the noble viscount, who actually did nothing whatever, so simulated occupation and activity, that he was regarded by all as the very life and soul of the party. And yet we are unjust in saying he did nothing, for he it was, who by the happy charm of his manner, the ready tact of a consummate man of the world, imparted to the meeting its great success. Unused to the agreeable qualities of such men, O'Reilly felt all the astonishment that great conversational gifts inspire, and sat amazed and delighted at the stores of pleasant stories, witty remarks, and acute observations poured out before him.

He knew nothing of the skill by which these abilities were guided, nor how, like cunning shopkeepers dressing their wares to most advantage, such men exhibit their qualities with all the artifice of display. He never suspected the subtle flattery by which he was led to fancy himself the intimate of men whose names were freely talked of before him, till at length the atmosphere of the great world was to him like the air he had breathed from childhood.

"How the prince would have relished O'Reilly," said the viscount to Twining, in a whisper easily overheard. "That racy humor, that strong native common sense, that vigorous disregard of petty obstacles wherever he is bent on following out a path—his royal highness would have appreciated all these."

"Unquestionably—been charmed with them—thought him most agreeable—great fun."

"You remind me of O'Kelly—Colonel O'Kelly—O'Reilly; strange enough, too, each of you should be of that same old Celtic blood. But perhaps it is just that very element that gives you the peculiar social fascination I was alluding to. You are not old enough, Twining, to remember that small house with the bay-windows opening on the bird-cage walk; it was like a country parsonage dropped down in the midst of London, with honeysuckles over the porch, and peacocks on the lawn in front of it. O'Kelly and Payne lived there together—the two pleasantest bachelors that ever joined in partnership. The prince dined with them by agreement every Friday. The charm of the thing was no state, no parade whatever. It was just as if O'Reilly here were to take this villa, and say, 'Now, Lackington, I am rich enough to enjoy myself, I don't want the worry and fatigue of hunting out the pleasant people of the world; but you know them all, you understand them—their ways, their wants, and their requirements—just tell me frankly, could not we manage to make this their rallying spot throughout Europe? Settled down here in the midst of the most lovely scenery in the world, with a good cook and a good cellar, might not this place become a perfect paradise?'"

"If I only knew that your lordship, just yourself alone, and of course the present company," added O'Reilly, with a bow round the table, "would vouchsafe me the honor of a visit, I'd be proud to be the owner of this place to-morrow. Indeed, I don't see why we wouldn't be, as well here as trapesing over the world in dust and heat. If, then, the girls see no objection—"

"I should like it of all things, papa," broke in Miss O'Reilly.

"I am charmed with the very thought of it," cried Molly.

"Capital thought—romantic notion—save any amount of money, and no taxes," muttered Twining.

"There's no approach by land whatever," said Spicer, who foresaw that all his horse capabilities would receive no development here.

"All the better," broke in Twining; "no interlopers—no fellows cantering down to luncheon, or driving over to dine—must come by boat, and be seen an hour beforehand."

"If I know anything of my friend here," said the viscount, "his taste will rather lie in the fashion of a warm welcome than a polite denial to a visitor. You must talk to Lanfranchi about the place

to-morrow, O'Reilly. He's a shrewd fellow, and knows how to go about these things."

"Faith, my lord, I see everything in sunshine so long as I sit in such company. It's the very genial kind of thing I like. A few friends—if I'm not taking too great a liberty—"

"No; by no means, O'Reilly. The esteem I feel for you, and that Twining feels for you"—here his lordship looked over at Spicer and slightly nodded, as though to say, "There is another there who requires no formal mention in the deed"—"are not passing sentiments, and we sincerely desire they may be accepted as true friendship."

"To be sure—unquestionably—great regard—unbounded admiration—what fun!" muttered Twining, half aloud.

The evening wore along in pleasant projects for the future. Spicer had undertaken to provide workmen and artificers of various kinds to repair and decorate the villa and its grounds. He knew of such a gardener, too; and he thought, by a little bribery and a 'rip down to Naples, he might seduce the prince of Syracuse's cook—a Sicilian, worth all the Frenchmen in the world for an intramontane "cuisine." In fact, ere the bright moonlight on the lake reminded them of their journey homeward, they had arranged a plan of existence for the O'Reillys almost Elysian in its enjoyments.

Few things develop more imaginative powers than the description of a mode of life wherein "money is no object," and wishing and having are convertible terms. Let a number of people—the least gifted though they be with the graces of fancy—so picture forth such an existence, and see how, by the mere multiplication of various tastes, they will end by creating a most voluptuous and splendid tableau. O'Reilly's counselors were rather adepts in their way, and certainly they did not forget one single ingredient of pleasure; till, when the boat glided into the little bay of the D'Este, such a story of a life was sketched out as nothing out of fairy-land could rival.

"I'll have it, my lord; the place is as good as mine this minute," said O'Reilly, as he stepped on shore; and as he spoke his heart thrilled with the concentrated delights of a whole life of happiness.

CHAPTER X.

A "SMALL DINNER."

LADY LACKINGTON and Lady Grace Twining passed the morning together. Their

husbands' departure on the picnic excursion offered them a suitable subject to discuss those gentlemen, and they improved the occasion to some purpose.

The viscountess did not, indeed, lean very heavily on her lord's failings; they were, as she described them, the harmless follies of certain middle-aged gentlemen, who, despite time and years, would still be charming and fascinating. "He likes those little easy conquests he is so sure of amongst vulgar people," said she. "He affects only to be amused by them, but he actually likes them; and then, as he never indulges in this sort of thing except in out-of-the-way places, why there's no great harm in it."

Lady Grace agreed with her, and sighed. She sighed, because she thought of her own burden, and how far more heavily it pressed. Twining's were no little foibles—no small weaknesses; none of his faults had their root in any easy self-deceptions. Everything he did, or said, or thought, was maturely weighed and considered; his gay, laughing manner—his easy, light-hearted gesticulation—his ready concurrence in the humor about him, were small coin that he scattered freely while he pondered over heavy investments.

From long experience of his crafty, double-dealing nature, coupled with something very near aversion to him, Lady Grace had grown to believe that in all he said or did some unseen motive lay, and she brought herself to believe that even his avaricious and miserly habits were practiced still less for the sake of saving than for some ulterior and secret end.

Of the wretched life they led she drew a dreary picture: a mock splendor for the world—a real misery at home; all the outward semblance of costly living—all the internal consciousness of meanness and privation. He furnished houses with magnificence that he might let them; he set up splendid equipages, that, when seen, they should be sold. "My very emeralds," said she, "were admired and bought by the Duchess of Windermere. It is very difficult to say that there is anything out of which he cannot extract a profit. If my ponies were praised in the park, I knew it was only the prelude to their being at Tattersall's in the morning; even the camelia which I wore in my hair was turned to advantage, for it sold the conservatory that raised it. And yet they tell me that if—they say that—I mean—I am told that the law would not construe these as cruelty, but simply a very ordinary exercise of marital authority, something unpleasant, per-

haps, but not enough to warrant complaint, still less resistance."

"But they *are* cruelties," broke in Lady Lackington; "men in Mr. Twining's rank of life do not beat their wives—"

"No, they only break their hearts," sighed Lady Grace; "and this, I believe, is perfectly legal."

"They were doing, or going to do, something about that t'other day in the Lords. That dear old man, Lord Cloudeslie, had a bill, or an amendment to somebody's bill, by which—I'm not sure I'm quite correct about it—but I believe it gave the wife power to take her settlement. No, that is not it: she was to be able, after five years of great cruelty—I'm afraid I have no clear recollection of its provisions, but I know the odious chancellor said it would effectually make women independent of men."

"Of course it never will become law, then," sighed Lady Grace again.

"Who knows, dear? They are always passing something or other they're sorry for afterward in either House. Shall I tell you who'd know all about it?—that Mr. Davenport Dunn. He is just the kind of person to understand these things."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lady Grace, with more animation in her manner.

"Let us ask him to dinner," said Lady Lackington; "I know him sufficiently to do so—that is, I have met him once. He'll be charmed, of course; and if there is anything very good and very safe to be done on the Bourse, he'll certainly tell us."

"I don't care for the Bourse. Indeed, I have nothing to speculate with."

"That is the best reason in the world, my dear, to make a venture; at least, so my brother-in-law, Annesley, says. You are certain to come out a winner; and in my own brief experiences, I never gave anything—I only said, 'Yes, I'll have the shares.' They were at fifty-eight and three-quarters, they said, and sure to be at sixty-four or five; and they actually did rise to seventy, and then we sold—that is, Dunn did—and remitted me twelve hundred and fifty-three pounds odd."

"I wish he could be equally fortunate with me. I don't mean as regards money," said Lady Grace; and her check became crimson as she spoke.

"I have always said there's a fate in these things; and who knows if his being here just at this moment is not a piece of destiny?"

"It might be so," said the other, sadly.

"There," said Lady Lackington, as she rapidly wrote a few lines on a piece of note-paper, "that ought to do :

"DEAR MR. DUNN,—If you will accept of an early dinner, with Lady Grace Twining and myself for the company, today, you will much oblige

"Yours truly,

"GEORGIANA LACKINGTON."

To another kind of man I'd have said something about two '*pauvres femmes délaissées*,' but he'd have been frightened, and probably not come."

"Probably," said Lady Grace, with a sigh.

"Now, let us try the success of this." And she rang a bell, and dispatched the note.

Lady Lackington had scarcely time to deliver a short essay on the class and order of men to which Mr. Davenport Dunn pertained, when the servant returned with the answer. It was a very formal acceptance of the invitation: "Mr. Davenport Dunn presented his compliments,"—and so on.

"Of course, he comes," said she, throwing the note away. "Do you know, my dear, I half suspect we have been indiscreet; for now that we have caught our elephant, what shall we do with him?"

"I cannot give you one solitary suggestion."

"These people are not our people, nor are their gods our gods," said Lady Lackington.

"If we all offer up worship at the same temple, the Bourse," said Lady Grace, somewhat sadly, "we can scarcely dispute about a creed."

"That is only true in a certain sense," replied the other. "Money is a necessity to all—the means of obtaining it may, therefore, be common to many. It is in the employment of wealth, in the tasteful expenditure of riches, that we distinguish ourselves from these people. You have only to see the houses they keep, their plate, their liveries, their equipages, and you perceive at once that whenever they rise above some groveling imitation they commit the most absurd blunders against all taste and propriety. I wish we had Spicer here to see about this dinner; it is one of the very few things he understands: but I suppose we must leave it to the cook himself, and we have the comfort of knowing that the criticism on his efforts will not be of a very high order."

"We dine at four, I believe," said Lady Grace, in her habitual tone of sorrow, as she swept from the room with that gesture of profound woe that would have graced a queen in tragedy.

Let us turn for a moment to Mr. Davenport Dunn. Lady Lackington's invitation had not produced in him either those overwhelming sensations of astonishment, or those excessive emotions of delight, which she had so sanguinely calculated on. There was a time that a viscountess asking him thus to dinner had been an event, the very fact being one requiring some effort on his part to believe; but these days were long past. Mr. Dunn had not only dined with great people since that, but had himself been their host and entertainer. Noble lords and baronets had sipped his claret, right honorables praised his sherry, and high dignitaries condescended to inquire where he got "that exquisite port." The tremulous, faint-hearted, doubting spirit—the suspicious, self-distrusting, humble man, had gone, and in his place there was a bold, resolute nature, confident and able, daily testing his strength against some other in the ring, and as often issuing from the contest, satisfied that he had little to fear from any antagonist. He was clever enough to see that the great objects in life are accomplished less by dexterity and address than by a strong, undeviating purpose. The failure of many a gifted man, and the high success of many a common-place one, had not been without its lesson for him; and it was in the firm resolve to rise a winner that he sat down to the game of life.

Lady Lackington's invitation was, therefore, neither a cause of pleasure nor astonishment. He remembered having met her somewhere, some time, and he approached the renewed acquaintance without any one of the sentiments her ladyship had so confidently predicted. Indeed, so little of that flurry of anticipation did he experience, that he had to be reminded her ladyship was waiting dinner for him, before he could remember the pleasure that was before him.

It may be a very ungallant confession for this true history to make, but we cannot blink saying that Lady Lackington and Lady Grace both evidenced by their toilet that they were not indifferent to the impression they were to produce upon their guest.

The viscountess was dressed in the perfection of that French taste whose chief characteristic is freshness and elegance. She was light, gauzy, and floating—a sweeping something of Valenciennes and white muslin—but yet human withal, and very graceful. Her friend, in deep black, with a rich lace veil fastened on her head behind, and draped artistically over one shoulder,

was a charming personification of affliction not beyond consolation. When they met, it was with an exchange of looks that said, "This ought to do."

Lady Lackington debated with herself what precise manner of reception she would award to Mr. Dunn—whether to impose by the haughty condescension of a fine lady, or fascinate by the graceful charm of an agreeable one. She was "equal to either fortune," and could calculate on success, whichever road she adopted. While she thus hesitated, he entered.

If his approach had little or nothing of the man of fashion about it, it was still a manner wherein there was little to criticise. It was not bold nor timid, and, without anything like over-confidence, there was yet an air of self-reliance that was not without dignity.

At dinner the conversation ranged over the usual topics of foreign travel, foreign habits, collections, and galleries. Of pictures and statues he had seen much, and evidently with profit and advantage; of people and society he knew next to nothing, and her ladyship quickly detected this deficiency, and fell back upon it as her stronghold.

"When hard-worked men like myself take a holiday," said Dunn, "they are but too glad to escape from the realities of life by taking refuge among works of art. The painter and the sculptor suggest as much poetry as can consist with their stern notions, and are always real enough to satisfy the demand for fact."

"But would not what you call your holiday be more pleasantly passed in making acquaintances? You could, of course, have easy access to the most distinguished society."

"I'm a bad Frenchman, my lady, and speak not a word of German or Italian."

"English is very generally cultivated just now—the persons best worth talking to can speak it."

"The restraint of a strange tongue, like the novelty of a court dress, is a sad detractor from all naturalness. At least, in my own little experience with strangers, I have failed to read anything of a man's character when he addressed me in a language not his own."

"And was it essential you should have read it?" asked Lady Grace, languidly.

"I am always more at my ease when I know the geography of the land I live in," said Dunn, smiling.

"I should say you have great gifts in that way—I mean in deciphering character," said Lady Lackington.

"Your ladyship flatters me. I have no pretensions of the kind. Once satisfied of the sincerity of those with whom I come into contact, I never strive to know more, nor have I the faculties to attempt more."

"But, in your wide-spread intercourse with life, do you not, insensibly, as it were, become an adept in reading men's natures?"

"I don't think so, my lady. The more one sees of life, the simpler does it seem, not from any study of humanity, but by the easy fact that three or four motives sway the whole world. An unsupplied want of one kind or other—wealth, rank, distinction, affection, it may be—gives the entire impulse to a character, just as a passion imparts the expression to a face; and all the diversities of temperament, like those of countenance, are nothing but the impress of a want—you may call it a wish. Now it may be," added he, and as he spoke he stole a glance, quick as lightning, at Lady Grace, "that such experiences are more common to men like myself—men, I mean, who are intrusted with the charge of others' interests; but assuredly I have no clew to character save in that one feature—a want."

"But I want fifty thousand things," said Lady Lackington. "I want a deal of money; I want that beautiful villa near Palermo, the 'Serra Novena;' I want that Arab pony Kratuloff rides in the park; I want, in short, everything that pleases me every hour of the day."

"These are not wants that make impulses, no more than a passing shower makes a climate," said Dunn. "What I speak of is that unceasing, unwearied desire that is with us in joy or sadness, that journeys with us and lives with us, mingling in every action, blending with every thought, and presenting to our minds a constant picture of ourselves under some wished-for aspect different from all we have ever known, where we are surrounded with other impulses and swayed by other passions, and yet still identically ourselves. Lady Grace apprehends me."

"Perhaps—at least partly," said she, fanning herself and concealing her face.

"There are very few exempt from a temptation of this sort, or if they be, it is because their minds are dissipated on various objects."

"I hate things to be called temptations, and snares, and the rest of it," said Lady Lackington; "it is a very tiresome cant. You may tell me, while I am waiting for my fish-sauce at dinner, it is a temptation, but if you wish me really to understand the

word, tell me of some wonderful speculation, some marvelous scheme for securing millions. Oh! dear, Mr. Dunn, you who really know the way, will you just show me the road to—I will be moderate—about twenty thousand pounds?"

"Nothing easier, my lady, if you are disposed to risk forty."

"But I am not, sir. I have not the slightest intention to risk one hundred. I'm not a gambler."

"And yet what your ladyship points at is very like gambling."

"Pray place that word along with temptation, in the forbidden category; it is quite hateful to me."

"Have *you* the same dislike to chance, Lady Grace," said he, stealing a look at her face with some earnestness.

"No," said she, in a low voice, "it is all I have to look for."

"By the way, Mr. Dunn, what are they doing in Parliament about us? Is there not something contemplated by which we can insist upon separate maintenance, or having a suitable settlement, *or*—"

"Separation—divorce," said Lady Grace, solemnly.

"No, my lady, the law is only repairing an old road, not making a new one. The want of the age is cheapness, cheap literature, cheap postage, and cheap traveling, and why not cheap divorce? Legislation now professes as its great aim to extend to the poor all the comforts of the rich, and as this is supposed to be one of them—"

"Have you any reason to doubt it, sir?" asked Lady Grace.

"Luxuries cease to be luxuries when they become common. Cheap divorce will be as unfashionable as cheap pine-apple when a coal-heaver can have it," said Lady Lackington.

"You mistake, it seems to me, what constitutes the luxury," interposed Lady Grace. "Every day of the year sees men liberated from prison, yet no one will pretend that the sense of freedom is less dear to every creature thus delivered."

"Your figure is but too like," said Dunn. "The divorced wife will be to the world only too much a resemblance of the liberated prisoner. Dark or fair, guilty or innocent, she will carry with her the opprobrium of a public trial, a discussion, and a verdict. Now, how few of us would go through an operation in public for the cure of a malady. Would we not rather hug our sorrows and our sufferings in secrecy, than accept health on such conditions?"

"Not when the disease was consuming

your very vitals—not when a perpetual fever racked your brain and boiled in your blood. You'd take little heed of what is called exposure then. The cry of your heart would be, 'Save me! save me!'” As she spoke, her voice grew louder and wilder, till it became almost a shriek, and, as she ended, she lay back flushed and panting in her chair.

“You have made her quite nervous, Mr. Dunn,” said Lady Lackington, as she arose and fanned her.

“Oh! no. It's nothing. Just let me have a little fresh air—on the terrace. Will you give me your arm?” said Lady Grace, faintly. And Dunn assisted her as she arose and walked out. “How very delicious this is!” said she, as she leaned over the balcony, and gazed down upon the placid water, streaked with long lines of starlight. “I conclude,” said she, after a little pause, “that scenes like this—moments as peacefully tranquil—are as dear to you, hard-worked men of the world, as they are to the wearied hearts of us poor women, all whose ambitions are so humble in comparison.”

“We are all of us striving for the same goal, I believe?” said he, “this same search after happiness, the source of so much misery!”

“You are not married, I believe?” said she, in an accent whose very softness had a tone of friendship.

“No. I am as much alone in the world as one well can be,” rejoined he, sorrowfully.

“And have you gone through life without ever meeting one with whom you would have been content to make partnership—taking her, as those solemn words say, ‘for better, for worse?’”

“They are solemn words,” said he, evading her question; “for they pledge that for which it is so hard to promise—the changeful moods which time and years bring over us. Which of us at twenty can say what he will be at thirty—still less at fifty? The world makes us many things we never meant to be.”

“So, then, you are not happy?” said she, in the same low voice.

“I have not said so much,” said he, smiling sadly; “are you?”

“Can you ask me? Is not the very confidence wherewith I treat you—strangers as we were an hour back to each other—the best evidence that it is from the very depth of my misery I appeal to you?”

“Make no rash confidences, Lady Grace,” said he, seriously. “They who tell of their heart's sorrows to the world are like those

who count their gold before robbers. I have seen a great deal of life, and the best philosophy I have learned from it is to ‘bear.’ Bear everything that can be borne. You will be surprised what a load you will carry by mere practice of endurance.”

“It is so easy to say to one in pain, ‘Have patience,’” said she, bitterly.

“I have practiced what I teach for many a year. Be assured of one thing—the battle of life is waged by all. The most favored by fortune—the luckiest, as the world calls them—have their contest and their struggle. It is not for existence, but it is often for what makes existence valuable.”

She sighed deeply, and, after a pause, he went on:

“We pity the poor, weary, heart-sick litigant, wearing out life in the dreary prosecution of a chancery suit, dreaming at night of that fortune he is never to see, and waking every day to the same dull round of pursuit. As hope flickers in his heart, suffering grows a habit: his whole nature imbibes the conflicting character of his cause; he doubts, and hesitates, and hopes, and fears, and wishes, till his life is one long fever. But infinitely more painful is the struggle of the heart whose affections have been misplaced. These are the suits over which no hope ever throws a ray. It is a long, dreary path, without a halting-place or a goal.”

As he spoke, she covered her face with her handkerchief; but he could perceive that she was weeping.

“I am speaking of what I know,” said he. “I remember once coming closely into relations with a young nobleman whose station, fortune, and personal advantages combined to realize all that one could fancy of worldly blessings. He was just one of those types a novelist would take to represent the most favored class of the most favored land of Europe. He had an ancient name, illustrious in various ways, a splendid fortune, was singularly endowed with abilities, highly accomplished, and handsome, and, more than all, he was gifted with that mysterious power of fascination by which some men contrive to make themselves so appreciated by others that their influence is a sort of magic. Give him an incident to relate—let him have a passing event to tell, wherein some emotion of pity, some sentiment of devotion played a part—and, without the slightest touch of artifice, without the veriest shade of ingenuity, he could make you listen breathlessly, and hang in rapture on his words. Well, this man—of whom, if I suffer myself to speak, I shall grow wearisome in the praise—this man

was heart-broken. Before he succeeded to his title, he was very poor, a subaltern in the army, with little beyond his pay. He fell in love with a very beautiful girl—I never heard her name, but I know that she was a daughter of one of the first houses in England. She returned his affection, and there was one of those thousand cases wherein love has to combat all the odds, and devotion subdue every thought that appeals to worldly pride and vanity.

“She accepted the contest nobly: she was satisfied to brave humble fortune, obscurity, exile—everything for him—at least, she said so; and I believe she thought she could keep her word. When the engagement took place—which was a secret to their families—the London season had just begun.

“It is not for me to tell you what a period of intoxicating pleasure and excitement that is, nor how in that wondrous conflict of wealth, splendor, beauty, and talent, all the fascination of gambling is imparted to a scene where, of necessity, gain and loss are alternating. It demands no common power of head and heart to resist these temptations. Apparently she had not this self-control. The gorgeous festivities about her, the splendor of wealth, and, more than even that, the esteem in which it was held, struck her forcibly. She saw that the virtues of humble station met no more recognition than the false luster of mock gems—that ordinary gifts, illustrated by riches, became actual graces. She could not shut out the contrast between her lover, poor, unnoticed, and unregarded, and the crowd of fashionable and distinguished youths whose princely fortunes gave them place and pre-eminence. In fact, as he himself told me—for Allington excused her—Good heavens! are you ill?” cried he, as, with a low, faint cry, she sank to the ground.

“Is she dying? Good God! is she dead?” cried Lady Lackington, as she lifted the powerless arm, and held the cold hands within her own.

Lafranchi was speedily sent for, and saw that it was merely a fainting fit.

“She was quite well previously, was she not?” asked he of Dunn.

“Perfectly so. We were chatting of indifferent matters—of London, and the season—when she was seized,” said he. “Is there anything in the air here that disposes to these attacks?”

Lafranchi looked at him without reply. Possibly they understood each other, for they parted without further colloquy.

CHAPTER XI.

“A CONSULTATION.”

IT was late in the night as Lord Lackington and his friends reached the villa, a good deal wearied, very jaded, and, if the confession may be made, a little sick of each other; they parted pretty much as the members of such day-long excursions are wont to do—not at all sorry to have reached home again, and brought their trip of pleasure to an end. Twining, of course, was the same happy-natured, gay, volatile creature that he set out in the morning. Everything went well with *him*; the world had but one aspect, which was a pleasant one, and he laughed and muttered, “What fun!” as in half-dogged silence the party wended their way through the garden toward the house.

“I hope these little girls may not have caught cold,” said the viscount, as he stood with Twining on the terrace, after saying “Good-night!”

“I hope so, with all my heart. Charming girls—most fascinating—father so amiable.”

“Isn’t that Dunn’s apartment we see the light in?” asked the other, half impatiently. “I’ll go and make him a visit.”

“Overjoyed to see you, greatly flattered by the attention,” chimed in Twining; and while he rubbed his hands over the enchanting prospect, Lord Lackington walked away.

Not waiting for any announcement, and turning the handle of the door immediately after he had knocked at it, the viscount entered. Whether Dunn had heard him or not, he never stirred from the table where he was writing, but continued engrossed by his occupation till his lordship accosted him.

“I have come to disturb you, I fear, Dunn?”

“Oh! Lord Lackington, your most obedient. Too happy to be honored by your presence at any time. Just returned, I conclude?”

“Yes, only this moment,” said the viscount, sighing weariedly. “These picnics are stupid inventions, they fatigue and they exhaust. They give little pleasure at the time, and none whatever to look back upon.”

“Your lordship’s picture is rather a dreary one,” said Dunn, smiling.

“Perfectly correct, I assure you; I went simply to oblige some country folks of yours. The O’Reillys—nice little girls—very natural, very pretty creatures; but

the thing is a bore. I never knew any one who enjoyed it except the gentleman who gets tipsy, and *he* has an awful retribution in the next day's headache—the terrible headache of iced rum punch."

Dunn laughed, because he saw that his lordship expected as much, and the viscount resumed:

"I am vexed, besides, at the loss of time; I wanted to have my morning with *you* here."

Dunn bowed graciously, but did not speak.

"We have so much to talk over—so many things to arrange—that I am quite provoked at having thrown away a day; and you, too, are possibly pressed for time?"

He nodded in assent.

"You can give me to-morrow, however?"

"I can give you to-night, my lord, which will, perhaps, do as well."

"But to-morrow—"

"Oh, to-morrow, my lord, I start with Baron Glumthal for Frankfort, to meet the Elector of Darmstadt,—an appointment that cannot be broken."

"Politically most important, I have no doubt," said the viscount, with an undisguised sarcasm in the tone.

"No, my lord, a mere financial affair," said Dunn, not heeding the other's manner. "His highness wants a loan, and we are willing to accommodate him."

"I wish I could find you in the same liberal spirit. It is the very thing I stand in need of just now. In fact, Dunn, you must do it."

The half coaxing accent of these last words was a strong contrast to the sneer of a few seconds before, and Dunn smiled as he heard them.

"I fancy, my lord, that if you are still of the same mind as before, you will have little occasion to arrange for a loan in any quarter."

"Pooh! pooh! the scheme is absurd. It has not one, but fifty obstacles against it. In the first place, you know nothing of this fellow, or whether he can be treated with. As for myself, I do not believe one word about his claim. Why, sir, there's not a titled house in England has not at some period or other been assailed with this sort of menace. It is the stalest piece of knavery going. If you were to poll the peers to-morrow, you'd not meet two out of ten have not been served with notice of action, or ejection on the title; in fact, sir, these suits are a profession, and a very lucrative one too."

Lord Lackington spoke warmly, and ere

he had finished had lashed himself up into a passion. Meanwhile, Dunn sat patiently, like one who awaited the storm to pass by ere he advanced upon his road.

"I conclude, from your manner, that you do not agree with me?" said the viscount.

"Your lordship opines truly. I take a very different view of this transaction. I have had all the documents of Conway's claim before me. Far more competent judges have seen and pronounced upon them. They constitute a most formidable mass of evidence, and save in a very few and not very important details, present an unbroken chain of testimony."

"So, then, there is a battery preparing to open fire upon us?" said the viscount, with a laugh of ill-affected indifference.

"There is a mine whose explosion depends entirely upon your lordship's discretion. If I say, my lord, that I never perused a stronger case, I will also say that I never heard of one so easy of management. The individual in whose favor these proofs exist has not the slightest knowledge of them. He has not a suspicion that all his worldly prospects put together are worth a ten-pound note. It is only within the last three months that I have succeeded in even discovering where he is."

"And where is he?"

"Serving as a soldier with his regiment in the Crimea. He was in hospital at Scutari when I first heard, but since that returned to duty with his regiment."

"What signifies all this? The fellow himself is nothing to us!"

Dunn again waited till this burst of anger had passed, and then resumed:

"My lord, understand me well. You can deal with this case now; six months hence it may be clear and clean beyond all your power of interference. If Conway's claim derive, as I have strong ground to believe it, from the elder branch, the estate and the title are both his."

"You are a hardy fellow, a very hardy fellow, Mr. Dunn, to make such a speech as this!"

"I said, If, my lord—If, is everything here. The assumption is, that Reginald Conway was summoned by mistake to the House of Peers in Henry the Seventh's reign—the true Baron Lackington being then an exile. It is from him this Conway's descent claims."

"I'm not going to constitute myself a committee of privileges, sir, and listen to all this jargon; nor can I easily conceive that the unshaken possession of centuries is to be disturbed by the romantic preten-

sions of a Crimean soldier. I am also aware how men of your cloth conduct these affairs to their own especial advantage. They assume to be the arbiters of the destinies of great families, and they expect to be paid for their labors—eh, isn't it so?"

"I believe your lordship has very accurately defined our position, though, perhaps, we might not quite agree as to the character of the remuneration."

"How so? What do you mean?"

"I, for instance, my lord, would furnish no bill of costs to either party. My relations with your lordship are such as naturally give me a very deep interest in what concerns you; of Mr. Conway I know nothing."

"So, then, you are simply moved in this present affair by a principle of pure benevolence: you are to be a sort of providence to the house of Lackington—eh, is that it?"

"Your lordship's explanation is most gracious," said Dunn, bowing.

"Come, now; let us talk seriously," said the viscount, in a changed tone. "What is it you propose?"

"What I would *suggest*, my lord," said Dunn, with a marked emphasis on the word, "is this: Submit the documents of this claim—we can obtain copies of the most important of them—to competent opinion, learn if they be of the value I attribute to them, see, in fact, if this claim be prosecuted, whether it is likely to succeed at law, and, if so, anticipate the issue by a compromise."

"But what compromise?"

"Your lordship has no heir. Your brother, who stands next in succession, need not marry. This point at once decided, Conway's claim can take its course after Mr. Beecher's demise. The estates secured to your lordship for life will amply guarantee a loan to the extent you wish."

"But they are mine, sir; they are mine this moment. I can go into the market to-morrow and raise what amount I please—"

"Take care, my lord—take care; a single imprudent step might spoil all. If you were to negotiate a mere ten thousand to-morrow, you might be met by the announcement that your whole property was about to be litigated, and your title to it contested. Too late to talk of compromise then."

"This sounds very like a threat, Mr. Dunn."

"Then have I expressed myself most faultily, my lord; nor was there anything less near my thoughts."

"Would you like to see my brother?—he

shall call on you in Dublin; you will be there by—when?"

"Wednesday week, my lord; and it is a visit would give me much pleasure."

"If I were to tell you my mind frankly, Dunn," said the viscount, in a more assured tone, "I'd say, I would not give a ten-pound note to buy up this man's whole claim. Annesley, however, has a right to be consulted—he has an interest only second to my own. See him, talk it over with him, and write to me."

"Where shall I address you, my lord?"

"Florence—I shall leave this at once—to-night," said Lord Lackington, impatiently: for somehow—we are not going to investigate wherefore—he was impatient to be off, and see no more of those he had been so intimate with.

CHAPTER XII.

ANNESLEY BEECHER'S "PAL."

LORD LACKINGTON was not much of a letter-writer: correspondence was not among the habits of his day. The society in which he moved, and of which, to some extent, he was a type, cared more for conversational than epistolary graces. They kept their good things for their dinner parties, and hoarded their smart remarks on life for occasions where the success was a personal triumph. Twice or thrice, however, every year, he was obliged to write. His man of business required to be reminded of this or that necessity for money, and his brother Annesley should also be admonished, or reproved, or remonstrated with, in that tone of superiority and influence so well befitting one who pays an annuity to him who is the recipient. In fact, around this one circumstance were grouped all the fraternal feelings and brotherly interest of these two men. One hundred and twenty-five pounds sterling every half year represented the ties of blood that united them: and while it offered to the donor the proud reflection of a generous self-sacrifice, it gave to him who received the almost as agreeable occasion for sarcastic allusion to the other's miserly habits and sordid nature, with a contrast of what he himself had done were their places in life reversed.

It was strange enough that the one same incident should have begotten such very opposite emotions, and yet the two phrases, "If you knew all I have done for him," and the rejoinder, "You'd not believe the

beggarly pittance he allows me," were correct exponents of their several feelings.

Not impossible is it that each might have made out a good case against the other. Indeed, it was a theme whereon, in their several spheres, they were eloquent; and few admitted to the confidence of either had not heard of the utter impossibility of doing anything for Annesley—his reckless folly, his profligacy, and his waste; and, on the other hand, "The incredible meanness of Lackington, with at least twelve thousand a year, and no children to provide for, giving me the salary of an upper butler." Each said far too much in his own praise not to have felt at least strong misgivings in his conscience. Each knew far too well that the other had good reason in many things he said; but so long had their plausibilities been repeated, that each ended by satisfying himself he was a paragon of fraternal affection, and, stranger still, had obtained for this opinion a distinct credence in their several sets in society; so that every peer praised the viscount, and every hard-up younger son pitied poor Annesley, and condemned the "infamous conduct of the old coxcomb his brother."

"That scampish fellow's conduct is killing poor Lackington," would say a noble lord.

"Annesley can't stand old Lackington's treatment much longer," was the commentary of half-pay captains of dragoons.

Had you but listened to Lord Lackington he would have told you of at least fifty distinct schemes he had contrived for his brother's worldly success, all marred and spoiled by that confounded recklessness, "that utter disregard, sir, of the commonest rules of conduct that every man in life is bound to observe." He might have been by this time colonel of the fifty-something; he might have been governor of some fortunate island in the Pacific—consul-general at Sunstroke town, in Africa, where, after three years, you retire with a full pension. If he'd have gone into the Church—and there was no reason why he shouldn't—there was the living of St. Cuthbert-in-the-Vale, eight hundred a year, ready for him. Every administration for years back had been entreated in his favor; and from ordnance clerkships to commissions in lunacy he had been offered places in abundance. Sinecures in India and jobs in Ireland had been found out in his behalf, and deputy-somethings created in Bermuda just to provide for him. The concessions he had made, the proxies he had given, "just for Annesley's sake," formed a serious charge against the noble lord's political consisten-

cy; and he quoted them as the most stunning evidences of fraternal love, and pointed out where he had gone against his conscience and his party as to a kind of martyrdom that made a man illustrious forever.

As for Annesley, his indictment had, to the full, as many counts. What he might have been—not in a mere worldly sense—not as regards place, pension, or emolument—but what in integrity, what in fair fame, what in honorable conduct and unblemished character, if Lackington had only dealt fairly with him—"there was really no saying." The noble motives which might have prompted, the high aspirations that might have moved him, all the generous impulses of a splendid nature, were there, thwarted, baffled, and destroyed, by Lackington's confounded stupidity. What the viscount ought to have done, what precise species of culture he should have devoted to these budding virtues, how he ought to have trained and trellised these tender shoots of aspiring goodness, he never exactly detailed. It was only clear that, whatever the road, he had never taken it; and it was really heartbreaking to hear what the world had lost in public and private virtues, all for Lackington's indolence and folly.

"He never gave me a chance, sir—not one chance," would he say. "Why, he knows Palmerston just as well as I know you; he can talk to Lord Derby as freely as I am speaking at this minute; and, would you believe it? he wouldn't say, 'There's Annesley—my brother Annesley—wants that commissionership, or that secretary's place. Annesley's a devilish clever fellow—up to a thing or two—ask Grog Davis if he ain't. Just try to get between him and the ropes, that's all; see if he doesn't sleep with one eye open.' Do you tell me there's one of them would refuse him? Grog said to his face, at Epsom Downs, the morning Crocus was scratched, 'My lord,' says he, 'take all you can get upon Annesley—make your book on him; he's the best horse in your lot, and it's Grog Davis says it.'"

Very true was it that Grog Davis said so. Nay, to enjoy the pleasure of hearing him so discourse was about the greatest gratification of Annesley Beecher's present life. He was poor and discredited. The Turf Club would not have him—he durst not show at Tattersall's. Few would dine, none discount him; and yet that one man's estimate of his gifts sustained him through all. "If Grog be right—and he ought to be, seeing that a more dodgy, crafty fellow

never lived—I shall come all round again. He that never backed the wrong horse couldn't be far astray about men. He thinks I've run in me yet ; *he* sees that I'll come out one of these days in top condition, and show my number from the stand-house." To have had the greatest opinion in equity favorable to your cause in chancery—to have known that Thesiger or Kelly said your case was safe—to learn that Faraday had pronounced your analysis correct—or White, of Cowes, had approved of the lines of your new yacht—would any of them be very reassuring sensations ; and yet were they as nothing to the unbounded confidence imparted to Beecher's mind by the encouraging opinion of his friend Grog Davis. It is only justice to say that Beecher's estimate of Davis was a feeling totally free of all the base alloy of any self-interest. With all Grog's great abilities—with talents of the very highest order—he was the reverse of a successful man. Trainer, auctioneer, sporting character, pugilist, publican, and hell-keeper, he had been always unlucky. He had his share of good things—more than his share. He had been in at some of the "very best robberies" ever done at Newmarket. The horses he had "nobbled," the jockeys "squared," the owners "hocused," were legion. All the matches he had "made safe," all the fights he had sold, would have filled five columns of *Bell's Life*. In whatever called itself "sport" he had dabbled and cheated for years ; and yet, there he was, with all his successes and all his experiences, something more than fifteen thousand pounds worse than ruined.

Worthy reader, have you stood by while some enthusiastic admirer of Turner's later works has, in all the fervor of his zeal, encomiunized one of those strange, incomprehensible creations, where cloud and sea, atmosphere, shadow, and smoke, seem madly commingled with tall masts piercing the lurid vapor, and storm-clouds drifting across ruined towers ? If at first you gladly welcomed any guidance through the wondrous labyrinth, and you accepted gratefully the aid of one who could reconcile seeming incongruities, and explain apparent difficulties, what was your disappointment at last to discover that, from some defect of organization, some absent power of judgment, you could not follow the elucidation—that you saw no power in this, no poetry in that—that no light gleamed into *your* soul out of all that darkness, nor any hope into *your* heart, from the mad confusion of that chaos ? Pretty much the same

mystification had it been to you to have listened to Annesley Beecher's account of his friend Grog Davis. It was evident that *he* saw the reason for everything—he could account for all ; but, alas ! the explanatory gift was denied him. The very utmost you could attain to was a glimmering perception that there were several young men of rank and station who had only half trusted the distinguished Davis, and in their sparing confidence had rescued themselves from his knavery ; that very artful combinations occasionally require confederates, and confederates are not always loyal ; that Grog occasionally did things with too high a hand—in plain words, reserved for himself more than his share of the booty ; and, in fact, that, with the best intentions and the most decided determination to put others "into the hole," he fell in himself, and so completely, too, that he had never been able to show his head out of it ever since.

If, therefore, as we have said, Annesley Beecher's explanation of these tangled skeins was none of the clearest, there was nothing daunting to himself in that difficulty. On the contrary, he deemed his intimacy with Grog as one of his greatest privileges. Grog had told him things that he would not tell to another man breathing ; he had seen in Grog's own hand what would, if not hang him, give him twenty years at Norfolk Island ; he knew that Grog had done things no man in England but himself had ever dreamed of ; in fact, as Othello's perils had won the fair Desdemona's love, Grog Davis's rascalities had captivated Beecher's admiration ; and, as the recruit might gaze upon the thickly-studded crosses on the breast of some glorious soldier, so did he venerate the proofs of the thousand-and-one knaveries of one who for thirty-odd years had been a "leg" and a swindler.

Let us present Captain Davis—for by that title was he popularly known—to our reader. He was a short, red-faced—very red-faced—man, with a profusion of orange-red hair, while he wore beard and whiskers in that form so common in our Crimean experiences. He was long-armed and bandy, the legs being singularly short and muscular. He affected dress, and was remarkable for more ostentation of velvet than consisted with ordinary taste, and a far greater display of rings, charms, and watch trinkets than is common even to gentlemen of the "Jewish persuasion." The expression of the man's face was eminently determination, and his greenish-gray eyes and thin-lipped, compressed mouth

plainly declared, "Bet with me or not—if you give me the shadow of a shade of impertinence, I'll fasten a quarrel upon you of which all your rank and station won't protect you from the consequences. I can hit a sixpence at twenty paces, and I'll make you feel that fact in every word you say to me. In my brevet rank of the furl you can't disown me, and if you try, mine the fault if you succeed." He had been out three or four times in very sanguinary affairs, so that the question as to "meeting" him was a settled point. He was one of those men to whom the epithet dangerous completely applies; he was dangerous alike to the young fellow entering life, unsuspecting of its wiles and ignorant of its rascalities; dangerous in the easy facility with which he would make foolish wagers, and lend even large sums on the very slightest acquaintance. He seemed so impressed with his theory that everybody ought to have all the enjoyment he liked, there was such a careless good-nature about him, such an uncalculating generosity, an air of such general kindness, that very young men felt at once at ease in his company; and if there were sundry things in his manner that indicated coarseness or bad breeding, if his address was vulgar and his style "snobbish," there were sufficient traits of originality about him to form a set-off for these defects, and "Old Grog" was pronounced an "out-and-out good fellow," and always ready "to help one at a pinch."

Such was he to the very young men just passing the threshold of life; to the older hands—fellows versed in all its acts and ways—he showed no false colors; such then, he was, the character which no disguise conceals, "the leg;" one whose solvency may be counted on more safely than his honesty, and whose dealings, however based on rognery, are still guided by that amount of honor which is requisite for transactions amongst thieves. There was an impression, too—we have no warranty for saying how far it was well-founded—that Grog was behind the scenes in transactions where many high and titled characters figured; that he was confederate in affairs of more than doubtful integrity; and that, if he liked, he could make revelations such as all the dark days at Tattersall's never equaled. "They'll never push me to the wall," he would say, "take my word for it; they'll not make Grog Davis turn queen's evidence," was the boastful exclamation of his after-dinner hours: and he was right. He could have told of strange doings with arsenic in the

stable, and stranger still with hooused negus in the back parlor; he had seen the certain favorite for the Oaks carted out stiff and cold on the morning that was to have witnessed her triumph; and he had opened the door for the ruined heir as he left his last thousand on the green baize of the hell table. He was so accustomed to all the vicissitudes of fortune—that is, he was so habituated to aid the goddess in the work of destiny—that nothing surprised him; and his red, carbuncled face and jaundiced eye, never betrayed the slightest evidence of anything like emotion or astonishment.

How could Beecher have felt any other than veneration for one so gifted? He approached him as might some youthful artist the threshold of Michael Angelo; he felt, when with him, that he was in the presence of one whose maxims were silver and whose precepts were gold, and that to the man who could carry away those experiences the secrets of life were no longer mysteries.

All the delight an old campaigner might have felt had the Great Duke vouchsafed to tell him of his achievements in the Peninsula—how he had planned the masterly defenses of Torres Vedras, or conceived the bold advance upon Spain—would have been but a weak representation of the eager enjoyment Beecher experienced when Grog narrated some of his personal recollections: how he had squared Sir Toby at Manchester; the way he had won the York Handicap with a dead horse; and the still prouder day when, by altering the flags at Bolton, he gained twenty-two thousand pounds on the great national steeplechase. Nor was it without a certain vain-gloriousness that Grog would speak of these, as, cigar in mouth and his hands deep in his breeches-pockets, he grunted out in broken sentences the great triumphs of his life.

We began this chapter by saying that Lord Laekington was not an impassioned letter-writer; and here we are discoursing about Mr. Davis and his habits, as if these topics could possibly have any relation to the noble viscount's ways: and yet they are connected, for it was precisely to read one of his lordship's letters to his friend that Beecher was now Grog's guest, seated opposite to him at the fire, in a very humble room of a very humble cottage on the strand of Irish-town. Grog had sought this retirement after the last settling at Newmarket, and had been, in popular phrase, "missing" since that event.

"Well, it's a long one, at all events,"

said Mr. Davis, as he glanced through his double eye-glass at the letter Beecher handed him—"so long, that I'll be sworn it had no inclosure. When a man sends the flimsy, he spares you the flourish!"

"Right there, Grog. It's all preach and no pay; but read it." And he lighted his cigar, and puffed away.

"'Lake of Como, Oct. 15.'

"What's the old cove about up at Como so late in the season?"

"Read it, and you'll know all," said the other, sententiously.

"DEAR ANNESLEY,—I have been plotting a letter to you these half-dozen weeks, but what with engagements, the heat, and that insurmountable desire to defer whatever can by possibility be put off, all my good intentions have turned out tolerably like some of your own—pleasant memories, and nothing more. Georgiana, too, said—"

"Who's Georgiana?"

"My sister-in-law."

"What's she like—you never spoke of her?"

"Oh, nothing particular. She was a Ludworth; they're a proud set, but haven't a brass farthing among them."

"Why did he marry her?"

"Who knows? He liked her, I believe," said he, after a pause, as though, failing a good and valid reason, he gave the next best that offered.

"Georgiana, too, said she'd write, but the chances are her own commissions would have been the burden of her letter. She has never forgotten that bargain of Mechlin lace you once procured her, and always speculates on some future exercise of your skill."

Annesley burst into a hearty laugh, and said,

"It was amongst the trumpery they gave me at Antwerp for a bill of three hundred and fifty pounds; I got a Rubens—a real Rubens, of course—an ebony cabinet, and twenty yards of coffee-colored 'point de Bruxelles,' horrid trash; but no matter, I never paid the bill, and Georgiana thought the lace a dead bargain at forty louis."

"So that it squared you both?" said Grog.

"Just so, Master Davis. Read on."

"You must see the utter impossibility of my making any increase to your present allowance—"

"Hang me if I do, then!"

"—present allowance. The pressure

of so many bad years, the charges of aiding the people to emigrate, and the cost of this confounded war, have borne very heavily upon us all, and condemned us to economies that we never dreamt of. For myself, I have withdrawn my subscription from several charities, and will neither give a cup at the Broome Regatta, nor my accustomed ten pounds toward the race ball. I wish I could impress you with the necessity of similar sacrifices: these are times when every man must take his share of the national burdens, and reduce his habits of indulgence in conformity with national exigency."

"It's all very fine to talk of cutting your coat, but when you haven't got any cloth at all, Master Davis—"

"Well, I suppose you must take a little of your neighbor's—if it don't suit you to go naked. This here noble lord writes 'like a book;' but when he says 'I'm not a-going to stump it,' there's no more to be said. You don't want to see the horse take his gallops that you know is to be scratched on the day of the race—that's a mere piece of idle curiosity, ain't it?"

"Quite true, Grog."

"Well, it's clear he won't. He says he won't, and that's enough—'We have come abroad for no other reason than economy, and are only looking for a place inexpensive enough for our reduced means.' What's his income?"

"Better than twelve thousand a year."

"Has he debts?"

"Well, I suppose he may—everybody has."

"Ay," said Grog, dryly, and read on: "The continent, however, is not the cheap place it once was—rent, servants, markets, all are dearer—and I'm quite satisfied you find Ireland much less expensive than any other part of Europe—which means, 'Stay there'—eh?"

"No, I don't take it that way," said Beecher, reddening.

"But I do, and I'll maintain it," reiterated Grog. "He's a knowing one, that same noble viscount—he's not the flat you always thought he was. He can square his own book, he can.—'As to any prospect of places, I tell you frankly, there is none. These competitive humbugs they call examinations do certainly stop a number of importunate people, but the vigilance of Parliament exercises a most overbearing tyranny on the ministers; and then the press! Now, we might tide over the House, Annesley, but the press would surely ruin all. If you were gazetted today consul to the least-known South Amer-

ican republic—commissioner for the sale of estates in the planet Saturn—those fellows would have a leader on you to-morrow, showing what you did fifteen years ago at Ascot—all your outlaws—all your actions in bankruptcy. They'd begin saying, "Is this the notorious Hon. Annesley Beecher? or are we mistaken in supposing that the gentleman here referred to is the same lately mentioned in our columns as the friend and associate of the still more famous Grog Davis?"

"He's cool, he is, the noble lord," said Davis, laying down the letter, while Beecher laughed till his eyes ran over with tears. "Now, I'd trouble his lordship to tell *me*," continued Grog, "which had the worst of that same acquaintance, and which was more profitable to the other. If the famous Grog were to split upon the notorious Annesley, who'd come last out of the bag?"

"You needn't take it so seriously as all that, Grog," said Beecher, in a placable tone.

"Why, when I'm told that one of the hardest things to be laid to *your* charge is the knowing *me*, it's high time to be serious, I think—not but I might just throw a shell into the enemy's own camp. The noble lord ain't so safe as he fancies. I was head-waiter at Smykes's—the old Cherry-tree, at Richmond—the night Mat Fortescue was ruined. I could tell the names of the partners even yet, though it's a matter of I won't say how many years ago; and when poor Fortescue blew his brains out, I know the man who drove his phaeton into town and said, 'Fortescue never had a hand light enough for these chestnuts. I always knew what I could do with them if they were my own.'

"Lackington never said that. I'll take my oath of it he never did!" cried Beecher, passionately.

"Take your oath of it!" said Davis, with an insulting sneer. "Do you mind the day old Justice Blanchard—it was at the York Assizes—said, 'Have a care, Mr. Beecher, what you are about to swear: if you persist in affirming that document, the consequences may be more serious than you apprehend?' And do you remember you didn't swear?"

"I'll tell you what, Master Grog," said Beecher, over whose face a sudden paleness now spread, "you may speak of *me* just as you like. You and I have been companions and pals for many a day; but Lackington is the head of my family, he has his seat in the peers, he can hold up his head

with the best in England, and I'll not sit here to listen to anything against him."

"You won't, won't you?" said Grog, placing a hand on either knee, and fixing his fiery gray eyes on the other's face. "Well, then, I'll tell you that you *shall*! Sit down, sir—sit down, I say, and don't budge from that chair till I tell you! Do you see that hand? and that arm—grasp it, squeeze it—doesn't feel very like the sinews of a fellow that feared hard labor. I was the best ten stone seven man in England the year I fought Black Joe, and I'm as tough this minute, so that Norfolk Island needn't frighten me; but the Hon. Annesley Beecher wouldn't like it, I'll promise him. He'd have precious pains in the shoulder-blades, and very sore feelings about the small of the back, after the first day's stone-breaking. Now, don't provoke me, that's all. When the world has gone so bad with a man as it has with *me* the last year or two, it's not safe to provoke him—it is not."

"I never meant to anger you, old fellow," began Annesley.

"Don't do it, then—don't, I say," repeated the other, doggedly; and he resumed the letter, saying: "When you're a writing the answer to this here letter, just ask Grog Davis to give you a paragraph. Just say, 'Grog, old fellow, I'm writing to my noble brother; mayhap you have a message of some kind or other for him,' and you'll see whether he has or not."

"You're a rum one, Master Davis," said Beecher, with a laugh that revealed very little of a heart at ease.

"I'm one that won't stand a fellow that doesn't run straight with me—that's what I am. And now for the noble viscount." And he ran his eyes over the letter without reading aloud. "All this here is only saying what sums he has paid for you, what terrible embarrassment your debts have caused him. Lord love him! it's no new thing to hear of in this life that paying money is no pleasure. And then it finishes, as all the stories usually do, by his swearing he won't do it any more. 'I think,' he says, 'you might come round by a fortunate hit in marriage; but somehow you blundered in every case that I pointed out to you—'"

"That's too bad!" cried Beecher, angrily. "The only thing he ever 'put me on' was an iron-master's widow at Barnstable, and I found that the whole concern was under a contract to furnish rails for a Peruvian line at two pounds ten a ton under the market price of iron."

"It was I discovered that!" broke in Grog, proudly.

"So it was, old fellow; and you got me off the match without paying forfeit."

"Well, this here looks better," continued Grog, reading. "Young and handsome, one of two daughters of an old Irish provision merchant come abroad for the first time in their life, and consequently new to everything. The names O'Reilly, of Mary's Abbey, so that you can have no difficulty in accurately learning all about him in Dublin. Knowing that these things are snapped up immediately in the cities, I have induced O'R. to take a villa on the lake here for the present, so that if your inquiries turn out satisfactorily, you can come out at once, and we'll find the birds where I have landed them."

"That's business-like—that's well and sensibly put," said Davis, in a voice of no counterfeited admiration.

He read on: "O'R. talks of forty thousand to each, but, with the prospect of connecting himself with people of station, might possibly come down more handsomely in one case, particularly when brought to see that the other girl's prospects will be proportionately bettered by this alliance; at all events, no time is to be lost in the matter, and you can draw on me, at two months, for fifty pounds, which will carry you out here, and where, if you should not find me, you will have letters of presentation to the O'R.'s. It is not a case requiring either time or money—though it may call for more energy and determination than you are in the habit of exercising. At the proper moment I shall be ready to contribute all in my power."

"What does that mean?" said Davis.

"I can't even guess; but no matter, the thing sounds well. You can surely learn all about this O'Reilly?"

"That's easy enough."

"I say, I say, old fellow," cried Beecher, as he flung his cigar away and walked up and down the room briskly, "this would put us all on our legs again. Wouldn't I 'go a heavy pot' on Rolt's stable! I'd take Coulton's three-year-old for the Canterbury to-morrow, I would! and give them twelve to twenty in hundreds on the double event. We'd serve them out, Master Grog—we'd give them such a shower-bath, old boy! They say I'm a flat, but what will they say when A. B.'s number hangs out at the stand-house?"

"There's not much to do on the turf just now," said Grog, dryly. "They've spoiled the turf," said he, as he lighted his cigar—"clean spoiled it. Once upon a

time the gents was gents, and the legs, legs, but nowadays every one 'legs' it, as he can; so I'd like to see who's to make a livin' out of it!"

"There's truth in that!" chimed in Beecher.

"So that," resumed Grog, "if you go in for this girl, don't you be making a book; there's plenty better things to be had now than the ring. There's companies, and banks, and speculations on every hand. You buy in at, say thirty, and sell out at eighty, ninety, or a hundred. I've been a meditating over a new one I'll tell you about another time—let us first think about this here marriage: it ain't impossible."

"Impossible! I should think not, Master Grog. But you will please to remember that Lackington has no child. I must succeed to the whole thing—title and all."

"Good news for the Jews, wouldn't it be?" cried Davis. "Why, your outlying paper wouldn't leave much of a margin to live on. You owe upward of a hundred thousand—that you do."

"I could buy the whole concern to-morrow for five-and-twenty thousand pounds. They can't touch the entail, old fellow!"

"My word on't, they'd have it out of you, one way or other; but never mind, there's time enough to think of these things—just stir yourself about this marriage."

"I'll start on Monday. I have one or two trifling matters to look after here, and then I'm free."

"What's this in the turn-down of Lackington's letter, marked '*Strictly confidential*'?"

"I meant to have dispatched this yesterday, but fortunately deferred doing so—fortunately, I say—as Davenport Dunn has just arrived here, with a very important communication, in which your interest is only inferior to my own. The explanation would be too long for a letter, and is not necessary besides, as D. will be in Dublin a day or two after this reaches you. See him at once; his address is Merriem square North, and he will be fully prepared for your visit. Be on your guard. In truth, D., who is my own solicitor and man of business in Ireland, is somewhat of a crafty nature, and may have other interests in his head paramount to those of, yours,

"'LACKINGTON.'"

"Can you guess what this means, Grog? has it any reference to the marriage scheme?"

"No; this is another match altogether,"

said Grog, sententiously; "and this here Dunn—I know about him though I never seen him—is the swellest cove going. *You* ain't fit to deal with *him*—you ain't!" added he, contemptuously. "If you go and talk to that fellow alone, I know how 'twill be."

"Come, come, I'm no flat."

Grog's look—one of intense derision—stopped him, and after stammering and blushing deeply, he was silent.

"You think, because you have a turn of speed among cripples, that you're fast," said Grog, with one of his least amiable grins, "but I tell you, that except among things of your own breeding, you'd never save a distance. Lord love ye! it never makes a fellow sharp to be 'done;' that's one of the greatest mistakes people ever make. It makes him suspicious—it keeps him on the lookout, as the sailors say; but what's the use of being on the lookout if you haven't got good eyes? It's the go-ahead makes a man nowadays, and the cautious chaps have none of that. No, no; don't you go rashly and trust yourself alone with Dunn. You'll have to consider well over this—you'll have to turn it over carefully in your mind. I'd not wonder," said he, after a pause, "but you'll have to take *me* with you!"

CHAPTER XIII.

A MESSAGE FROM JACK.

"He's come at last, Bella," said Kellett, as, tired and weary, he entered the little cottage one night after dark. "I waited till I saw him come out of the station at Westland row, and drive off to his house."

"Did he see you, papa?—did he speak to you?" asked she, eagerly.

"See *me*—speak to *me*! It's little he was thinking of *me*, darling! with Lord, Glengariff shaking oze of his hands, and Sir Samuel Downie squeezeing the other, and a dozen more crying out, 'Welcome home, Mr. Dunn! it is happy we are to see you looking so well; we were afraid you were forgetting poor Ireland and not coming back to us!' And by that time the carmen took up the chorus, and began cheering and hurraing, 'Long life and more power to Davenport Dunn!' I give you my word, you'd have thought it was Daniel O'Connell, or at least a new lord-lieutenant, if you saw the uproar and excitement there was about him."

"And he—how did he take it?" asked she.

"Just as cool as if he had a born right to it all. 'Thank you very much—most kind of you,' he muttered, with a little smile and a wave of his hand, as much as to say, 'There now, that'll do. Don't you see that I'm traveling *incog.*, and don't want any more homage?'"

"Oh, no, papa—not that—it was rather like humility—"

"Humility!" said he, bursting into a bitter laugh—"you know the man well! Humility! there are not ten noblemen in Ireland this minute has the pride and impudence of that man. If you saw the way he walked down the steps to his carriage—giving a little nod here, and a little smile there—maybe offering two fingers to some one of rank in the crowd—you'd say, 'There's a prince coming home to his own country—see how, in all their joy, he won't let them be too familiar with him!'"

"Are you quite just—quite fair in all this, dearest papa?"

"Well, I suppose I'm not," said he, testily. "It's more likely the fault lies in myself—a poor, broken-down country gentleman, looking at everything on the dark side, thinking of the time when his own family were something in the land, and Mr. Davenport Dunn very lucky if he got leave to sit down in the servants' hall. Nothing more likely than that!" added he, bitterly, as he walked up and down the little room in moody displeasure.

"No, no, papa, you mistake me," said she, looking affectionately at him. "What I meant was this, that to a man so burdened with weighty cares—one whose brain carries so many great schemes and enterprises—a sense of humility, proud enough in its way, might naturally mingle with all the pleasures of the moment, whispering as it were to his heart, 'Be not carried away by this flattery, be not carried away by your own esteem; it is less you than the work you are destined for that men are honoring. While they seem to cheer the pilot, it is rather the glorious ocean to which he is guiding them that they address their salutations.' Might not some such consciousness as this have moved him at such a time?"

"Indeed, I don't know, and I don't much care," said Kellett, sulkily. "I suppose people don't feel, nowadays, the way they used when I was young. There's new inventions in everything."

"Human nature is the same in all ages!" said she, faintly.

"Faith, and so much the worse for it,

Bella. There's more bad than good in life—more cruelty, and avarice, and falsehood, than there's kindness, benevolence, and honesty. For one good-natured act I've met with, haven't I met twenty, thirty, no, but fifty, specimens of roguery and double-dealing. If you want to praise the world, don't call Paul Kellett into court, that's all!"

"So far from agreeing with you," cried she, spring up and drawing her arm within his, "you are exactly the very testimony I'd adduce. From your own lips have I heard more stories of generosity—more instances of self-devotion, trustfulness, and true kindness—than I have ever listened to in life."

"Ay, among the poor, Bella—among the poor!" said Kellett, half ashamed of his recantation.

"Be assured, then, that these traits are not peculiar to any class. The virtues of the poor, like their sufferings, are more in evidence than in any other condition—their lives are laid bare by poverty; but I feel assured people are better than we think them—better than they know themselves."

"I'm waiting to hear you tell me that I'm richer, too," said Kellett, with a half-melancholy laugh—"that I have an elegant credit in a bank somewhere, if I only knew where to draw upon it!"

"There is this wealth in the heart of man, if he but knew how to profit by it: it is to teach us this lesson that great men have arisen from time to time. The poets, the warriors, the explorers, the great in science, set us all the same task, to see the world fair as it really is, to recognize the good around us, to subdue the erroneous thoughts that, like poisonous weeds, stifle the wholesome vegetation of our hearts, and to feel that the cause of humanity is our cause, its triumphs our triumphs, its losses our losses!"

"It may be all as you say, Bella darling, but it's not the kind of world ever I saw. I never knew men do anything but cheat each other and tell lies; and the hardest of it all," added he, with a bitter sigh, "that, maybe, it is your own flesh and blood treats you worst!"

This reflection announced the approach of gloomy thoughts. This was about the extent of any allusion he would ever make to his son, and Bella was careful not to confirm him in the feeling by discussing or opposing it. She understood his nature well. She saw that some fortunate incident or other, even time, might dissipate what had never been more than a mere prejudice, while, if reasoned with, he was

certain to argue himself into the conviction that of all the rubs he had met in life his son Jack's conduct was the hardest and the worst.

The long and painful silence that now ensued was at length broken by a loud knocking at the door of the cottage, a sound so unusual as to startle them both.

"That's at *our* door, Bella," said he. "I wonder who it can be? Beecher couldn't come out this time of the night."

"There it is again," said Bella, taking a light. "I'll go and see who's there."

"No, let me go," cried Kellett, taking the candle from her hand, and leaving the room with the firm step of a man about to confront a danger.

"Captain Kellett lives here, doesn't he?" said a tall young fellow, in the dress of a soldier in the Rifles.

Kellett's heart sank heavily within him as he muttered a faint "Yes."

"I'm the bearer of a letter for him," said the soldier, "from his son."

"From Jack!" burst out Kellett, unable to restrain himself. "How is he? Is he well?"

"He's all right now; he was invalided after that explosion in the trenches, but he's all right again. We all suffered more or less on that night;" and his eyes turned half inadvertently toward one side, where Kellett now saw that an empty coat-sleeve was hanging.

"It was there you left your arm, then, poor fellow," said Kellett, taking him kindly by the hand. "Come in and sit down; I'm Captain Kellett. A fellow-soldier of Jack's, Bella," said Kellett, as he introduced him to his daughter; and the young man bowed with all the ease of perfect good breeding.

"You left my brother well, I hope?" said Bella, whose womanly tact saw at once that she was addressing her equal.

"So well that he must be back to his duty ere this. This letter is from him, but as he had not many minutes to write, he made me promise to come and tell you myself all about him. Not that I needed his telling me, for I owe my life to your son, Captain Kellett; he carried me in on his back under the sweeping fire of a Russian battery; two rifle bullets pierced his shako as he was doing it; he must have been riddled with shot if the Russians had not stopped their fire."

"Stopped their fire!"

"That they did, and cheered him heartily. How could they help it?—he was the only man on that rude glacis, torn and gullied with shot and shell."



“ BUT THIS IS A GENTLEMAN, PAPA ; HIS SOLDIER JACKET IS SURELY NO DISGRACE.”
(P. 402.)

"Oh, the noble fellow!" burst out the girl, as her eyes ran over.

"Isn't he a noble fellow?" said the soldier. "We don't want for brave fellows in that army; but show me one will do what he. It was a shot carried off this," said he, touching the empty sleeve of his jacket; "and I said something—I must have been wandering in my mind—about a ring my mother had given me, and it was on the finger of that poor hand. Well, what does Jack Kellett do, while the surgeon was dressing my wound, but set off to the place where I was shot down, and, under all that hailstorm of Minié-balls, brought in the limb. That's the ring—he rescued it at the risk of his life. There's more than courage in that; there's a goodness and kindness of heart, worth more than all the bravery that ever stormed a battery."

"And yet he left me—deserted his poor father!" cried old Kellett, sobbing.

"If he did so, it was to make a name for you that the first man in England might be proud of."

"To go off and list as a common soldier!" said Kellett; and then, suddenly shocked at his own rudeness, and shamed by the deep blush on Sybella's face, he stammered out, "not but I've known many a man with good blood in his veins—many a born gentleman—serving in the ranks."

"Well, I hope so," said the other, laughing with a hearty good nature. "It's not exactly so common a thing with us as with our worthy allies the French; but every now and then you'll find a firelock in the hands that once held a double-barreled Manton, and maybe knocked over the pheasants in his own father's preserves."

"Indeed, I have heard of such things," said Kellett, with a sigh; but he was evidently lending his assent on small security, because he cared little for the venture.

"How poor Jack loves you!" cried Bella, who, deep in her brother's letter, had paid no attention to what was passing; "he calls you Charley—nothing but Charley."

"My name is Charles Conway," said the young man, smiling pleasantly.

"Charley," read she aloud, "my banker when I haven't a shilling, my nurse in hospital, my friend always—he'll hand you this, and tell you all about me. How the dear old dad will love to hear his stories of campaigning life, so like his own Peninsular tales. He'll see that the long peace has not tamed the native pluck of the race, but that the fellows are just as daring, just as steady, just as invincible as

ever they were; and he'll say, too, that to have won the friendship of such a comrade I must have good stuff in me also."

"Oh! if he hadn't gone away and left his old father!" broke in Kellett, lamentingly; "sure it wasn't the time to leave me."

"Wasn't it, though?" broke in the soldier; "I differ with you there. It was the very moment that every fellow with a dash of spirit about him should have offered his services. We can't all have commissions—we can't all of us draw handsome allowances from our friends; but we can surely take our turn in the trenches, and man a battery; and it's not a bad lesson to teach the common fellow, that for pluck, energy, and even holding out, the gentleman is at least his equal."

"I think it's the first of the name ever served in the ranks," said the old man, who, with a perverse obstinacy, would never wander from this one idea.

"How joyously he writes," continued Bella, as she bent over the letter: "I see by the papers, dearest Bella, that we are all disgusted and dispirited out here—that we have nothing but grievances about green coffee and raw pork, and the rest of it; don't believe a word of it. We do curse the commissariat now and then. It smacks like epicurism to abuse the rations; but ask Charley if these things are ever thought of after we rise from dinner and take a peep at those grim old earthworks, that somehow seem growing every day, or if we grumble about fresh vegetables as we are told off for a covering party. There's plenty of fighting; and, if any man hasn't enough in the regular way, he can steal out of a clear night and have a pop at the Russians from a rifle-pit. I'm twice as quick a shot as I was when I left home, and I confess the sport has double the excitement of my rambles after grouse over Mahers Mountain. It puts us on our mettle, too, to see our old enemies the French taking the work with us; not but they have given us the lion's share of it, and left our small army to do the same duties as their large one. One of the regiments in our brigade, rather than flinch from their share, returned themselves twelve hundred strong, while they had close upon three hundred sick—ay, and did the work too. Ask dad if his Peninsulars beat that? Plenty o' hardships, plenty of roughing, and plenty of hard knocks there are, but it's the jolliest life ever a fellow led, for all that. Every day has its own story of some dashing bit of bravery, that sets as all wild with excitement, while we wonder to our-

selves what do you all think of us in England. Here comes an order to summon all to close their letters, and so I shut up, with my fondest affection to the dear old dad and yourself.

Ever yours,
" 'JACK KELLETT.

" 'As I don't suppose you'll see it in the *Gazette*, I may as well say that I'm to be made a corporal on my return to duty. It's a long way yet to major-general, but at least I'm on the road, Bella."

" A corporal ! a corporal ! " exclaimed Kellett ; " may I never, if I know whether it's not a dream. Paul Kellett's eldest son—Kellett of Kellett's Court—a corporal ! "

" My father's prejudices all attach to the habits of his own day," said Bella, in a low voice, to the soldier—" to a time totally unlike the present in everything."

" Not in everything, Miss Kellett," said the youth, with a quiet smile. " Jack has just told you that all the old ardor, all the old spirit, is among the troops. They are the sons and grandsons of the gallant fellows that beat the French out of Spain."

" And are *you* going back ? " asked Kellett, half moodily, and scarcely knowing what he said.

" They won't have me," said the soldier, blushing as he looked at his empty sleeve ; " they want fellows who can handle a Minié rifle."

" Oh, to be sure—I ought to have known—I was forgetting," stammered he out, confusedly ; " but you have your pension, anyhow."

" I've a kind old mother, which is better," said the youth, blushing deeper again. " She only gave me a short leave to run over and see Jack Kellett's family ; for she knows Jack, by name at least, as if he were her own."

To Bella's questions he replied, that his mother had a small cottage near Bettws, at the foot of Snowdon ; it was one of the most picturesque spots of all Wales, and in one of those sunny nooks where the climate almost counterfeits the south of Europe.

" And now you'll go back, and live tranquilly there," said the girl, half dreamily, for her thoughts were wandering away Heaven knows where.

The youth saw the preoccupation, and arose to take his leave. " I shall be writing to Jack to-morrow, Captain Kellett," said he. " I may say I have seen you well and hearty, and I may tell the poor fellow—I'm sure you'll let me tell him—that you have heartily forgiven him ? " Old Kellett

shook his head mournfully ; and the other went on : " It's a hard thing of a dark night in the trenches, or while you lie on the wet ground in front of them, thinking of home and far away, to have any one thought but love and affection in your heart. It doesn't do to be mourning over faults and follies, and grieving over things one is sorry for. One likes to think, too, that they who are at home, happy at their firesides, are thinking kindly of us. A man's heart is never so stout before the enemy as when he knows how dear he is to some one far away."

As the youth spoke these words half falteringly, for he was naturally bashful and timid, Bella turned her eyes fully upon him, with an interest she had not felt before, and he reddened as he returned her gaze.

" I'm sure you forgive *me*, sir," said he, addressing Kellett. " It was a great liberty I took to speak to you in this fashion ; but I was Jack's comrade—he told me every secret he had in the world, and I know how the poor fellow would march up to a Russian battery to-morrow with an easier heart than he'd hear one hard word from you."

" Ask Bella there if I ever said a word, ever as much as mentioned his name," said Kellett, with all the self-satisfaction of egotism.

Bella's eyes quickly turned toward the soldier, with an expression so full of significance that he only gave a very faint sigh, and muttered :

" Well, I can do no more ; when I next hear from Jack, sir, you shall know it." And with this he moved toward the door.

Bella hastily whispered a few words in her father's ear, to which, as he seemed to demur, she repeated still more eagerly.

" How could we, since it's Sunday, and there will be Beecher coming out ? " muttered he.

" But this is a gentleman, papa ; his soldier jacket is surely no disgrace—"

" I couldn't, I couldn't," muttered he, doggedly.

Again she whispered, and at last he said : " Maybe you'd take your bit of dinner with us to-morrow, Conway—quite alone, you know."

The young fellow drew himself up, and there was, for an instant, a look of haughty, almost insolent, meaning in his face. There was that, however, in Bella's which as speedily overcame whatever irritation had crossed his mind, and he politely said :

" If you will admit me in this dress—I have no other with me."

“To be sure—of course,” broke in Kellett. “When my son is wearing the same, what could I say against it?”

The youth smiled good-naturedly at this not very gracious speech; mayhap the hand he was then holding in his own compensated for its rudeness, and his “Good-by!” was uttered in all frankness and cordiality.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DINNER AT PAUL KELLETT'S.

To all you gentlemen who live at home at ease there are few things less troublesome than the arrangement of what is called a dinner party. Some difficulty may possibly exist as to the guests. Lady Mary may be indisposed. It might not be quite right to ask Sir Harry to meet the Headleys. A stray embarrassment or two will arise to require a little thought or a little management. The material details, however, give no care. There is a stereotyped mode of feeding one's friends, out of which it is not necessary, were it even possible, to issue. Your mock-turtle may have a little more or less the flavor of madeira; your salmon be somewhat thicker in the shoulder; your sirloin be a shade more or less underdone; your side dishes a little more or less uneatable than your neighbor's, but, after all, from the caviare to the cheese, the whole thing follows an easy routine, and the dinner of No. 12 is the fac-simile of the dinner at No. 13; and the same silky voice that whispers “sherry, sir?” has its echo along the whole street. The same toned-down uniformity pervades the intellectual elements of the feast—all is quiet, jog-trot, and habitual; a gentle atmosphere of murmuring dullness is diffused around, very favorable to digestion, and rather disposing to sleep.

How different are all these things in the case of the poor man, especially when he happens to be a reduced gentleman, whose memories of the past are struggling and warring with exigencies of the present, and the very commonest necessities are matters of grave difficulty.

Kellett was very anxious to impress his son's friend with a sense of his social standing and importance, and he told Bella “not to mind spending the whole week's allowance, just to show the soldier what Jack's family was.” A leg of mutton and a little of Kinnahan's port constituted, in his mind, a very high order of entertainment; and these were at once voted. Bella hoped

that after the first outburst of this ostentatious fit he would fall back in perfect indifference about the whole matter; but far from it—his waking thought in the morning was the dinner, and when she remarked to him at breakfast on the threatening aspect of the clouds, his reply was, “No matter, dear, if we have plenty of capers.” Even the unhappy possibility of Beecher's “dropping in” was subordinate to his wish to cut a figure on the occasion; and he pattered about from the dining-room to the kitchen, peeped into saucepans, and scrutinized covered dishes with a most persistent activity. Nor was Bella herself quite averse to all this. She saw in the distance—remotely it might be—the glimmering of a renewed interest about poor Jack. “The pleasure this little incident imparts,” thought she, “will spread its influence wider. He'll talk of him too—he'll be led on to let him mingle with our daily themes. Jack will be one of us once more after this;” and so she encouraged him to make of the occasion a little festival.

What skill did she not practice, what devices of taste not display, to cover over the hard features of their stern poverty! The few little articles of plate which remained after the wreck of their fortune were placed on the sideboard, conspicuous among which was a cup “presented by his brother officers to Captain Paul Kellett, on his retirement from the regiment, with which he had served thirty-eight years”—a testimonial only exhibited on the very most solemn occasions. His sword and sash—the same he wore at Waterloo—were arrayed over the fireplace, and his Talavera shako—grievously damaged by a French saber—hung above them. “If he begins about ‘that expedition’”—it was thus he always designated the war in the Crimea—“Bella, I'll just give him a touch of the real thing, as we had it in the Peninsula! Faith, it wasn't digging holes in the ground we were then;” and he laughed to himself at the absurdity of the conceit.

The few flowers which the garden owned at this late season, humble and common as they were, figured on the chimney-piece, and not a resource of ingenuity was neglected to make that little dinner-room look pleasant and cheery. Fully a dozen times had Kellett gone in and out of the room, never weary of admiring it, and as constantly muttering to himself some praise of Bella, to whose taste it was all owing. “I'd put the cup in the middle of the table, Bella. The wallflowers would do well enough at the sideboard. Well, may-

be you're right, darling; it is less pretensions, to be sure. And be careful, dear, that old Betty has a clean apron. May I never, but she's wearing the same one since Candlemas! And don't leave her any corks to draw—she's the devil for breaking them into the bottle. I'll sit here, where I can have the screw at my hand. There's a great convenience in a small room, after all. By the good day, here's Beecher!" exclaimed he, as that worthy individual approached the door.

"What's all this for, Kellett, old boy? Are you expecting the viceroy, or celebrating a family festival, eh? What does it mean?"

"'Tis a mutton chop I was going to give a friend of Jack's—a young fellow that brought me a letter from him yesterday."

"Oh! your son Jack. By the way, what's his regiment—Light Dragoons, isn't it?"

"No; the Rifles," said Kellett, with a short cough.

"He's pretty high up for his lieutenancy by this, ain't he?" said Beecher, rattling on. "He joined before Alma, didn't he?"

"Yes; he was at the battle," said Kellett, dryly; for though he had once or twice told his honorable friend that Jack was in the service, he had not mentioned that he was in the ranks. Not that Annesley Beecher would have in the least minded the information. The fact could not by possibility have touched himself; it never could have compelled *him* to mount guard, do duty in the trenches, eat Commissariat biscuit, or submit to any of the hardships soldiery inflicts; and he'd have heard of Jack's fate with all that sublime philosophy which teaches us to bear tranquilly the calamities of others.

"Why don't you stir yourself to get him a step? There's nothing to be had without asking! ay, worse than asking—begging, worrying, importuning. Get some fellow in one of the offices to tell you when there's a vacancy, and then up and at them. If they say, 'We are only waiting for an opportunity, Captain Kellett,' you reply, 'Now's your time, then. Groves, of the Forty-sixth, is gone 'toes up'—Simpson, of the Bays, has cut his lucky this morning.' That's the way to go to work."

"You are wonderful!" exclaimed Kellett, who really did all but worship the worldly vision of his friend.

"I'd ask Lackington, but he's no use to any one. Just look at my own case." And now he launched forth into the theme

he really loved and never found wearisome. His capacity for anything—everything, his exact fitness for fifty opposite duties, his readiness to be a sinner, and his actual necessity for a salary, were subjects he could be eloquent on; devoting occasional passing remarks to Lackington's intense stupidity, who never exerted himself for him, and actually "thought him a flat." "I know you won't believe—but he does, I assure you—he thinks me a flat!"

Before Kellett could fully rally from the astounding force of such an unjustifiable opinion, his guest, Conway, knocked at the door.

"I say, Kellett, there comes an apology from your friend."

"How so?" asked Kellett, eagerly.

"I just saw a soldier come up to the door, and the chances are it's an officer's servant with a note of excuse."

The door opened as he spoke, and Conway entered the room. Kellett met him with an honest cordiality, and then, turning to Beecher, said,

"My son's friend and comrade—Mr. Annesley Beecher;" and the two men bowed to each other, and exchanged glances that scarcely indicated much pleasure at the acquaintance.

"Why, he's in the ranks, Kellett," whispered Beecher, as he drew him into the window.

"So is my son," said Kellett, with a gulp that half choked him.

"The deuce he is—you never told me that. And is this our dinner company?"

"I was just going to explain—Oh, here's Bella!" and Miss Kellett entered, giving such a cordial greeting to the soldier that made Beecher actually astounded.

"What's his name, Kellett?" said Beecher, half languidly.

"A good name, for the matter of that—he's called Conway."

"Conway—Conway?" repeated Beecher, aloud, "we have fortieth cousins, Conways. There was a fellow called Conway in the Twelfth Lancers that went a tremendous pace; they nicknamed him the 'Smasher,' I don't know why. Do you?" said he, addressing the soldier.

"I've heard it was from an awkward habit he had of putting his heel on snobs."

"Oh! you know him, perhaps?" said Beecher, affectedly.

"Why, as I was the man myself, I ought, according to the old adage, to say I knew but little of him."

"You Conway of the Twelfth! the same that owned Brushwood and Lady Killer, that won the Riddlesworth?"

"You're calling up old memories to me," said the youth, smiling, "which, after all, I'd just as soon forget."

"And you were an officer in the Lancers!" exclaimed Kellett, eagerly.

"Yes; I should have had my troop by this, if I hadn't owned those fortunate three-year-olds Mr. Beecher has just reminded me of. Like many others, whom success on the turf has misled, I went on madly, quite convinced I had fortune with me."

"Ah!" said Beecher, moralizing, "there's no doing a good stroke of work without the legs. Cranley tried it, Hawehcome tried it, Ludborough tried it, but it won't do. As Grog Davis says, 'you must not ignore existing interests.'"

"There's another name I haven't heard for many a year. What a scoundrel that fellow was! I've good ground for believing that this Davis it was poisoned Sir Aubrey, the best horse I ever owned. Three men of his stamp would make racing a sport unfit for gentlemen."

"Miss Kellett, will you allow me?" said Beecher, offering his arm, and right well pleased that the announcement of dinner cut short the conversation.

"A nice fellow that friend of your brother's," muttered he, as he led her along; "but what a stupid thing to go and serve in the ranks! It's about the last step I'd ever have thought of taking."

"I'm certain of it," said Bella, with an assent so ready as to sound like flattery.

As the dinner proceeded, old Kellett's astonishment continued to increase at the deference paid by Beecher to every remark that fell from Conway. The man who had twice won "the Bexley," and all but won "the Elms;" he who owned Sir Aubrey, and actually took the odds against all "Holt's stable," was no common celebrity. In vain was it Conway tried to lead the conversation to his friend Jack—what they had seen, and where they had been together—Beecher would bring them back to the turf and the *Racing Calendar*. There were so many dark things he wanted to know—so much of secret history he hoped to be enlightened in—and whenever, as was often the case, Conway did not and could not give him the desired information, Beecher slyly intimated by a look toward Kellett that he was a deep fellow, while he muttered to himself, "Grog Davis would have it out of him, notwithstanding all his cunning."

Bella alone wished to hear about the war. It was not alone that her interest was excited for her brother, but in the

great events of that great struggle her enthusiastic spirit found ample material for admiration. Conway related many heroic achievements, not alone of British soldiers, but of French and even Russians. Gallantry, as he said, was of no nation in particular, there were brave fellows everywhere; and he told, with all the warmth of honest admiration, how daringly the enemy dashed into the lines at night and confronted certain death, just for the sake of causing an interruption to the siege, and delaying even for a brief space the advance of the works. Told as these stories were with all the freshness which actual observation confers, and in a spirit of unexaggerated simplicity, still old Kellett heard them with the peevish jealousy of one who felt that they were destined to eclipse in their interest the old scenes of Spain and Portugal. That any soldiers lived nowadays like the old Light Division—that there were such fellows as the fighting Fifth, or Crawford's Brigade—no man should persuade him; and when he triumphantly asked if they hadn't as good a general as Sir Arthur Wellesley, he fell back, laughing contemptuously at the idea of such being deemed war at all, or the expedition, as he would term it, being styled a campaign.

"Remember, Captain Kellett, we had a fair share of your old Peninsular friends among us—gallant veterans, who had seen everything from the Douro to Bayonne."

"Well, and didn't they laugh at all this? didn't they tell you fairly it was not fighting?"

"I'm not so sure they did," said Conway, laughing good-naturedly. "Gordon told an officer in my hearing, that the charge up the heights at the Alma reminded him strongly of Harding's ascent of the hills at Albuera."

"No, no, don't say that—I can't stand it!" cried Kellett, peevishly; "sure if it was only that one thinks they were Frenchmen, with old Soult at their head—at Albuera—"

"There's nothing braver than a Russian, sir, depend on't," said the youth, with a slight warmth in his tone.

"Brave, if you like; but, you see, he isn't a soldier by nature, like the Frenchman; and yet we beat the French, thrashed him from the sea to the Pyrenees, and over the Pyrenees into France."

"What's the odds? You'd not do it again; or, if you did, not get Nap to abdicate. I'd like to have two thousand to fifty on the double event," said Beecher, chuckling over an imaginary betting-book.

"And why not do it again?" broke in Bella. "Is it after listening to what we have heard this evening that we have cause for any faint-heartedness about the spirit of our soldiery? Were Cressy or Agincourt won by braver fellows than now stand intrenched around Sebastopol?"

"I don't like it, as Grog says; never make a heavy book on a waiting race!"

"I conclude, then," said Conway, "you are one of those who augur ill of our success in the present war?"

"I'd not stake an even fifty on either side," said Beecher, who had shrewd suspicions that it was what he'd have called a "cross," and that Todleben and Lord Raglan could make "things comfortable" at any moment. "I see Miss Bella's of my mind," added he, as he perceived a very peculiar smile just parting her lips.

"I suspect not, Mr. Beecher," said she, slyly.

"Why did you laugh, then?"

"Shall I tell you? It was just this, then, passing in my mind. I was wondering within myself whether the habit of reducing all men's motives to the standard of morality observable in the 'ring' more often led to mistakes, or the contrary."

"I sincerely trust that it rarely comes right," broke in Conway. "I was close upon four years on the turf, as they call it; and if I hadn't been ruined in time, I'd have ended by believing that an honest man was as great a myth as anything we read of among the heathen gods."

"That all depends upon what you call honest," said Beecher.

"To be sure it does; you're right there," chimed in Kellett; and Beecher, thus seconded, went on:

"Now, I call a fellow honest when he won't put his pal into a hole—when he'll tell him whenever he has got a good thing, and let him have his share—when he'll warn him against a dark lot, and not let him 'in' to oblige anyone—that's honesty."

"Well, perhaps it is," said Conway, laughing. "The Russians said it was mercy to other day, when they went about shooting the wounded. There's no accounting for the way men are pleased to see things."

"I'd like to have *your* definition of honesty," said Beecher, slightly piqued by the last remark.

"How can you expect me to give you one? Have I not just told you I was for more than three years on the turf, had a racing stable, and dealt with trainers and jocks?" He paused for a second or two, and then, in a stronger voice, went on:

"I cannot believe that the society of common soldiers is a very high standard by which to measure either manners or motives; and yet I pledge my word to it, that my comrades, in comparison with my old companions of the turf, were unexceptionable gentlemen. I mean that, in all that regards truthfulness, fair dealing, and honorable intercourse, it would be insult to compare them."

"Ah, you see," said Beecher, "you got it 'all hot,' as they say. You're not an unprejudiced jurymen. They gave you a bucketing—I heard all about it. If Corporal Trim hadn't been doctored, you'd have won twelve thousand at Lancaster."

Conway smiled good-humoredly at the explanation thus suggested, but said nothing.

"Bother it for racing," said Kellett. "I never knew any real taste for horses or riding where there was races. Instead of caring for a fine, showy beast, a little thick in the shoulder, square in the joints, and strong in the haunch, they run upon things like greyhounds, all drawn up behind and low before; it's a downright misery to mount one of them."

"But it's a real pleasure to see him come in first, when your book tells you seven to one in your favor. Talk of sensations," said he, enthusiastically; "where is there the equal of that you feel when the orange and blue you have backed with a heavy pot comes pelting round the corner, followed by two—then three—all punishing, your own fellow holding on beautifully, with one eye a little thrown backward to see what's coming, and that quiet, calm look about the mouth that says, 'I have it.' Every note of the wild cheer that greets the winner is applause to your own heart—that deafening yell is your own song of triumph."

"Listen to him!—that's his hobby," cried Kellett, whose eyes glistened with excitement at the description, and who really felt an honest admiration for the describer. "Ah, Beecher, my boy!—you're at home there."

"If they'd only give me a chance, Paul—one chance!"

Whether it was that the expression was new and strange to him, or that the energy of the speaker astonished him, but Conway certainly turned his eyes toward him in some surprise: a sentiment which Beecher at once interpreting as interest, went on:

"*You*," said he—"you had many a chance; I never had one. You might have let them all in, you might have landed them all—so they tell me, at least—if you'd

have withdrawn Eyetooth. He was own brother to Aurelius, and sure to win. Well, if you'd have withdrawn him for the Bexley, you'd have netted fifty thousand. Grog—I mean a fellow 'well up' among the legs—told me so."

"Your informant never added what every gentleman in England would have said of me next day," said Conway. "It would have been neither more nor less than a swindle. The horse was in perfect health and top condition—why should I not have run him?"

"For no other reason that I know, except that you'd have been richer by fifty thousand for not doing it."

"Well," said Conway, quietly, "it's not a very pleasant thing to be crippled in this fashion; but I'd rather lose the other arm than do what you speak of. And if I didn't know that many gentlemen get a loose way of talking of fifty things they'd never seriously think of doing, I'd rather feel disposed to be offended at what you have just said."

"Offended! of course not—I never dreamed of anything offensive. I only meant to say that they call *me* a flat; but hang me if I'd have let them off as cheaply as you did."

"Then they're at perfect liberty to call me a flat also," said Conway, laughing. "Indeed, I suspect I have given them ample reason to think me one."

The look of compassionate pity Beecher bestowed on him as he uttered these words was as honest as anything in his nature could be.

It was in vain Bella tried to get back the conversation to the events of the campaign, to the scenes wherein poor Jack was an actor. Beecher's perverse activity held them chained to incidents which, to him, embraced all that was worth living for. "You must have had some capital things in your time, though. You had some race-horses, and were well in with Tom Nolan's set," said he to Conway.

"Shall I tell you the best match I ever had—at least, the one gave me most pleasure?"

"Do, by all means," said Beecher, eagerly, "though I guess it already. It was against Vickersley, even for ten thousand, at York."

"No," said the other, smiling.

"Well, then, it was the Cotswold—four miles in two heats. You won it with a sister to Lady Bird."

"Nor that either; though by these reminiscences you show me how accurately you have followed my humble fortunes."

"There's not a man has done anything on the turf for fifty years I can't give you his history; not a horse I won't tell you all his performances, just as if you were reading it out of the *Racing Calendar*. As *Bell's Life* said t'other day, 'If Annesley Beecher can't answer that question'—and it was about Running Rein—'no man in England can.' I'm 'the Fellow round the Corner' that you always see alluded to in *Bell*."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Conway, with assumed deference.

"That I am—Kellett knows it. Ask old Paul there—ask Grog—ask any one you like, whether A. B. is up to a thing or two. But we're forgetting this match—the best thing you said you ever had."

"I'm not so sure you'll be of my mind when you hear it," said Conway, smiling. "It was a race we had t'other day in the Crimea—a steeplechase, over rather a stiff course, with Spanish ponies; and I rode against Lord Broodale, Sir Harry Curtis, and Captain Marsden, and won five pounds and a dozen of champagne. My comrades betted something like fifty shillings on the match, and there would have been a general bankruptcy in the company if I had lost. Poor Jack mortgaged his watch and a pilot-coat that he was excessively proud of—it was the only bit of muti in the battalion, I think; but he came off all right, and treated us all to a supper with his winnings, which, if I don't mistake, didn't pay more than half the bill."

"Good luck to him, and here's his health," cried Kellett, whose heart, though proof against all ordinary appeals to affection, could not withstand this assault of utter recklessness and improvidence. "He's my own flesh and blood, there's no denying it."

If Conway was astounded at this singular burst of paternal affection, he did not the less try to profit by it, and at once began to recount the achievements of his comrade, Jack Kellett. The old man listened half doggedly at first, but gradually, as the affection of others for his son was spoken of, he relaxed, and heard, with an emotion he could not easily repress, how Jack was beloved by the whole regiment—that to be his companion in outpost duty, to be stationed with him in a battery, was a matter of envy. "I won't say," said Conway, "that every corps and every company has not fellows brave as he; but show me one who'll carry a lighter spirit into danger, and as soft a heart amid scenes of cruelty and bloodshed. So that if you asked who in our battalion is the pluckiest

—who the most tender-hearted—who the most generous—and who the least given to envy? you'd have the one answer—'Jack Kellett,' without a doubt."

"And what will it all do for him?" broke in the old man, resorting once more to his discontent.

"What will it do for him? What has it done for him? Is it nothing that, in a struggle history will make famous, a man's name is a household word? That in a war, where deeds of daring are so rife, his outnumbers those of any other? It's but a few weeks back a Sarāinian staff-officer, coming to our head-quarters on business, asked if the celebrated 'bersaglière' was there—so they call riflemen—and desired to see him; and, better than that, though he didn't know Jack's name, none doubted who was meant, but Jack Kellett was sent for on the instant. Now, that I call fame."

"Will it get him his commission?" said Beecher, knowingly, as though by one shrewd stroke of intelligence he had embraced the entire question.

"A commission can be had for four hundred and fifty pounds, and some man in Parliament to ask for it. But what Jack has done cannot be bought by mere money. Do you go out there, Mr. Beecher, just go and see for yourself—it's well worth the while—what stuff fellows are made of that face danger every day and night, without one thought above duty—never expecting—never dreaming that anything they do is to have its personal benefit, and would far rather have their health drunk by their comrades than be quoted in the *Times*. You'll find your old regiment there—you were in the Fusilier Guards, weren't you?"

"Yes, I tried soldiering, but didn't like it," said Beecher; "and it was better in my day than *now*, they tell me."

A movement of impatience on Conway's part was suddenly interrupted by Kellett saying, "He means that the service isn't what it was; and indeed he's right there. I remember the time there wasn't a man in the Eighty-fifth couldn't carry away three bottles of Bennett's strong port, and play as good a rubber, afterward, as Hoyle himself."

"It's the snobbery I was thinking of," said Beecher; "fellows go into the army now who ought to be counter-jumping."

"I don't know what they ought to be doing," broke in Conway, angrily, "but I could tell you something of what they are doing; and where you are to find men to do it better, I'm not so clear. I said a few moments back, you ought to go out to the

Crimea, but I beg to correct myself—it is exactly what you ought not to do."

"Never fear, old fellow; I never dreamed of it. Give you any odds you like, you'll never see my arrival quoted at Balaklava."

"A thousand pardons, Miss Kellett," whispered Conway, as he arose, "but you see how little habit I have of good company; I'm quite ashamed of my warmth. May I venture to come and pay you a morning visit before I go back?"

"Oh, by all means; but why not an evening one? You are more certain to find us."

"Then an evening one, if you'll allow me;" and shaking Kellett's hand warmly, and with a cold bow to Beecher, he withdrew.

"Wasn't he a flat!" cried Beecher, as the door closed after him. "The Smasher—that was the name he went by—went through an estate of six thousand a year, clean and clear, in less than four years, and there he is now, a private soldier with one arm!"

"Faith, I like him; he's a fine fellow," said Kellett, heartily.

"Ask Grog Davis if he'd call him a fine fellow," broke in Beecher, sneeringly; "there's not such a spoon from this to Newmarket. Oh, Paul, my hearty, if I had but one, just one of the dozen chances he has thrown away! But, as Grog says, 'a crowbar won't make a cracksman;' nor will a good stable of horses and safe jocks 'bring a fellow round,' if he hasn't it here." And he touched his forehead with his forefinger most significantly.

Meanwhile Charles Conway sauntered slowly back to town, on the whole somewhat a sadder man than he had left it in the morning. His friend Jack had spoken much to him of his father and sister, and why, or to what extent, he knew not, but, somehow, they did not respond to his own self-drawn picture of them. Was it that he expected old Kellett would have been a racier version of his son—the same dashing, energetic spirit—seeing all for the best in life, and accepting even its reverses in a half-jocular humor? had he hoped to find in him Jack's careless, easy temper—a nature so brimful of content as to make all around sharers in its own blessings? or had he fancied a "fine old Irish gentleman" of that thorough-bred school he had so often heard of?

Nor was he less disappointed with Bella; he thought she had been handsomer, or, at least, quite a different kind of beauty. Jack was blue-eyed and Saxon-looking, and he fancied that she must be a "blonde,"

with the same frank, cheery expression of her brother ; and he found her dark-haired and dark-skinned, almost Spanish in her look—the cast of her features grave almost to sadness. She spoke, too, but little, and never once reminded him, by a tone, a gesture, or a word, of his old comrade.

Ah ! how these self-created portraits do puzzle and disconcert us through life ! How they will obtrude themselves into the foreground, making the real and the actual but mere shadows in the distance. What seeming contradiction, too, do they create as often as we come into contact with the true and find it all so widely the reverse of what we dreamed of ! How often has the weary emigrant sighed over his own created promised land in the midst of the silent forest or the desolate prairie ! How has the poor health-seeker sunk heavy-hearted amid scenes which, had he not misconstrued them to himself, he had deemed a paradise ! These “phrenographs” are very dangerous paintings, and the more so that we sketch them in unconsciously.

“Jack is the best of them, that’s clear,” said Conway, as he walked along ; and yet, with all his affection for him, the thought did not bring the pleasure it ought to have done.

CHAPTER XV.

A HOME SCENE.

WHEN Paul Kellett described Mr. Davenport Dunn’s almost triumphal entry into Dublin, he doubtless fancied in his mind the splendors that awaited him at home ; the troops of servants in smart liveries, the homage of his household, and the costly entertainment which most certainly should celebrate his arrival. Public rumor had given to the hospitalities of that house a wide-extended fame. The fashionable fishmonger of the capital, his excellency’s “purveyor” of game, the celebrated Italian warehouse, all proclaimed him their best customer. “Can’t let you have that turbot, sir, till I hear from Mr. Dunn.” “Only two pheasants to be had, sir, and ordered for Mr. Dunn.” “The white truffles only taken by one gentleman in town. None but Mr. Dunn would pay the price.” The culinary traditions of his establishment threw the Castle into the background, and Kellett reveled in the notion of the great festivity that now welcomed his return. “Lords and earls—

the biggest salmon in the market—the first men of the land—and lobster sauce—ancient names and good families—with grouse, and ‘Sneyd’s Twenty-one’—that’s what you may call life ! It is wonderful, wonderful !” Now, when Paul enunciated the word “wonderful” in this sense, he meant it to imply that it was shameful, distressing, and very melancholy for the prospects of humanity generally. And then he amused himself by speculating whether Dunn liked it all—whether the unaccustomed elegance of these great dinners did not distress and pain him rather than give pleasure, and whether the very consciousness of his own low origin wasn’t a poison that mingled in every cup he tasted.

“It’s no use talking,” muttered he to himself ; “a man must be bred to it, like everything else. The very servants behind his chair frighten him ; he’s, maybe, eating with his knife, or he’s putting salt where he ought to put sugar, or he doesn’t take the right kind of wine with his meat. Beecher says he’d know any fellow just by that, and then it’s ‘all up’ with him. Wonderful, wonderful !”

How would it have affected these speculations had Kellett known that, while he was indulging them, Dunn had quietly issued by a back door from his house, and, having engaged a car, set out toward Clontarf ? A drearier drive of a dreary evening none need wish for. Occasional showers were borne on the gusty wind, swooping past as though hurrying to some elemental congress far away, while along the shore the waves beat with that irregular plash that betokens wild weather at sea. The fitful moonlight rather heightened than diminished the dismal aspect of the scenery. For miles the bleak strand stretched away, no headland nor even a hillock marking the coast ; the spectral gable of a ruined church being the only object visible against the leaden sky. Little garlands of paper, the poor tributes of the very poor, decorated the graves and the head-stones, and, as they rustled in the night wind, sounded like ghostly whisperings. The driver piously crossed himself as they passed the “uncannie” spot, but Dunn took no heed of it. To wrap his cloak tighter about him, to shelter more closely beneath his umbrella, were all that the dreary scene exacted from him ; and except when a vivid flash of lightning made the horse swerve from the road and dash down into the rough shingle of the strand, he never adverted to the way or the weather.

"What's this—where are we going?" cried he, impatiently.

"'Tis the flash that frightened the beast, yer honner," said the man; "and, if it was plazin' to you, I'd rather turn back again."

"Turn back—where to?"

"To town, yer honner."

"Nothing of the kind; drive on, and quickly too. We have five miles yet before us, and it will be midnight ere we get over them at this rate."

Sulkily and unwillingly did he obey; and, turning from the shore, they entered upon a low, sandy road that traversed a wide and dreary tract, barely elevated a few feet above the sea. By degrees the little patches of grass and fern disappeared, and nothing stretched on either side but low sand hummocks, scantily covered with rushes. Sea-shells crackled beneath the wheels as they went, and after a while the deep booming of the sea, thundering heavily along a sandy shore, apprised them that they had crossed the narrow neck of land which divided two bays.

"Are you quite certain you've taken the right road, my man?" cried Dunn, as he observed something like hesitation in the other's manner.

"It ought to be somewhere hereabout we turn off," said the man, getting down to examine more accurately from beneath. "There was a little cross put up to show the way, but I don't see it."

"But you have been here before. You told me you knew the place."

"I was here onst, and, by the same token, I swore I'd never come again. I lamed the best mare I ever put a collar on, dragging through this deep sand. Wirra, wirra! why the blazes wouldn't he live where other Christians do? There it is now; I see a light. Ah! bother them, it's out again."

Pushing forward as well as he might in the direction he had seen the light, he floundered heavily on, the wheels sinking nearly to the axles, and the horse stumbling at every step.

"Your horse is worth nothing, my good fellow; he hasn't strength to keep his legs," said Dunn, angrily.

"Good or bad, I'll give you lave to broil me on a gridiron if ever ye catch me coming the same road again. Ould Dunn won't have much company if he waits for me to bring them."

"I'll take good care not to tempt you!" said Dunn, angrily.

And now they plodded on in moody silence till they issued forth upon a little

flat space, bounded on three sides by the sea, in the midst of which a small two-storied house stood, defended from the sea by a rough stone breakwater that rose above the lower windows.

"There it is now, bad luck to it!" said the carman, savagely, for his horse was so completely exhausted that he was obliged to walk at his head and lift him at every step.

"You may remain here till I want you," said Dunn, getting down and plodding his way through the heavy sand. Flakes of frothy seadrift swept past him as he went, and the wild wind carried the spray far inland in heavy showers, beating against the walls and windows of the lonely house, and making the slates rattle. A low wall of large stones across the door showed that all entrance by that means was denied; and Dunn turned toward the back of the house, where, sheltered by the low wall, a small door was detectable. He knocked several times at this before any answer was returned. When, at last, a harsh voice from within called out,

"Don't ye hear who it is? confound ye! Open the door at once;" and Dunn was admitted into a large kitchen, where in a great straw chair beside the fire was seated the remains of a once powerful man, and who, although nearly ninety years of age, still preserved a keen eye, a searching look, and a quick impatience of manner rarely observable at his age.

"Well, father, how are you?" said Dunn, taking him affectionately by both hands, and looking kindly in his face.

"Hearty—stout and hearty," said the old man. "When did you arrive?"

"A couple of hours ago. I did not wait for anything but a biscuit and a glass of wine, when I set out here to see you. And you are well?"

"Just as you see: an odd pain or so across the back, and a swimming of the head—a kind of giddiness now and then, that's all. Put the light over there till I have a look at you. You're thinner, Davy, a deal thinner, than when you went away."

"I have nothing the matter with me; a little tired or so, that's all," said Dunn, hastily. "And how are things doing here, father, since I left?"

"There's little to speak of," said the old man. "There never is much doing at this season of the year. You heard, of course, that Gogarty has lost his suit; they're moving for a new trial, but they won't get it. Lanty Moore can't pay up the rest of the purchase for Slanestown, and I told

Hankes to buy it in. Kelly's murderer was taken on Friday last, near Kilbride, and offers to tell, God knows what, if they won't hang him; and Sir Gilbert North is to be the new secretary, if, as the *Evening Mail* says, Mr. Davenport Dunn concurs in the appointment"—and here the old man laughed till his eyes ran over. "That's all the news, Davy, of the last week; and now tell me yours. The papers say you were dining with kings and queens, and driving about in royal coaches all over the continent—was it true, Davy?"

"You got my letters, of course, father?"

"Yes; and I couldn't make out the names, they were all new and strange to me. I want to have from yourself what like the people are—are they as hard-working, are they as 'cute as our own? There's just two things now in the world, coal and industry, sorra more than that. And so you dined with the King of France?"

"With the Emperor, father. I dined twice; he took me over to Fontainebleau and made me stay the day."

"You could tell him many a thing he'd never hear from another, Davy; you could explain to him what's doing here, and how he might imitate it over there—rooting out the old vermin and getting new stock in the land—eh, Davy?"

"He needs no counsels, at least from such as me," said Dunn.

"Faith, he might have worse, far worse. An encumbered estate court would do all his work for him well, and the dirty word 'confiscation' need never be uttered!"

"He knows the road he wants to go," said Dunn, curfly.

"So he may, but that doesn't prove it's the best way."

"Whichever path he takes he'll tread it firmly, father, and that's more than half the battle. If you only saw what a city he has made Paris—"

"That's just what I don't like. What's the good of beautifying, and gilding, or ornamenting what you're going to riddle with grape and smash with round shot? It's like dressing a sweep in a field-marshal's uniform. And we all know where it will be to-morrow or next day."

"That we don't, sir. You're not aware that these spacious thoroughfares, these wide squares, these extended terraces, are so contrived that columns may march and maneuver in them, squadrons charge, and great artillery act through them. The proudest temples of that splendid city serve as bastions,—the great Louvre itself is less a palace than a fortress."

"Ay, ay, ay," cackled the old man, to

whom these revelations opened a new vista of thought. "But what's the use of it after all, Davy; he must trust somebody, and when it comes to that with anybody in life, where's his security, tell me that? But let us talk about home. Is it true the ministry is going out?"

"They're safer than ever; take my word for it, father, that these fellows know the trick of it better than all that went before them. They'll just do whatever the nation and the *Times* dictate to them—a little slower, mayhap, than they are ordered, but they'll do it. They have no embarrassments of a policy of any kind, and the only pretense of a principle they possess is, to sit on the Treasury benches."

"And they're right, Davy—they're right," said the old man, energetically.

"I don't doubt but they are, sir; the duty of the pilot is to take charge of the ship, but not to decide the port she sails for."

"I wish you were one of them, Davy; they'd suit *you*, and you'd suit *them*."

"So we should, sir; and who knows what may turn up? I'm not impatient."

"That's right, Davy; that's the lesson I always taught you; wait—wait!"

"When did you see Driscoll, father?" asked Dunn, after a pause.

"He was here last week; he's up to his ears about that claim to the Beecher estate, Lord—Lord—What's his name?"

"Lackington."

"Yes, Lord Lackington. He says if you were once come home, you'd get him leave to search the papers in the Record Tower at the Castle, and that it would be the making of himself if anything came out of it."

"He's always mare's-nesting, sir," said Dunn, carelessly.

"Faith, he has contrived to feather his own nest, anyhow," said the old man, laughing. "He lent Lord Glengariff five thousand pounds t'other day at six per cent., and on as good security as the bank."

"Does he pretend to have discovered anything new with respect to that claim?"

"He says there's just enough to frighten them, and that *your* help—the two of ye together—could work it well."

"He has not, then, found out the claimant?"

"He has his name, and the regiment he's in, but that's all. He was talking of writing to him."

"If he's wise he'll let it alone. What chance would a poor soldier in the ranks have against a great lord, if he had all the right in the world on his side?"

"So I told him; but he said we could make a fine thing out of it for all that: and somehow, Davy, he's mighty seldom mistaken."

"If he be, sir, it is because he has hitherto only meddled with what lay within his power. He can scheme and plot and track out a clew in the little world he has lived in, but let him be careful how he venture upon that wider ocean of life where his craft would be only a cockboat."

"He hasn't *your* stuff in him, Davy," cried the old man, in ecstasy; and a very slight flush rose to the other's cheek at the words, but whether of pride, or shame, or pleasure, it were hard to say. "I've nothing to offer you, Davy, except a cut of cold pork; could you eat it?" said the old man.

"I'm not hungry, father; I'm tired somewhat, but not hungry."

"I'm tired, too," said the old man, sighing; "but, to be sure, it's time for me—I'll be eighty-nine if I live till the fourth of next month. That's a long life, Davy."

"And it has been an active one, sir."

"I've seen great changes in my time, Davy," continued he, following out his own thoughts. "I was in the Volunteers when we bullied the English, and they've paid us off for it since, that they have! I was one of the jury when Jackson died in the dock, and if he was alive now, maybe it's a lord of the treasury he'd be. Everything is changed, and everybody too. Do you remember Kellett, of Kellett's Court, that used to drive on the Circular road with six horses?"

Dunn nodded an assent.

"His liveries were light-blue and silver, and Lord Castletown's was the same; and Kellett said to him one day, 'My lord,' says he, 'we're always mistaken for each other, couldn't we hit on a way to prevent it?' 'I'm willing,' says my lord, 'if I only knew how.' 'Then I'll tell you,' says Kellett; 'make your people follow your own example and turn their coats, that'll do it,' says he." And the old man laughed till his eyes swam. "What's become of them Kelleths?" added he, sharply.

"Ruined—sold out."

"To be sure, I remember all about it; and the young fellow—Paul was his name—where's he?"

"He's not so very young now," said Dunn, smiling; "he has a clerkship in the Customs; a poor place it is."

"I'm glad of it," said he, fiercely; "there was an old score between us—that's his father and me—and I knew I wouldn't die till it was settled."

"These are not kindly feelings, father," said Dunn, mildly.

"No; but they're natural ones, and that's as good," said the old man, with an energy that seemed to defy his age. "Where would I be now—where would you, if it was only kindness we thought of? There wasn't a man in all Ireland I wanted to be quits with so much as old Kellett of Kellett's Court; and you'd not wonder if you knew why; but I won't tell."

Davenport Dunn's cheek grew crimson and then deadly pale, but he never uttered a word.

"And what's more," continued the old man, energetically, "I'd pay the debt off to his children and his children's children with interest, if I could."

Still was the other silent; and the old man looked angry that he had not succeeded in stimulating the curiosity he had declared he would not gratify.

"Fate has done the work already, sir," said Dunn, gravely. "Look where *we* are and where *they*!"

"That's true—that's true; we have a receipt in full for it all; but I'd like to show it to him; I'd like to say to him, 'Mr. Kellett, once upon a time, when my son there was a child—'"

"Father, father, these memories can neither make us wiser nor happier," broke in Dunn, in a voice of deep emotion. "Had I taken upon me to carry through life the burden of resentments, my back had been broken long ago, and from your own prudent counsels I learned that this could never lead to success. The men whom destiny has crushed are like bankrupt debtors, and to pursue them is but to squander your own resources."

The old man sat moodily, muttering indistinctly to himself, and evidently little moved by the words he had listened to.

"Are you going away already?" cried he, suddenly, as Dunn rose from his chair.

"Yes, sir; I have a busy day before me to-morrow, and need some sleep to prepare for it."

"What will you be doing to-morrow, Davy?" asked the old man, while a bright gleam of pride lighted up his eyes and illuminated his whole face.

"I have deputations to receive—half a dozen at least. The drainage commission, too, will want me, and I must contrive to have half an hour for the inland navigation people; then the attorney-general will call about these prosecutions, and I have not made up my mind about them; and the Castle folk will need some clew to my intentions about the new secretary; there

are some twenty provincial editors, besides, waiting for directions, not to speak of private and personal requests, some of which I must not refuse to hear. As to letters, three days won't get through them; so that you see, father, I do need a little rest beforehand."

"God bless you, my boy—God bless you, Davy," cried the old man, tenderly, grasping his hand in both his own. "Keep the head clear and trust nobody—that's the secret, trust nobody—the only mistakes I ever made in life was when I forgot that rule." And affectionately kissing him, the father dismissed his son, muttering blessings on him as he went.

CHAPTER XVI.

DAVIS VERSUS DUNN.

DAVENPORT DUNN had not exaggerated when he spoke of a busy day for the morrow. As early as eight o'clock was he at breakfast, and before nine the long back parlor, with its deep bay window, was crowded like the waiting-room of a fashionable physician. Indeed, in the faces of anxiety, eagerness, and impatience of those assembled there, there was a resemblance. With a tact which natural shrewdness and long habit could alone confer, Mr. Clowes, the butler, knew exactly where each arrival should be introduced; and while railway directors, bank governors, and great contractors indiscriminately crowded the large dining-room, peers and right honorables filled the front drawing-room, the back one being reserved for law officers of the crown, and such secret emissaries as came on special mission from the Castle. From the hall, crammed with frieze-coated countryfolk, to the little conservatory on the stairs, where a few ladies were grouped, every space was occupied. Either from previous acquaintance, or guided by the name of the visitor, Mr. Clowes had little difficulty in assigning him his fitting place, dropping, as he accompanied him, some few words, as the rank and station of the individual might warrant his addressing to him. "I'll let Mr. Dunn know your lordship is here this instant, he is now just engaged with the chief baron.—He'll see you, Sir Samuel, next.—Mr. Wilcox, you have no chance for two hours, the Foyle deputation is just gone in.—You need scarcely wait to day, Mr. Tobin, there are eighteen before you.—Colonel Craddock, you are to come on Saturday, and bring

the plans with you.—Too late, Mr. Dean; his grace the archbishop waited till a quarter to eleven, the appointment is now for to-morrow at one.—No use in staying, my honest fellow, your own landlord couldn't see Mr. Dunn to-day." In the midst of such brief phrases as these, while he scattered hopes and disappointments about him, he suddenly paused to read a card, stealing a quick glance at the individual who presented it. "'Mr. Annesley Beecher.' By appointment, sir?"

"Well, I suppose I might say yes," muttered the visitor, while he turned to a short and very overdressed person at his side for counsel in the difficulty.

"To be sure—by appointment," said the other confidently, while he bestowed on the butler look of unmistakable defiance.

"And this—gentleman—is with you, sir?" asked the butler, pausing ere he pronounced the designation. "Might I request to have his name?"

"Captain Davis," said the short man, interposing. "Write it under your own, Beecher."

While Mr. Annesley Beecher was thus occupied, and, sooth to say, it was an office he did not discharge with much dispatch, Clowes had ample time to scan the appearance and style of the strangers.

"If you'll step this way, sir," said Clowes, addressing Beecher only, "I'll send in your card at once." And he ushered them as he spoke into the thronged dinner-room, whose crowded company sat silent and moody, each man regarding his neighbor with a kind of reproachful expression, as though the especial cause of the long delay he was undergoing.

"You ought 'to tip' that flunkey, Beecher," said Davis, as soon as they were alone in a window.

"Haven't the tin, Master Grog!" said the other, laughing; while he added in a lower voice, "do you know, Grog, I don't feel quite comfortable here. Rather mixed company, ain't it, for a fellow who only goes out of a Sunday?"

"All safe," muttered Davis. "These are all bank directors, or railway swells. I wish we had the robbing of them!"

"Good deal of humbug about all this, ain't there?" whispered Beecher, as he threw his eyes over the crowded room.

"Of course there is," replied the other. "While he's keeping us all kicking our shins here, he's reading the *Times*, or gossiping with a friend, or weighing a double letter for the post. It was the dentists took up the dodge first, and the nobs followed them."

"I'm not going to stand it much longer, Grog. I tell you I don't feel comfortable."

"Stuff and nonsense. You don't fancy any of these chaps has a writ in his pocket, do you? Why, I can tell you every man in the room. That little fellow with the punch-colored shorts is chairman of the Royal Canal Company. I know *him*, and he knows *me*. He had me 'up' about a roulette-table on board of one of the boats, and if it hadn't been for a trifling incident that occurred to his wife at Boulogne, where she went for the bathing, and which I broke to him in confidence—But stay, he's coming over to speak to me."

"How d'ye do, Captain Davis?" said the stranger, with the air of a man resolved to brave a difficulty, while he threw into the manner a tone of haughty patronage.

"Pretty bobbish, Mr. Hailes; and *you*, the same I hope."

"Well, thank you. You never paid me that little visit you promised at Leixlip."

"I've been so busy of late; up to my ears, as they say. Going to start a new company, and thinking of asking your assistance, too."

"What's the nature of it?"

"Well, it's a kind of a mutual self-securing sort of thing against family accidents. You understand—a species of universal guaranty to insure domestic peace and felicity—a thing that will come home to us all, and I only want a few good names in the direction, to give the shares a push."

Beecher looked imploringly, to try and restrain him; but he went on:

"May I take the liberty to put you down on the committee of management?"

Before any answer could come to this speech, Mr. Clowes called out, in a deep voice,

"Mr. Annesley Beecher and Captain Davis;" and flung wide the door for them to pass out.

"Why did you say that to him, Grog?" whispered Beecher, as they moved along.

"Just because I was watching the way he looked at me. He had a hardy, bold expression on his face that showed he needed a reminder, and so I gave him one. Always have the first blow when you see a fellow means to strike you."

Mr. Davenport Dunn rose as the visitors entered the room, and having motioned to them to be seated, took his place with his back to the fire, a significant intimation that he did not anticipate a lengthy interview. Whether it was that he had not previously settled in his own mind how to

open the object of his visit, or that something in Dunn's manner and appearance, unlike what he anticipated, had changed his intention, but certain is it that Beecher felt confused and embarrassed, and when reminded by Dunn's saying, "I am at your service, sir," he turned a most imploring look toward Davis to come to his rescue. The captain, however, with more tact, paid no attention to the appeal, and Beecher, with an immense effort, stammered out, "I have taken the liberty to call on you. I have come here to-day in consequence of a letter—that is, my brother, Lord Lackington—You know my brother?"

"I have that honor, sir."

"Well, in writing to me a few days back, he added a hurried postscript, saying he had just seen you; that you were then starting for Ireland, where, on your arrival, it would be well I should wait upon you at once."

"Did his lordship mention with what object, sir?"

"I can't exactly say that he did. He said something about your being his man of business, thoroughly acquainted with all his affairs, and so, of course, I expected—I believed, at least—that you might be able to lead the way—to show me the line of country, as one might call it," added he, with a desperate attempt to regain his ease, by recurring to his favorite phraseology.

"Really, sir, my engagements are so numerous, that I have to throw myself on the kindness of those who favor me with a call to explain the object of their visit."

"I haven't got Lackington's letter about me, but if I remember aright, all he said was, 'See Dunn as soon as you can, and he'll put you up to a thing or two,' or words to that effect."

"I regret deeply, sir, that the expressions give me no clew to the matter in hand."

"If this ain't feneing, my name isn't Davis," said Grog, breaking in. "You know well, without any going about the bush, what he comes about; and all this skirmishing is only to see if he's as well 'up' as yourself in his own business. Now then, no more chaff, but go in at once."

"May I ask who is this gentleman?"

"A friend—a very particular friend of mine," said Beecher, quickly. "Captain Davis."

"Captain Davis," repeated Dunn, in a half voice to himself, as if to assist his memory to some effort—"Captain Davis."

"Just so," said Grog, defiantly—"Captain Davis."

"Does his lordship's letter mention I should have the honor of a call from Captain Davis, sir?"

"No; but as he's my own intimate friend—a gentleman who possesses all my confidence—I thought, indeed I felt, the importance of having his advice upon any questions that might arise in this interview."

"I'm afraid, sir, you have subjected your friend to a most unprofitable inconvenience."

"The match postponed till further notice," whispered Grog.

"I beg pardon, sir," said Dunn, not overhearing the remark.

"I was a-saying that no race would come off to-day, in consequence of the inclemency of the weather," said Grog, as he adjusted his shirt-collar.

"Am I to conclude, then," said Beecher, "that you have not any communication to make to me?"

"No you ain't," broke in Grog, quickly. "He don't like *me*, that's all, and he hasn't the manliness to say it."

"On the contrary, sir, I feel all the advantage of your presence on this occasion—all the benefit of that straightforward manner of putting the question, which saves us so much valuable time."

Grog bowed an acknowledgment of the compliment, but with a grin on his face, that showed in what spirit he accepted it.

"Lord Lackington did not speak to you about my allowance?" asked Beecher, losing all patience.

"No, sir, not a word."

"He did not allude to a notion—he did not mention a plan—he did not discuss people called O'Reilly, did he?" asked he, growing more and more confused and embarrassed.

"Not a syllable with reference to such a name escaped him, sir."

"Don't you see," said Grog, rising, "that you'll have to look for the explanation to the second column of the *Times*, where 'A. B. will hear something to his advantage, if he calls without C. D.'"

Davenport Dunn paid no attention to this remark, but stood calmly impassive before them.

"It comes to this, then, that Lackington has been hoaxing me," said Beecher, rising, with an expression of ill-temper on his face.

"I should rather suggest another possibility," said Dunn politely; "that, knowing how far his lordship has graciously reposed his own confidence in me, he has generously extended to me the chance of obtaining the same position of trust on the

part of his brother—an honor I am most ambitious to attain. If you are disengaged on Sunday next," added he, in a low voice, "and would favor me with your company at dinner, alone—quite alone—"

Beecher bowed an assent in silence, casting a cautious glance toward Davis, who was scanning the contents of the morning paper.

"Till then," muttered Dunn, while he added aloud, "A good morning;" and bowed them both to the door.

"Well, you are a soft 'un, there's no denying it," said Davis, as they gained the street.

"What d'ye mean?" cried Beecher, angrily.

"Why, don't you see how you spoiled all? I'd have had the whole story out of him, but you wouldn't give me time to 'work the oracle.' He only wanted to show us how cunning he was—that he was deep, and all that; and when he saw that we were all wonder and amazement about his shrewdness, then, he'd have gone to business."

"Not a bit of it, Master Grog; that fellow's wide awake, I tell you."

"So much the worse for *you* then, that's all."

"Why so?"

"Because you're a-going to dine with him on Sunday next, all alone. I heard it, though you didn't think I was listening, and I saw the look that passed, too, as much as to say, 'We'll not have that fellow;' and that's the reason I say, 'So much the worse for you.'"

"Why, what can he do, with all his craft? He can't make me put my name to paper; and if he did, much good would it do him."

"You can't make running against the like of him," said Grog, contemptuously. "He has an eye in his head like a dog-fox. You've no chance with him. He couldn't double on *me*—he'd not try it; but he'll play *you* like a trout in a fishpond."

"What if I send him an excuse, then—shall I do that?"

"No. You must go, if it was only to show that you suspect nothing; but keep your eyes open; watch the ropes, and come over to me when the 'heat is run.'"

And with this counsel they parted.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE "PENSIONNAT GODARDE."

LET us ask our reader to turn for a brief space from these scenes and these actors,

and accompany us to that rich plain which stretches to the north-west of Brussels, and where, on the slope of the gentle hill, beneath the royal palace of Lacken, stands a most picturesque old house, known as the Château of the Three Fountains. The very type of a chateau of the Low Countries, from its gabled fronts, all covered with festooned rhododendron, to its trim gardens, peopled with leaden deities, and ornamented by the three fountains to which it owes its name, nothing was wanting. From the plump little figure who blew his trumpet on the weather-vane, to the gaudily gilded pleasure-boat that peeped from amidst the tall water-lilies of the fish-pond, all proclaimed the peculiar taste of a people who loved to make nature artificial, and see the instincts of their own quaint natures reproduced in every copse and hedgerow around them.

All the little queer contrivances of Dutch ingenuity were there—moeck shrubs, which blossomed as you touched a spring; jets, that spouted out as you trod on a certain spot; wooden figures, worked by mechanisms, lowered the drawbridge to let you pass; nor was the toll-keeper forgotten, who touched his cap in salutation. Who were they who had designed all these pleasant conceits, and what fate had fallen on their descendants, we know not. At the time we speak of, the chateau was a select pensionnat for ten young ladies, presided over by Madame Godarde, “of whom all particulars might be learned at Cadel’s Library, Old Bond street, or by personal application to the Rev. Pierre Faucher, Evangelical Minister, Adam street, Strand, London.” It was, as we have said, select—the most select of pensionnats. The ten young ladies were chosen after investigations the most scrutinizing; the conditions of the admission verged on the impossible. The mistress realized in her person all the rare attributes of an elevated rank and a rigid Protestantism, while the educational programme was little short of a fellowship course. Just as being a guardsman is supposed to confer a certain credit over a man’s outset in life, it was meant that being an *élève* of Madame Godarde should enter the world with a due and becoming *prestige*; for, while the range of acquirements included something at least from every branch of human science, the real superiority and strength of the establishment lay in the moral culture observed there; and as the female teachers were selected from among the models of the sex, the male instructors were warranted as having triumphed over temptations not

inferior to St. Anthony’s. The ritual of the establishment well responded to all the difficulties of admission. It was almost conventual in strictness; and even to the uniform dress worn by the pupils there was much that recalled the nunnery. The quiet uniformity of an unbroken existence, the changeless fashion of each day’s life, impressed even young and buoyant hearts, and toned down to seriousness spirits that nature had formed to be light and joyous. One by one, they who had entered there underwent this change; a little longer might be the struggle with some, the end was alike to all; nay, not to all! there was one whose temperament resisted to the last, and who, after three years of the duration, was just as unbroken in spirit, just as high in heart, just as gay, as when she first crossed the threshold. Gifted with one of those elastic natures which rise against every pressure, she accepted every hardship as the occasion for fresh resource, and met each new infliction, whether it were a severe task, or even punishment, with a high-hearted resolve not to be vanquished. There was nothing in her appearance that indicated this hardihood: she was a fair, slight girl, whose features were feminine almost to childishness. The gray-blue eyes, shaded with deep lashes; the beautifully formed mouth, on which a half saucy smile so often played; a half timid expression conveyed in the ever-changing color of her cheek, suggested the expression of a highly impressionable and undecided nature; yet this frail, delicate girl, whose bird-like voice reminded one of childhood, swayed and ruled all her companions. She added to these personal graces abilities of a high order. Skilled in every accomplishment, she danced, and sang, and drew, and played better than her fellows; she spoke several modern languages fluently, and even caught up their local dialects with a quickness quite marvelous. She could warble the Venetian barcarole with all the soft accents of an Adriatic tongue, or sing the Bauerlied of the Tyrol with every cadence of the peasant’s fancy. With a memory so retentive that she could generally repeat what she had once read over attentively, she had powers of mimicry that enabled her to produce at will everything noticeable that crossed her. A vivid fancy, too, threw its glittering light over all these faculties, so that even the common-place incidents of daily life grouped themselves dramatically in her mind, and events the least striking were made the origin of situation and sentiment, brilliant with wit and poetry.



"HE HASN'T YOUR STUFF IN HIM, DAVY," CRIED THE OLD MAN, IN ECSTASY; AND A VERY SLIGHT FLUSH ROSE TO THE OTHER'S CHEEK AT THE WORDS, BUT WHETHER OF PRIDE OR SHAME, OR PLEASURE, IT WERE HARD TO SAY. (P. 412.)

Great as all these advantages were, they were aided, and not inconsiderably, by other and adventitious ones. She was reputed to be a great heiress. How, and when, and why this credit attached to her, it were hard to say; assuredly she had never given it any impulse. She spoke, indeed, constantly of her father—her only living relation—as of one who never grudged her any indulgence, and she showed her schoolfellows the handsome presents which from time to time he sent her; these in their costliness—so unlike the gifts common to her age—may possibly have assisted the belief in her great wealth. But however founded, the impression prevailed that she was to be the possessor of millions, and in the course of destiny, to be what her companions called her in jest—a princess.

Nor did the designation seem ill applied. Of all the traits her nature exhibited, none seemed so conspicuous as that of "birth." The admixture of timidity and haughtiness, that blended gentleness with an air of command, a certain instinctive acceptance of whatever deference was shown her as a matter of right and due, all spoke of "blood;" and her walk, her voice, her slightest gesture, were in keeping with this impression. Even they who liked her least, and were most jealous of her fascination, never called her princess in any mockery. No, strange enough, the title was employed with all the significance of respect, and as such did she receive it.

If it were not that, in her capricious moods, nature has molded stranger counterfeits than this, we might incur some risk of incredulity from our reader when we say that the princess was no other than Grog Davis's daughter!

Davis had been a man of stratagems from his very beginning in life. All his gains had been acquired by dexterity and trick. Whatever he had accomplished was won as at a game where some other paid the loss. His mind, consequently, fashioned itself to the condition in which he lived, and sharpness, and shrewdness, and over-reaching seemed to him not alone the only elements of success, but the only qualities worth honoring. He had seen honesty and imbecility so often in company, that he thought them convertible terms; and yet this man—"leg," outcast, knave that he was—rose above all the realities of a life of rognery in one aspiration—to educate his child in purity, to screen her from the contamination of his own set, to bring her up among all the refining influences of care and culture, and

make her, as he said to himself, "the equal of the best lady in the land!" To place her among the well-born and wealthy, to have her where her origin could not be traced, where no clew would connect her with himself, had cost him a greater exercise of ingenuity than the deepest scheme he had ever plotted on the turf. That exchange of references on which Madame Godarde's exclusiveness so peremptorily insisted was only to be met at heavy cost. The distinguished baronet who stood sponsor to Grog Davis's respectability received cash for the least promising of promissory notes in return, and the lady who waited on Madame Godarde in her brougham "to make acquaintance with the person who was to have charge of her young relative," was the distracted mother of a foolish young man who had given bills to Davis for several thousands, and who, by this special mission, obtained possession of the documents. In addition to these direct, there were many other indirect sacrifices. Grog was obliged for a season to forego all the habits and profits of his daily life, to live in a sort of respectable seclusion, his servants in mourning, and himself in the deepest sable for the loss of a wife who had died twelve years before. In fact, he had to take out a species of moral naturalization, the details of which seemed interminable, and served to convince him that respectability was not the easy, indolent thing he had hitherto imagined it.

If Davis had been called on to furnish a debtor and creditor account of the transaction, the sum spent in the accomplishment of this feat would have astonished his assignee. As he said himself, "Fifteen hundred wouldn't see him through it." It is but fair to say that the amount so represented comprised the very worst of bad debts, but Grog cared little for that; his theory was that there wasn't the difference between a guinea and a pound in the best bill from Baring's and the worst paper in Holywell street. "You can always get either your money or your money's worth," said he, "and very frequently the last is the better of the two."

If it was a proud day for the father as he consigned his daughter to Madame Godarde's care, it was no less a happy one for Lizzy Davis, as she found herself in the midst of companions of her own age, and surrounded with all the occupations and appliances of a life of elegance. Brought up from infancy in a small school in a retired part of Cornwall, she had only known her father during the two or three off months of that probationary course of re-

spectability we have alluded to. With all his affection for his child, and every desire to give it utterance, Davis was so conscious of his own defects in education, and the blemishes which his tone of mind and thought would inevitably exhibit, that he had to preserve a sort of estrangement toward her, and guard himself against whatever might prejudice him in her esteem. If, then, by a thousand acts of kindness and liberality he gained on her affection, there was that in his cold and distant manner that as totally repelled all confidence. To escape from the dull uniformity of that dreary home, where a visitor never entered, nor any intercourse with the world was maintained, to a scene redolent of life, with gay, light-hearted associates, all pursuing the same sunny paths, to engage her brilliant faculties in a variety of congenial pursuits wherein there was only so much of difficulty as inspired zeal, to enter on an existence wherein each day imparted the sense of new acquirement, was a happiness that verged on ecstasy. It needed not all the flatteries that surrounded her to make this seem a paradise; but she had these, too, and in so many ways. Some loved her light-heartedness, and that gay spirit that floated like an atmosphere about her; others praised her gracefulness and her beauty; some preferred to these, those versatile gifts of mind that gave her the mastery over whatever she desired to learn; and there were those who dwelt on the great fortune she was to have, and the great destiny that awaited her.

How often in the sportive levity of happy girlhood had they asked her what life she should choose for herself—what station, and what land to live in. They questioned her in all sincerity, believing she had but to wish, to have the existence that pleased her. Then what tender caresses followed! what flattering entreaties that the dear princess would not forget Josephine, or Gertrude, or Julia, in the days of her greatness, but would recognize those who had been her loved schoolfellows years before!

“What a touchstone of your tact will it be, Lizzy, when you’re a duchess,” said one, “to meet one of us in a watering-place, or on a steamboat, and to explain, delicately enough not to hurt us, to his grace the duke, that you knew us as girls, and how provoking if you should call me Jane or Clara!”

“And then the charming condescension of your inquiry if we were married, though a half-bashful and an awkward-looking man should be standing by at our inter-

view, waiting to be presented, and afraid to be spoken to. Or worse than that, the long, terrible pauses in conversation, which show how afraid you are lest we should tumble into reminiscences.”

“Oh, Lizzy, darling,” cried another, “do be a duchess for a moment, and show how you would treat us all. It would be charming.”

“You seem to be forgetting, mesdames,” said she haughtily, “what an upstart you are making of me. This wondrous elevation, which is at once to make me forget my friends and myself, does not present to my eyes the same dazzling effect. In fact, I can imagine myself a duchess to-morrow without losing either my self-respect or my memory.”

“Daisy, dearest, do not be angry with us,” cried one, addressing her by the pet name which they best loved to call her.

“I am rather angry with myself that I should leave no better impression behind me. Yes,” added she, in a tone of sadness, “I am going away.”

“Oh, darling Lizzy—oh, Daisy, don’t say so,” broke out so many voices together.

“Too true! dearest friends,” said she, throwing her arms around those nearest her. “I only learned it this morning. Madame Godarde came to my room to say papa had written for me, and would come over to fetch me in about a fortnight. I ought doubtless to be so happy at the prospect of going home; but I have no mother—I have not either brother or sister; and here, amidst you, I have every tie that can attach the heart. When shall I ever live again amidst such loving hearts?—when shall life be the happy dream I have felt it here?”

“But think of us, Daisy, forlorn and deserted,” cried one, sobbing.

“Yes, Lizzy,” broke in another, “imagine the day-by-day disappointments that will break on us as we discover that this pleasure or that spot owed its charm to you—that it was your voice made the air melody—your accents gave the words their feeling! Fancy us as we find out—as find out we must—that the affection we bore you bound us into one sisterhood—”

“Oh!” burst Lizzy in, “do let me carry away some of my heart to him who should have it all, and make not my last moments with you too painful to bear. Remember, too, that it is but a passing separation; we can and we will write to each other. I’ll never weary of hearing all about you and this dear spot. There’s not a rosebud opening to the morning air but will bring some fragrance to my heart;

and that dear old window ! how often shall I sit at it in fancy, and look over the fair plain before us. Bethink you, too, that I am only the first launched into that wide ocean of life where we are all to meet hereafter."

"And be the dear, dear friends we now are," cried another. And so they hung upon her neck and kissed her, bathing her soft tresses with their tears, and indulging in all the rapture of that sorrow no ecstasy of joy can equal.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME DOINGS OF MR. DRISCOLL.

"THERE it is, Bella," said Kellett, as he entered the cottage at nightfall, and threw a sealed letter on the table. "I hadn't the courage to open it. A fellow came into the office and said, 'Is one Kellett here? This is a letter from Mr. Davenport Dunn. He was Mister, and I was *one* Kellett. Wasn't I low enough when I couldn't say a word to it?—wasn't I down in the world when I had to bear it in silence?'"

"Shall I read it for you?" said she, gently.

"Do, darling; but before you begin, give me a glass of whisky and water. I want courage for it, and something tells me, Bella, I'll need courage too."

"Come, come, papa, this is not like yourself; this is not the old Albuera spirit you are so justly proud of."

"Five-and-thirty years' hard struggling with the world never improved a man's pluck. There wasn't a fellow in the buff's had more life in him than Paul Kellett. It was in general orders never to sell my traps or camp furniture when I was reported missing; for, as General Pack said, 'Kellett is sure to turn up to-morrow, or the day after.' And look at me now!" cried he, bitterly; "and as to selling me out, they don't show me much mercy, Bella, do they?"

She made no reply, but slowly proceeded to break the seal of the letter.

"What a hurry ye're in to read bad news," cried he, peevishly; "can't you wait till I finish this?" And he pointed to the glass, which he sipped slowly, like one wishing to linger over it.

A half melancholy smile was all her answer, and he went on:

"I'm as sure of what's in that letter there as if I read it. Now, mark my words, and I'll just tell you the contents of it. Kellett's Court is sold, the first sale con-

firmed, and the master's report on your poor mother's charge is unfavorable. There's not a perch of the old estate left us, and we're neither more nor less than beggars. There it is for you in plain English."

"Let us learn the worst at once, then," said she, resolutely, as she opened the letter.

"Who told you that was the worst?" broke he in, angrily. "The worst isn't over for the felon in the dock when the judge has finished the sentence, there's the 'drop' to come, after that."

"Father, father!" cried she, pitifully, "be yourself again. Remember what you said the other night, that if we had poor Jack back again you'd not be afraid to face life in some new world beyond the seas, and care little for hardships or humble fortune if we could only be together."

"I was dreaming, I suppose," muttered he, doggedly.

"No; you were speaking out of the fullness of your love and affection; you were showing me how little the accidents of fortune touch the happiness of those resolved to walk humbly, and that once divested of that repining spirit which was ever recalling the past, we should confront the life before us more light of heart than we have felt for many a year."

"I wonder what put it in my head," muttered he, in the same despondent tone.

"Your own stout heart put it there. You were recalling what young Conway was telling us about poor Jack's plans and projects; and how, when the war was over, he'd get the sultan to grant him a patch of land close to the Bosphorus, where he'd build a little kiosk for us all, and we'd grow our own corn and have our own vines and fig-trees, seeking for nothing but what our own industry should give us."

"Dreams, dreams!" said he, sighing drearily. "You may read the letter now." And she began:

"SIR,—By direction of Mr. Davenport Dunn, I have to acquaint you that the commissioners, having overruled the objections submitted by him, will on Tuesday next proceed to the sale of the lands of Kellett's Court, Gorestown, and Kilmaganny, free of all charges and incumbrances thereon, whether by marriage settlement—"

"I told you—that's just what I was saying," burst in Kellett; "there's not sixpence left us!"

She ran hurriedly over to herself the tiresome intricacies that followed, till she came to the end, where a brief postscript ran:

"As your name is among those to be reduced in consequence of the late treasury order regarding the customs, Mr. Dunn hopes you will lose no time in providing yourself with another employment, to which end he will willingly contribute any aid in his power."

A wild, hysterical burst of laughter broke from Kellett as she ceased.

"Isn't there any more good news, Bella? Look over it carefully, darling, and you'll surely discover something else."

The terrible expression of his face shocked her, and she could make no reply.

"I'll wager a crown, if you search well, you'll see something about sending me to jail, or, maybe, transporting me.—Who's that knocking at the door there?" cried he, angrily, as a very loud noise resounded through the little cottage.

"'Tis a gentleman without wants to speak to the master," said the old woman, entering.

"I'm engaged, and can't see anybody," rejoined Kellett, sternly.

"He says it's the same if he could see Miss Bella," reiterated the old woman.

"He can't, then; she's engaged too."

The woman still lingered at the door, as if she expected some change of purpose.

"Don't you hear me?—don't you understand what I said?" cried he passionately.

"Tell him that your master cannot see him," said Bella.

"If I don't make too bould—if it's not too free of me—maybe you'd exense the liberty I'm taking," said a man, holding the door slightly open, and projecting a round bullet-head and a very red face into the room.

"Oh, Mr. Driscoll," cried Bella. "Mrs. Hawkshaw's brother, papa," whispered she quietly to her father, who, notwithstanding the announcement, made no sign.

"If Captain Kellett would pardon my intrusion," said Driscoll, entering with a most submissive air, "he'd soon see that it was at last with good intentions I came out all the way here on foot, and a bad night besides—a nasty little drizzling rain and mud—such mud!" And he held up in evidence a foot about the size of an elephant's.

"Pray sit down, Mr. Driscoll," said Bella, placing a chair for him. "Papa was engaged with matters of business when you knocked—some letters of consequence."

"Yes, miss, to be sure, and didn't want to be disturbed," said Driscoll, as he sat down, and wiped his heated forehead.

"I'm often the same way myself: but when I'm at home, and want nobody to disturb me, I put on a little brown-paper cap I have, and that's the sign no one's to talk to me."

Kellett burst into a laugh at the conceit, and Driscoll so artfully joined in the emotion, that when it ceased they were already on terms of intimacy.

"You see what a strange crayture I am? God help me," said Driscoll, sighing. "I have to try as many dodges with myself as others does be using with the world, for my poor head goes wanderin' away about this, that, and the other, and I'm never sure it will think of what I want."

"That's a sad case," said Kellett, compassionately.

"I was like everybody else till I had the fever," continued Driscoll, confidentially. "It was the spotted fever, not the scarlet fever, d'ye mind; and when I came out of it on the twenty-ninth day, I was the same as a child, simple and innocent. You'd laugh now if I told you what I did with the first half-crown I got. I bought a bag of marbles!"

And Kellett did laugh heartily; less, perhaps, at the circumstance than at the manner and look of him who told it.

"Ay, faith, marbles!" muttered Driscoll to himself; "'tis a game I'm mighty fond of."

"Will you take a little whisky-and-water? Hot or cold?" asked Kellett, courteously.

"Just a taste, to take off the deadness of the water," said Driscoll. "I'm obleeged to be as cautious as if I was walkin' on eggs. Dr. Dodd says to me, 'Terry,' says he, 'you had never much brains in your best days, but now you're only a sheet of thin paper removed from an idiot, and if you touch spirits it's all up with you.'"

"That was plain speaking, anyhow," said Kellett, smiling.

"Yes," said Driscoll, while he seemed struggling to call up some reminiscence; and then, having succeeded, said, "ay, 'There's five-and-twenty in Swift's this minute,' said he, 'with their heads shaved, and in blue cotton dressing-gowns, more sensible than yourself.' But you see, there was one thing in my favor, I was always harmless."

The compassionate expression with which Kellett listened to this declaration guaranteed how completely the speaker had engaged his sympathy.

"Well, well," continued Driscoll, "maybe I'm just as happy, ay, happier than ever I was! Every one is kind and good-na-

tured to me now. Nobody takes offense at what I say or do; they know well in their hearts that I don't mean any harm."

"That you don't," broke in Bella, whose gratitude for many a passing word of kindness, as he met her of a morning, willingly seized upon the opportunity for acknowledgment.

"My daughter has often told me of the kind way you always spoke to her."

"Think of that, now," muttered Terry to himself; "and I saying all the while to my own heart, 'Tis a proud man you ought to be to-day, Terry Driscoll, to be giving 'Good-morning' to Miss Kellett, of Kellett's Court, the best ould blood in your own county.'"

"Your health, Driscoll—your health," cried Kellett, warmly. "Let your head be where it will, your heart's in the right place, anyhow."

"Do you say so, now?" asked he, with all the eagerness of one putting a most anxious question.

"I do, and I'd swear it," cried Kellett, resolutely. "'Tis too clever and too 'cute the world's grown; they were better times when there was more good feeling and less learning."

"Indeed—indeed, it was the remark I made to my sister Mary the night before last," broke in Driscoll. "'What is there,' says I, 'that Miss Kellett can't teach them? they know the rule of three and What's-his-name's Questions as well as I know my prayers. You don't want them to learn mensuration and the use of the globes?' 'I'll send them to a school in France,' says she; 'it's the only way to be genteel.'"

"To a school in France?" cried Bella; "and is that really determined on?"

"Yes, miss; "they're to go immediately, and ye see that was the reason I walked out here in the rain to-night. I said to myself, 'Terry,' says I, 'they'll never say a word about this to Miss Kellett till the quarter is up; be off, now, and break it to her at once.'"

"'It was so like your own kind heart,'" burst out Bella.

"Yes," muttered Driscoll, as if in a reverie, "that's the only good o' me now, I can think of what will be of use to others."

"Didn't I tell you we were in a vein of good luck, Bella?" said Kellett, between his teeth; "didn't I say awhile ago there was more coming?"

"'But,' says I to Mary," continued Driscoll, "'you must take care to recommend Miss Kellett among your friends—"

Kellett dashed his glass down with such

force on the table as to frighten Driscoll, whose speech was thus abruptly cut short, and the two men sat staring fixedly at each other. The expression of poor Terry's vacant face, in which a struggling effort to deprecate anger was the solitary emotion readable, so overcame Kellett's passion, that, stooping over, he grasped the other's hand warmly, and said,

"You're a kind-hearted creature, and you'd never hurt a living soul. I'm not angry with you."

"Thank you, Captain Kellett—thank you," cried the other, hurriedly, and wiped his brow, like one vainly endeavoring to follow out a chain of thought collectedly. "Who is this told me that you had another daughter?"

"No," said Kellett; "I have a son."

"Ay, to be sure! so it was a son, they said, and a fine strapping young fellow, too. Where is he?"

"He's with his regiment, the Rifles, in the Crimea."

"Dear me, now, to think of that,—fighting the French just the way his father did."

"No," said Kellett, smiling, "it's the Russians he's fighting, and the French are helping him to do it."

"That's better any day," said Driscoll: "two to one is a pleasanter match. And so he's in the Rifles?" And here he laid his head on his hand and seemed lost in thought. "Is he a captain?" asked he, after a long pause.

"No, not yet," said Kellett, while his cheek flushed at the evasion he was practicing.

"Well, maybe he will soon," resumed the other, relapsing once more into deep thought. "There was a young fellow joined them in Cork just before they sailed, and I lent him thirty shillings, and he never paid me. I wonder what became of him? Maybe he's killed."

"Just as likely," said Kellett, carelessly.

"Now, would your son be able to make him out for me?—not for the sake of the money, for I wouldn't speak of it, but out of regard for him, for I took a liking to him; he was a fine, handsome fellow, and bold as a lion."

"He mightn't be in Jack's battalion, or he might, and Jack not know him. What was his name?" said Kellett, in some confusion.

"I'll tell you if you pledge your word you'll never say a syllable about the money for I can't think but he forgot it."

"I'll never breathe a word about it."

"And will you ask your son all about him—if he likes the sarvice, or if he'd rather be at home, and how it agrees with him?"

"And the name?"

"The name?—I wrote it down on a bit of paper just for my own memory's sake, for I forget everything—the name is Conway—Charles Conway."

"Why, that's the very—" When he got so far, a warning look from Bella arrested Kellett's voice, and he ceased speaking, looking eagerly at his daughter for some explanation. Had he not been so anxious for some clew to her meaning, he could scarcely have failed to be struck by the intense keenness of the glance Driscoll turned from the countenance of the father to that of the daughter. She, however, marked it, and with such significance, that a deathlike sickness crept suddenly over her, and she sank slowly down into a seat.

"You were saying, 'That's the very—'" said Driscoll, repeating the words, and waiting for the conclusion.

"The very name we read in a newspaper," said Bella, who, with a sort of vague instinct of some necessity for concealment, at once gave this evasive reply: "He volunteered for somewhere, or was first inside a battery, or did something or other very courageous."

"It wasn't killed he was?" said Driscoll, in his habitual tone.

"No, no," cried Kellett, "he was all safe."

"Isn't it a queer thing? but I'd like to hear of him! There was some Conways connections of my mother's, and I can't get it out of my head but he might be one of them. It's not a common name, like Driscoll."

"Well, Jaek will, maybe, be able to tell you about him," said Kellett, still under the spell of Bella's caution.

"If you would tell me on what points you want to be informed," said Bella, "I shall be writing to my brother in a day or two. Are there any distinct questions you wish to be answered?"

The calm but searching glance that accompanied these few words gradually gave way to an expression of pity as Bella gazed at the hopeless imbecility of poor Driscoll's face, wherein not a gleam of intelligence now lingered. It was as if the little struggle of intellect had so exhausted him that he was incapable of any further effort of reason. And there he sat, waiting till the returning tide of thought should flow back upon his stranded intelligence.

"Would you like him to be questioned

about the family?" said she, looking good-naturedly at him.

"Yes, miss—yes," said he, half dreamily; "that is, I wouldn't like my own name, poor crayture as I am, to be mentioned, but if you could anyways find out if he was one of the Conways of Abergedley—they were my mother's people—if you could find out that for me, it would be a great comfort."

"I'll charge myself with the commission," said Bella, writing down the words, "Conway of Abergedley."

"Now there was something else, if my poor head could only remember it," said Driscoll, whose countenance displayed the most complete picture of a puzzled intelligence.

"Mix yourself another tumbler, and you'll think of it by-and-by," said Kellett, courteously.

"Yes," muttered Driscoll, accepting the suggestion at once. "It was something about mustard-seed, I think," added he, after a pause; "they say it will keep fresh for two years if you put in a blue paper bag—deep blue is best." A look of sincere compassion passed between Kellett and his daughter, and Driscoll went on—"I don't think it was that, though I wanted to remember." And he fell into deep reflection for several minutes, at the end of which he started abruptly up, finished off his glass, and began to button up his coat in preparation for the road.

"Don't go till I see what the night looks like," cried Kellett, as he left the room to examine the state of the weather.

"If I should be fortunate enough to obtain any information, how shall I communicate with you?" asked Bella, addressing him hastily, as if to profit by the moment of their being alone.

Driscoll looked fixedly at her for a second or two, and gradually the expression of his face settled down into its habitual cast of unmeaning imbecility, while he merely muttered to himself, "No evidence—throw out the bills."

She repeated her question, and in a voice to show that she believed herself well understood.

"Yes!" said he, with a vacant grin—"yes! but they don't agree with everybody."

"There's a bit of a moon out now, and the rain has stopped," said Kellett, entering, "so that it wouldn't be friendly to detain you."

"Good-night, good-night," said Driscoll, hurriedly; "that spirit is got up to my head. I feel it. A pleasant journey

to you both, and be sure to remember me to Mrs. Miller." And with these incoherent words he hastened away, and his voice was soon heard singing cheerily, as he plodded his way toward Dublin.

"That's the greatest affliction of all," said Kellett, as he sat down and sipped his glass. "There's nothing like having one's faculties, one's reason, clear and unclouded. I wouldn't be like that poor fellow there to be as rich as the Duke of Leinster."

"It is a strange condition," said Bella, thoughtfully. "There were moments when his eyes lighted up with a peculiar significance, as if at intervals his mind had regained all its wonted vigor. Did you remark that?"

"Indeed, I did not. I saw nothing of the kind," said Kellett, peevishly. "By the way, why were you so cautious about Conway?"

"Just because he begged that his name might not be mentioned. He said that some trifling debts were still hanging over him, from his former extravagance; and though all in course of liquidation, he dreaded the importunate appeals of creditors, so certain to pour in if they heard of his being in Dublin."

"Every one has his troubles!" muttered Kellett, as he sank into a moody reflection over his own, and sipped his liquor in silence.

Turned us now follow Driscoll, who, having turned the corner of the lane, out of earshot of the cottage, suddenly ceased his song and walked briskly along toward town. Rapidly as he walked, his lips moved more rapidly still, as he maintained a kind of conversation with himself, bursting out from time to time with a laugh, as some peculiar conceit amused him. "To be sure, a connection by the mother's side," said he. "One has a right to ask after his own relations! And for all I know, my grandmother was a Conway. The onld fool was so near pokin' his foot in it, and letting out that he knew him well. She's a deep one, that daughter; and it was a bould stroke the way she spoke to me when we were alone. It was just as much as to say, 'Terry, put your cards down, for I know your hand.' 'No, miss,' says I, 'I've a thrump in the heel of my fist that ye never set eyes on. Ha, ha, ha!' but she's deep for all that—mighty deep; and if it was safe, I wish we had her in the plot! Ay! but is it safe, Mr. Driscoll? By the virtue of your oath, Terry Driscoll, do you believe she wouldn't turn on you? She's a fine-looking girl, too," added he,

after an interval. "I wish I knew her sweetheart, for she surely has one. Terry, Terry, ye must bestir yourself; ye must be up early and go to bed late, my boy. You're not the man ye were before ye had that 'faver'—that spotted faver!"—Here he laughed till his eyes ran over. "What a poor crature it has left ye—no memory—no head for anything!" And he actually shook with laughter at the thought. "Poor Terry Driscoll, ye are to be pitied!" said he, as he wiped the tears from his face. "Isn't it a sin and a shame there's no one to look after ye?"

CHAPTER XIX.

DRISCOLL IN CONFERENCE.

"NOT come in yet, sir, but he is sure to be back soon," said Mr. Clowes, the butler, to Terry Driscoll, as he stood in the hall of Mr. Davenport Dunn's house, about eleven o'clock of the same night we have spoken of in our last chapter.

"You're expecting him then?" asked Driscoll, in his own humble manner.

"Yes, sir," said Clowes, looking at his watch; "he ought to be here now. We have a deal of business to get through to-night, and several appointments to keep; but he'll see you, Mr. Driscoll. He always gives directions to admit *you* at once."

"Does he really?" asked Driscoll, with an air of perfect innocence.

"Yes," said Clowes, in a tone at once easy and patronizing, "he likes *you*. You are one of the very few who can amuse him. Indeed, I don't think I ever heard him laugh, what I'd call a hearty laugh, except when you're with him."

"Isn't that quare now!" exclaimed Driscoll. "Lord knows it's little fun is in me now!"

"Come in and take a chair—charge you nothing for the sitting," said Clowes, laughing at his own smartness as he led the way into a most comfortably furnished little room which formed his own sanctum.

The walls were decorated with colored prints and drawings of great projected enterprises—peat fuel manufactories of splendid pretensions, American packet stations on the west coast, of almost regal architecture, vied with ground plans of public parks and ornamental model farms; fish-curing institutions, and smelting-houses, and beetroot sugar-buildings, graced scenes of the very wildest desolation, and, by an active representation of life and movement,

seemed to typify the wealth and prosperity which enterprise was sure to carry into regions the very dreariest and least promising.

"A fine thing that, Mr. Driscoll," said Clowes, as Terry stood admiring a large and highly-colored plate, wherein several steam-engines were employed in supplying mill-streams with water from a vast lake, while thousands of people seemed busily engaged in spade labor on its borders. "That is the 'Lough Corrib Drainage and Fresh Strawberry Company,' capital eight hundred thousand pounds! Chemical analysis has discovered that the soil of drained lands, treated with a suitable admixture of the alkaline carbonates, is peculiarly favorable to the growth of the strawberry—a fruit whose properties are only now receiving their proper estimate. The strawberry, you are, perhaps, not aware, is a great antiscorbutic. Six strawberries, taken in a glass of diluted malic acid of a morning, fasting, would restore the health of those fine fellows we are now daily losing in such numbers in the Crimea. I mean, of course, a regular treatment of three months of this regimen, with due attention to diet, cleanliness, and habit of exercise—all predisposing elements removed—all causes of mental anxiety withdrawn. To this humane discovery this great industrial speculation owes its origin. There, you see the engines at full work; the lake is in process of being drained, the water being all utilized by the mills you see yonder, some of which are compressing the strawberry pulp into a paste for exportation. Here are the people planting the shoots; those men in blue, with the watering-pots, are the alkaline feeders, who supply the plant with the chemical preparation I mentioned, the strength being duly marked by letters, as you see. B. C. P. means bi-carbonate of potash; S. C. S., sub-carbonate of soda; and so on. Already, sir," said he, raising his voice, "we have contracts for the supply of twenty-eight tons a week, and we hope," added he, with a tremulous fervor in his voice, "to live to see the time when the table of the poorest peasant in the land will be graced by the health-conducing condiment."

"With all my heart and soul I wish you success," said Driscoll; while he muttered under his breath what sounded like a fervid prayer for the realization of this blessed hope.

"Of that we are pretty certain, sir," said Clowes, pompously; "the shares are now one hundred and twelve—paid up in two calls, thirty-six pounds ten shillings.

He," said Clowes, with a jerk of his thumb toward Mr. Dunn's room meant to indicate its owner—"he don't like it, calls it a bubble, and all that, but I have known him mistaken, sir—ay, and more than once. You may remember that vein of yellow marble—*giallo anteo*, they call it—found on Martin's property—That's his knock; here he comes now," cried he, hurrying away to meet his master, and leaving the story of his blunder unrelated. "All right," said Clowes, re-entering hastily; "you can go in now. He seems in a precious humor to-night," added he, in a low whisper; "something or other has gone wrong with him."

Driscoll had scarcely closed the inner door of cloth that formed the last security of Davenport Dunn's privacy, when he perceived the correctness of Mr. Clowes's information. Dunn's brow was dark and clouded, his face slightly flushed, and his eye restless and excited.

"What is it so very pressing, Driscoll, that couldn't wait till to-morrow?" said he, peevishly, and not paying the slightest attention to the other's courteous salutation.

"I thought this was the time you liked best," said Driscoll, quietly; "you always said, 'Come to me when I've done for the day—'"

"But who told you I had done for the day? That pile of letters has yet to be answered—many of them I have not even read. The attorney-general will be here in a few minutes about these prosecutions, too."

"That's a piece of good luck, anyhow," said Driscoll, quickly.

"How so? What d'ye mean?"

"Why, we could just get a kind of traveling opinion out of him about this case."

"What nonsense you talk," said Dunn, angrily; "as if a lawyer of standing and ability would commit himself by pronouncing on a most complicated question, the details of which he was to gather from *you!*" The look and emphasis that accompanied the last word were to the last degree insulting, but they seemed to give no offense whatever to him to whom they were addressed; on the contrary, he met them with a twinkle of the eye, and a droll twist of the mouth, as he muttered half to himself:

"Yes, God help me, I'll never set the Liffey on fire!"

"You might, though, if you had it heavily insured," said Dunn, with a savage irony in his manner that might well have provoked rejoinder; but Driscoll was proof

against whatever he didn't want to resent, and laughed pleasantly at the sarcasm.

"You were dining at the lodge, I suppose, to-day?" asked he, eager to get the conversation afloat at any cost.

"No, at Luscombe's—the chief secretary's," said Dunn, curtly.

"They say he's a clever fellow," said Driscoll.

"They are heartily welcome to this opinion who think so," broke in Dunn, peevishly. "Let them call him a fortunate one if they like, and they'll be nearer the mark.—What of this affair?" said he, at last. "Have you found out Conway?"

"No, but I learned that he dined and passed the evening with ould Paul Kellett. He came over to Ireland to bring him some news of his son, who served in the same regiment, and so I went out to Kellett to pump them; but for some reason or other they're as close as wax. The daughter beats all ever you saw! she tried a great stroke of cunning with me, but it wouldn't do."

"It was your poor head and the spotted fever—eh?" said Dunn, laughing.

"Yes," said Driscoll; "I never was rightly myself since that." And he laughed heartily.

"This is too slow for me, Driscoll; you must find out the young fellow at once, and let me see him. I have read over the statement again, and it is wonderfully complete. Hatchard has it now before him, and will give me his opinion by Sunday next. On that same day Mr. Beecher is to dine with me; now if you could manage to have Conway here on Monday morning, I'd probably be in a condition to treat openly with him."

"You're going too fast—too fast entirely," said Driscoll; "sure if Conway sees the road before him, he may just thravel it without us at all."

"I'll take care he shall not know which path to take, Driscoll; trust me for that. Remember that the documents we have are all-essential to him. Before he sees one of them our terms must be agreed on."

"I'll have ten thousand paid down on the nail. 'Tis eight years I am collectin' them papers. I bought that shooting-lodge at Banthry, that belonged to the Beechers, just to search the old cupboard in the dinner-room. It was plastered over for fifty years, and Denis Magrath was the only man living knew where it was."

"I'm aware of all that. The discovery—if such it prove—was all your own, Driscoll; and as to the money remuneration, I'll not defraud you of a sixpence."

"There was twelve hundred pounds," continued Driscoll, too full of his own train of thought to think of anything else, "for a wretched ould place with the roof fallin' in, and every stack of it rotten! Eight years last Michaelmas—that's money, let me tell you! and I never got more than thirty pounds any year out of it since."

"You shall be paid, and handsomely paid."

"Yes," said Terry, nodding.

"You can have good terms on either side."

"Yes, or a little from both," added Driscoll, dryly.

CHAPTER XX.

AN EVENING WITH GROG DAVIS.

It was late at night, and Grog Davis sat alone by a solitary candle in his dreary room. The fire had long burned out, and great pools of wet, driven by the beating rain through the rickety sashes, soaked the ragged carpet that covered the floor, while frequent gusts of storm scattered the slates, and shook the foundations of the frail building.

To all seeming, he paid little attention to the poor and comfortless features of the spot. A short square bottle of Hollands, and a paper of coarse cigars beside him, seemed to offer sufficient defense against such cares, while he gave up his mind to some intricate problem which he was working out with a pack of cards. He dealt, and shuffled, and dealt again, with marvelous rapidity. There was that in each motion of the wrist, in every movement of the finger, that bespoke practiced manipulation, and a glance quick as lightning on the board was enough to show him how the game fared.

"Passed twelve times," muttered he to himself, then added aloud, "Make your game, gentlemen, make your game. The game is made. Red, thirty-two. Now for it, Grog, man or a mouse, my boy. Mouse it is! by ——" cried he, with an infamous oath. "Red wins! Confound the cards!" cried he, dashing them on the floor. "Two minutes ago I had enough to live on the rest of my days. I appeal to any man in the room," said he, with a look of peculiar defiance around him, "if he ever saw such ill luck! There's not another fellow breathing ever got it like me!" And as he spoke, he arose and walked up and down the chamber, frowning savagely,

and turning glances of insolent meaning on every side of him. At last, approaching the table, he filled out a glass of gin and drank it off, and then, stooping down, he gathered up the cards and rescated himself. "Take you fifty on the first ace," cried he, addressing an imaginary bettor, while he began to deal out the cards in two separate heaps. "Won!" exclaimed he, delightedly. "Go you double or quits, sir—Any gentleman with another fifty?—A pony if you like, sir?—Done! Won again, by jingo! This is the only game, after all—decided in a second. I make the bank, gentlemen, two hundred in the bank. Why, where are the bettors this evening? This is only punting, gentlemen. Any one say five hundred—four—three—one hundred—for the first knave?" And the cards fell from his hands with wondrous rapidity. "Now, if no one is inclined to play, let's have a broiled bone," said he, rising, and bowing courteously around him.

"Second the motion!" cried a cheery voice, as the door opened and Annesley Beecher entered. "Why, Grog, my hearty, I thought you had a regular flock of pigeons here. I heard you talking as I came up the stairs, and fancied you were doing a smart stroke of work."

"What robbery have *you* been at with that white choker and that gimcrack waistcoat?" said Davis, sulkily.

"Dining with Dunn, and a capital dinner he gave me. I'm puzzled to say whether I like his wine or his cookery best."

"Were there many there?"

"None but ourselves."

"Lord! how he must have worked you!" cried Davis, with an insolent grin.

"Ain't such a flat as you think me, Master Grog. Solomon was a wise man, and Sampson a strong one, and A. B. can hold his own with most 'in the ruck.'"

A most contemptuous look was the only answer Davis condescended to this speech. At last, after he had lighted a fresh cigar, and puffed it into full work, he said, "Well, what was it he had to say to you?"

"Oh, we talked away of everything; and, by Jupiter! he knows a little of everything. Such a memory, too; remembers every fellow that was in power the last fifty years, and can tell you how he was 'squared,' for it's all on the 'cross' with *them*, Grog, just as in the ring. Every fellow rides to order, and half the running one sees is no race! Any hot water to be had?"

"No, there's cold in that jug yonder. Well, go on with Dunn."

"He is very agreeable, I must say; for, besides having met everybody, he knows all their secret history. How this one got out of his scrape, and why that went into the hole. You see in a moment how much he must be trusted, and that he can make his book on life as safe as the Bank of England. Fearfully strong that gin is!"

"No, it ain't," said Grog, rudely; "it's not the velvety tippie Dunn gave you, but it's good British gin, that's what it is."

"You wouldn't believe, too, how much he knows about women! He's up to everything that's going on in town. Very strange that, for a fellow like him. Don't you think so?"

Davis made no answer, but puffed away slowly. "And after women, what came next?"

"He talked next—let me see—about books. How he likes Becky Sharp—how he enjoys her! He says that character will do the same service as the published discovery of some popular fraud; and that the whole race of Beckys now are detected swindlers—nothing less."

"And what if they are; is that going to prevent their cheating? Hasn't the world always its crop of flats coming out in succession like green peas? What did he turn to after that?"

"Then we had a little about the turf."

"He don't know anything about the turf!" said Grog, with intense contempt.

"I'm not so sure of that," said Beecher, cautiously.

"Did he speak of *me* at all?" said Grog, with a peculiar grin.

"No; only to ask if you were the same Captain Davis that was mentioned in that affair at Brighton."

"And what did you say?"

"Said! Not knowing couldn't tell, Master Grog. Knew you were a great friend of my brother Lackington's, and always hand and glove with Blanchard and the swells."

"And how did he take that?"

"Said something about two of the same name, and changed the subject."

Davis drew near the table, and taking up the cards began to shuffle them slowly like one seeking some excuse for a moment of uninterrupted reflection. "I've found out the way that Yankee fellow does the king," said he, at last. "It's not the common bridge that everybody knows. It's a Mississippi touch, and a very neat one. Cut them now wherever you like."

Beecher cut the cards with all due care, and leaned eagerly over the table.

"King of diamonds!" cried Grog, slapping the card on the board.

"Do it again," said Beecher, admiringly; and once more Davis performed the dexterous feat.

"It's a nick!" cried Beecher, examining the edge of the card minutely.

"It ain't no such thing!" said Davis, angrily. "I'd give you ten years to find it out, and twenty to do it, and you'd fail in both."

"Let's see the dodge, Grog," said Beecher, half coaxingly.

"You don't see *my* hand till you put *yours* on the table," said Davis, fiercely. Then crossing his arms before him, and fixing his red fiery eyes on Beecher's face, he went on: "What do you mean by this fencing—just tell me what you mean by it?"

"I don't understand you," said Beecher, whose features were now of ashy paleness.

"Then you shall understand me!" cried Davis, with an oath. "Do you want me to believe that Dunn had you to dine with him all alone—just to talk about politics of which you know nothing, or books of which you know less. That he'd give you four precious hours of a Sunday evening to hear your opinions about men or women, or things in general. Do you ask me to swallow that, sir?"

"I ask you to swallow nothing," stammered out Beecher, in whose heart pride and fear were struggling for the mastery. "I have told you what we spoke of; if anything else passed between us, perhaps it was of a private and personal nature; perhaps it referred to family topics; perhaps I might have given a solemn assurance not to reveal the subject of it to any one."

"You did—did you?" said Davis, with a sneer.

"I said, perhaps I might have done so. I didn't say I had."

"And so you think—you fancy—that you're going to double on me," said Davis, rising, and advancing toward him with a sort of insulting menace. "Now, look here, my name ain't Davis but if ever you try it—try it, I say, because as to doing it, I dare you to your face—but if you just try it, twelve hours won't pass over till the dock of a police-court is graced by the Honorable Annesley Beecher on a charge of forgery."

"Oh, Davis!" cried Beecher, as he placed his hands over the other's lips, and glanced in terror through the room. "There never was anything I didn't tell you—you're the only man breathing that knows me."

"And I do know you, by Heaven, I do!" cried the other, savagely; "and I know you'd sneak out of my hands to-morrow, if you dared; but this I tell you, when you leave *mine* it will be to exchange into the turnkey's. You fancy that because I see you are a fool that I don't suspect you to be a crafty one. Ah! what a mistake you make there!"

"But listen to me, Grog—just hear me."

"My name's Davis, sir—Captain Davis—let me hear you call me anything else!"

"Well, Davis, old fellow—the best and truest friend ever fellow had in the world—now what's all this about? I'll tell you every syllable that passed between Dunn and myself. I'll give you my oath, as solemnly as you can dictate it to me, not to conceal one word. He made me swear never to mention it. It was *he* that imposed the condition on me. What he said was this: 'It's a case where you need no counsel, and where any counsel would be dangerous. He who once knows your secret will be in a position to dictate to you. Lord Lackington must be your only adviser, since his peril is the same as your own.'"

"Go on," said Davis, sternly, as the other seemed to pause too long.

Beecher drew a long breath, and, in a voice faint and broken, continued: "It's a claimant to the title—a fellow who pretends he derives from the elder branch—the Conway Beechers. All stuff and nonsense—they were extinct two hundred years ago—but no matter, the claim is there, and so circumstantially got up, and so backed by documents and the rest of it, that Lackington is frightened—frightened out of his wits. The mere exposure, the very rumor of the thing, would distract *him*. He's proud as Lucifer—and then he's hard up; besides, he wants a loan, and Dunn tells him there's no getting it till this affair is disposed of, and that he has hit on the way to do it."

"As how?" said Davis, dryly.

"Well," resumed Beecher, whose utterance grew weaker and less audible at every word, "Lackington, you know, has no children. It's very unlikely he ever will, now; and Dunn's advice is, that for a life interest in the title and estates I should bind myself not to marry. That fellow then, if he can make good his claim, comes in as next of kin after *me*; and as to who or what comes after *me*," cried he, with more energy, "it matters devilish little. Once 'toes up,' and Annesley Beecher won't fret over the next match that comes off—ch Grog, old fellow?" And he en-

deavored by a forced jocularity to encourage his own sinking heart.

"Here's a shindy!" said Grog, as he mixed himself a fresh tumbler and laid his arms crosswise on the table; "and so it's no less than the whole stakes is on this match?"

"Title and all," chimed in Beecher.

"I wasn't thinking of the title," said Grog, gruffly, as he relapsed into a moody silence. "Now, what does my lord say to it all?" asked he, after a long pause.

"Lackington?—Lackington says nothing, or next to nothing. You read the passage in his letter where he says, 'Call on Dunn,' or 'speak to Dunn,' or something like that—he didn't even explain about what; and then you may remember the foolish figure we cut on that morning we waited on Dunn ourselves, not being able to say why or how we were there."

"I remember nothing about cutting a foolish figure anywhere, or any time. It's not very much *my* habit. It ain't *my* way of business."

"Well, I can't say as much," said Beecher, laughing; "and I own frankly I never felt less at ease in my life."

"That's *your* way of business," said Grog, nodding gravely at him.

"Every fellow isn't born as sharp as you, Davis. Samson was a wise man—no, Solomon was a wise man—"

"Leave Samson and Solomon where they are," said Grog, puffing his cigar. "What we have to look to here, is, whether there be a claim at all, and then what it's worth. The whole affair may be just a cross between this fellow Dunn and one of his own pals. Now it's my lord's business to see to that. *You* are only the *second* horse all this while. If my lord knows that he can be disqualified, he's wide awake enough to square the match, he is. But it may be that Dunn hasn't put the thing fairly before him. Well, then, you must compare your book with my lord's. You'll have to go over to him, Beecher." And the last words were uttered with a solemnity that showed they were the result of a deep deliberation.

"It's all very well, Master Davis, to talk of going over to Italy; but where's the tin to come from?"

"It must be had somehow," said Davis, sententiously. "Ain't there any fellows about would give you a name to a bit of stiff, at thirty-one days' date?"

"Pumped them all dry long ago!" said Beecher, laughing. "There's not a man in the garrison would join me to spoil a stamp; and, as to the civilians, I scarcely know one who isn't a creditor already."

"You are always talking to me of a fellow called Kellett—why not have a shy at *him*?"

"Poor Paul!" cried Beecher, with a hearty laugh. "Why, Paul Kellett's ruined—cleaned out—sold in the encumbered what-d'ye-call-'ems, and hasn't a cross in the world!"

"I ought to have guessed as much," growled out Grog, "or he'd not have been on such friendly terms with *you*."

"A polite speech that, Grog," said Beecher, smiling.

"It's true, and that's better," said Davis. "The only fellows that stick close to a man in his poverty are those a little poorer than himself."

"Not but if he had it," said Beecher, following up his own thoughts—"not but if he had it, he's just the fellow to do a right good-natured thing."

"Well, I suppose he's got his name—they haven't sold *that*, have they?"

"No; but it's very much like the estate," said Beecher. "It's far too heavily charged ever to pay off the encumbrances."

"Who minds that, nowadays? A bad bill is a very useful thing sometimes. It's like a gun warranted to burst, and you can always manage to have it in the right man's hands when it comes the time for the explosion."

"*You are* a rum 'un, Davis—you *are*, indeed," said Beecher, admiringly; for it was in the delivery of such wise maxims that Davis appeared to him truly great.

"Get him down for fifty—that ain't much—fifty at three months. My lord says he'll stand fifty himself, in that letter I read. It was to help you to a match, to be sure; but that don't matter. There can be no question of marrying now. Let me see how this affair is going to turn. Well, I'll see if I can't do something myself. I've a precious lot of stamped paper there," and he pointed to an old secretary—"if I could hit upon a sharp fellow to work it."

"You are a trump, Grog!" cried Beecher, delightedly.

"If we had a clear two hundred, we could start to-morrow," said Grog, laying down his cigar, and staring steadfastly at him.

"Why, would *you* come, too?" muttered Beecher, who had never so much as imagined the possibility of this companionship on the continent.

"I expect I would," said Davis, with a very peculiar grin. "It ain't likely you'd manage an affair like this without advice."

"Very true—very true," said Beecher,

hurriedly. "But remember, Lackington is my brother—we're both in the same boat."

"But not with the same skulls," said Grog. And he grinned a savage grin at the success of his pun.

Beecher, however, so far from appreciating the wit, only understood the remark as a sneer at his intelligence, and half sulkily said,

"Oh! I'm quite accustomed to that, now—I don't mind it."

"That's right—keep your temper," said Grog, calmly; "that's the best thing in *your* book. You're what they call good-tempered. And," added he, in the moralizing tone, "though the world does take liberties with the good-tempered fellows, it shies them many a stray favor—many a sly five-pun-note into the bargain. I've known fellows go through life—and make a rare good thing of it, too—with no other stock-in-trade than this same good temper."

Beecher did not pay his habitual attention to Grog's words, but sat pondering over all the possible and impossible objections to a tour in such company. There were times and places where men might be seen talking to such a man as Davis. The betting-ring and the weighing-stand have their privileges, just like the green-room or the "flats," but in neither case are the intimacies of such localities exactly of a kind for parade before the world. Of all the perils of such a course none knew better than Beecher. What society would think—what clubs would say of it—he could picture to his mind at once.

Now, there were very few of life's casualties of which the Honorable Annesley Beecher had not tasted. He knew what it was to have his bills protested, his chattels seized, his person arrested; he had been browbeaten by bankruptcy commissioners, and bullied by sheriffs' officers; tradesmen had refused him credit; tailors abjured his custom; he had "burned his fingers" in one or two not very creditable transactions; but still, with all this, there was yet one depth to which he had not descended—he was never seen in public with a "wrong man." He had a jerk of the head, a wink, or a glance for the leg who met him in Piccadilly, as every one else had. If he saw him in the garden of the Star and Garter, or the park at Greenwich, he might even condescend to banter him on "looking jolly," and ask what new "robbery" he was in for; but as to descending to intimacy or companionship openly before the gaze of the world, he'd as soon

have thought of playing cad to a 'bus, or sweep at a crossing.

It was true the continent was not Hyde Park—the most strait-laced and well-conducted did fifty things there, they had never ventured on at home. Foreign travel had its license, and a passport was a sort of plenary indulgence for many a social transgression; but, with all this, there were a few names—about half a dozen in all Europe—that no man could afford to link his own along with.

As for Grog, he was known everywhere. From Ostend to Odessa his fame extended, and there was scarcely a police prefect in the traveled districts of the continent who had not a description of his person, and some secret instructions respecting him. From many of the smaller states, whose vigilance is in the ratio of their littleness, he was rigidly excluded; so that in his journeying through Europe, he was often reduced to a zigzag and erratic procedure, not unlike the game known to schoolboys as scotch-hop. In the ten minutes—it was not more—that Beecher passed in recalling these and like facts to his memory, his mind grew more and more perplexed; nor was the embarrassment unperceived by him who caused it. As Davis sipped and smoked, he stole frequent glances at his companion's face, and strove to read what was passing in his mind. "It may be," thought Grog, "he doesn't see his way to raising the money. It may be that his credit is lower in the market than I had fancied; or"—and now his fiery eyes grew fiercer and his lip more tense—"or it may be that he doesn't fancy *my* company. If I was only sure it was *that*," muttered he between his teeth; and had Annesley Beecher only chanced to look at him as he said it, the expression of that face would have left a legacy of fear behind it for many a day.

"Help yourself," said Grog, passing the bottle across the table—"help yourself, and the gin will help you, for I see you are 'pounded.'"

"Pounded? no, not a bit; nothing of the kind," said Beecher, blushing. "I was thinking how Lackington would take all this; what my lady would say to it; whether they'd regard it seriously; or whether they'd laugh at my coming out so far about nothing."

"They'll not laugh, depend on't; take my word for it, they won't laugh," said Davis, dryly.

"Well, but if it all comes to nothing—if it be only a plan to extort money?"

"Even that ain't anything to laugh at,"

said Davis. "I've done a little that way myself, and yet I never saw the fellow who was amused by it."

"So that you really think I ought to go out and see my brother?"

"I'm sure and certain that we must go," said Davis, just giving the very faintest emphasis to the "we."

"But it will cost a pot of money, Grog, even though I should travel in the cheapest way—I mean, the cheapest way possible for a fellow as well known as I am."

This was a bold stroke; it was meant to imply far more than the mere words announced. It was intended to express a very complicated argument in a mere innuendo.

"That's all gammon," said Grog, rudely. "We don't live in an age of couriers and extra-post; every man travels by rail nowadays, and nobody cares whether you take a coupé or a horse-box; and as to being known, so am I, and almost as well known as most fellows going."

This was pretty plain speaking; and Beecher well knew that Davis's frankness was always on the verge of the only one thing that was worse than frankness.

"After all," said Beecher, after a pause, "let the journey be ever so necessary, I haven't got the money."

"I know you haven't, neither have I; but we shall get it somehow. You'll have to try Kellett; you'll have to try Dunn himself, perhaps. I don't see why you shouldn't start with him; *he* knows that you ought to confer with my lord; and he could scarce refuse your note at three months, if you made it—say—fifty."

"But, Grog," said Beecher, laying down his cigar, and nerving himself for a great effort of cool courage, "what would suffice fairly enough for one, would be a very sorry allowance for two; and as the whole of my business will be with my own brother—where of necessity I must be alone with him—don't you agree with me that a third person would only embarrass matters rather than advance them?"

"No!" said Grog, sternly, while he puffed his cigar in measured time.

"I'm speaking," said Beecher, in a tone of apology—"I'm speaking, remember, from my knowledge of Lackington; he's very high and very proud; one of those fellows who 'take on' even with their equals; and with myself, he never forgets to let me feel I'm a younger brother."

"He wouldn't take any airs with *me*," said Grog, insolently. And Beecher grew actually sick at the bare thought of such a meeting.

"I tell you frankly, Davis," said he, with the daring of despair, "it wouldn't do. It would spoil all. First and foremost Lackington would never forgive me for having confided this secret to any one. He'd say, and not unfairly either, 'What has Davis to do with this? It's not the kind of case he's accustomed to deal with: his counsel couldn't possibly be essential here.' *He* doesn't know," added he, rapidly, "your consummate knowledge of the world; *he* hasn't seen, as I have, how keenly you read every fellow that comes before you."

"We start on Monday," said Grog, abruptly, as he threw the end of his cigar into the fire; "so stir yourself, and see about the bills."

Beecher arose and walked the room with hurried strides, his brow growing darker and his face more menacing at every moment.

"Look here, Davis," cried he, turning suddenly round and facing the other, "you assume to treat me as if I was a—school-boy;" and it was evident that he had intended a stronger word, but had not courage to utter it, for Davis's wicked eyes were upon him, and a bitter grin of irony was already on Grog's mouth as he said,

"Did you ever try a round with *me* without getting the worst of it? Do you remember any time where you came well out of it? You've been mauled once or twice somewhat roughly, but with the gloves on—always with the gloves on. Now, take my advice, and don't drive me to take them off—don't! You never felt my knuckles yet—and, by the Lord Harry, if you had, you'd not call out 'encore.'"

"You just want to bully me," said Beecher, in a whimpering tone.

"Bully you—bully *you*!" said Davis, and his features put on a look of the most intense scorn as he spoke. "Egad!" cried he, with an insolent laugh, "you know very little about either of us."

"I'd rather you do your worst at once than keep threatening me in this fashion."

"No you wouldn't; no—no—nothing of the kind," said Davis, with a mockery of gentleness in his voice and manner.

"May I be hanged if I would not!" cried Beecher, passionately.

"It ain't hanging now—they've made it transportation," said Davis, with a grin; "and them as has tried it says the old way was easiest." And in the slang style of the last words there was a terrible significance—it was as though a voice from the felons' dock was uttering a word of warning. Such was the effect on Beecher, that

he sank slowly down into a seat, silent and powerless.

"If you hadn't been in this uncommon high style to-night," said Grog, quietly, "I'd have told you some excellent reasons for what I was advising. I got a letter from Spicer this morning. He, and a foreign fellow he calls Count Lienstahl—it sounds devilish like 'lie and steal,' don't it?—have got a very pretty plant together, and if they could only chance upon a good second-rate horse, they reckon about eight or ten hundred in stakes alone this coming spring. They offer me a share if I could come out to them, and mean to open the campaign at Brussels. Now, there's a thing to suit us all—'picking for every one,' as they say in the oakum-sheds."

"Cochin China might be had for five hundred; or there's Spotted Snake, they want to sell him for anything he'll bring," said Beecher, with animation.

"They could manage five hundred at least, Spicer says. We're good for about twelve thousand francs, which ought to get us what we're looking for."

"There's Anchovy Paste—"

"Broke down before and behind."

"Hop the Twig, own sister to Levanter; ran second for the Colechester Cup—"

"Mares don't answer abroad."

"Well, what do you say to Mumps?"

"There's the horse for the continent. A great heavy-headed, thick-jawed beast, with lazy action, and capped hocks. He's the animal to walk into a foreign jockey club. Oh, if we had him!"

"I know where he is!" exclaimed Beecher, in ecstasy. "There's a Brummagem fellow driving him through Wales—a bagman—and he takes him a turn now and then for the county stakes that offer. I'll lay my head on't we get him for fifty pounds."

"Come, old fellow," said Grog, encouragingly, "you *have* your wits about you, after all. Breakfast here to-morrow, about twelve o'clock, and we'll see if we can't arrange the whole affair. It's a sure five hundred apiece, as if we had it here;" and he slapped his pockets as he spoke.

Beecher shook his friend's hand with a warmth that showed all his wonted cordiality, and with a hearty "Good-night!" they separated.

Grog had managed cleverly. He had done something by terror, and the rest he had accomplished by temptation. They were the two only impulses to sway that strange temperament.

CHAPTER XXI.

"A DARK DAY."

It was the day appointed for the sale of Kellett's Court, and a considerable crowd was assembled to witness the proceeding. Property was rapidly changing hands; new names were springing up in every county, and old ones were growing obsolete. Had the tide of conquest and confiscation flowed over the land, a greater social revolution could not have resulted; and, while many were full of hope and confidence that a new prosperity was about to dawn upon Ireland, there were some who continued to deplore the extinction of the old names, and the exile of the old families, whose traditions were part of the history of the country.

Kellett's Court was one of those great mansions which the Irish gentlemen of a past age were so given to building, totally forgetting how great the disproportion was between their house and their rent-roll. Irregular, incongruous, and inelegant, it yet, by its very size and extent, possessed a certain air of grandeur. Eighty guests had sat down to table in that oak-wainscoted dinner-room; above a hundred had been accommodated with beds beneath that roof; the stables had stalls for every hunting-man that came; and the servants' hall was a great galleried chamber, like the refectory of a convent, in everything save the moderation of the fare.

Many were curious to know who would purchase an estate burdened by so costly a residence, the very maintenance of which in repair constituted a heavy annual outlay. The gardens, long neglected and forgotten, occupied three acres, and were themselves a source of immense expense; a considerable portion of the demesne was so purely ornamental that it yielded little or no profit; and, as an evidence of the tastes and habits of its former owners, the ruins of a stand house marked out where races once were held in the park, while hurdle fences and deep drains even yet disfigured the swelling lawn.

Who was to buy such a property was the question none could answer. The house, indeed, might be converted into a "Union," if its locality suited; it was strong enough for a jail—it was roomy enough for a nunnery. Some averred the government had decided on purchasing it for a barrack; others pretended that the sisterhood of the Sacred Heart had already made their bargain for it; yet to these and many other assertions not less confidently uttered there were as many demurrers.

While rumors and contradictions were still buzzed about, the commissioner took his place on the bench, and the clerk of the court began that tedious recital of the circumstances of the estate with whose details all the interested were already familiar, and the mere curious cared not to listen to. An informality on a former day had interfered with the sale, a fact which the commissioner alluded to with satisfaction, as property had risen largely in value in the interval, and he now hoped that the estate would not alone clear off all the charges against it, but realize something for its former owner. A confused murmur of conversation followed this announcement. Men talked in knots and groups—consulted maps and rent-rolls—made hasty calculations in pencil—whispered secretly together, muttering frequently the words “Griffith,” “plantation measure,” “drainage,” and “copyhold,” and then, in a half-hurried, half-wearied way, the court asked “Is there no bidding after twenty-seven thousand five hundred?”

“Twenty-eight!” said a deep voice near the door.

A long, dreary pause followed, and the sale was over.

“Twenty-eight thousand!” cried Lord Glengariff; “the house alone cost fifty.”

“It’s only the demesne, my lord,” said some one near; “it’s not the estate is sold.”

“I know it, sir; but the demesne contains eight hundred acres, fully wooded, and inclosed by a wall.—Who is it for, Dunn?” asked he, turning to that gentleman.

“In trust, my lord,” was the reply.

“Of that I am aware, sir; you have said as much to the court.”

Dunn bent over and whispered some words in his ear.

“Indeed!” exclaimed the other, with evident astonishment; “and intending to reside?” added he.

“Eventually, I expect so,” said Dunn, cautiously, as others were now attending to the conversation.

Again Lord Glengariff spoke, but, ere he had finished, a strange movement of confusion in the body of the court interrupted him, while a voice hoarse with passionate meaning cried out, “Is the robbery over?—is it done?” and a large, powerful man, his face flushed, and his eyes glaring wildly, advanced through the crowd to the railing beneath the bench. His waistcoat was open, and he held his cravat in one hand, having torn it off in the violence of his excitement.

“Who is this man?” asked the commissioner, sternly.

“I’ll tell you who I am—Paul Kellett, of Kellett’s Court, the owner of that house and estate you and your rascally miscreants have just stolen from me. Ay, stolen is the word—law or justice have nothing to do with it. Your parliament made it law, to be sure, to pamper your Manchester upstarts who want to turn gentlemen—”

“Does any one know him?—has he no friends who will look after him?” said the commissioner, leaning over and addressing those beneath in a subdued voice.

“Devil a friend in the world! It’s few friends stick to the man whose property comes here. But don’t make me out mad. I’m in my full senses, though I had enough to turn fifty men to madness.”

“I know him, my lord; with the permission of the court, I’ll take charge of him,” said Dunn, in a tone so low as to be audible only to a few. Kellett, however, was one of them, and he immediately cried out,

“Take charge of me! Ay, that he will. He took charge of my estate, too, and he’ll do by *me* what he did with the property—give a bargain of me!”

A hearty burst of laughter filled the hall at this sally, for Dunn was one of those men whose prosperity always warrants the indulgence of a sarcasm. The court, however, could no longer brook the indecorous interruption, and sternly ordered that Kellett might be removed.

“My dear Mr. Kellett, pray remember yourself; only recollect where you are; such conduct will only expose you—”

“Expose me! do you think I’ve any shame left in me? Do you think, when a man is turned out to starve on the roads, that he cares much what people say of him?”

“This interruption is intolerable,” said the commissioner. “If he be not speedily removed, I’ll order him into the custody of the police.”

“Do, in God’s name,” cried Kellett, calmly. “Anything that will keep me from laying hands on myself, or somebody else, will be a charity.”

“Come with me, Kellett—do come along with *me*?” said Dunn, entreatingly.

“Not a step—not an inch. It was going with *you* brought me here. This man, my lord,” cried he, addressing the court with a wild earnestness—“this man said to me that this was the time to sell a property—that land was rising every day—that if we came into the court now, it’s not twenty, nor twenty-five, but thirty years’ purchase—”



"DR. DODD SAYS TO ME, 'TERRY,' SAYS HE, 'YOU HAD NEVER MUCH BRAINS IN YOUR BEST DAYS, BUT NOW YOU'RE ONLY A SHEET OF THIN PAPER REMOVED FROM AN IDIOT, AND IF YOU TOUCH SPIRITS ITS ALL UP WITH YOU.'" (P. 420.)

"I am sorry, sir," said the commissioner, sternly, "that you will give me no alternative but that of committing you; such continued disrespect of court cannot longer be borne."

"I'm as well in jail as anywhere else. You've robbed me of my property, I care little for my person. I'll never believe it's law—never! You may sit up with your wig, and your ushers, and your criers, but you are just a set of thieves and swindlers, neither more nor less. Talk of shame, indeed! I think some of yourselves might blush at what you're doing. There, there, I'm not going to resist you," said he to the policeman; "there's no need of roughness. Newgate is the best place for me now. Mind," added he, turning to where the reporters for the daily press were sitting—"mind and say that I just offered a calm protest against the injustice done me—that I was civilly remonstrating with the court upon what every man—"

Ere he could finish, he was quietly removed from the spot, and before the excitement of the scene had subsided, he was driving away rapidly toward Newgate.

"Drunk or mad—which was it?" said Lord Glengariff to Davenport Dunn, whose manner was scarcely as composed as usual.

"He has been drinking, but not to drunkenness," said Dunn, cautiously. "He is certainly to be pitied." And now he drew nigh the bench and whispered a few words to the commissioner.

Whatever it was that he urged—and there was an air of entreaty in his manner—did not seem to meet the concurrence of the judge. Dunn pleaded earnestly, however, and at last the commissioner said, "Let him be brought up to-morrow, then, and having made a suitable apology to the court, we will discharge him." Thus ended the incident, and once more the clerk resumed his monotonous readings. Townlands and baronies were described, valuations quoted, rights of turbary defined, and an ancient squirearchy sold out of their possessions with as little commotion or excitement as a mock Claude is knocked down at Christie's. Indeed, of so little moment was the scene we have mentioned deemed, that scarcely half a dozen lines of the morning papers were given to its recital. The court and its doings were evidently popular with the country at large, and one of the paragraphs which readers read with most pleasure, was that wherein it was recorded that estates of immense value had just changed owners, and that the commissioner had disposed of so many

thousands' worth of landed property within the week.

Sweeping measures of whatever nature they be, have always been in favor with the masses; never was any legislation so popular as the guillotine!

Evening was closing in, the gloomy ending of a gloomy day in winter, and Sybella Kellett sat at the window anxiously watching for her father's return. The last two days had been passed by her in a state of feverish uneasiness. Since her father's attendance at the custom-house ceased—for he had been formally dismissed at the beginning of the week—his manner had exhibited strange alternations of wild excitement and deep depression. At times he would move hurriedly about, talking rapidly, sometimes singing to himself; at others, he would sit in a state of torpor for hours. He drank, too, affecting some passing pain or some uneasiness as an excuse for the whisky-bottle, and when gently remonstrated with on the evil consequences, became fearfully passionate and excited. "I suppose I'll be called a drunkard next—there's nothing more likely than I'll be told it was my own sottish habits brought all this ruin upon me. 'He's a sot'—'He's never sober'—'Ask his own daughter about him.'" And then, stimulating himself, he would become furious with rage. As constantly, too, did he inveigh against Dunn, saying that it was he that ruined him, and that had he not listened to his treacherous counsels, he might have arranged matters with his creditors. From these bursts of passion he would fall into moods of deepest melancholy, accusing his own folly and recklessness as the cause of all his misfortunes, and even pushing self-condemnation so far as to assert that it was his misconduct and waste had driven poor Jack from home and made him enlist as a soldier.

Bella could not but see that his intellect was affected and his judgment impaired, and she made innumerable pretenses to be ever near him. Now, she pretended that she required air and exercise, that her spirits were low, and needed companionship. Then, she affected to have little purchases to make in town, and asked him to bear her company. At length he showed a restlessness under this restraint that obliged her to relax it; he even dropped chance words as if he suspected that he was the object of some unusual care and supervision. "There's no need of watching me," said he rudely to her on the morning that preceded the sale; "I'm in no want of a keeper. They'll see Paul Kellett's not the man to quail under any calamity—the

same to-day, to-morrow, and the next day. Sell him out or buy him in, and you'll never know by his face that he felt it."

He spoke very little on that morning, and scarcely tasted his breakfast. His dress was more careful than usual, and Bella, half by way of saying something, asked if he were going into Dublin.

"Into Dublin! I suppose I am indeed," said he, curtly, as though giving a very obvious reply. "Maybe," added he, after a few minutes—"maybe you forget this is the seventeenth, and that this is the day for the sale."

"I did remember it," said she, with a faint sigh, but not daring to ask how his presence there was needed.

"And you were going to say," added he, with a bitter smile, "what did that matter to *me*, and that *I* wasn't wanted. Neither I am—I'm neither seller nor buyer—but still I'm the last of the name that lived there—I was Kellett of Kellett's Court, and there'll never be another to say the same, and I owe it to myself to be there to-day—just as I'd attend a funeral—just as I'd follow the hearse."

"It will only give you needless pain, dearest father," said she soothingly; "pray do not go."

"Faith, I'll go, if it gave me a fit," said he fiercely. "They may say when they go home, 'Paul Kellett was there the whole time, as cool as *I* am now; you'd never believe it was the old family place—the house his ancestors lived in for centuries—was up for sale; there he was calm and quiet. If that isn't courage, tell me what is?'"

"And yet I'd rather you did not go, father. The world has trials enough to tax our energies, that we should not go in search of them."

"That's a woman's way of looking at it," said he contemptuously. "A man with a man's heart likes to meet danger, just to see how he'll treat it."

"But remember, father—"

"There, now," said he, rising from the table, "if you talked till you were tired, I'd go still. My mind is made up on it."

Bella turned away her head and stole her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I know very well," burst he in, bitterly, "that the blackguard newspapers to-morrow will just be as ready to abuse me for it. It would have been more dignified, or more decent, or something or other, if Mr. Kellett had not appeared at the sale; but I'll go, nevertheless, if it was only to see the man that's to take our place there! Wait dinner for me till six, that is, if there's any dinner at all." And with a

laugh of bitterest meaning he left the room, and was soon seen issuing from the little garden into the road.

What a sad day, full of gloomy forebodings, was that for her! She knew well how all the easy and careless humor of her father had been changed by calamity into a spirit fierce and resentful; that, suspectful of insult on every hand, he held himself ever prepared to meet the most harmless remark with words of defiance. An imaginary impression that the world had agreed to scorn him, made him adopt a bearing at once aggressive and offensive; and he who was once a proverb for good temper, became irritable and savage to a degree.

What might not come of such a temperament, tried in its tenderest spot? What might occur to expose him to the heartless sneers of those who neither knew his qualities nor his trials? These were her thoughts as she walked to and fro in her little room, unable to read, unable to write, though she made several attempts to begin a letter to her brother. The dark future also lowered before, without one flicker of light to pierce its gloom. How were they to live? In a few days more they would be at the end of their frail resources—something less than two pounds was all that they had in the world. How she envied those in some foreign land who could stoop to the most menial labor, unseen and unremembered by their own. How easily, she thought, poverty might be borne, if divested of the terrible contrast with a former condition. Could they by any effort raise the means to emigrate—and where to? Might not Mr. Dunn be the person to give counsel in such a case? From all she had heard of him, he was conversant with every career, every walk, and every condition. Doubtless he could name the very colony, and the very spot to suit them—nor impossible that he might aid them to reach it. If they prospered, they could repay him. They might pledge themselves to such a condition on this head as he would dictate. How, then, to approach him? A letter? And yet a letter was always so wanting in the great requisite of answering doubts as they arose, and meeting difficulties by ready rejoinder. A personal interview would do this. Then why not ask for an audience of him? "I'll call upon him at once," said she; "he may receive me without other solicitation—my name will surely secure me that much of attention." Would her father approve of such a step?—would it not appear to his eyes an act of meanness and dependence?

—might not the whole scheme be one to which he would offer opposition? From conflicts like these she came back to the dreary present, and wondered what could still delay his coming. It was a road but little traveled, and, as she sat watching at the window, her eyes grew wearied piercing the hazy atmosphere, darkening deeper and deeper as night drew near. She endeavored to occupy herself in various ways: she made little preparations for his coming—she settled his room neatly, over and over—she swept the hearth, and made a cheerful fire to greet him, and then, passing into the kitchen, she looked after the humble dinner that awaited him. Six o'clock passed, and another weary hour followed. Seven—and still he came not. She endeavored to divert her thoughts into thinking of the future she had pictured to herself. She tried to fancy the scenery, the climate, the occupation of that dream-land over the seas, but at every bough that beat against the window by the wind, at every sound of the storm without, she would start up, and hasten to the door to listen.

It was now near eight o'clock, and so acute had her hearing become by intense anxiety that she could detect the sounds of a footfall coming along the plashy road. She did not venture to move, lest she should lose the sound, and she dreaded, too, lest it should pass on. She bent down her head to hear, and now, oh, ecstasy of relief! she heard the latch of the little wicket raised, and the step upon the gravel-walk within. She rushed at once to the door, and, dashing out into the darkness, threw herself wildly upon his breast, saying, "Thank God you are come! Oh! how I have longed for you, dearest, dearest father!" And then as suddenly, with a shriek, cried out, "Who is it? Who is this?"

"Conway—Charles Conway. A friend—at least one who would wish to be thought so."

With a wild and rapid utterance she told him of her long and weary watch, and that her fears—mere causeless fears, she said she knew they were—had made her nervous and miserable. Her father's habits, always so regular and homely, made even an hour's delay a source of anxiety. "And then he had not been well for some days back—circumstances had occurred to agitate him—things preyed upon him more heavily than they had used. Perhaps it was the dreary season—perhaps their solitary kind of life had rendered them both more easily depressed. But, somehow—" She could not go on, but, hastening toward

the window, pressed her hands to her face.

"If you could tell me where I would be likely to hear of him—what are his haunts in town—"

"He has none—none whatever. He has entirely ceased to visit any of his former friends—even Mr. Beecher he has not called on for months long."

"Has he business engagements in any quarter that you know of?"

"None now. He did hold an office in the customs, but he does so no longer. It is possible—just possible—he might have called at Mr. Dunn's, but he could not have been detained there so late as this. And if he were—" She stopped, confused and embarrassed.

"As to that," said he, catching at her difficulty with ready tact, "I could easily pretend it was my own anxiety that caused the visit. I could tell him it was likely I should soon see Jack again, and ask of him to let me be the bearer of some kind message to him."

"Yes, yes," muttered Bella, half vacantly, for he had only given to his words the meaning of a mere pretext.

"I think you may trust to me that I will manage the matter delicately. He shall never suspect that he has given any uneasiness by his absence."

"But even this," said she, eagerly, "condemns me to some hours longer of feverish misery. You cannot possibly go back to town and return here in less than two—perhaps three hours."

"I'll try and do it in half the time," said Conway rising, and taking his cap. "Where does Mr. Dunn live?"

"In Merriion square. I forget the number, but it does not matter—every one knows his house. It is on the north side."

"You shall see me before—What o'clock is it now?"

"Half-past eight," said she, shuddering, as she saw how late it was.

"Before eleven, I promise you confidently—and earlier if I can."

"You know my father so very little—so very recently," said Sybilla, with some confusion, "that it may be necessary to guard you—that is, you ought to be made aware that on this day the estate our family has held for centuries was sold. It is true we are no poorer than we were yesterday; the property we called our own, and from habit believed to be such, had been mortgaged this many a year. Why or how we ever fancied that one day or other we should be in a position to pay off the incumbrances, I cannot tell you; but it is

true that we did so fancy, and used to talk of that happy event as of one we felt to be in store for us. Well, the blow has fallen at last, and demolished all our castle-building! Like storm-tossed vessels, we saw ships sinking on every side, and yet caught at hope for ourselves. This hope has now left us. The work of this morning has obliterated every trace of it. It is of this, then, I would ask you to be mindful when you see my poor father. He has seen ruin coming this many a year—it never came face to face with him till to-day. I cannot tell how he may brave it, though there was a time I could have answered for his courage.”

“Jack Kellett’s father could scarcely be deficient in that quality,” said Conway, whose flashing eyes showed that it was Jack’s sister was uppermost in his mind as he spoke.

“Oh!” said she, sorrowfully, “great as the heroism is that meets death on the field of battle, it is nothing to the patient and enduring bravery that confronts the daily ills of life—confronts them nobly, but in humility, neither buoyed up by inordinate hope, nor cast down by despondency, but manfully resolved to do one’s best, and, come what may, to do it without sacrifice of self-respect. Thus meeting fate, and with a temper that all the crosses of life have not made irritable nor suspicious, makes a man to my eyes a greater hero than any of those who charge in forlorn hopes, or single-handed rush up the breach torn by grape-shot.” Her cheek, at first pale, grew deeper and deeper red, and her dark eyes flashed till their expression became almost wild in brilliancy, when, suddenly checking her passionate mood, she said, “It were better I should go along with you—better, at least, I were at hand. He will bear much from me that he would not endure from another, and I will go.” So saying, she hastened from the room, and in a moment came back shawled and ready for the road.

“What a night for you to venture out,” said Conway; “and I have got no carriage of any kind.”

“I am well accustomed to brave bad weather, and care nothing for it.”

“It is raining fearfully, and the waves are washing clear over the low sea-wall,” said he, trying to dissuade her.

“I have come out here on many such nights, and never the worse for it. Can’t you fancy Jack Kellett’s sister equal to more than this?” said she, smiling through all her sadness, as she led the way to the door.

And now they were upon the road, the wild rain and the gusty wind beating against them, and almost driving them back. So loud the storm that they did not try to speak, but with her arm close locked within his own, Conway breasted the hurricane with a strange sensation of delight he had never known before.

Scarcely a word passed between them as they went; as the rain beat heavily against her he would try as well as he could to shelter her; when the cutting wind blew more severely he would draw her arm closer within his own, and yet thus in silence they grew to each other like friends of many a year. A sense of trustfulness, a feeling of a common object, too, sufficed to establish between them a sentiment to be molded by the events of after life into anything. Ay, so is it! Out of these chance affinities grow sometimes the passion of a life, and sometimes the disappointments that imbitter existence!

“What a good fortune it was that brought you to my aid to-night,” said she; “I had not dared to have come this long road alone.”

“What a good fortune mine to have even so humble a service to render you. Jack used to talk to me of you, for hours long. Nights just like this have we passed together, he telling me about your habits and your ways, so that this very incident seems to fit into the story of your life as an every-day occurrence. I know,” continued he, as she seemed to listen attentively, “how you used to ride over the mountains at home, visiting wild and out-of-the-way spots; how you joined him in his long fishing excursions, exploring the deep mountain gorges while he lingered by the river-side. The very names you gave these desolate places—taken from old books of travel—showed me how a spirit of enterprise was in your heart.”

“Were they not happy days!” murmured she, half to herself.

“They must have been,” said he, ardently; “to hear of them has charmed the weariest watches of the night, and made me long to know you.”

“Yes; but I am not what I was,” said she, hastily. “Out of that dreamy, strange existence I have awakened to a world full of its own stern realities. That pleasant indolence has ill prepared me for the road I must travel—and it was selfish, too! The vulgarest cares of every-day life are higher aims than all the mere soarings of imagination, and of this truth I am only now becoming aware.”

“But it was for never neglecting those

very duties Jack used to praise you ; he said that none save himself knew you as other than the careful mistress of a household."

"Poor fellow ! ours was an humble retinue, and needed little guidance."

"I see," said Conway, "you are too proud to accept of such esteem as mine ; but yet you can't prevent me offering it."

"Have I not told you how I prize your kindness ?" said she, gently.

"Will you let me think so ?" cried Conway, pressing her arm closely ; and again they were silent. Who knows with what thoughts ?

How dreary did the streets seem as they entered Dublin. The hazy lamps, dulled by the fast-falling rain, threw a misty light through the loaded atmosphere ; the streets, deserted by all but the very poorest, were silent and noiseless, save for the incessant splash of the rain ; few lights were seen on any side, and all was darkness and gloom. Wearily they plodded onward, Sybella deeply sunk in her own thoughts as to the future, and Conway, too respectful of her feelings to interrupt her, never uttered a word as they went. At last they reached Merrion square, and after some little search stood at the door of Mr. Davenport Dunn. Sybella drew a heavy sigh as Conway knocked loudly, and muttered to herself, "Heaven grant me good tidings of my father !"

CHAPTER XXII.

AFTER A DINNER-PARTY.

MR. DAVENPORT DUNN had a dinner party—he entertained the notables of the capital, and a chief secretary, a couple of judges, a poor-law commissioner, and some minor deities, soldier and civilian, formed his company. They were all social, pleasant, and conversational. The country was growing governable, calendars were light, military duty a mere pastime, and they chatted agreeably over reminiscences of a time—not very remote neither—when rockites were rife, jails crammed, and the fatigues and perils of a soldier not inferior to those of actual warfare.

"To our worthy host here !" said the chief baron, eyeing his claret before the light—and it was a comet vintage—"to our worthy host here are we indebted for most of this happy change."

"Under Providence," whispered the oily dean of the chapel royal.

"Of course, so I mean," said the judge, with that kind of impatience he would have met a needless suggestion in court. "Great public works, stupendous enterprises, and immense expenditure of capital have encountered rebellion by the best of all methods—prosperity !"

"Is it really extinct—has Lazarus died, or is he only sleeping ?" interposed a small dark-eyed man, with a certain air of determination and a look of defiance that seemed to invite discussion.

"I should, at all events, call it a trance that must lead to perfect recovery," said the chief secretary. "Ireland is no longer a difficulty."

"She may soon become something more," said the dark man ; "instead of embarrassing your counsels, she may go far toward swaying and controlling them. The energies that were once wasted in factious struggles at home here, may combine to carry on a greater combat in England ; and it might even happen that your statesmen might look back with envy to days of orange-and-green memory."

"She would gladly welcome the change you speak of," said the secretary.

"I'm not so sure of that, sir : you have not already shown yourselves so very tolerant when tried. It is but a few years ago, and your bar rebelled at the thought of an Irishman being made master of the rolls in England, and that Irishman, Plunkett."

"I must say," burst in the attorney-general, fresh from his first session in Parliament, and, more still, his first season in town, "this is but a prejudice—an unjust prejudice. I can assert for myself, that I never rose in the House without experiencing a degree of attention—a deference, in short—"

"Eminently the right of one whose opinions were so valuable," said the secretary, bowing blandly, and smiling.

"You did not lash them too often nor too much, Hatchard," said the dark man. "If I remember aright, you rose once in the session, and that was to move an adjournment."

"Ah, Lindley," said the other, good-humoredly, "you are an unforgiving enemy." Then, turning to the chief secretary, he said, "He cannot pardon my efforts, successful as they have been, to enable the fellows of the university to marry. He obtained his fellowship as a safe retirement, and now discovers that his immunity is worth nothing."

"I beg pardon," said Lindley ; "I have forgiven you long ago. It was from your arguments in its favor the measure was so

long resisted. You are really blameless in the matter!"

The sharp give and take of these sallies—the fruit of those intimacies which small localities produce—rather astonished the English officials, and the secretary and the commissioner exchanged glances of significant import; nor was this lost on the chief baron, who, to change the topic, suddenly asked,

"Who bought that estate—Kellett's Court, I think they call it—was sold this morning?"

"I purchased it in trust," said Dunn, "for an English peer."

"Does he intend ever to reside there?"

"He talks of it, my lord," said Dunn, "the way men talk of something very meritorious that they mean to do—one day or other."

"It went, I hear, for half its value," remarked some one.

"A great deal above that, I assure you," said Dunn. "Indeed, as property is selling now, I should not call the price a bad one."

"Evidently Mr. Kellett was not of your mind," said the former speaker, laughing. "I'm told he burst into court to-day and abused every one, from the bench to the crier, called the sale a robbery, and the judge a knave."

"Not exactly that. He did, it is true, interrupt the order of the court, but the sale was already concluded. He used very violent language, and so far forgot his respect for the bench as to incur the penalty of a committal."

"And was he committed?" asked the secretary.

"He was; but rather as a measure of precaution than punishment. The court suspected him to be insane." Here Dunn leaned over and whispered a few words in the secretary's ear. "Nor was it without difficulty," muttered he, in a low tone. "He continued to inveigh in the most violent tone against us all; declared he'd never leave the jail without a public apology from the bench; and, in fact, conducted himself so extravagantly, that I half suspected the judge to be right, and that there was some derangement in the case."

"I remember Paul Kellett at the head of the grand jury of his county," said one.

"He was high sheriff the first year I went that circuit," said the judge.

"And how has it ended—where is he now?" whispered the secretary.

"I persuaded him to come home here with me, and after a little calming down

he became reasonable and has gone to his own house, but only within the last hour. It was that my servant whispered me, when he last brought in the wine."

"And I suppose, after all," said the poor-law commissioner, "there was nothing peculiar in this instance; his case was one of thousands."

"Quite true, sir," said Lindley. "Statistical tables can take no note of such-like applicants for out-door relief; all are classified as paupers."

"It must be acknowledged," said the secretary, in a tone of half rebuke, "that the law has worked admirably; there is but one opinion on that subject in England."

"I should be greatly surprised were it otherwise," said Lindley; "I never heard that the Cornish fishermen disparaged shipwrecks!"

"Who is that gentleman?" whispered the secretary to Dunn.

"A gentleman very desirous to be crown prosecutor at Melbourne," said Dunn, with a smile.

"He expresses himself somewhat freely," whispered the other.

"Only here, sir—only here, I assure you. He is our staunchest supporter in the college."

"Of course we shall take Sebastopol, sir," said a colonel from the end of the table. "The Russians are already on half rations, and their ammunition is nigh exhausted." And now ensued a lively discussion of military events, wherein the speakers displayed as much confidence as skill.

"It strikes me," said Lindley, "we are at war with the Emperor Nicholas for practicing pretty much the same policy we approve of so strenuously for our ourselves. He wanted to treat Turkey like an encumbered estate. There was the impoverished proprietor, the beggared tenantry, the incapacity for improvement—all the hackneyed arguments, in fact, for selling out the sultan that we employ so triumphantly against the Irish gentleman."

"Excuse me," said the attorney-general, "he wanted to take forcible possession."

"Nothing of the kind. He was as ready to offer compensation as we ourselves are when we superannuate a clerk or suppress an office. His sole mistake was, that he proposed a robbery at the unlucky moment that the nation had taken its periodical attack of virtue—we were in the height of our honest paroxysm when he asked us to be knaves; and hence all that has followed."

"You estimate our national morality somewhat cheaply, sir," said the commissioner.

"As to morals, I think we are good political economists. We buy cheaply, and endeavor at least to sell in the dearest markets."

"No more wine, thank you," said the secretary, rising. "A cup of coffee, with pleasure."

It was a part of Davenport Dunn's policy to sprinkle his dinner company with men like Lindley. They were what physicians call a sort of mild irritants, and occasionally very useful in their way; but, in the present instance, he rather suspected that the application had been pushed too far, and he approached the secretary in the drawing-room with a kind of half apology for his guest.

"Ireland," said he, "has always possessed two species of place-hunters: the one, patiently supporting government for years, look calmly for the recognition of their services as a debt to be paid; the other, by an irritating course of action, seem to indicate how vexatious and annoying they may prove if not satisfactorily dealt with. Lindley is one of these, and he ought to be provided for."

"I declare to you, Dunn," said the secretary, as he drew his arm within the other's, and walked with him into the back drawing-room, "these kind of men make government very difficult in Ireland. There is no reserve—no caution about them. They compromise one at every step. You are the only Irishman I ever met who would seem to understand the necessity of reserve."

Dunn bowed twice. It was like the acknowledgment of what he felt to be a right.

"I go further," said the other, warming; "you are the only man here who has given us real and effective support, and yet never asked for anything."

"What could I wish for better than to see the country governed as it is?" said Dunn, courteously.

"All are not inspired so patriotically, Dunn. Personal advantages have their influence on most men."

"Of course—naturally enough. But I stand in no need of aid in this respect. I don't want for means. I couldn't, if you offered it, take office; my hands are too full already, and of work which another might not be able to carry out. Rank, of course—distinction—" and he stopped, and seemed confused.

"Well, come, we might meet you there, Dunn," said the other, coaxingly. "Be

frank with me. What do you wish for?"

"My family is of humble origin, it is true," said Dunn; "but without invidious reflection, I might point to some others—" Again he hesitated.

"That need not be an obstacle," said the secretary.

"Well, then, on the score of fortune, there are some poorer than myself in— in—" He stopped again.

"Very few as wealthy, I should say, Dunn—very few indeed. Let me only know your wishes. I feel certain how they will be treated."

"I am aware," said Dunn, with some energy, "that you incur the risk of some attack in anything you would do for me. I am necessarily in scant favor with a large party here. They would *assail you*, they would *vilify me*; but that would pass over. A few weeks—a few months at furthest—"

"To be sure—perfectly correct. It would be mere momentary clamor. Sir Davenport Dunn, Baronet, would survive—"

"I beg pardon," said Dunn, in a voice tremulous with emotion. "I don't think I heard you aright; I trust, at least, I did not."

The secretary looked quickly in his face, and saw it pale, the lips slightly quivering, and the brow contracted.

"I was saying," said he, in a voice broken and uncertain, "that I'm sure the Premier would not refuse to recommend you to her majesty for a baronetcy."

"May I make so bold as to ask if you have already held any conversation with the minister on this subject?"

"None whatever. I assure you most solemnly that I have no instructions on the subject, nor have I ever had any conversation with him on the matter."

"Then let me beg you to forget what has just passed between us. It is, after all, mere chit-chat. That's a Susterman's, that portrait you are looking at," said he, eager to change the topic. "It is said to be a likeness of Bianca Capello."

"A very charming picture indeed; purchased, I suppose, in your last visit abroad."

"Yes; I bought it at Verona. Its companion yonder, was a present from the Archduke Stephen, in recognition, as he was gracious enough to call it, of some counsels I had given the government engineers about drainage in Hungary. Despotie governments, as we like to term them, have this merit, at least—they confer acts of munificent generosity."

The secretary muttered an assent, and looked confused.

"I reaped a perfect harvest of crosses and decorations," continued Dunn, "during my tour. I have got cordons from countries I should be puzzled to point out on the map, and am a noble in almost every land of Europe but my own."

"Ours is the solitary one where the distinction is not a mere title," said the other, "and consequently there are graver considerations about conferring it than if it were a mere act of courtesy."

"Where power is already acquired there is often good policy in legitimatizing it," said Dunn, gravely. "They say that even the Church of Rome knows how to affiliate a heresy.—Well, Clowes, what is it?" asked he of the butler, who stood awaiting a favorable moment to address him. He now drew nigh, and whispered some words in his ear.

"But you said I was engaged—that I had company with me?" said Dunn, in reply.

"Yes, sir, but she persisted in saying that if I brought up her name you would certainly see her. were it but for a moment. This is her card."

"Miss Kellett," said Dunn to himself. "Very well. Show her into the study, I will come down.—It is the daughter of that unfortunate gentleman we were speaking of a while ago," said he, showing the card. "I suppose some new disaster has befallen him. Will you excuse me for a moment?"

As Dunn slowly descended the stairs, a very strange conflict was at work within him. From his very boyhood there had possessed him a stern sentiment of vengeance against the Kellett family. It was the daily lesson his father repeated to him. It grew with his years, and vague and unmeaning as it appeared, it had the force of an instinct. His own memory failed him as to all the circumstances of an early insult, but enough remained to make him know that he had been ignominiously treated and expelled from the house. In the great career of his life, with absorbing cares and high interests around him, he had little time for such memories, but in moments of solitude or of depression the thought would come up, and a sense of vindictive pleasure fill him, as he remembered, in the stern words of his father, where was *he*, and where were *they*? In the protection he had that very day assumed to throw over Kellett in the court, there was the sentiment of an insolent triumph; and here was again the daughter

of the once proud man supplicating an interview with him.

These were his thoughts as he entered the room where Sybella Kellett was standing near the fire. She had taken off her bonnet, and as her long hair fell down, and her dripping clothes clung to her, the picture of poverty and destitution her appearance conveyed revolted against the sentiment which had so lately filled him, and it was in a voice of gentle meaning he asked her to be seated.

"Can you tell me of my father, sir?" said she, eagerly, and not heeding his words; "he left home early this morning, and has never returned."

"I can tell you everything, Miss Kellett," said he, in a kind voice. "It will reassure you at once when I say he is well. Before this he is at home again."

The young girl clasped her hands closely, and her pale lips murmured some faint words.

"In a moment of excitement this morning, he said something to offend the court. It was an emergency to try a calmer temper perhaps than his; indeed, he ought not to have been there; at all events, he was betrayed into expressions which could not be passed over in mere silence, and he was committed—"

"To prison?" said she, faintly.

"Yes, he was taken into custody, but only for a few hours. I obtained his release soon after the court rose. The difficulty was to make him accept of his liberation. Far from having calmed down, his passion had only increased, and it was only after much entreaty that he consented to leave the jail and come here with me. In fact, it was under the pretense of drawing up a formal protest against his arrest that he did come, and he has been employed in this manner till about an hour ago, when one of my clerks took charge of him to convey him home. A little quietness and a little rest will restore him perfectly, however, and I have no doubt to-morrow or next day will leave no trace of this excitement."

"You have been most kind," said she, rising, "and I am very grateful for it. We owe much to you already, and this last but increases the debt."

Dunn stood silently contemplating her, as she replaced her bonnet and prepared for the road. At last he said, "Have you come all this way on foot and alone?"

"On foot, but not alone; a comrade of my brother's, a fellow soldier of his, kindly gave me his escort. He is waiting for me now without."

“Oh, then, the adventure has had its compensation to a certain degree,” said Dunn with a smile of raillery.

“Either I do not understand *you*, or you mistake *me*; which is it?” said she, boldly.

“My dear young lady,” said Dunn, hastily, “do not let me offend you. There is everything in what you have done this night to secure you respect and esteem. We live in a time when there is wonderfully little of personal devotion; and commonplace men like myself may well misjudge its sacrifices.”

“And yet it is precisely from you I should have expected the reverse. If great minds are tainted with littleness, where are we to look for high and noble sentiments?” She moved toward the door as she spoke, and Dunn, anticipating her, said,

“Do not go for a moment; let me offer you some refreshment, even a glass of wine. Well then, your friend? It is scarcely courteous to leave him outside in such weather.”

“Pray forgive me not accepting your offer; but I am impatient to be at home again. My father, too, will be distressed at my absence.”

“But I will send my carriage with you; you shall not walk,” said he, ringing the bell.

“Do not think me ungrateful, but I had rather return as I came. You have no idea, sir, how painfully kindness comes to hearts like ours. A sense of pride sustains us through many a trial; break down this, and we are helpless.”

“Is it that you will accept nothing at my hands—even the most common-place of attentions? Well, I’ll try if I cannot be more fortunate elsewhere;” and so saying, he hurried at once from the room. Before Sybella could well reflect on his words, he was back again, followed by Charles Conway.

“Miss Kellett was disposed to test your Crimean habits again, my good fellow,” said Dunn, “by keeping you out there under this terrible rain, and I perceive you have got some rough treatment already;” and he looked at the armless sleeve of his jacket.

“Yes,” said Conway, laughing, “a piece of Russian politeness!”

Few as were the words, the tone and manner of the speaker struck Dunn with astonishment, and he said,

“Have you been long in the service?”

“Some years,” was the short reply.

“It’s very strange,” said Dunn, regard-

ing him fixedly, “but your features are quite familiar to me. You are very like a young officer who cut such a dash here formerly—a spendthrift fellow, in a Lancer regiment.”

“Pray don’t involve yourself in any difficulty,” said Conway, “for, perhaps—indeed, I’m convinced—you are describing myself.”

“Conway, of the Twelfth?”

“The same, at your service—at least, in so far as being ruined and one-armed, means the same with the fellow who had a good fortune, and two hands to scatter it.”

“I must go. I’m impatient to be away,” said Sybella, eagerly.

“Then there is the carriage at the door,” said Dunn. “This time I have resolved to have my way;” and he gave her his arm courteously to conduct her.

“Could you call upon me to-morrow—could you breakfast with me, Mr. Conway?” said Dunn, as he gave him his hand at parting; “my request is connected with a subject of great importance to yourself.”

“I’m your man,” said Conway, as he followed Sybella into the carriage. And away they drove.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A BREAKFAST-TABLE.

WHEN, punctual to the appointed time, Charles Conway presented himself at Mr. Dunn’s door, he learned to his astonishment that that gentleman had gone out an hour before to breakfast with the chief secretary in the Park.

“But I came by invitation to breakfast with your master,” said he.

“Possibly so,” said Clowes, scanning the simply-clad soldier before him. “He never mentioned it to me, that’s all I know.”

Conway stood for a moment, half uncertain what to say; then, with a quiet smile, he said, “Pray tell him that I was here—my name is Conway.”

“As to the breakfast part of the matter,” said Clowes, who felt “rather struck” by something in the soldier’s manner, as he afterward expressed it, “I’m just about to take mine—you might as well join me.”

Conway looked him full in the face—such a stare was it as a man gives when he questions the accuracy of his own senses; a slight flush then rose to his cheek, and his lip curled, and then, with a saucy laugh, that seemed to combat the passing irritation he was suffering, he said, “It’s not a bad notion after all; I’m your man.”

Now, though Mr. Clowes had anticipated a very different reception to his politeness, he said nothing, but led the way into his sanctum, trusting to the locality and its arrangement to have their due effect upon his guest. Indeed, in this respect, he did but fair justice to the comforts around him.

The breakfast table, placed close to a cheertui fire, was spread with every luxury of that meal. A small spirit-lamp burned under a dish of most appetizing cutlets, in the midst of various kinds of bread, and different sorts of preserves. The grateful odor of mocha mingled with the purer perfume of fresh flowers, which, although in mid-winter, were never wanting at Mr. Clowes's breakfast-table, while in the center rose a splendid pineapple, the first of the season, duly offered by the gardener to the grand vizier of Davenport Dunn.

"I can promise you a better breakfast than *he* would have given you," said Clowes, as he motioned his guest to a seat, while he significantly jerked his thumb toward Dunn's study. "*He* takes tea and dry toast, and he quite forgets to order anything else. He has some crank or other about beginning the day with a light meal—quite a mistake—don't you think so?"

"This is not the most favorable moment to make me a convert to that opinion," said Conway, laughing. "I must confess I incline to *your* side of the controversy."

"There are herrings there," said Clowes, "and a spatchcock coming. You see," continued he, returning to the discussion, "he overworks—he does too much—taxes his powers beyond their strength—beyond any man's strength;" and here Mr. Clowes threw himself back in his chair, and looked pompously before him, as though to say, even Clowes wouldn't have constitution for what *he* does.—"A man must have his natural rest, sir, and his natural support;" and in evidence of the last he re-helped himself to the Strasburg paté.

"Your words are wisdom, and washed down with such bordeaux I'd like to see who'd gainsay them," said Conway, with a droll twinkle of the eye.

"Better coffee that, I fancy, than you got in the Crimea," said Clowes, pointing to the coffee-pot.

"I suspect Lord Raglan himself never saw such a breakfast as this. May I ask if it be your every-day meal?"

"We change slightly with the seasons. Oysters and sauterne suit spring; and then, when summer sets in, we lean toward the subacid fruits and claret-cup. Dash your pineapple with a little rum—it's very old, and quite a liqueur."

"This must be a very jolly life of yours," said Conway, as he lighted his cigarette and placed his feet on the fender.

"You'd prefer it to the trenches or the rifle-pits, I suspect," said Clowes, laughing, "and small blame to you. It was out there you lost your arm, I suppose?"

Conway nodded, and puffed on in silence.

"A bad business—a bad business we're making of it all! The Crimea was a mistake; we should have marched direct to Moscow—Moscow or St. Petersburg—I don't care which."

"Nor should I, if we could get there," said Conway, quietly.

"Get there—and why not? Fifty thousand British bayonets are a match for the world in arms. It is a head we want, sir—capacity to deal with the great questions of strategy. Even you yourself must have remarked that we have no generalship—no guidance—"

"I won't say that," said Conway, quietly. "We're knocking hard at Sebastopol, and all we can say is we haven't found the weak spot yet."

"The weak spot! Why, it's all weak—earthworks, nothing but earthworks! Now, don't tell *me* that Wellington would have minded earthworks! Ah! we have fallen upon sad times," sighed he, piteously. "Our land commanders say earthworks are impregnable—our admirals say stone walls can't be attacked."

Conway laughed again, and lighted a fresh cigarette.

"And what pension have you for that?" asked Clowes, glancing at the empty sleeve.

"A mere trifle—I can't exactly tell you, for I have not applied for it."

"I would, though; I'd have it out of them, and I'd have whatever I could besides. They'd not give *you* the Bath—that they keep for gentlemen—"

Conway took his cigar from his lips, and while his cheek burned, he seemed about to reply; then, resuming his smoking, he lay back and said nothing.

"After all," said Clowes, "there must be distinctions of rank. One regrets, one deplores, but can't help it. Look at all the attempts at equality, and see their failures. No, sir, you have *your* place in the social scale, and I have *mine*."

Now, when Mr. Clowes had enunciated this sentiment, he seemed suddenly to be struck by its severity, for he added, "Not but that every man is respectable in his own rank; don't imagine that I look down upon *you*."

Conway's eyes opened widely as he star-

ed at him, and he puffed his cigar a little more energetically, but never spoke.

"You've done with the service, I suppose?" said Clowes, after a while.

"I'm afraid so," said Conway, sighing.

"Well, *he*"—and he jerked his thumb toward Dunn's room—"he is the man to help you to something snug. He can give away places every hour of the day. Ay, sir," said he, warming, "he can make anything, from an archbishop to a barony constable."

"I rather fear that my capacity for employment might not be found very remarkable. I have idle habits and ways," said Conway, smiling.

"Bad things, my friend—bad things for any man, but especially for a poor one. I myself began life in an humble way—true, I assure you—but with industry, zeal, and attention, I am what you see me."

"That is encouraging, certainly," said Conway, gravely.

"It is so, and I mention it for your advantage."

Charles Conway now arose, and threw the half-smoked cigar into the fire. The movement betokened impatience, and sooth to say, he was half angry with himself, for while disposed to laugh at the vanity and conceit of the worthy butler, he still felt that he was his guest, and that such ridicule was ill applied to one whose salt he had eaten.

"You're not going without seeing him?" said Clowes. "He's sure to be in before noon. We are to receive the harbor commissioners exactly at twelve."

"I have a call to make, and at some distance off in the country, this morning."

"Well, if I can be of any use to you, just tell me," said Clowes, good-naturedly.

"My position here—one of trust and confidence, you may imagine—gives me many an opportunity to serve a friend; and I like you. I was taken with your manner as you came into the hall this morning, and I said to myself, 'There's good stuff in that young fellow, whoever he is.' And I ain't wrong. You have some blood in you, I'll be bound."

"We used to be rather bumptious about family," said Conway, laughing; "but I suspect the world has taught us to get rid of some of our conceit."

"Never mind the world. Pride of birth is a generous prejudice. I have never forgotten that my grandfather, on the mother's side, was a drysalter. But can I be of any use to you? that's the question."

"I'm inclined to think not; though I'm just as grateful to you. Mr. Dunn asked

me here this morning, I suspect, to talk over the war with me. Men naturally incline to hear what an eye-witness has to say, and he may have fancied I could have mentioned some new fact, or suggested some new expedient, which, in these days, seems such a fashionable habit, when everybody has his advice to proffer."

"No, no," said Clowes, shaking his head—"It couldn't be that. We have been opposed to this war from the beginning. It was all a mistake—a dead mistake. Aberdeen agreed with us, but we were outvoted. They would have a fight. They said we wanted something to get cotton-spinning out of our blood; and, egad! I suspect they've got it.

"Our views," continued Clowes, pompously, "were either a peace or a march to St. Petersburg. This French alliance is a rotten thing, sir. That Corsican will double on us. The very first moment any turn of fortune gives France an advantage, *he'll* make peace, and leave to us all the obloquy of a reluctant assent. That's *his* view—that's mine, too; and we are seldom mistaken."

"For all that, I wish I were back there again," said Conway. "With every one of its hardships—and they were no trifles—it was a better life than this lounging one I lead now. Tell Mr. Dunn that I was here. Say that I enjoyed your excellent hospitality and pleasant company; and accept my hearty thanks for both." And with a cordial shake of the hand, Conway wished him "Good-by," and departed.

"That's just the class of men we want in our army," said Clowes, as he followed him with his eyes. "A stamp somewhat above the common—a very fine young fellow, too."

In less than a quarter of an hour after Conway's departure, Davenport Dunn's carriage drew up at his door, and Mr. Clowes hastened to receive his master.

"Are they out, sir—are they out?" said he, eagerly, as he followed him into the study.

"Yes," said Dunn; "but everything is still at sixes and sevens. Lord Derby has been sent for, and Lord John sent for, and Lord Palmerston sent for, but nothing decided on—nothing done."

"And how will it end?" asked Clowes, like one waiting for the solution of a difficulty.

"Who has called this morning?" said Dunn, curtly. "Has Lord Glengarriff been here?"

"No, sir. Sir Jacob Harris and the Drumsna directors are all in waiting, and

a rather promiscuous lot are in the back parlor. A young soldier, too, was here. He fancied you had asked him to breakfast, and so I made him join mine."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Dunn. "I forgot all about that engagement. How provoking! Can you find out where he is stopping?"

"No. But he's sure to drop in again: I half promised him a sort of protection; and he looks a shrewd sort of fellow, and not likely to neglect his hits."

A strange twinkle shone in Dunn's eyes as he heard this speech, and a queer motion at the angle of his mouth accompanied it, but he never spoke a word.

As for Conway, meanwhile, he was briskly stepping out toward Clontarf, to inquire after poor Kellett, whose state was one to call for much anxiety. To the intense excitement of the morning there had succeeded a dull and apathetic condition, in which he seemed scarcely to notice anything or anybody. A look half weary, half vacant, was in his eye; his head was drooped; and a low muttering to himself was the only sign he gave of any consciousness whatever. Such was his state when Conway left the cottage late on the night before, with a promise to be back there again early the next morning.

Conway saw that the shutters of the little drawing-room were half closed as he entered the garden, and his quiet, cautious knock at the door denoted the fear at his heart. From the window, partly open, came a low, moaning sound, which, as he listened, he discovered to be the sick man's voice.

"He was just asking if you had come," said Bella. "He has been talking of poor Jack, and fancies that you have some tidings of him." And so saying she led him into the house.

Seated before the fire in a low chair, his hands resting on his knees, and his gaze fixed on the embers, Kellett never turned his head round as they entered, nor did he notice Bella as, in a soft, low voice, she mentioned Conway's name.

"He has come out to see you, dear papa; to sit with you and keep you company, and talk about dear Jack."

"Ay!" said the sick man in a vague, purposeless tone; and Conway now took a seat at his side, and laid one of his hands over his.

"You are better to-day, Captain Kellett, ain't you?" said he, kindly.

"Yes," said he, in the same tone as before.

"And will be still better to-morrow, I

trust, and able to come out and take this long walk with me we have so often promised ourselves."

Kellett turned and looked him full in the face. The expression of his features was that of one vainly struggling with some confusion of ideas, and earnestly endeavoring to find his way through difficulties; and a faint, painful sigh at last showed that the attempt was a failure.

"What does this state mean? Is it mere depression, or is it serious illness?" whispered Bella.

"I am not skillful enough to say," replied Conway, cautiously; "but I hope and trust it is only the effect of a shock, and will pass off as it came."

"Ay," said Kellett, in a tone that startled them, and for a moment they fancied he must have overheard them; but one glance at his meaningless features showed that they had no ground for their fears.

"The evil is deeper than that," whispered Bella, again. "This cold dew on his forehead, those shiverings that pass over him from time to time, and that look in his eye, such as I have never seen before, all betoken a serious malady. Could you fetch a doctor—some one in whom you place confidence?"

"I do know of one, in whom I have the fullest reliance," said Conway, rising hastily. "I'll go for him at once."

"Lose not a moment, then," said Bella, as she took the place he had just vacated, and placed her hand on her father's, as Conway had done.

Kellett's glance slowly followed Conway to the door, and then turned fully in Bella's face, while, with a voice of a thrilling distinctness, he said, "Too late, darling—too late!"

The tears gushed from Bella's eyes, and her lips trembled, but she never uttered a word, but sat silent and motionless as before.

Kellett's eyes were now bent upon her fixedly, with an expression of deep and affectionate interest; and he slowly drew his hand from beneath hers, and placed his arm around her.

"I wish he was come, darling," said he, at last.

"Who, papa?—the doctor," asked Bella.

"The doctor!—no, not the doctor," said he, sighing heavily.

"It is poor Jack you are thinking of?" said she affectionately.

"Poor, sure enough," muttered he; "we're all poor now." And an inexpressible misery was in his face as he spoke.

Bella wished to speak words of comfort

and encouragement; she longed to tell him that she was ready and willing to devote herself to him—that in a little time, and by a little effort on their part, their changed fortunes would cease to fret them—that they would learn to see how much of real happiness can consist with narrow means, but she knew not in what spirit her words might be accepted; a chance phrase, an accidental expression, might jar upon some excited feeling and only irritate where it was meant to soothe, and so she only pressed her lips to his hand and was silent.

The sick man's head gradually declined lower and lower, his breathing grew heavier, and he slept. The long dreary day dragged on its weary hours, and still Sybella sat by her father's side watching and waiting. It was already dusk, when a carriage stopped at the little gate and Conway got out, and was quickly followed by another. "The doctor at last," muttered Sybella, gently moving from her place; and Kellett awoke and looked at him.

Conway had barely time to whisper the name of the physician in Bella's ear, when Sir Maurice Dashwood entered. There was none of the solemn gravity of the learned doctor—none of the catlike stealthiness of the fashionable practitioner in his approach. Sir Maurice advanced like a man entering a drawing room before a dinner party, easy, confident, and affable. He addressed a few words to Miss Kellett, and then placing his chair next her father's, said,

"I hope my old brother officer doesn't forget me. Don't you remember Dashwood of the 43d?"

"The wildest chap in the regiment," muttered Kellett, "though he was the surgeon. Did you know him, sir?"

"I should think I did," said the doctor, smiling; "he was a great chum of yours, wasn't he? You messed together in the Pyrenees for a whole winter."

"A wild chap—could never come to any good," went on Kellett to himself. "I wonder what became of him."

"I can tell you, I think. Meanwhile, let me feel your pulse. No fixed pain here," said he, touching the region of the heart. "Look fully at me. Ah, it is there you feel it," said he, as he touched the other's forehead; "a sense of weight rather than pain, isn't it?"

"It's like lead I feel it," said Kellett, "and when I lay it down I don't think I'll ever be able to lift it up again."

"That you will, and hold it high, too, Kellett," said the doctor, warmly. "You

must just follow my counsels for a day or two, and we shall see a great change in you."

"I'll do whatever you bid me, but it's no use, doctor; but I'll do it for her sake there." And the last words were in a whisper.

"That's spoken like yourself, Kellett," said the other, cheerily. "Now let me have pen and ink."

As the doctor sat down to a table, he beckoned Bella to his side, and writing a few words rapidly on the paper before him, motioned to her to read them.

She grasped the chair as she read the lines, and it shook beneath her hand, while an ashy pallor spread over her features.

"Ask him if I might have a little brandy-and-water, Bella," said the sick man.

"To be sure you may," said Sir Maurice; "or, better still, a glass of claret; and it so happens I have just the wine to suit him. Conway, come back with me, and I'll give you a half-dozen of it."

"And is there nothing—is there no—" Bella could utter no more, when a warning of the doctor's hand showed that her father's eyes were on her.

"Come here, Bella," said he, in a low tone, "come here to me. There's a pound in my waistcoat pocket, in my room; put a shilling inside of it, for it's a guinea he ought to have, and gold by rights, if we had it. And tell him we'll send for him if we want to see him again. Do it delicately, darling, so as not to let him know. Say I'm used to these attacks; say they're in the family; say—But there they are driving away—they're off! and he never waited for his fee! That's the strangest thing of all." And so he fell a-thinking over this curious fact, muttering from time to time to himself, "I never heard of the like before."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COTTAGE.

DAVENPORT DUNN had but little leisure to think about Conway or poor Kellett. A change of ministry had just occurred in England, and men's minds were all eagerly speculating who was "to come in." Crowds of country gentlemen flocked up to Dublin, and "rising men" of all shades of opinion anxiously paraded their own claims to notice. Dunn's house was besieged from morning to night by visitors, all firmly persuaded that he must know more of the coming event than any one.

Whether such was really the case, or that he deemed it good policy to maintain the delusion, Dunn affected a slight indisposition, and refused to admit any visitor. Mr. Clowes, indeed, informed the inquirers that it was a mere passing ailment—"a slight derangement in the bronchii," he said; but he rigidly maintained the blockade, and suffered none to infringe it.

Of course, a hundred rumors gave their own version of this illness. It was spleen; it was indignation; the government had thrown him over; he had been refused the secretaryship which he had formerly applied for. Others averred that his attack was most serious—an ossification or a schirrus of some cartilage, a thing always fatal and dreadfully painful. Some went further. It was his prosperity that was in peril. Over-speculation had jeopardized him, and he was deep in the "Crédit Mobilier." Now all this while, the disappointed politician, the hopeless invalid, and the ruined speculator, ate and drank well, received and wrote replies to innumerable confidential notes from those in power, and carefully drew up a list of such as he desired to recommend to the government for place and employment.

Every morning Sir Maurice Dashwood's well-appointed cab drew up at his door, and the lively baronet would dash up the stairs to Dunn's room with all the elasticity of youth, and more real energy than is the fortune of one young fellow in a thousand. With a consummate knowledge of men and the world, he was second to none in his profession. He felt he could afford to indulge the gay and buoyant spirits with which Nature had blessed him, and even, doctor that he was, take his share in all the sports of the field and all the pleasures of society.

"Well, Dunn," cried he, gayly, one morning, as he entered the carefully-darkened room where the other sat, surrounded with papers and deep in affairs, "I think you may accept your bill of health, and come out of dock to-morrow. They are gazetted now and the world as wise as yourself."

"So I mean to do," said Dunn. "I intend to dine with the chancellor. What is said about the new government?"

"Very little. There is really little to say. They are nearly the same pieces, only placed differently on the board. This trumpery cry about 'right men in right places' will lead to all kinds of confusion, since it will eternally suggest choice, which, in plain words, means newspaper dictation."

"As good as any other dictation: better, in one respect, for it so often recants its judgments," said Dunn, sarcastically.

"Well, they are unanimous about *you* this morning. They are all eagerly inquiring in what way the government propose to recognize the services of one of the ablest men and most disinterested patriots of our day."

"I don't want anything from them," said Dunn, testily, and walking to the window to avoid the keen, sharp glance the other bent upon him.

"The best way to get it when you *do* want," said Dashwood. "By the way, what's our new viceroy like?"

"A very good appointment, indeed," said Dunn, gravely.

"Oh, I don't mean that. I want to know what he is personally; is he stiff, haughty, grave, gay, stand-off, or affable?"

"I should say, from what I have seen of Lord Allington, that he is one of those men who are grave without sadness—"

"Come, come, never mind the antithesis; does he care for society? does he like sport? is he free-handed? or has he only come here with the traditional policy, to 'drain Ireland?'"

"You'll like him much," said Dunn, in his natural voice, "and he'll like *you*."

Sir Maurice smiled, as though to say, "I could answer as much for myself;" and then asked, "Have you known him long?"

"No; that is, not very long," said Dunn, hesitating, "nor very intimately. Why do you ask?"

"Just because I want to get something—at once, too. There's a poor fellow, a patient of mine now—we were brother officers once—in a very sad way. Your friends of the Encumbered Court have just been selling him out, and by the shock they have so stunned him, that his brain has been attacked; at present it does not seem so formidable, but it will end in softening, and all the rest of it. Now, if they'd make him something at once—quickly it must be—he could drop out on some small retired allowance;—anything, in short, that would support him."

"But, what is it to be?" asked Dunn.

"Whatever you like to make him. It can scarcely be a bishop, for he's not in orders; nor a judge, for he was not called to the Bar; but why not a commissioner of something? you have them for all purposes and of all degrees."

"You take a low estimate of commissionerships, I perceive," said Dunn, smiling.

“They are row-boats, where two or three pull, and the rest only dip their oars. But come, promise me you’ll look to this ; take a note of the name—Paul Kellett, a man of excellent family, and once with a large landed property.”

“I know him,” said Dunn, with a peculiar significance.

“And know nothing to his disadvantage, I’m certain. He was a good officer and a kind-hearted fellow, whom we all liked. And there he is now,” added he, after a pause, “with a charming girl—his daughter—and I really don’t believe they have a five-pound note in the world. You must do this for me, Dunn. I’m bent upon it !”

“I’ll see what can be done about it. Anything like a job is always a difficulty.”

“And everything is a job here, Dunn, and no man knows better how to deal with one.” And so saying, and with a pleasant laugh, the gay-hearted doctor hurried away, to carry hope, and some portion at least of his own cheery nature, into many a darkened sick-room.

Though several names were announced with pressing entreaties for an audience, Dunn would see no one. He continued to walk up and down the room deep in thought, and seemed resolved that none should interrupt him. There were events enough to occupy, cases enough to engage him—high questions of policy, deep matters of interest, all that can stimulate ambition, all that can awaken energy—and yet, amidst all, where were his thoughts straying ? They were away to the years of his early boyhood, when he had been Paul Kellett’s playfellow, and when he was admitted—a rare honor—to the little dinner of the nursery ! What a strange thing it was that it was “there and then” his first studies of life and character should have been made ; that it was there and then he first molded himself to the temper and ways of another ; conforming to caprices, and tending to inclinations not his own. Stern tyrants were these child masters ! how they *did* presume upon their high station ! how severely did they make him feel the distance between them, and what arts did they teach him ! what subtle devices to outwit their own imperiousness and give him the mastery over them ! To these memories succeeded others more painful still, and Dunn’s brow contracted and his lips became tight-drawn, as he recollected them.

“I suppose even my father would allow that the debt is acquitted now,” muttered he to himself. “I’ll go and see them !”

said he, after a moment : “such a sight will teach me how far I have traveled in life.”

He gently descended a private stair that led to the garden, and passing out by the stables, soon gained the street. Walking rapidly on to the first stand, he engaged a car, and started for Clontarf.

If Davenport Dunn never gave way to a passion for revenge in life, it was in some sort because he deemed it a luxury above his means. He often fancied to himself that the time might come when he could indulge in this pleasure, just as now he revelled in a thousand others, which once had seemed as remote. His theory was, that he had not yet attained that eminence whence he could dispense with all aid, and he knew not what man’s services at any moment might be useful to him. Still with all this, he never ceased to enjoy whatever of evil fortune befell those who even in times past had injured him. To measure their destiny with his now, was like striking a balance with Fate—a balance so strong in his favor ; and when he had not actually contributed to their downfall, he deemed himself high-minded, generous, and pure-hearted.

It was reflecting in this wise he drove along, and at last drew up at Kellett’s door ; his knock was answered by Sybella herself, whose careworn features and jaded look scarcely reminded him of her appearance when first he saw her, flushed and excited by exercise.

“I thought I’d come myself and ask after him,” said Dunn, as he explained the object of his visit.

“He has scarce consciousness enough to thank you,” said she, mournfully, “but I am very grateful to you ;” and she preceded him into the room, where her father sat in the self-same attitude as before.

“He doesn’t know me,” whispered Dunn, as the sick man’s gaze was turned to him without the slightest sign of recognition—“he doesn’t know me !”

“I do. I know you well, Davenport Dunn, and I know why you come here,” said Kellett, with a distinctness that startled them both. “Leave us alone together, Bella, darling, we want to talk privately.”

Sybella was so astounded at this sudden show of intelligence, that she scarcely knew how to take it, or what to do ; but at a gesture from Dunn, she stepped noiselessly from the room, and left them together.

“You must not excite yourself, Kellett, nor prejudice your prospect of recovery by any exertion ; there will be time enough for matters of business hereafter—”

"No there won't; that's the reason I want to talk to you now," said Kellett, sharply. "I know well enough my time is short here."

Dunn began some phrase of cheering meaning, but the other stopped him abruptly, and said:

"There, there, don't be losing time that way. Is that the touch of a man long for this world?" and he laid on the other's hand his own hot and burning fingers. "I said I knew why you came here, Dunn," continued he, more strongly; "it was to look at your work. Ay, just so. It was *you* brought me to this, and you wanted to see it. Turn your eyes round the room, and you'll see it's poor enough. Look in at that bedroom there, and you'll say it couldn't be much more humble! I pawned my watch yesterday; there's all that's out of it;" and he showed some pieces of silver and copper mixed together in the palm of his hand; "there's not a silver spoon left, so that you see you've done it well!"

"My dear Kellett, these words of yours have no meaning in them—"

"Maybe not; but maybe you understand them for all that! Look here now, Dunn," said he, clutching his hand in his own feverish grasp; "what the child begins the man finishes! I know you well, and I've watched you for many a year. All your plans and schemes never deceived *me*; but it's a house of cards you're building after all! What I knew about you as a boy others may know as a man; and I wouldn't believe St. Peter if he told me you only did it *once*!"

"If this be not raving, it is a deliberate insult!" muttered Dunn, sternly, while he rudely pushed away the other's hand, and drew back his chair.

"Well, it's not raving, whatever it is," said Kellett, calmly. "The cold air of the earth that's opening for me, clears my brain, and I know well the words I'm saying, and the warning I'm giving you. Tell the people fairly that it's only scheming you were; that the companies are a bubble and the banks a sham; that you're only juggling this man's credit against that, making the people think that you have the confidence of the government, and the government believes that you can do what you like with the people. Go at once and publish it, that you are only cheating them all, or you'll have a gloomier ending even than this!"

"I came out of compassion for you."

"No you didn't, not a bit of it. You came to tell old Mat Dunn that the score

was wiped off; *he* came to the window here this morning and looked in at me."

"My father? Impossible! He's nearly ninety, and barely able to move about a room."

"I don't care for that; there he was, where you see that bush, and he leaned on the window-sill and looked at me; and he wiped the glass, where his breath dulled it, twice. Then I gave a shout at him that sent him off. They had to carry him to the car outside."

"Is this true?" cried Dunn eagerly.

"If I had had but the strength to bring me to the window, it's little I'd have minded his white hair."

"If you had dared!" said Dunn, rising, and no longer able to control his anger.

"Don't go yet; I have more to say to you," cried he, stretching out his hands toward him. "You think, because your roguery is succeeding, that you are great and respected. Not a bit; the gentlemen won't have you, and your own sort won't have you. There's not an honest man would eat your salt—there's not an honest girl would bear your name. There you stand, as much alone in the world as if you came out of another country, and you're the only man in Ireland doesn't see it."

Dunn darted from the room as the last words were uttered, and gained the road. So overwhelmed was he by rage and astonishment, that it was some minutes ere he could remember where he was or whither he would go.

"To Beldoyle," said he to the carman, pointing in the direction of the low shore, where his father lived; "drive your best pace." Then, suddenly changing his mind, he said, "No, to town."

"Is he gone, Bella?" said Kellett, as his daughter entered.

"Yes; and before I could thank him for his coming."

"I think I said enough," said he, with a fierce laugh, which made her suddenly turn and look at him.

It was all she could do to repress a sudden cry of horror, for one side of his face was distorted by palsy, and the mouth drawn all awry.

"What's this here, Bella?" said he, trying to touch his cheek with his hand; "a kind of stiffness—a sort of— Eh, are you crying, darling?"

"No; it was something in my eye pained me," said she, turning away to hide her face.

"Give me a looking-glass, quickly," cried he.

"No, no," said she, forcing a laugh;



"BUT IF YOU JUST TRY IT, TWELVE HOURS WON'T PASS OVER TILL THE DOCK OF A POLICE-COURT IS GRACED BY THE HONORABLE ANNESLEY BEECHER ON A CHARGE OF FORGERY."
(P. 427.)

“you have not shaved these two days, and you are quite neglected-looking. You shan't see yourself in such a state.”

“Bring it this minute, I say,” said he, passionately, and in a voice that grew less and less articulate every moment.

“Now pray be patient, dearest papa.”

“Then I'll go for it myself;” and with these words he grasped the arm of the chair and tried to rise.

“There, there,” said she softly, forcing him back into his seat, “I'll fetch it at once. I wish you would be persuaded, dear papa—” began she, still holding the glass in her hands. But he snatched it rudely from her, and placed it before him.

“That's what it is,” said he at last; “handsome Paul Kellett they used to call me at Corfu. I wonder what they'd say now.”

“It is a mere passing thing, a spasm of some kind.”

“Ay,” said he, with a mocking laugh, to which the distortion imparted a shocking expression. “Both sides will be the same—to-morrow or next day—I know that.”

She could hear no more, but covering her face with her hands, sobbed bitterly.

Kellett still continued to look at himself in the glass, and whether the contortion was produced by the malady or a passing emotion, a half-sardonic laugh was on his features as he said, “I was wrong when I said I'd never be chapfallen.”

CHAPTER XXV.

A CHURCHYARD.

THERE come every now and then, in our strange climate, winter days which imitate the spring, with softened sunlight, glistening leaves, and warbling birds; even the streams unite in the delusion and run clearly along with eddying circles, making soft music among the stones. These delicious intervals are full of pleasant influences, and the garden breath that floats into the open drawing-room brings hope as well as health on its wings. It was on such a morning a little funeral procession entered the gateway of the ruined church at Kellester, and wound its way toward an obscure corner where an open grave was seen. With the exception of one solitary individual, it was easy to perceive that they who followed the coffin were either the hired mourners, or some stray passers-by indulging a sad curiosity in listlessness. It

was poor Kellett's corpse was borne along, with Conway walking after it.

The mournful task over, and the attendants gone, Conway lingered about among the graves, now reading the sad records of surviving affection—now stopping to listen to the high-soaring lark whose shrill notes vibrated in the thin air. “Poor Jack!” thought he, aloud; “he little knows the sad office I have had this morning. He always was talking of home and coming back again, and telling his dear father of all his campaigning adventures; and so much for anticipation—beneath that little mound of earth lies all that made the home he dreamed of! He's almost the last of the Albuclas,” said he, as he stood over the grave; and at the same time a stranger drew near the spot, and, removing his hat, addressed him by name. “Ah! Mr. Dunn, I think?” said Conway.

“Yes,” said the other; “I regret to see that I am too late. I wished to pay the last tribute of respect to our poor friend, but unfortunately all was over when I arrived.”

“You knew him intimately, I believe?” said Conway.

“From boyhood,” said Dunn, coughing, to conceal some embarrassment. “Our families were intimate; but of him, personally, I saw little; he went abroad with his regiment, and when he returned, it was to live in a remote part of the country, so that we seldom met.”

“Poor fellow,” muttered Conway, “he does seem to have been well-nigh forgotten by every one. I was alone here this morning!”

“Such is life!” said Dunn.

“But such ought not death to be,” rejoined Conway. “A gallant old soldier might well have been followed to his last billet by a few friends or comrades; but he was poor, and that explains all!”

“That is a harsh judgment for one so young as you are.”

“No; if poor Kellett had fallen in battle, he had gone to his grave with every honor to his memory; but he lived on in a world where other qualities than a soldier's are valued, and he was forgotten, that's the whole of it!”

“We must think of the daughter now; something must be done for her,” said Dunn.

“I have a plan about that, if you will kindly aid me with it,” said Conway, blushing as he spoke. “You are aware, perhaps, that Jack Kellett and I were comrades. He saved my life, and risked his own to do it, and I owe him more than

life in the cheery, hearty spirit he inspired me with, at a time when I was rather disposed to sulk with the whole world, so that I owe him a heavy debt." Here he faltered, and at last stopped, and it was only as Dunn made a gesture to him to continue, that he went on. "Well, I have a dear, kind old mother living all alone in Wales, not over well off, to be sure, but quite able to do a kind thing, and fully as willing. If Miss Kellett could be induced to come and stay with her—it might be called a visit at first—time would gradually show them how useful they were to each other, and they'd find they needn't—they couldn't separate. That's my plan, will you support it?"

"I ought to tell you, frankly, that I have no presumption to counsel Miss Kellett. I never saw her till the night you accompanied her to my house; we are utter strangers to each other, therefore. There is, however, sufficient in your project to recommend itself, and if anything I can add will aid it, you may reckon upon me; but you will yourself see whether my counsels be admissible. There is only one question I would ask—you'll excuse the frankness of it for the sincerity it guarantees—Miss Kellett, although in poverty, was the daughter of a gentleman of fortune—all the habits of her life were formed in that station—now, is it likely—I mean—are your mother's circumstances—"

"My mother has something like a hundred a year in the world," broke in Conway, hastily. "It's a poor pittance, I know, and you would be puzzled to say how one could eke out subsistence on it, but she manages it very cleverly."

"I had really no intention to obtrude my curiosity so far," said Dunn, apologizing. "My object was to show you, generally, that Miss Kellett, having hitherto lived in a condition of comfort—"

"Well, we'll do our best—I mean, my mother will," said Conway. "Only say you will recommend the plan, and I'm satisfied."

"And for yourself—have you no project, no scheme of life struck out? A man so full of youth and energy should not sink into the listless inactivity of a retired soldier."

"You forget this," said Conway, pointing to his armless sleeve.

"Many a one-armed officer leads his squadron into fire; and your services, if properly represented—properly supported—would perhaps meet recognition at the horse guards. What say you, would you serve again if they offered you a cornetcy?"

"Would I?—would I bless the day that brought me the tidings? But the question is not of *me*," said he proudly, and he turned away to leave the spot. Dunn followed him, and they walked out into the road together. A handsome chariot, splendid in all its appointments, and drawn by two powerful thorough-breds; awaited the rich man's coming, and the footman banged down the steps with ostentatious noise as he saw him approach.

"Let the carriage follow," said Dunn to the servant, and walked on at Conway's side. "If it was not that I am in a position to be of service to you, my observation would be a liberty," said Dunn; "but I have some influence with persons in power—"

"I must stop you at once," said Conway, good-humoredly. "I belong to a class which does not accept of favors except from personal friends; and though I fully recognize your kind intentions toward me, remember, we are strangers to each other."

"I should wish to forget that," said Dunn, courteously.

"I should still be ungracious enough to bear it in mind. Come, come, Mr. Dunn," said he, "this is not the topic I want you to be interested in. If you can bring some hope and comfort into that little cottage yonder, you will do a far greater kindness than by any service you can render one like me."

"It would scarcely be advisable to do anything for a day or two?" said Dunn, rather asking the question.

"Of course not. Meanwhile, I'll write to my mother, and she shall herself address Miss Kellett, or, if you think it better, she'd come over here."

"We'll think over that. Come back with me to town, and eat your dinner with me, if you have no engagement."

"Not to-day—excuse me to-day. I am low and out of sorts, and I feel as if I'd rather be alone."

"Will you let me see you to-morrow, or the day after?"

"The day after to-morrow be it. By that time I shall have heard from my mother," said Conway. And they parted.

Long after Mr. Dunn's handsome equipage had driven away, Charles Conway continued to linger about the neighborhood of the little cottage. The shutters were closed, and no smoke issued from the chimney, and it looked dreary and desolate. Again and again would he draw near the little wicket and look into the garden. He would have given all he possessed to have been able to ask after her—to have seen

any one who could have told him of her—how she bore up in her dread hour of trial; but none was to be seen. More than once he adventured to approach the door, and timidly stood, uncertain what to do, and then, cautiously retracing his steps, he regained the road, again to resume his lonely watch. And so the noon passed, and the day waned, and evening drew nigh, and there he still lingered. He thought that when night closed in, some flickering light might give sign of life within—some faint indication of her his heart was full of; but all remained dark, silent, and cheerless. Even yet, could he not bear to leave the spot, and it was already far into the night ere he turned his steps toward Dublin.

Let us go back for a moment to Mr. Davenport Dunn, who was not the only occupant of the handsome chariot that rolled smoothly back to town. Mr. Driscoll sat in one corner, the blind carefully down, so as to screen him from view.

“And that was Conway!” said he, as soon as Dunn had taken his seat. “Wasn’t I right when I said you were sure to catch him here?”

“I knew as much myself,” said Dunn, curtly.

“Well, and what is he like?—is he a chap easy to deal with?—is he any way deep?”

“He’s as proud as Lucifer—that’s all I can make out of him, and there are few things harder to manage than real pride.”

“Ay, if you can’t get round it,” said Driscoll, with a sly twinkle of the eye.

“I have no time for such management,” said Dunn, stiffly.

“Well, how did he take what you said to him? Did he seem as if he’d enter into the business kindly?”

“You don’t suppose that I spoke to him about his family or his fortune, do you? Is it in a chance meeting like this that I could approach a subject full of difficulty and complication? You have rare notions of delicacy and address, Driscoll!”

“God help me! I’m a poor crayture, but somehow I get along for all that, and I’m generally as far on my road at the end of the day as them that travels with four posters.”

“You’d make a pretty mess of whatever required a light hand and a fine touch, that I can tell you. The question here lies between a peer of the realm with twelve thousand a year, and a retired soldier with eightpence a day pension. It does not demand much thought to see where the balance inclines.”

“You’re forgetting one trifling matter.

Who has the right to be the peer with the twelve thousand a year?”

“I am not forgetting it; I was going to it when you stopped me. Until we have failed in obtaining our terms from Lord Lackington—”

“Ay, but what are the terms?” broke in Driscoll, eagerly.

“If you interrupt me thus at every moment, I shall never be able to explain my meaning. The terms are for yourself to name; you may write the figures how you please. As for me, I have views that in no way clash with yours. And to resume: until we fail with the viscount, we have no need of the soldier. All that we have to think of as regards Conway is, that he falls into no hands but our own, that he should never learn anything of his claim, nor be within reach of such information till the hour when we ourselves think fit to make it known to him.”

“He oughtn’t to keep company with that daughter of Paul Kellett, then,” broke in Driscoll. “There’s not a family history in the kingdom she hasn’t by heart.”

“I have thought of that already, and there is some danger of such an occurrence.”

“As how?”

“Young Conway is at this very moment plotting how she may be domesticated with his mother, somewhere in Wales, I believe.”

“If he’s in love with her, it will be a bad business,” said Driscoll. “She does be reading, and writing, too, from morning till night. There’s no labor nor fatigue she’s not equal too, and all the searches and inquiries that weary others she’d go into out of pure amusement. Now, if she was ever to be with his mother, and heard the old woman talk about family history, she’d be at it hard and fast next morning.”

“There is no need she should go there.”

“No. But she mustn’t go—must never see her.”

“I think I can provide for that. It will be somewhat more difficult to take him out of the way for the present. I wish he were back in the Crimea.”

“He might get killed—”

“Ay, but his claim would not die. Look here, Driscoll,” said he, slowly; “I ventured to tell him this morning that I would assist him with my influence if he wishes to re-enter the service as an officer, and he resented the offer at once as a liberty. Now, it might be managed in another way. Leave me to think it over, and perhaps I can hit upon the expedient.

The attorney-general is to report upon the claims to me to-morrow, next day I'm to see Conway himself, and then you shall learn all."

"I don't like all these delays," began Driscoll; but at a look from Dunn he stopped, and held down his head, half angry, half abashed.

"You advance small loans of money on approved security, Driscoll," said Dunn, with a dry expression of the mouth. "Perhaps some of these mornings you may be applied to for a few hundreds by a young fellow wishing to purchase his commission—you understand me?"

"I believe I do," said Driscoll, with a significant smile.

"You'll not be too hard on him for the terms, especially if he has any old family papers to deposit as security—eh?"

"Just so—just so. A mere nominal guaranty," said Driscoll, still laughing. "Oh, dear! but it's a queer world, and one has to work his wits hard to live in it." And with this philosophic explanation of life's trials, Mr. Driscoll took his leave of Dunn, and walked homeward.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE OSTEND PACKET.

It was a wild, stormy night, with fast-flying clouds above, and a heavy rolling sea below, as the *Osprey* steamed away for Ostend, her closed hatchways and tarpaulined sailors, as well as her sea-washed deck and dripping cordage, telling there was "dirty weather outside." Though the waves broke over the vessel as she lay at anchor, and the short distance between the shore and her gangway had to be effected at peril of life, the captain had his mail, and was decided on sailing. There were but three passengers: two went aboard with the captain, the third was already on deck when they arrived, and leisurely paraded up and down with his cigar, stopping occasionally to look at the lights on shore, or cast a glance toward the wild chaos of waves that raged without.

"Safe now, I suppose, Grog?" muttered Beecher, as the vessel, loosed from her last mooring, turned head to sea out of the harbor.

"I rather suspect you are," said Davis, as he struck a light for his cigar. "Few fellows would like to swim out here with a judge's warrant in his mouth such a night as this."

"I don't like it overmuch myself," said Beecher; "there's a tremendous sea out there, and she's only a cockleshell after all."

"A very tidy one, sir, in a sea, I promise you," said the captain, overhearing, while with his trumpet he bellowed forth some directions to the sailors.

"You've no other passengers than ourselves, have you?" asked Beecher.

"Only that gentleman yonder," whispered the captain, pointing toward the stranger.

"Few, I take it, fancy coming out in such weather," said Beecher.

"Very few, sir, if they haven't uncommonly strong reasons for crossing the water," replied the captain.

"I think he had you there!" growled Grog in his ear. "Don't you go poking nonsense at fellows like that. Shut up, I tell you! shut up!"

"I begin to feel it denced cold here," said Beecher, shuddering.

"Come down below, then, and have something hot. I'll make a brew and turn in," said Davis, as he moved toward the ladder. "Come along."

"No, I must keep the deck, no matter how cold it is. I suffer dreadfully when I go below. Send me up a tumbler of rum-and-water, Davis, as hot as may be."

"You'd better take your friend's advice, sir," said the captain. "It will be dirty weather out there, and you'll be snugger under cover." Beecher, however, declined; and the captain, crossing the deck, repeated the same counsel to the other passenger.

"No, I thank you," said he, gayly; "but if one of your men could spare me a cloak or a cape, I'd be much obliged, for I am somewhat ill-provided against wet weather."

"I can let you have a rug, with pleasure," said Beecher, overhearing the request; while he drew from a recess beneath the binnacle one of those serviceable aids to modern travel in the shape of a strong woolen blanket.

"I accept your offer most willingly, and the more so as I suspect I have had the honor of being presented to you," said the stranger. "Do I address Mr. Annesley Beecher?"

"Eh?—I'm not aware—I'm not quite sure, by this light," began Beecher, in considerable embarrassment, which the other as quickly perceived, and remedied by saying,

"I met you at poor Kellett's. My name is Conway."

"Oh, Conway—all right," said Beecher, laughing. "I was afraid you might be a 'dark horse,' as we say. Now that I know your colors, I'm easy again."

Conway laughed too at the frankness of the confession, and they turned to walk the deck together.

"You mentioned Kellett. He's gone 'toes up,' isn't he?" said Beecher.

"He is dead, poor fellow," said Conway, gravely. "I expected to have met you at his funeral."

"So I should have been had it come off on a Sunday," said Beecher, pleasantly; "but as in seeing old Paul 'tucked in,' they might have nabbed me, I preferred being reported absent without leave."

"These were strong reasons, doubtless," said Conway, dryly.

"I liked the old fellow, too," said Beecher; "he was a bit of a bore, to be sure, about Arayo Molinos, and Albuera, and Soult, and Beresford, and the rest of 'em, but he was a rare good one to help a fellow at a pinch, and hospitable as a prince."

"That I'm sure of!" chimed in Conway.

"I know it—I can swear to it;—I used to dine with him every Sunday, regularly as the day came. I'll never forget those little tough legs of mutton—wherever he found them there's no saying—and those hard pellets of capers, like big swan-shot, washed down with table beer and whisky-grog, and poor Kellett thinking all the while he was giving you haunch of venison and red hermitage."

"He'd have given them just as freely if he had them," broke in Conway, half gruffly.

"That he would! He did so when he had it to give—at least so they tell me, for I never saw the old place at Kellett's Town, or Castle Kellett—"

"Kellett's Court was the name."

"Ay, to be sure, Kellett's Court. I wonder how I could forget it, for I'm sure I heard it often enough."

"One forgets many a thing they ought to remember," said Conway, significantly.

"Hit him again, he hasn't got no friends!" broke in Beecher, laughing jovially at this rebuke of himself. "You mean, that I ought to have had a fresher memory about all old Paul's kindnesses, and you're right there; but if you knew how hard the world has hit me, how hot they've been giving it to me these years back, you'd perhaps not lean so heavily on me. Since the Epsom of '42," said he, solemnly, "I never had one chance, not

one, I pledge you my sacred word of honor. I've had my little 'innings,' you know, like every one else—punted for five-pun notes with the small ones, but never a real chance. Now, I call that hard, deuced hard."

"I suppose it *is* hard," said Conway; but really it would have been very difficult to say in what sense his words should be taken.

"And when a fellow finds himself always on the wrong side of the road," said Beecher, who now fancied that he was taking a moralist's view of life, and spoke with a philosophic solemnity—"I say, when a fellow sees that, do what he will, he's never on the right horse, he begins to be soured with the world, and to think that it's all a regular 'cross.' Not that I ever gave in. No! ask any of the fellows up at Newmarket—ask the whole ring—ask—" he was going to say Grog Davis, when he suddenly remembered the heavy judgment Conway had already fulminated on that revered authority, and then, quickly correcting himself, he said, "Ask any of the 'legs' you like what stuff A.B.'s made of—if he ain't hammered iron, and no mistake!"

"But what do you mean when you say you never gave in?" asked Conway, half sternly.

"What do I mean?" said Beecher, repeating the words, half stunned by the boldness of the question—"what do I mean? Why, I mean that they never saw me 'down'—that no man can say Annesley Beecher ever said 'die.' Haven't I had my soup piping hot—spiced and peppered, too! Wasn't I in for a pot on Blue Nose, when Mope ran a dead heat with Belshazzar for the Cloudeslie—fifteen to three in fifties twice over, and my horse running in bandages, and an ounce of corrosive sublimate in his stomach! Well, you'd not believe it—I don't ask any one to believe it that didn't see it—but I was as cool as I am here, and I walked up to Lady Tinkerton's drag and ate a sandwich; and when she said, 'Oh! Mr. Beecher, do come and tell me what to bet on,' I said to her, 'Quicksilver's the fastest of metals, but don't back it just now.' They had it all over the course in half an hour: 'Quicksilver's the fastest of metals—'"

"I'm afraid I don't quite catch your meaning."

"It was alluding to the bucketing, you know. They'd just given Blue Nose corrosive sublimate, which is a kind of quicksilver."

"Oh! I perceive," said Conway.

"Good — wasn't it?" said Beecher, chuckling. "Let A. B. alone to 'sarve them out,'—that's what all the legs said!" And then he heaved a little sigh, as though to say, "That, after all, even wit and smartness were only a vanity and a vexation of spirit, and that a 'good book' was better than them all."

"I detest the whole concern," said Conway. "So long as gentlemen bred and trained to run their horses in honorable rivalry, it was a noble sport, and well became the first squirearchy of the world: but when it degenerated into a field for every crafty knave and trickster—when the low cunning of the gambler succeeded to the bold daring of the true lover of racing—then, the turf became no better than the *rouge et noir* table, without even the poor consolation of thinking that chance was any element in the result."

"Why, what would you have? It's a game where the best player wins, that's all," broke in Beecher.

"If you mean it is always a contest where the best horse carries away the prize, I enter my denial to the assertion. If it were so, the legs would have no existence, and all that classic vocabulary of 'nobbling,' 'squaring,' and so on, have no dictionary."

"It's all the same the whole world over," broke in Beecher. "The wide-awake ones will have the best seat on the coach."

Conway made no reply, but the increased energy with which he puffed his cigar bespoke the impatience he was suffering under.

"What became of the daughter?" asked Beecher, abruptly, and then, not awaiting the answer, went on: "A deuced good-looking girl, if properly togged out, but she hadn't the slightest notion of dressing herself."

"Their narrow fortune may have had something to say to that," said Conway, gravely.

"Where there's a will there's a way—that's my idea. I was never so hard up in life but I could make my tailor turn me out like a gentleman. I take it," added he, returning to the former theme, "she was a proud one. Old Kellett was awfully afraid of doing many a thing from the dread of her knowing it. He told me so himself."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Conway, with evident pleasure in the tone.

"I could have helped him fifty ways. I knew fellows who would have 'done' his bills—small sums, of course—and have shoved him along pleasantly enough, but *she* wouldn't have it at any price."

"I was not aware of that," remarked Conway, inviting by his manner further revelations.

Beecher, however, mistaking the source of the interest he had thus excited, and believing that his own craft and shrewdness were the qualities that awakened respect, went on to show how conversant he was with all financial operations among Jews and money-lenders, proudly declaring that there was not a "man on town" knew the cent. per centers as he did.

"I've had my little dealings with them," said he, with some vanity in the manner. "I've had my paper done when there wasn't a fellow on the 'turf' could raise a guinea. You see," added he, lowering his voice to a whisper that implied secrecy, "I could do them a service no money could repay. I was up to all that went on in life, and at the clubs. When Etheridge got it so heavy at the 'Rag,' I warned Fordyce not to advance him beyond a hundred or two. I was the only gentleman knew Brookdale's horse could win 'the Ripsley.' The legs, of course, knew it well before the race came off. Jemmy could have had ten thousand down for his 'book.' Ah! if you and I had only known each other six years ago, what a stroke of work we might have done together! Even now," said he, with increased warmth of voice, "there's a deuced deal to be done abroad. Brussels and Florence are far from worked out—not among the foreigners, of course, but our own fellows—the young Oxford and Cambridge 'saps'—the green ones waiting for their gazette in the Guards! Where are you bound for?—what are you doing?" asked he, as if a sudden thought had crossed his mind.

"I am endeavoring to get back to the Crimea," said Conway, smiling at the prospect which the other had with such frankness opened to him.

"The Crimea!" exclaimed Beecher, "why that is downright madness; they're fighting away there just as fresh as ever. The very last paper I saw is filled with an account of a Russian sortie against our lines, and a lot of our fellows killed and wounded."

"Of course there are hard knocks—"

"It's all very well to talk of it that way, but I think you might have been satisfied with what you saw. I'd just as soon take a cab down to Guy's, or the Middlesex Hospital, and ask one of the house-surgeons to cut me up at his own discretion, as go among those Russian savages. I tell you it don't pay—not a bit of it!"

"I suppose, as to the paying part, you're

quite right; but remember, there are different modes of estimating the same thing. Now, *I* like soldering—”

“No accounting for tastes,” broke in Beecher. “I knew a fellow who was so fond of the Queen’s Bench Prison he wouldn’t let his friends clear him out; but, seriously speaking, the Crimea’s a bad book.”

“I should be a very happy fellow tonight if I knew how I could get back there. I’ve been trying in various ways for employment in any branch of the service. I’d rather be a driver in the wagon train than whip the neatest four-in-hand over Epsom Downs.”

“There’s only one name for that,” said Beecher, “at least out of Hanwell.”

“I’d be content to be thought mad on such terms,” said Conway, good-humoredly, “and not even quarrel with those who said so!”

“I’ve got a better scheme than the Crimea in my head,” said Beecher, in a low, cautious voice, like one afraid of being overheard. “I’ve half a mind to tell you, though there’s one on board here would come down pretty heavily on me for peaching.”

“Don’t draw any indignation on yourself on *my* account,” said Conway, smiling. “I’m quite unworthy of the confidence, and utterly unable to profit by it.”

“I’m not so sure of that,” responded Beecher. “A fellow who has got it so hot as you have, has always his eyes open ever after. Come a little to this side,” whispered he, cautiously. “Did you remark my going forward two or three times when I came on board?”

“Yes, I perceived that you did so.”

“You never guessed why?”

“No; really I paid no particular attention to it.”

“I’ll tell you then,” whispered he, still lower, “it was to look after a horse I’ve got there. ‘Mumps,’ that ran such a capital second for the Yarmouth, and ran a dead heat afterward with Stanley’s ‘Cross-Bones,’ he’s there!” and his voice trembled between pride and agitation.

“Indeed!” exclaimed Conway, amused at the eagerness of his manner.

“There he is, disguised as a prize bull for the king of Belgium. Nobody suspects him—nobody could suspect him, he’s so well got up, horns and all. Got him on board in the dark in a large roomy box, clap posters to it on the other side, and ‘tool’ him along to Brussels. That’s what I call business! Now, if you wait a week or two, you can lay on him as deep as you

like. We’ll let the Belgians ‘in,’ before we’ve done with them. We run him under the name of ‘Klepper’—don’t forget it, Klepper!”

“I’ve already told you I’m unworthy of such a confidence; you only risk yourself when you impart a secret to indiscretion like mine.”

“You’d not blow us?” cried Annesley, in terror.

“The best security against my doing so accidentally is, that I may be hundreds of miles away before your races come off.”

For a minute or two Beecher’s misery was extreme. He saw how his rashness had carried him away to a foolish act of good-nature, and had not even reaped thanks for his generosity. What would he not have given to recall his words?—what would he not have done to obliterate their impression? At last a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he said,

“There are two of us in ‘the lay,’ and my ‘pal’ is the readiest pistol in Europe.”

“I’ll not provoke any display of his skill, depend on’t,” said Conway, controlling as well as he could the inclination to laugh out.

“He’d tumble you over like winking if you sold him. He’d make it as short work with myself if he suspected *me*.”

“I’d rather have a quieter sort of colleague,” said Conway, dryly.

“Oh! but he’s a rare one to ‘work the oracle.’ Solomon was a wise man—”

“What infernal balderdash are you at with Solomon and Samson, there?” shouted out Grog Davis, who had just been looking after the horse-box in the bow. “Come down below, and have a glass of brandy and water.”

“I’ll stay where I am,” said Beecher, sulkily, and walked away in dudgeon from the spot.

“I think I recognize your friend’s voice,” said Conway, when Beecher next joined him. “If I’m right, it’s a fellow I’ve an old grudge against.”

“Don’t have it out, then—that’s all,” broke in Beecher, hastily. “I’d just as soon go into a cage and dispute a bone with one of Van Amburgh’s tigers, as I’d ‘bring *him* to book.’”

“Make your mind easy about that,” said Conway. “I never go in search of old scores. I would only say, don’t leave yourself more in his power than you can easily escape from. As for myself, it’s very unlikely I shall ever see him again.”

“I wish you’d give up the Crimea,” said Beecher, who, by one of the strange ca-

prices of his strange nature, began to feel a sort of liking for Conway.

"Why should I give it up? It's the only career I'm fit for—if I even be fit for that, which, indeed, the Horse Guards don't seem to think. But I've got an old friend in the Piedmontese service who is going out in command of the cavalry, and I'm on my way now to Turin to see whether he cannot make me something—anything, in short, from an aid-de-camp to an orderly. Once before the enemy, it matters wonderfully little what rank a man holds."

"The chances of being knocked over are pretty much alike," said Beecher, "if that's what you mean."

"Not exactly," said Conway, laughing—"not exactly, though even in *that* respect the calculation is equal."

They now walked the deck step for step together in silence. The conversation had arrived at that point whence, if not actually confidential, it could proceed no further without becoming so, and so each appeared to feel it, and yet neither was disposed to lead the way. Beecher was one of those men who regard the chance persons they meet with in life just as they would accidental spots where they halt when on a journey—little localities to be enjoyed at the time, and never, in all likelihood, revisited. In this way, they obtained far more of his confidence than if he was sure to be in constant habits of intercourse with them. He felt they were safe depositories, just as he would have felt a lonely spot in a wood a secure hiding-place for whatever he wanted to conceal. Now he was already—we are unable to say why—disposed to like Conway, and he would gladly have revealed to him much that lay heavily at his heart—many a weighty care—many a sore misgiving. There was yet remaining in his nature that reverence and respect for honesty of character which survives very often a long course of personal debasement, and he felt that Conway was a man of honor. Such men he very well knew were usually duped and done—they were the victims of the sharp set he himself fraternized with, but, with all that, there was something about them that he still clung to, just as he might have clung to a reminiscence of his boy-days.

"I take it," said he at last, "that each of us have caught it as heavily as most fellows going. *You*, to be sure, worse than myself—for I was only a younger son."

"*My* misfortunes," said Conway, "were all of my own making. I squandered a very good fortune in a few years, without ever so much as suspecting I was in any dif-

ficulty; and after all, the worst recollection of the past is, how few kindnesses—how very few good-natured things a fellow does when he leads a life of mere extravagance. I have enriched many a money-lender, I have started half a dozen rascally servants into smart hotel-keepers, but I can scarcely recall five cases of assistance given to personal friends. The truth is, the most selfish fellow in the world is the spendthrift."

"That's something new to me, I must own," said Beecher, thoughtfully; but Conway paid no attention to the remark.

"My notion is this," said Beecher, after a pause, "do what you will—say what you will—the world won't play fair with you!"

Conway shook his head dissentingly, but made no reply, and another and a longer silence ensued.

"You don't know my brother Lackington?" said Beecher, at length.

"No. I have met him in the world, and at clubs, but don't know him."

"I'll engage, however, you've always heard him called a clever fellow, a regular sharp fellow, and all that, just because he's the viscount; but he is, without exception, the greatest flat going—never saw his way to a good thing yet, and if you told him of one was sure to spoil it. I'm going over to see him now," added he, after a pause.

"He's at Rome, I think, the newspapers say?"

"Yes, he's stopping there for the winter." Another pause followed, and Beecher threw away the end of his cigar, and sticking an unlighted one in his mouth, walked the deck in deep deliberation. "I'd like to put a case to you for your opinion," said he, as though screwing himself to a great effort. "If you stood next to a good fortune—next in reversion, I mean—and that there was a threat—just a threat, and no more—of a suit to contest your right, would you accept of a life interest in the property to avoid all litigation, and secure a handsome income for your own time?"

"You put the case too vaguely. First of all, a mere threat would not drive me to a compromise."

"Well, call it more than a threat; say that actual proceedings had been taken—not that I believe they have—but just say so."

"The matter is too complicated for my mere Yes or No to meet it; but on the simple question of whether I should compromise a case of that nature, I'd say No. I'd not surrender my right if I had one, and I'd not retain possession of that which didn't belong to me."

"Which means, that you'd reject the offer of a life interest?"

"Yes, on the terms you mention."

"I believe you're right. Put the bold face on, and stand the battle. Now the real case is this. My brother Lackington has just been served with notice—"

Just as Beecher had uttered the last word, his arm, which rested on the binnacle against which he was standing, was grasped with such force that he almost cried out with the pain, and at the same instant a muttered curse fell upon his ear.

"Go on," said Conway, as he waited to hear more.

Beecher muttered some unintelligible words about feeling suddenly chilled, and "wanting a little brandy," and disappeared down the stairs to the cabin.

"I heard you," cried Davis, as soon as the other entered—"I heard you! and if I hadn't heard you with my own ears, I'd not have believed it! Haven't I warned you, not once but fifty times, against that confounded peaching tongue of yours—haven't I told you, that if every act of your life was as pure and honest as you know it is not, your own stupid talk would make an indictment against you? You meet a fellow on the deck of a steamer—"

"Stop there!" cried Beecher, whose temper was sorely tried by this attack, "the gentleman I talked with is an old acquaintance—he knows *me*, ay, and what's more, he knows *you*!"

"Many a man knows *me*, and does not feel himself much the better for his knowledge!" said Davis, boldly.

"Well, I believe our friend here wouldn't say he was the exception to that rule" said Beecher with an ironical laugh.

"Who is he?—what's his name?"

"His name is Conway—he was a lieutenant in the 12th Lancers; but you will remember him better as the owner of Sir Aubrey."

"I remember him perfectly," replied Davis, with all his own composure—"I remember him perfectly—a tall, good-looking fellow, with short monstaches. He was—except yourself—the greatest flat I ever met in the betting ring; and that's a strong word, Mr. Annesley Beecher—ain't it?"

"I suspect you'd scarcely like to call him a flat to-day, at least to his face," said Beecher, angrily.

A look of mingled insolence and contempt was all the answer Davis gave this speech, and then, half filling a tumbler with brandy, he drank it off, and said slowly,

"What *I* would dare to do, *you* certainly would never suspect—that much I'm well

aware of. What *you* would dare is easily guessed at."

"I don't clearly understand you," said Beecher, timidly.

"You'd dare to draw me into a quarrel on the chance of seeing me 'bowled over,'" said Davis, with a bitter laugh. "You'd dare to see me stand opposite another man's pistol, and pray heartily at the same time that his hand mightn't shake, nor his wrist falter; but I've got good business habits about me, Master Beecher. If you open that writing-desk, you'll own few men's papers are in better order, or more neatly kept; and there is no satisfaction I could have to offer any one, wouldn't give me ample time to deposit in the hands of justice seven forged acceptances by the Honorable Annesley Beecher, and the power of attorney counterfeited by the same accomplished gentleman's hand."

Beecher put out his hand to catch the decanter of brandy; but Davis gently removed the bottle, and said, "No, no: that's only Dutch courage, man; nerve yourself up, and learn to stand straight and manfully, and when you say, 'Not guilty,' do it with a bold look at the jury box?"

Beecher dropped into his seat, and buried his head between his hands.

"I often think," said Davis, as he took out his cigar-case and proceeded to choose a cigar—"I often think it would be a fine sight when the swells—the fashionable world as the newspapers call them—would be pressing on to the Old Bailey to see one of their own set in the dock. What nobs there would be on the bench. All Brookes's and the Wyndham scattered among the bar. The *Illustrated News* would have a photographic picture of you, and the descriptive fellows would come out strong about the way you recognized your former acquaintances in court. Egad! old Grog Davis would be quite proud to give his evidence in such company! 'How long have you been acquainted with the prisoner in the dock, Mr. Davis?'" cried he, aloud, imitating the full and imperious accents of an examining counsel. "'I have known him upward of fifteen years, my lord. We went down together to Leeds in the summer of 1840 on a little speculation with coggled dice—'"

Beecher looked up and tried to speak, but his strength failed him, and his head fell heavily down again on the table.

"There, 'liquor up,' as the Yankees say," cried Davis, passing the decanter toward him. "You're a poor chicken-hearted creature, and don't do much honor to your 'order.'"

"You'll drive me to despair yet," muttered Beecher, in a voice scarcely above a whisper.

"Not a bit of it, man; there's pluck in despair! You'll never go that far!"

Beecher grasped his glass convulsively, and as his eyes flashed wildly, he seemed for a moment as if about to hurl it in the other's face. Davis's look, however, appeared to abash him, and with a low, faint sigh he relinquished his hold, while his head fell forward on his bosom.

Davis now drew near the fire, and with a leg on either side of it, smoked away at his ease.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A VISIT OF CONDOLENCE.

"I THINK she will *see me*," said Davenport Dunn to the old woman servant who opened the door to him at the Kelleys' cottage, "if you will tell her my name: Mr. Dunn—Mr. Davenport Dunn."

"She told me she'd not see anybody, sir," was the obdurate reply.

"Yes; but I think, when you say who it is—"

"She would not see that young man that was in the regiment with her brother, and he was here every day, wet or dry, to ask after her."

"Well, take in my card now, and I'll answer for it she'll not refuse me."

The old woman took the card half sulkily from his hand, and returned in a few minutes to say that Miss Kellett would receive him.

Dressed in mourning of the very humblest and cheapest kind, and with all the signs of recent suffering and sorrow about her, Sybella Kellett yet received Mr. Dunn with a calm and quiet composure for which he was scarcely prepared.

"If I have been importunate, Miss Kellett," said he, "it is because I desire to proffer my services to you. I feel assured that you will not take ill this assistance on my part. I would wish to be thought a friend—"

"You were so to my father, sir," said she, interrupting, while she held her handkerchief to her eyes.

Dunn's face grew scarlet at these words, but, fortunately for him, she could not see it.

"I had intended to have written to you, sir," said she, with recovered composure. "I tried to do so this morning, but my

head was aching so that I gave it up. I wanted your counsel, and indeed your assistance. I have no need to tell you that I'm left without means of support. I do not want to burden relatives, with whom, besides, I have had no intercourse for years; and my object was to ask if you could assist me to a situation as governess, or, if not, to something more humble still. I will be not difficult to please," said she, smiling sadly, "for my pretensions are of the very humblest."

"I'm aware how much you underrate them. I'm no stranger to Miss Kellett's abilities," said Dunn, bowing.

She scarcely moved her head in acknowledgment of this speech, and went on: "If you could insure me immediate occupation, it would serve to extricate me from a little difficulty at this moment, and relieve me from the embarrassment of declining ungraciously what I cannot accept of. This letter here is an invitation from a lady in Wales to accept the hospitality of her house for the present; and however deeply the kindness touches me, I must not avail myself of it. You may read the letter," said she, handing it to him.

Dunn perused it slowly, and, folding it up, laid it on the table again.

"It is most kindly worded, and speaks well for the writer," said he, calmly.

"I feel all its kindness," said she, with a slight quivering of the lip. "It comes when such is doubly precious, but I have my reasons against accepting it."

"Without daring to ask, I can assume them, Miss Kellett. I am one of those who believe that all efforts in life, to be either good or great, should strike root in independence; that he who leans upon another, parts with the best features of his identity, and loses himself in suiting his tastes to another's."

She made no reply, but a slight flush on her cheek, and an increased brightness in her eye, showed that she gave her full concurrence to the words.

"It is fortunate, Miss Kellett," said he, resuming, "that I am the bearer of a proposition which, if you approve of, meets the case at once. I have been applied to by Lord Glengariff to find a lady who would accept the situation of companion to his daughter. He has so far explained the requirements he seeks for, that I can answer for Miss Kellett being exactly everything to fulfill them."

"Oh, sir!" broke she in, "this is in no wise what I desired. I am utterly unfitted for such a sphere and such associations. Remember how and where my life has been

passed. I have no knowledge of life, and no experience of society."

"Let me interrupt you. Lord Glengariff lives completely estranged from the world in a remote part of the country. Lady Augusta, his only unmarried daughter, is no longer young; they see no company; indeed, their fortune is very limited, and all their habits of the very simplest and least expensive. It was remembering this very seclusion, I was glad to offer you a retreat so likely to meet your wishes."

"But even my education is not what such persons would look for. I have not one of the graceful accomplishments that adorn society. My skill as a musician is very humble; I cannot sing at all; and though I can read some modern languages, I scarcely speak them."

"Do not ask me to say how much I am aware of your capacity and acquirements, Miss Kellett. It is about two months back a little volume came into my hands which had once been yours; how it ceased to be so I don't choose to confess; but it was a work on the industrial resources of Ireland, annotated and commented on by *you*. I have it still. Shall I own to you that your notes have been already used by me in my reports, and that I have adopted some of the suggestions in my recommendations to Government? Nay, if you doubt me, I will give you the proof."

"I left such a volume as you speak of at Mr. Hawkshaw's, and believed it had been mislaid."

"It was deliberately stolen, Miss Kellett, that's the truth of it. Mr. Driscoll chanced to see the book, and happened to show it to me. I could not fail to be struck with it, the more as I discovered in your remarks hints and suggestions, coupled with explanations, that none had ever offered me."

"How leniently you speak of my presumption, sir!"

"Say, rather, how sincerely I applaud your zeal and intelligence—the book bespeaks both. Now, when I read it, I wished at once to make your acquaintance. There were points wherein you were mistaken; there were others in which you evidently see further than any of us. I felt that if time, and leisure, and opportunity of knowledge were supplied, these were the studies in which you might become really proficient. Lord Glengariff's proposal came at the very moment. It was all I could desire for you—a quiet home, the society of those whose very breeding is acted kindness."

"Oh, sir! do not flatter me into the belief that I am worthy of such advantages."

"The station will gain most by your association with it, take my word for that."

How was it that these words sent a color to her cheek and a courage to her heart that made her for a moment forget she was poor, and fatherless, and friendless? What was it, too, that made them seem less flattery than sound, just, and due acknowledgment? He that spoke them was neither young, nor handsome, nor fascinating in manner; and yet she felt his praise vibrate within her heart strangely and thrillingly.

He spoke much to her about her early life—what she had read, and how she was led to reflect upon themes so unlikely to attract a young girl's thoughts. By degrees, as her reserve wore off, she ventured to confess what a charm the great men of former days possessed for her imagination—how their devotion, their courage, their single-heartedness animated her with higher hopes for the time when Ireland should have the aid of those able to guide her destinies and make of her all that her great resources promised.

"The world of contemporaries is seldom just to these," said Dunn, gravely; "they excite envy rather than attract friendship, and then they have often few of the gifts which conciliate the prejudices around them."

"What matter if they can live down these prejudices?" cried she, warmly; then blushing at her own eagerness, she said, falteringly, "How have I dared to speak of these things, and to *you*?"

Dunn arose, and walked to the window, and now a long pause occurred, in which neither uttered a word.

"Is this cottage yours, Miss Kellett?" said he, at last.

"No; we had rented it, and the time expires in a week or two."

"And the furniture?"

"It was hired also, except a very few articles of little or no value."

Dunn again turned away, and seemed lost in deep thought; then, in a voice of some uncertainty and hesitation, said: "Your father's affairs were complicated and confused—there were questions of law, too, to be determined about them—so that, for the present, there is no saying exactly how they stand; still there will be a sum—a small one, unfortunately, but still a sum available to you, which, for present convenience, you must allow me to advance to you."

"You forget, sir, that I have a brother. To him, of right, belongs anything that remains to us."

"I had, indeed, forgotten that," said Dunn, in some confusion, "and it was just of him I wanted now to speak. He is serving as a soldier with a Rifle regiment in the Crimea. Can nothing be done to bring him favorably before the notice of his superiors? His gallantry has already attracted notice, but, as his real station is still unknown, his advancement has been merely that accorded to the humblest merits. I will attend to it. I'll write about him this very day."

"How I thank you!" cried she, fervently; and she bent down and pressed her lips to his hand.

A cold shivering passed over Dunn, as he felt the hot tears that fell upon his hand, and a strange sense of weakness oppressed him.

"It will make your task the lighter," cried she, eagerly, "to know that Jack is a soldier in heart and soul—brave, daring, and high-hearted, but with a nature gentle as a child's. There was a comrade of his here, the other day, one whose life he saved—"

"I have seen Conway," said Dunn, dryly, while he scanned her features closely.

No change of color nor voice showed that she felt the scrutiny, and in a calm tone she went on: "I know so little of these things, that I do not know if my dear brother were made an officer to-morrow whether his want of private fortune would prevent his acceptance of the rank, but there surely must be steps of advancement open to men poor as he is."

"You may trust all to me," interrupted Dunn. "Once that you consider me as your guardian, I will neglect nothing that concerns you."

"Oh, how have I deserved such kindness!" cried she, trying to smother her emotion.

"You must call me your guardian, too, and write to me as such. The world is of such a temper that it will serve you to be thought my ward. Even Lady Augusta Arden herself will feel the force of it." There was a kind of rude energy in the way these last words were uttered that gave them a character almost defiant.

"You are then decided that I ought to take the situation?" said she. And already her manner had assumed the deference of one seeking direction.

"Yes, for the present, it is all that could be desired. There will be no necessity of your continuing there if it should ever be irksome to you. Upon this, as upon all else, I trust you will communicate freely with me."

"I should approach an actual duty—a task—with far more confidence than I feel in offering to accommodate myself to the ways and tempers of utter strangers."

"Very true," said he; "but when I have told you about them they will be strangers no longer. People are easily comprehended who have certain strong ruling passions. They have only one, and that the very simplest of all motives—pride. Let me tell you of them." And so he drew his chair to her side and began to describe the Ardens.

We do not ask the reader to follow Davenport Dunn in his sketch—enough that we say his picture was more truthful than flattering, for he portrayed traits that had often given him offense and suffering. He tried to speak with a sort of disinterested coldness—a kind of half-pitying indifference about "ways and notions" that people estranged from "much intercourse with the world *will* fall into;" but his tone was, in spite of himself, severe and resentful, and scarcely compensated by his concluding words, "though of course, to *you*, they will be amiable and obliging."

"How I wish I could see them, though only for a minute," said she, as he finished.

"Have you such confidence, then, in your power of detecting character at sight?" asked he, with a keen and furtive glance.

"My gift is generally enough for my own guidance," said she, frankly; "but, to be sure, it has only been exercised among the country people, and they have fewer disguises than those we call their betters."

"I may write word, then, that within a week you will be ready," said Dunn, rising. "You will find in that pocket-book enough for any immediate outlay—nay, Miss Kellett, it is your own—I repeat it, all your own. I am your guardian, and no more." And with a stiffness of manner that almost repelled gratitude, he took his leave and withdrew. As he gained the door, however, he stopped, and, after a moment, came back into the room. "I should like to see you again before you leave—there are topics I would like to speak with you on. May I come in a day or two?"

"Whenever, and as often as you please." Dunn took her hand and pressed it tenderly. A deep crimson overspread her face as she said "Good-by!" and the carriage had rolled away ere she knew that he was gone.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE HERMITAGE AT GLENGARIFF.

BESIDE a little arm of the sea, and surrounded by lofty mountains, stood the cottage of Lord Glengariff. It was originally built as a mere fishing-lodge, a resting-place in the bathing season, or a spot to visit when it was the pleasure of its owners to affect retirement and seclusion. Then would the earl and his countess, and the Ladies Julia and Jemima, come down to the Hermitage with a sort of self-approving humility, that seemed to say, "Even we know how to chastise pride, and vanity, and the sinful lusts of the flesh." Whether it was that these seasons of mortification became more frequent, or that they required more space, we cannot say, but, in course of time, the Hermitage extended its limbs, first in one direction and then in another, till at length it grew to be a very commodious house, with ample rooms, and every imaginable comfort. Owing to the character of the architecture, too, it gained in picturesque effect by these successive additions; and in its jutting projections, its deep-shadowed courts, and its irregular line of roof, it presented a very pleasing specimen of that half-Elizabethan cottage so rarely hit upon in any regular plan.

As the fortunes of the noble house declined—the earl's ancestors had been among the most extravagant of Irish gentry—the ancient castle of Holt-Glengariff, where they had long resided, was sold, and the family settled down to live at the Hermitage. At first the change was supposed to be merely temporary—"they were going to live in London, or in Brighton; they were about to establish themselves in Paris; her ladyship was ordered to Italy"—a variety of rumors, in fact, were afloat to explain that the sunshine of their presence in that lonely glen would be but brief and short-lived. All the alterations that might be made in the cottage or its grounds, all the facilities of approach by land and water, all the beneficial changes in the village itself, were alluded to as projects for the day when they would come back there, for my lord said he "really liked the place"—a species of avowal that was accepted by the neighborhood as the proudest encomium man could pronounce upon their "happy valley."

With all these plans and intentions, it was now eighteen years, and the earl had never quitted the Hermitage for any longer journey than an occasional trip to Dublin.

The countess had taken a longer road than that over the Alps, and lay at rest in the village churchyard. The Ladies Georgiana, Arabella, and Julia had married off, and none remained but Lady Augusta Arden, of whom we have already made brief mention to our readers in a former chapter.

We did but scant justice to Lady Augusta when we said that she had once been handsome: she was so still. She had fine eyes and fine teeth; a profusion of brown hair of the very silkiest; her figure was singularly graceful; and, bating a degree of haughtiness—a family trait—her manner was unexceptionably good and pleasing. Both the earl and his daughter had lived too long among those greatly inferior to them in rank and fortune not to conceive a very exaggerated estimate of themselves.

No pasha was ever more absolute than my lord in the little village beside him; his will was a sort of firman that none dreamed of disputing; and, indeed, the place men occupied in the esteem of their fellows there, was little else than a reflex of how they were regarded at the Hermitage. We never scruple to bestow a sort of derisive pity upon the savage who, having carved his deity out of a piece of wood, sits down to worship him; and yet, what an unconscious imitation of the red man is all our adulation of great folks! We follow him to the very letter, not only in investing the object of our worship with a hundred qualities that he has not, but we make him the butt of our evil passions, and in the day of our anger and disappointment we turn round and rend him! Not that the villagers ever treated my lord in this wise—they were still in the stage "of worship"—they had been at "their offices," fathers and grandfathers, for many a year, and though some were beginning to complain that their knees were getting sore, none dreamed of getting on their legs! The fact was, that even they who liked the religion least, thought it was not worth while abjuring the faith of their fathers, especially when they could not guess what was to replace it; and so my lord dictated, and decided, and pronounced for the whole neighborhood; and Lady Augusta doctored, and model-schooled, and loan-funded them to her heart's content. Nay, we are wrong! It was all in the disappointed dreariness of an unsatisfied heart that she took to benevolence! Ohi, dear! what a sorry search is that after motives, if one only knew how much philanthropy and active charity have come of a breach of promise to marry! Not that Lady Augusta had ever stood in this

position, but either that she had looked too high, or was too hard to please, or from some other cause, but she never married.

The man who has no taste for horsemanship, consoles himself for the unenjoyed pleasure by reading of the fractured ribs and smashed collar-bones of the hunting-field. Was it in something of this spirit that Lady Augusta took an especial delight in dwelling in her mind and in her letters on all the disagreeables of her sisters' wedded life? The extravagance of men, their selfishness, their uncomplying habits, the odious tyranny of their tempers, were favorite themes with her, dashed with allusions to every connubial contingency, from alimony to the measles in the nursery! At last, possibly because, by such frequent recurrence to the same subjects, she had no longer anything new to say on them, or, perhaps—it is just possible—the themes themselves had less interest for others than for herself, her sisters seemed to reply less regularly than of old. Their answers were shorter and drier; they appeared neither to care so much for sympathy and condolence as formerly; and, in fact, as Lady Augusta said to herself, "They were growing inured to ill-treatment!" And if half of us in this world only knew of the miseries we are daily suffering, and which sympathetic friends are crying over, what a deal of delightful affliction might we enjoy that we now are dead to! What oppressive governments do we live under—what cruel taskmasters—what ungrateful publics, not to speak of the more touching sorrows of domestic life—the undervaluing parents and unsympathizing wives! Well, one thing is a comfort; there are dear kind hearts in mourning over all these for us, anxiously looking for the day we may awaken to a sense of our own misery!

It was of a cheery spring morning, sunlit and breezy, when in the chirping songs of birds, the rustling leaves, and fast-flowing rivulets, Nature seems to enjoy a more intense vitality, that the earl sat at breakfast with his daughter. A fairer prospect could hardly be seen than that which lay before the open windows in front of them. The green lawn, dotted with clumps of ancient trees, inclined with many a waving slope to the sea, which, in a long, narrow arm, pierced its way between two jutting headlands, the one bold, rocky, and precipitous, the other grass-covered and flowery, reflecting its rich tints in the glassy water beneath. The sea was, indeed, calm and still as any lake, and, save when a low, surging sound arose within some rocky

cavern, as silent and noiseless. The cattle browsed down to the very water's edge, and the nets of the fishermen hung to dry over the red-berried foliage of the arbutus. They who looked—when they did, perchance, look on this scene—gazed with almost apathy on it. Their eyes never brightened as the changing sunlight cast new effects upon the scene. Nor was this indifference the result of any unconsciousness of its beauty. A few months back it was the theme of all their praises. Landscape-painters and photographers were invited specially to catch its first morning tints, its last mellow glow at sunset. The old lord said it was finer than Sorrento—equal to anything in Greece. If the Mediterranean were bluer, where was there such emerald verdure?—where such blended coloring of heaths, purple, and blue, and violet?—in what land did the fragrance of the white thorn so load the warm atmosphere? Such, and such like, were the encomiums they were wont to utter; and wherefore was it that they uttered them no more? The explanation is a brief one. A commission, or a deputation, or a something as important, had come down to examine Bantry Bay, and investigate its fitness to become a packet station for America. In the course of this examination, a scientific member of the body had strayed down to Glengariff, where, being of a speculative as well as of a scientific turn, he was struck by its immense capabilities. What a gem it was, and what might it not be made? It was Ireland in the tropics—"the Green Isle" in the Indian Ocean! Only imagine such a spot converted into a watering-place! With a lodge for the queen on that slope sheltered by the ilex-copse, crescents, and casinos, and yacht stations, and ornamental villas rose on every side by his descriptive powers, and the old earl—for he was dining with him—saw at one glance how he had suddenly become a benefactor of mankind and a millionaire. "That little angle of the shore, yonder, my lord—the space between the pointed rock and the stone pine-trees—is worth fifty thousand pounds; the crescent that would stand there would leave many an untenanted house at Kemp Town. I'll engage myself to get you a thousand guineas for that small bit of table-land to the right—the Duke of Uxmore is only waiting to hit upon such a spot. Here, too, where we sit, must be the hydropathic establishment. You can't help it, my lord, you must comply. This park will bring you in a princely revenue. It is gold—actual gold—every foot of it! There's not

a Swiss cottage in these woods won't pay cent. per cent !”

Mr. Galbraith—such was his name—was of that pictorially-gifted order of which the celebrated George Robins was once chief. He knew how to dress his descriptions with the double attraction of the picturesque and the profitable, so that trees seemed to bend under golden fruit, and the sea-washed rocks looked like “nuggets.”

If there be something very seductive in the prospect of growing immensely rich all at once, there is a terrible compensation in the utter indifference inflicted on us as to all our accustomed pleasures in life. The fate of Midas seems at once our own ; there is nothing left to us but that one heavy and shining metal of all created blessedness ! Lord Glengariff was wont to enjoy the lonely spot he lived in with an intense appreciation of its beauty. He never wearied of watching the changing effects of season on a scene so full of charm ; but now he surveyed it with a sense of fidgety impatience, eager for the time when the sounds of bustle and business should replace the stillness that now reigned around him.

“This is from Dunn,” said he, breaking open a large, heavy-sealed letter, which had just arrived. His eyes ran hastily along it, and he exclaimed, peevishly, “No prospectus yet—no plan issued—nothing whatever announced. ‘I have seen Galbraith, and had some conversation with him about your harbor.’ My harbor !”

“Go on,” said Lady Augusta, mildly.

“Why, the insolent upstart has not even listened to what was said to him. My harbor ! He takes it for granted that we were wanting to make this a packet station for America, and he goes on to say that the place has none of the requisite qualifications—no depth of water ! I wish the fellow were at the bottom of it ! Really this is intolerable. Here is a long lecture to me not to be misled by those ‘speculation-mongers who are among the rife products of our age.’ I ask you, if you ever heard of impertinence like that ? This fellow—the arch-charlatan of his day—the quack par excellence of his nation—dares to warn *me* against the perils of his class and kindred ! Only listen to this, Gusty,” cried he, bursting into a fit of half-angry laughter : “‘I am disposed to think that, by drawing closer to the present party in power, you could serve your interests much more effectively than by embarking in any schemes of mere material benefit. Allington’—he actually calls him Allington !—‘dropped hints to this effect in a confidential conversation we held last evening to-

gether, and I am in hopes that, when we meet, you will enter into our views.’ Are the coronets of the nobility to be put up to sale like the acres of the squirearchy ? or what is it this fellow is driving at ?” cried he, flinging down the letter in a rage, and walking up and down the room. “The rule of O’Connell and his followers was mild, and gentle, and forbearing, compared with the sway of these fellows. In the one case we had a fair stand-up fight—opinion met opinion, and the struggle was an open one—but here we have an organized association to investigate the state of our resources, to pry into our private affairs, learning what pressure bears upon us here, what weak spot gives way there. They hold our creditors in leash, to slip them on us at any moment ; and the threat of a confiscation—for it is just that, and nothing less—is unceasingly hanging over us !”

He stopped short in his torrent of passion, for the white sail of a small fishing craft that just showed in the offing suddenly diverted his thoughts to that vision of prosperity he so lately reveled in—that pleasant dream of a thriving watering-place—bright, sunny, and prosperous—the shore dotted with gayly-caparisoned donkeys, and the sea speckled with pleasure-boats. All the elements of that gay Elysium came up before him—the full tide of fortune setting strongly in, and coming to his feet. Galbraith, who reveled in millions—whose rapid calculations rarely descended to ignoble thousands—had constantly impressed upon him that if Dunn only took it up, the project was already accomplished. “He’ll start you a company, my lord, in a week ; a splendid prospectus and an admirable set of names on the direction, with a paid-up capital to begin with, of—say 30,000*l*. He knows to a nicety how many stock exchange fellows, how many M.P.s, how many county gentlemen to have. He’ll stick all the plums in the right place, too ; and he’ll have the shares quoted at a premium before the scrip is well out in the market. Clever fellow, my lord—vastly clever fellow, Dunn !” And so the earl thought too, till the letter now before him dashed that impression with disappointment.

“I’ll tell you what it is, Gusty,” said he, after a pause—“we must ask him down here. It is only by an actual inspection of the bay that he can form any just conception of the place. You must write to him for me. This gouty knuckle of mine makes penwork impossible. You can say— Just find a sheet of paper, and I’ll tell you what

to say." Now, the noble earl was not as ready at dictation as he had fancied, for when Lady Augusta had opened her writing-desk, arranged her writing materials, and sat, pen in hand, awaiting his suggestions, he was still pacing up and down the room, muttering to himself in broken and unconnected phrases, quite unsuited to the easy flow of composition. "I suppose, Gusty—I take it for granted—you must begin, 'My dear sir'—eh?—or, perhaps, better still, 'Dear Mr. Dunn.'"

"'Dear Mr. Dunn,'" said she, not looking up from the paper, but quietly re-touching the last letters with her pen.

"But I don't see why, after all, we should follow this foolish lead," said he, proudly. "The acceptance he meets from others need not dictate to us, Gusty. I'd say, 'The earl of Glengariff'—or, 'I am requested by Lord Glengariff—'"

"'My father, Lord Glengariff,'" interposed she, quietly.

"It sounds more civilly, perhaps. Be it so;" and again he walked up and down, in the same hard conflict of composition. At length he burst forth: "There's nothing on earth more difficult than addressing a man of this sort. You want his intimacy without familiarity. You wish to be able to obtain the benefit of his advice, and yet not incur the infliction of his dictation. In fact, you are perfectly prepared to treat him as a valued guest, provided he never lapses into the delusion that he is your friend. Now, it would take old Metternich to write the sort of note I mean."

"If I apprehend you, your wish is to ask him down here on a visit of a few days, with the intimation that you have a matter of business to communicate—"

"Yes, yes," said he, impatiently, "that's very true. The business part of the matter should come in incidentally, and yet the tone of the invitation be such as to let him distinctly understand that he does not come without an express object. Now you have my meaning, Gusty," said he, with the triumphant air of one who had just surmounted a difficulty.

"If I have, then, I am as far as ever from knowing how to convey it," said she, half peevishly. "I'd simply say, 'Dear sir,' or, 'Dear Mr. Dunn,—There is a question of great moment to myself, on which your advice and counsel would be most valuable to me. If you could spare me the few days a visit would cost you, and while giving us the great pleasure of your society—'"

"Too flattering by half. No, no," broke he in again. "I'll tell you what would be

the effect of all that, Gusty"—and his voice swelled out full and forcibly—"the fellow would come here, and, before a week was over, he'd call me Glengariff!"

She grew crimson over face, and forehead, and neck, and then almost as quickly pale again, and, rising hastily from the table, said: "Really, you expect too much from my subtlety as a note-writer. I think I'd better request Mr. Dunn to look out for one of those invaluable creatures they call companions, who pay your bills, correct your French notes, comb the lapdog, and scold your maid for you. *She* might be, perhaps, equal to all this nice diplomacy."

"Not a bad notion by any means, Gusty," said he, quickly. "A clever woman would be inestimable for all the correspondence we are like to have soon; far better than a man—less obtrusive—more confidential—not so open to jobbery; a great point, a very great point. Dunn's the very man, too, to find out the sort of person we want."

"Something more than governess, and less than lady," said she, half superciliously.

"The very thing, Gusty—the very thing. Why, there are women with breeding enough to be maids of honor, and learning sufficient for a professor, whose expectations never rise beyond a paltry hundred a year—what am I saying?—sixty or seventy are nearer the mark. Now for it, Gusty. Make this object the substance of your letter. You can have no difficulty in describing what will suit us. We live in times, unfortunately, when people of birth and station are reduced to straitened circumstances on every hand. It reminds me of what poor Hammersley used to say: 'Do you observe,' said he, 'that whenever there's a great smash on the turf, you'll always see the coaches horsed with thorough-breds for the next year or two!'"

"A very unfeeling remark, if it mean anything at all."

"Never mind. Write this letter, and say at the foot of it, 'We should be much pleased if, in your journeys south'—he's always coming down to Cork and the neighborhood—'you could give us a few days at Glengariff Hermitage. My father has certain communications to make to you, which he is confident would exempt your visit from the reproach of mere idleness.' He'll take that; the fellow is always flattered when you seem impressed by the immensity of his avocations!" And with a hearty chuckle at the weakness he was triumphing over, the old lord left the room, while his daughter proceeded to compose her letter.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A MORNING AT OSTEND.

It would never have occurred to the mind of any one who saw Annesley Beecher and Davis, as they sat at breakfast together in Ostend, that such a scene as we have described could have occurred between them. Not only was their tone frank and friendly with each other, but a gay and lively spirit pervaded the conversation, and two seemingly more light-hearted fellows it were hard to find.

As the chemist is able by the minutest drop, an almost imperceptible atom of some subtle ingredient, to change the properties of some vast mass, altering color, and odor, and taste at once, so did the great artist Grog Davis know how to deal with the complicated nature of Beecher, that he could at any moment hurl him down into the blackest depths of despair, or elevate him to the highest pinnacle of hope and enjoyment. The glorious picture of a race-course, with all its attendant rogueries, betting-stands crammed with "flats," a ring crowded with "green-horns," was a tableau of which he never wearied. Now, this was a sort of landscape Grog touched off neatly. All the figures he introduced were life-studies, every tint, and shade, and effect taken carefully from nature. With a masterly hand, he sketched out a sort of future campaign, artfully throwing Beecher himself into the foreground, and making him fancy that he was in some sort necessary to the great events before them.

"Mumps did not touch his hock, I hope, when he kicked there?" asked Beecher.

"Call him Klepper—never forget that," remonstrated Grog; "he's remarkably like Mumps, that's all; but Mumps is in Staffordshire—one of the Pottery fellows has him."

"So he is," laughed Beecher, pleasantly. "I know the man that owns him."

"No you don't," broke in Davis; "you've only heard his name: it is Coulson, or Cotton, or something like that. One thing, however, is certain, he values him at twelve hundred pounds, and we'd sell our horse for eight."

"So we would, Grog, and be on the right side of the hedge, too."

"He'd be dog cheap for it," said Davis; "he's one of those lazy beggars that never wear out. I'd lay an even thousand on it, that he runs this day two years as he does to-day, and even when he hasn't speed for

a flat race he'll be a rare steeple-chase horse."

Beecher's eyes glistened, and he rubbed his hands with delight as he heard him.

"I do like an ugly horse," resumed Davis; "a heavy-shouldered beast, with lobe-ears, lazy eyes, and capped hocks, and if they know how to come out a stable with a 'knuckle over' of the pastern, or a little bit lame, they're worth their weight in gold."

What a merry laugh was Beecher's as he listened.

"Blow me!" cried Grog, in a sort of enthusiasm, "if some horses don't seem born cheats—regular legs! They drag their feet along, all weary and tired: if you push them a bit, they shut up, or they answer the whip with a kind of shrug, as if to say, 'It ain't any use punishing me at all.' The while they go plodding in, at the tail of the others, till within five, or maybe four lengths of the winning-post, and then you see them stretching—it ain't a stride—it's a stretch—you can't say how it's done, but they draw on—on—on, till you see half a head in front, and there they stay—just doing it—no more."

"Mumps is exactly—"

"Klepper—remember, he's Klepper," said Grog, mildly.

"Klepper, to be sure—how can I forget it?"

"I hope that fellow Conway is off," said Grog.

"Yes, he started by the train for Liège—third class, too—must be pretty hard up, I take it, to travel that way."

"Good enough for a fellow that's been roughing it in the ranks these two years."

"He's a gentleman, though, for all that," broke in Beecher.

"And Strawberry ran at Doncaster, and I saw him t'other day in a 'bus. Now, I'd like to know how much better he is for having once been a racer?"

"Blood always tells—"

"In a horse, Beecher, in a horse, not in a man. Haven't I got a deal of noble blood in my veins?—ain't I able to show a thorough-bred pedigree?" said he, mockingly. "Well, let me see the fellow will stand at eight paces from the muzzle of a rifle-pistol more cool, or who'll sight his man more calm than I will." There was a tinge of defiance in the way these words were said that by no means contributed to the ease of him who heard them.

"When do we go for Brussels, Grog?" asked he, anxious to change the subject.

"Here's the map of the country," said Davis, producing a card scrawled over with

lines and figures. "Brussels the 12th and 14th, Spa the 20th, Aix the 25th. Then *you* might take a shy at Dusseldorf. *I* can't; I winged a Prussian major there five years ago, and they won't let me in. I'll meet you at Wiesbaden, and we'll have a week at the tables. You'll have to remember that I'm Captain Christopher so long as we're on the Rhine; once at Baden, 'Richard's himself again!'"

"Is this for either of you, gentlemen?" said the waiter, presenting an envelope from the telegraph office.

"Yes. I'm Captain Davis," said Grog, as he broke the seal.

"Is the dean able to preach?—may we have a collection? 'Telegraph back.—Tom,'" read Davis, slowly, aloud; and then added, "Ain't he a flat to be always telegraphing these things? As if every fellow in the office couldn't see his game."

"Spicer, is it?" asked Beecher.

"Yes; he wants to hear how the horse is—if there's good running in him, and what he's to lay on; but that's no way to ask it. I mind the day, at Wolverton, when Lord Berrydale got one of these: 'Your mother is better—they are giving her tonics.' And I whispered to George Rigby, 'It's about Butterfly, his mare, that's in for the York, and that's to say, "She's all safe, lay heavy on it."' And so I hedged round, and backed her up to eight thousand—ay, and I won my money; and when Berrydale said to me, after the race was over, 'Grog,' says he, 'you seem to have had a glimpse of the line of country this time,' says I to him, 'Yes, my lord,' says I; 'and I'm glad to find the tonics agree with your lordship's mother.' Didn't he redded up to the roots of his hair! and when he turned away he said, 'There's no coming up to that fellow Davis!'"

"But I wonder you let him see that you were in his secret," said Beecher.

"That was the way to treat *him*. If it was Baynton or Herries, I'd not have said a word; but I knew Berrydale was sure to let me have a share in the first good thing going, just out of fear of me, and so he did; that was the way I came to back Old Bailey."

It was now Beecher's turn to gaze with admiring wonder at this great intelligence, and certainly his look was veneration itself.

"Here's another dispatch," cried Davis, as the waiter presented another packet like the former one. "We're like secretaries of state to-day," added he, laughing, as he tore open the envelope. This time, however, he did not read the contents aloud, but sat slowly pondering over the lines to himself.

"It's not Spicer again?" asked Beecher.

"No," was the brief reply.

"Nor that other fellow—that German with the odd name?"

"No."

"Nothing about Mumps—Klepper, I mean—nothing about him?"

"Nothing; it don't concern him at all. It's not about anything you ever heard of before," said Davis, as he threw a log of wood on the fire, and kicked it with his foot. "I'll have to go to Brussels to-night. I'll have to leave this by the four o'clock train," said he, looking at his watch. "The horse isn't fit to move for twenty-four hours, so you'll remain here; he mustn't be left without one of us, you know."

"Of course not. But is there anything so very urgent—"

"I suppose a man is best judge of his own affairs," said Davis, rudely.

Beecher made no reply, and a long and awkward silence ensued.

"Let him have one of the powders in a linseed mash," said Davis, at last, "and see that the bandages are left on—only a little loose—at night. Tom must remain with him in the box on the train, and I'll look out for you at the station. If we shouldn't meet, come straight to the Hôtel Tivoli, where all will be ready for you."

"Remember, Grog, I've got no money; you haven't trusted me with a single Napoleon."

"I know that; here's a hundred francs. Look out sharp, for you'll have to account for every centime of it when we meet. Dine upstairs here, for if you go down to the ordinary you'll be talking to every man Jack you meet—ay, you know you will."

"Egad! it's rather late in the day to school me on the score of manners."

"I'm not a-talking of manners, I'm speaking of discretion—of common prudence—things you're not much troubled with; you're just as fit to go alone in life as I am to play the organ at an oratorio."

"Many thanks for the flattery," said Beecher, laughing.

"What would be the good of flattering you?" broke out Grog. "You ain't rich, that one could borrow from you; you haven't a great house, where one could get dinners out of you; you're not even the head of your family, that one might draw something out of your rank—you ain't anything."

"Except *your* friend, Grog Davis; pray don't rob me of that distinction," said Beecher, with a polished courtesy the other felt more cutting than any common sarcasm.

“It’s the best leaf in your book, whatever you may think of it,” said Davis, sternly; “and it will be a gloomy morning for you whenever you cease to be it.”

“I don’t intend it, old fellow; I’ll never tear up the deed of partnership, you may rely upon that. The old-established firm of Beecher and Davis, or Davis and Beecher—for I don’t care which—shall last *my* time, at least;” and he held out his hand with a cordiality that even Grog felt irresistible, for he grasped and shook it heartily.

“If I could only get you to run straight, I’d make a man of you,” said Grog, eyeing him fixedly. “There’s not a fellow in England could do as much for you as I could. There’s nobody knows what’s in you as I do, and there’s nobody knows where you break down like *me*.”

“True, O Grog, every word of it.”

“I’d put you in the first place in the sporting world—I’d have your name at the top of the list at ‘The Turf.’ In six months from this day—this very day—I’d bind myself to make Annesley Beecher the foremost man at Newmarket. But just on one condition.”

“And that?”

“You should take a solemn oath—I’d make it a solemn one, I promise you—never to question anything I decided in your behalf, but obey me to the letter in whatever I ordered. Three months of that servitude, and you’d come out what I’ve promised you.”

“I’ll swear it this moment,” cried Beecher.

“Will you?” asked Davis, eagerly.

“In the most solemn and formal manner you can dictate on oath to me. I’ll take it now, only promising you’ll not ask me anything against the laws.”

“Nothing like hanging, nor even transportation,” said Grog, laughing, while Beecher’s face grew crimson, and then pale. “No—no; all I ask is easily done, and not within a thousand miles of a misdemeanor. But you shall just think it over quietly. I don’t want a ‘catch match.’ You shall have time to reconsider what I have said, and when we meet at Brussels you can tell me your mind.”

“Agreed; only I hold *you* to your bargain, remember, if I don’t change.”

“I’ll stand to what I’ve said,” said Davis. “Now, remember, the Hôtel Tirlemont; and so, good-by, for I must pack up.”

When the door closed after him, Annesley Beecher walked the room, discussing with himself the meaning of Davis’s late words. Well did he know that to restore himself to rank, and credit, and fair fame,

was a labor of no common difficulty. How was he ever to get back to that station, forfeited by so many derelictions? Davis might, it is true, get his bills discounted—might hit upon fifty clever expedients for raising the wind—might satisfy this one, compromise with that; he might even manage so cleverly, that race-courses and betting-rooms would be once more open to him. But what did—what could Grog know of that higher world where once he had moved, and to which, by his misdeeds, he had forfeited all claim to return? Why, Davis didn’t even know the names of those men whose slightest words are verdicts upon character. All England was not Ascot, and Grog only recognized a world peopled with gentlemen riders and jocks, and a landscape dotted with flagstaves, and closed in with a standhouse.

“No, no,” said he to himself; “that’s a flight above you, Master Davis. It’s not to be thought of.”

CHAPTER XXX.

THE OPERA.

A DINGY old den enough is the Hôtel Tirlemont, with its low-arched *porte-cochère* and its narrow windows, small-paned and iron-barred. It rather resembles one of those antiquated hostels you see in the background of an Ostade or a Teniers than the smart edifice which we nowadays look for in a hotel. Such was certainly the opinion of Annesley Beecher as he arrived there on the evening after that parting with Davis we have just spoken of. Twice did he ask the guide who accompanied him “if this was really the Tirlemont?” and “if there were not some other hotel of the same name?” and while he half hesitated whether he should enter, a waiter respectfully stepped forward to ask if he were the gentleman whose apartment had been ordered by Captain Davis; a demand to which, with a sullen assent, he yielded, and slowly mounted the stairs.

“Is the captain at home?” asked he.

“No, sir; he went off to the railway station to meet you. Mademoiselle, however, is up-stairs.”

“Mademoiselle!” cried Beecher, stopping, and opening wide his eyes in astonishment. “This is something new,” muttered he. “When did she come?”

“Last night, sir, after dinner.”

“Where from?”

“From a pensionnat outside the Porte

de Seharbeck, I think, sir; at least, her maid described it as in that direction."

"And what is she called—Mademoiselle Violette, or Virginie, or Ida, or what is it, eh?" asked he jocularly.

"Mademoiselle, sir—only mademoiselle—the captain's daughter!"

"His daughter!" repeated he, in increased wonderment, to himself. "Can this be possible?"

"There is no doubt of it, sir. The lady of the pensionnat brought her here last night in her own carriage, and I heard her, as she entered the salon, say, 'Now, mademoiselle, that I have placed you in the hands of your father—and then the door closed.'"

"I never knew he had a daughter," muttered Beecher to himself. "Which is my room?"

"We have prepared this one for you, but to-morrow you shall have a more comfortable one, with a lookout over the lower town."

"Put me somewhere where I shan't hear that confounded piano, I beg of you. Who is it rattles away that fashion?"

"Mademoiselle, sir."

"To be sure—I ought to have guessed it: and sings too, I'll be bound?"

"Like Grisi, sir," responded the waiter, enthusiastically, for the Tirlémont being frequented by the artistic class, had given him great opportunity for forming his taste.

Just at this moment a rich, full voice swelled forth in one of the popular airs of Verdi, but with a degree of ease and freedom that showed the singer soared very far indeed above the pretensions of mere amateurship.

"Wasn't I right, sir," asked the waiter, triumphantly. "You'll not hear anything better at the Grand Opera."

"Send me up some hot water, and open that portmanteau," said Beecher, while he walked on toward the door of the salon. He hesitated for a second or two about then presenting himself, but as he thought of Grog Davis, and what Grog Davis's daughter must be like, he turned the handle and entered.

A lady arose from the piano as the door opened, and even in the half-darkened room Beecher could perceive that she was graceful, and with an elegance in her gesture for which he was in no wise prepared.

"Have I the honor to address Miss Davis?"

"You are Mr. Annesley Beecher, the gentleman my papa has been expecting,"

said she, with an easy smile. "He has just gone off to meet you."

Nothing could be more common-place than these words, but they were uttered in a way that at once declared the breeding of the speaker. She spoke to the friend of her father, and there was a tone of one who felt that even in a first meeting a certain amount of intimacy might subsist between them.

"It's very strange," said Beecher, "but your father and I have been friends this many a year—close friends, too—and I never as much as suspected he had a daughter. What a shame of him not to have given me the pleasure of knowing you before."

"It was a pleasure he was chary enough of to himself," said she, laughing. "I have been at school nearly four years, and have only seen him once, and then for a few hours."

"Yes—but really," stammered out Beecher, "fascinations—charms such as—"

"Pray, sir, don't distress yourself about turning a compliment. I'm quite sure I'm very attractive, but I don't in the least want to be told so. You see," she added, after a pause, "I'm presuming upon what papa has told me of your old friendship to be very frank with you."

"I am enchanted at it," cried Beecher. "Egad! if you 'cut out all the work,' though, I'll scarcely be able to follow you."

"Ah! so here you are before me," cried Davis, entering, and shaking his hand cordially. "You had just driven off when I reached the station. All right, I hope?"

"All right, thank you."

"You've made Lizzy's acquaintance, I see, so I needn't introduce you. *She* knows you this many a day."

"But why have I not had the happiness of knowing *her*?" asked Beecher.

"How's Klepper," asked Grog, abruptly. "The swelling gone out of the hocks yet?"

"Yes; he's clean as a whistle."

"The wind-gall, too—has that gone?"

"Going rapidly; a few days' walking exercise will make him perfect."

"No news of Spicer and his German friend—though I expected to have had a telegraph all day yesterday. But come, these are not interesting matters for Lizzy—we'll have up dinner, and see about a box for the opera."

"A very gallant thought, papa, which I accept with pleasure."

"I must dress, I suppose," said Beech-

er, half asking, for even yet he could not satisfy his mind what amount of observance was due to the daughter of Grog Davis.

"I conclude you must," said she, smiling; "and I, too, must make a suitable toilet;" and, with a slight bow and a little smile, she swept past them out of the room.

"How close you have been, old fellow—close as wax—about this," said Beecher; "and, hang me, if she mightn't be daughter to the proudest duke in England!"

"So she might," said Grog; "and it was to make her so, I have consented to this life of separation. What respect and deference would the fellows show *my* daughter when *I* wasn't by? How much delicacy would she meet with when the fear of an ounce ball wasn't over them? And was I going to bring her up in such a set as you and I live with? Was a young creature like that to begin the world without seeing one man that wasn't a 'leg,' or one woman that wasn't worse? Was it by lessons of robbery and cheating her mind was to be stored? And was she to start in life by thinking that a hell was high society? Look at her *now*," said he, sternly, "and say if I was in Norfolk Island to-morrow, where's the fellow would have the pluck to insult her? It is true *she* doesn't know me as you and the others know me; but the man that would let her into *that* secret would never tell her another." There was a terrible fierceness in his eye as he spoke, and the words came from him with a hissing sound, like the venomous threatenings of a serpent. "*She* knows nothing of *my* life nor *my* ways. Except your own name, she never heard me mention one of the fellows we live with. She knows *you* to be the brother of Lord Viscount Lackington, and that you are the Honorable Annesley Beecher, that's all she knows of *you*; ain't that little enough?"

Beecher tried to laugh easily at this speech, but it was only a very poor and faint attempt after all.

"She thinks *me* a man of fortune, and *you* an unblemished gentleman, and if that be not innocence, I'd like to know what is! Of where, how, and with whom we pick up our living, she knows as much as *we* do about the bench of bishops."

"I must confess I don't think the knowledge would improve her!" said Beecher, with a laugh.

A fierce and savage glance from Davis, however, very quickly arrested this jocularly, and Beecher, in a graver tone, resumed: "It was a deuced fine thing of

you, Grog, to do this. There's not another fellow living would have had the head to think of it. But now that she has come home to you, how do you mean to carry on the campaign? A girl like that can't live secluded from the world—she must go out into society? Have you thought of that?"

"I have thought of it," rejoined Davis, bluntly, but in a tone that by no means invited further inquiry.

"Her style and her manner fit her for the best set anywhere—"

"That's where I intend her to be," broke in Davis.

"I need scarcely tell as clever a fellow as you," said Beecher, mildly, "that there's nothing so difficult as to find footing among these people. Great wealth may obtain it, or great patronage. There are women in London who can do that sort of thing; there are just two or three such, and you may imagine how difficult it is to secure their favor."

"They're all cracked teacups, those women you speak of; one has only to know where the flaw is, and see how easily managed they are!"

Beecher smiled at this remark; he chuckled to himself, too, to see that for once the wily Grog Davis had gone out of his depth, and adventured to discuss people and habits of which he knew nothing; but unwilling to prolong a controversy so delicate, he hurried away to his room to dress. Davis, too, retired on a similar errand, and a student of life might have been amused to have taken a peep into the two dressing-rooms. As for Beecher, it was but the work of a few minutes to array himself in dinner costume. It was a routine task that he performed without a thought on its details. All was ready at his hand, and even to the immaculate tie, which seemed the work of patience and skill, he dispatched the whole performance in less than a quarter of an hour. Not so Davis; he ransacked drawers and pormanteaus—covered the bed, the chairs, and the table with garments—tried on and took off again—endeavored to make colors harmonize—or hit upon happy contrasts. He was bent on appearing a "swell," and unquestionably when he did issue forth, with a canary-colored vest, and a green coat with gilt buttons, his breast a galaxy of studs and festooned chains, it would have been unfair to say he had not succeeded.

Beecher had but time to compliment him on his "get up," when Miss Davis entered. Though her dress was simply the quiet costume of a young unmarried girl,

there was in her carriage and bearing, as she came in, all the graceful ease of the best society, and lighted up by the lamps of the apartment, Beecher saw to his astonishment the most beautiful girl he had ever beheld. It was not alone the faultless delicacy of her face, but there was that mingled gentleness and pride, that strange blending of softness and seriousness, which sit so well on the high-born, giving a significance to every gesture or word of those whose every movement is so measured, and every syllable so carefully uttered. "Why wasn't she a countess in her own right?" thought he; "that girl might have all London at her feet."

The dinner went on very pleasantly. Davis, too much occupied in listening to his daughter, or watching the astonishment of Beecher, scarcely ever spoke, but the others chatted away about whatever came uppermost in a light and careless tone that delighted him.

Beecher was not sorry at the opportunity of a little display. He was glad to show Davis that in the great world of society he could play no insignificant part, and so he put forth all his little talents as a talker, with choice anecdotes of "smart people," and the sayings and doings of a set which, to Grog, were as much myths as the inscriptions on an Assyrian monument. Lizzy Davis evidently took interest in his account of London and its life. She liked, too, to hear about the families of her school-fellows, some of whom bore "cognate" names, and she listened with actual eagerness to descriptions of the gorgeous splendor and display of a town "season."

"And I am to see all these fine things, and know all these fine people, papa?" asked she.

"Yes, I suppose so—one of these days, at least," muttered Grog, not caring to meet Beecher's eye.

"I don't think you care for this kind of life so much as Mr. Beecher, pa. Is their frivolity too great for your philosophy?"

"It ain't that!" muttered Grog, growing confused.

"Then do tell me, now, something of the sort of people you are fond of; the chances are that I shall like them just as well as the others."

Beecher and Davis exchanged glances of most intense significance, and were it not from downright fear Beecher would have burst out laughing.

"Then I will ask Mr. Beecher," said she, gayly. "You'll not be so churlish as papa, I'm certain. You'll tell me what his world is like?"

"Well, it's a very smart world, too," said Beecher, slyly enjoying the malicious moment of worrying Grog with impunity. "Not so many pretty women in it, perhaps, but plenty of movement, plenty of fun, eh! Davis! Are you fond of horses, Miss Davis?"

"Passionately, and I flatter myself I can ride, too. By the way, is it true, papa, you have brought a horse from England for me?"

"Who could have told you that," said Davis, almost sternly.

"My maid heard it from a groom that has just arrived, but with such secrecy that I suppose I have destroyed all the pleasure of the surprise you intended me; never mind, dearest pa, I am just as grateful—"

"Grateful for nothing," broke in Davis. "The groom is a prating rascal, and your maid ought to mind her own affairs." Then reddening to his temples with shame at his ill-temper, he added, "There is a horse, to be sure, but he ain't much of a lady's palfrey."

"What would you say to her riding Klepper in the Allée Verte—it might be a rare stroke?" asked Beecher, in a whisper to Davis.

"Do you think that *she* is to be brought into *our* knaveries? Is *that* all you have learned from what I've been saying to you?" whispered Davis, with a look of such savage ferocity that Beecher grew sick at heart with terror.

"I'm sorry to break in upon such confidential converse," said she, laughingly, "but pray remember we are losing the first scene of the opera."

"I'm at your orders," said Beecher, as with his accustomed easy gallantry he stepped forward to offer her his arm.

The opera was a favorite one, and the house was crowded in every part. As in all cities of a certain rank, the occupants of the boxes, with a few rare exceptions, were the same well-known people who night after night follow along the worn track of pleasure. To them the stage is but a secondary object, to which attention only wanders at intervals. The house itself, the brilliant blaze of beauty, the splendor of diamonds, the display of dress, and, more than all these, the subtle by-play of intrigue, detectable only by eyes deep-skilled and trained—these form the main attractions of a scene wherein our modern civilization is more strikingly exhibited than in any other situation.

Scarcely had Lizzie Davis taken her seat than a low murmur of wondering admiration ran through the whole house, and, in

the freedom which our present day habits license, every opera glass was turned toward her. Totally unconscious of the admiration she was exciting, her glances ranged freely over the theater in every part, and her eyes were directed from object to object in amazement at the gorgeousness of the scene around her. Seated far back in the box, entirely screened from view, her father, too, perceived nothing of that strange manifestation, wherein a sort of homage is blended with a degree of impertinence, but watched the stage with intense eagerness. Very different from the feelings of either father or daughter were the feelings of Annesley Beecher. He knew well the opera and its habits, and as thoroughly saw that it is to the world of fashion what Tattersall's or the turf is to the world of sport—the great ring where every match is booked, every engagement registered, and every new aspirant for success canvassed and discussed. There was not a glance turned toward the unconscious girl at his side but he could read its secret import. How often had it been his own lot to stare up from his stall at some fair face, unknown to that little world which arrogates to itself all knowledge, and mingle his criticism with all the impertinences fashion loves to indulge in. The steady stare of some, the unwilling admiration of others, the ironical gaze of more, were all easy of interpretation by him, and for the very first time in his life he became aware of the fact that it was possible to be unjust with regard to the unknown.

As the piece proceeded and her interest in the play increased, a slightly heightened color, and an expression of half eagerness, gave her beauty all that it had wanted before of animation, and there was now an expression of such captivation on her face, that, carried away by that mysterious sentiment which sways masses, sending its secret spell from heart to heart, the whole audience turned from the scene to watch its varying effects upon that beautiful countenance. The opera was *Rigoletto*, and she continued to translate to her father the touching story of that sad old man, who, lost to every sentiment of honor, still cherished in his heart of hearts his daughter's love. The terrible contrast between his mockery of the world and his affection for his home, the bitter consciousness of how he treated others, conjuring up the terrors of what yet might be his own fate, came to him in her words, as the stage revealed their action, and gradually he leaned over in his eagerness till his head projected outside the box.

"There—wasn't I right about her?" said a voice from one of the stalls beneath. "That's Grog Davis. I know the fellow well."

"I've won my wager," said another. "There's old Grog leaning over her shoulder, and there can't be much doubt about her now."

"Annesley Beecher at one side, and Grog Davis at the other," said a third, "make the case very easy reading. I'll go round and get presented to her."

"Let us leave this, Davis," whispered Beecher, while he trembled from head to foot—"let us leave this at once. Come down to the crush-room, and I'll find a carriage."

"Why so—what do you mean?" said Davis, and as suddenly he followed Beecher's glance toward the pit, whence every eye was turned toward them.

That glance was not to be mistaken. It was the steady and insolent stare the world bestows upon those who have neither champions nor defenders; and Davis returned the gaze with a defiance as insulting.

"For any sake, Davis, let us get away," whispered Beecher again. "Only think of her, if there should be any exposure!"

"Exposure!—how should there? Who'd dare—"

Before he could finish, the curtain at the back of the box was rudely drawn aside, and a tall, handsome man, with a certain swaggering ease of manner that seemed to assert his right to be there if he pleased, came forward, saying:

"How goes it, Davis? I just caught a glimpse of that charming—"

"A word with you, Captain Hamilton," said Davis, between his teeth, as he pushed the other toward the door.

"As many as you like, old fellow, by-and-by. For the present, I mean to establish myself here."

"That you shan't, by Heaven!" cried Davis, as he placed himself in front of him.

"Leave this, sir, at once."

"Why, the fellow is deranged," said Hamilton, laughing; "or is it jealousy, old boy?"

With a violent push Davis drove him backward, and ere he could recover, following up the impulse, he thrust him outside the box, hurriedly passing outside, and shutting the door after him.

So rapidly and so secretly had all this occurred, that Lizzy saw nothing of it, all her attention being eagerly fixed on the stage. Not so Beecher. He had marked it all, and now sat listening in terror to the words of high altercation in the lobby.

From sounds that boded like insult and outrage, the noise gradually decreased to more measured tones; then came a few words in whisper, and Davis, softly drawing the curtain, stepped gently to his chair at his daughter's back. A hasty sign to Beecher gave him to understand that all was settled quietly, and the incident was over.

"You'll not think me very churlish if I rob you of one act of the opera, Lizzy?" said Davis, as the curtain fell; "but I have a racking headache, which all this light and heat are only increasing."

"Let us go at once, dearest papa," said she, rising. "You should have told me of this before. There, Mr. Beecher, you needn't leave this—"

"She's quite right," said Davis; "you must remain." And the words were uttered with a certain significance that Beecher well understood as a command.

It was past midnight when Annesley Beecher returned to the hotel, and both Davis and his daughter had already gone to their rooms.

"Did your master leave any message for me?" said he to the groom who acted as Davis's valet.

"No, sir, not a word."

"Do you know, would he see me? Could you ask him?" said he.

The man disappeared for a few minutes, and then coming back, said, "Mr. Davis is fast asleep, sir, and I dare not disturb him."

"Of course not," said Beecher, and turned away.

"How that fellow can go to bed and sleep, after such a business as that!" muttered Beecher, as he drew his chair toward the fire, and sat ruminating over the late incident. It was in a spirit of triumphant satisfaction that he called to mind the one solitary point in which he was the superior of Davis—class and condition—and he reveled in the thought that men like Grog make nothing but blunders when they attempt the habits of those above them. "With all his shrewdness," said he to himself, half aloud, "he could not perceive that he has been trying an impossibility. She is beyond them all in beauty, her manners are perfect, her breeding unexceptionable; and yet, there she is, Grog Davis's daughter! Ay, Grog, my boy, you'll see it one of these days. It's all to no use. Enter her for what stakes you like, she'll be always disqualified. There's only one thing carries these attempts through—if you could give her a pot of money. Yes, Master Davis, there are fellows—and with good

blood in their veins—that, for fifty or sixty thousand pounds, would marry even *your* daughter." With this last remark he finished all his reflections, and proceeded to prepare for bed.

Sleep, however, would not come; he was restless and uneasy; the incident in the theater might get abroad, and his own name be mentioned; or it might be that Hamilton, knowing well who and what Davis was, would look to him, Beecher, for satisfaction. *There* was another pleasant eventuality—to be drawn into a quarrel and shot for Grog Davis's daughter! To be the traveling companion of such a man was bad enough—to risk being seen with him on railroads and steamboats was surely sufficient—but to be paraded in places of public amusement, to be dragged before the well-dressed world, not as his chance associate, but as a member of his domestic circle, chaperoning his daughter to the opera, was downright intolerable! And thus was it that this man, who had been dunned and insulted by creditors, hunted from place to place by sheriff's officers, browbeaten by bankruptcy practitioners, stigmatized by the press, haunted all the while by a conscience that whispered there was even worse hanging over him, yet did he feel more real terror from the thought of how he would be regarded by his own "order" for this unseemly intimacy, than shame for all his deeper and graver transgressions.

"No," said he, at last, springing from his bed, and lighting his candle, "I'll be off. I'll cut my lucky, Master Grog; and here goes to write you half a dozen lines to break the fact to you. I'll call it a sudden thought—a notion—that I ought to see Lackington at once. I'll say that I couldn't think of subjecting Miss Davis to the inconvenience of that rapid mode of traveling I feel to be so imminently necessary. I'll tell him that as I left the theater, I saw one of Fordyce's clerks, that the fellow knew me and grinned, and that I know I shall be arrested if I stay here. I'll hint that Hamilton, who is highly connected, will have the English legation at us all. Confound it, he'll believe none of these. I'll just say—" Here he took his pen and wrote:

"DEAR D.—After we parted last night, a sudden caprice seized me that I'd start off at once for Italy. Had you been alone, old fellow, I should never have thought of it; but seeing that I left you in such charming company, with one—with one whose—[No, that won't do—I must strike out that;] and so he murmured over the

lines ending in 'company,' and then went on—I have no misgivings about being either missed or wanted.—[‘Better, perhaps, missed or regretted.’] We have been too long friends to—[‘No, we are too old pals, that’s better—he doesn’t care much for friendship’]—too old pals to make me suspect you will be displeased with this—this unforeseen—[‘That’s a capital word!—unforeseen what? It’s always calamity comes after unforeseen; but I can’t call it calamity’]—unforeseen ‘bolt over the ropes,’ and believe me as ever, or believe me ‘close as wax,’
Yours, A. B.”

“A regular diplomatic touch, I call that note,” said he, as he reread it to himself with much complacency. “Lackington thinks me a ‘flat;’ then let any one read that, and say if the fellow that wrote it is a fool.” And now he sealed and directed his epistle, having very nearly addressed it to Grog, instead of to Captain, Davis. “His temper won’t be angelic when he gets it,” muttered he, “but I’ll be close to Liège by that time.” And with this very reassuring reflection he jumped into bed again, determined to remain awake till day-break.

Wearied out at last with watching, Annesley Beecher fell off asleep, and so soundly, too, that it was not till twice spoken to, he could arouse and awaken.

“Eh, what is it, Rivers?” cried he, as he saw the trim training-groom at his side. “Anything wrong with the horse?”

“No, sir, nothing; *he’s* all right, anyhow.”

“What is it, then; any one from town looking for us?”

“No, sir, nobody whatever. It’s the captain himself—”

“What of him? is he ill?”

“Sound as a roach, sir; he’s many a mile off by this. Says he to me, ‘Rivers,’ says he, ‘when you gets back to the Tirllemont, give this note to Mr. Beecher; he’ll tell you afterward what’s to be done. Only,’ says he, ‘don’t forget to rub a little of the white oils on that near hock; very weak,’ says he, ‘be sure it’s very weak, so as not to blister him.’ Ain’t he a wonderful man, sir, to be thinking o’ that at such a moment?”

“Draw the curtain there—let me have more light,” cried Beecher, eagerly, as he opened the small and crumpled piece of paper. The contents were in pencil, and very brief:

“I’m off through the Ardennes toward Treves; come up to Aix with my daughter,

and wait there till you hear from me. There’s a vacant ‘troop’ in the Horse Guards Blue this morning. Rivers can tell you all.—Yours, C. D.”

“What has happened. Rivers?” cried he, in intense anxiety. “Tell me at once.”

“Sir, it don’t take long to tell. It didn’t take very long to do. It was three, or maybe half-past, this morning, the captain comes to my room, and says, ‘Rivers, get up: be lively,’ says he: ‘dress yourself and go over to Jonesse, that fellow as has the shooting-gallery, give him this note, he’ll just read it, and answer it at once; then run over to Burton’s and order a coupé, with two smart horses, to be here at five; after that come back quickly, for I want a few things packed up.’ He made a sign to me that all was to be ‘dark,’ and so away I went, and before three-quarters of an hour was back here again. At five to the minute the carriage came to the corner of the park, and we stepped out quietly, and when we reached it, there was Jonesse inside, with a tidy little box on his knee. ‘Oh, is that it?’ said I, for I knowed what that box meant—‘is that it?’

“‘Yes,’ says the captain, ‘that’s it; get up and make him drive briskly to Boitsfort.’ We were a bit late, I think, for the others was there when we got up, and I heard them grumbling something about being behind time. ‘Egad,’ says the captain, ‘you’ll find we’ve come early enough before we’ve done with you.’ They were cruel words, sir, now that I think how he tumbled him over stone dead in a moment.”

“Who dead?”

“That fine, handsome young man, with the light-brown beard—Hamilton, they said his name was—and a nicer fellow you couldn’t wish to see. I’ll never forget him as he lay there stretched on the grass, and the small blue hole in his forehead—you’d not believe it was ever half the size of a bullet—and his glove in his left hand, all so natural as if he was alive. I believe I’d have been standing there yet, looking at him, when the captain called me, and said, ‘Rivers, take these stirrups up a hole’—for he had a saddle-horse all ready for him—and give this note to Mr. Beecher; he’ll give you his orders about Klepper,’ says he, ‘but mind you look to that hock.’”

“And Captain Hamilton was killed?” muttered Beecher, while he trembled from head to foot at the terrible tidings.

“Killed—dead—he never moved a finger after he fell!”

“What did his friend do? Did he say anything?—did he speak?”

He dropped down on his knees beside him, and caught him by the hand, and cried out, 'George, my own dear fellow—George, speak to me ;' but George never spoke another word."

"And Davis—Captain Davis, what did he do?"

"He shook hands with Jonesse, and said something in French that made him laugh, and then going over to where the body lay, he said, 'Colonel Humphrey,' says he, 'you're a witness that all was fair and honorable, and that if this unhappy affair ever comes to be—' and then the colonel moved his hand for him to be off, and not speak to him. And so the captain took his advice, and got into the saddle ; but I heard him mutter something about 'teaching the colonel better manners' next time they met."

"And then he rode away?"

"Yes ; he turned into the wood, at a walking pace, for he was lighting his cigar. I saw no more of him, after that, for they called me to help them with the body, and it was all we could do, four of us, to carry him to the road where the carriage was standing."

"Did you ever hear them mention my name among them?" asked Beecher, tremblingly.

"No, sir ; nobody spoke of you but my master, when he handed me the note."

"What a sad business it has all been!" exclaimed Beecher, half aloud.

"I suppose it would go hard with the captain, sir, if he was caught?" said Rivers, inquiringly.

Again Beecher read over the note, pondering every word as he went. "What a sad business!" murmured he, "and all for nothing, or next to nothing!" Then, as if suddenly rousing himself to action, he said, "Rivers, we must get away at once. Take this passport to the police, and then look after a horse-box for the next train to Liège. We shall start at two o'clock."

"That's just what the captain said, sir. 'Don't delay in Brussels,' says he, 'and don't you go a-talking about this morning's work. If they have you up for examination—mind that you saw nothing—you heard nothing—you know nothing.'"

"Send Miss Davis's maid here," said Beecher ; "and then see about those things I've mentioned to you."

Mademoiselle Annette was a French Swiss, who very soon apprehended that a "difficulty" had occurred somewhere, which was to be kept secret from her young mistress, and though she smiled with a peculiar significance at the notion of Miss

Davis traveling under Beecher's protection, she did so with all the decorum of her gifted class.

"You'll explain everything, Annette," said Beecher, who in his confusion was eager to throw any amount of burden or responsibility upon another ; "you'll tell her whatever you like as to the cause of his going away, and I'll swear to it."

"Monsieur need not give himself any trouble," was the ready answer ; "all shall be cared for."

CHAPTER XXXI.

EXPLANATIONS.

WHAT a sad pity it is that the great faculty of "making things comfortable," that gifted power which blends the announcement with the explanation of misfortune, should be almost limited to that narrow guild in life to which Mademoiselle Annette belonged. The happy knack of half-informing and all-mystifying would be invaluable on the treasury benches, and great proficient as some of our public men are in this walk, how immeasurably do they fall short of the dexterity of the "soubrette."

So neatly and so cleverly had Annette performed her task, that when Miss Davis met Beecher at breakfast, she felt that a species of reserve was necessary as to the reasons of her father's flight, that as he had not directly communicated with herself, her duty was simply to accept of the guidance he had dictated to her. Besides this, let it be owned, she had not yet rallied from the overwhelming astonishment of her first meeting with her father, so utterly was he unlike all that her imagination had pictured him ! Nothing could be more affectionate, nothing kinder, than his reception ; a thoughtful anxiety for her comfort pervaded all he said. The gloomy old Tirlemont even caught up an air of home as she passed the threshold, but still he was neither in look, manner, nor appearance, what she fancied. All his self-restraint could not gloss over his vulgarity, nor all his reserve conceal his defects in breeding. His short, dictatorial manner with the servants—his ever-present readiness to confront nobody saw what peril—a suspicious insistence upon this or that mark of deference as a right of which he might possibly be defrauded,—all gave to his bearing a tone of insolent defiance that at once terrified and repelled her.

To all her eager questionings as to their

future life, where and how it was to be passed, he would only answer vaguely or evasively. He met her inquiries about the families and friends of her schoolfellows in the same way. Of her pleasures and pursuits, her love of music, and her skill in drawing, he could not even speak with those conventionalities that disguise ignorance or indifference. Of the great world—the “swells” he would have called them—he only knew such as were on the turf. Of the opera, he might possibly tell the price of a stall, but not the name of a singer; and as to his own future, what or where it should be, Grog no more knew than who would be first favorite for the Leger a century hence. To “fence off” any attempt “to pump him” in the ring, to dodge a clever cross-examiner in a court of justice, Davis would have proved himself second to none—these were games of skill, which he could play with the best—but it was a very different task to thread his way through the geography of a land he had not so much as heard of, and be asked to act as guide through regions whose very names were new to him.

The utmost that Lizzy could glean from that long first evening’s talk was, that her father had few or no political ambitions—rather shunned the great world—cared little for dukes or duchesses—nor set any great store on mere intellectual successes. “Perhaps,” thought she, “he has tried and found the hollowness of them all—perhaps he is weary of public life—perhaps he’d like the quiet pleasures of a country house, and that calm existence described as the chateau life of England. Would that he were only more frank with me, and let us know each other better!”

We entreat our readers to forgive us this digression, necessary as it is to show that Lizzy, whatever her real doubts and anxieties, felt bound not to display them, but accept Beecher’s counsel as her father’s will.

“And so we start for Aix-la-Chapelle by two?” said she, calmly.

“Yes; and I represent papa,” said Beecher. “I hope you feel impressed with a due reverence for my authority.”

“Much will depend upon the way you exercise it,” said she; “I could very easily be a rebel if I suspected the justice of the crown.”

“Come, come,” said he, laughing, “don’t threaten me! my viceroyship will be very short-lived—he’ll perhaps be at Aix before us.”

“And I suppose all my dreams of extravagance here are defeated,” said she.

“Annette and I have been plotting and planning such rare devices in ‘toilet,’ not exactly aware where or upon whom the captivations were to be exercised. I actually reveled in the thought of all the smart fineries my pensionnat life has denied me hitherto.”

There was that blending of levity with seriousness in her tone that totally puzzled Beecher; and so was it through all she said, there ran the same half-mocking vein that left him quite unable even to fathom her meaning. He muttered out something about “dress” and “smart things” being to be found everywhere, and that most probably they should visit even more pretentious cities than Brussels ere long.

“Which means that you know perfectly well where we are going, but won’t tell it. Well, I resign myself to my interesting part of ‘captive princess’ all the more submissively, since every place is new to me, every town an object of interest, every village a surprise.”

“You’d like to see the world—the real, the great world, I mean?” asked Beecher.

“Oh, how much!” cried she, clasping her hands in eagerness, as she arose.

Beecher watched her as she walked up and down the room, every movement of her graceful figure displaying dignity and pride, her small and beautifully shaped head slightly thrown back, while, as her hand held the folds of her dress, her march had something almost stage-like in its sweeping haughtiness. “And how she would become it!” muttered he, below his breath, but yet leaving the murmured sounds half audible.

“What are you saying, sir? Any disparaging sentiment on school-girl conceit or curiosity?”

“Something very like the opposite,” said Beecher. “I was whispering to myself that Grantley House and Rocksley Castle were the proper sphere for *you*.”

“Are these very splendid?” asked she, calmly.

“The best houses in England. Of their owners, one is a duke, with two hundred thousand a year, the other, an earl, with nearly as much.”

“And what do they do with it?”

“Everything; all that money can have—and what is there it cannot?—is there. Gorgeous houses, horses, dress, dinners, pictures, plate, the best people to visit them, the best cook, the best deer-park, the fastest yacht at Cowes, the best hunting-stable at Melton.”

“I should like that; it sounds very fas-

cinating, all of it. How it submerges at once, too, all the petty cares and contrivances, perpetually asking, 'Can we do this?' 'Dare we do that?' It makes existence the grand, bold, free thing one dreams it ought to be."

"You're right there; it does make life very jolly."

"Are *you* very rich?" asked she, abruptly.

"No, by Jove! poor as a church mouse," said he, laughing at the strangeness of the question, whose sincere simplicity excluded all notion of impertinence. "I'm what they call a younger son, which means one who arrives in the world when the feast is over. I have a brother with a very tidy fortune, if that were of any use to me."

"And is it not the same? You share your goods together, I suppose?"

"I should be charmed to share mine with him, on terms of reciprocity," said Beecher; "but I'm afraid he'd not like it."

"So that he is rich, and you poor?"

"Exactly so."

"And this is called brotherhood? I own I don't understand it."

"Well, it has often puzzled me too," said Beecher, laughingly; "but I believe, if I had been born first, I should have had no difficulty in it whatever."

"And papa?" asked she, suddenly—"what was he—an elder or a younger son?"

It was all that Beecher could do to maintain a decent gravity at this question. To be asked about Grog Davis's parentage seemed about the drollest of all possible subjects of inquiry, but, with an immense effort of self-restraint, he said,

"I never exactly knew; I rather suspect, however, he was an only child."

"Then there is no title in our family?" said she, inquiringly.

"I believe not; but you are aware that this is very largely the case in England. We are not all 'marquises,' and 'counts,' and 'chevaliers,' like foreigners."

"I like a title; I like its distinctiveness: the sense of carrying out a destiny, transmitting certain traits of race and kindred, seems a fine and ennobling thing; and this one has not, one cannot have, who has no past. So that," said she, after a pause, "papa is only what you would call a 'gentleman.'"

"Gentleman is a very proud designation, believe me," said he, evading an answer.

"And how would they address me in England—am I 'my lady.'"

"No, you are Miss Davis."

"How meanly it sounds—it might be a governess—a maid."

"When you are married, you take the rank and title of your husband—a duchess, if he be a duke."

"A duchess be it, then," said she, in that light, volatile tone she was ever best pleased to employ, while, with a rattling gayety, she went on: "How I should love to be one of those great people you have described to me—soaring away in all that ideal splendor which would come of a life of boundless cost, the actual and the present being only suggestive of a thousand fancied enjoyments! What glorious visions might one conjure up out of the sportiveness of an untrammelled will! Yes, Mr. Beecher, I have made up my mind—I'll be a duchess!"

"But you might have all these as a marchioness, a countess—"

"No, I'll be a duchess; you shan't cheat me out of my just claims."

"Will your grace please to give orders about packing up, for we must be away soon after one o'clock," said he, laughing.

"If I were not humility itself, I'd say, the train should await my convenience," said she, as she left the room with a proud and graceful dignity that would have become a queen.

For a few moments Beecher sat silent and thoughtful in his chair, and then burst out into a fit of immoderate laughing—he laughed till his eyes ran over and his sides ached. "If this ain't going the pace, I'd like to know what speed is!" cried he, aloud. "I wonder what old Grog would say if he heard her; and the best of the joke is, she is serious all the while. She is in the most perfect good faith about it all. And this comes of the absurdity of educating her out of her class. What a strange blunder for so clever a head to make! You might have guessed, Master Grog, that she never could be a 'Plater.' Let her only enter for a grand match, and she'll be 'scratched' from one end of England to the other. Ay, Davis, my boy, you fancy pedigrees are only cared for on the turf; but there is a *Racing Calendar*, edited by a certain Debrett, that you never heard of."

Again, he thought of Davis as a peer—"Viscount Davis;" Baron Grog, as he muttered it, came across him, and he burst out once more into laughter; then suddenly checking himself, he said, "I must take right good care, though, that he never hears of this same conversation; he's just the fellow to say *I* led her on to laugh at and ridicule him; he'd suspect in a moment that I took her that pleasant gallop

—and if he did—” A long, wailing whistle finished the sentence for him.

Other and not very agreeable reflections succeeded these. It was this very morning that he himself had determined on “levanting,” and there he was, more securely moored than ever. He looked at his watch, and muttered, “Eleven o’clock: by this time I should have been at Verviers, and on the Rhine before midnight. In four days more, I’d have had the Alps between us, and now here I am without the chance of escape; for if I bolted and left his daughter here, he’d follow me through the world to shoot me!”

He sat silent for some minutes, and then, suddenly springing up from his chair, he cried out,

“Precious hard luck it is! but I can neither get on *with* this fellow nor *without* him;” and with this “summing up” he went off to his room to finish his preparations for the road.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE COUPE ON THE RAIL.

ANNESLEY BEECHER felt it “deuced odd” to be the traveling companion and protector of a very beautiful girl of nineteen, to whose fresh youth every common object of the road was a thing of wonderment and curiosity: the country—the people—the scores of passengers arriving or departing—the chance incidents of the way—all amused her. She possessed that power of deriving intense enjoyment from the mere aspect of life that characterizes certain minds, and while thus each little incident interested her, her gay and lively sallies animated one who without her companionship had smoked his cigar in half-sulky isolation, voting journey and fellow-travelers “most monstrous bores.” As they traversed that picturesque tract between Chande Fontaine and Verviers, her delight and enjoyment increased. Those wonderful little landscapes which open at the exit from each tunnel, and where to the darkness and the gloom succeed, as if by magic, those rapid glances at swelling lawns, deep-bosomed woods, and winding rivers, with peaceful homesteads dotting the banks, were so many surprises full of marvelous beauty.

“Ah! Mr. Beecher,” said she, as they emerged upon one of these charming spots, “I’m half-relenting about my decision in regard to greatness. I think that in those

lovely valleys yonder, where the tall willows are hanging over the river, there might possibly be an existence I should like better than the life of even a duchess.”

“It’s a much easier ambition to gratify,” said he, smiling.

“It was not of *that* I was thinking,” said she, laughingly; “nor am I so certain you are right there. I take it people can generally be that they have set their heart on being.”

“I should like to be convinced of your theory,” cried he, “for I have been I can’t say how many years wishing for fifty things I have never succeeded in attaining.”

“What else have you done besides wishing?” asked she, abruptly.

“Well, that is a hard question,” said he, in some confusion; “and after all, I don’t see what remained to me to do but wish.”

“If that were all, it is pretty clear you had no right to succeed. When I said that people can have what they set their heart on, I meant what they so longed for that no toil was too great, no sacrifice too painful to deter them; that with eyes upturned to the summit they could breast the mountain, not minding weariness, and even when, footsore and exhausted, they sank down, they arose to the same enterprise, unshaken in courage, unbroken in faith. Have *you* known this?”

“I can scarcely say I have; but as to the longing and pining after a good turn of fortune, I’ll back myself against any one going.”

“That’s the old story of the child crying for the moon,” said she, laughing. “Now, what was it you longed for so ardently?”

“Can’t you guess?”

“You wanted to marry some one who would not have you, or who was beneath you, or too poor, or too something-or-other for your grand relations?”

“No, not that.”

“You aspired to some great distinction as a politician, or a soldier, or perhaps a sailor?”

“No, by Jove! never dreamed of it,” burst he in, laughing at the very idea.

“You sighed for some advancement in rank, or perhaps it was great wealth?”

“There you have it! Plenty of money—lots of ready—with that all the rest comes easy.”

“It must be very delightful, no doubt, to indulge every passing caprice, without ever counting the cost: but, after a while, what a spoilt child weariness would come over one from all this cloying enjoyment—how tiresome would it be to shorten the journey between will and accomplishment,

and make of life a mere succession of 'tableaux.' I'd rather strive, and struggle, and win."

"Ay, but one doesn't always win," broke he in.

"I believe one does—if one deserves it; and even when one does not, the battle is a fine thing. How much sympathy. I ask you, have we for those classic heroes who are always helped out of their difficulties by some friendly deity? What do we feel for him who, in the thick of the fight, is sure to be rescued by a goddess in a cloud?"

"I confess I do like a good 'book,' 'hedged' well all round, and standing to win somewhere. I mean," added he, in an explanatory tone, "I like to be safe in this world."

"Stand on the bank of the stream, then, and let bolder hearts push across the river!"

"Well, but I'm rather out of patience," said he, in a tone of half irritation. "I've had many a venture in life, and too many of them unfortunate ones."

"How I do wonder," said she, after a pause, "that you and papa are such great friends, for I have rarely heard of two people who take such widely different notions of life. *You* seem to me all caution and reserve—*he*, all daring and energy."

"That's the reason, perhaps, we suit each other so well," said Beecher, laughing.

"It may be so," said she thoughtfully; and now there was silence between them.

"Have you got sisters, Mr. Beecher?" said she, at length.

"No; except I may call my brother's wife one."

"Tell me of her. Is she young—is she handsome?"

"She is not young, but she is still a very handsome woman."

"Dark or fair?"

"Very dark, almost Spanish in complexion—a great deal of haughtiness in her look, but great courtesy when she pleases."

"Would she like *me*?"

"Of course she would," said he, with a smile and a bow; but a flush covered his face at the bare thought of their meeting.

"I'm not so certain you are telling the truth there," said she, laughing; "and yet you know there can be no offense in telling me I should not suit some one I have never seen; do, then, be frank with me, and say what would she think of me."

"To begin," said he, laughing, "she'd say you were very beautiful—"

"'Exquisitely beautiful,' was the phrase of that old gentleman that got into the next carriage; and I like it better."

"Well, exquisitely beautiful—the per-

fection of gracefulness—and highly accomplished."

"She'd not say any such thing; she'd not describe me like a governess; she'd probably say I was too demonstrative—that's a phrase in vogue just now—and hint that I was a little vulgar. But I assure you," added she seriously, "I'm not so when I speak French. It is a stupid attempt on my part to catch up what I imagine must be English frankness when I talk the language that betrays me into all these outspoken extravagances. Let us talk French now."

"You'll have the conversation very nearly to yourself, then," said Beecher, "for I'm a most indifferent linguist."

"Well, then, I must ask you to take my word for it, and believe that I'm well bred when I can afford it. But your sister—do tell me of her."

"She is '*très grande dame*,' as you would call it," said Beecher; "very quiet, very cold, extremely simple in language, dresses splendidly, and never knows wrong people."

"Who are wrong people?"

"I don't exactly know how to define them; but they are such as are to be met with in society, not by claim of birth and standing, but because they are very rich, or very clever, in some way or other—people, in fact, that one has to ask who they are."

"I understand. But that must apply to a pretty wide circle of this world's inhabitants."

"So it does. A great part of Europe, and *all* America," said Beecher, laughing.

"And papa and myself, how should we come through this formidable inquiry?"

"Well," said he, hesitating, "your father has always lived so much out of the world—this kind of world, I mean—so studiously retired, that the chances are that, in short—"

"In short—they'd ask, 'Who are these Davises?'" She threw into her face, as she spoke, such an admirable mimicry of proud pretension that Beecher laughed immoderately at it. "And when they'd ask it," continued she, "I'd be very grateful to you to tell me what to reply to them, since I own to you it is a most puzzling question to myself."

"Well," said Beecher in some embarrassment, "it is strange enough; but though your father and I are very old friends—as intimate as men can possibly be—yet he has never spoken to me about his family or connections—nay, so far has he carried his reserve, that, until yesterday, I was not aware he had a daughter."

"You don't mean to say he never spoke of me?"

"Never to *me*, at least; and, as I have told you, I believe no one possesses a larger share of his confidence than myself."

"That *was* strange," said she, in deep reflection. Then after a few minutes, she resumed: "If I had a story of my life I'd tell it you; but there is really none, or next to none. As a child, I was at school in Cornwall. Later on, papa came and fetched me away to a small cottage near Walmer, where I lived with a sort of governess, who treated me with great deference—in short, observed toward me so much respect that I grew to believe I was something very exalted and distinguished—a sort of 'Man in the Iron Mask,' whose pretensions had only to be known to convulse half Europe. Thence I passed over to the Pensionnat at the Three Fountains, where I found, if not the same homage, all the indications of my being regarded as a privileged individual. I had my maid; I enjoyed innumerable little indulgences none others possessed. I'm not sure whether the pony I rode at the riding-school was my own or not: I only know that none mounted him but myself. In fact, I was treated like one apart, and all papa's letters only reiterated the same order—I was to want for nothing. Of course, these teachings could impress but one lesson—that I was a person of high rank and great fortune; and of this I never entertained a doubt. Now," added she, with more energy, "so far as I understand its uses, I *do* like wealth, and so far as I can fancy its privileges, I love rank; but if the tidings came suddenly upon me that I had neither one nor the other, I feel a sort of self-confidence that tells me I should not be dispirited or discouraged."

Beecher gazed at her with such admiration that a deep blush rose to her face, as she said, "You may put this heroism of mine to the test at once, by telling me frankly what you know about my station. Am I a princess in disguise, Mr. Beecher, or am I only an item in the terrible category of what you have just called 'wrong people?'"

If the dread and terror of Grog Davis had been removed from Annesley Beecher's mind, there is no saying to what excesses of confidence the impulse of the moment might have carried him. He was capable of telling her any and everything. For a few seconds, indeed, the thought of being her trusted friend so overcame his prudence, that he actually took her hand between his own, as the prelude of the revelations he

was about to open, when suddenly a vision of Davis swept before his mind—Davis in one of his moods of wrath, paroxysms of passion as they were, wherein he stopped at nothing. "He'd send me to the dock as a felon—he'd shoot me down like a dog," muttered he to himself, as, dropping her hand, he leaned back in the carriage.

She bent over, and looked calmly into his face. Her own was now perfectly pale and colorless, and then, with a faint, sad smile, she said,

"I see that you'd like to gratify me. It is through some sense of delicacy and reserve that you hesitate. Be it so. Let us be good friends now, and perhaps in time, we may trust each other thoroughly."

Beecher took her hand once more, and bending down, kissed it fervently. What a strange thrill was that that ran through his heart, and what an odd sense of desolation was it as he relinquished that fair, soft hand, as though it were that by its grasp he held on to life and hope together! "Oh," muttered he to himself, "why was not she—why was not he himself—twenty things that neither of them were?"

"I wish I could read your thoughts," said she, smiling gently at him.

"I wish to heaven you could!" cried he, with an honest energy that his nature had not known for many a day.

For the remainder of the way neither spoke, beyond some chance remark upon the country or the people. It was as though the bridge between them was yet too frail to cross, and that they trusted to time to establish that interchange of thought and confidence which each longed for.

"Here we are at the end of our journey!" said he, with a sigh, as they entered Aix.

"And the beginning of our friendship," said she, with a smile, while she held out her hand to pledge the contract.

So intently was Beecher gazing at her face that he did not notice the action.

"Won't you have it?" asked she, laughing.

"Which," cried he—"the hand, or the friendship?"

"I meant the friendship," said she quietly.

"Tickets, sir!" said the guard, entering. "We are at the station."

Annesley Beecher was soon immersed in all those bustling cares which attend the close of a journey; and though Lizzy seemed to enjoy the confusion and turmoil that prevailed, he was far from happy amidst the anxieties about baggage and horse-boxes, the maid and the groom each

tormenting him in the interests of their several departments. All was, however, safe—not a cap-case was missing—Klepper “never lost a hair”—and they drove off to the Hotel of the Four Nations, in high spirits all.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE “FOUR NATIONS” AT AIX.

ALL the bustle of “settling down” in the hotel over, Annesley Beecher began to reflect a little on the singularity of his situation. The wondering admiration which had followed Lizzy Davis wherever she appeared on the journey seemed to have reached its climax now, and little knots and groups of lounging travelers were to be seen before the windows curious to catch a glance at this surpassing beauty. Now, had she been his *bonâ fide* property, he was just the man to derive the most intense enjoyment from this homage at second hand—he’d have exulted and triumphed in it. His position was, however, a very different one, and as merely her companion, while it exposed her to very depreciating judgments, it also necessitated on his part a degree of haughty defiance and championship for which he had not the slightest fancy whatever.

Annesley Beecher dragged into a row for Grog Davis’s daughter—Beecher fighting some confounded count or other about Lizzy Davis—Annesley shot by some zouave captain who insisted on waltzing with his “friend”—these were pleasant mind-pictures which he contemplated with the very reverse of enjoyment; and yet the question of her father’s station away, he felt it was a cause wherein even one who had no more love for the “duello” than himself might well have periled life. All her loveliness and grace had not been wasted when they could kindle up a little gleam of chivalry in the embers of that wasted heart!

He ran over in his mind all the Lady Julias and Georgianas of the fashionable world. He bethought him of each of those who had been the queens of London seasons; and yet how vastly were they all her inferiors. It was not alone that in beauty she eclipsed them, but she possessed besides the thousand nameless attractions of manner and gesture, a certain blended dignity and youthful gayety, that made her seem the very ideal of high-born loveliness. He had seen dukes’ daughters who could not vie with her in these gifts;

he had known countesses immeasurably beneath her. From these thoughts he went on to others as to her future, and the kind of fellow that might marry her; for, strangely enough, in all his homage there mingled the ever-present memory of Grog and his pursuits. Mountjoy Stubbs might marry her—he has fifty thousand a year, and his father was a pawnbroker. Lockwood Harris might marry her—he got all his money from the slave trade. There were three or four more—all wealthy, and all equivocal in position: men to be seen in clubs—to be dined with and played with—fellows who had yachts at Cowes and grouse-lodges in Scotland, and yet in London were “nowhere.” These men could within their own sphere do all they pleased—they could afford any extravagance they fancied—and what a delightful extravagance it would be to marry Lizzy Davis! Often as he had envied these men, he never did so more than now. They had no responsibilities of station ever hanging over them—no brothers in the peerage to bully them about this—no sisters in waiting to worry them about that. They could always, as he phrased it, “paint their coach their own color,” without any fear of the Herald’s Office; and what better existence could a man wish for than a prolific fancy and unlimited funds to indulge it. “If I were Stubbs I’d marry her.” This he said fully a dozen times over, and even confirmed it with an oath. And what an amiable race of people are the Stubbsses of this habitable globe—how loosely do responsibilities sit upon them—how generously are they permitted every measure of extravagance and every violation of good taste! What a painful contrast did his mind draw between Stubbs’s condition and his own! There was a time, too, when the State repaired in some sort the injustice that younger sons groaned under—the public service was full of the Lord Charleses and the honorables, who looked up to a paternal government for their support; but now there was actually a run against them. Beecher argued himself so warmly into this belief, that he said aloud, “If I asked for something to-morrow they’d refuse me, just because I’ve a brother a peer!”

The reader is already aware what a compensation he found for all his defeats and short-comings in life by arraigning the injustice of the world. Downing street—the turf—Lackington—Tattersall’s—the Horse Guards—and “the little hell in St. James’s street” were all in a league to crush him; but he’d show them “a turn

round the corner yet," he said; and with a saucy laugh of derision at all the malevolence of fortune, he set about dressing for dinner. Beecher was not only a very good-looking fellow, but he had that stamp of man of fashion on him which all the contamination of low habits and low associates had not effaced. His address was easy and unaffected; his voice pleasantly toned; his smile sufficiently ready; and his whole manner was an agreeable blending of deference with a sort of not ungraceful self-esteem. Negatives best describe the class of men he belonged to, and any real excellence he possessed was in not being a great number of things which form, unhappily, the social defects of a large section of humanity. He was never loud, never witty, never oracular, never anecdotic; and although the slang of the "turf" and its followers clung to him, he threw out its "dialectics" so laughingly that he even seemed to be himself ridiculing the quaint phraseology he employed.

We cannot venture to affirm that our readers might have liked his company, but we are safe in asserting that Lizzy Davis did so. He possessed that very experience of life—London life—that amused her greatly. She caught up with an instinctive quickness the meaning of those secret springs which move society, and where, though genius and wealth are suffered to exercise their influence, the real power is alone centered in those who are great by station and hereditary claims. She saw that the great Brahmins of fashion maintained a certain exclusiveness which no pretensions ever breached, and that to this consciousness of an unassailable position was greatly owing all the dignified repose and serenity of their manner. She made him recount to her the style of living in the country houses of England—the crowds of visitors that came and went—the field sports—the home resources that filled up the day—while intrigues of politics or fashion went silently on beneath the surface. She recognized that in this apparently easy and indolent existence a great game was ever being played, and that all the workings of ambition, all the passions of love, and hate, and fear, and jealousy were "on the board."

They had dined sumptuously. The equivocal position in which they appeared, far from detracting from the deference of the hotel people, served but to increase their homage. Experience had shown that such persons as they were supposed to be spent most and paid best, and so they were served on the most splendid plate; waiters

in full dress attended them; even to the bouquet of hothouse flowers left on "mademoiselle's" napkin, all were little evidences of that consideration of which Annesley Beecher well knew the meaning.

"Will you please to enlighten my ignorance on one point, Mr. Beecher?" said she, as they sat over their coffee. "Is it customary in this rigid England, of which you have told me so many things, for a young unmarried lady to travel alone with a gentleman who is not even a relative?"

"When her father so orders it, I don't see that there can be much wrong in it," said he, with some hesitation.

"That is not exactly an answer to my question; although I may gather from it that the proceeding is at least unusual."

"I won't say it's quite customary," said Beecher; "but taking into account that I am a very old and intimate friend of your father's—"

"There must, then, have been some very pressing emergency to make papa adopt such a course," interrupted she.

"Why so?" asked he. "Is the arrangement so very distasteful to you?"

"Perhaps not—perhaps I like it very well. Perhaps I find you very agreeable—very amusing—very—what shall I say?"

"Respectful."

"If you like that epithet, I have no objection to put it in your character. Yet still do I come back to the thought that papa could scarcely have struck out this plan without some grave necessity. Now, I should like much to know what that is, or was." Beecher made no sign of reply, and she quickly asked, "Do you know his reasons?"

"Yes," said he, gravely; "but I prefer that you should not question me about them."

"I can't help that, Mr. Beecher," said she, in that half-careless tone she sometimes used. "Just listen to me for one moment," said she, earnestly, and fixing her eyes fully on him—"just hear me attentively. From what I have gathered from your account of England and its habits, I am certainly now doing that which, to say the least, is most unusual and unwarrantable. Now, either there is a reason so grave for this that it makes a choice of evils imperative—and, therefore, I ought to have my choice—or there is another even worse interpretation—at least, a more painful one—to come."

"Which is?" cried he.

"That I am not of that station to which such propriety attaches of necessity."

She uttered these words with a cold

sternness and determination that actually made Beecher tremble. "It was Davis's daughter spoke there," thought he. "They are the words of one who declares that, no matter what be the odds against her, she is ready to meet the whole world in arms. What a girl it is!" muttered he, with a sense of mingled fear and admiration.

"Well, Mr. Beecher," said she, at length, "I *do* think you owe me a little frankness; short as our acquaintance has been I, at least, have talked in all the freedom of old friendship. Pray show me that I have not been indiscreet."

"Hang me, if I know what to say or do!" cried Beecher, in dire perplexity. "If I were to tell you why your father hurried away from Brussels, he'd bring me to book very soon. I promise you."

"I do not ask that," interrupted she, eagerly. "It is upon the other point my interest is most engaged." He looked blankly at her, for he really did not catch to what she alluded. "I want you to tell me, in one word, who are the Davises? Who are we? If we are not recognizable by that high world you have told me of, who, then, are our equals? Remember, that by an honest answer to my question, you give guidance and direction to my future life. Do not shrink from fear of giving me pain—there is no such pain as uncertainty; so be frank."

Beecher covered his face with his hands to think over his reply. He did not dare to look at her, so fearful was he of her reading his very embarrassment.

"I will spare you, sir," said she, smiling half superciliously; "but if you had known me a little longer, or a little better, you had seen how needless all this excessive caution on your part. I have more of what you call 'pluck' than you give me credit for."

"No, by Jove! that you haven't," cried Beecher; "you have more real courage than all the men I ever knew."

"Show me, then, that you are not deficient in the quality, and give me a plain answer to a plain question. Who are we?"

"I've just told you," said Beecher, whose confusion now made him stammer and stutter at every word—"I have just told you that your father never spoke to me about his relations. I really don't know his county, nor anything about his family."

"Then it only remains to ask, What are we? or, in easier words, Has my father any calling or profession? Come, sir, so much you can certainly tell me."

"Your father was a captain in a West India regiment, and, when I met him first,

he was a man about town—went to all the races—made his bets—won and lost, like the rest of us—always popular—knew everybody."

"A 'sporting character,' in short—isn't that the name newspapers give it?" said she, with a malicious twinkle of the eye.

"By Jove! how you hit a thing off at once!" exclaimed Beecher, in honest ecstasy at her shrewdness.

"So, then, I am at the end of the riddle at last," said she, musingly, as she arose and walked the room in deep meditation. "Far better to have told me so many a year ago—far better to have let me conform to this station when I might have done so easily, and without a pang!" A bitter sigh escaped her at the last word, and Beecher arose and joined her.

"I hope you are not displeased with me, my dear Miss Davis," said he, with a trembling voice; "I don't know what I'd not rather suffer than offend you."

"You have *not* offended me," said she, coldly.

"Well, I mean, than I'd pain you—than I'd say anything that should distress you. You know, after all, it wasn't quite fair to push me so hard."

"Are you forgetting, sir," broke she in, haughtily, "that you have really told me next to nothing, and that I am left to gather from mere insinuations that there is something in our condition your delicacy shrinks from explaining?"

"Not a bit of it," chimed he in, quickly. "The best men in England are on the turf, and a good book on the Oaks isn't within reach of the income-tax. Your father's dealings are with all the swells in the peerage."

"So there is a partnership in the business, sir," said she, with a quiet irony: "and is the Honorable Mr. Beecher one of the company?"

"Well—ha—I suppose—I ought to say yes," muttered he, in deep confusion. "We do a stroke of work together now and then—on the square, of course, I mean."

"Pray don't expose the secrets of the firm, sir. I am even more interested than yourself that they should be conducted with discretion. There is only one other question I have to ask, and as it purely concerns myself, you'll not refuse me a reply. Knowing our station in life, as I now see you know it, by what presumption did you dare to trifle with my girlish ignorance, and lead me to fancy that I might yet move in a sphere which in your heart you knew I was excluded from?"

Overwhelmed with shame and confusion,

and stunned by the embarrassment of a dull man in a difficulty, Beecher stood unable to utter a word.

"To say the least, sir, there was levity in this," said she in a tone of sorrowful meaning; "but, perhaps, you never meant it so."

"Never, upon my oath, never!" cried he, eagerly. "Whatever I said, I uttered in all frankness and sincerity. I know London town just as well as any man living, and I'll stand five hundred to fifty there's not your equal in it—and that's giving the whole field against the odds. All I say is, you shall go to the queen's drawing-room—"

"I am not likely to do so, sir," said she, with a haughty gesture, and left the room.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

THREE days passed over—three days varied with all the incidents that go to make up a longer existence—and Beecher and his fair charge were still in Aix. If they forbore to speak to each other of the strange situation in which they found themselves, they were not the less full of it. Neither telegraph nor letter came from Davis, and Beecher's anxiety grew hourly greater. There was scarcely an eventuality his mind had not pictured. Davis was arrested and carried off to prison in Brussels—was waylaid and murdered in the Ardennes—was ill, dying in some unheard-of village—involving in some other row, and obliged to keep secret—arrested on some old charge; in fact, every mishap that a fertile fancy could devise had befallen him, and now only remained the question, What was he himself to do with Lizzy Davis?

Whether it was that her present life was an agreeable change from the discipline of the Three Fountains, or that the new objects of interest about her engaged her to the exclusion of much thought, or that some higher philosophy of resignation supported her, but certain is it, she neither complained of the delay nor exhibited any considerable impatience at her father's silence. She went about sight-seeing, visited churches and galleries, strolled on the promenade before dinner, and finished with the theater at night, frankly owning that it was a kind of do-nothing existence that she enjoyed greatly. Her extraordinary beauty was already a town talk; and the

passages of the hotel were crowded as she went down to her carriage, and to her box at the opera were directed almost every glass in the house. This, however, is a homage not always respectful, and in the daring looks of the men, and the less equivocal glances of the women, Beecher read the judgment that had been pronounced upon her. Her manner, too, in public, had a certain fearless gayety about it that was sure to be severely commented on, while the splendor of her dress was certain to be not less mercifully interpreted.

To have the charge of a casket of jewels through the thieves' quarter of London was the constant similitude that rose to Beecher's mind as he descended the stairs at her side. To be obliged to display her to the wondering gaze of some hundred idlers, the dissipated and debauched loungers of a watering-place, men of bad lives and worse tongues; to mark the staring insolence of some, and the quizzical impertinence of others; to see how narrowly each day they escaped some more overt outrage from that officious politeness that is tendered to those in equivocal positions, were tortures that half maddened him. Nor could he warn her of the peril they stood in, or dare to remonstrate about many little girlish ways which savored of levity. The scene of the theater in Brussels was never off his mind, and the same one idea continually haunted him, that poor Hamilton's fate might be his own. The characterless men of the world are always cowards as to responsibility—they feel that there is a flaw in their natures that must smash them if pressed upon; and so was it here. Beecher's life was actual misery, and each morning he awoke the day seemed full of menace and misfortune to him. In his heart, he knew that if an emergency arose he should be found wanting; he'd either not think of the right thing, or have pluck for it if he even thought it; and then, whatever trouble or mishap he came through, there still remained worse behind—the settlement with Grog himself at the end.

Like most persons who seek the small consolation of falling back on their own foresight, he called to mind how often he had said to himself that nothing but ill could come of journeying with Grog Davis—he knew it—he was sure of it. A fellow to conspire with about a "plant"—a man to concert with on a race, or a "safe thing with the cards," was not exactly a meet traveling companion, and he fretted over the fatal weakness that had induced his acceptance of him. They had only just

started, and their troubles had already begun! Even if Davis himself were there, matters might not be so bad. Grog was always ready to "turn out" and have a shot with any one. It was a sort of pastime he rather liked when nothing else was stirring, it seemed like keeping his hand in; but, confound the fellow! he had gone off, and left in his place one who had a horror of hair-triggers, and shuddered at the very thought of a shot-wound.

He was far too conversant with the habits of *demi-monde* existence not to see that the plot was thickening, and fresh dangers clustering round him. The glances in the street were hourly growing more familiar—the looks were half recognitions. Half a dozen times in the morning, well-dressed and well-bearded strangers had bolted into their sitting-room in mistake, and, while apologizing for their blunder, delayed unnecessarily long over the explanation.

The waiter significantly mentioned that Prince Bottoffsky was then stopping at the hotel, with seven carriages and eighteen servants. The same intelligent domestic wondered they never went to see Count Czaptowitch's camelias—"he had sent a bouquet of them that very day to her ladyship." And Beecher groaned in his spirit as the fellow produced it.

"I see how it's all to end," muttered he as he paced the room, unable any longer to conceal the misery that was consuming him. "One of those confounded foreigners will come swaggering up to talk to her on the promenade, and then I'm 'in for it.' It's all Davis's fault. It's all *her* fault. Why can't she look like other people—dress like them—walk like them? What stuff and nonsense it is for *her* to be going about the world like a princess royal. It was only last night she wore a Brussels lace shawl at the opera that cost five thousand francs, and when it caught on a nail in the box and was torn, she laughed and said, 'Annette will be charmed with this disaster, for she was always coveting this lace, and wondering when she was to have it.' That's the fine 'bringing-up' old Grog is so proud of! If she were a countess in her own right, with ten thousand a year, she'd be a bad bargain!"

Al, Beecher! your heart never went with you when you made this cruel speech; you uttered it in spleen and bitterness, but not in sincerity; for already in that small compartment of your nature where a few honest affections yet lingered *she was* treasured, and, had you known how to do it, you would have loved her. Poor devil as he

was, life was a hard battle to him; always over head and ears in debt; protested bills meeting him at every moment; duns rising before him at every turn. Levity was to him, as to many, a mere mask over fear, and he walked the world in the hourly terror that any moment might bring him to shame and ruin. If he were a few minutes alone, his melancholy was almost despair, and over and over had he pictured to his mind a scene in the police-court, where he was called on to find full and sufficient bail for his appearance on trial. From such sorrowing thoughts he made his escape to rush into society—anywhere, anyhow—and, by the revulsion of his mind, came that rattling and boisterous gayety that made him seem the most light-hearted fellow in existence. Such men are always making bonfires of their household gods, and have nothing to greet them when they are at home.

What a fascination must Lizzy Davis have exercised over such a mind! Her beauty and her gracefulness would not have been enough without her splendid dressing, and that indescribable elegance of manner which was native to her. Then how she amused him!—what droll caricatures did she sketch of the queer originals of the place—the bearded old colonels, or the pretentious loungers that frequented the "Cursaal!" How witty the little epigrams by which she accompanied them, and how charmingly at a moment would she sit down at the piano and sing for him anything, from a difficult "scena" from Verdi to some floating barecarole of Venice! She could—let us tell it in one breath—make him laugh; and, O dearly valued reader! what would you or I give for the company of any one who could do as much? The world is full of learned people and clever people. There are Bourse men, and pre-Raphaelite men, and old-red-sandstone men, and Greek particle men, but where are the pleasant people one used to chat with long ago, who, though talking of mere common-places, threw out little sparks of fun—fire-flies in the dark copse—giving to what they said that smack of epigram that spiced talk but never over-seasoned it, whose genial sympathy sent a warm life-blood through every theme, and whose outspoken heartiness refreshed one after a cold bath of polite conventionalities. If they still exist upon this earth, they must be hiding themselves, wisely seeing it is not an age to suit them; they lie quiet under the ice, patiently hibernating till another summer may call them forth to vitality.

Now Lizzy Davis could make Beecher laugh in his lowest and gravest moments: droll situations and comical conceits came in showers over her mind, and she gave them forth with all the tact of a consummate actress. Her mimicry, too, was admirable, and thus he who rarely reflected, and never read, found in her ready talents resources against all weariness and *ennui*. What a girl she was!—how perfectly she would become any—the very highest—station! what natural dignity in her manner!—and— Then, after a pause, he murmured, “What a fortune she’d make on the stage!—Why, there’s nothing to compare with her—she’s as much beyond them all in beauty as in genius!” And so he set about thinking how, by marrying her, a man might make a “deuced good thing of it.” There’s no saying what Webster wouldn’t offer; and then there was America, always a “safe card;” not that it would do for himself to think of such a thing. Lackington would never speak to him again. All his family would cut him dead; he hadn’t an acquaintance would recognize him after such disgrace.

“Old Grog is so confoundedly well known!” muttered he—“the scoundrel is so notorious!” Still, there were fellows wouldn’t mind that—hard-up men, who had done everything, and found all failure. He knew—“Let us see,” said he to himself, beginning to count on his fingers all the possible candidates for her hand. “There’s Cranshaw Craven at Caen, on two hundred a year; he’d marry her, and never ask to see her if she’d settle twenty thousand francs a year on him. Brownlow Gore would marry her, and for a mere five hundred too, for he wants to try that new martingale at Ems; he’s certain he’d break the bank with less. Foley would marry her; but, to be sure, he has a wife somewhere, and she might object to that! I’d lay an even fifty,” cried he in ecstasy at the bright thought, “Tom Beresford would marry her just to get out of the Fleet!”

“What does that wonderful calculation mean?” cried she, suddenly, as she saw him still reckoning on his fingers. “What deep process of reasoning is my learned guardian engaged in?”

“I’d give you a long time to guess,” said he, laughing.

“Am I personally concerned in it?” asked she.

“Yes, that you are!”

“Well,” said she, after a pause, “you are counting over the days we have passed, or are still to pass here?”

“No, not *that!*”

“You are computing, perhaps, one by one, all your fashionable friends who would be shocked by my levity—that’s the phrase, I believe—meaning those outspoken impertinences you encourage me to utter about everything and everybody!”

“Far from it. I was—”

“Oh! of course, you were charmed,” broke she in; “and so you ought to be, when one performs so dangerous a trick to amuse you. The audience always applauds the rope-dancer that perils his neck; and you’d be worse than ungrateful not to screen me when I’m satirized. But it may relieve somewhat the load of obligation when I say that I utter these things just to please myself. I bear the world no ill-will, it is true; but I’m very fond of laughing at it.”

“In the name and on behalf of that respectable community, let me return you my thanks,” said he, bowing.

“Remember,” said she, “how little I really know of what I ridicule, and so let my ignorance atone for my ill-nature; and now, to come back, what was it that you were counting so patiently on your fingers? Not *my* faults, I’m certain, or you’d have had both hands.”

“I’m afraid I could scarcely tell you,” said he, “though somehow I feel that if I knew you a very little longer, I could tell you almost anything.”

“I wish you could tell me that this pleasant time was coming. What is this?” asked she, as the waiter entered, and presented her with a visiting card.

“Monsieur the count desires to know if mademoiselle will receive him,” said the man.

“What, how? What does this mean?” exclaimed Beecher, in terror and astonishment.

“Yes,” said she, turning to the waiter; “say, ‘with pleasure.’”

“Gracious mercy!” exclaimed Beecher, “you don’t know what you’re doing. Have you seen this person before?”

“Never!”

“Never heard of him!”

“Never,” said she with a faint smile, for the sight of his terror amused her.

“But who is he then? How has he dared—”

“Nay,” said she, holding behind her back the visiting card, which he endeavored to snatch from her hand—“this is *my* secret!”

“This is intolerable!” cried Beecher. “What is your father to think of your admitting a person to visit you? an utter stranger—a fellow Heaven knows—”

At this moment, as if to answer in the most palpable form the question he was propounding, a somewhat spruce-dressed man, middle-aged and comely, entered; and, passing Beecher by with the indifference he might have bestowed on a piece of furniture, advanced to where Lizzy was standing, and taking her hand, pressed it reverently to his lips.

So far from resenting the liberty, she smiled most courteously on him, and motioned to him to take a seat on the sofa beside her.

"I can't stand this, by Jove!" said Beecher, aloud; while, with an assumption of courage his heart little responded to, he walked straight up to the stranger. "You understand English, I hope?" said he, in very indifferent French.

"Not a syllable," replied the other, in the same language. "I only know 'all right;'" and he laughed pleasantly as he uttered the words in an imitation of English.

"Come, I'll not torture you any longer," said Lizzy, laughing, "read *that*." And she handed him the card, whereon, in her father's writing, there was, "See the count; he'll tell you everything.—C. D."

"I have heard the name before—Count Lienstahl," said Beecher to himself. "Has he seen your father? Where is he?" asked he, eagerly.

"He'll inform me on all, if you'll just give him time," said she; while the count, with an easy volubility, was pouring out a flow of words perfectly unintelligible to poor Beecher.

Whether it was the pleasure of the tidings he brought, or the delicious enjoyment of once more hearing and replying in that charming tongue that she loved so dearly, but Lizzy ceased even to look at Beecher, and only occupied herself with her new acquaintance.

Now, while we leave her thus pleasantly engaged, let us present the visitor to our reader.

Nothing could be less like the traditional "continental count" than the plump, close-shaven, blue-eyed gentleman who sat beside Lizzy Davis, with an expression of *bonhomie* in his face that might have graced a squire of Devon. He was neither frogged nor moustached; his countenance neither boded ill to the Holy Alliance, nor any close intimacy with billiards or dice-boxes. A pleasant, easy-tempered, soft-natured man he seemed, with a ready smile and a happy laugh, and an air of yielding good humor about him that appeared to vouch for his being one none need ever

dispute with. If there were few men less generally known throughout Europe, there was not one whose origin, family, fortune, and belonging were wrapped in more complete obscurity. Some said he was a Pomeranian, others called him a Swede; many believed him Russian, and a few, affecting deeper knowledge, declared he was from Dalmatia. He was a count, however, of somewhere, and as certainly was he one who had the *entrée* to all the best circles of the Continent, member of its most exclusive clubs, and the intimate of those who prided themselves on being careful in their friendships. While his manners were sufficiently good to pass muster anywhere, there was about him a genial kindness—a sort of perennial pleasantry—that was welcome everywhere; he brought to society that inestimable gift of adhesiveness by which cold people and stiff people are ultimately enabled to approximate and understand each other. No matter how dull and ungenial the salon, he was scarcely across the doorway when you saw that an element of social kindness had just been added, and in his little caressing ways and coaxing inquiries you recognized one who would not let condescension crush nor coldness chill him. If young people were delighted to see one so much their senior indulging in all the gay and light frivolities of life, older folk were gratified to find themselves so favorably represented by one able to dance, sing, and play like the youngest in company. So artfully, too, did he contribute his talent to society, that no thought of personal display could ever attach to him. It was all good-nature; he played to amuse *you*—he danced to gratify some one else; he was full of little attentions of a thousand kinds, and you no more thought of repayment than you'd have dreamed of thanking the blessed sun for his warmth or his daylight. Such men are the *bonbons* of humanity, and even they who do not care for sweet things are pleased to see them.

If his birth and origin were mysterious, far more so were his means of life. Nobody ever heard of his agent or his banker. He neither owned nor earned, and yet there he was, as well-dressed, as well cared for, and as pleasant a gentleman as you could see. He played a little, but it was notorious that he was ever a loser. He was too constantly a winner in the great game of life to be fortunate as a gambler, and he could well afford to laugh at this one little mark of spitefulness in fortune. Racing and races were a passion with him; but he loved sport for itself, not as a specu-

lation—so at least he said; and when he threw his arm over your shoulder, and said anything in that tone of genial simplicity that was special to him, I'd like to have seen the man—or, still more, the woman—who wouldn't have believed him.

The turf—like poverty—teaches one to know strange bed-fellows; and this will explain how the count and Grog Davis became acquaintances, and something more.

The grand intelligence who discovered the great financial problem of France—the *Crédit Mobilier*—has proclaimed to the world that the secret lay in the simple fact, that there were industrial energies which needed capital, and capital which needed industry, and that all he avowed to accomplish was to bring these two distant, but all necessary, elements into close union and co-operation. Now, something of the same kind moved Grog and the count to cement their friendship; each saw that the other supplied some want of his own nature, and before they had passed an hour together they ratified an alliance. An instinct whispered to each, "We are going the same journey in life, let us travel together;" and some very profitable tours did they make in company!

His presence now was on a special mission from Davis, whom he just met at Trèves, and who dispatched him to request his daughter to come on to Carlsruhe, where he would await her. The count was charged to explain, in some light easy way of his own, why her father had left Brussels so abruptly; and he was also instructed to take Annesley Beecher into his holy keeping, and not suffer him to fall into indiscretions, or adventure upon speculations of his own devising.

Lizzy thought him "charming"—far more worldly-wise people than Lizzy had often thought the same. There was a bubbling fountain of good-humor about him that seemed inexhaustible. He was always ready for any plan that promised pleasure. Unlike Beecher, who knew nobody, the count walked the street in a perpetual salutation—bowing, hand-shaking, and sometimes kissing, as he went—and in that strange polyglot that he talked he murmured as he went, "Ah, lieber Freund!"—"Come sta?"—"Addio!"—"Mon meilleur ami!" to each that passed; so that veritably the world did seem only peopled with those who loved him.

As for Beecher, notwithstanding a certain distrust at the beginning, he soon fell captive to a manner that few resisted; and though the intercourse was limited to shaking hands and smiling at each other,

the count's pleasant exclamation of "All right!" with a jovial slap on the shoulder, made him feel that he was a "regular trump," and a man "to depend on."

One lurking thought alone disturbed this esteem—he was jealous of his influence over Lizzy; he marked the pleasure with which she listened to him—the eager delight she showed when he came—her readiness to sing or play for him. Beecher saw all these in sorrow and bitterness; and though twenty times a day he asked himself, "What the deuce is it to me? How can it possibly matter to me whom she cares for?"—the haunting dread never left his mind, and became his very torturer. But why should he worry himself about it at all? The fellow did what he liked with every one. Rivers, the sulky training groom, that would not have let a royal highness see "the horse," actually took Klepper out and galloped him for the count. The austere landlady of the inn was smiles and courtesy to him: even to that unpolished class, the hackney coachmen, his blandishments extended, and they vied with each other who should serve him.

"We are to start for Wiesbaden to-morrow," said Lizzy to Beecher.

"Why so—who says so?"

"The count—"

"Si, si, andiamo—all right!" cried the count, laughing; and the march was ordered.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A FOREIGN COUNT.

THE announcement of Count Lienstahl's arrival at Wiesbaden was received with rejoicing. "Now we shall open the season in earnest. We shall have balls, picnics, races, hurdle-matches, gipsy parties, excursions by land and water! He'll manage everything and everybody." Such were the exclamations that resounded along the promenade as the party drove up to the hotel. Within less than an hour the count had been to Beberich to visit the reigning duke, he had kissed hands with half a dozen serene highnesses, made his bow to the chief minister and the Governor of Wiesbaden, and come back to dinner all smiles and delight at the condescension and kindness of the court and the capital.

If Lienstahl's popularity was great, he only shared a very humble portion of public attention when they appeared at the table d'hôte. There Lizzy Davis attracted every look, and the fame of her beauty

was already widespread. Such was the eagerness to obtain place at the table, that the most extravagant bribes were offered for a seat, and a well known elegant of Vienna actually paid a waiter five louis to cede his napkin to him and let him serve in his stead. Beecher was anything but gratified at these demonstrations. If his taste was offended, his fears were also excited. "Something bad must come of it," was his own muttered reflection; and as they retired after dinner to take their coffee, he showed very palpably his displeasure.

"Eh, caro mio—all right?" said the count, gayly, as he threw an arm over his shoulder.

"No, by Jove!—all wrong. I don't like it. It's not the style of thing I fancy." And here his confusion overwhelmed him, and he stopped abruptly; for the count, seating himself at the piano, and rattling off a lively prelude, began a well-known air from a popular French vaudeville, of which the following is a rude version:

"With a lovely face beside you,
You can't walk this world far,
But from those who've closely eyed you,
Comes the question—Who you are?
And though dowagers will send you
Cutting looks and glances keen,
The men will comprehend you
When you say—'C'est ma cousine.'"

He was preparing for the second verse when Lizzy entered the room, and turning at once to her, he peured forth some sentences with all that voluble rapidity he possessed.

"So," said she, addressing Beecher, "it seems that you are shocked, or horrified, or your good taste is outraged, by certain demonstrations of admiration for me exhibited by the worthy public of this place; and, shall I own to you, I liked it. I thought it very nice, and very flattering, and all that, until I thought it was a little—a very little, perhaps, but still a little—impertinent. Was that your opinion?"

There was a blunt frankness about this question, uttered in such palpable honesty of intention, that Beecher felt overwhelmed at once.

"I don't know the Continent like your friend there. I can't pretend to offer you advice and counsel like him; but if you really ask me, I'd say, 'Don't dine below any more—don't go to the rooms of an evening—don't frequent the promenade—'"

"What would you say to my taking the veil, for I fancy I've some vocation that way?" And then, turning to the count,

she said something in French, at which he laughed immoderately.

Whether vexed with himself or with her, or, more probably still, annoyed by not being able to understand what passed in a foreign language, Beecher took his hat and left the room. Without his ever suspecting it, a new pang was just added to his former griefs, and he was jealous! It is very rare that a man begins by confessing a sense of jealousy to his own heart; he usually ascribes the dislike he feels to a rival to some defect or some blemish in his nature. He is a coarse fellow—rude—vulgar, a coxcomb, or, worst of all, a bore. In some such disposition as this Beecher quitted the town, and strolled away into the country. He felt he hated the count, and yet he could not perceive why. Lienstahl possessed a vast number of the qualities he was generally disposed to like. He was gay, lively, light-hearted, never out of humor, never even thoughtful—his was that easy temperament that seemed to adapt itself to every phase of life. What was it, then? What could it be that he disliked about him? It was somewhat "cool," too, of Grog, to send this fellow over without even the courtesy of a line to himself. "Serve him right—serve them all right—if I were to cut my lucky;" and he ruminated long and anxiously over the thought. His present position was anything but pleasant or flattering to him. For aught *he* knew, the count and Lizzy Davis passed their time laughing at his English ignorance of all things foreign. By dint of a good deal of such self-tormenting, he at last reached that point whereat the very slightest additional impulse would have determined him to decamp from his party, and set out, all alone, for Italy. The terror of a day of reckoning with Davis was, however, a dread that he could never shake off. Grog the unforgiving, the inexorable! Grog, whose greatest boast in his vain-glorious moments was that, in the "long run," no man ever got the better of him, would assuredly bring him to book one day or other; and he knew the man's nature well enough to be aware that no fear of personal consequences would ever balk him on the road to a vengeance.

Sometimes the thought occurred to him that he would make a frank and full confession to Lackington of all his delinquencies, even to that terrible "count" by which the fame and fortune of his house might be blasted forever. If he could but string up his courage to this pitch, Lackington might "pull him through," Lackig-

ton would see that "there was nothing else for it," and so on. It is marvelous what an apparent strength of argument lies in those slang expressions familiar to certain orders of men. These conventionalities seem to settle at once questions which, if treated in more befitting phraseology, would present the gravest difficulties.

He walked on and on, and at last gained a pine wood which skirted the base of a mountain, and soon lost himself in its dark recesses. Gloomier than the place itself were the tone of his reflections. All that he might have been, all that lay so easily within his reach, all that life once offered him, contrasted bitterly with what he now saw himself. Conscience, it is true, suggested few of his present pangs; he believed—ay, sincerely believed—that he had been more "sinned against than sinning." Such a one had "let him in" here, such another "had sold him" there. In his reminiscences he saw himself trustful, generous and confiding, while the world—the great globe that includes Tattersall's, Goodwood, Newmarket, and Ascot, was little better than a nest of knaves and vagabonds.

Why couldn't Lackington get him something abroad—in the Brazils or Lima, for instance? He wasn't quite sure where they were, but they were far away, he thought—places too remote for Grog Davis to hunt him out, and whence he could give the great Grog a haughty defiance. They—how it would have puzzled him to say who "they" were—they couldn't refuse Lackington if he asked. He was always voting and giving his proxies, and doing all manner of things for them; he made a speech, too, last year at Hoxton, and gave a lecture upon something that must have served them. Lackington would begin the old story about character: "but who had character nowadays?" "Take down the Court Guides," cried he, aloud; "and let *me* give you the private life and adventures of each as you read out the names. Talk of *me!* why, what have I done equal to what Lockwood, Hepton, Bulkleigh, Frank Melton, and fifty more have done? No, no; for public life, now, they must do as a sergeant of the Ninety-fifth told me t'other day, 'We're obliged to take 'em little, sir, and glad to get 'em too!'"

It might be that there was something grateful to his feelings, reassuring to his heart, in this reflection, for he walked along now more briskly, and his head higher than before. Without being aware, he had already gone some miles from the town, and now found himself in one of

those long grassy alleys which traversed the dense wood in various directions. As he looked down the narrow road which seemed like the vast aisle of some Gothic cathedral, he felt a sort of tremulous motion beneath his feet, and then the moment after he could detect the measured tramp of a horse at speed. A slight bend of the alley had hitherto shut out the view, but suddenly a dark object came sweeping round the turn and advancing toward him. Half to secure a position, and half with the thought of watching what this might portend, Beecher stepped aside into the dense brushwood at the side of the alley, and which effectually hid him from view. He had barely time to make his retreat when a horse swept past him at full stride, and with one glance he recognized him as "Klepper." It was Rivers, too, who rode him, sitting high over the saddle and with his hands low, as if racing. Now it was but that very morning Rivers had told him that the horse was not "quite right," a bit heavy or so about the eyes, "out of sorts" he called it, and there he was now flying along at the top of his speed in full health and condition. It needed but the fortieth part of this to suggest a suspicion to such a mind as his, and with the speed of lightning there flashed across him the notion of a "cross." He, Annesley Beecher, was to be "put into the hole," to be "squared" and "nobbled," and all the rest of it! It did not indeed occur to him how very unprofitably such an enterprise would reward its votaries, that it would be a most gratuitous iniquity to "push him to the wall," that all the ingenious malevolence in the world could never make the venture "pay," his self-conceit smothered these reasonings, and he determined to watch and to see how the scheme was to be developed. He had not to wait long in suspense; at the bend of the alley where the horse had disappeared, two horsemen were now seen slowly approaching him. As they drew nearer, Beecher could mark that they were in close, and what seemed confidential, conversation. One he quickly recognized to be the count, the other, to his amazement, was Spicer, of whose arrival at Aix he had not heard anything. They moved so slowly past the spot where he was standing that he could gather some of the words that escaped them, although being in French. The sound of his own name quickly caught his ear. It was the count spoke as they came up:

"He is a *pauvre sire*, this Beecher, and I don't yet see what use he can be to us."

"Davis likes him, or at least he wants him," replied Spicer, "and that's enough for us. Depend upon it, Grog makes no mistakes." The other laughed, but what he replied was lost in the distance.

It was some time ere Beecher could summon resolution to leave the place of his concealment and set out toward the town. Of all the sentiments that swayed and controlled him, none had such a perfect mastery over his nature as distrust. It was, in fact, the solitary lesson his life's experience had taught him. He fancied that he could trace every mistake he had ever made—every failure he had ever incurred—to some unlucky movement of credulity on his own part, and that "believing" was the one great error of his whole life. He had long been of opinion that high station and character had no greater privileges than the power they possessed of imposing a certain trustfulness in their pledges, and that the great "pull" a duke had over a "leg" was that his grace would be believed in preference. But it also appeared to him that rogues were generally true to each other; now if this last hope were to be taken away, what was there left in life to cling to? Spicer had said, "Davis wants him." What did that mean?—what could it mean? Simply that Grog found him, not an associate or colleague, but a convenient tool. What an intolerable insult, that he, the Honorable Annesley Beecher, whose great connections rambled through half Debrett, was to be accounted a mere outpost sentry in the corps of Grog Davis!

His anger increased as he went along. The wound to his self-esteem was in the very tenderest spot of his nature. Had any man ever sacrificed so much to be a sharp fellow as he had? Who had, like him, given up friends, station, career, and prospects? Who had voluntarily surrendered the society of his equals, and gone down to the very dregs of mankind, just to learn that one great secret? And was it to be all in vain? Was all his training and teaching to go for nothing? Was he, after descending to the ranks, to discover that he never could learn the manual exercise? How often in the gloomiest hours of his disappointment, had he hugged the consolation to his heart that Grog Davis knew and valued him! "Ask G. D. if I'm a flat," was the proud rejoinder he would hurl at any attempt to depreciate his shrewdness. What was to become of him, then, if the bank that held all his fortune were to fail? If Beecher deemed a sharp fellow the most enviable of all mortals, so he regarded a dupe as the meanest and

most miserable, and the very thought of such a fate was almost maddening. "No, confound me! they shan't have it to say that they 'landed' A. B.; they shall never boast that they nobbled *me*," cried he, warming with the indignation that worked within him. "I'm off, and this time without beat of drum. Davis may do his worst. I'll lie by snug for a year or two. There must be many a safe spot in Germany or Italy, where a man may defy detection." And then he ran over in his mind all the successful devices he had seen adopted for disguising a man's appearance. Howard Vane had a wig and whiskers that left him unrecognized by his own mother: Crofton Campbell traveled with Inspector Field in search of himself, all by means of a nose. It was wonderful what science was accomplishing every day for the happiness and welfare of mankind!

The plan of escape was not without its difficulties, however. First of all, he had no money. Davis had given him merely enough to pay railroad fares and the charges incidental to the road, and he was living at the hotel on credit. This was a serious obstacle, but it was also one which had so often before occurred in Beecher's experience, that he was not so much dismayed by it as many another might have been. "Money was always to be had somehow," was a golden rule of his philosophy, the somehow meaning that it resolved itself into a simple question of skill and address of the individual in want of it. Aix was a considerable town, much frequented by strangers, and must doubtless possess all the civilizing attributes of other cities—viz., Jews, money-lenders, and discounters. Then, the landlord of the inn—it was always customary to give him the preference in these cases. He'd surely not refuse an advance of a few hundred francs to a man who came accompanied as he was. Klepper alone was good security for ten times more than he needed. Must it be confessed that he felt elevated in his own esteem when he had resolved upon this scheme. It savored of shrewdness—that great touchstone of capacity which he revered so highly. "They shall see if I'm a flat, this time," chuckled he to himself, as he went along; and he stepped out briskly in the excitement of self-approval. Then he went over in his mind all the angry commentaries that would be passed upon his flight—the passionate fury of Grog, the amazement of Spicer, the almost incredulous surprise of the count—till at last he came to Lizzy; and then, for the first time in all his calculations, a sense of shame sent

the color to his cheek, and he blushed till his face grew crimson. "Ay, by Jove! what will *she* think?" muttered he, in a voice of honest truthfulness. How he should appear to her—how he should stand in her estimation—after such an ignoble desertion, was a thought not to be encountered by self-praises of his cunning. What would her "pluck" say to his "cowardice?" was a terrible query.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A COUNTRY VISIT.

LET us now return to the Hermitage, and the quiet lives of those who dwell there. Truly, to the traveler gazing down from some lofty point of the Glengariff road upon that lowly cottage deep buried in its beech wood, and only showing rare glimpses of its trellised walls, nothing could better convey the idea of estrangement from the world and its ambitions. From the little bay, where the long low waves swept in measured cadence on the sands, to the purple-clad mountains behind, the scene was eminently calm and peaceful. The spot was precisely one to suggest the wisdom of that choice which prefers tranquil obscurity to the struggle and conflict of the great world. What a happy existence would you say was theirs, who could drop down the stream of life surrounded with objects of such beauty, free to indulge each rising fancy, and safe from all the collisions of mankind!—how would one be disposed to envy the unbroken peacefulness that no ambitions ruffled, no rude disappointments disturbed! And yet such speculations as these are ever faulty, and wherever the human heart throbs, there will be found its passions, its hopes, and fears. Beneath that quiet roof there dwelt all the elements that make the battle of life; and high aspirings and ignoble wishes, and love and fear, and jealousy, and wealth-seeking lived there, as though the spot were amidst the thundering crash of crowded streets, and the din of passing thousands!

Sybella Kellett had been domesticated there about two months, and between Lady Augusta and herself there had grown a sort of intimacy—short, indeed, of friendship, but in which each recognized good qualities in the other. Had Miss Kellett been older, less good-looking, less graceful in manner, or generally less attractive, it is just possible that—we say it with all

doubt and deference—Lady Augusta might have been equally disposed to feel satisfied. She suspected "Mr. Dunn must have somewhat mistaken the object of her note," or, "overlooked the requirements they sought for." "Personal attractions were not among the essentials she had mentioned." My "lord," too, was amazed at his recommending a "mere girl"—she couldn't be more than "twenty"—and, consequently, "totally deficient in the class of knowledge he desired."

Two months—no very long period—however, sufficed to show both father and daughter that they had been, to some extent, mistaken. Not only had she addressed herself to the task of an immense correspondence, but she had drawn out reports, arranged prospectuses, and entered into most complicated financial details with a degree of clearness that elicited marked compliment from the different bodies with whom this intercourse was maintained. The Glengariff Joint Stock Company, with its half million capital, figured largely in the public journals. Landscapes of the place appeared in the various illustrated papers, and cleverly-written magazine articles drew attention to a scheme that promised to make Ireland a favored portion of the empire. Her interest once excited, Sybella Kellett's zeal was untiring.

Already she anticipated the time when the population of that poor village—now barely subsisting in direst poverty—should become thriving and happy. The coast-fisheries—once a prolific source of wealth—were to be revived; fishing-craft, and tackle, and curing-houses, were all to be provided; means of transporting the proceeds to the rich markets of England procured. She had also discovered traces of lead in the neighborhood, and Dunn was written to, to send down a competent person to investigate the matter. In fact, great as was her industry, it seemed only second to an intelligence that adapted itself to every fresh demand and every new exigency, without a moment's interruption. To the old lord, her resources appeared inexhaustible, and gradually he abandoned the lead and guidance he had formerly given to his plans, and submitted everything to her will and dictation. It did not, indeed, escape his shrewdness that her zeal was more warmly engaged by the philanthropy than by the profit of these projects. It was to the advancement of the people, the relief of their misery, the education of their children, the care of their sick, that she looked as the great reward of all that they proposed. "What a

lesson we shall teach the rest of Ireland if we 'succeed!' was the constant exclamation she uttered. "How we shall be sought after to explain this and reveal that. What a proud day for us will it be when Glengariff shall be visited as the model school of the empire."

Thus fed and fostered by her hopes, her imagination knew no bounds, and the day seemed even too short for the duties it exacted. Even Lady Augusta could not avoid catching some of the enthusiasm that animated her, only restraining her expectations, however, by the cautious remark, "I wonder what Mr. Dunn will say? I am curious to know how he will pronounce upon it all."

The day at last came when this fact was to be ascertained, and the post brought the brief but interesting intelligence that Mr. Davenport Dunn would reach the Hermitage for dinner.

Lord Glengariff would have felt excessively offended could any one have supposed him anxious or uneasy on the score of Dunn's coming. That a great personage like himself should be compelled occasionally in life to descend to the agencies of such people was bad enough, but that he should have any misgivings about his co-operation or assistance, was really intolerable; and yet, we blush to confess, these were precisely the thoughts which troubled his lordship throughout the whole of that long day.

"Not that Dunn has ever forgotten himself with *me*—not that he has ever shown himself unmindful of our respective stations—so much I must say," were the little scraps of consolation that he repeated over and over to himself, while grave doubts really oppressed him that we had fallen upon evil days, when men of that stamp usurped almost all the influence that swayed society. No easy matter was it either to resolve what precise manner to assume toward him. A cold and dignified bearing might possibly repel all confidence, and an easy familiarity be just as dangerous, as surrendering the one great superiority his position conferred. It was true his lordship had never yet experienced any difficulty on such a score—of all men, he possessed a consummate sense of his own dignity, and suffered none to infringe it, but "this fellow Dunn had been spoiled." Great men—greater men than Lord Glengariff himself—had asked him to dinner. He had passed the thresholds of certain fine houses in Piccadilly, and well-powdered lackeys in Park lane had called "Mr. Dunn's carriage." Now

the Irishman that has soared to the realm of whitebait with a minister, or even a Star and Garter luncheon with a secretary of state, becomes, to the eyes of his home-bred countrymen, a very different person from the celebrity of mere Castle attentions and Phoenix Park civilities. Dunn was this, and more. He lounged into the Irish-office as into his own lodgings, and he walked into the most private chambers of Downing street as if by right. Consulted or not, he had the reputation of holding the patronage of all Ireland in his hands; and, assuredly, they who attained promotion were not slow in testifying to what quarter they owed their gratitude. Some of that mysterious grandeur that clung to the old religions of the Greeks seems to hover round the acts of a great government, till the ministers, like priests or augurs, appear less equals and fellow-men than stewards and dispensers of immense bounties intrusted to their keeping. There was about Dunn's manner much to foster this illusion. He was a blending of mystery with the deepest humility, but with a very evident desire that you should neither believe one nor the other. It was the same conscious power looming through the affected modesty of his pretensions that offended Lord Glengariff, and made him irritable in all his intercourse with him.

Let us take a passing glance at Lady Augusta. And why, may we ask, has she taken such pains about her toilet to-day? Not that her dress is unusually rich or costly, but she has evidently made a study of the "becoming," and looks positively handsome. She remembered something of a fuchsia in her hair, long, long ago; and now, by mere caprice of course, she has interwoven one in those dark clusters, never glossier nor more silky. Her calm, cold features, too, have caught up a gentler expression, and her voice is softer and lower. Her maid can make nothing of it. Lady Augusta has been so gracious and so thoughtful, and asked about her poor old sick grandmother. Well, these sunlights are meant to show what the coldest landscapes may become when smiled on by brighter skies!

And Sybella. Pale and melancholy, and in mourning, she, too, has caught up a sense of pleasure at the coming visit, and a faint line of color tinges her white cheek. She is very glad that Mr. Dunn is expected. "She has to thank him for many kindnesses; his prompt replies to her letters; his good-nature to poor Jack, for whom he has repeatedly written to the Horse

Guards; not to speak of the words of encouragement and hope he has addressed to herself. Yes, he is, indeed, her friend; perhaps her only friend in the world."

And now they are met in the drawing-room, waiting with anxiety for some sounds that may denote the great man's coming. The three windows open to the ground: the rich sward, spangled here and there with carnations or rich-scented stocks, slopes down toward a little river, from the bridge over which a view is caught of the Glengariff road, and to this spot each has silently loitered, and, as listlessly, turned back again without a word.

"We are waiting for Mr. Dunn, Augusta, ain't we?" asked Lord Glengariff, as if the thought had just suddenly struck him for the first time.

"Yes," replied she, gravely: "he promised us his company to-day at dinner."

"Are you quite sure it was to-day he mentioned?" said he, with an affected indifference in his tone.

"Miss Kellett can inform us with certainty."

"He said Thursday, and in time for dinner," said Sybella, not a little puzzled by this by-play of assumed forgetfulness.

"The man who makes his own appointments ought to keep them. I am five minutes beyond the half hour," said Lord Glengariff, as he looked at his watch.

"I suspect you are a little fast," observed Lady Augusta.

"There!—I think I heard the crack of a postilion's whip," cried Sybella, as she went outside the window to listen. Lady Augusta followed, and was soon at her side.

"You appear anxious for Mr. Dunn's coming. Is he a *very* intimate friend of yours, Miss Kellett?" said she, with a keen, quick glance of her dark eyes.

"He was the kind friend of my father, when he lived, and, since his death, he has shown himself not less mindful of me. There—I hear the horses plainly! Can't you hear them now, Lady Augusta?"

"And how was this kindness evidenced—in your own case I mean?" said Lady Augusta, not heeding her question.

"By advice, by counsel, by the generous interference which procured for me my present station here, not to speak of the spirit of his letters to me."

"So then you correspond with him?" asked she, reddening suddenly.

"Yes," said she, turning her eyes fully on the other. And thus they stood for some seconds, when, with a slight, but very slight motion of impatience, Lady Augusta said,

"I was not aware—I mean, I don't remember your having mentioned this circumstance to me."

"I should have done so if I thought it could have had any interest for you," said Sybella, calmly. "Oh, there is the carriage coming up the drive; I knew I was not mistaken."

Lady Augusta made no reply, but returned hastily to the house. Bella paused for a few seconds, and followed her.

No sooner was Mr. Dunn's carriage seen approaching the little bridge over the stream than Lord Glengariff rang to order dinner.

"It will be a rebuke he well merits," said he, "to find the soup on the table as he drives up."

There was something more than a mere movement of irritation in this; his lordship regarded it as a fine stroke of policy, by which Dunn's arrival, tinged with constraint and awkwardness, should place that gentleman at a disadvantage during the time he stayed, Lord Glengariff's favorite theory being, that "these people were insufferable when at their ease."

Ah, my lord, your memory was picturing the poor tutor of twenty years before, snubbed and scoffed at for his ungainly ways and ill-made garments—the man heavy in gait and awkward in address, sulky when forgotten, and shy when spoken to—this was the Davenport Dunn of your thoughts; there the very door *he* used to creep through in bashful confusion, yonder the side-table where he dined in a mockery of consideration. Little, indeed, were you prepared for him whose assured voice was already heard outside giving orders to his servant, and who now entered the drawing-room with all the ease of a man of the world.

"Ah, Dunn, most happy to see you here. No accident, I trust, occurred to detain you," said Lord Glengariff, meeting him with a well-assumed cordiality, and then, not waiting for his reply, went on: "My daughter, Lady Augusta, an old acquaintance—if you have not forgotten her. Miss Kellett you are acquainted with."

Mr. Dunn bowed twice, and deeply, before Lady Augusta, and then, passing across the room, shook hands warmly with Sybella.

"How did you find the roads, Dunn?" asked his lordship, still fishing about for some stray word of apology; "rather heavy, I fear, at this season."

"Capital roads, my lord, and excellent horses. We came along at a rate which would have astonished the lumbering posts of the continent."

"Dinner, my lord," said the butler, throwing wide the folding-doors.

"Will you give Lady Augusta your arm, Dunn?" said Lord Glengariff, as he offered his own to Miss Kellett.

"We have changed our dinner-room, Mr. Dunn," said Lady Augusta, as they walked along; thus by a mere word suggesting "by-gones and long ago."

"And with advantage, I should say," replied he, easily, as he surveyed the spacious and lofty apartment into which they had just entered. "The old dinner-room was low-ceilinged and gloomy."

"Do you really remember it?" asked she, with a pleasant smile.

"An over-good memory has accompanied me through life, Lady Augusta," said he. And then, as he remarked the rising color of her cheek, quickly added, "It is rarely that the faculty treats me to such grateful recollections as the present."

Lord Glengariff's table was a good specimen of country-house living. All the materials were excellent, and the cookery reasonably good; his wine was exquisite—the years and epochs connoisseurship loves to dwell upon; but Mr. Dunn ate sparingly and drank little. He had passed forty without gourmand tastes, and no man takes to epicurism after that. His lordship beheld, not without secret dissatisfaction, his curdiest salmon declined, his wonderful "south-down" sent away scarcely tasted, and, horror of horrors! saw water mixed with his 1815 claret as if it were a "little Bordeaux wine" at a Swiss table d'hôte.

"Mr. Dunn has no appetite for our coarse country fare, Augusta," said Lord Glengariff; "you must take him over the cliffs, to-morrow, and let him feel the sharp Glengariff air. There's nothing but hunger for it."

"Pardon me, my lord, if I say that I accept, with gratitude, the proposed remedy, though I don't acknowledge a just cause for it; I am always a poor eater."

"Tell him of Beverley, Augusta, tell him of Beverley," said my lord.

"Oh, it was simply a case similar to your own," said she, hesitatingly, "and, in all probability, incurred in the same way. The duke of Beverley, a very hard-worked man, as you know, always at Downing street at ten, and never leaving it till night, came here two years ago, to pass a few weeks with us, and although hale and stout to look at, could eat nothing—that is, he cared for nothing. It was in vain we put in requisition all our little culinary devices to tempt him; he sat down with us, and, like yourself, would fain persuade us that

he dined, but he really touched nothing; and, in utter despair, I determined to try what a course of open air and exercise would do."

"She means eight hours a day hard walking, Dunn," chimed in Lord Glengariff; "a good grouse-shooter's pace, too, and cross country."

"Well, confess that my remedy succeeded," said she, triumphantly.

"That it did. The duke went back to town fifteen years younger. No one knew him; the queen did not know him. And to this day he says, 'Whenever I'mhipped or out of sorts, I know what a resource I have in the Glengariff heather.'"

It is possible that Davenport Dunn listened with more of interest to this little incident because the hero of it was a duke and a cabinet minister.

Assuredly the minor ills of life, the petty stomachic miseries, and such like, are borne with a more becoming patience when we know that they are shared by peers and great folk. Not by *you*, valued reader, nor even by *me*—we have no such weaknesses—but by the Davenport Duns of this world, one of whom we are now treating. It was pleasant, too, to feel that he not only had a ducal ailment, but that he was to be cured like his grace! And so he listened, eagerly, as Lady Augusta went on to tell of the various localities, strange and unpronounceable, that they used to visit; and how his grace loved to row across such an arm of the lake; and what delight he took in the ascent of such a mountain. "But you shall judge for yourself, Mr. Dunn," said she, smiling, "and I now engage you for to-morrow, after breakfast." And with that she rose, and, accompanied by Sybella, passed into the drawing-room. Dunn was about to follow, when Lord Glengariff called out, "I'm of the old school, Dunn, and must have half an hour with my bottle before I join the ladies."

We do not stop to explain—perhaps we should not succeed to our wishes if we tried—why it was that Dunn was more genial, better satisfied, and more at his ease than when the dinner began, but so it was that as he filled the one glass of claret he meant to indulge in, he felt that he had been exaggerating to his own mind the disagreeables of this visit, and that everybody was kinder, pleasanter, and more natural than he had expected.

"Jesting apart, Dunn," said his lordship, "Augusta is right. What you require is rest—perfect repose; never to read or write a letter for three weeks, not look

at a newspaper, nor receive a telegraphic dispatch. Let us try if Glengariff cannot set you up. The fact is, we can't spare you."

"Your opinion is too flattering by half, my lord; but really, any one—I mean any one whose views are honest, and whose intentions are upright—can complete the work I have begun. There is no secret—no mystery in it."

"Come, come, this is over modest. We all know that your head alone could carry on the vast number of these great schemes which are now in operation among us. Could you really tell the exact number of companies of which you are director?"

"I'm afraid to say that I could," said Dunn, smiling.

"Of course you couldn't. It is marvelous, downright marvelous, how you get through it. You rise early, of course?"

"Yes, my lord, at five, summer and winter; light my own fire, and sit down to the desk till eight; by that time I have finished my correspondence on business topics. I then take a cup of tea and a little dry toast. This is my preparation for questions of politics, which usually occupy me till eleven. From that hour till three I receive deputations—heads of companies, and such like. I then take my ride, weather permitting, and usually contrive to call at the lodge, till nigh dinner hour. If alone, my meal is a frugal one, and soon dispatched; and then begins the real work of the day. A short nap of twenty minutes refreshes me, and I address myself with energy to my task. In these quiet hours, undisturbed and uninterrupted—for I admit none, not one, at such seasons—my mind is clear and unclouded, and I can work, without a sense of fatigue, till past midnight; it has even happened that morning has broke upon me without my being aware of it."

"No health, no constitution, could stand that, Dunn," said Lord Glengariff, with a voice artfully modulated to imply deep interest.

"Men are mere relays on the road of life; when one sinks, wearied or worn out, a fresh one comes forth ready to take his place in the traces."

"That may be—that may be, in the mass of cases, but there are exceptional men, Dunn—men who—men in fact, whose faculties have such an adaptiveness to the age we live in—do you perceive my meaning?—men of the situation, as the French say." Here his lordship began to feel that he was getting upon very ticklish ground, and by no means sure how he was to get

safely back again, when, with a violent plunge, he said, "That fellow Washington was one of those men, Louis Napoleon is another, and you—I don't hesitate to say it—you are also an instance of what I mean."

Dunn's pale face flushed up as he muttered some broken words of depreciating meaning.

"The circumstances, I am aware, are different. You have not to revolutionize a country, but you have undertaken just as hard a task: to remodel its social state—to construct out of the ruined materials of a bankrupt people the elements of national wealth and greatness. Let no man tell me, sir, that this is not a bolder effort than the other. Horse, foot, and dragons, as poor Grattan used to say, won't aid you here. To your own clear head, and your own keen intellect, must you trust."

"My dear lord," broke in Dunn, in a voice not devoid of emotion, "you exaggerate both my labor and my capacity. I saw that the holders of Irish property were not the owners, and I determined that they should be so. I saw that the people were improvident, less from choice than necessity, and I gave them banks. I saw land unproductive for want of capital, and I established the principle of loans for drainage and other improvements. I perceived that our soil and our climate favor certain species of cultivation, and as certainly deny some others. I popularized this knowledge."

"And you call this nothing! Why, sir, where's the statesman can point to such a list of legislative acts? Peel himself has left no such legacy behind him."

"Ah, my lord, this is too flattering—too flattering by half." And Dunn sipped his wine and looked down. "By the way, my lord," said he, after a pause, "how has my recommendation in the person of Miss Kellett succeeded?"

"A very remarkable young woman—a singularly-gifted person indeed," said the old lord, pompously. "Some of her ideas are tainted, it is true, with that canting philanthropy we are just now infected with—that tendency to discover all the virtue in rags and all the vice in purple; but, with this abatement to her utility, I must say she possesses a very high order of mind. She comes of a good family, doesn't she?"

"None better. The Kelletts of Kellett's Court were equal to any gentry in this county."

"And left totally destitute?"

"A mere wreck of the property remains, and even that is so cumbered with claims

and so involved in law, that I scarcely dare to say that they have an acre they can call their own."

"Poor girl. A hard case—a very hard case. We like her much, Dunn. My daughter finds her very companionable; her services, in a business point of view, are inestimable. All those reports you have seen are hers, all those drawings made by her hand."

"I am aware, my lord, how much zeal and intelligence she has displayed," said Dunn, who had no desire to let the conversation glide into the great Glengariff scheme, "and I am also aware how gratefully she feels the kindness she has met with under this roof."

"That is as it should be, Dunn, and I am rejoiced to hear it. It is in no spirit of self-praise I say it, but in simple justice—we do—my daughter and myself, both of us—do endeavor to make her feel that her position is less that of dependent than—than—companion."

"I should have expected nothing less from your lordship nor Lady Augusta," said Dunn, gravely.

"Yes, yes; you knew Augusta formerly; you can appreciate her high-minded and generous character, though I think she was a mere child when you saw her first."

"Very young indeed, my lord," said Dunn, coloring faintly.

"She is exactly, however, what she then promised to be—an Arden, a genuine Arden, sir; no deceit, no double; frank, outspoken; too much so, perhaps, for our age of mock courtesy, but a noble-hearted girl, and one fit to adorn any station."

There was an honest, earnest sincerity in the old lord's manner that made Dunn listen with respect to the sentiments he uttered, though in his heart the epithet girl, as applied to Lady Augusta, seemed somewhat ill chosen.

"I see you take no wine, so that, if you have no objection, we'll join the ladies."

"Your lordship was good enough to tell me that I was to make myself perfectly at home here; may I begin at once to avail myself of your kindness, and say that for this evening I beg to retire early? I have a number of letters to read, and some to answer."

"Really, Lady Augusta will feel quite offended if you slight her tea-table."

"Nay, my lord. It is only for this evening, and I am sure you will make my excuses becomingly."

"It shall be as you please," said the old lord, with a rather stiff courtesy.

"Thank you, my lord; thank you. I assure you it is very rarely the sacrifice to duty costs me so keenly. Good-night."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"A MAN IN REQUEST."

THE bountifully-spread breakfast-table of the following morning was not destined to be graced by Mr. Dunn's presence. A clerk had arrived early in the morning with a mass of correspondence from Dublin, and a Government messenger armed with an ominous-looking red box, came post haste about an hour later, while a request for a cup of tea in his own room explained that Mr. Dunn was not to make his appearance in public.

"This savors of downright slavery," said Lady Augusta, whose morning toilet was admirably devised.

"To me it savors of downright humbug," said Lord Glengariff, pettishly. "No one shall tell me that a man has not time to eat his meals like a gentleman. A secretary of state doesn't give himself such airs. Why, I protest, here comes another courier! what can this fellow be?"

"A messenger from the Home-office has just arrived for Mr. Dunn," said Miss Kellett, entering the room.

"Our little cottage is become like a house in Whitehall gardens," said Lord Glengariff, angrily. "I have no doubt we ought to feel excessively flattered by the notoriety the newspapers are certain to accord us."

"Mr. Dunn is more to be pitied than any of us," said Lady Augusta, compassionately.

"I suspect he'd not agree with you," said his lordship, bitterly. "I rather opine that Mr. Dunn has another and a very different estimate of his present position."

"Such a life is certainly not enviable. Perhaps I'm wrong, though," said she, quickly; "Miss Kellett does not seem of my mind."

Sybella blushed slightly, and, in some embarrassment, said, "Certain minds find their best happiness in great labor; Mr. Dunn's may be one of these."

"Pulteney found time for a cast with the hounds, and Charles Fox had leisure for his rubber of whist. It is these modern fellows have introduced the notion that 'the House' is like a 'mill at Manchester.' There goes one with his dispatches," cried he, as a mounted messenger rode off



HE HAD BARELY TIME TO MAKE HIS RETREAT WHEN A HORSE SWEEPED PAST HIM AT FULL STRIDE, AND WITH ONE GLANCE HE RECOGNIZED HIM AS "KLEPPER." (P. 489.)

from the door. "I'd wager a trifle that if they never came to hand the world would just jog on its course as pleasantly, and no one the worse for the mishap."

"With Mr. Dunn's compliments, my lord," said a servant, placing several open letters on the table; "he thought your lordship would like to see the latest news from the Crimea."

While Lord Glengariff took out his spectacles his face grew crimson, and he seemed barely able to restrain a burst of passionate indignation. As the servant closed the door he could no longer contain himself, but broke out: "Just fancy their sending off these dispatches to this fellow Dunn. Here am I, an Irish peer, of as good blood and ancient family as any in my country, and I might as well expect to hear Buckingham Palace was fitted up for my town residence when next I went to London, as look for an attention of this sort. If I hadn't it here under my own eyes, and saw the address, 'Davenport Dunn, Esq.,' 'on her Majesty's service,' I'd say flatly it was impossible."

"May I read some of them?" asked Lady Augusta, wishing by any means to arrest this torrent of angry attack.

"Yes, read away," cried he, laying down his spectacles. "Miss Kellett, too, may indulge her curiosity, if she has any, about the war."

"I have a dearer interest at stake there," said Sybella, blushing.

"I see little here we have not already read in the *Times*," said Lady Augusta, perusing the paper before her. "The old story of rifle-pits, sorties against working parties, the severity of the duty, and the badness of the commissariat."

"This is interesting," broke in Sybella. "It is an extract from a private letter of some one high in command. It says: 'The discontent of our allies increases every day, and as every post from France only repeats how unpopular the war is in that country, I foresee that nothing short of some great *fait d'armes*, in which the French shall have all the glory, will induce the Imperial Government to continue the struggle. The satisfaction felt in France at the attacks of the English journals on our own army, its generalship, and its organization, are already wearing out, and they look now for some higher stimulant to the national vanity.'"

"Who writes this?" cried Lord Glengariff, eagerly.

"The name is not given," said she. "The dispatch goes on merely to say, 'Your lordship would do well to give

these words the consideration they seem to deserve.' But here again, 'the coolness of the marshal increases, and our intercourse is neither frank nor confidential.'"

"All this sounds badly," said Lord Glengariff. "Our only progress would seem to be in ill-will with our ally. I suppose the end of it will be, we shall be left to continue the struggle alone."

"Would that it were so," burst in Sybella. "A great orator said to other day in the House, that coalitions were fatal—Englishmen never liked them. He only spoke of those alliances where parties agree to merge their differences and unite for some common object; but far more perilous are the coalitions where nations combine, the very contest that they wage being a field to evoke ancient rivalries and smoldering jealousies. I'd rather see our little army alone, with its face to the foe and its back to the sea, than I'd read of our entrance into Sebastopol side by side with the legions of France."

The passionate enthusiasm of the moment had carried her away, and she grew pale and heart-sick at her unwonted boldness as she finished.

"I hope Mr. Dunn may be able to benefit by your opinions on strategy," said Lady Augusta, as she rose from the table.

"What was it Lady Augusta said?" cried Lord Glengariff, as she left the room.

"I scarcely heard her aright, my lord," said Sybella, whose face was now crimson.

It was the first moment in her life in which dependence had exposed her to insult, and she could not collect her faculties, or know what to do.

"These things," said Lord Glengariff, pushing the dispatches contemptuously away, "add nothing to our knowledge. That writer in the *Times* gives us everything we want to know, and gives it better too. Send them back to Dunn, and ascertain, if you can, when we are likely to see him. I want him to come down to the bay; he ought to see the harbor and the coast. Manage this, Miss Kellett—not from me, of course, but in your own way—and let me know."

Lord Glengariff now left the room, and Sybella was once more deep in the dispatches.

Dry and guarded as they were—formal, with all the stamp of official accuracy—they yet told of the greatest and grandest struggle of our age. It was a true war of Titans, with the whole world for spectators. The splendid heroism of our army seemed even eclipsed by the unbroken endurance of daily hardship—that stern and

uncomplaining courage that faced death in cold blood, and marched to the fatal trenches with the steadfast tramp of a forlorn hope.

"No conscript soldiers ever bore themselves thus," cried she, in ecstasy. "These are the traits of personal gallantry—not the disciplined bravery that comes of the serried file and the roll of the drum."

With all her anxieties for his fate, she gloried to think "dear Jack" was there—that he was bearing his share of their hardships, and reaping his share of their glory. And oh! if she could but read mention of his name—if she could hear of him quoted for some act of gallantry, or, better still, some trait of humanity and kindness—that he had rescued a wounded comrade, or succored some poor maimed and forlorn enemy!

How hard was it for her on that morning, full of these themes, to address herself to the daily routine of her work. The grand panorama of war continued to unroll itself before her eyes, and the splendid spectacle of the contending armies revealed itself like a picture before her. The wondrous achievements she had read of reminded her of those old histories which had been the delight of her childhood, and she gloried to think that the English race was the same in daring and chivalry as it had shown itself centuries back!

She tried hard to persuade herself that the peaceful triumphs of art, the great discoveries of science, were finer and grander developments of human nature; but with all her ingenuity they seemed inglorious and poor beside the splendid displays of heroism.

"And now to my task," said she, with a sigh, as she folded up the map of the Crimea, on which she was tracing the events of the war.

Her work of that morning was the completion of a little "Memoir" of Glengariff and its vicinity, written in that easy and popular style which finds acceptance in our periodicals, and meant to draw attention to the great scheme for whose accomplishment a company was to be formed. Lord Glengariff wished this sketch should be completed while Dunn was still there, so that it might be shown him, and his opinion be obtained upon it.

Never had her task seemed so difficult—never so uncongenial; and though she labored hard to summon up all her former interest in the great enterprise, her thoughts would stray away, in spite of her, to the indented shores of the Crimea, and the wild and swelling plains around Sebasto-

pol. Determined to see if change of place might not effect some change of thought, she carried her papers to a little summer-house on the river-side, and once more addressed herself, resolutely, to her work. With an energy that rarely failed her, she soon overcame the little distraction, and wrote away rapidly and with ease. She at last reached that stage in her essay where, having enumerated all the advantages of the locality, she desired to show how nothing was wanting to complete its celebrity and recognition but the touch of some of those great financial magicians whose great privilege it is to develop the wealth and augment the resources of their fellow-men. She dwelt earnestly and, indeed, eloquently on the beauty of the scenery. She knew it in every varying aspect of its coloring, and she lingered over a description of which the reality had so often captivated her. Still, even here, the fostering hand of taste might yet contribute much. The stone pine and the ilex would blend favorably with the lighter foliage of the ash and the hazel, and many a fine point of view was still all but inaccessible for want of a foot-path. How beautifully, too, would the tasteful cottage of some true lover of the picturesque peep from amidst the ever-green oaks that grew down to the very shore. While she wrote, a shadow fell over her paper. She looked up, and saw Mr. Dunn. He had strolled by accident to the spot, and entered unperceived by her.

"What a charming place you have chosen for your study, Miss Kellett," said he, seating himself at the table. "Not but I believe," continued he, "that when once deeply engaged in a pursuit, one takes little account of surrounding objects. Pastorals have been composed in garrets, and our greatest romancer wrote some of his most thrilling scenes amid the noise and common-place interruptions of a court of sessions."

"Such labors as mine," said she, smiling, "neither require nor deserve the benefit of a chosen spot."

"You are engaged upon Glengariff," said he; "am I at liberty to look?" And he took the paper from the table as he spoke. At first he glanced half carelessly at the lines, but as he read on he became more attentive, and at last, turning to the opening pages, he read with marked earnestness and care.

"You have done this very well—admirably well," said he, as he laid it down; "but shall I be forgiven if I make an ungracious speech?"

"Say on," said she, smiling good-naturedly.

"Well, then," said he, drawing a long breath, "you are pleading an impossible cause. They who suggested it were moved by the success of those great enterprises which every day develops around us, and which, by the magic word 'company,' assume vitality and consistence; they speculated on immense profits just as they could compute a problem in arithmetic. It demanded so much skill and no more. You—I have no need that you should tell me so—were actuated by very different motives. You wanted to benefit a poor and neglected peasantry, to disseminate among them the blessings of comfort and civilization; you were eager for the philanthropy of the project, they for its gain."

"But why, as a mere speculation, should it be a failure?" broke she in.

"There are too many reasons for such a result," said he, with a melancholy smile. "Suffice it if I give you only one. We Irish are not in favor just now. While we were troublesome and rebellious, there was an interest attached to us—we were dangerous; and even in the sarcasms of the English press there lurked a secret terror of some great convulsion here which should shake the entire empire. We are prosperous now, and no longer picturesque. Our better fortune has robbed us of the two claims we used to have on English sympathy; we are neither droll nor ragged, and so they can neither laugh at our humor nor sneer at our wretchedness. Will not these things show you that we are not likely to be fashionable? I say this to you; to Lord Glengariff I will speak another language. I will tell him that his scheme will not attract speculators. I myself cannot advocate it. I never link my name with defeats. He will be, of course, indignant, and we shall part on bad terms. He is not the first I have refused to make rich."

There was a tone of haughty assumption in the way he spoke these words that astonished Sybella, who gazed at him without speaking.

"Are you happy here?" asked he, abruptly.

"Yes—that is, I have been so up to this—"

"In short, until I had robbed you of an illusion," said he, interrupting her. "Ah! how many a pang do these 'awakenings' cost us in life!" muttered he, half to himself. "Every one has his ambitions of one sort or other, and fancies his goal the true one; but his faith once disturbed,

how hard it is to address himself earnestly to another creed!"

"If it be duty," broke she in, "and if we have the consciousness of an honest breast and a right intention—"

"That is to say, if we gain a verdict in the court where we ourselves sit as judge," said he, with a suddenness that surprised her. "I, for instance, have my own sense of what is right and just; am I quite sure it is yours? I see certain anomalies in our social condition, great hardships, heavy wrongs; if I address myself to correct them, am I so certain that others will concur with me? The battle of life, like every other conflict, is one in which to sustain the true cause one must do many a cruel thing. It is only at last, when success has crowned all your efforts, that the world condescends to say you have done well."

"You, of all men, can afford to await this judgment patiently."

"Why do you say that of me?" asked he, eagerly.

"Because, so long as I can remember, I have seen your name associated with objects of charity and benevolence; and not these alone, but with every great enterprise that might stimulate the efforts and develop the resources of the country."

"Some might say that personal objects alone influenced me," said he, in a low voice.

"How poor and narrow-minded would be such a judgment," replied she, warmly. "There is an earnestness in high principle no self-seeking could ever counterfeit."

"That is true—quite true," said he; "but are you so certain that the world makes the distinction? Does not the vulgar estimate confound the philanthropist with the speculator? I say this with sorrow," said he, painfully, "for I myself am the victim of this very injustice." He paused for a few seconds, and then rising, he said, "Let us stroll along the river-side; we have both worked enough for the day." She arose at once, and followed him. "It is ever an ungracious theme—oneself," said he, as they walked along; "but, somehow, I am compelled to talk to you, and, if you will allow me, confidentially." He did not wait for a reply, but went on: "There was, in the time of the French regency, a man named Law, who, by dint of deep study and much labor, arrived at the discovery of a great financial scheme, so vast, so comprehensive, and so complete was it, that not only was it able to rescue the condition of the state from bankruptcy, but it disseminated through the trading

classes of the nation the sound principles of credit on which alone commerce can be based. Now this man—a man of unquestionable genius and—if benefits to one's species gave a just title to the name—a philanthropist—lived to see the great discovery he had made prostituted to the basest arts of scheming speculators. From the prince, who was his patron, to the humblest agent of the Bourse, he met nothing but duplicity, falsehood, and treachery, and he ended in being driven in shame and ignominy from the land he had succeeded in rescuing from impending ruin! You will say that the people and the age explain much of this base ingratitude, but believe me, nations and eras are wonderfully alike. The good and evil of this world go on repeating themselves in cycles with a marvelous regularity. The fate which befell Law may overtake any who will endeavor to imitate him; there is but one condition which can avert this catastrophe, and that is success. Law had too long deferred to provide for his own security. Too much occupied with his grand problem, he had made himself neither rich nor great, so that when the hour of adversity came no barriers of wealth or power stood between him and his enemies. Had he foreseen this catastrophe—had he anticipated it—he might have so dovetailed his own interests with those of the State, that attack upon one involved the fate of the other. But Law did nothing of the kind; he made friends of princes, and with the fortune that attaches to such friendships, he fell!" For some minutes he walked along at her side without speaking, and then resumed: "With all these facts before me, I, too, see that Law's fate may be my own!"

"But have you—" When she had gone thus far, Sybella stopped and blushed deeply, unable to continue.

"Yes," said he, answering what might have been her words—"yes, it was my ambition to have been to Ireland what Law was to France—not what calumny and injustice have pictured him, remember, but the great reformer, the great financier, the great philanthropist—to make this faction-torn land a great and united nation. To develop the resources of the richest country in Europe was no mean ambition, and he who even aspired to it was worthy of a better recompense than attack and insult."

"I have seen none of these," broke she in. "Indeed, so long as I remember, I can call to mind only eulogies of your zeal, praises of your intelligence, and the grandeur of your designs."

"There are such, however," said he, gloomily; "they are the first low murmurings, too, of a storm that will come in full force hereafter! Let it come," muttered he, below his breath. "If I am to fall, it shall be like Samson, and the temple shall fall with me."

Sybella did not catch his words, but the look of his features as he spoke them made her almost shudder with terror.

"Let us turn back," said she; "it is growing late."

Without speaking, Dunn turned his steps toward the cottage, and walked along in deep thought.

"Mr. Hanks has come, sir," said Dunn's servant, as he reached the door. And without even a word, Dunn hastened to his own room.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MR. DAVENPORT DUNN IN MORE MOODS THAN ONE.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Hanks performs no very conspicuous part in our story, he makes his appearance at the Hermitage with a degree of pomp and circumstance which demand mention. With our reader's kind leave, therefore, we mean to devote a very brief chapter to that gentleman and his visit.

As in great theaters there is a class of persons to whose peculiar skill and ability are confided all the details of "spectacle," all those grand effects of panoramic splendor which in a measure make the action of the drama subordinate to the charms of what, more properly, ought to be mere accessories, so modern speculation has called to its aid its own special machinists and decorators—a gifted order of men, capable of surrounding the driest and least promising of enterprises with all the pictorial attractions and attractive graces of the "ballet."

If it be a question of a harbor or dock company, the prospectus is headed with a colored print, wherein tall three-deckers mingle with close-reefed cutters, their gay bunting fluttering in the breeze as the light waves dance around the bows; from the sea beneath to the clouds above all is motion and activity—meet emblems of the busy shore where commerce lives and thrives. If it be a building speculation, the architecture is but the background of a brilliant "mall," where splendid equipages and caracoling riders figure, with gay parasols and sleek poodles intermixed.

One "buys in" to these stocks with feelings far above "five per cent." A sense

of the happiness diffused among thousands of our fellow-creatures—the “blessings of civilization,” as we like to call the extension of cotton prints—cheer and animate us; and while laying out our money advantageously, we are crediting our hearts with a large balance on the score of philanthropy. To foster this commendable tendency, to feed the tastes of those who love, so to say, to “shoot at fortune with both barrels,” an order of men arose, cunning in all the devices of advertisement, learned in the skill of capitals, and adroit in illustrations.

Of these was Mr. Hanks. Originally brought up at the feet of George Robins, he was imported into Ireland by Mr. Davenport Dunn as his chief man of business—the Grand Vizier of joint stock companies and all industrial speculations.

If Doctor Pangloss was a good man for knowing what wickedness was, Mr. Hanks might equally pretend to skill in all enterprises, since he had experienced for a number of years every species of failure and defeat. The description of his residences would fill half a column of a newspaper. They ranged from Brompton to Boulogne, and took in everything from Wilton Crescent to St. John's Wood. He had done a little of everything, too, from “chief commissioner to the Isthmus”—we never heard of what isthmus—to parliamentary agent for the friends of Jewish emancipation. With a quickness that rarely deceived him, Dunn saw his capabilities. He regarded him as fighting fortune so bravely with all the odds against him, that he ventured to calculate what such a man might be, if favorably placed in the world. The fellow who could bring down his bird with a battered old flint musket might reasonably enough distinguish himself if armed with an Enfield rifle. The venture was not, however, entirely successful; for though Hanks proved himself a very clever fellow, he was only really great under difficulties. It was with the crash of falling fortunes around him—amidst debt, bankruptcy, executions, writs, and arrests—Hanks rose above his fellows, and displayed all the varied resources of his fertile genius. The Spartan vigor of his mind assorted but badly with prosperity, and Hanks waxed fat and indolent, affected gorgeous waistcoats and chains, and imperceptibly sank down to the level of those decorative arts we have just alluded to. The change was curious: it was as though Gérard or Gordon Cumming should have given up lion-hunting and taken to teach piping bullfinches!

Every venture of Davenport Dunn was prosperous. All his argosies were borne on favoring winds, and Hanks saw his great defensive armor hung up to rust and to rot. Driven in some measure, therefore, to cut out his path in life, he invented that grand and gorgeous school of enterprise whose rashness and splendor crush into insignificance all the puny attempts of common-place speculators. He only talked millions—thousands he ignored. He would accept of no names on the direction of his schemes save the very highest in rank. If he crossed the Channel, his haste required a special steamer. If he went by rail, a special train awaited him. The ordinary world, moving along at its tortoise pace, was shocked at the meteor course that every now and then shot across the hemisphere, and felt humiliated in their own hearts by the comparison.

Four smoking posters, harnessed to the neatest and lightest of traveling carriages, had just deposited Mr. Hanks at the Hermitage, and he now sat in Mr. Dunn's dressing-room, arranging papers and assorting documents in preparation for his arrival.

It was easy to perceive that as Dunn entered the room he was very far from feeling pleased at his lieutenant's presence there.

“What was there so very pressing, Mr. Hanks,” said he, “that could not have awaited my return to town?”

“A stormy meeting of the Lough Allen Tin Company yesterday, sir—a very stormy meeting indeed. Shares down to twenty-seven and an eighth—unfavorable report on the ore, and a rumor—mere rumor, of course—that the last dividend was paid out of capital.”

“Who says this?” asked Dunn angrily.

“The *True Blue*, sir, hinted as much in the evening edition, and the suggestion was at once caught up by the Tory press.”

“Macken—isn't that the man's name—edits the *True Blue*?”

“Yes, sir; Michael Macken.”

“What have we against *him*, Hanks? If my memory deceives me not, we have something. Oh, I remember! he's the fellow of the forged stamps. I suppressed the charge at the stamp-office, but I have all the papers to substantiate it. See him—don't write. Hanks, see him—and show him how he stands. Let the article be fully contradicted, and an apology inserted.”

Mr. Hanks make a memorandum in his note-book, and went on: “Fenwick—Sir William Fenwick—retires from the Mun-

ster Bank Direction, and threatens a public letter with his reasons."

"I know them; he has obtained the loan he looked for, and wants to dissolve the connection now, but we don't so readily part with dear friends! See him also, Hanks, and say that a certain play transaction at Malta would figure awkwardly in any controversy between us, and that I know the man who took up the card from the floor."

"This will be open war, won't it?" asked Hanks.

"No; it will be the foundation of a friendship for life," said Dunn, smiling.

"Captain Palmer—that's a bad business, that of Palmer," said Hanks, shaking his head. "He came to the office in a towering passion yesterday, and it was all I could do to prevent him breaking out before the clerks. He said that when he gave up the stipendiary magistrateship, he had a distinct promise of a consulate in France, and now he is gazetted Coast Commissioner at the Niger, where nobody was ever known to survive the first autumn."

"Tell him he need not go out till spring; that will give us six months to promote him, either in this world or the next. The man is of no consequence, any how."

"Colonel Masham refuses to ratify the sale of Kilbeacon."

"Why so—on what pretext?" asked Dunn, angrily.

"He says you promised to support his canvass for Loughrea, and that your agents are secretly doing all in their power to defeat him; that no later than last Sunday, Father Walsh—"

"There—there," broke in Dunn, impatiently; "you don't suppose that I have time or patience to throw away on these histories."

"What answer shall I give him, then?" asked Hanks.

"Tell him—explain to him that the exigencies of party—No, that won't do. Send down Harte to conduct his election, let him be returned for the borough, and tell Joe Harte to take care to provide a case that will unseat him on a petition; before the petition comes on, we shall have the sale completed. The colonel shall be taught that our tactics are somewhat sharper than his own."

Hanks smiled approvingly at this stratagem of his chief, and really for the moment felt proud of serving such a leader. Once more, however, did he turn to his dreary note-book and its inexorable bea-roll of difficulties; but Dunn no longer heard him, for he was deep in his private

correspondence, tearing open and reading letter after letter with impatient haste. "What of the Crimea—what did you say there?" cried Dunn, stopping suddenly, and catching at the sound of that one word.

"That report of the *Morning Post* would require a prompt contradiction."

"What report?" asked Dunn, quickly.

"Here's the paragraph." And the other read from a newspaper before him: "'Our readers, we feel assured, will learn with satisfaction that the Government is at this moment in negotiation for the services of Mr. Davenport Dunn in the Crimea. To any one who has followed the sad story of our commissariat blunders and short-comings, the employment of this—the first administrative mind of our day—will be matter for just gratification. We have only to turn our eyes to the sister country, and see what success has attended his great exertions there, to anticipate what will follow his labors in the still more rugged field of the Crimea.'

"This is from the *Examiner*: 'We are sorry to hear, and upon the authority that assumes to be indisputable, that a grave difficulty has suspended, for the time at least, the negotiation between the Government and Mr. Davenport Dunn. The insistence on the part of that gentleman of such a recognition for his services as no administration could dare to promise, being the obstacle.'

"*Punch* has also his say: 'Mr. Davenport Dunn's scheme is now before the cabinet. It resolves itself into this: 'The Anglo-French alliance to be conducted on the principles of a limited liability company. For preference shares, address Count Morny, in Paris, or Dowb, at Bala-klava.'

"So much for official secrecy and discretion. This morning brings me the offer from the minister of this appointment, and here is the whole press of England speculating, criticising, and ridiculing it, forty-eight hours before the proposal is made me! What says the great leading journal?" added he, opening a broad sheet before him. "Very brief, and very vague," muttered he. "'No one knows better than the accomplished individual alluded to, how little the highest honors in the power of the Crown to bestow could add to the efficiency of that zeal, or the purpose of that guidance he has so strenuously and successfully devoted to the advancement of his country.' Psha!" cried he, angrily, as he threw down the paper, and walked to the window.

Hankes proceeded to read aloud one of those glowing panegyrics certain popular journals loved to indulge in, on the superior virtue, capacity, and attainments of the middle classes. "Of these," said the writer, "Mr. Dunn is a good specimen. Sprung from what may be called the very humblest rank—"

"Who writes that? What paper is it?"

"The *Daily Tidings*."

"You affect to know all these fellows of the press. It is your pride to have been their associate and boon companion. I charge you, then, no matter for the means or the cost, get that man discharged; follow him up, too; have an eye upon him wherever he goes, and wherever he obtains employment. He shall learn that a hungry stomach is a sorry recompense for the pleasure of pointing a paragraph. Let me see that you make a note of this, Mr. Hankes, and that you execute it also."

It was something so new for Hankes to see Dunn manifest any, the slightest, emotion on the score of the press, whether its comments took the shape of praise or blame, that he actually stared at him with a sort of incredulous astonishment.

"If I were born a Frenchman, an Italian, or even a German," said Dunn, with a savage energy of voice, "should I be taunted in the midst of my labors that my origin was plebeian? would the society in which I move be reminded that they accept me on sufferance? would the cheer that greeted my success be mingled with the cry, 'Remember whence you came?' I tell you, sir,"—and here he spoke with the thickened utterance of intense passion—"I tell you, sir, that with all the boasted liberty of our institutions, we cultivate a social slavery in these islands, to which the life of a negro is freedom in comparison!"

A sharp tap at the door interrupted him, and he cried "Come in." It was a servant to say dinner was on the table, and his lordship was waiting.

"Please to say I am indisposed—a severe headache. I hope his lordship will excuse my not appearing to-day," said he, with evident confusion; and then, when the servant withdrew, added, "You may go down to the inn. I suppose there is one in the village. I shall want horses to-morrow, and relays ready on the road to Killarney. Give the orders, and if anything else occurs to my recollection, I'll send you word in the evening."

Whether it was that Mr. Hankes had been speculating on the possible chances of dining with "my lord" himself, or that the prospect of the inn at Glengariff was

little to his taste, but he assuredly gathered up his papers in a mood that indicated no peculiar satisfaction, and withdrew without a word.

A second message now came to inquire what Mr. Dunn would like to take for his dinner, and conveying Lord Glengariff's regrets for his indisposition.

"A little soup—some fish, if there be any—nothing else," said Dunn, while he opened his writing-desk and prepared for work. Not noticing the interruption of the servant as he laid the table, he wrote away rapidly; at last he arose, and having eaten a few mouthfuls, reseated himself at his desk. His letter was to the minister, in answer to the offer of that morning's post. There was a degree of dexterity in the way that he conveyed his refusal, accompanying it by certain suggestive hints, vague and shadowy of course, of what the services of such a man as himself might possibly accomplish, so as to indicate how great was the loss to the State by not being fortunate enough to secure such high acquirements. The whole wound up with a half ambiguous regret that, while the ministry should accept newspaper dictation for their appointments, they could not also perceive that popular will should be consulted in the rewards extended to those who deserted their private and personal objects to devote their energies to the cause of the empire.

"Whenever such a government shall arise," wrote he, "the ministry will find few refusals to the offers of employment, and men will alike consult their patriotism and their self-esteem in taking office under the crown; nor will there be found, in the record of replies to a ministerial proffer, one such letter as now bears the signature of your lordship's very devoted, and very obedient servant,

"DAVENPORT DUNN."

This history does not profess to say how Mr. Dunn's apology was received by his noble host. Perhaps, however, we are not unwarranted in supposing that Lord Glengariff's temper was sorely and severely tested; one thing is certain, the dinner passed off with scarcely a word uttered at the table, and a perfect stillness prevailed throughout the cottage.

After some hours of hard labor, Dunn opened his window to enjoy the fresh air of the night, tempered slightly as it was with a gentle sea-breeze. If our western moonlights have not the silver luster of Greece, of which old Homer himself sings, they

have, in compensation, a mellow radiance of wondrous softness and beauty. Objects are less sharply defined and picked out, it is true, but the picture gains in warmth of color, and and those blended effects where light and shadow alternate. The influences of nature—the calm, still moonlight—the measured march of the long, sweeping waves upon the strand—those brilliant stars, “so still above, so restless in the water”—have a marvelous power over the hard-worked men of the world. They are amidst the few appeals to the heart which they can neither spurn nor reject.

Half hidden by the trees, but still visible from where he sat, Dunn could mark the little window of his humble bedroom twenty years ago! Ay! there was the little den to which he crept at night, his heart full of many a sorrow; the “proud man’s contumely” had eaten deep into him, and each day brought some new grievance, some new trial to be endured, while the sight of her he loved—the young and haughty girl—goaded him almost to madness.

One after another came all the little incidents of that long-forgotten time crowding to his memory, and now he bethought him how noiselessly he used to glide down those stairs, and stealing into the wood, meet her in her morning’s walk, and how, as with uncovered head he bowed to her, she would bestow upon him one of her own half-saucy smiles—more mockery than kindness. He called to mind the day, too, he had climbed the mountain to gather a bouquet of the purple heath—she said she liked it—and how, after a great effort of courage, he ventured to offer it to her. She took it half laughingly from his hand, and then turning to her pet goat beside her, gave it him to eat. He could have shot himself that morning, and yet there he was now, to smile over the incident!

As he sat, the sounds of music floated up from the open window of the room beneath. It was the piano, the same he used to hear long ago, when the poet himself of the melodies came down to pass a few days at the Hermitage. A low, soft voice was now singing, and as he bent down he could hear the words of poor Griffin’s beautiful song:

“A place in thy memory, dearest,
Is all that I claim;
To pause and look back as thou hearest
The sound of my name.”

What a strange thrill did the words send through him! They came, as it were, to

fill up the whole story of the past, embodying the unspoken prayer his love-sick heart once was filled with. For that “smile and kind word when we meet,” had he once pined and longed, and where was the spirit now that had once so yearned for love? A cold shudder passed over him, and he felt ill. He sat for a long while so deep in reflection, that he did not notice the music had ceased, and now all was still and silent around. From the balcony outside his window a little winding stair led down to the lawn beneath, and down this he now took his way, resolving to stroll for half an hour or so before bedtime.

Walking carelessly along, he at last found himself on the banks of the river, close to the spot where he had met Miss Kellett that same morning. How glad he would have been to find her there again! That long morning’s ramble had filled him with many a hopeful thought—he knew, with the instinct that in such men as himself rarely deceives—that he had inspired her with a sort of interest in him, and it warmed his self-esteem to think that he could be valued for something besides “success.” The flutter of a white dress crossing the little rustic bridge caught his eye at this moment, and he hurried along the path. He soon gained sufficiently upon the retiring figure to see it was a lady. She was strolling quietly along, stopping at times to catch the effects of the moonlight on the landscape.

Dunn walked so as to make his footsteps heard approaching, and she turned suddenly and exclaimed, “Oh, Mr. Dunn, who would have thought to see you here?”

“A question I might almost have the hardihood to retort, Lady Augusta,” said he, completely taken by surprise.

“As for me,” said she, carelessly, “it is my usual walk every evening. I stroll down to the shore round by that rocky headland, and rarely return before midnight; but *you*,” added she, throwing a livelier interest into her tone, “they said you were poorly, and so overwhelmed with business it was hopeless to expect to see you.”

“Work follows such men as myself like a destiny,” said he, sighing; “and as the gambler goes on to wager stake after stake on fortune, so do we hazard leisure, taste, happiness, all, to gain—I know not what in the end.”

“Your simile points to the losing gamester,” said she, quickly; “but he who has won, and won largely, may surely quit the table when he pleases.”

“It is true,” said he, after a pause—“it

is true, I have had luck with me. The very trees under whose branches we are walking—could they but speak—might bear witness to a time when I strolled here as poor and as hopeless as the meanest outcast that walks the high-road. I had not one living soul to say, ‘Be of good cheer, your time will come yet.’ My case had even more than the ordinary obstacles to success; for fate had placed me where every day, every hour of my life, should show me the disparity between myself and those high-born great to whose station I aspired. If you only knew, Lady Augusta,” added he, in a tone tremulous with emotion, “what store I laid on any passing kindness—the simplest word, the merest look—how even a gesture or a glance lighted hope within my heart, or made it cold and dreary within me, you’d wonder that a creature such as this could nerve itself to the stern work of life.”

“I was but a child at the time you speak of,” said she, looking down bashfully; “but I remember you perfectly.”

“Indeed!” said he, with an accent that implied pleasure.

“So well,” continued she, “that there is not a spot in the wood where we used to take our lesson-books in summer, but lives still associated in my mind with those hours, so happy they were!”

“I always feared that I had left very different memories behind me here,” said he, in a low voice.

“You were unjust, then,” said she, in a tone still lower—“unjust to yourself, and to us.”

They walked on without speaking, a strange mysterious consciousness that each was in the other’s thoughts standing in place of converse between them. At length, stopping suddenly in front of a little rocky cavern, over which aquatic plants were drooped, she said, “Do you remember calling that ‘Calypso’s grotto?’ It bears no other name still.”

“I remember more,” said he; and then stopped in some confusion.

“Some girlish folly of mine, perhaps,” broke she in hurriedly; “but once for all, let me ask forgiveness for many a thoughtless word, many a childish wrong. You, who know all tempers and moods of men as few know them, can well make allowances for natures spoiled as ours were—pampered and flattered by those about us, living in a little world of our own here. And yet, do not think me silly when I own that I would it were all back again. The childhood and the lessons, ay, the dreary Telemachus, that gave me many a head-

ache, and the tiresome hours at the piano, and the rest of it.” She glanced a covert glance at Dunn, and saw that his features were a shade darker and gloomier than before. “Mind,” said she, quickly, “I don’t ask you to *join* in this wish. You have lived to achieve great successes—to be courted, and sought after, and caressed. I don’t expect you to care to live over again hours which perhaps you look back to with a sort of horror.”

“I dare not well tell you how I look back to them,” said he, in a half irresolute manner.

Had there been any to mark it, he would have seen that her cheek flushed and her dark eyes grew darker as he spoke these words. She was far too skillful a tactician to disturb, even by a syllable, the thoughts she knew his words indicated, and again they sauntered along in silence, till they found themselves standing on the shore of the sea.

“How is it that the sea, like the sky, seems ever to inspire the wish that says, ‘What lies beyond that?’” said Dunn, dreamily.

“It comes of that longing, perhaps, for some imaginary existence out of the life of daily care and struggle—”

“I believe so,” said he, interrupting. “One is so apt to forget that another horizon is sure to rise to view—another bourne to be passed!” Then suddenly, as if with a rapid change of thought, he said, “What a charming spot this is to pass one’s days in—so calm, so peaceful, so undisturbed!”

“I love it!” said she, in a low, murmuring voice, as though speaking to herself.

“And I could love it too,” said he, ardently, “if fortune would but leave me to a life of repose and quiet.”

“It is so strange to hear men like yourself—men who in a measure make their own fate—always accuse destiny. Who is there, let me ask,” said she, with a boldness the stronger that she saw an influence followed her words—“who is there who could with more of graceful pride retire from the busy cares of life than he who has worked so long, so successfully, for his fellow-men? Who is there who, having achieved fortune, friends, station—why do you shake your head?” cried she suddenly.

“You estimate my position too flatteringly, Lady Augusta,” said he, slowly, and like one laboring with some painful reflection. “Of fortune, if that mean wealth, I have more than I need. Friends—what the world calls such—I suppose I may

safely say I possess my share of. But as to station, by which I would imply the rank which stamps a certain grade in society, and carries with it a prestige—

"It is your own whenever you care to demand it," broke she in. "It is not when the soldier mounts the breach that his country showers its honors on him—it is when, victory achieved, he comes back great and triumphant. You have but to declare that your labors are completed, your campaign finished, to meet any, the proudest, recognition your services could claim. You know my father," said she, suddenly changing her voice to a tone at once confidential and intimate—"you know how instinctively, as it were, he surrounds himself with all the prejudices of his order. Well, even he, as late as last night, said to me, 'Dunn ought to be one of us, Augusta. We want men of his stamp. The lawyers overbear us just now. It is men of wider sympathies, less technical, less narrowed by a calling, that we need. He ought to be one of us.' Knowing what a great admission that was for one like *him*, I ventured to ask how this was to be accomplished. Ministers are often the last to ratify the judgment the public has pronounced."

"Well, and what said he to that?" asked Dunn, eagerly.

"'Let him only open his mind to *me*, Augusta,' said he. 'If he but have the will, I promise to show him the way.'"

Dunn uttered no reply, but with a bent-down head walked along, deep in thought.

"May I ask you to lend me your arm, Mr. Dunn?" said Lady Augusta, in her gentlest of voices; and Dunn's heart beat with a strange, proud significance as he gave it.

They spoke but little as they returned to the cottage.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"A LETTER TO JACK."

LONG after the other inhabitants of the Hermitage were fast locked in sleep, Sybilla Kellett sat at her writing-desk. It was the time—the only time—she called her own, and she was devoting it to a letter to her brother. Mr. Dunn had told her on that morning that an opportunity offered to send anything she might have for him, and she had arranged a little packet—some few things, mostly worked by her own hands—for the poor soldier in the Crimea.

As one by one she placed the humble

articles in the box, her tears fell upon them—tears half pleasure and half sorrow—for she thought how "poor dear Jack" would feel as each new object came before him, reminding him of some thoughtful care, some anticipation of this or that casualty; and when at last all seemed packed and nothing forgotten, she arose and crossed the room toward a little shelf, from which she took a small volume, and, kissing it twice fervently, laid it in the box. This done, she knelt down, and, with her head between her hands, close pressed and hidden, prayed long and fervently. If her features wore a look of sadness as she arose, it was of sadness not without hope; indeed, her face was like one of those fair Madonnas which Raphael has left us—faces where trustfulness is more eminently the characteristic than any other quality.

Her long letter was nearly completed, and she sat down to add the last lines to it. It had grown into a sort of journal of her daily life, its cares and occupations, and she was half shocked at the length to which it extended. "I am not," wrote she, "so unreasonable as to ask you to write as I have done, but it would be an unspeakable pleasure if you would let me give the public some short extracts from the letters you send me, they are so unlike those our papers teem with. The tone of complaint is, I know, the popular one. Some clever correspondents have struck the key-note with success, and the public only listen with eagerness where the tale is of sufferings which might have been spared, and hardships that need not have been borne. But you, dear Jack, have taken another view of events, and one which, I own, pleases me infinitely more. You say truly, besides, that these narratives, interesting as no doubt they are to all at home here, exercise a baneful influence on the military spirit of our army. Men grow too care too much for newspaper distinction, too little for that noble *esprit de camaraderie* which is the finest enthusiasm of the service. I could not help feeling, as if I heard your voice as I read, 'I wish they wouldn't go on telling us about muddy roads, raw coffee, wet canvas, and short rations; we don't talk of these things so much among ourselves; we came out here to thrash the Russians, and none of us ever dreamed it was to be done without rough usage.' What you add about the evil effects of the soldier appealing to the civilian public for any redress of his grievances, real or imaginary, is perfectly correct. It is a great mistake.

“You must forgive my having shown your last letter to Mr. Davenport Dunn, who cordially joins me in desiring that you will let me send it to the papers. He remarks truly, that the Irish temperament of making the ludicrous repay the disagreeable is wanting in all this controversy, and that the public mind would experience a great relief if one writer would come forth to show that the bivouac fire is not wanting in pleasant stories, nor even the wet night in the trenches without its burst of light-hearted gaiety.

“Mr. Dunn fully approves of your determination not to ‘purchase.’ It would be too hard if you could not obtain your promotion from the ranks after such services as yours; so he says, and so, I suppose, I ought to concur with him; but as this seven hundred pounds lies sleeping at the banker’s while your hard life goes on, I own I half doubt if he be right. I say this to show you, once for all, that I will accept nothing of it. I am provided for amply, and I meet with a kindness and consideration for which I was quite unprepared. Of course, I endeavor to make my services requite this treatment, and do my best to merit the good-will shown me.

“I often wonder, dear Jack, when we are to meet, and where. Two more isolated creatures there can scarcely be on earth than ourselves, and we ought, at least, to cling to each other. Not but I feel that, in thus struggling alone with fortune, we are storing up knowledge of ourselves, and experiences of life that will serve us hereafter. When I read in your letters how by many a little trait of character you can endear yourself to your poor comrades, softening the hardship of their lot by charms and graces acquired in another sphere from theirs, I feel doubly strong in going forth among the poor families of our neighborhood, and doubly hopeful that even I may carry my share of comfort to some poorer and more neglected.

“The last object I have placed in your box, dearest Jack—it will be the first to reach your hands—is my prayer-book. You have often held it with me, long, long ago! Oh, if I dared to wish, it would be for that time again when we were children, with one heart between us. Let us pray, my dear brother, that we may live to meet and be happy as we then were; but if that is not to be—if one be destined to remain alone a wanderer here—pray, my dearest brother, that the lot fall not to me, who am weak-hearted and dependent.

“The day is already beginning to break, and I must close this. My heartfelt prayer

and blessings go with it over the seas. Again and again, God bless you.”

Why was it that still she could not seal that letter, but sat gazing sadly on it, while at times she turned to the open pages of poor Jack’s last epistle to her?

CHAPTER XL.

SCHEMES AND PROJECTS.

THE post-horses ordered for Mr. Dunn’s carriage arrived duly at break of day; but from some change of purpose, of whose motive this voracious history can offer no explanation, that gentleman did not take his departure, but merely dispatched a messenger to desire Mr. Hanks would come over to the Hermitage.

“I shall remain here to-day, Hanks,” said he, carelessly, “and not impossibly to-morrow also. There’s something in the air here suits me, and I have not felt quite well latterly.”

Mr. Hanks bowed, but not even his long-practiced reserve could conceal the surprise he felt at this allusion to health or well-being. Positive illness he could understand—a fever or a broken leg were intelligible ills—but the slighter casualties of passing indispositions were weaknesses that he could not imagine a business mind could descend to: no more than he could fancy a man’s being turned from pursuing his course because some one had accidentally jostled him in the streets.

Dunn was too acute a reader of men’s thoughts not to perceive the impression his words had produced, but, with the indifference he ever bestowed upon inferiors, he went on:

“Forward my letters here till you hear from me—there’s nothing so very pressing at this moment that cannot wait my return to town. Stay—I was to have had a dinner on Saturday; you’ll have to put them off. Clowes will show you the list; and let some of the evening papers mention my being unavoidably detained in the south—say nothing about indisposition.”

“Of course not, sir,” said Hanks, quite shocked at such an indiscretion being deemed possible.

“And why ‘of course,’ Mr. Hanks?” said Dunn, slowly. “I never knew it was among the prerogatives of active minds to be exempt from ailment.”

“A bad thing to speak about, sir—a very bad thing indeed,” said Hanks, solemnly. “You constantly hear people remark, ‘He

was never the same man since that last attack."

"Psha!" said Dunn, contemptuously.

"I assure you, sir, I speak the sense of the community. The old adage says, 'Two removes are as bad as a fire,' and in the same spirit I would say, 'Two gouty seizures are equal to a retirement.'"

"Absurdity!" said Dunn, angrily. "I never have acknowledged—I never will acknowledge—any such accountability to the world."

"They bring us 'to book' whether we will or not," said Hanks, sturdily.

Dunn started at the words, and turned away to hide his face; and well was it he did so, for it was pale as ashes, even to the lips, which were actually livid.

"You may expect me by Sunday morning, Hanks,"—he spoke without turning round—"and let me have the balance-sheet of the Ossory Bank to look over. We must make no more advances to the gentry down there; we must restrict our discounts."

"Impossible, sir, impossible! There must be no discontent—for the present at least," said Hanks, and his voice sunk to a whisper.

Dunn wheeled round till he stood full before him, and thus they remained for several seconds, each staring steadfastly at the other.

"You don't mean to say, Hanks—?" He stopped.

"I do, sir," said the other, slowly, "and I say it advisedly."

"Then there must be some gross mismanagement, sir," said Dunn, haughtily. "This must be looked to! Except that loan of forty-seven thousand pounds to Lord Lackington, secured by mortgage on the estate it went to purchase, with what has this bank supplied us?"

"Remember, sir," whispered Hanks, cautiously glancing around the room as he spoke, "the loan to the viscount was advanced by ourselves at six per cent., and the estate was bought in under your own name; so that, in fact, it is to us the bank have to look as their security."

"And am I not sufficient for such an amount, Mr. Hanks?" said he, sneeringly.

"I trust you are, sir, and for ten times the sum. Time is everything in these affairs. The ship that would float over the bar at high water, would stick fast at half-flood."

"The 'time' I am anxious for is a very different one," said Dunn, reflectively. "It is the time when I shall no longer be ha-

arrassed with these anxieties. Life is not worth the name when it excludes the thought of all enjoyment."

"Business is business, sir," said Mr. Hanks, with all the solemnity with which such men deliver platitudes as wisdom.

"Call it slavery, and you'll be nearer the mark," broke in Dunn. "For what or for whom, let me ask you, do I undergo all this laborious toil? For a world that at the first check or stumble will overwhelm me with slanders. Let me but afford them a pretext, and they will debit me with every disaster their own recklessness has caused, and forget to credit me with all the blessings my wearisome life has conferred upon them."

"The way of the world, sir," sighed Hanks, with the same stereotyped philosophy.

"I know well," continued Dunn, not heeding the other's commonplace, "that there are men who would utilize the station which I have acquired; they'd soon convert into sterling capital the unprofitable gains that I am content with. They'd be cabinet ministers—peers—ambassadors—colonial governors. It's only men like myself work without wages."

"'The laborer is worthy of his hire,' says the old proverb." Mr. Hanks was not aware of the authority, but quoted what he believed a popular saying.

"Others there are," continued Dunn, still deep in his own thoughts, "that would consult their own ease, and, throwing off this drudgery, devote what remained to them of life to the calm enjoyments of a home."

Mr. Hanks was disposed to add, "Home, sweet home," but he coughed down the impulse, and was silent.

Dunn walked the room with his arms crossed on his breast and his head bent down, deep in his own reflections, while his lips moved, as if speaking to himself. Meanwhile, Mr. Hanks busied himself gathering together his papers, preparatory to departure.

"They've taken that fellow Redlines. I suppose you've heard it?" said he, still sorting and arranging the letters.

"No," said Dunn, stopping suddenly in his walk; "where was he apprehended?"

"In Liverpool. He was to have sailed in the *Persia*, and had his place taken as a German watchmaker going to Boston."

"What was it he did? I forget," said Dunn, carelessly.

"He did, as one may say, a little of everything; issued false scrip on the Great Coast Railway, sold and pocketed the price

of some thirty thousand pounds' worth of their plant, mortgaged their securities, and cooked their annual accounts so cleverly, that for four years nobody had the slightest suspicion of any mischief."

"What was it attracted the first attention to these frauds, Hanks?" said Dunn, apparently curious to hear an interesting story.

"The merest accident in the world. He had sent a few lines to the Duke of Wycliffe to inquire the character and capacity of a French cook. Pollard, the duke's man of business, happened to be in the room when the note came, and his grace begged he would answer it for him. Pollard, as you are aware, is chairman of the Coast Line, and when he saw the name 'Lionel Redlines,' he was off in a jiffy to the Board-room with the news."

"One would have thought a little foresight might have saved him from such a stupid mistake as this," said Dunn, gravely. "A mode of living so disproportioned to his well-known means must inevitably have elicited remark."

"At any other moment, so it would," said Hanks; "but we live in a gambling age, and no one can say where, when, and how any one wins a large stake. Look at those fellows in France, for instance. There are men there who, six months ago, couldn't get cash for a bill of a thousand francs who are now owners of millions upon millions. There is no such thing as rich or poor now, for you may be either, or both, within any twenty-four hours."

"They'll transport this man Redlines, I suppose?" said Dunn, after a pause.

"That they will; but my own opinion is, they'd rather he had got clean away; there's always something dark in these affairs. Take my word for it, you'll see that the others—the men on the Board—are not clear of it. Shares were declining in that line—steadily declining—this many a day, in face of an eight per cent. dividend."

"And now he will be transported!" broke in Dunn, from the depth of a reverie.

"Many don't mind it!" said Hanks.

"How do you mean—not mind it?" asked Dunn, angrily. "Is deportation to a penal colony no punishment?"

"I won't go that far," replied Hanks; "but when a man has left things comfortable at home, it's not the bad thing people generally imagine."

"I don't understand you," said Dunn, shortly.

"Well, take Sir John Chesham's case as an instance. He was the founder of that great swindle, the Greenwich Royal Bank.

When they transported him, Lady Chesham went out with the next mail-packet, took a handsome house and furnished it, and then, waiting till Sir John got his ticket-of-leave, she hired him as a footman. And what's more, they that used to quarrel all day long at home here, are now perfect turtle-doves. To be sure, there is something in the fact that she has to send in a quarterly report of his conduct; and it's a fine thing to be able to threaten short rations and wool-carding to a refractory husband."

The jocose tone assumed by Mr. Hanks in this remark met with no response from Davenport Dunn, who only looked graver and more thoughtful.

"How strange!" muttered he to himself. "In morals as in medicine, it is the amount of the dose decides whether the remedy be curative or poisonous." Then, with a quick start round, he said, "Hanks, do you remember that terrible accident which occurred a few years ago in France—at Angers, I think the place was called? A regiment in marching order had to cross a suspension-bridge, and coming on with the measured tramp of the march, the united force was too much for the strength of the structure; the iron beams gave way, and all were precipitated into the stream below. This is an apt illustration of what we call Credit. It will bear, and with success, considerable pressure, if it be irregular, dropping, and incidental. Let the forces, however, be at once simultaneous and united—let the men keep step—and down comes the bridge! Ah, Hanks, am I not right?"

"I believe you are, sir," said Hanks, who was not quite certain that he comprehended the illustration.

"His lordship is waiting breakfast, sir," said a smartly-dressed footman at the door.

"I will be down in a moment. I believe, Hanks, we have not forgotten anything? The Cloyne and Carrick Company had better be wound up; and that waste-land project—let me have the papers to look over. You think we ought to discount those bills of Barrington's?"

"I'm sure of it, sir. The people at the Royal Bank would take them to-morrow."

"The credit of the bank must be upheld, Hanks. The libelous articles of those newspapers are doing us great damage, timid shareholders assail us with letters, and some have actually demanded back their deposits. I have it, Hanks!" cried he, as a sudden thought struck him—"I have it! Take a special train at once for town, and fetch me the balance-

sheet and the list of all convertible securities. You can be back here—let us see—by to-morrow at noon, or, at latest, to-morrow evening. By that time I shall have matured my plan.”

“I should like to hear some hint of what you intend,” said Hanks.

“You shall know all to-morrow,” said he, as he nodded a good-by, and descended to the breakfast-room. He turned short, however, at the foot of the stairs, and returned to his chamber, where Hanks was still packing up his papers. “On second thoughts, Hanks, I believe I had better tell you now,” said he. “Sit down.”

And they both sat down at the table, and never moved from it for an hour. Twice—even thrice—there came messages from below, requesting Mr. Dunn’s presence at the breakfast-table, but a hurried “Yes, immediately,” was the reply, and he came not.

At last they rose; Hanks the first, saying, as he looked at his watch, “I shall just be in time. It is a great idea, sir—a very great idea indeed, and does you infinite credit.”

“It ought to have success, Hanks,” said he, calmly.

“Ought, sir! It *is* success. It is as fine a piece of tactics as I ever heard of. Trust *me* to carry it out, that’s all.”

“Remember, Hanks, time is everything. Good-by!”

CHAPTER XLI.

“A COUNTRY WALK.”

WHAT a charming day was that at the Hermitage! every one pleased, happy, and good-humored! With a frankness that gave universal satisfaction, Mr. Dunn declared he could not tear himself away. Engagements the most pressing, business appointments of the deepest moment, awaited him on every side, but, “No matter what it cost,” said he, “I will have my holiday!” Few flatteries are more successful than those little appeals to the charms and fascinations of a quiet home circle; and when some hard-worked man of the world, some eminent leader at the bar, or some much-sought physician, condescends to tell us that the world of clients must wait while he lingers in our society, the assurance never fails to be pleasing. It is, indeed, complimentary to feel that we are, in all the easy indolence of leisure, enjoying the hours of one whose minutes are valued as guineas; our own

value insensibly rises at the thought, and we associate ourselves in our estimate of the great man. When Mr. Davenport Dunn had made this graceful declaration, he added another, not less gratifying, that he was completely at his lordship’s and Lady Augusta’s orders, as regarded the great project on which they desired to have his opinion.

“The best way is to come down and see the spot yourself, Dunn. We’ll walk over there together, and Augusta will acquaint you with our notions as we go along.”

“I ought to mention,” said Dunn, “that yesterday, by the merest chance, I had the opportunity of looking over a little sketch of your project.”

“Oh, Miss Kellett’s!” broke in Lady Augusta, coloring slightly. “It is very clever, very prettily written, but scarcely practical, scarcely business-like enough for a prosaic person like myself. A question of this kind is a great financial problem, not a philanthropic experiment. Don’t you agree with me?”

“Perfectly,” said he, bowing.

“And its merits are to be tested by figures, and not by Utopian dreams of felicity. Don’t you think so?”

He bowed again, and smiled approvingly.

“I am aware,” said she in a sort of half confusion, “what rashness it would be in me to say this to any one less largely-minded than myself; how I should expose myself to the censure of being narrow-hearted, and worldly, and so forth; but I am not afraid of such judgments from you.”

“Nor have you need to dread them,” said he, in a voice a little above a whisper.

“Young ladies, like Miss Kellett, are often possessed by the ambition—a very laudable sentiment, no doubt—of distinguishing themselves by these opinions. It is, as it were, a ‘trick of the time’ we live in, and, with those who do not move in ‘society,’ has its success too.”

The peculiar intonation of that one word “society” gave the whole point and direction of this speech. There was in it that which seemed to say, “*This* is the real tribunal! Here is the one true court where claims are recognized and shams nonsuited.” Nor was it lost upon Mr. Davenport Dunn. More than once—ay, many a time before—had he been struck by the reference to that Star Chamber of the well-bred world. He had even heard a noble lord on the treasury benches sneer down a sturdy champion of Manchesterism, by suggesting that in a certain circle, where the honorable gentleman never

came, very different opinions prevailed from those announced by him.

While Dunn was yet pondering over this mystic word, Lord Glengariff came to say that, as Miss Kellett required his presence to look over some papers in the library, they might stroll slowly along till he overtook them.

As they sauntered along under the heavy shade of the great beech-trees, the sun streaking at intervals the velvety sward beneath their feet, while the odor of the fresh hay was wafted by on a faint light breeze, Dunn was unconsciously brought back in memory to the "long, long ago," when he walked the self-same spot in a gloom only short of despair. Who could have predicted the day when he should stroll there, with *her* at his side—*her* arm within his own—*her* voice appealing in tones of confidence and friendship? His great ambitions had grown with his successes, and as he rose higher and higher, his aims continued to mount upward, but here was a sentiment that dated from the time of his obscurity, here, a day-dream that had filled his imagination when from imagination alone could be derived the luxury of triumph, and now it was realized and now—

Who is to say what strange wild conflict went on within that heart where worldliness felt its sway for once disputed? Did there yet linger there in the midst of high ambitions some trait of boyish love, or was it that he felt this hour to be the crowning triumph of his long life of toil?

"If I were not half ashamed to disturb your reverie," said Lady Augusta, smiling, "I'd tell you to look at that view yonder. See where the coast stretches along there, broken by cliff and headland, with those rocky islands breaking the calm sea-line, and say if you saw anything finer in your travels abroad?"

"Was I in a reverie? have I been dreaming?" cried he, suddenly, not regarding the scene, but turning his eyes fully upon herself. "And yet you'd forgive me were I to confess to you of what it was I was thinking."

"Then tell it directly, for I own your silence piqued me, and I stopped speaking when I perceived I was not listened to."

"Perhaps I am too confident when I say you would forgive me?"

"You have it in your power to learn, at all events," said she, laughingly.

"But not to recall my words if they should have been uttered rashly," said he, slowly.

"Shall I tell you a great fault you have

--perhaps your greatest?" asked she, quickly.

"Do, I entreat of you."

"And you pledge yourself to take my candor well, and bear me no malice afterward?"

"I promise," said he.

"It is a coldness—a reserve almost amounting to distrust, which seems actually to dominate in your temper. Be frank with me, now, and say fairly, was not this long alley reviving all the thoughts of long ago, and were you not summing up the fifty-one little grudges you had against that poor silly child who used to torment and fret you, and instead of honestly owning all this, you fell back upon that stern dignity of manner I have just complained of? Besides," added she, as though hurried away by some strong impulse, "if it would quiet your spirit to know you were avenged, you may feel satisfied."

"As how?" asked he, eagerly, and not comprehending to what she pointed.

"Simply thus," resumed she. "As I continued to mark and read of your great career in life, the marvelous successes which met you in each new enterprise, how with advancing fortune you ever showed yourself equal to the demand made upon your genius, I thought with shame and humiliation over even my childish follies, how often I must have grieved—have hurt you! Over and over have I said, 'Does he ever remember? Can he forgive me?' And yet there was a sense of exquisite pleasure in the midst of all my sorrow as I thought over all these childish vanities, and said to myself, 'This man, whom all are now flattering and fawning upon, was the same I used to irritate with my caprices, and worry with my whims!'"

"I never dreamed that you remembered me," said he, in a voice tremulous with delight.

"Your career made a romance for me," said she, eagerly. "I could repeat many of those vigorous speeches you made—those spirited addresses. One in particular I remember well, it was when refusing the offer of the Athlone burgesses to represent their town; you alluded so happily to the cares which occupied you—less striking than legislative duties, but not less important—or, as you phrased it, yours was like the part of those 'who sound the depth and buoy the course that thundering three-deckers are to follow.' Do you remember the passage? And again, that proud humility with which, alluding to the wants of the poor, you said, 'I, who have carried my musket in the ranks of the people!'"

Let me tell you, sir," added she, playfully, "these are very haughty avowals after all, and savor just as much of personal pride as the insolent declarations of many a pampered courtier!"

Dunn's face grew crimson, and his chest swelled with an emotion of intense delight.

"Shall I own to you," continued she, still running on with what seemed an irrepressible freedom, "that it appears scarcely real to me to be here talking to you about yourself, and your grand enterprises, and your immense speculations. You have been so long, to my mind, the great genius of wondrous achievements, that I cannot yet comprehend the condescension of your strolling along here as if this world could spare you."

If Dunn did not speak, it was that his heart was too full for words; but he pressed the round arm that leaned upon him closer to his side, and felt a thrill of happiness through him.

"By the way," said she, after a pause, "I have a favor to ask of you: papa would be charmed to have a cast of Marochetti's bust of you, and yet does not like to ask for it. May I venture—"

"Too great an honor to me," muttered Dunn. "Would you—I mean, would he—accept—?"

"Yes, I will, and with gratitude, not but I think the likeness hard and harsh. It is, very probably, what you are to that marvelous world of politicians and financiers you live among, but not such as your friends recognize you—what you are to-day, for instance."

"And what may that be?" asked he, playfully.

"I was going to say an imprudence, and I only caught myself in time."

"Do, then, let me hear it," said he, eagerly, "for I am quite ready to cap it with another."

"Yours be the first then," said she, laughing. "Is it not customary to put the amendment before the original motion?"

Both Mr. Dunn and his fair companion were destined to be rescued from the impending indiscretion by the arrival of Lord Glengariff, who, mounted on his pony, suddenly appeared beside them.

"Well, Dunn," cried he, as he came up, "has she made a convert of you? Are you going to advocate the great project here?"

Dunn looked sideways toward Lady Augusta, who, seeing his difficulty, at once said, "Indeed, papa, we never spoke of the scheme. I doubt if either of us as

much as remembered there was such a thing."

"Well, I'm charmed to find that your society could prove so fascinating, Augusta," said Lord Glengariff, with some slight irritation of manner, "but I must ask of Mr. Dunn to bear with me while I descend to the very commonplace topic which has such interest for me. The very spot we stand on is admirably suited to take a panoramic view of our little bay, the village, and the background. Carry your eyes along toward the rocky promontory on which the stone pines are standing, we begin there."

Now, most worthy reader, although the noble lord pledged himself to be brief, and really meant to keep his word, and although he fancied himself to be graphic—truth is truth—he was lamentably prolix and confused beyond all endurance. As for Dunn, he listened with an exemplary patience; perhaps his thoughts were rambling away elsewhere—perhaps he was compensated for the weariness by the occasional glances which met him from eyes now downcast—now bent softly upon him. Meanwhile, the old lord floundered on, amidst crescents and bathing lodges, yacht stations and fisheries, aiding his memory occasionally with little notes, which, as he contrived to mistake, only served to make the description less intelligible. At length, he had got so far as to conjure up a busy, thriving, well-to-do watering place, sought after by the fashionable world that once had loved Brighton or Dieppe. He had peopled the shore with loungers, and the hotels with visitors; equipages were seen flocking in, and a hissing steamer in the harbor was already sounding the note of departure for Liverpool or Holyhead, when Dunn, suddenly rousing himself from what might have been a reverie, said, "And the money, my lord. The means to do all this?"

"The money—the means—we look to you, Dunn, to answer that question. Our scheme is a great shareholding company of five thousand—no, fifty—nay, I'm wrong. What is it, Augusta?"

"The exact amount scarcely signifies much, my lord. The excellence of the project once proved, money can always be had. What I desired to know was, if you already possessed the confidence of some great capitalist favorable to the undertaking, or is it simply its intrinsic merits which recommend it?"

"Its own merits, of course," broke in Lord Glengariff, hastily. "Are they not sufficient?"





Photo. Electrotypo Co. N.Y.

"SHALL I TELL YOU A GREAT FAULT YOU HAVE, PERHAPS YOUR GREATEST?" ASKED SHE. QUICKLY. (P 511.)

"I am not in a position to affirm or deny that opinion," said Dunn, gravely. "Let me see," added he to himself, while he drew a pencil from his pocket, and on the back of a letter proceeded to scratch certain figures. He continued to calculate thus for some minutes, when at last he said, "If you like to try it, my lord, with an advance of say twenty thousand pounds, there will be no great difficulty in raising the money. Once afloat, you will be in a position to enlist shareholders easily enough." He spoke with all the cool indifference of one discussing the weather.

"I must say, Dunn," cried Lord Glen-gariff, with warmth, "this is a very noble—a very generous offer. I conclude my personal security—"

"We can talk over all this at another time, my lord," broke in Dunn, smiling. "Lady Augusta will leave us if we go into questions of bonds and parchments. My first care will be to send you down Mr. Steadman, a very competent person, who will make the necessary surveys; his report, too, will be important in the share market."

"So that the scheme enlists your co-operation, Dunn—so that we have *you* with us," cried the old lord, rubbing his hands, "I have no fears as to success."

"May we reckon upon so much?" whispered Lady Augusta, while a long, soft, meaning glance stole from her eyes.

Dunn bent his head in assent, while his face grew crimson.

"I say, Augusta," whispered Lord Glen-gariff, "we have made a capital morning's work of it—eh?"

"I hope so, too," said she. And her eyes sparkled with an expression of triumph.

"There is only one condition I would bespeak, my lord. It is this: the money-market at this precise moment is unsettled, over-speculation has already created a sort of panic, so that you will kindly give me a little time—very little will do—to arrange the advance. Three weeks ago we were actually glutted with money, and now there are signs of what is called tightness in discounts."

"Consult your own convenience in every respect," said the old lord, courteously.

"Nothing would surprise me less than a financial crisis over here," said Dunn, solemnly. "Our people have been rash in their investments latterly, and there is always a retribution upon inordinate gain!"

Whether it was the topic itself warmed him, or the gentle pressure of Lady Augusta's arm as in encouragement of his sentiments, but Dunn continued to "im-

prove the occasion" as they strolled along homeward, inveighing in very choice terms against speculative gambling, and deploring the injury done to honest, patient industry by those examples of wealth acquired without toil and accumulated without thrift. He really treated the question well and wisely, and when he passed from the mere financial consideration to the higher one of "morals" and the influence exerted upon national character, he actually grew eloquent.

Let us acknowledge that the noble lord did not participate in all his daughter's admiration of this high-sounding harangue, nor was he without a sort of lurking suspicion that he was listening to a lecture upon his own greed and covetousness; he, however, contrived to throw in at intervals certain little words of concurrence, and in this way occupied they arrived at the Hermitage.

It is not always that the day which dawns happily continues bright and unclouded to its close; yet this was such a one. The dinner passed off most agreeably. The evening in the drawing-room was delightful. Lady Augusta sang prettily enough to please even a more critical ear than Mr. Dunn's, and she had a tact, often wanting in better performers, to select the class of music likely to prove agreeable to her hearers. There is a very considerable number of people who like pictures for the story and music for the sentiment, and for these high art is less required than something which shall appeal to their peculiar taste. But, while we are confessing, let us own, that if Mr. Dunn liked "the melodies," it assuredly added to their charm to hear them sung by a peer's daughter; and as he lay back in his well-cushioned chair, and drank in the sweet sounds, it seemed to him that he was passing a very charming evening.

Like many other vulgar men in similar circumstances, he wondered at the ease and unconstraint he felt in such choice company! He could not help contrasting the tranquil beatitude of his sensations with what he had fancied must be the coldness and reserve of such society. He was, as he muttered to himself, as much at home as in his own house, and truly, as with one hand in his breast, while with the fingers of the other he beat time—and all falsely—he looked the very ideal of his order.

"Confound the fellow!" muttered the old peer, as he glanced at him over his newspaper, "he is insufferably at his ease among us!"

And Sybella Kellett, where was she all this time—or have we forgotten her? Poor Sybella! she had been scarcely noticed at dinner, scarcely spoken to in the drawing-room, and she had slipped unperceived away to her own room.

They never missed her.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE GERM OF A BOLD STROKE.

IF Mr. Davenport Dunn had passed a day of unusual happiness and ease, the night which followed was destined to be one of intense labor and toil. Scarcely had the quiet of repose settled down upon "the Hermitage," than the quick tramp of horses, urged to their sharpest trot, was heard approaching, and soon after Mr. Hanks descended from his traveling-carriage at the door.

Dunn had been standing at his open window gazing into the still obscurity of the night, and wondering at what time he might expect him, when he arrived.

"You have made haste, Hanks," said he, not wasting a word in salutation. "I scarcely looked to see you before day-break."

"Yes, sir; the special train behaved well, and the posters did their part as creditably. I had about four hours altogether in Dublin, but they were quite sufficient for everything."

"For everything?" repeated Dunn.

"Yes; you'll find nothing has been forgotten. Before leaving Cork, I telegraphed to Meekins of the *Post*, and to Browne of the *Banner*, to meet me on my arrival at Henrietta street. Strange enough, they both were anxiously waiting for some instructions on the very question at issue. They came armed with piles of provincial papers, all written in the same threatening style. One in particular, the *Upper Ossory Beacon*, had an article headed, 'Who is our Dionysius?'"

"Never mind that," broke in Dunn, impatiently. "You explained to them the line to be taken?"

"Fully, sir. I told them that they were to answer the attacks weakly, feebly, deprecating in general terms the use of personalities, and throwing out little appeals for forbearance, and so on. On the question of the bank, I said, 'Be somewhat more resolute; hint that certain aspersions might be deemed actionable; that wantonly to assail credit is an offense punish-

able at law; and then dwell upon the benefits already diffused by these establishments, and implore all who have the interest of Ireland at heart not to suffer a spirit of faction to triumph over their patriotism.'"

"Will they understand the part?" asked Dunn, more impatiently than before.

"Thoroughly; Browne, indeed, has a leader already 'set up'—"

"What do I care for all these?" broke in Dunn, peevishly. "Surely no man knows better than yourself that these fellows are only the feathers that show where the wind blows. As to any influence they wield over public opinion, you might as well tell me that the man who sweats a guinea can sway the Stock Exchange."

Hanks shook his head dissentingly, but made no reply.

"You have brought the bank accounts and the balance-sheet?"

"Yes, they are all here."

"Have you made any rough calculation as to the amount—?" He stopped.

"Fifty thousand ought to cover it easily—I mean with what they have themselves in hand. The first day will be a heavy one, but I don't suspect the second will, particularly when it is known that we are discounting freely as ever."

"And now as to the main point?" said Dunn.

"All right, sir. Etheridge's securities gave us seventeen thousand; we have a balance of about eleven on that account of Lord Lackington; I drew out the twelve hundred of Kellett's at once; and several other small sums, which are all ready."

"It is a bold stroke!" muttered Dunn, musingly.

"None but an original mind could have hit upon it, sir. I used to think the late Mr. Robins a very great man, sir—and he was a great man—but this is a cut above him."

"Let us say so when it has succeeded, Hanks," said Dunn, with a half-smile.

As he spoke, he seated himself at the table, and, opening a massive account-book, was soon deep in its details. Hanks took a place beside him, and they both continued to con over the long column of figures together.

"We stand in a safer position than I thought, Hanks," said Dunn, leaning back in his chair.

"Yes, sir; we have been nursing this Ossory Bank for some time. You remember, some time ago, saying to me, 'Hanks, put condition on that horse, we'll have to ride him hard before the season is over?'"

"Well, you have done it cleverly, I must say," resumed Dunn. "The concern is almost solvent."

"Almost, sir," echoed Hankses.

"What a shake it will give them all, Hankses," said Dunn, gleefully, "when it once sets in, as it will and must, powerfully. The Provincial will stand easily enough."

"To be sure, sir."

"And the Royal also; but the 'Tyrawley'—"

"And the 'Four Counties,'" added Hankses. "Driscoll is ready with four thousand of the notes 'to open the ball,' as he says, and when Terry's name gets abroad it will be worse to them than a placard on the walls."

"I shall not be sorry for the 'Four Counties.' It was Mr. Morris, the chairman, had the insolence to allude to me in the House, and ask if it were true that the ministry had recommended Mr. Davenport Dunn as a fit object for the favors of the Crown? That question, sir, placed my claim in abeyance ever since. The minister, pledged solemnly to me, had to rise in his place and say 'No.' Of course he added the stereotyped sarcasm, 'Not that if such a decision had been come to, need the cabinet have shrunk from the responsibility through any fears of the honorable gentleman's indignation.'"

"Well, Mr. Morris will have to pay for his joke now," said Hankses. "I'm told his whole estate is liable to the bank."

"Every shilling of it. Driscoll has got me all the details."

"Lushington will be the great sufferer by the 'Tyrawley,'" continued Hankses.

"Another of them, Hankses—another of them," cried Dunn, rubbing his hands joyfully. "Tom Lushington—the Honorable Tom, as they called him—blackballed me at 'Brookes's.' They told me his very words: 'It's bad enough to be "Dunned," as we are, out of doors, but let us at least be safe from the infliction at our clubs.' A sorry jest, but witty enough for those who heard it."

"I don't think he has sixpence."

"No, sir; nor can he remain a treasury lord with a fiat of bankruptcy against him. So much, then, for Tom Lushington! I tell you, Hankses," said he, spiritedly, "next week will have its catalogue of shipwrecks. There's a storm about to break that none have yet suspected."

"There will be some heavy sufferers," said Hankses, gravely.

"No doubt, no doubt," muttered Dunn.

"I never heard of a battle without killed

and wounded. I tell you, sir, again," said he, raising his voice, "before the week ends the shore will be strewn with fragments; we alone will ride through the gale unharmed. It is not fully a month since I showed the chief secretary here—ay, and his excellency also—the insolent but insidious system of attack the government journals maintain against me, the half-covert insinuations, the impertinent queries, pretended inquiries for mere information's sake. Of course, I got for answer the usual cant about 'freedom of the press,' 'liberty of public discussion,' with the accustomed assurance that the government had not, in reality, any recognized organ; and, to wind up, there was the laughing question, 'And what do you care, after all, for these fellows?' But now I will show what I do care—that I have good and sufficient reason to care—that the calumnies which assail me are directed against my material interests; that it is not Davenport Dunn is 'in-cause,' but all the great enterprises associated with his name; that it is not an individual, but the industry of a nation is at stake; and I will say to them, 'Protect me, or—' You remember the significant legend inscribed on the cannon of the Irish volunteers, 'Independence or—' Take my word for it, I may not speak as loudly as the nine-pounder, but my fire will be to the full as fatal!"

Never before had Hankses seen his chief carried away by any sense of personal injury; he had even remarked, among the traits of his great business capacity, that a calm contempt for mere passing opinion was his characteristic, and he was sorely grieved to find that such equanimity could be disturbed. With his own especial quickness Dunn saw what was passing in his lieutenant's mind, and he added, hastily:

"Not that, of all men, I need care for such assaults; powerful even to tyranny as the press has become among us, there is one thing more powerful still, and that is—prosperity! Ay, sir, there may be cavil and controversy as to your abilities, some may condemn your speech, or carp at your book, they may ery down your statecraft, or deny your diplomacy, but there is a test that all can appreciate, all comprehend, and that is—success. Have only *that*, Hankses, and the world is with you."

"There's no denying that," said Hankses, solemnly.

"It is the gauge of every man," resumed Dunn—"from him that presides over a railway board, to him that sways an empire. And justly so, too," added he, rapidly. "A man must be a consummate

judge of horseflesh that could pick out the winner of the oaks in a stable, but the scrubbiest varlet on the field can see who comes in first on the day of the race! Have you ever been in America, Hanks?" asked he, suddenly.

"Yes; all over the States. I think I know cousin Jonathan as well as I know old John himself."

"You know a very shrewd fellow, then," muttered Dunn; "over-shrewd, mayhap."

"What led you to think of that country now?" asked the other, curiously.

"I scarcely know," said Dunn, carelessly, as he walked the room in thoughtfulness; then added, "If no recognition were to come of these services of mine, I'd just as soon live there as here. I should, at least, be on the level of the best above me. Well," cried he, in a higher tone, "we have some trumps to play out ere it come to that."

Once more they turned to the account-books and the papers before them, for Hanks had many things to explain and various difficulties to unravel. The vast number of those enterprises in which Dunn engaged had eventually blended and mingled all their interests together. Estates and shipping, and banks, mines, railroads, and dock companies, had so often interchanged their securities, each bolstering up the credit of the other in turn, that the whole resembled some immense fortress, where the garrison, too weak for a general defense, was always hastening to some one point or other—the seat of immediate attack. And thus an Irish draining fund was one day called upon to liquidate the demands upon a sub-Alpine railroad, while a Mexican tin mine flew to the rescue of a hosiery scheme in Balbriggan! To have ever a force ready on the point assailed was Dunn's remarkable talent, and he handled his masses like a great master of war.

Partly out of that indolent insolence which power begets, he had latterly been less mindful of the press, less alive to the strictures of journalism, and attacks were made upon him which, directed as they were against his solvency, threatened at any moment to assume a dangerous shape. Roused at last by the peril, he had determined on playing a bold game for fortune, and this it was which now engaged his thoughts, and whose details the dawning day saw him deeply considering. His new great theory was, that a recognized station among the nobles of the land was the one only security against disaster. "Once among them," said he, "they will defend me as one of their order." How to

effect this grand object had been the long study of his life. But it was more—it was also his secret! They who fancied they knew the man, thoroughly understood the habits of his mind, his passions, his prejudices, and his hopes, never as much as suspected what lay at the bottom of them all. He assumed a sort of manner that in a measure disarmed their suspicion—he affected pride in that middle station of life he occupied, and seemed to glory in those glowing eulogies of commercial ability and capacity which it was the good pleasure of leading journalists just then to deliver. On public occasions he made an even ostentatious display of these sentiments, and Davenport Dunn was often quoted as a dangerous man for an hereditary aristocracy to have against them.

Such was he who now pored over complicated details of figures, intricate and tangled schemes of finance; and yet while his mind embraced them, with other thoughts was he picturing to himself a time when, proud among the proudest, he would take his place with the great nobles of the land. It was evident that another had not regarded this ambition as fanciful or extravagant. Lady Augusta—the haughty daughter of one of the haughtiest in the peerage—as much as said, "it was a fair and reasonable object of hope—then none could deny the claims he preferred, nor any affect to undervalue the vast benefits he had conferred on his country." There was something so truly kind, so touching, too, in the generous tone she assumed, that Dunn dwelt upon it again and again. Knowing all the secret instincts of that mysterious brotherhood as she did, Dunn imagined to himself all the advantage her advice and counsels could render him. "She can direct me in many ways, teaching me how to treat these mysterious high priests as I ought. What shall I do to secure her favor? How enlist it in my cause? Could I make her partner in the enterprise?" As the thought flashed across him his cheek burned as if with a flame, and he rose abruptly from the table and walked to the window, fearful lest his agitation might be observed. "That were success, indeed!" muttered he. "What a strong bail-bond would it be when I called two English peers my brothers-in-law, and an earl for my wife's father. This would at once lead me to the very step of the 'order.' How many noble families would it interest in my elevation. The Ardens are the best blood of the South—connected widely with the highest in both countries. Is it possible that this

could succeed?" He thought of the old earl and his intense pride of birth, and his heart misgave him; but then Lady Augusta's gentle tones and gentler looks came to his mind, and he remembered that though a peer's daughter she was peerless, and—we shame to write it—not young. The Lady Augusta Arden marries the millionaire Mr. Dunn, and the world understands the compact. There are many such matches every season.

"What age would you guess me to be, Hanks?" said he, suddenly turning round.

"I should call you—let me see—a matter of forty-five or forty-six, sir."

"Older, Hanks—older," said he, with a smile of half-pleasure.

"You don't look it, sir, I protest you don't. Sitting up all night and working over these accounts, one night, perhaps, call you forty-six; but seeing you as you come down to breakfast after your natural rest, you don't seem forty."

"This same life is too laborious; a man may follow it for the ten or twelve years of his prime, but it becomes downright slavery after that."

"But what is an active mind like yours to do, sir?" asked Hanks.

"Take his ease and rest himself."

"Ease!—rest! All a mistake, sir. Great business men can't exist in that lethargy called leisure."

"You are quite wrong, Hanks; if I were the master of some venerable old demesne, like this, for instance, with its timber of centuries' growth, and its charms of scenery, such as we see around us here, I'd ask no better existence than to pass my days in calm retirement, invite a stray friend or two to come and see me, and with books and other resources hold myself aloof from stocks and statecraft, and not so much as ask how are the funds or who is the minister."

"I'd be sorry to see you come to that, sir, I declare I should," said Hanks, earnestly.

"You may live to see it, notwithstanding," said Dunn, with a placid smile.

"Ah, sir," said Hanks, "it's not the man who has just conceived such a grand idea as this"—and he touched the books before him—"ought to talk of turning hermit."

"We'll see, Hanks—we'll see," said Dunn, calmly. "There come the post-horses—I suppose for you."

"Yes, sir; I ordered them to be here at six. I thought I should have had a couple of hours in bed by that time; but it doesn't signify, I can sleep anywhere."

"Let me see," said Dunn, calculating. "This is Tuesday; now, Friday ought to be the day, the news to reach me on Thursday afternoon: you can send a telegraphic message, and then send on a clerk. Of course, you will know how to make these communications properly. It is better I should remain here in the interval; it looks like security."

"Do you mean to come over yourself, sir?"

"Of course I do. You must meet me there on Friday morning. Let Mrs. Hailes have the house in readiness in case I might invite any one."

"All shall be attended to, sir," said Hanks. "I think I'll dispatch Wilkins to you with the news; he's an awful fellow to exaggerate evil tidings."

"Very well," said Dunn. "Good-night, or, I opine rather, good-morning." And he turned away into his bedroom.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE GARDEN.

FROM the moment that Mr. Davenport Dunn announced he would still continue to enjoy the hospitality of the Hermitage, a feeling of intimacy grew up between himself and his host that almost savored of old friendship. Lord Glengariff already saw in the distance wealth and affluence—he had secured a co-operation that never knew failure—the one man whose energies could always guarantee success.

It was true, Dunn had not directly pledged himself to anything; he had listened, and questioned, and inquired, and reflected, but given nothing like a definite opinion, far less a promise. But, as the old lord said, "these fellows are always cautious, always reserved, and whenever they do not oppose, it may be assumed that they concur. At all events, we must manage with delicacy; there must be no haste, no importunity; the best advocacy we can offer to our plans is to make his visit here as agreeable as possible." Such was the wise counsel he gave his daughter as they strolled through the garden after breakfast, talking over the character and the temperament of their guest.

"By George, Gusty!" cried Lord Glengariff, after a moment's silence, "I cannot yet persuade myself that this is 'Old Davy,' as you and the girls used to call him long ago. Of all the miraculous

transformations I have ever witnessed, none of them approaches this!"

"It is wonderful, indeed!" said she, slowly.

"It is not that he has acquired or increased his stock of knowledge—that would not have puzzled me so much, seeing the life of labor he has led—but I go on asking myself, what has become of his former self, of which not a trace nor vestige remains? where is his shy, hesitating manner, his pedantry, his suspicion? where the intense eagerness to learn what was going on in the house? You remember how his prying disposition used to worry us?"

"I remember," said she, in a low voice.

"There is something, now, in his calm, quiet deportment very like dignity. I protest I should—seeing him for the first time—call him a well-bred man."

"Certainly," said she, in the same tone.

"As little was I prepared for the frank and open manner in which he spoke to me of himself."

"Has he done so?" asked she, with some animation.

"Yes; with much candor, and much good sense, too. He sees the obstacles he has surmounted in life, and he, just as plainly, perceives those that are not to be overcome."

"What may these latter be?" asked she, cautiously.

"It is pretty obvious what they are," said he, half pettishly; "his family—his connections—his station, in fact."

"How did he speak of these—in what terms, I mean?"

"Modestly and fairly. He did not conceal what he owned to feel as certain hardships, but he was just enough to acknowledge that our social system was a sound one, and worked well."

"It was a great admission," said she, with a very faint smile.

"The radical crept out only once," said the old lord, laughing at the recollection.

"It was when I remarked that an ancient nobility, like a diamond, required centuries of crystallization to give it luster and coherence. 'It were well to bear in mind, my lord,' said he, 'that it began by being only charcoal.'"

She gave a low, quiet laugh, but said nothing.

"He has very sound notions in many things—very sound, indeed. I wish, with all my heart, that more of the class he belongs to were animated with *his* sentiments. He is no advocate for pulling down; moderate, reasonable changes—

changes in conformity with the spirit of the age, in fact—these he advocates. As I have already said, Gusty, these men are only dangerous when our own exclusiveness has made them so. Treat them fairly, admit them to your society, listen to their arguments, refute them, show them where they have mistaken us, and they are *not* dangerous."

"I suppose you are right," said she, musingly.

"Another thing astonishes me: he has no pride of purse about him—at least, I cannot detect it. He talks of money reasonably and fairly, acknowledges what it can, and what it cannot do—"

"And what, pray, is that?" broke she in, hastily.

"I don't think there can be much dispute on *that* score!" said he, in a voice of pique. "The sturdiest advocate for the power of wealth never presumed to say it could make a man—one of us!" said he, after a pause that sent the blood to his face.

"But it can, and does every day," said she, resolutely. "Our peerage is invigorated by the wealth as well as by the talent of the class beneath it, and if Mr. Dunn be the millionaire that common report proclaims him, I should like to know why that wealth, and all the influence that it wields, should not be associated with the institutions to which we owe our stability."

"The wealth and the influence if you like, only not himself," said the earl, with a saucy laugh. "My dear Augusta," he added, in a gentler tone, "he is a most excellent, and a very useful man—where he is. The age suits him, and he suits the age. We live in stirring times, when these sharp intellects have an especial value."

"You talk as if these men were *your* tools. Is it not just possible you may be *theirs*?" said she, impatiently.

"What monstrous absurdity is this, child!" replied he, angrily. "It is—it is downright—" he grew purple in the endeavor to find the right word—"downright Chartism!"

"If so, the Chartists have more of my sympathy than I was aware of."

Fortunately for both, the sudden appearance of Dunn himself put an end to a discussion, which each moment threatened to become perilous, and whose unpleasant effects were yet visible on their faces. Lord Glengariff had not sufficiently recovered his composure to do more than salute Mr. Dunn; while Lady Augusta's confu-

sion was even yet more marked. They had not walked many steps in company, when Lord Glengariff was recalled to the cottage by the visit of a neighboring magistrate, and Lady Augusta found herself alone with Mr. Dunn.

"I am afraid, Lady Augusta," said he, timidly, "my coming up was inopportune. I suspect I must have interrupted some confidential conversation."

"No, nothing of the kind," said she, frankly. "My father and I were discussing what we can never agree upon, and what every day seems to widen the breach of opinion between us; and I am well pleased that your arrival should have closed the subject."

"I never meant to play eavesdropper, Lady Augusta," said he, earnestly; "but as I came up the grass alley, I heard my own name mentioned twice. Am I indiscreet in asking to what circumstance I owe the honor of engaging your attention?"

"I don't exactly know how to tell you," said she, blushing. "Not, indeed, but that the subject was one on which your own sentiments would be far more interesting than our speculations; but in repeating what passed between us, I might, perhaps, give an undue weight to opinions which merely came out in the course of conversation. In fact, Mr. Dunn," said she, hastily, "my father and I differ as to what should constitute the aristocracy of this kingdom, and from what sources it should be enlisted."

"And I was used as an illustration?" said Dunn, bowing low, but without the slightest trace of irritation.

"You were," said she, in a low but distinct voice.

"And," continued he, in the same quiet tone, "Lady Augusta Arden condescended to think and to speak more favorably of the class I belong to than the earl her father. Well," cried he, with more energy of manner, "it is gratifying to me that I found the advocacy in the quarter that I wished it. I can well understand the noble lord's prejudices; they are not very unreasonable; the very fact that they have taken centuries to mature, and that centuries have acquiesced in them, would give them no mean value. But I am also proud to think that you, Lady Augusta, can regard with generosity the claims of those beneath you. Remember, too," added he, "what a homage we render to your order when men like myself confess that wealth, power, and influence are all little compared with recognition by *you* and *yours*."

"Perhaps," said she, hesitatingly, "you affix a higher value on these distinctions than they merit."

"If you mean so far as they conduce to human happiness, I agree with you; but I was addressing myself solely to what are called the ambitions of life."

"I have the very greatest curiosity to know what are yours," said she, abruptly.

"Mine! mine!" said Dunn, stammering, and in deep confusion. "I have but one."

"Shall I guess it? Will you tell me if I guess rightly?"

"I will, most faithfully."

"Your desire is, then, to be a cabinet minister; you want to be where the administrative talents you possess will have their fitting influence and exercise."

"No, not that!" sighed he, heavily.

"Mere title could never satisfy an ambition such as yours, of that I am certain," resumed she. "You wouldn't care for such an empty prize."

"And yet there is a title, Lady Augusta," said he, dropping his voice, which now faltered in every word—"there is a title to win which has been the guiding spirit of my whole life. In the days of my poverty and obscurity, as well as in the full noon of my success, it never ceased to be the goal of all my hopes. If I tremble at the presumption of even approaching this confession, I also feel the sort of desperate courage that animates him who has but one throw for fortune. Yes, Lady Augusta, such a moment as this may not again occur. I know you sufficiently well to feel that when one, even humble as I am, dares to avow—"

A quick step in the walk adjoining startled both, and they looked up. It was Sybella Kellett, who came up with a sealed packet in her hand.

"A dispatch, Mr. Dunn," said she; "I have been in search of you all over the garden." He took it with a muttered "Thanks," and placed it unread in his pocket. Miss Kellett quickly saw that her presence was not desired, and with a hurried allusion to engagements, was moving away, when Lady Augusta said,

"Wait for me, Miss Kellett; Mr. Dunn must be given time for his letters, or he will begin to rebel against his captivity." And with this, she moved away.

"Pray don't go, Lady Augusta," said he, "I'm proof against business appeals to-day." But she was already out of hearing.

Among the secrets which Davenport Dunn had never succeeded in unraveling,

the female heart was pre-eminently distinguished. The veriest young lady fresh from her governess or the boarding-school would have proved a greater puzzle to him than the most intricate statement of a finance minister. Whether Lady Augusta had fully comprehended his allusion, or whether, having understood it, she wished to evade the subject, and spare both herself and him the pain of any mortifying rejoinder, were now the difficult questions which he revolved over and over in his mind. In his utter ignorance of the sex, he endeavored to solve the problem by the ordinary guidance of his reason, taking no account of womanly reserve and delicacy, still less of that "finesse" of intelligence which, with all the certainty of an instinct, can divine at once in what channel feelings will run, and how their course can be most safely directed.

"She must have seen to what I pointed," said he, "I spoke out plainly enough—perhaps too plainly. Was that the mistake I made? Was my declaration too abrupt? and if so, was it likely she would not have uttered something like reproof? Her sudden departure might have this signification, as though to say, 'I will spare you any comment—I will seem even not to have apprehended you.' In the rank to which she pertains, I have heard, a chief study is, how much can be avoided of those rough allusions which grate upon inferior existences; how to make life calm and peaceful, divesting it so far as may be of the irritations that spring out of hasty words and heated tempers. In her high-bred nature, therefore, how possible is it that she would reason thus, and say, 'I will not hurt him by a direct refusal; I will not rebuke the presumption of his wishes. He will have tact enough to appreciate my conduct, and return to the topic no more!' And yet, how patiently she had heard me up to the very moment of that unlucky interruption. Without a conscious sense of encouragement I had never dared to speak as I did. Yes, assuredly she led me on to talk of myself and my ambitions as I am not wont to do. She went even further. She overcame objections which to myself had seemed insurmountable. She spoke to me like one taking a deep, sincere interest in my success; and was this feigned? or, if real, what meant it? After all, might not her manner be but another phase of that condescension with which her 'order' listen to the plots and projects of inferior beings—something begotten of curiosity as much as of interest?"

In this fashion did he guess, and speculate, and question on a difficulty where even wiser heads have guessed, and speculated, and questioned just as vaguely.

At last he was reminded of the circumstance which had interrupted their converse—the dispatch. He took it from his pocket and looked at the address and the seal, but never opened it, and with a kind of half-smile replaced it in his pocket.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE TELEGRAPHIC DISPATCH.

WHEN Mr. Davenport Dunn entered the drawing-room before dinner on that day, his heart beat very quickly as he saw Lady Augusta Arden was there alone. In what spirit she remembered the scene of the morning—whether she felt resentment toward him for his presumption, was disposed to scoff down his pretensions, or to regard them, if not with favor, with at least forgiveness, were the themes on which his mind was yet dwelling. The affable smile with which she now met him did more to resolve these doubts than all his casuistry.

"Was it not very thoughtful of me," said she, "to release you this morning, and suffer you to address yourself to the important things which claimed your attention? I really am quite vain of my self-denial."

"And yet, Lady Augusta," said he in a low tone, "I had felt more flattered if you had been less mindful of the exigency, and been more interested in what I then was speaking of."

"What a selfish speech," said she, laughing. "Now that my forbearance has given you all the benefits it could confer, you turn round and say you are not grateful for it. I suppose," added she, half pettishly, "the dispatch was not very pressing after all, and that this was the cause of some disappointment."

"I am unable to say," replied he, calmly.

"What do you mean? Surely, when you read it—"

"But I have not read it—there it is still, just as you saw it," said he, producing the packet with the seal unbroken.

"But really, Mr. Dunn," said she, and her face flushed up as she spoke, "this does not impress me with the wonderful aptitude for affairs men ascribe to you. Is it usual to treat these messages so cavalierly?"

"It never happened with me till this morning, Lady Augusta," said he, in the same low tone. "Carried away by an impulse which I will not try to account for, I had dared to speak to you of myself and of my future in a way that showed how eventful to both might prove the manner in which you heard me."

"Well, Dunn," cried Lord Glengariff, entering, "I suppose you have made a day of work of it; we have never seen you since breakfast."

"On the contrary, my lord," replied he, in deep confusion, "I have taken my idleness in the widest sense. Never wrote a line—not looked into a newspaper."

"Wouldn't even open a telegraphic message which came to his hands this morning," said Lady Augusta, with a malicious drollery in her glance toward him.

"Incredible!" cried my lord.

"Quite true, I assure your lordship," said Dunn, in deeper confusion, and not knowing what turn to give his explanation.

"The fact is," broke in Lady Augusta, hurriedly, "Mr. Dunn was so implicit in his obedience to our prescription of perfect rest and repose, that he made it a point of honor not even to read a telegram without permission."

"I must say it is very flattering to us," said Lord Glengariff; "but now let us reward the loyalty, and let him see what his news is."

Dunn looked at Lady Augusta, who, with the very slightest motion of her head, gave consent, and he broke open the dispatch.

Dunn crushed the paper angrily in his hand when he finished reading it, and muttered some low words of angry meaning.

"Nothing disagreeable, I trust?" asked his lordship.

"Yes, my lord, something even worse than disagreeable," said he; then flattening out the crumpled paper, he held it to him to read.

Lord Glengariff, putting on his spectacles, perused the document slowly, and then, turning toward Dunn, in a voice of deep agitation, said, "This is very disastrous indeed; are you prepared for it?"

Without attending to the question, Dunn took the dispatch from Lord Glengariff, and handed it to Lady Augusta.

"A run for gold!" cried she, suddenly. "An attempt to break the Ossory Bank! What does it all mean? Who are they that make this attack?"

"Opponents—some of them political,

some commercial, a few, perhaps, men personally unfriendly—enemies of what they call my success!" and he sighed heavily on the last word. "Let me see," said he, slowly, after a pause: "to-day is Thursday—to-morrow will be the 28th—heavy payments are required for the Guatemala Trunk Line—something more than forty thousand pounds to be made up. The Parma Loan, second installment, comes on the 30th."

"Dinner, my lord," said a servant, throwing open the door.

"A thousand pardons, Lady Augusta," said Dunn, offering his arm. "I am really shocked at obtruding these annoyances upon your notice. You see, my lord," added he, gayly, "one of the penalties of admitting the 'working men of life' into your society."

It was only as they passed on toward the dinner-room that Lord Glengariff noticed Miss Kellett's absence.

"She has a headache, or a cold, I believe," said Lady Augusta, carelessly; and they sat down to dinner.

So long as the servants were present the conversation ranged over commonplace events and topics, little indeed passing, since each seemed too deeply impressed with grave forebodings for much inclination for mere talking. Once alone—and Lord Glengariff took the earliest moment to be so—they immediately resumed the subject of the ill-omened dispatch.

"You are, at all events, prepared, Dunn?" said the earl; "this onslaught does not take you by surprise?"

"I am ashamed to say it does, my lord," said he, with a painful smile. "I was never less suspicious of any malicious design upon me. I was, for the first time perhaps in all my life, beginning to feel strong in the consciousness that I had faithfully performed my allotted part in the world, advanced the great interests of my country and of humanity generally. This blow has, therefore, shocked me deeply."

"What a base ingratitude!" exclaimed Lady Augusta, indignantly.

"After all," said Dunn, generously, "let us remember that I am not a fair judge in my own cause. Others have taken, it may be, another reading of my character: they may deem me narrow-minded, selfish, and ambitious. My very success—I am not going to deny it has been great—may have provoked its share of enmity. Why, the very vastness and extent of my projects were a sort of standing reproach to petty speculators and small scheme-mongers."

"So that it has really come upon you unawares?" said the earl, reverting to his former remark.

"Completely so, my lord. The tranquil ease and happiness I have enjoyed under this roof—the first real holiday in a long life of toil—are the best evidences I can offer how little I could have anticipated such a stroke."

"Still I fervently hope it will not prove more than inconvenience," said he, feelingly.

"Not even so much, my lord, as regards money. I cannot believe that the movement will be general. There is no panic in the country—rents are paid—prices remunerating—markets better than we have seen them for years; the sound sense and intelligence of the people will soon detect in this attack the prompting of some personal malice. In all likelihood a few thousands will meet the whole demand."

"I am so glad to hear you say so!" said Lady Augusta, smiling. "Really, when I think of all our persuasions to detain you here, I never could acquit us of some sort of share in any disaster your delay might have occasioned."

"Oh, Dunn would never connect his visit here with such consequences, I'm certain," said the earl.

"Assuredly not, my lord," said he; and as his eyes met those of Lady Augusta, he grew red, and felt confused.

"Are your people—your agents and men of business, I mean," said the earl, "equal to such an emergency as the present, or will they have to look to *you* for guidance and direction?"

"Merely to meet the demand for gold is a simple matter, my lord," said Dunn, "and does not require any effort of mind or forethought. To prevent the backwater of this rushing flood submerging and engulfing other banking-houses—to defend, in a word, the lines of our rivals and enemies—to save from the consequences of their recklessness the very men who have assailed us—these are weighty cares!"

"And are you bound in honor to take this trouble in their behalf?"

"No, my lord, not in honor any more than in law, but bound by the debt we owe to that commercial community by whose confidence we have acquired fortune. My position at the head of the great industrial movement in this country imposes upon me the great responsibility that 'no injury should befall the republic.' Against the insane attacks of party hate, factious violence, or commercial knavery, I am ex-

pected to do my duty; nay, more, I am expected to be provided with means to meet whatever emergency may arise—defeat this scheme—expose that—denounce the other. Am I wrong in calling these weighty cares?"

Self-glorification was not usually one of Davenport Dunn's weaknesses—indeed, "self," in any respect, was not a theme on which he was disposed to dwell—and yet now, for reasons which may better be suspected than alleged, he talked in a spirit of even vain exultation of his plans, his station, and his influence. If it was something to display before the peer claims to national respect, which, if not so ancient, were scarcely less imposing than his own, it was more pleasing still to dilate upon a theme to which the peer's daughter listened so eagerly. It was, besides, a grand occasion to exhibit the vast range of resources, the wide-spread influences, and far-reaching sympathies of the great commercial man, to show him, not the mere architect of his own fortune, but the founder of a nation's prosperity. While he thus held forth, and in a strain to which fervor had lent a sort of eloquence, a servant entered with another dispatch.

"Oh! I trust this brings you better news," cried Lady Augusta, eagerly; and as he broke the envelope, he thanked her with a grateful look.

"Well?" interposed she, anxiously, as he gazed at the lines without speaking—"well?"

"Just as I said," muttered Dunn, in a deep and suppressed voice—"a systematic plot—a deep-laid scheme against me."

"Is it still about the bank?" asked the earl, whose interest had been excited by the tenor of the recent conversation.

"Yes, my lord; they insist on making me out a bubble speculator—an adventurer—a Heaven knows what of duplicity and intrigue. I would simply ask them: 'Is the wealth with which this same Davenport Dunn has enriched you, real, solid, and tangible? are the guineas mint-stamped? are the shares true representatives of value?' But why do I talk of these people? If they render me no gratitude, they owe me none—my aims were higher and greater than ever *they* or *their* interests comprehended." From the haughty defiance of his tone, his voice fell suddenly to a low and quick key, as he said: "This message informs me that the demand upon the Ossory to-morrow will be a great concerted movement. Barnard, the man I myself returned last election for the borough, is to head it; he

has canvassed the county for holders of our notes, and such is the panic, that the magistrates have sent for an increased force of police, and two additional companies of infantry. My man of business asks, "What is to be done?"

"And what *is* to be done?" asked the earl.

"Meet it, my lord. Meet the demand as our duty requires us."

There was a calm dignity in the manner Dunn spoke the words that had its full effect upon the earl and his daughter. They saw this "man of the people" display, in a moment of immense peril, an amount of cool courage that no dissimulation could have assumed. As they could, and did indeed say afterward, when relating the incident, "We were sitting at the dessert, chatting away freely about one thing or another, when the confirmed tidings arrived by telegraph that an organized attack was to be made against his credit by a run for gold. You should really have seen him," said Lady Augusta, "to form any idea of the splendid composure he manifested. The only thing like emotion he exhibited was a sort of haughty disdain, a proud pity, for men who should have thus requited the great services he had been rendering to the country."

It is but just to own that he did perform his part well; he acted it, too, as theatrical critics would say, "chastely," that is, there was no rant, no exaggeration, not a trait too much, not a tint too strong.

"I wish I knew of any way to be of service to you in this emergency, Dunn," said the earl, as they returned to the drawing-room; "I'm no capitalist, nor have I a round sum at my command—"

"My dear lord," broke in Dunn, with much feeling, "of money I can command whatever amount I want. Baring, Hope, Rothschild, any of them would assist me with millions, if I needed them, to-morrow, which happily, however, I do not. There is still a want which they cannot supply, but which, I am proud to say, I have no longer to fear. The kind sympathy of your lordship and Lady Augusta has laid me under an obligation—" Here Mr. Dunn's voice faltered; the earl grasped his hand with a generous clasp, and Lady Augusta carried her handkerchief to her eyes as she averted her head.

"What a pack of hypocrites!" cries our reader, in disgust. No, not so. There was a dash of reality through all this deceit. They *were* moved—their own emotions, the tones of their own voices, the workings of their own natures, *had* stirred

some amount of honest sentiment in their hearts; how far it was alloyed by less worthy feeling, to what extent fraud and trickery mingled there, we are not going to tell you—perhaps we could not, if we would.

"You mean to go over to Kilkenny, then, to-morrow, Dunn?" asked his lordship, after a painful pause.

"Yes, my lord, my presence is indispensable."

"Will you allow Lady Augusta and myself to accompany you? I believe and trust that men like myself have not altogether lost the influence they once used to wield in this country, and I am vain enough to imagine I may be useful."

"Oh, my lord, this overwhelms me!" said Dunn, and covered his eyes with his hand.

CHAPTER LXV.

"THE RUN FOR GOLD."

THE great Ossory Bank, with its million sterling of paid-up capital, its royal charter, its titled directory, and its shares at a premium, stood at the top of Patriek street, Kilkenny, and looked, in the splendor of its plate-glass windows and the security of its iron railings, the very type of solvency and safety. The country squire ascended the hall-door steps with a sort of feeling of acquaintanceship, for he had known the viscount who once lived there in days before the Union, and the farmer experienced a sense of trustfulness in depositing his hard-earned gains in what he regarded as a temple of Cræsus. What an air of prosperity and business did the interior present! The massive doors swung noiselessly at the slightest touch, meet emblem of the secrecy that prevailed, and the facility that prevailed all transactions, within. What alacrity, too, in that numerous band of clerks, who counted, and cashed, and checked, unceasingly! How calmly they passed from desk to desk, a word, a mere whisper, serving for converse; and then what a grand and mysterious solemnity about that back office with its double doors, within which some venerable cashier, bald-headed and puffy, stole at intervals to consult the oracle who dwelt within! In the spacious apartment devoted to cash operations, nothing denoted the former destiny of the mansion but a large fireplace, with a pretentious chimney-piece of black oak, over which a bust of our gracious queen now figured, an object of

wonderment and veneration to many a frieze-coated gazer.

On the morning of the 12th of August, to which day we have brought our present history, the street in front of the bank presented a scene of no ordinary interest. From an early hour people continued to pour in, till the entire way was choked up with carriages and conveyances of every description, from the well-equipped barouche of the country gentleman to the humblest "shandradan" of the petty farmer. Sporting-looking fellows upon high-conditioned thorough-breeds, ruddy old squires upon cobs, and hard-featured country folk upon shaggy ponies, were all jammed up together amidst a dense crowd of foot passengers. A strong police force was drawn up in front of the bank, although nothing in the appearance of the assembled mass seemed to denote the necessity for their presence. A low murmur of voices ran through the crowd as each talked to his neighbor, consulting, guessing, and speculating, as temperament inclined; some were showing placards and printed notices they had received through the post—some pointed to newspaper paragraphs—others displayed great rolls of notes—but all talked with a certain air of sadness that appeared to presage coming misfortune. As ten o'clock drew nigh, the hour for opening the bank, the excitement rose to a painful pitch; every eye was directed to the massive door, whose gorgeous brass knocker shone with a sort of insolent brilliancy in the sun. At every moment watches were consulted, and in muttered whispers men broke their fears to those beside them. Some could descry the heads of people moving about in the cash office, where a considerable bustle appeared to prevail, and even this much of life seemed to raise the spirits of the crowd, and the rumor ran quickly on every side that the bank was about to open. At last, the deep bell of the town-hall struck ten. At each fall of the hammer all expected to see the door move, but it never stirred; and now the pent-up feeling of the multitude might be marked in a sort of subdued growl—a low, ill-boding sound, that seemed to come out of the very earth. As if to answer the unspoken anger of the crowd—a challenge accepted ere given—a heavy crash was heard, and the police proceeded to load with ball in the face of the people—a demonstration whose significance there was no mistaking. A cry of angry defiance burst from the assembled mass at the sight, but as suddenly was checked again as the massive door was

seen to move, and then, with a loud bang, fly wide open. The rush was now tremendous. With some vague impression that everything depended upon being among the first, the people poured in with all the force of a mighty torrent. Each fighting his way as if for life itself, regardless of the cries of suffering about him, strove to get forward; nor could all the efforts of the police avail to restrain them in the slightest. Bleeding, wounded, half-suffocated, with bruised faces and clothes torn to tatters, they struggled on—no deference to age, no respect to condition. It was a fearful anarchy, where every thought of the past was lost in the present emergency. On they poured, breathless and bloody, with gleaming eyes and faces of demoniacal meaning; they pushed, they jostled, and they tore, till the first line gained the counter, against which the force behind now threatened to crush them to death.

What a marvelous contrast to the storm-tossed multitude, steaming and disfigured, was the calm attitude of the clerks within the counter! Not deigning, as it seemed, to bestow a glance upon the agitated scene before them, they moved placidly about, pen behind the ear, in voices of ordinary tone asking what each wanted, and counting over the proffered notes with all the impassiveness of every-day habit. "Gold for these, did you say?" they repeated, as though any other demand met the ear! Why, the very air rang with the sound, and the walls gave back the cry. From the wild voice of half-maddened recklessness to the murmur that broke from fainting exhaustion, there was but one word—"Gold!" A drowning crew, as the surging waves swept over them, never screamed for succor with wilder eagerness than did that tangled mass shout, "Gold, gold!"

In their savage energy they could scarcely credit that their demands should be so easily complied with: they were half stupefied at the calm indifference that met their passionate appeal. They counted and recounted the glittering pieces over and over, as though some trick were to be apprehended—some deception to be detected. When drawn or pulled back from the counter by others eager as themselves, they might be seen in corners counting over their money, and reckoning it once more. It was so hard to believe that all their terrors were for nothing—their worst fears without a pretext. Even yet they couldn't imagine but that the supply must soon run short, and they kept asking those

that came away, whether they, too, had got their gold. Hour after hour rolled on, and still the same demand, and still the same unbroken flow of the yellow tide continued. Some very large checks had been presented, but no sooner was their authenticity acknowledged than they were paid. An agent from another bank arrived with a formidable roll of "Ossory" notes, but was soon seen issuing forth with two bursting little bags of sovereigns. Notwithstanding all this, the pressure never ceased for a moment—nay, as the day wore on, the crowds seemed to have grown denser and more importunate, and when the half-exhausted clerks claimed a few minutes' respite for a biscuit and a glass of wine, a cry of impatience burst from the insatiable multitude. It was three o'clock. In another hour the bank would close, as many surmised, never to open again. It was evident, from the still increasing crowd and the excitement that prevailed, how little confidence the ready payments of the bank had diffused. They who came forth loaded with gold were regarded as fortunate, while they who still waited for their turn were in all the feverish torture of uncertainty.

A little after three the crowd was cleft open by the passage of a large traveling barouche, which, with four steaming posters, advanced slowly through the dense mass.

"Who comes here with an earl's coronet?" said a gentleman to his neighbor, as the carriage passed. "Lord Glengariff, and Davenport Dunn himself, by George!" cried he, suddenly.

The words were as quickly caught up by those at either side, and the news, "Davenport Dunn has arrived," ran through the immense multitude. If there was an eager, almost intense, anxiety to catch a glimpse of him, there was still nothing that could indicate in the slightest degree the state of popular feeling toward him. Slightly favorable it might possibly have been, inasmuch as a faint effort at a cheer burst forth at the announcement of his name, but it was repressed just as suddenly, and it was in a silence almost awful that he descended from the carriage at the private door of the bank.

"Do, I beg of you, Mr. Dunn," said Lady Augusta, as he stood to assist her to alight, "let me entreat of you not to think of us. We can be most comfortably accommodated at the hotel."

"By all means, Dunn. I insist upon it," broke in the earl.

"In declining my poor hospitality, my lord," said Dunn, "you will grieve me

much, while you will also favor the impression that I am not in a condition to offer it."

"Ah! quite true—very justly observed. Dunn is perfectly right, Augusta. We ought to stop here." And he descended at once, and gave his hand to his daughter.

Lady Augusta turned about ere she entered the house, and looked at the immense crowd before her. There was something of almost resentfulness in the haughty gaze she bestowed; but, let us own, the look, whatever it implied, well became her proud features, and more than one was heard to say, "What a handsome woman she is!"

This little incident in the day's proceedings gave rise to much conjecture, some auguring that events must be grave and menacing when Dunn's own presence was required, others inferring that he came to give assurance and confidence to the bank. Nor was the appearance of Lord Glengariff less open to its share of surmise, and many were the inquiries how far he was personally interested—whether he was a large stockholder of the concern, or deep in its books as debtor. Leaving the speculative minds who discussed the subject without doors, let us follow Mr. Dunn, as, with Lady Augusta on his arm, he led the way to the drawing-room.

The rooms were handsomely furnished, that to the back opening upon a conservatory filled with rich geraniums, and ornamented with a pretty marble fountain, now in full play. Indeed, so well had Dunn's orders been attended to, that the apartments which he scarcely occupied for above a day or so in a twelvemonth had actually assumed the appearance of being in constant use. Books, prints, and newspapers were scattered about, fresh flowers stood in the vases, and recent periodicals lay on the tables.

"What a charming house!" exclaimed Lady Augusta; and really the approbation was sincere, for the soft-cushioned sofas, the perfumed air, the very quiet itself, were in delightful contrast to the heat and discomfort of a journey by "rail."

It was in vain Dunn entreated his noble guests to accept some luncheon; they peremptorily refused, and, in fact, declared that they would only remain there on the condition that he bestowed no further thought upon them, addressing himself entirely to the weighty cares around him.

"Will you at least tell me at what hour you'd like dinner, my lord? Shall we say six?"

"With all my heart. Only, once more, I beg, never think of us. We are most comfortable here, and want for nothing."

With a deep bow of obedience, Dunn moved toward the door, when suddenly Lady Augusta whispered a few rapid words in her father's ear.

"Stop a moment, Dunn!" cried the earl. "Augusta is quite right. The observation is genuine woman's wit. She says, I ought to go down along with you, to show myself in the bank; that my presence there will have a salutary effect. Eh, what d'ye think?"

"I am deeply indebted to Lady Augusta for the suggestion," said Dunn, coloring highly. "There cannot be a doubt that your lordship's countenance and support at such a moment are priceless."

"I'm glad you think so—glad she thought of it," muttered the earl, as he arranged his white locks before the glass, and made a sort of hasty toilet for his approaching appearance in public.

To judge from the sensation produced by the noble lord's appearance in the bank, Lady Augusta's suggestion was admirable. The arrival of a wagon-load of bullion could scarcely have caused a more favorable impression. If Noah had been an Englishman, the dove would have brought him not an olive-branch but a lord. I say it in no spirit of sarcasm or sneer—for, *cæteris paribus*, lords are better company than commoners; I merely record it passing, as a strong trait of our people and our race. So was it now, that from the landed gentleman to the humblest tenant-farmer, the earl's presence seemed a fresh guaranty of solvency. Many remarked that Dunn looked pale—some thought anxious—but all agreed that the hearty-faced, white-haired old nobleman at his side was a perfect picture of easy self-satisfaction.

They took their seats in the cash-office, within the counter, to be seen by all, and see everything that went forward. If Davenport Dunn regarded the scene with a calm and unmoved indifference, his attention being, in fact, more engrossed by his newspaper than by what went on around, Lord Glengariff's quick eye and ear were engaged incessantly. He scanned the appearance of each new applicant as he came up to the table—he listened to his demand, noted its amount, and watched with piercing glance what effect it might produce on the cashier. Nor was he an unmoved spectator of the scene, for while he simply contented himself with an angry stare at the frieze-coated peasant, he actually scowled an insolent defiance when any of higher rank or more pretentious exterior presented himself, muttering in

broken accents beneath his breath, "Too bad, too bad!" "Gross ingratitude!" "A perfect disgrace!" and so on.

He was at the very climax of his indignation, when a voice from the crowd addressed him with, "How d'ye do, my lord? I was not aware you were in this part of the country."

He put up his double eye-glass, and speedily recognized the Mr. Barnard whom Dunn mentioned as so unworthily requiting all he had done for him.

"No, sir," said the earl, haughtily; "and just as little did I expect to see you here on such an errand as this. In *my* day, country gentlemen were the first to give the example of trust and confidence, and not foremost in propagating unworthy apprehensions."

"I'm not a partner in the bank, my lord, and know nothing of its solvency," said the other, as he handed in two checks over the counter.

"Eight thousand six hundred and forty-eight. Three thousand, twelve, nine, six," said the clerk, mechanically. "How will you have it, sir?"

"Bank of Ireland notes will do."

Dunn lifted his eyes from the paper, and then, raising his hat, saluted Mr. Barnard.

"I trust you left Mrs. Barnard well?" said he, in a calm voice.

"Yes—thank you—well—quite well?" said Barnard, in some confusion.

"Will you remember to tell her that she shall have the acorns of the Italian pines next week. I have heard of their arrival at the custom-house."

While Barnard muttered a very confused expression of thanks, the old earl looked from one to the other of the speakers in a sort of bewilderment. Where was the angry indignation he had looked for from Dunn?—where the haughty denunciation of a black ingratitude.

"Why, Dunn, I say," whispered he, "isn't this Barnard the fellow you spoke of—the man you returned to parliament t'other day?"

"The same, my lord," replied Dunn, in a low cautious voice. "He is here exacting a right—a just right—and no more. It is not now, nor in this place, that I would remind him how ungraciously he has treated me. This day is *his*. *Mine* will come yet."

Before Lord Glengariff could well recover from the astonishment of this cold and calculating patience, Mr. Hanks pushed his way through the crowd, with an open letter in his hand.

It was a telegram just received, with an

account of an attack made by the mob on Mr. Dunn's house in Dublin. Like all such communications, the tidings were vague and unsatisfactory: "A terrific attack by mob on No. 18. Windows smashed, and front door broken, but not forced. Police repulsed; military sent for."

"So much for popular gratitude, my lord," said Dunn, as he handed the slip of paper to the earl. "Fortunately, it was never the prize on which I had set my heart. Mr. Hankes," said he, in a bland, calm voice, "the crowd seems scarcely diminished outside. Will you kindly affix a notice on the door, to state that, to convenience the public, the bank will on this day continue open till five o'clock?"

"By Heaven! they don't deserve such courtesy!" cried the old lord, passionately. "Be as just as you please, but show them no generosity. If it be thus they treat the men who devote their best energies—their very lives—to the country, I, for one, say it is not a land to live in, and I spurn them as countrymen!"

"What would you have, my lord? The best troops have turned and fled under the influence of a panic—the magic words, 'We are mined!' once routed the very column that had stormed a breach! You don't expect to find the undisciplined masses of mankind more calmly courageous than the veterans of a hundred fights."

A wild, hoarse cheer burst forth in the street at this moment, and drowned all other sounds.

"What is it now? Are they going to attack us here?" cried the earl.

The cry again arose, louder and wilder, and the shouts of "Dunn for ever! Dunn for ever!" burst from a thousand voices.

"The placard has given great satisfaction, sir," said Hankes, reappearing. "Confidence is fully restored."

And truly it was strange to see how quickly a popular sentiment spread its influence, for they who now came forward to exchange their notes for gold no longer wore the sturdy air of defiance of the earlier applicants, but approached half reluctantly, and with an evident sense of shame, as though yielding to an ignoble impulse of cowardice and fear. The old earl's haughty stare and insolent gaze were little calculated to rally the diffident; for with his double eye-glass he scanned each new comer with the air of a man saying, "I mark, and I'll not forget you!"

What a contrast was Dunn's expression—that look, so full of gentle pity and forgiveness! Nothing of anger, no resentfulness, disfigured the calm serenity of his

pale features. He had a word of recognition—even a smile and a kind inquiry—for some of those who now bashfully tried to screen themselves from notice. The great rush was already over; a visible change had come over that vast multitude who so lately clamored aloud for gold. The very aspect of that calm, unmoved face was a terrible rebuke to their unworthy terror.

"It's nigh over, sir," whispered Hankes to his chief, as he stood with his massive gold watch in the hollow of his hand. "Seven hundred only have been paid out in the last twelve minutes. The battle is finished!"

The vociferous cheering without continued unceasingly, and yells for Dunn to come forth and show himself filled the air.

"Do you hear them?" asked Lord Glengariff, looking eagerly at Dunn.

"Yes, my lord. It is a very quick reaction. Popular opinion is generally correct in the main; but it is rare to find it reversing its own judgments so suddenly."

"Very dispassionately spoken, sir," said the old lord, haughtily; "but what if you had been unprepared for this onslaught to-day?—what if they had succeeded in compelling you to suspend payments?"

"Had such been possible, my lord, we would have richly deserved any reverse that might have befallen us. What is it, Hankes?" cried he, as that gentleman endeavored to get near him.

"You'll have to show yourself, sir—you must positively address them in a few words from the balcony."

"I do not think so, Hankes. This is a mere momentary burst of popular feeling."

"Not at all, sir. Listen to them now—they are shouting madly for you. To decline the call will be taken as pride. I implore you to come out, if only for a few minutes."

"I suppose he is right, Dunn," said Lord Glengariff, half doggedly. "For my own part, I have not the slightest pretension to say how popular demonstrations—I believe that is the word for them—are to be treated. Street gatherings, in my day, were called mobs, and dispersed by horse police; our newer civilization parleys to them and flatters them. I suppose you understand the requirements of the times we live in."

The clamor outside was now deafening, and by its tone seemed in sort to justify what Hankes had said, that Dunn's indifference to their demands would be construed into direct insult.

"Do it at once!" cried Hankes, eagerly, "or it will be too late. A few words spoken

now will save us thirty thousand pounds to-morrow."

This whisper in Dunn's ear decided the question, and turning to the earl, he said, "I believe, my lord, Mr. Hanks is right—I ought to show myself."

"Come along, then," said the old lord, heartily; and he took his arm with an air that said, "I'll stand by you throughout."

Scarcely had Dunn entered the drawing-room, than Lady Augusta met him, her cheek flushed and her eyes flashing. "I am so glad," cried she, "that you are going to address them. It is a proud moment for you."

When the window opened, and Davenport Dunn appeared on the balcony, the wild roar of the multitude made the air tremble, for the cry was taken up by others in remote streets, and came echoing back again and again. I have heard that consummate orators—men practiced in all the arts of public speaking—have acknowledged that there is no such severe test, in the way of audience, as that mixed assemblage called a mob, wherein every class has its representative, and every gradation its type. Now Dunn was not a great public speaker. The few sentences he was obliged to utter on the occasions of his health being drunk, cost him no uncommon uneasiness; he spoke them usually with faltering accents and much diffidence. It happens, however, that the world is often not displeased at these small signs of confusion—these little defects in oratorical readiness—in men of acknowledged ability, and even prefer them to the rapid flow and voluble ease of more practiced orators. There is, so to say, a mock air of sincerity in the professions of a man whose feelings seem fuller than his words,—something that implies the heart to be in the right place, though the tongue be but a poor exponent of its sentiments; and lastly, the world is always ready to accept the embarrassment of the speaker as an evidence of the grateful emotions that are swaying him. Hence the success of country gentlemen in the House—hence the hearty cheers that follow the rambling discursiveness of bucolic eloquence!

If Mr. Dunn was not an orator, he was a keen and shrewd observer, and one fact he had noticed, which was, that the shouts and cries of popular assemblages are to an indifferent speaker pretty much what an accompaniment is to a bad singer—the aids by which he surmounts difficult passages and conceals his false notes. Mr. Hanks, too, well understood how to lead this or-

chestra, and had already taken his place on the steps of the door beneath.

Dunn stood in front of the balcony, Lord Glengariff at his side and a little behind him. With one hand pressed upon his heart, he bowed deeply to the multitude. "My kind friends," said he, in a low voice, but which was audible to a great distance, "it has been my fortune to have received at different times of my life gratifying assurances of sympathy and respect, but never in the whole course of a very varied career do I remember an occasion so deeply gratifying to my feelings as the present. (Cheers, that lasted ten minutes and more.) It is not," resumed he, with more energy—"it is not at a moment like this, surrounded by brave and warm hearts, when the sentiments of affection that sway *you* are mingled with the emotions of my own breast, that I would take a dark or gloomy view of human nature, but truth compels me to say that the attack made this day upon my credit—for *I* am the Ossory Bank—(loud and wild cheering)—yes, I repeat it, for the stability of this institution *I* am responsible by all I possess in this world. Every share, every guinea, every acre I own are here! Far from me to impute ungenerous or unworthy motives to any quarter; but, my worthy friends, there has been foul play—(groans)—there has been treachery—(deeper groans)—and my name is not Davenport Dunn but it shall be exposed and punished." (Cries of "More power to ye," and hearty cheers, greeted this solemn assurance.)

"I am, as you are well aware, and I glory in declaring it, one of yourselves. (Here the enthusiasm was tremendous.) By moderate abilities, hard work, and unflinching honesty—for that is the great secret—I have become what you see me to-day! (loud cheering.) If there be among you any who aspire to my position, I tell him that nothing is easier than to attain it. I was a poor scholar—you know what a poor scholar is—when the generous nobleman you see now at my side first noticed me. (Three cheers for the lord were proposed and given most heartily.) His generous patronage gave me my first impulse in life. I soon learned how to do the rest." ("That ye did;") "More power and success to ye," here ran through the mob.) "Now, it was at the table of that noble lord—enjoying the first real holiday in thirty years of toil—that I received a telegraphic dispatch, informing me there would be a run for gold upon this bank before the week was over. I vow to you I did not believe it. I spurned the tidings as a base

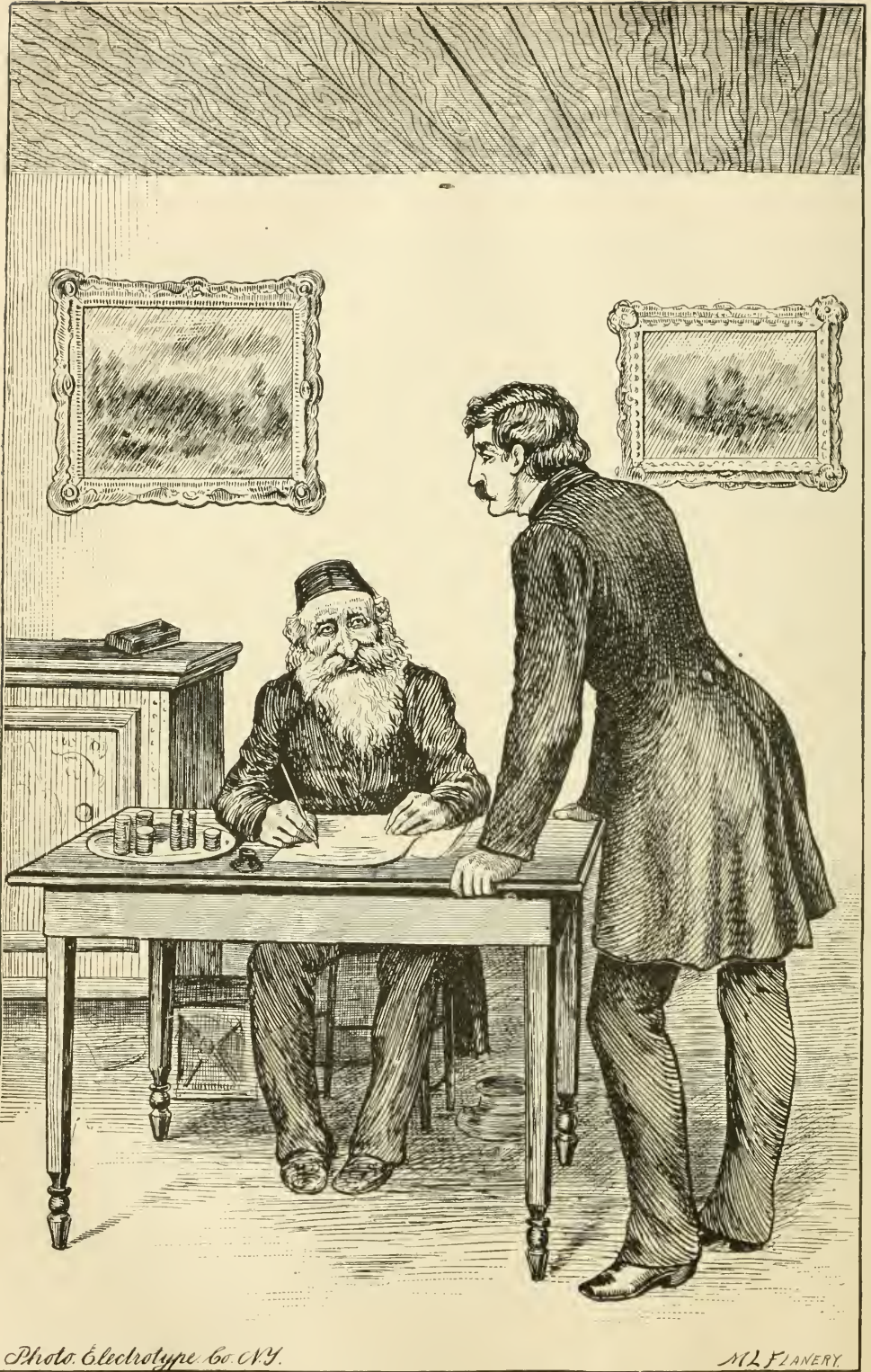


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M. L. FLANERY.

"WELL, A LITTLE OF BOTH, I THINK," SAID BEECHER, HIS EYES GREEDILY DEVOURING THE GLITTERING LITTLE COLUMNS OF GOLD BEFORE HIM. (P. 535.)

calumny upon the people, and as I handed the dispatch to his lordship to read, I said, If this be possible—and I doubt it much—it is the treacherous intrigue of an enemy, not the spontaneous movement of the public.” (Here Lord Glengariff bowed an acquiescence to the statement, a condescension on his part that speedily called for three vociferous cheers for “the lord,” once more.)

“I am no lawyer,” resumed Dunn, with vigor—“I am a plain man of the people, whose head was never made for subtleties; but this I tell you, that if it be competent for me to offer a reward for the discovery of those who have hatched this conspiracy, my first care will be on my return to Dublin to propose ten thousand pounds for such information as may establish their guilt! (Cheering for a long time followed these words.) They knew that they could not break the bank—in their hearts they knew that our solvency was as complete as that of the Bank of England itself—but they thought that by a panic, and by exciting popular feeling against me, I, in my pride of heart and my conscious honesty, might be driven to some indignant reaction; that I might turn round and say, Is this the country I have slaved for? Are these the people for whose cause I have neglected personal advancement, and disregarded the flatteries of the great? Are these the rewards of days of labor and nights of anxiety and fatigue? They fancied, possibly, that, goaded by what I might have construed into black ingratitude, I would say, like Coriolanus, ‘I banish you!’ But they little knew either you or me, my warm-hearted friends! (Deafening cheers.) They little knew that the well-grounded confidence of a nation cannot be obliterated by the excitement of a moment. A panic in the commercial, like a thunder-storm in the physical world, only leaves the atmosphere lighter, and the air fresher than before; and so I say to you, we shall all breathe more freely when we rise to-morrow—no longer to see the dark clouds overhead, nor hear the rumbling sounds that betoken coming storm.

“I have detained you too long. (‘No, no!’ vociferously broke forth.) I have spoken also too much about myself. (‘Not a bit; we could listen to ye till mornin’,’ shouted a wild voice, that drew down hearty laughter.) But before I go, I wish to say, that, hard pressed as we are in the bank—sorely inconvenienced by the demands upon us—I am yet able to ask your excellent mayor to accept of five hundred

pounds from me for the poor of this city—(what a yell followed this announcement! plainly indicating what a personal interest the tidings seemed to create)—and to add—(loud cheers)—and to add—(more cheers)—and to add,” cried he, in his deepest voice, “that the first toast I will drink this day shall be, The Boys of Killenny!”

It is but justice to add, that Mr. Dunn’s speech was of that class of oratory that “hears” better than it reads, while his audience was also less critically disposed than may be our valued reader. At all events, it achieved a great success; and within an hour after its delivery, hawkers cried through the streets of the city, “The Full and True Account of the Run for Gold, with Mr. Dunn’s Speech to the People;” and, sooth to say, that though the paper was not “cream laid,” and though many of the letters were upside down, the literature had its admirers, and was largely read. Later on, the city was illuminated, two immense letters of D. D. figuring in colored lamps in front of the town-hall, while copious libations of whisky-punch were poured forth in honor of the Man of the People. In every rank and class, from the country gentleman who dined at the club-house, to the smallest chop-house in John street, there was but one sentiment—that Dunn was a fine fellow, and his enemies downright scoundrels. If a few of nicer taste and more correct feeling were not exactly pleased with his speech, they wisely kept their opinions to themselves, and let “the eyes have it,” who pronounced it to be manly—aboveboard—modest, and so forth.

Throughout the entire evening, Mr. Hanks was everywhere, personally or through his agents; his care was to collect public sentiment, to ascertain what popular opinion thought of the whole events of the morning, and to promote, so far as he could with safety, the flattering estimate already formed of his chief. Scarcely half an hour elapsed without Dunn’s receiving from his indefatigable lieutenant some small scrap of paper, with a few words hastily scrawled, in this fashion:

“Rice and Walsh’s, nine o’clock.—Company in the coffee-room enthusiastic; talk of a public dinner; some propose portrait in town-hall.”

“A quarter to ten, Judy’s, Rose Inn street.—Comic song, with a chorus:

“‘If for gold ye run,
Says the Shan van Voght;
If for gold ye run,

I'll send for Davy Dunn,
He's the boy to show ye fun,
Says the Shan van Voght !”

“Eleven o'clock. High street.—Met the Dean, who says, ‘D. D. is an honor to us; we're all proud of him.’ The county your own when you want it.”

“Twelve o'clock.—If any one should venture to ask for gold to-morrow, he will be torn to pieces by the mob.”

Assuredly it was a triumph; and every time that the wild cheers from the crowds in the street broke in upon the converse in the drawing-room, Lady Augusta's eyes would sparkle as she said, “I don't wonder at your feeling proud of it all!”

And he *did* feel proud of it. Strange as it may seem, he was as proud as though the popularity had been earned by the noblest actions and the most generous devotion. We are not going to say why or wherefore this. And now for a season we take our leave of him to follow the fortunes of some others whose fate we seem to have forgotten. We have the less scruple for deserting Davenport Dunn at this moment, that we leave him happy, prospering, and in good company.

CHAPTER LXVI.

A NOTE FROM DAVIS.

AM I asking too much of my esteemed reader, if I beg of him to remember where and how I last left the Honorable Annesley Beecher? for it is to that hopeful individual and his fortunes I am now about to return.

If it be wearisome to the reader to have his attention suddenly drawn from the topic before him, and his interest solicited for those he has well-nigh forgotten, let me add that it is almost as bad for the writer, who is obliged to hasten hither and thither, and, like a huntsman with a straggling pack, to urge on the tardy, correct the loiterer, and repress the eager.

When we parted with Annesley Beecher, he was in sore trouble and anxiety of mind; a conviction was on him that he was “squared,” “nobbled,” “crossed,” “potted,” or something to the like intent and with a like euphonious designation. “The count and Spicer were conspiring to put him in a hole!” As if any “hole” could be as dark, as hopeless, and as deep as the dreary pitfall of his own helpless nature!

His only resource seemed flight: to break cover at once and run for it, ap-

peared the solitary solution of the difficulty. There was many a spot in the map of Europe which offered a sanctuary against Grog Davis. But what if Grog were to set the law in motion, where should he seek refuge then? Some one had once mentioned to him a country with which no treaty connected us with regard to criminals. It began, if he remembered aright, with an S; was it Sardinia, or Sweden, or Spain, or Sicily, or Switzerland? It was surely one of them, but which? “What a mass of rubbish, to be sure,” thought he, “they crammed me with at Rugby, but not one solitary particle of what one could call useful learning. See now, for instance, what benefit a bit of geography might be to me!” And he rambled on in his mind, concocting an educational scheme which would really fit a man for the wear and tear of life.

It was thus reflecting he entered the inn and mounted to his room; his clothes lay scattered about, drawers were crammed with his wearables, and the table covered with a toilet equipage, costly, and not yet paid for. Who was to pack all these? Who was to make up that one portmanteau which would suffice for flight, including all the indispensable, and rejecting the superfluous. There is a case recorded of a Frenchman who was diverted from his resolve on suicide by discovering that his pistols were not loaded, and, incredible as it may seem, Beecher was deterred from his journey by the thought of how he was to pack his trunk. He had never done so much for himself since he was born, and he didn't think he could do it; at all events, he wasn't going to try. Certain superstitious people are impressed with the notion that making a will is a sure prelude to dying; so others there are who fancy that, by the least effort on their own behalf, they are forecasting a state of poverty in which they must actually work for subsistence.

How hopelessly, then, did he turn over costly waistcoats and embroidered shirts, gaze on richly-cut and crested essence-bottles and boot-boxes, whose complexity resembled mathematical instruments. In what manner they were ever conveyed so far he could not imagine. The room seemed actually filled with them. It was Rivers had “put them up,” but Rivers could no longer be trusted, for he was evidently in the “lay” against him.

He sighed heavily at this: it was a dreary, hopeless sigh over the depravity of the world and mankind in general. “And what a paradise it might be,” he thought,

“if people would only let themselves be cheated quietly and peaceably, neither threatening with their solicitors, nor menacing with the police. Heaven knew how little he asked for; a safe thing now and then on the Derby—a good book on the Oaks; he wanted no more! He bore no malice nor ill-will to any man breathing; he never wished to push any fellow to the wall. If ever there was a generous heart it beat in *his* bosom, and if the world only knew the provocation he had received! No matter, he would never retaliate—he’d die game—be a brick to the last,” and twenty other fine things of the same sort that actually brought the tears to his own eyes over his own goodness.

Goodness, however, will not pack a trunk, nor will moral qualities, however transcendent, fold cravats and dress-coats, and he looked very despondently around him, and thought over what he half-fancied was the only thing he couldn’t do. So accustomed had he been of late to seek Lizzy Davis’s counsel in every moment of difficulty, that actually, without knowing it, he descended now to the drawing room, some vague, undefined feeling impelling him to be near her.

She was singing at the piano, all alone, as he entered; the room, as usual, brilliantly lighted up as if to receive company, rare flowers and rich plants grouped tastefully about, and “Daisy”—for she looked that name on this occasion—in one of those charming “toilets” whose consummate skill it is to make the most costly articles harmonize into something that seems simplicity itself. She wore a fuchsia in her hair, and another—only this last was of coral and gold elaborately and beautifully designed—on the front of her dress, and except these, nothing more of ornament.

“Tutore mio,” said she, gayly, as he entered, “you have treated me shamefully; for first of all, you were engaged to drive with me to the Krentz Berg, and secondly, to take me to the opera, and now, at half-past nine, you make your appearance. How is this, monsieur? Expliquez vous.”

“Shall I tell the truth?” said he.

“By all means, if anything so strange shouldn’t embarrass you.”

“Well, then, I forgot all about both the drive and the opera. It’s all very well to laugh,” said he, in a tone of half pique; “young ladies, with no weightier cares on their hearts than whether they ought to wear lilac or green, have very little notion of a man’s anxieties. They fancy that life is a thing of white and red roses, soft music and bouquets—but it ain’t.”

“Indeed! are you quite sure?” asked she, with an air of extreme innocence.

“I suspect I am,” said he, confidently; “and there’s not many a man about town knows more of it than I do.”

“And now, what may be the cares, or rather, for I don’t want to be curious, what sort of cares are they that oppress that dear brain? Have you got any wonderful scheme for the amelioration of mankind to which you see obstacles? Are your views in politics obstructed by ignorance or prejudice? Have you grand notions about art for which the age is not ripe? or are you actually the author of a wonderful poem that nobody has had taste enough to appreciate?”

“And these are your ideas of mighty anxieties, Miss Lizzy?” said he, in a tone of compassionate pity. “By Jove! how I’d like to have nothing heavier on my heart than the whole load of them.”

“I think you have already told me you never were crossed in love?”

“Well, nothing serious, you know. A scratch or so, as one may say, getting through the bushes, but never a cropper—nothing like a regular smash.”

“It would seem to me, then, that you have enjoyed a singularly fortunate existence, and been just as lucky in life as myself.”

Beecher started at the words. What a strange chaos did they create within him! There is no tracing the thoughts that came and went, and lost themselves in that poor bewildered head. The nearest to anything like consistency was the astonishment he felt that she—Grog Davis’s daughter—should ever imagine she had drawn a prize in the world’s lottery.

“Yes, Mr. Beecher,” said she, with the ready tact with which she often read his thoughts and answered them, “even so. I do think myself very, very fortunate! And why should I not? I have excellent health, capital spirits, fair abilities, and, bating an occasional outbreak of anger, a reasonably good temper. As regards personal traits, Mr. Annesley Beecher once called me beautiful—Count Lienstahl would say something twice as rapturous—at all events, quite good-looking enough not to raise antipathies against me at first sight; and lastly, but worth all the rest, I have an intense enjoyment in mere existence; the words ‘I live,’ are to *me*, ‘I am happy.’ The alternations of life, its little incidents and adventures, its passing difficulties, are, like the changeful aspects of the seasons, full of interest, full of suggestiveness, calling out qualities of mind and resources of

temperament that in the cloudless skies of unbroken prosperity might have lain unused and unknown. And now, sir, no more sneers at my fancied good fortune; for, whatever *you* may say, I feel it to be real."

There was that in her manner—a blended energy and grace—which went far deeper into Beecher's heart than her mere words, and he gazed at her slightly flushed cheek and flashing eyes with something very nearly rapture, and he muttered to himself, "There she is, a half-bred 'un, and no training, and able to beat them all!"

This time, at all events, she did not read his thoughts; as little, perhaps, did she care to speculate about them, "By-the-by," said she, suddenly approaching the chimney and taking up a letter, "this has arrived here, by private hand, since you went out, and it has a half-look of papa's writing, and is addressed to you."

Beecher took it eagerly. With a glance he recognized it as from Grog, when that gentleman desired to disguise his hand.

"Am I correct?" asked she—"am I correct in my guess?"

He was too deep in the letter to make her any reply. Its contents were as follows:

"DEAR B.—They've kicked up such a row about that affair at Brussels, that I have been obliged to lie dark for the last fortnight, and in a confoundedly stupid hole on the right bank of the Rhine. I sent over Spicer to meet the baron, and take Klepper over to Nimmequen and Magdeburg, and some other small places in Prussia. They can pick up in this way a few thousand florins, and keep the mill going. I gave him strict orders not to see my daughter, who must know nothing whatever of these or any like doings. The baron she might see, for he knows life thoroughly, and if he is not a man of high honor, he can assume the part so well that it comes pretty much to the same thing. As to yourself, you will, on receipt of this, call on a certain Lazarus Stein, Juden Gasse, No. 41 or 42, and give him your acceptance for two thousand galden, with which settle your hotel bill, and come on to Bonn, where, at the post-office, you will find a note, with my address. Tramp, you see, has won the Cotteswold, as I prophesied, and 'Leo the Tenth' nowhere. Cranberry must have got his soup pretty hot, for he has come abroad, and his wife and the children gone down to Scotland. As to your own affairs, Ford says you are bet-

ter out of the way; and if anything is to be done in the way of compromise, it must be while you are abroad. He does not think Strich can get the rule, and you mustn't distress yourself for an extra out-lawry or two. There will be some trouble about the jewels, but I think even that matter may be arranged also. I hope you keep from the tables, and I look for a strict reckoning as to your expenses, and a stricter book up as regards your care of my daughter. 'All square' is the word between pal and pal, and there never was born the man didn't find that to be his best policy when he dealt with

"Your friend,

"CHRISTOPHER DAVIS.

"To while away the time in this dreary dog-hole, I have been sketching out a little plan of a martingale for the roulette-table. There's only one zero at Homburg, and we can try it there as we go up. There's a flaw in it after the twelfth 'pass,' but I don't despair of getting over the difficulty. Old Stein, the money-changer, was upward of thirty years croupier at the Cursaal, and get him to tell you the average runs, black and red, at rouge-et-noir, and what are the signs of an intermitting game; and also the six longest runs he has ever known. He is a shrewd fellow, and seeing that you come from me will be confidential.

"There has been another fight in the Crimea, and somebody well licked. I had nothing on the match, and don't care a brass farthing who claimed the stakes.

"Tell Lizzy that I'm longing to see her, and if I didn't write it is because I'm keeping everything to tell her when we meet. If it wasn't for her picture, I don't know what would have become of me since last Tuesday, when the rain set in."

Beecher re-read the letter from the beginning, nor was it an easy matter for him to master at once all the topics it included. Of himself and his own affairs the information was vague and unsatisfactory; but Grog knew how to keep him always in suspense—to make him ever feel that he was swimming for his life, and he himself the only "spar" he could catch at.

"Bring me to book about my care of his daughter!" muttered he, over and over, "just as if she wasn't the girl to take care of herself. Egad! he seems to know precious little about her. I'd give a 'Nap' to show her this letter, and just hear what she'd say of it all. I suppose she'd split on me. She'd go and tell Davis, 'Beecher has put me up to the whole

“rig ;” and if she did—What would happen then ?” asked he, replying to the low, plaintive whistle which concluded his meditation. “Eh—what ! did I say anything ?” cried he, in terror.

“Not a syllable. But I could see that you had conjured up some difficulty which you were utterly unable to deal with.”

“Well, here it is,” said he, boldly. “This letter is from your father. It’s all full of private details, of which you know nothing, nor would you care to hear ; but there is one passage—just one—that I’d greatly like to have your opinion upon. At the same time, I tell you frankly, I have no warranty from your father to let you see it—nay, the odds are, he’d pull me up pretty sharp for doing so without his authority.”

“That’s quite enough, Mr. Beecher, about *your* scruples. Now *mine* go a little further still, for they would make me refuse to learn anything which my father’s reserve had kept from me. It is a very easy rule of conscience, and neither hard to remember nor to follow.”

“At all events, he meant this for your own eye,” said Beecher, showing her the last few lines of the letter.

She read them calmly over, a slight trembling of the lip—so slight that it seemed rather like a play of light over her face—was the only sign of emotion visible, and then, carefully folding the letter, she gave it back, saying, “Yes, I had a right to see these lines.”

“He is fond of you, and proud of you, too,” said Beecher. A very slight nod of her head gave an assent to his remark, and she was silent. “We are to leave this at once,” continued he, “and move on to Bonn, where we shall find a letter with your father’s address, somewhere, I take it, in that neighborhood.” He waited, hoping she would say something, but she did not speak. And then he went on : “And then you will be once more at home—emancipated from this tiresome guardianship of mine.”

“Why tiresome ?” asked she, suddenly.

“Oh, by Jove ! I know I’m a very slow sort of fellow as a ladies’ man—have none of the small talents of those foreigners—couldn’t tell Mozart from Verdi—nor, though I can see when a woman is well togged, could I tell you the exact name of any one part of her dress.”

“If you really did know all these, and talked of them, I might have found you very tiresome,” said she, in that half-careless voice she used when seeming to think aloud. “And you,” asked she, suddenly,

as she turned her eyes fully upon him—“and you, are you to be emancipated then ?—are you going to leave us ?”

“As to that,” replied he, in deep embarrassment, “there’s a sort of hitch in it. I ought, if I did the right thing, to be on my way to Italy now, to see Lackington—my brother, I mean. I came abroad for that ; but Gr—your father, I should say—induced me to join *him*, and so, with one thing and the other, here I am, and that’s really all I know about it.”

“What a droll way to go through life !” said she, with one of her low, soft laughs.

“If you mean that I haven’t a will of my own, you’re all wrong,” said he, in some irritation. “Put me straight at my fence, and see if I won’t take it. Just say, ‘A. B., there’s the winning-post,’ and mark whether I won’t get my speed up.”

What a strange glance was that which answered this speech ! It implied no assent ; as little did it mean the reverse. It was rather the look of one who, out of a maze of tangled fancies, suddenly felt recalled to life and its real interests. To poor Beecher’s apprehension it simply seemed a sort of half-compassionate pity, and it made his cheek tingle with wounded pride.

“I know,” muttered he to himself, “that she thinks me a confounded fool ; but I ain’t. Many a fellow in the ring made that mistake, and burned his fingers for it after.”

“Well,” said she, after a moment or so of thought, “I am ready—at least, I shall be ready very soon. I’ll tell Annette to pack up, and prepare for the road.”

“I wish I could get you to have some better opinion of me, Miss Lizzy,” said he, seriously. “I’d give more than I’d like to say, that you’d—you’d—”

“That I’d what ?” asked she, calmly.

“That you’d not set me down as a regular flat,” said he, with energy.

“I’m not very certain that I know what that means ; but I will tell you that I think you very good-tempered, very gentle-natured, and very tolerant of fifty-and-one caprices, which must be all the more wearisome because unintelligible. And then you are a very fine gentleman, and—the Honorable Annesley Beecher.” And holding out her dress in minuet fashion, she courtesied deeply, and left the room.

“I wish any one would tell me whether I stand to win or not by that book,” exclaimed Beecher, as he stood there alone, utterly nonplused and confounded. “Wouldn’t she make a stunning actress ! By Jove ! Webster would give her a hun-

dred a week, and a free benefit!" And with this he went off into a little mental arithmetic, at the end of which he muttered to himself, "And that does not include starring it in the provinces!"

With the air of a man whose worldly affairs went well, he arranged his hair before the glass, put on his hat, gave himself a familiar nod, and went out.

CHAPTER LXVII.

LAZARUS STEIN, GELDWECHSLER.

THE *Juden Gasse*, in which Beecher was to find out the residence of Lazarus Stein, was a long, straggling street, beginning in the town and ending in a suburb, where it seemed as it were to lose itself. It was not till after a long and patient search that Beecher discovered a small door in an old ivy-covered wall, on which, in irregular letters, faint, and almost illegible, stood the words, "Stein, Geldwechsler." As he rang stoutly at the bell, the door opened, apparently of itself, and admitted him into a large and handsome garden. The walks were flanked by fruit-trees in espalier, with broad borders of rich flowers at either side, and although the center spaces were given up to the uses of a kitchen-garden, the larger beds, rich in all the colors of the tulip and ranunculus, showed how predominant was the taste for flowers over mere utility. Up one alley, and down another, did Beecher saunter without meeting any one, or seeing what might mean a habitation, when at length, in a little copse of palm-trees, he caught sight of a small diamond-paned window, approaching which, he found himself in front of a cottage whose diminutive size he had never seen equaled, save on the stage. Indeed, in its wooden framework, gaudily painted, its quaint carvings, and its bamboo roof, it was the very type of what one sees in a comic opera. One sash of the little window lay open and showed Beecher the figure of a very small old man, who, in a long dressing-gown of red-brown stuff, and a fez cap, was seated at a table, writing. A wooden tray in front of him was filled with dollars and gold pieces in long stately columns, and a heap of bank-notes lay pressed under a heavy leaden slab at his side. No sooner had Beecher's figure darkened the window than the old man looked up and came out to meet him, and taking off his cap with a deep reverence, invited him to

enter. If the size of the chamber, and its curious walls covered over with cabinet pictures, might have attracted Beecher's attention at another moment, all his wonderment, now, was for the little man himself, whose piercing black eyes, long beard, and hooked nose, gave him an air of almost unearthly meaning.

"I suppose I have the honor to speak to Mr. Stein?" said he, in English, "and that he can understand me in my own tongue?"

"Yaas—go on," said the old man.

"I was told to call upon you by Captain Davis; he gave me your address."

"Ach, der Davis—der Davis—a vaary goot man—my vaary dear friend. You are der rich Englander that do travel wif him—ch?"

"I am traveling with him just now," said Beecher, laughing slightly; "but as to being rich—why, we'll not dispute about it."

"Yaas, here is his letter. He says, Milord will call on you hisself, and so I hold myself—how you say 'bereit?'—ready—hold myself ready to see you. I have de honor to make you very mush welcome to my poor house."

Beecher thanked him courteously, and producing Davis's letter, mentioned the amount for which he desired to draw.

The old man examined the writing, the signature, and then the seal, handing the document back when he had finished, muttering to himself, "Ach, der Davis—der Davis!"

"You know my friend very intimately, I believe?" asked Beecher.

"I believe I do—I believe I do," said he with a low chuckle to himself.

"So he mentioned to me, and added one or two little matters on which I was to ask you for some information. But first this bill—you can let me have these two thousand florins?"

"And what do he do now, der Davis?" asked the Jew, not heeding the question.

"Well, I suppose he rubs on pretty much the same as ever," said Beecher, in some confusion.

"Yaas—yaas—he rub on—and he rub off, too, sometimes—ha! ha! ha!" laughed out the old man, with a fiendish cackle. "Ach, der Davis!"

Without knowing in what sense to take the words, Beecher did not exactly like them, and as little was he pleased with that singular recurrence to "der Davis," and the little sigh that followed. He was growing impatient, besides, to get his money, and again reverted to the question.

"He look well? I hope he have de goot gesundheit—what you call it?"

"To be sure he does—nothing ever ails him. I never heard him complain of as much as a headache."

"Ach, der Davis, der Davis!" said the old man, shaking his head.

Seeing no chance of success by his direct advances, Beecher thought he'd try a little flank attack by inducing a short conversation, and so he said: "I am on my way to Davis now, with his daughter, whom he left in my charge."

"Whose daughter?" asked the Jew.

"Davis's—a young lady that was educated at Brussels."

"He have no daughter. Der Davis have no daughter."

"Hasn't he, though? just come over to the Four Nations, and I'll show her to you. And such a stunning girl, too!"

"No, no, I never believe it—never; he did never speak to me of a daughter."

"Whether he did or not—there she is, that's all I know."

The Jew shook his head, and sought refuge in his former muttering of "Ach, der Davis!"

"As far as not telling you about his daughter, I can say he never told me, and I fancy we were about as intimate as most people; but the fact is as I tell you."

Another sigh was all his answer, and Beecher was fast reaching the limit of his patience.

"Daughter, or no daughter, I want a matter of a couple of thousand florins—no objection to a trifle more, of course—and wish to know how you can let me have them?"

"The Margraf was here two weeks ago, and he say to me, 'Lazarus,' say he, 'Lazarus, where is your goot friend Davis?' 'Highness,' say I, 'dat I know not.' Den he say, 'I will find him, if I go to Jerusalem;' and I say, 'Go to Jerusalem.'"

"What did he want with him?"

"What he want?—what every one want, and what nobody get, except how he no like—ha! ha! ha! Ach, der Davis!"

Beecher rose from his seat, uncertain how to take this continued inattention to his demand. He stood for a moment in hesitation, his eyes wandering over the walls where the pictures were hanging.

"Ah! if you do care for art, now you suit yourself, and all for a noting! I sell all these—dat Gerard Dow, dese two Potters, de leetle Cuyp—a veritable treasure, and de Mieris—de best he ever painted, and de rest, with de landschaft of Both, for eighty tousand seven hundred florins.

It is a schenk—a gift away—noting else."

"You forget, my excellent friend Stein," said Beecher, with more assurance than he had yet assumed, "that it was to receive, and not spend, money I came here this morning."

"You do a leetle of all de two—a leetle of both, so to say," replied the Jew. "What moneys you want?"

"Come, this is speaking reasonably. Davis's letter mentions a couple of thousand florins; but if you are inclined to stretch the amount to five, or even four thousand, we'll not fall out about the terms."

"How you mean—no fall out about de terms?" said the other, sharply.

"I meant that for a stray figure or so, in the way of discount, we shouldn't disagree. You may, in fact, make your own bargain."

"Make my own bargain, and pay myself too," muttered the Jew. "Ach, der Davis, how he would laugh!—ha! ha! ha!"

"Well, I don't see much to laugh at, old gent, except it be at my own folly, to stand here so long chaffering about these paltry two thousand florins. And now, I say, 'Yea or nay, will you book up, or not?'"

"Will you buy de Cuyp, and de Wou-
vermans, and de Ostade?—dat is the question."

"Egad, if you furnish the ready, I'll buy the cathedral and the cursaal. I'm not particular as to the investment when the cash is easily come at"

"De cash is very easy to come at," said the Jew, with a strange grin.

"You're a trump, Lazarus!" cried Beecher, in ecstasy at his good fortune. "If I had known you some ten years ago, I'd have been another man to-day. I was always looking out for one really fair, honest-hearted fellow to deal with, but I never met with him till now."

"How you have it—gold or notes?" said Lazarus.

"Well, a little of both, I think," said Beecher, his eyes greedily devouring the glittering little columns of gold before him.

"How your title?—how your name?" asked Stein, taking up a pen.

"My name is Annesley Beecher. You may write me the 'Honorable Annesley Beecher.'"

"Lord of——"

"I'm not lord of anything. I'm next in succession to a peerage, that's all."

"He call you de viscount—I forget de name."

"Lackington, perhaps?"

"Yaas, dat is de name; and say, give him de moneys for his bill. Now, here is de acceptance, and here you put your sign, across dis."

"I'll write Annesley Beecher, with all my heart; but I'll not write myself Lackington."

"Den you no have de moneys, nor de Cuyp, nor de Ostade," said the Jew, replacing the pen in the ink-bottle.

"Just let me ask you, old boy, how would it benefit you that I should commit a forgery? Is that the way you like to do business?"

"I do know mysel how I like my business to do, and no man teach me."

"What the devil did Davis mean, then, by sending me on this fool's errand? He gave me a distinct intimation that you'd cash my acceptance—"

"Am I not ready? You never go and say to der Davis dat I refuse it? Ach, der Davis!" and he sighed as if from the very bottom of his heart.

"I'll tell him frankly that you made it a condition I was to sign a name that does not belong to me—that I'll tell him."

"What care he for dat? Der Davis write his own name on it and pay it hisself."

"Oh! and Davis was also to indorse this bill, was he?" asked Beecher.

"I should tink he do; oderwise I scarce give you de moneys."

"That, indeed, makes some difference. Not in reality that it wouldn't be just as much a forgery; but if the bill come back to Grog's own hands—"

"Ach, der Grog—ha! ha! ha! 'Tis so long dat I no hear de name—Grog Davis!" and the Jew laughed till his eyes ran over.

"If there's no other way of getting at this money—"

"Dere is no oder way," said Lazarus, in a tone of firmness.

"Then good-morning, friend Lazarus, for you'll not catch me spoiling a stamp at that price. No, no, old fellow. I'm up to a thing or two, though you don't suspect it. I only rise to the natural fly, and no mistake."

"I make no mistake; I take vaary goot care of dat," said Lazarus, rising, and taking off his fez, to say adieu. "I wish you de vaary goot day."

Beecher turned away, with a stiff salutation, into the garden. He was angry with Davis, with himself, and with the whole world. It was a rare event in his life to see gold so much within his reach, and yet not available, just for a scruple—a mere

scruple—for, after all, what was it else? Writing "Lackington" meant nothing, if Lackington were never to see, much less to pay the bill. Once "taken up" as it was sure to be by Grog, what signified it if the words across the acceptance were Lackington or Annesley Beecher? And yet, what could Davis mean by passing him off as the viscount? Surely, for such a paltry sum as a couple of thousand florins, it was not necessary to assume his brother's name and title. It was some "dodge," perhaps, to acquire consequence in the eyes of his friend Lazarus that he was the traveling companion of an English peer; and yet, if so, it was the very first time Beecher had known him yield to such a weakness. He *had* a meaning in it, that much was certain, for Grog made no move in the game of life without a plan! "It can't be," muttered Beecher to himself—"it can't be for the sake of any menace over me for the forgery, because he has already in his hands quite enough to push me to the wall on that score, as he takes care to remind me he might any fine morning have me 'up' on that charge." The more Beecher ruminated over what possible intention Davis might have in view, the more did he grow terrified, lest, by any short-comings on his own part, he might thwart the great plans of his deep colleague.

"I never met his equal yet to put a fellow in a cleft stick," muttered Beecher, as he walked to and fro in intense agitation, "and he's just the man also, whenever anything goes wrong, not to listen to a word of explanation. 'Why didn't you do as I bade you?' or, 'As I ordered you?' for that's his phrase generally. 'Who told you that you had any option in the matter? Did I take you into consultation? Play up to my hand!' that's his cry. 'Play up to my hand, and never mind your own!' Well, I have been doing so some ten or twelve years back, and a nice game I've made of it! Break with him!—of course I'd break with him, if any one would tell me how! Egad, sometimes I begin to think that transportation and the rest of it would not be a bit harder to bear than old Grog's tyranny! It wears one out—it positively drains a man's nature dry!" There are volcanic throes, that however they may work and struggle, throw up no lava; so with Beecher. All his passionate indignation could not rouse him to action, although his actual suffering might have prompted energy to any amount. He took out Davis's letter and re-read it. One line which had escaped his attention before, now caught his eye on the blank leaf. It

ran thus: "Take care that you do not delay at Aix after receipt of this. Benson's fellows are after you." A cold shudder came over Beecher as he perused the line. Benson's fellows meant bailiffs, detectives, or something of the like. Benson was a money-lender of the most inveterate villainy—a fellow who had pursued more men of station and condition than any one living. He was the terror of the "swells." To be in Benson's hands, meant ruin in its most ir retrievable shape; and at the very moment he stood there his minions were on his track!

Ere he was well aware of it, he was back at the little window of the cottage.

"I must have this money on your own terms, Stein," said he. "I find that Davis has some urgent need of my presence. I can't delay here another day."

"How many tousand gulden, milord?" asked the Jew, respectfully, as he dipped his pen in the ink-bottle.

"Davis says two—I should like to say four, or even five."

"Five if you wish it, milord; to me is it all as one—five, fifteen, or fifty; whatever sum you want."

Beecher put his hand on the other's wrist to detain him while he took a moment's counsel with himself. Never had such a golden opportunity as this presented itself. Never before had he seen the man who so generously proffered his services. It was ask and have. Was he to reject such good fortune?—was he to turn his back on the very first piece of luck that had ever befallen him? What heart-burnings might he be storing up for future years when he looked back to the time that, with a word, he might have made his fortune!

"But are you quite sure, friend Lazarus, that if I say eight or ten thousand—for I don't want more—Davis will be as willing to back the bill?"

"I am quite sure."

"Well, now, I am not so very certain of that, and as it is Davis will have to book up, it might be safer, perhaps, that I didn't go beyond the amount he mentions—eh?"

"As you will—as you please yourself. I only say, dere is der Herr Davis's name; he send it to me and say, 'Milord will do de rest.'"

"So that he sent you a blank acceptance?" cried Beecher, in amazement.

"Yaas, just as you see—'Christopher Davis,' and de flourish as usual. Ach, der Davis!" and he sighed once more.

The man who held Grog's signature on a blank stamp assumed no common shape

in Annesley Beecher's eyes, and he continued to gaze on the old man with a strange sense of awe and astonishment. If he had not the document there before him on the table he would not have believed it. The trustful courage of Van Amburgh, who used to place his head in the lion's mouth, seemed poor in comparison with such heroic boldness as this; and he gazed at the writing in a sort of fascination.

"And Grog actually sent you that over by letter?" asked he again.

"Yaas, as you see," was the calm answer.

"Well, here goes then, Abraham—Lazarus, I mean; make it out for a matter of—five—no, eight—hang it, let us say ten thousand florins when we are about it! Ten thousand, at six months—eh?"

"Better at tree months—we can always renew," said Stein, calmly.

"Of course; and by that time we may want a little more liquor in the decanter—eh! old boy?" said Beecher, laughing joyfully.

"To be sure, vaary mush more liquor as you want it."

"What a brick!" said Beecher, clapping him on the shoulder in all the ecstasy of delight.

"Dere!" said the Jew, as he finished writing, "all is done; only to say where it be paid—what bank at London."

"Well, that is a bit of a puzzle, I must own!" said Beecher, rubbing his chin with an air of doubt and hesitation.

"Where do de Lord Lackington keep his account?" asked the Jew; and the question was so artfully posed that Beecher answered promptly,

"Harmer and Gore's, Lombard street, or Pall-Mall, whichever you like."

"Harmer and Gore. I know dem vaary well—that will do; you do sign your name dere."

"I wish I could persuade you that Annesley Beecher would be enough—eh?"

"You write de name as der Davis say, and no oder!"

"Here goes, then! 'In for a penny,' as the proverb say," muttered he; and in a bold, dashing hand, wrote "Lackington" across the bill.

"Ah!" said the Jew, as he examined it with his glass, and scanned every letter over and over; "and now, vat you say for de Cuyp, and de Mieris, and de Ostade—vill you take em all, as I say?"

"I'll think over it—I'll reflect a bit first, Master Stein. As for pictures, they're rather an incumbrance when a man hasn't a house to hang them in."

"You have de vaary fine house in town, and an oder vaary fine house in de country, beside a what you call box—shoot box—"

"Nothing of the kind, Lazarus. I haven't a thing as big as the crib we are standing in. Your mind is always running upon my brother; but there's a wide difference between our fortunes, I assure you. He drew the first ticket in the lottery of life; and, by the way, that reminds me of something in Grog's letter that I was to ask you." And Beecher took the epistle from his pocket and ran his eye over it. "Ah! here it is! 'Ask Stein what are the average runs at rouge-et-noir? what are the signs of an intermitting game? and what are the longest runs he remembers on one color?' Can you answer me these?"

"Some of dem I have here," said Stein, taking down from a shelf a small vellum-bound volume, fastened with a padlock and chain, the key of which he wore attached to his watch. "Here is de grand 'arcannum,'" said he, laughing; "here are de calculs made in de experience of forty-one year! Where is de man in Europe can say as mush as dat? In dis book is recounted de great game of de Duc de Brancas, where he broke de bank every night of de week till Saturday—two million three hundred thousand francs! Caumartin, the first croupier, shot hisself, and Nogeot go mad. He reckon de moneys in de Casette, for when he say on Friday night, 'Monseigneur,' say he, 'we have not de full sum here—there's one hundred and seventy thousand francs too little,' de Duc reply, 'Never mind, mon cher Monsieur Nogeot, I am noways pressed—don't distress yourself—only let it be pay, before I go home to bed.' Nogeot lose his reason when he hear it. Ah! here is de whole 'Geschichte,' and here de table of chances."

Beecher gazed on the precious volume as Aladdin might have done on the lamp. It was the mystic key to untold riches. With that marvelous look a man needed no more in life; there lay all the "cabals," all the "martingales," that years of intense toil and deep study had discovered. To win that knowledge, too, what hearts had been broken—what desolation—what death! It was a record of martyrs in his eyes, and he really regarded it with a sort of rapturous veneration.

Old Lazarus did not fail to detect the expression of wonderment and admiration. He saw depicted there the glowing ecstasy that all the triumphs of high art could not call up. The vigorous energy of Wouvermans, the glowing coloring of Cuypp, the mellow richness of Mieris, had not touch-

ed that nature which now vibrated in every chord to the appeal of fortune. It was the submissive worship of a devotee before some sacred relic! Stein read that gaze, and tracked its every motive, and with a solemn gesture he clasped the volume and locked it.

"But you are surely going to show me—I mean, you are about to tell me the answer to these questions?"

Stein shook his head dubiously, as he said, "Dat is my Kleinod, my idol—in dat book lie de secret of secrets, and I say to myself, 'Lazarus, be poor—be destitute—be houseless to-morrow, and you know how to get rich if you will.' De great law of Chances—de rule dat guide what we call 'luck'—dere it is written! I have but to say I will have, and I have! When I die, I will burn it, or have it lay wit me in my grave."

"It's not possible you could do this!" cried Beecher, in horror: far less of indignation had it cost him to hear that any one should carry out of the world with him the cure of cancer, of cholera, or some such dread scourge of poor humanity. The black-hearted selfishness of such a crime seemed without a parallel, and for a second or two, as he looked at the decrepid object before him, and saw the lonely spot, the isolation, and the propitious moment, a strange wild thought flashed across his mind that it might be not only pardonable, but praiseworthy, to seize upon and carry it off by force.

Whether the old man read what was passing within him is hard to say, but he returned the other's look as steadily and as fiercely, and Beecher felt abashed and cowed.

"I'll tell you what, Stein," said he, after a pause, "I'll buy that same old volume of yours, just for the euriosity of the thing, and I'll make you a sporting offer—I'll give you ten thousand francs for it!"

A low wailing whistle of utter contempt was all the Jew replied.

"Well, it's a splendid bid, if you come to think of it; for, just suppose it be everything you say—and I own I can't believe it is—but suppose it were, who is to guarantee the continuance of these great public play-tables? All the governments of Europe are setting their faces against them—not a year passes without one or two being closed. This very spring there was a talk of suppressing play at Baden. Who can tell what the first outbreak of fanatic zeal may effect?"

"No, no. So long as men live, dey will do tree tings—make love, make war, and

gamble. When dey give up dese, de world shut up."

There was a truthful force about this Beecher felt could not be gainsaid, and he stood silent and confuted. There was another appeal that he had not tried, and he resolved to neglect nothing that gave even the faintest chance of success. He addressed himself to the Jew's goodness of heart—to the benevolence that he knew must have its home in his nature. To what end, therefore, should he carry to the grave, or destroy, a secret that might be a blessing to thousands? He depicted, not without knowledge, some of the miseries of the man "forgotten of fortune"—the days of fevered anxiety—the nights of agonizing torture, as, half maddened by his losses, he played wildly, recklessly on—suicide in all its darkest forms ever present to his aching faculties, while all this time one glance within that little book would save him. And he wound up all by a burst of enthusiastic praise of a man who could thus transmit happiness to generations unborn.

"I never wish to sell dat book. I mean it alway to die wit myself! but if you will give me one thousand pounds, it is yours. If you delay, I will say two thousands."

"Done—I take it. Of course a bill will do—eh?"

"Yaas, I will take a bill—a bill at three months. When it is yours, I will tell you dat you are de luckiest man in all Europe. You have dere, in dat leetle volume, all man strive for, fight for, cheat for, die for!"

As he said this, he sat down again at his desk to write the acceptance Beecher was to sign, while the other, withdrawing into the window recess, peered eagerly into the pages of the precious book.

"Mind," said the Jew, "you no let any one see de 'Cabal.' If it be once get abroad, de bank will change de play. You just carry in your head de combinations, and you go in, and win de millions dat you want at de time."

"Just so," said Beecher, in ecstasy, the very thought of the golden cataract sending a thrill of rapture through him. "I suppose, however, I may show it to Davis?"

"Ach, der Davis, yaas—der Davis can see it," said the Jew, with a laugh whose significance it were very hard to interpret. "Dere now," said Stein, handing him the pen, "write de name dere as on de oder."

"Still Lackington, I suppose—eh?" asked Beecher.

"Yaas—just de same," said Stein, gravely.

"'Just as good for a sheep as a lamb,' as the proverb says," muttered Beecher. And he dashed off the name with a reckless flourish. "I'll tell you one thing, Master Stein," said he, as he buttoned up the magic volume in the breast of his coat, "if this turn out the good dodge you say it is, I'll behave handsomely to you. I pledge you my word of honor, I'll stand to you for double—treble the sum you have got written there. *You* don't know the fellow you're dealing with—very few know him, for the matter of that—but though he has got a smart lesson or two in life, he has good stuff in him still; and *if*—I say *if*, because, of course, all depends on *that*—*if* I can give the bank at Hamburg a spring in the air with the aid of this, I'll not forget *you*, old boy."

"You make dem all spring in de air!—Ems, Wiesbaden, Baden—all go up together!" And the Jew laughed with the glee of a demon.

"Not that I want to hurt any one—not that I'd like to squeeze a fellow too hard," broke in Beecher, suddenly, for a quick thrill of superstitious fear—the gambler's innate conscience—shot through him, and made him tremble to think that, by a chance word, or thought, he might disgust the fortune he would propitiate. "No, no; my motto is, 'Live and let live!' There's room for us all!" And with the utterance of a sentiment he believed so truly generous, he took leave of the Jew, and departed.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

A VILLAGE NEAR THE RHINE.

It was at a little village called Holbach, about fifteen miles from the right bank of the Rhine, Grog Davis had taken up his quarters while awaiting the arrival of his daughter. Near as it was to that great high-road of Europe, scarcely out of ear-shot of whizzing steamers and screaming trains, the spot was wonderfully secluded and unvisited. A little trout stream, known to a few, who treasured the secret like fishermen, made the inn resorted to in the months of May and June; but for the rest of the year the "Golden Hook" had few customers, and the landlord almost abdicated his functions till spring came round again. The house, originally intended for a mill, was built over the river itself, so that the indolent angler might actually have fished from the very window. The pine-clad mountains of Nassau in-

closed the narrow glen, which straggled irregularly along for miles, now narrowing to a mere strip, now expanding into little plains of fertile meadow-land, with neat cottages and speckled cattle scattered around them. A narrow belt of garden flanked the river, on whose edge a walk of trellised vines was fashioned—a charming spot in the sultry heat of summer, with its luxuriant shade above and the rippling stream below. Davis had seen the place years before in some hurried journey; but his retentive mind carried a full memory of the spot, and he soon found that it comprised all he was in search of—it was easy of access, secret, and cheap.

Only too well pleased to meet with a guest at this dead season of the year, they gave up to him the choicest apartment, and treated him with every solicitude and attention. His table was supplied well, almost luxuriously; the good wine of Ettleberg, given in liberal profusion; the vine alley converted into a pistol gallery for his use; and all for such a sum per diem as would not have satisfied a waiter at the Clarendon. But it was the calm seclusion, the perfect isolation, that gratified him most. Let him stroll which way he would, he never chanced upon a traveler. It was marvelous, indeed, how such a place could have escaped that prying tribe of ramblers which England each year sends forth to wrangle, dispute, and disparage everything over Europe; and yet here were precisely the very objects they usually sought after—beautiful scenery, a picturesque peasantry, and a land romantic in all its traits and traditions.

Not that Grog cared for these: rocks, waterfalls, ruins, leafy groves, or limpid streams, made no appeal to *him*. He lived for the life of men, their passions, and their ambitions. He knew some people admired this kind of thing, and there were some who were fond of literature; others liked pictures; others, again, fancied old coins. He had no objection. They were, if not very profitable, at least harmless tastes. All he asked was, not to be the companion of such dreamers. "Give me the fellow that knows life," would he say; and I am afraid that the definition of that same "life" would have included some things scarcely laudable.

If the spot were one to encourage indolence and ease, Davis did not yield to this indulgence. He arose early; walked for health; shot with the pistol for practice; studied his martingale for the play-table; took an hour with the small-sword with an old maître d'armes whom he found in the

village; and without actually devoting himself to it as a task, practiced himself in German by means of conversation; and lastly, he thought deeply and intently over the future. For speculations of this kind he had no mean capacity. If he knew little of the human heart in its higher moods, he understood it well in its shortcomings and its weaknesses; to what temptations a man might yield, when to offer them, and how, were mysteries he had often brooded over. In forecastings of this order, therefore, Davis exercised himself. Strange eventualities, "cases of conscience," that I would fain believe never occurred to you, dear reader, nor to me, arose before him, and he met them manfully.

The world is generous in its admiration of the hard-worked minister, toiling night-long at his desk, receiving and answering his twenty dispatches daily, and rising in the House to explain this, refute that, confirm the other, with all the clearness of an orator and all the calmness of a clerk; but after all he is but a fly-wheel in that machine of government, of which there are some hundred other component parts, all well fitting and proportioned. Précis writers and private secretaries cram, colleagues advise him. The routine of official life hedges him in his proper groove, and if not overcome by indolence or affected by zeal, he can scarcely blunder. Not so your man of straits and emergency, your fellow living by his wits, and wrestling from the world, that fancies it does not want him, reward and recognition. It is no marvel of a proud three-decker sail round the globe; but very different is our astonishment if a cock-boat come safely from the China seas, or brave the stormy passage round the Cape. Such a craft as this was Grog, his own captain: himself the crew, he had neither owner nor underwriter; and yet, amidst the assembled navies of the world, he would have shown his bunting!

The unbroken calm of his present existence was most favorable to these musings, and left him to plan his campaign in perfect quiet. Whether the people of the inn regarded him as a great minister in disgrace come, by hard study, to retrieve a lost position, a man of science deeply immersed in some abstruse problem, or a distinguished author seeking isolation for the free exercise of his imagination, they treated him not only with great respect, but a sort of deference was shown in their studious effort to maintain the silence and stillness around. When he was supposed to be at his studies, not a

voice was heard, not a footfall on the stairs. There is no such flattery to your man of scapes and accidents, your thorough adventurer, as that respectful observance that implies he is a person of condition. It is like giving of free will to the highwayman the purse he expected to have a fight for. Davis delighted in these marks of deference, and day by day grew more eager in exacting them.

"I heard some noise outside there, this morning, Carl," said he to the waiter; "what was the meaning of it?" For a moment or two the waiter hesitated to explain, but after a little went on to speak of a stranger who had been a resident of the inn for some months back without ever paying his bill, the law, singularly enough, not giving the landlord the power of turning him adrift, but simply of ceasing to afford him sustenance, and waiting for some opportunity of his leaving the house, to forbid his re-entering it. Davis was much amused at this curious piece of legislation, by which a moneyless guest could be starved out, but not expelled, and put many questions as to the stranger, his age, appearance, and nation. All the waiter knew was, that he was a venerable-looking man, portly, advanced in life, with specious manners, a soft voice, and a benevolent smile; as to his country, he couldn't guess. He spoke several languages, and his German was, though peculiar, good enough to be a native's.

"But how does he live," said Davis; "he must eat?"

"There's the puzzle of it!" exclaimed Carl; "for a while he used to watch while I was serving a breakfast or a dinner, and sallying out of his room, which is at the end of the corridor, he'd make off, sometimes with a cutlet—perhaps a chicken, now a plate of spinach, now an omelette, till, at last, I never ventured up-stairs with the tray without some one to protect it. Not that even this always sufficed, for he was occasionally desperate, and actually seized a dish by force."

"Even these chances, taken at the best, would scarcely keep a man alive," said Davis.

"Nor would they; but we suspect he must have means of getting out at night and making a 'raid' over the country. We constantly hear of fowls carried off; cheese and fruit stolen. There he is now, creeping along the gallery. Listen! I have left some apples outside."

With a gesture to enforce caution, Davis arose, and placed a percussion-cap on a

pistol, a motion of his hand sufficing to show that the weapon was not loaded.

"Open the door gently," said he; and the waiter, stealing over noiselessly, turned the handle. Scarcely had the door been drawn back, when Grog saw the figure of a man, and snapped off the pistol. At the same moment, he sprang from the spot, and rushed out to the corridor. The stranger, to all seeming, was not even startled by the report, but was gravely occupied in examining his sleeve to see if he had been struck. He lifted up his head, and Davis, with a start, cried out,

"What, Paul!—Paul Classon! Is this possible?"

"Davis—old fellow!—do I see you here?" exclaimed the other, in a deep and mellow voice, utterly devoid of irritation or even excitement.

"Come in—come in here, Paul," said Davis, taking him by the arm; and he led him within the room. "Little I suspected on whom I was playing this scurvy trick."

"It was not loaded," said the other, coolly.

"Of course not."

"I thought so," said he, with an easy smile; "they've had so many devices to frighten me."

"Come, Paul, old fellow, pour yourself out a tumbler of that red wine, while I cut you some of this ham; we'll have plenty of time for talk afterward."

The stranger accepted the invitation, but without the slightest show of eagerness or haste. Nay, he unfolded his napkin leisurely, and fastened a corner in one button-hole—as some old-fashioned epicures have a trick of doing. He held his glass, too, up to the light, to enjoy the rich color of the wine; and smacked his lips as he tasted it with the air of a connoisseur.

"A burgundy, Davis, eh?" asked he, sipping again.

"I believe so. In truth, I know little about these wines."

"Oh, yes, a 'pomard,' and very good of its kind. Too loaded, of course, for the time of year, except for such palates as England rears."

Davis had now covered his friend's plate with ham and capon; and at last was pleased to see him begin his breakfast.

We are not about to impose upon our reader the burden of knowing more of Mr. Classon than is requisite for the interests of our story; but while he eats the first regular meal he has tasted for two months and more, let us say a word or so about him. He was a clergyman whose life had

been one continued history of mischances. Occasionally the sun of prosperity would seem disposed to shine genially on his head; but for the most part his lot was to walk with dark and lowering skies above him.

If he held any preferment, it was to quarrel with his rector, his dean, or his bishop—to be cited before commissions—tried by surrogates—pronounced contumacious—suspended, and Heaven knows what else. He was everlastingly in litigation with churchwardens and parish authorities, discovering rights of which he was defrauded, and privileges of which he was deprived. None like him to ferret out Acts of Edward or Henry, and obsolete bequests of long-buried founders of this, that, or t'other, of which the present guardians were little better than pickpockets. Adverse decisions and penalties pressing on him, he grew libelous, he spoke, wrote, and published all manner of defamatory things, accused every one of peculation, fraud, and falsehood, and, as the spirit of attack strengthened in him by exercise, menaced this man with prosecution, and that, with open exposure. Trials by law, and costs, accumulated against him, and he was only out of jail, here, to enter it again, there. From the courts "above" he soon descended to those "below;" he became dissipated and dissolute, his hiring pen scrupled at nothing, and he assailed anything or any one, to order. Magistrates "had him up" as the author of threatening letters or begging epistles. Today, he was the mock secretary of an imaginary charity; to-morrow, he'd appear as a distressed missionary going out to some island in the Pacific. He was eternally before the world, until the paragraph that spoke of him grew to be headed by the words, "The Reverend Paul Classon again!" or, more briefly, "Paul Classon's last!" His pen, all this while, was his sole subsistence, and what a bold sweep it took!—impeachment of ministers, accusation of theft, forgery, intimation of even worse crimes against the highest names in the realm, startling announcements of statesmen bribed, ambassadors corrupted, pasquinades against bishops and judges, libelous stories of people in private life, prize fights, prophetic almanacs, mock missionary journals, stanzas to celebrate quack remedies—even street ballads were among his literary efforts; while, personally, he presided at low singing establishments, and was the president of innumerable societies in localities only known to the police. It was difficult to take up a newspaper without finding him either re-

ported drunk and disorderly in the police-sheet, obstructing the thoroughfare by a crowd assembled to hear him, having refused to pay for his dinner or his bed, assaulted the landlady, or, crime of crimes, used intemperate language to "G 493." At last, they got actually tired of trying him for begging, and imprisoning him for battery—the law was wearied out; but the world also had its patience exhausted, and Paul saw that he must conquer a new hemisphere. He came abroad.

What a changeful life was it now that he led—at one time a tutor, at another a commissionaire for an hotel, a railway porter, a traveling servant, a police spy, the doorkeeper of a circus company, editor of an English journal, veterinary, language master, agent for patent medicines, picture dealer, and companion to a nervous invalid, which, as Paul said, meant a furious maniac. There is no telling what he went through of debt and difficulty, till the police actually preferred passing him quietly over the frontier to following up with penalty so incurable an offender. In this way had he wandered about Europe for years, the terror of legations, the pestilence of charitable committees. Contributions to enable the Rev. Paul Classon to redeem his clothes, his watch, his divinity library, to send him to England, to the Andes, to Africa, figured everywhere. I dare not say how often he had been rescued out of the lowest pit of despondency, or snatched like a brand from the burning; in fact, he lived in a pit, and was always on fire.

"I am delighted," said Davis, as he replenished his friend's plate, "I am delighted to see that you have the same good, hearty appetite as of old, Paul."

"Ay, Kit," said he, with a gentle sigh, "the appetite has been more faithful than the dinner; on the same principle, perhaps, that the last people who desert us are our creditors!"

"I suspect you've had rather a hard time of it," said Davis, compassionately.

"Well, not much to complain of—nothing that one would call hardships," said Classon, as he pushed his plate from him and proceeded to light a cigar; "we're all strugglers, Kit, that's the fact of it."

"I suppose it is; but it ain't very disagreeable to be a struggler with ten thousand a year."

"If the having and enjoying were always centered in the same individual," said Classon, slowly, "what you say would be unanswerable; but it's not so, Kit. No, no; the fellows who really enjoy life never have anything. They are, so to say, guests

on a visit to this earth, come to pass a few months pleasantly, to put up anywhere, and be content with everything." Grog shook his head dissentingly, and the other went on: "Who knows the truth of what I am saying better than either of us? How many broad acres did your father or mine bequeath us? What debentures, railroad shares, mining scrip, or mortgages? And yet, Kit, if we come to make up the score of pleasant days and glorious nights, do you fancy that any noble lord of them all would dispute the palm with us? Oh!" said he, rapturously, "give me the unearned enjoyments of life—pleasures that have never cost me a thought to provide, nor a sixpence to pay for! Pass the wine, Kit—that bottle is better than the other;" and he smacked his lips, while his eyes closed in a sort of dreamy rapture.

"I'd like to hear something of your life, Paul," said Davis. "I often saw your name in the *Times* and the *Post*, but I'd like to have your own account of it."

"My dear Kit, I've had fifty lives. It's the man you should understand—the fellow that is here," and he slapped his broad chest as he spoke. "As for mere adventures, what are they? Squalls that never interfere with the voyage—not even worth entering in the ship's log."

"Where's your wife, Paul?" asked Davis abruptly, for he was half impatient under the aphorizing tone of his companion.

"When last I heard of her," said Classon, slowly, as he eyed his glass to the light, "she was at Chicago—if that be the right prosody of it—lecturing on 'Woman's Rights.' Nobody knew the subject better than Fanny."

"I heard she was a very clever woman," said Davis.

"Very clever," said Classon; "discur-sive; not always what the French call 'conséquent,' but certainly clever, and a sweet poetess." There was a raey twinkle in that reverend eye as he said the last words, so full of malicious drollery that Davis could not help remarking it; but all Classon gave for explanation was, "This to her health and happiness!" and he drained off a bumper. "And yours, Kit—what of her?" asked he.

"Dead these many years. Do you remember her?"

"Of course I do. I wrote the article on her first appearance at the Surrey. What a handsome creature she was then! It was I predicted her great success; it was I that saved her from light comedy parts, and told her to play *Lady Teazle!*"

"I'll show you her born image to-morrow—her daughter," said Davis, with a strange choking sensation that made him cough; "she's taller than her mother—more style also."

"Very difficult, that—very difficult, indeed," said Classon, gravely. "There was a native elegance about her I never saw equaled; and then her walk, the carriage of the head, the least gesture, had all a certain grace that was fascination."

"Wait till you see Lizzy," said Davis, proudly, "you'll see these all revived."

"Do you destine her for the boards, Kit?" asked Classon, carelessly.

"For the stage? No, of course not," replied Davis, rudely.

"And yet these are exactly the requirements would fetch a high price just now. Beauty is not a rare gift in England; nor are form and symmetry; but except in the highly born there is a lamentable deficiency in that easy gracefulness of manner, that blended dignity and softness, that form the chief charm of woman. If she be what you say, Kit—if she be, in short, her mother's daughter—it is a downright insanity not to bring her out."

"I'll not hear of it! That girl has cost me very little short of ten thousand pounds—ay, ten thousand pounds—schooling, masters, and the rest of it. She's no fool, so I take it, it ain't thrown away! As regards beauty, I'll stake fifteen to ten, in hundreds, that, taking your stand at the foot of St. James's street on a drawing-room day, you don't see her equal. I'm ready to put down the money to-morrow, and that's giving three to two against the field! And is that the girl I'm to throw away on the Haymarket? She's a Derby filly, I tell you, Paul, and will be first favorite one of these days."

"Faustum sit augurium!" said Classon, as he raised his glass in a theatrical manner, and then drained it off. "Still, if I be rightly informed, the stage is often the ante-chamber to the peerage. The attractions that dazzle thousands form the center of fascination for some one."

"She may find her way to a coronet without that," said Davis, rudely.

"Ah, indeed!" said Paul, with a slight elevation of the eyebrow; but though his tone invited a confidence, the other made no further advances.

"And now for yourself, Classon, what have you been at lately?" said Davis, wishing to change the subject.

"Literature and the arts. I have been contributing to a London weekly, as Crimean correspondent, with occasional letters

from the gold diggings. I have been painting portraits, for a florin the head, till I have exhausted all the celebrities of the three villages near us. My editor has, I believe, run away, however, and supplies have ceased for some time back."

"And what are your plans now?"

"I have some thoughts of going back to divinity. These newly-invented water-cure establishments are daily developing grander proportions, some have got German bands, some donkeys, some pleasure-boats, others rely upon lending libraries and laboratories, but the latest dodge is a chaplain."

"But won't they know you, Paul? Have not the newspapers 'blown you?'"

"Ah, Davis, my dear friend," said he, with a benevolent smile, "it's far easier to live down a bad reputation than to live up to a good one. I'd only ask a week—one week's domestication with the company of these places—to show I was a martyred saint. I have, so to say, a perennial fount of goodness in my nature that has never failed me."

"I remember it at school," said Davis, dryly.

"You took the clever line, Kit, 'suum cuique;' it would never have suited *me*. You were born to thrive upon men's weaknesses, mine the part to have a vested interest in their virtues."

"If you depend upon their virtues for a subsistence, I'm not surprised to see you out at elbows," said Davis, roughly.

"Not so, Kit—not so," said the other, blandly, in rebuke. "There's a great deal of weak good-nature always floating about life. The world is full of fellows with 'Pray take me in' written upon them."

"I can only vouch for it very few have come in my way," said Davis, with a harsh laugh.

"So much the better for *them*," said Paul, gravely.

A pause of considerable duration now ensued between them, broken at last by Davis abruptly saying, "Is it not a strange thing, it was only last night I was saying to myself, 'What the deuce has become of Holy Paul, the newspapers have seemingly forgotten him? It can't be that he is dead?'"

"Lazarus only sleepeth," said Classon; "and indeed my last eleven weeks here seem little other than a disturbed sleep."

Continuing his own train of thought, Davis went on: "If I could chance upon him now, he's just the fellow I want, or rather that I may want."

"If it is a lampoon, or a satire, you're

thinking of, Kit, I've given them up; I make no more blistering ointments, but turn all my skill to balsams. They give no trouble in compounding, and pay even better. Ah, Davis, my worthy friend, what a mistake it is to suppose that a man must live by his talents, while his real resource is his temperament. For a life of easy enjoyment, that blessed indolence that never knew a care, it is heart, not head, is needed."

"All I can say is, that with the fellows I've been most with, heart had very little to do with them, and the best head was the one that least trusted his neighbors."

"A narrow view, my dear friend—a narrow view, take my word for it; as one goes on in life he thinks better of it."

A malicious grin was all the answer Davis made to this remark. At last he turned his eyes full upon the other, and in a low but distinct voice said, "Let us have no more of this, Paul. If we are to play, let us play, as the Yankees say, without the 'items'—no cheating on either side. Don't try the grand benevolence dodge with *me*—don't. When I said a while ago I might want you, it was no more than I meant. You *may* be able to render me a service—a great service."

"Say how," said Classon, drawing his chair nearer to him—"say how, Kit, and you'll not find the terms exorbitant."

"It's time enough to talk about the stakes when we are sure the match will come off," said Davis, cautiously. "All I'll say for the present is, I may want you."

Classon took out a small and very greasy-looking note-book from his waistcoat pocket, and with his pencil in hand, said, "About what time are you likely to need me? Don't be particular as to a day, or a week, but just in a rough-guessing sort of way say when."

"I should say in less than a month from this time—perhaps within a fortnight."

"All right," said Classon, closing his book, after making a brief note. "You smile," said he, blandly, "at my methodical habits, but I have been a red-tapist all my life, Kit. I don't suppose you'll find any man's papers, letters, documents, and so forth, in such trim order as mine—all labeled, dated, and indexed. Ah! there is a great philosophy in this practical equanimity, take my word for it there is."

"How far are we from Neuweid here?" asked Davis, half-pettishly, for every pretension of his reverend friend seemed to jar upon his nerves.

"About sixteen or eighteen miles, I should say?"



THE STRANGER, TO ALL SEEMING, WAS NOT EVEN STARTLED BY THE REPORT, BUT WAS GRAVELY OCCUPIED IN EXAMINING HIS SLEEVE TO SEE IF HE HAD BEEN STRUCK.

CHAPTER LXIX.

IMMINENT TIDINGS.

"I must go or send over there to-morrow," continued Davis. "The postmaster sends me word that several letters have arrived, some to my address, some to my care. Could you manage to drive across?"

"Willingly; only remember, that once I leave this blessed sanctuary I may find the door closed against my return. They've a strange legislation here—"

"I know—I've heard of it," broke in Davis. "I'll guarantee everything, so that you need have no fears on that score. Start at daybreak, and fetch back all letters you find there for me or for the Honorable Annesley Beecher."

"The Honorable Annesley Beecher!" said Classon, as he wrote the name in his note-book. "Dear me! the last time I heard that name was—let me see—fully twelve years ago. It was after that affair at Brighton. I wrote an article for the *Heart of Oak*, on the 'Morality of our Aristocracy.' How I lashed their vices, how I stigmatized their lives of profligacy and crime!"

"You infernal old hypocrite!" cried Davis, with a half-angry laugh.

"There was no hypocrisy in that, Kit. If I tell you that a statue is bad in drawing, or incorrect in anatomy, I never assert thereby that I myself have the torso of Hercules or the limbs of Antinous."

"Leave people's vices alone, then; they're the same as their debts—if you're not going to pay them, you've no right to talk about them."

"Only on public grounds, Kit. Our duty to society, my dear friend, has its own requirements!"

"Fiddlestick!" said Davis, angrily, as he pushed his glass from before him; then, after a moment, went on: "Do you start early, so as to be back here before evening—my mind is running on it. There's three Naps," said he, placing the gold pieces on the table. "You'll not want more."

"Strange magnetism is the touch of gold to one's palm," said Classon, as he surveyed the money in the hollow of his hand. "How marvelous that these bits of stamped metal should appeal so forcibly to my inner consciousness."

"Don't get drunk with them, that's all," said Davis, with a stern savagery of manner, as he arose from his seat. "There's my passport—you may have to show it at the office. And now, good-by, for I have a long letter to write to my daughter."

Classon poured the last of the burgundy into a tumbler, and drank it off, and hiccupping out, "I'll haste me to the capital!" left the room.

It was a very wearisome day to Davis as he waited for the return of Paul Classon. Grog's was not a mind made for small suspicions or petty distrusts—he was a wholesale dealer in iniquity, and despised minute rogueries; yet he was not altogether devoid of anxiety as hour by hour went over, and no sign of Classon. He tried to pass the time in his usual mode. He shot with the pistol, he fished, he whipped the trout stream, he went over his "martingale" with the cards, but, somehow, everything went amiss with him. He only hit the bull's-eye once in three shots—he fished wide—a pike carried off his tackle—and, worst of all, he detected a flaw in the great "Cabal," that, if not remediable, must render it valueless.

"A genuine Friday, this!" muttered he, as he santered up a little eminence, from which a view might be had of the road for above a mile. "And what nonsense it is people saying they're not superstitious. I suppose I have as little of that kind of humbug about me as my neighbors; yet I wouldn't play half-crowns at blind-hookey to-day. I'd not take the favorite even against a chance horse. I'd not back myself to leap that drain yonder; and why? just because I'm in, what the French call 'guignon.' There's no other word for it that ever I heard. These are the days Fortune says to a man, 'Shut up, and don't book a bet!' It's a wise fellow takes the warning. I know it so well, that I always prepare for a run against me, and as sure as I am here, I feel that some thing or other is going wrong elsewhere. Not a sign of him—not a sign!" said he, with a heavy sigh, as he gazed long and earnestly along the line of road. "He hasn't bolted, that I'm sure of; he'd not 'try that on' with *me*. He remembers to this very hour a licking I gave him at school. I know what it is, he's snug in a wine 'Schenke.' He's in for a big drink, the old beast, as if he couldn't get blind drunk when he came home. I think I see him holding forth to the boors, and telling them what an honor it is to them to sit in his company; that he took a high class at Oxford, and was all but Bishop of— Eh, is that he? No, it's going t'other way. Confounded fool!—but worse fool myself for trusting him. That's exactly what people would say: 'He gave Holy Paul three Naps, and expected to see him come back sober!' Well, so I did; and just

answer me this : Is not all the work of this world done by rogues and vagabonds ? It suits them to be honest for a while ; they ride to order so long as they like the stable. Not a sign of him !” And with a comfortless sigh he turned back to the house.

“ I wish I knew how Lizzy was to-night !” muttered he, as he rested his head on his hand and sat gazing at her picture. “ Ay, that is your own saucy smile, but the world will take that out of you, and put a puckered-up mouth and hard lines in its place, that it will, confound it ! And those eyes will have another kind of brightness in them, too, when they begin to read life glibly. My poor darling, I wish you could stay as you are. Where are you now, I wonder ? Not thinking of old Kit, I’m certain ! And yet, maybe, I wrong her—maybe she is just dwelling on long—long ago—home, and the rest of it. Ay, darling, that’s what the lucky ones have in life, and never so much as know their luck in having it. By Jove ! she is handsome !” cried he, as he held up the miniature in ecstasy before him. “ If she’s so beautiful, Mr. Ross, why don’t she come to the drawing-room ?” say the court people. Ay, you’ll see her there yet, or I’m not Kit Davis ! Don’t be impatient, ladies ; make your running while the course is your own, for there’s a clipper coming. I’d like to see where they’ll be when Lizzy takes the field.”

And now in his pride he walked the room, with head erect and arms folded. It was only for a very short space, however, that these illusions withdrew him from his gloomier reveries, for with a start he suddenly recurred to all the anxieties of the morning, and once more issued forth upon the high-road to look out for Classon. The setting sun sent a long golden stream of light down the road, on which not a living thing was to be seen. Muttering what were scarcely blessings on the head of his messenger, he strolled listlessly along. Few men could calculate the eventualities of life better or quicker than Davis. Give him the man and the opportunities, and he would speedily tell you what would be the upshot. He knew thoroughly well how far experience and temperament mold the daring spirit, and how the caution that comes of education tames down the wild influences suggested by temptation.

“ No,” said he to himself, “ though he had my passport and three Napoleons besides, he has not levanted. He is far too deep a fellow for that.”

At last, a low rumbling sound came up

from the distance ; he stopped and listened. It came and went at intervals, till at last he could distinctly mark the noise of wheels and the voice of a man urging on his horse. Davis quickened his pace, till in the gray half-light he descried a little one-horse carriage slowly advancing toward him. He could only see one man in it, but, as it came nearer, he saw a heap of clothes, surmounted by what indicated the presence of another in the bottom of the conveyance, and Grog quickly read the incident by the aid of his own anticipation. There, indeed, lay Paul Classon, forgetful of the world and all its cares, his outstretched arm almost touching the wheel, and the heavy wooden shoe of the peasant grazing his face.

“ Has he got the letters ? Where are they ?” cried Davis, eagerly, to the driver.

“ They’re in his hat.”

Grog snatched it rudely from his head and found several letters of various sizes and shapes, and with what, even in that dim light, seemed a variety of addresses and superscriptions.

“ Are you certain none have fallen out or been lost on the road ?” said Davis, as he reckoned them over.

“ That I am,” said the man, “ for at every jolt of the wagon he used to grip his hat and hold it fast as if it was for very life, till we came to the last village. It was there he finished off with a flask of Laubthaler that completely overcame him.”

“ So, then, he was sober on leaving Neu-weid ?”

“ He was in the so-called ‘ bemuzzed ’ state !” said the man, with a half apologetic air.

“ Take him down to the inn : throw him into the hay-yard—or the river, if you like,” said Davis, contemptuously, and turned away.

Once in his own room, the candles lighted, the door locked, Davis sat down to the table on which the letters were thrown. Leisurely he took them up one by one and examined their superscriptions.

“ Little news in these,” said he, throwing three or four to one side ; “ the old story—money seeking.” And he mumbled out, “ ‘ Your acceptance being duly presented this day at Messrs. Haggitts and Drudges, and no provision being made for payment of the same—’ It’s like the burden of an old song in one’s ears. Who is this from ? Oh ! Billy Peach, with some Doncaster news. I do wonder will the day ever come that will bring me good tidings by the post ; I’ve paid many a pound in my life for letters, and I never yet chanced

upon one that told me my uncle Peter had just died, leaving me all his estates in Jamaica, or that my aunt Susan bequeathed to me all her Mexican stock and the shares in four tin mines. This is also from Peach, and marked 'immediate,' and he broke it open. It contained only these lines: "Dark is the word for a week or two still. On Tuesday your name will appear among the passengers for New York by the *Persia*. Sancy Sal is a dead break-down, and we net seven hundred safe; Pot did it with a knitting-needle, while they were plaiting her. What am I to do about the jewels?"

Davis's brow darkened as he crushed the paper in his hand, while he muttered, "I wish these infernal fools had not been taught to write! He ought to know, that addressing me Captain Christopher, never deceived a 'detective' yet. And this is for the Honorable Annesley Beecher," said he, reading aloud the address, "'care of Captain Christopher, Coblenz—try Bingen—try Neuweid.' A responsible-looking document this; it looks like a dispatch, with its blue-post paper and massive seal; and what is the name here, in the corner? 'Davenport Dunn,' sure enough—'Davenport Dunn.' And with your leave, sir, we'll see what you have to say," muttered he, as he broke the seal of the packet. A very brief note first met his eyes; it ran thus:

"DEAR SIR,—While I was just reading a very alarming account of Lord Lackington's illness in a communication from Messrs. Harmer and Gore, the post brought me the inclosed letter for yourself, which I perceive to be in her ladyship's hand; I forward it at once to Brussels, in the hope that it may reach you there. Should her ladyship's tidings be better than I can fain persuade myself to hope, may I presume to suggest that you should lose no time in repairing to Italy. I cannot exaggerate the peril of his lordship's state; in fact, I am hourly expecting news of his death; and, the *peculiar circumstances* of the case considered, it is highly important you should possess yourself of every information the exigencies of the event may require. I beg to inclose you a bank post-bill for two hundred pounds, payable at any banker's on your signature, and have the honor to be, with sincere respect,

"Your humble servant,

"DAVENPORT DUNN.

"P. S.—I have reason to know that certain claims are now under consideration,

and will be preferred ere long, if suitable measures be not adopted to restrain them."

"From which side do you hold your brief, Master Davenport Dunn? I should like to know *that!*" said Davis, as he twice over read aloud this postscript. He looked at Lady Lackington's letter, turned it over, examined the seal and the postmark, and seemed to hesitate about breaking it open. Was it that some scruple of conscience arrested his hand, and some mysterious feeling that it was a sisterly confidence he was about to violate? Who knows! At all events, if there was a struggle it was a brief one, for he now smashed the seal and spread the open letter before him.

With a muttered expression of impatience did he glance over the four closely-written pages, indited in the very minutest of hands and the faintest possible ink. Like one addressing himself, however, to a severe task, he set steadily to work, and for nigh an hour never rose from the table. We have no right, as little have we the wish, to inflict upon our reader any portion of the labor this process of deciphering cost Davis, so that we will briefly state what formed the substance of the epistle. The letter was evidently begun before Lord Lackington had been taken ill, for it opened with an account of Como and the company at the Villa d'Este, where they had gone to resume the water-cure. Her ladyship's strictures upon the visitors, their morals, and their manners, were pleasantly and flippantly thrown off. She possessed what would really seem an especial gift of her class—the most marvelous use of the perceptive faculties—and could read not alone rank and condition, but character and individuality, by traits of breeding and manner that would have escaped the notice of hundreds of those the world calls shrewd observers. This fragment, for it was such, was followed, after a fortnight, by a hastily written passage, announcing that Lord Lackington had been seized with an attack resembling apoplexy, and for several hours remained in great danger. She had detained the letter to give the latest tidings before the post closed, and ultimately decided on not dispatching it till the next day. The following morning's communication was a minute account of medical treatment, the bleedings, the blisterings, the watchings, and the anxieties of a sick-bed, with all the vacillating changes that mark the course of malady, concluding with these words: "The doctors are not without hopes, but confess that their confidence is rather

based on the great strength and energy of his constitution than upon any success that has attended their treatment, from which I may say that up to this no benefit has accrued. So well as I can interpret his utterance, he seems very anxious to see you, and made an effort to write something to you, which of course he could not accomplish. Come out here, therefore, as quickly as possible; the route by Lucerne is, they tell me, the shortest and speediest. If I were to give my own opinion, it would be, that he is better and stronger than yesterday, but I do not perceive the doctors disposed to take this view." After this came a lengthened statement of medical hopes and fears, balanced with all the subtle minuteness known to the "Faculty." They explained to a nicety how if that poor watch were to stop it could not possibly be from any fault of theirs, but either from some vice in its original construction, or some organic change occasioned by time. They demonstrated, in fact, that great as was their art, it was occasionally baffled, but pointed with a proud humility to the onward progress of science, in the calm assurance that doubtless we should one day know all these things, and treat them as successfully as we now do—I am afraid to say what. One thing, however, was sufficiently clear—Lord Lackington's case was as bad as possible, his recovery almost hopeless. On the turn-down of the last page was the following, written in evident haste, if not agitation: "In opening the letters which have arrived since his illness, I am astonished to find many referring to some suit, either meditated or actually instituted, against our right to the title. Surely some deep game of treachery is at work here. He never once alluded to such a possibility to myself, nor had I the slightest suspicion that any pretended claim existed. One of these letters is from Mr. Davenport Dunn, who has, I can see from the tone in which he writes, been long conversant with the transaction, and as evidently inclines to give it a real or feigned importance. Indeed, he refers to a 'compromise' of some sort or other, and strongly impresses the necessity of not letting the affair proceed further. I am actually distracted by such news coming at such a moment. Surely Lackington could never have been weak enough to yield to mere menacé, and have thus encouraged the insolent pretensions of this claim? As you pass through London, call at Fordyce's, somewhere in Furnival's Inn, and just in course of conversation, showing your acquaintance with the subject, learn all you

can on the matter. Fordyce has all our papers, and must necessarily know what weight is due to these pretensions. Above all, however, hasten out here; there is no saying what any day—any hour—may produce. I have no one here to give me a word of advice, or even consolation; for though Lady Grace is with us, she is so wrapt up in her new theological studies—coquetting with Rome as she has been all the summer—that she is perfectly useless.

"Have you any idea who is Terence Driscoll? Some extraordinary notes bearing this signature, ill-written and ill-spelt, have fallen into my hands as I rummaged among the papers, and they are all full of this claim. It is but too plain Lackington suffered these people to terrify him, and this Driscoll's tone is a mixture of the meanest subserviency and outrageous impertinence. It is not unlikely Fordyce may know him. Of course, I need not add one word of caution against your mention of this affair, even to those of your friends with whom you are in closest intimacy. It is really essential not a hint of it should get abroad.

"I have little doubt now, looking back on the past, that anxiety and care about this matter have had a large share in bringing on Lackington's attack. He had been sleepless and uneasy for some time back, showing an eagerness, too, about his letters, and the greatest impatience if any accident delayed the post. Although all my maturer thoughts—indeed, my convictions—reject attaching any importance to this claim, I will not attempt to conceal from you how unhappy it has made me, nor how severely it has affected my nerves."

With one more urgent appeal to lose not an hour in hastening over the Alps, the letter concluded; the single word "weaker," apparently written after the letter was sealed, giving a deep meaning to the whole.

Davis was not satisfied with one perusal of the latter portion of this letter, but read it over carefully a second time; after which, taking a sheet of paper, he wrote down the names of Fordyce and Terence Driscoll. He then opened a directory, and running his eye down a column, came to "Fordyce and Fraude, 7 Furnival's Inn, solicitors." Of Terence Driscolls there were seventeen, but all in trade, tanners, tinmen, last-makers, wharfingers, and so on; not one upon whom Davis could fix the likelihood of the correspondence with the viscount. He then walked the room, cigar in mouth, for about an hour, after which he sat down and wrote the note to Beecher which we have given in a former chapter, with di-

rections to call upon Stein, the money-lender, and then hasten away from Aix as speedily as possible. This finished, he addressed another and somewhat longer epistle to Lazarus Stein himself, of which latter document this true history has no record.

We perhaps owe an apology to our reader for inverting in our narrative the actual order of these events. It might possibly have been more natural to have preceded the account of Beecher's reception of the letter by the circumstances we have just detailed. We selected the present course, however, to avoid the necessity of that continual change of scene, alike wearisome to him who reads as to him who writes; and, as we are about to sojourn in Mr. Davis's company for some time to come, we have deferred the explanation to a time when it should form part of a regular series of events. Nor are we sorry at the opportunity of asking the reader to turn once again to that brief note, and mark its contents. Though Davis was fully impressed with the conviction that Lord Lackington's days were numbered, though he felt that, at any moment, some chance rumor, some flying report, might inform Beecher what great change was about to come over his fortunes, yet this note is written in all the seeming carelessness of a gossiping humor: he gives the latest news of the turf, he alludes to Beecher's new entanglements at home, to his own newly-discovered martingale for the play-table, trusting to the one line about "Benson's people" to make Beecher hasten away from Aix, and from the chance of hearing that his brother was hopelessly ill. While Grog penned these lines he would have given—if he had it—ten thousand pounds that Beecher was beside him. Ay, willingly had he given it, and more too, that Beecher might be where no voice could whisper to him the marvelous change that any moment might cause in his destiny. O ye naturalists, who grow poetical over the grub and the butterfly, what is there, I ask ye, in the transformation at all comparable with that when the younger brother, the man of strait and small fortune, springs into the peer, exchanging a life of daily vicissitudes, cheap dinners and duns, dubious companionships and high discounts, for the assured existence, the stately banquets, the proud friendships, the pomp and circumstance of a lord? In a moment he soars out of the troubled atmosphere of debts and disabilities, and floats into the balmy region whose very sorrows never wear an unbecoming mourning.

Grog's note was thus a small specimen of what the great Talleyrand used to call the perfection of dispatch-writing, "not the best thing that could be said on the subject, but simply that which would produce the effect you desired." Having sent off this to Beecher, he then telegraphed to his man of business, Mr. Peach, to ascertain at Fordyce's the latest accounts of Lord Lackington's health, and answer "by wire."

It was far into the night when Davis betook himself to bed, but not to sleep. The complications of the great game he was playing had for him all the interest of the play-table. The kind of excitement he gloried in was to find himself pitted against others—wily, subtle, and deep-scheming as himself—to see some great stake on the board, and to feel that it must be the prize of the best player. With the gambler's superstition, he kept constantly combining events with dates and eras, recalling what of good or ill-luck had marked certain periods of his life. He asked himself if September had usually been a fortunate month? did the 20th imply anything? what influence might Holy Paul exert over his destiny? was he merely unlucky himself, or did he bring evil fortune upon others? If he suffered himself to dwell upon such "vain auguries" as these, they still exerted little other sway over his mind than to nerve it to greater efforts; in fact, he consulted these signs as a physician might investigate certain symptoms, which, if not of moment enough to call for special treatment, were yet indicative of hidden mischief.

His gambling experiences had given him the ready tact, by a mere glance around the table, to recognize those with whom the real struggle should be waged; to detect, in a second, the deep head, the crafty intelligence—that marvelous blending of caution with rashness that make the gamester; and in the same spirit he now turned over in thought each of those with whom he was now about to contend, and muttered the name of Davenport Dunn over and over. "Could we only 'hit it off' together, what a game might we not play!" was his last reflection ere he fell off to sleep.

CHAPTER LXX.

A DISCURSIVE CONVERSATION.

DAVIS was surprised, and something more, as he entered the breakfast room

the next morning to find the Rev. Paul Classon already seated at the table, calmly arranging certain little parallelograms of bread and butter and sardines. No signs of discomfiture or shame showed themselves in that calmly benevolent countenance. Indeed, as he arose and extended his hand, there was an air of bland protection in the gesture perfectly soothing.

"You came back in a pretty state last night," said Davis, roughly.

"Overtaken, Kit, overtaken. It was a piece of good news rather than the grape juice did the mischief. As the poet says,

"Good tidings flowed upon his heart
Like a sea o'er a barren shore,
And the pleasant waves refreshed the spot
So parched and bleak before."

The fact is, Kit, you brought me luck. Just as I reached the post-office, I saw a letter addressed to the Rev. Paul Classon, announcing that I had not been accepted as Chaplain to the great hydropathic Institution at Como! and, to commemorate the event, I celebrated in wine the triumphs of water! You got the letters all safely?"

"Little thanks to you if I did; nor am I yet certain how many may have dropped out on the road."

"Stay—I have a memorandum here," said Paul, opening his little note-book. "Four, with London post-marks, to Captain Christopher; two from Brussels for the same; a large packet for the Hon. Annesley Beecher. That's the whole list."

"I got these?" said Grog, gruffly; but why, might I ask, could you not have kept sober till you got back here?"

"He who dashes his enthusiasm with caution, waters the liquor of life. How do we soar above the common ills of existence save by yielding to those glorious impulses of the heart, which say, 'Be happy!'"

"Keep the sermon for the cripples at the water cure," said Davis, savagely. "When are you to be there?"

"By the end of the month. I mentioned the time myself. It would be as soon, I thought, as I could manage to have my divinity library out from England."

The sly drollery of his eye as he spoke, almost extorted a half smile from Davis.

"Let me see," muttered Grog, as he arose and lighted his cigar, "We are, today, the 21st, I believe. No, you can't be there so early. I shall need you somewhere about the first week in October; it might chance to be earlier. You mustn't

remain here, however, in the interval. You'll have to find some place in the neighborhood, about fifteen or twenty miles off."

"There's Höchst on the Lahn, a pleasant spot, eighteen miles from this."

"Höchst be it; but, mark me, no more of last night's doings."

"I pledge my word," said Paul, solemnly. "Need I say, it is as good as my bond?"

"About the same, I suspect; but I'll give you *mine*, too," said Davis with a fierce energy. "If by any low dissipation or indiscretion of yours, you thwart the plans I am engaged in, I'll leave you to starve out the rest of your life here."

"So swear we all as liegemen true,
So swear to live and die!"

cried out Paul, with a most theatrical air in voice and gesture.

"You know a little of everything, I fancy," said Davis, in a more good-humored tone. "What do you know of law?"

"Of law?" said Paul, as he helped himself to a dish of smoking outlets—"If it be the law of debtor and creditor, false arrest, forcible possession, battery, or fraudulent bankruptcy, I am indifferently well-skilled. Nor am I ignorant in divorce cases, separate maintenance, and right of guardianship. Equity, I should say, is my weak point."

"I believe you," said Davis, with a grin, for he but imperfectly understood the speech. "But it is of another kind of law I'm speaking. What do you know about disputed title to a Peerage? Have you any experience in such cases?"

"Yes; I have ransacked registries—rummaged out grave-stones in my time. I very nearly burned my fingers, too, with a baptismal certificate that turned out to be—what shall I call it?—unauthentic!"

"You forged it!" said Grog, gruffly.

"They disputed its correctness, and possibly with some grounds for their opinion. Indeed," added he, carelessly, "it was the first thing of the kind I had ever done, and it was slovenly—slovenly."

"It would have been transportation!" said Davis, gravely.

"With hard labor," added Classon, sipping his tea.

"At all events, you understand something of these sort of cases?"

"Yes; I have been concerned, one way or another, with five. They are interesting when you take to them; there are so many, so to say, surprises—always something turning up you never looked for—

somebody's father that never had a child—somebody's mother that never was married. Then people die—say a hundred and fifty years ago—and no proof the death can be made out; or you build wonderfully upon an act of Parliament, and only find out at the last hour that it had been repealed. These traits give a great deal of excitement to the suit. I used to enjoy them much when I was younger?" And Mr. Classon sighed as if he had been calling up memories of cricket-matches, steeple-chases, or the polka—pleasures that advancing years had rudely robbed him of.

Davis sat deep in thought for some time. Either he had not fully made up his mind to open an unreserved confidence with his revered friend, or, which is perhaps as likely, he was not in possession of such knowledge as might enable him to state his case.

"The suits, or actions, or whatever you call them," said he, at length, "always drag on for years—don't they?"

"Of course they do; the lawyers take care of that. There are trials at bar, commissions, special examinations before the Masters, arguments before the Peers, appeals against decisions; in fact, it is a question of the purse of the litigants. Like everything else, however, in this world, they've got economy-struck. I remember the time—it was the Bancroft case—they gave me five guineas a day and traveling expenses to go out to Ravenna and take the deposition of an old Marchesa, half-sister of the Dowager, and now, I suppose, they'd say the service was well paid with one-half. Indeed, I may say I had as good as accepted a sort of engagement to go out to the Crimea and examine a young fellow whom they fancy has a claim to a Peerage, and for a mere trifle—fifteen shillings a day and expenses. But they had got my passport stopped here, and I couldn't get away."

"What was the name of the claimant?"

"Here it is," said he, opening his notebook. "Charles Conway, formerly in the 11th Hussars, supposed to be serving as orderly on the staff of General La Marmora. I have a long letter of instructions Froode forwarded me, and I suspect it is a strong case got up to intimidate."

"What is the Peerage sought for?" asked Davis, with an assumed indifference.

"I can tell you in five minutes if you have any curiosity on the subject," said Paul rising. "The papers are all in my writing desk."

"Fetch them," said Davis, as he walked to the window and looked out.

Classon soon re-entered the room with a large open letter in his hand.

"There's the map of the country!" said he, throwing it down on the table. "What would call the fair odds in such a case, Kit—a private soldier's chance of a Peerage that has been undisturbed since Edward the Third?"

"About ten thousand to one, I'd call it."

"I agree with you, particularly since Froode is in it. He only takes up these cases to make a compromise. They're always 'settled.' He's a wonderful fellow to sink the chamber and charge the mine, but he never explodes—never!"

"So that Froode can always be squared, eh?" asked Davis.

"Always." Classon now ran his eyes over the letter, and, mumbling the lines half aloud, said, "'In which case the Conways of Abergeldy, deriving from the second son, would take precedence of the Beecher branch.' The case is this," added he, aloud: "Viscount Lackington's Peerage was united to the estates by an act of Edward; a motion for a repeal of this was made in Elizabeth's time, and lost—some aver the reverse; now the claimant, Conway, relies upon the original act, since in pursuit of the estates he invalidates the title. It's a case to extort money, and a good round sum, too. I'd say Lord Lackington might give twenty thousand to have all papers and documents of the claim surrendered into his hands."

"A heavy sum, twenty thousand," muttered Davis, slowly.

"So it is, Kit; but when you come to tot up suits at Nisi Prius, suits in Equity, searches at the Herald's Office, and hearings before the lords, you'll see it's a downright saving."

"But could Lackington afford this? What is he worth?"

"They call the English property twelve thousand a year, and he has a small estate in Ireland besides. In fact, it is out of that part of the property the mischief has come. This Conway's claim was discovered in some old country house there, and Froode is only partially instructed in it."

"And now, Paul," said Davis, slowly, "if you got a commission to square this here affair and make all comfortable, how would you go about it?"

"Acting for which party, do you mean?" asked Paul.

"I mean for the Lackingtons."

"Well, there are two ways. I'd send for Froode, and say, 'What's the lowest figure for the whole?' or I'd despatch a trusty fellow to the Crimea to watch Conway, and

see what approaches they are making to him. Of course they'll send a man out there, and it oughtn't to be hard to get hold of him, or, if not himself, of all his papers and instructions."

"That looks business-like," said Grog, encouragingly.

"After all, Kit, these things, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, are only snaps of the percussion-cap. There's scarcely a Peerage in England is not menaced with an attempt of the kind; but such is the intermarriage—such the close tie of affinity between them—they stand manfully to the fellow in possession. They know in their hearts, if once they let the world begin to pick out a stone here or there, the whole wall may come tumbling down, and so they say. 'Here's one of us since Henry II.'s time going to be displaced for some upstart fellow none of us ever heard of.' What signifies legitimacy that dates seven centuries back, in favor of one probably a shoemaker, or a house-painter? They won't stand that, Kit, and reasonably enough, too. I suppose you've heard all about this case from Beecher?"

"Well, I *have* heard something about it," said Grog, in confusion, for the suddenness of the question disconcerted him, "but *he* don't care about it."

"Very likely not. If Lackington were to have a son, it wouldn't concern him much."

"Not alone that, but he doesn't attach any importance to the claim; he says it's all got up to extort money."

"What of that? When a highwayman stops you with the same errand, doesn't the refusal occasionally provoke him to use force? I know very few things so hard to deal with as menaces to extort money. Life is, after all, very like the game the Americans call 'Poker,' where the grand secret is, never to 'brag' too far on a bad hand. What was *your* part in this business, Kit?" asked he, after a brief silence.

"How do you mean by *my* part?" rejoined Davis, gruffly.

"I mean, how were you interested? Do you hold any of Lackington's paper?—have you got any claims on the reversion?—in a word, does it in any way concern you which king reigns in Israel?"

"It might, or it might not," said Grog, dryly. "Now for a question to *you*. Could you manage to get employed in the affair—to be sent out after this Conway—or is it too late?"

"It might, or it might not," said Clason, with a significant imitation of the other's tone and manner. Davis under-

stood the sarcasm in a moment, and in a voice of some irritation, said,

"Don't you try to come the whip-hand over *me*, Holy Paul. If there be anything to do in this matter, it is *I*, and not *you*, will be paymaster; so much for this, so much for that—there's the terms!"

"It is such dealings I like best," said Clason, blandly. "Men would have benefited largely in this world had Probity been parcelled out as task-work instead of being made daily labor."

"I suspect that neither you nor I would have had much employment either way," said Davis, with a bitter laugh. "But come, you must be stirring. You'll have to be off out of this before the afternoon. The Rhine steamer touches at Neuweid at three, and I expect my daughter by this boat. I don't want her to see you just yet awhile, Paul. You'll start for Höchst, put up at the inn there, and communicate with me at once, so that I may be able to reckon upon you when needed. It were as well, too, that you'd write a line to Froode, and say, that on second thoughts that expedition to the Crimea might suit; explore the way, in fact, and let me know the tidings. As to terms," said Grog—for the other's blank look expressed hesitation—"if *I* say, 'Go,' *you* shall say, 'For what?'"

"I do love these frank and open dealings," said Paul, warmly.

"Look here," said Davis, as the other was about to leave the room: "old Joe Morris, of Mincing-lane, made his fortune by buying up all the forged bills of exchange he could lay hands on, well knowing that the fellows he could hang or transport any day would be trusty allies. Now, I have all my life committed every critical thing to somebody or other that no other living man would trust with a sixpence. They stood to *me* as I stood to *them*, and they know why. Need I tell you that why?"

"No necessity in the world to do so," said Paul, blandly.

"That's enough," said Davis. "Come to me when you're ready, and I'll have some cash for you."

CHAPTER LXXI.

A FAMILY MEETING.

ALONG a road pleasantly shaded by linden trees, Davis strolled leisurely that afternoon to meet his daughter. It was a mellow, autumnal day—calm, silent, and

half sombre—one of those days in which the tranquil aspect of nature has an influence of sad but soothing import, and even the least meditative minds are led to reflection. Down the deep valley, where the clear trout stream eddied along, while the leafy chestnut-trees threw their shadows over the water; over the rich pasture-lands, where the spotted cattle roamed; high up the blue mountains, whose snowy summits mingled with the clouds, Davis wandered with his eyes, and felt, he knew not why or how, a something of calming, subduing effect upon a brain racked with many a scheme—wearied with many a plot.

As he gazed down upon that fair scene where form and color and odor were blended into one beauteous whole, a struggling effort of fancy sent through his mind the question, "Is this, after all, the real prize of life? Is this peaceful existence worth all the triumphs that we strive and fight for?" And then came the thought, "Could this be lasting, what would a nature like mine become, thus left in rust and disuse? Could I live? or should I enjoy life without that eternal hand-to-hand conflict with my fellow-men, on which skill and ready wit are exercised?" He pondered long over this notion, nor could he satisfy himself with any conclusion.

He thought he could remember a time when he would thoroughly have liked all this—when he could have taken leave of the busy world without one regret, and made the great race of life a mere "walk over;" and now that he had tasted the poisonous fascination of that combat, where man is pitted against man, and where even the lust of gain is less stimulating than a deadly sense of jealous rivalry, it was too late—too late! How strange, too, did it seem to him, as he looked back upon his wild and stormy life, with all its perils and all its vicissitudes, to think that an existence so calm, so uneventful, and so safe, could yet be had—that a region existed where craft could find no exercise, where subtlety might be in disuse! It was to him like a haven that he was rejoiced to know—a harbor whose refuge, some one day or other, he would search out; but there was yet one voyage to make—one grand venture—which, if successful, would be the crowning fortune of his life!

The sharp crack crack of a postillion's whip started him from his musings, and, looking up, he saw a post-carriage approaching at full speed. He waved his hat as the carriage came near for the men to

draw up, and the next moment Lizzy Davis was in her father's arms. He kissed her twice, and then, holding her back, gazed with proud delight at her beautiful features, never more striking than in that moment of joyful meeting.

"How well you are looking, Lizzie!" said he, with a thick utterance.

"And you, too, dear papa," said she, caressingly. "This quiet rural life seems to have agreed wonderfully with you. I declare you look five years younger for it, does he not, Mr. Beecher?"

"Ah, Beecher, how are you?" cried Davis, warmly shaking the other's hand. "This is jolly, to be all together again," said he, as, drawing his daughter's arm within his own, and taking Beecher on the other side, he told the postillions to move forward, while they would find their way on foot."

"How did you ever hit upon this spot?" asked Beecher; "we couldn't find it on the map."

"I came through here some four-and-twenty years ago, and I never forget a place, nor a countenance. I thought at the time it might suit me, some one day or other, to remember, and you see I was right. You are grown fatter, Lizzy; at least I fancy so. But come, tell me about your life at Aix—was it pleasant? was the place gay?"

"It was charming, papa!" cried she, in ecstasy; "had you only been with us, I could not have come away. Such delightful rides and drives, beautiful environs, and then the *Cursaal* of an evening, with all its odd people—not that my guardian, here, fancied so much my laughing at them."

"Well, you didn't place much restraint upon yourself, I must say."

"I was reserved even to prudery; I was the caricature of Anglo-Saxon propriety," said she, with affected austerity.

"And what did they think of you, eh?" asked Davis, trying to subdue the pride that would, in spite of him, twinkle in his eye.

"I was the belle of the season. I assure you it is perfectly true!"

"Come, come, Lizzy——"

"Well, ask Mr. Beecher. Be honest now, and confess frankly, were you not sulky at driving out with me the way the people stared? Didn't you complain that you never expected to come home from the play without a duel, or something of the kind, on your hands? Did you not induce me to ruin my toilette just to escape what you so delicately called 'our notoriety?' Oh, wretched man! what triumphs did I not

relinquish out of compliance to your taste for obscurity!"

"By Jove! we divided public attention with Ferouk Khan and his wives. I don't see that my taste for obscurity obtained any brilliant success."

"I never heard of such black ingratitude!" cried she, in mock indignation. "I assure you, pa, I was a martyr to his English notions, which, to *me*, seem to have had their origin in Constantinople."

"Poor Beecher!" said Davis, laughingly.

"Poor Beecher, no, but happy Beecher, envied by thousands. Not, indeed," added she, with a smile, "that his appearance at this moment suggests any triumphant satisfaction. Oh, papa, you should have seen him when the Russian Prince Ezerboffsky asked me to dance, or when the Archduke Albrecht offered me his horses; or, better still, the evening the Margrave lighted up his conservatory just to let me see it."

"Your guardianship had its anxieties, I perceive," said Davis, dryly.

"I think it had," said Beecher, sighing. "There were times I'd have given five thousand, if I had it, that she had been safe under your own charge."

"My dear fellow, I'd have given fifty," said Davis, "if I didn't know she was just in as good hands as my own." There was a racy heartiness in this speech that thrilled through Beecher's heart, and he could scarcely credit his ears that it was Grog spoke it. "Ay, Beecher," added he, as he drew the other's arm closer to his side, "there was just one man—one single man in Europe—I'd have trusted with the charge."

"Really, gentlemen," said Lizzy, with a malicious sparkle of the eye, "I am lost in my conjectures whether I am to regard myself as a sort of human Koo-i-noor—a priceless treasure—or something so very difficult to guard, so perilous to protect, as can scarcely be accounted a flattery. Say, I entreat of you, to which category do I belong?"

"A little to each, I should say—eh, Beecher?" cried Grog, laughingly.

"Oh, don't appeal to *him*, papa. *He* only wants to vaunt his heroism the higher, because the fortress he guarded was so easy of assault!"

Beecher was ill fitted to engage in such an encounter, and stammered out some common place apology for his own seeming want of gallantry.

"She's too much for us, Beecher—too much for us. It's a pace we can't keep up," muttered Grog in the other's ear.

And Beecher nodded a ready assent to the speech.

"Well," said Lizzy, gaily, "now that your anxieties are well over, I do entreat of you to unbend a little, and let us see the lively, light-hearted Mr. Annesley Beecher, of whose pleasant ways I have heard so much."

"I used to be light-hearted enough, once, eh, Davis?" said Beecher with a sigh. "When you saw me first at the Derby—of let me see, I don't remember the year, but it was when Danby's mare Petrilla won—with eighteen to one 'given and taken' against her, the day of the race—Brown Davy, the favorite, coming in a bad third—he died the same night."

"Was he 'nobbled'?" asked Lizzy, dryly. "What do you mean?" cried Grog, gruffly. "Where did you learn that word?"

"Oh, I'm quite strong in your choice vocabulary," said she, laughingly; "and you are; 'ot to fancy that in the dissipations of Aix I have forgotten the cares of my education. My guardian there set me a task every morning—a page of Burke's Peerage and a column of the *Racing Calendar*; and for the ninth Baron of Fitzfoodle, or the fifteenth winner of the Diddleworth, you may call on me at a moment."

The angry shadow on Davis's brow gradually faded away, and he laughed a real, honest, and good-humored laugh.

"What do you say to the Count, Lizzy?" asked he next. "There was a fine gentleman, wasn't he?"

"There was the ease and the self-possession of good breeding without the manners. He was amusing from his own self-content, and a sort of latent impression that he was taking you in, and when one got tired of that, he became downright stupid."

"True as a book, every word of it!" cried Beecher, in hearty gratitude, for he detested the man, and was envious of his small accomplishments.

"His little caressing ways, too, ceased to be flatteries, when you saw that, like the cheap bonbons scattered at a carnival, they were made for the million."

"Hit him again, he hasn't got no friends!" said Beecher, with an assumed slang in his tone.

"But worst of all was that mockery of good-nature—a false air of kindness about him. It was a spurious coinage, so cleverly devised that you look at every good guinea afterwards with distrust."

"How she knows him—how she reads him!" cried Davis, in delight.

"He was very large print, papa," said she, smiling.

"Confound me!" cried Beecher, "if I didn't think you liked him, you used to receive him so graciously; and I'll wager he thinks himself a prime favorite with you."

"So he may, if it give him any pleasure," said she, with a careless laugh.

Davis marked the expression of Beecher's face as she said these words; he saw how that distrustful nature was alarmed, and he hastened to repair the mischief.

"I am sure you never affected to feel any regard for him, Lizzy?" said Davis.

"Regard for him!" said she, haughtily; "I should think not! Such people as he are like the hired horses that every one uses, and only ask that they should serve for the day they have taken them."

"There, Beecher," said Davis, with a laugh. "I sincerely hope she's not going to discuss *your* character or *mine*."

"By Jove! I hope not." And in the tone in which Beecher uttered this there was an earnestness that made the other laugh heartily.

"Well, here we are. This is your home for the present," said Davis, as he welcomed them to the little inn, whose household were all marshalled to receive them with fitting deference.

The arrangements within doors were even better than the picturesque exterior promised, and when Lizzy came down to dinner she was in raptures about her room, its neatness even to elegance, and glorious views that opened before the windows.

"I'm splendidly lodged, too," said Beecher; "and they have given me a dressing-room, with a little winding stair to the river, and a bath in the natural rock. It is downright luxury, all this."

Davis smiled contentedly as he listened. For days past had he been busied with these preparations, determined to make the spot appear in all its most favorable colors. Let us do him the justice to own that his cares met a full success. Flowers abounded in all the rooms, and the perfumed air, made to seem tremulous by the sounds of falling water, was inexpressibly calming after the journey. The dinner, too, would have done honor to a more pretentious "hostel;" and the Steinberger, a cabinet wine, that the host would not part with except for "love as well as money," was perfection. Better than all these—better than the fresh trout with its gold and azure speckles—better than the delicate Rehbraten with its luscious sauce—better than the red partridges in their bed of truffles, and a dessert whose grapes rivalled those of Fontainebleau,—better, I say, than all, was the happy temper of the

hour! Never were three people more disposed for enjoyment. To Lizzy, it was the oft dreamed-of home, the quiet repose of a spot surrounded with all the charm of scenery, coming, too, just as the dissipations of gaiety had begun to weary and pall upon her. To Beecher, it was the first moment of all his life in which he tasted peace. Here were neither duns nor bailiffs. It was a Paradise where no writ had ever wandered, nor the word "outlawry" had ever been uttered. As for Davis, if he had not actually won his game, he held in his hand the trump card that he knew must gain it. What signified, now, a day or even a week more or less; the labor of his long ambition was all but completed, and he saw the goal reached that he had striven for years to attain.

Nor were they less pleased with each other. Never had Lizzy seemed to Beecher's eyes more fascinating than now. In all the blaze of full dress she never looked more beautiful than in that simple muslin, with the sky-blue ribbon in her glossy hair, and the bouquet of moss roses coquettishly placed above her ear, for—I mention it out of accuracy—she wore her hair drawn back, as was the mode about a century ago, and was somewhat ingenious in her imitation of that mock-shepherdess "coiffure" so popular with fine ladies of that time. She would have ventured on a "patch" if it were not out of fear for her father; not, indeed, that the delicate fairness of her skin, or the dazzling brilliancy of her eyes, needed the slightest aid from art. Was it with some eye to keeping a toilette that she wore a profusion of rings, many of great price and beauty? I know not her secret; if I did, I should assuredly tell it, for I suspect none of her coquetries were without their significance. To complete Beecher's satisfaction, Davis was in a mood of good humor, such as he had never seen before. Not a word of contradiction—not one syllable of disparagement fell from his lips, that Beecher usually watched with an almost childish terror, dreading reproof at every moment, and not being over certain when his opinions would pass without a censure. Instead of this, Grog was conciliating even to gentleness, constantly referred to Beecher what he thought of this or that, and even deferred to his better judgment on points whereon he might have been supposed to be more conversant. Much valued reader, has it ever been your fortune in life to have had your opinions on law blandly approved of by ex-chancellor, your notions of medicine courteously confirmed by a great physician, or your

naval tactics endorsed by an admiral of the fleet? If so, you can fully appreciate the ecstasy of Annesley Beecher as he found all his experiences of the sporting world corroborated by the "Court above." This was the gold medal he had set his heart on for years—this the great prize of all his life; and now he had won it, and he was really a "sharp fellow." There is an intense delight in the thought of having realized a dream of ambition, of which, while our hearts gave us the assurance of success, the world at large only scoffed at our attempting. To be able to say, "Yes, here I am, despite all your forebodings and all your predictions—I knew it was 'in me!'" is a very proud thing, and such a moment of vaingloriousness is pardonable enough.

How enjoyable at such a moment of triumph was it to hear Lizzy sing and play, making that miserable old piano discourse in a guise it had never dreamed of! She was in one of those moods wherein she blended the wildest flights of fancy with dashes of quaint humor; now, breathing forth a melody of Spohr's in accents of thrilling pathos, now, hitting off in improvised doggrel a description of Aix and its company, with mimics of their voice and manner irresistibly droll. In these imitations the Count, and even Beecher himself, figured, till Grog, fairly worn out with laughter, had to entreat her to desist.

As for Beecher, he was a good-tempered fellow, and the little raillery at himself took nothing from the pleasure of the description, and he laughed in ready acknowledgment of many a little trait of his own manner that he never suspected could have been detected by another.

"Ain't she wonderful—ain't she wonderful!" exclaimed Grog, as she strolled out into the garden, and left them alone together.

"What I can't make out is, she has no blank days," said Beecher. "She was just as you saw her there, the whole time we were at Aix; and while she's rattling away at the piano, and going on with all manner of fun, just ask her a serious question—I don't care about what—and she'll answer you as if she had been thinking of nothing else for the whole day before."

"Had she been born in *your* rank of life, Beecher, where would she be now—tell me that?" said Davis; and there was an almost fierce energy in the words as he spoke them.

"I can tell you one thing," cried Beecher, in a transport of delight, "there's no rank too high for her this minute."

"Well said, boy—well said," exclaimed Davis, warmly; "and here's to her health."

"That generous toast and cheer must have been in honor of myself," said Lizzy, peeping in at the window; "and in acknowledgment I beg to invite you both to tea."

CHAPTER LXXII.

A SAUNTER BY MOONLIGHT.

LIZZY DAVIS had retired to her room, somewhat weary after the day's journey, not altogether unexcited by her meeting with her father. How was it that there was a gentleness, almost a tenderness in his manner she had never known before? The short, stern address, the abrupt question, the stare piercing and defiant of one who seemed ever to distrust what he heard, were all replaced by a tone of quiet and easy confidence, and a look that bespoke perfect truthfulness.

"Have I only seen him hitherto in moments of trial and excitement? are these the real traits of his nature? is it the hard conflict of life calls forth the sterner features of his character? and might he, in happier circumstances, be ever kind and confiding, as I see him now?" What a thrill of ecstasy did the thought impart! What a realization of the home she had often dreamed of! "He mistakes me, too," said she aloud, "if he fancies that my heart is set upon some high ambition. A life of quiet obscurity, in some spot peaceful and unknown as this, would suffice for all my wishes. I want no triumphs—I covet no rivalries." A glance at herself in the glass, at this moment, sent the deep color to her cheek, and she blushed deeply. Was it that those bright, flashing eyes, that fair and haughty brow, and those lips tremulous with proud significance, gave a denial to these words? Indeed, it seemed as much, for she quickly added, "Not that I would fly the field, or ingloriously escape the struggle—Who's there?" cried she, quickly, as a low tap came to the door.

"It is I, Lizzy. I heard you still moving about, and I thought I'd propose half an hour's stroll in the moonlight before bed. What do you say to it?"

"I should like it of all things, papa," cried she, opening the door at once.

"Throw a shawl across your shoulders, child," said he; "the air is not always free from moisture. We'll go along by the riverside."

A bright moon in a sky without a cloud lit up the landscape, and by the strongly-marked contrast of light and shadow imparted a most striking effect to scene wild, broken, and irregular. Fantastically shaped rocks broke the current of the stream; at every moment gnarled and twisted roots straggled along the shelving banks, and in the uncertain light assumed goblin shapes and forms, the plashing stream, as it rushed, by appearing to give motion to the objects around. Nor was the semblance all unreal, for here and there a pliant branch rose and fell on the surging water like the arm of some drowning swimmer.

The father and daughter walked along for some time in utter silence, the thoughts of each filled with the scene before them. Lizzy fancied it was a conflict of river gods—some great Titanic war, where angry giants were the combatants; or, again, as fairer forms succeeded, they seemed a group of nymphs bathing in the soft moonlight. As for Grog, it reminded him of a row at Ascot, where the swell-mob smashed the police; and so strikingly did it call up the memory of the event, that he laughed aloud, and heartily.

“Do tell me what you are laughing at, pa,” said she, entreatingly.

“It was something that I saw long ago—something I was reminded of by those trees yonder, bobbing up and down with the current.”

“But what was it?” asked she, more eagerly; for even yet the memory kept him laughing.

“Nothing that could interest you, girl,” said he bluntly; and then, as if ashamed of the rudeness of his speech, he added, “though I have seen a good deal of life, Lizzy, there’s but little of it I could recall for either your benefit or instruction.”

“Lizzy was silent; she wished him to speak on, but did not choose to question him. Strangely enough, too, though he shunned the theme, he had been glad if she had led him on to talk of it.

After a long pause he sighed heavily, and said, “I suppose everyone, if truth were told, would have rather a sad tale to tell of the world when he comes to my age. It don’t improve upon acquaintance, I promise you. Not that I want to discourage *you* about it, my girl. You’ll come to my way of thinking one of these days, and it will be quite soon enough.”

“And have you really found men so false and worthless as you say?”

“I’ll tell you in one word the whole story, Lizzy. The fellows that are born to a good station and good property are

all fair and honest, if they like it; the rest of the world must be rogues, whether they like it or not.”

“This is a very disenchanting picture you put before me.”

“Here’s how it is, girl,” said he, warming with his subject. “Every man in the world is a gambler; let him rail against dice, racing, cards, or billiards, he has a game of his own in his heart, and he’s playing for a seat in the cabinet, a place in the colonies, a bishopric, or the command of a regiment. The difference is, merely, that your regular play-man admits chance into his calculations, the other fellows don’t; they pit pure skill against the table, and trust to their knowledge of the game.”

She sighed deeply, but did not speak.

“And the women are the same,” resumed he; “some scheming to get their husbands high office, some intriguing for honors or Court favor—all of them ready to do a sharp thing—to make a hit on the stock exchange.”

“And are there none above these mean and petty subterfuges?” cried she indignantly.

“Yes; the few I have told you—they who come into the world to claim the stakes. They can afford to be high-minded, and generous, and noble hearted, as much as they please. They are booked ‘all right,’ and need never trouble their heads about the race; and that is the real reason, girl, why these men have an ascendancy over all others. They are not driven to scramble for a place—they have no struggles to encounter—the crowd makes way for them as they want to pass; and if they have anything good, ay, or even good-looking, about them, what credit don’t they get for it?”

“But surely there must be many a lowly walk where a man with contentment can maintain himself honorably, and even proudly?”

“I don’t know of them, if there be,” said Davis, sulkily. “Lawyers, parsons, merchants, are all, I fancy, pretty much alike—all on ‘the dodge.’”

“And Beecher—poor Beecher?” broke in Lizzy. And there was a blended pity and tenderness in the tone that made it very difficult to say what her questions really implied.

“Why do you call him poor Beecher?” asked he, quickly. “He ain’t so poor in one sense of the word.”

“It was in no allusion to his fortune I spoke. I was thinking of him solely with reference to his character.”

"And he is poor Beecher, is he, then?" asked Davis, half sternly.

If she did not reply, it was rather in the fear of offending her father, whose manner, so suddenly changing, apprised her of an interest in the subject she had never suspected.

"Look here, Lizzy," said he, drawing her arm more closely to his side, while he bespoke her attention; "men born in Beecher's class don't need to be clever, they have no necessity for the wiles, and schemes, and subtleties, that—that fellows like myself, in short, must practise. What they want is good address, pleasing manners—all the better if they be good looking. It don't require genius to write a cheque on one's banker; there is no great talent needed to say 'Yes,' or 'No,' in the House of Lords. The world—I mean their own world—likes them all the more if they haven't got great abilities. Now Beecher is just the fellow to suit them."

"He is not a peer, surely?" asked she, hastily.

"No, he ain't yet, but he may be one any day. He is as sure of the peerage as—I am not! and then, poor Beecher—as you called him a while ago—becomes the Lord Viscount Lackington, with twelve or fourteen thousand a year! I tell you, girl, that of all the trades men follow, the very best, to enjoy life, is to be an English Lord with a good fortune."

"And is it true, as I have read," asked Lizzy, "that this high station, so fenced around by privileges, is a prize open to all who have talent or ability to deserve it? That men of humble origin, if they be gifted with high qualities, and devote them ardently to their country's service, are adopted from time to time into that noble brotherhood?"

"All rubbish; don't believe a word of it. It's a flam and a humbug—a fiction like the old story about an Englishman's house being his castle, or that balderdash, 'no man need eriminate himself.' They're always inventing 'wise saws' like these in England, and they get abroad and are believed at last, just by dint of repeating. Here's the true state of the case," said he, coming suddenly to a halt, and speaking with greater emphasis. "Here I stand, Christopher Davis, with as much wit under the crown of my hat as any noble lord on the woosack, and I might just as well try to turn myself into a horse and be first favorite for the Oaks, as attempt to become a peer of Great Britain. It ain't to be done, girl—it ain't to be done!"

"But, surely, I have heard of men sud-

denly raised to rank and title for the services——"

"So you do. They want a clever lawyer, now and then, to help them on with a peerage case; or, if the country grows forgetful of them, they attract some notice by asking a lucky general to join them; and even then they do it the way a set old ladies would offer a seat in the coach to a stout-looking fellow on a road beset with robbers—they hope he'll fight for 'em; but, after all, it takes about three generations before one of these new hands gets regularly recognized by the rest."

"What haughty pride!" exclaimed she, but nothing in her tone implied reprobation.

"Ain't it haughty pride?" cried he; "but if you only knew how it is nurtured in them, how they are worshiped! They walk down St. James's street, and the policeman elbows me out of the way to make room for them; they stroll into Tattersall's, and the very horses cock their tails and step higher as they trot past; they go into church, and the parson clears his throat and speaks up in a fine round voice for them. It's only because the blessed sun is not an English institution, or he'd keep all his warmth and light for the peerage."

"And have they, who render all this homage, no shame for their self-abasement?"

"Shame! why the very approach to them is an honor. When a lord in the ring at Newmarket nods his head to me and says, 'How dy'e do, Davis?' my pals—my acquaintances, I mean—are twice as respectful to me for the rest of the day. Not that *I* care for that," added he, sternly; "I know *them* a deuced sight better than *they* fancy!—far better than *they* know *me*!"

Lizzy fell into a reverie; her thoughts went back to a conversation she had once held with Beecher about the habits of the great world, and all the difficulties to its approach.

"I wish I could dare to put a question to you, papa," said she, at last.

"Do so, girl. I'll do my best to answer it."

"And not be angry at my presumption—not be offended with me?"

"Not a bit. Be frank with me, and you'll find me just as candid."

"What I would ask, then, is this—and mind, papa, it is no mere curiosity, no idle indulgence of a passing whim I would ask it, but for sake of self-guidance and direction—who are we?—what are we?"

The blood rose to Davis's face and tem-

ples till he became crimson, his nostrils dilated, and his eyes flashed with a wild lustre. Had the bitterest insult of an enemy been hurled at his face before the open world, his countenance could not have betrayed an expression of more intense passion.

“By Heaven!” said he, with a long-drawn breath, “I didn’t think there was one in Europe would have asked me that much to my face. There’s no denying it, girl, you have my own pluck in you.”

“If I ever thought it would have moved you so——”

“Only to make me love you the more, girl—to make me know you for my own child in heart and soul,” cried he, pressing her warmly to him.

“But I would not have cost you this emotion, dearest pa——”

“It’s over now; I am as cool as yourself. There’s my hand; there’s not much show of nervousness there. ‘Who are we?’” exclaimed he, fiercely, echoing her question. “I’d like to know how many of that eight-and-twenty millions they say we are in England could answer such a question? There’s a short thick book or two tells about the peerage and baronetage, and says who are they, but as for the rest of us——” A wave of the hand finished the sentence. “My own answer would be that of many another: I’m the son of a man who bore the same name, and who, if alive, would tell the same story. As to what we are, that’s another question,” added he, shrewdly; “though, to be sure, English life and habits have established a very easy way of treating the matter. Everybody with no visible means of support, and who does nothing for his own subsistence, is either a gentleman or a vagrant. If he be positively and utterly unable to do anything for himself, he’s a gentleman; if he can do a stroke of work in some line or other, he’s only a vagrant.”

“And you, papa?” asked she, with an accent as calm and unconcerned as might be.

“I?—I am a little of both, perhaps,” said he, after a pause.

A silence ensued long enough to be painful to each; Lizzy did not dare to repeat her question, although it still remained unanswered, and Davis knew well that he had not met it frankly as he promised. What a severe struggle was that his mind now endured. The hoarded secret of his whole life—the great mystery to which he had sacrificed all the happiness of a home—for which he had consented to estrange himself from his child—training her up

amidst associations and habits every one of which increased the distance between them—there it was now on his lip, a word might reveal it, and by its utterance might be blasted all the fondest hopes his heart had ever cherished. To make Lizzy a lady, to surround her not only with all the wants and requirements of station, but to imbue her mind with sentiments and modes of thought such as befit that condition, had been the devoted labor of his life. For this he had toiled and struggled, contrived, plotted, and schemed for years long. What terrible scenes had he not encountered, with what desperate characters not associated. In the fearful commerce of the play-table there was not a dark passion of the human heart he had not explored—to know men in their worst aspects—in their insolence of triumph, the meanness of their defeat, in their moments of avarice, in their waste—to read their natures so that every start or sigh, a motion of the finger, a quivering of the lip, should have its significance—to perceive as by an instinct where—in the craft or subtlety of each lay, and by the same rapid intuition, to know his weak point also! Men have won high collegiate honors with less intensity of study than he gave to this dark pursuit; men have come out of battle with less peril to life than he faced every day of his existence, and all for one object—all that his daughter might breathe an atmosphere from which he must live excluded, and know a world whose threshold he should never pass. Such was the terrible conflict that now raged within him, as he reviewed the past, and saw to what a narrow issue he had reduced his one chance of happiness. “There she stands now,” thought he, “all that my fondest hopes had ever fashioned her, and who is to say what one word, one single word uttered by my lips, may not make of that noble nature, pure and spotless as it is? How will she bear to hear that her station is a deception? her whole life a lie? that she is the daughter of Grog Davis—the Leg?” Heaven knows with what dexterous artifices he had often met this difficulty as it used to present itself to his mind—how he had seen in what way he could extricate himself—how reconcile his own short-comings with her high-soaring tastes and habits! Whatever such devices he had ever conceived, none came to his aid now, not one offered him the slightest assistance.

Then came another thought—“How long is this deception to be carried on? Am I to wait?” said he, “and if so, for what? Ay, there’s the question, for what?”

Is it that some other may break the news to her, and tell her whose daughter she is?" In that world he knew best he could well imagine with what especial malice such a tale would be revealed. Not that slander need call imagination to its aid. Alas! his life had incidents enough for malignity to gloat over!

His stout arm shook, and his strong frame trembled with a sort of convulsive shudder as these thoughts flashed across his mind.

"Are you cold, dearest pa? Are you ill?" asked she, eagerly.

"No. Why do you ask?" said he, sternly.

"You trembled all over; I was afraid you were not well."

"I'm never ill," said he, in the same tone. "There's a bullet in me somewhere about the hip—they can't make out exactly where—gives me a twinge of pain now and then. Except that, I never knew what ailment means."

"In what battle?"

"It wasn't a battle," broke he in—"it was a duel. It's an old story now, and not worth remembering. There, you need not shudder, girl; the fellow who shot me is alive, though, I must say, he hasn't a very graceful way of walking. Do you ever read the newspapers—did they allow you ever to read them at school?"

"No; but occasionally I used to catch a glance at them in the drawing-room. It was a kind of reading fascinated me intensely, it was so real. But why do you ask me?"

"I don't know why I asked the question," muttered he, half moodily, and hung his head down. "Yes I do," cried he, after a pause. "I wanted to know if you ever saw *my* name—our name—in the public prints."

"Once—only once, and very long ago, I did, and I asked the governess if the name was common in England, and she said, 'yes.' I remember the paragraph that attracted me to this very hour. It was the case of a young man—I forget the name—who shot himself in despair after some losses at play, and the narrative was headed: 'More of Grog Davis!'"

Davis started back, and, in a voice thick and hoarse with passion, cried out:

"And then? What next?" The words were uttered in a voice so fearfully wild that Lizzy stood in a sort of stupefied terror, and unable to reply. "Don't you hear me, girl?" cried he. "I asked you what came next."

"There was an account of an inquest—

some investigation as to how the poor fellow had met his death. I remember little about that. I was only curious to learn who this Grog Davis might be——"

"And they couldn't tell you, it seems!"

"No; they had never heard of him."

"Then I'll tell you, girl. Here he stands before you."

"You! Papa—you! dearest pa. Oh! no, no!" cried she, imploringly, as she threw herself on his neck and sobbed bitterly—"oh no! I'll not believe it."

"And why not believe it? What was there in that same story that should prejudice *me*? There, there, girl, if you give way thus it will offend me—ay, Lizzy, offend me."

She raised her head from his shoulder, dried her eyes, and stood calm and unmoved before him. Her pale face, paler in the bright moonlight, now showed not a trace of passion or emotion.

Davis would have given his right hand at that moment that she had been led into some burst of excitement—some outbreak of passionate feeling—which in rebuking might have carried him away from all thoughts about himself; but she was cold, and still, and silent, like one who has heard some terrible tidings, but yet has summoned up courage for the trial. There was that in her calm, impassive stare that cut him to the very heart; nor could any words have reproached him, so bitterly as that steadfast look.

"If you don't know who we are, you know what we are, girl. Is that not so?" cried he, in a thick and passionate tone. "I meant to have told it you fifty times. There wasn't a week in the last two years that I didn't at least begin a letter to you about it. I did more; I cut all the things out of the newspapers and made a collection of them, and intended, some day or other, you should read them. Indeed, it was only because you seemed so happy there that I spared you. I felt the day must come, though. Know it you must, sooner or later, and better from me than another. I mean better for the other, for, by heaven! I'd have shot him who told you. Why don't you speak to me, girl? What's passing in your mind?"

"I scarcely know," said she, in a hollow voice. "I don't quite feel sure I am awake!"

"Yes!" cried he, with a terrible oath, "you *are* awake; it was the past was the dream!—when you were the princess, and every post brought you some fresh means of extravagance—that was the dream! The world went well with myself in those days.



THE ELDER ONE NEEDING A LIGHT FOR HIS CIGAR, TOUCHED HIS HAND TO DAVIS, AND MUTTERED SOME BROKEN WORDS OF GERMAN, TO REQUEST PERMISSION TO LIGHT IT FOR HIM. (P. 566.)

Luck stood to me in whatever I touched. In all I ventured, I was sure to come right, as if I had made my bargain with Fortune. But the jade threw me over at last, that she did. From the hour I went in against Hope's stables at Rickworth—that's two years and eleven days to-day—I never won a bet! The greenest youngsters from Oxford beat me at my own weapons. I went on selling—now a farm, now a house, now a brood mare. I sent the money all to you, girl, every guinea of it. What I did myself, I did on tick till the September settling at Cottiswoode, and then it was all up. I was ruined!"

"Ruined!" echoed she, while she grasped his arm and drew him closer to her side; "you surely had made friends—"

"Friends are capital things when the world goes well with you, but friends are fond of a good cook and iced champagne, and they don't fancy broken boots and a bad hat. Besides, what credit is to the merchant, luck is to one of us. Let the word get abroad, luck is against you—let them begin to say, 'There's that poor devil, Davis, in for it again; he's so unlucky!'—once they say that, you are shunned like a fellow with the plague—none will associate with you, none give you a helping hand or a word of counsel. Why the grooms wouldn't gallop if I was on the ground, for fear my bad luck might strain a sinew and slip a ligament! And they were right, too! Smile if you like, girl—I am not a very superstitious fellow—but nobody shall persuade me there ain't such a thing as luck. Be that as it may, *mine* turned—I was ruined!"

"And were there none to come to your aid? You must surely have lent a helping hand to many—"

"Look here, girl," said he; "now that we are on this subject, you may as well understand it aright. If a gentleman born—a fellow like Beecher, there—comes to grief, there's always plenty of others ready to serve him; some for the sake of his family, some for his name, some because there's always a chance that he may pay one day or other. Snobs, too, would help him, because he's the Honorable Annesley Beecher; but it's vastly different when it's Grog Davis is in case. Every one rejoices when a Leg breaks down."

"A Leg is the slang for—for—"

"For a betting man," interposed Davis. "When a fellow takes up the Turf as a profession, they call him 'a Leg'—not that they'd exactly say it to his face!" added he, with a smile of intense sarcasm.

"Go on," said she, faintly, after a slight pause.

"Go on with what?" cried he, rudely. "I've told you everything. You wanted to know what I was, and how I made my living. Well, you know it all now. To be sure, the newspapers, if you read them, could give you more precise details; but there's one thing, girl, they couldn't blink: there's not one of them could say that what my head planned overnight my hand was not ready to defend in the morning! I can't always throw a main, but I'll hit my man—and at five-and-thirty paces, if he don't like to stand closer."

"And what led you to this life, papa? Was it choice?"

"I have told you enough already—too much, mayhap," said he, doggedly. "Question me no more!"

Had Davis but seen the face of her at his side, what a terrible shock it would have given him, hard and stern as he was. She was pale as marble—even the lips were colorless—while along her cheeks a heavy tear stole slowly along. It was the only one she shed, but it cost an agony.

"And this is the awaking from the glorious dream I have long been lost in?—this the explanation of that life of costly extravagance, where every wish was answered—every taste pampered. This is the reverse of that medal which represented me as noble by birth and high in station!" If these were the first bitter thoughts that crossed her mind, her next were to ask herself why it was that the tidings had not humiliated her more deeply. "How is it that while I see and hear all this," cried she, "I listen in a spirit of defiance, not defeat? Is it that in my heart I dare to arraign the decrees the world has adopted for its guidance? Do I presume to believe that I can play the rebel successfully against the haughtiest aristocracy of Europe?—There is yet one question, papa," said she, slowly and deliberately, "that I would wish to ask you. It is the last I will ever put, leaving to your own discretion to answer it or not. Why was it—I mean, with what object did you place me where by habit and education I should contract ideas of life so widely different from those I was born to?"

"Can't you guess?" said he, rudely.

"Mayhap I do guess the reason," said she, in a low but unbroken voice. "I remember your saying one night to Mr. Beecher, 'when a colt has a turn of speed he's always worth the training.'"

Davis grew crimson; his very ears tingled

as the blood mounted to his head. Was it shame? was it anger? was it a strange pride to see the traits of his own heart thus reflected on his child? or was it a blinding of all three together? At all events, he never uttered a word, but walked slowly along at her side.

A low faint sigh from Lizzy suddenly aroused him, and he said, "Are you ill—are you tired, girl?"

"I'd like to go back to the house," said she calmly, but weakly. He turned without a word, and walked on toward the inn.

"When I proposed this walk, Lizzy, I never meant it to have been so sad a one."

"Nor yours the fault if it so," said she, drearily.

"I could, it is true, have kept you longer in the dark. I might have maintained this deception a week or two longer."

"Oh, that were useless; the mistake was in not—No matter—it was never a question wherein I could have a voice. Hasn't the night grown colder?"

"No; it's just what it was when we came out," said he, gruffly. "Now that you know all this affair," resumed he, after a lapse of some minutes, "there's another matter I'd like to talk over; it touches yourself too, and we may as well have it now as later. What about Beecher; he has been paying you attentions hasn't he?"

"None beyond what I may reasonably expect from one in his position toward me."

"Yes but he has, though. I sent over Lienstahl to report to me, and he says that Beecher's manner implied attachment, and yours showed no repugnance to him. Is this true?"

"It may be, for aught I know," said she, indifferently. "Mr. Beecher probably knows what *he* meant. I certainly can answer for myself, and will say, that whatever my manner might imply, my heart—if that be the name for it—gave no concurrence to what the Count attributed to me."

"Do you dislike him?"

"Dislike? No; certainly not; he is too gentle, too obliging, too conciliating in manner, too well bred to create dislike. He is not very brilliant—"

"He'll be a peer," broke in Davis.

"I suspect that all his views of life are deeply tinged with prejudice?"

"He'll be a peer," continued Davis.

"He has been utterly neglected in education."

"He don't want it."

"I mean that, to suit the station he fills——"

"He has got the station—he's sure of it—he can't be stripped of it. In one word, girl, he has, by right and birth, rank and fortune, such as ten generations of men like myself, laboring hard every hour of their lives, could never win. He'll be a peer of England, and I know of no title means so much."

"But of all his failings," said Lizzy, who seemed to take little heed of her father's interruptions, while steadily following out her own thoughts—"of all his failings, he has none greater or more pernicious than the belief that it is a mark of intelligence to outwit one's neighbor—that cunning is a high quality, and craft means genius."

"These might be poor qualities to gain a living with," said Davis, "but I tell you, once for all, he doesn't need to be brilliant, or witty, or any other nonsense of that kind. He'll have the right to go where all the cleverness of the world couldn't place him, to live in a set, where, if he could write plays like Shakespeare, build bridges like Brunel, or train a horse like John Scott, it wouldn't avail him a brass farthing; and if you only knew, child, what these people think of each other, and what the world thinks of *them*, you'd see it's the best stake ever was run for."

Lizzy never replied a word; every syllable of her father's speech was, as it were, "filtering down" into her mind, and she brooded long over the thoughts thus suggested. Thus walking along in silence, side by side, they drew nigh the house. They had now gained the little garden before the door, and were standing in the broad full moonlight face to face. Davis saw that her eyes were red and her cheeks marked by tears, but an impassive calm, and a demeanor subdued even to coldness, seemed to have succeeded to this emotion. "Oh! my poor girl," broke he out in a voice of deepest feeling, "if I didn't know the world so well—if I didn't know how little one gains by indulging affection—if I didn't know, besides, how you yourself will think of all this some ten or twelve years hence, I couldn't have the heart for it."

"And—must—it—be?" faltered she out, in a broken accent.

Davis threw his arm around her, and, pressing her to him, sobbed bitterly. "There, there," cried he, "go in—go in, child; go to bed, and get some sleep." And with this he turned quickly away and left her.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

A RIDE TO NEUWEID.

LONG before Lizzy had composed herself to sleep—for her heart was torn by a first sorrow, and she lay restless and fevered—her father, mounted on a post-horse, was riding away toward the Rhine. He had desired that the reply to his telegraphic message should be addressed to him at the post office of Neuweid, and thither he was now bent.

It is a strange thing, that when the affections of men of this stamp are deeply moved—when their sensibilities, long dulled and hardened by the rubs of life, are once evoked—the feelings excited are less those of gentleness and tenderness than an almost savage desire for some personal conflict. Urging his horse to full speed, Davis spared neither whip nor spur. Alone upon that solitary road, he asked himself aloud if he were less alone in the broad, bleak world? “Is not the ‘field’ against me wherever I go? I never heard of the fellow that had not some ‘moorings’—some anchorage—except myself.” But a brief hour ago and there was one who loved him with all her heart—who saw, or fancied she saw, a rich mine of generous qualities in his rough manners and blunt address—who pictured to her mind what such a nature might have been under happier circumstances and with better culture; “And now,” cried he, aloud—“now she knows me for what I am, how will she bear this? Will she sink under it? will it crush her? or has she enough of my own blood in her veins to meet it courageously? Oh! if she only knew the world as I do—what a mean coward it is—how it bullies the weak and truckles to the strong—how it frowns down the timid and simpers to the sturdy! Every man—ay, and every woman—can sell his life dearly; and strange it is, one only learns the value of this secret too late. Let a fellow start with it, and see what it does for him. I went at them single-handed; I went down all alone into the ring, and have they beaten *me*? I had no honorable or right honorable friends to pick *me* out of a scrape. It would be hard to find three men, with good hats on them, would bail me to the amount of ten pounds; and here I am to-day just as ready to face them all as ever.”

What canting nonsense do we occasionally read in certain quarters to disparage mere personal courage—“mere personal courage!” We are reminded that the ignoble quality is held in common with the

bull-dog, and that in this essential he is our master; we are reminded that it is a low and vulgar attribute that neither elevates nor enlightens, that the meanest creatures are often gifted with it, and the noblest natures void of it. To all this we give a loud and firm denial; and we affirm as steadfastly, that without it there is neither truth nor manliness. The self-reliance that makes a man maintain his word, be faithful to his friendships, and honorable in his dealings, has no root in a heart that shakes with craven fear. The life of a coward is the voyage of a ship with a leak—eternal contrivance, never-ceasing emergency. All thoughts dashed with a perpetual fear of death, what room is there for one generous emotion, one great or high-hearted ambition?

What a quality must that be, I would ask, that gives even to such a nature as this man’s a sort of rugged dignity? Yes, with all his failings and short-comings, and I am not going to hide one of them, his personal courage lifted him out of that category of contempt to which his life assigned him. How well the world understands such men to be the *fera nature* of humanity. It may shun, deprecate, disparage, but it never despises them. If then of such value be a gift that makes even the bad appear tolerable, there is this evil in the quality, that it disposes men like Davis to be ever on the attack. Their whole policy of life is aggressive.

It was about eight o’clock, on a mellow autumnal morning, as Grog reached Neuweid, and rode down the main street, already becoming thronged with the peasantry for the market. Guiding his horse carefully through the booths of flaunting wares, gay stalls of rural finery, and stands of fruit, he reached the little inn where he meant to breakfast.

The post was not to open for an hour, so that he ordered his meal to be at once got ready, and looked also to the comfort of his beast, somewhat blown by a long stage. His breakfast had been laid in the public room, in which two travelers were seated, whose appearance, even before he heard them speak, proclaimed them to be English. They were both young, fresh-looking, and well favored, that stamp of half-modesty, half-boldness, so essentially British, was on them, and, notwithstanding the entrance of a stranger, they talked away in their native language with all the fearless security your genuine John Bull feels that no confounded foreigner can understand him. It is but fair to admit that Grog’s beard and moustaches, his frogged

and braided grass-green coat, and his blue spectacles, made him resemble anything on earth rather than a subject of Queen Victoria.

In the mere glance Grog bestowed upon them as he passed he saw the class to which they pertained—young Oxford or Cambridge men, “out” for their vacation—an order for which he ever entertained a supreme contempt. He despised their mock shrewdness, their assumed craft, and that affectation of being “fast men,” which in reality never soared above running up a bill at the pastrycooks, thrashing a townsman, and giving a stunning wine party at their rooms. To what benefit could such miniature vices be turned? It was only “punting” with the Evil One, and Grog thought so, and avoided them.

Deep in the “mysterious gutturals” of the *Cologne Gazette*, or busily discussing his carbonadoed beefsteak, Davis gave no heed to the bald, disjointed chat of his neighbors; broken phrases reached him at intervals about proctors and the “little go,” the stroke oar of Brazennose, or some new celebrity of the ballet, when suddenly the name of Annesley Beecher startled him. He now listened attentively, and heard one of them relating to the other, that while waiting for his arrival at Aix-la-Chapelle, he had devoted himself to watching Beecher and “the stunning girl” that was with him. It appeared from what he said that all Aix was wildly excited by curiosity on her account. That she was neither wife, sister, nor mistress, none disputed. Who was she, then? or what could be the explanation of that mysterious companionship? “You should have seen her at the rooms,” continued the narrator; “she used to make her appearance about eleven—rarely before—dressed with a magnificence that threw all the little German royalties into the shade—such lace and ornaments! They said, of course, it was all false; I can only tell you that old Lady Bamouth got beside her one night just to examine her scarf, and she proclaimed it real Brussels, and worth I can’t say how much; and for the recovery of an opal that fell out of her bracelet one night Beecher gave six hundred francs next morning.”

“Then it was the money was false,” broke in the other; “Beecher is ruined, he hasn’t sixpence—at least I’ve always heard him mentioned as a fellow regularly cleaned out years ago.”

“He was before my day,” resumed the first; “but I heard the same story you did. But what’s the meaning of calling a fellow ruined that can go about the world

stopping at first-rate hotels, having carriages, horses, opera-boxes; why the waiter at Aix told me that he paid above five hundred florins for flowers. This girl, whoever she was, was wild about moss-roses and pink hyacinths, and they fetched them from Rotterdam for her. Pretty well that, for a ruined man!”

“Perhaps it was she herself had the money,” suggested the other, half carelessly.

“That’s possible too; I know that whenever she came down to the wells and took a glass of the waters, she always gave a gold piece to the girl that served her.”

“Then she was not a lady by birth; that trait is quite sufficient to decide the point.”

Davis started as if he had been stung; here, from the lips of these raw youths, was he to receive a lesson in life, and be told that all the cost and splendor by which he purposed to smooth over the difficult approaches to society were fatal blunders and no more. That the very extravagance so imposing in one of acknowledged station, becomes “suspect” in those of dubious rank. Like all men of quick resentments, he soon turned the blame from himself to others. It was Lizzy’s fault. What right had she to draw upon herself all the censorious tongues of a watering-place? Why should she have attracted this foolish notoriety? After all, she was new to life and the world, and might be pardoned, but Beecher—it was just the one solitary thing he *did* know—Beecher ought to have warned her against this peril; he ought to have guarded against it himself. Why should such a girl be exposed to the insolent comments of fellows like these? and he measured them deliberately, and thought over in his mind how little trouble it would cost him to put two families into mourning—mayhap, to throw a life-long misery into some happy home, and change the whole destinies of many he had never seen—never should see! There was, however, this difficulty, that in doing so he drew a greater publicity upon her—all whose interests required secrecy and caution. “Till she have the right to another name than mine she must not be the talk of newspapers,” said he to himself; and like many a prudent reflection, it had its sting of pain.

These meditations were rudely cut short by the sound of his own name. It was the elder of the two young men who was discussing the duel at Brussels, and detailing, with all the influence of his superior experience, the various reasons why “no man

was called upon to meet such a fellow as Davis." "I talked it over with Stanworth and Ellis, and they both agreed with me."

"But what is to be done?" asked the younger.

"You hand him over to the police, or you thrash him right well with a horse-whip, pay five pounds penalty for the assault, and there's an end on't."

"And is 'Grog,' as they call him, the man to put up with that mode of treatment?"

"What can he do? Notoriety must ruin him. The moment it gets abroad that a wolf has been seen near a village, all turn out for the pursuit."

Had he who uttered this sentiment only cast his eyes toward the stranger at the table in the corner, he would have seen by the expression of the features, that his simile was not a bad one. Davis shook with passion, and his self-control, to sit still and listen, was almost like a fit.

"All the more ungenerous, then, would be the conduct," said the younger, "to resent a personal wrong by calling in others to your aid."

"Don't you see, George," broke in the other, "that men have their beasts of prey like other animals, and agree to hunt them down, out of common security, for the mischief he causes, and the misery he spreads through the world. One of these fellows in his lair is worse than any tiger that ever crouched in a jungle. And as to dealing with him, as Ellis says, do you ever talk of giving a tiger fair play? do you make a duel of it, with equal weapons? or do you just shoot him down when you can, and how you can?"

Davis arose, and drew himself up, and there was a moment of irresolution in his mind, of which, could the two travelers have read the secret, they would almost as soon have smoked their cigars in the den of a wild beast. And yet there they sat, puffing indolently away the blue cloud, scarcely deigning a passing glance at Grog, as he proceeded to leave the room.

Anatomists assure us that if we but knew the delicate tissues by which the machinery of our life is carried on, how slight the fibres, how complex the functions on which vitality depends, we should not have courage to move, or even speak, lest we should destroy an organization so delicate and sensitive. In like manner, did we but know in life the perils over which we daily pass, the charged mines over which we walk, the

volcanoes that are actually throbbing beneath our feet, what terrors would it give to mere existence! It was on the turn of a straw how Davis decided—a word the more—a look from one of them—a laugh—might have cost a life. With a long-drawn breath, the sigh of a pent-up emotion, Grog found himself in the open air; there was a vague feeling in his mind of having escaped a peril, but what, or where, or how, he couldn't remember.

He sat down in the little porch under the clustering vines; the picturesque street, with its carved gables and tasteful balconies, sloped gently down to the Rhine, which ran in swift eddies beneath. It was a fair and pleasant scene, nor was its influence all lost upon him. He was already calmed. The gay dresses and cheerful faces of the peasants, as they passed and repassed, their merry voices, their hearty recognitions and pleasant greetings, gave a happier channel to his thoughts. He thought of Lizzie—how *she* would like it—how enjoy it! and then a sudden pang shot through his heart, and he remembered that she, too, was no longer the same. The illusion that had made her life a fairy tale was gone—dissipated for ever. The spell that gave the charm to her existence was broken! What was all the cultivation of mind—what the fascinations by which she moved the hearts of all around her—what the accomplishments by which she adorned society, if they only marked the width of that chasm that separated her from the well-born and the wealthy? To be more than their equal in grace, beauty, and genius, less than their inferior in station, was a sad lesson to learn, and this the last night had taught her.

"Ay," muttered he, below his breath, "she knows who she is now, but she has yet to learn all that others think of her." How bitterly, at that instant, did he reproach himself for having revealed his secret. A thousand times better to have relinquished all ambition, and preserved the warm and confiding love she bore him. "We might have gone to America—to Australia. In some far-away country I could easily earn subsistence, and no trace of my former life follow me. She, at least, would not have been lost to me—her affection would have clung to me through every trial. Mere reverse of fortune—for such and no more had it seemed—would never have chilled the generous glow of her woman's heart, and I need not have shocked her self-love, nor insulted her dignity, by telling her that she was the gambler's daughter."

As he was thus musing, the two travelers

came out and seated themselves in the porch; the elder one needing a light for his cigar touched his hat to Davis, and muttered some broken words of German, to request permission to light it for him. Grog bowed a stiff acquiescence, and the younger said, "Not over courteous—a red Jew, I take it!"

"A traveling jeweler, I fancy," said the other; "twig the smart watch-chain."

Oh, young gentlemen, how gingerly had you trod there if you only knew how thin was the ice under your feet, and how cold the depth beneath it. Davis arose and walked down the street. The mellow notes of a bugle announced the arrival of the post, and the office must now open in few minutes. Forcing his way through the throng to the open window, he asked if there were any letters for Captain Christopher? None. Any for Captain Davis? None. Any for the Hon. Annesley Beecher? The same reply. He was turning away in disappointment, when a voice called out, "Wait! here's a message just come in from the telegraph office. Please to sign the receipt for it." He wrote the name, C. Christopher, boldly, and pushed his way through the crowd once more.

If his heart throbbed painfully with the intensity of anxiety, his fingers never trembled as he broke the seal of the despatch. Three brief lines were all that were there; but three brief lines can carry the tidings of a whole destiny. We give it as it stood:

"William Peach to Christopher, Neuwied, in Nassau.

"The Viscount died yesterday, at four p. m. Lawyers want A. B.'s address immediately.

"Proceedings already begun."

Davis devoured the lines four—five times over, and then muttered between his teeth, "Safe enough now—the match as good as over!"

"I say, George," said one of the young travelers to his companion, "our friend in the green frock must have got news of a prize in the lottery. Did you ever see anything like his eyes? they actually lit up the blue spectacles."

"Clap the saddle on that black horse," cried Grog, as he passed into the stable; "give him a glass of Kirschwasser, and bring him round to the door."

"He knows how to treat an old poster," said the ostler; "it's not the first ride he has taken on a courier's saddle."

CHAPTER LXXIV.

HOW GROG DAVIS DISCOURSED, AND ANNESLEY BEECHER LISTENED.

WHEN Davis reached the little inn at evening, he was surprised to learn that Annesley Beecher had passed the day alone. Lizzy complained of headache, and kept her room. Grog listened to this with a grave, almost stern, look; he partly guessed that the ailment was a mere pretext; he knew better to what to attribute her absence. They dined tête-à-tête; but there was a constraint over each, and there was little of that festive enjoyment that graced the table on the day before. Beecher was revolving in his mind all the confessions that burdened his conscience about Stein and the mystical volume he had bought from him; the large sums he had drawn for were also grievous loads upon his heart, and he knew not in what temper or spirit Davis would hear of them. Grog, too, had many things in his head; not, indeed, that he meant to reveal them, but they were like secret instructions to his own heart, to be referred to for guidance and direction.

They sipped their wine under the trellised vines, and smoked their cigars in an atmosphere fragrant with the jessamine and the rose, the crystal river eddying along at their feet, and the purple mountain glowing in the last tints of declining day.

"We want Lizzy to enliven us," said Davis, after a long silence on both sides. "We're dull and heavy without her."

"By Jove! it does make a precious difference whether she's here or not," said Beecher, earnestly.

"There's a light-heartedness about that girl does one good," said Davis, as he puffed his cigar. "And she's no fool, either."

"I should think she's not," muttered Beecher, half indignantly.

"It couldn't be supposed she should know life like you or me, for instance; she hasn't seen the thing—never mixed with it; but let the time come that she shall take her part in the comedy, you'll see whether she'll not act it cleverly."

"She has head for anything!" chimed in Beecher.

"Ay, and what they call tact, too. I don't care what company you place her in; take her among your duchesses to-morrow, and see if she'll not keep her own place—and that a good one."

Beecher sighed, but it was not in any despondency.

And now a long silence ensued ; not a sound heard save the light noise of the bottle as it passed between them, and the long-drawn puffs of smoke that issued from their lips.

"What did you do with Stein ? Did he give you the money ?" asked Davis, at last.

"Oh yes, he gave it—he gave it freely enough ; in fact, he bled so easily, that, as the doctors say, I took a good dash from him. You mentioned two thousand florins, but I thought, as I was about it, a little more would do us no harm, and so I said, 'Lazarus, old fellow, what if we make this for ten thousand——'"

"Ten thousand !" said Davis, removing his cigar from his lips and staring earnestly, but yet not angrily, at the other.

"Don't you see, that as I have the money with me," began Beecher, in a tone of apology and terror, "and as the old fellow didn't put 'the screw on' as to discount——"

"No, he's fair enough about that ; indeed, so far as my own experience goes, all Jews are. It's your high-class Christian I'm afraid of ; but you took the cash ?"

"Yes !" said Beecher, timidly, for he wasn't sure he was yet out of danger.

"It was well done—well thought of," said Grog, blandly. "We'll want a good round sum to try this new martingale of mine. Opening with five Naps, we must be able to bear a run of four hundred and eighty, which according to the rule of chances, might occur once in seventeen thousand three hundred and forty times."

"Oh ! as to that," broke in Beecher, "I have hedged famously. I bought old Stein's conjuring book, what he calls his 'Kleinod,' showing how every game is to be played, when to lay on, when to draw off. Here it is," said he producing the volume from his breast-pocket. "I have been over it all day. I tried three problems with the cards myself, but I couldn't make them come up right."

"How did you get him to part with this ?" asked Davis, as he examined the volume carefully.

"Well, I gave him a fancy price—that is, I am to give it, which makes all the difference," said Beecher, laughing. "In short, I gave him a bit of stiff, at three months, for one thousand——"

"Florins ?"

"No, pounds—pounds sterling," said Beecher, with a half-choking effort.

"It *was* a fancy price," said Grog, slowly, not the slightest sign of displeasure manifesting itself on his face as he spoke.

"You don't think, then, that it was too much ?" faltered out Beecher.

"Perhaps not, *under* the circumstances," said Davis, keenly.

"What do you mean by 'under the circumstances ?'"

Davis threw his cigar into the stream, pushed bottle and glasses away from him—far enough to permit him to rest both his arms on the table—and then steadfastly fixing his eyes on the other, with a look of intense but not angry significance, said, "How often have I told you, Beecher, that it was no use to try a 'double' with me. Why, man, I know every card in your hand."

"I give you my sacred word of honor, Grog——"

"To be renewed at three months, I suppose ?" said Davis, sneeringly. "No, no, my boy, it takes an earlier riser to get to the blind side of Kit Davis. I'm not angry with you for trying it—not a bit, lad ; there's nothing wrong in it but the waste of time."

"May I be hanged, drawn, and quartered, if I know what you are at, Grog !" exclaimed the other, piteously.

"Well, all I can say is *I read you* easier than *you read me*. You gave old Lazarus a thousand pounds for that book after reading that paragraph in the *Times*."

"What paragraph ?"

"I mean that about your brother's title not being legal."

"I never saw it—never heard of it," cried Beecher, in undisguised terror.

"Well, I suppose I'm to believe you," said Davis, half reluctantly. "It was in a letter from the Crimea, stating, that so confident are the friends of a certain claimant to the title and estates now enjoyed by Lord Lackington, that they have offered the young soldier who represents the claim any amount of money he pleases to purchase promotion in the service."

"I repeat to you my word of honor I never saw nor heard of it."

"Of course, then, I believe you," said Grog.

Again and again did Beecher reiterate assurances of his good faith ; he declared, that during all his stay at Aix, he had never looked into a newspaper, nor had he received one single letter, except from Davis himself ; and Davis believed him, from the simple fact that such a paragraph as he quoted had no existence—never was in print—never uttered, till Grog's own lips had fashioned it.

"But surely, Grog, it is not a flying rumor—the invention of some penny-a-liner—would find any credence with *you* ?"

"I don't know," said Davis, slowly; "I won't say I'd swear to it all, but just as little would I reject it as a fable. At all events, I gave you credit for having trimmed your sails by the tidings, and if you didn't, why there's no harm done, only you're not so shrewd a fellow as I thought you."

Beecher's face grew scarlet; how near—how very near he was of being "gazetted" the sharp fellow he had been striving for years to become, and now, by his own stupid admission, had he invalidated his claim to that high degree.

"And this is old Stein's celebrated book?" I've heard of it these five-and-thirty years, though I never saw it till now. Well, I won't say you made a bad bargain——"

"Indeed, Grog—indeed, by George! I'm as glad as if I won five hundred to hear you say so. To tell you the truth, I was half afraid to own myself the purchaser. I said to myself, 'Davis will chaff me so about this book, he'll call me all the block-heads in Europe——'"

"No, no, Beecher, you ain't a blockhead, nor will I suffer any one to call you such. There are things—there are people, too, just as there are games—that you don't know, but before long you'll be the match of any fellow going. I can put you up to them, and I will. There's my hand on it."

Beecher grasped the proffered hand and squeezed it with a warmth there was no denying. What wonderful change had come over Grog he could not guess. Whence this marvelous alteration in his manner towards him? No longer scoffing at his mistaken notions of people, or disparaging his abilities, Davis condescended now to talk and take counsel with him as an equal.

"That's the king of wines," said Davis, as he pushed a fresh bottle across the table. "When you can get 'Marcobrunner' like that, where's the Burgundy ever equalled it? Fill up your glass, and drink a bumper to our next venture, whatever it be!"

"Our next venture, whatever it be!" echoed Beecher, as he laid the empty glass on the table.

"Another toast," said Davis, replenishing the glasses. "'May all of our successes be in company.'"

"I drink it with all my heart, old fellow. You've always stood like a man to me, and I'll never desert you," cried Beecher, whose head was never proof against the united force of wine and excitement.

"There never were two fellows on this

earth so made to run in double harness," said Davis, "as you and myself. Let us only lay our heads together, and there's nothing can resist us."

Grog now launched forth into one of those descriptions which he could throw off with a master's hand, sketching life as a great hunting-ground, and themselves as the hunters. What zest and vigor could he impart to such a picture!—how artfully, too, could he make Beecher the foreground figure, he himself only shadowed forth as an accessory. Listening with eagerness to all he said, Beecher continued to drink deeply, the starry night, the perfumed air, the rippling sounds of the river, all combining with the wine and the converse to make up a dream-land of fascination. Nor was the enchantment less perfect that the objects described passed before him like a series of dissolving views. They represented, all of them, a life of pleasure and enjoyment—means inexhaustible—means for every extravagance—and, what he relished fully as much, the undisputed recognition by the world to the claim of being a "sharp fellow"—a character to which Grog's aid was so dexterously contributed as to escape all detection.

Perhaps our reader might not have patience with us were we to follow Davis through all the devious turns and windings of this tortuous discourse. Perhaps, too, we should fail signally were we to attempt to convey in our cold narrative what came from his lips with all the marvellous power of a good story-teller, whose voice could command many an inflection, and whose crafty nature appreciated the temper of the metal beneath his beat. If we could master all these, another and a greater difficulty would still remain; for how could we convey, as Davis contrived to do, that through all these gorgeous scenes of worldly success, in the splendor of a life of magnificence, amidst triumphs and conquests, one figure should ever pass before the mind's eye, now participating in the success, now urging its completion, now, as it were, shedding a calm and chastened light over all—a kind of angelic influence that heightened every enjoyment of the good, and averted every approach of evil?

Do not fancy, I beseech you, that this was a stroke of high art far above the pencil of Grog Davis. Amongst the accidents of his early life the "stage" had figured, and Grog had displayed very considerable talents for the career. It was only at the call of what he considered a higher ambition he had given up "the boards" for "the

ring." Besides this, he was inspired by the Marcobrunner, which had in an equal degree affected the brain of him who listened. If Grog were eloquent, Beecher was ductile. Indeed, so eagerly did he devour all that the other said, that when a moment of pause occurred, he called out, "Go on, old fellow—go on! I could listen to you forever!"

Nor was it altogether surprising that he should like to hear words of praise and commendation from lips that once only opened in sarcasm and ridicule of him. How pleasant to know at last that he was really and truly a great partner in the house of Davis and Co., and not a mere commission agent, and that this partnership—how that idea came to strike him we cannot determine—was to be binding forever. How exalting, too, the sentiment that it was just at the moment when all his future looked gloomiest this friendship was ratified. The Lackington Peerage might go, but there was Grog Davis staunch and true—the ancient estates be torn from his house, but there was the precious volume of old Lazarus, with wealth untold within its pages. Thus threading his way through these tortuous passages of thought, stumbling, falling, and blundering at every step, that poor brain lost all power of coherency and all guidance, and he wavered between a reckless defiance of the world and a sort of slavish fear of its censure.

"And Lackington, Grog—Lackington," cried he, at length—"he's as proud as Lucifer—what will he say?"

"Not so much as you think!" remarked Grog, dryly. "Lackington will take it easier than you suspect."

"No, no, you don't know him—don't know him at all. I wouldn't stand face to face with him this minute for a round sum!"

"I'd not like it over much myself!" muttered Davis, with a grim smile.

"It's all from pride of birth and blood, and he'd say, 'Debts, if you like, go ahead with Jews and the fifty per centers, but, hang it, don't tie a stone around your throat—don't put a double ditch between you and your own rank! Look where I am,' he'd say—'look where I am!'"

"Well, I hope he finds it comfortable!" muttered Grog, with a dry malice.

"Look where I am!" resumed Beecher, trying to imitate the pretentious tones of his brother's voice. "And where is it, after all?"

"Where we'll all be, one day or other!" growled out Grog, who could not help answering his own reflections.

"And are you sure of where you are?"

—that's what I'd ask him, eh, Grog?—'are you sure of where you are?'"

"That *would* be a poser, I suspect," said Davis, who laughed heartily; and the contagion catching Beecher, he laughed till the tears came.

"I might ask him, besides, 'Are you quite sure how long you are to remain where you are?' eh, Grog? What would he say to that?"

"The chances are, he'd not answer at all," said Davis, dryly.

"No, no! you mistake him, he's always ready with a reason; and then he sets out by reminding you that he's the head of the house—a fact that a younger brother doesn't need to have recalled to his memory. Oh, Grog, old fellow, if I were the Viscount—not that I wish any ill to Lackington—not that I'd really enjoy the thing at any cost to *him*—but if I were—"

"Well, let's hear. What then?" cried Davis, as he filled the other's glass to the top, "what then?"

"Wouldn't I trot the coach along at a very different pace! It's not poking about Italy, dining with smoke-dried Cardinals and snuffy old 'Marchesas,' I'd be; but I'd have such a stable, old fellow, with Jem Bates to ride and Tom Ward to train them, and yourself, too, to counsel me. Wouldn't we give Binsleigh, and Hawksworth, and the rest of them a cold bath, eh?"

"That ain't the style of thing at all, Beecher," said Grog, deprecatingly; "you ought to go in for the 'grand British Nobleman dodge'—county interests—influence with a party—and a vote in the Lords. If you were to try it, you'd make a right good speech. It wouldn't be one of those flowery things the Irish fellows do, but a manly, straightforward, genuine English discourse."

"Do you really think so, Grog?" asked he, eagerly.

"I'm sure of it. I never mistook pace in my life; and I know what's in you as well as if I saw it. The real fact is, you have a turn of speed that you yourself have no notion of, but it will come out one of these days if you're attacked—if they say anything about your life on the turf, your former companions, or a word about the betting-ring."

The charm of this flattery was far more intoxicating even than the copious goblets of "Marcobrunner," and Beecher's flushed cheeks and flashing eyes betrayed how it overpowered him. Davis went on.

"You are one of those fellows that never show 'the stuff they're made of' till some injustice is done them—eh?"

"True as a book!" chimed in Beecher.

"Take you fairly, and a child might lead you, but try it on to deny you what you justly have a right to—let them attempt to dictate to you, and say, 'Do this, and don't do the other'—little they know on what back they've put the saddle! You'll give them such a hoist in the air as they never expected!"

"How you read every line of me!" exclaimed Beecher, in ecstasy.

"And I'll tell you more; there's not another man breathing knows you but myself. They've always seen you in petty scrapes and little difficulties, pulling the devil by the last joint of his tail, as Jack Bush says; but let them wait till you come out for a cup race—the Two Thousand Guinea Stakes—then I'm not Kit Davis if you won't be one of the first men in England."

"I hope your right, Davis. I almost feel as if you were," said Beecher, earnestly.

"When did you find me in the wrong, so far as judgment went? Show me one single mistake I ever made in a matter of opinion? Who was it foretold that Bramston would bolt after the Cotteswold if Rugby didn't win? who told the whole yard at Tattersall's that Grimsby would sell Holt's stable? who saw that Rickman Turner was a coward, and wouldn't fight?—and I said it, the very day they gave him 'the Bath' for his services in China! I don't know much about books, nor do I pretend to, but as to men and women—men best—I'll back myself against all England and the Channel Islands."

"And I'll take as much as you'll spare me out of your book, Grog," said Beecher, enthusiastically, while he filled his glass and drained it.

"You see," said Davis, in a low, confidential tone, as if imparting a great secret, "I've always remarked that the way they smash a fellow in Parliament—I don't care in which house—is always by raking up something or other he did years before. If he wrote a play, or a novel, or a book of poems, they're down on him at once about his imagination and his fancy—that means, he never told a word of truth in his life. If he was unfortunate in business, they're sure to refer to him about some change in the law of bankruptcy, and say, 'There's my honorable friend yonder ought to be able to help us by his experiences!' Then, if a fellow has only his wits about him, how he floors them! You see there's a great deal of capital to be made out of one of these attacks. You rise to reply, without any anger or passion—only dignity—noth-

ing but dignity! You appeal to the House if the assault of the right honorable baronet opposite was strictly in good taste—whatever that means. You ask why you are signalized out to be the mark of his eloquence, or his wit, or whatever it be; and then you come out with a fine account of yourself, and all the honorable motives that nobody ever suspected you of. That's the moment to praise everything you ever did, or meant to do, or couldn't do—that's the time to show them what a man they have amongst them."

"Capital—glorious—excellent!" cried Beecher, in delight.

"Well, suppose now," said Davis, "there's a bill about marriages—they're always changing the law about them; it's evidently a contract doesn't work quite smoothly for all parties—well, there's sure to be many a spicy remark and impertinent allusion in the debate; it's a sore subject, and every one has a 'raw' on it, and at last somebody says something about unequal matches, alliances with an inferior class, 'noble Lords that have not scrupled to mingle the ancient blood of their race with the—the thin and washy current that flows in plebeian veins.' I'm the Lord Chancellor, now," said Grog, boldly, "and I immediately turn round and fix my eyes upon you. Up you get at once, and say, 'I accept, my Lords, I accept for myself, and my own case, every word the noble duke, or marquis, has just uttered. It never would have occurred to me to make my personal history the subject of your Lordships' attention, but when thus rudely brought before you—rudely and gratuitously introduced—' Here you'd frown at the last speaker, as much as to say, 'You'll hear more about this outside—'"

"Go on—go on!" cried Beecher, with impatience.

"I rise in this place—that has always a great impression, to say 'this place'—'I rise in this place to say that I am prouder in the choice that shares with me the honors of my coronet, than in all the dignity and privilege that same coronet confers.' What a cheer—what a regular hurrah follows that, for they have seen her—ay, that have they! They have beheld her sweeping down the gilded drawing-room—the handsomest woman in England! Where's the duchess with her eyes, her skin, her dignity, and her grace? Doesn't she look 'thoroubred in every vein of her neck?' Where did she get that graceful sweep, that easy-swimming gait, if she hadn't it in her very nature?"

"By Heaven, it's true, every syllable of

it!" cried out Beecher, in all the wild ecstasy of delight.

"Where is the man—I don't care what his rank might be—who wouldn't envy you after you'd made that speech? You'd walk down Westminster the proudest man in England after it."

Beecher's features glowed with a delight that showed he had already anticipated the sense of his popularity.

"And then how the newspapers will praise you. It will be as if you built a bridge over the gulf that separates two distinct classes of people. You'll be a sort of noble reformer. What was the wisest thing Louis Napoleon ever did? His marriage. Do you mark that he was always following his uncle's footsteps in all his other policy; he saw that the only great mistake he ever made was looking out for a high match, and, like a shrewd fellow, he said, 'I have station, rank, power, and money enough for two. It's not to win the good favor of a wrinkled old arch-duchess, or a deaf old princess, I'm going to marry. I'll go in for the whole field. I'll take the girl that, if I wasn't an emperor, I'd be proud to call my own.' And signs on't, they all cried out, 'See if he hasn't his heart in the right place—there's an honest drop there!' Let him be as ambitious as you like, he married just as you or I would. Ain't it a fine thing," exclaimed Grog, enthusiastically, "when one has all the middle classes in one's favor—the respectable ruck that's always running but seldom showing a winner? Get these fellows with you, and it's like Baring's name on the back of your bill. And now, Beecher," said Davis, grasping the other's hand, and speaking with a deep earnestness—"and now that I've said what you might have done, I'll tell you what I *will* do. I have just been sketching out this line of country to see how you'd take your fences, nothing more. You've shown me that you're the right sort, and I'm not the man to forget it. If I had seen the shadow of a shade of a dodge about you—if I'd have detected one line in your face, or one shake in your voice, like treachery—so help me! I'd have thrown you over like winking! You fancied yourself a great man, and were staunch and true to your old friends; now it's my turn to tell you that I wouldn't give that empty flask yonder for all your brother Lackington's lease of his peerage! Hear me out. I have it from his own lawyers—from the fellows in Furnival's Inn—it's up with him; the others are perfectly sure of their verdict. There's how it is! And now, Annesley Beecher, you were

willing to marry Kit Davis's daughter when you thought you could make her a peeress—now, I say, that when you've nothing, nor haven't a sixpence to bless yourself with, it's Kit himself will give her to you, and say, there's not the other man breathing he'd as soon see the husband of this same Lizzy Davis!"

The burst of emotion with which Beecher met this speech was, indeed, the result of very conflicting feelings; shock at the terrible tidings of his brother's downfall, and the insult to his house and name, mingled with a burst of gratitude to Davis for his fidelity; but stronger and deeper than these was another sentiment, for smile if you will, most sceptical reader, the man was in love, after *his* fashion. I do not ask of you to believe that he felt as you or I might or ought to feel the tender passion. I do not seek to persuade you that the object of his affection mingled with all his thoughts, swayed them, and etherealized them, that she was the theme of many a heart-woven story, the heroine of many an ecstatic dream; still she was one who could elicit from that nature, in all its selfishness, little traits of generous feeling, little bursts of honest sentiment, that made him appear better to his own heart. And so far has the adage truth with it, virtue is its own reward, in the conscious sense of well doing, in the peaceful calm of an unrepining spirit, and, not least of all, in that sympathy which good men so readily bestow upon even faint efforts to win their suffrage.

And so he sobbed out something that meant grief and gratitude; hope, fear, and uncertainty—worse than fear—all agitating and distracting him by turns.

Very little time did Grog give himself for calmer reflection; away he went at full speed to sketch out their future life. They were to make the tour of Europe, winning all before them. All the joyous part, all the splendor of equipage, retinue, mode of life, and outlay being dictated by Beecher, all the more business detail, the play and the money-getting, devolving upon Davis. Baden, Ems, Wiesbaden, Hamburg, and Aix, all glowed in the descriptions like fields of foretold glory. How they were to outshine princes in magnificence and royal highnesses in display—the envy of Beecher—of his unvarying luck—the splendor of all his belongings—Lizzy's beauty too! What a page would he fill in the great gossip calendar of Europe!

Well Davis knew how to feed the craving vanity of that weak nature, whose most ardent desire was to be deemed cun-

ning and sharp, the cautious reserve of prudent men in his company being a tribute to his acuteness the dearest his heart could covet. Oh, if he longed for anything as success, it was for a time when his coming would spread a degree of terror at a play-table, and men would rise rather than risk their fortune against *his*! Should such a moment ever be his? was that great triumph ever to befall him? And all this as the husband of Lizzy Davis!

"Ay!" said Grog, as he read and traced each succeeding emotion in that transparent nature—"ay! that's what may be called life; and when we've done Europe, smashed every bank on the Continent, we'll cross the Atlantic, and give Jonathan a 'touch of our quality.' I know all their games well, and I've had my 'three bullets and a poker' before now on a Mississippi steamer! Your Yankee likes faro, and I've a new cabal to teach him; in short, my boy, there's a roving commission of fun before us, and if it don't pay, *my* name ain't Davis!"

"Was this your scheme, then, Grog," asked Beecher, "when you told me at Brussels that you could make a man of me?"

"It was, my boy," cried Davis, eagerly. "You've guessed it. There was only one obstacle to the success of the plan at that time, and this exists no longer."

"What was the obstacle you speak of?"

"Simply, that so long as you fancied yourself next in succession to a peerage, you'd never lay yourself down regularly to your work; you'd say, 'Lackington can't live for ever; he's almost twenty years my senior. I must be the viscount yet. Why should I, therefore, cumber myself with cares that I have no need of, and involve myself amongst people I'll have to cut one of these days. No. I'll just make a waiting race of it, and be patient.' Now, however, that you can't count upon this prospect—now that to-morrow, or next day, will declare to the world that Henry Hastings Beecher is just Henry Hastings Beecher, and not Viscount Lackington, and that the Honorable Annesley is just Annesley, and no more—now, I say, that you see this clearly with your own eyes, you'll buckle to, and do your work manfully. And there was another thing—"

And here Davis paused, and seemed to meditate.

"What was that, Grog? Be candid, old fellow, and tell me all."

"So I will, then," resumed Davis. "That other thing was this. So long as

you were the great man in prospective, and might some fine day be a lord, you could always persuade yourself—or some one else could persuade you—that Kit Davis was hanging on you just for your rank—that he wanted the intimacy of a man in your station, and so on. Now, if you ever came to believe this, there would have been an end of all confidence between us; and without confidence, what can a fellow do for his pal? This was, therefore, the obstacle, and even if you could have got over it, I couldn't. No, hang me if I could! I was always saying to myself, 'It's all very nice and smooth now, Kit, between you and Beecher—you eat, drink, and sleep together—but wait till he turns the corner, old fellow, and see if he won't give you the cold shoulder.'"

"You couldn't believe—"

"Yes but I could, and did, too; and many's the time I said to myself, 'If Beecher wasn't a top-sawyer, what a trump he'd be! He has head for anything, and address for anything.' And do you know"—here Grog dropped his voice to a whisper, and spoke as if under great emotion—"and do you know that I couldn't be the same man to you myself just because of your rank. That was the reason I used to be so sulky, so suspicious, and so—ay, actually cruel with you, telling you, as I did, what couldn't I do with certain acceptances? Now, look here, Beecher—Light that taper beside you; there's a match in that box at your elbow."

Unsteady enough was Beecher's hand; indeed, it was not wine alone now made him tremble. An intense agitation shook his frame, and he shivered like one in an ague fit. He couldn't tell what was coming; the theme alone was enough to arrest all process of reasoning on his part. It was like the force of a blow that stunned and stupified at once.

"There, that will do," said Grog, as he drew a long pocket-book from his breast-pocket, and searched for some time amongst its contents. "Ay, here they are—two—three—four of them—insignificant-looking scraps of paper they look—and yet there's a terrible exposure in open court, a dreary sea voyage over the ocean, and a whole life of a felon's suffering in those few lines."

"For the love of mercy, Davis, if you have a spark of pity in your heart—if you have a heart at all—don't speak in this way to me!" cried Beecher, in a voice almost choked with sobs.

"It is for the last time in my life you'll ever hear such words," said Grog, calmly.

“Read them over carefully—examine them well. Yes I wish and require it.”

“Oh, I know them well!” said Beecher, with a heavy sigh. “Many’s the sleepless night the thought of them has cost me.”

“Go over every line of them—satisfy yourself that they’re the same—that the words ‘Johnstone Howard’ are in your own hand.”

Beecher bent over the papers; but, with his dimmed eyes and trembling fingers, it was some time ere he could decipher them. A sigh from the very bottom of his heart, was all the reply he could make.

“They’ll never cost you another sleepless night, old fellow!” said Davis, as he held them over the flame of the taper. “There’s the end of ’em now!”

CHAPTER LXXV.

REFLECTIONS OF ANNESLEY BEECHER.

A WISER head than that of Annesley Beecher might have felt some confusion on awaking the morning after the events we have just related. Indeed, his first sensations were those of actual bewilderment as he opened his eyes, and beheld the pine-clad mountains rising in endless succession—the deep glens—the gushing streams, crossed by rude bridges of a single tree—the rustic saw-mills all dripping with spray, and trembling with the force of their own machinery. Where was he? What strange land was this? How came he there? Was this in reality the “new world beyond the seas” Davis had so often described to him? By a slow, labroious process, like filtering, stray memories dropped one by one through his clouded faculties, and at length he remembered the scene of the preceding night, and all that had passed between Davis and himself. Yet, withal, there was much of doubt and uncertainty mixed up, nor could he, by any effort, satisfy himself how much was fact, how much mere speculation. Was it true that Lackington was to lose his peerage? Was it possible such a dreadful blow was to fall on their house? If so, what portion of the estates would follow the title? Would a great part—would all the property be transferred to the new claimant? What length of time, too, might the suit occupy?—such things often lasted for years upon years. Was it too late for a compromise? Could not some arrangement be come to “some way?” Grog was surely the man to de-

cease a plan for this—at all events, he could protract and spin out proceedings. “It’s not p.p.—the match may never come off,” muttered Beecher, “and I’ll back old Grog to ‘square it,’ *somehow*.”

And then the bills—the forged acceptances—they were actually burned before his face! It was well-nigh incredible—but he had seen them, held them in his own hand, and watched them as the night wind wafted away their blackened embers, never more to rise in judgment against him—never to cost him another night of sleepless terror! Who would have believed Davis capable of such magnanimity? Of all men living, he had deemed him the last to forego any hold over another—and then the act was his own spontaneous doing, without reservation, without condition.

Beecher’s heart swelled proudly as he thought over this trait of his friend. Was it that he felt a sense of joy in believing better of mankind?—was it that it awoke within his breast more hopeful thoughts of his fellow-men?—did it appeal to him like a voice, saying, “Despair of no man; there are touches of kindness in natures the very roughest, that redeem whole lives of harshness?” No, my good reader, it would be unfair and unjust to you were I to say that such sentiments as these swayed him. Annesley Beecher’s thoughts flowed in another and very different channel. The words he whispered to his heart were somewhat in this wise: “What a wonderful fellow must you be, Beecher, to acquire such influence over a man like Davis; what marvellous gifts must you not be endowed with! Is it any wonder that Grog predicts a brilliant future to him who can curb to his will the most stubborn of natures, and elicit traits of sacrifice out of the most selfish of men? Who but yourself could work this miracle?” Mean and ignoble as such a mode of arguing may seem, take my word for it, most patient reader, it is not unfrequent in this world of ours, nor is Annesley Beecher the only one who has ascribed all his good fortune to his own deservings.

“Shrewd fellow, that Davis; he always saw what stuff was in *me*; he recognized the real metal, while others were only sneering at the dross; just as he knows this moment, that if I start fresh without name, fortune, or title, that I’m sure to be at the top o’ the tree at last. Give me his daughter! I should think he would! It’s not all up with Lackington yet, dark as it looks; we’re in possession, and there is a ‘good line of country’ between the Honorable Annesley Beecher, next viscount

in succession, and Kit Davis, commonly called Grog of that ilk! Not that the girl isn't equal to any station—there's no denying *that!* Call her a Greville, a Stanley, or a Scymour, and she's a match for the finest man in England! Make her a countess to-morrow, and she'll look it!”

It is but fair to acknowledge that Beecher was not bewildered without some due cause, for if Davis had, at one time, spoken to him as one who no longer possessed claim to rank and station, but was a mere adventurer like himself, at another moment, he had addressed him as the future viscount, and pictured him as hurling a proud defiance to the world in the choice he had made of his wife. This was no blunder on Grog's part. That acute individual had, in the course of his legal experiences, remarked that learned counsel are wont to insert pleas which are occasionally even contradictory, alleging at times that “there was no debt,” and then, that “if there had been, it was already paid.” In the same spirit did Davis embrace each contingency of fortune, showing, that whether peer or commoner, Amnesley Beecher “stood to win” in making Lizzy his wife. “Scratch the pedigree, and she'll be a stunning peeress; and if the suit goes against us, show me the girl like her to meet the world!” This was the sum of the reflections that cost him a whole morning's intellectual labor, and more of actual mental fatigue than befalls a great parliamentary leader after a stormy debate.

That Davis had no intention to intimidate him was clearly shown by his destroying the acceptances: had he wished to lean on coercion, here was the means. Take your choice between matrimony and a felony was a short and easy piece of argumentation, such as would well have suited Grog's summary notions; and yet he had, of his own accord, freely and for ever relinquished this vantage ground. Beecher was now free. For the first time for many a long year of life he arose from his bed without a fear of the law and its emissaries. The horrible nightmare that had scared him so often, dashing the wildest moments of dissipation with sudden fear, deepening the depths of despondency with greater gloom, had all fled, and he awoke to feel that there was no terror in a “beak's” eye, nothing to daunt him in the shrewd glances of a detective. They who have lived long years of insecurity, tortured by the incessant sense of an impending peril, to befall them to-day, to-morrow, or next day, become at length so imbued with fear, that when the hour of their

emancipation arrives, they are not able, for a considerable time, to assure themselves of their safety. The captive dreams of his chains through many a night after he has gained his liberty; the shipwrecked sailor can never forget the raft and the lone ocean on which he tossed; nor was it altogether easy for Beecher to convince himself that he could walk the world with his head high, and bid defiance to crown prosecutors and juries!

“I'm out of *your* debt, Master Grog,” said he, with a pleasant laugh to himself; “catch me if you can running up another score in *your* books—wait till you see me slipping my neck into a noose held by *your* fingers. You made me feel the curb pretty sharp for many a long day, and might still, if you hadn't taken off the bridle with your own hands; but I'm free now, and won't I show you a fair pair of heels! Who could blame me, I'd like to know? When a fellow gets out of gaol, does he take lodgings next door to the prison? I never asked him to burn those bills. It was all his own doing. I conclude that a fellow, as shrewd as he, knew what he was about. Mayhap he said to himself, ‘Beecher's the downiest cove going. It will be a denced sight better to have him as my friend and pal than to send him to break stones in Australia. I can stand to win a good thing on him, and why should I send him over seas just out of spite? I'll come the grand magnanimous dodge over him—destroy the papers before his face, and say, ‘Now, old fellow, what do you say to that for a touch of generosity?’”

“‘Well, I'll tell you what I say, Master Davis,’” said he, drawing himself up, and speaking boldly out. “‘I say that you're a regular trump, and no mistake; but you're not the sharp fellow I took you for. No, no, old gent, you're no match for A. B.! He's been running in bandages all this time past; but now that his back sinews are all right, you'll see if he hasn't a turn of speed in him.’ And what is more, I'd say to him, ‘Look here, Grog, we've jogged along these ten or twelve years or so without much profit to either of us—what say you if we dissolve the partnership and let each do a little business on his own account? If I should turn out anything very brilliant, you'll be proud of me, just as England says she is when a young colony takes a great spring of success, and say, ‘Ay, he was one of my rearing!’” Of course all dictation, all that bullying intolerance is at an end now, and time it was! Wasn't I well weary of it! wasn't I actually sick of life with it! I couldn't turn to

anything, couldn't think of anything, with that eternal fear before me, always asking myself, 'Is he going to do it now?' It is very hard to believe it's all over." And he heaved a deep sigh as though disburdening his heart of its last load of sorrow.

"Davis is very wide awake," continued he; "he'll soon see how to trim his sails to this new wind; he'll know that he can't bully—can't terrorize."

A sharp, quick report of a pistol, with a clanging crash, and then a faint tinkle of a bell, cut short his musings, and Beecher hastened to the window and looked out. It was Davis in the vine alley practising with the pistol; he had just sent a ball through the target, the bell giving warning that the shot had pierced the very center. Beecher watched him as he levelled again; he thought he saw a faint tremor of the hand, a slight unsteadiness of the wrist; vain illusion—bang went the weapon, and again the little bell gave forth the token of success.

"Give me the word—one—two," cried out Davis to the man who loaded and handed him the pistols. "One—two," called out the other, and the same instant rang out the bell, and the ball was true to its mark.

"What a shot—what a *deadly* shot!" muttered Beecher, as a cold shudder came over him.

As quickly as he could take the weapons, Davis now fired; four—five—six balls went in succession through the tiny circle, the bell tinkling on and never ceasing, so rapidly did shot follow upon shot, till, as if sated with success, he turned away, saying, "I'll try it to-morrow, blindfold!"

"I'm certain," muttered Beecher, "no man is bound to go out with a fellow like that. A duel is meant to be a hazard, not dead certainty! To stand before him at twenty—ay, forty paces, is a suicide, neither more nor less; he must kill you. I'd insist on his fighting across a handkerchief. I'd say, 'Let us stand foot to foot!'" No, Beecher, not a bit of it; you'd say nothing of the kind, nor, if you did, would it avail you! Your craven heart could not beat were those stern gray eyes fixed upon you, looking death into you from a yard off. He'd shoot you down as pitilessly, too, at one distance as at the other.

Was it in the fullness of a conviction that his faltering lips tried to deny, that he threw himself back upon a chair, while a cold, clammy sweat covered his face and forehead, a sickness like death crept over him, objects grew dim to his eyes, and the room seemed to turn and swim before him?

Where was his high daring now? Where the boastful spirit in which he had declared himself free, no more the slave of Grog's insolent domination, nor basely cowering before his frown? Oh, the ineffable bitterness of that thought, coming, too, in revulsion to all his late self-gratulations! Where was the glorious emancipation he had dreamed of, now? He could not throw him into prison, it is true, but he could lay him in a grave.

"But I'd not meet him," whispered he to himself. "One is not bound to meet a man of this sort."

There is something marvelously accommodating and elastic in the phrase, "One is not bound" to do this, that, and t'other. As the said bond is a contract between oneself and an imaginary world, its provisions are rarely onerous or exacting. Life is full of things "one is not bound to do." You are "not bound," for instance, to pay your father's debts, though, it might be, they were contracted in your behalf and for your benefit. You are not bound to marry the girl whose affections have been your own for years if you can do better in another quarter, and she has nothing in your handwriting to establish a contract. You are not bound—good swimmer though you be—to rescue a man from drowning, lest he should clutch too eagerly and peril your safety. You are not bound to risk the chance of a typhus by visiting a poor friend on his sick-bed. You are not bound to aid charities you but half approve—to assist people who have been improvident—to associate with many who are uninteresting to you. But why go on with this expurgatorial catalogue? It is quite clear the old things "one *is* bound" to do are those the world will enforce at his hands; and let our selfishness be ever so inveterate, and ever so crafty, the majority will beat us, and the Ayes have it at last!

Now, few men had a longer list of the things they were "not bound to do" than Annesley Beecher; in reality, if the balance were to be struck between them, and those he acknowledged to be obligatory, it would have been like Falstaff's sack to the miserable morsel of bread. Men of his stamp fancy themselves very wise in their generation. They are not easy-natured, open, trustful, and free-handed, like that Pharisee! Take my word for it, the system works not so well as it looks, and they pass their existence in a narrow prison-ward of their own selfish instincts—their fears their fetters, their cowardly natures heavy as any chains!

Beecher reasoned somewhat in this wise. Grog was "not bound" to destroy the acceptances. He might have held them in terrorism over him for a life-long, and used them, at last, if occasioned served. At all events, they were valuable securities, which it was pure and wanton waste to burn. Still, the act being done, Beecher was "bound" in the heaviest recognizances to his own heart to profit by the motion; and the great question with him was, what was the best and shortest road to that desirable object? Supposing Lackington all right—no disputed claim to the title, no litigation of the estate—Beecher's best course had possibly been to slip his cable, make all sail, and part company with Davis for ever. One grave difficulty, however, opposed itself to this scheme. How was it possible for any man walking the earth to get out of reach of Grog Davis? Had there been a planet allotted for the especial use of peers—were there some bright star above to which they could betake themselves and demand admission by showing their patent, and from which all of inferior birth were excluded, Beecher would assuredly have availed himself of his privilege; but, alas! whatever inequalities pervade life, there is but one earth to bear us living, and cover us when dead! Now, the portion of that earth which constitutes the continent of Europe, Davis knew like a detective. A more hopeless undertaking could not be imagined than to try to escape him. Great as was his craft, it was nothing to his courage—a courage that gave him a sort of affinity to a wild animal, so headlong, reckless, and desperate did it seem. Provoke him, he was ever ready for the conflict; outrage him, and only your life's blood could be the expiation. And what an outrage had it been if Beecher had taken this moment—the first, perhaps the only one in all his life, in which Davis had accomplished a noble and generous action—to desert him! How he could picture to his mind Grog, when the tidings were told him!—not overwhelmed by astonishment—not stunned by surprise—not irresolute even for a second, but starting up like a wounded tiger, and eager for pursuit, his fierce eyeballs glaring, and his sinewy hands closed with a convulsive grip.

It was clear, therefore, that escape was impossible. What, then, was the alternative that remained? To abide—sign a life-long partnership with Grog, and marry Lizzy. "A stiff line of country—a very stiff line of country, Annesley, my boy," said he, addressing himself: "many a

dangerous rasper, many a smashing fence there—have you nerve for it?" Now, Beecher knew life well enough to see that such an existence was, in reality, little else than a steeple-chase, and he questioned himself gravely whether he possessed head or hand for the effort. Grog, to be sure, was a marvelous trainer, and Lizzy—what might not Lizzy achieve of success, with her beauty, her gracefulness, and her genius! It was not till after a long course of reflection that her image came up before him; but when once it did come, it was master of the scene. How he recalled all her winning ways, her syren voice, her ready wit, her easy, graceful motion, her playful manner, that gave to her beauty so many new phases of attraction! What a fascination was it that in her company he never remembered a sorrow—nay, to think of her was the best solace he had ever found against the pain of gloomy reveries. She was never out of humor, never out of spirits—always brilliant, sparkling, and happy-minded. What a glorious thing to obtain a share of such a nature—the very next best thing to having it oneself. "But all this was not love," breaks in my impatient reader. Very true; I admit it in all humility. It was not what you, nor perhaps I, would call by that name; but yet it was all that Annesley Beecher had to offer in that regard.

Have you never remarked the strange and curious efforts made by men who have long lived on narrow fortunes to acquit themselves respectably on succeeding to larger means? They know well enough that they need not pinch, and screw, and squeeze any longer—that fortune has enlarged her boundaries, and that they can enter into wider, richer and pleasanter pasturage—and yet, for the life of them, they cannot make the venture! or if they do, it is with a sort of convulsive, spasmodic effort far more painful than pleasurable. Their old instincts press heavily upon them, and bear down all the promptings of their present prosperity; they really do not want all these bounties of fate—they are half crushed by the shower of blessings. So is it precisely with your selfish man in his endeavors to expand into affection, and so was it with Beecher when he tried to be a lover.

Some moralists tell us that, even in the best natures, love is essentially a selfish passion. What amount of egotism, then, does it not include in those who are far—very far—from being "the best?" With all this, let us be just to poor Beecher. Whatever there was of heart about him,



“WHAT A SHOT—WHAT A DEADLY SHOT!” MUTTERED BEECHER, AS A COLD SHUDDER CAME
ER HIM. (P. 575.)

she had touched; whatever of good, or kind, or gentle, in his neglected being existed, she had found the way to it. If he were capable of being anything better, she alone could have aided the reformation. If he were not to sink still lower and lower, it was to her helping hand his rescue would be owing. And somehow—though I cannot explain how—he felt and knew this to be the case. He could hear generous sentiments from *her*, and not deem them hypocrisy. He could listen to *her* words of trust and hopefulness, and yet not smile at her credulity. *She* had gained that amount of ascendancy over his mind which subjugated all his own prejudices to her influence, and, like all weak natures, he was never so happy as in slavery. Last of all, what a prize it would be to be the husband of the most beautiful woman in Europe! There was a notoriety in that, far above the fame of winning “Derbys,” or breaking roulette banks; and he pictured to himself how they would journey through the Continent, admired, worshiped, and envied, for already he had invested himself with the qualities of his future wife, and gloried in the triumphs she was so sure to win.

“By Jove! I’ll do it,” cried he, at last, as he slapped his hand on the table. “I don’t care what they’ll say, I *will* do it; and if there’s any fellow dares to scoff or sneer at it, Grog shall shoot him. I’ll make that bargain with him; and he’ll like it, for he loves fighting.” He summed up his resolution by imagining that the judgment of the world would run somehow in this fashion: “Wonderful fellow, that Annesley Beecher! It’s not above a year since his brother lost the title, and there he is, now, married to the most splendorous woman in Europe, living like a prince—denying himself nothing, no matter what what it cost—and all by his own wits! Show me his equal anywhere! Lackington used to call him a ‘flat.’ I wonder what he’d say, now!”

CHAPTER LXXVI.

A DARK CONFIDENCE.

WHAT a wound it would inflict upon our self-love were we occasionally to know that the concessions we have extorted from our own hearts by long effort and persuasion would be deemed matters of very doubtful acceptance by those in whose favor they were made. With what astonishment should we learn that there was nothing

so very noble in our forgiveness—nothing so very splendid in our generosity! I have been led to this reflection by thinking over Annesley Beecher’s late resolve, and wondering what effect it might have had on him could he have overheard what passed in the very chamber next his own.

Though Lizzy Davis was dressed and ready to come down to breakfast, she felt so ill and depressed that she lay down again on her bed, telling the maid to close the shutters and leave her to herself.

“What’s this, Lizzy? What’s the matter, girl?” said Davis, entering, and taking a seat at her bedside. “Your hand is on fire.”

“I slept badly—scarcely at all,” said she, faintly, “and my head feels as if it would split with pain.”

“Poor child!” said he, as he kissed her burning forehead; “I was the cause of all this. Yes, Lizzy, I know it, but I had been staving off this hour for many and many a year. I felt in my heart that you were the only one in all the world who could console or cheer me, and yet I was satisfied to forego it all—to deny myself what I yearned after—just to spare you.”

The words came with a slow and faltering utterance from him, and his lips quivered when he had done speaking.

“I’m not quite sure the plan was a good one,” said she, in a low voice.

“Nor am I now,” said he, sternly; “but I did it for the best.”

She heaved a heavy sigh, and was silent.

“Mayhap I thought, too,” said he, after a pause, “that when you looked back at all the sacrifices I had made for you, how I toiled and labored—not as other men toil and labor, for *my* handicraft was always exercised with a convict ship in the offing—There, you needn’t shudder now; I’m here beside you now. Well, I thought you’d say, ‘After all, he gave me every advantage in his power. If he couldn’t bestow on me station and riches, he made me equal to their enjoyment if they ever befel me. He didn’t bring me down to his own level, nor to feel the heartburnings of his own daily life, but he made me, in thought and feeling, as good as any lady in the land.’”

“And for what—to what end?” said she, wildly.

“That you might be such, one day, girl,” said he, passionately. “Do you think I have not known every hour, for the last thirty odd years, what I might have been, had I been trained, and schooled, and taught the things that others know? Have I not felt that I had pluck, daring,

energy, and persistence that only wanted knowledge to beat them all, and leave them nowhere? Have I not said to myself, 'She has every one of these, and she has good looks to boot; and why shouldn't she go in and carry away the cup?' And do you think, when I said that, that I wasn't striking a docket of bankruptcy against my own heart for ever? for to make *you* great was to make *me* childless!"

Lizzy covered her face with her hands, but never uttered a word.

"I didn't need any one to tell me," resumed he, fiercely, "that training you up in luxury and refinement wasn't the way to make you satisfied with poverty, or proud of such a father as myself. I knew deuced well what I was preparing for myself there. 'But no matter,' I said, 'come what will, *she* shall have a fair start of it. Show me the fellow will try a balk—show me the man will cross the course while she's running.'"

Startled by the thick and guttural utterance of his words, Lizzy removed her hands from her face, and stared eagerly at him. Strongly shaken by passion as he was, every line and lineament tense with emotion, there was a marvelous resemblance between her beautiful features and the almost demoniac savagery of his. Had he not been at her side, the expression was only that of intense pain on a face of surpassing beauty, but, seen through the baneful interpretation of his look, she seemed the type of a haughty nature spirited by the very wildest ambition.

"Ay, girl," said he, with a sigh, "you've cost me more than money or money's worth; and if I ever come to have what they call a 'conscience,' I'll have an ugly score to settle on your account."

"Oh, dearest father!" cried she, bitterly, "do not wring my heart by such words as these."

"There, you shall hear no more of it," said he, withdrawing his hand from her grasp and crossing his arm on his breast.

"Nay," said she, fondly, "you shall tell me all and everything. It has cost you heavily to make this confidence to me. Let us try if it cannot requite us both. I know the worst. No?" cried she, in terror, as he shook his head; "why, what is there remains behind?"

"How shall I tell you what remains behind?" broke he in, sternly; "how shall I teach you to know the world as I know it—to feel that every look bent on me is insult—every word uttered as I pass a sarcasm—that fellows rise from the table

when I sit down at it? and though, now and then, I am lucky enough to catch one who goes too far, and make him a warning to others, they can do enough to spite me, and yet never come within twelve paces of me. I went over to Neuwid yesterday to fetch my letters from the post. You'd fancy that in a little village on this untraveled bank of the Rhine I might have rested an hour to bait my horse and eat my breakfast unmolested and without insult. You'd say that in a secluded spot like that I would be safe. Not a bit of it. Scandal has its hue and cry, and every man that walks the earth is its agent. Two young fellows fresh from England—by their dress, their manner, and their bad French, I judged them to be young students from Oxford or Cambridge—breakfasted in the same room with me, and deeming me a foreigner, and therefore—for it is a right English conclusion—unable to understand them, talked most freely of events and people before me. I paid little attention to their rapid talk till my ear caught the name of Beecher. They were discussing him and a lady who had been seen in his company at Aix-la-Chapelle. Yes, they had seen her repeatedly in her rides and drives, followed her to the Coursal, and stared her at the opera. They were quite enthusiastic about her beauty, and only puzzled to know who this mysterious creature might be who looked like a queen and dressed like a queen. One averred she was not Beecher's sister—the peerage told them that; as little was she his wife. Then came the other and last alternative. And I had to sit still and listen to every *pro* and *con* of this stupid converse—their miserable efforts to reason, or their still more contemptible attempts to jest, and dare not stand up before them and say, 'Hold your slanderous tongues, for she is my daughter,' because, to the first question they would put to me, I must say, 'My name is Davis—Christopher Davis'—ay, 'Grog Davis,' if they would have it so. No, no, girl, all your beauty, all your grace, all your fascinations would not support such a name—the best horse that ever won the Derby will break down if you overweight him; and so, I had to leave my breakfast uneaten and come away how I could. For one brief moment I was irresolute. I felt that if I let them off so easily I'd pine and fret over it after, and, maybe, give way to passion some other time with less excuse; but my thoughts came back to you, Lizzy, and I said, 'What signifies about me? I have no object, no goal in life, but her. She

must not be talked of, nor made matter for newspaper gossip. She will one day or other hold a place at which slander and malevolence only talk in whispers, and even these must be uttered with secrecy! I couldn't help laughing as I left the room. One of them declined to eat salad because it was unwholesome. Little he knew on what a tiny chance it depended whether that was to be his last breakfast. The devilish pleasure of turning back and telling him so almost overcame my resolution."

"There was, then, an impropriety in my living at Aix as I did?" asked Lizzy, calmly.

"The impropriety, as you call it, need not have been notorious," said he, in angry confusion. "If people will attract notice by an ostentatious display—horses, equipage, costly dressing, and so on, the world will talk of them. You couldn't know this, but Beecher did. It was his unthinking folly drew these bad tongues on you. It is a score he'll have to settle with me yet."

"But, dearest papa, let me bear the blame that is my due. It was I—I myself—who encouraged, suggested these extravagances. I fancied myself possessed of boundless wealth; he never undeceived me; nay, he would not even answer my importunate questions as to my family, my connections, whence we came, and of what country."

"If he had," muttered Grog, "I'd be curious to have heard his narrative."

"I saw at last that there was a secret, and then I pressed him no more."

"And you did well. Had you importuned, and had he yielded, it had been worse for *him*."

"Just as little did I suspect," continued she, rapidly, "that any reproach could attach to my living in his society; he was your friend; it was at your desire he accepted this brief guardianship; he never by a word, a look, transgressed the bounds of respectful courtesy; and I felt all the unconstrained freedom of old friendship in our intercourse."

"All his reserve and all your delicacy won't silence evil tongues, girl. I intended you to have stayed a day or two, at most, at Aix. You passed weeks there. Whose fault that, you say? Mine—of course mine, and no one else's. But what but my fault every step in your whole life? Why wasn't I satisfied to bring you up in my own station, with rogues and swindlers for daily associates? then I might have had a daughter who would not be ashamed to own me."

"Oh, that I am not; that I will never be," cried she throwing her arm around his neck. "What has your whole life been but a sacrifice to me? It may be that you rate too highly these great prizes of life; that you attach to the station you covet for me a value I cannot concur in. Still, I feel that it was your love for me prompted this hope, and that while *you* trod the world darkly and painfully, you purchased a path of light and pleasantness for *me*."

"You have paid me for it all by these words," said he, drawing his hand across his eyes. "I'd work as a daily laborer on the road—I'd be a sailor before the mast—I'd take my turn with a chain-gang, and eat Norfolk Island biscuit, if it could help to place you where I seek to see you."

"And what is this rank to which you aspire so eagerly?"

"I want you to be a peeress, girl. I want you to be one of the proudest guild the world ever yet saw or heard of; to have a station so accredited that every word you speak, every act you do, goes forth with its own authority."

"But stay," broke she in, "men's memories will surely carry them back to who I was."

"Let them, girl. Are you the stuff to be chilled by that? Have I made you what you are, that you cannot play their equal? There are not many of them better looking—are there any cleverer or better informed? Even those Oxford boys said you looked like an empress. If insult will crush you, girl, you've got little of *my* blood in you."

Lizzy's face flushed scarlet, and her eyes glittered wildly, as they seemed to say, "Have no fears on that score." Then, suddenly changing to an ashy pallor, and in a voice trembling with intense feeling, she said: "But why seek out an existence of struggle and conflict? It is for me and my welfare that all your anxieties are exercised. Is it not possible that these can be promoted without the dangerous risk of this ambition? You know life well—tell me, then, are there not some paths a woman may tread for independence, and yet cause no blush to those who love her best? Of the acquirements you have bestowed upon me, are there not some which could be turned to this account? I could be a governess."

"Do you know what a governess is, girl?—a servant in the garb of a lady: one whose mind has been cultivated, not to form resources for herself, but to be drained and drawn on by others. They used to kill a serf, in the middle ages, that a noble

might warm his feet in the hot entrails; our modern civilization is satisfied by driving many a poor girl crazy, to cram some stupid numskull with a semblance of knowledge. You shall not be a governess."

"There is the stage, then," cried she. "I'm vain enough to imagine I should succeed there."

"I'll not hear of it," broke in Davis, passionately. "If I was certain you could act like Siddons herself, you should not walk the boards. I know what a theater is. I know the life of coarse familiarity it leads to. The corps is a family gathered together like what jockeys call 'a scratch team'—a wheeler here, and a leader there, with just smartness enough to soar above the level of a dull audience, crammed with the light jest of low comedy, and steered by no higher ambition than a crowded benefit, or a junketing at Greenwich. How would *you* consort with these people?"

"Still, if I achieved success—"

"I won't have it—that's enough. I tell you, girl, that there is but one course for *you*. You must be declared winner at the stand-house before you have been seen on the ground. If you have to run the gauntlet through all the slanders and stories they will rake up of *me*—if, before you reach the goal, you have to fight all the lost battles of *my* life over again, you'll never see the winning-post."

"And is it not better to confront the storm, and risk one's chances with the elements, than suffer shipwreck at once? I tell you, father," cried she, eagerly, "I'll face all the perils you speak of, boldly; I'll brave insolence, neglect, sarcasm—what they will—only let me feel one honest spot in my heart, and be able to say to myself, 'You have toiled lowly, and fared ill—you have dared a conflict and been worsted—but you have not made traffic of your affections, nor bought success by that which makes it valueless.'"

"These are the wild romances of a girl's fancy," said Davis. "Before a twelve-month was over, you couldn't say, on your oath, whether you had married for love or interest, except that poverty might remind you of the one, and affluence suggest the other. Do you imagine that the years stop short with spring, and that one is always in the season of expectancy? No, no; months roll along, and after summer comes autumn, and then winter, and the light dress you fancied that you never need change would make but scanty clothing."

"But if I am not able to bring myself to this?"

"Are you certain you will be able to bring *me* to worse?" said he, solemnly. "Do you feel, Lizzy, as if you could repay my long life of sacrifice and struggle by what would undo them all? Do you feel strong enough to say, 'My old father was a fool to want to make *me* better than himself; I can descend to the set he is ashamed of; and, more still, I can summon courage to meet taunts and insults on him, which, had I station to repel them from, had never been uttered.'"

"Oh, do not tempt me this way," cried she, bitterly.

"But I will, girl—I will leave nothing unsaid that may induce you to save yourself from misery, and *me* from disgrace. I tell you, girl, if I face the world again, it must be with such security as only you can give me—you, a lady high in rank and position, can then save *me*. My enemies will know that their best game will not be to ruin *me*."

"And are you sure it would save you?" said she, sternly and coldly.

"I am," said he, in a voice like her own.

"Will you take a solemn oath to me that you see no other road out of these difficulties, whatever they are, than by my doing this?"

"I will swear it as solemnly as ever words were sworn. I believe—before Heaven I say it—that there's not another chance in life by which your future lot can be secured."

"Do not speak of mine; think solely of your fortunes, and say if this alone can save them."

"Just as firmly do I say, then, that once in the position I mean, you can rescue me out of every peril. You will be rich enough to pay some, powerful enough to promote others, great enough to sway and influence all."

"Good God! what have you done, then, that it is only by sacrificing all my hopes of happiness that you can be ransomed?" cried she with a burst of irrepressible passion.

"You want a confession, then," said Davis, in a tone of most savage energy; "you'd like to hear my own indictment of myself. Well, there are plenty of counts in it. Stand forward, Kit Davis. You are charged with various acts of swindling and cheating—light offenses, all of them—committed in the best of company, and in concert with honorable and even noble colleagues. By the virtue of your oath, Captain Davis, how many horses have you poisoned? how many jockeys have you drugged? what number of men have you

hoessed at play? what sums have you won from others in a state of utter insensibility? Can you state any case where you enforced a false demand by intimidation? Can you charge your memory with any instance of shooting a man who accused you of foul play? What names besides your own have you been in the habit of signing to bills? Have you any revelations to make about stock transferred under forgery? Will you kiss the book, and say, that nineteen out of twenty at the hulks have not done a fiftieth part of what you have done? Will you solemnly take oath that there are not ten, fifteen, twenty charges, which might be prosecuted against you, to transportation for life? and are there not two—or, certainly, is there not one—with a heavier forfeiture on it? Are there not descriptions of you in almost every police bureau in Europe, and photographic likenesses, too, and frontier passport-offices of little German States, that Hesse, and Cassel, and Coburgh should not be ravaged by the wolf called Grog Davis?"

"And if this be so, to what end do I sacrifice myself?" cried she in bitter anguish. "Were it not better to seek out some faraway land where we cannot be traced? Let us go to America, to Australia I don't care how remote it be—the country that will shelter us—"

"Not a step. I'll not budge out of Europe; win or lose, here I stay! Do as I tell you, girl, and the game is our own. It has been my safety this many a year that I could compromise so many in my own fall. Well, time has thinned the number marvelously. Many have died. The cholera, the Crimea, the Marshalsea, broken hearts, and what not, have done their work; and of the few remaining, some have grown indifferent to exposure, others have dropped out of view, and now it would be as much as I could do to place four or five men of good names in the dock beside me. That ain't enough. I must have connexions. I want those relations that can't afford disgrace. Let me only have *them*, they'll take care of their own reputations. You don't know, but I know, what great folk can do in England. There's not a line in the Ten Commandments they couldn't legalize with an Act of Parliament. They can marry and unmarry, bind and loosen, legitimize or illegitimize, by a vote 'of the House;' and by a vote of society that can do just as much: make a swindling railroad contractor the first man in London, and, if they liked it, and saw it suited their book, they could make Kit Davis a member of White's, or

the Carlton, and once they did it, girl, they'd think twice before they'd try to undo it again. All I say is, give me a viscount for a son-in-law, and see if I don't 'work the oracle.' Let me have just so much backing as secures a fair fight, and my head be on't if they don't give in before I do! They're very plucky with one another, girl, because they keep within the law; but mark how they tremble before the fellow that doesn't mind the law—that goes through it, at one side of it, or clean over it. That's the pull I have over them. The man that don't mind a wetting can always drag another into the water; do you see that?"

Davis had now so worked upon himself that he walked the room with hasty steps, his cheeks burning, and his eyes widely, fiercely glaring. Amongst the traits which characterize men of lawless and depraved lives, none is more remarkable than the boastful hardihood with which they will at times deploy all the resources of their iniquity, even exaggerating the amount of the wrongs they have inflicted on society. There is something actually satanic in their exultation over a world they have cheated, bullied, injured and insulted, so that in their infernal code, honesty and trustfulness seem only worthy of contempt, and he alone possessed of true courage who dares and defies the laws that bind his fellow-men.

Davis was not prone to impulsiveness; very few men were less the slaves of rash or intemperate humors. He had been reared in too stern a school to let mere temper master him; but his long-practised self-restraint deserted him here. In his eagerness to carry his point, he was borne away beyond all his prudence, and once launched into the sea of his confessions, he wandered without chart or compass. Besides this, there was that strange, morbid sense of vanity which is experienced in giving a shock to the fears and sensibilities of another. The deeper the tints of his own criminality—the more terrible the course he had run in life—so much the more was he to be feared and dreaded. If he should fail to work upon her affections, he might still hope to extract something from her terror, for who could say of what a man like him was not capable? And last of all, he had thrown off the mask, and he did not care to retain a single rag of the disguise he so long had worn, thus was it, then, that he stood before her in all the strong light of his iniquities—a criminal, whose forfeitures would have furnished guilt for fifty.

"Shall I go on?" said he, in a voice of thick and labored utterance, "or is this enough?"

"Oh, is it not enough?" cried she, bitterly.

"You asked me to tell you all—everything—and now that you've only caught a passing glimpse of what I could reveal, you start back affrighted. Be it so; there are at least no concealments between us now, and harsh as my lesson has been, it is not a whit harsher than if the world had given it. I've only one word more to say, girl," said, he, as he drew nigh the door and held his hand on the lock; "if it be your firm resolve to reject this fortune, the sooner you let me know it the better. I have said all that I need say; the rest is within your own hands; only remember, that if such be your determination, give me the earliest notice, for I, too, must take my measures for the future."

If there was nothing of violence in the manner he uttered these words, there was a stern, impassive serenity that made them still more impressive, and Lizzy, without a word of reply, buried her face between her hands and wept.

Davis stood irresolute; for a moment it seemed as if his affection had triumphed, for he made a gesture as though he would approach her; then, suddenly correcting himself with a start, he muttered below his breath, "It is done now," and left the room.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

SOME DAYS AT GLENGARIFF.

THE little hermitage of Glengariff, with its wooded park, its winding river, its deep solitudes fragrant with wild rose and honeysuckle, is familiar to my reader. He has lingered there with me, strolling through leafy glades, over smooth turf, catching glimpses of blue sea through the dark foliage, and feeling all the intense ecstasy of a spot that seemed especially created for peaceful enjoyment. What a charm was in those tangled pathways, overhung with jessamine and arbutus, or now flanked by a moss-clad rock, through whose fissures small crystal rivulets trickled slowly down into little basins beneath. How loaded the air with delicious perfume—what a voluptuous sense of estrangement from all passing care crept over one as he stole noiselessly along over the smooth sward, and drank in the mellow blackbird's note, blended with the distant murmur of the

rippling river. And where is it all now? The park is now traversed in every direction with wide, unfinished roads, great open spaces appear at intervals, covered with building materials, yawning sand-quarries swarming with men, great brick-fields smoking in all the reeking oppression of that filthy manufacture, lime kilns spreading their hateful breath on every side, vast cliffs of slate and granite-rock, making the air resound with their discordant crash, with all the vulgar tumult of a busy herd. If you turn seaward, the same ungraceful change is there: ugly and misshapen wharfs have replaced the picturesque huts of the fishermen; casks, and hogsheds, and bales, and hampers litter the little beach where once the festooned net was wont to hang, and groups of half drunken sailors riot and dispute where once the merry laugh of sportive childhood was all that woke the echoes. If the lover of the picturesque could weep tears of bitter sorrow over these changes, to the man of speculation and progress they were but signs of a glorious prosperity. The Grand Glengariff Villa Allotment and Marine Residence Company was a splendid scheme, whose shares were eagerly sought after at a high premium. Mr. Dunn must assuredly have lent all his energies to the enterprise, for descriptions of the spot were to be found throughout every corner of the three kingdoms. Colored lithographs and stereoscopes depicted its most seductive scenes through the pages of popular "weeklies," and a dropping fire of interesting paragraphs continued to keep up the project before the public through the columns of the daily press. An *Illustrated News* of one week presented its subscribers with an extra engraving of the "Yachts entering Glengariff harbor after the regatta;" the next, it was a finished print of the "Lady Augusta Arden laying the foundation-stone of the Davenport obelisk." At one moment the conflict between wild nature and ingenious art would be shown by a view of a clearing in Glengariff forest, where the solid foundations of some proud edifice were seen rising amidst prostrate pines and fallen oak trees—prosaic announcements in advertising columns giving to these pictorial devices all the solemn stability of fact, so that such localities as "Arden-terrace," "Lackington-avenue," "Glengariff-crescent," and "Davenport heights," became common and familiar to the public ear.

The imaginative literature of speculation—industrial fiction it might be called—has reached a very high development in our

day. Not content with enlisting all the graces of fancy in the cause of enterprise, heightening the charms of scenery and aiding the interests of romance by historic association, it actually allies itself with the slighter infirmities of our social creed, and exalts the merits of certain favored spots by the blessed assurance that they are patronized by our betters. Amongst the many advantages fortune bestowed upon the grand Glengariff scheme was conspicuously one—dukes had approved, and earls admired it. “We are happy to learn,” said the *Post*, “that the Marquis of Duckington has entrusted the construction of his marine villa at Glengariff to the exquisite skill and taste of Sir Jeffrey Blocksley, who is at present engaged in preparing Noddleton Hall for his grace the Duke of Bowood, at the same charming locality.” In the *Herald* we find: “The Earl of Hanaper is said to have paid no less than twelve thousand guineas for the small plot of land in which his bathing-lodge at Glengariff is to stand. It is only right to mention, that the view from his windows will include the entire bay, from the Davenport obelisk to Dunn Lighthouse—a prospect unequalled, we venture to assert, in Europe.” And, greater than these, the *Chronicle* assures us, the arrival of a treasury lord, accompanied by the chairman of the Board of Works, on Monday last, at Glengariff, proclaimed the gracious intention of her majesty to honor this favored spot by selecting it for a future residence. “‘Queen’s Cot,’ as it will be styled, will stand exactly on the site formerly occupied by the late residence of Lord Glengariff, well known as the hermitage, and be framed and galleried in wood in the style so frequently seen in the Tyrol.”

Where is the born Briton would not feel the air balmier and the breeze more zephyr-like if he could see that it waved a royal standard? where the Anglo-Saxon who would not think the sea more salubrious that helped to salt a duke? where the alley that was not cooler if a marquis walked beneath its shadow? It is not that honest John Bull seeks the intimacy or acquaintance of these great folk—he has no such weakness or ambition—he neither aspires to know or be known of them; the limit of his desire is to breathe the same mountain air, to walk the same chain pier, to be fed by their poulterer and butcher, and, maybe, buried by their undertaker. Were it the acquaintanceship he coveted—were it some participation in the habits of refined and elegant intercourse, far be it from us to say one word in disparagement of such

ambition, satisfied as we are that in all that concerns the enjoyment of society, for the charms of a conversation where fewest prejudices prevail, where least exaggerations are found, where good feeling is rarely, good taste never, violated, the highest in rank are invariably the most conspicuous. But, unhappily, these are not the prizes sought after, the grand object being attained if the Joneses and Simkinses can spend their autumn in the same locality with titled visitors, bathe in the same tides, and take their airings at the same hours. What an unspeakable happiness might it yield them to know they had been “bored” by the same monotony, and exhausted by the same *ennuis*!

They who were curious in such literature fancied they could detect the fine round hand of Mr. Hanks in the glowing descriptions of Glengariff. Brought up at the feet of that Gamaliel of appraisers, George Robins, he really did credit to his teachings. Nor was it alone the present delights of the spot he dwelt upon, but expatiated on the admirable features of an investment certain to realize, eventually, two or three hundred per cent. It was, in fact, like buying uncleared land in the bush, upon which, within a few years, streets and squares were to be found, purchasing for a mere nominal sum whole territories that to-morrow or next day were to be sold as building lots and valued by the foot.

As in a storm the tiniest creeks and most secluded coves feel, in their little bays, the wild influence that prevails without, and see their quiet waters ruffled and wave-tossed, so, too, prosperity follows the same law, and spreads its genial sunshine in a wide circle around the spot it brightens. For miles and miles along the shore the grand Glengariff scheme diffused the golden glory of its success. Little fishing villages, solitary cottages in sequestered glens, lonely creeks, whose yellow strands had seldom seen a foot-track—all felt it. The patient habits of humble industry seemed contemptible to those who came back to their quiet homesteads after seeing the wondrous doings at Glengariff—and marvelous, indeed, were the narratives of sudden fortunes. One had sold his little “shebeen” for more gold than he knew how to count; another had become rich by the price of the garden before his door; the shingly beach seemed paved with precious stones, the rocks appeared to have grown into bullion. How mean and despicable seemed daily toil: the weary labor of the field, the precarious life of the fisher-

man, in presence of such easy prosperity, were ignoble drudgery. It savored of superior intelligence to exchange the toil of the hands for the exercise of speculative talents, and each began to compute what some affluent purchaser might not pay for this barren plot, what that bleak promontory might not bring in this market of fanciful bidders.

Let us note the fact that the peasant was not a little amused by the absurd value which the rich man attached to objects long familiar and unprized by himself. The picturesque and the beautiful were elements so totally removed from all his estimate of worth, that he readily ascribed to something very like insanity the great man's fondness for them. That a group of stone pines on a jutting cliff, a lone and rocky island, a ruined wall, an ancient well canopied by a bower of honeysuckle, should be deemed objects of price, appeared to be the most capricious of all tastes; and, in his ignorance as to what imparted this value, he glutted the market with everything that occurred to him. Spots of ground the least attractive, tenements occupying the most ill-chosen sites, ugly and misshapen remains of cottages long deserted, were all vaunted as fully as good or better than their neighbors had sold for thousands. It must be owned, the market-price of any article seemed the veriest lottery imaginable! One man could actually find no purchaser for four acres of the finest potato-garden in the county; another got a hundred guineas for his goodwill of a bit of stony land that wouldn't feed a goat; here was a slated house no one would look at, there was a mud hovel a lord and two members of Parliament were outbidding each other over these three weeks. Could anything be more arbitrary or inexplicable than this? in fact, it almost seemed as if the old, the ruinous, the neglected, and the unprofitable had now usurped the place of all that was neat, orderly, or beneficial.

If we have suffered ourselves to be led into these remarks, they are not altogether digressory. The hermitage, we have said, was doomed. Common report alleged that the queen had selected the spot for her future residence, and of a truth it was even worthy of such a destiny. Whether in reality royalty had made the choice, or that merely it was yet a speculation in hope of such an event, we cannot say, but an accomplished architect had already begun the work of re-construction, and more than two-thirds of the former building were now demolished. The fragment that

still remained was about the oldest part of the cottage, and not the least picturesque. It was a little wing with three gables to the front, the ancient framework, of black oak, quaintly ornamented with many a tasteful device and grim decoration. A little portico, whose columns were entirely concealed by the rich foliage of a rhododendron, stood before the windows, whose diamond panes told of an era when glass bore a very different value; a gorgeous flower-plat, one rich expanse of rare tulips and ranunculi, sloped from the portico to the river, over which a single plank formed a bridge. The stream, which was here deep and rock-bottomed, could be barely seen between the deep-hanging branches of the weeping-ash, but its presence might be recognized by the occasional splash of a leaping trout, or the still louder stroke of a swan's wing as he sailed in solemn majesty over his silent domain. So straggling and wide-spreading had been the ancient building, that, although a part of the condemned structure, the clank of the mason's trowel and the turmoil of the falling materials could scarcely be heard in this quiet, sequestered spot. Here Sybella Kellett still lived—left behind by her great protectors—half in forgetfulness. Soon after the triumph of the Ossory Bank they had removed to Dublin, thence to London, where they now awaited the passage of a special bill to make the Glengarriff allotment scheme a chartered company. Although the great turn in the fortunes of Glengarriff had transmitted to other hands the direction and guidance of events there, her zeal, energy, and, above all, her knowledge of the people, especially marked her out as one whose services were most valuable. English officials, new to Ireland and its ways, quickly discovered the vast superiority she possessed over them in all dealings with the peasantry, whose prejudices she understood, and whose modes of thought were familiar to her. By none were her qualities more appreciated than by Mr. Hanks. There was a promptitude and decision in all she did, a ready-witted intelligence to encounter whatever difficulty arose, and a bold, purpose-like activity of character about her that amazed and delighted that astute gentleman. "She's worth us all, sir," he would say to Sir Elkanah Paston, the great English engineer—"worth us all. Her suggestions are priceless; see how she detected the cause of those shifting sands in the harbor, and supplied the remedy at once; mark how she struck out that line of road from the quarries; think of her transplanting

those pinasters five-and-thirty feet high, and not a failure—not one failure amongst them; and there's the promontory, now the most picturesque feature of the bay; and as to those terraced gardens that she laid out last week, I vow and declare Sir Joseph himself couldn't have done it better. And then, after a day of labor—riding, perhaps, five-and-twenty or thirty miles—she'll sit down to her desk and write away half the night."

If it had not been for one trait, Mr. Hanks would have pronounced her perfection; there was, however, a flaw, which the more he thought over the more did it puzzle him. She was eminently quick-sighted, keen to read motives and appreciate character, and yet with all this she invariably spoiled every bargain made with the people. Instead of taking advantage of their ignorance and inexperience, she was continually on the watch over *their* interests; instead of endeavoring to overreach them, she was mindful of their advantage, cautiously abstaining from everything that might affect their rights.

"We might have bought up half the county for a song, sir, if it were not for that girl," Mr. Hanks would say; "she has risen the market on us everywhere. 'Let us be just,' she says. I want to be just, Miss Kellett, but just to ourselves."

A pleasant phrase is that same one "just to ourselves," but Mr. Hanks employed it like many other people, and never saw its absurdity.

Now, Sybella Kellett fancied that justice had a twofold obligation, and found herself very often the advocate of the poor man, patiently sustaining his rights, and demanding their recognition. Confidence, we are told by a great authority, is a plant of slow growth, and yet she acquired it in the end. The peasantry submitted to her, claims the most complex and involved; they brought their quaint old contracts, half illegible by time and neglect; they recited, and confirmed by oral testimony, the strangest possible of tenures; they recounted long narratives of how they succeeded to this holding, and what claims they could prefer to that; histories that would have worn out almost any human patience to hear, and especially trying to one whose apprehension was of the quickest. And yet she would listen to the very end, make herself master of the case, and give it a deep and full consideration. This done, she decided; and to that decision none ever objected. Whatever her decree, it was accepted as just and fair, and even if a single disappointed or discontented

suitor could have been found, he would have shrunk from avowing himself the opponent of public opinion.

It was, however, by the magic of her sympathy, by the secret charm of understanding their natures, and participating in every joy and sorrow of their hearts, that she gained her true ascendancy over them. There was nothing feigned or factitious in her feeling for them; it was not begotten of that courtly tact which knows names by heart, remembers little family traits, and treasures up an anecdote, it was true, heartfelt, honest interest in their welfare. She had watched them long and closely; she knew that the least amiable trait in their natures was also that which oftenest marred their fortunes—distrust, and she set herself vigorously to work to uproot this vile, pernicious weed, the most noxious that ever poisoned the soil of a human heart. By her own truthful dealings with them she inspired truth, by *her* fairness she exacted fairness, and by the straightforward honesty of her words and actions they grew to learn how far easier and pleasanter could be the business of life where none sought to overreach his neighbor.

To such an extent had her influence spread, that it became at last well nigh impossible to conclude any bargain for land without her co-operation. Unless her award had decided, the peasant could not bring himself to believe that his claim had met a just or equitable consideration; but whatever Miss Bella decreed was final and irrevocable. From an early hour each morning the suitors to her court began to arrive. Under a large damson-tree was placed a table, at which she sat, busily writing away, and listening all the while to their long-drawn-out narratives. It was her rule never to engage in any purchase when she had not herself made a visit to the spot in question, ascertained in person all its advantages and disadvantages, and speculated how far its future value should influence its present price. In this way she had traveled far and near over the surrounding country, visiting localities the wildest and least known, and venturing into districts where a timid traveler had not dared to set foot. It required all her especial acuteness, oftentimes, to find out—from garbled and incoherent descriptions—the strange and out-of-the-way places no map had ever indicated. In fact, the wild and untraveled country was pathless as a sea, and nothing short of her ready-witted tact had been able to navigate it.

She was, as usual, busied one morning

with her peasant levee when Mr. Hanks arrived. He brought a number of letters from the post, and was full of the importance so natural to him who has the earliest intelligence.

"Great news, Miss Bella," said he, gaily—"very great news. One of the French princes announces his intention to build a villa here. He requires a small park of some forty or fifty acres, access to the sea, and a good anchorage for his yacht. This note here will give all particulars. Here is an application from Sir Craven Tolle-mache; he wants us to build him a house on any picturesque site near the shore, and contracts to take it on lease. Here is a demand for one hundred shares, fifty to be exchanged for shares in the Boquantilla, Cobalt, and Zinc mines, now at a premium. Kelsal and Waterline wish to know what facilities we would afford them to establish yacht-building in Crooke's harbor. If liberally dealt with, they propose to expend fifty thousand on permanent improvements. Lord Drelington is anxious for a house in Lackington-crescent. I believe he is too late. There are also seven applications for 'Arden House,' which, I fancy, has been promised to Sir Peter Parkesworth. Founde's Cliff, too, is eagerly run after; that sketch you made of it has been a great success. We must extend our territories, Miss Bella—we must widen our frontier; never was there such a hit. It is the grandest operation of Mr. Dunn's life. Seven hundred and twenty-three thousand pounds—one-fourth already paid, the remainder available at short calls. Those Welsh people, Plimmon and Price, are eager about our lead mine, and we can run up the shares there to sixty-five or seventy whenever we please. Here, too, are the plans for the new casino and baths. This is the sketch of a hydropathic establishment—a pet scheme of Lord Glengariff's; we must let him have it. And here is Traevane's report about the marble. It will serve admirably for every purpose but statuary. Our slate slabs are pronounced the finest ever imported. We mean to flag the entire terrace along the sea with them. This is from Dunn himself; it is very short, and hurriedly written: 'Chevass will move the second reading of our bill on Tuesday. I have spoken to the chancellor, and it is all right. Before it goes to the lords we must have a new issue of shares. I want, at least, two hundred and fifty thousand by the end of the year.' He says nothing about politics; indeed, he is so occupied with gaities and fine company, he has little time for business. He only men-

tions, that 'till we have done with this stupid war we cannot hope for any real extension to our great enterprise.'"

"And does he put our miserable plottings here in competition with the noble struggle of our glorious soldiers in the Crimea?" cried she, now breaking silence for the first time.

Mr. Hanks actually started with the energy of her manner, and for a moment could scarcely collect himself to reply.

"Well, you know, Miss Bella," said he, faltering at every word, "we are men of peace—we are people engaged in the quiet arts of trade—we cannot be supposed indifferent to the interests are lives are passed in forwarding."

"But you are Englishmen besides, sir; not to say you are brothers and kinsmen of the gallant men who are fighting our enemies."

"Very true, Miss Bella—very true; they have their profession and we have ours. We rejoice in their success as we participate in all the enthusiasm of their gallantry. I give you my word of honor I couldn't help filling out an extra glass of sherry yesterday to the health of that fine fellow who dashed at the Russian staff and carried off a colonel prisoner. You saw it, I suppose, in the papers?"

"No. Pray let me hear it," said she, eagerly.

"Well, it was an observation—a 'reconnaissance' I think they called it—the Russians were making of the Sardinian lines, and they came so near, that a young soldier—an orderly of General La Marmora's—heard one of them say, 'Yes, I have the whole position in my head.' Determining that so dangerous a fellow should not get back to head quarters, he watched him closely, till he knew he could not be mistaken in him, and then setting off at speed—for he was mounted—he crossed the Tchernaya a mile or so further up, and waiting for them, he lay concealed in a small copse. His plan was to sell his own life for this officer's; but whether he relinquished that notion, or that chance decided the event, there's no knowing. In he dashed, into the midst of them, cut this colonel's bridle-arm across at the wrist, and taking his horse's reins rode for it with all speed towards his own lines. He got a start of thirty or forty stride before they could rally in pursuit, which they did actually up to the very range of the rifle pits, and only retired at last when three fell dead or wounded."

"But *he* escaped?" cried she.

"That he did, and carried his prisoner

safe into the lines, and presented him to the general, modestly remarking he is safer here than over yonder—pointing to Sebastopol; and strangest part of the whole thing he turns out to be an Englishman?"

"An Englishman?"

"Yes. He was serving, by some strange accident, on General La Marmora's staff, as a simple orderly, though evidently a man of some education and position—one of those wild young bloods, doubtless, that had gone too fast at home, but who really do us no discredit when it comes to a question of pluck and daring."

"Do us no discredit!" cried she; "and have you nothing more generous to say of one who has asserted the honor of England so nobly in the face of an entire army? Do us no discredit! why, one such feat as this adds more glory to the nation than all the schemes of all the jobbers who deal in things like these." And she threw contemptuously from her the colored plans and pictures that littered the table.

"Dear me, Miss Kellett, here's a whole ink-bottle spilled over the Davenport obelisk."

"Do us no discredit!" burst out she again. "Are we really the nation of shopkeepers that France calls us? Have we no pride save in successful bargaining? no glory save in growing rich? Is money getting so close at the nation's heart that whatever retards or delays its hoardings savors of misfortune? When you were telling me that anecdote, how I envied the land that owned such a hero; and when you said he was our own—our countryman—my heart felt bursting with gratitude. Tell me his name."

"His name—his name—how strange that I should have forgotten it, for, as I told you, I toasted his health only yesterday."

"Yes you remember the sherry!" said she, bitterly.

Mr. Hanks's cheek tingled and grew crimson. It was a mood of passionate excitement he had never witnessed in her before, and he was astounded at the change in one usually so calm and self-possessed. It was then in no small confusion that he turned over the letter before him to find something which might change the topic in discussion.

"Ah, here is a matter," said he, referring once more to Dunn's letter. "He says: 'Beg of Miss Kellett to see a small holding called "Kilmaganagh;" I cannot exactly say where, but it lies to the north of Bantry Bay. I suspect that it possesses

few recommendations such as would entitle it to a place in the "scheme," but, if to be had on reasonable terms, I would be well pleased to obtain it. Driscoll had effected a part purchase, but, having failed to pay up the instalment due last March, his claim lapses. By the way, can you ascertain for me where this same Driscoll has gone to? It is now above four months since I have heard of him. Trace him if possible. As to Kilmaganagh, tell Miss K. that she may indulge that generosity she is not indisposed to gratify, and be on this occasion a liberal purchaser.' He fancies you lean a little to the country people, Miss Bella," said Hanks, as he stole a cautious glance at her now heightened color. "I will even consent to what is called a fancy price for the tenement, and certainly not lose it for a hundred or two above its actual value. Look to this, and look to Driscoll.' There's a riddle here, Miss Bella, if we knew how to read it," said Hanks as he looked over the few lines once more.

"I have but scant wits to read riddles, Mr. Hanks. Let us see where this place lies." And she turned to a large map on the table, the paths and cross-paths of which had been marked in different colored inks by her own hand, "I remember the name. There was an old tower called Kilmaganagh Fort, which used to be visible from the bay. Yes, here it is—a strange, wild spot, too, and, as Mr. Dunn opines, scarcely available for his great scheme."

"But he has so many great schemes," said Hanks, with a sly and sidelong glance toward her.

Sybella, however, paid no attention to the remark, but leaning over the map, continued to trace out the line of route to the spot in question. "By crossing Bantry Bay at Gortalassy, one might save above thirty miles of way. I have been over the road before, and remember it well."

"And you really mean to undertake the journey?" asked Hanks, in some astonishment.

"Of course I do. I ask nothing better than to be fully occupied, and am well pleased when in so doing I can exchange the desk for the saddle, or almost better, the stern-sheets of a Bantry hooker. You are not a woman, and you cannot feel, therefore, the sense of pride inspired by mere utility."

"I wish I might ask you a favor, Miss Kellett," said he, after a moment's thought.

"A favor of *me!*" said she, laughing, as though the idea amused her.

"Yes," said he, resuming. "I would beg to be permitted to accompany you on this same journey. I have never seen any

of these wild, untraveled tracts, and it would be a great additional charm to visit them in your company."

"So far as I am concerned, I grant you the permission freely, but it were well for you to remember that you must not only be well mounted, but prepared to ride over some rough country. I go usually as the crow flies, and, as nearly as I can, the same pace too. Now, between this and Loughbeg, there are at least three trying fences: one a wall with a deep drop beyond it, and another a steep bank, where I remember that somebody narrowly escaped having an ugly fall; there's a small estuary, too, to cross, near Gortalassy. But I am ashamed to enumerate these petty obstacles; such as they are, they are the only ones—there are none on my part."

"When do you mean to set out?" asked Hanks, in a tone far less eager than his former question.

"There's a full moon to-morrow night, so that leaving this about midnight we might reach the bay by six or seven o'clock, and then, if we should be fortunate with the wind, arrive at Kilmagunagh by about four o'clock. Taking there three or four hours to see the place, we could start again about eight, or even nine—"

"Good Heavens! that gives nothing for repose—no time to recruit."

"You forget there are fully five hours on board the boat. I'll not be the least offended if you sleep the entire time. If there's not wind enough to take in a reef, I'll give the tiller to old Mark Spillane, and take a sleep myself."

"It is really like a Tartar journey," said the terrified Hanks.

"I have told you the worst of it, I must own," said she, laughing, "for I feel I have no right to obtain your escort on false pretences."

"And you would go alone over this long distance—land and sea?"

"Land and sea are very grand words, Mr. Hanks, for some five-and-twenty miles of heather and a few hours in an open boat; but such as they are, I would go them alone."

Mr. Hanks would like to have said something complimentary—something flattering, but it did not exactly occur to him how he was to do it. To have exalted her heroism would be like a confession of his own poltroonery; to have seen any surprising evidence of boldness in her daring might possibly reflect upon her delicacy. He felt—none could have felt more thoroughly—that she was very courageous

and very full of energy, but somehow these were precisely qualities he was not in a position to estimate, and he knew in his heart how feebly any words of his would fall in praise of such gifts.

"Well, I'll go," said he, with a sigh, the words being addressed to himself, though uttered loud enough to catch Sybella's ears.

"Nay, Mr. Hanks," said she, smiling good-naturedly. "be advised by me, have nothing to say to this journey; it will not reward you."

"Who knows?" said he, catching at the last words with a suddenness that half startled her.

"The country," continued she, "is bleak and dreary till you approach the sea, and there all depends on weather, since, Bantry may be bright as an Italian lake, or overshadowed with cloud and fog like a Dutch sea-coast. The people are poor, and scarcely civilized—in fact, I feel no pride in exhibiting such a tract to a stranger."

"I'd like to go," said he again, with a shade more of firmness in the accent.

"Be it so," said she, half talking to herself. "Of this Ireland of long ago there will soon be no vestige. It will be interesting, doubtless, to see the last receding steps of a departing race." She paused for awhile, and then, in a voice full, and round, and forcible, added, "I am not, however, one of those who think that to promote the advancement of this country you must treat the Irishman as the Yankee does the red Indian. Others, I am aware, are differently minded. They would say, Pour into this land the fresh energies of Yorkshire—the active industry of the Lothians. Mr. Dunn, all Irish though he be, is of this opinion. Are you, too, a disciple of this school, sir?"

"Well, I own—I protest—I am free to confess, Miss Kellett," mumbled Hanks, in deep embarrassment, "I have always thought the Irish so indolent and so lazy—"

"Take this note, Patsy," broke in Sybella, as she hastily scribbled a few lines on a piece of paper—"take this note over to Bantry, and, as you pass Gortalassy, tell Mark Spillane I'll want the 'hooker' to-morrow at daybreak. 'Indolence,' Mr. Hanks, and 'laziness,' would scarcely cross seventeen miles of mountain, as that boy will, in less than three hours. I'll back him—and I know of fifty more, his equals—against the 'West Riding,' to-morrow."

"Well, but when we speak of industry—"

"I know that," broke she in; "these are the habits of an active, not of a hard-working, people. But you were talking a few minutes back of the Crimea. Are my poor countrymen backward there? Do you detect in them any shrinking from their share of toil—any sluggish reluctance to the hard work of campaigning life? Ask their officers this—I mean their own officers, for they alone can speak for them."

"That's the very essence of Irish barbarism," cried Hanks, with the triumph of a man who had detected a blot. "They must be appealed to in a peculiar language—addressed in a peculiar way. If one hasn't the key to their very strange natures, there's nothing to be done with them."

"And no great disparagement in all that," cried she, boldly. "At all events, the reproach will apply to what Mr. Hanks would call their 'betters.' Without the key to the hearts of your great men on 'change, where would the 'Grand Glengariff scheme' have been? If we had not bethought us that there are such passions as avarice and usury, how could we have devised that ingenious speculation by which my lord is to become a millionaire, and Mr. Dunn his prophet?"

What was it in her tone, as she spoke these words, that made Mr. Hanks tremble? Had she really divined that there was rottenness in the core of that stupendous enterprise? Did she know, or did she even suspect, that the great venture was not the solvent, safe, secure investment it professed to be? Very terrible were such fears, and Mr. Hanks could not endure without investigating them.

"But surely, Miss Kellett," he began, "you can draw a broad distinction between the antiquated prejudices of a peasantry and the clear-headed calculations of a clever capitalist. Here we have a splendid plan—a grand scheme—not merely to enrich the fundholder—"

"Oh, sir, spare me. I beseech you, that eloquent peroration about the benefits to be bestowed upon the people, of which I am beginning to grow weary. I have lent my own humble aid to propagate that notion—I had almost said that fallacy. Only hear me out," said she, as he tried to interrupt. "I began my duties here in the most sanguine of all moods. Heaven knows not what dreams I had of a land of abundance and content. Well, I have seen the abundance—the wealth has really poured in—every one is richer, better fed, clothed, housed, and cared for, and

almost in an equal ratio are they grown more covetous, grasping, envious, and malevolent—You won't let me finish," cried she, as he showed an increasing impatience. "Well, perhaps as we stroll along the cliffs to-morrow, you will be more disposed to listen—that is, if I have not already terrified you from accepting the companionship."

"Oh no! by no means; but how are we to go—do we drive?"

"Drive! why, my dear Mr. Hanks, it is only a Kerry pony has either legs or head for the path we must follow. Cast your eye along this coast line; jagged and fanciful as it looks, it conveys no notion of its rugged surface of rock, and its wild and darksome precipices. Take my word for it, you have as much to learn of the scenery as of the temperament of the land."

"But I'd like to go," repeated he, his accent being marvelously little in accordance with the sentiment.

"Nothing easier, sir. I'll give orders to have a pony—a most reliable pony—ready for you here to-morrow evening, when I shall expect you at tea."

Mr. Hanks bowed his grateful acknowledgments.

"I suspect, sir," said she, playfully, "that I have guessed your reason for this journey."

"My reason, my dear Miss Kellett," said he, in confusion—"my reason is simply the pleasure and honor of *your* company, and the opportunity of visiting an interesting scene with—with—"

"No matter for the compliment, but I began really to imagine, that you wished to learn my secret of bargaining with the people—that you wanted to witness one of these contracts you have heard so much of. Well, sir, you shall have it: our sole secret is, we trust each other."

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

A BRIDLE-PATH.

SYBELLA KELLETT was less than just when she said that the country which lay between the hermitage and Bantry Bay had few claims to the picturesque. It may possibly have been that she spoke with reference to what she fancied might have been Mr. Hanks's judgment of such a scene. There was, indeed, little to please an English eye; no rich and waving woods—no smiling corn fields—no expanse of swelling lawn or upland of deep meadow, but there

was a wild and grand desolation, a waving surface fissured with deep clefts opening on the sea, which boomed in many a cavern far beneath. There were cliffs upright as a wall, hundreds of feet in height, on whose bare summits some rude remains were still traceable—the fragment of a church, or shrine, or some lone cross, symbol of a faith that dated from centuries back. Heaths of many a gorgeous hue—purple, golden, and azure—clad a surface ever changing, and ferns that would have overtopped a tall horseman mingled their sprayey leaves with the wild myrtle and the arbutus. The moon was at her full as Sybella, accompanied by Mr. Hanks, and followed by an old and faithful groom—a servant of her father's in times past—took her way across this solitary tract.

If my reader is astonished that Mr. Hanks should have offered himself for such an expedition, it is but fair to state that the surprise was honestly shared in by that same gentleman. Was it that he made the offer in some moment of rash enthusiasm?—had any impulse of wild chivalry mastered his calmer reason?—was it that curious tendency which occasionally seems to sway cockney natures to ascend mountains, cross dangerous ledges, or peep into volcanic craters? I really cannot aver that any of these was his actual motive, while I have my suspicion that a softer, a gentler, though a deeper sentiment influenced him on this occasion. Mr. Hanks, to use a favorite phrase of his own—“had frequent occasion to remark” Miss Kellett's various qualities of mind and intelligence; he had noticed in her the most remarkable aptitude for “business.” She wrote and answered letters with a facility quite marvelous; details, however complicated, became by her treatment simple and easy; no difficulties seemed to deter her; and she possessed a gift—one of the rarest and most valuable of all—never to waste a moment on the impracticable, but to address herself, with a sort of intuition, at once, to only such means as could be rendered available.

Now, whether it was that Mr. Hanks anticipated a time when Mr. Dunn, in his greatness, might soar above the meaner cares of a business life—when, lifted into the elysian atmosphere of the nobility, he would look down with contemptuous apathy at the struggles and cares of enterprise—or whether Mr. Hanks, from sources of knowledge available peculiarly to himself, knew that the fortunes of that great man were not built upon an eternal foundation, but shared in that sad lot which threatens

all things human with vicissitude—whether stern facts and sterner figures taught him that all that splendid reputation, all that boundless influence, all that immense riches, might chance, one day or other, to be less real, less actual, and less positive, than the world now believed them to be—whether, in a word, Mr. Hanks felt that Fortune, having smiled so long and so blandly on her favorite, might not, with that capriciousness so generally ascribed to her, assume another and very different aspect—whatever the reason, in short, he deemed the dawn of his own day was approaching, and that, if only true to himself, Mr. Hanks was sure to be the man of the “situation,” the next great star in the wide hemisphere that stretches from the stock exchange to—the Marshalsea, and includes all from Belgravia to Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Miss Kellett's abilities, her knowledge, her readiness, her tact, a certain lightness of hand in the management of affairs that none but a woman ever possesses, and scarcely one woman in ten thousand combines with the more male attributes of hard common sense, pointed her out to Mr. Hanks as one eminently suited to aid his ambition. Now, men married for money every day in the week, and why not marry for what secured not alone money, but fame, station, and influence? Mr. Hanks was a widower; his own experience of married life had not been fortunate. The late Mrs. Hanks was a genius, and had the infirmities of that unsocial class: she despised her husband, quarrelled with him, lampooned him in a book, and ran off with the editor of a small weekly review that eulogized her novel. It was supposed she died in Australia—at least, she never came back again; and as the first lieutenant gravely confirms the sun's altitude when he mutters, “Make it noon,” so Mr. Hanks, by as simple a fiat, said, “Make her dead,” and none disputed him. At all events, he was a widower by brevet, and eligible to be gazetted a husband at any moment.

Miss Kellett possessed many personal attractions, nor was he altogether insensible to them; but he regarded them, after all, pretty much as the intended purchaser of an estate might have regarded an ornamental fish pond or a flower garden on the property—something, in short, which increased the attraction, but never augmented the value. He was glad they were there, though they by no means would have decided him to the purchase. He knew, besides, that the world set a high price on these things, and he was not sorry to pos-

ness what represented value of any kind. It was always scrip—shares—securities, even, although one could not well say how, when, or where the dividend was to be paid.

There was another consideration, too, weighed materially with him. The next best thing, in Mr. Hanks's estimation, to marrying into a good connexion, was to have none at all—no brothers, no sisters-in-law, no cousins-german or otherwise, no uncles, aunts, or any good friends of parental degree. Now, except a brother in the Crimea—with an excellent chance of being killed—Sybella had none belonging to her. In the happy phrase of advertisements, she had no incumbrances. There was no one to insist upon this or that settlement—none to stipulate for anything in her favor; and these were, to his thinking, vast advantages. Out of these various considerations our reader is now to fashion some of the reasons which induced Mr. Hanks to undertake an excursion alike foreign to his tastes and uncongenial to his habits; but as a placeman would not decline the disagreeables of a sea voyage as the preliminary to reaching the colony he was to govern, so this gentleman consoled himself by thinking that it was the sole penalty attached to a very remunerative ambition.

If Sybella was not without some astonishment at his proposal to accompany her, she never gave herself the slightest trouble to explain the motive. She acceded to his wish from natural courtesy and the desire to oblige, and that was all. He had been uniformly polite and civil in all their intercourse; beyond that, he was not a person whose companionship she would have sought or cared for, and so they rode along, chatting indifferently of whatever came uppermost—the scene, the road, the season, the condition of the few people who formed the inhabitants of this wild region, and how their condition might possibly be affected by the great changes then in progress near them.

Guarded and cautious as he was in all he said, Mr. Hanks could not entirely conceal how completely he separated in his own mind the success of the great scheme and the advantage that might accrue to the people; nor was she slow to detect this reservation. She took too true and just a view of her companion's temper and tone to approach this theme with the scruples that agitated herself, but at once said:

"Let us suppose this scheme to be as prosperous as its best friends can wish it, Mr. Hanks; that you all—I mean, you

great folk, who are directors, chairmen, secretaries, and so forth—become as rich and powerful as you desire, see your shares daily increasing in value, your speculations more and more lucrative, what becomes of the people—the poor man—all this while?"

"Why, of course he participates in all these successes; he grows rich too; he sells what he has to sell at a better market, obtains higher wages for his labor, and shares all our prosperity."

"Granted. But who is to teach him the best use of this newly-acquired prosperity? You, and others like you, have your tastes already formed; the channels are already made in which your affluence is to run: not so with him; abundance may—nay, it will, suggest waste, which will beget worse. Who are to be his guides?—who his examples?"

"Oh, as to that, his increase of fortune will suggest its own appropriate increase of wants. He will be elevated by the requirements of his own advancing condition, and even if he were not, it is not exactly any affair of ours; we do our part when we afford him the means of a higher civilization."

"I don't think so. I suspect that not alone do you neglect a duty, but that you inflict a wrong. But come, I will take another alternative; I will suggest—what some are already predicting—that the project will not prove a success."

"Who says that?" cried Hanks, hastily, and in his haste forgetting his habitual caution of manner.

"Many have said it. Some of those whose opinions I am accustomed to place trust in, have told myself that the speculation is too vast—disproportioned to the country—undertaken on a scale which nothing short of imperial resources could warrant—"

"But surely you do not credit such forebodings?" broke he in.

"It is of little consequence how far I credit them. I am as nothing in the event. I only would ask, what if all were to fail?—what if ruin were to fall upon the whole undertaking, what is to become of all those who have invested their entire fortunes in the scheme? The great and affluent have many ventures—they trust not their wealth to one argosy; but how will it be with those who have embarked their all in one vessel?"

Mr. Hanks paused, as if to reflect over his reply, and she continued: "It is a question I have already dared to address to Mr. Dunn himself. I wrote to him twice

on the subject. The first time I asked what guarantee could be given to small shareholders—those, for instance, who had involved their whole wealth in the enterprise. He gave me no answer. To my second application came the dry rejoinder, that I had possibly forgotten in whose service I was retained; that I drew my resources from the Earl of Glengariff, and not from the peasantry, whose advocate I had constituted myself."

"Well?" cried Hankses, curious to hear what turn the correspondence took.

"Well," said she, smiling gently, "I wrote again. I said it was true I had forgotten the fact of which he reminded me, but I pleaded in excuse that neither the earl nor her ladyship had refreshed my memory on the circumstance by any replies to eight, or, I believe, nine letters I sent them. I mentioned, too, that though I could endure the slight of this neglect for myself, I could not put up with it for the sake of those whose interest I watched over. Hear me out," said she, perceiving that he was about to interrupt. "It had become known in Glengariff that all the little fortune I was possessed of—the few hundred pounds Mr. Dunn had rescued for me out of the wreck of our property—was invested in this scheme. Mr. Dunn counseled this employment of the money, and I consented to it. Now, this trustfulness on my part induced many others to imitate what they deemed my example."

"And you really did make this investment?" said Hankses, whose eagerness could not brook longer delay.

"Yes," said she, with a quiet smile, "though evidently, had I consulted Mr. Hankses, he would never have counseled the step." After a moment, she resumed: "I have half a mind to tell you how it happened."

"I pray you let me hear it."

"Well, it was in this way: Shortly after that affair of the Ossory Bank—the run for gold, I mean—I received a few hurried lines from Mr. Dunn, urging me to greater exertion on the score of the Glengariff scheme, and calling upon me to answer certain newspaper insinuations against its solvency, and so forth. Before replying to these attacks, I was of course bound to read them; and shall I confess it, such was the singular force of the arguments they employed, so reasonable did their inferences appear, and so terrible the consequences should the plan prove a failure, that I for the first time perceived that it was by no means impossible the vast superstructure we were raising might be actually

on the brink of a volcano. I did not like exactly to tell Mr. Dunn these misgivings: in fact, though I attempted two or three letters to that effect, I could not, without great risk of offending, convey my meaning, and so I reflected and pondered over the matter several days, working my brain to find some extrication from the difficulty. At last, I bethought me of this: Mr. Dunn was my guardian; by his efforts was the small fragment of property that fell to me rescued and saved. What if I were to request him to invest the whole of it in this scheme? Were its solvency but certain, where could the employment of the money be safer or more profitable? If he consented, I might fairly suppose my fears were vain, and my misgivings unfounded. If, however, he showed any reluctance, even backwardness, to the project, the very phrase he might employ to dissuade me would have its especial significance, and I could at once have something to reason upon. Well, I wrote to him, and he answered by the next post: "I fully coincide with your suggestion, and acting on it, you are now the possessor of fifty-four shares in the Allotment. As the moment for buying in is favorable, it is a thousand pities you could not make an equally profitable investment for your brother, whose twelve hundred pounds is yielding the very inglorious interest of the Bank."

"And so you took the shares?" said Hankses, sighing; then added, "but let me see—at what rate did you buy?"

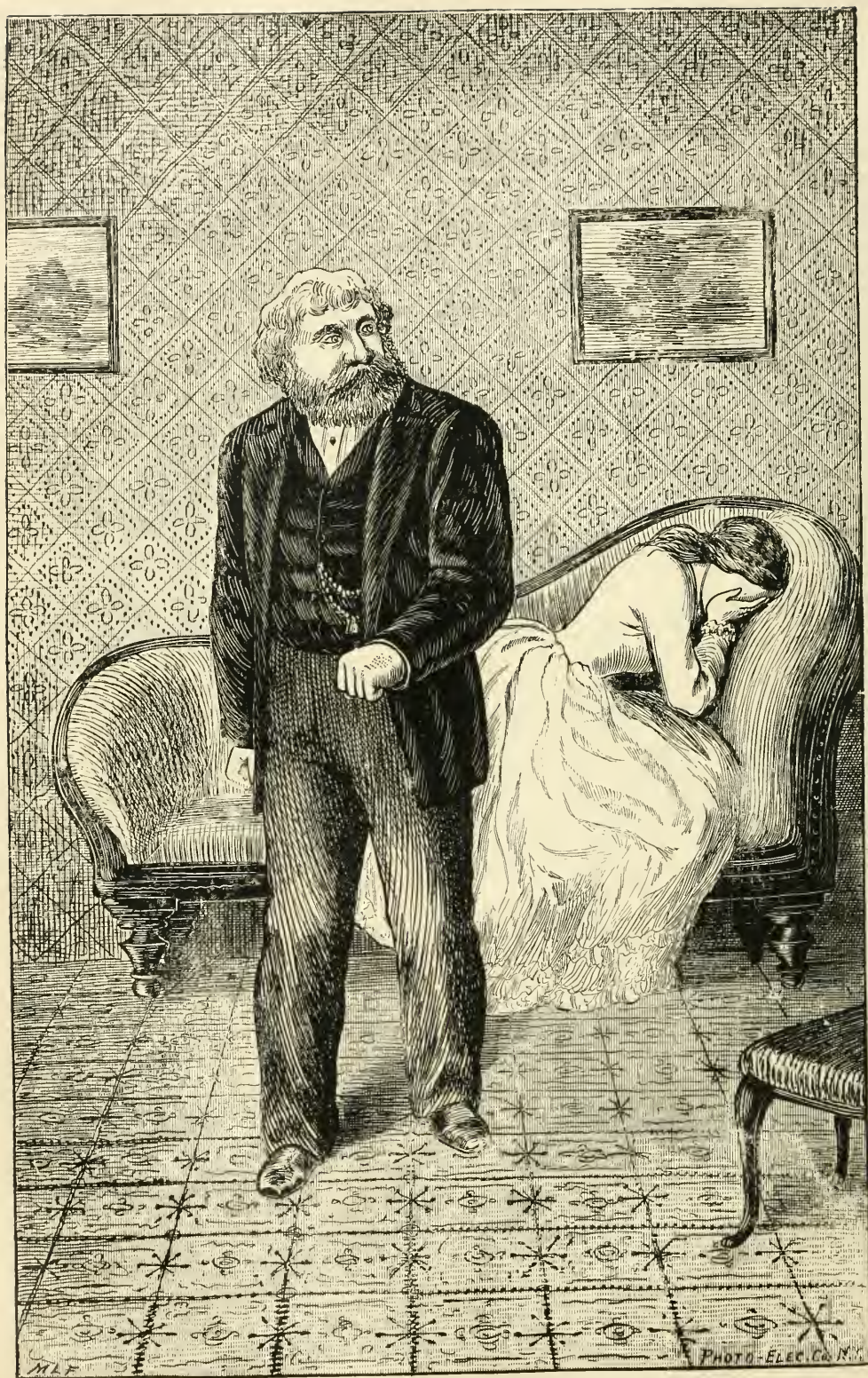
"I am ashamed to confess, I forget; but I know the shares were high."

"After the Ossory run," muttered he—"that was about September. Shares were then something like one hundred and twenty-seven and a quarter; higher afterward—higher the whole month of November; shaky toward the end of the year—very shaky, indeed, in January. No, no," said he to himself, "Dunn ought not to have done it."

"I perceive," said she, half smiling, "Mr. Hankses opines that the money had been better in the bank."

"After all," continued he, not heeding her remark, "Dunn couldn't do anything else. You own yourself that if he had attempted to dissuade you, you would immediately have taken alarm—you'd have said 'This is all a sham. All these people will find themselves 'let in' some fine morning;' and as Dunn could very readily make good your few hundred pounds, why he was perfectly justified in the advice he gave."

"Not when his counsel had the effect of



SUDDENLY, CORRECTING HIMSELF WITH A START, HE MUTTERED BELOW HIS BREATH "ITS DONE NOW." (P. 582.)

influencing mine," said she, quickly—"not when it served to make me a perfidious example to others. No, no, Mr. Hanks; if this scheme be not an honest and an upright one, I accept no partnership in its details."

"I am only putting a case, remember," said Hanks, hurriedly—"a possible but most improbable case. I am supposing that a scheme with the finest prospectus, the best list of directors, the most respectable referees in the empire, to be—what shall I say?—to be sickly—yes, sickly—in want of a little tonic treatment, generous diet, and so forth."

"You'll have to follow me here, Mr. Hanks," broke in Sybella; "the pathway round this cliff only admits one at a time. Keep close to the rock, and if your head be not steady, don't look down."

"Good heavens! we are not going round that precipice!" cried Hanks, in a voice of the wildest terror.

"My servant will lead your horse, if you prefer it," said she, without answering his question; "and mind your footing, for the moss is often slippery with the spray."

Sybella made a signal with her whip to the groom, who was now close behind, and then, without awaiting for more, moved on. Hanks watched her as she descended the little slope to the base of a large rock, around which the path wound itself on the very verge of an immense precipice. Even from where he now stood the sea could be seen surging and booming hundreds of feet below, and although the night was calm and still, the ever restless waves beat heavily against the rocks, and sent masses of froth and foam high into the air. He saw her till she turned the angle of the path, and then she was lost to his view.

"I don't think I have head for it. I'm not used to this kind of thing," said Hanks, in a voice of helpless despondency to the old groom, who now stood awaiting him to dismount. "Is there much danger? Is it as bad as it looks?"

"'Tis worse when you get round the rock there," said the groom, "for it's always going down you are, steeper than the roof of a house, with a shingle footing, and sloping outwards."

"I'll not go a step. I'll not venture," broke in Hanks.

"Indeed, I wouldn't advise your honor," said the man, in a tone too sincere to be deemed sarcastic.

"I know my head couldn't bear it," said he, with the imploring accents of one who entreated a contradiction. But the old groom, too fully convinced of the senti-

ment to utter a word against it, was now only thinking of following his mistress.

"Wait a moment," cried Hanks, with an immense effort. "if I were once across this"—he was going to add an epithet, but restrained himself—"this place, is there nothing more of the same kind afterwards?"

"Isn't there, faith!" cried the man. "Isn't there the Clunk, where the beast has to step over gullies five-and-thirty or forty feet deep? Isn't there Tim's island, a little spot where you must turn your horse round with the sea four hundred feet under you? Isn't there the Devil's Nose——"

"There, there, you needn't go on my good fellow; I'll turn back."

"Look where she is now," said the man, pointing with his whip to a rocky ledge hundreds of feet down, along which a figure on horseback might be seen creeping slowly along. "'Tis there, where she's stealing along now, you need the good head and the quick hand. May I never!" exclaimed he, in terror, "If them isn't goats that's coming up to meet her! Merciful Joseph! what'll she do? There, they are under the horse's legs, forcing their way through! Look how the devil's are rushing all round and about her! If the beast moves an inch——" A wild cry broke from the old man here, for a fragment of rock, displaced by the rushing herd, had just come thundering down the cliff, and splashed into the sea beneath. "The Heavens be praised! she's safe," muttered he, piously crossing himself; and then, without a word more, and as if angry at his own delay, he pressed his horse forward to follow her.

It was in vain Hanks cried to him to wait—to stop for only an instant—that he, too, was ready to go—not to leave him and desert him there—that he knew not where to turn him, nor could ever retrace his way,—already the man was lost to view and hearing, and all the vain entreaties were uttered to the winds. As for Sybella, her perilous pathway gave her quite enough to do not to bestow a thought upon her companion; nor, indeed, had she much recollection of him till the old groom overtook her on the sandy beach, and recounted to her, not without a certain touch of humor, Mr. Hanks's terror and despair.

"It was cruel to leave him, Ned," said she, trying to repress a smile at the old man's narrative. "I think you must go back, and leave me to pursue my way alone."

"Sorra one o' me will go back to the

likes of him. 'Tis for your own self, and ne'er another, I'd be riskin' my neck in the same spot," said he resolutely.

"But what's to become of him, Ned? He knows nothing of the country; he'll not find his way back to Glengarriff."

"Let him alone; devil a harm he'll come to. 'Tis chaps like that never comes to mischief. He'll wander about there till day breaks, and, maybe, find his way to Duff's Mill, or, at all events, the boy with the letter-bag from Caherelough is sure to see him."

Even had this last assurance failed to satisfy Sybella, it was so utterly hopeless a task to overrule old Ned's resolve, that she said no more, but rode on in silence. Not so Ned; the theme afforded him an opportunity for reflecting on English character and habits, which was not to be lost.

"I'd like to see your brother John turn back and leave a young lady that way," said he, recurring to the youth whose earliest years he had watched over.

No matter how impatiently, even angrily, Bella replied to the old man's bigoted preference of his countrymen, Ned persisted in deploring the unhappy accident by which fate had subjected the finer and more gifted race to the control and dominion of an inferior people. To withdraw him effectually from a subject which to an Irish peasant has special attraction, she began to tell him of the war in the East and of her brother Jack, the old man listening with eager delight to the achievements of one he had carried about in his arms as a child.

Her mind, filled with the wondrous stories of private letters—the intrepid daring of this one, the noble chivalry of that—she soon succeeded in winning all his attention. It was singular, however, that of all the traits she recorded, none made such a powerful appeal to the old man's heart as the generous self-devotion of those women who, leaving home, friends, country, and all, gave themselves up to the care of the sick and wounded. He never wearied of hearing how they braved death in its most appalling shape amidst the pestilential airs of the hospital, in the midst of such horrors as no pen can picture, taking on them the most painful duties, accepting fatigue, exhaustion, and peril as the common incidents of life, braving scenes of agony such as in very recital sickened the heart, descending to all that was menial in their solicitude for some poor sufferer, and all this with a benevolence and a kindness that made

them seem less human beings than ministering angels from heaven.

"Oh, holy Joseph! isn't it yourself ought to be there?" cried the old man, enthusiastically. "Was there ever your like to give hope to a sick heart? Who ever could equal you to cheer up the sinking spirit, and even make misery bearable? Miss Bella, darling, did you never think of going out?"

"Ay, Ned, a hundred times," said she, sighing drearily. "I often, too, said to myself, There's not one of these ladies—for they are ladies born and bred—who hasn't a mother, father, sisters, and brothers dear to her, and to whom she is herself dear. She leaves a home where she is loved, and where her vacant place is daily looked at with sorrow, and yet here am I, who have none to care for, none to miss me, who would carry over the sea with me no sorrows from those I was leaving, for I am friendless, surely I am well fitted for such a task——"

"Well," said he, eagerly, as she seemed to hesitate, "well, and why——"

"It was not fear held me back," resumed she. "It was not that I shrank from the sights and sounds of agony that must have been more terrible than any death; it was simply a hope—a wish, perhaps more than a hope—that I might be doing service to those at home here, who, if I were to leave them, would not have one on their side. Perhaps I overrated what I did, or could do; perhaps I deemed my help of more value than it really was; but every day seemed to show me that the people needed some one to counsel and to guide them—to show them where their true interests lay, and by what little sacrifices they could oftentimes secure a future benefit."

"That's thrue, every word of it. Your name is in every cabin, with a blessing tacked to it. There's not a child doesn't say a prayer for you before he goes to sleep; and there's many a grown man never thought of praying at all till he axed a blessing for yourself!"

"With that, too," resumed she, "was coupled power, for my Lord left much to my management. I was able to help the deserving, to assist the honest and industrious; now I aided this one to emigrate, now I could contribute a little assistance of capital. In fact, Ned, I felt they wanted *me*, and I knew I liked *them*. There was one good reason for not going away. Then there were other reasons," said she, falteringly. "It is not a good example to give to others to leave, no matter

how humble, the spot where we have a duty, to seek out a higher destiny. I speak as a woman."

"And is it true, Miss Bella, that it's Mister Dunn has it all here under his own hand? that the lord owns nothing only what Dunn allows him, and that the whole place down to Kenmare river is Dunn's?"

"It is quite true, Ned, that the control and direction of all the great works here are with Mr. Dunn. All the quarries and mines, the roads, harbors, quays, bridges, docks, houses, are all in his hands."

"Blessed hour! and where does he get the money to do it all?" cried he, in amazement.

Now, natural as was the question, and easy of reply as it seemed, Sybella heard it with something almost like a shock. Had the thought not occurred to her hundreds of times? And, if so, how had she answered it? Of course there could be no difficulty in the reply; of course such immense speculations, such gigantic projects as Mr. Dunn engaged in, supplied wealth to any amount. But equally true was it that they demanded great means; they were costly achievements—these great lines of railroad, these vast harbors. Nor were they always successful; Mr. Hanks himself had dropped hints about certain "mistakes," that were very significant. The splendid word "credit" would explain it all, doubtless, but how interpret credit to the mind of the poor peasant? She tried to illustrate it by the lock of a canal, in which the water is momentarily utilized for a particular purpose, and then restored, unimpaired, to the general circulation; but Ned unhappily damaged the imagery by remarking, "But what's to be done if there's no water?" Fortunately for her logic, the road became once more only wide enough for one to proceed at a time, and Sybella was again left to her own musings.

Scarcely conscious of the perilous path by which she advanced, she continued to meditate over the old man's words, and wonder within herself how it was that he, the poor, unlettered peasant, should have conceived that high notion of what her mission ought to be—when and how her energies should be employed. She had been schooling herself for years to feel that true heroism consisted in devoting oneself to some humble, unobtrusive career, whose best rewards were the good done to others, where self-denial was a daily lesson, and humility a daily creed; but, do what she could, there was within

her heart the embers of the fire that burned there in childhood. The first article of that faith taught her that without danger there is no greatness—that in the hazardous conflicts where life is ventured, high qualities only are developed. What but such noble excitement could make heroes of those men, many of whom, without such stimulus, had dropped down the stream of life unnoticed and undistinguished? "And shall I," cried she, aloud, "go on for ever thus, living the small life of petty cares and interests, confronting no dangers beyond a dark December day, encountering no other hazards than the flippant rebuke of my employer?"

"There's the yawl, Miss Bella: she's tacking about, waiting for us," said Ned, as he pointed to a small sail-boat like a speck in the blue sea beneath; and at the same instant a little rag of scarlet bunting was run up to the peak, to show that the travelers had been seen from the water.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE DISCOVERY.

It is possible that my reader might not unwillingly accompany Sybella as she stepped into the little boat, and tripping lightly over the "thwarts," seated herself in the stern-sheets. The day was bright and breezy, the sea scarcely ruffled, for the wind was off the land; the craft, although but a fishing boat, was sharp and clean built, the canvass sat well on her, and, last of all, she who held the tiller was a very pretty girl, whose cheek, flushed with exercise, and loosely waving hair, gave to her beauty the heightened expression of which care occasionally robbed it. The broad bay, with its mountain background and its wide sea reach, studded with tall three-masters, was a fine and glorious object, and as the light boat heeled over to the breeze, and the white foam came rustling over the prow, Sybella swept her fair hand through the water and bathed her brow with the action of one who dismissed all painful thought, and gave herself to the full enjoyment of the hour. Yes, my dear reader, the companionship of such a girl on such a day, in such a scene, was worth having; and so even those rude fishermen thought it, as stretched at full length on the shingle ballast, they gazed half bashfully at her, and then exchanged

more meaning looks with each other as she talked with them.

Just possible is it, too, that some curiosity may exist as to what became of Mr. Hanks. Did that great projector of industrial enterprise succeed in retracing his steps with safety? did he fall in with some one able to guide him back to Glengariff? did he regain the Hermitage after fatigue, and peril and much self-reproach for an undertaking so foreign to his ways and habits? and did he vow to his own heart that this was to be the last of such excursions on his part? Had he his misgivings, too, that his conduct had not been perfectly heroic? and did he experience a sense of shame in retiring before a peril braved by a young and delicate girl? Admitted to a certain share of that gentleman's confidence, we are obliged to declare that his chief sorrows were occasioned by the loss of time, the amount of inconvenience, and the degree of fatigue the expedition had caused him. It was not till late in the afternoon of the day that he chanced upon a fisherman on his way to Bantry to sell his fish. The poor peasant could not speak nor understand English, and after a vain attempt at explanation on either side, the colloquy ended by Hanks joining company with the man, and proceeding along with him, whither he knew not.

If we have not traced the steps of Sybella's wanderings, we are little disposed to linger along with of Mr. Hanks, though, if his own account were to be accepted, his journey was a succession of adventures and escapes. Enough if we say that he at last abandoned his horse amid the fissured cliffs of the coast, and, as best he might, clambered over rock and precipice, through tall mazes of wet fern and deep moss, along shingly shores and sandy beaches, till he reached the little inn at Bantry, the weariest and most worn-out of men, his clothes in rags, his shoes in tatters, and he himself scarcely conscious, and utterly indifferent as to what became of him.

A night's sound sleep and a good breakfast were already contributing much to efface the memory of past sufferings, when Sybella Kellett entered his room. She had been over to the cottage, had visited the whole locality, transacted all the business she had come for, and only diverged from her homeward route on hearing that Mr. Hanks had just arrived at Bantry. Rather apologizing for having left *him* than accusing him of deserting *her*, she rapidly proceeded to sketch out her own journey. She did not dwell upon any incidents of the way—had they been really new or

strange she would not have recalled them—she only adverted to what had constituted the object of her coming—the purchase of the small townland which she had completed.

"It is a dear old place," said she, "of a fashion one so rarely sees in Ireland, the house being built after that taste known as Elizabethan, and by tradition said to have once been inhabited by the poet Spenser. It is very small, and so hidden by a dense beech wood, that you might pass within fifty yards of the door and never see it. This rude drawing may give you some idea of it."

"And does the sea come up so close as this?" asked Hanks, eagerly.

"The little fishing-boat ran into the cove you see there; her mainsail dropped over the new-mown hay."

"Why, it's the very thing Lord Lockwood is looking for. He is positively wild about a spot in some remote out-of-the-way region; and then, what you tell me of its being a poet's house will complete the charm. You said Shakespeare—"

"No, Spenser, the poet of the 'Faërie Queene,'" broke she in, with a smile.

"It's all the same; he'll give it a fanciful name, and the association with its once owner will afford him unceasing amusement."

"I hope he is not destined to enjoy the pleasure you describe."

"No?—why not, pray?"

"I hope and trust that the place may not pass into his hands; in a word, I intend to ask Mr. Dunn to allow me to be the purchaser. I find that the sum is almost exactly the amount I have invested in the Allotment scheme—these same shares we spoke of—and I mean to beg as a great favor—a very great favor—to be permitted to make this exchange. I want no land—nothing but the little plot around the cottage."

"The cottage formerly inhabited by the poet Spenser, built in the purest Elizabethan style, and situated in a glen—you said a glen, I think, Miss Kellett?" said Hanks—"in a glen, whose wild enclosure, bosomed amongst deep woods, and washed by the Atlantic—"

"Are you devising an advertisement, sir?"

"The very thing I was doing, Miss Kellett. I was just sketching out a rough outline of a short paragraph for the *Post*."

"But remember, sir, I want to possess this spot. I wish to be its owner—"

"To dispose of, of course, hereafter—to make a clear three, or four, or five thousand by the bargain, eh?"

"Nothing of the kind, Mr. Hanks. I mean to acquire enough—some one day or other—to go back and dwell there. I desire to have what I shall always, to myself, at least, call mine—my home. It will be as a goal to win, the time I can come back and live there. It will be a resting-place for poor Jack when he returns to England."

Mr. Hanks paused. It was the first time Miss Kellett had referred to her own fortunes in such a way as permitted him to take advantage of the circumstance, and he deliberated with himself whether he ought not to profit by the accident. How would she receive a word of advice from him? Would it be well taken? might it possibly lead to something more? Would she be disposed to lean on his counsels? and, if so, what then? Ay, Mr. Hanks, it was the "what then?" was the puzzle. It was true his late conduct presented but a sorry emblem of that life-long fidelity he thought of pledging; but if she were the clear-sighted, calm reasoning intelligence he believed, she would lay little stress upon what, after all, was a mere trait of a man's temperament. Very rapidly, indeed, did these reflections pass through his mind, and then he stole a glance at her as she sat quietly sipping her tea, looking a very ideal of calm tranquility. "This cottage," thought he, "has evidently taken a hold of her fancy. Let me see if I cannot turn the theme to my purpose." And with this intention he again brought her back to speak of the spot, which she did with all the eagerness of true interest.

"As to the association with the gifted spirit of song," said Mr. Hanks, soaring proudly into the style he loved, "I conclude that to be somewhat doubtful of proof, eh?"

"Not at all, sir. Spenser lived at a place called Kilcoleman, from which he removed for two or three years, and returned. It was in this interval he inhabited the cottage. Curiously enough, some manuscript in his writing—part of a correspondence with the lord-deputy—was discovered yesterday when I was there. It was contained in a small oak casket with a variety of other papers, some in quaint French, some in Latin. The box was built in so as to form a portion of a curiously-carved chimney-piece, and chance alone led to its discovery."

"I hope you secured the documents?" cried Hanks, eagerly.

"Yes, sir; here they are, box and all. The rector advised me to carry them away for security sake." And so saying, she

aid upon the table a massively bound and strong built box, of about a foot in length.

It was with no inexperienced hand that Mr. Hanks proceeded to investigate the contents. His well practiced eye rapidly caught the meaning of each paper as he lifted it up, and he continued to mutter to himself his comments upon them. "This document is an ancient grant of the lands of Clonghrennin to the monks of the abbey of Castlerosse, and bears date 1104. It speaks of certain rights reserved to the baron Hugh Pritchard Conway. Conway—Conway," mumbled he, twice or thrice, that's the very name I tried and could not remember yesterday, Miss Kellett. You asked me about a certain soldier whose daring capture of a Russian officer was going the round of the papers. The young fellow had but one arm, too; now I remember, his name was Conway."

"Charles Conway. Was it Charles Conway?" cried she, eagerly; "but it could be no other—he had lost his right arm."

"I'm not sure which, but he had only one, and he was called an orderly on the staff of the Piedmontese general."

"Oh, the noble fellow! I could have sworn he would distinguish himself. Tell me it all again, sir; where did it happen, and how, and when?"

Mr. Hanks's memory was now to be submitted to a very searching test, and he was called on to furnish details which might have puzzled "our own correspondent." Had Charles Conway been rewarded for his gallantry? what notice had his bravery elicited? Was he promoted, and to what rank? Had he been decorated, and with what order? Were his wounds, as reported, only trifling? Where was he now?—was he in hospital, or on service? She grew impatient at how little he knew—how little the incident seemed to have impressed him. "Was it possible," she asked, "that heroism like this was so rife that a meagre paragraph was deemed enough to record it—a paragraph, too, that forgot to state what had become of its hero?"

"Why, my dear Miss Kellett," interposed he, at length, "one reads a dozen such achievements every week."

"I deny it, sir," cried she, angrily. "Our soldiers are the bravest in the world; they possess a courage that asks no aid from the promptings of self-interest, nor the urgings of vanity; they are very lions in combat; but it needs the chivalrous ardor of the gentleman, the man of blood and lineage, to conceive a feat like this. It was only a noble patriotism could suggest the thought of such an achievement."

"I must say," said Hanks, in confusion, "the young fellow acquitted himself admirably; but I would also beg to observe that there is nothing in the newspaper to lead to the conclusion you are disposed to draw. There's not a word of his being a gentleman."

"But I know it, sir—the fact is known to me. Charles Conway is a man of family; he was once a man of fortune; he had served as an officer in a Lancer regiment; he had been extravagant, wild, wasteful, if you will."

"Why, it can't be the Smasher you're talking of?—the great swell that used to drive the four chesnuts in the park, and made the wager he'd go in at one window of Stag and Mantle's, and out at t'other?"

"I don't care to hear of such follies, sir, when there are better things to be remembered. Besides, he is my brother's dearest friend, and I will not hear him spoken of but with respect. Take my word for it, sir, I am but asking what you had done, without a hint, were he only present."

"I believe you—by Jove, I believe you!" cried Hanks, with an honesty in the tone of his voice that actually made her smile. "And so, this is Conway the Smasher!"

"Pray, Mr. Hanks, recall him by some other association. It is only fair to remember that he has given us the fitting occasion."

"Ay, very true—what you say is perfectly just; and, as you say, he is your brother's friend. Who would have thought it!—who would have thought it!"

Without puzzling ourselves to inquire what it was that thus excited Mr. Hanks's astonishment, let us observe that gentleman, as he turns over, one by one, the papers in the box, muttering his comments, meanwhile, to himself: "Old title-deeds—very old indeed—all the ancient contracts are recited. Sir Gwellem Conway must have been a man of mark and note in those days. Here we find him holding 'in capite' from the king, twelve thousand acres, with the condition that he builds a strong castle and a 'bawn.' And these are, apparently, Sir Gwellem's own letters. Ah! and here we have him or his descendant called Baron of Ackroyd and Bedgelt, and claimant to the title of Lackington, in which he seems successful. This is the writ of summons calling him to the lords as Viscount Lackington. Very curious and important these papers are—more curious, perhaps, than important—for in all likelihood there have been at least half a dozen confiscations of these lands since this time."

Mr. Hanks's observations were not well attended to, for Sybella was already deep in the perusal of a curious old letter from a certain Dame Marian Conway to her brother, then sheriff of Cardigan, in which some very strange traits of Irish chieftain life were detailed.

"I have an antiquarian friend who'd set great store by these old documents, Miss Kellett" said Hanks, with a sort of easy indifference. "They have no value save for such collectors; they serve to throw a passing light over a dark period of history, and perhaps explain a bygone custom or an obsolete usage. What do you mean to do with them?"

"Keep them. If I succeed in my plans about the cottage, these letters of Spencer to Sir Lawrence Esmond are in themselves a title. Of course, if I fail in my request, I mean to give them to Mr. Dunn."

"These were Welsh settlers, it would seem," cried Hanks, still bending over the papers. "They came originally from Abergedley."

"Abergedley!" repeated Sybella, three or four times over. "How strange!"

"What is strange, Miss Kellett?" asked Hanks, whose curiosity was eagerly excited by the expression of her features.

Instead of reply, however, she had taken a small note-book from her pocket, and sat with her eyes fixed upon a few words written in her own hand: "The Conways of Abergedley—of what family—if settled at any time in Ireland, and where?" These few words, and the day of the year when they were written, recalled to her mind a conversation she had once held with Terry Driscoll.

"What is puzzling you, Miss Kellett?" broke in Hanks; "I wish I could be of any assistance to its unravelment."

"I am thinking of 'long ago;' something that occurred years back. Didn't you mention," asked she suddenly, that Mr. Driscoll had been the former proprietor of this cottage.

"Yes, in so far as having paid part of the purchase-money. Does his name recall anything to interest you, Miss Kellett?"

If she heard, she did not heed his question, but sat deep sunk in her own musings.

If there was any mood of the human mind that had an especial fascination for Mr. Hanks, it was that frame of thought which indicated the possession of some mysterious subject—some deep and secret theme which the possessor retained for himself alone—a measure of which none were to know the amount, to which none

were to have the key. It would be ignoble to call this passion curiosity, for in reality it was less exercised by any desire to fathom the mystery, than it was prompted by an intense jealousy of him who thus held in his own hands the solution of some portentous difficulty. To know on what schemes other men were bent—what hopes and fears filled them—by what subtle trains of reasoning they came to this conclusion or to that, were the daily exercises of his intelligence. He was eternally, as the phrase is, putting things together, comparing events, confronting this circumstance with that, and drawing inferences from every chance and accident of life. Now, it was clear to him Miss Kellett had a secret—or, at least, had the clue to one. Driscoll was “in it,” and this cottage was “in it,” and not impossibly too, some of these Conways were “in it.” There was something in that notebook—how was he to obtain sight of it? The vaguest line—a word—would be enough for him. Mr. Hanks remembered how he had once committed himself and his health to the care of an unskillful physician simply because the man knew a fact which he wanted, and did worm out of him during his attendance. He had, at another time, undertaken a short voyage in a most unsafe craft, with a drunken captain, because the stewardess was possessed of a secret, of which even in his seasickness he obtained the key. Over and over again had he assumed modes of life he detested, dissipation the most distasteful to him, to gain the confidence of men that were only assailable in these modes; and now he bethought him, that if he only had a glimmering of his present suspicion, the precipice, and the narrow path, and the booming sea below, had all been braved, and he would have followed her unflinchingly through every peril with this goal before him. Was it too late to reinstate himself in her esteem? He thought not; indeed, she did not seem to retain any memory of his defection. At all events, there was little semblance of its having influenced her in her manner toward him.

“We shall meet at Glengariff, Mr. Hanks,” said Sybella, rising, and replacing the papers in the box. “I mean to return by the coast road, and will not ask you to accompany me.”

“It is precisely what I was about to beg as a favor. I was poorly yesterday—a nervous headache, an affection I am subject to—in short, I felt unequal to any exertion, or even excitement.”

“Pray let me counsel you to spare yourself a journey of much fatigue with little to reward it. Frequency and long habit have deprived the mountain tract of all terror for me, but I own that to a stranger it is not without peril. The spot where we parted yesterday is the least dangerous of the difficulties, and so I would say be advised, and keep to the high road.”

Now there was not the slightest trace of sarcasm in what she said; it was uttered in all sincerity and good faith, and yet Mr. Hanks could not help suspecting a covert mockery throughout.

“I am determined she shall see I am a man of courage,” muttered he to himself; and then added, aloud, “You must permit me to disobey you, Miss Kellett. I am resolved to bear your company.”

There was a dash of decision in his tone that made Sybella turn to look at him, and, to her astonishment, she saw a degree of purpose and determination in his face very unlike its former expression. If she did not possess the craft and subtlety which long years had polished to a high perfection in him, she had that far finer and more delicate tact by which a woman’s nature reads man’s coarser temperament. She watched his eye, too, and saw how it rested on the oaken box, and, even while awaiting her answer, never turned from that object.

“Yes,” said she to herself, “there is a game to be played out between us, and yonder is the stake.”

Did Mr. Hanks divine what was passing in her mind? I know not. All he said was:

“May I order the horses, Miss Kellett?”

“Yes, I am ready.”

“And this box, what is to be done with it? Best to leave it here in the possession of the innkeeper. I suppose it will be safe?” asked he, half timidly.

“Perfectly safe; it would be inconvenient to carry with us. Will you kindly tell the landlord to come here?”

“No sooner had Mr. Hanks left the room on his errand, than Sybella unlocked the box, and taking out the three papers in which the name of Conway appeared, relocked it. The papers she as quickly consigned to a small bag, which, as a sort of sabretasche, formed part of her riding costume.

Mr. Hanks was somewhat longer on his mission than appeared necessary, and when he did return there was an air of some bustle and confusion about him, while between him and the landlord an

amount of intimacy had grown up—a sort of confidence was established—that Bella's keen glance rapidly read.

"An old-fashioned lock, and doubtless worth nothing, Miss Kellett," said Hankes, as with a contemptuous smile he regarded the curiously carved ornament of the key-hole. "You have the key, I think?"

"Yes; it required some ingenuity to withdraw it from where, I suppose, it has been rusting many a year."

"It strikes me I might as well put a band over the lock and affix my seal. It will convey the notion of something very precious inside," added he, laughing, "and our friend here, Mr. Rorke, will feel an increased importance in the guardianship of such a treasure."

"I'll guard it like goold, sir, that you may depend on," chimed in the landlord.

Why was it that, as Bella's quick glance was bent upon him, that he turned so hastily away, as if to avoid the scrutiny?

Do not imagine, valued reader, that while this young girl scanned the two faces before her, and tried to discover what secret understanding subsisted between these two men—strangers but an hour ago—that she herself was calm and self-possessed. Far from it; as little was she self-acquitted. It was under the influence of a sudden suspicion flashing across her mind—whence or how she knew not—that some treachery was being planned, that she withdrew these documents from the box. The expression of Hankes's look, as it rested on the casket, was full of significance. It meant much, but of what nature she could not read. The sudden way he had questioned her about Driscoll imparted a link of connection between that man and the contents of the box, or part of them; and what part could that be except what concerned the name Conway? If these were her impulses, they were more easily carried out than forgiven, and in her secret heart she was ashamed of her own distrust, and of what it led her to do.

"It would be a curious question at law," said Hankes, as he affixed the third and last seal—"a very curious question, who owns that box. Not that its contents would pay for the litigation," added he, with a mocking laugh; "but the property being sold this morning, with an unsettled claim of Driscoll's over it, and the purchaser being still undeclared—for I suppose you bought it in for the earl, or for Mr. Dunn, perhaps——"

"No, sir, in my own name, and for myself, waiting Mr. Dunn's good pleasure to confirm the sale in the way I have told you."

"Indeed!" exclaimed he, looking with an unfeigned admiration at a young girl capable of such rapid and decisive action—"so that you really may consider yourself its owner?"

"I do consider myself its owner," was her calm reply.

"Then pray excuse my officiousness in this sealing up. I hope you will pardon my indiscreet zeal."

She smiled without answering, and the blood mounted to Mr. Hankes's face and forehead till they were crimson. He, too, felt that there was a game between them, and was beginning to distrust his "hand."

"Are we to be traveling companions, Mr. Hankes?" asked she. And though nothing was said in actual words, there was that in the voice and manner of the speaker that made the question run thus: "Are we, after what we have just seen of each other, to journey together?"

"Well, if you really wish me to confess the truth, Miss Kellett, I must own I am rather afraid of my head along these mountain paths—a sort of faintness, a rushing of blood to the brain, and a confusion—in short, Nature never meant me for a chamois hunter, and I should bring no credit on your training of me."

"Your resolve is all the wiser, sir, and so to our next meeting." She waved him a half familiar, half cold farewell, and left the room.

Mr. Hankes saw her leave the town, and he loitered about the street till he could mark two mounted figures ascending the mountain. He then ordered a chaise to the door with all speed.

"Will you take it now, sir, or send for it, as you said at first?" asked the inn-keeper, as he stood with the oak box in his hands.

"Keep it till I write—keep it till you hear from me; or no, put it in the chaise—that's better."

CHAPTER LXXX.

THE DOUBLE BLUNDER.

SHORT as had been Sybella's absence from the Hermitage, a vast number of letters had arrived for her in the mean while. The prospect of a peace so confidently entertained at one moment, was now rudely destroyed by the abrupt termination of the Vienna conferences, and the result was a panic in the money-market.

The panic of an army rushing madly on to victory; the panic on shipboard when

the great vessel has struck, and, after three or four convulsive throes, the mighty masts have snapped, and the blue water, surging and bounding, has riven the hatchways and flooded the deck; the panic of a mob as the charge of cavalry is sounded, and the flash of a thousand sabres is seen through the long vista of a street; the panic of a city stricken by plague or cholera, are all dreadful and appalling things, and have their scenes of horror full of the most picturesque terror,—still are there incidents of an almost equal power when that dread moment has arrived which is called a “Panic on ’Change.”

It was but yesterday, and the world went well and flourishingly, mills were at work, foundries thundered with their thousand hammers, vessels sailed forth from every port, and white-sailed argosies were freighted with wealth from distant colonies. None had to ask twice for means to carry out his speculations—for every enterprise there was capital—and now scarcely twenty-four hours have passed, and all is changed. A despatch has been received in the night; a messenger has arrived at Downing-street; the minister has been aroused from his sleep to hear that we have met some great reverse; a terrible disaster has befallen us: two line-of-battle ships, whose draught of water was too great, have grounded under an enemy’s fire; in spite of the most heroic resistance, they have been captured; the union-jacks are on their way to Moscow. Mayhap the discomfiture, less afflicting to national pride, is the blunder of a cavalry officer, or the obstinacy of an envoy. Little matter for the cause, we have met a check. Down goes credit, and up go the discounts; the mighty men of millions have drawn their purse-strings, and not a guinea is to be had; the city is full of sad-visaged men in black, presaging every manner of misfortune: More troops are wanted—more ships; we are going to have an increase of the income-tax—a loan—a renewal of war burdens in fifty shapes! Each fancies some luxury of which he must deprive himself, some expense to be curtailed, and all are taking the dreariest view of a future whose chief feature is to be privation.

So was it now. Amidst a mass of letters was one from Davenport Dunn, written with brevity and in haste. By a mistake, easily made in the hurry and confusion of such correspondence, it was, though intended for Mr. Hankes, addressed to Miss Kellett, the “Strictly private and confidential” occupying a conspicuous place

across the envelope, while lower down was written “Immediate.”

It was a very rare event latterly for Mr. Dunn to write to Miss Kellett, nor had she, in all their intercourse, once received from him a letter announced thus “confidential.” It was, then, in some surprise, and not without a certain anxiety, that she broke the seal. It was dated “Wednesday, Irish Office,” and began thus: “Dear S.”—she started—he had never called her Sybella in his life; he had been most punctiliously careful ever to address her as Miss Kellett. She turned at once to the envelope and read the address, “Miss Kellett, the Hermitage, Glengariff.” And yet there could be no mistake. It opened, “Dear S.” “He has forgotten a word,” thought she; “he meant in his mood of confidence to call me Miss Sybella, and has omitted the title.” The letter ran thus: ‘We have failed at Vienna, as we do everywhere, and in everything. The war is to continue; consequently we are in a terrible mess. Glumthal telegraphs this morning that he will not go on; the Frankfort people, will, of course, follow his lead, so that Mount Cenis will be ‘nowhere’ by the end of the week. I am, however, more anxious about Glengariff, which must be upheld, *for the moment*, at any cost. To-day I can manage to keep up the shares, perhaps also to-morrow. The old earl is more infatuated about the scheme than ever, though the accounts he receives from that girl”—“That girl,” muttered she, “who can he mean?”—“from that girl occasionally alarm him. She evidently has her own suspicions, though I don’t clearly see by what they have been suggested. The sooner, therefore, you can possess yourself of the correspondence, the better. I have written to her by this post with a proposition she will most probably accept—advise it, by all means.” “This is scarcely intelligible,” said she, once more reverting to the direction of the letter.—“Should the ministry be beaten on Monday, they mean to dissolve Parliament. Now, they cannot go to the country, in Ireland, without me, and my terms I have already fixed. They *must* give us aid—material, substantial aid; I will not be put off with office or honors—it is no time for either. Meanwhile, I want all the dividend warrants, and a brief sketch of our next statement, for we meet on Saturday. Come what will, the Allotment must be sustained till the new election be announced. I hope Laekington’s cheque was duly presented, for I find that his death was known here on the 4th. Where the new viscount

is, no one seems even to guess. Get rid of the girl, and believe me, yours ever—D. D.”

“Surely, there is some strange mystification here,” said she, as she sat pondering over this letter. “There are allusions which, had they not been addressed to me, I might have fancied were intended for myself. This girl, whose accounts have terrified Lord Glengariff, and who herself suspects that all is not right, may mean *me*; but yet it is to me he writes, confidently and secretly. I cannot complain that the letter lacks candor—it is frank enough; every word forebodes coming disaster, the great scheme is threatened with ruin, nothing can save it but government assistance—an infamous compact, if I read it aright. And if all this be so, in what a game have I played a part! This great venture is a swindling enterprise! All these poor people whose hard earned gains have been invested in it will be ruined; my own small pittance, too, is gone. Good heavens! to what a terrible network of intrigue and deception have I lent myself! How have I come to betray those whose confidence I strove so hard to gain! This girl—this girl—who is she? and of whom does he speak?” exclaimed she, as, in an outburst of emotion, she walked the room, her whole frame trembling, and her eyes glaring in all the wildness of high excitement.

“May I come in?” whispered a soft voice, as a low tap was heard at the door; and without waiting for leave, Mr. Hanks entered. Nothing could be silkier nor softer than his courteous approach: his smile was the blandest, his step the smoothest, his bow the nicest blending of homage and regard, and, as he took Miss Kellett’s hand, it was with the air of a courtier, dashed with the devotion of an admirer. Cruel is the confession that she noticed none—not one—of these traits. Her mind was so engrossed by the letter, that, had Mr. Hanks made his entry in a suit of chain armor, and with a mace in his hand, she would not have minded it.

“I am come to entreat forgiveness—to sue your pardon, Miss Kellett, for a very great offence, of which, however, I am the guiltless offender. The letter which I hold here, and which, as you see, is addressed ‘S. Hanks, Esq.,’ was certainly intended for you, and not me.”

“What—how—misdirected—a mistake in the address?” cried she, eagerly.

“Just so; placed in a wrong enclosure,” resumed he, in a tone of well graduated calm. “A blunder which occurs over and over in life, but I am fain to hope has never happened with less serious results.”

“In short,” said she, hastily, “my letter, or the letter meant for me, came directed to *you*?”

“Precisely. I have only to plead, as regards myself, that immediately on discovery—and I very soon discovered that it could not have been destined for my perusal—I refolded the epistle and hastened to deliver it to your own hands.”

“More discreet and more fortunate than I!” said she, with a very peculiar smile, “since this letter which I hold here, and which bore my address, I now perceive was for you, and this I have not read merely once or twice, but fully a dozen times; in truth, I believe I could repeat it, word for word, if the task were required of me.”

What has become of Mr. Hanks’s soft and gentle manner? Where are his bland looks, his air of courtesy and kindness, his voice so full of sweetness and deference? Why, the man seems transfixed, his eyeballs are staring wildly, and he actually clutches, not takes, the letter from her hands.

“Why, the first words might have undeceived you,” cried he, rudely. “Your name is not Simpson Hanks.”

“No, sir; but it is Sybella, and the writer begins ‘Dear S.’—a liberty, I own, I felt it, but one which I fancied my position was supposed to permit. Pray, read on, sir, and you will see that there was matter enough to puzzle finer faculties than mine.”

Perhaps the tone in which she spoke these words was intentionally triumphant—perhaps Mr. Hanks attributed this significance to them causelessly; at all events, he started and stared at her for above a minute steadfastly. He then addressed himself suddenly to the letter.

“Gracious heavens! what a terrible blunder!” exclaimed he, when he had finished the reading.

“A great mistake, certainly, sir,” said she, calmly.

“But still one of which you are incapable to take advantage, Miss Kellett,” said he, with eagerness.

“Is it to the girl who is to be got rid of, sir, you address this speech? Is it to her whose trustfulness has been made the instrument to deceive others and lure them to their ruin? Nay, Mr. Hanks, your estimate of my forbearance is indeed too high.”

“But what would you do, young lady?”

“Do, sir! I scarcely know what I would not do,” burst she in, passionately. “This letter was addressed to *me*. I know noth-

ing of the mistake of its direction; here is the envelope with my name upon it. It is consequently mine—mine, therefore, to publish, to declare to the world, through its words, that the whole of this grand enterprise is a cheat; that its great designer is a man of nothing, living the precarious life of a gambling speculator, trading on the rich man's horde and the poor man's pittance, making market of all, even to his patriotism. I would print this worthy document with no other comment than the words, 'Received by me, Sybella Kellett, this day of September, and sworn to as the handwriting of him whose initials it bears, Davenport Dunn.' I would publish it in such type that men might read it as they went—that all should take warning and put no faith in these unprincipled tricksters. Ay, sir, and I would cling as my hope of safety from the world's scorn, to that insulting mention of myself, and claim as my vindication that I am the girl to be 'got rid of.' None shall dare to call me complice, since the little I once called my own is lost. But I would do more, sir. The world I have unwittingly aided to deceive has a full right to an expiation at my hands. I would make public the entire correspondence I have for months back been engaged in. You seemed to say 'No' to this. Is it my right you dispute, or my courage to assert the right?"

"You must be aware, Miss Kellett," said he, deprecatingly, "that you became possessed of this letter by a mistake—that you had no right to the intelligence it contains, and, consequently, have none to avail yourself of that knowledge. It may be perfectly true that you can employ it to our detriment. It would, I have little doubt, serve to shake our credit for a day or two; but do you know what misery, what utter ruin your rashness will have caused meanwhile? By the fall of our securities you will beggar hundreds. All whose necessities may require them to sell out on the day of your disclosures will be irretrievably ruined. You meditate a vengeance upon Mr. Dunn, and your blow falls on some poor struggling creatures that you never so much as heard of. I do not speak," continued he, more boldly, as he saw the deep effect his words produced—"I do not speak of the destitution and misery you will spread here—all works stopped—all enterprise suspended—thousands thrown out of employment. These are the certain, the inevitable evils of what you propose to do. And now, let me ask, What are to be the benefits? You would depose from his station of power and in-

fluence the only man in the kingdom who has a brain to conceive, or a courage to carry out these gigantic enterprises—the only man of influence sufficient to treat with the government, and make his own terms. You would dethrone him, to instal in his place some inferior intelligence—some mere creature of profit and loss, without genius or patriotism; and all for what?—for a mere phrase, and that, too, in a letter which was never intended for your eyes."

Mr. Hanks saw that he was listened to, and he continued. Artfully contriving to take the case out of its real issue, he made it appear to Miss Kellett that she was solely impelled by personal motives, and had no other object in view than a vengeance on the man who had insulted her. "And now just throw your eyes over the letter intended for yourself. I only glanced at it, but it seemed to me written in a tone of sincerest well-wishing."

It was so. It contained the offer of a most advantageous position. A new governor-general of India desired a suitable companion for his daughters, who had lost their mother. He was a nobleman of highest rank and influence. The station was one which secured great advantages, and Dunn had obtained the promise of it in her behalf by considerable exertion on his part. Nay, more. Knowing that her fortune was engaged in the "Allotment scheme," he volunteered to take her shares at the highest rate they had ever borne, as she would, probably, require immediate means to procure an Indian outfit. The whole wound up with a deeply expressed regret at the loss Glengariff would sustain by her departure; "but all my selfishness," added he, "could not blind me to the injustice of detaining in obscurity one whose destiny so certainly points her out for a station lofty and distinguished."

She smiled at the words, and, showing them to Hanks, said, "It is most unfortunate, sir, that I should have seen the other letter. I could so readily have yielded myself up to all this flattery, which, even in its hollowness, has a certain charm."

"I am certain Miss Kellett has too much good sense—too much knowledge of life—too much generosity besides—"

"Pray, sir, let me stop you, or the catalogue of my perfections may become puzzling, not to say that I need all the good gifts with which you would endow me to aid me to a right judgment here. I wish I knew what to do."

"Can you doubt it?"

"If the road be so clear, will you not point it out?"

"Write to Mr. Dunn. Well, let me write to him. I will inform him how this mischance occurred. I will tell him that you had read and re-read his letter before discovering the mistake of the address; that, consequently, you are now—so far as this great enterprise is concerned—one of ourselves; that, although you seem to take advantage of a circumstance thus accidentally revealed, yet that, as chance has put you in possession of certain facts, that—that, in short—"

"That, in short, I ought to profit by my good fortune," said she, calmly, finishing the phrase for him.

"Unquestionably," chimed in Hankses, quickly; "and, what's more, demand very high terms, too. Dunn is a practical man," added he, in a lower and more confidential tone; "nobody knows better when liberality is the best policy."

"So that this is a case for a high price?" asked she, in the same calm tone.

"I'd make it so if I were in your place. I'd certainly say a 'high figure,' Miss Kellett."

"Shall I confess, sir, that, in so far as knowing how to profit by it, I am really unworthy of this piece of fortune? Is Mr. Hankses enough my friend to enlighten me?"

There was a smile that accompanied this speech which went far—very far—to influence Mr. Hankses. Once again did his personal fortunes rise before him—once again did he bethink him that this was an alliance that might lead to much.

"I can give you a case in point, Miss Kellett—I mean as to the value of a secret. It was when Sir Robert Peel meditated his change in the corn laws. One of the council—it does not matter to say his name—accidentally divulged the secret intention, and a great journal gave no less than ten thousand pounds for the intelligence—ten thousand pounds sterling!"

She seemed to pause over this story, and reflect upon it.

"Now," resumed Hankses, "it is just as likely he'd say, 'Money is scarce just now—your demand comes at an inconvenient moment.' This would be true—there's no gainsaying it—and I'd reply, 'Let me have it in shares—some of the new preference scrip just issued.'"

"How it does allay difficulties to deal with persons of great practical intelligence—men of purpose-like mind," said Sybella, gravely.

"Ah, Miss Kellett, if I could only believe that this was a favorable moment to appeal to you in their behalf—at least in

so far as regards one of their number—one who has long admired your great qualities in silence, and said to himself, 'What might she not be if allied to one well versed in life, trained to all its chances and changes—?'"

"It never occurred to me to fancy I had inspired all this interest, sir," said she, calmly.

"Probably because your thoughts never dwelt on me," said Hankses, with a most entreating look; "but I assure you," added he, warmly, "the indifference was not reciprocal. I have been long—very long attracted by those shining abilities you display. Another might dwell upon your personal attractions, and say the impression your beauty had made upon him; but beauty is a flower—a perishable hot-house flower. Not," added he, hastily, "that I pretend to be insensible to its fascinations; no, Miss Kellett, I have my weaknesses like the rest!"

Sybella scarcely heard his words. It was but a day before, and a poor unlettered peasant, an humble creature unread in life and human nature, told her that he deemed her one fit for high and devoted enterprise, and that her rightful place was amidst the wounded and the dying in the Crimea. Had he construed her, then, more truly? At all events, the career was a noble one. She did not dare to contrast it any longer with her late life, so odious now did it seem to her, with all its schemes for wealth, its wily plottings and intrigues.

"I am afraid, sir, I have been inattentive—I fear that my thoughts were away from what you have been saying," said she, hastily.

"Shall I just throw my ideas on paper, Miss Kellett, and wait your answer—say to-morrow?"

"My answer to what, sir?"

"I have been presumptuous enough to make you an offer of my hand, Miss Kellett," said he, with a half-offended dignity. "There are, of course, a number of minor considerations—I call them minor, as they relate to money matters—to be discussed after; for instance, with regard to these shares—"

"It will save us both a world of trouble, sir, when I thank you deeply for the honor you would destine me, and decline to accept it."

"I know there is a discrepancy in point of years—"

"Pray, sir, let us not continue the theme. I have given my answer, and my only one."

"Or if it be that any meddling individual should have mentioned the late Mrs. H.," said he, bristling up—"for she is the late, that I can satisfy you upon—I have abundant evidence to show how that woman behaved——"

"You are confiding to me more than I have the right or wish to hear, sir."

"Only in vindication—only in vindication. I am aware how her atrocious book has libeled me. It made me a perfect martyr for the season after it came out; but it is out of print—not a copy to be had for fifty pounds, if it were offered."

"But really, sir——"

"And then, Miss Kellett," added he, in a sort of thrilling whisper, "she drank; at first sherry—brown sherry—but afterward brandy—ay, ma'am, brandy neat, and a matter of a bottle daily. If you only knew what I went through with her—the scenes in the street, in the playhouses, in coffee-rooms—ay, and police-offices—I give you my sacred word of honor Simpson Hanks was rapidly becoming as great a public scandal as the Rev. Paul Classon himself!"

"Cannot you perceive, sir, that these details are less than uninteresting to me?"

"Don't say that, Miss Kellett—don't I beg you, or else you'll make me fear that you'll not read the little pamphlet I published, entitled, 'A Brief Statement by Simpson Hanks'—a brochure that I am proud to believe decided the world in my favor."

"Once for all, Mr. Hanks, I decline to hear more of these matters. If I have not more plainly told you how little they claim to interest me, it is because my own selfish cares fill up my thoughts. I will try to hand you the correspondence Mr. Dunn desires to see in your keeping by to-morrow morning. There are many circumstances will require special explanation in it. However, I will do my best to be ready."

"And my offer, Miss Kellett?"

"I have declined it, sir."

"But really, young lady, are you well aware of what it is you refuse?" asked he, angrily.

"I will not discuss the question, sir," said she, haughtily. "Give me that letter I showed you."

"The letter, I opine, is mine, Miss Kellett. The address alone pertains to you."

"Do you mean, then, to retain possession of the letter," asked she hurriedly.

"I protest, I think it is better—better for all of us—that I should do so. You will pardon me if I observe that you are now under the influence of excited feelings—you are

irritated. Any line of action, under such circumstances, will necessarily be deficient in that calm, matured judgment which is mainly your characteristic."

"It needed, but this, sir, to fill up the measure!" exclaimed she passionately.

"I don't perfectly apprehend you, Miss Kellett."

"Mean, sir, that this last trait of yours was alone wanting to complete the utter contempt I now feel for my late life and its associates. Mr. Dunn's letter, with all its disgraceful disclosures—your own crafty counsels how best to profit by the accidental knowledge—and now this refusal to restore the letter—this means distrust based on a breach of confidence——"

"By no means, madam. In withholding this letter I maintain it to be my own. I have already explained to you that the address is all you can lay claim to; a recent legal decision is in my favor. It was tried last Hilary term before Justice Whitecroft. The case was *Barnes versus Barnes*."

"If my anger prompt me to rasher acts than my calmer reason might have counseled," broke in Sybella, "remember, sir, it is to yourself you owe it. At least upon one point you may rely. Whatever I decide to do in this affair, it will not be swayed by any—the slightest—regard for your friends or their interests. I will think of others alone—never once of *them*. Your smile seems to say, 'The war between us is an unequal one.' I know it. I am a woman, poor, friendless, unprotected; you and yours are rich, and well thought of; and yet, with all this odds, if I accept the conflict I do not despair of victory."

As she left the room and the door closed after her, Mr. Hanks wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and sat down the perfect picture of dismay.

"What *is* she up to?" cried he, three or four times to himself. "If she resolves to make a public scandal of it, there's an end of us! The shares would be down—down to nothing—in four-and-twenty hours! I'll telegraph to Dunn at once!" said he, rising, and taking his hat. "The mischance was his own doing; let him find the remedy himself."

With all that perfection of laconic style which practice confers, Mr. Hanks communicated to Davenport Dunn the unhappy mistake which had just befallen. Under the safeguard of a cypher used between them he expressed his deepest fears for the result, and asked for immediate counsel and guidance.

This dispatch, forwarded by telegraph,

he followed by a long letter, entering fully into all the details of the mischance, and reporting with—it must be acknowledged—a most scrupulous accuracy an account of the stormy scene between Miss Kellett and himself. He impressed upon his chief that no terms which should secure her silence would be too high, and gently insinuated that a prompt and generous offer on Dunn's part might not impossibly decide the writer to seal his devotion to the cause by making the lady Mrs. Hankes. "Only remember," added he, "it must be in cash or approved bills."

Partly to illustrate the difficulty of the negotiation he was engaged in, partly to magnify the amount of the sacrifice he proposed to make, he depicted Sybella in colors somewhat less flattering than ardent love usually employs. "It is clear to me now," wrote he, "from what I witnessed to-day, that neither you nor I ever understood this girl aright. She has a temper of her own, and an obstinacy perfectly invincible. Acting on the dictate of what she fancies to be her conscience, she is quite capable of going to any extreme, and I have the strongest doubt that she is one to be moved by affection or deterred by fear." After a little more of this eulogistic strain, he wound up by repeating his former generous proposal. He adroitly pointed out that it was in the interest only of such a patron he could ever dream of so great a sacrifice; and then, in that half-jocular way in which he often attained to all the real and business-like elements of a project, he added, "Say ten thousand, and the 'match' will come off—a very moderate stake, if you only remember the 'forfeit.'"

In a brief postscript he mentioned the discovery of the ancient document found at the cottage, with, as he said, "some curious papers about the Conway family. These I have duly sealed up in the box, and retain in my possession, although Miss K. has evidently an eye upon them."

"Write fully and explicitly whatever you mean to do; should you, however, fully agree to what I propose, telegraph back to

"Yours, ever faithfully,

"SIMPSON HANKES.

"They have come to tell me she is packing up her things, and has sent a twenty pound note to be changed."

CHAPTER LXXXI.

DOWNING STREET.

IF our story had a hero—which it has not—that hero would be Mr. Davenport Dunn

himself, and we might, consequently, feel certain compunctious scruples as to the length of time that has elapsed since we last saw him. When we parted, however, we took care to remind our reader that we left him in good company, and surely such a fact ought to allay all apprehensions on his behalf.

Months have rolled over—the London season has passed—Parliament has but a few days to run—the wearied speakers are longing to loiter along green lanes, or be touring or water-curing it in Germany—cities are all but deserted, and town houses have that dusty, ill-cared-for air that reminds one of an estate in chancery, or a half-pay lieutenant. Why is it, then, that Mr. Dunn's residence in Merrion square wears a look of unusual trimness? Fresh paint—that hypocrisy of architecture—has done its utmost; the hall door is a marvel of mock oak, as are the columns of spurious marble; the Venetian blinds are of an emerald green, and the plate-glass windows mirror the parched trees in the square, and reflect back the almost equally picturesque jaunting cars as they drive past; the balcony, too, throughout its whole length, is covered with rich flowers and flowery shrubs. In a word, there is a look of preparation that bespeaks a coming event. What can it be?

Various rumors are afloat as to the reason of these changes, some averring that Mr. Dunn is about to take a high official position, and be raised to a distinguished rank; others opine that he is about to retire from the cares of a business life, and marry. What may he not be? Whom may he not aspire to? Surely the world has gone well with this man. What a great general is to an army in the field—what a great leader to a party in the "House," was he to every industrial enterprise. His name was a guarantee for all that was accurate in discipline and perfect in organization. The board over which he presided as chairman was sure to meet with regularity and act with energy. The officials who served under him, even to the very humblest, seemed to typify the wise principles by which he had himself been guided in life. They appeared as though imbued with the same patient industry, the same untiring application, the same grave demeanor marked them. "I served under Mr. Davenport Dunn." "Mr. Dunn knows me." "Mr. Dunn will speak for me," were characters that had the force of a diploma, since they vouched not alone for capacity, but for conduct.

It is a very high eminence to attain when

a man's integrity and ability throw such a light about him that they illumine not alone the path he treads in life, but shine brightly on those who follow his track, making an atmosphere in which all around participate. To this height had Dunn arrived, and he stood the confessed representative of those virtues Englishmen like to honor, and that character they boast to believe national—the man of successful industry. The fewer the adventitious advantages he derived from fortune, the greater and more worthy did he appear. He was no aristocrat, propped and bolstered by grand relatives. He had no Most Noble or Right Honorable connections to push him. He was not even gifted with those qualities that win popular favor—he had none of those graces of easy cordiality that others possess—he was not insinuating in address, nor ready of speech. They who described him called him an awkward, bashful man, always struggling against his own ignorance of society, and only sustained by a proud consciousness that whispered the “sterling stuff that was inside”—qualities which appeal to large audiences, and are intelligible to the many. Ay, there was indeed his grand secret. Genius wounds deeply, talent and ability offend widely, but the man of mere commonplace faculties, using common gifts with common opportunities, trading rather upon negative than positive properties, succeeding because he is not this, that, and t'other, plodding along the causeway of life steadily and unobtrusively, seen by all, watched and noticed in every successive stage of his upward progress, so that each may say, “I remember him a barefooted boy, running errands in the street—a poor clerk at forty pounds a year—I knew him when he lived in such an alley, up so many pair of stairs!” Strange enough, the world likes all this; there is a smack of self-gratulation in it that seems to say, “If I liked it, I could have done as well as he.” Success in life won, these men rise into another atmosphere, and acquire another appreciation. They are then used to point the moral of that pleasant fallacy we are all so fond of repeating to each other, when we assert, amongst the blessings of our glorious constitution, that there is no dignity too great, no station too high for the Englishman who combines industry and integrity with zeal and perseverance. Shame on us, that we dare to call fallacy that which great lord chancellors and chief justices have verified from their own confessions; nay, we have even heard a lord mayor declare that he was, once upon a

time, like that “poor” publican! The moral of it all is, that with regard to the Davenport Dunns of this world, we pity them in their first struggles, we are proud of them in their last successes, and we are about as much right in the one sentiment as in the other.

The world—the great wide world of man—is marvelously identical with the small ingredient of humanity of whose aggregate it consists. It has its moods of generosity, distrust, liberality, narrowness, candor and suspicion—its fevers of noble impulse, and its cold fits of petty meanness—its high moments of self-devotion, and its dark hours of persecution and hate. Men are judged differently in different ages, just as in every-day life we hear a different opinion from the same individual, when crossed by the cares of the morning and seated in all the voluptuous repose of an after-dinner *abandonnement*.

Now it chanced that Mr. Dunn's lot in life had thrown him into a fortunate conjuncture of the world's temper. The prosperity of a long peace had impressed us with an exaggerated estimate of all the arts that amass wealth—riches became less the reward than the test of ability—success and merit had grown to be convertible terms—clever speakers and eloquent writers assured us that wars pertained only to ages of barbarism—that a higher civilization would repudiate them—that men, now bent upon a high and noble philanthropy, would alone strive to diffuse the benefits of abundance and refinement amongst their fellows, and that we were about to witness an elysian age of plenty, order, and happiness. The same men who stigmatized the glory of war as the hypocrisy of carnage, invented another hypocrisy infinitely meaner and more ignoble, and placed upon the high altars of our worship the golden image of gain.

As the incarnation of this passion Davenport Dunn stood out before the world; nor was there a tribute of its flattery that was not laid at his feet. Even they who had neither wish nor necessity to benefit by his peculiar influence did not withhold their homage, but joined in the general acclamation that pronounced him the great man of our time; and at his Sunday dinners were met the most distinguished in rank—all that the country boasted of, great in station, illustrious by services or capacity. His splendid house in Piccadilly—rented for the season for a fabulous sum—was beset all the morning by visitors, somewhat unlike, it must be owned, the class who frequented his Dublin

levees. Here they were not deputations or bank directors, railway chairmen or drainage commissioners, they were all that fashion claims as her own—proud duchesses of princely fortune, great countesses high in courtly favor, noble ladies whose smile of recognition was a firman to the highest places. They met there, by one of those curious compacts the grand world occasionally makes with itself, to do something, in a sort of half imitation of that inferior race of mortals who live and marry, and die in the spheres beneath them. In fact, Dunn's house was a sort of Bourse, where snares were trafficked in, and securities bought and sold, with an eagerness none the less that the fingers that held them wore gloves fastened with rubies and emeralds.

In those gorgeous drawing-rooms, filled with objects of high art, statues stolen from the Vatican, gems obtained by heaven knows what stratagems from Italian or Spanish convents, none deigned to notice by even a passing look the treasures that surrounded them. In vain the heavenly beauty of Raphael beamed from the walls—in vain the seductive glances of Greuze in all their languishing voluptuousness—in vain the haughty nobility of Van Dyck claimed the homage of a passing look. All were eagerly bent upon lists of stocks and shares, and no words were heard save such as told of rise or fall—the alterations of that chance which makes or mars humanity.

It was while in the midst of that distinguished company Mr. Dunn received the telegram we have mentioned in our last chapter as despatched by Mr. Hanks. His was a nature long inured to the ups-and-downs of fortune; his great self-teaching had been principally directed to the very point of how best to meet emergencies, and yet, as he read over these brief lines, for a moment his courage seemed to have deserted him.

"Chimbarago Artesian Well and Water Company," hisped out a very pale, sickly-looking countess. "Shares are rising, Mr. Dunn; may I venture upon them?"

"Here's the Marquesas Harbor of Refuge scheme going to smash, Dunn?" whispered an old gentleman, with a double eye-glass, his hand trembling as it held the share-list. "Eh, what do you say to that?"

"Glengariff's going steadily up,—steadily up," muttered Lord Glengariff in Dunn's ear. Then, struck by the sudden pallor of his face, he added, "are you ill—are you faint?"

"A mere nothing," said Dunn, care-

lessly. "By the way, what hour is it? Near one, and I have an appointment with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Yes, Lady Massingberd, perfectly safe; not a splendid investment, but quite sure. Cagliari Cobalts are first-rate, Sir George; take all you can get of them. The Dalmatian line is guaranteed by the Austrian government, my lord. I saw the ambassador yesterday. Pray excuse a hasty leave-taking."

His carriage was quickly ordered, but before he set out he despatched a short telegraphic message to Hanks. It ran thus: "Detain her; suffer no letters from her to reach the post." This being duly sent off, he drove to Downing street. That dingy old temple of intrigue was well known to him. His familiar steps had mounted that gloomy old stair some scores of times, but now for the first, the very first time in his life, instead of being at once ushered into the presence of the minister, he was asked to "wait for a few moments." What a shock did the intimation give him! Was the news already abroad? had the fell tidings escaped? A second's consideration showed this was impossible, and yet what meant this reserve?"

"Is the counsel sitting, Mr. Bagwell?" asked he, of a very well-dressed young gentleman, with a glass fixed in his eye, who acted as private secretary to the minister.

"No; they're chatting, I fancy," hisped out the other. "The council was up half an hour ago."

"Have you mentioned my name, sir?" asked Dunn, with a formidable emphasis on the pronoun.

"Yes," said he, arranging his hair before the glass; "I sent in your card."

"Well, and the answer?"

"There was no answer, which, I take it, means 'wait,'" replied he, in the same light and graceful tone of voice.

Dunn took his hat hastily from the table, and with a stern stare, intended to mean, I shall remember your face again, said: "You may inform Lord Jedburg that I came by appointment; that I was here punctually at one o'clock; that I waited full fifteen minutes; that——"

What more Mr. Dunn was about to say was cut short by the opening of a door, and the issuing forth of some five or six gentlemen, all laughing and talking together.

"How d'ye do, Mr. Dunn?" "How d'ye do, Dunn?" "How are you, Dunn?" said some three or four, familiarly, as they passed through the room. And ere he could acknowledge the salutations, Lord Jedburg himself appeared at the door, and



"'TIS THERE, WHERE SHE'S STEALING ALONG NOW, YOU NEED THE GOOD HEAD AND THE QUICK HAND." (P. 593.)

made a sign for him to enter. Never before had Davenport Dunn crossed those precincts with so nervous a heart. If his reason assured him that there was no cause for fear, his instincts and his conscience spoke a different language. He bent one quick penetrating glance on the minister ere he sat down, as though to read there what he might of the future, but there was nothing to awaken anxiety or distrust in that face. His lordship was far advanced in life, his hair more white than gray, his brow wrinkled and deep-furrowed, and yet if, instead of the cares of a mighty empire his concern had been the passing events of a life of society and country habits, nothing could have more suited the easy expression, the graceful smile, and the pleasant *bonhomie* of that countenance. Resuming the cigar he had been smoking as Dunn came in, he lounged back indolently in his deep chair, and said:

"What can I do for you at the Isle of Wight, Dunn? I fancy we shall have a trip to Osborne to-morrow morning."

"Indeed, my lord?" asked he anxiously; "are you going out?"

"So they say," replied the other, carelessly. "Do you smoke? You'll find those Cubans very mild. So they say, Dunn. Monksley assures us that we shall be in a minority to-night of fifteen or sixteen. Drake thinks five-and-twenty."

"From your lordship's easy mode of taking it, I conclude that there is either a remedy for the disaster, or that——"

"It is no disaster at all," chimed in his lordship, gaily. "Well, the Carlton Club are evidently of that mind, and some of the evening papers too."

"I perceive, my lord," said Dunn, with a peculiar smile, "the misfortune is not irremediable."

"You are right, Dunn," said the other, promptly. "We have decided to accept a defeat, which, as our adversaries have never anticipated, will find them perfectly unprepared how to profit by it. They will beat us, but, when called upon to form a government, will be utterly unable. The rest is easy enough: a new Parliament, and ourselves stronger than ever."

"A very clever countryman of mine once told me, my lord, that he made a ruinous coach line turn out a most lucrative speculation by simply running an opposition and breaking it; so true are the world in their attachment to success."

A hearty laugh from the minister acknowledged the parallel, and he added, carelessly.

"Sir George Bosley has a story of a fel-

low who once established a run on his own bank just to get up his credit. A hit above even *you*, Master Dunn—eh?"

If Dunn laughed, it was with a face of deepest crimson, though he saw the while his secret was safe. Indeed, the honest frankness of his lordship's laugh guaranteed that all was well.

"The fellow ought to have been a cabinet minister, Dunn. He had the true governing element in him, which is a strong sense of human gullibility."

"A little more is needed, my lord; how to turn that same tendency to profit."

"Of course—of course. By the way, Dunn, though not *à propos*," said he, laughingly, "what of the great Glengariff scheme? Is it prospering?"

"The shares stand at one hundred and seventy-seven and an eighth, my lord," said Dunn, calmly. "I can only wish your lordship's party as favorable a fortune."

"Well, we are rather below par just now," said the minister, laughing, while he busied himself to select another cigar from the heap before him.

"It was just about that very enterprise I came to speak to your lordship this morning," said Dunn, drawing his chair closer. "I need not tell you how far the assurance of government support has aided our success. The report of the Parliamentary Committee as to the Harbor of Refuge—the almost certain promise of her Majesty's marine residence—the flattering reception your lordship gave to the deputation in the matter of the American Packet-station, have all done us good and efficient service. But we want more, my lord—we want more!"

"The deuce you do! Why, my good friend, these marks of our preference for your scheme have cost us some hundred angry addresses and recriminations from all parts of the kingdom, where, we are told, there is more picturesque scenery, more salubrious air, deeper water, and better anchorage. If you build a villa for every member of the cabinet, and settled it on us in freehold there, it would not repay us for all we have suffered in your cause."

"We should be both proud and happy to accommodate your lordship's colleagues on Jedburg-erescent," said Dunn, bowing with a well-assumed seriousness.

"But what do you want us to do?" said his lordship, peevishly, for he had the dislike great men generally feel to have their joke capped. It is for them to be smart, if they please, but not for the Mr.

Davenport Dunn of this world to take up the clue of the facetiousness.

Mr. Dunn seemed somewhat posed by the abrupt directness of the question. Lord Jedburg went on :

"You surely never supposed that we could send you material assistance. You are far too conversant with the working of our institutions to expect such. These things are possible in France, but they won't do here. No, Dunn; perfectly impossible here."

"And yet, my lord, it is precisely in France that they ought to be impossible. Ministers in that country have no responsibility except toward their sovereign. If they become suddenly enriched, one sees at once how they have abused the confidence of their master."

"I'll not enter upon that question," said his lordship, smartly. "Tell me, rather, something about Ireland; how shall we fare there in a general election?"

"With proper exertions you may be able to hold your own," was the dry rejoinder.

"Not more? Not any more than this?"

"Certainly not, my lord, nor do I see how you could expect it. What you are in the habit of calling concessions to Irish interests have been little other than apologies for the blunders of your colleagues. You remove some burden imposed by yourselves, or express sorrow for some piece of legislation your own hands have inflicted——"

"Come, come, Mr. Dunn, the only course of lectures I attend are delivered in the House of Commons; besides I have no time for these things." There was a tone of prompt decision in the way he uttered this that satisfied Dunn he had gone fully as far as was safe. "Now as to Ireland, we shall look for at least sixty, or perhaps seventy, sure votes. Come, where's your list, Dunn? ont with it, man! we are rather rich in patronage just now. We can make a bishop, a Puisne judge, three assistant barristers, a poor law commissioner, not to say that there are some fifty smaller things in the revenue. Which will you have?"

"All, my lord," said Dunn, coolly—"all, and some colonial appointments besides, for such of our friends as find living at home inexpedient."

His lordship lay back in his chair, and laughed pleasantly. "There's Jamaica just vacant; would that suit you?"

"The governorship? The very thing I want, and for a very old supporter of your lordship's party."

"Who is he?"

"The Earl of Glengariff, my lord, a nobleman who has never received the slightest acknowledgment for a political adherence of fifty odd years."

"Why, the man must be in second childhood. If I remember aright, he was——"

"He is exactly four years your lordship's senior; he says you fagged for him his last half at Eton."

"Pooh, pooh! he mistakes; it was of my father he was thinking. But to the point: what can he do for us?"

"I was alluding to what he had done, my lord," said Dunn, pointedly.

"Ah, Dunn, we are not rich enough for gratitude. That is the last luxury of a "millionaire;" besides, you are aware how many claimants there will be for so good a thing as this."

"Which of them all, my lord, can promise you ten votes in the Houses?"

"Well, is the bargain finished? Is all paid?"

"Not yet, my lord; not yet. You are averse to affording us any support to the Glengariff scheme, and, for the present, I will not hamper you with the consideration; you can, however, serve us in another way. Glumthal is very anxious about the Jew bill; he wishes, heaven knows why, to see his brother in the House. May I promise him that the next session will see i. law? Let me just have your lordship's word to that effect, so that I may telegraph to him when I leave this."

His lordship shook his head dubiously, and said, "You forget that I have colleagues, Dunn."

"I remember it well, my lord, and I only asked for your own individual pledge. The fact is, my lord, the Jews throughout the world have attached an immense importance to this question, and if Glumthal—confidentially, of course—be made the depository of the secret, it will raise him vastly in the estimation of his co-religionists."

"Let us see if the thing can be done. Is it practicable, and how?"

"Oh, as to that, my lord, modern legislation is carried on pretty much like a mercantile concern; you advertise your want, and it is supplied at once. Ask the newspapers, 'How are we to admit the Jews?' and you'll get your answer as regularly as though it were a question of sport addressed to *Bell's Life*."

"Candor being the order of the day, what does Mr. Davenport Dunn want for himself?"

"I am coming to him, my lord, but not just yet."

“Why, really, Dunn, except that we turn Colonel Blood in your behalf, and steal the crown for you, I don’t see what more we can do.”

“It is a mere trifle in point of patronage, my lord, though, in my ignorance of such matters, it may be possibly not without difficulty,” said Dunn; and for the first time his manner betrayed a sign of embarrassment. “The Earl of Glengariff has an only unmarried daughter, a lady of great personal attractions, and remarkably gifted in point of ability; one of those persons, in short, on whom Nature has set the stamp of high birth, and fitted to be the ornament of a court.”

“But we are all married in the cabinet. Even the treasury lords have got wives,” said Lord Jedburg, laughing, and enjoying the discomfiture of Dunn’s face even more than his own jest.

“I am aware of it, my lord,” replied Dunn, with inflexible gravity; “my ambitious hopes did not aspire so highly. What I was about to entreat was your lordship’s assistance to have the lady I have mentioned appointed to a situation in the household—one of her majesty’s ladies—”

“Impossible! perfectly impossible, Dunn!” said the minister, flinging away his cigar in impatient anger; “really, you seem to have neither measure nor moderation in your demands. Such an interference on my part, if I were mad enough to attempt it, would meet a prompt rebuke.”

“If your lordship’s patience had permitted me to finish, you would have heard that what I proposed was nothing beyond the barren honor of a *Gazette*. On the day week that her ladyship’s name had so appeared she would be married.”

“It does not alter the matter in the least. It is not in my province to make such a recommendation, and I refuse it flatly.”

“I am sorry for it, my lord. Your lordship’s refusal may inflict great evils upon the country—the rule of an incompetent and ungenial government—the accession to power of men the most unscrupulous and reckless.”

“Cannot you see, sir,” said the minister, sharply, “that I am in a position to comprehend what my office admits of, and where its limits are laid? I have told you that these appointments are not in our hands.”

“Sir Robert Peel did not say so, my lord; he insisted—actually insisted—on his right to surround the throne with political partisans.”

“The cabinet is not an equity court,

to be ruled by precedents: and I tell you once more, Dunn, I should fail if I attempted it.”

“The viscountess might obtain this favor,” said Dunn, with an obdurate persistence that was not to be resisted; “and even if unsuccessful, it would inflict no rebuff on your lordship. Indeed, it would come more gracefully as a proposition from her ladyship, who could also mention Lady Augusta’s approaching marriage.”

“I also think I might leave you to finish the discussion with my wife,” said his lordship, laughing; “I half suspect it would be the best penalty on your temerity. Are you engaged for Sunday?—well, then, dine with us. And now, that bill being adjourned,” said he, with a weary sigh, “what next?”

“I am now coming to myself—to my own case, my lord,” said Dunn, with the very slightest tremor in his voice. “Need I say that I wish it were in the hands of any other advocacy? I am so far fortunate, however, that I address one fully conversant with my claims on his party. For five-and-twenty years I have been the careful guardian of their interests in a country where, except in mere name, they never possessed any real popularity. Your lordship smiles a dissent—may I enter upon the question?”

“Heaven forbid!” broke in the minister, smiling good-humoredly.

“Well, my lord, were I to reduce my services to a mere monetary estimate, and furnish you with a bill of costs, for what a goodly sum should I stand in the estimates. I have mainly sustained the charge of seven county elections, hardly contested. I have paid the entire charges on twenty-two borough contests. I have subsidized the provincial press in your favor at a cost of several thousand pounds out of my own pocket. I have compromised three grave actions about to be brought against the government. Of the vast sums I have contributed to local charities, schools, nunneries, societies of various denominations, all in the interest of your party, I take no account. I have spent in these and like objects a princely fortune, and yet these hundreds of thousands of pounds are as nothing—mere nothing to the actual personal services I have rendered to your party. In the great revolution effected by the sale of encumbered estates, I have so watchfully guarded your interests that I have replaced the old rampant Toryism of the land by a gentry at once manageable and practicable—men intent less upon party than personal objects,

consequently available to the minister, always accessible by an offer of direct advantage. I have, with all this, so thrown a Whig light over the rising prosperity of the country, that it might seem the result of your wise rule that stimulated men to the higher civilization they have attained to, and that a more forbearing charity and a more liberal spirit went hand in hand with improved agriculture and higher farming. To identify a party with the great march of this prosperity—to make of your policy a cause of these noble results, was the grand conception which, for a quarter of a century, I have carried out. When Mr. O'Connell kept your predecessors in power, his price was the bit-by-bit surrender of what in your hearts you believed to be bulwarks of the constitution, in return for my support what have I got? Some patronage—be it so—for my own dependents and followers, no doubt! Show me one man of my name, one man of my convictions, holding place under the crown. No, my lord, my power to serve your party was based on this sure foundation, that I was open to no imputation; I was the distributor of your patronage to the men best worthy to receive it—no more."

"Four o'clock, Dunn; time's up," said his lordship. "I must go down to the House."

"I am sorry to have detained your lordship with so ungracious a theme."

"Well, I do think you might have spared me some of it. I know well my colleagues all know your invaluable services—an admirable member of the party, active and able, but not quite neglected either, eh, Dunn?—not entirely left in oblivion?"

While he spoke, he busied himself in the search for a paper amidst the heap of those before him, and could not therefore notice the mortification so palpably expressed on Dunn's face.

"I can't find it," muttered he; "I should like, however, to show you the memorandum itself, in which your name stands recommended to her majesty for a baronetcy."

Dunn's sudden start made the speaker look up, and as he turned his eyes on him there was no mistaking the look of determined anger on his features.

"A baronetcy, my lord," said he, with a slow, thick utterance, "has become the recognized reward of a popular writer, or a fashionable physician, whose wives acquire a sort of Brammagem rank in calling themselves 'My lady;' but men like myself

—men who have sustained a party—men who, wielding many arms of strength, have devoted them all to the one task of maintaining in power a certain administration, which, whatever their gifts, assuredly did not possess the art of conciliating—"

"Come, it is a peerage you want?" broke in his lordship, whose manner betrayed a temper pushed to its last limits.

"If I am to trust your lordship's tone, the pretension would seem scarcely credible," said Dunn, calmly.

"I believe I can understand how it would appear to others. I can, without great difficulty, imagine the light in which it would be viewed."

"As to that, my lord, any advancement to a man like me will evoke plenty of animadversion. I have done too much for your party not to have made many enemies. The same objection would apply were I to accept the paltry acknowledgment you so graciously contemplated for me, and which I warn you not to offer me."

Was it the naked insolence of this speech, or was it that in uttering it the proud pretension of the man summoned a degree of dignity to his manner, but certainly the minister now looked at him with a sort of respect he had not deigned hitherto to bestow.

"You know well, Dunn," he began, in a tone of conciliation, "that fitness for the elevation is only one of the requirements in such a case. There are a mass of other considerations—the ostensible claims—I mean such as can be avowed and declared openly—of the pretending party—the services he has rendered to the country at large—the merits he can show for some great public recognition. The press, whatever be its faults now-a-days, has no defects on the score of frankness, and we shall have the question put in twenty quarters—'What brilliant campaign has Mr. Dunn concluded?' 'What difficult negotiation carried to successful issue?' 'Where have been his great achievements in the law courts?' To be sure, it might be said that we honor the industrial spirit of our country in ennobling one who has acquired a colossal fortune by his own unaided abilities, but Manchester and Birmingham have also their 'millionaires.'"

"Your lordship's time is far too valuable to be passed in such discussion—even mine might be more profitably spent than in listening to it. My demand is now before you; in some three weeks hence it is not impossible it may await the consideration of your lordship's successors. In one

word, if I leave this room without your distinct pledge on the subject, you will no longer reckon me amongst the followers of your party."

"Half-past four, I protest," said Lord Jedburg, taking up his gloves. "I shall be too late at the House. Let us conclude this to-morrow morning. Come down here at eleven."

"Excuse me, my lord. I leave town to-night. I am going over to Ireland."

"Yes, you ought to be there—I forgot. Well, you must leave this affair in my hands. I'll speak to Croydon and Locksley about it—both staunch friends of yours. I can make no pledge, you know—no actual promise—"

"Nor I either, my lord," said Dunn, rising. "Let me, however, ask you to accept of my excuses for Sunday at dinner."

"I regret much that we are not to have the pleasure of your company," said his lordship, with a formal courtesy.

"These appointments," said Dunn, laying down a list he had made on the table. "are, of course, in your lordship's hands."

"I conclude so," was the dry reply, as the minister buttoned his coat.

"I wish your lordship a very good morning. Good-by, my lord." And the words had their peculiar utterance.

"Good-by, Mr. Dunn," said the minister, shortly, and rang for his carriage.

Dunn had but reached the foot of the stairs, when he heard a rapid tread behind him. "I beg pardon, Mr. Dunn," cried Bagwell, the private secretary; "his lordship sent me to overtake you, and say, that the matter you are desirous about shall be done. His lordship also hopes you can dine with him on Sunday."

"Oh, very well; say, 'yes, with much pleasure.' Has his lordship gone?"

"Yes, by the private door. He was in a great hurry, and will, I fear, be late after all."

"There's a good thing to be done, just now, in potash, Bagwell, at Pesaro. If you have a spare hundred or two, give me a call to-morrow morning." And with a gesture to imply secrecy, Dunn moved away, leaving Bagwell in a dream of gold-getting.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

THE COTTAGE NEAR SNOWDEN.

At an early portion of this true story, our reader was incidentally told that

Charles Conway had a mother, and that she lived in Wales. Her home was a little cottage near the village of Bedgellert, a neighborhood wherein her ancestors had once possessed large estates, but of which not an acre now acknowledged her as owner. Here, on a mere pittance, she had lived for years a life of unbroken solitude. The few charities to the poor her humble means permitted had served to make her loved and respected, while her gentle manners and kind address gave her that sort of eminence which such qualities are sure to attain in remote and simple circles.

All her thoughts in life, all her wishes and ambitions, were centered in her son, and although it was to the wild and reckless extravagance of his early life that she owed the penury which now pressed her—although but for his wasteful excesses she had still been in affluence and comfort, she never attached to him the slightest blame, nor did her lips ever utter one syllable of reproach. Strong in the conviction that so long as the wild excesses of youth stamp nothing of dishonor on the character, the true nature within has sustained no permanent injury, she waited patiently for the time when, this season of self-indulgence over, the higher dictates of manly reason would assert their influence, and that Charley, having sown his wild oats, would come forth rather chastened and sobered than stained by his intercourse with the world.

If this theory of hers has its advocates, there are many—and wise people, too—who condemn it, and who deem those alone safe who have been carefully guarded from the way of temptation, and have been kept estranged from the seductions of pleasure. To ourselves the whole question resolves itself into the nature of the individual, at the same time that we had far rather repose our confidence in one who had borne his share in life's passages, gaining his experience, mayhap, with cost, but coming honorably through the trial, than on him who, standing apart, had but looked out over the troubled ocean of human passion, nor risked himself on the sea of man's temptations.

The former was Conway's case: he had led a life of boundless extravagance; without any thought of the cost, he had launched out into every expensive pursuit. What we often hear applied to others figuratively, was strictly applicable to him; he never knew the value of money; he never knew that anything one desired could be overpaid for. The end came a last. With a yacht ready stored and fitted out for a

Mediterranean cruise, with three horses heavily engaged at Doncaster, with a shooting lodge filled with distinguished company in the Highlands, with negotiations all but completed for the Hooksley hounds, with speculations ripe as to whether the duchess of this, or the countess of that had secured him for a daughter or a niece, there came one morning the startling information from his solicitor that a large loan he had contemplated raising was rendered impossible by some casualty of the money-market. Recourse must be had to the Jews—heavy liabilities incurred at Newmarket must be met at once and at any cost. A week of disaster fell exactly at this juncture; he lost largely at the Portland, largely on the turf; a brother officer, for whom he had given surety, levanted immensely in debt, while a local bank, in which a considerable sum of his was vested, failed. The men of sixty per cent. saved him from shipwreck, but they took the craft for the salvage, and Conway was ruined.

Amidst the papers which Conway had sent to his solicitor as securities for the loan, a number of family documents had got mingled, old deed and titles to estates of which the young man had not so much as heard, claims against property of whose existence he knew nothing. When questioned about them by the man of law, he referred him coolly to his mother, saying frankly, "It was a matter on which he had never troubled his head." Mrs. Conway herself scarcely knew more. She had heard that there was a claim in the family to a peerage; her husband used to allude to it in his own dreamy, indolent fashion and say that it ought to be looked after, and that was all.

Had the information come to the mind of an active or enterprising man of business it might have fared differently. The solicitor to the family was, however, himself a lethargic, lazy sort of person, and he sent back the papers to Mrs. Conway, stating that he was not sure "something might not be made of them;" that is, added he, "if he had five or six thousand pounds to expend upon searches, and knew where to prosecute them."

This was but sorry comfort, but it did not fall upon a heart high in hope or strong in expectation. Mrs. Conway had never lent herself to the impression that the claim had much foundation, and she heard the tidings with calm, and all that was remembered of the whole transaction was when some jocular allusion would be made by Charles to the time when he should succeed to his peer-

age, or some as lighthearted jest of the old lady as to whether she herself was to enjoy a title or not. The more stirring incidents of a great campaign had latterly, however, so absorbed all the young soldier's interest, that he seemed totally to have forgotten the oft-recurring subject of joke between them. Strange enough was it, yet that in the very letter which conveyed to his mother an account of his Tchernaya achievement, a brief postscript had the following words:

"Since I have been confined to hospital, a person connected with the newspapers, I believe, has been here to learn the exact story of my adventure, and, curiously enough, has been pumping me about our family history. Can it be that 'our peerage' is looking up again? This last saber-cut on my skull makes me rather anxious to exchange a chako for a coronet. Can you send me anything hopeful in this direction?"

It was on an answer to this letter the old lady was occupied, seated at an open window, as the sun was just setting on a calm and mellow evening in late autumn. Well understanding the temperament of him she addressed, she adverted little to the danger of his late achievement, and simply seemed to concur in his own remark when recounting it, that he who has made his name notorious from folly, has, more than others, the obligation to achieve a higher and better reputation; and added, at the same time, "Charley, what I liked best in your feat was its patriotism. The sense of rendering a good and efficient service to the cause of your country was a nobler prompting than any desire for personal distinction." From this she turned to tell him about what she well knew he loved best to hear of—her home and her daily life, with its little round of uneventful cares, the little Welsh pony "Crw," and his old spaniel "Belle," and the tulips he had taken such pains about, and the well he had sunk in the native rock. She had good tidings, too, that the railroad—the dreadful railroad—was not to take the line of their happy valley, but to go off in some more "favored direction." Of the cottage itself she had succeeded in obtaining a renewed lease—a piece of news well calculated to delight him, "if," as she said, "grand dreams of the peerage might not have impaired his relish for the small hut at the foot of Snowdon." She had just reached so far when a little chaise, drawn by a mountain pony, drew up before the

door, and a lady in a sort of half mourning dress got out and rang the bell. As the old lady rose to admit her visitor—for her only servant was at work in the garden—she felt no small astonishment. She was known to none but the peasant neighborhood about her; she had not a single acquaintance in the country with its gentry; and although the present arrival came with little display, in her one glance at the figure of the stranger she saw her to be distinctly of a certain condition in life.

It will conduce equally to brevity and to the interests of our story if we give what followed in the words wherein Mrs. Conway conveyed it to her son:

“Little I thought, my dear Charley, that I should have to cross this already long letter—little suspected that its real and only interest was to have been suggested as I drew to its close; and here, if I had the heart for it, were the place to scold you for a pretty piece of mystification you once practiced upon me, when you induced me to offer the hospitality of this poor cottage to an humble gentlewoman, whose poverty would not deem even my life an existence of privation—the sister of a fellow-soldier you called her, and made me believe—whose the fault I am not sure—that she was some not very young or very attractive person, but one whose claim lay in her friendless lot and forlorn condition. Say what you will, such was my impression, and it could have had no other source than your description. Yes, Charley, my mind-picture was of a thin-faced, somewhat sandy-haired lady, of some six or eight-and-thirty years, bony, angular, and awkward, greatly depressed, and naturally averse to intercourse with those who had not known her or her better fortunes; shall I add, that I assisted my portrait by adding coarse hands, and filled up my anticipation by suspecting a very decided Irish brogue. Of course this flattering outline could not have been revealed in a vision, and must have come from your hands, deny it whenever and however you may! And now for the reality—the very prettiest girl I ever saw, since I left off seeing pretty people, when I was young and had pretensions myself: even then I do not remember any one handsomer, and with a winning grace of manner equal, if not superior, to her beauty. You know me as a very difficult critic on the subject of breeding and *maintien*. I feel that I am so, even to injustice, because I look for the reserved courtesy of one era as well as the easy frankness of another. *She* has both; and

she is a court lady who could adorn a cottage. Of my own atrocious sketch there was nothing about her. Stay, there was. She had the Irish accent, but by some witchery of her own, I got to like it—fancied it was musical and breathed of the sweet South; but if I go on with her perfections, I shall never come to the important question, for which you care more to hear besides, as to how I know all these things. And now, to my horror, I find how little space is left me to tell you. Well, in three words you shall have it. She has been here to see me on her way somewhere, her visit being prompted by the wish to place in my hands some very curious and very old family records, found by a singular accident in an Irish country house. They relate to the claim of some ancestor of yours to certain lands in Ireland, and the right is asserted in the name of Baron Conway, and afterwards the Lord Viscount Lackington. I saw no further; indeed, except that they all relate to our dear peerage, they seem to possess no very peculiar interest. If it were not that she would introduce your name, push me with interminable questions as to what it was you had really done, what rewards you had or were about to reap, where you were, and, above all, how, I should have called her visit the most disinterested piece of kindness I ever heard of. Still she showed a sincere and ardent desire to serve us, and said that she would be ready to make any delay in London to communicate with our lawyer, and acquaint him fully with the circumstances of this discovery.

“I unceasingly entreated her to be my guest, were it only for a few days. I even affected to believe that I would send for our lawyer to come down and learn the curious details of the finding of the papers; but she pleaded the absolute necessity of her presence in London so strongly—she betrayed, besides, something like a deep anxiety for some coming event—that I was obliged to abandon my attempt, and limit our acquaintance by the short two hours we had passed together.

“It will take some time, and another long letter, to tell you of the many things we talked over: for, our first greeting over, we felt toward each other like old friends. At last she arose to leave me, and never since the evening you bade me good-by did the same loneliness steal over my heart as when I saw her little carriage drive away from the door.

“One distressing recollection alone clouds the memory of our meeting; I suffered her to leave me without a promise

to return. I could not, without infringing delicacy, have pressed her more to tell me of herself and her plans for the future, and yet even now I regret that, at any hazard, I did not risk the issue. The only pledge I could obtain was, that she would write to me. I am now at the end of my paper, but not of my theme, of which you shall hear more in my next. Meanwhile, if you are not in love with her, I am.

“Your affectionate mother,
“MARIAN CONWAY.”

We have ourselves nothing to add to the narrative of this letter, save the remark that Mrs. Conway felt far more deeply than she expressed the disappointment of not being admitted to Sybella's full confidence. The graceful captivation of the young girl's manner, heightened in interest by her friendless and lone condition—the perilous path in life that must be trodden by one so beautiful and unprotected—had made a deep impression on the old lady's heart, and she was sincere in self-reproach that she had suffered her to leave her.

She tried again and again, by recalling all that passed between them, to catch some clue to what Sybella's future pointed; but so guardedly had the young girl shrouded every detail of her own destiny, that the effort was in vain. Sybella had given an address in town, where Mrs. Conway's lawyer might meet her if necessary, and with a last hope the old lady had written a note to that place, entreating, as the greatest favor, that she would come down and pass some days with her at the cottage; but her letter came back to her own hands. Miss Kellett was gone.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

A SUPPER.

IN long-measured sweep the waves flowed smoothly in upon the low shore at Baldoyle of a rich evening in autumn, as a very old man tottered feebly down to the strand and seated himself on a rock. Leaning his crossed arms on his stout stick, he gazed steadily and calmly on the broad expanse before him. Was it that they mirrored to him the wider expanse of that world to which he was so rapidly tending? was it in that measured beat he recognized the march of time, the long flow of years he could count, and which still swept on, smooth but relentless? or was it that the unbroken surface soothed by its very same-

ness a brain long wearied by its world conflict? Whatever the cause, old Matthew Dunn came here every evening of his life, and, seated on the self-same spot, gazed wistfully over the sea before him.

Although his hair was snow-white, and the wrinkles that furrowed his cheeks betrayed great age, his eyes yet preserved a singular brightness, and in their vivid glances showed that the strong spirit that reigned within was still unquenched. The look of defiance they wore was the very essence of the man—one who accepted any challenge that fortune flung him, and, whether victor or vanquished, only prepared for fresh conflict.

There was none of the weariness so often observable in advanced age about his features, nothing of that expression that seems to crave rest and peace, still as little was there anything of that irritable activity which seems at times to counterfeit past energy of temperament; no, he was calm, stern, and self-possessed, the man who had fought his way from boyhood, and who asked neither grace nor favor of fortune as he drew nigh the end of the journey!

“I knew I'd find you here,” said a deep voice close to his ear. “How are you?”

The old man looked up, and the next moment his son was in his arms. “Davy, my own boy—Davy, I was just thinking of you; was it Friday or Saturday you said you'd come.”

“I thought I could have been here Saturday, father, but Lord Jedburg made a point of my dining with him yesterday; and it was a great occasion—three cabinet ministers present, a new governor-general of India, too—I felt it was better to remain.”

“Right, Davy—always right—them's the men to keep company with!”

“And how are you, sir? are you hale, and stout and hearty as ever?” said Dunn, as he threw his head back, the better to look at the old man.

“As you see me, boy; a little shaky about the knees, somewhat tardy about getting up of a morning, but once launched, the old craft can keep her timbers together. But tell me the news, lad—tell me the news, and never mind *me*.”

“Well, sir, last week was a very threatening one for us. No money to be had on any terms, discounts all suspended, shares falling everywhere, good houses crashing on all sides, nothing but disasters with every post, but we've worked through it, sir. Glumthal behaved well, though at the very last minute; and Lord Glengariff, too,

deposited all his tittle-deeds at Ham-bridge's for a loan of thirty-six thousand; and then, as Downing street also stood to us, we weathered the gale, but it was close work, father—so close that at one moment I telegraphed to Liverpool to secure a berth in the *Arctic*."

A sudden start from the old man stopped him, but he quickly resumed: "Don't be alarmed, sir; my message excited no suspicion, for I sent a fellow to New York by the packet, and now all is clear again, and we have good weather before us."

"The shares fell mighty low in the Allotment, Davy; how was that?"

"Partly from the cause I have mentioned, father, the tightness in the money market; partly that I suspect we had an enemy in the camp, that daughter of Kellett's—"

"Didn't I say so? didn't I warn you about her? didn't I tell you that it was the brood of the serpent that stung us first?" cried out the old man, with a wild energy; "and with all that you would put her there with the lord and his family, where she'd know all that was doing, see the letters, and, maybe, write the answers to them! Where was the sense and prudence of that, Davy?"

"She was an enthusiast, father, and I hoped that she'd have been content to revel in that realm, but I was mistaken."

There was a tone of dejection in the way he spoke the last words that made the old man fix his eyes steadfastly on him. "Well, Davy, go on," said he.

"I have no more to say, sir," said he, in the same sad voice. "The earl has dismissed her, and she has gone away."

"That's right, that's right—better late than never. Neither luck nor grace could come of Paul Kellett's stock. I hope that's the last we'll hear of them; and now, Davy, how is the great world doing? How is the queen?"

Dunn could scarcely suppress a smile as he answered this question, asked as it was in real and earnest anxiety: and for some time the old man continued to press him with eager inquiries as to the truth of various newspaper reports about royal marriages and illustrious visitors, of which it was strange how he preserved the recollection.

"You have not asked me about myself, father," said Dunn at last, "and I think *my* fortunes might have had the first place in your interest."

"Sure you told me this minnte that you didn't see the queen," said the old man, peevishly.

"Very true, sir, I did not, but I saw her minister. I placed before him the services I had done his party, my long sacrifices of time, labor, and money in their cause; I showed him that I was a man who had established the strongest claim upon the government."

"And wouldn't be refused—wouldn't be denied, eh, Davy?"

"Just so, sir. I intimated that also, so far as it was prudent to do so."

"The stronger the better. Davy; weak words show a faint heart. 'Tis knowing the cost of your enmity will make men your friends."

"I believe, sir, that in such dealings my own tact is my safest guide. It is not to-day or yesterday that I have made acquaintance with men of this order. For upwards of two-and-twenty years I have treated ministers as my equals."

The old man heard this proud speech with an expression of almost ecstasy on his features, and grasped his son's hand in a delight too great for words.

"Ay, father, I have made our name a cognate number in this kingdom's arithmetic. Men talk of Davenport Dunn as one recognized in the land."

"'Tis true; 'tis true as the Bible!" muttered the old man.

"And what is more," continued the other, warming with his theme, what I have done I have done for all time. I have laid the foundations deep that the edifice might endure. A man of inferior ambition would have been satisfied with wealth, and the enjoyments it secures; he might have held a seat in Parliament, sat on the benches beside the minister, maybe, may have held some lordship of this or under-secretaryship of that, selling his influence ere it matured, as poor farmers sell their crops standing—but I preferred the patient path. I made a waiting race of it, father, and see what the prize is to be. Your son is to be a peer of Great Britain!"

The old man's mouth opened wide, and his eyes glared with an almost unnatural brightness, as, catching his son with both arms, he tried to embrace him.

"There, dear father—there!" said Dunn, calmly; "you must not over-excite yourself."

"It's too much, Davy—it's too much; I'll never live to see it."

"That you will, sir—for a time, indeed, I was half disposed to stipulate that the title should be conferred upon yourself. It would have thus acquired another generation in date, but I remembered how

indisposed you might feel to all the worry and care the mere forms of assuming it might cost you. You would not like to leave this old spot, besides——”

“No, on no account,” said the old man, pensively.

“And then I thought that your great pride, after all, would be to hear of me, your own Davy, as Lord Castledunn.”

“I thought it would be plain Dunn—Lord Dunn,” said the old man, quickly.

“If the name admitted of it, I’d have preferred it so.”

“And what is there against the name?” asked he, angrily.

“Nothing, father; none have ever presumed to say a word against it. In talking the matter over, however, with some members of the cabinet, one or two suggested Danncourt, but the majority inclined to Castledunn.”

“And what did your lordship say?” asked the old man, with a gleeful cackle.

“Oh, Davy! I never thought the day would come that I’d call you by any name I’d love so well as that you bore when a child; but see, now, it makes my old eyes run over to speak to you as ‘my lord.’”

“It is a fair and honest pride, father,” said Dunn, caressingly. “We stormed the breach ourselves, with none to help, none to cheer us on.”

“Oh, Davy, but it does me good to call you ‘my lord.’”

“Well, sir, you are only anticipating a week or two. Parliament will assemble after the elections, and then be prorogued; immediately afterward there will be four elevations to the peerage—mine one of them.”

“Yes, my lord,” mumbled the old man, submissively.

“But this is not all, father; the same week that sees me gazetted a peer will announce my marriage with an earl’s daughter.”

“Davy, Davy, this luck is coming too quick! Take care, my son, that there’s no pit before you.”

“I know what I am doing, sir, and so does the Lady Augusta Arden. You remember the Earl of Glengariff’s name?”

“Where you were once a tutor, is it?”

“The same, sir.”

“It was they that used to be so cruel to you, Davy, wasn’t it?”

“I was a foolish boy, ignorant of the world and its ways at the time. I fancied fifty things to mean offence which never were intended to wound me.”

“Ay, they made you eat in the servants’ hall, I think.”

“Never, sir—never; they placed me at a side-table once or twice when pressed for room.”

“Well, it was the room you had somewhere in a hayloft, eh?”

“Nothing of the kind, sir. Your memory is all astray. My chamber was small—for the cottage had not much accommodation—but I was well and suitably lodged.”

“Well, what was it they did?” muttered he to himself. “I know it was something that made you cry the whole night after you came home.”

“Father, father! these are unprofitable memories,” said Dunn, sternly. “Were one to treasure up the score of all the petty slights he may have received in life, so that in some day of power he might acquit the debt, success would be anything but desirable.”

“I am not so sure of that, Davy. I never forgot an injury.”

“I am more charitable, sir,” said Dunn, calmly.

“No, you’re not, Davy—no, you’re not,” replied the old man, eagerly, “but you think it’s wiser to be never-minding; and so it would, boy, if the man that injured you was to forget it too. Ah, Davy, that’s the rub. But *he* won’t; he’ll remember to his dying day that there’s a score between you.”

“I tell you, father, that these maxims do not apply to persons of condition, all whose instincts and modes of thought are unlike those of the inferior classes.”

“They are men and women, Davy—they are men and women.”

Dunn arose impatiently, observing that the night was growing chilly, and it were better to return to the house.

“I mean to sup with you,” said he, gaily, “if you have anything to give me.”

“A rasher and eggs, and a bladebone of cold mutton, is all I have,” muttered the old man, gloomily. “I would not let them buy a chicken this week, when I saw the shares falling. Give me your arm, Davy, I’ve a slight weakness in the knees; it always took me at this season since I was a boy.” And mumbling how strange it was that one did not throw off childish ailments as one grew older, he crept slowly along toward the house.

As they entered the kitchen, Dunn remarked with astonishment how little there remained of the abundance and plenty which had so characterized it of old. No hams, no fitches hung from the rafters; no sturdy barrels of butter stood against the walls; the chicken-coop was empty;

and even to the good fire that graced the hearth there was a change, for a few half-sodden turf-sods were all that lingered in the place. Several baskets and hampers, carefully corded and sealed, were ranged beside the dresser, in which Dunn recognized presents of wine, choice cordials and liquors, that he had himself addressed to the old man.

"Why, father, how is this?" asked he, half angrily. "I had hoped for better treatment at your hands. You have apparently not so much as tasted any of the things I sent you."

"There they are, indeed, Davy, just as they came for 'Matthew Dunn, Esq., with care,' written on them, and not a string cut!"

"And why should this be so, sir, may I ask?"

"Well, the truth is, Davy," said he, with a sigh. "I often longed to open them, and uncork a bottle of ale or brandy, or, maybe, sherry, and sore tempted I felt to do it when I was drinking my buttermilk of a night, but then I'd say to myself, 'Ain't you well and hearty? keep cordials for the time when you are old, and feeble, and need support; don't be giving yourself bad habits, that maybe some fifteen or twenty years hence you'll be sorry for.' There's the reason, now, and I see by your face you don't agree with me."

Dunn made no answer, but taking up a knife he speedily cut the cordage of a large hamper, and as speedily covered a table with a variety of bottles.

"We'll drink this to the queen's health, father," said he, holding up a flask of rare hock; "and this to the 'House of Lords,' for which estimable body I mean to return thanks; and then, father, I'll give 'Prosperity to the landed interest and the gentry of Ireland,' for which you shall speak."

Dunn went gaily along in this jesting fashion while he emptied the hamper of its contents, displaying along the dresser a goodly line of bottles, whose shape and corkage guaranteed their excellence. Meanwhile, an old servant woman had prepared the table, and was busily engaged with the materials of the meal.

"If I only thought we were going to have a feast, Davy, I'd have made her light a fire in the parlor," said the old man, apologetically.

"We're better here, sir; it's cosier and homelier, and I know you think so. Keep your own corner, father, and I'll sit here."

With appetites sharpened by the sea air and a long fast, they seated themselves at table and eat heartily. If their eyes met,

a smile of pleasant recognition was exchanged: for while the old man gazed almost rapturously on his illustrious son, Dunn bent a look of scarcely inferior admiration on that patriarchal face, whereon time seemed but to mellow the traits that marked its wisdom.

"And what name do they give this, Davy?" said he, as he held up his glass to the light.

"Burgundy, father—the king of wines. The wine-merchant names this Chamber-tin, which was the favorite drinking of the great Napoleon."

"I wonder at that, now," said the old man, sententiously.

"Wonder at it! And why so, father?—is it not admirable wine?"

"Its just for that reason, Davy; every sup I swallow sets me a-dreaming of wonderful notions—things I know the next minute is quite impossible—but I feel when the wine is on my lips as if they were all easy and practicable."

"After all, father, just remember that you cannot imagine anything one-half so strange as the change in our own actual condition. There you sit, with your own clear head, to remind you of when and how you began life, and here am I!—for I am, as sure as if I held my patent in my hand—the Right Honorable Lord Castledunn."

"To your lordship's good health and long life," said the old man, fervently.

"And now to a worthier toast, father—Lady Castledunn that is to be."

"With all my heart. Lady Castledunn, whoever she is."

"I said, 'that is to be,' father; and I have given you her name—the Lady Augusta Arden."

"I never heard of her," muttered the old man, dreamily.

"An earl's daughter, sir; the ninth Earl of Glengariff, said Dunn, pompously.

"What's her fortune, Davy? She ought to bring you a good fortune."

"Say, rather, sir, it is I that should make a splendid settlement—so proud a connection should meet its suitable acknowledgment."

"I understand little about them things, Davy; but there's one thing I do know, there never was the woman born I'd make independent of me if she was my wife. It isn't in nature, and it isn't in reason."

"I can only say, sir, that with *your* principles you would not marry into the peerage."

"Maybe I'd find one would suit me as well elsewhere."

"That is very possible, sir," was the dry reply.

"And if she cost less, maybe she'd wear as well," said the old man, peevishly; "but I suppose your lordship knows best what suits your lordship's station."

"That also is possible, sir," said Dunn, coldly.

The old man's brow darkened, he pushed his glass from him, and looked offended and displeased.

Dunn quickly saw the change that had passed over him, and cutting the wire of a champagne flask he filled out a foaming tumbler of the generous wine, saying, "Drink this to your own good health, father—to the man whose wise teachings and prudent maxims have made his son a foremost figure in the age, and who has no higher pride than to own where he got his earliest lessons."

"Is it true, Davy—are them words true?" asked the old man, trembling with eagerness.

"As true as that I sit here." And Dunn drained his glass as he spoke.

The old man, partly wearied by the late sitting, partly confused by all the strange tidings he had heard, dropped his head upon his chest and breathed heavily, muttering indistinctly, a few broken and incoherent words. Lost in his own reveries, Dunn had not noticed this drowsy stupor, when suddenly the old man said:

"Davy—are you here, Davy?"

"Yes, father, here beside you."

"What a wonderful dream I had, Davy," he continued; "I dreamed you were made a lord, and that the Queen sent for you, and I was looking everywhere, up and down, for the fine cloak with the ermine all over it that you had to wear before her majesty; sorra a one of me could find it at all; at last I put my hand on it, and was going to put it on your shoulders, when what should it turn out but a shroud!—ay, a shroud!"

"You are tired, father; these late hours are bad for you. Finish that glass of wine, and I'll say good night."

"I wonder what sign a shroud is, Davy?" mumbled the old man, pertinaciously adhering to the dream. "A coffin, they say, is a wedding."

"It is not a vigorous mind like yours, father, that lends faith to such miserable superstitions."

"That is just what they are not. Dreams is dreams, Davy."

"Just so, sir; and, being dreams, have neither meaning nor consistency."

"How do you know that more than me?"

Who told you they were miserable superstitions? I call them warnings—warnings that come out of our own hearts; and they come to us in our sleep just because that's the time our minds are not full of cares and troubles, but is just taking up whatever chances to cross them. What made Luke Davis dream of a paycock's feather the night his son was lost at sea? Answer me that if you can."

"These are unprofitable themes, father; we only puzzle ourselves when we discuss them. Difficult as they are to believe, they are still harder to explain."

"I don't want to explain them," said the old man, sternly, for he deemed that the very thought of such inquiry had in it something presumptuous.

"Well, father," said Dunn, rising, "I sincerely trust you will sleep soundly now, and be disturbed by none of these fancies. I must hasten away. I leave for Belfast by the early train, and have a mass of letters to answer before that."

"When am I to see you again, Davy?" asked the old man, eagerly.

Very soon, I hope, sir; as soon as I can, of that you may be certain," said he, cordially.

"Let it be soon, then, Davy, for the meeting does me good. I feel to-night ten years younger than before you came, and it isn't the wine either, 'tis the sight of your face and the touch of your hand. Good night, and my blessing be with you!" And a tear coursed down his seared cheek as he spoke.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

A SHOCK.

It was past midnight when Davenport Dunn reached his own house. His return was unexpected, and it was some time before he gained admission. The delay, however, did not excite his impatience; his head was so deeply occupied with cares and thoughts for the future, that he was scarcely conscious of the time he had been kept waiting.

Mr. Clowes, hurriedly summoned from his bed, came up full of apologies and excuses.

"We did not expect you till to-morrow, sir, by the late packet," said he, in some confusion. Dunn made no answer, and the other went on: "Mr. Hanks, too, thought it not improbable you would not be here before Wednesday."

"When was he here?"

"To-day, sir; he left that oak box here this morning, and those letters, sir."

While Dunn carelessly turned over the superscriptions, among which he found none to interest him, Clowes repeatedly pressed his master to take some supper, or at least a biscuit and a glass of dry sherry.

"Send for Mr. Hanks," said Dunn, at last, not condescending to notice the entreaties of his butler. "Let him wait for me here when he comes." And so saying, he took a candle and passed up-stairs.

Mr. Clowes was too well acquainted with his master's temper to obtrude unseasonably upon him, so that he glided noiselessly away till such time as he might be wanted.

When Dunn entered the drawing-room, he lighted the candles of the candelabra over the chimney and some of those which occupied the branches along the walls, and then, turning the key in the door, sat down to contemplate the new and splendid decorations of the apartment.

The task had been confided to skillful hands, and no more attempted than rooms of moderate size and recent architecture permitted. The walls, of a very pale green, displayed to advantage a few choice pictures—Italian scenes by Turner, a Cuypp or two, and a Mieris—all of them of a kind to interest those who had no connoisseurship to be gratified. A clever statuette of the French Emperor, a present graciously bestowed by himself, stood on a console of malachite, and two busts of whig statesmen occupied brackets at either side of a vast mirror. Except these, there was little ornament, and the furniture seemed rather selected for the indulgence of ease and comfort than for show or display. A few bronzes, some curious carvings in ivory, an enamelled miniature, and some illuminated missals were scattered about amongst illustrated books and aquarelles, but in no great profusion; nor was there that indiscriminate litter which too frequently imparts to the salon the character of a curiosity-shop. The rooms, in short, were eminently habitable.

Over the chimney in the back drawing-room was a clever sketch, by Thorburn, of Lady Augusta Arden. She was in a riding-habit, and standing with one hand on the mane of an Arab pony—a beautiful creature presented to her by Dunn. While he stood admiring the admirable likeness, and revolving in his mind the strange traits of that thoughtfulness which had supplied the picture—for it was all Sybella Kellett's doings, every detail of the decora-

tions, the color of the walls, the paintings, even to the places they occupied, had all been supplied by her—Dunn started, and a sudden sickness crept over him. On a little table beside the fireplace stood a small gold salver, carved by Cellini, and which served to hold a few objects, such as coins, and rings, and antique gems. What could it be, then, amidst these century-old relics, which now overcame and so unmanned him that he actually grew pale as death, and sank at last, trembling, into a seat, cold perspiration on his face, and his very lips livid?

Mixed up amid the articles of *vertu* on that salver was an old-fashioned penknife with a massive handle of blood-stone, to which a slip of paper was attached, containing two or three words in Miss Kellett's hand. Now the sight of this article in that place so overcame Dunn that it was some minutes ere he could reach out his hand to take the knife. When giving to Miss Kellett the charge of several rare and valuable objects, he had entrusted her with keys to certain drawers, leaving to her own judgment the task of selection. He had totally forgotten that this knife was amongst these, but even had he remembered the circumstance, it would not have caused alarm, naturally supposing how little worthy of notice such an object would seem amidst others of price and rarity. And yet there it was, and, by the slip of paper fastened to it, attesting a special notice.

With an effort almost convulsive he had last seized the knife, and read the words. They were simply these: "A penknife, of which Mr. Dunn can probably supply the history." He dropped it as he read, and lay back, with a sense of fainting sickness.

The men of action and energy can face the positive present perils of life with a far bolder heart than they can summon to confront the terrors of conscience-stricken imagination. In the one case, danger assumes a shape and a limit; in the other, it looms out of distance, vast, boundless, and full of mystery. She knew, then, the story of his boyish shame; she had held the tale secretly in her heart through all their intercourse, reading his nature, mayhap, through the clue of that incident, and tracing out his path in life by the light it afforded; doubtless, too, she knew of his last scene with her father—that terrible interview, wherein the dying man uttered a prediction that was almost a curse; she had treasured up these memories, and accepted his aid with seeming frankness, and

yet, all the while that she played the grateful, trusting dependent, she had been slowly pursuing a vengeance. If Paul Kellett had confided to her the story of this childish transgression, he had doubtless revealed to her how heavily it had been avenged—how, with a persistent, persecuting hate, Dunn had tracked him, through difficulty and debt, to utter ruin. She had therefore read him in his real character, and had devoted herself to a revenge deeper than his own. Ay, he was countermined!

Such was the turn of his thoughts, as he sat there wiping the cold sweat that broke from his forehead, and cursing the blindness that had so long deceived him; and he, whose deep craft had carried him triumphant through all the hardest trials of the world, the man who had encountered the most subtle intellects, the great adventurer in a whole ocean of schemes, was to be the dupe and sport of a girl!

And now, amid his self-accusings, there rose up that strange attempt at compromise the baffled heart so often clings to, that he had, at times, half-suspected this deep and secret treachery—that she had not been either so secret or so crafty as she fancied herself. “If my mind,” so reasoned he, “had not been charged with far weightier themes, I should have detected her at once; all her pretended gratitude, all her assumed thankfulness, had never deceived me; her insignificance was her safeguard. And yet withal, I sometimes felt, she is too deeply in our confidence—she sees too much of the secret machinery of our plans. While I exulted over the ignoble dependence she was doomed to—while I saw, with a savage joy, how our lots in life were reversed, was I self-deceived?”

So impressed was he with the idea of a game in which he had been defeated, that he went over in his mind every circumstance he could recall of his intercourse with her. Passages the simplest—words of little significance—incidents the most trivial—he now charged with deepest meaning. Amidst these, there was one for which he could find no solution—why had she so desired to be the owner of the cottage near Bantry? It was there that Driscoll had discovered the Conway papers. Was it possible—the thought flashed like lightning on him—that there was any concert between the girl and this man? This suspicion no sooner occurred to him than it took firm hold of his mind. None knew better than Dunn the stuff Driscoll was made of, and knowing, besides, how he had, by his own seeming lukewarmness, affronted

that crafty schemer, it was by no means improbable that such an alliance as this existed. And this last discovery of documents—how fortunate was it that Hanks had secured them. The papers might or might not be important; at all events, the new Lord Lackington might be brought to terms by their means; he would have come to his peerage so unexpectedly, that all the circumstances of the contested claim would be strange to him. This was a point to be looked at; and as he reasoned thus, again did he go back to Sybella Kellett, and what the nature of her game might be, and how it should first display itself.

A tap at the door startled him. “Mr. Hanks is below, sir,” said Clowes.

“I will be with him in a moment,” replied Dunn; and again relapsed into his musings.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

A MASTER AND MAN.

“Is she gone?—where to?” cried Dunn, without answering Mr. Hanks’s profuse salutations and welcomes.

“Yes, sir; she sailed yesterday.”

“Sailed, and for where?”

“For Malta, sir, in the *Euxine* steamer, Gone to her brother in the Crimea. One of my people saw her go on board at Southampton.”

“Was she alone?”

“Quite alone, sir. My man was present when she paid the boatmen. She had very little luggage, but they demanded half a guinea—

“What of Driscoll? Have you traced him?” asked Dunn, impatient at the minuteness of this detail.

“He left London for Havre on the 12th of last month, sir, with a passport for Italy. He carried one of Hartwell’s circulars for three hundred pounds, and was to have taken a courier at Paris, but did not.”

“And where is he now?” asked Dunn, abruptly.

“I am unable to say, sir,” said Hanks, almost abjectly, for he felt self-rebuked in the acknowledgment. “My last tidings of him came from Como—a new hydropathic institution there.”

“Expecting to find the Viscount Lackington,” said Dunn, with a sardonic laugh. “Death was before you, Master Driscoll; you did not arrive in time for even the funeral. I say, Hanks,” added he, quick-

ly, "what of the new viscount? Has he answered our letters?"

"Not directly, sir; but there came a short note signed 'C. Christopher,' stating that his lordship had been very ill, and was detained at Ems, and desiring to have a bank post-bill for two hundred forwarded to him by return."

"You sent it?"

"Of course, sir; the letter had some details which proved it to be authentic."

"And the sum a trifle," broke in Dunn. "She is scarcely at Malta by this, Hanks. What am I thinking of? She'll not reach it before next Friday or Saturday. Do you remember young Kellett's regiment?"

"No, sir."

"Well, find it out. I'll write to the Horse Guards to-morrow to have him promoted—to give him an ensigncy in some regiment serving in India. Whom do you know at Malta, Hanks?"

"I know several, sir; Edmond Grant, in the storekeeper's department; James Hoeksley, second harbor-master; Paul Wesley, in the under-secretary's office."

"Any of them will do. Telegraph to detain her; that her brother is coming home; she must not go to the Crimea." There was a stern fixity of purpose declared in the way these last words were spoken, which at the same time warned Hanks from asking any explanation of them. "And now for business. What news from Arigua—any ore?"

"Plenty, sir; the new shaft has turned out admirably. It is yielding upward of twenty-eight per cent., and Holmes offers thirty pounds a ton for the raw cobalt."

"I don't care for that, sir. I asked how were shares," said Dunn, peevishly.

"Not so well as might be expected, sir. The shake at Glengariff was felt widely."

"What do you mean? The shares fell, but they rose again; they suffered one of those fluctuations that attend on all commercial or industrial enterprises; but they rallied even more quickly than they went down. When I left town yesterday they were at one hundred and forty-three."

"I know it, sir. I received your telegram, and I showed it to Bayle and Childers, but they only smiled, and said, 'So much the better for the holders.'"

"I defy any man—I don't care what may be his abilities or what his zeal—to benefit this country!" exclaimed Dunn, passionately. "There is amongst Irishmen, toward each other, such an amount of narrow jealousy—mean, miserable, envious rivalry—as would swamp the best in-

tentions, and destroy the wisest plans that ever were conceived. May my fate prove a warning to whoever is fool enough to follow me!"

Was it that when Dunn thus spoke he hoped to persuade Mr. Hanks that he was a noble-hearted patriot, sorrowing over the errors of an ungrateful country? Did he fancy that his subtle lieutenant, the associate of all his deep intrigues, the confidant of his darkest schemes, was suddenly to see in him nothing but magnanimity of soul and single-hearted devotedness? No, I cannot presume to say that he indulged in any such delusion. He uttered the words just to please himself—to flatter himself! as some men drink off a cordial to give them Dutch courage. There are others that enunciate grand sentiments, high sounding and magniloquent, the very music and resonance of their words imparting a warm glow within them.

It is a common error to imagine that such "stage thunder" is confined to that after-dinner eloquence in whose benefit the canons of truth-telling are all repealed. Far from it. The practice enters into every hour of every-day life, and the greatest knave that ever rogued never cheated the world half as often as he cheated himself!

As though it had been a glass of brown sherry that he swallowed, Mr. Dunn felt "better" after he had uttered these fine words. He experienced a proud satisfaction in thinking what a generous heart beat within his own waistcoat, and thus reassured, he thought well of the world at large.

"And Ossory, Mr. Hanks—how is Ossory?"

"A hundred and fourteen, with a look upward," responded Mr. Hanks. "Since the day of the 'run' deposits have largely increased. Indeed, I may say we are now the great country gentry bank of the midland. We discount freely, too, and we lend generously."

"I shall want some ready money, soon, Hanks," said Dunn, as he paced the room with his hands behind his back, and his head bent forward. "You'll have to sell out some of those harbor shares."

"Bantry's, sir? Glumthal's have them as securities!"

"So they have; I forgot. Well, St. Columbus, or the patent fuel, or that humbug discovery of Patterson's, the Irish Asphalt. There's an American fellow, by the way, wants that."

"They're very low—very low, all these, sir," said Hanks, lugubriously. "They

sank so obstinately that I just withdrew our name quietly, so that we can say any day we have long ceased any connection with these enterprises."

"She'll scarcely make any delay in Malta, Hankes. Your message ought to be there by Thursday at latest." And then, as if ashamed of showing where his thoughts were straying, he said, "All kinds of things—odds and ends of every sort—are jostling each other in my brain to-night."

"You want rest, sir; you want nine or ten hours of sound sleep."

"Do I look fatigued or harassed?" asked Dunn, with an earnestness that almost startled the other.

"A little tired, sir; not more than that," cautiously answered Hankes.

"But I don't *feel* tired. I am not conscious of any weariness," said he, pettishly. "I suspect that you are not a very acute physiognomist, Hankes. I have told you," added he, hastily, "I shall want some twelve or fifteen thousand pounds soon. Look out, too, for any handsome country seat—in the south I should prefer it—that may be in the market. I'll not carry out my intentions about Kellett's Court. It is a tumble-down old concern, and would cost us more in repairs than a handsome house fit to inhabit."

"Am I to have the honor of offering my felicitations, sir," said Hankes, obsequiously—"are the reports of the newspapers as to a certain happy event to be relied on?"

"You mean as to my marriage? Yes, perfectly true. I might, in a mere worldly point of view, have looked higher—not higher, certainly not—but I might have contracted what many would have called a more advantageous connection—in fact, I might have had any amount of money I could care for—but I determined for what I deemed the wiser course. You are probably not aware that this is a very long attachment. Lady Augusta and myself have been as good as engaged to each other for—for a number of years. She was very young when we met first—just emerging from early girlhood—but the sentiment of her youthful choice has never varied, and, on *my* part, the attachment has been as constant."

"Indeed, sir!" said Hankes, sorely puzzled what to make of this declaration.

"I know," said Dunn, returning rapidly to the theme, "that nothing will seem less credible to the world at large than a man of *my* stamp marrying for love! The habit is to represent us as a sort of human monster, a creature of wily, money-getting faculties, shrewd, overreaching, and successful. They

won't give us feelings, Hankes. They won't let us understand the ties of affection and the charms of a home. Well," said he, after a long pause, "there probably never lived a man more mistaken, more misconceived by the world than myself."

Hankes heaved a heavy sigh; it was, he felt, the safest thing he could do, for he did not dare to trust himself with a single word. The sigh, however, was a most profound one, and plainly as words declared the compassionate contempt he entertained for a world so short-sighted and so meanly minded.

"After all," resumed Dunn, "it is the penalty every man must pay for eminence. The poor little nibblers at the rind of fortune satisfy their unsuccess when they say, 'Look at him with all his money!'"

Another and deeper sigh here broke from Hankes, who was really losing all clue to the speaker's reflections.

"I'm certain, Hankes, you have heard observations of this kind five hundred times."

"Ay, have I, sir," answered he in hurried confusion—"five thousand!"

"Well, and what was your reply, sir? How did you meet such remarks?" said Dunn, sternly.

"Put them down, sir—put them down at once—that is, I acknowledge that there was a sort of fair ground—I agreed in thinking that, everything considered, and looking to what we saw every day around us in life—and Heaven knows it is a strange world, and the more one sees of it the less he knows—"

"I'm curious to hear," said Dunn, with a stern fixedness of manner, "in what quarter you heard these comments on my character."

Hankes trembled from head to foot. He was in the witness box, and felt that one syllable might place him in the dock.

"You never heard one word of the kind in your life, sir, and you *know* it," said Dunn, with a savage energy of tone that made the other sick with fear. "If ever there was a man whose daily life refuted such a calumny it was myself."

Dunn's emotions were powerful, and he walked the room from end to end with long and determined strides. Suddenly halting at last, he looked Hankes steadily in the face, and said,

"It was the Kellett girl dared thus to speak of me, was it not? The truth, sir—the truth, I *will* have it out of you!"

"Well, I must own you are right. It was Miss Kellett."

Heaven forgive you, Mr. Hankes, for the

tie, inasmuch as you never intended to tell it till it was suggested to you.

"Can you recall the circumstance which elicited this remark? I mean," said he, with an affected carelessness of manner "how did it occur? You were chatting together—discussing people and events, eh?"

"Yes, sir, just so."

"And she observed——do you chance to remember the phrase she used?"

"I give you my word of honor that I do not, sir," said Hanks, with a sincere earnestness.

"People who fancy themselves clever—and Miss Kellett is one of that number—have a trick of eliminating every trait of a man's character from some little bias—some accidental bend given to his youthful mind. I am almost certain—nay, I feel persuaded—it was by some such light that young lady read me. She had heard I was remarkable as a schoolboy for this, that, or t'other—I saved my pocket-money or lent it out at interest. Come, was it not with the aid of an ingenious explanation of this kind she interpreted me?"

Mr. Hanks shook his head, and looked blankly disconsolate.

"Not that I value such people's estimate of me," said Dunn, angrily. "Calumniate, vilify, depreciate as they will, here I stand with my foot on the first step of the peerage. Ay, Hanks, I have made my own terms, the first *Gazette* after the new elections will announce Mr. Davenport Dunn as Lord Castledunn."

Hanks actually bounded on his chair. Had he been the faithful servant of some learned alchemist, watching patiently for years the wondrous manipulations and subtle combinations of his master, following him from crucible to crucible, and from alembic to alembic, till the glorious moment when, out of smoke and vapor, the yellow glow of the long-sought metal gleamed before his eyes, he could not have regarded his chief with a more devoted homage.

Dunn read "WORSHIP" in every lineament of the other's face. It was as honest veneration as his nature could compass, and, sooth to say, the great man liked it, and sniffed his insence with the air of Jove himself.

"I mean to take care of *you*, Hanks," he said, with a bland protectiveness. "I do not readily forget the men who have served me faithfully. Of course we must draw out of all our enterprises here. I intend at once to realize—yes, Hanks—to realize a certain comfortable sum and withdraw."

These were not very explicit nor very

determinate expressions, but they were amply intelligible to him who heard them.

"To wind-up, sir, in short," said Hanks, significantly.

"Yes, Hanks, to 'wind-up.'"

"A difficult matter—a very difficult matter, sir."

"Difficulties have never deterred me from anything, Mr. Hanks. The only real difficulty I acknowledge in life is to choose which of them I will adopt; that done, the rest is matter of mere detail." Mr. Dunn now seated himself at a table, and in the calm and quiet tone with which he treated every business question, he explained to Hanks his views on each of the great interests he was concerned in. Shares in home speculations were to be first exchanged for foreign scrip, and these afterwards sold. Of the vast securities of private individuals pledged for loans, or given as guaranties, only such were to be redeemed as belonged to persons over whom Dunn had no control. Depository as he was of family secrets, charged with the mysterious knowledge of facts whose publication would bring ruin and disgrace on many, this knowledge was to have its price and its reward; and as he ran his finger down the list of names so comprised, Hanks could mark the savage exultation of his look while he muttered unintelligibly to himself.

Dunn stopped at the name of the Viscount Lackington, and, leaning his head on his hand, said, "Don't let us forget that message to Malta."

"A heavy charge that, sir," said Hanks. "The Ossory has got all his lordship's titles; and we have set them down, too, for twenty-one thousand seven hundred above their value."

"Do you know who is the Viscount Lackington?" asked Dunn, with a strange significance.

"No, sir."

"Neither do I," said Dunn, hurriedly following him. "Mayhap it cost some thousands of pounds and some tiresome talk to decide that question; at all events, it will cost you or me nothing."

"The Earl of Glengariff's claim must, I suppose, be satisfied, sir?"

"Of course it must, and the very first of all! But I am not going to enter minutely into these things now, Hanks. I need a little of that rest you were just recommending me to take. Be here to-morrow at twelve; do not mention my arrival to any one, but come over with the Ossory statement and the two or three other most important returns."

Mr. Hanks rose to withdraw, and as he moved toward the door his eye caught the oaken box, with three large seals placed by his own hand.

"You have scarcely had time to think about these papers, sir; but they will have their importance when that peerage case comes to be discussed. The Lackingtons were Conways——"

"Let me have a look at them," said Dunn, rapidly.

Hanks broke open the paper bands, and unlocked the box. For some time he searched through the documents as they lay, and then emptying them all upon the table, he went over them more carefully one by one. "Good Heavens!" cried he, "how can this be?"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Dunn; "you do not pretend that they are missing?"

"They are gone—they are not here!" said the other, almost fainting from agitation.

"But these are the seals you yourself fastened on the box."

"I know it—I see it—and I can make nothing of it."

"Mr. Hanks, Mr. Hanks, this is serious," said Dunn, as he bent upon the affrighted man a look of heart-searching significance.

"I swear before Heaven—I take my most solemn oath——"

"Never mind swearing—how could they have been extracted? that is the question to be solved."

Hanks examined the seals minutely; they were his own. He scrutinized the box on every side to see if any other mode of opening it existed; but there was none. He again went through the papers—opening, shaking, sifting them one by one—and then, with a low, faint sigh, he sank down upon a chair, the very image of misery and dismay. "Except it was the devil himself——"

"The devil has plenty of far more profitable work on hand, sir," said Dunn, sternly; and then, in a calmer tone, added, "Is it perfectly certain that you ever saw the documents you allude to? and when?"

"Saw them? Why I held them in my hands for several minutes. It was I myself replaced them in the box before sealing it."

"And what interval of time occurred between your reading them and sealing them up?"

"A minute—half a minute perhaps; stay," cried he, suddenly, "I remember

now that I left the room to call the landlord. Miss Kellett remained behind."

With a dreadful imprecation Dunn struck his forehead with his hand, and sank into his seat. "What cursed folly," cried he, bitterly—"and what misfortune and ruin may it beget!"

"It was then that she took them—that was the very moment," muttered Hanks, as he followed on his own dreary thoughts.

"My father was right," said Dunn below his breath; "that girl will bring sorrow on us yet."

"But, after all, what value could they have in her eyes? She knows nothing about the questions they refer to; she could not decipher the very titles of the documents."

"I ought to have known—I ought to have foreseen it," cried Dunn, passionately. "What has my whole life been, but a struggle against the blunders, the follies, and the faults of those who should have served me! Other men are fortunate in their agents. It was reserved for me to have nothing but incapables, or worse."

"If you mean to include *me* in either of these categories, sir, will you please to say which?" said Hanks, reddening with anger.

"Take your choice—either or both!" said Dunn, savagely.

"A man must be very strong in honesty that can afford to speak in this fashion of others," said Hanks, his voice tremulous with rage. "At all events, the world shall declare whether he be right or not."

"How do you mean, 'the world shall declare?' Is it that what has passed between us here can be made matter for public notoriety? Would you dare——"

"Oh! I would dare a great deal, sir, if I was pushed to it," said Hanks, scoffingly. "I would dare, for instance, to let the world we are speaking of into some of the mysteries of modern banking. I have a vast amount of information to give as to the formation of new companies—how shares are issued, canceled, and reissued. I could tell some amusing anecdotes about title-deeds of estates that never were transferred——"

Why is it that Mr. Hanks, now in full flood of his sarcasm, stops so suddenly? What has arrested his progress? and why does he move so hurriedly toward the door, which Dunn has, however, already reached before him and locked? Was it something in the expression of Dunn's features that alarmed him?—truly, there was in his look what might have appalled a stouter heart—or was it that Dunn had

suddenly taken something, he could not discern what, from a drawer, and hastily hidden it in his pocket?

"Merciful heavens!" cried Hanks, trembling all over, "you would not dare—"

"Like yourself, sir, I would dare much if pushed to it," said Dunn, in a voice that now had recovered all its wonted composure. "But come, Hanks, it is not a hasty word or an ungenerous speech is to break up the ties of a long friendship. I was wrong—I was unjust—I ask your pardon for it. You have served me too faithfully and too well to be requited thus. Give me your hand, and say you forgive me."

"Indeed, sir, I must own I scarcely expected—that is, I never imagined—"

"Come, come, do not do it grudgingly—tell me frankly all is forgiven."

Hanks took the outstretched hand, and muttered some broken, unintelligible words.

"There, now, sit down and think no more of this folly." He opened a large pocket-book as he spoke, and searching for some time among its contents, at last took forth a small slip of paper. "Ay, here it is," said he: "Sale of West Indian estates—resident commissionership—two thousand per annum, with allowance for house, &c, etc, Sir Hepton Wallis was to have it. Would this suit you, Hanks? the climate agrees with many constitutions."

"Oh, as to the climate," said Hanks, trembling with eagerness and delight, "I'd not fear it."

"And then with ample leave of absence from time to time, and a retiring allowance, after six years' service, of—if I remember aright—twelve hundred a year. What say you? It must be filled up soon. Shall I write your name instead of Sir Hepton's?"

"Oh, sir, this is indeed generosity!"

"No, Hanks, mere justice—nothing more. The only merit I can lay claim to in the matter is the sacrifice I make in separating myself from a well-tryed and trusted adherent."

"These reports shall be ready immediately, sir," said Hanks. "I'll not go to bed to-night—"

"We have ample time for everything, Hanks; don't fatigue yourself, and be here at twelve to-morrow."

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

ANNESLEY BEECHER IN A NEW PART.

ABOUT five weeks have elapsed since we last sojourned with Grog Davis and his

party at the little village of Holbach. Five weeks are a short period in human life, but often enough has it sufficed to include great events, and to make marvelous changes in a man's fortunes! Now, the life they all led here might seem well suited to exclude such calculations. Nothing seemed less likely to elicit vicissitudes. It was a calm, tame monotony, each day so precisely like its predecessor, that it was often hard to remember how the week stole on. The same landscape, with almost the same effects of sun and shadow, stretched daily before their eyes; the same gushing water foamed and fretted; the same weeds bent their heads to the flood; the self-same throbbing sounds of busy mills mingled with the rushing streams; the very clouds, as they dragged themselves lazily up the mountain side, and then broke into fragments on the summit, seemed the same; and yet in that little world of three people there was the endless conflict of hope and fear, and all the warring interests which distract great masses of men filled their hearts and engaged their minds.

At first, Beecher chafed and fretted at the delay; Lizzy appeared but rarely, and when she did it was with a strange reserve, almost amounting to constraint, that he could not comprehend. She did not seem angry or offended with him, simply more distant. Her high spirits, too, were gone,—no more the light-hearted, gay, and playful creature he remembered,—she was calm even to seriousness. A look of thoughtful preoccupation marked her as she sat silently gazing on the landscape, or watching the eddies of the circling river. There was nothing—save a slight increase of paleness—to denote sorrow in her appearance; her features were placid and her expression tranquil. If her voice had lost its ringing music, it had acquired a tone of deep and melting softness that seemed to leave an echo in the heart that heard it. To this change, which at first chilled and repelled Beecher, he grew day by day to accustom himself. If her mood was one less calculated to enliven and to cheer him, it was yet better adapted to make his confidence. He could talk to her more freely of himself than heretofore. No longer did he stand in dread of the sharp and witty epigrams with which she used to quiz his opinions and ridicule his notions of life. She would listen to him now with patience, him if not with interest, and she would hear with attention as he talked for hours on the one sole theme he loved, himself. And oh, young ladies—not that you need any counsels of mine in such matters—but if,

perchance, my words of advice should have any weight with you—let me impress this lesson on your hearts: that for the man who is not actually in love with you, but only “spooney,” there is no such birdlime as the indulgence of his selfishness. Let him talk away about his dogs and his horses, his exploits in China or the Crimea, his fishings in Norway, his yachtings in the Levant; let him discourse about his own affairs, of business as well as pleasure: how briefs are pouring in or patients multiply; hear him as he tells you of his sermon before the bishop, or his examination at Burlington House,—trust me, no theme will make *him* so eloquent nor *you* so interesting. Of all “serials”—as the phrase is—there is none can be carried out to so many “numbers” as Egotism, and though the snowball grows daily bigger, it rolls along even more easily.

I am not going to say that Lizzy Davis did this of “prepnese”—I am even candid enough to acknowledge to you that I am not quite sure I can understand her. She had ways of acting and thinking peculiarly her own. She was not always what the French call “conséquente,” but she was marvelously quick to discover she was astray, and “try back.” She was one of those people who have more difficulty in dealing with themselves than with others. She had an instinctive appreciation of those whose natures she came in contact with, joined to a strong desire to please; and, lastly, there was scarcely a human temperament with which she could not sympathize somewhere. She let Beecher talk on, because it pleased *him*, and pleasing *him* became at last a pleasure to herself. When he recalled little traits of generosity, the kind things he had done here, the good-natured acts he had done there, she led him on to feel a more manly pride in himself than when recounting tales of his sharp practices on the turf and his keen exploits in the ring.

Beecher saw this leaning on her part, and ascribed it all to her “ignorance of the world,” and firmly believed that when she saw more of life she would think more highly of his intellect than even of his heart. Poor fellow! they were beautifully balanced, and phrenology, for once, would have its triumph in showing the mental and the moral qualities in equilibrium. After the first week they were always together, for Davis was continually on the road, now to Neuweid, now to Höchst. The letters and telegrams that he dispatched and received were incredible in number, and when jested with on the amount of his cor-

respondence by Beecher, his only answer was, “It’s all *your* business, my boy—the whole concerns *you*.” Now, Annesley Beecher was far too much of a philosopher to trouble his head about anything which could be avoided, and to find somebody who devoted himself to his interests, opened and read the dunning appeals of creditors, answered their demands by “renewals,” or cajoled them by promises, was one of the highest luxuries he could imagine. Indeed, if Grog would only fight for him and go to jail for him, he’d have deemed his happiness complete. “And who knows,” thought he, “but it may come to that yet. I seem to have thrown a sort of fascination over the old fellow that may lead him any lengths.”

Meanwhile, there was extending over himself another web of fascination not the less complete that he never perceived it. His first waking thought was of Lizzy. As he came down to breakfast, his dress showed how studiously he cultivated appearance. The breakfast over, he sat down to his German lesson beside her with a patient perseverance that amazed him. There he was, with addled head and delighted heart, conjugating “Ich liebe,” and longing for the day when he should reach the imperative mood; and then they walked long country walks into the dark beech woods, along grassy alleys where no footfall sounded, or they strayed beside some river’s bank, half fancying that none had ever strolled over the same sward before. And how odd it was to see the Honorable Annesley Beecher, the great lion of the Guards’ Club, the once celebrity of the Coventry, carrying a little basket on his arm like a stage peasant in a comic opera, with the luncheon, or mayhap bearing a massive stone in his arms to bridge a stream for Lizzy to cross. Poor fellow! he did these things with a good will, and even in his awkwardness there was that air of “gentleman” which never left him; and then he would laugh so heartily at his own inaptitude, and join in Lizzy’s mirth at the mischances that befell him. And was it not delightful, through all these charming scenes, on the high mountain side, in the deep heather, or deep in some tangled glen, with dog-roses and honeysuckle around them, he could still talk of himself and she could listen?

For the life of him he could not explain how it was that the time slipped over so pleasantly. As he himself said, “there was not much to see, and nothing to do,” and yet, somehow, the day was always too short for either. He wanted to write to

his brother, to his sister-in-law, to Dunn, to his man of business—meaning the Jew who raised money for him—but never could find time. He was so puzzled by the problem that he actually asked Lizzy to explain it, but she only laughed.

Now and then, when he chanced to be all alone, a sudden thought would strike him that he was leading a life of inglorious idleness. He would count up how many weeks it was since he had seen a *Bell's Life*, and try to calculate what races were coming off that very same day; then he would draw a mind-picture of Tattersall's on a settling day, and wonder who were the defaulters, and who were getting passports for the continent; and he would wind up his astonishment by thinking that Grog was exactly leading the same indolent existence. "although we have that 'grand book with the martingale,' and might be smashing the bank at Baden every night." That a man should have the cap of Fortunatus, and yet never try it on, even just for the experiment's sake, was downright incredible. You might not want money—not that he had ever met the man in that predicament yet—you might perhaps have no very strong desire for this, that, or t'other, yet, somehow, "the power was such a jolly thing!" The fact that you could go in and win whenever you pleased was a marvelously fine consideration. As for himself—so he reasoned—he did not exactly know why, but he thought his present life a very happy one. He never was less beset with cares: he had no duns; there was not a tailor in Bond street knew his address; the very Jews had not traced him; he was as free as air. Like most men accustomed to eat and drink of the best, the simple fare of an humble inn pleased him. Grog, whenever he saw him, was good-humored and gay; and as for Lizzy, "of all the girls he had ever met, she was the only one ever understood him."

As Annesley Beecher comprehended his own phrase being "understood" was no such bad thing. It meant, in the first place, a generous appreciation of all motives for good, even though they never went beyond motives—a hopeful trust in some unseen, unmanifested excellence of character—a broadcast belief that, making a due allowance for temptations, human frailties, and the doctrine of chances—this latter most of all—the balance would always be found in favor of good *versus* evil; and, secondly, that all the imputed faults and vices of such natures as *his*, were little else than the ordinary weaknesses of "the best of us." Such is being "understood,"

good reader; and, however it may chance with others, I hope that "you and I may."

But Lizzy Davis understood him even better and deeper than all this. She knew him—if not better than I do myself, at least better than I am able to depict to you. Apart, then, from the little "distractions" I have mentioned, Beecher was very happy. It had been many a long day since he felt himself so light-hearted and so kindly minded to the world at large. He neither wished any misfortune to befall Holt's "stable" or Shipman's "three-year-old;" he did not drop off to sleep hoping that Beverly might break down or "Nightcap" spring a back sinew; and, stranger than all, he actually could awake of a morning and not wish himself the Viscount Lackington. Accustomed as he was to tell Lizzy everything, to ask her advice about all that arose, and her explanation for all that puzzled him, he could not help communicating this new phenomenon of his temperament, frankly acknowledging that it was a mystery he could not fathom.

"Nothing seems ever to puzzle you, Lizzy"—he had learned to call her Lizzy some time back—"so just tell me what can you make of it. Ain't it strange?"

"It is strange," said she, with a faint smile, in which a sort of sad meaning mingled.

"So strange," resumed he, "that had any one said to me, 'Beecher, you'll spend a couple of months in a little German inn, with nothing to do, nothing to see, and, what's more, it will not bore you,' I'd have answered, 'Take you fifty to one in hundreds on the double event—thousands if you like it better'—and see, hang me if I shouldn't have lost!"

"Perhaps not. If you had a heavy wager on the matter it is likely you would not have come."

"Who knows, everything is fate in this world. Ah, you may laugh, but it is, though. What else, I ask you—what brings me here just now? why am I walking along the river with you beside me?"

"Partly because, I hope, you find it pleasant," said she, with a droll gravity, while something in her eyes seemed to betoken that her own thoughts amused her.

"There must be more than that," said he, thoughtfully, for he felt the question a knotty one, and rather liked to show that he did not skulk the encounter with such difficulties.

"Partly, perhaps, because it pleases me," said she, in the same quiet tone."

He shook his head, doubtfully; he had

asked for an explanation, and neither of these supplied that want. "At all events, Lizzy, there is one thing you will admit—if it is fate, one can't help it—eh?"

"If you mean by that you must walk along here at my side, whether you will or not, just try, for experiment's sake, if you could not cross over the stream and leave me to go back alone."

"Leave *you* to go back alone!" cried he upon whom the last words were ever the most emphatic. "But why so, Lizzy; are you angry with me?—are you weary of me?"

"No, I'm not angry with you," said she, gently.

"Wearied, then—tired of me—bored?"

"Must I pay you compliments on your agreeability, Mr. Beecher?"

"There it is again," broke he in, pettishly. "It was only yesterday you consented to call me Annesley, and you have gone back from it already—forgotten it all!"

"No, I forget very seldom—unfortunately!" This last word was uttered to herself, and for herself.

"You will call me Annesley, then?" asked he, eagerly.

"Yes, if you wish it—Annesley." There was a pause before she spoke the last word; and when she did utter it, her accent faltered slightly, and a faint blush tinged her cheek.

As for Beecher, his heart swelled high and proudly; he felt at that moment a strange warm glow within him that counterfeited courage; for an instant he thought he would have liked something perilous to confront—something in encountering which he might stand forth before Lizzy as a Paladin. Was it that some mysterious voice within him whispered, "She loves you—her heart is yours"? and, oh! if so, what a glorious sentiment must there be in that passion if love can move a nature like this and mould it to one great or generous ambition.

"Lizzy, I want to talk to you seriously," said he, drawing her arm within his own. "I have long wanted to tell you something, and if you can hear it without displeasure, I swear to you I'd not change with Lackington to-morrow! Not that it's such good fun being a younger son—few men know that better than myself—still I repeat, that if you only say 'yes' to me, I pledge you my oath I'd rather hear it than be sure I was to win the Oaks—ay, by heaven! Oaks and Derby too! You know now what I mean, dearest Lizzy, and do not, I beseech you, keep me longer in suspense."

She made no answer; her cheek became very pale, and a convulsive shudder passed over her; but she was calm and unmoved the next instant.

"If you love another, Lizzy," said he, and his lips trembled violently, "say so frankly. It's only like all my other luck in life, though nothing was ever as heavy as this."

There was an honesty, a sincerity in the tone of these words that seemed to touch her, for she stole a side look at his face, and the expression of her glance was of kindly pity.

"Is it true, then, that you *do* love another, Lizzy?" repeated he, with even deeper emotion.

"No!" said she, with a slow utterance.

"Will you not tell me, dearest Lizzy, if—if I am to have any hope. I know well enough that you needn't take a poor beggar of a younger son. I know where a girl of your beauty may choose. Far better than you do I know, that you might have title, rank, fortune; and as for me, all I have is a miserable annuity Lackington allows me, just enough to starve on—not that I mean to go on, however, as I have been doing; no, no, by Jove! I'm round the corner now, and I intend to make play, and 'take up my running.' Your father and I understand what we're about."

What a look was that Lizzy gave him! What a piercing significance must the glance have that sent the blood so suddenly to his face and forehead, and made him falter, and then stop.

"One thing I'll swear to you, Lizzy—swear it by all that is most solemn," cried he, at last—"if you consent to share fortunes with me, I'll never engage in anything—no matter how sure or how safe—without your full concurrence. I have been buying experience this many a year, and pretty sharply has it cost me. They make a gentleman pay his footing, I promise you; but I *do* know a thing or two at last—I *have* had my eyes opened!"

Oh, Annesley Beecher, can you not see how you are damaging your own cause? You have but to look at that averted head, or, bending round, to catch a glimpse of those fair features, and mark the haughty scorn upon them, to feel that you are pleading against yourself.

"And what may be this knowledge of which you are so proud?" said she, coldly.

"Oh, as to that," said he, in some confusion at the tone she had assumed, "it concerns many a thing you never heard of."

The turf, and the men that live by it, make a little world of their own. They don't bother their heads about parties or politics—don't care a farthing who's 'in' or who's 'out.' They keep their wits—and pretty sharp wits they are—for what goes on in Scott's stable, and how Holt stands for the St. Leger. They'd rather hear how Velocipede eat his corn, than hear all the cabinet secrets of Europe; and for that matter, so would I."

"I do not blame you for not caring for state secrets—it is very possible they would interest you little; but surely you might imagine some more fitting career than what, after all, is a mere trading on the weakness of others. To make of an amusement a matter of profit is, in my eyes, mean—it is contemptible."

"That's not the way to look on it at all. The first men in England have race-horses."

"And precisely in the fact of their great wealth do these soar above all the ignoble associations, the turf obliges to those who live by it."

"Well, I'll give it up; there's my word on't. I'll never put my foot in Tattersall's yard again. I'll take my name off the Turf Club—is that enough?"

She could not help smiling at the honest zeal of this sacrifice; but the smile had none of the scorn her features displayed before.

"Oh, Lizzy!" cried he, enthusiastically, "if I was sure we could just live on here as we are doing—never leave this little valley, nor see more of the world than we do daily—I'd not exchange the life for a duke's fortune—"

"And Holt's stable," added she, laughing. "Come, you must not omit the real bribe."

He laughed heartily at this sally, and owned it was the grand temptation.

"You are certainly very good-tempered, Annesley," said she, after a pause.

"I don't think I am," said he, half piqued, for he thought the remark contained a sort of disparagement of that sharpness on which he chiefly prided himself. "I am very hot at times."

"I meant that you bore with great good humor from me what you might, if so disposed, have fairly enough resented as an impertinence. What do I, what could I, know of that play world of which you spoke? How gentlemen and men of fashion regard these things must needs be mysteries to me; I only wished to imply that you might make some better use of your faculties, and that knowledge of life you

possess, than in conning over a betting book or the *Racing Calendar*."

"So I mean to do. That's exactly what I'm planning."

"Here's the soup cooling and the sherry getting hot," cried Grog, as he shouted from the window of the little inn, and waved his napkin to attract their notice.

"There's papa making a signal to us," said Lizzy; "did you suspect it was so late?"

"Seven o'clock, by Jove!" cried Beecher, as he gave her his hand to cross the stepping-stones. "What a fuss he'll make about our keeping the dinner back!"

"I have eaten all the caviare and the pickles, and nearly finished a bottle of Madeira, waiting for you," said Grog; "so, no dressing, but come in at once."

"Oh, dearest Lizzy!" cried Beecher, as they gained the porch. "just one word—only one word—to make me the happiest fellow in the world or the most miserable." But Lizzy sprang up the stairs, and was in her room almost ere his words were uttered.

"If I had had but another moment," muttered Beecher to himself, "just one moment more, I'd have shown her that I meant to turn over a new leaf—that I wasn't going to lead the life I have done. I'd have told her—though, I suppose, old Grog would murder me if he knew it—of our grand martingale, and how we mean to smash the bank at Baden. No deception about that—no 'cross' there. She can't bring up grooms, and jockeys, and stable helpers against me now. It will all be done amongst ourselves—a family party, and no mistake!"

All things considered, Annesley Beecher, it was just as well for you that you had not that "one moment" you wished for.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

A DEAD HEAT.

SOME eight or ten days have elapsed since the scene we have just recorded—not one of whose incidents are we about to relate—and we are still at Holbach. As happens so frequently in the working of a mathematical question, proofs are assumed without going over the demonstrations; so, in real life—certain postulates being granted—we arrive at conclusions which we regard as inevitable.

We are at Holbach, but no longer strolling along its leaf-strewn alleys, or watch-

ing the laughing eddies of its circling river—we are within doors. The scene is a small, most comfortably-furnished chamber of the little inn, where an ample supper is laid out on a sideboard, a card-table occupying the center of the room, at which two players are seated, their somewhat “charged” expressions and disordered dress indicating a prolonged combat, a fact in part corroborated by the streak of pinkish dawn that has pierced between the shutters, and now blends with the sickly glare of the candles. Several packs of cards litter the floor around them, thrown there in that superstitious passion only gamblers understand, and a decanter and some glasses stand on the table beside the players, who are no others than our acquaintances Grog Davis and Paul Clason.

There is a vulgar but not unwise adage that tells us “dogs do not eat dogs,” and the maxim has a peculiar application to gamblers. All sorts and manners of men love to measure their strength with each other—swordsmen, swimmers, pedestrians, even hard drinking used to have its duels of rivalry—gamblers never. Such an employment of their skill would seem to their eyes about as absurd as that of a sportsman who would turn his barrel against his companion instead of the cock-pheasant before him. Their “game” is of another order. How, then, explain the curious fact we have mentioned? There are rivalries that last life-long; there are duels that go on from year to year of existence, and even to the last leave the question of superiority undetermined. The game of piquet formed such between these two men. At every chance meeting in life—no matter how long the interval or how brief the passage might be—they recurred to the old-vexed question, which Fortune seemed to find a pleasure in never deciding definitely. The fact that each had his own separate theory of the game, would have given an interest to the encounter, but besides there was now another circumstance whose import neither were likely to undervalue. Davis had just paid over to Paul Clason the sum of two hundred Napoleons—the price of a secret service he was about to perform—and the sight of that glowing heap of fresh gold—for there it lay on the corner of the table,—had so stimulated the acquisitiveness of Grog’s nature that he could not resist the temptation to try and regain them. The certainty that when he should have won them it would only be to restore them to the loser, for whose expenses on a long journey

they were destined, detracted nothing from this desire on his part. A more unprofitable debtor than Holy Paul could not be imagined. His very name in a schedule would reflect discredit on the bankruptcy! But there lay the shining pieces, fresh from the mint and glittering, and the appeal they made was to an instinct, not to reason. Was it with the knowledge of this fact that Paul had left them there instead of putting them up in his pocket? Had he calculated in his own subtle brain that temptations are least resistable when they are most tangible? There was that in his reverence’s look which seemed to say as much, and the thoughtless wantonness of his action as his fingers fiddled with the gold may not have been entirely without a purpose. They had talked together, and discussed some knotty matters of business, having concluded which, Davis proposed cards.

“Our old combat, I suppose?” said Paul, laughing. “Well, I’m always ready.” And down they sat, hour after hour finding them still in the same hard struggle, fortune swinging with its pendulous stroke from side to side, as though to elicit the workings of hope and fear in each, alternately. Meanwhile, they drank freely, and from time to time arose to eat at the side-table in that hurried and greedy way that only gamblers eat, as though vexed at the hunger that called them from their game. They were both too great proficient in play to require that absorption of faculties inferior gamblers need. They could, and did, talk of everything that came uppermost, the terms of the game dropping through the conversation like the measured booming of great guns amid the clattering crash of musketry. Luck for some time had favored Holy Paul, and while he became blander, softer, and more benign of look, Grog grew fierce, his eyes fiery, and his words sharp and abrupt. Clason’s polished courtesy chafed and irritated him, but he seemed determined to control his anger as far as he might, and not give his adversary the transient advantage of temper. Had spectators been admitted to the lists, the backers would have most probably taken the churchman. His calm countenance, his mild, unexcited eye, his voice so composed and gentle, must have made Paul the favorite.

“We shall scarcely have time for another game, Kit”—he’d have called him Grog, but that he was losing—“I perceive the day is beginning to break.”

“So am I for the matter of that,” said Davis, with a bitter laugh. “You have won—let me see—forty-six, and twenty-

seven, and a hundred and twelve—that was a ‘thumper’—and thirty-four, besides that loose cash there—about two hundred and forty or fifty Naps, Master Paul. A very pretty night’s work, and more profitable than preaching, I take it.”

Regarding the matter as a mere monetary question—

“No gammon—cut the cards,” broke in Davis; “one game must finish us. Now, shall we say double or quits?”

“If you really wish me to speak my candid mind, I’d rather not.”

“I thought as much,” muttered Grog to himself; and then, in a louder voice, “What shall it be, then—one hundred and fifty? Come, even if you should lose, you’ll get up winner of a clean hundred.”

“Would that it were at the expense of some one I love less!”

“Answer my question,” said Davis, angrily, “Will you have a hundred and fifty on the last game—yes or no?”

“Yes, of course, Kit, if you desire it.”

“Cut again; there is a faced card,” said Davis. And now he dealt with a slow deliberation that showed what an effort his forced composure was costing him.

Classon sat back in his chair watching the cards as they fell from the dealer’s hand, but affecting in his half-closed eyes and folded arms the air of one deep in his own musings.

“I will say this, Davis,” said he, at last, with the slow utterance that announces a well-matured thought, “you have managed the whole of this business with consummate skill; you have done it admirably.”

“I believe I have,” said Davis, with a sort of stern decision in his tone; “and there was more difficulty in the case than you are aware of.”

“There must have been very considerable difficulty,” rejoined Paul, slowly. “Even in the very little I have seen of him I can detect a man whose temperament must have presented the greatest embarrassments. He is proud—very proud—susceptible to any extent. I have five cards—forty-seven.”

“Not good.”

“Three queens.”

“Four tens.”

“So, then, my tierce in spades is not good, of course. I play one.”

“Fifteen and five twenty, and the tens ninety-four. The first honor I have scored this hour. The difficulty I allude to was with my daughter; she wouldn’t have him.”

“Not have him?—not accept a peer of the realm?”

“Who told her he was a peer? She only knows him as the Honorable Annesley Beecher.”

“Even so. As the Honorable Annesley Beecher, he is a man of high connections—related to some of the first people. A club—play a club. I take it that such a man is a very high mark indeed.”

“She wasn’t of your mind, that’s clear,” said Davis, abruptly; “nor do I believe it would have signified in the least to have told her that he *was* a lord.”

“Romantic!” muttered Paul.

“No, not a bit.”

“Loved another, perhaps.”

“How should she? She never saw any other except a one-eyed Pole, that taught her music at that Belgian school, and a sort of hairy dwarf that gave lessons in drawing! A hundred and seventeen. It’s your deal.”

“And he himself has no suspicion of his brother’s death?” said Classon, as he gave out the cards.

“Not the slightest. He was trying to write a letter to him, to break the news of his marriage, only yesterday.”

“Cleverly done—most cleverly done,” said Paul, in ecstasy. “If he had come to the knowledge he might very possibly have refused *her*.”

“I rather—suspect—not,” said Grog, dwelling slowly on each word, while his countenance assumed an expression of fierce and terrible determination. “A lucky take in, that—the queen of diamonds: it gives me seven cards. Refuse her! by heaven, he’d have had a short experience of his peerage! Kings and knaves—six, and seven I play—twenty-three. Piqued again, Holy Paul! No, no; he’d never have dared that.”

Classon shook his head doubtfully.

“You might just as well tell me, Paul Classon, that you’d refuse to marry them,” said Davis, as he struck the table with his clenched fist, “and that I would bear it! I have a way of not being denied what I have determined on; that has done me good service in life. That bear-eyed boy—the attaché at the legation in Frankfort—wanted to refuse me a passport for the Honorable Annesley Beecher and Mrs. Beecher, saying that, until the marriage there was no such person. But I whispered a word to him across the table, and he gave it, and there it is now.”

“Going to Italy!” said Classon, as he read from the document which Grog had thrown down before him; “wonderful fellow—wonderful fellow—forgets nothing!” muttered he, to himself.

Yes, but he does though; he has just forgotten four kings and suffered *you* to count four queens, Master Paul—a tribute to your agreeability somewhat too costly.”

“Even to the traveling carriage, Kit,” resumed Classon, not heeding the sarcasm. “and a more complete thing I never saw in my life. You picked it up at Frankfort.”

“Yes, at the Hôtel de Russie; got it for two thousand two hundred francs—it cost ten, six months ago. A quint in spades, and the cards divided; I score thirty-one.”

“And when is he to learn, that he has succeeded to the title?”

“When he’s across the Alps—when he is out of the land of rouge et noir and roulette; he may know it then, as soon as he pleases. I’m to join them at Como, or Milan, as I can’t well ‘show’ at Baden, even at this late time of year. Before I come up he’ll have heard all about Lackington’s death.”

“Will it ever occur to him, Kit, to suspect that you were aware of it?”

“I don’t know; perhaps it may,” said Grog, doggedly.

“If so, will the impression not lead to a very precarious state of relations between you?”

“Maybe so—seven hearts and five spades, you are ‘capoted.’ There, Paul, that doesn’t leave so much between us after all. What if he does suspect it; the world suspects fifty things about me that no man has ever yet dared to lay to my charge. If you and I, Master Paul, were to fret ourselves about the suspicions that are entertained of us, we’d have a pleasant life of it. Your good health.”

“To yours, my dear Kit; and may I never drink it in worse tippie would be the only additional pleasure I could suggest to the toast. It is wonderful Madeira!”

“I have had it in the London docks since the year ’31; every bottle of it now, seeing that the vines are ruined in the island, is worth from thirty shillings to five-and-thirty. I won it from Tom Hardiman; he took the invoice out of his pocket-book and flung it across the table to me. ‘Grog,’ says he, ‘when you take it out of bond, mind you ask me to dianer, and give me a bottle of it?’ But he’s gone, ‘toes up,’ and so here’s to his memory.”

“‘Drunk in solemn silence,’ as the newspapers say,” broke in Paul, as he drained his glass.

“Yes,” said Davis, eyeing the wine by the light, “that’s a tippie this little inn here is not much accustomed to see under

its roof; but if I were to stay a little longer, I’d make something of this place. They never heard of Harvey’s sauce, Chili vinegar, Caviare, Stilton; even Bass and British gin were novelties when I came. There, as well as I can make it up, you are a winner of fifteen Naps; there they are.”

“Dear me, I fancied I stood safe to come off with a hundred!” said Paul, lugubriously.

“So you did, without counting the points; but you’ve lost five hundred and sixty-four—ay, and a right good thing you’ve made of it, Master Paul. I’d like to know how long it is since you earned such a sum honestly.”

Classon sighed heavily as he swept the cash into his pocket, and said, “I’m unable to tell you; my memory grows worse every day.”

“When you go back to England, you can always brush it up by the police sheet—that’s a comfort,” said Davis, with a savage laugh.

“And what will the noble viscount have to spend yearly?” asked Classon, to change the theme.

“Something between eight and ten thousand.”

“A snug thing, Kit—a very snug thing indeed; and I take it that by this time o’ day he knows the world pretty well.”

“No; nothing of the kind!” said Grog, bluntly; “he’s a fool, and must stay a fool!”

“The more luck his, then, to have Christopher Davis for his father-in-law.”

“I’ll tell you what’s better still, Holy Paul—to have Lizzy Davis for his wife. You think she’s going to make a great match of it because he’s the lord viscount and she is *my* daughter; but I tell you, and I’m ready to maintain it too, I never met the man yet was worthy of her. There may be girls as handsome, though I never saw them—there may be others as clever, that I’m no judge of—but this I do know, that for pluck, real pluck, you’ll not find her equal in Europe. She’d never have married him for his rank; no, if it was a dukedom he had to offer her. She’d never have taken him for his fortune, if it had been ten times the amount. No, she wouldn’t consent to it, even to take *me* out of my difficulties and set me all straight with the world, because she fancied that by going on the stage, or some such trumpery, she could have done that just as well. She’d not have had him for himself, for she knows he’s a fool, just as well as I do. There was only one thing I found she couldn’t get over: it was the thought that,

she *dare* not marry him; that to thrust herself into the station and rank *he* occupied, would be to expose herself to insults that must crush her. It was by a mere chance I discovered that this was a challenge, she'd have rather died than decline. It was for all the world like saying to myself, 'Don't you go into the ring there, Kit Davis; my lords and the gentlemen don't like it.' 'Don't they? Well, let's see how they'll take it, for I *am* a-going!' It was *that* stung her, Paul Classon. *She* didn't want all those fine people; *she* didn't care a brass farthing about their ways and their doings! *She'd* not have thought it a hard lot in life just to jog on as she is. *She* didn't want to be called a countess, nor live like one; but when it was hinted to her, that if she *did* venture amongst them, it would be to be driven back with shame and insult, then her mind was made up at once. Not that she ever confessed as much to me; no, I found out her secret by watching her closely. The day I told her, I forget what anecdote about some outrageous piece of insolence played off on some new intruder into the titled class, she suddenly started as if something had stung her, and her eyes glared like a tiger's; then catching me by the hand, she said, 'Don't tell me these things; they pain me more to hear than real, downright calamities!' That was enough for *me*. I saw her cards, Paul, and I played through them!"

Classon heaved a deep sigh and was silent.

"What are you sighing over, Paul?" asked Davis, half crossly.

"I was just sorrowing to myself to think how little all her pluck will avail her."

"Stuff and nonsense, sir! It is the very thing to depend on in the struggle."

"Ay, if there were a struggle, Kit, but that is exactly what there will not be. You, for instance, go into Brookes's tomorrow, you have been duly elected. It was a wet day, only a few at the ballot, and, somehow, you got in. Well, you are, to all intents, as much a member as his grace there, or the noble marquis. There's no commotion, no stir when you enter the room. The men at their newspapers look up, perhaps, but they read away immediately with only increased attention; the group at the window talks on, too; the only thing noticeable is that nobody talks to *you*. If you ask for the *Globe* or the *Chronicle*, when the reader shall have finished, he politely hands it at once, and goes away."

"If he did, I'd follow him——"

"What for?—to ask an explanation

where there had been no offence? To make yourself at once notorious in the worst of all possible ways? There's nothing so universally detested as the man that makes a 'row;' witness the horror all well-bred people feel at associating with Americans, they're never sure how it's to end. Now, if all these considerations have their weight with men, imagine how they must be regarded by women, fifty times more exacting as they are in all the exigencies of station, and whose freemasonry is a hundred times more exclusive."

"That's all rot!" broke in Davis, his passion the more violent as the arguments of the other seemed so difficult to answer. "You think to puzzle *me* by talking of all these grand people and their ways as if they weren't all men and women. That they are, and a rum lot, too, some of them! Come," cried Davis, suddenly, as though a happy thought had just flashed across his mind, "it was the turn of a straw one day, by your own account, that you were not a bishop. Now, I'd like to know, if that lucky event had really taken place, wouldn't you have been the same holy Paul Classon that sits there?"

"Perhaps not, entirely," said Classon, in his oiliest of voices. "I trust that I should, in ascending to that exalted station have cast off the slough of an inferior existence, and carried up little of my former self except the friendships of my early years."

"Do you fancy, Master Paul, that gammon like this can impose upon a man of my sort?"

"My dear and worthy friend," rejoined Classon, "the tone in which I appeal to you is my tribute to your high ability. To an inferior man I had spoken very different language. Sentiments are not the less real that they are expressed with a certain embroidery, just as a bank post-bill would be very good value though a Choctaw Indian might deem it a piece of waste paper."

"I'd like to see you try it on with Lizzy in this fashion," said Davis. "I don't think even your friend the Choctaw Indian would save you."

"I should be proud of even defeat at such hands!" exclaimed Paul, rapturously.

"You'd have little to be proud of when she'd have done with you," cried Grog, all his good-humor restored by the mere thought of his daughter.

"Have you spoken to his lordship about what I mentioned?" said Paul, half diffidently.

"No," said Grog; "on reflection, I

thought it better not. I'm sure, besides, that there's no church preferment in his gift; and then, Classon, he knows *you*, as who does not?"

"Quæ regio terræ non plena est? Ay, Grog, you and I have arrived at what the world calls, Fame."

"Speak for yourself, sir; I acknowledge no partnership in the case. When I have written letters they have not been begging ones, and when I have stretched out my hand there was no pistol in the palm of it!"

"Very true, Kit; I never had a soul above a petty larceny, and *you* had a spirit that aspired to transportation for life!"

Davis bounded on his chair, and glowered with a fearful stare at the speaker, who, meanwhile, drained the decanter into his glass with an unmoved serenity.

"Don't be angry, my ancient friend," said he, blandly. "The cares of friendship, like the skill of a surgeon, must often pain to be serviceable. Happy let us call ourselves when no ruder hand wields the probe or the bistoury!"

"Make an end of canting, I want to speak to you about matters of moment. You will set out to-day, I hope."

"Immediately after the marriage."

"What road do you take?"

"Strasburg, Paris, Marseilles, whence direct to Constantinople by the first steamer."

"After that?"

"Across the Black Sea to Balaklava."

"But when do you reach the Crimea?"

"Balaklava is *in* the Crimea."

Davis flushed scarlet. The reflection on his geography wounded him, and he winced under it.

"Are you quite clear that you understand my instructions?" said he, testily.

"I wish I was as sure of a deanery," said Paul, smacking his lips over the last glass.

"You can scarcely wish over well to the church, when you desire to be one of its dignitaries," said Davis, with a sarcastic grin.

"Why so, my worthy friend? There is a wise Scotch adage says, 'It taks a' kind of folk to mak a world;' and so, various orders of men, with gifts widely differing, if not discrepant, are advantageously assembled into what we call corporations."

"Nonsense—bosh!" said Grog, impatiently. "If you have no better command of common sense where you are going, I have made a precious bad choice of an agent."

"See how men misconstrue their own natures!" exclaimed Classon, with a sort of fervor. "If any one had asked me what gift I laid especial claim to possess, I protest I should have said, 'common sense;' a little more common sense than any one else I ever met."

"You are modest, too."

"Becomingly so, I hope and believe."

"Have you any other remarkable traits that you might desire to record?"

"A few, and a very few," said Paul, with a well-assumed air of humility. "Nature has blessed me with the very best of tempers. I am never rash, hasty, or impetuous; I accept the rubs of life with submission; I think well of every one."

"Do you, faith!" exclaimed Davis, with a scornful laugh.

"Knowing well that we are all slaves of circumstances, I take motives where others demand actions, just as I would take a bill at three months from him who has no cash. It may be paid, or it may not."

"You'd have passed it ere it became due, eh, Master Paul?"

"Such is possible; I make no claims above human frailty."

"Is sobriety amongst your other virtues?"

"I rarely transgress its limits, save when alone. It is in the solitary retirement where I seek reflection that I occasionally indulge. There I am—so to say—'Classo cum Classo.' I offer no example to others—I shock no outward decorum. If the instinctive appreciation of my character—which I highly possess—passes that of most men, I owe it to those undisguised moments when I stand revealed to myself. Wine keeps no secrets; and, Paul Classon drunk appeals to Paul Classon sober. Believe me, Kit, when I tell you no man knows half the excellent things in his own heart till he has got tipsy by himself!"

"I wish I had never thought of you for this affair," said Davis, angrily.

"Pitt made the same speech to Wolfe, and yet that young general afterwards took Quebec."

"What do I care about Wolfe or Quebec? I want a particular service that a man of moderate brains and a firm purpose can accomplish."

"And for which Paul Classon pledges himself with his head? Ay, Grog Davis, that is my bond."

"The day you come back to me with proof of success, I hand you five hundred pounds."

"Cash."

"Cash—and more, if it all be done to

our entire satisfaction. *He,*" here he jerked his thumb toward Beecher's room, "*he* shan't forget you."

Paul closed his eyes and muttered something to himself, ending with, "And 'five pounds for the Cruelty to Animals—from the Reverend Paul Classon.' I shall be in funds for them all."

"Ah, Kit!" said he at last, with a deep-drawn sigh, "what slaves are we all, and to the meanest accidents, too—the veriest trifles of our existence. Ask yourself, I beseech you, what is it that continually opposes your progress in life—what is your rock ahead? Your name! nothing but your name!—call yourself Jones, Wilkins, Simpson, Watkins, and see what an expansion it will give your naturally fine faculties. Nobody will dare to assert that you or I are the same men we were five-and-twenty or thirty years ago, and yet *you* must be Davis and *I* must be Classon, whether we will or not. I call this hard—very hard indeed!"

"Would it be any benefit to me if I could call myself Paul Classon?" said Grog, with an insolent grin.

"It is not for the saintly man who bears that name to speak boastfully of its responsibilities—"

"In bills of exchange, I O U's, promissory notes, and so forth," laughed in Grog.

"I have, I own, done a little in these ways, but what gifted man ever lived who has not at some time or other committed his sorrows to paper; the misfortune in my case was that it was stamped."

"Do you know, Holy Paul, I think you are the greatest 'hemp' I ever met."

"No, Kit, don't say so—don't, my dear and valued friend; these words give me deep pain."

"I do say it, and I maintain it!"

"What good company you must have kept through life, then!"

"The worst of any man in England. And yet," resumed he, after a pause, "I'm positively ashamed to think that *my* daughter should be married by the Reverend Paul Classon."

"A prejudice, my dear and respected friend—a prejudice quite beneath your enlarged and gifted understanding! Will it much signify to you if he, who one of these days shall say, 'The sentence of this court, Christopher Davis, is transportation beyond the seas,' be a justice of the Common Pleas or a baron of the exchequer? No, no, Kit; it is only your vain, conceited people who fancy that they are not hanged if it wasn't Calcraft tied the noose!"

More than once did Davis change color

at this speech, whose illustrations were selected with special intention and malice.

"Here's daybreak already!" cried Grog, throwing open the window, and admitting the pinkish light of an early dawn and the fresh sharp air of morning.

"It's chilly enough, too," said Classon, shivering, as he emptied the gin into his glass.

"I think you've had enough already," said Grog, rudely, as he flung both tumbler and its contents out of the window. "Go, have a wash, and make yourself a little decent-looking; one would imagine, to see you, you had passed your night in the 'lock-up!'"

"When you see me next you'll fancy I'm an archdeacon." So saying, and guiding himself by the chairs, Paul Classon left the room.

With a quiet step, and firm, neither "overtaken" by liquor nor fatigued by the night's debauch, Davis hastened to his chamber. So long as he was occupied with the cares of dressing, his features betrayed no unusual anxiety; he did, indeed, endeavor to attire himself with more than ordinary care, and one cravat after another did he fling on the floor, where a number of embroidered vests were already lying. At length the toilet was completed, and Grog surveyed himself in the large glass, and was satisfied. He knew he didn't look like Annesley Beecher and that "lot," still less did he resemble the old "swells" of Brookes's and the Carlton, but he thought there was something military, something sporting—a dash of the "mag," with "Newmarket"—about him, that might pass muster anywhere! "At all events, Lizzy won't be ashamed of me," muttered he to himself. "Poor, poor Lizzy!" added he, in a broken tone; and he sank down into a chair, and leaned his head on the table.

A gentle tap came to the door. "Come in," said he, without raising his head; and she entered.

As the rich robe of silk rustled across the floor he never raised his head, nor even when bending over she threw an arm around his neck and kissed his forehead, did he stir or move.

"I want you to look at me, dearest papa," said she, softly.

"My poor Lizzy—my own dear Lizzy!" murmured he, half indistinctly; then, starting suddenly up, he cried aloud, "Good heavens! is it worth all this—"

"No, indeed, papa," burst she in; "it is *not*—it is *not* worth it!"

"What do you mean?" asked he, abruptly. "What were you thinking of?"

"It was *your* thoughts I was following out," said she, drearily.

"How handsome—how beautiful you are, girl!" exclaimed he, as holding both her hands he surveyed her at full length. "Is this Brussels lace?"

She nodded assent.

"And what do you call these buttons?"

"They are opals."

"How it all becomes you, girl! I'd never like to see you less smartly dressed! And now—and now I am to lose you!" And he fell upon her neck, and clasped her fondly to his heart.

"Oh, my dear father, if you knew——" She could not continue.

"And don't I know!" broke he in. "Do you think that all my hard, bad experience of life has left me so bereft of feeling! But I'll tell you another thing I know, Lizzy," said he, in a deep, calm voice, "that what we fancy must break our hearts to do we can bear, and bear patiently, and, what's more, so learn to conform to, that after a few years of life we wonder that we ever thought them hardships!"

"We do not change so much without heavy suffering!" said she, sorrowfully.

"That is possible, too," said he, sighing. Then suddenly rallying, he said, "You'll write to me often, very often, Lizzy; I'll want to hear how you get on with these great folk; not that I fear anything, only this, girl, that their jealousy will stimulate their rancor. You are so handsome, girl! so handsome!"

"I'm glad of it," said she, with an air of proud exultation.

"Who's there?" cried Davis, impatiently, as a sharp knock came to the door. It was the Reverend Paul come to borrow a white neckcloth, none of his own being sufficiently imposing for such an occasion.

"I am scarcely presentable, Miss Davis. I am sure I address Miss Davis," said he, pushing into the room, and bowing ceremoniously at each step. "There can be but only one so eminently beautiful!"

"There, take what you want, and be off!" cried Davis, rudely.

"Your father usurps all the privileges of long friendship, and emboldens me to claim some too, my dear young lady. Let me kiss the fairest hand in Christendom." And with a reverential homage all his own Paul bent down and touched her hand with his lips.

"This is the Reverend Paul Classon, Lizzy," said Davis, "a great dignitary of church, and an old schoolfellow of mine."

"I am always happy to know a friend of

my father's," said she, smiling gracefully.

"You have only just arrived?"

"This moment!" said he, with a glance toward Grog.

"There, away with you, and finish your dressing," broke in Davis, angrily; "I see it is nigh seven o'clock."

"Past seven, rather, and the company assembled below stairs, and Mr. Beecher—for I presume it must be he—pacing the little terrace in all the impatience of a bridegroom. Miss Davis, your servant." And with a bow of deep reverence Paul retired.

"There were so many things running in my mind to say to you, Lizzy," said Davis, "when that Classon came in." It was very hard for him not to add an epithet, but he *did* escape that peril.

"I own, papa, he did not impress me very favorably."

"He's a first-rate man, a great scholar, a regular don amongst the shovel-hats," said Grog, hastily; "that man was within an ace of being a bishop. But it was not of *him* my head was full, girl. I wanted to talk to you about Beecher and that haughty sister-in-law of his. *She'll* 'try it on' with you, Lizzy; I'm sure she will!"

"Dearest papa, how often have you told me that in preparing for the accidents of life we but often exaggerate their importance. I'll not anticipate evil."

"Here's Beecher!—here he is!" cried Davis, as he clasped her once more to his heart; and then, opening the door, led her down the stairs.

There was a full assemblage of all the folk of the little inn, and the room was crowded. The landlord and his wife, and four buxom daughters and two sons, were there; and a dapper waiter, with very tight fitting trousers, and a housemaid, and three farm-servants, all with big bouquets in their hands and huge bows of white ribbon on their breasts; and Mademoiselle Annette, Lizzy's maid, in a lilac silk and a white crape bonnet; and Peters, Beecher's man, in a most accurate blue frock, except his master, looking far more like a gentleman than any one there.

As for Annesley Beecher, no man ever more accurately understood how to "costume" for every circumstance in life, and whether you saw him lounging over the rail in Rotten-row, strolling through the park at Richmond, sunning himself at Cowes, or yawning through a wet day in a country-house, his "get-up" was sure to be faultless. Hundreds tried in vain to catch the inimitable curl of his hat, the unattainable sweep of his waistcoat-collar;

and then there were shades and tones of his color about him that were especially his own. Of course, I am not about to describe his appearance on this morning: it is enough if I say that he bestowed every care upon it, and succeeded. And Paul—Holy Paul—how blandly imposing, how unctuously serene he looked! Marriage was truly a benediction at such hands. He faltered a little, his dulcet accents trembled with a modest reluctance, as he asked, “Wilt thou take—this woman—” Could he have changed the liturgy for the occasion, he had said, “this angel;” as it was, his voice compensated for the syllables, and the question was breathed out like air from the Garden of Eden.

And so they were married, and there was a grand breakfast, where all the household were assembled, and where Paul Clason made a most effective little speech to “the health of the bride,” interpolating his English and German with a tact all his own; and then they drove away with four posters, with all the noise and whip-cracking, the sighs and smiles, and last good-byes, just as if the scene had been Hanover-square, and the High Priest a Canon of Westminster!

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

STUNNING TIDINGS.

A TELEGRAM duly dispatched had prepared the hotel of the Cour de Bade for the arrival of the Honorable Annesley and Mrs. Beecher, and when the well-appointed traveling carriage came clattering into the “porte cochère” at nightfall, there was a dress parade of landlord and waiters ready to receive them.

It was a very long time since Beecher had felt the self-importance of being deemed rich. For many a year back life had been but a series of struggles, and it was a very delightful sensation to him to witness once more all the ready homage, all the obsequious attention, which are only rendered to affluence. Herr Bauer had got the dispatch just in time to keep his handsomest suite of rooms for him; indeed, he had “sent away the Margraf of Schweinerhausen, who wanted them.” This was gratifying; and, limited as Beecher’s German was, he could catch the muttered exclamations of “Ach Gott, wie schön!” “Wie lieblich!” as his beautiful wife passed up the stairs; and this, too, pleased him. In fact, his was just then the glorious mood that comes once in a lifetime to

the luckiest of us—to be charmed with everything.

To enjoy the sunshine one must have sojourned in shadow, and certainly prosperity is never so entrancing as after some experience of its opposite, and Beecher was never wearied of admiring the splendor of the apartment, the wonderful promptitude of the waiters, and the excellence of everything. It must be owned the dinner was in Bauer’s best style—the bisque, the rae-braten, the pheasant, all that could be wished for; and when the imposing host himself uncorked a precious flask of a “Cabinet Steinberger.” Beecher felt it was a very charming world when one had only got to the sunny side of it. Mr. Bauer—a politeness rarely accorded, save to the highest rank—directed the service in person, and vouchsafed to be agreeable during the repast.

“And so your season was a good one, Bauer?” said Beecher.

“Reasonably so, your excellency. We had the King of Wurtemberg, the Queen of Greece, a couple of archdukes, and a crown prince of something far north—second-rate ones all, but good people, and easily satisfied.”

Beecher gave a significant glance toward Lizzie, and went on: “And who were your English visitors?”

“The old set, your excellency; the Duke of Middleton, Lord Headlam and his four daughters, Sir Hipsley Keyling, to break the bank as usual—”

“And did he?”

“No, excellency; it broke *him*.”

“Poor devil! it ain’t so easy to get to windward of those fellows, Bauer; they are too many for us, eh?” said Beecher, chuckling with the consciousness that *he* had the key to that mysterious secret.

“Well, excellency, there’s nobody ever does it but one, so long as I have known Baden.”

“And who is he, pray?”

“Mr. Twining—Adderley Twining, sir; that’s the man can just win what, and when, and how he pleases.”

“Don’t tell *me* that, Bauer; *he* hasn’t got the secret. If Twining wins, it’s chance, mere chance, just as you might win.”

“It may be so, your excellency.”

“I tell you, Bauer—I know it as a *fact*—there’s just one man in Europe has the martingale, and here’s to his health.”

Mr. Bauer was too well skilled in his calling not to guess in whose honor the glass was drained, and smiles a gracious recognition of the toast.

"And your pretty people, Herr Bauer," broke in Lizzy; "who were your great beauties this season?"

"We had nothing remarkable, madame," said he, bowing.

"No, Master Bauer," broke in Beecher; "for the luck and the good looks I suspect you should have gone somewhere else this summer."

Bauer bowed his very deepest acknowledgment. Too conscious of what became him in his station to hazard a flattery in words, he was yet courtier enough to convey his admiration by a look of most meaningful deference.

"I conclude that the season is nigh over," said Lizzy, half languidly, as she looked out on the moonlit promenade, where a few loungers were lingering.

"Yes, madame; another week will close the rooms. All are hastening away to their winter quarters—Rome, Paris, or Vienna."

"How strange it is, all this life of change!" said Lizzy, thoughtfully.

"It is not what it seems," said Beecher, "for the same people are always meeting again and again, now in Italy, now in England. Ah! I see the Cursaal is being lighted up. How jolly it looks through the trees! Look yonder, Lizzy, where all the lamps are glittering. Many a sad night it cost me, gay as it appears."

Mr. Bauer withdrew as the desert was placed on the table, and they were alone.

"Rich fellow that Bauer," said Beecher; "he lends more money than any Jew in Frankfort. I wonder whether I couldn't tempt him to advance me a few hundreds?"

"Do you want money, then?" asked she, unsuspectingly.

"Want it? no, not exactly, except that every one wants it; people always find a way to spend all they can lay their hands on."

"I don't call that wanting it," said she, half coldly.

"Play me something, Lizzy, here's a piano; that Sicilian song—and sing it." He held out his hand to lead her to the piano, but she only drew her shawl more closely around her, and never moved. "Or, if you like better, that Styrian dance," continued he.

"I am not in the humor," said she, calmly.

"Not in the humor? well be in the humor. I was never in better spirits in my life. I wouldn't change with Davis when he won the Czarewitch. Such a dinner as old Bauer gave us, and such wine! and then this coffee, not to speak of the company—eh, Lizzy?"

"Yes, Mr. Bauer was most agreeable."

"I wasn't talking of Mr. Bauer, ma chère, I was thinking of some one else."

"I didn't know," said she, with a half-weary sigh.

Beecher's cheek flushed up, and he walked to the window and looked out; meanwhile she took up a book and began to read. Along the alley beneath the window troops of people now passed toward the rooms. The hour of play had sounded, and the swell of the band could be heard from the space in front of the Cursaal. As his eyes followed the various groups ascending the steps and disappearing within the building, his imagination pictured the scene inside.

There was always a kind of rush to the tables on the last few nights of the season. It was a sort of gamblers' theory that they were "lucky," and Beecher began to con over to himself all the fortunate fellows who had broken the bank in the last week of a season. "I told old Grog I'd not go," muttered he; "I pledged myself I'd not enter the rooms; but, of course, that meant I'd not play, it never contemplated mere looking in and seeing who was there; rather too hard if I were not to amuse myself particularly when"—here he turned a glance toward Lizzy—"I don't perceive any very great desire to make the evening pass pleasantly here. Ain't you going to sing?" asked he, half angrily.

"If you wish it," said she, coldly.

"Nor play?" continued he, as though not hearing her reply.

"If you desire it," said she, rising, and taking her place at the piano.

He muttered something, and she began. Her fingers at first strayed in half careless chords over the instrument: and then, imperceptibly, struck out into a wild, plaintive melody of singular feeling and pathos, one of those Hungarian airs, which, more than any other national music, seem to dispense with words for their expression.

Beecher listened for a few moments, and then, muttering indignantly below his breath, he left the room, banging the door as he went out. Lizzy did not seem to have noticed his departure, but played on, air succeeding air, of the same character and sentiment; but at last she leaned her head upon the instrument and fell into a deep reverie. The pale moonlight, as it lay upon the polished floor, was not more motionless. Beecher, meanwhile, had issued forth into the street, crossed the little rustic bridge, and held his way toward the Cursaal. His humor was not an enviable nor amiable one. It was such a mood as makes a courageous

man very dangerous company, but fills an individual of the Beecher type with all that can be imagined of suspicion and distrust. Every thought that crossed his mind was a doubt of somebody or something. He had been duped, cheated, "done," he didn't exactly know when, how, or by whom, with what object, or to what extent. But the fact was so. He entered the rooms and walked toward the play-table. There were many of the old faces he remembered to have seen years ago. He exchanged bows and recognitions with several foreigners whose names he had forgotten, and acknowledged suitably the polite obeisance of the croupiers, as they rose to salute him. It was an interesting moment as he entered, and the whole table were intently watching the game of one player, whose single Louis d'or had gone on doubling with each deal, till it had swelled into a sum that formed the limit of the bank. Even the croupiers, models as they are of impassive serenity, showed a touch of human sentiment as the deal began, and seemed to feel that they were in presence of one who stood higher in fortune's favor than themselves.

"Won again!" cried out a number of voices; "the thirteenth pass! who ever saw the like! It is fabulous, monstrous!" Amid the din of incessant commentaries, few of them uttered in the tone of felicitation, a very tall man stretched his arm toward the table, and began to gather in the gold, saying in a pleasant, but hurried voice. "A thousand pardons. I hope you'll excuse me; wouldn't inconvenience you for worlds. I think you said"—this was to the banker—"I think you said thirty-eight thousand francs in all; thank you, extremely obliged—a very great run of luck indeed—never saw the like before. Would you kindly exchange that note, it is a Frankfort one? quite distressed to give you the trouble—ininitely grateful;" and, bashfully sweeping the glittering coins into his hat, as if ashamed to have interrupted the game, he retired to a side-table to count over his winnings. He had just completed a little avenue of gold columns, muttering to himself little congratulations, interspersed with, "what fun!" when Beecher, stepping up, accosted him. "The old story, Twining! I never heard nor read of a fellow with such luck as yours!"

"Oh, very good luck; capital luck!" cried Twining, rubbing his lean hands, and then slapping them against his leaner legs. "As your lordship observes, I do occasionally win; not always, not always, but occasionally. Charmed to see you here—de-

lighted—what fun! Late—somewhat late in the season—but still lovely weather. Your lordship only just arrived I suppose?"

"I see you don't remember me, Twining," said Beecher, smiling, and rather amused to mark how completely his good fortune had absorbed his attention.

"Impossible, my lord!—never forget a face—never!"

"Pardon me if I must correct you this once, but it is quite clear you *have* forgotten me. Come, for whom do you take me?"

"Take you, my lord—take you? Quite shocked if I could make a blunder, but really I feel certain I am speaking with Lord Lackington."

"There, I knew it!" cried Beecher, laughing out. "I knew it—though, *oy Jove!* I was not quite prepared to hear that I looked so old. You know he's about eighteen years my senior."

"So he was, my lord—so he was," said Twining, gathering up his gold. "And, for a moment, I own I was disposed to distrust my eyes, not seeing your lordship in mourning."

"In mourning, and for whom?"

"For the late viscount, your lordship's brother!"

"Lackington! Is Lackington dead?"

"Why, it's not possible your lordship hasn't heard it? It cannot be that your letters have not brought you the tidings? It happened six—ay, seven weeks ago—and I know that her ladyship wrote, urgently entreating you to come out to Italy." Twining continued to detail in his own peculiar and fitful style various circumstances about Lord Lackington's last illness. But Beecher never heard a word of it, but stood stunned and stupefied by the news. It would be too tangled a web were we to inquire into the complicated and confused emotions which then swayed his heart. The immense change in his own fortunes, his sudden accession to rank, wealth, and station, came accompanied by traits of brotherly love and affection bestowed on him long, long ago, when he was a Harrow boy, and "Laek" came down to see him; and then, in after life, the many kind things he had done for him—helping him out of this or that difficulty—services little estimated at the time, but now remembered with more than mere gratitude. "Poor Lackington! and that I should not have been with you!" muttered he; and then, as if the very words had set another chord in vibration, he started as he thought that he had been

duped. Davis knew it all—Davis had intercepted the letters. It was for this he had detained him weeks long in the lonely isolation of that Rhenish village. It was for this his whole manner had undergone such a marked change to him. Hence the trustfulness with which he burned the forged acceptances—the liberality with which he supplied him with money, and then—the marriage! “How they have done me!” cried he, in an agony of bitterness—“how they have done me! The whole thing was concerted—a plan from the very beginning—and *she* was in it.” While he thus continued to mutter to himself imprecations upon his own folly, Twining led him away, and imperceptibly induced him to stroll along one of the unfrequented alleys. At first, Beecher’s questions were all about his brother’s illness—how it began—what they called it—how it progressed. Then he asked after his sister-in-law—where she then was, and how. By degrees he adverted to Lackington’s affairs; his will—what he had left, and to whom. Twining was one of the executors, and could tell him everything. The viscount had provided handsomely, not extravagantly, for his widow, and left everything to his brother! “Poor Lackington, I knew he loved me always!” Twining entered into a somewhat complicated narrative of a purchase the late viscount had made, or intended to make in Ireland—an encumbered estate—but Beecher paid no attention to the narrative. All his thoughts were centered upon his own position, and how Davis had done him.

“Where could you have been, my lord, all that time, not to have heard of this?” asked Twining.

“I was in Germany, in Nassau. I was fishing amongst the mountains,” said the other, in confusion.

“Fishing!—great fun, capital fun—like it immensely—no expense, rods and hooks—rods and hooks; not like hunting—hunting perfectly ruinous—I mean for men like myself, not of course for your lordship.”

“Poor Lackington!” muttered Beecher, half unconsciously.

“Ah!” sighed Twining, sympathetically.

“I was actually on my way out to visit him, but one thing or another occurred to delay me!”

“How unfortunate, my lord; and, really, his anxieties about *you* were unceasing. You have not to be told of the importance he attached to the title and name of your house! He was always saying,

‘If Beecher were only married! If we could find a wife for Annesley——’”

“A wife!” exclaimed the other, suddenly.

“Yes, my lord, a wife; excellent thing, marriage—capital thing—great fun.”

“But it’s done, sir—I’m booked!” cried Beecher, vehemently. “I was married on Sunday last.”

“Wish your lordship every imaginable joy. I offer my felicitations on the happy event. Is the viscountess here?”

“She *is* here,” said Beecher, with a dogged sternness.

“May I ask the name of Lady Lackington’s family?” said Twining, obsequiously.

“Name—name of her family?” echoed Beecher, with a scornful laugh. Then, suddenly stopping, he drew his arm within Twining’s, and in the low voice of a secret confidence, said: “You know the world as well as most men—a deal better, I should say—now, can you tell me, is a marriage of this kind binding?”

“What kind of a marriage do you mean?”

“Why, a private marriage in an inn, without bans, license, or publication of any kind, the ceremony performed by a fellow I suspect is a degraded parson—at least, I used to hear he was ‘scratched’ years ago—Classon.”

“Paul Classon—Holy Paul?—clever fellow, very ingenious. Tried to walk into me once for a subscription to convert the Mandans Indians—didn’t succeed—what fun!”

“Surely no ministration of his can mean much, eh?”

“Afraid it does, my lord; as your late brother used to observe, marriage is one of those bonds in which even a rotten string is enough to bind us. Otherwise, I half suspect some of us would try to slip our cables—slip our cables and get away! What fun, my lord—what fun!”

“I don’t believe such a marriage is worth a rush,” went on Beecher, in that tone of affirmation by which he often stimulated his craven heart to feel a mock confidence. “At least, of this I am certain, there are five hundred fellows in England would find out a way to smash it.”

“And do you want to ‘cry off,’ my lord?” asked Twining, abruptly.

“I might or I might not, that depends. You see, Twining, there’s rather a wide line of country between Annesley Beecher with nothing, and Viscount Lackington with a snug little estate, and if I had only known last Sunday morning that I was qualified to run for a cup, I’d scarcely have entered for a hack stakes.”

"But then you are to remember her connections."

"Connections!" laughed out Beecher, scornfully.

"Well, family—friends; in short, she may have brothers—a father?"

She *has* a father, by Jove!—she *has* a father!"

"May I be so bold as to ask——?"

"Oh, you know him well!—all the world knows him, for the matter of that. What do you say to Kit Davis—Grog!"

"Grog Davis, my lord!—Grog Davis!"

"Just so," said Beecher, lighting a cigar with an affected composure he intended to pass off for great courage.

"Grog—Grog—Grog!—wonderful fellow! astonishing fellow! up to everything! and very amusing! I must say, my lord—I must say, your lordship's father-in-law is a very remarkable man."

"I rather suspect he is, Twining."

"Under the circumstances—the actual circumstances—I should say, my lord, keep your engagement—keep your engagement."

"I understand you, Twining; you don't fancy Master Grog. Well, I know an opinion of that kind is abroad. Many people are afraid of him, *I* never was, eh?" The last little interrogative was evoked by a strange smile that flickered across Twining's face. "You suspect that I *am* afraid of him, Twining; now, why should I?"

"Can't possibly conceive, my lord—cannot imagine a reason."

"He is what is called a dangerous fellow."

"Very dangerous."

"Vindictive."

"To the last. Never abandons a pursuit, they tell me."

"But we live in an age of civilization, Twining. Men of his stamp can't take the law in their own hands."

"I'm afraid that is exactly the very thing they do, my lord; they contrive always to be in the wrong, and consequently have everything their own way;" and so Mr. Twining rubbed his hands, slapped his legs, and laughed away very pleasantly.

"You are rather a Job's comforter, Twining," said Beecher, tartly.

"Not very like Job, your lordship; very little resemblance, I must say, my lord! Much more occasion for pride than patience—peccage and a fine property!"

"I'm sure I never coveted it; I can frankly say I never desired prosperity at the price of—the price of——By the way, Twining, why not compromise this affair. I don't see why a handsome sum—I'm

quite willing it should be handsome—wouldn't put all straight. A clever friend might be able to arrange the whole thing. Don't you agree with me?"

"Perfectly, my lord—quite convinced you have taken the correct view."

"Should you feel any objection to act for me in the matter—I mean, to see Davis?"

Twining winced like a man in pain.

"Why, after all, it is a mere negotiation."

"Very true, my lord."

"A mere experiment."

"Just so, my lord; so is proving a new cannon; but I'd just as soon not sit on the breech for the first fire."

"It's wonderful how every one is afraid of this fellow, and I wind him around my finger!"

"Tact, my lord—tact and cleverness, that's it."

"You see, Twining," said Beecher, confidentially, "I'm not quite clear that I'd like to be off. I haven't regularly made up my mind about it. There's a good deal to be said on either side of the question. I'll tell you what to do: come and breakfast with us to-morrow morning—I'd say dine, but I mean to get away early and push on toward the south—you shall see her, and then—and then we'll have a talk afterwards."

"Charmed, my lord—delighted—too happy. What's your hour?"

"Let us say eleven. Does that suit you?"

"Perfectly; any hour—eleven, twelve, one—whenever your lordship pleases."

"Well, good night, Twining, good night."

"Good night, my lord, good night. What fun," muttered he, slapping his legs as he stepped out to his lodgings.

It was not till he had smoked his fourth cigar, taking counsel from his tobacco, as was his wont, that the new viscount returned to his hotel. It was then nigh morning, and the house was so buried in sleep that he knocked full half an hour before he gained admittance.

"There's a gentleman arrived, sir, who asked after you. He didn't give his name."

"What is he like—old, young, short, or tall?"

"Middle aged, sir, and short, with red beard and moustaches. He drank tea with the lady upstairs, sir, and waited to see you till nigh two o'clock."

"Oh, I know him," muttered Beecher, and passed on. When he reached his dressing room, he found the table covered with a mass of letters addressed to Lord

Viscount Lackington, and scrawled over with postmarks, but a card, with the following few words, more strongly engaged his attention: "It's all right, you are the viscount.—C. D."

A deep groan burst from Beecher as he dropped the card and sank heavily into a seat. A long, long time slipped over ere he could open the letters and examine their contents. They were almost all from lawyers and men of business, explanation of formalities to be gone through, legal details to be completed, with here and there respectful entreaties to be continued in this or that agency. A very bulky one was entirely occupied with a narrative of the menaced suit on the title, and a list of the papers which would be hereafter required for the defence. It was vexatious to be told of a rebellion ere he had yet seated himself on the throne, and so he tossed the ungracious document to the end of the room, his mood the very reverse of that he had so long pictured to himself it might be.

"I suppose it is all great luck!" muttered he to himself; "but up to this I see no end of difficulty and trouble."

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

UNPLEASANT EXPLANATIONS.

BEECHER had scarcely dropped off to sleep when he was awoken by a heavy, firm tread in the room; he started up, and saw it was Davis.

"How is the noble viscount?" said Grog, drawing a chair and seating himself. "I came over here post haste when I got the news."

"Have you told her?" asked Beecher, eagerly.

"Told her! I should think I have. Was it not for the pleasure of that moment that I came here—here, where they could arrest me this instant and send me off to the fortress of Rastadt? I shot an Austrian officer in the garrison there four years ago?"

"I heard of it," groaned Beecher, from the utmost depth of his heart. "So that she knows it all?"

"She knows that you are a peer of England, and that she is a peeress."

Beecher looked at the man as he spoke, and never before did he appear to him so insufferably insolent and vulgar. Traits which he had in part forgotten or overlooked, now came out in full force, and he

saw him in all the breadth of his coarseness. As if he had read what was passing in Beecher's mind, Davis stared fully at him, resolute and defiant.

"I suppose," resumed Grog, "it was a pleasure you had reserved for yourself to inform her ladyship of her step in rank, but I thought she'd just like to hear the news as well from her father."

Beecher made no answer, but sat buried in thought; at last he said: "Mr. Twinning, whom I met accidentally last night, told me of my brother's death, and told me, besides, that it had occurred fully eight weeks ago."

"So long as that!" said Davis, dryly.

"Yes, so long as that," said Beecher, fixing his eyes steadfastly on the other. "He tells me, too, that Lady Lackington wrote twice, or even thrice, to urge me to come on to Italy; that my arrival was looked for hourly. Many other letters were also sent after me, but not one reached my hand. Strange, very strange!"

"I suppose you have them all there now," said Grog, defiantly, as he pointed to the mass of letters on the dressing-table.

"No, these are all of recent dates, and refer, besides, to others which I have never got."

"What has become of the others, then?" asked Grog, resolutely.

"That's the very point I cannot decide, and it is the very question I was about to ask of *you*."

"What do you mean?" said Grog, calmly.

"What I mean is this," said Beecher, "that I am curious to learn how long it is since you knew of my brother's death?"

"If you'd like to hear when I suspected that fact, perhaps I can tell you," said Grog.

"Well, let me hear so much."

"It was shortly after your arrival at Hollbach."

"Ah! I thought so—I thought as much!" cried Beecher, triumphantly.

"Wait a bit—wait a bit; don't be sure you have won the game, I've a card in my hand yet. When you endorsed certain large bills for Lazarus Stein, at Aix, you signed your name 'Lackington.' Oh, there's no denying it, I have them here in this pocket-book. Now, either your brother was dead, or you committed a forgery."

"You know well, sir," said Beecher, haughtily, "at whose instance and persuasion I wrote myself 'Lackington.'"

"I know it! I know nothing about it. But before we carry this controversy fur

ther, let me give you a hint: drop this haughty tone you have just taken with me—it won't do—I tell you it won't. If you're the lord viscount to the world, you know deuced well what you are to me, and what, if you push me to it, I could make you to *them*.

“Captain Davis, I am inclined to think that we had better come to an understanding at once,” said Beecher, with a degree of firmness he could rarely assume. “Our relations cannot be what they have hitherto been. I will no longer submit to dictation nor control at your hands. Our roads in life lie in opposite directions; we need seldom to meet, never to cross each other. If Lady Lackington accepts the same view of these matters as myself, well; if not, it will not be difficult to suggest an arrangement satisfactory to each of us.”

“And so you think to come the noble lord over *me*, do you?” said Grog, with an irony perfectly savage in look and tone. “I always knew you were a fool, but that you could carry your stupid folly that far I never imagined. You want to tell me—if you had the pluck you would tell me—that you are ashamed of having married *my* daughter, and I tell *you*, that out of your whole worthless, wretched, unmanly life, it is the one sole redeeming action. That *she* stooped to marry *you* is another matter—she that, at this very moment, confers more honor upon your rank than it can ever bestow upon *her*! Ay! start if you will, but don't sneer, for if you do, by the eternal heaven above us, it will be the last laugh you'll ever indulge in!” A sudden movement of his hand toward the breast of his coat gave such significance to the words that Beecher sprang from his seat and approached the bell-rope. “Sit down there—there, in that chair,” cried Grog, in the thickened accents of passion. “I haven't done with you. If you call a servant into the room I'll fling *you* out of the window. If you imagined, when I burned your forged acceptances, that I hadn't another evidence against you stronger than all, you mistook Kit Davis. What! did you think to measure yourself against *me*? Nature never meant you for that, my lord viscount—never!”

If Davis was carried away by the impetuosity of his savage temper in all this, anger never disabled him from keenly watching Beecher and scanning every line in his face. To his amazement, therefore, did he remark that he no longer exhibited the same extent of fear he had hitherto done. No, he was calmer and more collected than Grog had ever seen him in a moment of trial.

“When your passion has blown over,” said Beecher, quietly, “you will perhaps tell me what it is you want or require of me.”

“Want of you—want of you!” reiterated Davis, more abashed by the other's demeanor than he dared to confess, even to himself—“what can *I* want of you? or, if I do want anything, it is that you will remember who you are, and who am I. It is not to remember that you are a lord, and I a leg—it is not that I mean—you're not very like to forget it; it is to call to mind that I have the same grip of you I have had any day these ten years, and that I could show up the Viscount Lackington just as easily as the Honorable Annesley Beecher.”

If Beecher's cheek grew paler, it was only for a moment, and, with an amount of calm dignity of which Grog had not believed him capable, he said:

“There's not any use in your employing this language toward me—there's not the slightest necessity for me to listen to it. I conclude, after what has passed between us, we cannot be friends; there's no need, however, of our being enemies.”

“Which means, ‘I wish you a very good morning, Kit Davis,’ don't it?” said Grog, with a grin.

Beecher gave a smile that might imply anything.

“Ah! so that's it?” cried Davis, endeavoring, by any means to provoke a reply.

Beecher made no answer, but proceeded in most leisurely style with his dressing.

“Well, that's candid, anyhow,” said Grog, sternly. “Now, I'll be as frank with *you*: I thought a few days back that I'd done rather a good thing of it, but I find that I backed the wrong horse after all. You are the viscount now, but you won't be so this day six months.”

Beecher turned his head round, and gave a smile of the most insolent incredulity.

“Ay, I know you'll not believe it, because it is I that tell you; but there came out a fellow from Fordyce's with the same story, and when you open your letters you'll see it again.”

Beecher's courage now deserted him, and the chair on which he leaned shook under his grasp.

“Here's how it is,” said Grog, in a calm, deliberate tone: “Dunn—that same fellow we called on one day together—has fallen upon a paper—a title, or a patent, or a writ, or something—that shows you have no claim to the viscounty, and that it ought to go, along with the estates, to some man who represents the elder branch.

Now, Dunn, it seems, was someway deep with your brother. He had been buying land for him, and not paying, or paying the money and not getting the land—at all events, he wasn't on the square with him; and seeing that you might probably bring him to book, he just says, 'Don't go into accounts with me, and here's your title; give me any trouble, and I'll go over to the enemy.'

"But there can be no such document."

"Fordyce's people say there is. Hankes, Dunn's own agent, told them the substance of it; and it seems it was on the list of proofs, but they never could lay a hand on it."

Beecher heard no more, but taking up the lawyer's letter which he had thrown so indignantly from him the night before, he began patiently to read it.

"Who can make head or tail of all this?" cried he, in angry impatience. "The fellow writes as if I was a scrivener's clerk, and knew all that confounded jargon. Mere schemes to extort money these."

"Not always. There's now and then a real charge in the gun, and it's too late to know it when you're hit," cried Grog, quickly.

"Why do not Fordyce's people send out a proper person to communicate with myself directly," said Beecher, haughtily.

"They did, and I saw him," said Grog, boldly.

Beecher grew crimson, and his lip trembled with a convulsive movement. It was very hard indeed to restrain himself, but, with an effort, he succeeded, and simply said, "And then——"

"And then," resumed Davis, "I packed him off again."

"What authority had you to thrust yourself forward in this manner?" cried Beecher, passionately.

"What authority?—the interest of my daughter, the Viscountess Lackington," said Grog, with a mingled insolence and mockery. "You may safely swear it was out of no special regard for *you*. What authority?" And with this he burst out into a laugh of sarcastic defiance.

"It need not offend you," said Beecher, "if I say that a question like this must be entrusted to very different hands from yours."

"You think so, eh?"

"I'm sure of it."

"Well, I am not; so far from it, that I'm ready to declare if I can't pull you through, there's not that man living who can. Lawyers can meet lawyers. If one wins a trick here, the other scores one there. This

fellow has a deed—that one has a codicil. It is always the same game; and they're in no hurry to finish, for they are playing on velvet. What's really wanting is some one that doesn't care a rush for a little risk—ready to bribe this man—square the other—burn a parish register, if need be, and come at—at any document that may be required—at the peril of passing his days at Norfolk Island."

"You fancy that the whole world is like the ring at Ascot," said Beecher, sneeringly.

"And ain't it? What's the difference, I'd like to know? Is it noble lords like yourself would prove the contrary?"

"I will see Fordyce myself," said Beecher, coldly.

"You needn't be at the trouble," said Davis calmly. "There's two ways of doing the thing: one is a compromise with the claimant, who turns out to be that young Conway, the 'smasher.'"

"Young Conway, the one-armed fellow?"

"Just so. The other is, to get hold of Dunn's papers. Now, I have dispatched a trusty hand to the Crimea, to see about the first of these plans. As for the other, I'll do it myself."

"How so?"

"Just this way: you shall give me a written authority to demand from Dunn all your family papers and documents, making me out to be your agent for the Irish estates." Beecher started, and a slight cast of derision marked his lip; but there was that in Grog's face that speedily suppressed every temptation to sneer, and he grew sick with terror. "Dunn will be for holding out," resumed Davis. "He'll be for writing to yourself for explanations, instructions, and so forth; and if I were a fellow of his own sort, I'd have to agree; but, being what I am—Kit Davis, you see—I'll just say 'No gammon, my old gent. We don't mean to lose this match, nor don't mean to let *you* noble *us*. Be on the square, and it will be all the better for yourself.' We'll soon understand each other."

A gentle tap at the door here interrupted Davis, and Beecher's servant, with a most bland voice, said: "Her ladyship is waiting breakfast, my lord," and disappeared.

"Who told *him*?" asked Beecher, a strange sense of pleasure vibrating through him as this recognition reminded him of his newly acquired station.

"I told him last night," said Davis, with a look that seemed to say, "And of whatever I do, let there be no further question."

As they entered the breakfast-room, they

found Lizzy—I must ask pardon if I return at times to their former names in speaking of her and her husband—in conversation with Mr. Twining, that gentleman having presented himself, and explained how he came to be there.

“Do you know Captain Davis, Twining? Let me present him to you,” said Beecher, blushing deeply as he spoke.

“Charmed, my lord—much honored—fancy we have met before—met at York Spring Meet. Rataplan beat by a neck—great fun!”

“It wasn’t great fun for me,” growled out Grog; “I stood to win on Bruiser.”

“Excellent horse—capital horse—wonderful stride!”

“I’ll tell you what he was,” said Grog, sternly, “a rare bad ’un!”

“You surprize—amaze me, Captain Davis—quite astonish me! Always heard a great character of Bruiser!”

“You did, did you?” said Grog with a jocular leer. “Well, the information wasn’t thrown away, for you laid heavily against him.”

“Most agreeable man, your father-in-law; my lord,” said Twining, slapping his legs and laughing away in high good humor; then, turning again to Davis, he engaged him in conversation.

Meanwhile, Beecher had drawn Lizzy into a recess of the window, and was whispering anxiously to her.

“Did this piece of news take you by surprise?” asked he, scanning her closely as he spoke.

“Yes,” said she, calmly.

“It was quite unexpected,” said he, half in question—“at least by *me*,” added he, after a pause.

She saw that some suspicion—she knew not of what, and as possibly cared as little—agitated him, and she turned away to the breakfast-table without speaking. Beecher, however, led her back again to the window. “I’d like much to ask you a question,” said he, half timidly; “that is, if I did not fear you might take it ill.”

“And there is such a risk, is there?” asked she.

“Well—it is just possible,” faltered he.

“In that case, take my advice, and do not hazard it.” There was a calm resolution in her tone that carried more weight with it than anything like passion, and Beecher felt in his heart that he dared not reject her counsel.

Lizzy had now taken her place at the breakfast-table, her air, look, and manner being all that could denote a mind perfectly easy and contented. So consummate, too,

was her tact, that she gradually led the conversation into that tone of pleasant familiarity when frank opinions are expressed and people talk without restraint; and thus, without the semblance of an effort, she succeeded, while developing any agreeability Beecher possessed, in silencing her father, whose judgment of men and events were not always the safest. As for Twining, she perfectly fascinated him. He was no mean critic in all that regards dress and manners; few men could more unerringly detect a flaw in breeding or a solecism in address. Mere acting, however good, would never have imposed upon him, and all the polish of manner and the charm of a finished courtesy would have failed with him if unaccompanied by that “sentiment” of good breeding which is its last and highest captivation. How subdued was all the flippant mockery of his manner! how respectful the tone in which he accosted her! It was the viscountess, and not Grog Davis’s daughter he saw before him. Now Beecher saw all this, and a sense of pride swelled his heart, and made him almost forget his distrusts and suspicions. When breakfast was over, Lizzy, passing her arm within her father’s, led him away. She had many things to say to him, and he to her, so that Beecher and Twining were left alone together.

“Well, Twining,” said Annesley, as he lighted a cigar. “tell me frankly—don’t you think I might have done worse?”

“Impossible to have done better—impossible!” said Twining. “I don’t speak of her ladyship’s beauty, in which she surpasses all I have ever seen, but her manner—her courtesy—has a blending of grace and dignity that would confer honor on the most finished court in Europe.”

“I’m glad you say so, Twining; enn quote *you* as an authority on these things, and I own frankly I am delighted to have my own judgment so ratified.”

“Her appearance in the world will be such a success as one has not seen for years!” exclaimed Twining.

“She’ll be sharply criticised,” said Beecher, puffing his cigar.

“She can well afford it, my lord.”

“What will the women say, Twining? She is so good looking—what will the women say?”

“Where there’s no rivalry, there will be no dispraise. She is so surpassingly beautiful that none will have courage to criticise; and if they should, where can they detect a fault?”

“I believe you are right, Twining—I believe you are right,” said Beecher, and

his face glowed with pleasure as he spoke. "Where she got her manners I can't make out," added he, in a whisper.

"Ay, my lord, these are nature's own secrets, and she keeps them closely."

"It is the father—old Grog—is the difficulty," whispered Beecher, still lower; "what can be done with *him*?"

"Original, certainly; peculiar—very peculiar—what fun!" And Twining in an instant recovered all his wonted manner, and slapped away at his legs unmercifully.

"I don't exactly see the fun of it—especially for *me*," said Beecher, peevishly.

"After all, a well-known man, my lord—public character—a celebrity, so to say."

"Confound it!" cried Beecher, angrily, "don't you perceive there lies the whole annoyance? The fellow is known from one end of England to the other. You can't enter a club on a rainy day, when men men sit round the fire, without hearing a story of him; you don't get to the third station on a railroad till some one says, 'Have you heard old Grog's last?' There's no end to him!"

"Wonderful resources!—astonishing!—great fun!"

"I'll be hanged if it *is* great fun, though you are pleased to say so," said Beecher, angrily.

Twining was far too good-tempered to feel hurt by this peevishness, and only rubbed his hands and laughed joyfully.

"And the worst of all," resumed Beecher—"the worst of all is, he *will* be a foreground figure; do what you may, he *will* be in the front of the Stand-house."

"Get him a situation abroad, my lord—something in the colonies;" broke in Twining.

"Not a bad thought that, Twining; only he is so notorious."

"Doesn't signify in the least, my lord. Every office under the crown has its penal settlements. The foreign office makes its culprits consuls; the colonial sends their chief justices to the Gold Coast; and the home secretary's Botany Bay is Ireland."

"But would they really give me something—I mean something he'd take?"

"I haven't a doubt of it, my lord; I wanted to get rid of a poor relation t'other day, and they made him a boundary commissioner at Baffin's Bay. Baffin's Bay!—what fun!" And he laughed immoderately.

"How am I to set about this, Twining?" You are aware that up to this I have had no relations with politics or parties."

"Nothing easier, my lord; always easy for a peer—proxy often of great consequence. Write to the premier—hint that

you are well disposed to adopt his views—due maintenance of all the glorious privileges of our constitution, with progressive improvement—great fun, capital fun!—all the landmarks firm and fixed, and as much of your neighbor's farm as possible. Or if you don't like to do this, set Davenport Dunn at them; he is your lordship's Irish agent—at least, he was the late viscount's—he'll do it—none better, none so well!"

"That might be the best way," said Beecher, musing.

"He'll be charmed—delighted—overjoyed at this proof of your lordship's confidence. He'll go to work at once, and before your lordship begins to receive, or go out, your amiable and most highly gifted father-in-law may be income-tax collector in Cochin-China."

"Now, there's only one thing more, Twining—which is, to induce Davis to agree to this. He likes Europe—likes the life of England and the Continent."

"Certain he does—quite sure of it; no man more calculated to appreciate society or adorn it. Capital fun!"

"Do you think," resumed Beecher, "that you could just throw out a hint—a slight suggestion—to see how he'd take it?"

"Come much better from your lordship."

"Well, I don't know—that is I half suspect——"

"Far better, infinitely better, my lord; your own tact, your lordship's good taste—Oh dear me, one o'clock already, and I have an appointment!" And with the most profuse apologies for a hurried departure, and as many excuses to be conveyed to her ladyship, Mr. Twining disappeared.

Although Twining's reluctance to carry into execution the tone of policy he suggested did not escape Beecher's penetration, the policy itself seemed highly recommendable. Grog out of Europe—Grog beyond the seas, collecting taxes, imprisoning skipper, hunting runaway negroes, or flogging Caffres, it mattered not, so that he never crossed his sight again. To be sure, it was not exactly the moment to persuade Davis to expatriate himself when his prospects at home began to brighten, and he saw his daughter a peeress. Still, Dunn was a fellow of such marvelous readiness, such astonishing resources! if any man could "hit off" the way here, it was he. And then, how fortunate! Grog was eagerly pressing Beecher to be accredited to this same Davenport Dunn, he asked that he might be sent to confer and negotiate with him about the pending action at law. What an admirable opportunity was this,

then, for Dunn to sound Davis, and, if occasion served, tempt him with an offer of place! Besides these reasons, valid and sound so far as they went, there was another impulse that never ceased to urge Beecher forward, and this was, a vague shadowy sort of impression that if he could only succeed in his plan he should have outwitted Grog, and “done” *him*. There was a sense of triumph associated with this thought that made his heart swell with pride. In his passion for double-dealing, he began to think how he could effect his present purpose—by what zigzag and circuitous road, through what tangled scheme of duplicity and trick. “I have it—I have it,” cried he, at length; and he hastened to his dressing-room, and having locked the door, he opened his writing-desk and sat down to write. But it is not at the end of a chapter I can presume to insert his lordship’s correspondence.

CHAPTER XC.

OVERREACHINGS.

BEECHER did not amongst his gifts possess the pen of a ready writer; but there was a strange symmetry observable between the composition and the manual part. The lines were irregular, the letters variously sized, erasures frequent, blots everywhere, while the spelling displayed a spirit that soared above orthography. A man unused to writing, in the cares of composition is pretty much in the predicament of a bad horseman in a hunting field. He has a vague, indistinct notion of “where” he ought to go, without the smallest conception as to the “how.” He is balked or “pounded” at every step, always trying back, but never by any chance hitting off the right road to his object.

Above a dozen sheets of paper lay half scrawled over before him after two hours hard labor, and there he still sat pondering over his weary task. His scheme was simply this: to write a few lines to Dunn, introducing his father-in-law, and instructing him to afford him all information and details as to the circumstances of the Irish property, it being his intention to establish Captain Davis in the position of his agent in that country; having done which, and given to Grog to read over, he meant to substitute another in its place, which other was confidentially to entreat of Dunn to obtain some foreign and far-away appointment for Davis, and by every imaginable

means to induce him to accept it. This latter document Dunn was to be instructed to burn immediately after reading. In fact, the bare thought of what would ensue if Davis saw it, made him tremble all over, and aggravated all the difficulties of composition. Even the mode of beginning puzzled him, and there lay some eight or ten sheets scrawled over with a single line, thus: “Lord Lackington presents his compliments”—“The Viscount Lackington requests”—“Lord Lackington takes the present opportunity”—“Dear Dunn”—“Dear Mr. Dunn”—“My dear Mr. Dunn”—“Dear D.” How nicely and minutely did he weigh over in his mind the value to be attached to this exordium, and how far the importance of position counterbalanced the condescension of close intimacy. “Better be familiar,” said he, at last; “he’s a vulgar dog, and he’ll like it;” and so he decided for “My dear Dunn.”

“MY DEAR DUNN,—As I know of your influence with the people in power—too formal that, perhaps,” said he, re-reading it—“as I know what you can do with the dons in Downing street—that’s far better—I want you to book the bearer—no, that is making a flunkey of him—I want you to secure me a snug thing in the colonies—or better, a snug colonial appointment—for my father-in-law—no, for my friend—no, for my old and attached follower, Captain Davis—that’s devilish well rounded, old and attached follower, Captain Davis.—When I tell you that I desire he may get something over the hills and far away, you’ll guess at once—you’ll guess at once why—no, guess the reason—no, you’ll see with half an eye how the cat jumps.” He threw down his pen at this and rubbed his hands in an ecstasy of delight. “Climate doesn’t signify a rush, for he’s strong as a three-year-old, and has the digestion of an ‘ostrage;’ the main thing, little to do, and opportunities for blind hookey. As to outfit, and some money in hand, I’ll stand it. Once launched, if there’s only a billiard-table or dice-box in the colony, he’ll not starve.”

“Eh, Grog, my boy,” cried he with a laugh, “as the parsons say, ‘Salary less an object than a field of profitable labor!’ And, by Jove! the grass will be very short indeed where you can’t get enough to feed on! There’s no need to give Dunn a caution about reserve, and so forth, with him—he knows Grog well.”

Having finished this letter, and placed it carefully in his pocket, he began the other,

which, seeing that it was never to be delivered, and only shown to Davis himself, cost him very little trouble in the composition. Still it was not devoid of all difficulty, since, by the expectations it might create in Grog's mind of obtaining the management of the Irish property, it would be actually throwing obstacles in the way of his going abroad. He therefore worded the epistle more carefully, stating it to be his intention that Captain Davis should be his agent at some future time not exactly defined, and requesting Dunn to confer with him as one enjoying his own fullest confidence.

He had but finished the document when a sharp knock at the door announced Davis. "The very man I wanted," said Beecher; "sit down and read that."

Grog took his double eye-glass from his pocket—an aid to his sight only had recourse to when he meant to scrutinize every word and every letter—and sat down to read. "Vague enough," said he, as he concluded. "Small credentials for most men, but quite sufficient for Kit Davis."

"I know that," said Beecher, half timidly, for no sooner in the redoubted presence than he began to tremble at his own temerity.

"This Mr. Dunn is a practical sort of man, they say, so that we shall soon understand each other," said Davis.

"Oh, you'll like him greatly."

"I don't want to like him," broke in Grog; "nor do I want him to like *me*."

"He's a fellow of immense influence just now; can do what he pleases with the ministry."

"So much the better for *him*," said Grog, bluntly.

"And for his friends, sir," added Beecher. "He has only to send in a name, and he's sure to get what he asks for, at home or abroad."

"How convenient!" said Grog; and whether it was an accident or not, he directed his eyes full on Beecher as he spoke, and as suddenly a deep blush spread over the other's face. "Very convenient, indeed," went on Grog, while his unrelenting glance never wavered nor turned away. As he stared, so did Beecher's confusion increase, till at last, unable to endure more, he turned away, sick at heart. "My lord viscount," said Grog, gravely, "let me give you a word of counsel: never commit a murder, for if you do, your own fears will hang you."

"I don't understand you," faltered out Beecher.

"Yes you do; and right well, too,"

broke in Grog, boldly. "What rubbish have you got in your head now, about 'a place' for me? What nonsensical scheme about making me an inspector of this, or a collector of that? Do you imagine that for any paltry seven or eight hundred a year, I'm going to enter into recognizance not to do what's worth six times the amount? Mayhap you'd like to send me to India, or to China. Oh, that's the dodge, is it?" exclaimed he, as the crimson flush now extended over Beecher's forehead to the very roots of his hair. "Well, where is it to be? There's a place called Bogota, where they always have yellow fever, couldn't you get me named consul there? Oh dear, oh dear!" laughed he out, "how you *will* go on playing that little game, though you never score a point!"

"I sometimes imagine that you don't know how offensive your language is, said Beecher, whose angry indignation had mastered all his fears "at least, it is the only explanation I can suggest for your conduct toward myself."

"Look at it this way," said Grog; "if you always lost the game whenever you played against one particular man, wouldn't you give in at last, and own him for your master? Well, now, that is exactly what you are doing with me—losing, losing on—and yet you won't see that you're beaten."

"I'll tell you what I see, sir," said Beecher, haughtily, "that our intercourse must cease."

Was it not strange that this coarse man, reckless in action, headstrong and violent, felt abashed for the instant in presence of the dignified manner which, for a passing moment, the other displayed. It was the one sole weapon Grog Davis could not match, and before the "gentleman" he quailed, but only for a second or two, when he rallied and said: "I want the intercourse as little as you do. I am here for the pleasure of being with my daughter."

"As for that," began Beecher, "there's no need——" He stopped abruptly, something terribly menacing in Grog's face actually arresting his words in the utterance.

"Take you care what you say," muttered Grog, as he approached him, and spoke with a low guttural growl. "I haven't much patience at the best of times; don't provoke me *now*."

"Will you take this letter—yes or no?" said Beecher, resolutely.

"I will: seal and address it," said Grog, searching for a match to light the taper, while Beecher folded the letter, and wrote the direction. Davis continued to break

match after match in his effort to strike a light. Already the dusk of declining day filled the room, and objects were dimly desecrated. Beecher's heart beat violently. The thought that even yet, if he could summon courage for it, he might outwit Grog, sent a wild thrill through him. What ecstasy could he only succeed!

"Curse these wax contrivances! the common wooden ones never failed," muttered Davis. "There goes the fifth."

"If you'll ring for Fisher——"

An exclamation and an oath proclaimed that he had just burned his finger, but he still persevered.

"At last!" cried he—"at last!" And just as the flame rose slowly up, Beecher had slipped the letter in his pocket, and substituted the other in its place.

"I'll write 'Private and confidential,'" added Beecher, "to show that the communication is strictly for himself alone." And now the document was duly sealed, and the name "Lackington" inscribed in the corner.

"I'll start to-night," said Davis, as he placed the letter in his pocket-book; I may have to delay a day in London, to see Fordyce. Where shall I write to you?"

"I'll talk that over with my lady," said the other, still trembling with the remnant of his fears. "We dine at six," added he, as Davis arose to leave the room.

"So Lizzy told me," said Davis.

"You don't happen to know if she invited Twining, do you?"

"No! but I hope she didn't," said Grog, sulkily.

"Why so? He's always chatty, pleasant, and agreeable," said Beecher, whose turn it was now to enjoy the other's irritation.

"He's what I hate most in the world," said Davis, vindictively; a swell that can walk into every leg in the ring—that's what he is!" And with this damatory estimate of the light-hearted, easy-natured Adderley Twining, Grog banged the door and departed.

That social sacrament, as some one calls dinner, must have a strange, mysterious power over our affections and our sympathies, for when these two men next met each other, with napkins on their knees and soup before them, their manner was bland and even cordial. You will probably say, How could they be otherwise? that was neither the time nor place to display acrimony or bitterness, nor could they carry out in Lizzy's presence the unseemly discussion of the morning. Very true; and their bearing might consequently ex-

hibit a calm and decent courtesy; but it did more—far more, it was familiar and even friendly, and it is to the especial influence of the dinner-table that I attribute the happy change. The blendid decorum and splendor—that happy union of tangible pleasure with suggestive enjoyment, so typified by a well-laid and well-spread table, is a marvelous peacemaker. Discrepant opinions blend into harmonious compromise as the savory odors unite into an atmosphere of nutritious incense, and a wider charity to one's fellows comes in with the champagne. Where does diplomacy unbend—where do its high-priests condescend to human feelings and sympathies save at dinner? Where, save at Mansion House banquets, are great ministers facetious? Where else are grave chancellors jocose and treasury lords convivial?

The three who now met were each, in their several ways, in good spirits,—Grog, because he had successfully reasserted his influence over Beecher; Beecher, because, while appearing to be defeated, he had duped his adversary; and Lizzy, for the far better reason that she was looking her very best, and that she knew it. She had, moreover, passed a very pleasant morning, for Mr. Twining had made it his business—doubtless with much hand-rubbing and many exclamations of "What fun!"—to go amongst all the tradespeople of Baden proclaiming the arrival of a "millionaire Milor," and counseling them to repair with all the temptations of their shops to the hotel. The consequence was, that Lizzy's drawing-room was like a fair till the hour of dressing for dinner. Jewelry in its most attractive forms, rich lace, silks, velvets, furs, costly embroideries, inlaid cabinets, gems, ancient and modern—all the knick-knackeries which a voluptuous taste has conceived, all the extravagant inventions of a fashion bent on ruinous expenditure, were there,—fans sparkling with rubies, riding-whips encrusted with turquoises, slippers studded over with pearls. There was nothing wanting: even richly-carved meerschaums and walking-sticks were paraded, in the hope that as objects of art and eloquence they might attract her favor. Her father had found her dazzled and delighted by all this splendor, and told her that one of the first duties of her high station was the encouragement of art. "It is to you, and such as you, these people look for patronage," said he. "An English peeress is a princess, and must dispense her wealth generously."

I am bound to acknowledge her ladyship did not shrink from this responsibility of her station. Without caring for the cost—as often without even inquiring the price—she selected what she wished; and rows of pearls, diamond bracelets, rings, and head ornaments covered her dressing-table, while sable and Astrakan cloaks, cashmeres, and Genoa velvets littered every corner of the room. “After all,” thought she, as she fixed a jeweled comb in her hair, “it is very nice to be rich, and while delighting yourself you can make so many others happy!”

Doubtless, too, there was some reason in the reflection; and in the smiling faces and grateful glances around her she found a ready confirmation of the sentiment. Happily for her at the moment, she did not know how soon such pleasures pall, and as happily for ourselves, too, is it the law of our being that they should do so, and that no enjoyment is worth the name which has cost no effort to procure, nor any happiness a boon which has not demanded an exertion to arrive at. If Beecher was startled at the sight of all these costly purchases, his mind was greatly relieved as Grog whispered him that Herr Koch, the banker, had opened a credit for him, on which he might draw as freely as he pleased. The word “Lackington” was a talisman which suddenly converted a sea of storm and peril into a lovely lake only ruffled by a zephyr.

At last the pleasant dinner drew to a close, and as the coffee was brought in the noise of a carriage beneath the windows attracted them.

“That’s *my* trap,” said Davis; “I ordered it for half-past eight exactly.”

“But there’s no train at this hour,” began Lizzy.

“I know that; but I mean to post all night, and reach Carlsruhe for the first departure in the morning. I’m due in London on Monday morning—eh, my lord?”

“Yes, that you are,” said Beecher; “Dublin, Tuesday evening.”

“Just so,” said Davis, as he arose, “and I mean to keep my time like a pendulum. Can I do any little commission for your ladyship as I pass through town—anything at Howell and James’s—anything from Storr’s?”

“I never heard of them——”

“Quite time enough, Lizzy,” broke in Beecher; “not to say that we might stock a very smart warehouse with the contents of the next room. Don’t forget the courier—he can join us at Rome; and remember, we shall want a cook. The ‘Mow-

bray’ have an excellent fellow, and I’m sure an extra fifty would seduce him, particularly as he hates England, detests a club, and can’t abide the ‘Sundays;’ and my lady will require something smarter than Annette as a maid.”

“Oh! I couldn’t part with Annette!”

“Nor need you; but you must have some one who can dress hair in a Christian fashion.”

“And what do you call that?” asked Grog, with a stare of insolent meaning.

“My lord is quite right in the epithet, for I copied my present coiffure from a picture of a Jewish girl I bought this morning, and I fancy it becomes me vastly.”

There was in the easy coquetry of this speech what at once relieved the awkwardness of a very ticklish moment, and Beecher rewarded her address with a smile of gratitude.

“And the house in Portland-place to be let?” murmured Davis, as he read from his note-book. “What of that box in the Isle of Wight?”

“I rather think we shall keep it on; my sister-in-law liked it, and might wish to go there.”

“Let her buy it or take a lease of it then,” said Grog. “You’ll see, when you come to look into it, she has been left right well off.”

Beecher turned away impatiently, and made no reply.

“All that Herefordshire rubbish of model farm and farming stock had better be sold at once. You are not going into that humbug like the late lord, I suppose?”

“I have come to no determination about Lackington Court as yet,” said Beecher, coldly.

“The sooner you do, then, the better. There’s not a more rotten piece of expense in the world than south-downs and short-horns, except it be Cochin-China hens and blue tulips.”

“Let Fordyce look to my subscriptions at the Clubs.”

“Pure waste of money when you are not going back there.”

“But who says that I am not?” asked Beecher, angrily.

“Not yet a bit, at all events,” replied Davis, and with a grin of malicious meaning so significant that Beecher actually sickened with terror.

“It will be quite time enough to make further arrangements when I confer with the members of my family,” said Beecher, haughtily.

To this speech Davis only answered by

another grin, that spoke as plain as words could, "Even the high tone will have no effect upon *me*." Luckily this penance was not long to endure, for Lizzy had drawn her father aside, and was whispering a few last words to him. It was in a voice so low and subdued they spoke that nothing could be heard, but Beecher imagined or fancied he heard Grog mutter: "Pluck will do it—pluck will do anything." A long, affectionate embrace, and a fondly uttered, "Good-by girl," followed, and then, shaking hands with Beecher, Davis lighted his cigar and departed.

Lizzy opened the window, and leaning over the balcony, watched the carriage as it sped along the valley, the lights appearing and disappearing at intervals. What thoughts were hers as she stood there? Who knows? Did she sorrow after him, the one sole being who had cared for her through life?—did her heart sadden at the sense of desertion?—was the loneliness of her lot in life then uppermost in her mind?—or did she feel a sort of freedom in the thought that now she was to be self-guided and self-dependent? I know not. I can only say that, though a slight flush colored her cheek, she shed no tears, and as she closed the window and returned into the room her features were calm and emotionless.

"Why did not papa take the route by Strasburg, it is much the shortest?"

"He couldn't," said Beecher, with a triumphant bitterness—"he couldn't. He can't go near Paris."

"By Verviers, then, and Belgium?" said she, reddening.

"He'd be arrested in Belgium and tried for his life. He has no road left but down the Rhine to Rotterdam."

"Poor fellow!" said she, rising. "It must be a real peril that turns *him* from his path." There was an accent on the pronoun that almost made the speech a sarcasm; at all events, ere Beecher could notice it, she had left the room.

"Now, if fortune really meant to do me a good turn," said Beecher to himself, "she'd just shove my respected father-in-law, writing-desk, pocket-book, and all, into the 'Rheingau,' never to turn up again." And with this pious sentiment, half wish, half prayer, he went down stairs and strolled into the street.

As the bracing night air refreshed him, he walked along briskly towards Lindenthal, his mind more at ease than before. It was, indeed, no small boon that the terror of Grog's presence was removed. The man who had seen him in all his transgressions

and his short-comings was, in reality, little else than an open volume of conscience, ever wide spread before him. How could he assume in such a presence to assert one single high or honorable motive? What honest sentiment dare he enunciate? He felt in his heart that the Viscount Lackington with ten thousand a year was not the Honorable Annesley Beecher with three hundred. The noble lord could smile at the baits that to the younger son were irresistible temptations. There was no necessity that *he* should plot, scheme, and contrive; or if he did, it should be for a higher prize, or in a higher sphere, and with higher antagonists. And yet Grog would not have it so. Let him do what he would, there was the inexorable Davis ever ready to bring down Lackington to the meridian of Beecher! Amidst all the misfortunes of his life, the ever having known this man was the worst—the very worst!

And now he began to go over in his mind some of the most eventful incidents of this companionship. It was a gloomy catalogue of debauch and ruin. Young fellows entrapped at the very outset in life, led on to play, swindled, "hoccussed," menaced with exposure, threatened with who knows what perils of public scandal if they refused to sign this or that "promise to pay." Then all the intrigues to obtain the money: the stealthy pursuit of the creditor to the day of his advancement or his marriage; the menaces measured out to the exigencies of the case—now a prosecution, now a pistol. What a dreadful labyrinth of wickedness was it, and how had he threaded through it undetected! He heaved a heavy sigh as he muttered a sort of thanksgiving that it was all ended at last—all over! "If it were not for Grog, these memories need never come back to me," said he. "Nobody wants to recall them against me, and the world would be most happy to dine with the Viscount Lackington without a thought of the transgressions of Annesley Beecher! If it were not for Grog—if it were not for Grog!"—and so ran the eternal refrain at the close of each reflection. "At all events," said he, "I'll 'put the Alps between us;'" and early on the following morning the traveling-carriage stood ready at the door, and amidst the bowings and reverences of the hotel functionaries, the "happy pair" set out for Italy.

Do not smile in any derision at the phrase, good reader, the words are classic by newspaper authority; and whatever popular preachers may aver to the contrary, we live in a most charming world,

where singleness is blessed and marriage is happy, public speaking is always eloquent, and soldiery ever gallant. Still, even a sterner critic might have admitted that the epithet was not misapplied, for there are worse things in life than to be a viscount with a very beautiful wife, rolling pleasantly along the Via Mala on Collinge's best patent, with six smoking posters, on a bright day of November. This for his share; as to hers, I shall not speak of it. And yet, why should I not? Whatever may be the conflict in the close citadel of the heart, how much of pleasure is derivable from the mere aspect of a beautiful country as one drives rapidly along, swift enough to bring the changes of scene agreeably before the eye, and yet not too fast to admit of many a look at some spot especially beautiful. And then how charming to lose oneself in that dreamland, where—peopling the landscape with figures of long, long ago, we too have our part, and ride forth at daybreak from some deep-vaulted portal in jingling mail, or gaze from some lone tower over the wide expanse that forms our baronial realm—visions of ambition, fancies of a lowly, humble life, alternating as the rock-crowned castle or the sheltered cot succeed each other. And lastly, that strange, proud sentiment we feel as we sweep past town and village, where human life goes on in its accustomed track: the crowd in the market-place—the little group around the inn—the heavy wagon unloading at the little quay—the children hastening on to school—all these signs of a small, small world of its own, that we, in our greatness, are never again to gaze on, our higher destiny bearing us ever onward to grander and more pretentious scenes.

“And this is Italy?” said Lizzy, half aloud, as, emerging from the mists of the Higher Alps, the carriage wound its zigzag descent from the Splügen, little glimpses of the vast plain of Lombardy coming into view at each turn of the way, and then the picturesque outlines of old ruinous Chiavenna, its tumble-down houses, half hid in trellised vines, and farther on again the head of the lake of Como, with its shores of rugged rock.

“Yes, and this miserable dog-hole here is called Campo Dolcino!” said Beecher, as he turned over the leaves of his “John Murray.” “That’s the most remarkable thing about these Italians, they have such high-sounding names for everything, and we are fools enough to be taken in by the sound.”

“It is a delusion that we are rather dis-

posed to indulge in generally,” said Lizzy. “The words, ‘you majesty,’ or ‘your highness,’ have their own magic in them, even when the representatives respond but little to the station.”

“It was your father. I fancy, taught you that lesson,” said he, peevishly.

“What lesson do you mean?”

“To hold people of high rank cheaply—to imagine that they must be all cheats and impositions.”

“No,” said she calmly, but resolutely. “If he taught me anything on this subject, it was to attribute to persons of exalted station very lofty qualities. What I have to fear is, that my expectation will be far above the reality. I can imagine what they might be, but I am not so sure it is what I shall find them.”

“You had better not say so to my sister-in-law,” said Beecher, jeeringly.

“It is not my intention,” said she, with the same calm voice.

“I make that remark,” resumed he, “because she has what some people would call exaggerated notions about the superiority of the well-born over all inferior classes; indeed, she is scarcely just in her estimate of low people.”

“Low people are really to be pitied!” said she, with a slight laugh; and Beecher stole a quick glance at her, and was silent.

He was not able long to maintain this reserve. The truth was, he felt an invincible desire to recur to the class in life from which Lizzy came, and to speak disparagingly of all who were humbly born. Not that this vulgarity was really natural to him—far from it. With all his blemishes and defects he was innately too much a gentleman to descend to this. The secret impulse was to be revenged of Grog Davis—to have the one only possible vengeance on the man that had “done him,” and even though that was only to be exacted through Davis’s daughter, it pleased him. And so he went on to tell of the prejudices—absurd, of course—that persons like Lady Georgina would persist in entertaining about common people.

“You’ll have to be so careful in all your intercourse with her,” said he; easy, natural, of course, but never familiar—she wouldn’t stand it.”

“I will be careful,” said Lizzy, calmly.

“The chances are, she’ll find out some one of the name, and ask you, in her own half careless way, ‘Are you of the Staffordshire Davises? or do you belong to the Davises of such a place?’”

“If she should, I can only reply that I don’t know,” said Lizzy.

"Oh! but you mustn't say that," laughed out Beecher, who felt a sort of triumph over what he regarded as his wife's simplicity.

"You would not surely have me say that I was related to these people?"

"No, not exactly that; but still, to say that you didn't know whether you were or not, would be a terrible blunder! It would amount to a confession that you were Davises of nowhere at all."

"Which is about the truth, perhaps," said she, in the same tone.

"Oh! truth is a very nice thing, but not always pleasant to tell."

"But don't you think you could save me from an examination in which I am so certain to acquit myself ill, by simply stating that you have married a person without rank, station, or fortune? These facts once understood, I feel certain that her ladyship will never allude to them unpleasantly."

"Then there's another point," said Beecher, evidently piqued that he had not succeeded in irritating her—"there's another point—and you must be especially careful about it—never by any chance let out that you were educated at a school, or a Pensionnat, or whatever they call it. If there's anything she cannot abide, it is the thought of a girl brought up at a school; mind, therefore, only say, 'my governess.'"

She smiled and was silent.

"Then she'll ask you if you had been 'out?' and when you were presented? and who presented you? She'll do it so quietly and so naturally, you'd never guess that she meant any impertinence by it."

"So much the better, for I shall not feel offended."

"As to the drawing-room," rejoined Beecher, "you must say that you always lived very retiredly—never came up to town—that your father saw very little company."

"Is not this Chiavenna we're coming to?" asked Lizzy, a slight—but very slight—flush rising to her cheek. And now the loud cracking of the postillions' whips drowned all other sounds as the horses tore along through the narrow streets, making the frail old houses rock and shiver as they passed. A miserable looking vetturino carriage stood at the inn door, and was dragged hastily out of the way to make room for the more pretentious equipage. Scarcely had the courier got down than the whole retinue of the inn was in motion, eagerly asking if "Milordo" would not alight? if his "Eccellenza" would not take some refreshment?

But his "Eccellenza" would do no neither; sooth to say, he was not in the best of humors, and curtly said, "No, I want nothing but post-horses to get out of this wretched place."

"Isn't that like an Englishman?" said a voice from the vetturino carriage to some one beside him.

"But I know him," cried the other, leaping out. "It's the new Viscount Lackington!" And with this he approached the carriage, and respectfully removing his hat, said, "How d'ye do, my lord?"

"Ah, Spicer! you here?" said Beecher, half haughtily. "Off to England, I suppose?"

"No, my lord, I'm bound for Rome."

"So are we, too. Lady Lackington and myself," added he, correcting at once a familiar sort of glance that Spicer found time to bestow upon Lizzy. "Do you happen to know if lady Georgina is there?"

"Yes, my lord, at the Palazzo Gondi, on the Pintian;" and here Spicer threw into his look an expression of respectful homage to her ladyship.

"Palazzo Gondi; will you try and remember that address?" said Beecher to his wife. And then, waving his hand to Spicer, he added, "Good-bye—meet you at Rome some of these days," and was gone.

CHAPTER XCI.

AT ROME.

IN a small and not very comfortably furnished room looking out upon the Pintian Hill at Rome, two ladies were seated, working, one in deep mourning, whose freshness indicated a recent loss, the other, in a strangely fashioned robe of black silk, whose deep cape and rigid absence of ornament recalled something of the cloister. The first was the widowed Viscountess Lackington, the second the Lady Grace Twining, a recent convert to Rome, and now on her way to some ecclesiastical preferment in the Church either as "Chanoinesse" or something equally desirable. Lady Lackington looked ill and harassed, there were not on her face any traces of deep sorrow or affliction, but the painful marks of much thought. It was the expression of one who had gone through a season of trial wherein she had to meet events and personages all new and strange to her. It was only during the last few days of Lord Lackington's illness that she learned the fact of a contested claim to the

title, but brief as was the time every post brought a mass of letters bearing on this painful topic. While the lawyers, therefore, showered their unpleasant and discouraging tidings, there was nothing to be heard of Beecher; none knew where he was, or how a letter was to reach him. All her own epistles to him remained unacknowledged. Fordyce's people could not trace him, neither could Mr. Dunn, and there was actually the thought of asking the aid of that inquisitorial service whose detective energies are generally directed in the pursuit of guilt.

If Amnesley Beecher might be slow to acknowledge the claims of fraternal affection, there was no one could accuse him of any lukewarmness to his own interests, and though it was now two months and upward since the viscount's death, yet he had never come forward to assert his new rank and station. Whatever suspicions might have weighed down the mind of the viscountess regarding this mysterious disappearance, the language of all the lawyers' letters was assuredly ill-calculated to assuage. They more than hinted that they suspected some deep game of treachery and fraud. Beecher's long and close intimacy with the worst characters of the Turf—men notorious for their agency in all the blackest intrigues—was continually brought up. His life of difficulty and strait, his unceasing struggle to meet his play engagements, driving him to the most ruinous compacts, all were quoted to show that to a man of such habits and with such counsellors any compromise would be acceptable that offered present and palpable advantages in lieu of a possible and remote future.

The very last letter the viscountess received from Fordyce contained this startling passage: "It being perfectly clear that Mr. Beecher would only be too ready to avail himself of his newly acquired privileges if he could, we must direct our sole attention to those circumstances which may explain why he could not declare himself the Viscount Lackington. Now, the very confident tone lately assumed by the Conway party seems to point to this mysterious clue, and everything I learn more and more disposes me to apprehend a shameful compromise."

It was with the letter that contained this paragraph before her Lady Lackington now sat, affecting to be engaged in her work, but, in reality, reading over, for the fiftieth time, the same gloomy passage.

"Is it not incredible that, constituted as the world now is, with its railroads and

its telegraphs, you cannot immediately discover the whereabouts of any missing individual?" said Lady Lackington.

"I really think he must have been murdered," said Lady Grace, with the gentlest of accents, while she bent her head over the beautiful altar-cloth she was embroidering.

"Nonsense—absurdity! such a crime would soon have publicity enough."

Lady Grace gave a smile of compassionate pity at the speech, but said nothing.

"I can't imagine how you could believe such a thing possible," said the viscountess, tartly.

"I can only say, my dear, that, no later than last night, Monsignore assured me that, through M. Mazzini and the Bible societies, you can make away with any one in Europe, and, indeed, in most parts of the world besides. Don't smile so contemptuously, my dear. Remember who it is says this. Of course, as he remarks, the foolish newspapers have their own stupid explanations always ready, at one moment calling it a political crime, at another the act of insanity, and so on. They affected this language about Count Rossi, and then about the dear and sainted archbishop of Paris; but what true believer ever accepted this?"

"Monsignore would not hold this language to *me*," said Lady Lackington, haughtily.

"Very probably not dearest; he spoke in confidence when he mentioned it to me."

"I mean, that he would hesitate ere he forfeited any respect I entertain for his common sense by the utterance of such wild absurdity. What is it Turner?" asked she, suddenly, as her maid entered.

"Four packing-cases have just come, my lady, with Mr. Spicer's respectful compliments, and that he will be here immediately—he has only gone to change his dress."

"Why don't he come at once? I don't care for his dress."

"No, my lady, of course not," said Turner, and retired.

"I must say he has made haste," said Lady Lackington, languidly. "It was only on the eighth or ninth, I think, he left this, and as he had to get all my mourning things—I had actually nothing—and to go down to Lackington Court, and then to Wales, and after that to the Isle of Wight, what with lawyers and other tiresome people to talk to, he has really not done badly."

"I hope he has brought the chalice," sighed Lady Grace.

"I hope he has brought some tidings of my respectable brother-in-law," said the viscountess, in a tone that seemed to say where the really important question lay.

"And the caviare—I trust he has not forgotten the caviare. It is the only thing Monsignore eats at breakfast in Advent."

An insolent gesture of the head was all the acknowledgment Lady Lackington vouchsafed to this speech. At last she spoke. "When he can get horse-racing out of his head Spicer is a very useful creature."

"Very, indeed," said Lady Grace.

"The absurd notion that he is a sporting character is the parent of so many other delusions; he fancies himself affluent, and, stranger still, imagines he's a gentleman." And the idea so amused her ladyship that she laughed aloud at it.

"Mr. Spicer, my lady," said a servant, flinging wide the door, and in a most accurate morning-dress, every detail of which was faultless, that gentleman bowed his way across the room with an amount of eagerness that might possibly exact a shake of the hand, but, if unsuccessful, might easily subside into a colder acceptance. Lady Lackington vouchsafed nothing beyond a faint smile, and the words, "How d'ye do?" as with a slight gesture she motioned to him the precise chair he was to seat himself on. Before taking his place Mr. Spicer made a formal bow to Lady Grace, who, with a vacant smile, acknowledged the curtesy, and went on with her work.

"You have made very tolerable haste, Spicer," said Lady Lackington. "I scarcely expected you before Saturday."

"I have not been to bed for six nights, my lady."

"You'll sleep all the better for it to-night, perhaps."

"We had an awful gale of wind in crossing to Calais—the passage took eight hours."

"You relished land traveling all the more for it afterward."

"Not so, my lady; for at Lyons the whole country was flooded, and we were obliged to march eleven miles afoot on a railway embankment, and under a tremendous storm of rain; but even that was not the worst, for in crossing the St. Bernard—"

"I really don't care for such moving accidents; I always skip them in the newspapers. What of my mourning—is much crape worn?"

"A great deal of crape, my lady, and in 'bouffes' down the dress."

"With bugles or without? I see by your hesitation, sir, you have forgotten about the bugles."

"No, my lady, I have them," said he, proudly; "small acorns of jet are also worn on points of the flounces, and Madame Frontin suggested that, as your ladyship dislikes black so much—"

"But who said as much, sir?" broke she in angrily.

"And the caviare, Mr. Spicer—have you remembered the caviare?" lisped out lady Grace.

"Yes, my lady; but Fortnum's people are afraid some of it may prove a failure. There was something, I don't know what, happened to the fish in the Baltic this year."

"Who ventured to say black was unbecoming to me?" asked Lady Lackington, changing her question and speaking more angrily.

"It was Frontin, my Lady, who remarked that you once had said nothing would ever induce you to wear that odious helmet widows sometimes put on."

"Oh dear! and I have such a fancy for it," exclaimed Lady Grace.

"You mistake, my dear; you are confounding the occasion with the costume," said Lady Lackington; and her eyes sparkled with the malice of her remark.

Mr. Spicer's face exhibited as much enjoyment of the wit as he deemed decorous to the party satirised.

"And now, sir, for the important part of your mission: have you obtained any information about my brother-in-law?"

"Yes, my lady, I saw him at Chiavenna. He drove up to the post-house to change horses as we were there; he told me, in the few minutes we spoke together, that they were on their way to Rome."

"Whom do you mean, sir, when you say 'they'?"

"Lord and Lady Lackington, my lady."

"Is he married? Did you say he was married, sir?" exclaimed she, in a voice discordant above all her efforts to restrain.

"Yes, my lady; I was, in a manner, presented to her ladyship, who was, I must say, a very beautiful person—"

"I want no raptures, sir; are you quite certain she was his wife?"

"His lordship told me so, my lady, and when they reached the Hotel Royal, at Milan, I took occasion to question the courier, whom I knew before, and he told me all about it."

"Go on, sir."

"Well, my lady, they were just married about ten or twelve days when I met them;

the ceremony had been performed in some little out-of-the-way spot in the Rhine country where Mr. Beecher had been staying for the summer, and where, as it happened, he never received any tidings of the late lord's death, or the presumption is, he had never made this unfortunate connection."

"What do you mean by 'unfortunate connection'?"

"Why, one must really call it so, my lady; the world, at least, will say as much."

"Who is she, sir?"

"She's the daughter of one of the most notorious men in England, my lady, the celebrated leg, Grog Davis."

Ah, Mr. Spicer, small and insignificant as you are, you have your sting, and her ladyship has felt it. These words, slowly uttered in a tone of assumed sorrow, so overcame her they were addressed to, that she covered her face with her handkerchief, and sat thus, speechless, for several minutes. To Spicer it was a moment of triumph—it was a vengeance for all the insults, all the slights she showered upon him, and he only grieved to think how soon her proud spirit would rally from the shock.

Lady Lackington's face, as she withdrew her handkerchief was of ashy paleness, and her bloodless lips trembled with emotion. "Have you heard what this man has said, Grace?" whispered she, in a voice so distinct as to be audible throughout the room.

"Yes, dearest; it is most distressing," said the other, in the softest of accents.

"Distressing! It is an infamy!" cried she. Then suddenly turning to Spicer, with flaring eyes and flushed face, she said, "You have rather a talent for blundering, sir, and it is just as likely this is but a specimen of your powers. I am certain she is not his wife."

"I can only say, my lady, that I took pains enough to get the story accurately; and as Kuffner, the courier, was at the marriage——"

"Marriage!" broke she in, with a sarcastic irony; "why, sir, it is not thus a peer of England selects the person who is to share his dignity."

"But you forget, my lady," interposed Spicer, "that he didn't know he was a peer—he had not the slightest expectation of being one—at the time. Old Grog knew it——"

"Have a care, sir, and do not *you* forget yourself. These familiar epithets are for my associates in the ring, and not for *my* ears."

"Well, the captain, my lady—he is as well known by that name as the other—he had all the information, and kept back the letters, and managed the whole business so cleverly, that the first Mr. Beecher ever knew of his lordship's death was when hearing it from Mr. Twining at Baden."

"I thought Mr. Twining was in Algiers or Australia, I forget which, said Lady Grace, gently.

"Such a marriage must be a mockery—a mere mockery. He shall break it—he must break it!" said Lady Lackington, as she walked up and down with the long strides and the step of a tigress in a cage.

"Oh dear! they are so difficult to break!" sighed Lady Grace. "Mr. Twining always promised me a divorce when the law came in and made it so cheap, and now he says that it's all a mistake, and until another Bill, or an Act, or something or other, is passed, that it's a luxury far above persons of moderate fortunes."

"Break it he shall," muttered Lady Lackington, as she continued her march.

"Of course, dearest, expense doesn't signify to *you*," sighed out Lady Grace.

"And do you mean to tell me, sir," said Lady Lackington, "that this is the notorious Captain Davis of whose doings we have been reading in every newspaper?"

"Yes, my lady, he is the notorious"—he was going to say Grog, but corrected himself, and added—"Captain Davis, and has been for years back the intimate associate of the present Lord Lackington."

Mr. Spicer was really enjoying himself on this occasion, nor was it often his fortune to give her ladyship so much annoyance innocuously. His self-indulgence, however, carried him too far, for Lady Lackington, suddenly turning round, caught the expression of gratified malice on his face.

"Take care, sir—take care," she cried, with a menacing gesture of her finger. "There may chance to be a flaw somewhere in your narrative; and if there should, Mr. Spicer—if there should—I don't *think* Lord Lackington would forget it—I am *sure* I shan't." And with this threatening declaration her ladyship swept out of the room in most haughty fashion.

"This is all what comes of being obliging," exclaimed Spicer, unable to control himself any longer. "It was not *I* that threw Beecher into Grog's company—it was not *I* that made him marry Grog's daughter. For all that *I* cared, he might go and be a monk at La Trappe, or marry as many wives as Brigham Young himself."

"I hope you brought me Lady Gertrude Oscot's book, Mr. Spicer—" Rays Through Oriel Windows?" said Lady Grace, in one of her sweetest voices. "She is such a charming poetess."

"I'd lay my life on't, she's just as wide-awake as her father," muttered Spicer to himself.

"As wide-awake? Dear me, what can you mean?"

"That she's fly—up to trap—oh, isn't she!" went he on, still communing to himself.

"Lady Gertrude Oscot, sir?"

"No; but Grog Davis's daughter—the new Viscountess Lackington—my lady. I was thinking of *her*," said Spicer, suddenly recalled to a sense of where he stood.

"I protest, sir, I cannot understand how two persons so totally dissimilar could occur to any mind at the same moment." And with this Lady Grace gathered up the details of her embroidery, and curtsying a deep and formal adieu, left the room.

"Haven't I gone and done it with both of them!" said Spicer, as he took out his cigar-case to choose a cigar; not that he had the slightest intention of lighting it in such a place—no profanity of the kind ever occurred to him—all he meant was the mock bravado to himself of an act that seemed to imply so much coolness, such collected courage. As to striking a light, he'd as soon have done it in a magazine.

And sticking his cigar in his mouth, he left the house; even in the street he forgot to light it, and strolled along, turning his weed between his lips, and revolving no very pleasant thoughts in his mind; "All the way to England, down to Wales, then the Isle of Wight, seeing no end of people—lawyers, milliners, agents, proctors, jewelers, and dressmakers—eternal explainings and expostulations, begging for this, deprecating that; asking this man to be active and the other to be patient; and then back again over the whole breadth of Europe in atrocious weather, sea-sick, and land-sick, tossed, jolted, and shaken—and all for what—ay, for what? To be snubbed, outraged, and insulted, treated like a lacquey—no, but ten times worse than any lacquey would bear. And why should I bear it? That's the question. Why should I? Does it signify a brass farthing to me whether the noble house of Lackington quarters its arms with the cogged dice and the marked king of the Davises? What do I care about their tarnished shield? It's rather cool of my lady to turn upon *me*!" Well reasoned and true, Mr. Spicer; you have but forgotten one small item in

the account, which is the consideration accorded to you by your own set, because you were seen to mingle with those so much above you.

We are told that when farthings are shaken up a sufficiently long time with guineas in a bag they acquire a sort of yellow lustre, which, by no means enabling them to pass for guineas, still makes them wonderfully bright farthings, and doubtless would render them very intolerant in the company of their equals. Such was, in a measure, what had happened to Mr. Spicer; and though at first sight the process would seem a gain, it is in reality the reverse, since, after this mock gilding, the coin—whether it be man or farthing—has lost its stamp of truthfulness, and will not "pass" for even the humble value it once represented.

"At all events," thought Mr. Spicer, as he went along, "her ladyship has not come off scot free for all her impertinence. I have given her materials for a very miserable morning, and irritated the very sorest spot in all her mind. It was just the very lesson she wanted; there's nothing will do her so much good in the world."

It is by no means an uncommon delusion for ill-natured people to fancy that they are great moral physicians, and that the bitters they drop into *your* wine-glass and *my* teacup are admirable tonics, which our constitutions require. The drug is not always an evil, but the doctor is detestable.

As Spicer drew nigh one of the great hotels in the Piazza di Spagna he recognized Beecher's traveling-carriage just being unloaded at the door. They had arrived at that moment, and the courier was bustling about and giving his orders like one whose master was likely to exact much and pay handsomely.

"The whole of the first floor, Freytag," said the courier, authoritatively; "every room of it. My lord cannot bear the disturbance of people lodged near him."

"He used not to be so particular in the 'Bench,'" muttered Spicer. "I remember his sleeping one of three in a room."

"Ah, Mr. Spicer! my lord said, if I should meet you, to mention he wishes to see you."

"Do you think he'd receive me now, Kuffner?"

"Well, I'll go and see."

Mr. Kuffner came speedily back, and beckoning to Spicer to follow, led the way to Lord Lackington's room. "He is dressing for dinner, but will see you," added he, as he introduced him.

The noble viscount did not turn from

the mirror at which he was elaborately arranging his neck-cloth as Spicer entered, but satisfied himself with calling out, "Take a chair, Spicer, you'll find one somewhere."

The tone of the salutation was not more significant than the aspect of this room itself. All the articles of a costly dressing-case of silver-gilt were ranged on one table. Essence-bottles, snuff-boxes, pipe-heads, with rings, jeweled buttons, and such-like knick-knacks covered another; whatever fancy could suggest or superfluity compass of those thousand-and-one trinkets the effeminacy of our age has introduced into male costume, all abounded. Quantities, too, of the most expensive clothes were there—rich uniforms, fur-lined pelisses, and gold-embroidered waistcoats. And as Mr. Spicer quickly made the tour of these with his eye, his gaze rested at last on my lord himself, whose dressing-gown of silver brocade would have made a state robe for a Venetian Doge.

"Everything is in confusion just now, but if you'll throw down some of these things, you'll get a chair," said Beecher, carelessly.

Spicer, however, preferred to take his place at the chimney, on which he leaned in an attitude that might take either the appearance of respect or familiarity as the emergency required.

"When did you arrive?" asked my lord.

"About two hours ago," was the short reply.

Beecher turned to gaze at the man, who answered without more semblance of deference, and now, for the first time, their eyes met. It was evidently Spicer's game, by a bold assertion of former intimacy, to place their future intercourse on its old footing, and just as equally decided was Beecher that no traditions of the past should rise up and obtrude themselves on the present, and so he threw into this quiet, steady stare, an amount of haughty resolution, before which Spicer quailed and struck his flag.

"Perhaps, I should say, three hours, my lord," added Spicer, flurriedly; and Beecher turned away with a slight curl on his lip, as though to say, "The conflict was not a very long one." Spicer marked the expression, and vowed vengeance for it.

"I thought you'd have got here two or three days before," said Beecher, carelessly.

"Vetturino traveling is not like express, my lord," said Spicer, fawningly. "You could cover your hundred miles between breakfast and a late dinner, while

we thought ourselves wonderful to get over forty from sunrise to midnight."

"That's true," yawned out Beecher; "Vetturino work must be detestable."

"No man could give you a better catalogue of its grievances than your father-in-law, my lord; he has had a long experience of them. I remember, one winter, we started from Brussels in the deep snow there was Baring, Hope, Fisk, Grog, and myself."

"I don't care to hear your adventures; and it would be just as agreeable to me were you to call my relative Captain Davis, as to speak of him by a vulgar nickname."

"Faith, my lord, I didn't mean it. It slipped out quite unconsciously, just as it did a while ago—far more awkwardly, by-the-by—when I was talking to Lady Lackington. The dowager, I mean."

"And what occasion, sir, had you, to refer to Captain Davis in *her* company?" asked Beecher, fiercely.

"She asked me plumply, my lord, what was her ladyship's name, what family she came of, who her connections were, and I told her that I never heard of any of them, except her father, popularly known as Grog Davis—a man that every one on the turf was acquainted with."

"You are a malicious scoundrel, Spicer," said Beecher, whose pale cheek now shook and trembled with passion.

"Well, I don't think so, my lord," said the other, quietly. "It is not, certainly, the character the world gives me. And as to what passed between her ladyship and myself this afternoon, I did my very best to escape difficulties. I told her that the Brighton affair was almost forgotten now—it was fully eighteen years since it happened; that as to Charles Herbert's death, there were two stories—some averring that poor Charley had actually struck Grog—and then, though the York trial was a public scandal—Well, my lord, don't look so angrily at me—it was by no fault of *mine* these transactions became notorious."

"And what have you been all your whole life to this Davis but his cad and errand-boy, a fellow he has sent with a bad horse—for he would not have trusted you with a good one—to run for a hack stakes in an obscure county, a lounge about stables and the steps of club-houses, picking up scraps of news from the jocks and selling them to the gentlemen? Does it become you to turn out Kit Davis and run full cry after him?"

It was but rarely that Beecher's indignation could warm up to the temperature of downright passion, but when it did so,

it gave the man a sort of power that few would have recognized in his weak and yielding nature; at all events, Spicer was not the man to stem such a torrent, and so he stared at him with mingled terror and anger.

"I tell you, Mr. Spicer," added Beecher, more passionately still, "if you hadn't known Davis was a thousand miles away, you'd never have trusted yourself to speak of him in this fashion; but, for your comfort I say it, he'll be here in a day or two."

"I never said a word of him you'd not find in the newspapers," said Spicer, doggedly.

"When you come to settle accounts together it will surprise me very much if there won't be matter for another paragraph in them," said Beecher, with a sneer.

Spicer winced; he tried to arrange his neckcloth, and then to button his glove, but all his efforts could not conceal a tremor that shook him from head to foot. Now, when Beecher got his "man down," he never thought he could trample enough upon him; and, as he walked the room in hasty strides to and fro, he jeeringly pictured to Spicer the pleasures of his next meeting with Davis; not, indeed, but that all his eloquence was superfluous—it needed no descriptive powers to convince any who enjoyed Grog's *friendship* what his enmity might imply.

"I know him as well as *you* do, my lord," said Spicer, as his patience at last gave way. "And I know, besides, there's more than half the Continent where he can't set a foot."

"Perhaps, you mentioned that, also, to my sister-in-law," said Beecher, derisively.

"No, I said nothing about it!" muttered the other.

There was now a pause—each only waited for any the slightest show of concession to make advances to the other; for, although without the slightest particle of good feeling on either side, they well knew the force of the adage that enjoins friendship among knaves. My lord thoroughly appreciated the utility of a Spicer—well did Spicer understand all the value of a peer's acquaintance.

Each ruminated long over the situation, and at last Beecher said, "Did poor Lackington leave you anything in his will?"

"A racing snaffle and two whips, my lord."

"Poor fellow, he never forgot any one, I'm sure," sighed Beecher.

"He had a wonderful memory, indeed, my lord, for I had borrowed twenty pounds

of him at the Canterbury races some ten years ago, and he said to me just before he took to bed, 'Never mind the trifle that's between us, Spicer, I shall not take it.'"

"Good-hearted, generous fellow!" muttered Beecher.

Spicer's mouth twitched a little, but he did not speak.

"There never was a better brother, never!" said Beecher, far more intent upon the display of his own affectionate sorrow than in commemorating fraternal virtues. "We never had a word of disagreement in our lives. Poor Lackington! he used to think he was doing the best by me by keeping me so tight and always threatening to cut me down still lower; he meant it for the best, but you know I couldn't live upon it, the thing was impossible. If I hadn't been one of the 'wide-awakes' I'd have gone to the wall at once; and let me tell you, Master Spicer, it wasn't every fellow would have kept his head over water where I was swimming.

"That I'm convinced of," said Spicer, gravely.

"Well, it's a long lane has no turning, Spicer," said he, complacently looking at himself in the glass. "Even a runaway pulls up somewhere; not but I'm sorry from the bottom of my heart for poor Lack, but it will be our own turn one of these days, that's a match there's no paying forfeit on, eh, Spicer? It must come off whether we will or not!"

"So it must, my lord," sighed out Spicer, sympathetically.

"Ay, by Jove! whether a man leaves twelve thousand a year or only two hundred behind him," sighed out Beecher, who could not help making the application to himself.

Again did Spicer sigh, and so profoundly it might have represented grief for the whole peerage.

"I say, old fellow," said Beecher, clapping him familiarly on the shoulder, "I wish you hadn't told Georgy all that stuff about Davis; these things do no good."

"I assure you solemnly, my lord, I said it with the best motives; her ladyship would certainly learn the whole history somewhere, and so I thought I'd just sketch the thing off in a light, easy way."

"Come, come, Spicer—no gammon, my lad; you never tried any of your light, easy ways with *my* sister-in-law. At all events, it's done, and can't be undone now," sighed he, drearily. Then, after a moment, he added, "How did she take the news?"

"Well, at first, my lord, she wouldn't believe it, but went on—'She's not his

wife, sir; I tell you they're not married, and so on."

"Well—and then?"

"Then, my lord, I assured her that there could be no doubt of the matter—that your lordship had done me the honor of presenting me——"

"Which I never did, Master Spicer," laughed in Beecher—"you know well enough that I never did; but a fib won't choke you, old fellow."

"At all events, I made it clear that you were really married, and to the daughter of a man that would send you home on a shutter if you threw any doubt on it."

"Wouldn't he, by Jupiter?" exclaimed Beecher, with all the sincerity of a great fact. "Well, after *that*, how did she take on?"

"She didn't say a word, but rocked from side to side, this way—like one going to faint; and indeed her color all went, and she was pale as a corpse; and then she took long breaths, and muttered below her voice, 'This is worst of all!' After that, she rallied, and certainly gave it to your lordship in round style, but always winding it up with—Break it he shall, and must, if it was the Archbishop of Canterbury married them."

"Very fine talking, Master Spicer, but matrimony is a match where you can't scratch and pay forfeits. I wish you could," muttered he to himself. "I wish you had the presence of mind and the pluck to have told her that it was *my* affair, and not *hers*. As to the honor of the Lackingtons and all that lot, she isn't a Lackington any more than you are—she's a De Tracey; good blood, no better, but she isn't one of us, and you ought to have told her so."

"I own I'd not have had courage for that!" said Spicer, candidly.

"That's what I'd have said in your place, Spicer. The present Viscount Lackington is responsible to himself, and not to the late lord's widow; and, what's more, he is no flat, without knowledge of men and the world, but a fellow with both eyes opened, and who has gone through as smart a course of education as any man in the ring. Take up the Racing Calendar and show me any one since Huckaback beat Grim. Con. that ever got it so 'hot' as I have. No, no, my lady, it won't do, preaching to me about 'life.' If I don't know a thing or two, who does? If you'd have had your wits about you, Spicer, that's what you'd have told her."

"I'm not so ready at a pinch as you are, my lord," muttered Spicer, who affected sullenness.

"Few are, Master Spicer—very few are, I can tell you;" and in the pleasure of commending and complimenting himself and his own great gifts, Beecher speedily ceased to remember what so lately had annoyed him. "Dine here at seven, Spicer," said he, at last, "and I'll present you to my lady. She'll be amused with *you*." Though the last words were uttered in a way that made their exact significance somewhat doubtful, Mr. Spicer never sought to canvass them; he accepted the invitation in good part, for he was one of those men who, though they occasionally "quarrel with their bread and butter," are wise enough never to fall out with their truffles.

CHAPTER XCII.

THE TWO VISCOUNTESSES.

WHEN the new viscount had dismissed Mr. Spicer, he set out to visit his sister-in-law. Any one who has been patient enough to follow the stages of this history will readily imagine that he did not address himself to the task before him with remarkable satisfaction. If it had been a matter to be bought off by money, he would readily have paid down a good round sum as forfeit. It was no use fortifying himself, as he tried to do, by all the commonplaces he kept repeating to his own heart, saying, "She ain't my guardian. I'm no ward to be responsible to *her*. She can exercise no control over me or my property. She's the dowager and no more." All the traditions of his younger brother life rose up in rebellion against these doctrines, and he could think of her as nothing but the haughty viscountess, who had so often pronounced the heaviest censures upon his associates and his mode of living. A favorite theory of his was it also, in olden times, to imagine that, but for Georgina, Lackington would have done this, that, and t'other for him; that she it was who thwarted all his brother's generous impulses, and taught him to look with stern disfavor on his life of debt and dissipation. These memories rushed now fully to his mind, and assuredly added no sentiment of pleasure to his expectation of the meeting. More than once did he come to a halt, and deliberate whether, seeing how unpleasant such an interview must prove, he need incur the pain of it. "I could write to her, or I could send Lizzy to say that I was confined to bed, and ill. Wouldn't that be a flare up? By Jove! if I could

only see the match as it came off between them, I'd do *that*. Not but I know Georgy would win; she'd come out so strong as 'Grandy Dame,' the half-bred 'un would have no chance. Still there would be a race, and a close one, for Lizzy has her own turn of speed, and if she had the breeding——" And as he got thus far in his ruminations, he had reached the Palazzo Gondi, where his sister-in-law lived. With a sort of sullen courage he rang the bell, and was shown in: her ladyship was dressing, but would be down in a moment.

Beecher had now some minutes alone, and he passed them scrutinizing the room and its appurtenances. All was commoner and more homely than he looked for. Not many indications of comfort—scarcely any of luxury. What might this mean? Was her settlement so small as to exact this economy, or was it a voluntary saving. If so, it was the very reverse of all her former tastes, for she was essentially one who cultivated splendor and expense. This problem was still puzzling him, when the door opened and she entered. He advanced rapidly to meet her, and saluted her on each cheek. There was a strange affectation of cordiality on each side. Prize-fighters shake hands ere they double them up into catapults for each other's heads, but the embrace here was rather more like the kiss the victim on the scaffold bestows upon his executioner.

Seated side by side on the sofa for a few minutes, neither uttered a word; at last she said, in a calm, low voice, "We had hoped to see you before this—he looked anxiously for your coming."

Beecher heaved a heavy sigh: in that unhappy delay was comprised all the story of his calamities. And how to begin—how to open the narrative?

"I wrote as many as five letters," resumed she, "some addressed to Fordyce's, others to the care of Mr. Davenport Dunn."

"Not one of them ever reached me."

"Very strange, indeed," said she, with a smile of faintest incredulity; "letters so seldom miscarry now-a-days. Stranger still, that none of your other correspondents should have apprised you of your brother's state; there was ample time to have done it."

"I know nothing of it. I vow to heaven I had not the slightest suspicion of it!"

"Telegraphs, too, are active agencies in these days, and I wrote to Fordyce to use every exertion to acquaint you."

"I can only repeat what I have said already, that I was utterly ignorant of

everything till I arrived at Baden; there I accidentally met Twining——"

"Spicer told me about it," said she, abruptly, as though it was not necessary to discuss any point conceded on both sides. "Your coming," continued she, was all the more eagerly looked for, because it was necessary you should be, so far as possible, prepared for the suit we are threatened with; actions at law for ejections on title are already announced, and great—the very greatest—inconvenience has resulted for want of formal instructions on your part."

"Is the thing really serious, Georgy?" asked he, with an unfeigned anxiety of manner.

"If you only will take the trouble of reading Fordyce's two last letters—they are very long, I confess, and somewhat difficult to understand—you will at least see that his opinion is the reverse of favorable. In fact he thinks the English estates are gone."

"Oh, Georgy, dearest! but you don't believe that?"

"The Irish barony and certain lands in Cork," resumed she, calmly, "are not included in the demand they profess to make; no, of course, have they any claim as to the estates purchased by Lord Lackington through Mr. Dunn."

"But the title?"

"The viscounty goes with the English property."

"Good heavens! a title we have held undisturbed, unquestioned, since Edward the Third's time. I cannot bring myself to conceive it!"

"Great reverses of condition can be borne with dignity when they are not of our own incurring," said she, with a stern and pointed significance.

"I am afraid I cannot boast of possessing all your philosophy," said he, touchily.

"So much the worse. You would need it, and even more, too, if all that I have heard be true."

There was no mistaking this inference, and Beecher only hesitated whether he should accept battle at once, or wait for another broadside.

"Not but," broke she in, "if you could assure me that the rumors were untrue—that *you* have been calumniated, and *I* misinformed—if, I say, you were enabled to do this, the tidings would help greatly to sustain me through this season of trouble."

"You must speak more plainly, Georgina, if I am to understand you."

"Are you married, Annesley?" said she, abruptly.

"Yes. I hope I am of age to enter the holy estate without leave from my relations."

"It is true, then?" said she, with a deep, full voice.

"Perfectly true. And then?" There was an open defiance in this tone of questioning which seemed actually to sting her.

"And then?" repeated she, after him—"and then?" You are right to say, 'and then?'—if that means, 'What next?'

Beecher turned pale and red, as fear and passion swayed him alternately; but he never spoke.

"Is it really a marriage?" broke she in again, "or is it some mockery enacted by a degraded priest, and through the collusion of some scheming sharpers. Ah, Annesley! tell me frankly how you have been tricked into this ignominious contract?" And her accents, as she spoke this, assumed a tone of imploring affection that actually moved him. To this a sense of offended dignity quickly succeeded with him, and he said:

"I cannot permit you to continue in this strain; I am rightfully, legally married, and the lady who shares my lot is as much the Viscountess Lackington as you are."

She covered her face with both her hands, and sat thus for several minutes.

"Perhaps it is all for the best," muttered she, in a low but audible accent—"perhaps it is all for the best. Loss of rank, station, and name will fall the more lightly on those who so little understood how to maintain them with dignity."

"And if I am threatened with the loss of my title and fortune," cried Beecher, passionately, "is it exactly the time to heap these insults on me?"

Partly from the firmness of his manner as he uttered these words, partly that they were not devoid of truthful meaning, she accepted the reproof almost submissively.

"You must go over to England at once. Beecher," said she, calmly. "You must place yourself immediately in Fordyce's hands, and secure the best advice the bar affords. I would go with you myself, but that—" The deep flush that spread over Beecher's face as she paused here made the moment one of intense pain to each. "No matter," resumed she; "there is only one danger I would warn you against. You dropped the word 'compromise;' now, Annesley, let nothing induce you to descend to this. Such a suggestion could only have come from those whose habits of life accept expediency in lieu of principle. Maintain your rights proudly and de-

fiantly so long as they pertain to you; if law should at last declare that we are only usurpers—" She tried to finish, but the words seemed as if they would choke her, and after an effort almost convulsive she burst into tears. Scarcely less moved, Beecher covered his face with his hands and turned away.

"I will do whatever you advise me, Georgina," said he, at length, as he seated himself on the sofa at her side. "If you say I ought to go to England, I'll set off at once."

"Yes: you must be in London; you must be where you can have daily, hourly access to your lawyers; but you must also determine that this contest shall be decided by law, and law alone. I cannot, will not, believe that your rights are invalid. I feel assured that the House of Lords will maintain the cause of an acknowledged member of their order against the claims of an obscure pretender. This sympathy, however, will only be with you so long as you are true to yourself. Let the word 'compromise' be but uttered, and the generous sentiment will be withdrawn; therefore, Annesley"—here she dropped her voice, and spoke more impressively—"therefore, I should say, go over to England *alone*; be free to exercise untrammelled your own calm judgment—keep your residence a secret from all save your law advisers—see none else."

"You mean, then, that I should go without my wife?"

"Yes!" said she coldly; "if she accompany you, her friends, her father, with whom she will of course correspond, will know of your whereabouts and flock round you with their unsafe counsels; this is most to be avoided."

"But how is it to be managed, Georgina; she cannot surely stop here, at an hotel too, while I am away in England?"

"I see nothing against such an arrangement; not having had the pleasure of seeing and knowing Lady Lackington, I am unable to guess any valid reasons against this plan. Is she young?"

"Not twenty."

"Handsome, of course?" said she, with a slight but supercilious curl of the lip.

"Very handsome—beautiful," answered he, but in a voice that denoted no rapture.

Lady Lackington mused for a moment or two; it seemed as if she were discussing within her own mind a problem, stating and answering objections as they arose, for she muttered such broken words as, "Dangerous, of course—in Rome especially—but impossible for her to go to Eng-

land—all her relations—anything better than that—must make the best of it;” then, turning to Beecher with an air of one whose determination was taken, she said: “She must stay with me till you return.” Before he had rallied from his surprise at this resolution, she added, “Come over to tea this evening, and let me see her.”

Beecher pressed her hand cordially, as though to imply a gratitude above words; but in reality he turned away to conceal all the emotions this new position of difficulty occasioned, merely calling out, “We’ll come very early,” as he departed.

Lizzy heard that Spicer was to be their guest at dinner, and they themselves to take tea with the Viscountess Lackington, with equal indifference. She had scarcely seen Mr. Spicer, and was not over pleased with her brief impression; of her ladyship she had only *heard*, but even that much had not inspired her to anticipate a pleasant meeting.

There was, however, in her husband’s manner, a sort of fidgety anxiety that showed he attached to the coming interview an amount of importance she could by no means understand. He continued to throw out such hints as to “Georgina’s notions” on this or that point; and, while affecting a half ridicule, really showed how seriously he regarded them. Even to Lizzy’s dress his cares extended; and he told her to be mindful that nothing in her costume should attract special criticism or remark.

Beecher was far more uneasy than even his looks betrayed. He dreaded to dwell upon the haughty demeanor his sister-in-law would so certainly assume, and the sort of inspection to which his wife was to be subjected. In his heart he wished that Lizzy had been less beautiful, less attractive, or as he ungraciously styled it to himself, “less showy.” He well knew how damaging would all her brilliant qualities become to the eyes of one, herself a belle and a beauty in times past. He discussed over and over with himself whether it might not be better to acquaint Lizzy of the kind of dress parade that awaited her, or leave wholly to chance the events of the interview. For once in his life he took a wise resolve, and said nothing on the matter.

The dinner passed off somewhat heavily—Beecher silent and preoccupied, Lizzy thoughtful and indisposed to converse, and Spicer vexed, in spite of all his resolutions to the contrary, by what he had insultingly called to himself, “the airs of Grog Davis’s daughter;” and yet nothing could

be less just than to stigmatize by such a phrase a manner quiet, calm, and unpretentious, and totally removed from all affectation.

For a while Beecher bestowed a watchful attention on Spicer, uneasy lest by some adroit piece of malice he might either irritate Lizzy or lead her covertly into some imprudent disclosures; but he soon saw that it would have required a hardier spirit than Mr. Spicer’s to have adventured on impertinence in that quarter, and, lighting his cigar, he sat moodily down by the window to think on the future.

Left with the field thus open, Spicer canvassed within himself how best to profit by the opportunity. Should he declare himself an old friend of her father’s—his associate and his colleague? Should he dexterously intimate that knowing all about her family and antecedents, she could not do better than secure his friendship? Should he not also slyly suggest that, married to a man like Beecher, the counsels of one prudent and wily as himself would prove invaluable? “Now, or never,” thought he, as he surveyed her pale features, and interpreted their expression as implying timidity and fear.

“Your first visit to Rome, I believe?” said he, as he searched for a cigar amidst a heap on the table.

A cold assent followed.

“Wonderful place; not merely for its old monuments and ruins, though they are curious too, but its strange society—all nations, and all ranks of each mixed and mingled together; great swells, and snobs, grand ladies, princes, cardinals, and ambassadors, thrown together with artistes, gamblers, and fast ones of either sex—a regular fair of fine company, with plenty of amusement and lots of adventure.”

“Indeed!” said she, languidly.

“Just the place your father would like,” said he, dropping his voice to a half whisper.

“In what way, pray?” asked she, quietly.

“Why, in the way of trade, of course,” said he, laughing. “For the fine lady part of the matter he’d not care for it—that never was his line of country—but for the young swells that thought themselves sporting characters, for the soft young gents that fancied they could play, Grog was always ready. I ask your pardon for the familiar nickname, but we’ve known each other about thirty years. He always called me Ginger. Haven’t you heard him speak of old Ginger?”

“Never, sir.”

"Strange, that; but perhaps he did not speak of his pals to you?"

"No, never."

"That was so like him. I never saw his equal to hunt over two different kinds of country. He could get on the top of a bus and go down to St. John's-wood, or to Putney, after a whole night at Crawley's, and with an old shooting-jacket and jimmer on him, and a garden-rake in his hand, you'd never suspect he was the fellow who had cleared out the company and carried off every shilling at billiards and blind-hookey. Poor old Kit, how fond I am of him."

A stare, whose meaning Spicer could not fathom, was the only reply to the speech.

"And he was so fond of *me*. I was the only one of them all he could trust. He liked Beech—I mean his lordship there; he was always attached to him, but whenever it was really a touch-and-go thing, a nice operation, then he'd say, 'Where's Ginger—give me Ginger!' The adventures we've had together would make a book; and do you know that more than once I thought of writing them, or getting a fellow to write them, for it's all the same. I'd have called it 'Grog and Ginger.' Wouldn't that take?"

She made no reply; her face was, perhaps, a thought paler, but unchanged in expression.

"And then the scenes we've gone through!—dangerous enough some of them; he rather liked that, and I own it never was my taste."

"I am surprised to hear you say so, sir," said she, in a, low but very distinct voice; "I'd have imagined exactly the reverse."

"Indeed! and may I make so bold as to ask why?"

"Simply, sir, that a gentleman so worldly-wise as yourself must always be supposed to calculate eventualities, and not incur, willingly at least, those he has a mind for. To be plain, sir, I'm at a loss to understand how one not fond of peril should hazard the chance of being thrown out of a window—don't start, I'm only a woman, and cannot do it, nor, though I have rung for a servant—am I going to order *him*. For this time it shall be the door." And, rising proudly, she walked towards the window, but ere she reached it, Spicer was gone.

"What's become of Spicer, Lizzy?" said Beecher, indolently, as his eyes traversed the room in search of him.

"He has taken his leave," said she, in a voice as careless.

"He's tiresome, I think," yawned he; at least I find him so."

She made no reply, but sat down to compose her thoughts, somewhat ruffled by the late scene.

"Ain't it time to order the carriage? I told Georgy we'd come early," added he after a pause.

"I almost think I'll not go to-night," said she, in a low voice.

"Not go! You don't mean that when my sister-in-law sends you a message to come and see her that you'll refuse!" cried he, in a mixture of anger and astonishment.

"I'm afraid I could be guilty of so great an enormity," said she, smiling superciliously.

"It's exactly the word for it, whatever you may think," said he, doggedly. "All I can say is, that you don't know Georgina, or you'd never have dreamt of it."

"In that case it is better I *should* know her; so I'll get my bonnet and shawl at once."

She was back in the room in a moment, and they set out for the Palazzo Gondi.

What would not Beecher have given, as they drove along, for courage to counsel and advise her—to admonish as to this, and caution as to that. And yet he did not dare to utter a word, and she was as silent.

It would not be very easy to say exactly what sort of person Lady Georgina expected in her sister-in-law; indeed, she had pictured her in so many shapes to herself that there was not an incongruity omitted in the composition, and she fancied her bold, daring, timid, awkward, impertinent, and shy, alternately, and, in this conflict of anticipation it was that Lizzy entered. So utterly overcome was Lady Georgina by astonishment, that she actually advanced to meet her in some confusion, and then, taking her hand, led her to a seat on the sofa beside her.

While the ordinary interchange of commonplaces went on—and nothing could be more ordinary and commonplace than the words of their greeting—each calmly surveyed the other. What thoughts passed in their minds—what inferences were drawn, and what conclusions formed in this moment, it is not for me to guess. To women alone pertains that marvelous freemasonry that scans character at a glance, and investigates the sincerity of a disposition and the value of a lace flounce with the same practiced facility. If Lady Georgina was astonished by the striking beauty of her sister-in-law, she was amazed still more by

her manner and her tone. Where could she have learned that graceful repose—that simplicity, which is the very highest art? Where and how had she caught up that gentle quietude which breathes like a balmy odor over the well-bred world? How had she acquired that subtlety by which wit is made to sparkle and never to startle? and what training had told her how to weave through all she said the flattery of a wish to please?

Woman of the world as she was, Lady Lackington had seen no such marvel as this. It was no detraction from its merit that it might be all acting, for it was still “high art.” Not a fault could she detect in look, gesture, or tone, and yet all seemed as easy and unstudied as possible. Her ladyship knew well that the practice of society confers all these advantages; but here was one who had never mixed with the world—who, by her own confession, “knew no one,” and yet was a mistress of every art that rules society. Lady Georgina had yet to learn that there are instincts stronger than all experience, and that, in the common intercourse of life, Tact is Genius.

Though Lizzy was far more deeply versed in every theme on which it was her ladyship’s pleasure to talk than herself—though she knew more of painting, of music, and of literature, than the viscountess, she still seemed like one gleaming impressions as they conversed, and at each moment acquiring nearer and clearer views; and yet even this flattery was so nicely modulated that it escaped detection.

There was a mystery in the case her ladyship determined to fathom. “No woman of her class,” as she phrased it, could have been thus trained without some specific object. The stage had latterly been used as a sort of show mart where young girls display their attractive graces, at times with immense success. Could this have been the goal for which she had been destined? She adroitly turned the conversation to that topic, but Lizzy’s answers soon negated the suspicion: Governesses, too, were all-accomplished in those days; but here there was less of acquirement exhibited than of all the little arts and devices of society.

“Is my trial nearly over?” whispered Lizzy in Beecher’s ear as he passed beside her chair. “I’d rather hear a verdict of Guilty at once than to submit to further examining.”

A look of caution, most imploringly given, was all his reply.

Though Lady Lackington had neither heard question nor answer, her quick

glance had penetrated something like a meaning in them, and her lip curled impatiently as she said to Beecher, “have you spoke to Lady Lackington of our plans for her—I mean during your absence?”

He muttered a sullen “No, not yet,” and turned away.

“It was an arrangement that will, I hope, meet your approval,” said Lady Georgina, half coldly, “since Beecher must go over to England for some weeks, and as you could not with either comfort or propriety remain alone in your hotel, our plan was that you should come here.”

Lizzy merely turned her eyes on Beecher, but there was that in their expression that plainly said, “Is this *your* resolve?” He only moved away and did not speak.

“Not but if any of your own family,” continued Lady Lackington, “could come out here, that you might prefer *their* company—that would be an arrangement equally satisfactory. Is such an event likely?”

“Nothing less so, my lady,” said Lizzy. “My father has affairs of urgency to treat at this moment.”

“Oh, I did not exactly allude to your father—you might have sisters.”

“I have none.”

“An aunt, perhaps?”

“I never heard of one.”

“Lizzy, you are aware, Georgina,” broke in Beecher, whose voice trembled at every word, “was brought up abroad—she never saw any of her family.”

“How strange! I might even say, how unfortunate!” sighed her ladyship, superciliously.

“Stranger, and more unfortunate still, your ladyship would perhaps say, if I were to tell you that I never so much as heard of them.”

“I am not certainly prepared to say that the circumstance is one to be boastful of,” said Lady Lackington, who resented the look of haughty defiance of the other.

“I assure your ladyship that you are mistaken in attributing to me such a sentiment. I have nothing of which to be boastful.” Your present position, Lady Lackington, might inspire a very natural degree of pride.”

“It has not done so yet, my lady. My experience of the elevated class to which I have been raised has been too brief to impress me; a wider knowledge will probably supply this void.”

“And yet,” said Lady Georgina, sarcastically, “it is something—the change from Miss Davis to the Viscountess Lackington.”

"When that change becomes more real, more actual, my lady," said Lizzie, boldly, "It will assuredly bear its fruits; when, in being reminded of what I was, and whence I came, I can only detect the envious malevolence that would taunt me with what is no fault of mine, but a mere accident of fortune—when I hear these things with calm composure, and, in my rank as a peeress, feel the equal of those who would disparage me, then, indeed, I may be proud."

"Such a day may never come," said Lady Georgina, coldly.

"Very possibly, my lady. It has cost me no effort to win this station you seem to prize so highly; it will not exact one to forego all its great advantages."

"What a young lady to be so old a philosopher! I'm sure Lord Lackington never so much as suspected the wisdom he acquired in his wife. It may, however, be a family trait."

"My father was so far wise, my lady, that he warned me of the reception that awaited me in my new station, but in his ignorance of that great world he gave me rather to believe that I should meet insinuated slights and covert impertinences than open insults. Perhaps I owe it to my vulgar origin that I really like the last the best; at least they show me that my enemies are not formidable."

"Your remarks have convinced me that it would be quite superfluous in me to offer my protection to a lady so conversant with life and the world."

"They will at least serve to show your ladyship that I would not have accepted the protection."

"But Lizzy, dearest, you don't know what you are saying. Lady Georgina can establish your position in society as none other can."

"I mean to do that without aid."

"Just as her father, Mr. Grog, would force his way into the stand-house," whispered Lady Lackington, but still loud enough for Lizzy to overhear.

"Not exactly as your ladyship would illustrate it," said Lizzy, smiling; "but in seeing the amount of those gifts which have won the suffrages of society, I own that I am not discouraged. I am told," said she, with a great air of artlessness, "that no one is more popular than your ladyship."

Lady Lackington arose, and stared at her with a look of open insolence, and then turning whispered something in Beecher's ear.

"After all," muttered he, "*she* did not

begin it. Get your shawl, Lizzy," added he aloud, "my sister keeps early hours, and we must not break in on them."

Lady Lackington and Lizzy curtseyed to each other like ladies of high comedy; it seemed, indeed, a sort of rivalry whose reverence should be most formal and most deferential.

"Haven't you gone and done it!" cried Beecher, as they gained the street. "Georgina will never forget this so long as she lives."

"And if she did I'd take care to refresh her memory," said Lizzy, laughing; and the mellow sounds rang out as if from a heart that never knew a care.

"I shall require to set out for England to-morrow," said Beecher, moodily, so soon as they had reached the hotel. The speech was uttered to induce a rejoinder, but she made none.

"And probably be absent for several weeks," added he.

Still she never spoke, but seemed busily examining the embroidered coronet on the corner of her handkerchief.

"And as circumstances require—I mean, as I shall be obliged to go alone—and as it would be highly inconvenient, not to say unusual, for a young married woman, more especially in the rank you occupy, to remain in an hotel alone without friends or relatives, we have thought—that is, Georgy and I have considered—that you should stay with her."

Lizzy only smiled, but what that strange smile might signify it was far beyond Beecher's skill to read.

"There is only one difficulty in the matter," resumed he, "and as it is a difficulty almost entirely created by yourself, you will naturally be the more ready to rectify it." He waited long enough to provoke a question from her, but she seemed to have no curiosity on the subject, and did not speak.

"I mean," added he, more boldly, "that before accepting my sister's hospitality, you must necessarily make some 'amende' for the manner in which you have just treated her."

"In which *I* treated *her*!" said Lizzy, after him, her utterance being slow and totally passionless.

"Yes, these were my words," said he.

"Have you forgotten how *she* treated *me*?" asked Lizzy, in the same calm tone.

"As to that," said he, with a sort of fidgety confusion—"as to that, you ought to bear in mind who she is—what she is—and then it's Georgy's way; even among her equals—those well born as herself—she

has always been permitted to exercise a certain sort of sway ; in fact, the world of fashion has decreed her a sort of eminence. You cannot understand these things yet, though you may do so, one day or other. In a word, *she* can do what *you* cannot, and must not, and the sooner you know it the better."

"And what is it you propose that I should do?" asked she, with seeming innocence.

"Write her a note—brief if you like, but very civil—full of excuses for anything that may have given her offense ; say all about your ignorance of life, newness to the world, and so on ; declare your readiness to accept any suggestions she will kindly give you for future conduct—for she knows society like a book—and conclude by assuring her—Well!" cried he, suddenly, for she had started from him so abruptly that he forgot his dictation.

"Go on—go on," said she, resuming her calm tone.

"You've put me out," cried he ; "I can't remember where I was. Stay—I was saying—What was it? it was something like—"

"Something like 'I'll not do it any more,'" said Lizzy, with a low laugh, while at the same instant she opened her writing-desk and sat down to write.

Now, although Beecher would have preferred seeing her accept this lesson with more show of humility, he was, on the whole, well satisfied with her submission. He watched her as her pen moved across the paper, and saw that she wrote in a way that indicated calm composure and not passion. The note was quickly finished, and as she was folding it she stopped and said, "But perhaps you might like to read it?"

"Of course I'd like to read it," said he, eagerly, taking it up and reading aloud :

"The Viscountess Lackington having received Lord Lackington's orders to apologize to Georgina, Viscountess Lackington, for certain expressions which may have offended her, unwillingly accepts the task as one likely to indicate to her ladyship the propriety of excusing her own conduct to one who had come to claim her kindness and protection."

"And would you presume to send her such a note as this?" cried he, as he crushed it up and flung it into the fire.

"Not now," said she, with a quiet smile.

"Sit down, and then write—"

"I'll not write another," said she, rising. She moved slowly across the room, and as she gained the door she turned and said,

"If you don't want Kuffner, I'd be glad to have him here ;" and without awaiting his reply, she was gone.

"Haven't I made a precious mess of it?" cried Beecher, as he buried his head between his hands, and sat down before the fire.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MRS. SEACOLE'S.

IN a dense fog, and under a thin cold rain, the *Tigris* steamed slowly into the harbor of Balaklava. She had been chartered by the government, and sent out with some seventy thousand pair of shoes, and other like indispensables for an army much in want, but destined to be ultimately re-dispatched to Constantinople—some grave omissions in red tapery having been discovered—whereby she and the shoes remained till the conclusion of the war, when the shoes were sold to the Russians, and the ship returned to England.

Our concern is not, however, with the ship or the shoes, or the patent barley, the potted meats, or the "printed instructions" with which she was copiously provided, but with two passengers who had come up in her from Constantinople, and had, in a manner, struck up a sort of intimacy by the way. They were each of them men rather advanced in life—somewhat ordinary in appearance, of that commonplace turn in look, dress, and bearing that rarely possesses attraction for the better-off class of travelers, but, by the force of a grand law of compensations, as certainly disposes them to fraternize with each other. There are unquestionably some very powerful affinities which draw together men past the prime of life, when they wear bad hats, seedy black coats very wide in the skirt, and Berlin gloves. It is not alone that if they smoke, the tobacco is of the same coarse kind, and that brandy-and-water is a fountain where they frequently meet, but there are mysterious points of agreement about them which develop rapidly into close intimacy, and would even rise to friendship if either of them was capable of such a weakness.

They had met casually at "Miseri's" at Constantinople, and agreed to go up the Black Sea together. Now, though assuredly any common observer passing them might not readily be able to distinguish one from the other again, both being fat, broad-shouldered, vulgar-looking men of about fifty-four, or more, yet each was a sort of

puzzle to each other, and in the curiosity thus inspired, there grew up a bond between them that actually served to unite them.

If we forbore any attempt at mystification with our valued reader in an early stage of this history, it is not now, that we draw to its close, we would effect any secrecy. Let us, therefore, at once announce the travelers by their names, one being Terry Driscoll, and the other the Reverend Paul Classon.

Driscoll had dropped hints—vague hints only—that he had come out to look after a nephew of his, a kind of scapegrace who was always in trouble, but in what regiment he served, or where, or whether he was yet alive, or had been broke and sent home, were all little casualties which he contemplated and discussed, with a strange amount of composure. As for Paul, without ever entering directly upon the personal question, he suffered his ministerial character to ooze slowly out, and left it to be surmised that he was a gentleman of the press, unengaged, and a Christian minister, unattached.

Not that these personal facts were declared in the abrupt manner they are here given to the reader. Far from it; they merely loomed through the haze of their discourse as, walking the deck for hours, they canvassed the war and its objects, and its probable results. Upon all these themes they agreed wonderfully, each being fully satisfied that the whole campaign was only a well-concerted rognery—a scheme for the dismemberment of Turkey, when she had been sufficiently debilitated by the burden of an expensive contest to make all resistance impossible. Heaven knows if either of them seriously believed this. At all events, they said it to each other, and so often, so circumstantially, and so energetically, that it would be very rash in us to entertain a doubt of their sincerity.

"I have been recommended to a house kept by a Mrs. Seacole," said Classon, as they landed on the busy quay, where soldier, and sailors, and land-transport men, with Turks, Wallachs, Tartars, and Greeks, were performing a small Babel of their own.

"God help me!" exclaimed Terry, plaintively, "I'm like a new-born child here; I know nobody, nor how to ask for anything."

"Come along with me, then. There are worse couriers than Paul Classon." And bustling his way through the crowd, his Reverence shouldered his carpet bag, and pushed forward.

It was indeed a rare good fortune for Terry to have fallen upon a fellow traveler so gifted and so accomplished; for not only did Paul seem a perfect polyglot, but he possessed that peculiar bustling activity your regular travelers acquire, by which on his very entrance into an inn, he assumes the position less of guest than of one in authority and in administration. And so now Paul had speedily investigated the resources of the establishment, and ordered an excellent supper, while poor Driscoll was still pottering about his room, or vainly endeavoring to uncoiler a portmanteau which a sailor had fastened more ingeniously than necessary.

"I wish I knew what he was," muttered Terry to himself. "He'd be the very man to help me in this business, if I could trust him."

Was it a strange coincidence that at the same moment Paul Classon should be saying to himself, "That fellow's simplicity would be invaluable if I could only enlist him in our cause. He is a fool well worth two wise men at this conjuncture."

The sort of coffee-room where they supped was densely crowded by soldiers, sailors, and civilians of every imaginable class and condition. Bronzed, weather-beaten captains, come off duty for a good dinner and a bottle of real wine at Mother Seacole's, now mingled with freshly-arrived subs, who had never even seen their regiments; surgeons, commissaries, naval lieutenants, queen's messengers, and army chaplains, were all there, talking away, without previous acquaintance with each other, in all the frankness of men who felt absolved from the rule of ordinary etiquette; and thus, amid discussions of the campaign and its chances, were mingled personal adventures, and even private narratives, all told without the slightest reserve or hesitation: how such a one had got up from his sick-bed, and reported himself well and fit for duty, and how such another had pleaded urgent private affairs to get leave to go home; what a capital pony Watkins had bought for a sovereign, what execrable bitter beer Jones was paying six shillings the bottle for; sailors canvassing the slow advances of landsmen, soldiers wondering why the blue-jackets wouldn't "go in" and blow the whole mock fortifications into the air—some boasting, some grumbling, many ridiculing the French, and all cursing the commissariat.

If opinions were boldly stated, and sentiments declared with very little regard for any opposition they might create, there was throughout a tone of hearty good-fel-

lowship that could not be mistaken. The jests and the merriment seemed to partake of the same hardy character that marked each day's existence, and many a story was told with a laugh, that could not be repeated at the "Rag," or reported at the Horse Guards. Classon and Driscoll listened eagerly to all that went on around them. They were under the potent spell that effects all men who feel themselves for the first time in a scene of which they had heard much. They were actually in the Crimea. The men around them had actually just come off duty in the trenches; that little dark-bearded fellow had lost his arm in the attack of the Mamelon—that blue-eyed youth, yonder, had led a party in assault on the Cemetery—the jovial knot of fellows near the stove had been "potting" all night at the Russians from a rifle-pit. There was a reality in all these things that imparted a marvelous degree of interest to individuals that might otherwise have seemed commonplace and ordinary.

Amidst the noisy narratives and noisier commentaries of the moment, there seemed one discussion carried on with more than usual warmth. It was as to the precise species of reward that could be accorded to one whose military rank could not entitle him to the "Bath."

"I tell you, Chidley," cried one of the speakers, "if he had been a Frenchman there would have been no end of boasting amongst our amiable allies, and he'd have heaven knows what grade of the legion and a pension besides! Show me the fellow amongst them could have done the feat! I don't speak of the pluck of it—they have plenty of pluck—but where's the rider could have sat his horse over it?"

"What height was it?" asked another, as he leisurely puffed his cigar.

"Some say six feet—call it five, call it four, anything you please—it was to go at a breastwork with two nine-pounders inside, that was the feat—and I say again, I don't know another fellow in the army that would have thought of it but himself!"

"Dick Churchill once jumped into a square and out again!"

A hearty roar of laughter announced the amount of credit vouchsafed to the story, but the speaker, most circumstantially, gave time and place, and cited the names of those who had witnessed the fact.

"Be it all as you say," interposed the first speaker, "Churchill did a foolhardy thing, without any object or any result; but Conway sabred three gunners with his own hand."

If the story up to this moment had only interested our two travelers by its heroic claims, no sooner was the name of Conway uttered than each started with astonishment. As for Classon, he arose at once, and drawing near the narrator, politely begged to know if the Conway mentioned was a one-armed man.

"The same, sir—Charley the Smasher, as they used to call him long ago; and, by George, he has earned some right to the title!"

"And he escaped unhurt after all this?" asked Classon.

"No, I never said that; he was almost hacked to pieces, and his horse had four bullets in him and fell dead, after carrying him half way back to our lines."

"And Conway, is he alive? Is he likely to recover?" asked Paul, eagerly.

"The doctors say it is impossible; but Charley himself declares that he has not the slightest intention of dying, and the chances are, he'll keep his word."

"Dear me! only think of that!" muttered Driscoll, as with a look of intense simplicity he listened to this discourse. "And where is he now, sir, if I might make so bold?"

"He's up at the Monastery of St. George, about eight miles off."

"The Lord give him health and strength to go and fight the Russians again!" said Terry; and the speech, uttered in a tone so natural and so simple, was heard with a general laugh.

"Come over to this table, my old buck, and we'll drink that toast in a bumper!" cried one of the officers; and with many a bashful expression of pleasure Mr. Driscoll accepted the invitation.

"Won't your friend join us?" asked another, looking towards Classon.

"I must, however, reluctantly, decline, gentlemen," said Paul, blandly. "I cannot indulge like my respected friend here—I stand in need of rest and repose."

"He doesn't look a very delicate subject, notwithstanding," said a subaltern, as Classon retired.

"There's no judging from appearances," observed Driscoll. "You'd think me a strong man, but I am as weak as a child. There's nothing left of me since I had the 'faver,' and I'll tell you how it happened."

CHAPTER XCIV.

THE CONVENT OF ST. GEORGE.

DAY broke heavily and dull through the massively barred windows of the Convent

of St. George, and dimly discovered a vast crowd assembled in the great hall of waiting: officers—sailors and soldiers—come to inquire news of wounded comrades, camp-followers, suttlers, surgeons, araba-drivers, Tartar guides, hospital nurses, newspaper correspondents, Jew money changers, being only some of the varieties in that great and motley crowd.

Two immense fireplaces threw a ruddy glare over two wide semi-circles of human faces before them, but here and there throughout the hall knots and groups were gathered, engaged in deep and earnest converse. Occasionally one speaker occupied the attention of a listening group, but more generally there was a sort of discussion in which parties suggested this or that explanation, and so supplied some piece of omitted intelligence.

It is to this dropping and broken discourse of one of these small gatherings that I would now draw my reader's attention. The group consisted of nigh a dozen persons, of whom a staff officer and a naval captain were the principal speakers.

"My own opinion is," said the former, "that if the personal episodes of this war come ever to be written, they will be found infinitely more strange and interesting than all the great achievements of the campaign. I ask you, for instance, where is there anything like this very case? A wounded soldier, half cut to pieces by the enemy, is carried to the rear to hear that his claim to a peerage has just been established, and that he has only to get well again to enjoy fifteen thousand a year."

"The way the tidings reach him is yet stranger," broke in another.

"What is *your* version of that?"

"It is the correct one, I promise you," rejoined he; "I had it from the Colthorpe, who was present. When the London lawyer—I don't know his name—reached Balaklava, he discovered, to his horror, that Conway was in the front; and when the fellow summons pluck enough to move on to head-quarters, he learns that Charley has just gone out with a party of eight, openly declaring they mean to do something before they come back. Up to this, the man of parchment has studiously kept his secret; in fact, the general belief about him was that he was charged with a writ, or some such confounded thing, against the poor Smasher, and, of course, the impression contributed little to secure him a polite reception. Now, however, all his calm and prudential reserve is gone, and he rushes madly in to the general's tent, where the general is at break-

fast with all the staff and several guests, and, with the air of a man secure of his position, he flings down upon the table a letter to the general commanding-in-chief from a minister of state, saying, 'There, sir! may I reckon upon your assistance?' It was some time before the general could quite persuade himself that the man was in his senses, he talked away so wildly and incoherently, repeatedly saying, 'I throw it all upon you, sir. Remember, sir, I take none of the responsibility—none!'

"I wish you would kindly inform me as to the precise service you expect at my hands, sir," said the general, somewhat haughtily.

"To have this document deposited in the hands of Lieutenant Charles Conway, sir," said he pompously, laying down a heavily sealed package; "to convey to him the news that his claim to the title and estates of his family has been declared perfect; that before he can reach England he will be Lord Viscount Lackington and Conway."

"Bad news from the front, sir," said an aide-de-camp, breaking in. "After a successful attack on a small redoubt near the Cemetery, two squadrons of the —th have been surprised, and nearly all cut up. Conway, they say, killed."

"No, not killed," broke in another; "badly wounded, and left behind."

"There was, as you may imagine, very little thought bestowed on the lawyer after this. Indeed, the party was scattered almost immediately, and Colthorpe was just going out, when one of Miss Nightingale's ladies said to him, 'Will you do me a great favor, Major Colthorpe—a very great favor? It is to let me have my saddle put on your gray charger for half an hour.' Colly says, if she hadn't been the very prettiest girl he had ever seen since they left England, he'd have shirked it, but he could not; and in less than ten minutes there she was, cantering away through the tents and heading straight for the front. It was not, however, only the gray Arab she carried off, but the great letter of the lawyer was gone too; and so now every one knew at once she was away to the front."

"And after that—after that?" asked three or four together, as the narrator paused.

"After that," resumed he, "there is little to be told. Colthorpe's Arab galloped back with a ball in his counter, and the saddle torn to rags with shot. The girl has not been heard of."

"I can supply this portion of the story," said a young fellow, with his arm in a sling.

"She had come up with Conway, whom they had placed on a horse, and were leading him back to the lines, when a Russian skirmishing party swept past and carried the girl off, and she is now in Sebastopol, under the care of the Countess Woronoff."

"And Conway?"

"Conway's here; and though he has, between shots and sabre-cuts, eight severe wounds, they say that, but for his anxiety about this girl's fate, his chances of recovery are not so bad. Here comes Dr. Raikes, however, who could give us the latest tidings of him."

The gentleman thus alluded to moved hastily down the hall, followed by a numerous train of assistants, to whom he gave his orders as he went. He continued at the same time to open and run his eyes over various letters which an assistant handed to him one by one.

"I will not be tormented with these requests, Parkes," said he, peremptorily. "You are to refuse all applications to see patients who are not in the convalescent wards. These interviews have invariably one effect—they double *our* labor here."

By this time the doctor was hemmed closely in by a dense crowd, eagerly asking for news of some dear friend or kinsman. A brief "Badly," "Better," "Sinking," "Won't do," were in general the extent of his replies, but in no case did he ever seem at a loss as to the name or circumstance of the individual alluded to.

And now at last the great hall began to thin. Wrapping themselves well in their warm cloaks, securing the hoods tightly over their heads, men set out in twos and threes, on foot, on horseback, or in arabas, some for the camp, some for Balaklava, and some for the far-away quarter at the extreme right, near the Tchernaya. A heavy snow was falling, and a cold and cutting wind came over the Black Sea, and howled drearily along the vaulted corridors of the old Convent.

Matter enough for story was there beneath that venerable roof! It was the week after the memorable fight of Inkermann, and some of the best blood of Britain was ebbing in those dimly-lighted cells, whose echoes gave back heart-sick sighs for home from lips that were soon to be mute for ever. There are unlucky days in the calendar of medicine—days when the convalescent makes no progress, and the sick man grows worse—when medicaments seem mulcted of half their efficacy, and disastrous chances abound. Doctors rarely reject the influence of this sup-

erstition, but accept it with calm resignation.

Such, at least, seemed the spirit in which two army surgeons now discussed the events of the day, as they walked briskly for exercise along one of the corridors of the Convent.

"We shall have a gloomy report to send in to-morrow, Parkes," said the elder. "Not one of these late operation cases will recover. Hopeton is sinking fast; Malcomb's wound has put on a treacherous appearance; that compound fracture shows signs of gangrene; and there's Conway, we all thought so well of last night, going rapidly, as though from some internal hemorrhage."

"Poor fellow! it's rather hard to die just when he has arrived at so much to live for. You know that he is to have a peerage?"

"So he told me himself. He said laughingly to me, 'Becknell, my boy, be careful, you are cutting up no common sort of fellow; it's all lordly flesh and blood here!' We were afraid the news might over-excite him, but he took it as easily as possible, and only said, 'How happy it will make my poor mother;' and, after a moment, 'if I only get back to tell it to her!'"

"A civilian below," said a hospital-sergeant, "wishes to see Mr. Conway."

"Can't be—say so," was the curt reply, as the doctor tore, without reading, the piece of paper on which a name was written.

"The lawyer, I have no doubt," said the other; "as if the poor fellow could care to hear of title-deeds and rent-rolls now. 'He'd rather have twenty drops of morphine than know that his estate covered half a county.'"

The sergeant waited for a second or two to see if the doctor should reconsider his reply, and then respectfully retired. The stranger, during the short interval of absence had denuded himself of great-coat and snow-shoes, and was briskly chafing his hands before the fire.

"Well, sergeant, may I see him?" asked he, eagerly.

"No. The doctors won't permit it."

"You didn't tell them who I was, then, that's the reason. You didn't say I was the confidential agent of his family, charged with a most important communication?"

"If I didn't, it was, perhaps, because I didn't know it," said the man, laughing.

"Well, then, go back at once and say that I've come out special—that I must see

him—that the ten minutes I'll stay will save years and years of law and chancery—and that”—here he dropped his voice—“there's a hundred pounds here for the same minutes.”

“You'd better keep that secret to yourself, my good friend,” interposed the sergeant, stiffly.

“Well, so I will, if you recommend it,” said the other, submissively; “but, surely, a ten-pound note would do you no harm yourself, sergeant.”

An insolent laugh was the only answer the other vouchsafed, as he lighted his cigar and sat down before the fire.

“They won't let me see him for the mischief it might do him,” resumed the other, “and little they know that what I have to tell him might be the saving of his life.”

“How so?”

“Just that I've news for him here that would make a man almost get out of his coffin—news that would do more to cure him than all the doctors in Europe. There's papers in that bag there that only wants his name to them to be worth thousands and thousands of pounds, and if he dies without signing them there's nothing but ruin to come of it; and when I said a ten-pound note awhile ago to you, it was a hundred gold sovereigns I meant, counted into the hollow of your fist, just as you sat there. See now, show me your hand.”

As if in a sort of jocular pantomime, the man held out his hand, and the other, taking a strong leather purse from his pocket, proceeded to untie the string, fastened with many a cunning device. At length it was opened, and, emptying out a quantity of its contents into one hand, he began to deposit the pieces, one by one, in the other's palm. “One, two, three, four,” went he on, leisurely, till the last sovereign dropped from his fingers with the words “one hundred!”

Secret and safe as the bargain seemed, a pair of keen eyes peering through the half snowed-up window had watched the whole negotiation, following the sergeant's fingers as they closed upon the gold and deposited it within his pocket.

“Wait here, and I'll see what can be done by-and-by,” said the sergeant, as he moved away.

Scarcely was the stranger left alone than the door opened, and a man entered, shaking the snow from his heavy boots and his long capote.

“So, my worthy friend,” cried he, in a rich, soft voice, “you stole a march on me—moved off without beat of drum, and took up a position before I was stirring!”

“Ah, my reverend friend, *you* here!” said the other, in evident confusion. “I never so much as suspected you were coming in this direction.”

Paul Claxson and Terry Driscoll stared long and significantly at each other. Of all those silences, which are more eloquent than words, none can equal that interval in which two consummate knaves exchange glances of recognition, so complete an appreciation is there of each other's gifts, such an honest, unaffected, frank interchange of admiration.

“You are a clever fellow, Driscoll, you are!” said Paul, admiringly.

“No, no. The Lord help me, I'm a poor crayture,” said Terry shaking his head despondingly.

“Don't believe it, man—don't believe it,” said Paul, clapping him on the shoulder; “you have great natural gifts. Your face alone is worth a thousand a year, and you have a shuffling, shambling way of coming into a room that's better than an account at Coutts's. Joe Norris used to say that a slight palsy he had in one hand was worth twelve hundred a year to him at billiards alone.”

“What a droll man you are, Mr. Claxson,” said Terry, wiping his eyes as he laughed. And again they looked at each other long and curiously.

“Driscoll,” said Paul, after a considerable pause, “on which side do you hold your brief?”

“My brief! God knows it's little I know about briefs and parchments,” sighed Terry, heavily.

“Come, come, man, what's the use of fencing. I see your hand; I know every trump in it.”

Driscoll shook his head, and muttered something about the “faver that destroyed him entirely.”

“Ah!” sighed Claxson, “I cannot well picture to my mind what you might have been anterior to that calamity, but what remains is still remarkable—very remarkable. And now I ask again, on which side are you engaged?”

“Dear me—dear me!” groaned out Terry; “its a terrible world we live in!”

“Truly and well observed, Driscoll. Life is nothing but a long and harrassing journey, with accidents at every stage, and mischances at every halt; meanwhile, for whom do you act?”

The door at the end of the long gallery was slightly and noiselessly opened at this instant, and a signal with a hand caught Driscoll's attention. Rapid and stealthy

as was the motion, Classon turned hastily round and detected it.

"Sit still, Driscoll," said he, smiling, "and let us talk this matter over like men of sense and business. It's clear enough, my worthy friend, that neither you nor I are rich men."

Driscoll sighed an assent.

"That, on the contrary, we are poor, struggling, hard-toiling fellows, mortgaging the good talents fortune has blessed us with to men who have been born to inferior gifts but better opportunities."

Another sigh from Terry.

"You and I, as I have observed, have been deputed out here to play a certain game. Let us be, therefore, not opponents, but partners. One side only can win, let us both be at that side."

Again Terry sighed, but more faintly than before.

"Besides," said Classon, rising, and turning his back to the fire, while he stuck his hands in his pockets, "I'm an excellent colleague, and, unless the world wrongs me, a most inveterate enemy."

"Will he live, do you think?" said Terry, with a gesture of his thumb to indicate him of whom he spoke.

"No; impossible," said Classon, confidently; "he stands in the report fatally wounded, and I have it confidentially that there's not a chance for him."

"And his claim dies with him?"

"That's by no means so sure; at least, we'd be all the safer if we had his papers, Master Driscoll."

"Ay!" said Driscoll, knowingly.

"Now, which of us is to do the job, Driscoll? that's the question. I have my claim to see him, as chaplain to the—I'm not sure of the name of what branch of the service—we'll say the 'Irregular Contingent' Legion. What are *you*, my respected friend?"

"A connection of the family, on the mother's side," said Terry, with a leer.

"A connection of the family!" laughed out Classon. "Nothing better."

"But, after all," sighed Terry, despondingly, "there's another fellow before us both—that chap that brought out the news to the camp, Mr. Reggis, from the house of Swindal and Reggis."

"He's cared for already," said Classon, with a grin.

"The Lord protect us! what do you mean?" exclaimed Driscoll, in terror.

"He wanted to find his way out here last night, so I bribed two Chasseurs d'Afrique to guide him. They took him off outside the French advance, and dropped

him within five hundred yards of a Cossack picket, so that the worthy practitioner is now snug in Sebastopol. In fact, Driscoll, my boy, I'm—as I said before—an ugly antagonist!"

Terry laughed an assent, but there was little enjoyment in his mirth.

"The girl—one of those hospital ladies," continued Classon—"a certain Miss Kellett, is also a prisoner."

"Miss Kellett!" cried Driscoll, in amazement and terror together. "I know her well, and if she's here she'll outwit us both."

"She's in safe hands this time, let her be as cunning as she will. In fact, my dear Driscoll, the game is our own if we be but true to each other."

"I'm more afraid of that girl than them all," muttered Driscoll.

"Look over those hills yonder, Driscoll, and say if that prison-house be not strong enough to keep her. Mr. Reggis and herself are likely to see Moscow before they visit Cheapside. Remember, however, if the field be our own, it is only for a very brief space of time. Conway is dying. What is to be done must be done quickly; and as there is no time for delay, Driscoll, tell me frankly what is it worth to you?" Terry sneezed and wiped his eyes, and sneezed again—all little artifices to gain time and consider how he should act.

"My instructions are these," said Classon, boldly: "to get Conway to sign a bond abdicating all claim to certain rights in lieu of a good round sum in hand; or, if he refuse—"

"Which he certainly would refuse," broke in Driscoll.

"Well, then, to possess myself of his papers, deeds, letters, whatever they were—make away with them, or with any one holding them. Ay, Driscoll, it is sharp practice, my boy, but we're just now in a land where sudden death dispenses with a coroner's inquest, and the keenest inquirer would be puzzled whether the fatal bullet came from a Russian rifle or a Croat carbine. Lend me a helping hand here, and I'll pledge myself that you are well paid for it. Try and dodge me, and I'll back myself to beat you at your own game."

"Here's an order for one of you gentlemen," said an hospital orderly, "coming up to see Lieutenant Conway."

"Is it for me," said Driscoll, eagerly; "I'm a relation of his."

"And I am his family chaplain," said Classon, rising; "we'll go together." And before Driscoll could interpose a word, Paul slipped his arm within the other's and led him away.

CHAPTER XCIV.

SHOWING "HOW WOUNDS ARE HEALED."

ON a low little bed in a small chamber, once a cell of the Convent, Charles Conway lay, pale, bloodless, and breathing heavily. The surgeon's report of that morning called him "mortally wounded," and several of his comrades had already come to bid him farewell. To alleviate, in some measure, his sufferings, he was propped up with pillows and cushions to a half-sitting posture, and so placed, that his gaze could rest upon the open sea, which lay calm and waveless beneath his window; but even on this his eyes wandered vaguely, as though already all fixity of thought was fled, and that the world and its scenes had ceased to move or interest him. He was in that state of exhaustion which follows great loss of blood, and in which the brain wanders dreamily and incoherently, though ready at any sudden question to arouse itself to an effort of right reason.

A faint, sad smile, a little nod, a gesture of the hand, were tokens that one by one his comrades recorded of their last interview with him; and now all were gone, and he was alone. A low murmur of voices at his door bespoke several persons in earnest conversation, but the sounds never reached the ears of the sick man.

"He spoke of making a will, then," said Classon, in a whisper.

"Yes, sir," replied the sergeant. "He asked several times if there was not some one who could take down his wishes in writing, and let him sign it before witnesses."

"That will do admirably," said Paul, pushing his way into the room, closely followed by Terry Driscoll. "Ah, Driscoll," said Paul unctuously, "if we were moralists instead of poor, frail time-serving creatures as we are, what a lesson might we not read in the fate of the poor fellow that lies there!"

"Ay, indeed!" sighed out Terry, assentingly.

"What an empty sound 'my lord' is, when a man comes to that," said Paul, in the same solemn tone, giving, however, to the words "my lord" a startling distinctness that immediately struck upon the sick man's ear. Conway quickly looked up and fixed his eyes on the speaker.

"Is it all true, then—an I not dreaming?" asked the wounded soldier, eagerly.

"Every word of it true, my lord," said Classon, sitting down beside the bed.

"And I was the first, my lord, to bring

out the news," interposed Terry. "'Twas myself found the papers in an old farmhouse, and showed them to Davenport Dunn."

"Hush, don't you see that you only confuse him?" whispered Classon, cautiously.

"Dunn, Dunn," muttered Conway, trying to recollect. "Yes, we met at poor Kellett's funeral—poor Kellett! the last of the Albuernas!"

"A gallant soldier, I have heard," chimed in Classon, merely to lead him on.

"Not a whit more so than his son Jack. Where is he—where is Jack?"

None could answer him, and there was a silence of some minutes.

"Jack Kellett would never have deserted me in this way if he were alive and well," muttered Conway, painfully. "Can no one give me any tidings of him?"

Another silence ensued.

"And I intended he should have been my heir," said Conway, dreamily. "How strangely it sounds, to be sure, the notion of inheriting anything from Charley Conway. How little chance there was a month or two back that my best legacy might not have been a shabrack or a pair of pistols; and now I am the Lord Viscount—what is it?—Viscount—"

"A wild gust of wind—one of those swooping blasts for which the Euxine is famous—now struck the strong old walls, and made the massive casements rattle. The sick man started at the noise, which recalled at once the crash of the battlefield, and he cried out vigorously, "Move up, men—move up; keep together, and charge. Charge!" and with bent-down head and compressed lips he seemed like one prepared to meet a murderous onslaught. A sudden faintness succeeded to this excitement, and he lay back, weak and exhausted. As he fell back, a letter dropped from his hand to the ground. Classon speedily caught it up and opened it. He had, however, but time to read the opening line, which ran thus: "My dearest Charley, our cause is all but won—"

"From his mother," interposed Driscoll, leaning over his shoulder.

"Ay, my mother, murmured Conway, whose ear, preternaturally acute from fever, caught the word; "she will see that my wishes are carried out, and that all I leave behind me goes to poor Jack."

"We'll take care of that, sir," said Classon, blandly; "only let us know what it is you desire. We have no other object here than to learn your wishes."

With all the alacrity of one accustomed

to such emergencies, Paul drew a small portfolio from his pocket provided with all materials for writing, and arrayed them neatly before him; but already the sick man had dropped off into a sleep, and was breathing heavily.

"That box must contain all the papers," said Classon, rising stealthily and crossing the room; "and see, the key is in the lock!" In a moment they were both on the spot busily ransacking the contents. One glance showed their suspicions to be correct: there were heaps of legal documents, copies of deeds, extracts of registries, with innumerable letters of explanation. They had no time for more than the most hurried look at these; in fact, they turned in terror at every movement, to see if the sick man had recovered from his swoon.

"This is all; better than ever I looked for," said Classon. "Fill your pockets with them; we must divide the spoils between us, and be off before he rallies."

Driscoll obeyed with readiness. His eager eye scrutinized hastily so much as he could catch of the import of each document; but he did not venture, by any attempt at selection, to excite Classon's suspicions.

"If we cannot make our own terms after this night's work, Driscoll, my name is not Paul Classon. The poor fellow here will soon be past tale-telling, even if he were able to see us. There you have dropped a large parchment."

"I'll put it in the pocket of my cloak," said the other, in a whisper; while he added, still more stealthily: "wouldn't you swear that he was looking at us this minute?"

Classon started. The sick man's eyes were open, and their gaze directed toward them, while his lips, slightly parted, seemed to indicate a powerless attempt to speak.

"No," said Classon, in a scarcely audible whisper; "that is death."

"I declare I think he sees us," muttered Driscoll.

"And if he does, man, what signifies it? He's going where the knowledge will little benefit him. Have you everything safe and sure, now? There, button your coat well up; we must start at once."

"May I never! if I can take my eyes off him," said Driscoll, trembling.

"You had better take yourself off, bodily, my worthy friend; there's no saying who might chance to come in upon us here. Is not that a signet ring on his finger? It would only be a proper atten-

tion to carry it to his mother, Driscoll." There was a half sarcasm about the tone of this speech that made it sound strangely ambiguous, as, stooping down, he proceeded to take off the ring.

"Leave it there—leave it there! it will bring bad luck upon us," murmured Driscoll, in terror.

"There is no such bad luck as not to profit by an opportunity," whispered Classon, as he tried, but in vain, to withdraw the ring. A sharp, half-suppressed cry suddenly escaped him, and Driscoll exclaimed,

"What is it? What's the matter?"

"Look, and see if he hasn't got hold of me, and tightly, too."

The affected jocularity of his tone accorded but ill with the expression of pain and fright so written upon his features, for the dying man had grasped him by the wrist, and held him with a grip of iron.

"That's what they call a dead man's grip, I suppose," said Classon, in assumed mockery. "Just try if you cannot unclasp his fingers."

"I wouldn't touch him if you offered me a thousand guineas for it," said Driscoll, shuddering.

"Nonsense, man. We cannot stand fooling here, and I shall only hurt him if I try it with one hand. Come, open his fingers gently. Be quick. I hear voices without, and the tramp of horses' feet in the court below. Where are you going? You're not about to leave me here?"

"May I never! if I know what to do," muttered Driscoll, in a voice of despair. "And didn't I tell you from the first it would bring bad luck upon us?"

"The worst of all luck is to be associated with a fool and a coward," said Classon, savagely. "Open these fingers at once, or give me a knife and I'll do it myself."

"The Lord forgive you, but you're a terrible man," cried Driscoll, moving stealthily toward the door.

"So you *are* going?" muttered Paul, with a voice of intense passion. "You would leave me here to take the consequences, whatever they might be?"

Driscoll made no reply, but stepped hastily out of the room, and closed the door.

For a moment, Classon stood still and motionless; then, bending down his head, he tried to listen to what was passing outside, for there was a sound of voices in the corridor, and Driscoll's one of them. "The scoundrel is betraying me!" muttered Paul to himself. "At all events,

these must not be found upon me." And with this, and by the aid of his one disengaged hand, he proceeded to strew the floor of the room with the various papers he had abstracted from the box. Again, too, he listened; but now all was still without. What could it mean? Had Driscoll got clear away, without even alluding to him? And now he turned his gaze upon the sick man, who lay there calm and motionless as before. "This will end badly if I cannot make my escape," muttered he to himself; and he once more strove with all his might to unclasp the knotted fingers, but such was the rigid tenacity of their grasp, they felt as though they must sooner be broken than yield. "Open your hand, sir. Let me free," whispered he in Conway's ear. "That fellow has robbed you, and I must follow him. There, my poor man, unclasp your fingers," said he, caressingly, "or it will be too late!"

Was it a delusion, that he thought a faint flickering of a smile passed over that death-like countenance? And now, in whispered entreaty, Classon begged and implored the other to set him free.

"There is nothing for it, then, but this," said Paul, with a muttered curse, "and your own fault is it that I am driven to it!" And, so saying, he drew a powerful clasp-knife from his pocket, and tried to open it with his teeth; but the resistance of the spring still defied all his efforts for some time, and it was only after a long struggle that he succeeded. "He's insensible; he'll never feel it," muttered Paul below his breath; "and even if he should, self-preservation is the first of all cares." And with this he grasped the knife vigorously in his strong hand, and gazed at the sick man, who seemed to return his stare as fixedly. There was in Conway's look even a something of bold defiance, that seemed to say. "I dare and defy you!" so at least did Classon read it, and quailed before its haughty meaning. "What wretched cowardice is over me, and at a time when minutes are worth days," muttered Classon. "Here goes!" But now a confused noise of many voices, and the steps of advancing feet, were heard in the corridor, and Classon sank down beside the bed, a cold sweat covering his forehead and face, while he trembled in every limb.

The room was speedily filled with staff officers and surgeons, in the midst of whom was a civilian, travel-stained and tired-looking, who pressed eagerly forward, saying, as he beheld Classon, "Who is this man—what is he doing here?"

"An humble missionary—a weak vessel," said Paul, whiningly. "In a paroxysm of his pain he caught me thus, and has held me ever since. There—at last I am free!" And as he said these words the sick man's fingers unclasp and liberated him.

"There has been foul play here," said Mr. Reggis, the stranger in civilian dress. "See! that box has been rifled; the floor is covered with papers. This man must be detained."

"In bonds or in a dungeon, it matters not," said Paul, holding up his hands as if about to open a lengthy discourse, but he was hurried away ere he could continue.

"He is certainly no worse," said one of the surgeons, as he felt Conway's pulse and examined the action of his heart, "but I am far from saying that he will recover!"

"If I do not greatly mistake," said Reggis, "our friend the missionary is the man through whose kind offices I was betrayed within the Russian lines; but I'll look to this later. As it was, I have had little to complain of my treatment in Sebastopol and my detention was of the shortest."

"And Miss Kellett—is she free also?" asked one of the bystanders.

"Yes; we came back together. She is up at headquarters, giving Lord Raglan an account of her capture."

"What is it, Conway?" asked one of the surgeons, suddenly startled by the intensity of the anxiety in his face. "Are you in pain?"

He shook his head in dissent.

"You are thirsty, perhaps. Will you have something to drink?"

"No," said he, with the faintest possible utterance.

"What is it, then, my poor fellow?" said he affectionately.

"So it was not a dream!" gasped out Conway.

"What was it you fancied to be a dream?"

"All—everything but this!" And he pointed to a deep wound from a sabre-cut in his shoulder.

"Ay, and that, too, will be as a dream some years hence!" said the other, cheerfully.

It was evident now that the excitement of talking and seeing so many persons about him was injurious, and the surgeons silently motioned to the bystanders to retire.

"May I remain with him?" asked the lawyer. "If he could give his consent to

certain measures, sign one or two papers, years of litigation might be saved."

Conway had, meanwhile, beckoned to the surgeon to approach him; and then, as the other leaned over the bed, he whispered,

"Was it true what I have just heard—was she really here?"

"Miss Kellett, do you mean? Yes; she carried up the news to you herself. It was she that tied the handkerchief on your wounded artery, too, and saved your life."

"Here—in the Crimea? It cannot—cannot be!" sighed Conway.

"She is not the only noble-hearted woman who has left home and friends to brave perils and face hardships, though I own she stands alone for heroism and daring."

"So, then, it was not a delusion—I did actually see her in the trenches?" said Conway, eagerly.

"She was in the advanced parallel the night the Russians surprised the fifth. She was the first to give the alarm of the attack."

"Only think, doctor, of what happened to me that night! I was sent up at speed to say that reinforcements were coming up. Two companies of the Royals were already in march. My horse had twice fallen with me, and, being one-armed, I was a good deal shaken, and so faint when I arrived that I could scarcely deliver my message. It was just then a woman—I could only perceive in the darkness that she seemed young—gave me her brandy-flask; after drinking, I turned to give it back to her, but she was gone. There was no time to search for her at such a moment, and I was about to ride away, when 'a carcasse,' exploding on one of the redoubts, lit up the whole scene for a considerable space around, and whom should I see but Jack Kellett's sister, cheering the men and encouraging them to hold their ground. I could have sworn to her features, as I could now to yours; but that she could really be there seemed so utterly impossible, that I fancied it was a delusion. Nay," added he after a pause, "let me tell the whole truth. I thought it was a warning! Ay, doctor, the weight is off my heart now that I have confessed this weakness." As Conway spoke, he seemed, indeed, as though he had relieved himself of some mighty care, for already his eye had regained its luster, and his bold features recovered their wonted expression. "Now," cried he, with a renovated vigor, "I have done with false terrors about second sight, and the rest of it. I am myself again."

"You can listen to my tidings, then," said Reggis, seating himself at the bedside, and at once beginning a narrative, to which I am obliged to own Conway did not always pay a becoming attention, his thoughts still reverting to very different scenes and incidents from those which the lawyer recounted. Indeed, more than once was the narrator's patience sorely tried and tested. "I am doing my very best to be brief, sir. I am limiting myself strictly to a mere outline of the case," said he, in something of pique. "It *might* interest you—it *ought* to interest you!"

"If the doctor yonder will promise me health and years to enjoy all this same good fortune, so it will interest me," cried Conway. "What does the income amount to?"

"If we only recover the English estates, it will be something under twelve thousand a year. If we succeed with the Irish, it will be about three more."

"And how far are we on the road to this success?"

"One verdict is already won. The first action for ejection on title has been brought, and we are the victors. Upon this, all your counsel are agreed, your claim to the viscounty rests."

"I can scarcely credit—scarcely picture it to myself," said Conway, half aloud. "My mind is confused by the thought of all the things I wish to do, if this be true. First of all, I want to purchase Jack Kellett's commission."

"If you mean Miss Kellett's brother, he is already gazetted an ensign, and on his way to join his regiment in India."

"And how do you know this?"

"She told me so herself."

"She! When and where have you seen her?"

"Here, at headquarters; in Sebastopol, where we were prisoners together; at the camp yesterday, where we parted."

"My poor head cannot bear this," said Conway, painfully; "I am struggling between the delight of all these good tidings and a terrible dread that I am to awake and find them but a dream. You said that she was here in the camp?"

"That she is. If you but heard the cheer that greeted her arrival! it began at the advanced pickets, and swelled louder and louder, till, like the roar of the sea, it seemed to make the very air tremble. There, hear that! As I live, it is the same shout again."

"Here comes the general and his staff into the court below," said the doctor, hurrying away to receive them.

As the sounds of a distant cheer died away, the noise of horses' feet resounded through the court-yard, and the clank of musketry in salute announced the arrival of an officer of rank.

"I declare they are coming this way," cried Mr. Reggis, rising in some confusion, "and I heard your name spoken. Coming, I've no doubt, to see *you*."

"The general of your division, Conway, came to ask after you," said an aide-de-camp, entering, and then standing aside to make place for a venerable, soldier-like man, whose snow-white hair would have graced a patriarch.

"I have come to shake your hand, Conway," said he, "and to tell you we are all proud of you. There is nothing else talked of through our own or the French camp than that daring feat of yours, and England will soon hear of it."

A deep blush of manly shame covered Conway's face as he listened to these words, but he could not speak.

"I have been talking the matter over with the general commanding-in-chief," resumed he, "who agrees with me that the Horse Guards might possibly, recognizing your former rank of captain, make you a now brevet major, and thus qualify you for the Bath."

"Time enough, general, for that," said Conway. "I have a very long arrear of folly and absurdity to wipe out ere I have any pretension to claim high rewards."

"Well, but if all that I hear be true, we are likely to lose your services here; they have a story abroad about a peerage and a vast fortune to which you have succeeded. Indeed, I heard this moment from Miss Kellett——"

"Is she here, sir?—can I see her?" cried Conway, eagerly.

"Yes. She has come over to say good-by, for, I regret to say, she, too, is about to leave us to join her brother at Calcutta."

A sickly paleness spread itself over Conway's cheeks, and he muttered, "I must see her—I must speak with her at once."

"So you shall, my poor fellow," said the other, affectionately; "and I know of no such recompense for wounds and suffering as to see her gentle smile and hear her soft voice. She shall come to you immediately."

Conway covered his face with his hand to conceal the emotion that stirred him, and heard no more. Nor was he conscious that one by one the persons around him slipped noiselessly from the room, while into the seat beside his bed glided a young

girl's figure, dressed in deep black, and veiled.

"Such a fate!" muttered he, half aloud; "all this, that they call my good fortune, comes exactly when I do not care for it."

"And why so?" asked a low, soft voice almost in his very ear.

"Is this indeed you?" cried he, eagerly; "was it *your* hand I felt on my temples as I lay wounded outside the trenches? was it your voice that cheered me as they carried me to the rear?"

She slightly bent her head in assent, and murmured, "Your old comrade's sister could not do less."

"And now you are about to leave me," said he, with an overwhelming sorrow in the tone.

She turned away her head slightly, and made no answer.

"I, who am utterly alone here," said he, in a broken voice. "Is this, too, like my old comrade's sister?" There was a peevishness in the way he spoke this, of which he seemed himself to be ashamed the moment the words were uttered, and he quickly added, "What a fellow I am to say this to you!—*you*, who have done so much for me—you, who promised to be a daughter to my poor mother when I am gone!"

"But you are not to take this gloomy view," said she, hastily; "the surgeons all pronounce you better; they agree that your wounds progress favorably, and that in a week or two you may be removed to Constantinople, and thence to England."

He gave a faint, sickly smile of most melancholy meaning.

"And what will not the cheery, bracing air of those Welsh mountains do, aided by the kind care of that best of nurses, a fond mother?"

"And where will you be by that time?" asked he, eagerly.

"Journeying away eastward to some far-away land, still more friendless!" said she, sadly.

"This, then, is the sum of all my good fortune, that when life opens fairly for me, it shall be bereft of all that I cared for!" cried he, wildly.

Terrified by the excited tone in which he spoke, as well as by the feverish luster of his eyes, Sybella tried to calm and soothe him, but he listened—if, indeed, he heard her—with utter apathy.

"Come!" cried he, at last, "if your resolve be taken, so is mine. If you leave for India, I shall never quit the Crimea."

"It is not thus I expected one to speak

who loves his mother as you do," said she, reproachfully.

"Ay, Sybella, it would indeed have been a happy day for me when I should have returned to her in honor, could I but have said, 'You have not alone a son beneath your roof, but a dear daughter also.' If all that they call my great luck had brought this fortune, then had I been indeed a fellow to be envied. Without that hope, there is not another that I want to cling to."

She tried gently to withdraw her hand from his, but he held it in his grasp, and continued :

"You, who never heard of me until the first day we met, know little of the stored-up happiness your very name has afforded me for many a day—how days long Jack talked of you to me as we rambled together—how the long nights of the trenches were beguiled by telling of you—till at length I scarcely knew whether I had not myself known and loved you for years. I used to fancy, too, how every trait of poor Jack—his noble ardour, his generous devotion—might be displayed amidst the softer and more graceful virtues of womanhood; and at last I came to know you, far and away above all I had ever dreamed of."

"Let me go—let me say good-bye," said she, in a faint whisper.

"Bear with me a few moments longer, Sybella," cried he, passionately. "With all their misery, they are the happiest of my life."

"This is unfair—it is almost ungenerous of you," said she, with scarcely stifled emotion, and still endeavoring to withdraw her hand.

"So it is!" cried he, suddenly; "it is unmanly and ignoble both, and it is only a poor, selfish sick man could stoop to plead so abjectly." He relinquished her hand as he spoke, and then grasping it suddenly, he pressed it to his lips, and burst into tears. "A soldier should be made of better stuff, Sybella," said he, trying to smile. "Good-bye—good-bye."

"It is too late to say so now," said she faintly. "I will not go."

"Not go—not leave me, Sybella?" cried he. "Oh, that I may have heard you aright! Did you say you would remain with me, and for how long?"

"For ever!" said she, stooping down and kissing his forehead. The next moment she was gone.

"Come, Conway," said the doctor, "cheer up, my good fellow, you'll be all right in a week or so. You've got some-

thing worth living for, too, if all accounts be true."

"More than you think for, doctor," said Conway, heartily—"far more than you think for."

"The lawyer talks of a peerage and a fine estate."

"Far more than that," cried Conway; "a million times better."

The surgeon turned a look of half apprehension on the sick man, and, gently closing the shutters, he withdrew.

Dark as was that room, and silent as it was, what blissful hopes and blessed anticipations crowded and clustered around that low "sick-bed"—what years of happiness unfolded themselves before that poor brain, which no longer felt a pang, save in the confusion of its bright imaginings! How were wounds forgotten and sufferings unminded in those hours wherein a whole future was revealed!

At last he fell off to sleep, and to dream of a fair white hand that parted the hair upon his forehead, and then gently touched his feverish cheek. Nor was it all a dream; she was at his bedside.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"GROG" IN COUNCIL.

"WHAT dreary little streets are those that lead from the Strand toward the Thames! Pinched, frail, semi-genteel, and many-logged are the houses, mysteriously indicative of a variously occupied population, and painfully suggesting, by the surging conflict of busy life at one end, and the dark flowing river at the other, an existence maintained between struggle and suicide." This, most valued reader, is no reflection of mine, but was the thought that occupied the mind of one who, in not the very best of humors, and of a wet and dreary night, knocked in succession at half the doors in the street in search after an acquaintance.

"Yes, sir, the second back," said a sleepy maid-servant at last; he is just come in."

"All right," said the stranger. "Take that carpet-bag and writing-desk up-stairs to his room, and say 'that Captain Davis is coming after them.'"

"You owe me a tip, captain," said the cabman, catching the name as he was about to mount his box. "Do you remember the morning I drove you down to Black-wall to catch the Antwerp boat, I went

over Mr. Moss, the sheriff's officer, and smashed his ankle, and may I never taste bitters again if I got a farthing for it."

"I remember," said Davis, curtly. "Here's a crown. I'd have made it a sovereign if it had been his neck you'd gone over."

"Better luck next time, sir, and thank you," said the man, as he drove away.

The maid was yet knocking for admission when Grog arrived at the door. "Captain Fisk, sir—Captain Fisk, there's a gent as says——"

"That will do," said Davis, taking the key from her hand and opening the door for himself.

"Old Grog himself, as I'm a living man!" cried a tall, much-whiskered and moustached fellow, who was reading a *Bell's Life* at the fire.

"Ay, Master Fisk—no other," said Davis, as he shook his friend cordially by the hand. "I've had precious work to find you out. I was up at Duke street, then they sent me to the Adelphi; after that I tried Ling's, in the Haymarket, and it was a waiter there——"

"Joe," broke in the other.

"Exactly. Joe told me that I might chance upon you here."

"Well, I'm glad to see you, old fellow, and have a chat about long ago," said Fisk, as he placed a square green bottle and some glasses on the table. "How well you're looking, too; not an hour older than when I saw you four years ago!"

"Ain't I, though," muttered Grog. "Ay, and like the racers, I've got weight for age besides. I'm a stone and a half heavier than I ought to be, and there's nothing worse than that to a fellow that wants to work with his head and sleep with one eye open."

"You can't complain much on that score, Kit; you never made so grand a stroke in your life as that last one—the marriage, I mean."

"It wasn't bad," said Davis, as he mixed his liquor, "nor was it exactly the kind of hazard that every man could make. Beecher was a troublesome one—a rare troublesome one; nobody could ever say when he'd run straight."

"I always thought him rotten," said the other, angrily.

"Well, he is and he isn't," said Grog, deliberately.

"He has got no pluck," said Fisk, indignantly.

"He has quite enough."

"Enough—enough for what?"

"Enough for a lord. Look here, Master Fisk, so long as you have not to gain your living by anything, it is quite sufficient if you can do it moderately well. Many a first-rate amateur there is who wouldn't be thought a tenth-rate artist."

"I'd like to know where you had been to-day if it wasn't for your pluck," said Fisk, doggedly.

"In a merchant's office in the city, be-like, on a hundred and twenty pounds a year; a land steward down in Dorsetshire, at half the salary; skipper of a collier from North Shields, or an overseer in Jamaica. These are the high prizes for such as you and me; and the droll part of the matter is, they *will* talk of us as 'such lucky dogs,' whenever we attain to one of these brilliant successes. Gazette my son-in-law as ambassador to Moscow, and nobody thinks it strange; announce in the same paper that Kit Davis has been made a gauger, and five hundred open mouths exclaim, 'How did he obtain that? Who the deuce got it for him? Does *he* fall on his legs!' and so on."

"I suppose we shall have our turn one of these days," muttered the other, sulkily.

"I hope not. I'd rather have things as they are," said Grog, gravely.

"Things as they are! And why so, I'd wish to ask?"

"Look at it this way, Tom Fisk," said Grog, squaring his arms on the table and talking with slow deliberation; "if you were going to cut into a round game, wouldn't you rather take a hand where the players were all soft ones, with plenty of cash, or would you prefer sitting down with a set of downy coves, all up to every dodge, and not a copper farthing in the company? Well, that's exactly what the world would be if the Manchester fellows had their way; that's exactly what it is, this very hour we're sitting here, in America. There's nobody on the square there. President, Judges, Editors, Congressmen, Governors, are all rogues; and they've come to that pass, that any fellow with a dash of spirit about him must come over to Europe to gain his livelihood. I have it from their own lips what I'm telling you, for I was a thinking about going over there myself, but they said, 'Don't go, sir,'—they always say 'sir'—'don't go, sir.' Our Western fellows are very wide awake; for every trump you'd have up your *sleeve*, they'd have two in their *boots!*"

"For my own part," said Fisk, "I'd not go and live amongst them if you'd make me minister at Washington, and so I told Simmy Hankes this morning, when

he came in such high feather about his appointment as consul—I forget where to.”

“Hankes—Hankes! The same fellow that used to be with Robins?”

“Just so; and for some years back Davenport Dunn’s managing man.”

Grog gave a very slight start, and then asked carelessly why he was leaving Dunn’s employment.

“Dunn’s going to shut up shop. Dunn is to be a peer next week, and retires from business. He is to be in Tuesday’s *Gazette*, so Hankes tells me.

“He has done the thing well, I suppose?” said Davis, coolly.

“Hankes says something like two millions sterling. Pretty well for a fellow that started without a sixpence.”

“I wonder he couldn’t have done something better for Hankes than that paltry place.”

“So he might, and so he would; but you see, Simmy didn’t like waiting. He’s a close fellow, and one can’t get much out of him, but I can perceive that he was anxious to get off the coach.”

“Didn’t like the pace—didn’t trust the tackle overmuch,” said Grog, carelessly.

“Something of that kind, I’ve no doubt,” rejoined Fisk.

“Have you any pull over this same Hankes, Tom?” said Grog, confidentially.

“Well, I can’t say I have. We were pals together long ago; we did a little in the racing line—in a very small way, of course. Then he used to have a roulette-table at Doncaster, but somehow there was no ‘go’ in him; he was over-cautious, and always saying, ‘I’d rather take to business,’ and as I hated business, we separated.”

“It’s odd enough that I can’t remember the fellow. I thought I knew every one that was on the ‘lay’ these five and thirty years.”

“He wasn’t Hankes at the time I speak of; he was a Jew at that period, and went by the name of Simeon.”

“Simeon, Simeon—not the fellow that used to come down to Windsor with the Hexquite Habannar cigars?” And Grog mimicked not alone the voice, but the face of the individual alluded to, till Fisk burst into a roar of laughter.”

“That’s Simmy—that’s the man,” cried Fisk, as he dried his eyes.

“Don’t I know him! I had a class at that time, young fellows in the blues. I used to give them lessons in billiards, and Simmy, as you call him, discounted for the mess on a sliding scale—ten per cent. for the major, and sixty for cornets the

first year they joined. He was good fun, Simmy; he fancied he would have been a first-rate actor, and used to give scenes out of ‘Othello,’ in Kean’s manner: that was the only soft thing about him, and many a fellow got a bill done by applauding. ‘Now is the winter of our discontent!’” And Grog gave a low growling sort of a laugh at his reminiscences.

“You’ll see him to-morrow; he’s to breakfast here,” said Fisk, rather amused at the prospect of a recognition between such men.

“He would never play *Shylock*,” continued Grog, following out his reminiscences, “though we all told him he’d make a great hit in the part. The Jew, you see—the Jew couldn’t stand *that*. And so Mr. Simmy Hankes is no other than Simeon! It was an old theory of mine, whenever I saw a fellow doing wonderfully well in the world, without any help from friends or family, to fancy that one time or other he must have belonged to what they are so fond of calling ‘the Hebrew persuasion!’”

“I wouldn’t rake up old memories with him, Grog, if I were you,” said Fisk, coaxingly.

“It ain’t *my* way, Tom Fisk,” said Davis, curtly.

“He’ll be at his ease at once when he perceives that you don’t intend to rip up old scores; and he’ll be just as delicate with *you*.”

“Delicate with me?” cried Grog, bursting out into a fit of immoderate laughter. “Well, if that ain’t a good one! I wonder what he is! Do you imagine Fitzroy Kelly is ashamed of being thought a lawyer, or Brodie of being a surgeon? You must be precious soft, my worthy friend, if you suppose that I don’t know what the world thinks and says of *me*. No, no, there’s no need of what you call delicacy at all. You used to be made of other stuff than this, Tom Fisk. It’s keeping company with them snobs of half-pay officers, clerks in the Treasury, and press reporters, has spoiled you; the demi-gents of the ‘Garottaman Club’ have ruined hundreds.”

“The Garottaman is one of the first clubs in town,” broke in Fisk.

“You’re too much like sailors on a raft for my fancy,” said Grog, dryly.

“What do you mean by that?”

“Just that you are all hungry and have got nothing to eat—you’re eternally casting lots who is to be devoured next! But we’ll not fall out about that. I’ve been turning over in my head about this Simmy Hankes, and I’d like to have an hour in

his company, all alone. Could you manage to be out of the way to-morrow morning and leave me to entertain him at breakfast?"

"It will suit my book to a trivet, for I want to go over to Barnes to look after a yearling I've got there, and you can tell Hankes that the colt was taken suddenly ill."

"He'll not be very curious about the cause of your absence," said Grog, dryly. "The pleasure of seeing me so unexpectedly will put everything else out of his head." A grim smile showed the spirit in which he spoke these words.

It was now very late, and Davis threw himself on a sofa, with his great coat over him, and, wishing his friend a good-night, was soon sound asleep: nor did he awake till aroused by the maid-servant getting the room into readiness and arranging the table for breakfast. Then, indeed, Grog arose and made his toilet for the day—not a very elaborate nor a very elegant one, but still a disguise such as the most practised detective could not have penetrated, and yet removable in a moment, so that he might, by merely taking off eyebrows and moustaches, become himself at once.

Having given orders that the gentleman he expected should be shown in on his arrival, Grog solaced himself at the fire with a morning paper, in all the ease of slippers and an armchair. Almost the first thing that struck his eye was a paragraph informing the world that the marriage of a distinguished individual—whose approaching elevation to the peerage had been already announced—with one of the most beautiful daughters of the aristocracy, would take place early in the ensuing week. And then, like a codicil to a will, followed a brilliant description of the gold dressing-case ordered by Mr. Davenport Dunn, at Storr's, for his bride. He was yet occupied with the paragraph when Mr. Hankes entered the room.

"I am afraid I have made a mistake," said that bland gentleman. "I thought this was Captain Fisk's apartment."

"You're all right," said Grog, leisurely surveying the visitor, whose "get up" was really splendid. Amethyst studs glittered on his shirt; his ample chest seemed a shrine in its display of amulets and charmed offerings, while a massive chain crossed and recrossed him so frequently, that he appeared to be held together by its coils. Fur and velvet, too, abounded in his costume; and even to the immense "gland" that depended from his cane, there was an amount of costliness that bespoke affluence.

"I regret, sir," began Hankes, pompously, "that I have not the honor——"

"Yes, yes; you *have* the honor," broke in Grog. "You've had it this many a year. Sit down here. I don't wear exactly so well as you, but you'll remember me presently. I'm Kit Davis, man. You don't require me to say who you are."

"Davis—Grog Davis," muttered Hankes to himself, while an ashy paleness spread over his face.

"You don't look overjoyed to meet with an old friend," said Grog, with a peculiar grin; "but you ought, man. There's no friendships like early ones. The fellows who knew us in our first scrapes are always more lenient to our last wickednesses."

"Captain Davis—Captain Davis!" stammered out Hankes, "this is indeed an unexpected pleasure!"

"So much so that you can hardly get accustomed to it," said Grog, with another grin. "Fisk received a hasty message that called him away to the country this morning, and left me to fill his place; and I, as you may guess, was little loath to have a cozy chat with an old friend that I have not seen—how many years is it?"

"It must be nigh ten, or even twelve!"

"Say, seven or eight-and-twenty, man, and you'll be nigher the mark. Let me see," said he, trying to remember, "the last time I saw you was at Exeter. You were waiting for your trial about those bills of George Colborne. Don't look so frightened, there's no one to hear us here. It was as narrow an escape there as ever man had. It was after that, I suppose, you took the name of Hankes?"

"Yes," said the other, in a faint whisper.

"Well, I must say Christianity doesn't seem to have disagreed with you. You're in capital case—a little pluffy for work, but in rare health, and sleek as a beaver."

"Always the same. He will have his joke," muttered Hankes, as though addressing some third party to the colloquy.

"I can't say that I have committed any excesses in that line of late," said Grog, dryly. "I've had rather a tough fight with the world!"

"But you've fought it well, and successfully, Davis," said the other with confidence. "Haven't you married your daughter to a viscount?"

"Who told *you* that? Who knows it here?" cried Grog, hurriedly.

"I heard it from Fordyce's people a fortnight ago. It was I myself brought the first news of it to Davenport Dunn."

"And what did *he* say?"

"Well, he didn't say much; he wondered a little how it came about; hinted that you must be an uncommon clever fellow, for it was a great stroke, if all should come right."

"You mean about the disputed claim to the title?"

"Yes."

"He has his doubts about that then, has he?"

"He hasn't much doubt on the subject, for it lies with himself to decide the matter either way. If he likes to produce certain papers, Conway's claim is as good as established. You are aware that they have already gained two of their actions on ejection; but Dunn could save them a world of time and labor, and that's why he's coming up to-morrow. Fordyce is to meet him at Calvert's hotel, and they're to go into the entire question?"

"What are his terms? How much does he ask?" said Grog, bluntly.

"I can't possibly say; I can only suspect."

"What do you suspect, then?"

"Well," said Hanks, drawing a long breath, "my impression is that, if he decide for the present viscount, he'll insist upon an assignment of the whole Irish property in his favor."

"Two thousand a year, landed property!" exclaimed Grog.

"Two thousand eight hundred, and well paid," said Hanks, coolly, "but that is not all."

"Not all! What do you mean?"

"Why, there's another hitch. But what am I saying?" cried he, in terror. "I don't believe that I'd speak of these things on my death-bed."

"Be frank and open with me, Simeon. I am a true pal to the man that trusts me, and the very devil to him that plays me false."

"I know it," said the other gloomily.

"Well, now for that other hitch, as you called it. What is it?"

"It's about an estate that was sold under the 'Encumbered Court,' and bought by the late Lord Lackington—at least in his name—and then resold at a profit—." Here he stopped and seemed as though he had already gone too far.

"I understand," broke in Grog; "the purchase-money was never placed to the viscount's credit, and your friend Dunn wants an acquittance in full of the claim."

"You've hit it!"

"What's the figure—how much?"

"Thirty-seven thousand six hundred pounds."

"He's no retail dealer, this same Davenport Dunn," said Grog with a grin; that much I will say of him."

"He has a wonderful head," said Hanks, admiringly.

"I'll agree with you, if it save his neck," said Davis; and then added, after a moment, "he's bringing up all these documents and papers with him, you said?"

"Yes; he intends to make some settlement or other of the matter before he marries. After that he bids farewell to business forever."

"He'll go abroad, I suppose?" said Davis, not attaching any strong significance to his remark; but suddenly perceiving an expression of anxiety in Hanks' face, he said, "mayhap it were all as well, he be out of the way for a year or so."

The other nodded an assent.

"He has 'realized' largely, I take it?"

Another nod.

"Foreign funds and railways—ch?"

"Not railways—no, script!" said Hanks, curtly.

"Won't there be a jolly smash!" said Davis, with a bitter laugh. "I take it there's not been anyone has 'done the trick' these fifty years like this fellow."

"I suspect you're right there," murmured Hanks.

"I have never seen him but once, and then only for a few minutes, but I read him like a printed book. He had put on the grand integrity and British-mercantile-honesty frown to scowl me down, to remind Davis, 'the leg,' that he was in the presence of Dunn, the unimpeachable, but I put one eye a little aslant, this way, and I just said, 'round the corner old fellow—round the corner!' Oh, didn't he look what the Yankees call 'mean ugly!'"

"He'll never forget it to you, that's certain."

"If he did, I'd try and brush up his memory a bit," said Davis, curtly. "He must be a rare sharp one," added he after a pause.

"The cleverest man in England, I don't care who the other is," cried Hanks, with enthusiasm. "When the crash comes—it will be in less than a month from this day—the world will discover that they're done to the tune of between three and four millions sterling, and I defy the best accountant that ever stepped to trace out where the frauds originated, whether, it was the Railways smashed the Mines, the Mines that ruined the Great Ossory, the Great Ossory that dipped the Drainage, or the Drainage that swamped the Glengariff, not to speak of all the inci-

dental confusion about estates never paid for, and sums advanced on mock mortgages, together with canceled script re-issued, preference shares circulated before the current ones, and dock warrants for goods that never existed. And that ain't all," continued Hanks, to whom the attentive eagerness of Grog's manner vouched for the interest his narrative excited—"that ain't all; but there isn't a class, nor condition in life, from the peer to the poorest laboring man, that he hasn't in some way involved in his rogueries, and made him almost a partner in the success. Each speculation being dependent for its solvency on the ruin of some others, Ossory will hate Glengariff, Drainage detest Mines, Railways curse patent fuel, and so on. I'll give the Equity Court and the Bankrupt Commissioners fifty years, and they'll not wind up the concern."

Grog rubbed his hands gleefully, and laughed aloud.

"Then all the people that will be compromised!" said Hanks; "Glimthal himself is not too clean-handed; lords and fine ladies that lent their names to this or that company, chairmen of committees in the House that didn't disdain to accept five hundred or a thousand shares as a mark of grateful recognition for pushing a bill through its second reading; ay, and great mercantile houses that discounted freely on forged acceptances, owning that they thought the best of all security was the sight of a convict-hulk and a felon's jacket, and that no man was such prompt pay as he that took a loan of a friend's signature. What a knock-down blow for all that lath-and-plaster edifice we dignify by the name of credit, when the world sees that it is a loaf the rogue can take a slice out of as well as the honest man!"

"Don't we have stunning leaders in the *Times* about it!" cried Grog. "It will go deuced hard with the ministry that have made this fellow a peer."

"Yes, they'll have to go out," said Hanks, gravely; "a cabinet may defend a bad measure—they'll never fight for a bad man."

"And they can't hang this fellow?" said Grog, after a pause.

"Hang! I should think not, indeed."

"Nor even transport him?"

"No, not touch a hair of his head. He'll have to live abroad for a year or two—in Paris or Rome—no great hardship if it were Naples; he'll make a surrender of his property—an old house somewhere and some brick-fields, a mine of Daryamon coal,

and a flax-mill on a river that has scarcely any water, together with a sheaf of bad bills and Guatemala bonds. They'll want to examine him before the court, and he'll send them a sick certificate, showing how agitation and his recent losses have almost made him imbecile; and even Mr. Linklater will talk feebly about his great reverse of condition."

"It's as good as a play to hear about this," said Grog; "it beats Newmarket all to sticks."

"If it's a play, it won't be a benefit to a good many folk," said Hanks, grinning.

"Well, he *is* a clever fellow—far and away cleverer than I ever thought him," said Grog. "Any man—I don't care who he is—can do the world to a short extent, but to go in at them on this scale a fellow must be a genius."

"He *is* a genius," said Hanks, in a tone of decision. "Just think for a moment what a head it must have been that kept all that machinery at work for years back without a flaw or a crack to be detected, started companies, opened banks, worked mines, railroads, and telegraphs, built refuge harbors, drained whole counties, brought vast tracts of waste land into cultivation, equalizing the chances of all enterprises by making the success of this come to the aid of the failure of that: the grand secret of the whole being the dexterous application of what is called 'credit.'"

"All that wouldn't do at Doncaster," said Grog; "puff your horse as much as you like, back him up how you will in the betting-ring, if he hasn't the speed in him it won't do. It's only 'change you can 'brag out of a bad hand.' Dunn would never cut any figure on the turf."

"There you are all wrong; there never yet was the place, or the station, where that man wouldn't have distinguished himself. Why, it was that marvelous power of his kept me with him for years back. I knew all that was going on. I knew that we hadn't—so to say—coals for one boiler while we had forty engines in full stroke; but I couldn't get away. It was a sort of fascination; and when he'd strike out a new scheme, and say carelessly, 'Call the capital one million, Hanks,' he spoke like a man that had only to put his hand in a bag and produce the money. Nothing daunted, nothing deterred him. He'd smash a rival company as coolly as you'd crush a shell under your heel, and he'd turn out a government with the same indifference he'd discharge a footman."

"Well," grumbled out Grog, at last, for

he was getting irritable at the exaggerated estimate Hanks formed of his chief, "what has it all come to? Ain't he smashed at last?"

"*He* smashed!" cried Hanks, in derision. "*He* smashed! *You* are smashed! I am smashed! any one else you like is smashed, but *he* is not! Mind my words, Davis, Davenport Dunn will be back here in London, before two years are over, with the grandest house and the finest retinue in town. His dinners will be the best, and his balls the most splendid of the season. No club will rival his cook, no equipage beat his in the park. When he rises in the lords—which he'll do only seldom—there will be a most courteous attention to his words; and, above all, you'll never read one disparaging word about him in the papers. I give him two years, but it's just as likely he'll do it in less."

"It may be all as you say," said Grog, sullenly, "though I won't say I believe it myself; but, at all events, it doesn't help *me* on my way to my own business with him. I want these papers of Lackington's out of his hands! He may 'walk into' the whole world, for all that *I* care; but I want to secure *my* daughter as the viscountess—that's how it stands."

"How much ready money can you command? What sum can you lay your hand on?"

Grog drew his much-worn pocket-book from his breast, and opening the leaves began to count to himself.

"Something like fifty-seven pounds odd shillings," said he, with a grin.

"If you could have said twelve or fourteen thousand, down, it might be nearer the mark. Conway's people are ready with about ten thousand."

"How do you know?" asked Grog, savagely.

"Dunn told me as much. But he doesn't like to treat with them, because the difficulty about the Irish estate would still remain unsettled."

"Then what am I to do? How shall I act?" asked Grog.

"It's not an easy matter to advise upon," said Hanks, thoughtfully, "for Dunn holds to one maxim with invariable tenacity, which is never to open any negotiation with a stranger which cannot be completed in one interview. If you couldn't begin by showing the bank-notes, he'd not discuss the question at all."

Grog arose and walked the room with hasty steps: he tried to seem calm, but in the impatient gesture with which he threw his cigar into the fire might be read the

agitation he could not conquer nor conceal.

"What could you yourself do with him, Hanks?" said he, at last.

"Nothing—absolutely nothing," said the other. "He never in his life permitted a subordinate to treat, except on his own behalf; that was a fixed law with him."

"Curse the fellow!" burst out Davis, "he made rules and laws as if the world was all his own."

"Well, he managed to have it pretty much his own way, it must be confessed," said Hanks, with a half smile.

"He is to be in town to-morrow, you said?" muttered Grog, half aloud. "Where does he stop?"

"This time it will be at Calvert's, Upper Brook-street. His house in Piccadilly is ready, but he'll not go there at present."

"He makes a mystery of everything, so far as I can see," said Grog, angrily. "He comes up by the express train, doesn't he?" grumbled he, after a pause.

"If he hasn't a special engine," said Hanks. "He always, however, has his own *coupé* furnished and finished up for himself, and never, by any chance, given to any one else. There's a capital bed in it and a desk, where he writes generally the whole night through, and a small cooking apparatus, where he makes his coffee, so that no servant ever interrupts him at his work. Indeed, except from some interruption, or accident on the line, the guard would not dare to open his door. Of course *his* orders are very strictly obeyed. I remember one night Lord Jedburg sent in his name, and Dunn returned for answer, 'I can't see him.'"

"And did the Prime Minister put up with that?" asked Davis.

"What could he do?" said the other, with a shrug of the shoulder.

"If I were Lord Jedburg I'd have unkennelled him, I promise you *that*, Simmy. But here, it's nigh twelve o'clock, and I have a mass of things to do. I say, Hanks, could you contrive to look in here to-morrow evening, after nightfall? I may have something to tell you."

"We were strictly confidential—all on honor this morning, Kit," said the other, whispering.

"I think you know *me*, Master Simmy," was all Grog's reply. "I don't think my worst enemy could say that I ever 'split' on the fellow that trusted me."

A hearty shake-hands followed, and they parted.

CHAPTER XCVII.

THE TRAIN.

THE up-train from Holyhead was a few minutes behind time at Chester, and the travelers who awaited its arrival manifested that mixture of impatience and anxiety which in our railroad age is inseparable from all delay. One stranger, however, displayed a more than ordinary eagerness for its coming, and compared the time of his watch repeatedly with the clock of the station.

At length from the far-away distance the wild scream of the engine was heard, and with many a cranking clash and many a heavy sob the vast machine swept smoothly in beneath the vaulted roof. As the stranger moved forward to take his place, he stopped to hear a few words that met his ear. It was a railroad official said: "Mr. Davenport Dunn delayed us about a quarter of an hour; he wanted to give a look at the new pier, but we have nearly made it up already." "All right!" replied the station-master. The stranger now moved on till he came in front of a *coupé* carriage; whose window-blinds, rigidly drawn down, excluded all view from without. For an instant he seemed to fumble at the door, in an endeavor to open it, but was speedily interrupted by a guard calling out. "Not there, sir—that's a private carriage;" and thus warned, the traveler entered another lower down the line. There were two other travelers in the same compartment, apparently strangers to each other. As the stranger with whom we are immediately concerned took his place, he slipped into his pocket a small latch-key, of which, in the very brief attempt to try the door of the private carriage, he had successfully proved the utility, and, drawing his rug across his knees, lay calmly back.

"Here we are, detained again," grumbled out one of the travelers. "I say, guard, what is it now?"

"Waiting for a telegram for Mr. Davenport Dunn, sir. There it comes! all right." A low bell rings out, a wild screech following, and with many a clank and shock the dusky monster sets out once more.

"Public convenience should scarcely be sacrificed in this manner, grumbled out the former speaker. "What is this Mr. Dunn to you or to me that we should be delayed for his good pleasure?"

"I am afraid, sir," replied the other, whose dress and manner bespoke a clergy-

man, "that we live in an age when wealth is all-powerful, and its possessors dictate the law to all poorer than themselves."

"And can you tell me of any age when it was otherwise?" broke in the last arrival with a half-rude chuckle. "It's all very fine to lay the whole blame of this, that, and t'other to the peculiar degeneracy of our own time, but my notion is, the world grows neither worse nor better." There was that amount of defiance in the tone of the speaker that seemed to warn his companions, for they each of them maintained a strict silence. Not so with him; he talked away glibly about the influence of money, pretty plainly intimating, that as nobody ever met the man who was indifferent to its possession, the abuse showered upon riches was nothing but cant and humbug. "Look at the parsons," said he; "they tell you it is all dross and rubbish, and yet they make it the test of your sincerity, whenever they preach a charity sermon. Look at the lawyers, and they own that it is the only measure they know by which to recompense an injury; then take the doctors, and you'll see that their humanity has its price, and the good Samaritan charges a guinea a visit."

The individuals to whom these words were addressed made no reply; indeed, there was a tone of confident assumption in the speaker that was far from inviting converse, and now a silence ensued on all sides.

"Do either of you gentlemen object to tobacco?" said the last speaker, after a pause of some duration; and at the same time, without waiting for the reply, he produced a cigar-case from his pocket, and began deliberately to strike a light.

"I am sorry to say, sir," responded the clergyman, "that smoking disagrees with me, and I cannot accustom myself to endure the smell of tobacco."

"All habit," rejoined the other, as he lighted his cigar. "I was that way myself for years, and might have remained so, too, but that I saw the distress and inconvenience I occasioned to many jolly fellows who loved their pipe; and so I overcame my foolish prejudices, and even took to the weed myself."

The other travelers muttered some low words of dissatisfaction, and the clergyman, opening the window, looked out, apparently in search of the guard.

"It's only a cheroot, and a prime one," said the smoker, coolly; "and as you object, I'll not light another."

"A vast condescension on your part, sir, seeing that we have already signified



"IT IS TOO LATE TO SAY SO NOW," SAID SHE FAINTLY, "I WILL NOT GO." (P. 681.)

our dislike to tobacco," said the lay traveler.

"I did not remark that *you* gave any opinion at all," said the smoker; "and my vast condescension, as you term it, is entirely in favor of this gentleman."

There was no mistaking the provocation of this speech, rendered actually insulting by the mode in which it was delivered; and the traveler to whom it was addressed, enveloping himself in his cloak, sat moodily back, without a word. The train soon halted for a few seconds, and, brief as was the interval, this traveler employed it to spring from his place, and seek a refuge elsewhere; a dexterous manœuvre which seemed to excite the envy of the parson, now left alone with his uncongenial companion. The man of peace, however, made the best of it, and, drawing his traveling cap over his eyes, resolved himself to sleep. For a considerable while the other sat still, calmly watching him, and, at last, when perfectly assured that the slumber was not counterfeited, he gently arose, and threw the curtain across the lamp in the roof of the carriage. A dim, half-lurid light succeeded, and by this uncertain glare the stranger proceeded to make various changes in his appearance. A large, bushy wig of black hair was first discarded, with heavy eyebrows and whiskers to match; an immense overcoat was taken off, so heavily padded and stuffed, that when denuded of it the wearer seemed half his size; large heels were unscrewed from his boots, reducing his height by full a couple of inches; till at length, in place of a large, unwieldy-looking man of sixty, lumbering and beetle-browed, there came forth a short, thick-set figure, with red hair and beard, twinkling eyes of a fierce gray, and a mouth the very type of unflinching resolution. Producing a small looking-glass, he combed and arranged his whiskers carefully, re-tied his cravat, and bestowed a most minute scrutiny on his appearance, muttering, as he finished, to himself, "Ay, Kit, you're more like yourself now!" It is, perhaps, unnecessary to say this speech was addressed to our acquaintance Grog Davis, nor was it altogether what is called a "French compliment;" he *did* look terribly like himself. There was in his hard, stern face, his pinched-up eyes, and his puckered mouth, an amount of resolute vigor that showed he was on the eve of some hazardous enterprise. His toilet completed, he felt in his breast-pocket, to assure himself that something there was not missing, and then, taking out his watch,

he consulted the time. He had scarcely time to replace it in his pocket when the train entered a deep cutting between two high banks of clay. It was apparently the spot he had waited for, and in an instant he had unfastened the door by his latch-key, and stood on the ledge outside. One more look within to assure himself that the other was still asleep, and he closed the door, and locked it.

The night was dark as pitch, and a thin soft rain was falling, as Davis, with a rapidity that showed this was no first essay in such a walk, glided along from carriage to carriage till he reached a heavy luggage van, immediately beyond which was the *coupé* of Mr. Davenport Dunn.

The brief prayer that good men utter ere they rush upon an enterprise of deadly peril must have its representative in some shape or other with those whose hearts are callous. Nature will have her due; and in that short interval—the bridge between two worlds—the worst must surely experience intense emotion. Whatever those of Davis, they were of the briefest. In another second he was at the door of Dunn's carriage, his eyes glaring beneath the drawn-down blind, where by a narrow slip of light, he could detect a figure busily employed in writing. So bent was he on mastering every portion and detail of the arrangement within, that he actually crept around till he reached the front windows, and could plainly see the whole *coupé* lighted up brilliantly with wax candles.

Surrounded with papers, and letters, and dispatch-boxes, the man of business labored away as though in his office, every appliance for refreshment beside him. These Davis noted well, remarking the pistols that hung between the windows, and a bell-pull quite close to the writing-table. This latter passed through the roof of the carriage, and was evidently intended to signalize the guard when wanted. Before another minute had elapsed, Davis had cut off this communication, and, knotting the string outside, still suffered it to hang down within as before.

All that *precaution* could demand was now done; the remainder must be decided by *action*. Noiselessly introducing the latch-key, Davis turned the lock, and opening the door, stepped inside. Dunn started as the door banged and there beheld him. To ring and summon the guard was the quick impulse of his ready wit; but when the bell-rope came down as he pulled it, the whole truth flashed across him that all had been concerted and plotted carefully.

"Never mind your pistols. I'm armed

too," said Davis, coolly. "If it was your life I wanted, I could have taken it easily enough at any minute during the last ten or twelve."

"What do you mean then, sir, by this violence? By what right do you dare to enter here?" cried Dunn, passionately.

"There has been no great violence up to this," said Davis, with a grin. "As to my right to be here, we'll talk about that presently. You know *me*, I believe?"

"I want to know why you are here," cried Dunn, again.

"And so you shall; but first of all no treachery. Deal fairly, and a very few minutes will settle all business between us."

"There is no business to be settled between us," said Dunn, haughtily, "except the insolence of your intrusion here, and for that you shall pay dearly."

"Don't try bluster with *me*, man," said Grog, contemptuously. "If you just stood as high in integrity as I know you to stand low in knavery, it wouldn't serve you. I've braved pluckier fellows than ever you were."

With a sudden jerk Dunn let down the window, but Grog's iron grip held him down in his place, as he said, sternly, "I'll not stand nonsense. I have come here for a purpose, and I'll not leave it till it's accomplished. You know *me*."

"I do know you," said Dunn, with an insolent irony.

"And I know *you*. Hankses—Simmy Hankses—has told me a thing or two; but the world will soon be as wise as either of us."

Dunn's face became deadly pale, and in a voice broken and faint he said, "What do you mean? What has Hankses said?"

"All—everything. Why, bless your heart, man, it was no secret to me that you were cheating, the only mystery was *how* you did the trick; now Hankses has shown me that. I know it all now. You hadn't so many trumps in your hand, but you played them twice over—that was the way you won the game. But that's no affair of mine. 'Rook' them all round—only don't 'try it on' with Kit Davis! What brought me here is this: *my* daughter is married to Annesley Beecher that was, the now Viscount Lackington; there's another fellow about to contest the title and the estates. *You* know all about his claim and his chances, and you can, they tell me, make it all 'snug' to either party. Now, I'm here to treat with you. How much shall it be? There's no use in going about the bush—how much shall it be?"

"I can be of no use to you in this business," said Dunn, hesitatingly; "the papers are not in my keeping. Conway's suit is in the hands of the first men at the Bar—"

"I know all that, and I know, besides, you have an appointment with Fordyce at Calvert's Hotel, to arrange the whole matter; so go in at once, and be on the square with me. Who has these papers? Where are they?"

Dunn started at the sudden tone of the question, and then his eyes turned as quickly toward a brass-bound dispatch-box at the bottom of the carriage. If the glance was of the speediest, it yet had not escaped the intense watchfulness of Davis, who now reiterated his question of "Where are they?"

"If you'd come to me after my interview with Fordyce," said Dunn, with a slow deliberation, as though giving the matter a full reflection, "I think we might hit upon something together."

"To be sure we might," said Grog, laughing; "there's only one obstacle to that pleasant arrangement, that I should find an inspector and two constables of the police ready waiting for my visit. No, Master Dunn, what we're to do we'll do *here*, and *now*."

"You appear to measure all men by your own standard, sir," said Dunn, indignantly; "and let me tell you that in point of honor it is a scant one."

"We're neither of us fit for a grenadier company of integrity, that's a fact, Dunn; but upon my solemn oath I believe I'm the best man of the two. But what's the use of this 'chaff'? I have heard from Hankses how it stands about that Irish estate you pretended to buy for the late lord, and never paid for. Now you want to stand all square upon that, naturally enough; it is a pot of money—seven-and-thirty-thousand pounds. Don't you see, old fellow, I have the whole story all correct and clear, so, once more, do be business-like, and say what's your figure—how much!"

Again did Dunn's eyes revert to the box at his feet, but it was difficult to say whether intentionally or not. Davis, however, never ceased to watch their gaze; and when Dunn, becoming suddenly conscious of the scrutiny, grew slightly red, Grog chuckled to himself, and muttered "You're no match for Kit Davis, deep as you are."

"Until we learn to repose some trust in each other, sir," said Dunn, whose confusion still continued, "all dealing together is useless."

"Well, if you mean by that," retorted

Davis, "that you and I are going to start for a ten years' friendship, I declare off, and say it's no match. I told you what brought me here, and now I want *you* to say how I'm to go back again. Where are these same papers?—answer me that."

"Some are in the hands of Conway's lawyers—some are in the Crimea, carried away surreptitiously by a person who was once in my confidence—some are, I suspect, in the keeping of Conway's mother, in Wales——"

"And some are locked up in that red box there," said Grog, with a defiant look.

"Not one. I can swear by all that is most solemn and awful there's not a document there that concerns the cause." As Dunn spoke these words his voice trembled with intense agitation, and he grew sickly pale.

"What if I wouldn't believe you on your oath?" broke in Grog, whose keen eyes seemed actually to pierce the other's secret thoughts. "It wasn't to-day, or yesterday, that you and I learned how to dodge an oath. Open that box there, I'll have a look through it for myself."

"That you never shall," said Dunn, fiercely, as he grasped the bundle of keys that lay before him and placed them in his breast-pocket.

"Come, I like your pluck, Dunn, though it won't serve your turn this time. I'll either see that box opened before me now, or I'll carry it off with me—which shall it be?"

"Neither, by heavens!" cried Dunn, whose passion was now roused effectually.

"We'll first of all get these out of the way; they're ugly playthings," said Davis, as with a spring he seized the pistols and hurled them through the open window; in doing so, however, he necessarily leaned forward, and partly turned his back toward Dunn. With a gesture quick as lightning, Dunn drew a loaded pistol from his breast, and placing the muzzle almost close to the other's head, drew the trigger. A quick motion of the neck made the ball glance from the bone of the skull, and, passing down amongst the muscles of the neck, settle above the shoulder. Terrible as the wound was, Davis sprang upon him with the ferocity of a tiger. Not a word nor a cry escaped his lips, as, in all the agony of his sufferings, he seized Dunn by the throat with one hand, while, drawing from his breast a heavy life-preserver, he struck him on the head with the other. A wild scream—a cry for help, half smothered in the groan that followed, rang out, and Dunn reeled

from his seat and fell dead on the floor! Two fearful fractures had rent the skull open, and life was extinguished at once. Davis bent down, and gazed long and eagerly at the ghastly wounds, but it was not till he had laid his hand over the heart that he knew them to be fatal. A short shudder, more like the sense of sudden cold than any sentiment of horror, passed over him as he stood for a few seconds motionless; then opening the dead man's coat, he drew forth his keys and searched for that one which pertained to the red box. He carefully placed the box upon the table and unlocked it. The contents were title-deeds of the Glengariff family, but all in duplicate, and so artfully imitated, that it would have been scarcely possible to distinguish original from copy. Of the Lackingtons there was nothing but a release of all claims against Davenport Dunn, purporting to have been the act of the late lord, but of which the signature was only indicated in pencil.

"The discovery wasn't worth the price," muttered Davis, as he turned a half sickly look upon the lifeless mass at his feet.

"I'm not the first who found out that the swag didn't pay for the smash—not," added he, after a moment, "that I was to blame here; it was he began it!"

With some strange mysterious blending of reverence for the dead, with a vague sense of how the sight would strike the first beholders, Davis raised the corpse from the floor and placed it on the seat. He then wiped the clotted gore from the forehead and dried the hair. It was a gruesome sight, and even he was not insensible to its terrors, for, as he turned away, he heaved a short, thick sigh. How long he stood thus, half stunned and bewildered, he knew not, but he was at length recalled to thought and activity by the loud whistle that announced the train was approaching a station. The next minute they glided softly in beside a platform, densely crowded with travelers. Davis did not wait for the guard, but opened the door himself, and slowly, for he was in pain, descended from the carriage.

"Call the station-master here," said he to the first official he met. "Let some one, too, fetch a doctor, for I am badly wounded, and a policeman, for I want to surrender myself." He then added, after a pause, "There's a dead man in that carriage yonder!"

The terrible tidings soon spread abroad, and crowds pressed eagerly forward to gaze upon the horrible spectacle. No sooner

was it announced that the murdered man was the celebrated Davenport Dunn, than the interest increased tenfold, and, with that marvelous ingenuity falsehood would seem ever to have at her disposal, a dozen artfully conceived versions of the late event were already in circulation. It was the act of a maniac—a poor creature driven mad by injustice and persecution. It was the vengeance of a man whose fortune had been ruined by Dunn. It was the father of a girl he had seduced and abandoned. It was a beggared speculator—a ruined trustee—and so on; each narrative, strangely enough, inferring that the fatal catastrophe was an expiation! How ready is the world to accept this explanation of the sad reverses that befall those it once has stooped to adulate—how greedily does it seek to repay itself for its own degrading homage, by maligning the idol of its former worship! Up to this hour no man had ever dared to whisper a suspicion of Dunn's integrity, and now, ere his lifeless clay was cold, many were floundering away in this pseudo morality about the little benefit all his wealth was to him, and wondering if his fate would not be a lesson! And so the train went on its way, the *coupé* with the dead body detached and left for the inspection of the inquest, and Davis on a sick-bed and in custody of the police.

His wound was far more serious than at first was apprehended, the direction the ball had taken could not be ascertained, and the pain was intense. Grog, however, would not condescend to speak of his suffering, but addressed himself vigorously to all the cares of his situation.

"Let me have some strong Cavendish tobacco and a pint of British gin, pen, ink, and paper, and no visitors."

The remonstrances of the doctor he treated with scorn.

"I'm not one of your West-end swells," said he, "that's afraid of a little pain, nor one of your Guy's Hospital wretches that's frightened by the surgeon's tools; only no tinkering, no probing. If you leave me alone, I have a constitution that will soon pull me through."

His first care was to dictate a telegraphic dispatch to a well-known lawyer, whose skill in criminal cases had made him a wide celebrity. He requested him to come down at once and confer with him. His next was to write to his daughter, and in this latter task he passed nearly half the night. Written as it was in great bodily pain and no small suffering of mind, the letter was marvelously indicative of the man who penned it. He narrated the

whole incident to its fatal termination exactly as it occurred; not the slightest effort did he make at exculpation for his own share in it; and he only deplored the misfortune in its effect upon the object he had in view.

"If Dunn," said he, "hadn't been so ready with his pistol, I believe we might have come to terms, but there's no guarding against accidents. As matters stand, Annesley must make his own fight, for, of course, I can be of little use to him or to any one else till the assizes are over. So far as I can see, the case is a bad one, and Conway most likely to succeed; but there's yet time for a compromise. I wish you'd take the whole affair into your own hands."

To enable her to enter clearly upon a question of such complication, he gave a full narrative, so far as he could, of the contested claim, showing each step he had himself taken in defence, and with what object he had dispatched Paul Classon to the Crimea. Three entire pages were filled with this theme; of himself, and his own precarious fortunes, he said very little indeed.

"Don't be alarmed, Lizzy," wrote he; "if the coroner's inquest should find a verdict of 'Willful Murder' against me, such a decision does not signify a rush; and as I mean to reserve all my defence for the trial, such a verdict is likely enough. There will be, besides this, the regular hue and cry people get up against the gambler, the leg, and who knows what else they'll call me. Don't mind that, either, girl. Let the moralists wag their charitable tongues, we can afford to make a waiting race, and, if I don't mistake much, before the trial comes off Davenport Dunn himself will be more ill thought of than Kit Davis. Above all, however, don't show in public; get away from Rome, and stay for a month or two in some quiet, out-of-the-way place, where people cannot make remarks upon your manner, and either say, 'See how this disgraceful affair has cut her up,' or, 'Did you ever see any one so brazen under an open shame?'"

"I have sent for Ewin Jones, the lawyer, and expect him by the down train; if he should say anything worth repeating to you I'll add it ere I seal this."

A little lower down the page were scrawled, half illegibly, the following few words:

"Another search for the ball and no better luck; it has got down amongst some nerves, where they're afraid to follow it—a sort of chancery court. Jones is here, and thinks 'we'll do,' particularly if 'the

press' blackguards Dunn well in the meantime. Remember me to A. B., and keep him from talking nonsense about the business—for a while, at least—that is, if you can, and

“Believe me, yours, as ever,
“C. DAVIS.”

CHAPTER XCVIII.

THE TRIAL.

SCARCELY had the town been struck by the large placards announcing the dreadful murder of Davenport Dunn, which paraded the streets in all directions, when a second edition of the morning papers brought the first tidings of the ruin that was to follow that event, and now in quick succession came news that the treasurer of the Grand Glengariff Company had gone off with some fifty thousand pounds; that the great Ossory Bank had stopped payment; companies on every hand smashing; misfortune and calamity everywhere. Terrible as was the detail which the inquest revealed, the whole interest of the world was turned to the less striking but scarcely less astounding news that society had for years back been the dupe of the most crafty and unprincipled knave of all Europe, that the great idol of its worship, the venerated and respected in all enterprises of industry, the man of large philanthropy and wide benevolence, was a schemer and a swindler, unprincipled and unfeeling. The fatal machinery of deception and falsehood which his life maintained crumbled to ruin at the very moment of his death; he was himself the mainspring of all fraud, and when he ceased to dictate, the game of roguery was over. While, therefore, many deplored the awful crime which had just been committed, and sorrowed over the stain cast upon our age and our civilization, there arose amidst their grief the wilder and more heartrending cry of thousands brought to destitution and beggary by this bold, bad man.

Of the vast numbers who had dealings with him, scarcely any escaped: false title-deeds, counterfeited shares, forged scrip abounded. The securities entrusted to his keeping in all the trustfulness of an unlimited confidence had been pledged for loans of money; vast sums alleged to have been advanced on mortgage were embezzled without a shadow of security. From the highest in the peerage to the poorest peasant, all were involved in the same scheme of ruin, and the great for-

tures of the rich and the hardly saved pitance of the poor alike engulfed. So suddenly did the news break upon the world that it actually seemed incredible. It was not alone a shock given to mercantile credit and commercial honesty, but it seemed an outrage against whatever assumed to be high-principled and honorable. It could not be denied that this man had been the world's choicest favorite. Upon him had been lavished all the honors and rewards usually reserved for the greatest benefactors of their kind. The favors of the crown, the friendship and intimacy with the highest in station, immense influence with the members of the government, power and patronage to any extent, and greater than all these, because more widespread and far-reaching, a sort of acceptance that all he said and did, and planned and projected, was certain to be for the best and that they who opposed his views or disparaged his conceptions were sure to be mean-minded and envious men, jealous of the noble ascendancy of his great nature. And all this because he was rich and could enrich others! Had the insane estimate of this man been formed by those fighting the hard battle of fortune, and so crushed by poverty that even a glimpse of affluence was a gleam of paradise, it might have been more pardonable; but far from it. Davenport Dunn's chief adherents and his primest flatterers were themselves great in station and rolling in wealth; they were many of them the princes of the land. The richest banker of all Europe—he whose influence has often decided the fate of contending nations—was Dunn's tried and trusted friend. The great minister whose opening speech of a session was the *mot d'ordre* for half the globe had taken counsel with him, stooping to ask his advice, and condescending to endorse his opinions. A proud old noble, as haughty a member of his order as the peerage possessed, did not disdain to accept him for a son-in-law; and now the great banker was to find himself defrauded, the great minister disgraced, and the noble lord who had stooped to his alliance was to see his estate dissipated and his fortune lost!

What a moral strain did not the great monitors of our age pour forth—what noble words of reproof fell from pulpit and press upon the lust of wealth, the base pursuit of gold!—what touching contrasts were drawn between the hard-won competence of the poor man and the ill-gotten abundance of the gambler. How impressively was the lesson proclaimed, that patient industry was a nobler characteristic

of a people than successful enterprise, and that it was not to lucky chances and accidental success, but to the virtues of truthfulness, order, untiring labor, and economy, that England owed the high place she occupied amongst the nations of the earth. All this was, perhaps, true: the only pity was, that the pain over our greatness should be also a funeral wail over thousands reduced to beggary and want! For weeks the newspapers had no other themes than the misery of this man's cruel frauds. Magistrates were besieged by appeals from people reduced to the last destitution; public offices crowded with applicants, pressing to know if the titles or securities they held as the sole guaranties of a livelihood, were true or false. All confidence seemed gone. Men trembled at every letter they opened, and none knew whether the tidings of each moment might not be the announcement of utter ruin.

Until the event had actually occurred, it was not easy to conceive how the dishonesty of one man could so effectually derange the whole complex machinery of a vast society; but so it really proved. So intensely had the money-getting passion taken possession of the national mind—so associated had national prosperity seemed to be with individual wealth—that nothing appeared great, noble, or desirable but gold, and the standard of material value was constituted to be the standard of all moral excellence: intending to honor industry, the nation had paid its homage to money?

Of all the victims to Dunn's perfidy, there was one who never could be brought to believe in his guilt. This was the old Earl of Glengariff. So stunned was he by the first news of the murder that his faculties never rightly recovered the shock, and his mind balanced between a nervous impatience for Dunn's arrival and a dreary despondency as to his coming; and in this way he lived for years, his daughter watching over him with every care and devotion, hiding with many an artifice the painful signs of their reduced fortune, and feeding with many a false hope the old man's yearnings for wealth and riches. The quiet old town of Bruges was their resting-place, and there, amidst deserted streets and grass-grown pavements, they lived, pitied and unknown.

The "Dunn Frauds," as by journalist phrase they were now recognized, formed for months long a daily portion of the public reading, and only at length yielded their interest to a case before the "lords"—the claim preferred by a Crimean hero to

the title of Viscount Lackington, and of which some successful trials at bar gave speedy promise of good result. Indeed, had the question been one to be decided by popular suffrage, the issue would not have been very doubtful. Through the brilliant records of "our own correspondent" and the illustrated columns of a distinguished "weekly," Charles Conway had now become a celebrity, and meetings were held and councils consulted how best to honor his arrival on his return to England. As though glad to return from the disparaging stories of fraud, baseness, and deception, which Dunn's fall disclosed, to nobler and more spirit-stirring themes, the nation seemed to hail with a sort of enthusiasm the character of this brave soldier!

His whole military career was narrated at length, and national pride deeply flattered by a record which proved that in an age stigmatized by late disclosures, chivalry and heroism had not died out, but survived in all their most brilliant and ennobling features. While municipal bodies voted their freedom and swords of honor, and public journals discussed the probable rewards of the crown, another turn was given to popular interest by the announcement that, on a certain day, Christopher Davis was to be tried at the Old Bailey for the murder of Davenport Dunn. Had the hand which took away his life been that of some one brought down to beggary by his machinations, a certain amount of sympathy would certainly have been wrung from national feeling. Here, however, if any such plea existed, no token was given. Davis had maintained, at the coroner's inquest, a dogged, unbroken silence, simply declaring that he reserved whatever he had to say for the time of his trial. He did not scruple, besides, to exhibit an insolent contempt for a verdict which he felt could exercise little influence on the future, while to his lawyer he explained that he was not going to give "Conway's people" the information that he had so totally failed in securing the documents he sought for, and his presumed possession of which might yet induce a compromise with Beecher.

In vain was he assured, that his obstinate refusal to answer the questions of the jury would seriously endanger his safety by arming the public mind against him; he sternly resisted every argument on this score, and curtly said, "There are higher interests at stake than mine here—it is my daughter, the viscountess, is to be thought of, not me." Nor did his reserve end there. Through the long interval which

preceded his trial, he confided very sparingly in his lawyer, his interviews with him being mainly occupied in discussing points of law, what was and what was not evidence, and asking for a history of such cases—if any there were—as resembled his own. In fact, it soon appeared that, having mastered certain details, Davis was determined to conduct his own defence, and address the jury in his own behalf.

The interest the public takes in a criminal trial is often mainly dependent on the rank of the persons implicated; not only is sympathy more naturally attracted to those whose condition in life would seem to have removed them from the casualties of crime, but, in such cases, the whole circumstances are sure to be surrounded with features of more dramatic interest. Now, although Davis by no means occupied that station which could conciliate such sympathy, he was widely known, and to men of the first rank in England. The habits of the turf and the ring establish a sort of acquaintanceship, and even intimacy, between men who have no other neutral territory in life, and, through these, Davis was on the most familiar terms with noble lords and honorable gentlemen, who took his bets and pocketed his money as freely as from their equals. With these, his indomitable resolution, his "pluck," had made him almost a favorite. They well knew, too, how they could count upon these same faculties in any hour of need, and "Old Grog" was the resource in many a difficulty that none but himself could have confronted.

If his present condition excited no very warm anxiety for his fate, it at least created the liveliest curiosity to see the man, to watch how he would comport himself in such a terrible exigency, to hear the sort of defence he would make, and to mark how far his noted courage would sustain him in an ordeal so novel and so appalling. The newspapers also contributed to increase this interest, by daily publishing some curious story or other illustrating Davis's early life, and, as may be surmised, not always to his advantage on the score of probity and honor. Photographers were equally active; so that when, on the eventful morning, the clerk of the arraign demanded of the prisoner whether he pleaded guilty or not guilty, the face and features of the respondent were familiar to every one in the court. Some expected to see him downcast and crestfallen, some looked for a manner of insolent swagger and pretension. He was equally free from either, and in his calm but resolute bear-

ing, as he surveyed bench and jury-box, there was unmistakable dignity and power. If he did not seek the recognitions of his acquaintances throughout the court, he never avoided them, returning the salutations of the "swells," as he called them, with the easy indifference he would have accorded them at Newmarket.

I have no pretension to delay my reader by any details of the trial itself. It was a case where all the evidence was purely circumstantial, but wherein the most deliberate and deep-laid scheme could be distinctly traced. With all the force of that consummate skill in narrative which a criminal lawyer possesses, Davis was tracked from his leaving London to his arrival at Chester. Of his two hours spent there the most exact account was given, and although some difficulty existed in proving the identity of the traveler who had taken his place at that station with the prisoner, there was the strongest presumption to believe they were one and the same. As to the dreadful events of the crime itself, all must be inferred from the condition in which the murdered man was found and the nature of the wounds that caused his death. Of these, none could entertain a doubt; the medical witnesses agreed in declaring that life must have been immediately extinguished. Lastly, as to the motive of the crime—although not essential in a legal point of view, the prosecutor, in suggesting some possible cause, took occasion to dwell upon the character of the prisoner, and even allude to some early events in his life. Davis abruptly stopped this train of argument, by exclaiming, "None of these are in the indictment, sir. I am here on a charge of murder, and not for having horsewhipped *you* at Ascot, the year Comus won the queen's cup."

An interruption so insulting, uttered in a voice that resounded throughout the court, now led to a passionate appeal from the counsel to the bench, and a rebuke from the judge to Davis, who reminded him how unbecoming such an outrage was, from one standing in the solemn situation that he did.

"Solemn enough if guilty, my lord, but only irksome and unpleasant to a man with as easy a conscience as mine," was the quick reply of Grog, who now eyed the court in every part with an expression of insolent defiance.

The evidence for the prosecution having closed, Davis arose, and, with a calm self-possession, addressed the court:

"I believe," said he, "that if I followed the approved method in cases like the pres-

ent, I'd begin by expressing the great confidence and satisfaction I feel in being tried by a judge so just and a jury so intelligent as that before me; and then, after a slight diversion as to the blessings of a good conscience, I'd give you fifteen or twenty minutes of pathetic lamentation for the good and great man whose untimely death is the cause of this trial. Now, I'm not about to do any of these. Judges are generally upright; juries are, for the most part, painstaking and fair. I conclude, therefore, that I'm as safe with his lordship and yourselves as with any others; and as to Mr. Davenport Dunn and his virtues, why, gentlemen, like the character of him who addresses you, the least said the better! Not," added he, sternly, "that I fear comparison with him—far from it; we were both adventurers, each of us traded upon the weakness of his fellows; the only difference was, that he played a game that could not but win, while I took my risks like a man, and as often suffered as I succeeded. *My* victims—if that's the phrase in vogue for them—were young fellows starting in life with plenty of cash and small experience; *his* were widows, with a miserable pittance, scarcely enough for support; orphan children, with a thousand or two trust money; or, as you might see in the papers, poor governesses eagerly seizing the occasion to provide for the last years of a toilsome life. But my opinion is you have no concern with *his* character, or with *mine*; you are there to know how he came by his death, and I'll tell you that."

In a narrative told calmly, without stop or impediment, and utterly free from a word of exaggeration or a sentiment of passion, he narrated how, by an appointment, the nature of which he refused to enter upon, he had met Davenport Dunn on the eventful night in question. The business matter between them, he said—and of this, too, he declined to give any particular information—had led to much and angry re-*crimination*, till at length, carried beyond the bounds of all temper and reserve, Davis rashly avowed that he was in the possession of the secret history of all Dunn's frauds; he showed, by details the most exact, that he knew how for years and years this man had been a swindler and a cheat, and he declared that the time for unmasking him had arrived, and that the world should soon know the stuff he was made of. "There was, I suspected," continued he, "in the red box at my feet a document whose production in a trial would have saved a friend of my own from ruin, and which Dunn was then carrying

up to London to dispose of to the opponent in the suit. I affected to be certain that it was there, and I quickly saw by his confusion that I guessed aright. I proposed terms for it as liberal as he could wish, equal to any he could obtain elsewhere. He refused my offers. I asked then to see and read it, to assure myself that it was the paper I suspected. This, too, he refused. The altercation grew warm; time pressed, for we were not far from the station where I meant to stop, and driven to half desperation, I declared that I'd smash the box if he would not consent to unlock it. I stooped as I said this, and as my head was bent he drew a pistol and shot me. The ball glanced from my skull and entered my neck. This is the wound," said he, baring his throat, "and here is the bullet. I was scarcely stunned, and I sprang to my legs and killed him!"

The sensation of horror the last words created was felt throughout the court, and manifested by a low murmur of terror and disgust. Davis looked around him with a cold, resolute stare, as if he did not shrink in the least from this show of disapprobation.

"I am well aware," said he, calmly, "there are many here at this moment would have acted differently. That lady with the lace veil yonder, for instance, would have fainted; the noble lord next the bench, there, would have dropped on his knees and begged his life. I see one of the jury, and if I can read a human countenance, his tells me he'd have screamed out for the guard. Well, I have nothing to say against any of these ways of treating the matter. None of them occurred to *me*, and I killed him! The crown lawyer has told you the rest; that I surrendered myself at once to the police, and never attempted an escape. A legal friend has mentioned to me that witnesses to character are occasionally called in cases like the present, and that I might derive benefit from such testimony. Nothing would be easier for me than this. There is a noble lord, a member of the cabinet, knows me long and intimately; there's a venerable bishop now in town could also speak for me. He taught me chicken hazard thirty years ago, and I have never ceased to think affectionately of him. There's a judge in the adjoining court who was my chum and companion for two years—Well, my lord, I have done. I shall call none of them; nor have I anything more to observe."

The jury, after a short address from the judge, retired, and Davis's lawyer, rising,

approached the dock and whispered something to the prisoner.

"What's the betting?" murmured Grog.

"Even as to the first charge. Two to one for a verdict of manslaughter."

"Take all you can get for me on the first," said Grog, "and I'll take the odds on the other in hundreds. It's a sort of a hedge for me. There, let's lose no time; they'll be back soon."

In a few minutes after this brief conversation, the jury returned into court. Their finding was not guilty of murder, guilty of manslaughter only.

Davis listened to the decision calmly, and then, having pencilled down a few figures in his note-book, he muttered, "Not so bad, neither; seven hundred on the double event!" So occupied was he in his calculations, that he had not heard a recommendation to mercy, which the jury had appended, though somewhat informally, to their verdict.

"What a pot of money one might have had against that," said Davis. "Isn't it strange none of us should ever have thought of it!"

The judge reserved sentence till he had thought over the recommendation, and the trial was over.

CHAPTER XCIX.

THE END OF ALL THINGS.

FROM the day of Davenport Dunn's death to the trial of Kit Davis three whole months elapsed—a short period in the term of human life, but often sufficient to include great events. It only took three months, once on a time, for a certain great emperor to break up his camp at Boulogne-sur-Mer and lay Austria at his feet! In the same short space the self-same emperor regained and lost his own great empire. What wonder, then, if three months brought great and important changes to the fortunes of some of the individuals of this story.

I have not any pretension to try to interest my reader for the circumstances by which Charles Conway recovered the ancient title and the estates that rightfully belonged to him, nor to ask his company through the long and intricate course of law proceedings by which this claim was established. Enough to say that amidst the documents which contributed to this success, none possessed the same conclusive force as that discovered so accidentally by Sybella Kellett. It formed the connecting

link in a most important chain of evidence, and was in a great measure the cause of ultimate success. It rarely happens that the great mass of the public feels any strong interest in the issue of cases like this; the very rank of the litigants removing them, by reason of their elevation, from so much of common-place sympathy, as well as the fact that the investigation so frequently involves the very driest of details, the general public regards these suits with a sentiment of almost indifference.

Far different was it on the present occasion. Every trial at bar was watched with deep interest, the newspapers commenting largely on the evidence, and prognosticating in unmistakable terms the result. Crimean Conway was the national favorite, and even the lawyers engaged against him were exposed to a certain unpopularity. At length came the hearing before the Privilege Committee of the Lords, and the decision by which the claim was fully established and Charles Conway declared to be the Viscount Lackington. The announcement created a sort of jubilee. Whether the good public thought that the honors of the crown were bestowed upon their favorite with a somewhat niggard hand, or whether the romance of the case—the elevation of one who had served in the ranks and was now a peer of the realm—had captivated their imaginations, certain it is they had adopted his cause as their own, and made of his success a popular triumph.

Few people of Europe indulge in such hearty bursts of enthusiasm as our own, and there is no more genuine holiday than that when they can honor one who has conferred credit upon his nation. Conway, whose name but a short time back was unknown, had now become a celebrity, and every paragraph about him was read with the liveliest interest. To learn that he had arrived safely at Constantinople, that he was perfectly recovered from his wounds, that he had dined on a certain day with the ambassador, and that at a special audience from the sultan he had been decorated with the first-class of the Medjidié, were details that men interchanged when they met, as great and gratifying tidings, when suddenly there burst upon the world the more joyful announcement of his marriage: "At the embassy chapel *et pera*, this morning, the Viscount Lackington, better known to our readers as Crimean Conway, was married to Miss Kellett, only daughter of the late Captain Kellett, of Kellett's Court. A novel feature of the ceremony consisted in the pre-

sence of Rifaz Bey, sent by order of the sultan to compliment the distinguished bridegroom, and to be the bearer of some very magnificent ornaments for the bride. The happy couple are to leave this in H. M. S. *Dædalus* to-morrow for Malta; but, intending to visit Italy before their return, will not probably reach England for two or three months."

Within a few weeks after, a passage in the *Gazette* announced that Viscount Lackington had been honored with the Bath, and named aide-de-camp to the queen. It is not for poor chroniclers like ourselves to obtrude upon good fortune like this, and destroy, by attempted description, all that constitutes its real happiness. The impertinence that presses itself in personal visits on those who seek seclusion, is only equalled by that which would endeavor to make history of moments too sacred for recording.

Our story opened of a lovely morning in autumn—it closes of an evening in the same mellow season, and in the self-same spot, too, the Lake of Como. Long, motionless shadows stretched across the calm lake as, many colored, from the tints of the surrounding woods, it lay bathed in the last rays of a rich sunset. It was the hour when, loaded with perfume, the air moves languidly through the leaves and the grass, and a sense of tender sadness seems to pervade nature. Was it to watch the last changes of the rich coloring, as from a rose pink the mountain summits grew a deep crimson, then faded again to violet, and, after a few minutes of deepest blue, darkened into night, that a small group was gathered silently on the lake terrace of the Villa d'Este? They were but three—a lady and two gentlemen. *She*, seated a little apart from the others, appeared to watch the scene before her with intense interest, bending down her head at moments as if to listen, and then resuming her former attitude.

The younger of the men seemed to participate in her anxiety—if such it could be called—and peered no less eagerly through the gathering gloom that now spread over the lake. The elder, a short, thick-set figure, displayed his impatience in many a hurried walk of a few paces, and a glance, quick and short over the water. None of them spoke a word. At last the short man asked, in a gruff, coarse tone, "Are you quite sure she said it was this evening they were to arrive?"

"Quite sure; she read the letter over for me. Besides, my sister Georgina makes no

mistakes of this kind, and she'd not have moved off to Lugano so suddenly if she was not convinced that they would be here to-night."

"Well, I will say your grand folk have their own notions of gratitude as they have of everything else. She owes these people the enjoyment of a capital income, which, out of delicacy, they have left her for her life, and the mode she takes to acknowledge the favor is by avoiding to meet them."

"And what more natural?" broke in the lady's voice. "Can she possibly forget that they have despoiled her of her title, her station, her very name? In her place, I feel I should have done exactly the same."

"That's true," burst out the younger man. "Lizzy is right. But for them, Georgina had still been the Viscountess Lackington."

"You have a right to feel it that way," laughed out the short man, scornfully. "You are both in the same boat as herself, only that they haven't left *you* twelve hundred per annum."

"I hear a boat now; yes, I can mark the sound of the oars," said the lady.

"What a jolly change would a good squall now make in your fortunes," said the short man. "A puff of wind and a few gallons of water are small things to stand between a man and twelve thousand a year!"

The suggestion did not seem to find favor with the others, for they made no reply.

"You never sent off your letter, I think?" resumed he, addressing the younger man.

"Of course not, father," broke in the female voice. "It was an indignity I could not stoop to."

"Not stoop to?" cried out Grog, for it is needless to say it was himself, with his daughter and son-in-law who formed the group. "I like that—I like our not stooping when it's crawling we're come to!"

"Ay, by Jove!" muttered Beecher, ruefully, "that it is, and over a rough road, too."

"Well, I'd have sent the letter," resumed Grog. "I'd have put it this way: 'You didn't deal harshly with the Dowager; don't treat *us* worse than *her*.'"

"Father, father!" cried Lizzy, imploringly, "how unlike you all this is."

"I know it is, girl—I know it well enough. Since that six months I passed in Newgate I don't know myself. I'm not the man I was, nor I never shall be again.

That same dull life and its dreary diet have broken up old Grog." A heavy sigh closed these words, and for some minutes the silence was unbroken.

"There comes a boat up to the landing-place," cried Beecher, suddenly.

"I must see them, and I will," said Lizzy, rising and drawing her shawl around her. "I have more than a mere curiosity to see this Crimean hero and his heroic wife." It was hard to say in what spirit the words were uttered, so blended was the ardor and the sarcasm in their tone. "Are you coming, father?"

"I—no. Not a bit of it," said Grog, rudely. "I'd rather see a promising two-year-old than all the heroes and all the beauties in Europe."

"And you, Beecher?" asked she, with a half smile.

"Well, I've no great wish on the subject. They have both of them cost me rather too heavily to inspire any warm interest in their behalf."

The words were scarcely uttered, when the large window of the room adjoining the terrace was flung open, and a great flood of light extended to where they stood; at the same moment a gentleman with a lady on his arm advanced toward them.

"Mr. Annesley Beecher is here, I believe?" said the stranger.

"Yes; that is my name, sir," was the answer.

"Let me claim a cousin's privilege to shake your hand, then," said the other. "You knew me once as Charles Conway, and my wife claims you as a still older friend."

"My father bore you the warmest affection," said Sybella eagerly.

Beecher could but mutter some half inarticulate words.

"I have done you, what you must feel a cruel injury," said Conway, "but I believe the game was never yet found out where all could rise winners. There is, however, a slight reparation yet in my power. The lawyers tell me that a separate suit will be required to establish our claim to the Irish estates. Take them, therefore; you shall never be disturbed in their possession by me or mine. All I ask is, let there be no bad blood between us. Let us be friends."

"You may count upon me, at all events," said Lizzy extending her hand to him. "I am, indeed, proud to know you."

"Nor would I be forgotten in this pleasant compact," said Sybella, advancing toward Lizzy. "We have less to forgive, my dear cousin, and we can be friends without even an explanation."

The acquaintance thus happily opened,

they continued to walk the terrace together for hours, till at length the chill night air warned Conway that he was still an invalid.

"Till to-morrow, then," said Sybella, as she kissed Lizzy's cheek affectionately.

"Till to-morrow!" replied the other, as a heavy tear rolled down her cheek, for hers was a sad heart, as she followed with her eyes their retreating figures.

"Ain't he a trump!" cried Beecher, as he drew his wife's arm within his own, and led her along at his side. "He doesn't believe one syllable about our sending those fellows over to the Crimea to crib the papers; he fancies we were all 'on the square'—Oh, I forgot," broke he in, suddenly, "you were never in the secret yourself. At all events, he's a splendid fellow, and he's going to leave the Irish estates with us, and that old house at Kellett's Court. But where's your father? I'm dying to tell him this piece of news."

"Here I am," said Grog, gruffly, as he came forth from a little arbor, where he had been hiding.

"We're all right, old boy," burst in Beecher, joyfully. "I tried the cousin dodge with Conway, rubbed him down smoothly, and the upshot is, he has offered us the Irish property."

Grog gave a short grunt and fixed his eyes steadfastly on his daughter, who, pale and trembling all over, caught her father's arm for support.

"He felt naturally enough," resumed Beecher, "that ours was a deuced hard case."

"I want to hear what *your* answer was—what reply *you* made him!" gasped out Lizzy, painfully.

"Could there be much doubt about that?" cried Beecher. "I booked the bet at once."

"No, no, I will not believe it," said she, in a voice of deep emotion; "you never did so. It was but last night, as we walked here on this very spot, I told you how, in some far-away colony of England, we could not fail to earn an honorable living; that I was well content to bear my share of labor, and you agreed with me that such a life was far better than one of dependence or mere emergency. You surely could not have forgotten this!"

"I didn't exactly forget it, but I own I fancied twelve hundred a year, and a snug old house, a better thing than road-making at Victoria, or keeping a grammar-school at Auckland."

"And you had the courage to reason thus to the man who had descended to the

ranks as a common soldier to vindicate a name to which nothing graver attached than a life of waste and extravagance! No, no, tell me that you are only jesting with me, Annesley. You never said this!"

"Lizzy's right—by heaven she's right!" broke in Grog, resolutely.

"If you mean that I refused him, you're both much mistaken; and to clinch the compact, I even said I'd set out for Ireland to-morrow."

"I'm for New Orleans," said Grog, with a rough shake, as though throwing a weight from his shoulders.

"Will you have a traveling companion, father?" asked Lizzy, in a low voice.

"Who is it to be, girl?"

"Lizzy—your own Lizzy!"

"That will I, girl," cried he, as he threw his arms about her, and kissed her in sincere affection.

"Good-by sir," said she, holding out her hand to Beecher. "Our compact was a hollow one from the first. It would be but a miserable deception to maintain it."

"I knew luck was going to turn with me!" muttered Beecher, as he watched her leaving the terrace, "but I'd never have believed any one if he'd told me that I'd have booked an estate and scratched my marriage all on the same evening!"

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