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"TROTH, PATSEY, IT'S WHAT I'M THINKING, THERE'S NOBODY KNOWS HOW TO COURT LIKE A RAAL GENTLEMAN." (P. 856.)

THE WORKS

OF

CHARLES LEVER.

VOL. III.

CHARLES O'MALLEY.
JACK HINTON.

WITH TWENTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE.

THE success of Harry Lorrequer was the reason for writing Charles O'Malley. That I myself was in no wise prepared for the favor the public bestowed on my first attempt is easily enough understood. The ease with which I strung my stories together—and in reality the Confessions of Harry Lorrequer are little other than a notebook of absurd and laughable incidents—led me to believe that I could draw on this vein of composition without any limit whatever. I felt, or thought I felt, an inexhaustible store of fun and buoyancy within me, and I began to have a misty, half confused impression that Englishmen generally labored under a sad-colored temperament, took depressing views of life, and were proportionately grateful to any one who would rally them even passingly out of their despondency, and give them a laugh without much trouble for going in search of it.

When I set to work to write Charles O'Malley I was, as I have ever been, very low with fortune, and the success of a new venture was pretty much as eventful to me as the turn of the right color at *rouge et noir*. At the same time I had then an amount of spring in my temperament, and a power of enjoying life, which I can honestly say I never found surpassed. The world had for me all the interest of an admirable comedy, in which the part allotted myself, if not a high or a foreground one, was eminently suited to my taste, and brought me, besides, sufficiently often on the stage to enable me to follow all the fortunes of the piece. Brussels, where I was then living, was adorned at the period by a most agreeable English society. Some leaders of the fashionable world of London had come there to refit and recruit, both in body and estate. There were several pleasant and a great number of pretty people among them; and, so far as I could judge, the fashionable dramas of Belgrave Square and its vicinity were being performed in the Rue Royale and the Boulevard de Waterloo with very considerable success. There were dinners, balls, dejeuners and picnics in the Bois de Cambre, excursions to Waterloo, and select little parties to Bois-fort, a charming little resort in the forest, whose intense cockneyism became perfectly inoffensive as being in a foreign land, and remote from the invasion of home-bred vulgarity. I mention all these things to show the adjuncts by which I was aided, and the rattle of gayety by which I was as it were, "accompanied," when I next tried my voice.

The soldier element tinctured strongly our society, and I will say most agreeably. Amongst those whom I remember best, were several old Peninsulars. Lord Combermere was of this number, and another of our set was an officer who accompanied, if indeed he did not command, the first boat party who crossed the Douro. It is needless to say how I cultivated a society so full of all the storied details I was eager to obtain, and how generously disposed were they to give me all the information I needed. On topography especially were they valuable to me, and with such good result that I have been more than once complimented on the accuracy of my descriptions of places which I have never seen, and whose features I have derived entirely from the narratives of my friends.

When, therefore, my publishers asked me could I write a story in the Lorrequer vein, in which active service and military adventure could figure more prominently than mere civilian life, and where the achievements of a British army might

form the staple of the narrative? When this question was propounded me, I was ready to reply—Not one, but fifty. Do not mistake me, and suppose that any overweening confidence in my literary powers would have emboldened me to make this reply; my whole strength lay in the fact that I could not recognize anything like literary effort in the matter. If the world would only condescend to read that which I wrote precisely as I was in the habit of talking, nothing could be easier than for me to occupy them. Not alone was it very easy to me, but it was intensely interesting and amusing to myself, to be so engaged.

The success of Harry Lorrequer had been freely wafted across the German Ocean, but even in its mildest accents it was very intoxicating incense to me; and I set to work on my second book with a thrill of hope as regards the world's favor which—and it is no small thing to say it—I can yet recall.

I can recall, too, and I am afraid more vividly still, some of the difficulties of my task when I endeavored to form anything like an accurate or precise idea of some campaigning incident, or some passage of arms, from the narratives of two distinct and separate "eye-witnesses." What mistrust I conceived for all eye-witnesses from my own brief experience of their testimonies! What an impulse did it lend me to study the nature and the temperament of the narrator, as indicative of the peculiar coloring he might lend his narrative; and how it taught me to know the force of the French epigram that has declared how it was entirely the alternating popularity of Marshal Soult that decided whether he won or lost the battle of Toulouse.

While, however, I was sifting these evidences, and separating, as well as I might, the wheat from the chaff, I was in a measure training myself for what, without my then knowing it, was to become my career in life. This was not therefore altogether without a certain degree of labor, but so light and pleasant withal, so full of picturesque peeps at character, and humorous views of human nature, that it would be the very rankest ingratitude of me if I did not own that I gained all my earlier experiences of the world in very pleasant company—highly enjoyable at the time, and with matter for charming souvenirs long after.

That certain traits of my acquaintances found themselves embodied in some of the characters of this story, I do not seek to deny. The principle of natural selection adapts itself to novels as to nature, and it would have demanded an effort above my strength to have disabused myself at the desk of all the impressions of the dinner table, and to have forgotten features which interested or amused me.

One of the personages of my tale I drew, however, with very little aid from fancy. I would go so far as to say that I took him from the life, if my memory did not confront me with the lamentable inferiority of my picture to the great original it was meant to portray.

With the exception of the quality of courage, I never met a man who contained within himself so many of the traits of Falstaff, as the individual who furnished me with Major Monsoon. But the Major—I must call him so, though that rank was far beneath his own—was a man of unquestionable bravery. His powers as a story-teller were to my thinking unrivaled, the peculiar reflections on life which he would passingly introduce—the wise apothegms—were after a morality essentially of his own invention, that he would indulge in the unsparing exhibition of himself in situations such as other men would never have confessed to, all blended up with a racy enjoyment of life, dashed occasionally with sorrow that our tenure of it was short of patriarchal. All these, accompanied by a face redolent of intense humor, and a voice whose modulations were managed with the skill of a consummate artist, all these I say were above me to convey, nor indeed as I re-read any of the adventures in which he figures, am I other than ashamed at the weakness of my drawing and the poverty of my coloring.

That I had a better claim to personify him than is always the lot of a novelist—that I possessed, so to say, a vested interest in his life and adventures, I will relate a little incident in proof; and my accuracy, if necessary, can be attested by another actor in the scene who yet survives.

I was living a bachelor life at Brussels, my family being at Ostende for the bathing during the summer of 1840. The city was comparatively empty; all the so-called society being absent at the various spas or baths of Germany. One member of the British Legation, who remained at his post to represent the mission, and myself making common cause of our desolation and ennui, spent much of our time together, and dined *tête-à-tête* every day.

It chanced that one evening, as we were hastening through the park on our way to dinner, we espied the Major—for as Major I must speak of him—lounging along with that half careless, half observant air we

had both of us remarked as indicating a desire to be somebody's, anybody's guest, rather than surrender himself to the homeliness of domestic fare.

"There's that confounded old Monsoon," cried my diplomatic friend. "It's all up if he sees us, and I can't endure him."

Now I must remark that my friend, though very far from insensible to the humoristic side of the Major's character, was not always in the vein to enjoy it, and when so indisposed he could invest the object of his dislike with something little short of antipathy. "Promise me," said he, as Monsoon came toward us, "promise me, you'll not ask him to dinner." Before I could make any reply, the Major was shaking a hand of either of us, and rapturously expatiating over his good luck at meeting us. "Mrs. M.," said he, "has got a dreary party of old ladies to dine with her, and I have come out here to find some pleasant fellow to join me, and take our mutton chop together."

"We're behind our time, Major," said my friend, "sorry to leave you so abruptly, but must push on. Eh, Lorrequer," added he, to evoke corroboration on my part.

"Harry says nothing of the kind," replied Monsoon, "he says, or he's going to say, 'Major, I have a nice bit of dinner waiting for me at home, enough for two, will feed three, or if there be a shortcoming, nothing easier than to eke out the deficiency by another bottle of Moulton; come along with us then, Monsoon, and we shall be all the merrier for your company.'"

Repeating his last words, "come along, Monsoon," etc., I passed my arm within his, and away we went. For a moment my friend tried to get free and leave me, but I held him fast and carried him along in spite of himself. He was, however, so chagrined and provoked that till the moment we reached my door he never uttered a word, nor paid the slightest attention to Monsoon, who talked away in a vein that occasionally made gravity all but impossible.

Our dinner proceeded drearily enough, the diplomatist's stiffness never relaxed for a moment, and my own awkwardness damped all my attempts at conversation. Not so, however, Monsoon, he ate heartily, approved of everything, and pronounced my wine to be exquisite. He gave us a perfect discourse on sherry, and Spanish wines in general, told us the secret of the Amontillado flavor, and explained that process of browning by boiling down wine, which some are so fond of in England. At last, seeing perhaps that the protection had little charm for us, with his accustomed tact, he diverged into anecdote. "I was once fortunate enough," said he, "to fall upon some of that choice sherry from the St. Lucas Luentas, which is always reserved for royalty. It was a pale wine, delicious in the drinking, and leaving no more flavor in the mouth than a faint dryness that seemed to say—another glass. Shall I tell you how I came by it?" And scarcely pausing for reply he told the story of having robbed his own convoy, and stolen the wine he was in charge of for safe conveyance.

I wish I could give any—even the weakest idea of how he narrated that incident, the struggle that he portrayed between duty and temptation, and the apologetic tone of his voice in which he explained that the frame of mind that succeeds to any yielding to seductive influences, is often in the main more profitable to a man than is the vain-glorious sense of having resisted a temptation. "Meekness is the mother of all the virtues," said he, "and there is no being meek without frailty." The story, told as he told it, was too much for the diplomatist's gravity, he resisted all signs of attention as long as he was able, and at last fairly roared out with laughter.

As soon as I myself recovered from the effects of his drollery I said, "Major, I have a proposition to make you: let me tell the story in print, and I'll give you five naps."

"Are you serious, Harry?" asked he. "Is this on honor?"

"On honor, assuredly," I replied.

"Let me have the money down, on the nail, and I'll give you leave to have me and my whole life, every adventure that ever befell me, aye, and, if you like, every moral reflection that my experiences have suggested."

"Done!" cried I, "I agree."

"Not so fast," cried the diplomatist, "we must make a protocol of this; the high contracting parties must know what they give and what they receive. I'll draw out the treaty."

He did so at full length on a sheet of that solemn blue tinted paper, so dedicated to dispatch purposes—he duly set forth the concession and the consideration. We each signed the document, he witnessed and sealed it, and Monsoon pocketed my five napoleons, filling a bumper to any success the bargain might bring me,

and of which I have never had reason to express deep disappointment.

This document, along with my University degree, my commission in a Militia regiment, and a vast amount of letters very interesting to me, were seized by the Austrian authorities on the way from Como to Florence in the August of 1847, being deemed part of a treasonable correspondence—probably purposely allegorical in form—and never restored to me. I fairly own that I'd give all the rest willingly to repossess myself of the Monsoon treaty, not a little for the sake of that quaint old autograph, faintly shaken by the quiet laugh with which he wrote it.

That I did not entirely fail in giving my Major some faint resemblance to the great original from whom I copied him, I may mention that he was speedily recognized in print by the Marquis of Londonderry, the well-known Sir Charles Stuart of the Peninsular campaign. "I know that fellow well," said he; "he once sent me a challenge, and I had to make him a very humble apology. The occasion was this: I had been out with a single aide-de-camp, to make a reconnaissance in front of Victor's division; and to avoid attracting any notice, we covered over our uniform with two common gray overcoats, which reached to the feet, and effectually concealed our rank as officers. Scarcely, however, had we topped a hill which commanded the view of the French, than a shower of shells flew over and around us. Amazed to think how we could have been so quickly noticed, I looked around me, and discovered, quite close in my rear, your friend Monsoon with what he called his staff, a popinjay set of rascals, dressed out in green and gold, and with more plumes and feathers than the general staff ever bosted. Carried away by momentary passion at the failure of my reconnaissance, I burst out with some insolent allusion to the harlequin assembly which had drawn the French fire upon us. Monsoon saluted me respectfully, and retired without a word; but I had scarcely reached my quarters when a 'friend' of his waited on me with a message, a very categorical message it was too, 'it must be a meeting or an ample apology.' I made the apology, a most full one, for the Major was right, and I had not a fraction of reason to sustain me in my conduct, and we have been the best of friends ever since."

I myself had heard the incident before this from Monsoon, but told amongst other adventures whose exact veracity I was rather disposed to question, and did not therefore accord it all the faith that was its due; and I admit that the accidental corroboration of this one event very often served to puzzle me afterward, when I listened to stories in which the Major seemed a second Munchausen, but might, like in this of the duel, have been amongst the truest and most matter-of-fact of historians. May the reader be not less embarrassed than myself is my sincere, if not very courteous, prayer.

I have no doubt myself, that often in recounting some strange incident, a personal experience it always was, he was himself more amused by the credulity of the hearers, and the amount of interest he could excite in them, than were they by the story. He possessed the true narrative gusto, and there was a marvelous instinct in the way in which he would vary a tale to suit the tastes of an audience; while his moralizings were almost certain to take the tone of a humoristic quiz on the company.

Though fully aware that I was availing myself of the contract that delivered him into my hands, and dining with me two or three days a week, he never lapsed into any allusion to his appearance in print, and the story had been already some weeks published before he asked me to lend him "that last thing—he forgot the name of it—I was writing."

Of Frank Webber I have said, in a former notice, that he was one of my earliest friends, my chum in college, and in the very chambers where I have located Charles O'Malley, in Old Trinity. He was a man of the highest order of abilities, and with a memory that never forgot, but ruined and run to seed by the idleness that came of a discursive, uncertain temperament. Capable of anything, he spent his youth in follies and eccentricities; every one of which, however, gave indications of a mind inexhaustible in resources, and abounding in devices and contrivances that none other but himself would have thought of. Poor fellow, he died young; and perhaps it is better it should have been so. Had he lived to a later day, he would most probably have been found a foremost leader of Fenianism, and from what I knew of him, I can say he would have been a more dangerous enemy to English rule than any of those dealers in the petty larceny of rebellion we have lately seen amongst us.

I have said that of Mickey Free I had not one, but one thousand—types. Indeed, I am not quite sure that in my last visit to Dublin, I did not chance on a liv-

ing specimen of the "Free" family, much readier in repartée, quicker with an apropos, and droller in illustration than my own Mickey. This fellow was "boots" at a great hotel in Sackville Street; and I owe him more amusement and some heartier laughs than it has been always my fortune to enjoy in a party of wits. His criticisms on my sketches of Irish character were about the shrewdest and the best I ever listened to; and that I am not bribed to this opinion by any flattery, I may remark that they were more often severe than complimentary, and that he hit every blunder of image, every mistake in figure, of my peasant characters, with an acuteness and correctness, which made me very grateful to know that his daily occupations were limited to blacking boots, and not polishing off authors.

I believe I have now done with my confessions, except I should like to own that this story was the means of according me a more heartfelt glow of satisfaction, a more gratifying sense of pride, than anything I ever have or ever shall write, and in this wise. My brother, at that time the rector of an Irish parish, once forwarded to me a letter from a lady unknown to him, but who had heard he was the brother of "Harry Lorrequer," and who addressed him, not knowing where a letter might be directed to myself. The letter was the grateful expression of a mother, who said "I am the widow of a field officer, and with an only son, for whom I obtained a presentation to Woolwich; but seeing in my boy's nature certain traits of nervousness and timidity, which induced me to hesitate on embarking him in the career of a soldier, I became very unhappy and uncertain which course to decide on.

"While in this state of uncertainty I chanced to make him a birthday present of 'Charles O'Malley,' the reading of which seemed to act like a charm on his whole character, inspiring him with a passion for movement and adventure, and spiriting him to an eager desire for a military life. Seeing that this was no passing enthusiasm, but a decided and determined bent, I accepted the cadetship for him, and his career has been not alone distinguished as a student, but one which has marked him out for an almost hare-brained courage, and for a dash and heroism that give high promise for his future.

"Thank your brother for me," wrote she, "a mother's thanks for the welfare of an only son, and say how I wish that my best wishes for him and his could recompense him for what I owe him."

I humbly hope that it may not be imputed to me as unpardonable vanity—the recording of this incident. It gave me an intense pleasure when I heard it; and now, as I look back on it, it invests this story for myself with an interest which nothing else that I have written can afford me.

I have now but to repeat what I have declared in former editions, my sincere gratitude for the favor the public still continues to bestow on me—a favor which probably associates the memory of this book with whatever I have since done successfully, and compels me to remember that to the popularity of "Charles O'Malley" I am indebted for a great share of that kindliness in criticism, and that geniality in judgment, which—for more than a quarter of a century—my countrymen have graciously bestowed on their faithful friend and servant,

CHARLES LEVER.

TRIESTE, 1872.

CHAPTER I.

DALY'S CLUB HOUSE.

THE rain was dashing in torrents against the window-panes, and the wind sweeping in heavy and fitful gusts along the dreary and deserted streets, as a party of three persons sat over their wine, in that stately old pile which once formed the resort of the Irish members, in College-green, Dublin, and went by the name of Daly's Club House. The clatter of falling tiles and chimney-pots—the jarring of the window-frames and howling of the storm without, seemed little to affect the spirits of those within, as they drew closer to a blazing fire, before which stood a small table covered with the remains of a dessert, and an abundant supply of bottles, whose characteristic length of neck indicated the rarest wines of France and Germany; while the portly magnum of claret—the wine *par excellence* of every Irish gentleman of the day—passed rapidly from hand to hand, the conversation did not languish, and many a deep and hearty laugh followed the stories which every now and then were told, as some reminiscence of early days was recalled, or some trait of a former companion remembered.

One of the party, however, was apparently engrossed by other thoughts than those of the mirth and merriment around; for, in the midst of all, he would turn suddenly from the others, and devote himself

to a number of scattered sheets of paper, upon which he had written some lines, but whose crossed and blotted sentences attested how little success had waited upon his literary labors. This individual was a short, plethoric-looking, white-haired man, of about fifty, with a deep, round voice, and a chuckling, smothering laugh, which, whenever he indulged, not only shook his own ample person, but generally created a petty earthquake on every side of him. For the present, I shall not stop to particularize him more closely; but, when I add, that the person in question was a well-known member of the Irish House of Commons, whose acute understanding and practical good sense were veiled under an affected and well-dissembled habit of blundering, that did far more for his party than the most violent and pointed attacks of his more accurate associates, some of my readers may anticipate me in pronouncing him to be Sir Harry Boyle. Upon his left sat a figure the most unlike him possible; he was a tall, thin, bony man, with a bolt-upright air, and a most saturnine expression; his eyes were covered by a deep green shade, which fell far over his face, but failed to conceal a blue scar that, crossing his cheek, ended in the angle of his mouth, and imparted to that feature, when he spoke, an apparently abortive attempt to extend toward his eyebrow; his upper lip was covered with a grizzly and ill-trimmed moustache, which added much to the ferocity of his look, while a thin and pointed beard on his chin gave an apparent length to the whole face that completed its rueful character. His dress was a single-breasted, tightly-buttoned frock, in one button-hole of which a yellow ribbon was fastened, the decoration of a foreign service, which conferred upon its wearer the title of Count; and though Billy Considine, as he was familiarly called by his friends, was a thorough Irishman in all his feelings and affections, yet he had no objection to the designation he had gained in the Austrian army. The Count was certainly no beauty, but, somehow, very few men of his day had a fancy for telling him so; a deadlier hand and a steadier eye never covered his man in the Phœnix; and though he never had a seat in the House, he was always regarded as one of the government party, who more than once had damped the ardor of an opposition member, by the very significant threat of "setting Billy at him." The third figure of the group was a large, powerfully-built, and handsome man, older than either of the others, but not betraying in his voice or carriage any touch of time. He was attired in the green coat and buff vest which formed the livery of the club; and in his tall, ample forehead, clear, well-set eye, and still handsome mouth, bore evidence that no great flattery was necessary at the time which called Godfrey O'Malley the handsomest man in Ireland.

"Upon my conscience," said Sir Harry, throwing down his pen with an air of ill-temper, "I can make nothing of it; I have got into such an infernal habit of making bulls, that I can't write sense when I want it."

"Come, come," said O'Malley, "try again, my dear fellow. If you can't succeed, I'm sure Billy and I have no chance."

"What have you written? Let us see," said Considine, drawing the paper toward him, and holding it to the light. "Why, what the devil is all this? you have made him 'drop down dead after dinner of a lingering illness brought on by the debate of yesterday.'"

"Oh, impossible!"

"Well, read it yourself; there it is; and, as if to make the thing less credible, you talk of his 'Bill for the Better Recovery of Small Debts.' I'm sure, O'Malley, your last moments were not employed in that manner."

"Come, now," said Sir Harry, "I'll set all to rights with a postscript. 'Any one who questions the above statement, is politely requested to call on Mr. Considine, 16 Kildare street, who will feel happy to afford him every satisfaction upon Mr. O'Malley's decease, or upon miscellaneous matters.'"

"Worse and worse," said O'Malley. "Killing another man will never persuade the world that I'm dead."

"But we'll wake you, and have a glorious funeral."

"And if any man doubt the statement, I'll call him out," said the Count.

"Or, better still," said Sir Harry, "O'Malley has his action at law for defamation."

"I see I'll never get down to Galway at this rate," said O'Malley, "and as the new election takes place on Tuesday week, time presses. There are more writs flying after me this instant, than for all the government boroughs."

"And there will be fewer returns, I fear," said Sir Harry.

"Who is the chief creditor?" asked the Count.

"Old Stapleton, the attorney in Fleet street, has most of the mortgages."

"Nothing to be done with him in this way?" said Considine, balancing the cork-screw like a hair trigger.

"No chance of it."

"May be," said Sir Harry, "he might come to terms if I were to call and say—You are anxious to close accounts, as your death has just taken place. You know what I mean."

"I fear so should he, were you to say so. No, no, Boyle, just try a plain, straightforward paragraph about my death. We'll have it in Falkner's paper to-morrow; on Friday the funeral can take place, and, with the blessing o' God, I'll come to life on Saturday at Athlone, in time to canvass the market."

"I think it wouldn't be bad if your ghost were to appear to old Timins the tanner, in Naas, on your way down; you know he arrested you once before."

"I prefer a night's sleep," said O'Malley; "but come, finish the squib for the paper."

"Stay a little," said Sir Harry, musing; "it just strikes me that, if ever the matter gets out, I may be in some confounded scrape. Who knows if it is not a breach of privilege to report the death of a member? And to tell you truth, I dread the Sergeant and the Speaker's warrant with a very lively fear."

"Why, when did you make his acquaintance?" said the Count.

"Is it possible you never heard of Boyle's committal?" said O'Malley; "you surely must have been abroad at the time; but it's not too late to tell it yet."

"Well, it's about two years since old Townsend brought in his Enlistment Bill, and the whole country was scoured for all our voters, who were scattered here and there, never anticipating another call of the House, and supposing that the session was just over. Among others, up came our friend Harry, here, and, the night he arrived, they made him a 'Monk of the Screw,' and very soon made him forget his senatorial dignities.

"On the evening after his reaching town, the bill was brought in, and at two in the morning the division took place—a vote was of too much consequence not to look after it closely—and a Castle messenger was in waiting in Exchequer street, who, when the debate was closing, put Harry, with three others, into a coach, and brought them down to the House. Unfortunately, however, they mistook their friends, voted against the bill, and, amid the loudest cheering of the opposition, the government party were defeated. The rage of the ministers knew no bounds, and looks of defiance and even threats were exchanged between the ministers and the deserters. Amid all this poor Harry fell fast asleep, and dreamed that he was once more in Exchequer street, presiding among the monks, and mixing another tumbler. At length he awoke and looked about him—the clerk was just at the instant reading out, in his usual routine manner, a clause of the new bill, and the remainder of the House was in dead silence. Harry looked again around on every side, wondering where was the hot water, and what had become of the whisky bottle, and above all, why the company were so extremely dull and ungenial. At length, with a half shake, he roused up a little, and giving a look of unequivocal contempt on every side, called out, 'Upon my soul, you're pleasant companions—but I'll give you a chant to enliven you.' So saying, he cleared his throat with a couple of short coughs, and struck up, with the voice of a Stentor, the following verse of a popular ballad:

"'And they nibbled away, both night and day,
Like mice in a round of Glo'ster;
Great rogues they were all, both great and small;
From Flood to Leslie Foster.
"'Great rogues all.'

"'Chorus, boys!'

If he was not joined by the voices of his friends in the song, it was probably because such a roar of laughing never was heard since the walls were roofed over. The whole House rose in a mass, and my friend Harry was hurried over the benches by the Sergeant-at-Arms, and left for three weeks in Newgate, to practice his melody."

"All true," said Sir Harry, "and worse luck to them for not liking music; but come now, will this do?—'It is our melancholy duty to announce the death of Godfrey O'Malley, Esq., late member for the county of Galway, which took place on Friday evening, at Daly's Club House. This esteemed gentleman's family—one of the oldest in Ireland, and among whom it was hereditary not to have any children——'"

Here a burst of laughter from Considine and O'Malley interrupted the reader, who with the greatest difficulty could be persuaded that he was again bulling it.

"The devil fly away with it," said he, "I'll never succeed."

"Never mind," said O'Malley; "the first part will do admirably; and let us now turn our attention to other matters."

A fresh magnum was called for, and over its inspiring contents all the details of

the funeral were planned; and, as the clock struck four, the party separated for the *night*, well satisfied with the result of their labors.

CHAPTER II.

THE ESCAPE.

When the dissolution of Parliament was announced the following morning in Dublin, its interest in certain circles was manifestly increased by the fact that Godfrey O'Malley was at last open to arrest; for as, in olden times, certain gifted individuals possessed some happy immunity against death by fire or sword, so the worthy O'Malley seemed to enjoy a no less valuable privilege, and for many a year had passed, among the myrmidons of the law, as writ-proof. Now, however, the charm seemed to have yielded, and pretty much with the same feeling as a storming party may be supposed to experience on the day that a breach is reported as practicable, did the honest attorneys, retained in the various suits against him, rally round each other that morning in the Four Courts.

Bonds, mortgages, post-obits, promissory notes—in fact, every imaginable species of invention for raising the O'Malley exchequer for the preceding thirty years—were handed about on all sides, suggesting to the mind of an uninterested observer the notion that, had the aforesaid O'Malley been an independent and absolute monarch, instead of merely being the member for Galway, the kingdom over whose destinies he had been called to preside would have suffered not a little from a depreciated currency and an extravagant issue of paper. Be that as it might, one thing was clear: the whole estates of the family could not possibly pay one-fourth of the debt, and the only question was one which occasionally arises at a scanty dinner on a mail-coach road—who was to be the lucky individual to carve the joint, where so many were sure to go off hungry.

It was now a trial of address between these various and highly-gifted gentlemen who should first pounce upon the victim, and when the skill of their caste is taken into consideration, who will doubt that every feasible expedient for securing him was resorted to? While writs were struck against him in Dublin, emissaries were dispatched to the various surrounding counties to procure others in the event of his escape. *Ne exeats* were sworn, and water-bailiffs engaged to follow him on the high seas; and, as the great Nassau balloon did not exist in those days, no imaginable mode of escape appeared possible, and bets were offered at long odds that, within twenty-four hours, the late member would be enjoying his *otium cum dignitate* in his Majesty's gaol of Newgate.

Expectation was at the highest—confidence hourly increasing—success all but certain—when, in the midst of all this high-bounding hope, the dreadful rumor spread that O'Malley was no more. One had seen it just five minutes before in the evening edition of Falkner's paper—another heard it in the courts—a third overheard the Chief Justice stating it to the Master of the Rolls—and, lastly, a breathless witness arrived from College-green with the news that Daly's Club House was shut up, and the shutters closed. To describe the consternation the intelligence caused on every side is impossible; nothing in history equals it, except, perhaps, the entrance of the French army into Moscow, deserted and forsaken by its former inhabitants. While terror and dismay, therefore, spread amid that wide and respectable body who formed O'Malley's creditors, the preparations for his funeral were going on with every rapidity; relays of horses were ordered at every stage of the journey, and it was announced that, in testimony of his worth, a large party of his friends were to accompany his remains to Portumna Abbey—a test much more indicative of resistance in the event of any attempt to arrest the body, than of anything like reverence for their departed friend.

Such was the state of matters in Dublin, when a letter reached me one morning at O'Malley Castle, whose contents will at once explain the writer's intention, and also serve to introduce my unworthy self to my reader. It ran thus:

"Dear Charley,—Your uncle Godfrey, whose debts [God pardon him] are more numerous than the hairs of his wig, was obliged to die here last night. We did the thing for him completely; and all doubts as to the reality of the event are silenced by the circumstantial detail of the newspaper 'that he was confined six weeks to his bed from a cold he caught, ten days ago, while on guard.' Repeat this, for it's better we had all the same story till he comes to life again, which, maybe, will not take place before Tuesday or Wednesday. At the same time, canvass the county for him, and say he'll be with his friends next week, and up in Woodford and the Scariff barony: say he died a true Catholic,

it will serve him on the hustings. Meet us in Athlone on Saturday, and bring your uncle's mare with you—he says he'd rather ride home; and tell Father McShane to have a bit of dinner ready about four o'clock, for the corpse can get nothing after he leaves Mount Mellick.—No more now, from yours, ever,

"HARRY BOYLE.

"Daly's, about eight in the evening.
"To Charles O'Malley, Esq.,
O'Malley Castle, Galway."

When this not over-clear document reached me, I was the sole inhabitant of O'Malley Castle, a very ruinous pile of incongruous masonry, that stood in a wild and dreary part of the county of Galway, bordering on the Shannon. On every side stretched the property of my uncle, or at least what had once been so; and, indeed, so numerous were its present claimants, that he would have been a subtle lawyer who could have pronounced upon the rightful owner. The demesne around the castle contained some well-grown and handsome timber, and, as the soil was undulating and fertile, presented many features of beauty; beyond it, all was sterile, bleak, and barren. Long tracts of brown heath-clad mountain, or not less unprofitable valleys of tall and waving fern, were all that the eye could discern, except where the broad Shannon, expanding into a tranquil and glassy lake, lay still and motionless beneath the dark mountains, a few islands, with some ruined churches and a round tower, alone breaking the dreary waste of water.

Here it was that I had passed my infancy and my youth, and here I now stood, at the age of seventeen, quite unconscious that the world contained aught fairer and brighter than that gloomy valley, with its rugged frame of mountains.

When a mere child, I was left an orphan to the care of my worthy uncle. My father, whose extravagance had well sustained the family reputation, had squandered a large and handsome property in contesting elections for his native county, and in keeping up that system of unlimited hospitality for which Ireland in general, and Galway more especially, was renowned. The result was, as might be expected, ruin and beggary. He died, leaving every one of his estates encumbered with heavy debts, and the only legacy he left to his brother was a boy of four years of age, entreating him, with his last breath, "Be anything you like to him, Godfrey, but a father, or at least such a one as I have proved."

Godfrey O'Malley, some short time previous, had lost his wife, and when this new trust was committed to him, he resolved never to remarry, but to rear me up as his only child, and the inheritor of his estates. How weighty and onerous an obligation this latter might prove, the reader can form some idea. The intention was, however, a kind one; and, to do my uncle justice, he loved me with all the affection of a warm and open heart.

From my earliest years his whole anxiety was to fit me for the part of a country gentleman, as he regarded that character—viz., I rode boldly with fox-hounds; I was about the best shot within twenty miles of us; I could swim the Shannon at Holy Island; I drove four-in-hand better than the coachman himself; and from finding a hare to hooking a salmon, my equal could not be found from Killaloe to Banagher. These were the staple of my endowments. Besides which, the parish priest had taught me a little Latin, a little French, and a little geometry, and a great deal of the life and opinions of St. Jago, who presided over a holy well in the neighborhood, and was held in very considerable repute.

When I add to this portraiture of my accomplishments that I was nearly six feet high, with more than a common share of activity and strength for my years, and no inconsiderable portion of good looks, I have finished my sketch, and stand before my reader.

It is now time I should return to Sir Harry's letter, which so completely bewildered me, that, but for the assistance of Father Roach, I should have been totally unable to make out the writer's intentions. By his advice, I immediately set out for Athlone, where, when I arrived, I found my uncle addressing the mob from the top of the hearse, and recounting his miraculous escapes as a new claim upon their gratitude.

"There was nothing else for it, boys; the Dublin people insisted on my being their member, and beseiged the club-house. I refused—they threatened—I grew obstinate—they furious. 'I'll die first,' said I. 'Galway or nothing!'" "Hurrah!" from the mob. "O'Malley forever!" "And ye see, I kept my word, boys—I did die; I died that evening at a quarter past eight. There, read it for yourselves; there's the paper; was waked and carried out, and here I am after all, ready to die in earnest for you—but never to desert you."

The cheers here were deafening, and my uncle was carried through the market, down to the mayor's house, who, being a friend of the opposite party, was complimented with three groans; then up the Mall to the chapel, beside which Father MacShane resided. He was then suffered to touch the earth once more, when, having shaken hands with all of his constituency within reach, he entered the house, to partake of the kindest welcome and best reception the good priest could afford him.

My uncle's progress homeward was a triumph; the real secret of his escape had somehow come out, and his popularity rose to a white heat. "An it's little O'Malley cares for the law—bad luck to it; it's himself can laugh at judge and jury. Arrest him—nabocklish—catch a weasel asleep," etc. Such were the encomiums that greeted him as he passed on toward home; while shouts of joy and blazing bonfires attested that his success was regarded as a national triumph.

The west has certainly its strong features of identity. Had my uncle possessed the claims of the immortal Howard—had he united in his person all the attributes which confer a lasting and an ennobling fame upon humanity—he might have passed on unnoticed and unobserved; but for the man that had duped a judge and escaped the sheriff, nothing was sufficiently flattering to mark their approbation. The success of the exploit was twofold; the news spread far and near, and the very story canvassed the county better than Billy Davern himself, the Athlone attorney.

This was the prospect now before us; and, however little my readers may sympathize with my taste, I must honestly avow that I looked forward to it with a most delighted feeling. O'Malley Castle was to be the center of operations, and filled with my uncle's supporters; while I, a mere stripling, and usually treated as a boy, was to be intrusted with an important mission, and sent off to canvass a distant relation, with whom my uncle was not upon terms, and who might possibly be approachable by a younger branch of the family, with whom he had never any collision.

CHAPTER III.

MR. BLAKE.

NOTHING but the exigency of the case could ever have persuaded my uncle to stoop to the humiliation of canvassing the individual to whom I was now about to proceed as envoy extraordinary, with full powers to make any, or every *amende*, provided only his interest, and that of his followers, should be thereby secured to the O'Malley cause. The evening before I set out was devoted to giving me all the necessary instructions how I was to proceed, and what difficulties I was to avoid.

"Say your uncle's in high feather with the government party," said Sir Harry, "and that he only votes against them as a *ruse de guerre*, as the French call it."

"Insist upon it that I am sure of the election without him; but that for family reasons he should not stand aloof from me; that people are talking of it in the country."

"And drop a hint," said Considine, "that O'Malley is greatly improved in his shooting."

"And don't get drunk too early in the evening, for Phil Blake has beautiful claret," said another.

"And be sure you don't make love to the red-headed girls," added a third; "he has four of them, each more sinfully ugly than the other."

"You'll be playing whist, too," said Boyle; "and never mind losing a few pounds. Mrs. B., long life to her, has a playful way of turning the king."

"Charley will do it all well," said my uncle; "leave him alone. And now let us have in the supper."

It was only on the following morning, as the tandem came round to the door, that I began to feel the importance of my mission, and certain misgivings came over me as to my ability to fulfill it. Mr. Blake and his family, though estranged from my uncle for several years past, had been always most kind and good-natured to me; and although I could not, with propriety, have cultivated any close intimacy with them, I had every reason to suppose that they entertained toward me nothing but sentiments of good-will. The head of the family was a Galway squire of the oldest and most genuine stock; a great sportsman, a negligent farmer, and most careless father; he looked upon a fox as an infinitely more precious part of the creation than a French governess; and thought that riding well with hounds was a far better gift than all the learning of a Porson. His daughters were after his own heart—the best tempered, least educated, most high-spirited, gay, dashing ugly girls in the country—ready to ride over a four-foot paling without a saddle, and to dance

the "Wind that shakes the barley," for four consecutive hours, against all the officers that their hard fate, and the Horse Guards, ever condemned to Galway.

The mamma was only remarkable for her liking for whist, and her invariable good fortune thereat; a circumstance the world were agreed in ascribing less to the blind goddess than her own natural endowments.

Lastly, the heir of the house was a stripling of about my own age, whose accomplishments were limited to selling spavined and broken-winded horses to the infantry officers, playing a safe game at billiards, and acting as jackal-general to his sisters at balls, providing them with a sufficiency of partners, and making a strong fight for a place at the supper-table for his mother. These fraternal and filial traits, more honored at home than abroad, had made Mr. Matthew Blake a rather well-known individual in the neighborhood where he lived.

Though Mr. Blake's property was ample, and, strange to say for his county, unincumbered, the whole air and appearance of his house and grounds betrayed anything rather than a sufficiency of means. The gate lodge was a miserable mud hovel, with a thatched and falling roof; the gate itself, a wooden contrivance, one-half of which was boarded, and the other railed; the avenue was covered with weeds, and deep with ruts, and the clumps of young plantation, which had been planted and fenced with care, were now open to the cattle, and either totally uprooted or denuded of their bark, and dying. The lawn, a handsome one of some forty acres, had been devoted to an exercise-ground for training horses, and was cut up by their feet beyond all semblance of its original destination; and the house itself, a large and venerable structure of above a century old, displayed every variety of contrivance, as well as the usual one of glass, to exclude the weather. The hall-door hung by a single hinge, and required three persons each morning and evening to open and shut it; the remainder of the day it lay pensively open; the steps which led to it were broken and falling; and the whole aspect of things without was ruinous in the extreme. Within, matters were somewhat better, for, though the furniture was old, and none of it clean, yet an appearance of comfort was evident; and the large grate, blazing with its pile of red-hot turf, the deep-cushioned chairs, the old black mahogany dinner-table, and the soft carpet, albeit deep with dust, were not to be despised on a winter's evening, after a hard day's run with the "Blazers." Here it was, however, that Mr. Philip Blake had dispensed his hospitalities for above fifty years, and his father before him; and here, with a retinue of servants as *gauches* and ill-ordered as all about them, was he accustomed to invite all that the county possessed of rank and wealth, among which the officers quartered in his neighborhood were never neglected, the Miss Blakes having as decided a taste for the army as any young ladies of the west of Ireland; and, while the Galway squire, with his cords and tops, was detailing the last news from Ballinasloe in one corner, the dandy from St. James's street might be seen displaying more arts of seductive flattery in another than his most accurate *insouciance* would permit him to practice in the elegant saloons of London or Paris; and the same man who would have "cut his brother," for a solecism of dress or equipage, in Bond street, was now to be seen quietly domesticated, eating family dinners, rolling silk for the young ladies, going down the middle in a country dance, and even descending to the indignity of long whist, at "tenpenny" points, with only the miserable consolation that the company were not honest.

It was upon a clear frosty morning, when a bright blue sky and a sharp but bracing air seem to exercise upon the feelings a sense no less pleasurable than the balmiest breeze and warmest sun of summer, that I whipped my leader short round, and entered the precincts of "Gurt-na-Morra." As I proceeded along the avenue, I was struck by the slight traces of repairs here and there evident; a gate or two that formerly had been parallel to the horizon, had been raised to the perpendicular; some ineffectual efforts at paint were also perceptible upon the palings; and, in short, everything seemed to have undergone a kind of attempt at improvement.

When I reached the door, instead of being surrounded, as of old, by a tribe of menials frieze-coated, bare-headed, and bare-legged, my presence was announced by a tremendous ringing of bells, from the hands of an old functionary, in a very formidable livery, who peeped at me through the hall-window, and whom, with the greatest difficulty, I recognized as my quondam acquaintance, the butler. His wig alone would have graced a king's counsel, and the high collar of his coat, and the stiff pillory of his cravat, denoted an eternal adieu to so humble a vocation as drawing a cork. Before I had time for any conjecture as to the altered circumstances about, the activity of my friend

at the bell had surrounded me with "four others worse than himself," at least, they were exactly similarly attired; and, probably, from the novelty of their costume, and the restraints of so unusual a thing as dress, were as perfectly unable to assist themselves or others, as the Court of Aldermen would be, were they to rig out in plate armor of the fourteenth century. How much longer I might have gone on conjecturing the reasons for the masquerade around, I cannot say; but my servant, an Irish disciple of my uncle's, whispered in my ear—"It's a red-breeches day, Master Charles—they'll have the hoith of company in the house." From the phrase, it needed little explanation to inform me that it was one of those occasions on which Mr. Blake attired all the hangers-on of his house in livery, and that great preparations were in progress for a more than usually splendid reception.

In the next moment I was ushered into the breakfast-room, where a party of above a dozen persons were most gayly enjoying all the good cheer for which the house had a well-deserved repute. After the usual shaking of hands, and hearty greetings were over, I was introduced in all form to Sir George Dashwood, a tall and singularly handsome man of about fifty, with an undress military frock and ribbon. His reception of me was somewhat strange, for, as they mentioned my relationship to Godfrey O'Malley, he smiled slightly, and whispered something to Mr. Blake, who replied, "Oh! no, no; not the least. A mere boy; and besides——" What he added I lost, for at that moment Nora Blake was presenting me to Miss Dashwood.

If the sweetest blue eyes that ever beamed beneath a forehead of snowy whiteness, over which dark brown and waving hair fell, less in curls than masses of locky richness, could only have known what wild work they were making of my poor heart, Miss Dashwood, I trust, would have looked at her teacup or her muffin rather than at me, as she actually did on that fatal morning. If I were to judge from her costume, she had only just arrived, and the morning air had left upon her cheek a bloom that contributed greatly to the effect of her lovely countenance. Although very young, her form had all the roundness of womanhood; while her gay and sprightly manner indicated all the *sans géne* which only very young girls possess, and which, when tempered with perfect good taste, and accompanied by beauty and no small share of talent, forms an irresistible power of attraction.

Beside her sat a tall, handsome man, of about five-and-thirty, or perhaps forty years of age, with a most soldierly air, who, as I was presented to him, scarcely turned his head, and gave me a half-nod of very unequivocal coldness. There are moments in life, in which the heart is, as it were, laid bare to any chance or casual impression with a wondrous sensibility of pleasure or its opposite. This to me was one of those; and, as I turned from the lovely girl, who had received me with a marked courtesy, to the cold air, and repelling *hauteur* of the dark-browed Captain, the blood rushed throbbing to my forehead; and as I walked to my place at the table, I eagerly sought his eye, to return him a look of defiance and disdain, proud and contemptuous as his own. Captain Hammersley, however, never took further notice of me, but continued to recount, for the amusement of those about him, several excellent stories of his military career, which, I confess, were heard with every test of delight by all, save me. One thing galled me particularly—and how easy is it, when you have begun by disliking a person, to supply food for your antipathy—all his allusions to his military life were coupled with half hinted and ill-concealed sneers at civilians of every kind, as though every man not a soldier were absolutely unfit for common intercourse with the world—still more, for any favorable reception in ladies' society.

The young ladies of the family were a well-chosen auditory, for their admiration of the army extended from the Life Guards to the Veteran Battalion, the Sappers and Miners included; and, as Miss Dashwood was the daughter of a soldier, she, of course, coincided in many, if not all his opinions. I turned toward my neighbor, a Clare gentleman, and tried to engage him in conversation, but he was breathlessly attending to the Captain. On my left sat Matthew Blake, whose eyes were firmly riveted upon the same person, and heard his marvels with an interest scarcely inferior to that of his sisters. Annoyed, and in ill-temper, I ate my breakfast in silence, and resolved that, the first moment I could obtain a hearing from Mr. Blake, I would open my negotiation, and take my leave at once of "Gurt-na-Morra."

We all assembled in a large room, called, by courtesy, the library, when breakfast was over; and then it was that Mr. Blake, taking me aside, whispered, "Charley, it's right I should inform you that Sir George Dashwood there is the Commander of the Forces, and is come down here at this

moment to——." What for, or how it should concern me, I was not to learn; for, at that critical instant, my informant's attention was called off by Captain Hammersley asking if the hounds were to hunt that day.

"My friend Charley, here, is the best authority upon that matter," said Mr. Blake, turning toward me.

"They are to try the Priest's meadows," said I, with an air of some importance; "but, if your guests desire a day's sport, I'll send word over to Brackely to bring the dogs over here, and we are sure to find a fox in your cover."

"Oh, then, by all means," said the Captain, turning toward Mr. Blake, and addressing himself to him—"by all means; and Miss Dashwood, I'm sure, would like to see the hounds throw off."

Whatever chagrin the first part of his speech caused me, the latter set my heart a throbbing; and I hastened from the room to dispatch a messenger to the huntsman to come over to Gurt-na-Morra, and also another to O'Malley Castle, to bring my best horse and my riding equipments, as quickly as possible.

"Matthew, who is this Captain?" said I, as young Blake met me in the hall.

"Oh! he is the aide-de-camp of General Dashwood. A nice fellow, isn't he?"

"I don't know what you may think," said I, "but I take him for the most impertinent, impudent, supercilious——"

The rest of my civil speech was cut short by the appearance of the very individual in question, who, with his hands in his pockets and a cigar in his mouth, sauntered forth down the steps, taking no more notice of Matthew Blake and myself than the two fox terriers that followed at his heels.

However anxious I might be to open negotiations on the subject of my mission, for the present the thing was impossible; for I found that Sir George Dashwood was closeted closely with Mr. Blake, and resolved to wait till evening, when chance might afford me the opportunity I desired.

As the ladies had retired to dress for the hunt, and as I felt no peculiar desire to ally myself with the unsocial Captain, I accompanied Matthew to the stable to look after the cattle, and make preparations for the coming sport.

"There's Captain Hammersley's mare," said Matthew, as he pointed out a highly bred but powerful English hunter; "she came last night, for, as he expected some sport, he sent his horses from Dublin on purpose. The others will be here to-day."

"What is his regiment?" said I, with an appearance of carelessness, but in reality feeling curious to know if the Captain was a cavalry or infantry officer.

"The —th Light Dragoons," said Matthew.

"You never saw him ride?" said I.

"But his groom there says he leads the way in his own country."

"And where may that be?"

"In Leicestershire, no less," said Matthew.

"Does he know Galway?"

"Never was in it before; it's only this minute he asked Mosey Daly if the ox-fences were high here."

"Ox-fences! then he does not know what a wall is?"

"Devil a bit; but we'll teach him."

"That we will," said I, with as bitter a resolution to impart the instruction as ever schoolmaster did to whip Latin grammar into one of the great unbreeched.

"But I had better send the horses down to the Mill," said Matthew; "we'll draw that cover first."

So saying, he turned toward the stable, while I sauntered alone toward the road, by which I expected the huntsman. I had not walked half a mile before I heard the yelping of the dogs, and, a little farther on, I saw old Brackely coming along at a brisk trot, cutting the hounds on each side, and calling after the stragglers.

"Did you see my horse on the road, Brackely?" said I.

"I did, Misther Charles, and, troth, I'm sorry to see him; sure yerself knows better than to take out the Badger, the best steeple-chaser in Ireland, in such a country as this; nothing but awkward stone-fences, and not a foot of sure ground in the whole of it."

"I know it well, Brackely; but I have my reasons for it."

"Well, maybe you have; what cover will your honor try first?"

"They talk of the Mill," said I, "but I'd much rather try 'Morran-a-Gowl.'"

"Morran-a-Gowl! do you want to break your neck entirely?"

"No, Brackely, not mine."

"Whose then, alannah?"

"An English Captain's, the devil fly away with him; he's come down here to-day, and from all I can see is a most impudent fellow; so, Brackely——"

"I understand. Well, leave it to me, and, though I don't like the only deer-park wall on the hill, we'll try it this morning with the blessing; I'll take him down by Woodford, over the 'Devil's Mouth,'

—it's eighteen foot wide this minute with the late rains—into the four callows; then over the stone walls, down to Dangan; then take a short cast up the hill, blow him a bit, and give him the park wall at the top. You must come in then fresh, and give him the whole run home over Sleibhmich—the Badger knows it all, and takes the road always in a fly,—a mighty distressing thing for the horse that follows, more particularly if he does not understand a stony country. Well, if he lives through this, give him the sunk fence and the stone wall at Mr. Blake's clover-field, for the hounds will run into the fox about there; and though we never ride that leap since Mr. Malone broke his neck at it, last October, yet, upon an occasion like this, and for the honor of Galway——"

"To be sure, Brackely, and here's a guinea for you, and now trot on toward the house; they must not see us together, or they might suspect something. But, Brackely," said I, calling out after him, "if he rides at all fair, what's to be done?"

"Troth, then, myself doesn't know; there is nothing so bad west of Athlone; have ye a great spite again him?"

"I have," said I fiercely.

"Could ye coax a fight out of him?"

"That's true," said I; "and now ride on as fast as you can."

Brackely's last words imparted a lightness to my heart and my step, and I strode along a very different man from what I had left the house half an hour previously.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HUNT.

Although we had not the advantages of a "southerly wind and cloudy sky," the day, toward noon, became strongly overcast, and promised to afford us good scenting weather, and as we assembled at the meet, mutual congratulations were exchanged upon the improved appearance of the day. Young Blake had provided Miss Dashwood with a quiet and well-trained horse, and his sisters were all mounted, as usual, upon their own animals, giving to our turn-out quite a gay and lively aspect. I myself came to cover upon a hackney, having sent Badger with a groom, and longed ardently for the moment when, casting the skin of my great coat and overalls, I should appear before the world in my well-appointed "cords and tops." Captain Hammersley had not as yet made his appearance, and many conjectures were afloat as to whether "he might have missed the road or changed his mind," or, "forgot all about it," as Miss Dashwood hinted.

"Who, pray, pitched upon this cover?" said Caroline Blake, as she looked with a practiced eye over the country, on either side.

"There is no chance of a fox late in the day at the Mill," said the huntsman, inventing a lie for the occasion.

"Then of course you never intend us to see much of the sport, for, after you break cover, you are entirely lost to us."

"I thought you always followed the hounds," said Miss Dashwood, timidly.

"Oh, to be sure we do, in any common country; but here it is out of the question; the fences are too large for any one, and, if I am not mistaken, these gentlemen will not ride far over this. There, look yonder, where the river is rushing down the hill—that stream, widening as it advances, crosses the cover nearly midway; well, they must clear that; and then you may see these walls of large loose stones, nearly five feet in height; that is the usual course the fox takes, unless he heads toward the hills, and goes toward Dangan, and then there's an end of it; for the deer-park wall is usually a pull up to every one, except, perhaps, to our friend Charley yonder, who has tried his fortune against drowning more than once there."

"Look, here he comes," said Matthew Blake, "and looking splendidly too—a little too much in flesh, perhaps, if anything."

"Captain Hammersley!" said the four Miss Blakes, in a breath, "where is he?"

"No, it's the Badger I'm speaking of," said Matthew, laughing, and pointing with his finger toward a corner of the field where my servant was leisurely throwing down a wall about two feet high to let him pass.

"Oh, how handsome!—what a charger for a dragoon!" said Miss Dashwood.

Any other mode of praising my steed would have been much more acceptable. The word dragoon was a thorn in my tenderest part, that rankled and lacerated at every stir. In a moment I was in the saddle, and scarcely seated, when at once all the *mauvais honte* of boyhood left me, and I felt every inch a man. I often look back to that moment of my life, and, comparing it with many similar ones, cannot help acknowledging how purely is the self-possession which so often wins success the result of some slight and trivial association. My confidence in my horsemanship sug-

gested moral courage of a very different kind, and I felt that Charles O'Malley curvetting upon a thorough-bred, and the same man ambling upon a shelty, were two and very dissimilar individuals.

"No chance of the Captain," said Matthew, who had returned from a *reconnaissance* upon the road; "and after all it's a pity, for the day is getting quite favorable."

While the young ladies formed pickets to look out for the gallant *militaire*, I seized the opportunity of prosecuting my acquaintance with Miss Dashwood; and, even in the few and passing observations that fell from her, learned how very different an order of being she was from all I had hitherto seen of country belles. A mixture of courtesy with *naïveté*—a wish to please, with a certain feminine gentleness, that always flatters a man, and still more a boy that fain would be one—gained momentarily more and more upon me, and put me also on my mettle to prove to my fair companion that I was not altogether a mere uncultivated and unthinking creature, like the remainder of those about me.

"Here he is, at last," said Helen Blake, as she cantered across a field, waving her handkerchief as a signal to the Captain, who was now seen approaching at a brisk trot.

As he came along, a small fence intervened; he pressed his horse a little, and, as he kissed hands to the fair Helen, cleared it in a bound, and was in an instant in the midst of us.

"He sits his horse like a man, Misther Charles," said the old huntsman; "troth, we must give him the worst bit of it."

Captain Hammersley was, despite all the critical acumen with which I canvassed him, the very beau ideal of a gentleman rider; indeed, although a very heavy man, his powerful English thoroughbred, showing not less bone than blood, took away all semblance of overweight; his saddle, well fitting and well placed; his large and broad-reined snaffle; his own costume of black coat, leathers, and tops, was in perfect keeping, and even to his heavy-handled hunting whip I could find nothing to cavil at. As he rode up he paid his respects to the ladies in his usual free and easy manner, expressed some surprise, but no regret, at hearing that he was late, and never deigning any notice of Matthew or myself, took his place beside Miss Dashwood, with whom he conversed in a low and under tone.

"There they go," said Matthew, as five or six dogs, with their heads up, ran yelping along a furrow, then stopped, howled again, and once more set off together. In an instant all was commotion in the little valley below us. The huntsman, with his hand to his mouth, was calling off the stragglers, and the whipper-in following up the leading dogs with the rest of the pack. "They've found!—they're away!" said Matthew; and, as he spoke, a great yell burst from the valley, and in an instant the whole pack were off at full speed. Rather more intent that moment upon showing off my horsemanship than anything else, I dashed spurs into Badger's sides, and turned him toward a rasping ditch before me; over we went, hurling down behind us a rotten bank of clay and small stones, showing how little safety there had been in topping instead of clearing it at a bound. Before I was well seated again, the Captain was beside me. "Now for it, then," said I; and away we went. What might be the nature of his feelings I cannot pretend to state, but my own were a strange *mélange* of wild, boyish enthusiasm, revenge and recklessness. For my own neck I cared little—nothing; and, as I led the way by half a length, I muttered to myself, "Let him follow me fairly this day, and I ask no more."

The dogs had got somewhat the start of us, and, as they were in full cry, and going fast, we were a little behind. A thought therefore struck me that, by appearing to take a short cut upon the hounds, I should come down upon the river where its breadth was greatest, and thus, at one *coup*, might try my friend's mettle and his horse's performance at the same time. On we went, our speed increasing, till the roar of the river we were now approaching was plainly audible. I looked half around, and now perceived the Captain was standing in his stirrups, as if to obtain a view of what was before him; otherwise his countenance was calm and unmoved, and not a muscle betrayed that he was not cantering on a parade. I fixed myself firmly in my seat, shook my horse a little together, and with a shout whose import every Galway hunter well knows, rushed him at the river. I saw the water dashing among the large stones, I heard its splash, I felt a bound like the *ricochet* of a shot, and we were over, but so narrowly that the bank had yielded beneath his hind legs, and it needed a bold effort of the noble animal to regain his footing. Scarcely was he once more firm, when Hammersley flew by me, taking the lead, and sitting quietly in his saddle, as if racing. I know of little in all my after-life like the agony of that moment; for although I was far, very

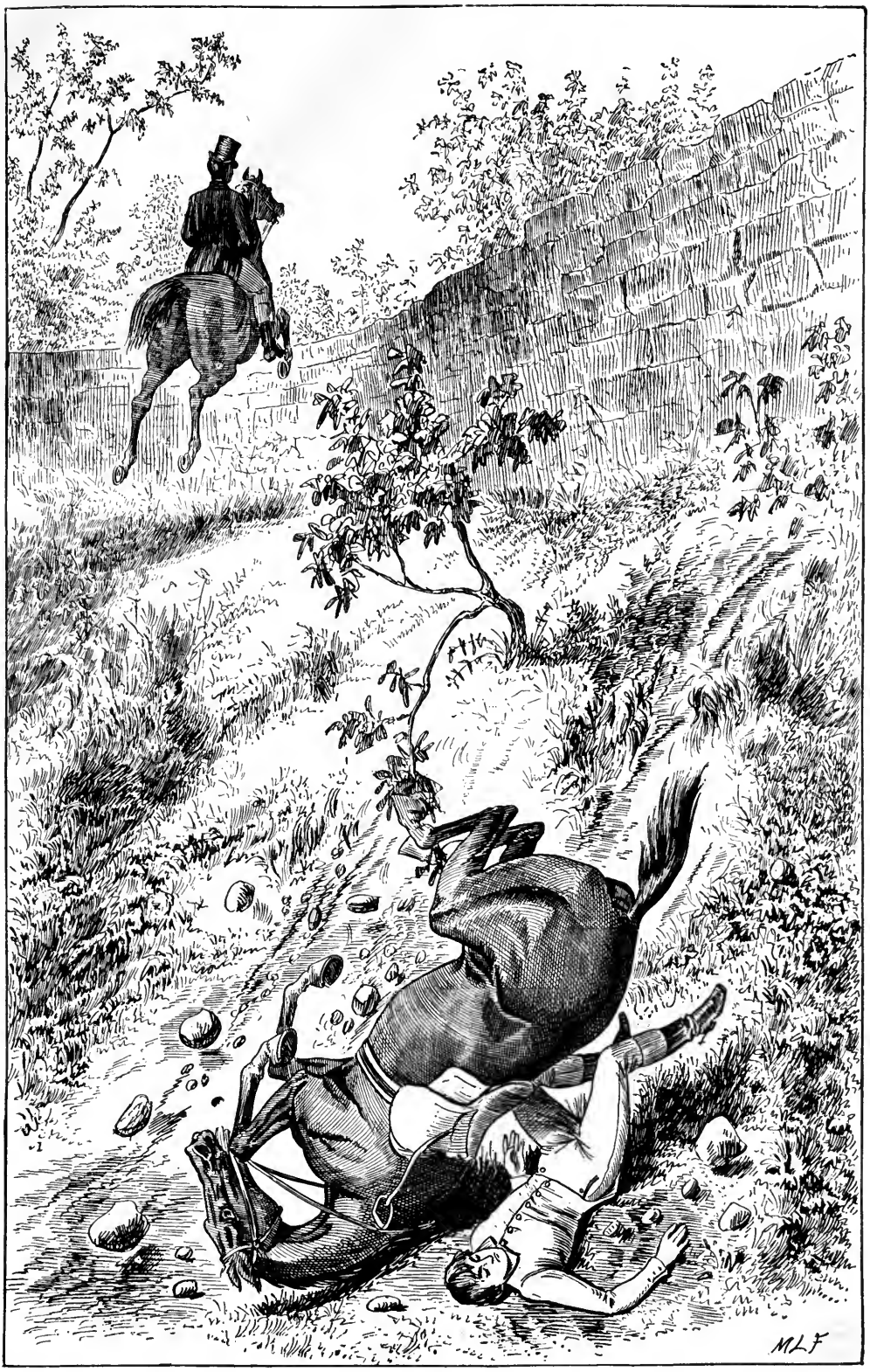
far, from wishing real ill to him, yet I would gladly have broken my leg or my arm if he could not have been able to follow me. And now, there he was, actually a length and a half in advance! and, worse than all, Miss Dashwood must have witnessed the whole, and doubtless his leap over the river was better and bolder than mine. One consolation yet remained, and while I whispered it to myself I felt comforted again. "His is an English mare—they understand these leaps—but what can he make of a Galway wall?" The question was soon to be solved. Before us, about three fields, were the hounds still in full cry; a large stone wall lay between, and to it we both directed our course together. "Ha!" thought I, "he is floored at last," as I perceived that the Captain held his horse rather more in hand, and suffered me to lead. "Now, then, for it!" So saying, I rode at the largest part I could find, well knowing that Badger's powers were here in their element. One spring, one plunge, and away we were, galloping along at the other side. Not so the Captain: his horse had refused the fence, and he was now taking a circuit of the field for another trial of it.

"Pounded, by Jove!" said I, as I turned round in my saddle to observe him. Once more she came at it, and once more baulked, rearing up at the same time, almost so as to fall backward.

My triumph was complete, and I again was about to follow the hounds, when, throwing a look back, I saw Hammersley clearing the wall in a most splendid manner, and taking a stretch of at least thirteen feet beyond it. Once more he was on my flanks, and the contest renewed. Whatever might be the sentiments of the riders (mine I confess to), between the horses it now became a tremendous struggle. The English mare, though evidently superior in stride and strength, was slightly overweighted, and had not, besides, that catlike activity an Irish horse possesses; so that the advantages and disadvantages on either side were about equalized. For about half an hour now the pace was awful. We rode side by side, taking our leaps exactly at the same instant, and not four feet apart. The hounds were still considerably in advance, and were heading toward the Shannon, when suddenly the fox doubled, took the hill-side, and made for Dangan. "Now, then, comes the trial of strength," I said, half aloud, as I threw my eye up a steep and rugged mountain, covered with wild furze and tall heath, around the crest of which ran, in a zig-zag direction, a broken and dilapidated wall, once the inclosure of a deer-park. This wall, which varied from four to six feet in height, was of solid masonry, and would, in the most favorable ground, have been a bold leap. Here, at the summit of a mountain, with not a yard of footing, it was absolutely desperation.

By the time that we reached the foot of the hill, the fox, followed closely by the hounds, had passed through a breach in the wall, while Matthew Blake, with the huntsmen and whipper-in, were riding along in search of a gap to lead the horses through. Before I put spurs to Badger, to face the hill, I turned one look toward Hammersley. There was a slight curl, half-smile, half-sneer upon his lip, that actually maddened me, and had a precipice yawned beneath my feet, I should have dashed at it after that. The ascent was so steep that I was obliged to take the hill in a slanting direction, and even thus, the loose footing rendered it dangerous in the extreme.

At length I reached the crest, where the wall, more than five feet in height, stood frowning above and seeming to defy me. I turned my horse full round, so that his very chest almost touched the stones, and, with a bold cut of the whip and a loud halloo, the gallant animal rose, as if rearing, pawed for an instant to regain his balance, and then, with a frightful struggle, fell backward, and rolled from top to bottom of the hill, carrying me along with him; the last object that crossed my sight, as I lay bruised and motionless, being the Captain, as he took the wall in a flying leap, and disappeared at the other side. After a few scrambling efforts to rise, Badger regained his legs and stood beside me; but such was the shock and concussion of my fall, that all the objects around seemed wavering and floating before me, while showers of bright sparks fell in myriads before my eyes. I tried to rise, but fell back helpless. Cold perspiration broke over my forehead, and I fainted. From that moment I can remember nothing, till I felt myself galloping along at full speed upon a level table-land, with the hounds about three fields in advance, Hammersley riding foremost, and taking all his leaps coolly as ever. As I swayed to either side upon my saddle, from weakness, I was lost to all thought or recollection, save a flickering memory of some plan of vengeance, which still urged me forward. The chase had now lasted above an hour, and both hounds and horses began to feel the pace at which they were going. As for me, I



THE GALLANT ANIMAL ROSE, AS IF REARING, PAWED FOR AN INSTANT TO REGAIN HIS BALANCE, AND THEN, WITH A FRIGHTFUL STRUGGLE, FELL BACKWARDS, AND ROLLED FROM TOP TO BOTTOM OF THE HILL, CARRYING ME ALONG WITH HIM. (P. 644.)

rode mechanically; I neither knew nor cared for the dangers before me. My eye rested on but one object; my whole being was concentrated upon one vague and undefined sense of revenge. At this instant the huntsman came alongside of me.

"Are you hurted, Misther Charles? did you fall?—your cheek is all blood, and your coat is torn in two; and, Mother o' God, his boot is ground to powder; he does not hear me. Oh, pull up—pull up, for the love of the Virgin; there's the clover field, and the sunk fence before you, and you'll be killed on the spot."

"Where?" cried I, with the cry of a madman, "where's the clover field?—where's the sunk fence? Ha! I see it—I see it now."

So saying, I dashed the rowels into my horse's flanks, and in an instant was beyond the reach of the poor fellow's remonstrances. Another moment, I was beside the Captain. He turned round as I came up; the same smile was upon his mouth—I could have struck him. About three hundred yards before us lay the sunk fence: its breadth was about twenty feet, and a wall of close brickwork formed its face. Over this the hounds were now clambering; some succeeded in crossing, but by far the greater number fell back howling into the ditch.

I turned toward Hammersley. He was standing high in his stirrups, and, as he looked toward the yawning fence, down which the dogs were tumbling in masses, I thought (perhaps it was but a thought) that his cheek was paler. I looked again, he was pulling at his horse; ha! it was true then, he would not face it. I turned round in my saddle—looked him full in the face, and, as I pointed with my whip to the leap, called out in a voice hoarse with passion, "Come on." I saw no more. All objects were lost to me from that moment. When next my senses cleared I was standing amid the dogs, where they had just killed. Badger stood blown and trembling beside me, his head drooping, and his flanks gored with spur marks. I looked about, but all consciousness of the past had fled; the concussion of my fall had shaken my intellect, and I was like one but half awake. One glimpse, short and fleeting, of what was taking place, shot through my brain, as old Brackely whispered to me, "By my soul ye did for the Captain there." I turned a vague look upon him, and my eyes fell upon the figure of a man that lay stretched and bleeding upon a door before me. His pale face was crossed with a purple stream of blood, that trickled from a wound beside his eyebrow; his arms lay motionless and heavily at either side. I knew him not. A loud report of a pistol aroused me from my stupor; I looked back. I saw a crowd that broke suddenly asunder, and fled right and left. I heard a heavy crash upon the ground; I pointed with my finger, for I could not utter a word.

"It is the English mare, yer honor; she was a beauty this morning, but she's broke her shoulder-bone, and both her legs, and it was best to put her out of pain."

CHAPTER V.

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

On the fourth day following the adventure detailed in the last chapter I made my appearance in the drawing-room; my cheek well blanched by copious bleeding, and my step tottering and uncertain. On entering the room I looked about in vain for some one who might give me an insight into the occurrences of the four preceding days, but no one was to be met with. The ladies, I learned, were out riding; Matthew was buying a new setter; Mr. Blake was canvassing; and Captain Hammersley was in bed. Where was Miss Dashwood?—in her room; and Sir George?—he was with Mr. Blake.

"What! canvassing too?"

"Troth, that same was possible," was the intelligent reply of the old butler, at which I could not help smiling. I sat down, therefore, in the easiest chair I could find, and, unfolding the county paper, resolved upon learning how matters were going on in the political world. But, somehow, whether the editor was not brilliant, or the fire was hot, or that my own dreams were pleasanter to indulge in than his fancies, I fell sound asleep.

How differently is the mind attuned to the active busy world of thought and action, when awakened from sleep by any sudden and rude summons to arise and be stirring, and when called into existence by the sweet and silvery notes of softest music, stealing over the senses, and while they impart awakening thoughts of bliss and beauty, scarcely dissipating the dreary influence of slumber! Such was my first thought as, with closed lids, the thrilling chords of a harp broke upon my sleep, and aroused me to a feeling of unutterable pleasure. I turned gently round in my chair, and beheld Miss Dashwood. She

was seated in a recess of an old-fashioned window; the pale yellow glow of a wintry sun at evening fell upon her beautiful hair and tinged it with such a light as I have often since then seen in Rembrandt's pictures; her head leaned upon the harp, and, as she struck its chords at random, I saw that her mind was far away from all around her. As I looked, she suddenly started from her leaning attitude, and, parting back her curls from her brow, she preluded a few chords, and then sighed forth, rather than sang, that most beautiful of Moore's Melodies,—

"She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps."

Never before had such pathos, such deep utterance of feeling, met my astonished sense; I listened breathlessly as the tears fell one by one down my cheek; my bosom heaved and fell; and, when she ceased, I hid my head between my hands and sobbed aloud. In an instant she was beside me, and placing her hand upon my shoulder, said,

"Poor dear boy, I never suspected you of being there, or I should not have sung that mournful air."

I started and looked up, and from what I know not, but she suddenly crimsoned to her very forehead, while she added in a less assured tone,

"I hope, Mr. O'Malley, that you are much better, and I trust there is no imprudence in your being here."

"For the latter I shall not answer," said I, with a sickly smile; "but already I feel your music has done me service."

"Then let me sing more for you."

"If I am to have a choice, I should say, sit down, and let me hear you talk to me. My illness and the doctor together have made wild work of my poor brain; but, if you will talk to me——"

"Well, then, what shall it be about? Shall I tell you a fairy tale?"

"I need it not: I feel I am in one this instant."

"Well, then, what say you to a legend, for I am rich in my stores of them?"

"The O'Malleys have their chronicles, wild and barbarous enough, without the aid of Thor and Woden."

"Then, shall we chat of every-day matters? Should you like to hear how the election and the canvass go on?"

"Yes, of all things."

"Well, then, most favorably. Two baronies, with most unspeakable names, have declared for us, and confidence is rapidly increasing among our party. This I learned by chance yesterday; for papa never permits us to know anything of these matters—not even the names of the candidates."

"Well, that was the very point I was coming to, for the government were about to send down some one just as I left home; and I am most anxious to learn who it is."

"Then am I utterly valueless; for I really can't say what party the government espouses, and only know of our own."

"Quite enough for me that you wish it success," said I, gallantly. "Perhaps you can tell me if my uncle has heard of my accident?"

"Oh yes; but somehow he has not been here himself, but sent a friend—a Mr. Considine, I think; a very strange person he seemed. He demanded to see papa, and, it seems, asked him if your misfortune had been a thing of his contrivance, and whether he was ready to explain his conduct about it; and, in fact, I believe he is mad."

"Heaven confound him," I muttered between my teeth.

"And then he wished to have an interview with Captain Hammersley; however, he is too ill; but as the doctor hoped he might be down-stairs in a week, Mr. Considine kindly hinted that he should wait."

"Oh, then, do tell me how is the Captain."

"Very much bruised, very much disfigured, they say," said she, half smiling; "but not so much hurt in body as in mind."

"As how, may I ask?" said I, with an appearance of innocence.

"I don't exactly understand it; but it would appear that there was something like rivalry among you gentlemen chasseurs on that luckless morning, and that while you paid the penalty of a broken head, he was destined to lose his horse and break his arm."

"I certainly am sorry—most sincerely sorry for any share I might have had in the catastrophe; and my greatest regret, I confess, arises from the fact that I should cause *you* unhappiness."

"*Me*—pray explain?"

"Why, as Captain Hammersley—"

"Mr. O'Malley, you are too young now to make me suspect you have an intention to offend; but, I caution you, never repeat this."

I saw that I had transgressed, but how, I most honestly confess, I could not guess; for though I certainly was the senior of my fair companion in years, I was most

lamentably her junior in tact and discretion.

The gray dusk of evening had long fallen as we continued to chat together beside the blazing wood embers; she evidently amusing herself with the original notions of an untutored, unlettered boy, and I drinking deep those draughts of love that nerved my heart through many a breach and battle-field.

Our colloquy was at length interrupted by the entrance of Sir George, who shook me most cordially by the hand, and made the kindest inquiries about my health.

"They tell me you are to be a lawyer, Mr. O'Malley," said he; "and, if so, I must advise you to take better care of your headpiece."

"A lawyer, papa; oh, dear me! I should never have thought of his being anything so stupid."

"Why, silly girl, what would you have a man be?"

"A dragoon, to be sure, papa," said the fond girl, as she pressed her arm around his manly figure, and looked up in his face with an expression of mingled pride and affection.

That word sealed my destiny.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DINNER.

When I retired to my room to dress for dinner, I found my servant waiting with a note from my uncle, to which, he informed me, the messenger expected an answer.

I broke the seal and read:

"Dear Charley,—Do not lose a moment in securing old Blake—if you have not already done so—as information has just reached me that the government party has promised a cornetcy to young Matthew if he can bring over his father. And these are the people I have been voting with—a few private cases excepted—for thirty odd years!

"I am very sorry for your accident. Considine informs me that it will need *explanation* at a later period. He has been in Athlone since Tuesday, in hopes to catch the new candidate on his way down, and get him into a little private quarrel before the day; if he succeed, it will save the county much expense, and conduce greatly to the peace and happiness of all parties. But 'these things,' as Father Roach says, 'are in the hands of Providence.' You must also persuade old Blake to write a few lines to Simon Mallock, about the Coolnamuck mortgage. We can give him no satisfaction at present, at least such as he looks for; and don't be philandering any longer where you are, when your health permits a change of quarters.

"Your affectionate uncle,
"Godfrey O'Malley.

"P.S.—I have just heard from Considine; he was out this morning and shot a fellow in the knee, but finds that after all he was not the candidate, but a tourist that was writing a book about Connemara.

"P.S. No. 2.—Bear the mortgage in mind, for old Mallock is a spiteful fellow, and has a grudge against me, since I horsewhipped his son in Banagher. Oh, the world, the world!—G. O'M."

Until I read this very clear epistle to the end, I had no very precise conception how completely I had forgotten all my uncle's interests, and neglected all his injunctions. Already five days had elapsed, and I had not as much as mooted the question to Mr. Blake, and probably all this time my uncle was calculating on the thing as concluded; but, with one hole in my head and some half-dozen in my heart, my memory was none of the best.

Snatching up the letter, therefore, I resolved to lose no more time; and proceeded at once to Mr. Blake's room, expecting that I should, as the event proved, find him engaged in the very laborious duty of making his toilette.

"Come in, Charley," said he, as I tapped gently at the door; "its only Charley, my darling; Mrs. B. won't mind you."

"Not the least in life," responded Mrs. B., disposing at the same time a pair of her husband's corduroys, tippet fashion, across her ample shoulders, which before were displayed in the plenitude and breadth of coloring we find in a Rubens. "Sit down, Charley, and tell us what's the matter."

As, until this moment, I was in perfect ignorance of the Adam and Eve-like simplicity in which the private economy of Mr. Blake's household was conducted, I would have gladly retired from what I found to be a mutual territory of dressing-room, had not Mr. Blake's injunctions been issued somewhat like an order to remain.

"It's only a letter, sir," said I, stuttering, "from my uncle, about the election. He says that, as his majority is now certain, he should feel better pleased in going

to the poll with all the family, you know, sir, along with him. He wishes me just to sound your intentions—to make out how you feel disposed toward him; and—and, faith, as I am but a poor diplomatist, I thought the best way was to come straight to the point and tell you so."

"I perceive," said Mr. Blake, giving his chin at the moment an awful gash with the razor, "I perceive; go on."

"Well, sir, I have little more to say; my uncle knows what influence you have in Scariff, and expects you'll do what you can there."

"Anything more?" said Blake, with a very dry and quizzical expression I didn't half like—"anything more?"

"Oh, yes, you are to write a line to old Mallock."

"I understand; about Coolnamuck, isn't it?"

"Exactly; I believe that's all."

"Well now, Charley, you may go downstairs, and we'll talk it over after dinner."

"Yes, Charley dear, go down, for I'm going to draw on my stockings," said the fair Mrs. Blake, with a look of very modest consciousness.

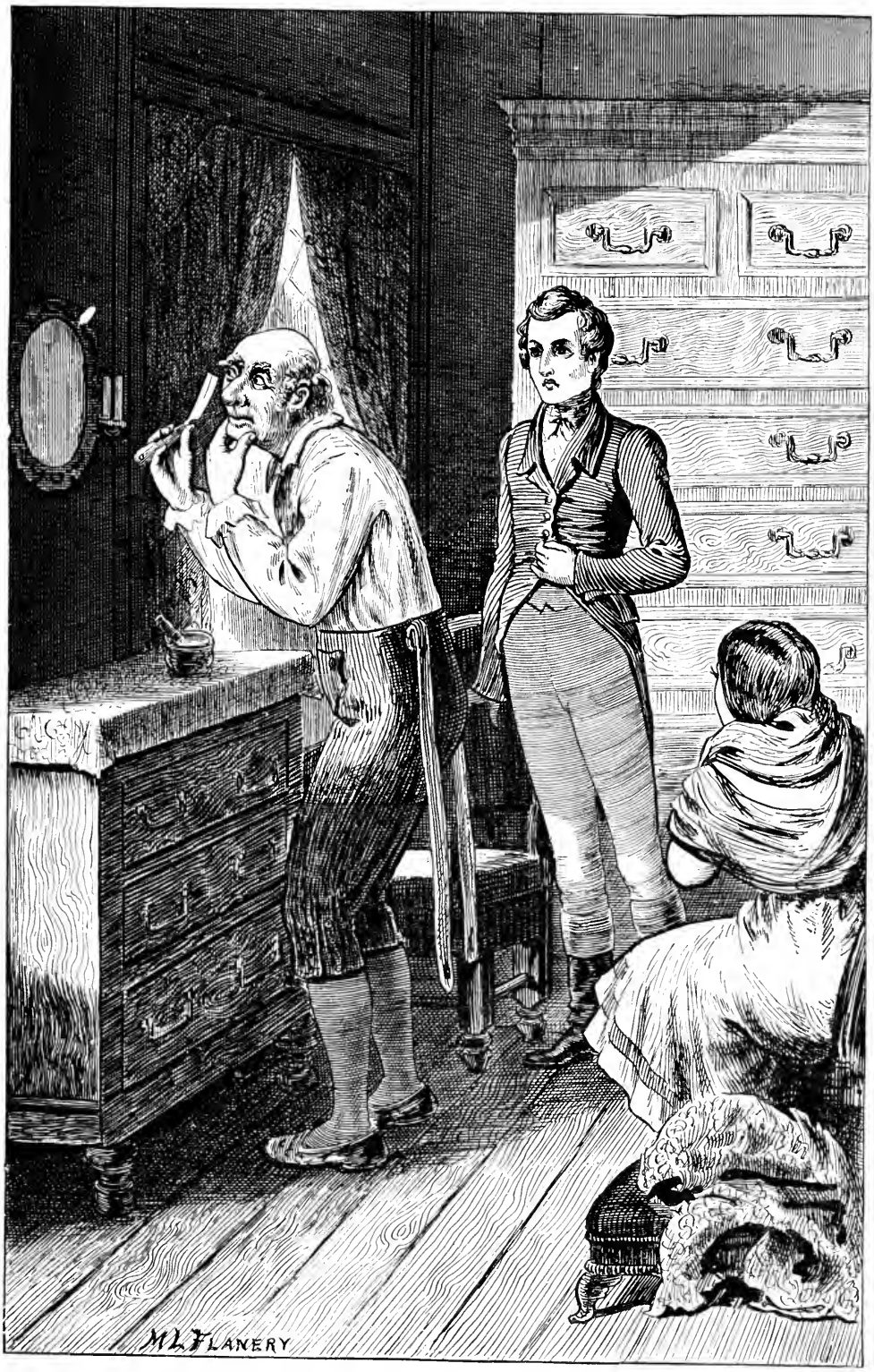
When I had left the room, I couldn't help muttering a "Thank God!" for the success of a mission I more than once feared for, and hastened to dispatch a note to my uncle, assuring him of the Blake interest, and adding that, for propriety sake, I should defer my departure for a day or two longer.

This done, with a heart lightened of its load, and in high spirits at my cleverness, I descended to the drawing-room. Here a very large party were already assembled, and, at every opening of the door, a new relay of Blakes, Burkes, and Bodkins, was introduced. In the absence of the host, Sir George Dashwood was "making the agreeable" to the guests, and shook hands with every new arrival, with all the warmth and cordiality of old friendship. While thus he inquired for various absent individuals, and asked, most affectionately, for sundry aunts and uncles, not forthcoming, a slight incident occurred, which, by its ludicrous turn, served to shorten the long half-hour before dinner. An individual of the party, a Mr. Blake, had, from certain peculiarities of face, obtained, in his boyhood, the sobriquet of "Shave-the-wind." This hatchet-like conformation had grown with his growth, and perpetuated upon him a nickname, by which alone was he ever spoken of among his friends and acquaintances; the only difference being that, as he came to man's estate, brevity, that soul of wit, had curtailed the epithet to mere "Shave." Now, Sir George had been hearing frequent reference made to him always by this name, heard him ever so addressed, and perceived him to reply to it; so that, when he was himself asked by some one what sport he had found that day among the woodcocks, he answered at once, with a bow of very grateful acknowledgment, "Excellent, indeed, but entirely owing to where I was placed in the copse; had it not been for Mr. Shave there—"

I need not say that the remainder of his speech, being heard on all sides, became one universal shout of laughter, in which, to do him justice, the excellent Shave himself heartily joined. Scarcely were the sounds of mirth lulled into an apparent calm, when the door opened, and the host and hostess appeared. Mrs. Blake advanced in all the plenitude of her charms, arrayed in crimson satin, sorely injured in its freshness by a patch of grease upon the front, about the same size and shape as the continent of Europe, in Arrowsmith's Atlas; a swansdown tippet covered her shoulders; massive bracelets ornamented her wrists; while from her ears descended two Irish diamond earrings, rivaling in magnitude and value the glass pendants of a lustre. Her reception of her guests made ample amends, in warmth and cordiality, for any deficiency of elegance; and, as she disposed her ample proportions upon the sofa, and looked around upon the company, she appeared the very impersonation of hospitality.

After several openings and shuttings of the drawing-room door, accompanied by the appearance of old Simon the butler, who counted the party at least five times before he was certain that the score was correct, dinner was at length announced. Now came a moment of difficulty, and one which, as testing Mr. Blake's tact, he would gladly have seen devolve upon some other shoulders; for he well knew that the marshaling a room full of mandarins, blue, green, and yellow, was "cakes and gingerbread" to ushering a Galway party in to dinner.

First, then, was Mr. Miles Bodkin, whose grandfather would have been a lord if Cromwell had not hanged him one fine morning. Then Mrs. Mosey Blake's first husband was promised the title of Kilmacud if it was ever restored, whereas Mrs. French of Knocktumnor's mother was then at law for a title; and, lastly, Mrs. Joe Burke was fourth cousin to Lord Clanricarde, as is or will be every Burke



"HE WISHES ME JUST TO SOUND YOUR INTENTIONS—TO MAKE OUT HOW YOU FEEL DISPOSED TOWARDS HIM." (P. 648.)

from this to the day of judgment. Now, luckily for her prospects, the lord was alive; and Mr. Blake, remembering a very sage adage about "dead lions," etc., solved the difficulty at once by gracefully tucking the lady under his arm and leading the way. The others soon followed, the priest of Portumna and my unworthy self bringing up the rear.

When, many a year afterward, the hard ground of a mountain bivouac, with its pitiful portion of pickled cork-tree, yclept mess-beef, and that pyroligneous aquafortis they call corn brandy, have been my hard fare, I often looked back to that day's dinner with a most heart-yearning sensation: a turbot as big as the Waterloo shield—a sirloin that seemed cut from the sides of a rhinoceros—a sauce-boat that contained an oyster-bed. There was a turkey, which singly would have formed the main army of a French dinner, doing mere outpost duty, flanked by a picket of ham and a detached squadron of chickens, carefully ambushed in a forest of greens; potatoes, not disguised *à la maître d'hôtel* and tortured to resemble bad macaroni, but piled like shot in an ordnance-yard, were posted at different quarters; while massive decanters of port and sherry stood proudly up like standard-bearers amid the goodly array. This was none of your austere "great dinners," where a cold and chilling *plateau* of artificial nonsense cuts off one half of the table from intercourse with the other; when whispered sentences constitute the conversation, and all the friendly recognition of wine-drinking, which renews acquaintance and cements an intimacy, is replaced by the ceremonious filling of your glass by a lacquey—where smiles go current in lieu of kind speeches, and epigram and smartness form the substitute for the broad jest and merry story. Far from it. Here the company ate, drank, talked, laughed, did all but sing, and certainly enjoyed themselves heartily. As for me, I was little more than a listener, and such was the crash of plates, the jingle of glasses, and the clatter of voices, that fragments only of what was passing around reached me, giving to the conversation of the party a character occasionally somewhat incongruous. Thus such sentences as the following ran foul of each other every instant:

"No better land in Galway"—"where could you find such facilities"—"for shooting Mr. Jones on his way home"—"the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"—"kiss"—"Miss Blake she's the girl with a foot and ankle"—"Daly has never had wool on his sheep"—"now could he"—"What does he pay for the mountain"—"four and tenpence a yard"—"not a penny less"—"all the cabbage-stalks and potato-skins"—"with some bog stuff through it"—"that's the thing to"—"make soup, with a red herring in it instead of salt"—"and when he proposed for my niece, ma'am, says he"—"mix a strong tumbler, and I'll make a shake-down for you on the floor"—"and may the Lord have mercy on your soul"—"and now, down the middle and up again"—"Captain Magan, my dear, he is the man"—"to shave a pig properly"—"it's not money I'm looking for, says he, the girl of my heart"—"if she had not a windgall and two spavins"—"I'd have given her the rights of the church, of coorse," said Father Roach, bringing up the rear of this ill-assorted jargon.

Such were the scattered links of conversation I was condemned to listen to, till a general rise on the part of the ladies left us alone to discuss our wine, and enter in good earnest upon the more serious duties of the evening.

Scarcely was the door closed when one of the company, seizing the bell-rope, said, "With your leave, Blake, we'll have the 'dew' now."

"Good claret—no better," said another; "but it sits mighty cold on the stomach."

"There's nothing like the groceries, after all—eh, Sir George?" said an old Galway squire to the English general, who acceded to the fact, which he understood in a very different sense.

"Oh, punch, you are my darlin'," hummed another, as a large square half-gallon decanter of whisky was placed on the table, the various decanters of wine being now ignominiously sent down to the end of the board without any evidence of regret on any face save Sir George Dashwood's, who mixed his tumbler with a very rebellious conscience.

Whatever were the noise and clamor of the company before, they were nothing to what now ensued. As one party were discussing the approaching contest, another was planning a steeple-chase; while two individuals, unhappily removed from each other the entire length of the table, were what is called "challenging each other's effects" in a very remarkable manner, the process so styled being an exchange of property, when each party, setting an imaginary value upon some article, barters it for another, the amount of boot paid and received being determined by a third person, who is the umpire. Thus a gold

breast-pin was swopped, as the phrase is, against a horse; then a pair of boots, then a Kerry bull, etc.—every imaginable species of property coming into the market. Sometimes, as matters of very dubious value turned up, great laughter was the result. In this very national pastime, a Mr. Miles Bodkin, a noted fire-eater of the west, was a great proficient, and, it is said, once so completely succeeded in despoiling an uninitiated hand, that, after winning in succession his horse, gig, harness, etc., he proceeded *seriatim* to his watch, ring, clothes, and portmanteau, and actually concluded by winning all he possessed, and kindly lent him a card-cloth to cover him on his way to the hotel. His success on the present occasion was considerable, and his spirits proportionate. The decanter had thrice been replenished, and the flushed faces and thickened utterance of the guests evinced that from the cold properties of the claret there was but little to dread. As for Mr. Bodkin, his manner was incapable of any higher flight, when under the influence of whisky, than what it evinced on common occasions; and, as he sat at the end of the table, fronting Mr. Blake, he assumed all the dignity of the ruler of the feast, with an energy no one seemed disposed to question. In answer to some observations of Sir George, he was led into something like an oration upon the peculiar excellences of his native country, which ended in a declaration that there was nothing like Galway.

"Why don't you give us a song, Miles? and maybe the general would learn more from it than all your speech-making."

"To be sure," cried out several voices together; "to be sure: let us hear the 'Man for Galway!'"

Sir George having joined most warmly in the request, Mr. Bodkin filled up his glass to the brim, bespoke a chorus to his chant, and, clearing his voice with a deep hem, began the following ditty, to the air which Moore has since rendered immortal, by the beautiful song, "Wreath the Bowl," etc. And although the words are well known in the west, for the information of less favored regions I here transcribe

"THE MAN FOR GALWAY.

"To drink a toast,
A proctor roast,
Or bailiff as the case is,
To kiss your wife
Or take your life
At ten or fifteen paces;
To keep game cocks—to hunt the fox,
To drink in punch the Solway,
With debts galore, but fun far more;
Oh, that's 'the man for Galway.'
"Chorus—With debts, etc.

"The King of Oude
Is mighty proud,
And so were onst the *Caysars*—(Cæsars)
But ould Giles Eyre
Would make them stare,
Av he had them with the Blazers.
To the devil I fling—ould Runjeet Sing,
He's only a prince in a small way,
And knows nothing at all of a six-foot wall;
Oh, he'd never 'do for Galway.'
"Chorus—With debts, etc.

"Ye think the Blakes
Are no 'great shakes;'
They're all his blood relations,
And the Bodkins sneeze
At the grim Chinese,
For they come from the *Phenaycians:*
So fill the brim, and here's to him
Who'd drink in punch the Solway;
With debts galore, but fun far more;
Oh! that's 'the man for Galway.'
"Chorus—With debts," etc.

I much fear that the reception of this very classic ode would not be as favorable in general companies as it was on the occasion I first heard it, for certainly the applause was almost deafening; and even Sir George, the defects of whose English education left some of the allusions out of his reach, was highly amused, and laughed heartily.

The conversation once more reverted to the election, and although I was too far from those who seemed best informed on the matter to hear much, I could catch enough to discover that the feeling was a confident one. This was gratifying to me, as I had some scruple about my so long neglecting my uncle's cause.

"We have Scariff to a man," said Bodkin.

"And Mosey's tenantry," said another. "I swear, though, there's not a freehold registered on the estate, that they'll vote, every mother's son of them, or devil a stone of the Court-house they'll leave standing on another."

"And may the Lord look to the returning officer!" said a third, throwing up his eyes.

"Mosey's tenantry are droll boys, and, like their landlord, more by token—they never pay any rent."

"And what for shouldn't they vote?" said a dry-looking little old fellow in a red waistcoat: "when I was the dead agent—"

"The dead agent!" interrupted Sir George, with a start.

"Just so," said the old fellow, pulling

down his spectacles from his forehead, and casting a half-angry look at Sir George, for what he had suspected to be a doubt of his veracity.

"The General does not know, maybe, what that is," said some one.

"It is the dead agent," says Mr. Blake, "who always provides substitutes for any voters that may have died since the last election. A very important fact in statistics may thus be gathered from the poll-books of this county, which proves it to be the healthiest part of Europe—a freeholder has not died in it for the last fifty years."

"The 'Kiltopher boys' won't come this time—they say there's no use trying to vote when so many were transported last assizes for perjury."

"They're poor-spirited creatures," said another.

"Not they—they are as decent boys as any we have—they're willing to wreck the town for fifty shillings' worth of spirits; besides, if they don't vote for the county, they will for the borough."

This declaration seemed to restore these interesting individuals to favor, and now all attention was turned towards Bodkin, who was detailing the plan of a grand attack upon the polling-booths, to be headed by himself. By this time all the prudence and guardedness of the party had given way—whisky was in the ascendant, and every bold stroke of election policy, every cunning artifice, every ingenious device, was detailed and applauded, in a manner which proved that self-respect was not the inevitable gift of "mountain dew."

The mirth and fun grew momentarily more boisterous, and Miles Bodkin, who had twice before been prevented proposing some toast, by a telegraphic signal from the other end of the table, now swore that nothing should prevent him any longer, and rising with a smoking tumbler in his hand, delivered himself as follows:

"No, no, Phil Blake, ye needn't be winkin' at me that way—it's little I care for the spawn of the ould serpent." [Here great cheers greeted the speaker, in which, without well knowing why, I heartily joined.] "I'm going to give a toast, boys—a real good toast—none of your sentimental things about wall-flowers, or the vernal equinox, or that kind of thing, but a sensible, patriotic, manly, intrepid toast; a toast you must drink in the most universal, laborious, and awful manner—do ye see now?" [Loud cheers.] "If any man of you here present doesn't drain this toast to the bottom—(here the speaker looked fixedly at me, as did the rest of the company)—then, by the great gun of Athlone, I'll make him eat the decanter, glass stopper and all, for the good of his digestion—d'ye see now?"

The cheering at this mild determination prevented my hearing what followed; but the peroration consisted in a very glowing eulogy upon some person unknown, and a speedy return to him as member for Galway. Amid all the noise and tumult at this critical moment, nearly every eye at the table was turned upon me; and, as I concluded that they had been drinking my uncle's health, I thundered away at the mahogany with all my energy. At length, the hip, hipping over, and comparative quiet restored, I rose from my seat to return thanks—but strange enough, Sir George Dashwood did so likewise; and there we both stood amid an uproar that might well have shaken the courage of more practiced orators; while from every side came cries of "Hear, hear"—"Go on, Sir George"—"Speak out, General"—"Sit down, Charley"—"Confound the boy"—"Knock the legs from under him," etc. Not understanding why Sir George should interfere with what I regarded as my peculiar duty, I resolved not to give way, and avowed this determination in no very equivocal terms. "In that case," said the General, "I am to suppose that the young gentleman moves an amendment to your proposition; and, as the etiquette is in his favor, I yield."—Here he resumed his place, amid a most terrific scene of noise and tumult, while several humane proposals, as to my treatment, were made around me, and a kind suggestion thrown out to break my neck, by a near neighbor. Mr. Blake at length prevailed upon the party to hear what I had to say—for he was certain I should not detain them above a minute. The commotion having in some measure subsided, I began: "Gentleman, as the adopted son of the worthy man whose health you have just drunk——" Heaven knows how I should have continued—but here my eloquence was met by such a roar of laughing as I never before listened to; from one end of the board to the other it was one continued shout, and went on, too, as if all the spare lungs of the party had been kept in reserve for the occasion. I turned from one to the other—I tried to smile, and seemed to participate in the joke, but failed; I frowned—I looked savagely about where I could see enough to turn my wrath thitherward; and, as it chanced, not in vain; for Mr. Miles Bodkin, with an intuitive perception of my wishes, most suddenly ceased his mirth, and, assuming a

look of frowning defiance that had done him good service upon many former occasions, rose and said :

"Well, sir, I hope you're proud of yourself—you've made a nice beginning of it, and a pretty story you'll have for your uncle. But if you'd like to break the news by a letter, the General will have great pleasure in franking it for you ; for, by the rock of Cashel, we'll carry him in against all the O'Malleys that ever cheated the Sheriff."

Scarcely were the words uttered, when I seized my wine glass, and hurled it with all my force at his head ; so sudden was the act, and so true the aim, that Mr. Bodkin measured his length upon the floor ere his friends could appreciate his late eloquent effusion. The scene now became terrific ; for though the redoubted Miles was *hors de combat*, his friends made a tremendous rush at, and would infallibly have succeeded in capturing me, had not Blake and four or five others interposed. Amid a desperate struggle, which lasted for some minutes, I was torn from the spot, carried bodily up-stairs, and pitched headlong into my own room, where, having doubly locked the door on the outside, they left me to my own cool and not over-agreeable reflections.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FLIGHT FROM GURT-NA-MORRA.

It was by one of those sudden and inexplicable revulsions which occasionally restore to sense and intellect the maniac of years' standing, that I was no sooner left alone in my chamber than I became perfectly sober. The fumes of the wine—and I had drunk deeply—were dissipated at once ; my head, which but a moment before was half wild with excitement, was now cool, calm, and collected ; and, stranger than all, I, who had only an hour since entered the dining-room with all the unsuspecting freshness of boyhood, became, by a mighty bound, a man—a man in all my feelings of responsibility, a man who, repelling an insult by an outrage, had resolved to stake his life upon the chance. In an instant a new era in life had opened before me—the light-headed gayety which fearlessness and youth impart, was replaced by one absorbing thought—one all-engrossing, all-pervading impression, that if I did not follow up my quarrel with Bodkin, I was dishonored and disgraced ; my little knowledge of such matters not being sufficient to assure me that I was now the aggressor, and that any further steps in the affair should come from his side.

So thoroughly did my own griefs occupy me, that I had no thought for the disappointment my poor uncle was destined to meet with in hearing that the Blake interest was lost to him, and the former breach between the families irreparably widened by the events of the evening. Escape was my first thought ; but how to accomplish it ?—the door, a solid one of Irish oak, doubly locked and bolted, defied all my efforts to break it open ; the window was at least five-and-twenty feet from the ground, and not a tree near to swing into. I shouted, I called aloud, I opened the sash, and tried if any one outside were within hearing ; but in vain. Weary and exhausted, I sat down upon my bed and ruminated over my fortunes. Vengeance — quick, entire, decisive vengeance — I thirsted and panted for ; and every moment I lived under the insult inflicted on me, seemed an age of torturing and maddening agony. I rose with a leap ; a thought had just occurred to me. I drew the bed toward the window, and fastening the sheet to one of the posts with a firm knot, I twisted it into a rope, and let myself down to within about twelve feet of the ground, when I let go my hold, and dropped upon the grass beneath, safe and uninjured. A thin misty rain was falling, and I now perceived, for the first time, that in my haste I had forgotten my hat ; this thought, however, gave me little uneasiness, and I took my way toward the stable, resolving, if I could, to saddle my horse, and get on before any intimation of my escape reached the family.

When I gained the yard all was quiet and deserted ; the servants were doubtless enjoying themselves below stairs ; and I met no one in the way. I entered the stable, threw the saddle upon "Badger," and, before five minutes from my descent from the window, was galloping toward O'Malley Castle at a pace that defied pursuit, had any one thought of it.

It was about five o'clock on a dark wintry morning as I led my horse through the well-known defiles of out-houses and stables which formed the long line of offices to my uncle's house. As yet no one was stirring ; and as I wished to have my arrival a secret from the family, after providing for the wants of my gallant gray, I lifted the latch of the kitchen door—no other fastening being ever thought necessary, even at night—and gently groped

my way toward the stairs: all was perfectly still, and the silence now recalled me to reflection as to what course I should pursue. It was all-important that my uncle should know nothing of my quarrel, otherwise he would inevitably make it his own, and, by treating me like a boy in the matter, give the whole affair the very turn I most dreaded. Then, as to Sir Harry Boyle, he would most certainly turn the whole thing into ridicule, make a good story, perhaps a song out of it, and laugh at my notions of demanding satisfaction. Considine, I knew, was my man; but then he was at Athlone—at least so my uncle's letter mentioned; perhaps he might have returned; if not, to Athlone I should set off at once. So resolving, I stole noiselessly up-stairs, and reached the door of the Count's chamber; I opened it gently, and entered; and, though my step was almost imperceptible to myself, it was quite sufficient to alarm the watchful occupant of the room, who, springing up in his bed, demanded gruffly "Who's there?"

"Charles, sir," said I, shutting the door carefully, and approaching his bed-side. "Charles O'Malley, sir. I'm come to have a bit of your advice and, as the affair won't keep, I have been obliged to disturb you."

"Never mind, Charley," said the Count; "sit down, there's a chair somewhere near the bed—have you found it? There—well now, what is it? What news of Blake?"

"Very bad; no worse. But it is not exactly *that* I came about; I've got into a scrape, sir."

"Run off with one of the daughters," said Considine. "By jingo, I knew what those artful devils would be after."

"Not so bad as that," said I, laughing. "It's just a row, a kind of squabble; something that must come—"

"Ay, ay," said the Count, brightening up; "say you so, Charley? Begad, the young ones will beat us all out of the field. Who is it with—not old Blake himself—how was it? tell me all."

I immediately detailed the whole events of the preceding chapter, as well as his frequent interruptions would permit, and concluded by asking what further step was now to be taken, as I was resolved the matter should be concluded before it came to my uncle's ears.

"There you are all right; quite correct, my boy. But there are many points I should have wished otherwise in the conduct of the affair hitherto."

Conceiving that he was displeased at my petulance and boldness, I was about to commence a kind of defense, when he added—

"Because, you see," said he, assuming an oracular tone of voice, "throwing a wine-glass, with or without wine, in a man's face, is merely, as you may observe, a mark of denial and displeasure at some observation he may have made, not in any wise intended to injure him, further than in the wound to his honor at being so insulted, for which, of course, he must subsequently call you out. Whereas, Charley, in the present case, the view I take is different; the expression of Mr. Bodkin, as regards your uncle, was insulting to a degree—gratuitously offensive, and warranting a blow. Therefore, my boy, you should, under such circumstances, have preferred aiming at him with a decanter—a cut-glass decanter, well aimed and low, I have seen do effective service. However, as you remark it was your first thing of the kind, I am pleased with you—very much pleased with you. Now, then, for the next step." So saying, he arose from his bed, and striking a light with a tinder-box, proceeded to dress himself as leisurely as if for a dinner party, talking all the while.

"I will just take Godfrey's tax-cart and the roan mare on to Meelish; put them up at the little inn—it is not above a mile from Bodkin's—and I'll go over and settle the thing for you; you must stay quiet till I come back, and not leave the house on any account. I've got a case of old broad barrels there that will answer you beautifully; if you were anything of a shot, I'd give you my own cross handles, but they'd only spoil your shooting."

"I can hit a wine-glass in the stem at fifteen paces," said I, rather nettled at the disparaging tone in which he spoke of my performance.

"I don't care sixpence for that: the wine-glass had no pistol in his hand. Take the old German, then; see now, hold your pistol thus: no finger on the guard there, these two on the trigger. They are not hair triggers; drop the muzzle a bit: bend your elbow a trifle more; sight your man outside your arm; outside, mind, and take him in the hip, and, if anywhere higher, no matter."

By this time the Count had completed his toilet, and, taking the small mahogany box which contained his peace-makers under his arm, led the way toward the stables. When we reached the yard, the only person stirring there was a kind of half-witted boy, who, being about the house, was employed to run of mes-

sages for the servants, walk a stranger's horse, or to do any of the many petty services that regular domestics contrive always to devolve upon some adopted subordinate. He was seated upon a stone step, formerly used for mounting, and though the day was scarcely breaking, and the weather severe and piercing, the poor fellow was singing an Irish song, in a low monotonous tone, as he chafed a curb chain between his hands with some sand. As we came near he started up, and, as he pulled off his cap to salute us, gave a sharp and piercing glance at the Count, then at me; then once more upon my companion, from whom his eyes were turned to the brass-bound box beneath his arm; when, as if seized with a sudden impulse, he started on his feet, and set off toward the house with the speed of a greyhound, not, however, before Considine's practiced eye had anticipated his plan; for, throwing down the pistol-case, he dashed after him, and in an instant had seized him by the collar.

"It won't do, Patsey," said the Count; "you can't double on me."

"Oh, Count, darlin', Mister Considine avick, don't do it, don't now," said the poor fellow, falling on his knees, and blubbering like an infant.

"Hold your tongue, you villain, or I'll cut it out of your head," said Considine.

"And so I will; but don't do it, don't for the love of—"

"Don't do what, you whimpering scoundrel? What does he think I'll do?"

"Don't I know very well what you're after, what you're always after too? oh, wirra, wirra!" Here he wrung his hands and swayed himself backward and forward, a true picture of Irish grief.

"I'll stop his blubbering," said Considine, opening the box, and taking out a pistol, which he cocked leisurely, and pointed at the poor fellow's head; "another syllable now, and I'll scatter your brains upon that pavement."

"And do, and divil thank you; sure, it's your trade."

The coolness of the reply threw us both off our guard so completely, that we burst out into a hearty fit of laughing.

"Come, come," said the Count, at last, "this will never do; if he goes on this way, we'll have the whole house about us. Come, then, harness the roan mare, and here's half-a-crown for you."

"I wouldn't touch the best piece in your purse," said the poor boy; "sure it's blood-money, no less."

The words were scarcely spoken, when Considine seized him by the collar with one hand, and by the wrist with the other, and carried him over the yard to the stable, where, kicking open the door, he threw him on a heap of stones, adding, "If you stir now, I'll break every bone in your body;" a threat that seemed certainly considerably increased in its terrors, from the rough gripe he had already experienced, for the lad rolled himself up like a ball, and sobbed as if his heart were breaking.

Very few minutes sufficed us now to harness the mare in the tax-cart, and, when all was ready, Considine seized the whip, and locking the stable-door upon Patsey, was about to get up, when a sudden thought struck him. "Charley," said he, "that fellow will find some means to give the alarm; we must take him with us." So saying, he opened the door, and taking the poor fellow by the collar, flung him at my feet in the tax-cart.

We had already lost some time, and the roan mare was put to her fastest speed to make up for it. Our pace became, accordingly, a sharp one; and, as the road was bad, and the tax-cart no "patent inaudible," neither of us spoke. To me this was a great relief: the events of the last few days had given them the semblance of years, and all the reflection I could muster was little enough to make anything out of the chaotic mass—love, mischief, and misfortune—in which I had been involved since my leaving O'Malley Castle.

"Here we are, Charley," said Considine, drawing up short at the door of a little country ale-house, or in Irish parlance, *shebeen*, which stood at the meeting of four bleak roads, in a wild and barren mountain tract, beside the Shannon. "Here we are, my boy! jump out and let us be stirring."

"Here, Patsey, my man," said the Count, unraveling the prostrate and doubly-knotted figure at our feet; "lend a hand, Patsey." Much to my astonishment, he obeyed the summons with alacrity, and proceeded to unharness the mare with the greatest dispatch. My attention was, however, soon turned from him to my own more immediate concerns, and I followed my companion into the house.

"Joe," said the Count to the host, "is Mr. Bodkin up at the house this morning?"

"He's just passed this way, sir, with Mr. Malowney of Tillnamuck, in the gig, on their way from Mr. Blake's. They stopped here to order horses to go over to O'Malley Castle, and the gossoon is gone to look for a pair."

"All right," said Considine; and added, in a whisper, "we've done it well, Charley,

to be beforehand, or the governor would have found it all out, and taken the affair into his own hands. Now, all you have to do is, to stay quietly here till I come back, which will not be above an hour at farthest. Joe, send me the pony—keep an eye on Patsey, that he doesn't play us a trick—the short way to Mr. Bodkin's is through Scariff—ay, I know it well, good-by, Charley—by the Lord, we'll pepper him."

These were the last words of the worthy Count as he closed the door behind him, and left me to my own not very agreeable reflections. Independently of my youth and perfect ignorance of the world, which left me unable to form any correct judgment on my conduct, I knew that I had taken a great deal of wine, and was highly excited when my unhappy collision with Mr. Bodkin occurred. Whether, then, I had been betrayed into anything which could fairly have provoked his insulting retort or not, I could not remember; and now my most afflicting thought was, what opinion might be entertained of me by those at Blake's table; and, above all, what Miss Dashwood herself would think, and what narrative of the occurrence would reach her. The great effort of my last few days had been to stand well in her estimation, to appear something better in feeling, something higher in principle, than the rude and unpolished squirearchy about me, and now here was the end of it! What would she, what could she, think, but that I was the same punch-drinking, rowing, quarreling bumpkin as those whom I had so lately been carefully endeavoring to separate myself from? How I hated myself for the excess to which passion had betrayed me, and how I detested my opponent as the cause of all my present misery. "How very differently," thought I, "her friend the Captain would have conducted himself. His quiet and gentlemanly manner would have done fully as much to wipe out any insult on his honor as I could do, and, after all, would neither have disturbed the harmony of a dinner table, nor made himself, as I shuddered to think I had, a subject of rebuke, if not of ridicule." These harassing, torturing reflections continued to press on me, and I paced the room with my hands clasped and the perspiration upon my brow. "One thing is certain,—I can never see her again," thought I; "this disgraceful business must, in some shape or other, become known to her, and all I have been saying these last three days rise up in judgment against this one act, and stamp me an impostor; I that decried—nay, derided—our false notion of honor. Would that Considine were come! What can keep him now?" I walked to the door: a boy belonging to the house was walking the roan before the door. "What had, then, become of Pat?" I inquired; but no one could tell. He had disappeared shortly after our arrival, and had not been seen afterward. My own thoughts were, however, too engrossing to permit me to think more of this circumstance, and I turned again to enter the house, when I saw Considine advancing up the road at the full speed of his pony.

"Out with the mare, Charley—be alive, my boy—all's settled." So saying, he sprang from the pony, and proceeded to harness the roan with the greatest haste, informing me in broken sentences as he went on with all the arrangements:

"We are to cross the bridge of Portumna. They won the ground, and it seems Bodkin likes the spot; he shot Peyton there three years ago. Worse luck now, Charley, you know: by all the rule of chance, he can't expect the same thing twice—never four by honors in two deals—didn't say that, though—a sweet meadow, I know it well; small hillocks, like molehills, all over it—caught him at breakfast; I don't think he expected the message to come from us, but said that it was a very polite attention, and so it was, you know."

So he continued to ramble on as we once more took our seats in the tax-cart, and set out for the ground.

"What are you thinking of, Charley?" said the Count, as I kept silent for some minutes.

"I'm thinking, sir, if I were to kill him, what I must do after."

"Right, my boy; nothing like that, but I'll settle all for you. Upon my conscience, if it wasn't for the chance of his getting into another quarrel and spoiling the election, I'd go back for Godfrey; he'd like to see you break ground so prettily. And you say you're no shot?"

"Never could do anything with the pistol to speak of, sir," said I, remembering his rebuke of the morning.

"I don't mind that: you've a good eye; never take it off him after you're on the ground—follow him everywhere. Poor Callaghan, that's gone, shot his man always that way. He had a way of looking, without winking, that was very fatal at a short distance; a very good thing to learn, Charley, when you have a little spare time."

Half an hour's sharp driving brought us to the river side, where a boat had been

provided by Considine to ferry us over. It was now about eight o'clock, and a heavy, gloomy morning. Much rain had fallen overnight, and the dark and louring atmosphere seemed charged with more. The mountains looked twice their real size, and all the shadows were increased to an enormous extent. A very killing kind of light it was, as the Count remarked.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DUEL.

As the boatmen pulled in toward the shore we perceived, a few hundred yards off, a group of persons standing, whom we soon recognized as our opponents. "Charley," said the Count, grasping my arm tightly, as I stood up to spring on the land—"Charley, although you are only a boy, as I may say, I have no fear for your courage; but, still, more than that is needful here. This Bodkin is a noted duelist, and will try to shake your nerve. Now, mind that you take everything that happens quite with an air of indifference; don't let him think that he has any advantage over you, and you'll see how the tables will be turned in your favor."

"Trust to me, Count," said I; "I'll not disgrace you."

He pressed my hand tightly, and I thought that I discerned something like a slight twitch about the corners of his grim mouth, as if some sudden and painful thought had shot across his mind; but in a moment he was calm, and stern-looking as ever.

"Twenty minutes late, Mr. Considine," said a short, red-faced little man, with a military frock and foraging cap, as he held out his watch in evidence.

"I can only say, Captain Malowney, that we lost no time since we parted; we had some difficulty in finding a boat; but, in any case, we are here *now*, and that, I opine, is the important part of the matter."

"Quite right—very just indeed. Will you present me to your young friend—very proud to make your acquaintance, sir; your uncle and I met more than once in this kind of way. I was out with him in '92—was it? no, I think it was '93—when he shot Harry Burgoyne, who, by-the-by, was called the crack shot of our mess; but, begad, your uncle knocked his pistol hand to shivers, saying in his dry way, 'He must try the left hand this morning.' Count, a little this side, if you please."

While Considine and the Captain walked a few paces apart from where I stood. I had leisure to observe my antagonist, who stood among a group of his friends, talking and laughing away in great spirits. As the tone they spoke in was not of the lowest, I could catch much of their conversation at the distance I was from them. They were discussing the last occasion that Bodkin had visited this spot, and talking of the fatal event which happened then.

"Poor devil," said Bodkin, "it wasn't his fault; but you see some of the —th had been showing white feathers before that, and he was obliged to go out. In fact, the Colonel himself said, 'Fight, or leave the corps.' Well, out he came: it was a cold morning in February, with a frost the night before going off in a thin rain: well, it seems he had the consumption or something of that sort, with a great cough and spitting of blood, and this weather made him worse, and he was very weak when he came to the ground. Now, the moment I got a glimpse of him, I said to myself, 'He's pluck enough, but as nervous as a lady;' for his eye wandered all about, and his mouth was constantly twitching. 'Take off your great-coat, Ned,' said one of his people, when they were going to put him up; 'take it off, man.' He seemed to hesitate for an instant, when Michael Blake remarked, 'Arrah, let him alone; it's his mother makes him wear it, for the cold he has.' They all began to laugh at this, but I kept my eye upon him. And I saw that his cheek grew quite livid, and a kind of gray color, and his eyes filled up. 'I have you now,' said I to myself, and I shot him through the lungs."

"And this poor fellow," thought I, "was the only son of a widowed mother." I walked from the spot to avoid hearing further, and felt, as I did so, something like a spirit of vengeance rising within me, for the fate of one so untimely cut off.

"Here we are, all ready," said Malowney, springing over a small fence into the adjoining field—"take your ground, gentlemen."

Considine took my arm and walked forward. "Charley," said he, "I am to give the signal; I'll drop my glove when you are to fire, but don't look at me at all. I'll manage to catch Bodkin's eye, and do you watch him steadily, and fire when he does."

"I think that the ground we are leaving behind us is rather better," said some one.

"So it is," said Bodkin; "but it might

be troublesome to carry the young gentleman down that way—here all is fair and easy."

The next instant we were placed, and I well remember the first thought that struck me was, that there could be no chance of either of us escaping.

"Now, then," said the Count, "I'll walk twelve paces, turn and drop this glove, at which signal you fire, and *together* mind. The man who reserves his shot falls by my hand." This very summary denunciation seemed to meet general approbation, and the Count strutted forth. Notwithstanding the advice of my friend, I could not help turning my eyes from Bodkin to watch the retiring figure of the Count. At length he stopped—a second or two elapsed — he wheeled rapidly round, and let fall the glove. My eye glanced toward my opponent, I raised my pistol and fired. My hat turned half round upon my head, and Bodkin fell motionless to the earth. I saw the people around me rush forward; I caught two or three glances thrown at me with an expression of revengeful passion; I felt some one grasp me round the waist, and hurry me from the spot, and it was at least ten minutes after, as we were skimming the surface of the broad Shannon, before I could well collect my scattered faculties to remember all that was passing, as Considine, pointing to the two bullet holes in my hat, remarked, "Sharp practice, Charley; it was the overcharge saved you."

"Is he killed, sir?" I asked.

"Not quite, I believe, but as good; you took him just above the hip."

"Can he recover?" said I, with a voice tremulous from agitation, which I vainly endeavored to conceal from my companion.

"Not if the doctor can help it," said Considine; "for the fool keeps poking about for the ball. But now let's think of the next step; you'll have to leave this, and at once too."

Little more passed between us. As we rowed toward the shore, Considine was following up his reflections, and I had mine, alas! too many and too bitter to escape from.

As we neared the land, a strange spectacle caught our eye. For a considerable distance along the coast crowds of country people were assembled, who, forming in groups, and breaking into parties of two and three, were evidently watching with great anxiety what was taking place at the opposite side. Now, the distance was at least a mile, and therefore any part of the transaction which had been enacting there must have been quite beyond their view. While I was wondering at this, Considine cried out suddenly, "Too infamous, by Jove; we're murdered men."

"What do you mean?" said I.

"Don't you see that?" said he, pointing to something black which floated from a pole at the opposite side of the river.

"Yes; what is it?"

"It's his coat they've put upon an oar to show the people he's killed, that's all. Every man here's his tenant, and look—there!—they're not giving us much doubt as to their intention." Here a tremendous yell burst forth from the mass of people along the shore, which, rising to a terrific cry, sunk gradually down to a low wailing, then rose and fell again several times as the Irish death-cry filled the air and rose to heaven, as if imploring vengeance on a murderer.

The appalling influence of the *keen*, as it is called, had been familiar to me from my infancy, but it needed the awful situation I was placed in to consummate its horrors. It was at once my accusation and my doom. I knew well—none better—the vengeful character of the Irish peasant of the west, and that my death was certain I had no doubt. The very crime that sat upon my heart quailed its courage and unnerved my arm. As the boatmen looked from us toward the shore, and again at our faces, they, as if instinctively, lay upon their oars, and waited for our decision as to what course to pursue.

"Rig the spritsail, my boys," said Considine, "and let her head lie up the river, and be alive, for I see they're bailing a boat below the little reef there, and will be after us in no time."

The poor fellows, who, although strangers to us, sympathizing in what they perceived to be our imminent danger, stepped the light spar which acted as mast, and shook out their scanty rag of canvas in a minute. Considine, meanwhile, went aft, and steadying her head with an oar, held the small craft up to the wind till she lay completely over, and, as she rushed through the water, ran dipping her gunnel through the white foam.

"Where can we make without tacking, boys?" inquired the Count.

"If it blows on as fresh, sir, we'll run you ashore within half a mile of the castle."

"Put an oar to leeward," said Considine, "and keep her up more to the wind, and I promise you, my lads, you will not go home fresh and fasting, if you land us where you say."

"Here they come," said the other boatman, as he pointed back with his finger toward a large yawl which shot suddenly from the shore, with six sturdy fellows pulling at their oars, while three or four others were endeavoring to get up their rigging, which appeared tangled and confused at the bottom of the boat; the white splash of water, which fell each moment beside her, showing that the process of baling was still continued.

"Ah, then, may I never—av it isn't the ould *Dolphin* they have launched for the cruise," said one of our fellows.

"What's the *Dolphin*, then?"

"An ould boat of the Lord's (Lord Clanricarde's) that didn't see water, except when it rained, these four years, and is sun-cracked from stem to stern."

"She can sail, however," said Considine, who watched, with a painful anxiety, the rapidity of her course through the water.

"Nabocklish, she was a smuggler's jolly-boat, and well used to it. Look how they're pulling. God pardon them; but they're in no blessed humor this morning."

"Lay out upon your oars, boys; the wind's failing us," cried the Count, as the sail flapped lazily against the mast.

"It's no use, your honor," said the elder; "we'll be only breaking our hearts to no purpose; they're sure to catch us."

"Do as I bade you, at all events. What's that ahead of us there?"

"The Oat Rock, sir. A vessel with grain struck there, and went down with all aboard, four years last winter. There's no channel between it and the shore—all sunk rocks, every inch of it. There's the breeze"—the canvas fell over as he spoke, and the little craft lay down to it till the foaming water bubbled over her lee bow—"keep her head up, sir; higher—higher still"—but Considine little heeded the direction, steering straight for the narrow channel the man alluded to. "Tear and ages, but you're going right for the eloch na quirka!"

"Arrah, an' the devil a taste I'll be drowned for your devarsion," said the other, springing up.

"Sit down there, and be still," roared Considine, as he drew a pistol from the case at his feet, "if you don't want some leaden ballast to keep you so. Here, Charley, take this, and if that fellow stirs hand or foot—you understand me."

The two men sat sulkily in the bottom of the boat, which now was actually flying through the water. Considine's object was a clear one; he saw that, in sailing, we were greatly over-matched, and that our only chance lay in reaching the narrow and dangerous channel between the Oat Rock and the shore, by which we should distance the pursuit, the long reef of rocks that ran out beyond requiring a wide berth to escape from. Nothing but the danger behind us could warrant so rash a daring. The whole channel was dotted with patches of white and breaking foam—the sure evidence of the mischief beneath—while here and there a dash of spurting spray flew up from the dark water, where some cleft rock lay hid below the flood. Escape seemed impossible; but who would not have preferred even so slender a chance with so frightful an alternative behind him! As if to add terror to the scene, Considine had scarcely turned the boat ahead of the channel when a tremendous blackness spread over all around; the thunder pealed forth, and, amid the crashing of the hail and the bright glare of lightning, a squall struck us, and laid us nearly keel uppermost for several minutes. I well remember we rushed through the dark and blackening water, our little craft more than half filled, the oars floating off to leeward, and we ourselves kneeling on the bottom planks for safety. Roll after roll of loud thunder broke, as it were, just above our heads; while, in the swift dashing rain that seemed to hiss around us, every object was hidden, and even the other boat was lost to our view. The two poor fellows! I shall never forget their expression. One, a devout Catholic, had placed a little leaden image of a saint before him in the bow, and implored its intercession with a torturing agony of suspense that wrung my very heart; the other, apparently less alive to such consolations as his church afforded, remained with his hands clasped, his mouth compressed, his brows knitted, and his dark eyes bent upon me with the fierce hatred of a deadly enemy; his eyes were sunken and bloodshot, and all told of some dreadful conflict within; the wild ferocity of his look fascinated my gaze, and amid all the terrors of the scene I could not look from him. As I gazed, a second and more awful squall struck the boat, the mast bent over, and, with a loud report like a pistol shot, smashed at the thwart, and fell over, trailing the sail along the milky sea behind us. Meanwhile, the water rushed clean over us, and the boat seemed settling. At this dreadful moment the sailor's eye was bent upon me, his lips parted, and he muttered, as if to himself, "This it is to go to sea with a murderer." O God! the agony of that moment—the heart-felt and accus-

ing conscience that I was judged and doomed—that the brand of Cain was upon my brow—that my fellow-men had ceased forever to regard me as a brother—that I was an outcast and a wanderer forever. I bent forward till my forehead fell upon my knees, and I wept. Meanwhile, the boat flew through the water, and Considine, who alone among us seemed not to lose his presence of mind, cut away the mast, and sent it overboard. The storm now began to abate, and, as the black mass of cloud broke from around us, we beheld the other boat, also dismasted, far behind us, while all on board of her were employed in baling out the water with which she seemed almost sinking. The curtain of mist that had hidden us from each other no sooner broke than they ceased their labors for a moment, and, looking toward us, burst forth into a yell so wild, so savage, and so dreadful, my very heart quailed as its cadence fell upon my ear.

"Safe, my boy," said Considine, clapping me on the shoulder, as he steered the boat forth from its narrow path of danger, and once more reached the broad Shannon —"safe, Charley; though we've had a brush for it." In a minute more we reached the land, and drawing our gallant little craft on shore, set out for O'Malley Castle.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RETURN.

O'Malley Castle lay about four miles from the spot we landed at, and thither accordingly we bent our steps without loss of time. We had not, however, proceeded far, when, before us on the road, we perceived a mixed assemblage of horse and foot, hurrying along at a tremendous rate. The mob, which consisted of some hundred country people, were armed with sticks, scythes, and pitchforks, and, although not preserving any very military aspect in their order of march, were still a force quite formidable enough to make us call a halt, and deliberate upon what we were to do.

"They've outflanked us, Charley," said Considine; "however, all is not yet lost. But see, they've got sight of us—here they come."

At these words, the vast mass before us came pouring along, splashing the mud on every side, and huzzaing like so many Indians. In the front ran a bare-legged boy, waving his cap to encourage the rest, who followed him at about fifty yards behind.

"Leave that fellow for me," said the Count, coolly examining the lock of his pistol; "I'll pick him out, and load again in time for his friends' arrival. Charley, is that a gentleman I see far back in the crowd? Yes, to be sure it is; he's on a large horse—now he's pressing forward, so let—no—oh—ay—it's Godfrey O'Malley himself, and these are our own people." Scarcely were the words out when a tremendous cheer arose from the multitude, who, recognizing us at the same instant, sprung from their horses and ran forward to welcome us. Among the foremost was the scarecrow leader, whom I at once perceived to be poor Patsey, who, escaping in the morning, had returned at full speed to O'Malley Castle, and raised the whole country to my rescue. Before I could address one word to my faithful followers I was in my uncle's arms.

"Safe, my boy, quite safe?"

"Quite safe, sir."

"No scratch anywhere?"

"Nothing but a hat the worse, sir," said I, showing the two bullet holes in my headpiece.

His lip quivered as he turned and whispered something into Considine's ear which I heard not; but the Count's reply was "Devil a bit, as cool as you see him this minute."

"And Bodkin, what of him?"

"This day's work's his last," said Considine; "the ball entered here; but come along, Godfrey; Charley's new at this kind of thing, and we had better discuss matters in the house."

Half an hour's brisk trot—for we were soon supplied with horses—brought us back to the Castle, much to the disappointment of our cortége, who had been promised a *scrimmage*, and went back in very ill-humor at the breach of contract.

The breakfast-room, as we entered, was filled with my uncle's supporters, all busily engaged over poll-books and booth tallies, in preparation for the eventful day of battle. These, however, were immediately thrown aside to hasten round me, and inquire all the details of my duel. Considine, happily for me, however, assumed all the dignity of an historian, and recounted the events of the morning so much to my honor and glory, that I, who only a little before felt crushed and bowed down by the misery of my late duel, began, amid the warm congratulations and eulogiums about me, to think I was no small hero; and, in fact, something very much resem-

bling "the man for Galway." To this feeling a circumstance that followed assisted in contributing: while we were eagerly discussing the various results likely to arise from the meeting, a horse galloped rapidly to the door, and a loud voice called out, "I can't get off, but tell him to come here." We rushed out and beheld Captain Malowney, Mr. Bodkin's second, covered with mud from head to foot, and his horse reeking with foam and sweat. "I am hurrying on to Athlone for another doctor; but I've called to tell you that the wound is not supposed to be mortal—he may recover yet." Without waiting for another word, he dashed spurs into his nag and rattled down the avenue at full gallop. Mr. Bodkin's dearest friend on earth could not have received the intelligence with more delight, and I now began to listen to the congratulations of my friends with a more tranquil spirit. My uncle, too, seemed much relieved by the information, and heard with great good temper my narrative of the few days at Gurt-na-Morra. "So then," said he, as I concluded, "my opponent is at least a gentleman; that is a comfort."

"Sir George Dashwood," said I, "from all I have seen, is a remarkably nice person, and I am certain you will meet with only the fair and legitimate opposition of an opposing candidate in him—no mean or unmanly subterfuge."

"All right, Charley. Well, now, your affair of this morning must keep you quiet here for a few days, come what will; by Monday next, when the election takes place, Bodkin's fate will be pretty clear, one way or the other, and, if matters go well, you can come into town; otherwise, I have arranged with Considine to take you over to the Continent for a year or so; but we'll discuss all this in the evening. Now, I must start on a canvass. Boyle expects to meet you at dinner to-day; he is coming from Athlone on purpose. Now, good-by!"

When my uncle had gone I sank into a chair, and fell into a musing fit over all the changes a few hours had wrought in me. From a mere boy, whose most serious employment was stocking the house with game, or inspecting the kennel, I had sprung at once into man's estate, was complimented for my coolness, praised for my prowess, lauded for my discretion, by those who were my seniors by nearly half a century; talked to in a tone of confidential intimacy by my uncle, and, in a word, treated in all respects as an equal—and such was all the work of a few hours. But so it is, the eras in life are separated by a narrow boundary—some trifling accident, some casual rencontre impels us across the Rubicon, and we pass from infancy to youth—from youth to manhood—from manhood to age—less by the slow and imperceptible step of time than by some one decisive act or passion, which, occurring at a critical moment, elicits a long latent feeling, and impresses our existence with a color that tinges it for many a long year. As for me, I had cut the tie which bound me to the careless gayety of boyhood with a rude gash. In three short days I had fallen deeply, desperately in love, and had wounded, if not killed, an antagonist in a duel. As I meditated on these things, I was aroused by the noise of horses' feet in the yard beneath. I opened the window and beheld no less a person than Captain Hammersley. He was handing a card to a servant, which he was accompanying by a verbal message: the impression of something like hostility on the part of the Captain had never left my mind, and I hastened down-stairs just in time to catch him as he turned from the door.

"Ah, Mr. O'Malley!" said he, in a most courteous tone, "they told me you were not at home."

I apologized for the blunder, and begged of him to alight and come in.

"I thank you very much; but, in fact, my hours are now numbered here. I have just received an order to join my regiment: we have been ordered for service, and Sir George has most kindly permitted my giving up my staff appointment. I could not, however, leave the country without shaking hands with you. I owe you a lesson in horsemanship, and I'm only sorry that we are not to have another day together."

"Then you are going out to the Peninsula?" said I.

"Why, we hope so: the Commander-in-Chief, they say, is in great want of cavalry, and we scarcely less in want of something to do. I'm sorry you are not coming with us."

"Would to Heaven I were!" said I, with an earnestness that almost made my brain start.

"Then, why not?"

"Unfortunately, I am peculiarly situated. My worthy uncle, who is all to me in this world, would be quite alone if I were to leave him; and although he has never said so, I know he dreads the possibility of my suggesting such a thing to him: so that, between his fears and mine,

the matter is never broached by either party, nor do I think ever can be."

"Devilish hard—but I believe you are right; something, however, may turn up yet to alter his mind, and, if so, and if you do take to dragooning, don't forget George Hammersley will be always most delighted to meet you; and so good-by, O'Malley, good-by."

He turned his horse's head and was already some paces off, when he returned to my side, and, in a lower tone of voice, said,

"I ought to mention to you that there has been much discussion on your affair at Blake's table, and only one opinion on the matter among all parties—that you acted perfectly right. Sir George Dashwood—no mean judge of such things—quite approves of your conduct, and I believe wishes you to know as much; and now, once more good-by."

CHAPTER X.

THE ELECTION.

The important morning at length arrived, and, as I looked from my bedroom window at daybreak, the crowd of carriages of all sorts and shapes decorated with banners and placards; the incessant bustle; the hurrying hither and thither; the cheering as each new detachment of voters came up, mounted on jaunting-cars, or on horses whose whole caparison consisted in a straw rope for a bridle, and a saddle of the same frail material—all informed me that the election day was come. I lost no further time, but proceeded to dress with all possible dispatch. When I appeared in the breakfast-room, it was already filled with some seventy or eighty persons of all ranks and ages, mingled confusedly together, and enjoying the hospitable fare of my uncle's house, while they discussed all the details and prospects of the election. In the hall—the library—the large drawing-room, too, similar parties were also assembled, and, as new-comers arrived, the servants were busy in preparing tables before the door and up the large terrace that ran the entire length of the building. Nothing could be more amusing than the incongruous mixture of the guests, who, with every variety of eatable that chance or inclination provided, were thus thrown into close contact, having only this in common, the success of the cause they were engaged in. Here was the old Galway squire, with an ancestry that reached to Noah, sitting side by side with the poor cottier, whose whole earthly possession was what, in Irish phrase, is called a "potato garden," meaning the exactly smallest possible patch of ground out of which a very Indian-rubber conscience could presume to vote. Here sat the old simple-minded, farmer-like man, in close conversation with a little white-foreheaded, keen-eyed personage, in a black coat and eye-glass—a flash attorney from Dublin, learned in flaws of the registry, and deep in the subtleties of election law. There was an Athlone horse-dealer, whose habitual daily practices in imposing the halt, the lame, and the blind upon the unsuspecting, for beasts of blood and mettle, well qualified him for the trickery of a county contest. Then there were scores of squireen gentry, easily recognized on common occasions by a green coat, brass buttons, dirty cords, and dirtier top-boots, a lash-whip, and a half-bred fox-hound; but now, fresh-washed for the day, they presented something of the appearance of a swell mob, adjusted to the meridian of Galway. A mass of frieze-coated, brown-faced, bullet-headed peasantry filling up the large spaces, dotted here and there with a sleek, roguish-eyed priest, or some low electioneering agent, detailing, for the amusement of the company, some of those cunning practices of former times, which, if known to the proper authorities, would, in all likelihood, cause the talented narrator to be improving the soil of Sydney, or fishing on the banks of the Swan River; while, at the head and foot of each table, sat some personal friend of my uncle, whose ready tongue, and still readier pistol, made him a personage of some consequence, not more to his own people than to the enemy. While of such material were the company, the fare before them was no less varied: here some rubicund squire was deep in amalgamating the contents of a venison pasty with some of Sneyd's oldest claret; his neighbor, less ambitious, and less erudite in such matters, was devouring rashers of bacon, with liberal potations of potteen; some pale-cheeked scion of the law, with all the dust of the Four Courts in his throat, was sipping his humble beverage of black tea beside four sturdy cattle-dealers from Ballinasloe, who were discussing hot whisky punch and *spoleaion* (boiled beef) at the very primitive hour of eight in the morning. Amid the clank of decanters, the crash of knives and plates, the jingling of glasses, the laughter and voices of the guests were audibly increas-

ing, and the various modes of "running a buck" (anglicè, substituting a vote), or hunting a badger, were talked over on all sides, while the price of a *veal* (a calf) or a voter was disputed with all the energy of debate.

Refusing many an offered place, I went through the different rooms in search of Considine, to whom circumstances of late had somehow greatly attached me.

"Here, Charley," cried a voice I was very familiar with—"here's a place I've been keeping for you."

"Ah, Sir Harry, how do you do? Any of that grouse-pie to spare?"

"Abundance, my boy; but I'm afraid I can't say as much for the liquor: I have been shouting for claret this half-hour in vain—do get us some nutriment down here, and the Lord will reward you. What a pity it is," he added, in a lower tone, to his neighbor—"what a pity a quart bottle won't hold a quart; but I'll bring it before the House one of these days." That he kept his word in this respect, a motion on the books of the Honorable House will bear me witness.

"Is this it?" said he, turning toward a farmer-like old man, who had put some question to him across the table; "is it the apple-pie you'll have?"

"Many thanks to your honor—I'd like it, av it was wholesome."

"And why shouldn't it be wholesome?" said Sir Harry.

"Troth, then, myself does not know; but my father, I heerd tell, died of an apple-plexy, and I'm afeerd of it."

I at length found Considine, and learned that, as a very good account of Bodkin had arrived, there was no reason why I should not proceed to the hustings; but I was secretly charged not to take any prominent part in the day's proceedings. My uncle I only saw for an instant;—he begged me to be careful, avoid all scrapes, and not to quit Considine. It was past ten o'clock when our formidable procession got under way, and headed toward the town of Galway. The road was, for miles, crowded with our followers; banners flying and music playing, we presented something of the spectacle of a very ragged army on its march. At every cross-road a mountain-path re-enforcement awaited us, and, as we wended along, our numbers were momentarily increasing; here and there along the line, some energetic and not over-sober adherent was regaling his auditory with a speech in laudation of the O'Malleys since the days of Moses, and more than one priest was heard threatening the terrors of his church in aid of a cause to whose success he was pledged and bound. I rode beside the Count, who, surrounded by a group of choice spirits, recounted the various happy inventions by which he had, on divers occasions, substituted a personal quarrel for a contest. Boyle also contributed his share of election anecdote, and one incident he related, which, I remember, amused me much at the time.

"Do you remember Billy Calvert, that came down to contest Kilkenny?" inquired Sir Harry.

"What! ever forget him!" said Considine, "with his well-powdered wig, and his hessians. There never was his equal for lace ruffles and rings."

"You never heard, maybe, how he lost the election?"

"He resigned, I believe, or something of that sort."

"No, no," said another; "he never came forward at all; there's some secret in it, for Tom Butler was elected without a contest."

"Jack, I'll tell you how it happened. I was on my way up from Cork, having finished my own business, and just carried the day, not without a push for it. When we reached—Lady Mary was with me—when we reached Kilkenny, the night before the election, I was not ten minutes in town till Butler heard of it, and sent off express to see me; I was at my dinner when the messenger came, and promised to go over when I'd done; but, faith, Tom didn't wait, but came rushing up-stairs himself, and dashed into the room in the greatest hurry.

"'Harry,' says he, 'I'm done for; the corporation of free smiths, that were always above bribery, having voted for myself and my father before, for four pounds ten a man, won't come forward under six guineas and whiskey. Calvert has the money; they know it. The devil a farthing we have; and we've been paying all our fellows that can't read in Hennesy's notes, and you know the bank's broke this three weeks.'

"On he went, giving me a most disastrous picture of his cause, and concluded by asking if I could suggest anything under the circumstances.

"'You couldn't get a decent mob and clear the poll?'

"'I am afraid not,' said he, despondingly.

"'Then I don't see what's to be done, if you can't pick a fight with himself. Will he go out?'

"'Lord knows; they say he's so afraid

of that, that it has prevented him coming down till the very day. But he is arrived now; he came in the evening, and is stopping at Walsh's, in Patrick street.'

"'Then I'll see what can be done,' said I.

"'Is that Calvert, the little man that blushes when the Lady Lieutenant speaks to him?' said Lady Mary.

"'The very man.'

"'Would it be of any use to you if he could not come on the hustings to-morrow?' said she again.

"''Twould gain us the day; half the voters don't believe he's here at all, and his chief agent cheated all the people on the last election, and if Calvert didn't appear, he wouldn't have ten votes to register. But why do you ask?'

"'Why, that, if you like, I'll bet you a pair of diamond earrings he shan't show.'

"'Done,' said Butler; 'and I promise a necklace into the bargain, if you win, but I'm afraid you're only quizzing me.'

"'Here's my hand on it,' said she; 'and now let's talk of something else.'

"As Lady Mary never asked my assistance, and as I knew she was very well able to perform whatever she undertook, you may be sure I gave myself very little trouble about the whole affair, and, when they came, I went off to breakfast with Tom's committee, not knowing anything that was to be done.

"Calvert had given orders that he was to be called at eight o'clock, and so a few minutes before that time a gentle knock came to the door.

"'Come in,' said he, thinking it was the waiter, and covering himself up in the clothes, for he was the most bashful creature ever was seen—'come in.'

"The door opened, and what was his horror to find that a lady entered in her dressing gown, her hair on her shoulders, very much tossed and disheveled! The moment she came in she closed the door, and locked it, and then sat leisurely down upon a chair.

"Billy's teeth chattered, and his limbs trembled, for this was an adventure of a very novel kind for him. At last he took courage to speak.

"'I am afraid, madam,' said he, 'that you are under some unhappy mistake, and that you suppose this chamber is—'

"'Mr. Calvert's,' said the lady, with a solemn voice, 'is it not?'

"'Yes, madam, I am that person.'

"'Thank God,' said the lady, with a very impressive tone, 'here I am safe.'

"Billy grew very much puzzled at these words; but hoping that, by his silence, the lady would proceed to some explanation, he said no more. She, however, seemed to think that nothing further was necessary, and sat still and motionless, with her hands before her and her eyes fixed on Billy.

"'You seem to forget me, sir?' said she, with a faint smile.

"'I do, indeed, madam; the half-light, the novelty of your costume, and the strangeness of the circumstance altogether, must plead for me—if I appear rude enough.'

"'I am Lady Mary Boyle,' said she.

"'I do remember you, madam; but may I ask—?'

"'Yes, yes, I know what you would ask; you would say, why are you here? how comes it that you have so far outstepped the propriety of which your whole life is an example, that alone, at such a time, you appear in the chamber of a man whose character for gallantry—?'

"'Oh, indeed—indeed, my lady, nothing of the kind.'

"'Ah, alas! poor defenseless women learn, too late, how constantly associated is the retiring modesty which decries, with the pleasing powers which insure success—'

"Here she sobbed, Billy blushed, and the clock struck nine.

"'May I then beg, madam—'

"'Yes, yes, you shall hear it all; but my poor scattered faculties will not be the clearer by your hurrying me. You know, perhaps,' continued she, 'that my maiden name was Rogers?' He of the blankets bowed, and she resumed. 'It is now eighteen years since, that a young, unsuspecting, fond creature, reared in all the care and fondness of doting parents, tempted her first step in life, and trusted her fate to another's keeping. I am that unhappy person; the other, that monster in human guise that smiled but to betray, that won but to ruin and destroy, is he whom you know as Sir Harry Boyle.'

"Here she sobbed for some minutes, wiped her eyes, and resumed her narrative. Beginning at the period of her marriage, she detailed a number of circumstances, in which poor Calvert, in all his anxiety to come *au fond* at matters, could never perceive bore upon the question in any way; but, as she recounted them all with great force and precision, entreating him to bear in mind certain circumstances to which she should recur by-and-by, his attention was kept on the stretch, and it was only when the clock struck ten that he was fully aware how his morning was pass-

ing, and what surmises his absence might originate.

"'May I interrupt you for a moment, dear madam? Was it nine or ten o'clock which struck last?'

"'How should I know?' said she, frantically. 'What are hours and minutes to her who has passed long years of misery?'

"'Very true—very true,' replied he, timidly, and rather fearing for the intellects of his fair companion.

"She continued.

"The narrative, however, so far from becoming clearer, grew gradually more confused and intricate, and, as frequent references were made by the lady to some previous statement, Calvert was more than once rebuked for forgetfulness and inattention, where, in reality, nothing less than shorthand could have borne him through.

"'Was it in '93 I said that Sir Harry left me at Tuam?'

"'Upon my life, madam, I am afraid to aver; but it strikes me—'

"'Gracious powers! and this is he whom I fondly trusted to make the depository of my woes—cruel, cruel man.' Here she sobbed considerably for several minutes, and spoke not.

"A loud cheer of 'Butler for ever!' from the mob without, now burst upon their hearing, and recalled poor Calvert at once to the thought that the hours were speeding fast, and no prospect of the everlasting tale coming to an end.

"'I am deeply, most deeply grieved, my dear madam,' said the little man, sitting up in a pyramid of blankets, 'but hours, minutes, are most precious to me this morning. I am about to be proposed as member for Kilkenny.'

"At these words the lady straightened her figure out, threw her arms at either side, and burst into a fit of laughter, which poor Calvert knew at once to be hysterics. Here was a pretty situation: the bell-rope lay against the opposite wall, and, even if it did not, would he be exactly warranted in pulling it?

"'May the devil and all his angels take Sir Harry Boyle and his whole connection to the fifth generation,' was his sincere prayer, as he sat, like a Chinese juggler, under his canopy.

"At length the violence of the paroxysm seemed to subside, the sobs became less frequent, the kicking less forcible, and the lady's eyes closed, and she appeared to have fallen asleep.

"'Now is the moment,' said Billy; 'if I could only get as far as my dressing-gown.' So saying, he worked himself down noiselessly to the foot of his bed, looked fixedly at the fallen lids of the sleeping lady, and essayed one leg from the blankets. 'Now or never,' said he, pushing aside the curtain, and preparing for a spring. One more look he cast at his companion, and then leaped forth; but just as he lit upon the floor, she again roused herself, screaming with horror. Billy fell upon the bed, and, rolling himself in the bedclothes, vowed never to rise again till she was out of the visible horizon.

"'What is all this? what do you mean, sir?' said the lady, reddening with indignation.

"'Nothing, upon my soul, madam; it was only my dressing-gown!'

"'Your dressing-gown!' said she, with an emphasis worthy of Siddons; 'a likely story for Sir Harry to believe, sir; fie, fie, sir.'

"This last allusion seemed a settler; for the luckless Calvert heaved a profound sigh, and sunk down as if all hope had left him. 'Butler for ever!' roared the mob; 'Calvert for ever!' cried a boy's voice from without; 'Three groans for the runaway!' answered this announcement; and a very tender inquiry of, 'Where is he?' was raised by some hundred mouths.

"'Madam,' said the almost frantic listener—'madam, I must get up; I must dress. I beg of you to permit me.'

"'I have nothing to refuse, sir. Alas! disdain has long been my only portion. Get up, if you will.'

"'But,' said the astonished man, who was well-nigh deranged at the coolness of this reply—'but how am I to do so if you sit there?'

"'Sorry for any inconvenience I may cause you; but, in the crowded state of the hotel, I hope you see the impropriety of my walking about the passages in this costume?'

"'And, great God! madam, why did you come out in it?'

"A cheer from the mob prevented her reply being audible. One o'clock tolled out from the great bell of the cathedral.

"'There's one o'clock, as I live.'

"'I heard it,' said the lady.

"'The shouts are increasing. What is that I hear? *Butler is in.* Gracious mercy, is the election over?'

"The lady stepped to the window, drew aside the curtain, and said, 'Indeed, it would appear so. The mob are cheering Mr. Butler.' [A deafening shout burst from the street.] 'Perhaps you'd like to

see the fun, so I'll not detain you any longer. So, good-by, Mr. Calvert; and as your breakfast will be cold, in all likelihood, come down to No. 4, for Sir Harry's a late man, and will be glad to see you.'"

CHAPTER XI.

AN ADVENTURE.

As thus we lightened the road with chatting, the increasing concourse of people, and the greater throng of carriages that filled the road, announced that we had nearly reached our destination.

"Considine," said my uncle, riding up to where we were, "I have just got a few lines from Davern. It seems Bodkin's people are afraid to come in: they know what they must expect, and if so, more than half of that barony is lost to our opponent."

"Then he has no chance whatever."

"He never had, in my opinion," said Sir Harry.

"We'll see soon," said my uncle, cheerfully, and rode to the post.

The remainder of the way was occupied in discussing the various possibilities of the election, into which I was rejoiced to find that defeat never entered.

In the goodly days I speak of, a county contest was a very different thing indeed from the tame and insipid farce that now passes under that name; where a briefless barrister, bullied by both sides, sits as assessor—a few drunken voters—a radical O'Connellite grocer—a demagogue priest—a deputy grand purple something from the Trinity College lodge, with some half-dozen followers, shouting, "To the devil with Peel!" or "Down with Dens!" form the whole *corps de ballet.* No, no; in the times I refer to the voters were some thousands in number, and the adverse parties took the field, far less dependent for success upon previous pledge or promise made them, than upon the actual stratagem of the day. Each went forth, like a general to battle, surrounded by a numerous and well-chosen staff; one party of friends, acting as commissariat, attended to the victualing of the voters,—that they obtained a due, or rather undue allowance of liquor, and came properly drunk to the poll; others, again, broke into skirmishing parties, and, scattered over the country, cut off the enemy's supplies, breaking down their post-chaises, upsetting their jaunting-cars, stealing their poll-books, and kidnapping their agents. Then there were secret service people, bribing the enemy and enticing them to desert; and lastly, there was a species of sapper-and-miner force, who invented false documents, denied the identity of the opposite party's people, and, when hard pushed, provided persons who took bribes from the enemy, and gave evidence afterward on a petition. Amid all these encounters of wit and ingenuity, the personal friends of the candidate formed a species of rifle brigade, picking out the enemy's officers, and doing sore damage to their tactics, by shooting a proposer, or wounding a seconder—a considerable portion of every leading agent's fee being intended as compensation for the duels he might, could, would, should, or ought to fight during the election. Such, in brief, was a contest in the olden time; and, when it is taken into consideration that it usually lasted a fortnight or three weeks, that a considerable military force was always engaged (for our Irish law permits this), and which, when nothing pressing was doing, was regularly assailed by both parties—that far more dependence was placed in a bludgeon than a pistol—and that the man who registered a vote without a cracked pate was regarded as a kind of natural phenomenon, some faint idea may be formed how much such a scene must have contributed to the peace of the county, and the happiness and welfare of all concerned in it.

As we rode along, a loud cheer from a road that ran parallel to the one we were pursuing attracted our attention, and we perceived that the cortége of the opposite party was hastening on to the hustings. I could distinguish the Blakes' girls on horseback among a crowd of officers in undress, and saw something like a bonnet in the carriage-and-four which headed the procession, and which I judged to be that of Sir George Dashwood. My heart beat strongly as I strained my eyes to see if Miss Dashwood was there; but I could not discern her, and it was with a sense of relief that I reflected on the possibility of our not meeting under circumstances wherein our feelings and interests were so completely opposed. While I was engaged in making this survey, I had accidentally dropped behind my companions; my eyes were firmly fixed upon that carriage, and, in the faint hope that it contained the object of all my wishes, I forgot everything else. At length the cortége entered the town, and, passing beneath a heavy stone gateway, was lost to my view. I was still

lost in reverie, when an under-agent of my uncle's rode up.

"Oh! Master Charles," said he, "what's to be done? They've forgotten Mr. Holmes at Woodford, and we haven't a carriage, chaise, or even a car left to send for him."

"Have you told Mr. Considine?" inquired I.

"And sure you know yourself how little Mr. Considine thinks of a lawyer. It's small comfort he'd give me if I went to tell him: if it was a case of pistols or a bullet mold, he'd ride back the whole way himself for them."

"Try Sir Harry Boyle, then."

"He's making a speech this minute before the Court-house."

This had sufficed to show me how far behind my companions I had been loitering, when a cheer from the distant road again turned my eyes in that direction: it was the Dashwood carriage returning after leaving Sir George at the hustings. The head of the britska, before thrown open, was now closed, and I could not make out if any one were inside.

"Devil a doubt of it," said the agent, in answer to some question of a farmer who rode beside him; "will you stand to me?"

"Troth, to be sure I will."

"Here goes, then," said he, gathering up his reins and turning his horse toward the fence at the roadside; "follow me now, boys."

The order was well obeyed, for, when he had cleared the ditch, a dozen stout country fellows, well mounted, were beside him. Away they went at a hunting pace, taking every leap before them, and heading toward the road before us.

Without thinking further of the matter, I was laughing at the droll effect the line of frieze coats presented as they rode side by side, over the stone walls, when an observation near me aroused my attention.

"Ah, then, av they know anything, of Tim Finucane, they'll give it up peaceably: its little he'd think of taking the coach from under the judge himself."

"What are they about, boys?" said I.

"Goin' to take the chaise-and-four forninst ye, yer honor," said the man.

I waited not to hear more, but darting spurs into my horse's sides, cleared the fence in one bound. My horse, a strong-knit half-bred, was as fast as a racer for a short distance; so that when the agent and his party had come up with the carriage, I was only a few hundred yards behind. I shouted out with all my might, but they either heard not or heeded not, for scarcely was the first man over the fence into the road, when the postilion on the leader was felled to the ground, and his place supplied by his slayer; the boy on the wheeler shared the same fate, and, in an instant, so well managed was the attack, the carriage was in possession of the assailants. Four stout fellows had climbed into the box and the rumble, and six others were climbing to the interior, regardless of the aid of steps. By this time the Dashwood party had got the alarm, and returned in full force—not, however, before the other had laid whip to the horses, and set out in full gallop; and now commenced the most terrific race I ever witnessed.

The four carriage horses, which were the property of Sir George. were English thorough-breds of great value, and, totally unaccustomed to the treatment they experienced, dashed forward at a pace that threatened annihilation to the carriage at every bound. The pursuers, though well mounted, were speedily distanced, but followed at a pace that, in the end, was certain to overtake the carriage. As for myself, I rode on beside the road, at the full speed of my horse, shouting, cursing, imploring, execrating, and beseeching at turns, but all in vain—the yells and shouts of the pursuers and pursued drowned all other sounds except when the thundering crash of the horses' feet rose above all. The road, like most western Irish roads until the present century, lay straight as an arrow for miles, regardless of every opposing barrier, and, in the instance in question, crossed a mountain at its very highest point. Toward this pinnacle the pace had been tremendous; but, owing to the higher breeding of the cattle, the carriage party had still the advance, and when they reached the top they proclaimed the victory by a cheer of triumph and derision. The carriage disappeared beneath the crest of the mountain, and the pursuers halted, as if disposed to relinquish the chase.

"Come on, boys. Never give up," cried I, springing over into the road, and heading the party to which by every right I was opposed.

It was no time for deliberation, and they followed me with a hearty cheer that convinced me I was unknown. The next instant we were on the mountain top, and beheld the carriage half way down beneath us, still galloping at full stretch.

"We have them now," said a voice behind me; "they'll never turn Lurra Bridge, if we only press on."

The speaker was right: the road at the mountain foot turned at a perfect right angle, and then crossed a lofty one-arched bridge, over a mountain torrent that ran deep and boisterously beneath. On we went, gaining at every stride, for the fellows who rode postilion well knew what was before them, and slackened their pace to secure a safe turning. A yell of victory arose from the pursuers, but was answered by the others with a cheer of defiance. The space was now scarcely two hundred yards between us, when the head of the britska was flung down, and a figure that I at once recognized as the redoubted Tim Finucane, one of the boldest and most reckless fellows in the county, was seen standing on the seat, holding—gracious Heavens! it was true—holding in his arms the apparently lifeless figure of Miss Dashwood.

"Hold in!" shouted the ruffian, with a voice that rose high above all the other sounds. "Hold in! or, by the Eternal, I'll throw her, body and bones, into the Lurra Gash!" for such was the torrent called, that boiled and foamed a few yards before us.

He had by this time got firmly planted on the hind seat, and held the drooping form on one arm, with all the ease of a giant's grasp.

"For the love of God!" said I, "pull up. I know him well—he'll do it to a certainty if you press on."

"And we know you too," said a ruffianly fellow, with a dark whisker meeting beneath his chin, "and have some scores to settle ere we part—"

But I heard no more. With one tremendous effort I dashed my horse forward. The carriage turned an angle of the road—for an instant was out of sight—another moment I was behind it.

"Stop!" I shouted, with a last effort, but in vain. The horses, maddened and infuriated, sprang forward, and, heedless of all efforts to turn them, the leaders sprang over the low parapet of the bridge, and hanging for a second by the traces, fell with a crash into the swollen torrent beneath. By this time I was beside the carriage. Finucane had now clambered to the box, and, regardless of the death and ruin around, bent upon his murderous object, he lifted the light and girlish form above his head, bent backward, as if to give greater impulse to his effort, when, twining my lash around my wrist, I leveled my heavy and loaded hunting whip at his head; the weighted ball of lead struck him exactly beneath his hat, he staggered, his hands relaxed, and he fell lifeless to the ground: the same instant I was felled to the earth by a blow from behind, and saw no more.

CHAPTER XII.

MICKEY FREE.

NEARLY three weeks followed the event I have just narrated ere I again was restored to consciousness. The blow by which I was felled—from what hand coming it was never after discovered—had brought on concussion of the brain, and for several days my life was despaired of. As by slow steps I advanced toward recovery, I learned from Considine that Miss Dashwood, whose life was saved by my interference, had testified, in the warmest manner, her gratitude, and that Sir George had, up to the period of his leaving the country, never omitted a single day to ride over and inquire for me.

"You know, of course," said the Count, supposing such news was the most likely to interest me—"you know we beat them?"

"No. Pray tell me all. They've not let me hear anything hitherto."

"One day finished the whole affair. We polled man for man till past two o'clock, when our fellows lost all patience, and beat their tallies out of the town. The police came up, but they beat the police; then they got soldiers, but begad they were too strong for them, too. Sir George witnessed it all, and, knowing besides how little chance he had of success, deemed it best to give in; so that a little before five o'clock he resigned. I must say no man could behave better. He came across the hustings and shook hands with Godfrey; and, as the news of the *scrimmage* with his daughter had just arrived, said that he was sorry his prospect of success had not been greater, that, in resigning, he might testify how deeply he felt the debt the O'Malleys had laid him under."

"And my uncle, how did he receive his advances?"

"Like his own honest self; grasped his hand firmly; and upon my soul I think he was half sorry that he gained the day. Do you know, he took a mighty fancy to that blue-eyed daughter of the old General's. Faith, Charley, if he was some twenty years younger, I would not say but—— Come, come, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings; but I have been stay-

ing here too long. I'll send up Mickey to sit with you. Mind and don't be talking too much to him."

So saying, the worthy Count left the room, fully impressed that, in hinting at the possibility of my uncle's marrying again, he had said something to ruffle my temper.

For the next two or three weeks my life was one of the most tiresome monotony. Strict injunctions had been given by the doctors to avoid exciting me; and, consequently, every one that came in walked on tiptoe, spoke in whispers, and left me in five minutes. Reading was absolutely forbidden; and, with a sombre half-light to sit in, and chicken broth to support nature, I dragged out as dreary an existence as any gentleman west of Athlone.

Whenever my uncle or Considine were not in the room, my companion was my own servant, Michael, or, as he was better known, "Mickey Free." Now, had Mickey been left to his own free and unrestricted devices, the time would not have hung so heavily; for, among Mike's manifold gifts, he was possessed of a very great flow of gossiping conversation; he knew all that was doing in the county, and never was barren in his information wherever his imagination could come into play. Mickey was the best hurler in the barony, no mean performer on the violin, could dance the national bolero of "Tatter Jack Walsh" in a way that charmed more than one soft heart beneath a red woolsey bodice, and had, withal, the peculiar free-and-easy devil-may-care kind of off-hand Irish way, that never deserted him in the midst of his wiliest and most subtle moments, giving to a very deep and cunning fellow all the apparent frankness and openness of a country lad.

He had attached himself to me as a kind of sporting companion; and, growing daily more and more useful, had been gradually admitted to the honors of the kitchen and the prerogatives of cast clothes, without ever having been actually engaged as a servant; and while thus no warrant officer, as, in fact, he discharged all his duties well and punctually, was rated among the ship's company, though no one could say at what precise period he changed his caterpillar existence and became the gay butterfly, with cords and tops, a striped vest, and a most knowing jerry hat, who stalked about the stable-yard and bullied the helpers. Such was Mike. He had made his fortune, such as it was, and had a most becoming pride in the fact that he made himself indispensable to an establishment which, before he entered it, never knew the want of him. As for me, he was everything to me. Mike informed me what horse was wrong, why the chestnut mare couldn't go out, and why the black horse could. He knew the arrival of a new covey of partridges quicker than the *Morning Post* does of a noble family from the Continent, and could tell their whereabouts twice as accurately; but his talents took a wider range than field sports afford, and he was the faithful chronicler of every wake, station, wedding, or christening for miles round; and as I took no small pleasure in those very national pastimes, the information was of great value to me. To conclude this brief sketch, Mike was a devout Catholic, in the same sense that he was enthusiastic about anything; that is, he believed and obeyed exactly as far as suited his own peculiar notions of comfort and happiness. Beyond *that*, his scepticism stepped in and saved him from inconvenience; and though he might have been somewhat puzzled to reduce his faith to a rubric, still it answered his purpose, and that was all he wanted. Such, in short, was my valet, Mickey Free, and who, had not heavy injunctions been laid on him as to silence and discretion, would well have lightened my weary hours.

"Ah! then, Misther Charles," said he, with a half-suppressed yawn at the long period of probation his tongue had been undergoing in silence—"ah! then, but ye were mighty near it."

"Near what?" said I.

"Faith, then, myself doesn't well know. Some say it's purgathory; but it's hard to tell."

"I thought you were too good a Catholic, Mickey, to show any doubts on the matter?"

"May be I am—may be I ain't," was the cautious reply.

"Wouldn't Father Roach explain any of your difficulties for you, if you went over to him?"

"Faix, it's little I'd mind his explainings."

"And why not?"

"Easy enough. If you ax ould Miles there, without, what does he be doing with all the powther and shot, wouldn't he tell you he's shooting the rooks, and the magpies, and some other varmint? but myself knows he sells it to Widow Casey, at two-and-fourpence a pound: so belikes, Father Roach may be shooting away at the poor souls in purgathory, that all this time are enjoying the hoith of fine living in heaven, ye understand."

"And you think that's the way of it, Mickey?"

"Troth, it's likely. Anyhow, I know it's not the place they make it out."

"Why, how do you mean?"

"Well, then, I'll tell you, Misther Charles; but you must not be saying anything about it afther; for I don't like to talk about these kind of things."

Having pledged myself to the requisite silence and secrecy, Mickey began:

"Maybe you heard tell of the way my father, rest his soul wherever he is, came to his end. Well, I needn't mind particulars, but, in short, he was murdered in Ballinasloe one night, when he was baitin' the whole town with a blackthorn stick he had, more by token, a piece of a scythe was stuck at the end of it; a nate weapon, and one he was mighty partial to: but these murdering thieves, the cattle dealers, that never cared for diversion of any kind, fell on him and broke his skull.

"Well, we had a very agreeable wake, and plenty of the best of everything, and to spare, and I thought it was all over; but somehow, though I paid Father Roach fifteen shillings, and made him mighty drunk, he always gave me a black look wherever I met him, and when I took off my hat, he'd turn away his head displeased like.

"'Murder and ages,' says I, 'what's this for?' but as I've a light heart, I bore up, and didn't think more about it. One day, however, I was coming home from Athlone market, by myself on the road, when Father Roach overtook me. 'Devil a one a me 'ill take any notice of you now,' says I, 'and we'll see what'll come out of it.' So the priest rid up, and looked me straight in the face.

"'Mickey,' says he—'Mickey.'

"'Father,' says I.

"'Is it that way you salute your clargy,' says he, 'with your caubeen on your head?'

"'Faix,' says I, 'it's little ye mind whether it's an or aff, for you never take the trouble to say, "By your leave," or "Damn your soul," or any other politeness, when we meet.'

"'You're an ungrateful creature,' says he; 'and if you only knew, you'd be trembling in your skin before me, this minute.'

"'Devil a tremble,' says I, 'after walking six miles this way.'

"'You're an obstinate, hard-hearted sinner,' says he, 'and it's no use in telling you.'

"'Telling me what?' says I, for I was getting curious to make out what he meant.

"'Mickey,' says he, changing his voice, and putting his head down close to me—'Mickey, I saw your father last night.'

"'The saints be merciful to us!' said I, 'did ye?'

"'I did,' says he.

"'Tear an ages,' says I, 'did he tell you what he did with the new corduroys he bought in the fair?'

"'Oh! then, you are a could-hearted creature,' says he, 'and I'll not lose time with you.' With that he was going to ride away, when I took hold of the bridle.

"'Father, darling,' says I, 'God pardon me, but them breeches is goin' between me an' my night's rest; but tell me about my father?'

"'Oh! then, he's in a melancholy state!'

"'Whereabouts is he?' says I.

"'In purgathory,' says he; 'but he won't be there long.'

"'Well,' says I, 'that's a comfort, anyhow.'

"'I am glad you think so,' says he; 'but there's more of the other opinion.'

"'What's *that?*' says I.

"'That hell's worse.'

"'Oh! melia-murther,' says I, 'is that it?'

"'Ay, that's it.'

"Well, I was so terrified and frightened, I said nothing for some time, but trotted along beside the priest's horse.

"'Father,' says I, 'how long will it be before they send him where you know?'

"'It will not be long now,' says he, 'for they're tired entirely with him: they've no peace night or day,' says he. 'Mickey, your father is a mighty hard man.'

"'True for you, Father Roach,' says I to myself; 'av he had only the ould stick with the scythe in it, I wish them joy of his company.'

"'Mickey,' says he, 'I see you're grieved, and I don't wonder; sure, it's a great disgrace to a decent family.'

"'Troth, it is,' says I, 'but my father always liked low company. Could nothing be done for him now, Father Roach?' says I, looking up in the priest's face.

"'I'm greatly afraid, Mickey, he was a bad man, a very bad man.'

"'And ye think he'll go there?' says I.

"'Indeed, Mickey, I have my fears.'

"'Upon my conscience,' says I, 'I believe you're right; he was always a restless crayture.'

"'But it doesn't depind on him,' says the priest, crossly.

"'And, then, who then?' says I.

"'Upon yourself, Mickey Free,' says he; 'God pardon you for it, too.'

"'Upon me?' says I.

"'Troth, no less,' says he; 'how many masses was said for your father's soul?—how many aves?—how many paters?—answer me.'

"'Devil a one of me knows!—maybe twenty.'

"'Twenty, twenty—no, nor one.'

"'And why not?' says I; 'what for wouldn't you be helping a poor crayture out of trouble, when it wouldn't cost you more nor a handful of prayers?'

"'Mickey, I see,' says he, in a solemn tone, 'you're worse nor a haythen, but ye couldn't be other; ye never come to yer duties.'

"'Well, father,' says I, looking very penitent, 'how many masses would get him out?'

"'Now you talk like a sensible man,' says he. 'Now, Mickey, I've hopes for you. Let me see'—here he went countin' upon his fingers, and numberin' to himself for five minutes—'Mickey,' says he, 'I've a batch coming out on Tuesday week, and if you were to make great exertions, perhaps your father could come with them; that is, av they have made no objections.'

"'And what for would they?' says I; 'he was always the hoith of company, and av singing's allowed in them parts—'

"'God forgive you, Mickey, but yer in a benighted state,' says he, sighing.

"'Well,' says I, 'how'll we get him out on Tuesday week? for that's bringing things to a focus.'

"'Two masses in the morning, fastin',' says Father Roach, half loud, 'is two, and two in the afternoon is four, and two at vespers is six,' says he; 'six masses a day for nine days is close by sixty masses—say sixty,' says he; 'and they'll cost you—mind, Mickey, and don't be telling it again, for it's only to yourself I'd make them so cheap—a matter of three pounds.'

"'Three pounds!' says I; 'be-gorra ye might as well ax me to give you the rock of Cashel.'

"'I'm sorry for ye, Mickey,' says he, gatherin' up the reins to ride off—'I'm sorry for ye; and the time will come when the neglect of your poor father will be a sore stroke agin yourself.'

"'Wait a bit, your reverence,' says I—'wait a bit. Would forty shillings get him out?'

"'Av course it wouldn't,' says he.

"'Maybe,' says I, coaxing—'maybe, av you said that his son was a poor boy that lived by his industhry, and the times was bad—'

"'Not the least use,' says he.

"'Arrah, but it's hard-hearted they are,' thinks I. 'Well, see now, I'll give you the money, but I can't afford it all at on'st; but I'll pay five shillings a week—will that do?'

"'I'll do my endayvors,' says Father Roach; 'and I'll speak to them to treat him peaceably in the mean time.'

"'Long life to yer reverence, and do. Well, here now, here's five hogs to begin with; and, musha, but I never thought I'd be spending my loose change that way.'

"Father Roach put the six tinpinnies in the pocket of his black leather breeches, said something in Latin, bid me good-morning, and rode off.

"Well, to make my story short, I worked late and early to pay the five shillings a week, and I did do it for three weeks regular; then I brought four and fourpence—then it came down to one and tenpence halfpenny—then ninepence—and, at last, I had nothing at all to bring.

"'Mickey Free,' says the priest, 'ye must stir yourself; your father is mighty displeased at the way you've been doing of late; and av ye kept yer word, he'd be near out by this time.'

"'Troth,' says I, 'it's a very expensive place.'

"'By coorse it is,' says he; 'sure all the quality of the land's there. But, Mickey, my man, with a little exertion, your father's business is done. What are you jingling in your pocket there?'

"'It's ten shillings, your reverence, I have to buy seed potatoes.'

"'Hand it here, my son. Isn't it better your father would be enjoying himself in paradise, than if ye were to have all the potatoes in Ireland?'

"'And how do ye know,' says I, 'he's so near out?'

"'How do I know—how do I know, is it?—didn't I see him?'

"'See him! tear an ages, was you down there again?'

"'I was,' says he; 'I was down there for three-quarters of an hour yesterday evening, getting out Luke Kennedy's mother. Decent people the Kennedys—never spared expense.'

"'And ye seen my father?' says I.

"'I did,' says he; 'he had an ould flannel waistcoat on, and a pipe sticking out of the pocket av it.'

"'That's him,' says I. 'Had he a hairy cap?'

"'I didn't mind the cap,' says he, 'but

av coorse he wouldn't have it on his head in that place.'

"'Thrue for you,' says I. 'Did he speak to you?'

"'He did,' says Father Roach; 'he spoke very hard about the way he was treated down there, that they was always jibin' and jeerin' him about *drink*, and fightin', and the course he led up here, and that it was a queer thing, for the matter of ten-shillings, he was to be kept there so long.'

"'Well,' says I, taking out the ten shillings and counting it with one hand, 'we must do our best, anyhow; and ye think this'll get him out surely?'

"'I know it will,' says he; 'for when Luke's mother was leaving the place, and yer father saw the door open, he made a rush at it, and, be-gorra, before it was shut he got his head and one shoulder outside av it, so that, ye see, a thrifle more 'll do it.'

"'Faix, and yer reverence,' said I, 'you've lightened my heart this morning.' And I put my money back again in my pocket.

"'Why, what do you mean?' says he, growing very red, for he was angry.

"'Just this,' says I, 'that I've saved my money; for av it was my father you seen, and that he got his head and one shoulder outside the door, oh, then, by the powers!' says I, 'the devil a gaol or gaoler from hell to Connaught id hould him; so, Father Roach, I wish you the top of the morning.' And I went away laughing; and from that day to this I never heard more of purgathory; and ye see, Master Charles, I think I was right."

Scarcely had Mike concluded when my door was suddenly burst open, and Sir Harry Boyle, without assuming any of his usual precautions respecting silence and quiet, rushed into the room, a broad grin upon his honest features, and his eyes twinkling in a way that evidently showed me something had occurred to amuse him.

"By Jove, Charley, I musn't keep it from you, it's too good a thing not to tell you; do you remember that very essenced young gentleman who accompanied Sir George Dashwood from Dublin, as a kind of electioneering friend?"

"Do you mean Mr. Prettyman?"

"The very man; he was, you are aware, an under-secretary in some government department. Well, it seems that he had come down among us poor savages as much from motives of learned research and scientific inquiry, as though we had been South Sea Islanders; report had gifted us humble Galwayans with some very peculiar traits, and this gifted individual resolved to record them. Whether the election week might have sufficed his appetite for wonders I know not, but he was peaceably taking his departure from the west on Saturday last, when Phil Macnamara met him, and pressed him to dine that day with a few friends at his house. You know Phil; so that when I tell you Sam Burke, of Greenmount, and Roger Doolan were of the party, I need not say that the English traveler was not left to his own unassisted imagination for his facts; such anecdotes of our habits and customs as they crammed him with, it would appear, never were heard before—nothing was too hot or too heavy for the luckless Cockney, who, when not sipping his claret, was faithfully recording in his tablet the mems. for a very brilliant and very original work on Ireland.

"'Fine country—splendid country—glorious people—gifted—brave—intelligent—but not happy—alas! Mr. Macnamara, not happy. But we don't know you, gentlemen—we don't indeed; at the other side of the Channel our notions regarding you are far, very far from just.'

"'I hope and trust,' said old Burke, 'you'll help them to a better understanding ere long.'

"'Such, my dear sir, will be the proudest task of my life. The facts I have heard here this evening have made so profound an impression upon me, that I burn for the moment when I can make them known to the world at large. To think—just to think, that a portion of this beautiful island should be steeped in poverty—that the people not only live upon the mere potatoes, but are absolutely obliged to wear the skins for raiment, as Mr. Doolan has just mentioned to me.'

"'Which accounts for our cultivation of lumpers,' added Mr. Doolan, 'they being the largest species of the root, and best adapted for wearing apparel.'

"'I should deem myself culpable, indeed I should, did I not inform my countrymen upon the real condition of this great country.'

"'Why, after your great opportunities for judging,' said Phil, 'you ought to speak out. You've seen us in a way, I may fairly affirm, few Englishmen have, and heard more.'

"'That's it—that's the very thing, Mr. Macnamara. I've looked at you more closely, I've watched you more narrowly, I've witnessed what the French call your "*vie intime*."'

"'Bedad you have,' said old Burke,

with a grin, 'and profited by it to the utmost.'

"'I've been a spectator of your election contests—I've partaken of your hospitality—I've witnessed your popular and national sports—I've been present at your weddings, your fairs, your wakes; but no, I was forgetting, I never saw a wake.'

"'Never saw a wake?' repeated each of the company in turn, as though the gentleman was uttering a sentiment of very dubious veracity.

"'Never,' said Mr. Prettyman, rather abashed at this proof of his incapacity to instruct his English friends upon *all* matters of Irish interest.

"'Well, then,' said Macnamara, 'with a blessing, we'll show you one. Lord forbid that we shouldn't do the honors of our poor country to an intelligent foreigner when he's good enough to come amongst us.'

"'Peter,' said he, turning to the servant behind him, 'who's dead hereabouts?'

"'Sorra one, yer honor. Since the scrimmage at Portumna the place is peaceable.'

"'Who died lately in the neighborhood?'

"'The widow Macbride, yer honor.'

"'Couldn't they take her up again, Peter? My friend here never saw a wake.'

"'I'm afeerd not, for it was the boys roasted her, and she wouldn't be a decent corpse for to show a stranger,' said Peter, in a whisper.

"Mr. Prettyman shuddered at these peaceful indications of the neighborhood, and said nothing.

"'Well, then, Peter, tell Jemmy Divine to take the old musket in my bedroom, and go over to the Clunagh bog—he can't go wrong—there's twelve families there that never pay a halfpenny rent, and *when it's done*, let him give notice to the neighborhood, and we'll have a rousing wake.'

"'You don't mean, Mr. Macnamara—you don't mean to say——,' stammered out the Cockney, with a face like a ghost.

"'I only mean to say,' said Phil, laughing, 'that you're keeping the decanter very long at your right hand.'

"Burke contrived to interpose before the Englishman could ask any explanation of what he had just heard—and for some minutes he could only wait in impatient anxiety—when a loud report of a gun close beside the house attracted the attention of the guests; the next moment old Peter entered, his face radiant with smiles.

"'Well, what's that?' said Macnamara.

"'"Twas Jimmy, yer honor. As the evening was rainy, he said he'd take one of the neighbors, and he hadn't to go far, for Andy Moore was going home, and he brought him down at once.'

"'Did he shoot him?' said Mr. Prettyman, while cold perspiration broke over his forehead. 'Did he murder the man?'

"'Sorra murder,' said Peter, disdainfully; 'but why wouldn't he shoot him when the master bid him?'

"I needn't tell you more, Charley; but in ten minutes after, feigning some excuse to leave the room, the terrified Cockney took flight, and, offering twenty guineas for a horse to convey him to Athlone, he left Galway, fully convinced that they don't yet know us on the other side of the Channel."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE JOURNEY.

THE election concluded—the turmoil and excitement of the contest over—all was fast resuming its accustomed routine around us, when one morning my uncle informed me that I was at length to leave my native county, and enter upon the great world as a student of Trinity College, Dublin. Although long since in expectation of this eventful change, it was with no slight feeling of emotion I contemplated the step, which, removing me at once from all my early friends and associations, was to surround me with new companions and new influences, and place before me very different objects of ambition from those I had hitherto been regarding.

My destiny had been long ago decided; the army had had its share of the family, who brought little more back with them from the wars than a short allowance of members and shattered constitutions; the navy had proved, on more than one occasion, that the fate of the O'Malleys did not incline to hanging; so that, in Irish estimation, but one alternative remained, and that was the bar. Besides, as my uncle remarked, with great truth and foresight, "Charley will be tolerably independent of the public, at all events; for, even if they never send him a brief, there's law enough in the family to last *his* time"—a rather novel reason, by-the-by, for making a man a lawyer, and which induced Sir Harry, with his usual clearness, to observe to me,

"Upon my conscience, boy, you are in luck. If there had been a Bible in the

house, I firmly believe he'd have made you a parson."

Considine alone, of all my uncle's advisers, did not concur in this determination respecting me. He set forth, with an eloquence that certainly converted *me*, that my head was better calculated for bearing hard knocks than unraveling knotty points; that a shako would become it infinitely better than a wig; and declared, roundly, that a boy who began so well, and had such very pretty notions about shooting, was positively thrown away in the Four Courts. My uncle, however, was firm, and, as old Sir Harry supported him, the day was decided against us, Considine murmuring, as he left the room, something that did not seem quite a brilliant anticipation of the success awaiting me in my legal career. As for myself, though only a silent spectator of the debate, all my wishes were with the Count. From my earliest boyhood a military life had been my strongest desire; the roll of the drum and the shrill fife that played through the little village, with its ragged troop of recruits following, had charms for me I cannot describe; and had a choice been allowed me, I would infinitely rather have been a sergeant in the dragoons than one of his Majesty's learned in the law. If, then, such had been the cherished feeling of many a year, how much more strongly were my aspirations heightened by the events of the last few days. The tone of superiority I had witnessed in Hammersley, whose conduct to me at parting had placed him high in my esteem—the quiet contempt of civilians, implied in a thousand sly ways—the exalted estimate of his own profession, at once wounded my pride and stimulated my ambition; and, lastly, more than all, the avowed preference that Lucy Dashwood evinced for a military life, were stronger allies than my own conviction needed to make me long for the army. So completely did the thought possess me, that I felt, if I were not a soldier, I cared not what became of me. Life had no other object of ambition for me than military renown, no other success for which I cared to struggle, or would value when obtained. "*Aut Cæsar aut nullus,*" thought I; and when my uncle determined I should be a lawyer, I neither murmured nor objected, but hugged myself in the prophecy of Considine, that hinted pretty broadly, "the devil a stupider fellow ever opened a brief; but he'd have made a slashing light dragoon."

The preliminaries were not long in arranging. It was settled that I should be immediately dispatched to Dublin to the care of Doctor Mooney, then a junior fellow in the University, who would take me into his especial charge; while Sir Harry was to furnish me with a letter to his old friend, Doctor Barret, whose advice and assistance he estimated at a very high price. Provided with such documents, I was informed that the gates of knowledge were more than half ajar for me, without an effort upon my part. One only portion of all the arrangements I heard with anything like pleasure; it was decided that my man Mickey was to accompany me to Dublin, and remain with me during my stay.

It was upon a clear, sharp morning in January, of the year 18—, that I took my place upon the box-seat of the old Galway mail, and set out on my journey. My heart was depressed and my spirits were miserably low. I had all that feeling of sadness which leave-taking inspires, and no sustaining prospect to cheer me in the distance. For the first time in my life, I had seen a tear glisten in my poor uncle's eye, and heard his voice falter as he said, "Farewell!" Notwithstanding the difference of age, we had been perfectly companions together; and, as I thought now over all the thousand kindnesses and affectionate instances of his love I had received, my heart gave way, and the tears coursed slowly down my cheeks. I turned to give one last look at the tall chimneys and the old woods, my earliest friends; but a turn of the road had shut out the prospect, and thus I took my leave of Galway.

My friend Mickey, who sat behind with the guard, participated but little in my feelings of regret. The potatoes in the metropolis could scarcely be as wet as the lumpers in Scariff; he had heard that whisky was not dearer, and looked forward to the other delights of the capital with a longing heart. Meanwhile, resolved that no portion of his career should be lost, he was lightening the road by anecdote and song, and held an audience of four people, a very crusty-looking old guard included, in roars of laughter. Mike had contrived, with his usual *savoir faire*, to make himself very agreeable to an extremely pretty-looking country girl, around whose waist he had most lovingly passed his arm, under pretense of keeping her from falling, and to whom, in the midst of all his attentions to the party at large, he devoted himself considerably, pressing his suit with all the aid of his native minstrelsy.

"Hould me tight, Miss Matilda, dear."

"My name's Mary Brady, av ye plase."

"Ay, and I do plase.

"Oh, Mary Brady, you are my darlin',
You are my looking-glass, from night till morning;
I'd rayther have ye without one farthen,
Nor Shusey Gallagher and her house and garden.

May I never av I wouldn't, then; and ye needn't be laughing."

"Is his honor at home?"

This speech was addressed to a gaping country fellow, that leaned on his spade to see the coach pass.

"Is his honor at home? I've something for him from Mr. Davern."

Mickey well knew that few western gentlemen were without constant intercourse with the Athlone attorney. The poor countryman accordingly hastened through the fence, and pursued the coach with all speed for above a mile, Mike pretending all the time to be in the greatest anxiety for his overtaking them; until at last, as he stopped in despair, a hearty roar of laughter told him that, in Mickey's *parlance*, he was "sould."

"Taste it, my dear; devil a harm it'll do ye; it never paid the king sixpence."

Here he filled a little horn vessel from a black bottle he carried, accompanying the action with a song, the air to which, if any of my readers feel disposed to sing it, I may observe bore a resemblance to the well-known "A Fig for St. Denis of France."

"POTTEEN, GOOD LUCK TO YE, DEAR.

"Av I was a monarch in state,
Like Romulus or Julius Caysar,
With the best of fine victuals to eat,
And drink like great Nebuchadnezzar,
A rasher of bacon I'd have,
And potatoes the finest was seen, sir;
And for drink, it's no claret I'd crave,
But a keg of ould Mullens' potteen, sir,
With the smell of the smoke on it still.

"They talk of the Romans of ould,
Whom they say in their own times was frisky;
But trust me, to keep out the cowld,
The Romans at home here like whisky.
Sure it warms both the head and the heart,
It's the soul of all readin' and writin',
It teaches both science and art,
And disposes for love or for fightin'.
Oh, potteen, good luck to ye, dear."

This very classic production, and the black bottle which accompanied it, completely established the singer's pre-eminence in the company; and I heard sundry sounds resembling drinking, with frequent good wishes to the provider of the feast. "Long life to ye, Mr. Free," "Your health and inclinations, Mr. Free," etc.; to which Mr. Free responded by drinking those of the company, "av they were vartuous." The amicable relations thus happily established, promised a very lasting reign, and would, doubtless, have enjoyed such, had not a slight incident occurred, which for a brief season interrupted them.

At the village where we stopped to breakfast, three very venerable figures presented themselves for places in the inside of the coach: they were habited in black coats, breeches, and gaiters, wore hats of a very ecclesiastic breadth in their brim, and had altogether the peculiar air and bearing which distinguishes their calling, being no less than three Roman Catholic prelates on their way to Dublin to attend a convocation. While Mickey and his friends, with the ready tact which every low Irishman possesses, immediately perceived who and what these worshipful individuals were, another traveler, who had just assumed his place on the outside, participated but little in the feelings of reverence so manifestly displayed, but gave a sneer of a very ominous kind, as the skirt of the last black coat disappeared within the coach. This latter individual was a short, thick-set, bandy-legged man, of about fifty, with an enormous nose, which, whatever its habitual coloring, on the morning in question was of a brilliant purple. He wore a blue coat, with bright buttons, upon which some letters were inscribed, and around his neck was fastened a ribbon of the same color, to which a medal was attached. This he displayed with something of ostentation, whenever an opportunity occurred, and seemed altogether a person who possessed a most satisfactory impression of his own importance. In fact, had not this feeling been participated in by others, Mr. Billy Crow would never have been deputed by No. 13,476 to carry their warrant down to the west country, and establish the nucleus of an Orange Lodge in the town of Foxleigh; such being, in brief, the reason why he, a very well known manufacturer of "leather continuations" in Dublin, had ventured upon the perilous journey from which he was now returning. Billy was going on his way to town rejoicing, for he had had most brilliant success; the brethren had feasted and fêted him; he had made several splendid orations, with the usual number of prophecies about the speedy downfall of Romanism; the inevitable return of Protestant ascendancy; the pleasing prospect that, with increased effort and improved organization, they should soon be able to have everything their own

way, and clear the Green Isle of the horrible vermin St. Patrick forgot when banishing the others; and that, if Daniel O'Connell (whom might the Lord confound!) could only be hanged, and Sir Harcourt Lees made Primate of all Ireland, there were still some hopes of peace and prosperity to the country.

Mr. Crow had no sooner assumed his place upon the coach than he saw that he was in the camp of the enemy. Happily for all parties, indeed, in Ireland, political differences have so completely stamped the externals of each party, that he must be a man of small penetration who cannot, in the first five minutes he is thrown among strangers, calculate with considerable certainty, whether it will be more conducive to his happiness to sing "Croppies Lie Down," or "The Battle of Ross." As for Billy Crow, long life to him! you might as well attempt to pass a turkey upon M. Audubon for a giraffe, as endeavor to impose a Papist upon him for a true follower of King William. He could have given you more generic distinctions to guide you in the decision, than ever did Cuvier to designate an antediluvian mammoth; so that no sooner had he seated himself upon the coach, than he buttoned up his great coat, stuck his hands firmly in his side pockets, pursed up his lips, and looked altogether like a man that, feeling himself out of his element, resolves to "bide his time" in patience, until chance may throw him among more congenial associates. Mickey Free, who was himself no mean proficient in reading a character, at one glance saw his man and began hammering his brains to see if he could not overreach him. The small portmanteau which contained Billy's wardrobe bore the conspicuous announcement of his name; and, as Mickey could read, this was one important step already gained.

He accordingly took the first opportunity of seating himself beside him, and opened the conversation by some very polite observation upon the other's wearing apparel, which is always, in the west, considered a piece of very courteous attention. By degrees the dialogue prospered, and Mickey began to make some very important revelations about himself and his master, intimating that the "state of the country" was such that a man of his way of thinking had no peace or quiet in it.

"That's him there, forenent ye," said Mickey, "and a better Protestant never hated mass. Ye understand."

"What!" said Billy, unbuttoning the collar of his coat to get a fairer view at his companion; "why, I thought you were—"

Here he made some resemblance of the usual manner of blessing oneself.

"Me, devil a more nor yourself, Mr. Crow."

"Why, do you know me, too?"

"Troth, more knows you than you think."

Billy looked very much puzzled at all this; at last he said:

"And ye tell me that your master there's the right sort?"

"Thrue blue," said Mike, with a wink, "and so is his uncles."

"And where are they, when they are at home?"

"In Galway, no less; but they're here now."

"Where?"

"Here."

At these words he gave a knock of his heel to the coach, as if to intimate their "whereabouts."

"You don't mean in the coach—do ye?"

"To be sure I do; and troth, you can't know much of the west, av ye don't know the three Mr. Trenches of Tallybash! them's they."

"You don't say so?"

"Faix, but I do."

"May I never drink the 12th of July if I didn't think they were priests."

"Priests!" said Mickey, in a roar of laughter—"priests!"

"Just priests."

"Be-gorra, though, ye had better keep that to yourself, for they're not the men to have that same said to them."

"Of course, I wouldn't offend them," said Mr. Crow; "faith, it's not me would cast reflections upon such real out-and-outers as they are. And where are they going now?"

"To Dublin straight; there's to be a grand lodge next week; but sure Mr. Crow knows better than me."

Billy after this became silent. A moody reverie seemed to steal over him, and he was evidently displeased with himself for his want of tact in not discovering the three Mr. Trenches of Tallybash, though he only caught sight of their backs.

Mickey Free interrupted not the frame of mind in which he saw conviction was slowly working its way, but, by gently humming in an under tone the loyal melody of "Croppies Lie Down," fanned the flame he had so dexterously kindled. At length, they reached the small town of Kinnegad. While the coach changed

horses, Mr. Crow lost not a moment in descending from the top, and, rushing into the little inn, disappeared for a few moments. When he again issued forth, he carried a smoking tumbler of whisky punch, which he continued to stir with a spoon. As he approached the coach-door he tapped gently with his knuckles, upon which the reverend prelate of Maronia or Mesopotamia, I forget which, inquired what he wanted.

"I ask your pardon, gentlemen," said Billy, "but I thought I'd make bold to ask you to take something warm this cold day."

"Many thanks, my good friend; but we never do," said a bland voice from within.

"I understand," said Billy, with a sly wink: "but there are circumstances now and then—and one might for the honor of the cause, you know. Just put it to your lips, won't you?"

"Excuse me," said a very rosy-cheeked little prelate, "but nothing stronger than water—"

"Botheration," thought Billy, as he regarded the speaker's nose. "But I thought," said he, aloud, "that you would not refuse this."

Here he made a peculiar manifestation in the air, which, whatever respect and reverence it might carry to the honest brethren of 13,476, seemed only to increase the wonder and astonishment of the bishops.

"What does he mean?" said one.

"Is he mad?" said another.

"Tear and ages," said Mr. Crow, getting quite impatient at the slowness of his friends' perception, "tear and ages, I'm one of yourselves."

"One of us," said the three in chorus—"one of us?"

"Ay, to be sure"—here he took a long pull at the punch—"to be sure I am; here's 'No surrender,' your souls! whoop"—a loud yell accompanying the toast as he drank it.

"Do you mean to insult us?" said Father P——. "Guard, take the fellow."

"Are we to be outraged in this manner?" chorused the priests.

"'July the 1st, in Oldbridge town,'" sang Billy, "and here it is, 'The glorious, pious, and immortal memory of the great and good—'"

"Guard! Where is the guard?"

"'And good King William, that saved us from Popery—"

"Coachman!—guard!' screamed Father ——.

"'Brass money—'"

"Policeman! policeman!" shouted the priests.

"'Brass money and wooden shoes;' devil may care who hears me," said Billy, who, supposing that the three Mr. Trenches were skulking the avowal of their principles, resolved to assert the pre-eminence of the great cause single-handed and alone.

"'Here's the Pope in the pillory, and the devil pelting him with priests.'"

At these words a kick from behind apprised the loyal champion that a very ragged auditory, who for some time past had not well understood the gist of his eloquence, had at length comprehended enough to be angry. *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*, certainly, in an Irish row. "The merest urchin may light the train; one handful of mud often ignites a shindy that ends in a most bloody battle." And here, no sooner did the *vis a tergo* impel Billy forward than a severe rap of a closed fist in the eye drove him back, and in one instant he became the center to a periphery of kicks, cuffs, pullings, and haulings, that left the poor Deputy-Grand not only orange, but blue.

He fought manfully, but numbers carried the day; and, when the coach drove off, which it did at last without him, the last thing visible to the outsides was the figure of Mr. Crow, whose hat, minus the crown, had been driven over his head down upon his neck, where it remained like a dress cravat, buffeting a mob of ragged vagabonds, who had so completely metamorphosed the unfortunate man with mud and bruises, that a committee of the grand lodge might actually have been unable to identify him.

As for Mickey and his friends behind, their mirth knew no bounds; and, except the respectable insides, there was not an individual about the coach who ceased to think of and laugh at the incident till we arrived in Dublin, and drew up at the Hibernian, in Dawson street.

CHAPTER XIV.

DUBLIN.

No sooner had I arrived in Dublin than my first care was to present myself to Dr. Mooney, by whom I was received in the most cordial manner. In fact, in my utter ignorance of such persons, I had imagined a College fellow to be a character necessarily severe and unbending; and, as the only two very great people I had ever seen

in my life were the Archbishop of Tuam, and the Chief Baron, when on circuit, I pictured to myself that a University fellow was, in all probability, a cross between the two, and feared him accordingly.

The Doctor read over my uncle's letter attentively, invited me to partake of his breakfast, and then entered upon something like an account of the life before me, for which Sir Harry Boyle had, however, in some degree prepared me.

"Your uncle, I find, wishes you to live in college; perhaps it is better too; so that I must look out for chambers for you. Let me see: it will be rather difficult, just now, to find them." Here he fell for some moments into a musing fit, and merely muttered a few broken sentences, as, "To be sure, if other chambers could be had—but then—and, after all, perhaps, as he is young—besides, Frank will certainly be expelled before long, and then he will have them all to himself. I say, O'Malley, I believe I must quarter you for the present with a rather wild companion; but as your uncle says you're a prudent fellow"—here he smiled very much, as if my uncle had not said any such thing—"why, you must only take the better care of yourself, until we can make some better arrangement. My pupil, Frank Webber, is at this moment in want of a 'chum,' as the phrase is, his last three having only been domesticated with him for as many weeks; so that, until we find you a more quiet resting-place, you may take up your abode with him."

During breakfast, the Doctor proceeded to inform me that my destined companion was a young man of excellent family and good fortune, who, with very considerable talents and acquirements, preferred a life of rackety and careless dissipation to prospects of great success in public life, which his connection and family might have secured for him; that he had been originally entered at Oxford, which he was obliged to leave; then tried Cambridge, from which he escaped expulsion by being rusticated, that is, having incurred a sentence of temporary banishment; and, lastly, was endeavoring, with what he himself believed to be a total reformation, to stumble on to a degree in the "silent sister."

"This is his third year," said the Doctor, "and he is only a freshman, having lost every examination, with abilities enough to sweep the University of its prizes. But come over now, and I'll present you to him."

I followed him down-stairs, across the court, to an angle of the old square, where, up the first floor left, to use the college direction, stood the name of Mr. Webber, a large No. 2 being conspicuously painted in the middle of the door, and not over it, as is usually the custom. As we reached the spot, the observations of my companion were lost to me in the tremendous noise and uproar that resounded from within. It seemed as if a number of people were fighting, pretty much as a banditti in a melodrama do, with considerable more of confusion than requisite; a fiddle and a French horn also lent their assistance to shouts and cries, which, to say the best, were not exactly the aids to study I expected in such a place.

Three times was the bell pulled, with a vigor that threatened its downfall, when, at last, as the jingle of it rose above all other noises, suddenly all became hushed and still; a momentary pause succeeded, and the door was opened by a very respectable-looking servant, who, recognizing the Doctor, at once introduced us into the apartment where Mr. Webber was sitting.

In a large and very handsomely furnished room, where Brussels carpeting and softly-cushioned sofas contrasted strangely with the meagre and comfortless chambers of the Doctor, sat a young man at a small breakfast-table, beside the fire. He was attired in a silk dressing-gown and black velvet slippers, and supported his forehead upon a hand of most lady-like whiteness, whose fingers were absolutely covered with rings of great beauty and price. His long silky brown hair fell in rich profusion upon the back of his neck, and over his arm, and the whole air and attitude was one which a painter might have copied. So intent was he upon the volume before him, that he never raised his head at our approach, but continued to read aloud, totally unaware of our presence.

"Dr. Mooney, sir," said the servant.

"*Ton dapamey bominos, prosephe, crione Agamemnon,*" repeated the student, in an ecstacy, and not paying the slightest attention to the announcement.

"Dr. Mooney, sir," repeated the servant in a louder tone, while the Doctor looked around on every side for an explanation of the late uproar, with a face of the most puzzled astonishment.

"*Be dakiown para thina dolekoskion enkos,*" said Mr. Webber, finishing a cup of coffee at a draught.

"Well, Webber, hard at work I see," said the Doctor.

"Ah, Doctor, I beg pardon! Have you been long here?" said the most soft and insinuating voice, while the speaker passed

his taper fingers across his brow, as if to dissipate the traces of deep thought and study.

While the doctor presented me to my future companion, I could perceive, in the restless and searching look he threw around, that the fracas he had so lately heard was still an unexplained and *vexata questio* in his mind.

"May I offer you a cup of coffee, Mr. O'Malley?" said the youth, with an air of almost timid bashfulness. "The Doctor, I know, breakfasts at a very early hour."

"I say, Webber," said the Doctor, who could no longer restrain his curiosity, "what an awful row I heard here as I came up to the door. I thought Bedlam was broke loose. What could it have been?"

"Ah, you heard it too, sir," said Mr. Webber, smiling most benignly.

"Hear it? to be sure I did. O'Malley and I could not hear ourselves talking with the uproar."

"Yes, indeed, it is very provoking; but, then, what's to be done? One can't complain, under the circumstances."

"Why, what do you mean?" said Mooney, anxiously.

"Nothing, sir, nothing. I'd much rather you'd not ask me; for, after all, I'll change my chambers."

"But why? Explain this at once. I insist upon it."

"Can I depend upon the discretion of your young friend?" said Mr. Webber, gravely.

"Perfectly," said the Doctor, now wound up to the greatest anxiety to learn a secret.

"And you'll promise not to mention the thing except among your friends?"

"I do," said the Doctor.

"Well, then," said he, in a low and confident whisper, "it's the Dean."

"The Dean!" said Mooney, with a start. "The Dean! Why, how can it be the Dean?"

"Too true," said Mr. Webber, making a sign of drinking; "too true, Doctor. And then, the moment he is so, he begins smashing the furniture. Never was anything heard like it. As for me, as I am now become a reading man, I must go elsewhere."

Now, it so chanced that the worthy Dean, who albeit a man of most abstemious habits, possessed a nose which, in color and development, was a most unfortunate witness to call to character, and as Mooney heard Webber narrate circumstantially the frightful excesses of the great functionary, I saw that something like conviction was stealing over him.

"You'll, of course, never speak of this except to your most intimate friends," said Webber.

"Of course not," said the Doctor, as he shook his hand warmly, and prepared to leave the room. "O'Malley, I leave you here," said he; "Webber and you can talk over your arrangements."

Webber followed the Doctor to the door, whispered something in his ear, to which the other replied, "Very well, I will write; but if your father sends the money, I must insist—" The rest was lost in protestations and professions of the most fervent kind, amid which the door was shut, and Mr. Webber returned to the room.

Short as was the interspace from the door without to the room within, it was still ample enough to effect a very thorough and remarkable change in the whole external appearance of Mr. Frank Webber; for, scarcely had the oaken panel shut out the Doctor, when he appeared no longer the shy, timid, and silvery-toned gentleman of five minutes before, but, dashing boldly forward, he seized a key-bugle that lay hid beneath a sofa-cushion, and blew a tremendous blast.

"Come forth, ye demons of the lower world," said he, drawing a cloth from a large table, and discovering the figures of three young men, coiled up beneath. "Come forth, and fear not, most timorous freshmen that ye are," said he, unlocking a pantry, and liberating two others. "Gentlemen, let me introduce to your acquaintance Mr. O'Malley. My chum, gentlemen. Mr. O'Malley, this is Harry Nesbitt, who has been in college since the days of old Perpendicular, and numbers more cautions than any man who ever had his name on the books. Here is my particular friend, Cecil Cavendish, the only man who could ever devil kidneys. Captain Power, Mr. O'Malley; a dashing dragoon, as you see; aide-de-camp to his Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant, and love-maker-general to Merrion square, West. These," said he, pointing to the late denizens of the pantry, "are jibs, whose names are neither known to the proctor nor the police-office; but, with due regard to their education and morals, we don't despair."

"By no means," said Power; "but come, let us resume our game." At these words he took a folio atlas of maps from a small table, and displayed beneath a pack of cards, dealt as if for whist. The two gentlemen to whom I was introduced by name, returned to their places; the unknown

two put on their boxing gloves, and all resumed the hilarity which Dr. Mooney's advent had so suddenly interrupted.

"Where's Moore?" said Webber, as he once more seated himself at his breakfast.

"Making a spatch-cock, sir," said the servant.

At the same instant, a little, dapper, jovial-looking personage appeared with the dish in question.

"Mr. O'Malley, Mr. Moore, the gentleman who, by repeated remonstrances to the board, has succeeded in getting eatable food for the inhabitants of this penitentiary, and has the honored reputation of reforming the commons of college."

"Anything to Godfrey O'Malley, may I ask, sir?" said Moore.

"His nephew," I replied.

"Which of you winged the gentleman the other day for not passing the decanter, or something of that sort?"

"If you mean the affair with Mr. Bodkin, it was I."

"Glorious, that; begad, I thought you were one of us. I say, Power, it was he pinked Bodkin."

"Ah, indeed," said Power, not turning his head from his game; "a pretty shot, I heard—two by honors—and hit him fairly—the odd trick. Hammersley mentioned the thing to me."

"Oh! is he in town?" said I.

"No; he sailed for Portsmouth yesterday. He is to join the 11th—game—I say, Webber, you've lost the rubber."

"Double or quit, and a dinner at Dunleary," said Webber. "We must show O'Malley—confound the Mister—something of the place."

"Agreed."

The whist was resumed; the boxers, now refreshed by a leg of the spatch-cock, returned to their gloves, Mr. Moore took up his violin, Mr. Webber his French horn, and I was left the only unemployed man in the company.

"I say, Power, you'd better bring the drag over here for us; we can all go down together."

"I must inform you," said Cavendish, "that, thanks to your philanthropic efforts of last night, the passage from Grafton street to Stephen's green is impracticable." A tremendous roar of laughter followed this announcement; and, though at the time the cause was unknown to me, I may as well mention it here, as I subsequently learned it from my companions.

Among the many peculiar tastes which distinguished Mr. Francis Webber, was an extraordinary fancy for street-begging; he had, over and over, won large sums upon his success in that difficult walk; and so perfect were his disguises, both of dress, voice, and manner, that he actually, at one time, succeeded in obtaining charity from his very opponent in the wager. He wrote ballads with the greatest facility, and sang them with infinite pathos and humor; and the old woman at the corner of College green was certain of an audience when the severity of the night would leave all other minstrelsy deserted. As these feats of *jongleric* usually terminated in a row, it was a most amusing part of the transaction to see the singer's part taken by the mob against the college men, who, growing impatient to carry him off to supper somewhere, would invariably be obliged to have a fight for the booty.

Now, it chanced that a few evenings before, Mr. Webber was returning with a pocket well lined with copper, from a musical *réunion* he had held at the corner of York street, when the idea struck him to stop at the end of Grafton street, where a huge stone grating at that time exhibited, perhaps it exhibits still, the descent to one of the great main sewers of the city.

The light was shining brightly from a pastrycook's shop, and showed the large bars of stone between which the muddy water was rushing rapidly down, and plashing in the torrent that ran boisterously several feet beneath.

To stop in the street of any crowded city is, under any circumstances, an invitation to others to do likewise, which is rarely unaccepted; but when in addition to this, you stand fixedly in one spot, and regard with stern intensity any object near you, the chances are ten to one that you have several companions in your curiosity before a minute expires.

Now, Webber, who had at first stood still, without any peculiar thought in view, no sooner perceived that he was joined by others, than the idea of making something out of it immediately occurred to him.

"What is it, agra?" inquired an old woman, very much in his own style of dress, pulling at the hood of his cloak.

"And can't you see for yourself, darling?" replied he, sharply, as he knelt down, and looked most intensely at the sewer.

"Are ye long there, avick?" inquired he of an imaginary individual below, and then waiting as if for a reply, said, "Two hours! Blessed Virgin! he's two hours in the drain!"

By his time the crowd had reached entirely across the street, and the crushing

and squeezing to get near the important spot was awful.

"Where did he come from?" "Who is he?" "How did he get there?" were questions on every side, and various surmises were afloat, till Webber, rising from his knees, said, in a mysterious whisper to those nearest him, "He's made his escape to-night out o' Newgate by the big drain, and lost his way; he was looking for the Liffey, and took the wrong turn."

To an Irish mob, what appeal could equal this? A culprit, at any time, has his claim upon their sympathy; but let him be caught in the very act of cheating the authorities and evading the law, and his popularity knows no bounds. Webber knew this well, and, as the mob thickened around him, sustained an imaginary conversation that Savage Landor might have envied, imparting now and then such hints concerning the runaway as raised their interest to the highest pitch, and fifty different versions were related on all sides—of the crime he was guilty—the sentence that was passed on him—and the day he was to suffer.

"Do you see the light, dear?" said Webber, as some ingeniously benevolent individual had lowered down a candle with a string—"do ye see the light? Oh! he's fainted, the creature." A cry of horror from the crowd burst forth at these words, followed by a universal shout of "Break open the street."

Pickaxes, shovels, spades, and crowbars seemed absolutely the walking accompaniments of the crowd, so suddenly did they appear upon the field of action, and the work of exhumation was begun with a vigor that speedily covered nearly half of the street with mud and paving-stones. Parties relieved each other at the task, and, ere half an hour, a hole capable of containing a mail coach was yawning in one of the most frequented thoroughfares of Dublin. Meanwhile, as no appearance of the culprit could be had, dreadful conjectures as to his fate began to gain ground. By this time the authorities had received intimation of what was going forward, and attempted to disperse the crowd; but Webber, who still continued to conduct the prosecution, called on them to resist the police, and save the poor creature. And now began a most terrific fray; the stones, forming a ready weapon, were hurled at the unprepared constables, who, on their side, fought manfully, but against superior numbers; so that, at last, it was only by the aid of a military force the mob could be dispersed, and a riot, which had assumed a very serious character, got under. Meanwhile, Webber had reached his chambers, changed his costume, and was relating over a supper-table the narrative of his philanthropy to a very admiring circle of his friends.

Such was my chum, Frank Webber; and as this was the first anecdote I had heard of him, I relate it here that my readers may be in possession of the grounds upon which my opinion of that celebrated character was founded, while yet our acquaintance was in its infancy.

CHAPTER XV.

CAPTAIN POWER.

WITHIN a few weeks after my arrival in town I had become a matriculated student of the University, and the possessor of chambers within its walls, in conjunction with the sage and prudent gentleman I have introduced to my readers in the last chapter. Had my intentions on entering college been of the most studious and regular kind, the companion into whose society I was then immediately thrown would have quickly dissipated them. He voted morning chapels a bore, Greek lectures a humbug, examinations a farce, and pronounced the statute-book, with its attendant train of fines and punishment, an "unclean thing." With all my country habits and predilections fresh upon me, that I was an easily won disciple to his code need not be wondered at, and, indeed, ere many days had passed over, my thorough indifference to all college rules and regulations had given me a high place in the esteem of Webber and his friends. As for myself, I was most agreeably surprised to find that what I had looked forward to as a very melancholy banishment, was likely to prove a most agreeable sojourn. Under Webber's directions, there was no hour of the day that hung heavily upon our hands. We rose about eleven, and breakfasted; after which succeeded fencing, sparring, billiards, or tennis in the park; about three, got on horseback, and either cantered in the Phœnix or about the squares till visiting time; after which, made our calls, and then dressed for dinner, which we never thought of taking at commons, but had it from Morrison's, we both being reported sick in the Dean's list, and thereby exempt from the routine fare of the fellows' table. In the evening our occupations became still

more pressing; there were balls, suppers, whist parties, rows at the theatre, shindies in the street, deviled drumsticks at Hayes', select oyster parties at the Carlingford; in fact, every known method of remaining up all night, and appearing both pale and penitent the following morning.

Webber had a large acquaintance in Dublin, and soon made me known to them all. Among others, the officers of the —th Light Dragoons, in which regiment Power was Captain, were his particular friends, and we had frequent invitations to dine at their mess. There it was first that military life presented itself to me in its most attractive, possible form, and heightened the passion I had already so strongly conceived for the army. Power, above all others, took my fancy. He was a gay, dashing-looking, handsome fellow of about eight-and-twenty, who had already seen some service, having joined while his regiment was in Portugal; was in heart and soul a soldier, and had that species of pride and enthusiasm in all that regarded a military career that form no small part of the charm in the character of a young officer.

I sat near him the second day we dined at the mess, and was much pleased at many slight attentions in his manner toward me.

"I called on you to-day, Mr. O'Malley," said he, "in company with a friend, who is most anxious to see you."

"Indeed," said I; "I did not hear of it."

"We left no cards either of us, as we were determined to make you out on another day; my companion has most urgent reasons for seeing you. I see you are puzzled," said he, "and, although I promised to keep his secret, I must blab: it was Sir George Dashwood was with me; he told us of your most romantic adventure in the west, and, faith, there is no doubt you saved the lady's life."

"Was she worth the trouble of it?" said the old major, whose conjugal experiences imparted a very crusty tone to the question.

"I think," said I, "I need only tell her name to convince you of it."

"Here's a bumper to her," said Power, filling his glass; "and every true man will follow my example."

When the hip, hipping which followed the toast was over, I found myself enjoying no small share of the attention of the party as the deliverer of Lucy Dashwood.

"Sir George is cudgeling his brain to show his gratitude to you," said Power.

"What a pity, for the sake of his peace of mind, that you're not in the army," said another; "it's so easy to show a man a delicate regard by a quick promotion."

"A devil of a pity for his own sake, too," said Power, again; "they're going to make a lawyer of as strapping a fellow as ever carried a saberdash."

"A lawyer!" cried out half a dozen together, pretty much with the same tone and emphasis as though he had said a twopenny postman—"the devil they are."

"Cut the service at once: you'll get no promotion in it," said the colonel; "a fellow with a black eye like you would look much better at the head of a squadron than a string of witnesses. Trust me, you'd shine more in conducting a picket than a prosecution."

"But if I can't?" said I.

"Then take my plan," said Power, "and make it cut *you*."

"Yours?" said two or three in a breath —"yours?"

"Ay, mine; did you never know that I was bred to the bar? Come, come, if it was only for O'Malley's use and benefit—as we say in the parchments—I must tell you the story."

The claret was pushed briskly round, chairs drawn up to fill any vacant spaces, and Power began his story.

"As I am not over long-winded, don't be scared at my beginning my history somewhat far back. I began life that most unlucky of all earthly contrivances for supplying casualties in case anything may befall the heir of the house—a species of domestic jury-mast, only lugged out in a gale of wind—a younger son. My brother Tom, a thick-skulled, pudding-headed, dog, that had no taste for anything save his dinner, took it into his wise head one morning that he would go into the army, and, although I had been originally destined for a soldier, no sooner was his choice made, than all regard for my taste and inclination was forgotten; and, as the family interest was only enough for one, it was decided that I should be put in what is called a 'learned profession,' and let push my fortune. 'Take your choice, Dick,' said my father, with a most benign smile—'take your choice, boy: will you be a lawyer, a parson, or a doctor?'

"Had he said, 'Will you be put in the stocks, the pillory, or publicly whipped?' I could not have looked more blank than at the question.

"As a decent Protestant, he should have grudged me to the church; as a philan-

thropist, he might have scrupled at making me a physician; but, as he had lost deeply by lawsuits, there looked something very like a lurking malice in sending me to the bar. Now, so far as I concurred with him, for having no gift for enduring either sermons or senna, I thought I'd make a bad administrator of either, and as I was ever regarded in the family as rather of a shrewd and quick turn, with a very natural taste for roguery, I began to believe he was right, and that nature intended me for the circuit.

"From the hour my vocation was pronounced, it had been happy for the family that they could have got rid of me. A certain ambition to rise in my profession laid hold on me, and I meditated all day and night how I was to get on. Every trick, every subtle invention to cheat the enemy that I could read of, I treasured up carefully, being fully impressed with the notion that roguery meant law, and equity was only another name for odd and even.

"My days were spent haranguing special juries of housemaids and laundresses, cross-examining the cook, charging the under butler, and passing sentence of death upon the pantry boy, who, I may add, was invariably hanged when the court rose.

"If the mutton were overdone, or the turkey burned, I drew up an indictment against old Margaret, and against the kitchen-maid as accomplice; and the family hungered while I harangued; and, in fact, into such disrepute did I bring the legal profession, by the score of annoyance of which I made it the vehicle, that my father got a kind of holy horror of law courts, judges, and crown solicitors, and absented himself from the assizes the same year, for which, being a high sheriff, he paid a penalty of 500*l.*

"The next day I was sent off in disgrace to Dublin to begin my career in college, and eat the usual quartos and folios of beef and mutton which qualify a man for the woolsack.

"Years rolled over, in which, after an ineffectual effort to get through college, the only examination I ever got being a jubilee for the king's birthday, I was at length called to the Irish bar, and saluted by my friends as Counselor Power. The whole thing was so like a joke to me, that it kept me in laughter for three terms, and, in fact, it was the best thing could happen me, for I had nothing else to do. The hall of the Four Courts was a very pleasant lounge, plenty of agreeable fellows that never earned sixpence, or were likely to do so. Then the circuits were so many country excursions, that supplied fun of one kind or other, but no profit. As for me, I was what was called a good junior: I knew how to look after the waiters, to inspect the decanting of the wine, and the airing of the claret, and was always attentive to the father of the circuit, the crossest old villain that ever was a king's counsel. These eminent qualities, and my being able to sing a song in honor of our own bar, were recommendations enough to make me a favorite, and I was one.

"Now the reputation I obtained was pleasant enough at first, but I began to wonder that I never got a brief. Somehow, if it rained civil bills or declarations, devil a one would fall upon my head, and it seemed as if the only object I had in life was to accompany the circuit, a kind of deputy-assistant commissary-general, never expected to come into action. To be sure, I was not alone in misfortune; there were several promising youths who cut great figures in Trinity, in the same predicament, the only difference being, that they attributed to jealousy what I suspected was forgetfulness, for I don't think a single attorney in Dublin knew one of us.

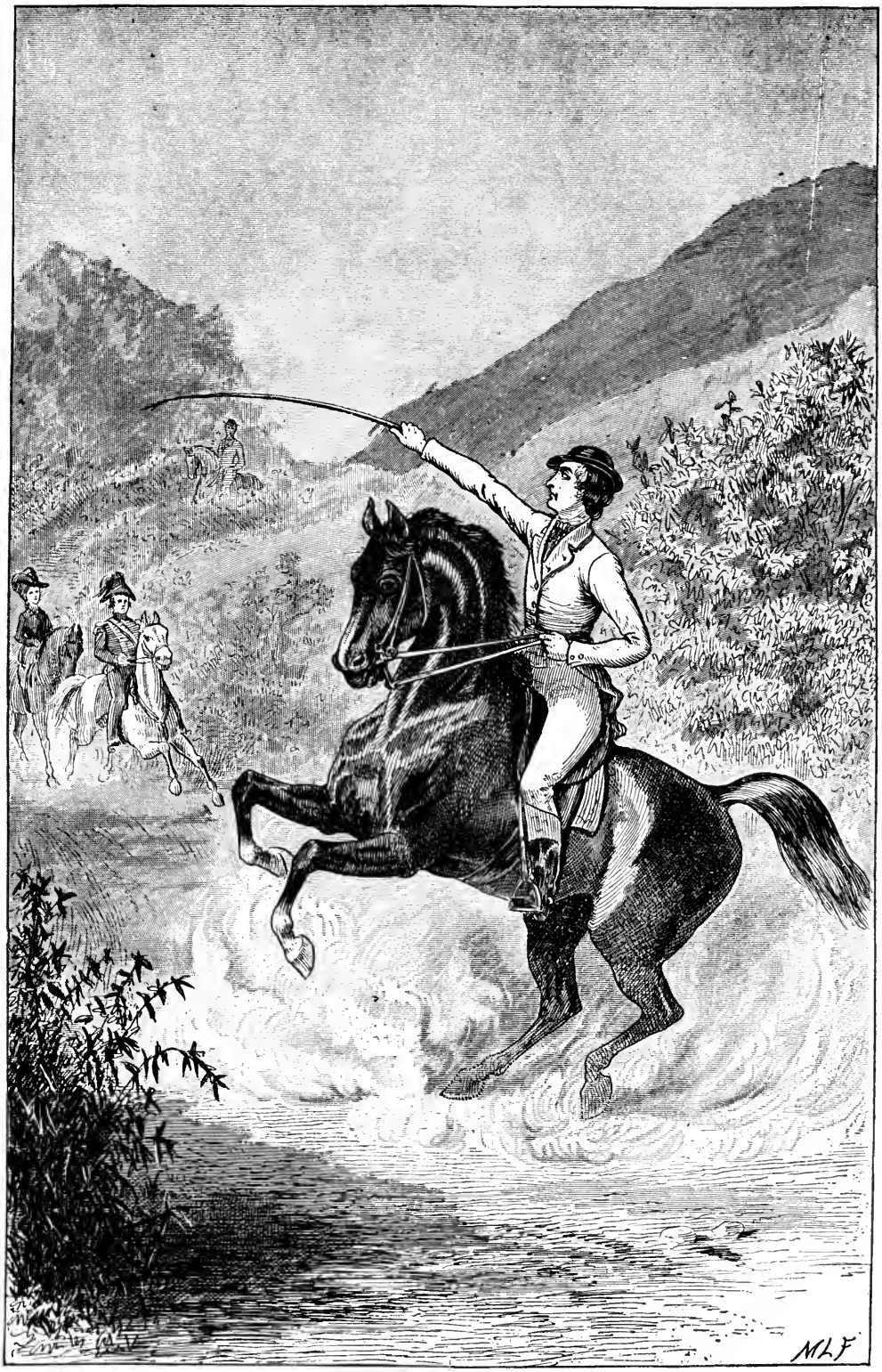
"Two years passed over, and then I walked the hall with a bag filled with newspapers, to look like briefs, and was regularly called by two or three criers from one court to the other. It never took; even when I used to seduce a country friend to visit the courts, and get him into an animated conversation in a corner between two pillars, devil a one would believe him to be a client, and I was fairly nonplussed.

"'How is a man ever to distinguish himself in such a walk as this?' was my eternal question to myself every morning as I put on my wig. 'My face is as well known here as Lord Manners's;' every one says, "How are you, Dick?" "How goes it, Power?" but except Holmes, that said one morning as he passed me, "Eh, always busy?" no one alludes to the possibility of my having anything to do.'

"'If I could only get a footing,' thought I, 'Lord, how I'd astonish them! As the song says,

> '"Perhaps a recruit
> Might chance to shoot
> Great General Buonaparte."

So,' said I to myself, 'I'll make these halls ring for it some day or other, if the occasion ever present itself.' But, faith, it seemed as if some cunning solicitor overheard me, and told his associates, for they avoided me like a leprosy. The home cir-



"STOP, SIR," SHOUTED SIR GEORGE. (P. 682.)

cuit I had adopted for some time past, for the very palpable reason that, being near town, it was least costly, and it had all the advantages of any other for me, in getting me nothing to do. Well, one morning we were in Philipstown; I was lying awake in bed, thinking how long it would be before I'd sum up resolution to cut the bar, where certainly my prospects were not the most cheering, when some one tapped gently at my door.

"'Come in,' said I.

"The waiter opened gently, and held out his hand with a large roll of paper tied round with a piece of red tape.

"'Counselor,' said he, 'handsel.'

"'What do you mean?' said I, jumping out of bed; 'what is it, you villain?'

"'A brief.'

"'A brief; so I see, but it's for Counselor Kinshella, below stairs.' That was the first name written on it.

"'Bethershin,' said he, 'Mr. M'Grath bid me give it to you carefully.'

"By this time I had opened the envelope, and read my own name at full length as junior counsel in the important case of Monaghan *v.* M'Shean, to be tried in the Record Court at Ballinasloe. 'That will do,' said I, flinging it on the bed with a careless air, as if it were a very every-day matter with me.

"'But counselor, darlin', give us a thrifle to dhrink your health with your first cause, and the Lord send you plenty of them.'

"'My first,' said I, with a smile of most ineffable compassion at his simplicity, 'I'm worn out with them; do you know, Peter, I was thinking seriously of leaving the bar, when you came into the room. Upon my conscience, it's in earnest I am.'

"Peter believed me, I think, for I saw him give a very peculiar look as he pocketed his half-crown and left the room.

"The door was scarcely closed when I gave way to the free transport of my ecstasy; there it lay at last, the long looked-for, long wished-for object of all my happiness, and, though I well knew that a junior counsel has about as much to do in the conducting of a case as a rusty handspike has in a naval engagement, yet I suffered not such thoughts to mar the current of my happiness. There was my name in conjunction with the two mighty leaders on the circuit, and though they each pocketed a hundred, I doubt very much if they received their briefs with one-half the satisfaction. My joy at length a little subdued, I opened the roll of paper and began carefully to peruse about fifty pages of narrative regarding a watercourse that once had turned a mill; but, from some reasons doubtless known to itself or its friends, would do so no longer, and thus set two respectable neighbors at loggerheads, and involved them in a record that had been now heard three several times.

"Quite forgetting the subordinate part I was destined to fill, I opened the case in a most flowery oration, in which I descanted upon the benefits accruing to mankind from water-communication since the days of Noah; remarked upon the antiquity of mills, and especially of millers, and consumed half an hour in a preamble of generalities that I hoped would make a very considerable impression upon the court. Just at the critical moment when I was about to enter more particularly into the case, three or four of the great unbriefed came rattling into my room, and broke in upon the oration.

"'I say, Power,' said one, 'come and have an hour's skating on the canal; the courts are filled, and we shan't be missed.'

"'Skate, my dear friend,' said I, in a most dolorous tone, 'out of the question; see, I am chained to a devilish knotty case with Kinshella and Mills.'

"'Confound your humbugging,' said another; 'that may do very well in Dublin for the attorneys, but not with us.'

"'I don't well understand you,' I replied; 'there is the brief. Hennesy expects me to report upon it this evening, and I'm so hurried.'

"Here a very chorus of laughing broke forth, in which, after several vain efforts to resist, I was forced to join, and kept it up with the others.

"When our mirth was over, my friends scrutinized the red tape-tied packet, and pronounced it a real brief, with a degree of surprise that certainly augured little for their familiarity with such objects of natural history.

"When they had left the room, I leisurely examined the all-important document, spreading it out before me upon the table, and surveying it as a newly anointed sovereign might be supposed to contemplate a map of his dominions.

"'At last,' said I to myself—'at last, and here is the footstep to the woolsack.' For more than an hour I sat motionless, my eyes fixed upon the outspread paper, lost in a very maze of reverie. The ambition which disappointments had crushed, and delay had chilled, came suddenly back, and all my day-dreams of legal success, my cherished aspirations after silk gowns, and patents of precedence rushed

once more upon me, and I resolved to do or die. Alas! a very little reflection showed me that the latter was perfectly practicable; but that, as a junior counsel, five minutes of very common-place recitation was all my province, and with the main business of the day I had about as much to do as the call-boy of a playhouse has with the success of a tragedy.

"'My Lord, this is an action brought by Timothy Higgin,' etc., and down I go, no more to be remembered and thought of than if I had never existed. How different it would be were I the leader! Zounds, how I would worry the witnesses, browbeat the evidence, cajole the jury, and soften the judges! If the Lord were, in his mercy, to remove old Mills and Kinshella before Tuesday, who knows but my fortune might be made? This supposition, once started, set me speculating upon all the possible chances that might cut off two king's counsel in three days, and left me fairly convinced that my own elevation was certain, were they only removed from my path.

"For two whole days the thought never left my mind; and, on the evening of the second day, I sat moodily over my pint of port, in the Clonbrock Arms, with my friend, Timothy Casey, Captain in the North Cork Militia, for my companion.

"'Fred,' said Tim, 'take off your wine, man. When does this confounded trial come on?'

"'To-morrow,' said I, with a deep groan.

"'Well, well, and if it does, what matter,' he said, 'you'll do well enough, never be afraid.'

"'Alas!' said I, 'you don't understand the cause of my depression.' I here entered upon an account of my sorrows, which lasted for above an hour, and only concluded just as a tremendous noise in the street without announced an arrival. For several minutes, such was the excitement in the house, such running hither and thither, such confusion, and such hubbub, that we could not make out who had arrived.

"At last a door opened quite near us, and we saw the waiter assisting a very portly-looking gentleman off with his great-coat, assuring him the while, that if he would only walk into the coffee-room for ten minutes, the fire in his apartment should be got ready. The stranger accordingly entered and seated himself at the fireplace, having never noticed that Casey and myself—the only persons there—were in the room.

"'I say, Phil, who is he?' inquired Casey of the waiter.

"'Counselor Mills, Captain,' said the waiter, and left the room.

"'That's your friend,' said Casey.

"'I see,' said I; 'and I wish with all my heart he was at home with his pretty wife, in Leeson street.'

"'Is she good looking?' inquired Tim.

"'Devil a better,' said I; 'and he's as jealous as Old Nick.'

"'Hem,' said Tim; 'mind your cue, and I'll give him a start.' Here he suddenly changed his whispering tone for one in a louder key, and resumed: 'I say, Power, it will make some work for you lawyers. But who can she be? that's the question.' Here he took a much crumpled letter from his pocket, and pretended to read: '"A great sensation was created in the neighborhood of Merrion square, yesterday, by the sudden disappearance from her house of the handsome Mrs. ——" Confound it—what's the name?—what a hand he writes? Hill or Miles, or something like that—"the lady of an eminent barrister, now on circuit. The gay Lothario is, they say, the Hon. George ——"' I was so thunderstruck at the rashness of the stroke, I could say nothing; while the old gentleman started as if he had sat down on a pin. Casey, meanwhile, went on.

"'Hell and fury!' said the king's counsel, rushing over, 'what is it you're saying?'

"'You appear warm, old gentleman,' said Casey, putting up the letter, and rising from the table.

"'Show me that letter—show me that infernal letter, sir, this instant!'

"'Show you my letter,' said Casey; 'cool, that, anyhow. You are, certainly, a good one.'

"'Do you know me, sir? answer me that,' said the lawyer, bursting with passion.

"'Not at present,' said Tim, quietly; 'but I hope to do so in the morning, in explanation of your language and conduct.' A tremendous ringing of the bell here summoned the waiter to the room.

"'Who is that —— ?' inquired the lawyer. The epithet he judged it safe to leave unsaid, as he pointed to Casey.

"'Captain Casey, sir; the commanding officer here.'

"'Just so,' said Casey; 'and very much at your service, any hour after five in the morning.'

"'Then you refuse, sir, to explain the paragraph I have just heard you read?'

"'Well done, old gentleman; so you

have been listening to a private conversation I held with my friend here. In that case we had better retire to our room.' So saying, he ordered the waiter to send a fresh bottle and glasses to No. 14, and, taking my arm, very politely wished Mr. Mills good night, and left the coffee-room.

"Before we had reached the top of the stairs the house was once more in commotion. The new arrival had ordered out fresh horses, and was hurrying every one in his impatience to get away. In ten minutes the chaise rolled off from the door, and Casey, putting his head out of the window, wished him a pleasant journey; while turning to me, he said,

"'There's one of them out of the way for you, if we are even obliged to fight the other.'

"The port was soon dispatched, and with it went all the scruples of conscience I had at first felt for the cruel *ruse* we had just practiced. Scarcely was the other bottle called for, when we heard the landlord calling out in a stentorian voice,

"'Two horses, for Goran bridge, to meet Counselor Kinshella.'

"'That's the other fellow?' said Casey.

"'It is,' said I.

"'Then we must be stirring,' said he. 'Waiter, chaise and pair in five minutes—d'ye hear? Power, my boy, I don't want you; stay here, and study your brief. It's little trouble Counselor Kinshella will give you in the morning.'

"All he would tell me of his plans was, that he didn't mean any serious bodily harm to the counselor, but that certainly he was not likely to be heard of for twenty-four hours.

"'Meanwhile, Power, go in and win, my boy,' said he; 'such another walk over may never occur.'

"I must not make my story longer. The next morning, the great record of Monaghan *v.* M'Shean was called on, and, as the senior counsel were not present, the attorney wished a postponement. I, however, was firm; told the court I was quite prepared, and with such an air of assurance that I actually puzzled the attorney. The case was accordingly opened by me in a very brilliant speech, and the witnesses called; but such was my unlucky ignorance of the whole matter, that I actually broke down the testimony of our own, and fought like a Trojan for the credit and character of the perjurers against us! The judge rubbed his eyes—the jury looked amazed—and the whole bar laughed outright. However, on I went, blundering, floundering, and foundering at every step, and, at half-past four, amid the greatest and most uproarious mirth of the whole court, heard the jury deliver a verdict against us just as old Kinshella rushed into the court, covered with mud and spattered with clay. He had been sent for twenty miles to make a will for Mr. Daly of Daly's Mount, who was supposed to be at the point of death, but who, on his arrival, threatened to shoot him for causing an alarm to his family by such an imputation.

"The rest is soon told. They moved for a new trial, and I moved out of the profession. I cut the bar, for it cut me. I joined the gallant 14th as a volunteer, and here I am without a single regret, I must confess, that I didn't succeed in the great record of Monaghan *v.* M'Shean."

Once more the claret went briskly round, and while we canvassed Power's story, many an anecdote of military life was told, as every instant increased the charm of that career I longed for.

"Another cooper, Major," said Power.

"With all my heart," said the rosy little officer, as he touched the bell behind him; "and now let's have a song."

"Yes, Power," said three or four together, "let us have 'The Irish Dragoon,' if it's only to convert your friend O'Malley there."

"Here goes, then," said Dick, taking off a bumper as he began the following chant to the air of "Love is the soul of a gay Irish man:"

"THE IRISH DRAGOON.

"Oh! love is the soul of an Irish Dragoon,
In battle, in bivouac, or in saloon—
From the tip of his spur to his bright sabretasche,
With his soldierly gait and his bearing so high,
His gay laughing look, and his light speaking eye,
He frowns at his rival, he ogles his wench,
He springs in his saddle and *chasses* the French—
With his jingling spur and his bright sabretasche.

"His spirits are high, and he little knows care,
Whether sipping his claret, or charging a square—
With his jingling spur and his bright sabretasche.
As ready to sing or to skirmish he's found,
To take off his wine, or to take up his ground;
When the bugle may call him, how little he fears,
To charge forth in column, and beat the Mounseers—
With his jingling spur and his bright sabretasche.

"When the battle is over, he gayly rides back
To cheer every soul in the night bivouac—
With his jingling spur and his bright sabretasche.

Oh ! there you may see him in full glory crown'd,
As he sits 'mid his friends on the hardly won ground,
And hear with what feeling the toast he will give,
As he drinks to the land where all Irishmen live—
With his jingling spur and his bright sabretasche."

It was late when we broke up; but among all the recollections of that pleasant evening, none clung to me so forcibly, none sank so deeply in my heart as the gay and careless tone of Power's manly voice; and as I fell asleep toward morning, the words of "The Irish Dragoon" were floating through my mind, and followed me in my dreams.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE VICE-PROVOST.

I HAD now been for some weeks a resident within the walls of the University, and yet had never presented my letter of introduction to Dr. Barret. Somehow, my thoughts and occupations had left me little leisure to reflect upon my college course, and I had not felt the necessity suggested by my friend Sir Harry, of having a supporter in the very learned and gifted individual to whom I was accredited. How long I might have continued in this state of indifference, it is hard to say, when chance brought about my acquaintance with the doctor.

Were I not inditing a true history in this narrative of my life, to the events and characters of which so many are living witnesses, I should certainly fear to attempt anything like a description of this very remarkable man, so liable would any sketch, however faint and imperfect, be, to the accusation of caricature, when all was so singular and so eccentric.

Dr. Barret was, at the time I speak of, close upon seventy years of age, scarcely five feet in height, and even that diminutive stature lessened by a stoop. His face was thin, pointed, and russet-colored; his nose so aquiline as nearly to meet his projecting chin, and his small gray eyes, red and bleary, peered beneath his well-worn cap with a glance of mingled fear and suspicion. His dress was a suit of the rustiest black, threadbare, and patched in several places, while a pair of large brown leather slippers, far too big for his feet, imparted a sliding motion to his walk, that added an air of indescribable meanness to his appearance; a gown that had been worn for twenty years, browned and coated with the learned dust of the *Fagel*, covered his rusty habiliments, and completed the equipments of a figure that it was somewhat difficult for the young student to recognize as the Vice-Provost of the University. Such was he in externals. Within, a greater or more profound scholar never graced the walls of the college; a distinguished Grecian, learned in all the refinements of a hundred dialects; a deep Orientalist, cunning in all the varieties of Eastern languages, and able to reason with a Moonshee, or chat with a Persian ambassador. With a mind that never ceased acquiring, he possessed a memory ridiculous for its retentiveness even of trifles; no character in history, no event in chronology, was unknown to him, and he was referred to by his contemporaries for information in doubtful and disputed cases, as men consult a lexicon or dictionary. With an intellect thus stored with deep and far-sought knowledge, in the affairs of the world he was a child. Without the walls of the college, for above forty years, he had not ventured half as many times, and knew absolutely nothing of the busy, active world that fussed and fumed so near him; his farthest excursion was to the Bank of Ireland, to which he made occasional visits to fund the ample income of his office, and add to the wealth which already had acquired for him a well-merited repute of being the richest man in college.

His little intercourse with the world had left him, in all his habits and manners, in every respect exactly as when he entered college, nearly half a century before; and as he had literally risen from the ranks in the University, all the peculiarities of voice, accent, and pronunciation which distinguished him as a youth, adhered to him in old age. This was singular enough, and formed a very ludicrous contrast with the learned and deep-read tone of his conversation; but another peculiarity, still more striking, belonged to him. When he became a fellow, he was obliged, by the rules of the college, to take holy orders as a *sine quâ non* to his holding his fellowship; this he did, as he would have assumed a red hood or blue one, as bachelor of laws, or doctor of medicine, and thought no more of it; but, frequently, in his moments of passionate excitement, the venerable character with which he was invested was quite forgotten, and he would utter some sudden and terrific oath, more productive of mirth to his auditors than was seemly, and for which, once spoken, the poor Doctor felt the greatest shame and contrition. These oaths were no less singular

than forcible, and many a trick was practiced, and many a plan devised, that the learned Vice-Provost might be entrapped into his favorite exclamation of "May the devil admire me!" which no place or presence could restrain.

My servant, Mike, who had not been long in making himself acquainted with all the originals about him, was the cause of my first meeting the Doctor, before whom I received a summons to appear, on the very serious charge of treating with disrespect the heads of the college.

The circumstances were shortly these:—Mike had, among the other gossip of the place, heard frequent tales of the immense wealth and great parsimony of the Doctor; of his anxiety to amass money on all occasions, and the avidity with which even the smallest trifle was added to his gains. He accordingly resolved to amuse himself at the expense of this trait, and proceeded thus:—Boring a hole in a halfpenny, he attached a long string to it, and, having dropped it on the Doctor's step, stationed himself on the opposite side of the court, concealed from view by the angle of the Commons' wall. He waited patiently for the chapel bell, at the first toll of which the door opened, and the Doctor issued forth. Scarcely was his foot upon the step, when he saw the piece of money, and as quickly stooped to seize it; but just as his finger had nearly touched it, it evaded his grasp, and slowly retreated. He tried again, but with the like success. At last, thinking he miscalculated the distance, he knelt leisurely down, and put forth his hand, but lo! it again escaped him; on which, slowly rising from his posture, he shambled on toward the chapel, where, meeting the senior lecturer at the door, he cried out, "H— to my soul, Wall, but I saw the halfpenny walk away!"

For the sake of the grave character whom he addressed, I need not recount how such a speech was received; suffice it to say, that Mike had been seen by a college porter, who reported him as my servant.

I was in the very act of relating the anecdote to a large party at breakfast in my rooms, when a summons arrived, requiring my immediate attendance at the Board, then sitting in solemn conclave at the examination-hall.

I accordingly assumed my academic costume as speedily as possible, and, escorted by that most august fuctionary, Mr. M'Alister, presented myself before the seniors.

The members of the Board, with the Provost at their head, were seated at a long oak table, covered with books, papers, etc., and from the silence they maintained, as I walked up the hall, I augured that a very solemn scene was before me.

"Mr. O'Malley," said the Dean, reading my name from a paper he held in his hand, "you have been summoned here at the desire of the Vice-Provost, whose questions you will reply to."

I bowed. A silence of a few minutes followed, when, at length, the learned Doctor, hitching up his nether garments with both hands, put his old and bleary eyes close to my face, while he croaked out, with an accent that no hackney-coachman could have exceeded in vulgarity,

"Eh, O'Malley; you're *quartus*, I believe; a'n't you?"

"I believe not. I think I am the only person of that name now on the books."

"That's thrue; but there were three O'Malleys before you. Godfrey O'Malley, that construed *Calve Neroni* to Nero the Calvinist—ha! ha! ha!—was cautioned in 1788."

"My uncle, I believe, sir."

"More than likely, from what I hear of you—*Ex uno*, etc. I see your name every day on the punishment roll. Late hours, never at chapel, seldom at morning lecture. Here ye are, sixteen shillings, wearing a red coat."

"Never knew any harm in that, Doctor."

"Ay, but d'ye see me, now? 'Grave raiment,' says the statute. And then, ye keep numerous beasts of prey, dangerous in their habits, and unseemly to behold."

"A bull terrier, sir, and two game-cocks, are, I assure you, the only animals in my household."

"Well, I'll fine you for it."

"I believe, Doctor," said the Dean, interrupting, in an undertone, "that you cannot impose a penalty in this matter."

"Ay, but I can. 'Singing-birds,' says the statute, 'are forbidden within the walls.'"

"And then, ye dazzled my eyes at Commons, with a bit of looking-glass, on Friday. I saw you. May the devil—ahem!—As I was saying, that's casting *reflections* on the heads of the college; and your servant it was, *Michaelis Liber*, Mickey Free—may the flames of—ahem!—an insolent varlet! called me a sweep."

"You, Doctor; impossible!" said I, with pretended horror.

"Ay, but d'ye see me, now? It's thrue, for I looked about me at the time, and there wasn't another sweep in the place but myself. Hell to—I mean—God

forgive me for swearing! but I'll fine you a pound for this."

As I saw the Doctor was getting on at such a pace, I resolved, notwithstanding the august presence of the Board, to try the efficacy of Sir Harry's letter of introduction, which I had taken in my pocket, in the event of its being wanted.

"I beg your pardon, sir, if the time be an unsuitable one; but may I take the opportunity of presenting this letter to you?"

"Ha! I know the hand—Boyle's. *Boyle secundus.* Hem, ha, ay! 'My young friend; and assist him by your advice.' To be sure! Oh! of course. Eh, tell me, young man, did Boyle say nothing to you about the copy of Erasmus, bound in vellum, that I sold him in Trinity term, 1782?"

"I rather think not, sir," said I, doubtfully.

"Well, then, he might. He owes me two-and-fourpence of the balance."

"Oh! I beg pardon, sir; I now remember he desired me to repay you that sum; but he had just sealed the letter when he recollected it."

"Better late than never," said the Doctor, smiling graciously. "Where's the money? Ay! half-a-crown. I haven't twopence—never mind. Go away, young man; the case is dismissed. *Vehementer miror quare huc venisti.* You're more fit for anything than a college life. Keep good hours; mind the terms; and dismiss *Michaelis Liber.* Ha, ha, ha! May the devil!—hem!—that is, do—" So saying, the little Doctor's hand pushed me from the hall, his mind evidently relieved of all the griefs from which he had been suffering, by the recovery of his long-lost two-and-fourpence.

Such was my first and last interview with the Vice-Provost, and it made an impression upon me that all the intervening years have neither dimmed nor erased.

CHAPTER XVII.

TRINITY COLLEGE—A LECTURE.

I HAD not been many weeks a resident of Old Trinity ere the flattering reputation my chum, Mr. Francis Webber, had acquired, extended also to myself; and, by universal consent, we were acknowledged the most riotous, ill-conducted, and disorderly men on the books of the University. Were the lamps of the squares extinguished, and the college left in total darkness, we were summoned before the Dean; was the Vice-Provost serenaded with a chorus of trombones and French horns, to our taste in music was the attention ascribed; did a sudden alarm of fire disturb the congregation at morning chapel, Messrs. Webber and O'Malley were brought before the Board; and I must do them the justice to say that the most trifling circumstantial evidence was ever sufficient to bring a conviction. Reading men avoided the building where we resided as they would have done the plague. Our doors, like those of a certain classic precinct commemorated by a Latin writer, lay open night and day; while moustached dragoons, knowingly dressed four-in-hand men, fox-hunters in pink issuing forth to the Dubber, or returning splashed from a run with the Kildare hounds, were everlastingly seen passing and repassing. Within, the noise and confusion resembled rather the mess-room of a regiment toward eleven at night than the chambers of a college student; while, with the double object of affecting to be in ill health, and to avoid the reflections that daylight occasionally inspires, the shutters were never opened, but lamps and candles kept always burning. Such was No. 2, Old Square, in the goodly days I write of. All the terrors of fines and punishments fell scatheless on the head of my worthy chum. In fact, like a well-known political character, whose pleasure and amusement it has been for some years past to drive through acts of parliaments and deride the powers of the law, so did Mr. Webber tread his way, serpenting through the statute-book, ever grazing, but rarely trespassing upon some forbidden ground, which might involve the great punishment of expulsion. So expert, too, had he become in his special pleadings, so dexterous in the law of the University, that it was no easy matter to bring crime home to him; and even when this was done, his pleas in mitigation rarely failed of success.

There was a sweetness of demeanor, a mild, subdued tone about him, that constantly puzzled the worthy heads of the college how the accusations ever brought against him could be founded on truth; that the pale, delicate-looking student, whose harsh, hacking cough terrified the hearers, could be the boisterous performer upon a key-bugle, or the terrific assailant of watchmen, was something too absurd for belief; and when Mr. Webber, with his hand upon his heart, and in his most dulcet accents, assured them that the

hours he was not engaged in reading for the medal were passed in the soothing society of a few select and intimate friends of literary tastes and refined minds, who, knowing the delicacy of his health—here he would cough—were kind enough to sit with him for an hour or so in the evening, the delusion was perfect; and the story of the Dean's riotous habits having got abroad, the charge was usually suppressed.

Like most idle men, Webber never had a moment to spare. Except read, there was nothing he did not do; training a hack for a race in the Phœnix—arranging a rowing-match—getting up a mock duel between two white-feather acquaintances, were his almost daily avocations. Besides that, he was at the head of many organized societies, instituted for various benevolent purposes. One was called "The Association for Discountenancing Watchmen;" another, "The Board of Works," whose object was principally devoted to the embellishment of the University, in which, to do them justice, their labors were unceasing, and what with the assistance of some black paint, a ladder, and a few pounds of gunpowder, they certainly contrived to effect many important changes. Upon an examination morning, some hundred luckless "jibs" might be seen perambulating the courts, in the vain effort to discover their tutors' chambers, the names having undergone an alteration that left all trace of their original proprietors unattainable; Doctor Francis Mooney having become Doctor Full Moon—Doctor Hare being, by the change of two letters, Doctor Ape—Romney Robinson, Romulus and Remus, etc. While, upon occasions like these, there could be but little doubt of Master Frank's intentions, upon many others, so subtle were his inventions, so well-contrived his plots, it became a matter of considerable difficulty to say whether the mishap which befell some luckless acquaintance were the result of design or mere accident; and not unfrequently well-disposed individuals were found condoling with "Poor Frank!" upon his ignorance of some college rule or etiquette, his breach of which had been long and deliberately planned. Of this latter description was a circumstance which occurred about this time, and which some who may throw an eye over these pages will perhaps remember.

The Dean having heard (and, indeed, the preparations were not intended to secure secrecy) that Webber destined to entertain a party of his friends at dinner on a certain day, sent a most peremptory order for his appearance at Commons, his name being erased from the sick list, and a pretty strong hint conveyed to him that any evasion upon his part would be certainly followed by an inquiry into the real reasons for his absence. What was to be done? That was the very day he had destined for his dinner. To be sure, the majority of his guests were college men, who would understand the difficulty at once; but still there were some others, officers of the 14th, with whom he was constantly dining, and whom he could not so easily put off. The affair was difficult, but still Webber was the man for a difficulty; in fact, he rather liked one. A very brief consideration accordingly sufficed, and he sat down and wrote to his friends at the Royal Barracks thus:

"Dear Power,—I have a better plan for Tuesday than that I had proposed. Lunch here at three—(we'll call it dinner)—in the hall with the great guns: I can't say much for the grub, but the company—glorious! After that we'll start for Lucan in the drag—take our coffee, strawberries, etc., and return to No. 2, for supper at ten. Advertise your fellows of this change, and believe me,

"Most unchangeably yours,
"Frank Webber."

"Saturday."

Accordingly, as three o'clock struck, six dashing-looking light dragoons were seen slowly sauntering up the middle of the dining-hall, escorted by Webber, who, in full academic costume, was leisurely ciceroning his friends, and expatiating upon the excellences of the very remarkable portraits which graced the walls.

The porters looked on with some surprise at the singular hour selected for sight-seeing, but what was their astonishment to find that the party, having arrived at the end of the hall, instead of turning back again, very composedly unbuckled their belts, and having disposed of their sabres in a corner, took their places at the Fellows' table, and sat down amid the collective wisdom of Greek Lecturers and Regius Professors, as though they had been mere mortals like themselves.

Scarcely was the long Latin grace concluded, when Webber, leaning forward, enjoined his friends, in a very audible whisper, that if they intended to dine, no time was to be lost.

"We have but little ceremony here, gentlemen, and all we ask is a fair start," said he, as he drew over the soup, and proceeded to help himself.

The advice was not thrown away, for each man, with an alacrity a campaign usually teaches, made himself master of some neighboring dish—a very quick interchange of good things speedily following the appropriation. It was in vain that the Senior Lecturer looked aghast—that the Professor of Astronomy frowned—the whole table, indeed, were thunderstruck, even to the poor Vice-Provost himself, who, albeit given to the comforts of the table, could not lift a morsel to his mouth, but muttered between his teeth, "May the devil admire me, but they're dragoons!" The first shock of surprise over, the porters proceeded to inform them that except Fellows of the University or Fellow-commoners, none were admitted to the table. Webber, however, assured them that it was a mistake, there being nothing in the statute to exclude the 14th Light Dragoons, as he was prepared to prove. Meanwhile dinner proceeded, Power and his party performing with great self-satisfaction upon the sirloins and saddles about them; regretting only, from time to time, that there was a most unaccountable absence of wine, and suggesting the propriety of napkins whenever they should dine there again. Whatever chagrin these unexpected guests caused among their entertainers of the upper table, in the lower part of the hall the laughter was loud and unceasing, and long before the hour concluded, the Fellows took their departure, leaving to Master Frank Webber the task of doing the honors alone and unassisted. When summoned before the Board for the offense on the following morning, Webber excused himself by throwing the blame upon his friends, with whom, he said, nothing short of a personal quarrel—a thing for a reading man not to be thought of—could have prevented intruding in the manner related. Nothing less than *his* tact could have saved him on this occasion, and at last he carried the day; while, by an act of the Board, the 14th Light Dragoons were pronounced the most insolent corps in the service.

An adventure of his, however, got wind about this time, and served to enlighten many persons as to his real character, who had hitherto been most lenient in their expressions about him. Our worthy tutor, with a zeal for our welfare far more praiseworthy than successful, was in the habit of summoning to his chambers, on certain mornings of the week, his various pupils, whom he lectured in the books for the approaching examinations. Now, as these séances were held at six o'clock in winter as well as summer, in a cold, fireless chamber—the lecturer lying snug amid his blankets, while we stood shivering around the walls—the ardor of learning must, indeed, have proved strong that prompted a regular attendance. As to Frank, he would have as soon thought of attending chapel as of presenting himself on such an occasion. Not so with me. I had not yet grown hackneyed enough to fly in the face of authority, and I frequently left the whist-table, or broke off in a song, to hurry over to the Doctor's chambers, and spout Homer and Hesiod. I suffered on in patience, till at last the bore became so insupportable that I told my sorrows to my friend, who listened to me out, and promised me succor.

It so chanced that upon some evening in each week Dr. Mooney was in the habit of visiting some friends who resided a short distance from town, and spending the night at their house. He, of course, did not lecture the following morning—a paper placard, announcing no lecture, being affixed to the door on such occasions. Frank waited patiently till he perceived the Doctor affixing this announcement upon his door one evening; and no sooner had he left the college, than he withdrew the paper and departed.

On the next morning he rose early, and, concealing himself on the staircase, waited the arrival of the venerable damsel who acted as servant to the Doctor. No sooner had she opened the door and groped her way into the sitting-room, than Frank crept forward, and, stealing gently into the bedroom, sprung into the bed, and wrapped himself up in the blankets. The great bell boomed forth at six o'clock, and soon after the sounds of the feet were heard upon the stairs—one by one they came along—and gradually the room was filled with cold and shivering wretches, more than half asleep, and trying to arouse themselves into an approach to attention.

"Who's there?" said Frank, mimicking the Doctor's voice, as he yawned three or four times in succession, and turned in the bed.

"Collisson, O'Malley, Nesbitt," etc., said a number of voices, anxious to have all the merit such a penance could confer.

"Where's Webber?"

"Absent, sir," chorused the whole party.

"Sorry for it," said the mock Doctor. "Webber is a man of first-rate capacity, and were he only to apply, I am not certain to what eminence his abilities might raise him. Come, Collisson—any three

angles of a triangle are equal to—are equal to—what are they equal to?" Here he yawned as though he would dislocate his jaw.

"Any three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles," said Collisson, in the usual sing-song tone of a freshman.

As he proceeded to prove the proposition, his monotonous tone seemed to have lulled the Doctor into a doze, for in a few minutes a deep long-drawn snore announced from the closed curtains that he listened no longer. After a little time, however, a short snort from the sleeper awoke him suddenly, and he called out,

"Go on; I'm waiting. Do you think I can arouse at this hour of the morning for nothing but to listen to your bungling? Can no one give me a free translation of the passage?"

This digression from mathematics to classics did not surprise the hearers, though it somewhat confused them, no one being precisely aware what the line in question might be.

"Try it, Nesbitt—you, O'Malley—silent all—really this is too bad!" An indistinct muttering here from the crowd was followed by an announcement from the Doctor that "the speaker was an ass, and his head a turnip! Not one of you capable of translating a chorus from Euripides—'Ou, ou, papai, papai,' etc.; which, after all, means no more than—'Oh, whilleleu, murder, why did you die?' etc. What are you laughing at, gentlemen? May I ask, does it become a set of ignorant, ill-informed savages—yes, savages, I repeat the word—to behave in this manner? Webber is the only man I have with common intellect—the only man among you capable of distinguishing himself. But as for you—I'll bring you before the Board—I'll write to your friends—I'll stop your college indulgences—I'll confine you to the walls—I'll be damned, eh—"

This lapse confused him; he stammered, stuttered, endeavored to recover himself; but by this time we had approached the bed, just at the moment when Master Frank, well knowing what he might expect if detected, had bolted from the blankets and rushed from the room. In an instant we were in pursuit; but he regained his chambers, and double-locked the door before we could overtake him, leaving us to ponder over the insolent tirade we had so patiently submitted to.

That morning the affair got wind all over college. As for us, we were scarcely so much laughed at as the Doctor; the world wisely remembering, if such were the nature of our morning's orisons, we might nearly as profitably have remained snug in our quarters.

Such was our life in Old Trinity; and strange enough it is that one should feel tempted to the confession, but I really must acknowledge these were, after all, happy times, and I look back upon them with mingled pleasure and sadness. The noble lord who so pathetically lamented that the devil was not so strong in him as he used to be forty years before, has an echo in my regrets, that the student is not as young in me as when these scenes were enacting of which I write.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE INVITATION—THE WAGER.

I WAS sitting at breakfast with Webber, a few mornings after the mess dinner I have spoken of, when Power came in hastily.

"Ha, the very man!" said he. "I say, O'Malley, here's an invitation for you from Sir George, to dine on Friday. He desired me to say a thousand civil things about his not having made you out, regrets that he was not at home when you called yesterday, and all that. By Jove, I know nothing like the favor you stand in; and, as for Miss Dashwood, faith! the fair Lucy blushed, and tore her glove in most approved style, when the old General began his laudation of you."

"Pooh, nonsense," said I; "that silly affair in the west."

"Oh, very probably; there's reason the less for your looking so excessively conscious. But I must tell you, in all fairness, that you have no chance; nothing short of a dragoon will go down."

"Be assured," said I, somewhat nettled, "my pretensions do not aspire to the fair Miss Dashwood."

"*Tant mieux et tant pis, mon cher.* I wish to Heaven mine did; and, by St. Patrick, if I only played the knight errant half as gallantly as yourself, I would not relinquish my claims to the Secretary at War himself."

"What the devil brought the old General down to your wild regions?" inquired Webber.

"To contest the county."

"A bright thought, truly. When a man was looking for a seat, why not try a place where the law is occasionally heard of?"

"I'm sure I can give you no information on that head; nor have I ever heard how Sir George came to learn that such a place as Galway existed."

"I believe I can enlighten you," said Power. "Lady Dashwood—rest her soul!—came west of the Shannon; she had a large property somewhere in Mayo, and owned some hundred acres of swamp, with some thousand starving tenantry thereupon, that people dignified as an estate in Connaught. This first suggested to him the notion of setting up for the county; probably supposing, that the people who never paid in rent might like to do so in gratitude. How he was undeceived, O'Malley there can inform us. Indeed, I believe the worthy General, who was confoundedly hard up when he married, expected to have got a great fortune, and little anticipated the three Chancery suits he succeeded to, nor the fourteen rent-charges to his wife's relatives that made up the bulk of the dower. It was an unlucky hit for him when he fell in with the old 'maid' at Bath; and, had she lived, he must have gone to the colonies. But the Lord took her one day, and Major Dashwood was himself again. The Duke of York, the story goes, saw him at Hounslow during a review—was much struck with his air and appearance—made some inquiries—found him to be of excellent family and irreproachable conduct—made him an aide-de-camp—and, in fact, made his fortune. I do not believe that, while doing so kind, he could by possibility have done a more popular thing. Every man in the army rejoiced at his good fortune; so that, after all, though he has had some hard rubs, he has come well through, the only vestige of his unfortunate matrimonial connection being a correspondence kept up by a maiden sister of his late wife's with him. She insists upon claiming the ties of kindred upon about twenty family eras during the year, when she regularly writes a most loving and ill-spelled epistle, containing the latest information from Mayo, with all particulars of the Macan family, of which she is a worthy member. To her constant hints of the acceptable nature of certain small remittances, the poor General is never inattentive; but to the pleasing prospect of a visit in the flesh from Miss Judy Macan, the good man is dead. In fact, nothing short of being broke by a general court-martial could at all complete his sensations of horror at such a stroke of fortune; and I am not certain, if choice were allowed him, that he would not prefer the latter."

"Then he has never yet seen her?" said Webber.

"Never," replied Power; "and he hopes to leave Ireland without that blessing, the prospect of which, however remote and unlikely, has, I know well, more than once terrified him since his arrival."

"I say, Power, and has your worthy General sent me a card for his ball?"

"Not through me, Master Frank."

"Well, now, I call that devilish shabby, do you know. He asks O'Malley there from *my* chambers, and never notices the other man, the superior in the firm. Eh, O'Malley, what say you?"

"Why, I didn't know you were acquainted."

"And who said we were? It was his fault, though, entirely, that we were not. I am, as I have ever been, the most easy fellow in the world on that score—never give myself airs to military people—endure anything, everything—and you see the result—hard, ain't it?"

"But, Webber, Sir George must really be excused in this matter. He has a daughter, a most attractive, lovely daughter, just at that budding, unsuspecting age when the heart is most susceptible of impressions; and where, let me ask, could she run such a risk as in the chance of a casual meeting with the redoubted lady-killer, Master Frank Webber? If he has not sought you out, then here be his apology."

"A very strong case, certainly," said Frank; "but, still, had he confided his critical position to my honor and secrecy, he might have depended on me; now, having taken the other line—"

"Well, what then?"

"Why, he must abide the consequences. I'll make fierce love to Louisa; isn't that the name?"

"Lucy, so please you."

"Well, be it so—to Lucy—talk the little girl into a most deplorable attachment for me."

"But how, may I ask, and when?"

"I'll begin at the ball, man."

"Why, I thought you said you were not going?"

"There you mistake seriously. I merely said that I had not been invited."

"Then, of course," said I, "Webber, you can't think of going, in any case, on *my* account."

"My very dear friend, I go entirely upon my own. I not only shall go, but I intend to have most particular notice and attention paid me. I shall be prime favorite with Sir George—kiss Lucy—"

"Come, come, this is too strong."

"What do you bet I don't? There, now, I'll give you a pony a piece, I do. Do you say done?"

"That you kiss Miss Dashwood, and are not kicked down-stairs for your pains; are those the terms of the wager?" inquired Power.

"With all my heart. That I kiss Miss Dashwood, and am not kicked down-stairs for my pains."

"Then I say, done."

"And with you too, O'Malley?"

"I thank you," said I, coldly; "I'm not disposed to make such a return for Sir George Dashwood's hospitality as to make an insult to his family the subject of a bet."

"Why, man, what are you dreaming of? Miss Dashwood will not refuse my chaste salute. Come, Power, I'll give you the other pony."

"Agreed!" said he. "At the same time, understand me distinctly—that I hold myself perfectly eligible to winning the wager by my own interference; for, if you do kiss her, by Jove! I'll perform the remainder of the compact."

"So I understand the agreement," said Webber, arranging his curls before the looking-glass. "Well, now, who's for Howth? the drag will be here in half an hour."

"Not I," said Power; "I must return to the barracks."

"Nor I," said I, "for I shall take this opportunity of leaving my card at Sir George Dashwood's."

"I have won my fifty, however," said Power, as we walked out in the courts.

"I am not quite certain—"

"Why, the devil, he would not risk a broken neck for that sum; besides, if he did, he loses the bet."

"He's a devilish keen fellow."

"Let him be. In any case I am determined to be on my guard here."

So chatting, we strolled along to the Royal Hospital, when, having dropped my pasteboard, I returned to the college.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BALL.

I HAVE often dressed for a storming party with less of trepidation than I felt on the evening of Sir George Dashwood's ball. Since the eventful day of the election I had never seen Miss Dashwood; therefore, as to what precise position I might occupy in her favor was a matter of great doubt in my mind, and great import to my happiness. That I myself loved her was a matter of which all the badinage of my friends regarding her made me painfully conscious; but that, in our relative positions, such an attachment was all but hopeless, I could not disguise from myself. Young as I was, I well knew to what a heritage of debt, lawsuit, and difficulty I was born to succeed. In my own resources and means of advancement I had no confidence whatever, had even the profession to which I was destined been more of my choice. I daily felt that it demanded greater exertions, if not far greater abilities, than I could command, to make success at all likely; and then, even if such a result were in store, years, at least, must elapse before it could happen, and where would she then be, and where should I?—where the ardent affection I now felt and gloried in—perhaps all the more for its desperate hopelessness—when the sanguine and buoyant spirit to combat with difficulties which youth suggests, and which later manhood refuses, should have passed away? And, even if all these survived the toil and labor of anxious days and painful nights, what of her? Alas! I now reflected that, although only of my own age, her manner to me had taken all that tone of superiority and patronage which an elder assumes toward one younger, and which, in the spirit of protection it proceeds upon, essentially bars up every inlet to a dearer or warmer feeling—at least, when the lady plays the former part. "What, then, is to be done?" thought I. "Forget her?—but, how? How shall I renounce all my plans, and unweave the web of life I have been spreading around me for many a day, without that one golden thread that lent it more than half its brilliancy and all its attraction? But then, the alternative is even worse, if I encourage expectations and nurture hopes never to be realized. Well, we meet to-night, after a long and eventful absence; let my future fate be ruled by the results of this meeting. If Lucy Dashwood does care for me—if I can detect in her manner enough to show me that my affection may meet a return, the whole effort of my life shall be to make her mine; if not—if my own feelings be all that I have to depend upon to extort a reciprocal affection—then shall I take my last look of her, and with it the first and brightest dream of happiness my life has hitherto presented."

* * * * *

It need not be wondered at if the brilliant *coup d'œil* of the ball-room, as I entered, struck me with astonishment, accustomed as I had hitherto been to nothing more magnificent than an evening party of squires and their squiresses, or the annual garrison ball at the barracks. The glare of wax-lights, the well-furnished saloons, the glitter of uniforms, and the blaze of plumed and jeweled dames, with the clang of military music, was a species of enchanted atmosphere which, breathing for the first time, rarely fails to intoxicate. Never before had I seen so much beauty: lovely faces, dressed in all the seductive flattery of smiles, were on every side; and, as I walked from room to room, I felt how much more fatal to a man's peace and heart's ease the whispered words and silent glances of those fair damsels, than all the loud gayety and boisterous freedom of our country belles, who sought to take the heart by storm and escalade.

As yet I had seen neither Sir George nor his daughter, and, while I looked on every side for Lucy Dashwood, it was with a beating and anxious heart I longed to see how she would bear comparison with the blaze of beauty around.

Just at this moment a very gorgeously-dressed hussar stepped from a doorway beside me, as if to make a passage for some one, and the next moment she appeared leaning upon the arm of another lady. One look was all that I had time for, when she recognized me.

"Ah, Mr. O'Malley—how happy—has Sir George—has my father seen you?"

"I have only arrived this moment; I trust he is quite well?"

"Oh! yes, thank you—"

"I beg your pardon with all humility, Miss Dashwood," said the Hussar, in a tone of the most knightly courtesy, "but they are waiting for us."

"But, Captain Fortescue, you must excuse me one moment more. Mr. Lechmere, will you do me the kindness to find out Sir George? Mr. O'Malley—Mr. Lechmere." Here she said something in French to her companion, but so rapidly that I could not detect what it was, but merely heard the reply—"*Pas mal!*"—which, as the lady continued to canvass me most deliberately through her eye-glass, I supposed referred to me. "And now, Captain Fortescue—" And with a look of most courteous kindness to me she disappeared in the crowd.

The gentleman to whose guidance I was intrusted was one of the aides-de-camp, and was not long in finding Sir George. No sooner had the good old General heard my name, than he held out both his hands and shook mine most heartily.

"At last, O'Malley—at last I am able to thank you for the greatest service ever man rendered me. He saved Lucy, my Lord; rescued her under circumstances where anything short of his courage and determination must have cost her her life."

"Ah! very pretty indeed," said a stiff old gentleman addressed, as he bowed a most superbly-powdered scalp before me; "most happy to make your acquaintance."

"Who is he?" added he, in nearly as loud a tone to Sir George.

"Mr. O'Malley, of O'Malley Castle."

"True, I forgot—why is he not in uniform?"

"Because, unfortunately, my Lord, we don't own him; he's not in the army."

"Ha! ha! thought he was."

"You dance, O'Malley, I suppose? I'm sure you'd rather be over there than hearing all my protestations of gratitude, sincere and heartfelt as they really are."

"Lechmere, introduce my friend Mr. O'Malley; get him a partner."

I had not followed my new acquaintance many steps, when Power came up to me. "I say, Charley," cried he, "I have been tormented to death by half the ladies in the room to present you to them, and have been in quest of you this half-hour. Your brilliant exploit in savage land has made you a regular *preux chevalier;* and if you don't trade on that adventure to your most lasting profit, you deserve to be—a lawyer. Come along here! Lady Muckleman, the adjutant-general's lady and chief, has four Scotch daughters you are to dance with; then, I am to introduce you in all form to the Dean of Something's niece; she is a good-looking girl, and has two livings in a safe county. Then there's the town-major's wife; and, in fact, I have several engagements from this to supper-time."

"A thousand thanks for all your kindness in prospective, but I think, perhaps, it were right I should ask Miss Dashwood to dance, if only as a matter of form—you understand?"

"And, if Miss Dashwood should say, 'With pleasure, sir,' only as a matter of form—you understand?" said a silvery voice beside me. I turned, and saw Lucy Dashwood, who, having overheard my very free-and-easy suggestion, replied to me in this manner.

I here blundered out my excuses. What I said, and what I did not say, I do not now remember; but, certainly, it was her turn now to blush, and her arm trembled

within mine as I led her to the top of the room. In the little opportunity which our quadrille presented for conversation, I could not help remarking that, after the surprise of her first meeting with me, Miss Dashwood's manner became gradually more and more reserved, and that there was an evident struggle between her wish to appear grateful for what had occurred, with a sense of the necessity of not incurring a greater degree of intimacy. Such was my impression, at least, and such the conclusion I drew from a certain quiet tone in her manner, that went further to wound my feelings and mar my happiness than any other line of conduct toward me could possibly have effected.

Our quadrille over, I was about to conduct her to a seat, when Sir George came hurriedly up, his face greatly flushed, and betraying every semblance of high excitement,

"Dear papa, has anything occurred? pray what is?" inquired she.

He smiled faintly, and replied, "Nothing very serious, my dear, that I should alarm you in this way; but, certainly, a more disagreeable *contretemps* could scarcely occur."

"Do tell me; what can it be?"

"Read this," said he, presenting a very dirty-looking note, which bore the mark of a red wafer most infernally plain upon its outside.

Miss Dashwood unfolded the billet, and, after a moment's silence, instead of participating, as he expected, in her father's feeling of distress, burst out a-laughing, while she said, "Why, really, papa, I do not see why this should put you out much, after all. Aunt may be somewhat of a character, as her note evinces, but after a few days—"

"Nonsense, child; there's nothing in this world I have such a dread of as that confounded woman—and to come at such a time."

"When does she speak of paying her visit?"

"I knew you had not read the note," said Sir George, hastily; "she's coming here to-night—is on her way this instant, perhaps. What is to be done? If she forces her way in here, I shall go deranged outright. O'Malley, my boy, read this note, and you will not feel surprised if I appear in the humor you see me."

I took the billet from the hands of Miss Dashwood, and read as follows:

"Dear Brother,—When this reaches your hand, I'll not be far off. I'm on my way up to town, to be under Dr. Dease, for the ould complaint. Cowley mistakes my case entirely; he says it's nothing but religion and wind. Father Magrath, who understands a good deal about females, thinks otherwise—but God knows who's right. Expect me to tea, and, with love to Lucy, believe me yours, in haste,

"Judith Macan.

"Let the sheets be well aired in my room; and if you have a spare bed, perhaps we could prevail upon Father Magrath to stop too."

I scarcely could contain my laughter till I got to the end of this very free-and-easy epistle; when at last I burst forth in a hearty fit, in which I was joined by Miss Dashwood.

From the account Power had given me in the morning, I had no difficulty in guessing that the writer was the maiden sister of the late Lady Dashwood, and for whose relationship Sir George had ever testified the greatest dread, even at the distance of two hundred miles, and for whom, in any nearer intimacy, he was in no wise prepared.

"I say, Lucy," said he, "there's only one thing to be done; if this horrid woman does arrive, let her be shown to her room, and for the few days of her stay in town, we'll neither see nor be seen by any one."

Without waiting for a reply, Sir George was turning away to give the necessary instructions, when the door of the drawing-room was flung open, and the servant announced, in his loudest voice, "Miss Macan." Never shall I forget the poor General's look of horror as the words reached him; for, as yet, he was too far to catch even a glimpse of its fair owner. As for me, I was already so much interested in seeing what she was like, that I made my way through the crowd toward the door. It is no common occurrence that can distract the various occupations of a crowded ball-room, where, amid the crash of music and the din of conversation, goes on the soft, low voice of insinuating flattery, or the light flirtation of a first acquaintance; every clique, every coterie, every little group of three or four, has its own separate and private interests, forming a little world of its own, and caring for and heeding nothing that goes on around; and even when some striking character or illustrious personage makes his *entrée*, the attention he attracts is so momentary, that the buzz of conversation is scarcely,

if at all, interrupted, and the business of pleasure continues to flow on. Not so now, however. No sooner had the servant pronounced the magical name of Miss Macan, than all seemed to stand still. The spell thus exercised over the luckless General seemed to have extended to his company, for it was with difficulty that any one could continue his train of conversation, while every eye was directed toward the door. About two steps in advance of the servant, who still stood door in hand, was a tall, elderly lady, dressed in an antique brocade silk, with enormous flowers gaudily embroidered upon it. Her hair was powdered, and turned back, in the fashion of fifty years before; while her high-pointed and heeled shoes completed a costume that had not been seen for nearly a century. Her short, skinny arms were bare and partly covered by a falling flower of old point lace, while on her hands she wore black silk mittens; a pair of green spectacles scarcely dimmed the lustre of a most piercing pair of eyes, to whose effect a very palpable touch of rouge on the cheeks certainly added brilliancy. There stood this most singular apparition, holding before her a fan about the size of a modern tea-tray, while at each repetition of her name by the servant, she curtsied deeply, bestowing the while upon the gay crowd before her a very curious look of maidenly modesty at her solitary and unprotected position.

As no one had ever heard of the fair Judith save one or two of Sir George's most intimate friends, the greater part of the company were disposed to regard Miss Macan as some one who had mistaken the character of the invitation, and had come in a fancy dress. But this delusion was but momentary, as Sir George, armed with the courage of despair, forced his way through the crowd, and taking her hand affectionately, bid her welcome to Dublin. The fair Judy, at this, threw her arms about his neck, and saluted him with a hearty smack, that was heard all over the room.

"Where's Lucy, brother? let me embrace my little darling," said the lady, in an accent that told more of Miss Macan than a three-volume biography could have done. "There she is, I'm sure; kiss me, my honey."

This office Miss Dashwood performed with an effort at courtesy really admirable; while, taking her aunt's arm, she led her to a sofa.

It needed all the poor General's tact to get over the sensation of this most *mal à propos* addition to his party; but, by degrees, the various groups renewed their occupations, although many a smile, and more than one sarcastic glance at the sofa, betrayed that the maiden aunt had not escaped criticism.

Power, whose propensity for fun very considerably outstripped his sense of decorum to his commanding officer, had already made his way toward Miss Dashwood, and succeeded in obtaining a formal introduction to Miss Macan.

"I hope you will do me the favor to dance next set with me, Miss Macan?"

"Really, Captain, it's very polite of you, but you must excuse me. I was never anything great in quadrilles; but if a reel or a jig—"

"Oh, dear aunt, don't think of it, I beg of you."

"Or even Sir Roger de Coverley," resumed Miss Macan.

"I assure you, quite equally impossible."

"Then I'm certain you waltz," said Power.

"What do you take me for, young man? I hope I know better. I wish Father Magrath heard you ask me that question, and for all your laced jacket—"

"Dearest aunt, Captain Power didn't mean to offend you; I'm certain he—"

"Well, why did he dare to—*sob, sob,*—did he see anything light about me, that he—*sob, sob, sob*—oh dear! oh dear! is it for this I came up from my little peaceful place in the west?—*sob, sob, sob*—General, George, dear; Lucy, my love, I'm taken bad. Oh dear! oh dear! is there any whisky negus?"

Whatever sympathy Miss Macan's sufferings might have excited in the crowd about her before, this last question totally routed them, and a most hearty fit of laughter broke forth from more than one of the bystanders.

At length, however, she was comforted, and her pacification completely effected by Sir George setting her down to a whist-table. From this moment I lost sight of her for above two hours. Meanwhile, I had little opportunity of following up my intimacy with Miss Dashwood, and, as I rather suspected that, on more than one occasion, she seemed to avoid our meeting, I took especial care, on my part, to spare her the annoyance.

For one instant only had I any opportunity of addressing her, and then there was such an evident embarrassment in her manner that I readily perceived how she felt circumstanced, and that the sense of gratitude to one whose further advances

THE FAIR JUDY, AT THIS, THREW HER ARMS ABOUT HIS NECK, AND SALUTED HIM WITH A HEARTY SMACK, THAT WAS HEARD ALL OVER THE ROOM. (P. 696.)

she might have feared rendered her constrained and awkward. "Too true," said I; "she avoids me. My being here is only a source of discomfort and pain to her; therefore, I'll take my leave, and, whatever it may cost me, never to return." With this intention, resolving to wish Sir George a very good night, I sought him out for some minutes. At length I saw him in a corner, conversing with the old nobleman to whom he had presented me early in the evening.

"True, upon my honor, Sir George," said he; "I saw it myself, and she did it just as dexterously as the oldest blackleg in Paris."

"Why, you don't mean to say that she cheated?"

"Yes, but I do, though—turned the ace every time. Lady Herbert said to me, 'Very extraordinary it is—four by honors again.' So I looked, and then I perceived it—a very old trick it is; but she did it beautifully. What's her name?"

"Some western name; I forget it," said the poor General, ready to die with shame.

"Clever old woman, very!" said the old Lord, taking a pinch of snuff; "but revokes too often."

Supper was announced at this critical moment, and before I had further thought of my determination to escape, I felt myself hurried along in the crowd toward the staircase. The party immediately in front of me were Power and Miss Macan, who now appeared reconciled, and certainly testified most openly their mutual feelings of good-will.

"I say, Charley," whispered Power, as I came along, "it is capital fun—never met anything equal to her; but the poor General will never live through it, and I'm certain of ten days' arrest for this night's proceeding."

"Any news of Webber?" I inquired.

"Oh yes, I fancy I can tell something of him; for I heard of some one presenting himself, and being refused the *entrée*, so that Master Frank has lost his money. Sit near us, I pray you, at supper. We must take care of the dear aunt for the niece's sake, eh?"

Not seeing the force of this reasoning, I soon separated myself from them, and secured a corner at a side table. Every supper, on such an occasion as this, is the same scene of soiled white muslin, faded flowers, flushed faces, torn gloves, blushes, blanc-mange, cold chicken, jelly, sponge cakes, spooney young gentlemen doing the attractive, and watchful mammas calculating what precise degree of propinquity in the crush is safe or seasonable for their daughters, to the moustached and unmarrying lovers beside them. There are always the same set of gratified elders, like the benchers in King's Inn, marched up to the head of the table, to eat, drink, and be happy—removed from the more profane looks and soft speeches of the younger part of the creation. Then there are the *oi polloi* of outcasts, younger sons of younger brothers, tutors, governesses, portionless cousins, and curates, all formed in a phalanx round the side tables, whose primitive habits and simple tastes are evinced by their all eating off the same plate and drinking from nearly the same wine-glass,—too happy if some better-off acquaintance at the long table invites them to "wine," though the ceremony on their part is limited to the pantomime of drinking. To this miserable *tiers état* I belonged, and bore my fate with unconcern; for, alas! my spirits were depressed and my heart heavy. Lucy's treatment of me was every moment before me, contrasted with her gay and courteous demeanor to all save myself, and I longed for the moment to get away.

Never had I seen her looking so beautiful; her brilliant eyes were lit with pleasure, and her smile was enchantment itself. What would I not have given for one moment's explanation, as I took my leave for ever!—one brief avowal of my love, my unalterable, devoted love; for which I sought not or expected return, but merely that I might not be forgotten.

Such were my thoughts, when a dialogue quite near me aroused me from my reverie. I was not long in detecting the speakers, who, with their backs turned to us, were seated at the great table, discussing a very liberal allowance of pigeon pie, a flask of champagne standing between them.

"Don't, now! don't, I tell ye; it's little ye know Galway, or ye wouldn't think to make up to me, squeezing my foot."

"Upon my soul, you're an angel, a regular angel. I never saw a woman suit my fancy before."

"Oh, behave now. Father Magrath says—"

"Who's he?"

"The priest; no less."

"Oh! confound him."

"Confound Father Magrath, young man?"

"Well, then, Judy, don't be angry; I only meant that a dragoon knows rather more of these matters than a priest."

"Well, then, I'm not so sure of that. But, anyhow, I'd have you to remember it

ain't a Widow Malone you have beside you."

"Never heard of the lady," said Power.

"Sure, it's a song—poor creaure—it's a song they made about her in the North Cork, when they were quartered down in our county."

"I wish to Heaven you'd sing it."

"What will you give me, then, if I do?"

"Anything—everything—my heart, my life."

"I wouldn't give a trauneen for all of them. Give me that old green ring on your finger, then."

"It's yours," said Power, placing it gracefully upon Miss Macan's finger, "and now for your promise."

"Maybe my brother might not like it."

"He'd be delighted," said Power; "he dotes on music."

"Does he, now?"

"On my honor, he does."

"Well, mind you get up a good chorus, for the song has one, and here it is."

"Miss Macan's song!" said Power, tapping the table with his knife.

"Miss Macan's song!" was re-echoed on all sides; and before the luckless General could interfere, she had begun. How to explain the air I know not, for I never heard its name; but at the end of each verse a species of echo followed the last word, that rendered it irresistibly ridiculous.

"THE WIDOW MALONE.

"Did ye hear of the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
Who lived in the town of Athlone
Alone?
Oh! she melted the hearts
Of the swains in them parts,
So lovely the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
So lovely the Widow Malone.

"Of lovers she had a full score,
Or more,
And fortunes they all had galore,
In store;
From the minister down
To the clerk of the crown,
All were courting the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
All were courting the Widow Malone.

"But so modest was Mrs. Malone,
'Twas known
No one ever could see her alone,
Ohone!
Let them ogle and sigh,
They could ne'er catch her eye,
So bashful the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
So bashful the Widow Malone.

"Till one Mister O'Brien from Clare,
How quare!
It's little for blushin' they care
Down there;
Put his arm round her waist,
Gave ten kisses at laste,
'Oh,' says he, 'you're my Molly Malone,
My own;
Oh,' says he, 'you're my Molly Malone.'

"And the Widow they all thought so shy,
My eye,
Ne'er thought of a simper or sigh,
For why?
But 'Lucius,' says she,
'Since you've made now so free,
You may marry your Mary Malone,
Ohone!
You may marry your Mary Malone.'

"There's a moral contained in my song,
Not wrong,
And one comfort it's not very long,
But strong:
If for widows you die,
Larn to *kiss* not to *sigh*,
For they're all like sweet Mistress Malone,
Ohone!
Oh! they're very like Mistress Malone."

Never did song create such a sensation as Miss Macan's; and certainly her desires as to the chorus were followed to the letter, for "The Widow Malone, ohone!" resounded from one end of the table to the other, amid one universal shout of laughter. None could resist the ludicrous effect of her melody; and even poor Sir George, sinking under the disgrace of his relationship, which she had contrived to make public by frequent allusions to her "dear brother the General," yielded at last, and joined in the mirth around him.

"I insist upon a copy of 'The Widow,' Miss Macan," said Power.

"To be sure; give me a call to-morrow—let me see—about two. Father Magrath won't be at home," said she, with a coquettish look.

"Where, pray, may I pay my respects?"

"No. 22 South Anne street—very respectable lodgings. I'll write the address in your pocket-book."

Power produced a card and pencil, while Miss Macan wrote a few lines, saying, as she handed it:

"There, now, don't read it here before the people; they'll think it mighty indelicate in me to make an appointment."

Power pocketed the card, and the next minute Miss Macan's carriage was announced.

Sir George Dashwood, who little flattered himself that his fair guest had any intention of departure, became now most considerately attentive—reminded her of

the necessity of muffling against the night air—hoped she would escape cold—and wished her a most cordial good-night, with a promise of seeing her early the following day.

Notwithstanding Power's ambition to engross the attention of the lady, Sir George himself saw her to her carriage, and only returned to the room, as a group was collecting around the gallant Captain, to whom he was relating some capital traits of his late conquest—for such he dreamed she was.

"Doubt it who will," said he, "she has invited me to call on her to-morrow—written her address on my card—told me the hour she is certain of being alone. See here!" At these words he pulled forth the card, and handed it to Lechmere.

Scarcely were the eyes of the other thrown upon the writing, when he said, "So, this isn't it, Power."

"To be sure it is, man," said Power. "Anne street is devilish seedy—but that's the quarter."

"Why, confound it, man," said the other, "there's not a word of that here."

"Read it out," said Power. "Proclaim aloud my victory."

Thus urged, Lechmere read:

"DEAR P.,—Please pay to my credit—and soon, mark ye—the two ponies lost this evening. I have done myself the pleasure of enjoying your ball, kissed the lady, quizzed the papa, and walked into the cunning Fred Power. Yours,

"FRANK WEBBER.

"'The Widow Malone, ohone!' is at your service."

Had a thunderbolt fallen at his feet, his astonishment could not have equaled the result of this revelation. He stamped, swore, raved, laughed, and almost went deranged. The joke was soon spread through the room, and from Sir George to poor Lucy, now covered with blushes at her part in the transaction, all was laughter and astonishment.

"Who is he? that is the question," said Sir George, who, with all the ridicule of the affair hanging over him, felt no common relief at the discovery of the imposition.

"A friend of O'Malley's," said Power, delighted, in his defeat, to involve another with himself.

"Indeed!" said the General, regarding me with a look of a very mingled cast.

"Quite true, sir," said I, replying to the accusation that his manner implied; "but equally so, that I neither knew of his plot, nor recognized him when here."

"I am perfectly sure of it, my boy," said the General; "and, after all, it was an excellent joke—carried a little too far, it's true; eh, Lucy?"

But Lucy either heard not, or affected not to hear; and, after some little further assurance that he felt not the least annoyed, the General turned to converse with some other friends; while I, burning with indignation against Webber, took a cold farewell of Miss Dashwood, and retired.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAST NIGHT IN TRINITY.

How I might have met Master Webber after his impersonation of Miss Macan, I cannot possibly figure to myself. Fortunately, indeed, for all parties, he left town early the next morning; and it was some weeks ere he returned. In the meanwhile, I became a daily visitor at the General's, dined there usually three or four times a week, rode out with Lucy constantly, and accompanied her every evening either to the theatre or into society. Sir George, possibly from my youth, seemed to pay little attention to an intimacy which he perceived every hour growing closer, and frequently gave his daughter into my charge in our morning excursions on horseback. As for me, my happiness was all but perfect. I loved, and already began to hope that I was not regarded with indifference; for, although Lucy's manner never absolutely evinced any decided preference toward me, yet many slight and casual circumstances served to show me that my attentions to her were neither unnoticed nor uncared for. Among the many gay and dashing companions of our rides, I remarked that, however anxious for such a distinction, none ever seemed to make any way in her good graces; and I had already gone far in my self-deception that I was destined for good fortune, when a circumstance which occurred one morning at length served to open my eyes to the truth, and blast, by one fatal breath, the whole harvest of my hopes.

We were about to set out one morning on a long ride, when Sir George's presence was required by the arrival of an officer who had been sent from the Horse Guards on official business. After half an hour's delay, Colonel Cameron, the officer in question, was introduced, and entered into

conversation with our party. He had only landed in England from the Peninsula a few days before, and had abundant information of the stirring events enacting there. At the conclusion of an anecdote—I forget what—he turned suddenly round to Miss Dashwood, who was standing beside me, and said in a low voice,

"And now, Miss Dashwood, I am reminded of a commission I promised a very old brother officer to perform. Can I have one moment's conversation with you in the window?"

As he spoke, I perceived that he crumpled beneath his glove something like a letter.

"To me?" said Lucy, with a look of surprise that sadly puzzled me whether to ascribe it to coquetry or innocence—"to me?"

"To you," said the Colonel, bowing; "and I am sadly deceived by my friend Hammersley—"

"Captain Hammersley?" said she, blushing deeply as she spoke.

I heard no more. She turned toward the window with the Colonel, and all I saw was, that he handed her a letter, which, having hastily broken open, and thrown her eyes over, she grew at first deadly pale—then red—and, while her eyes filled with tears, I heard her say, "How like him!—how truly generous this is!" I listened for no more—my brain was wheeling round, and my senses reeling—I turned and left the room—in another moment I was on my horse, galloping from the spot, despair, in all its blackness, in my heart—and, in my broken-hearted misery, wishing for death.

I was miles away from Dublin ere I remembered well what had occurred, and even then not over clearly; the fact that Lucy Dashwood, whom I imagined to be my own in heart, loved another, was all that I really knew. That one thought was all my mind was capable of, and in it my misery, my wretchedness were centered.

Of all the grief my life has known, I have had no moments like the long hours of that dreary night. My sorrow, in turn, took every shape and assumed every guise; now I remembered how the Dashwoods had courted my intimacy and encouraged my visits; how Lucy herself had evinced, in a thousand ways, that she felt a preference for me. I called to mind the many unequivocal proofs I had given her that my feeling, at least, was no common one; and yet, how had she sported with my affections, and jested with my happiness! That she loved Hammersley I had now a palpable proof; that this affection must have been mutual, and prosecuted at the very moment I was not only professing my own love for her, but actually receiving all but an avowal of its return—oh! it was too, too base; and, in my deepest heart, I cursed my folly, and vowed never to see her more.

It was late on the next day ere I retraced my steps toward town, my heart sad and heavy, careless what became of me for the future, and pondering whether I should not at once give up my college career, and return to my uncle. When I reached my chambers, all was silent and comfortless; Webber had not returned; my servant was from home; and I felt myself more than ever wretched in the solitude of what had been so oft the scene of noisy and festive gayety. I sat some hours in a half musing state, every sad depressing thought that blighted hopes can conjure up rising in turn before me. A loud knocking at the door at length aroused me. I got up and opened it. No one was there; I looked around, as well as the coming gloom of evening would permit, but saw nothing. I listened, and heard, at some distance off, my friend Power's manly voice, as he sang,

"Oh! love is the soul of an Irish Dragoon!"

I hallooed out, "Power!"

"Eh, O'Malley, is that you?" inquired he. "Why, then, it seems it required some deliberation whether you opened your door or not. Why, man, you can have no great gift of prophecy, or you wouldn't have kept me so long there."

"And have you been so?"

"Only twenty minutes; for, as I saw the key in the lock, I had determined to succeed, if noise would do it."

"How strange! I never heard it."

"Glorious sleeper you must be; but come, my dear fellow, you don't appear altogether awake yet."

"I have not been quite well these few days."

"Oh! indeed. The Dashwoods thought there must have been something of that kind the matter by your brisk retreat. They sent me after you yesterday; but, wherever you went, Heaven knows! I never could come up with you; so that your great news has been keeping these twenty-four hours longer than need be."

"I am not aware what you allude to."

"Well, you are not over-likely to be the wiser when you hear it, if you can assume no more intelligent look than that. Why, man, there's great luck in store for you."

"As how, pray? Come, Power, out

with it, though I can't pledge myself to feel half as grateful for my good fortune as I should do. What is it ?"

"You know Cameron ?"

"I have seen him," said I, reddening.

"Well, Old Camy, as we used to call him, has brought over, among his other news, your gazette."

"My gazette ? what do you mean ?"

"Confound your uncommon stupidity this evening. I mean, man, that you are one of us—gazetted to the 14th Light—the best fellows for love, war, and whisky that ever sported a sabretasche. 'Oh! love is the soul of an Irish Dragoon.' By Jove ! I am as delighted to have rescued you from the black harness of the King's Bench as though you had been a prisoner there. Know, then, friend Charley, that on Wednesday we proceed to Fermoy, join some score of gallant fellows—all food for powder—and, with the aid of a rotten transport and the stormy winds that blow, will be bronzing our beautiful faces in Portugal before the month's out. But come, now, let's see about supper. Some of ours are coming over here at eleven, and I promised them a deviled bone; and, as it's your last night among these classic precincts, let us have a shindy of it."

While I dispatched Mike to Morrison's to provide supper, I heard from Power that Sir George Dashwood had interested himself so strongly for me that I had obtained my cornetcy in the 14th; that, fearful lest any disappointment might arise, he had never mentioned the matter to me, but that he had previously obtained my uncle's promise to concur in the arrangement if his negotiation succeeded. It had so done, and now the long sought-for object of many days was within my grasp; but, alas ! the circumstance which lent it all its fascinations was a vanished dream; and what, but two days before, had rendered my happiness perfect, I listened to listlessly and almost without interest. Indeed, my first impulse at finding that I owed my promotion to Sir George, was to return a positive refusal of the cornetcy; but then I remembered how deeply such conduct would hurt my poor uncle, to whom I never could give an adequate explanation. So I heard Power in silence to the end, thanked him sincerely for his own good-natured kindness in the matter, which already, by the interest he had taken in me, went far to heal the wounds that my own solitary musings were deepening in my heart. At eighteen, fortunately, consolations are attainable that become more difficult at eight-and-twenty, and impossible at eight-and-thirty.

While Power continued to dilate upon the delights of a soldier's life—a theme which many a boyish dream had long since made hallowed to my thoughts—I gradually felt my enthusiasm rising, and a certain throbbing at my heart betrayed to me that, sad and dispirited as I felt, there was still within that buoyant spirit which youth possesses as its privilege, and which answers to the call of enterprise as the war-horse to the trumpet. That a career worthy of manhood, great, glorious, and inspiriting, opened before me, coming so soon after the late downfall of my hopes, was, in itself, a source of such true pleasure, that ere long I listened to my friend, and heard his narrative with breathless interest. A lingering sense of pique, too, had its share in all this. I longed to come forward in some manly and dashing part, where my youth might not be ever remembered against me, and when, having brought myself to the test, I might no longer be looked upon and treated as a boy.

We were joined at length by the other officers of the 14th, and, to the number of twelve, sat down to supper.

It was to be my last night in Old Trinity, and we resolved that the farewell should be a solemn one. Mansfield, one of the wildest young fellows in the regiment, had vowed that the leave-taking should be commemorated by some very decisive and open expression of our feelings, and had already made some progress in arrangements for blowing up the great bell, which had more than once obtruded upon our morning convivialities; but he was overruled by his more discreet associates, and we at length assumed our places at table, in the midst of which stood a *hecatomb* of all my college equipments, cap, gown, bands, etc. A funeral pile of classics was arrayed upon the hearth, surmounted by my "Book on the Cellar," and a punishment-roll waved its length, like a banner, over the doomed heroes of Greece and Rome.

It is seldom that any very determined attempt to be gay *par excellence* has a perfect success, but certainly upon this evening ours had. Songs, good stories, speeches, toasts, bright visions of the campaign before us, the wild excitement which such a meeting cannot be free from, gradually, as the wine passed from hand to hand, seized upon all, and about four in the morning, such was the uproar we caused, and so terrific the noise of our proceedings, that

the accumulated force of porters, sent one by one to demand admission, was now a formidable body at the door; and Mike at last came in to assure us that the Bursar, the most dread official of all collegians, was without, and insisted, with a threat of his heaviest displeasure, in case of refusal, that the door should be opened.

A committee of the whole house immediately sat upon the question, and it was at length resolved, *nemine contradicente*, that the request should be complied with. A fresh bowl of punch, in honor of our expected guest, was immediately concocted, a new broil put on the gridiron, and, having seated ourselves with as great a semblance of decorum as four bottles a man admits of, Curtis, the junior Captain, being most drunk, was deputed to receive the Bursar at the door, and introduce him to our august presence.

Mike's instructions were, that immediately on Dr. Stone, the Bursar's entering, the door was to be slammed to, and none of his followers admitted. This done, the Doctor was to be ushered in, and left to our own polite attentions.

A fresh thundering from without scarcely left time for further deliberation; and at last Curtis moved toward the door, in execution of his mission.

"Is there any one there?" said Mike, in a tone of most unsophisticated innocence, to a rapping that, having lasted three-quarters of an hour, threatened now to break in the panel. "Is there any one there?"

"Open the door this instant—the senior Bursar desires you—this instant."

"Sure it's night, and we're all in bed," said Mike.

"Mr. Webber—Mr. O'Malley," said the Bursar, now boiling with indignation, "I summon you, in the name of the Board, to admit me."

"Let the gemman in," hiccuped Curtis; and, at the same instant, the heavy bars were withdrawn, and the door opened, but so sparingly as with difficulty to permit the passage of the burly figure of the Bursar.

Forcing his way through, and regardless of what became of the rest, he pushed on vigorously through the ante-chamber, and before Curtis could perform his functions of usher, stood in the midst of us. What were his feelings at the scene before him, Heaven knows. The number of figures in uniform at once betrayed how little his jurisdiction extended to the great mass of the company, and he immediately turned toward me.

"Mr. Webber—"

"O'Malley, if you please, Mr. Bursar," said I, bowing with most ceremonious politeness.

"No matter, sir; *arcades ambo*, I believe."

"Both Archdeacons," said Melville, translating, with a look of withering contempt upon the speaker.

The Doctor continued, addressing me:

"May I ask, sir, if you believe yourself possessed of any privilege for converting this University into a common tavern?"

"I wish to Heaven he did," said Curtis; "capital tap your old Commons would make."

"Really, Mr. Bursar," replied I, modestly, "I had began to flatter myself that our little innocent gayety had inspired you with the idea of joining our party."

"I humbly move that the old cove in the gown do take the chair," sang out one. "All who are of this opinion say 'Ay.'" A perfect yell of ayes followed this. "All who are of the contrary say 'No.' The ayes have it."

Before the luckless Doctor had a moment for thought, his legs were lifted from under him, and he was jerked, rather than placed, upon a chair, and put sitting upon the table.

"Mr. O'Malley, your expulsion within twenty-four hours—"

"Hip, hip, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" drowned the rest, while Power, taking off the Doctor's cap, replaced it by a foraging cap, very much to the amusement of the party:

"There is no penalty the law permits of, that I shall not—"

"Help the Doctor," said Melville, placing a glass of punch in his unconscious hand.

"Now for a 'Viva la Compagnie!" said Telford, seating himself at the piano, and playing the first bars of that well-known air, to which, in our meetings, we were accustomed to improvise a doggerel in turn:

"I drink to the graces, Law, Physic, Divinity,
Viva la Compagnie!
And here's to the worthy old Bursar of Trinity
Viva la Compagnie!"

"Viva, viva la va!" etc., were chorused with a shout that shook the old walls, while Power took up the strain:

"Though with lace caps and gowns they look so like asses,
Viva la Compagnie!

They'd rather have punch than the springs of Parnassus,
Viva la Compagnie !

"What a nose the old gentleman has, by the way,
Viva la Compagnie !
Since he smelt out the devil from Botany Bay,*
Viva la Compagnie !"

Words cannot give even the faintest idea of the poor Bursar's feelings while these demoniacal orgies were enacting around him. Held fast in his chair by Lechmere and another, he glowered on the riotous mob around like a maniac, and astonishment that such liberties could be taken with one in his situation seemed to have surpassed even his rage and resentment; and every now and then a stray thought would flash across his mind that we were mad,—a sentiment which, unfortunately, our conduct was but too well calculated to inspire.

"So you're the morning lecturer, old gentleman, and have just dropped in here in the way of business; pleasant life you must have of it," said Casey, now by far the most tipsy man present.

"If you think, Mr. O'Malley, that the events of this evening are to end here—"

"Very far from it, Doctor," said Power; "I'll draw up a little account of the affair for 'Saunders.' They shall hear of it in every corner and nook of the kingdom."

"The Bursar of Trinity shall be a proverb for a good fellow that loveth his lush," hiccuped out Fegan.

"And if you believe that such conduct is academical," said the Doctor, with a withering sneer.

"Perhaps not," lisped Melville, tightening his belt; "but it's devilish convivial—eh, Doctor?"

"Is that like him?" said Moreton, producing a caricature, which he had just sketched.

"Capital—very good—perfect. M'Cleary shall have it in his window by noon today," said Power.

At this instant some of the combustibles disposed among the rejected habiliments of my late vocation caught fire, and squibs, crackers, and detonating shots went off on all sides. The Bursar, who had not been deaf to several hints and friendly suggestions about setting fire to him, blowing him up, etc., with one vigorous spring burst from his antagonists, and, clearing the table at a bound, reached the floor. Before he could be seized, he had gained the door, opened it, and was away. We gave chase, yelling like so many devils; but wine and punch, songs and speeches, had done their work, and more than one among the pursuers measured his length upon the pavement; while the terrified Bursar, with the speed of terror, held on his way, and gained his chambers, by about twenty yards in advance of Power and Melville, whose pursuit only ended when the oaken panel of the door shut them out from their victim. One loud cheer beneath his window served for our farewell to our friend, and we returned to my rooms. By this time a regiment of those classic functionaries, yclept porters, had assembled around the door, and seemed bent upon giving battle in honor of their maltreated ruler; but Power explained to them, in a neat speech, replete with Latin quotations, that their cause was a weak one, that we were more than their match, and, finally, proposed to them to finish the punch-bowl—to which we were really incompetent—a motion that met immediate acceptance; and old Duncan, with his hélmet in one hand, and a goblet in the other, wished me many happy days, and every luck in this life, as I stepped from the massive archway, and took my last farewell of Old Trinity.

Should any kind reader feel interested as to the ulterior course assumed by the Bursar, I have only to say that the terrors of the "Board" were never fulminated against me, harmless and innocent as I should have esteemed them. The threat of giving publicity to the entire proceedings by the papers, and the dread of figuring in a sixpenny caricature in M'Cleary's window, were too much for the worthy Doctor, and he took the wiser course, under the circumstances, and held his peace about the matter. I, too, have done so for many a year, and only now recall the scene among the wild transactions of early days and boyish follies.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PHŒNIX PARK.

WHAT a glorious thing it is, when our our first waking thoughts not only dispel some dark depressing dream, but arouse us to the consciousness of a new and bright career suddenly opening before us, buoyant in hope, rich in promise for the future! Life has nothing better than

* Botany Bay was the slang name given by college men to a new square rather remotely situated from the remainder of the college.

this. The bold spring by which the mind clears the depth that separates misery from happiness, is ecstasy itself; and, then, what a world of bright visions come teeming before us—what plans we form—what promises we make to ourselves in our own hearts—how prolific is the dullest imagination—how excursive the tamest fancy, at such a moment! In a few short and fleeting seconds, the events of a whole life are planned and pictured before us. Dreams of happiness and visions of bliss, of which all our after-years are insufficient to eradicate the *prestige*, come in myriads about us; and from that narrow aperture through which this new hope pierces into our heart, a flood of light is poured that illumines our path to the very verge of the grave. How many a success in after-days is reckoned but as one step in that ladder of ambition some boyish review has framed; perhaps, after all, destined to be the first and only one! With what triumph we hail some goal attained, some object of our wishes gained, less for its present benefit, than as the accomplishment of some youthful prophecy, when, picturing to our hearts all that we would have in life, we whispered within us the flattery of success.

Who is there who has not had some such moment? and who would exchange it, with all the delusive and deceptive influences by which it comes surrounded, for the greatest actual happiness he has partaken of? Alas! alas! it is only in the boundless expanse of such imaginations, unreal and fictitious as they are, that we are truly blessed. Our choicest blessings in life come even so associated with some sources of care, that the cup of enjoyment is not pure, but dregged in bitterness.

To such a world of bright anticipation did I awake on the morning after the events I have detailed in my last chapter. The first thing my eyes fell upon was an official letter from the Horse Guards:

"The Commander of the Forces desires that Mr. O'Malley will report himself, immediately on the receipt of this letter, at the headquarters of the regiment to which he is gazetted."

Few and simple as the lines were, how brimful of pleasure they sounded to my ears. The regiment to which I was gazetted! And so I was a soldier at last! the first wish of my boyhood was then really accomplished. And my uncle—what will he say?—what will he think?

"A letter, sir, by the post," said Mike, at the moment.

I seized it eagerly; it came from home, but was in Considine's handwriting. How my heart failed me as I turned to look at the seal. "Thank God!" said I, aloud, on perceiving that it was a red one. I now tore it open and read:

"My dear Charley,—Godfrey being laid up with the gout, has desired me to write to you by this day's post. Your appointment to the 14th, notwithstanding all his prejudices about the army, has given him sincere pleasure. I believe, between ourselves, that your college career, of which he has heard something, convinced him that your forte did not lie in the classics; you know I said so always, but nobody minded me. Your new prospects are all that your best friends could wish for you; you begin early; your corps is a crack one; you are ordered for service. What could you have more?

"Your uncle hopes, if you can get a few days' leave, that you will come down here before you join, and I hope so too; for he is unusually low spirited, and talks about his never seeing you again, and all that sort of thing.

"I have written to Merivale, your Colonel, on this subject, as well as generally on your behalf; we were cornets together forty years ago; a strict fellow you'll find him, but a trump on service. If you can't manage the leave, write a long letter home at all events; and so God bless you, and all success!

"Yours, sincerely,
"W. Considine."

"I had thought of writing you a long letter of advice for your new career, and, indeed, half accomplished one. After all, however, I can tell you little that your own good sense will not teach you as you go on, and experience is ever better than precept. I know of but one rule in life which admits of scarcely any exception, and having followed it upward of sixty years, approve of it only the more. Never quarrel when you can help it; but meet any man—your tailor, your hairdresser—if he wishes to have you out. W. C."

I had scarcely come to the end of this very characteristic epistle, when two more letters were placed upon my table. One was from Sir George Dashwood, inviting me to dinner, to meet some of my "brother officers." How my heart beat at the expression. The other was a short note,

marked "Private," from my late tutor, Dr. Mooney, saying, "that if I made a suitable apology to the Bursar for the late affair at my room, he might probably be induced to abandon any further step; otherwise,"—then followed innumerable threats about fine, penalties, expulsion, etc., that fell most harmlessly upon my ears. I accepted the invitation; declined the apology; and, having ordered my horse, cantered off to the barracks to consult my friend Power as to all the minor details of my career.

As the dinner hour grew near, my thoughts became again fixed upon Miss Dashwood, and a thousand misgivings crossed my mind, as to whether I should have nerve enough to meet her, without disclosing in my manner the altered state of my feelings, a possibility which I now dreaded fully as much as I had longed some days before to avow my affection for her, however slight its prospects of return. All my valiant resolves, and well-contrived plans for appearing unmoved and indifferent in her presence, with which I stored my mind while dressing, and when on the way to dinner, were, however, needless, for it was a party exclusively of men; and, as the coffee was served in the dinner-room, no move was made to the drawing-room by any of the company. "Quite as well as it is!" was my muttered opinion, as I got into my cab at the door. "All is at an end as regards me in her esteem, and I must not spend my days sighing for a young lady that cares for another." Very reasonable, very proper resolutions these; but, alas! I went home to bed, only to think half the night long of the fair Lucy, and dream of her the remainder of it.

When morning dawned, my first thought was, shall I see her once more? shall I leave her for ever thus abruptly? or, rather, shall I not unburden my bosom of its secret, confess my love, and say farewell? I felt such a course much more in unison with my wishes than the day before; and, as Power had told me that, before a week, we should present ourselves at Fermoy, I knew that no time was to be lost.

My determination was taken. I ordered my horse, and, early as it was, rode out to the Royal Hospital. My heart beat so strongly as I rode up to the door, that I half resolved to return. I rang the bell. Sir George was in town. Miss Dashwood had just gone five minutes before to spend some days at Carton. "It is fate!" thought I, as I turned from the spot, and walked slowly beside my horse toward Dublin.

In the few days that intervened before my leaving town, my time was occupied from morning to night; the various details of my uniform, outfit, etc., were undertaken for me by Power. My horses were sent for to Galway, and I myself, with innumerable persons to see, and a mass of business to transact, contrived, at least three times a day, to ride out to the Royal Hospital, always to make some trifling inquiry for Sir George, and always to hear repeated that Miss Dashwood had not returned.

Thus passed five of my last six days in Dublin, and, as the morning of the last opened, it was with a sorrowing spirit that I felt my hour of departure approach, without one only opportunity of seeing Lucy, even to say good-by.

While Mike was packing in one corner, and I in another was concluding a long letter to my poor uncle, my door opened and Webber entered.

"Eh, O'Malley, I'm only in time to say adieu! it seems. To my surprise this morning I found you had cut the 'Silent Sister.' I feared I should be too late to catch one glimpse of you ere you started for the wars."

"You are quite right, Master Frank, and I scarcely expected to have seen you. Your last brilliant achievement at Sir George's very nearly involved me in a serious scrape."

"A mere trifle. How confoundedly silly Power must have looked, eh? Should like so much to have seen his face. He booked up next day—very proper fellow. By-the-by, O'Malley, I rather like the little girl; she is decidedly pretty; and her foot—did you remark her foot?—capital."

"Yes, she's very good-looking," said I, carelessly.

"I'm thinking of cultivating her a little," said Webber, pulling up his cravat and adjusting his hair at the glass. "She's spoiled by all the tinsel vaporing of her hussar and aide-de-camp acquaintances; but something may be done for her, eh?"

"With your most able assistance and kind intentions."

"That's what I mean exactly. Sorry you're going—devilish sorry. You served out Stone gloriously: perhaps it's as well, though; you know they'd have expelled you: but still something might turn up; soldiering is a bad style of thing, eh? How the old General did take his sister-in-law's presence to heart. But he must forgive and forget, for I'm going to be very great friends with him and Lucy. Where are you going now?"

"I'm about to try a new horse before troops," said I. "He's staunch enough with the cry of the fox-pack in his ears, but I don't know how he'll stand a peal of artillery."

"Well, come along," said Webber; "I'll ride with you." So saying, we mounted and set off to the Park, where two regiments of cavalry and some horse artillery were ordered for inspection.

The review was over when we reached the exercising ground, and we slowly walked our horses toward the end of the Park, intending to return to Dublin by the road. We had not proceeded far, when, some hundred yards in advance, we perceived an officer riding with a lady, followed by an orderly dragoon.

"There he goes," said Webber; "I wonder if he'd ask me to dinner, if I were to throw myself in his way?"

"Who do you mean?" said I.

"Sir George Dashwood, to be sure, and, *la voilà*, Miss Lucy. The little darling rides well, too: how squarely she sits her horse. O'Malley, I've a weakness there; upon my soul I have."

"Very possible," said I; "I am aware of another friend of mine participating in the sentiment."

"One Charles O'Malley, of his Majesty's—"

"Nonsense, man—no, no. I mean a very different person, and, for all I can see, with some reason to hope for success."

"Oh, as to that, we flatter ourselves the thing does not present any very considerable difficulties."

"As how, pray?"

"Why, of course, like all such matters, a very decisive determination to be, to do, and to suffer, as Lindley Murray says, carries the day. Tell her she's an angel every day for three weeks. She may laugh a little at first, but she'll believe it in the end. Tell her that you have not the slightest prospect of obtaining her affection, but still persist in loving her. That, finally, you must die from the effects of despair, etc., but rather like the notion of it than otherwise. That you know she has no fortune; that you haven't a sixpence; and who should marry, if people whose position in the world was similar did not?"

"But halt: pray, how are you to get time and place for all such interesting conversations?"

"Time and place! Good Heavens, what a question! Is not every hour of the twenty-four the fittest? Is not every place the most suitable? A sudden pause in the organ of St. Patrick's did, it is true, catch me once in a declaration of love, but the choir came in to my aid and drowned the lady's answer. My dear O'Malley, what could prevent you this instant, if you are so disposed, from doing the amiable to the darling Lucy there?"

"With the father for an umpire, in case we disagreed," said I.

"Not at all. I should soon get rid of him."

"Impossible, my dear friend."

"Come now, just for the sake of convincing your obstinacy. If you like to say good-by to the little girl without a witness, I'll take off the he-dragon."

"You don't mean—"

"I do, man—I do mean it." So saying, he drew a crimson silk handkerchief from his pocket, and fastened it round his waist like an officer's sash. This done, and telling me to keep in their wake for some minutes, he turned from me, and was soon concealed by a copse of whitethorn near us.

I had not gone above a hundred yards farther when I heard Sir George's voice calling for the orderly. I looked, and saw Webber at a considerable distance in front, curvetting and playing all species of antics. The distance between the General and myself was now so short, that I overheard the following dialogue with his sentry.

"He's not in uniform, then?"

"No, sir; he has a round hat."

"A round hat!"

"His sash—"

"A sword and sash. This is too bad. I'm determined to find him out."

"How d'ye do, General?" cried Webber, as he rode toward the trees.

"Stop, sir," shouted Sir George.

"Good day, Sir George," replied Webber, retiring.

"Stay where you are, Lucy," said the General, as, dashing spurs into his horse, he sprang forward at a gallop, incensed beyond endurance that his most strict orders should be so openly and insultingly transgressed.

Webber led on to a deep hollow, where the road passed between two smooth slopes, covered with furze trees, and from which it emerged afterward in the thickest and most intricate part of the Park. Sir George dashed boldly after, and in less than half a minute both were lost to my view, leaving me in breathless amazement at Master Frank's ingenuity, and some puzzle as to my own future movements.

"Now then, or never!" said I, as I pushed boldly forward, and in an instant was alongside of Miss Dashwood.

Her astonishment at seeing me so suddenly, increased the confusion from which I felt myself suffering, and, for some minutes, I could scarcely speak. At last, I plucked up courage a little, and said:

"Miss Dashwood, I have looked most anxiously, for the last four days, for the moment which chance has now given me. I wished, before I parted forever with those to whom I owe already so much, that I should, at least, speak my gratitude ere I said good-by."

"But when do you think of going?"

"To-morrow. Captain Power, under whose command I am, has received orders to embark immediately for Portugal."

I thought—perhaps it was but a thought—that her cheek grew somewhat paler as I spoke; but she remained silent; and I, scarcely knowing what I had said, or whether I had finished, spoke not either.

"Papa, I am sure, is not aware," said she, after a long pause, "of your intention of leaving so soon; for, only last night, he spoke of some letters he meant to give you to some friends in the Peninsula; besides, I know"—here she smiled faintly—"that he destined some excellent advice for your ears, as to your new path in life, for he has an immense opinion of the value of such to a young officer."

"I am, indeed, most grateful to Sir George, and truly never did any one stand more in need of counsel than I do." This was said half musingly, and not intended to be heard.

"Then, pray, consult papa," said she, eagerly; "he is much attached to you, and will, I'm certain, do all in his power—"

"Alas! I fear not, Miss Dashwood."

"Why, what can you mean? Has anything so serious occurred?"

"No, no; I'm but misleading you, and exciting your sympathy with false pretenses. Should I tell you all the truth, you would not pardon, perhaps not hear me."

"You have, indeed, puzzled me; but if there is anything in which my father—"

"Less him than his daughter," said I, fixing my eyes full upon her as I spoke. "Yes, Lucy, I feel I must confess it, cost what it may, I love you; stay, hear me out: I know the fruitlessness, the utter despair, that awaits such a sentiment. My own heart tells me that I am not, cannot be, loved in return; yet, would I rather cherish in its core my affection slighted and unblessed, such as it is, than own another heart. I ask for nothing, I hope for nothing; I merely entreat that, for my truth, I may meet belief, and, for my heart's worship of her whom alone I can love, compassion. I see that you at least pity me. Nay, one word more; I have one favor more to ask; it is my last, my only one. Do not, when time and distance may have separated us—perhaps forever—think that the expressions I now use are prompted by a mere sudden ebullition of boyish feeling—do not attribute to the circumstance of my youth alone the warmth of the attachment I profess; for I swear to you, by every hope I have, that, in my heart of hearts, my love to you is the source and spring of every action in my life, of every aspiration in my heart; and, when I cease to love you, I shall cease to feel.

"And now, farewell—farewell forever." I pressed her hand to my lips, gave one long, last look, turned my horse rapidly away, and, ere a minute, was far out of sight of where I had left her.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ROAD.

POWER was detained in town by some orders from the Adjutant-General, so that I started for Cork the next morning, with no other companion than my servant Mike. For the first few stages upon the road, my own thoughts sufficiently occupied me, to render me insensible or indifferent to all else. My opening career—the prospects my new life as a soldier held out—my hopes of distinction—my love of Lucy, with all its train of doubts and fears—passed in review before me, and I took no note of time till far past noon. I now looked to the back part of the coach, where Mike's voice had been, as usual, in the ascendant for some time, and perceived that he was surrounded by an eager auditory of four raw recruits, who, under the care of a sergeant, were proceeding to Cork to be enrolled in their regiment. The sergeant, whose minutes of wakefulness were only those when the coach stopped to change horses and when he got down to mix a "summat hot," paid little attention to his followers, leaving them perfectly free in all their movements, to listen to Mike's eloquence, and profit by his suggestions, should they deem fit. Master Michael's services to his new acquaintances, I began to perceive, were not exactly of the same nature as Dibdin is reported to have rendered to our navy in the late war. Far from it—his theme was no contemptuous

disdain for danger—no patriotic enthusiasm to fight for home and country—no proud consciousness of British valor, mingled with the appropriate hatred of our mutual enemies; on the contrary, Mike's eloquence was enlisted for the defendant. He detailed, and in no unimpressive way either, the hardships of a soldier's life; its dangers, its vicissitudes, its chances, its possible penalties, its inevitably small rewards; and, in fact, so completely did he work on the feelings of his hearers, that I perceived more than one glance exchanged between the victims, that certainly betokened anything save the resolve to fight for King George. It was at the close of a long and most powerful appeal upon the superiority of any other line of life, petty larceny and small felony inclusive, that he concluded with the following quotation:

"Thrue for ye boys!

"'With your red scarlet coat,
You're as proud as a goat,
And your long cap and feather.'

But, by the piper that played before Moses! it's more whipping nor gingerbread is going on amongst them, av ye knew but all, and heerd the misfortune that happened to my father."

"And was he a sodger?" inquired one.

"Troth was he, more sorrow to him, and wasn't he a'most whipped one day, for doing what he was bid?"

"Musha, but that was hard."

"To be sure it was hard; but, faix, when my father seen that they didn't know their own minds, he thought, anyhow, he knew his, so he ran away, and devil a bit of him they ever cotch afther. Maybe, ye might like to hear the story, and there's instruction in it for yez too."

A general request to this end being preferred by the company, Mike took a shrewd look at the sergeant, to be sure that he was still sleeping, settled his coat comfortably across his knees, and began:

"Well, it's a good many years ago my father 'listed in the North Cork, just to oblige Mr. Barry, the landlord there; 'for,' says he, 'Phil,' says he, 'it's not a soldier ye'll be at all, but my own man, to brush my clothes and go errands, and the like o' that; and the King, long life to him! will help to pay ye for your trouble. Ye understand me?' Well, my father agreed, and Mr. Barry was as good as his word. Never a guard did my father mount, nor as much as a drill had he, nor a roll-call, nor anything at all, save and except wait on the Captain, his master, just as pleasant as need be, and no inconvenience in life.

"Well, for three years this went on as I am telling, and the regiment was ordered down to Bantry, because of a report that the 'boys' was rising down there; and the second evening there was a night party patrolling with Captain Barry for six hours in the rain, and the Captain, God be merciful to him! tuk cowld and died; more by token, they said it was drink, but my father says it wasn't; 'for,' says he, 'after he tuk eight tumblers comfortable,' my father mixed the ninth, and the Captain waved his hand this way, as much as to say he'd have no more. 'Is it that ye mean?' says my father. And the Captain nodded. 'Musha, but it's sorry I am,' says my father, 'to see you this way, for ye must be bad entirely to leave off in the beginning of the evening.' And thrue for him, the Captain was dead in the morning.

"A sorrowful day it was for my father when he died. It was the finest place in the world; little to do; plenty of divarsion; and a kind man he was—when he was drunk. Well, then, when the Captain was buried and all was over, my father hoped they'd be for letting him away, as he said, 'Sure, I'm no use in life to anybody, save the man that's gone, for his ways are all I know, and I never was a sodger.' But, upon my conscience, they had other thoughts in their heads; for they ordered him into the ranks to be drilled just like the recruits they took the day before.

"'Musha, isn't this hard?' said my father. 'Here I am, an ould vitrin that ought to be discharged on a pension, with two-and-sixpence a day, obliged to go capering about the barrack-yard practicing the goose-step, or some other nonsense not becoming my age nor my habits.' But so it was. Well, this went on for some time, and, sure, if they were hard on my father, hadn't he his revenge, for he nigh broke their hearts with his stupidity. Oh! nothing in life could equal him; devil a thing, no matter how easy, he could learn at all, and so far from caring for being in confinement, it was that he liked best. Every sergeant in the regiment had a trial of him, but all to no good; and he seemed striving so hard to learn all the while that they were loth to punish him, the ould rogue!

"This was going on for some time, when, one day, news came in that a body of the rebels, as they called them, was coming down from the Gap of Mulnavick to storm the town and burn all before them. The whole regiment was of coorse under

arms, and great preparations was made for a battle. Meanwhile, patrols were ordered to scour the roads, and sentries posted at every turn of the way and every rising ground to give warning when the boys came in sight; and my father was placed at the Bridge of Drumsnag, in the wildest and bleakest part of the whole country, with nothing but furze mountains on every side, and a straight road going over the top of them.

"'This is pleasant,' says my father, as soon as they left him there alone by himself, with no human creature to speak to, nor a whisky-shop within ten miles of him; 'cowld comfort,' says he, 'on a winter's day, and faix, but I have a mind to give ye the slip.'

"Well, he put his gun down on the bridge and he lit his pipe, and he sat down under an ould tree and began to ruminate upon his affairs.

"'Oh, then, it's wishing it well I am,' says he, 'for sodgering; and bad luck to the hammer that struck the shilling that listed me, that's all,' for he was mighty low in his heart.

"Just then a noise came rattling down near him. He listened, and, before he could get on his legs, down comes the General, ould Cohoon, with an orderly after him.

"'Who goes that?' says my father.

"'The round,' says the General, looking about all the time to see where was the sentry, for my father was snug under the tree.

"'What round?' says my father.

"'The grand round,' says the General, more puzzled than afore.

"'Pass on, grand round, and God save you kindly!' says my father, putting his pipe in his mouth again, for he thought all was over.

"'D—n your soul, where are you?' says the General, for sorrow bit of my father could he see yet.

"'It's here I am,' says he, 'and a cowld place I have of it; and if it wasn't for the pipe I'd be lost entirely.'

"The words wasn't well out of his mouth when the General began laughing till ye'd think he'd fall off his horse; and the dragoon behind him—more by token, they say it wasn't right for him—laughed as loud as himself.

"'Yer a droll sentry,' says the General, as soon as he could speak.

"'Be-gorra, it's little fun there's left in me,' says my father, 'with this drilling, and parading, and blackguarding about the roads all night.'

"'And is this the way you salute your officer?' says the General.

"'Just so,' says my father; 'devil a more politeness ever they taught me.'

"'What regiment do you belong to?' says the General.

"'The North Cork, bad luck to them!' says my father, with a sigh.

"'They ought to be proud of ye,' says the General.

"'I'm sorry for it,' says my father, sorrowfully, 'for maybe they'll keep me the longer.'

"'Well, my good fellow,' says the General, 'I haven't more time to waste here; but let me teach you something before I go. Whenever your officer passes, it's your duty to present to him.'

"'Arrah, it's jokin' ye are,' says my father.

"'No, I'm in earnest,' says he, 'as ye might learn, to your cost, if I brought you to a court-martial.'

"'Well, there's no knowing,' says my father, 'what they'd be up to; but sure, if that's all, I'll do it, with all "the veins," whenever yer coming this way again.'

"The General began to laugh again here, but said,

"'I'm coming back in the evening,' says he, 'and mind you don't forget your respect to your officer.'

"'Never fear, sir,' says my father; 'and many thanks to you for your kindness for telling me.'

"Away went the General, and the orderly after him, and, in ten minutes, they were out of sight.

"The night was falling fast, and one-half of the mountain was quite dark already, when my father began to think they were forgetting him entirely. He looked one way, and he looked another, but sorra bit of a sergeant's guard was coming to relieve him. There he was, fresh and fasting, and daren't go for the bare life. 'I'll give you a quarter of an hour more,' says my father, 'till the light leaves that rock up there; after that,' says he, 'by the mass! I'll be off, av it cost me what it may.'

"Well, sure enough, his courage was not needed this time; for what did he see at the same moment, but a shadow of something coming down the road opposite the bridge. He looked again; and then he made out the General himself, that was walking his horse down the steep part of the mountain, followed by the orderly. My father immediately took up his musket off the wall, settled his belts, shook the ashes out of his pipe, and put it into his pocket,

making himself as smart and neat-looking as he could be, determining, when ould Cohoon came up, to ask him for leave to go home, at least for the night. Well, by this time the General was turning a sharp part of the cliff that looks down upon the bridge, from where you might look five miles round on every side. 'He sees me,' says my father; 'but I'll be just as quick as himself.' No sooner said than done; for, coming forward to the parapet of the bridge, he up with his musket to his shoulder, and presented it straight at the General. It wasn't well there, when the officer pulled up his horse quite short, and shouted out, 'Sentry! sentry!'

"'Anan?' says my father, still covering him.

"'Down with your musket, you rascal. Don't you see it's the grand round?'

"'To be sure I do,' says my father, never changing for a minute.

"'The ruffian will shoot me,' says the General.

"'Devil a fear,' says my father, 'av it doesn't go off of itself.'

"'What do you mean by that, you villain?' says the General, scarcely able to speak with fright, for, every turn he gave on his horse, my father followed with the gun—'what do you mean?'

"'Sure, ain't I presenting?' says my father. 'Blood an ages! do you want me to fire next?'

"With that the General drew a pistol from his holster, and took deliberate aim at my father; and there they both stood for five minutes, looking at each other, the orderly all the while breaking his heart laughing behind a rock; for, ye see, the General knew av he retreated that my father might fire on purpose, and, av he came on, that he might fire by chance; and sorra bit he knew what was best to be done.

"'Are ye going to pass the evening up there, grand round?' says my father; 'for it's tired I'm getting houldin' this so long.'

"'Port arms!' shouted the General, as if on parade.

"'Sure I can't, till yer past,' says my father, angrily; 'and my hand's trembling already.'

"'By Heavens! I shall be shot,' says the General.

"'Be-gorra, it's what I'm afraid of,' says my father; and the words wasn't out of his mouth before off went the musket—bang—and down fell the General, smack on the ground, senseless. Well, the orderly ran out at this, and took him up and examined his wound; but it wasn't a wound at all, only the wadding of the gun; for my father—God be kind to him!—ye see, could do nothing right; and so he bit off the wrong end of the cartridge when he put it in the gun, and, by reason, there was no bullet in it. Well, from that day after they never got a sight of him; for, the instant that the General dropped, he sprang over the bridge-wall and got away; and what, between living in a lime-kiln for two months, eating nothing but blackberries and sloes, and other disguises, he never returned to the army, but ever after took to a civil situation, and driv a hearse for many years."

How far Mike's narrative might have contributed to the support of his theory, I am unable to pronounce; for his auditory were, at some distance from Cork, made to descend from their lofty position, and join a larger body of recruits, all proceeding to the same destination, under a strong escort of infantry. For ourselves, we reached the "beautiful city" in due time, and took up our quarters at the Old George Hotel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CORK.

THE undress rehearsal of a new piece, with its dirty-booted actors, its cloaked and hooded actresses *en papillote*, bears about the same relation to the gala, wax-lit, and bespangled ballet, as the raw young gentleman of yesterday to the epauletted, belted, and sabretasched dragoon, whose transformation is due to a few hours of head-quarters, and a few interviews with the Adjutant.

So, at least, I felt it; and it was with a very perfect concurrence in his Majesty's taste in a uniform, and a most entire approval of the regimental tailor, that I strutted down George's street a few days after my arrival in Cork. The transports had not as yet come round; there was a great doubt of their doing so for a week or so longer; and I found myself, as the dashing Cornet, the center of a thousand polite attentions and most kind civilities.

The officer under whose orders I was placed for the time was a great friend of Sir George Dashwood's, and paid me, in consequence, much attention. Major Dalrymple had been on the staff from the commencement of his military career—had served in the Commissariat for some time—was much on foreign stations; but never, by any of the many casualties of his

life, had seen what could be called service. His ideas of the soldier's profession were, therefore, what might almost be as readily picked up by a commission in the battle-axe guards, as one in his Majesty's Fiftieth. He was now a species of district Paymaster, employed in a thousand ways, either inspecting recruits, examining accounts, revising sick certificates, or receiving contracts for mess beef. Whether the nature of his manifold occupations had enlarged the sphere of his talents and ambition, or whether the abilities had suggested the variety of his duties, I know not; but truly, the Major was a man of all work. No sooner did a young Ensign join his regiment at Cork, than Major Dalrymple's card was left at his quarters; the next day came the Major himself; the third brought an invitation to dinner; on the fourth he was told to drop in, in the evening; and, from thenceforward, he was the *ami de la maison*, in company with numerous others as newly fledged and inexperienced as himself.

One singular feature of the society at the house was that, although the Major was as well known as the flag on Spike Island, yet, somehow, no officer above the rank of an Ensign was ever to be met with there. It was not that he had not a large acquaintance; in fact, the "How are you, Major?"—"How goes it, Dalrymple?" that kept everlastingly going on as he walked the streets, proved the reverse; but, strange enough, his predilections leaned toward the newly-gazetted, far before the bronzed and seared campaigners who had seen the world, and knew more about it. The reasons for this line of conduct were twofold: in the first place, there was not an article of outfit, from a stock to a sword-belt, that he could not and did not supply to the young officer; from the gorget of the infantry to the shako of the grenadier, all came within his province; not that he actually kept a *magasin* of these articles, but he had so completely interwoven his interests with those of numerous shopkeepers in Cork, that he rarely entered a shop over whose door Dalrymple & Co. might not have figured on the sign-board. His stables were filled with a perfect infirmary of superannuated chargers, fattened and conditioned up to a miracle, and groomed to perfection. He could get you—*only you*—about three dozen of sherry, to take out with you as sea-store; he knew of such a servant; he chanced upon such a camp-furniture yesterday in his walks; in fact, why want for anything? His resources were inexhaustible—his kindness unbounded.

Then money was no object—hang it, you could pay when you liked—what signified it? In other words, a bill at thirty-one days, cashed and discounted by a friend of the Major's, would always do. While such were the unlimited advantages his acquaintance conferred, the sphere of his benefits took another range. The Major had two daughters; Matilda and Fanny were as well known in the army as Lord Fitzroy Somerset or Picton, from the Isle of Wight to Halifax, from Cape Coast to Chatham, from Belfast to the Bermudas. Where was the subaltern who had not knelt at the shrine of one or the other, if not of both, and vowed eternal love until a change of quarters? In plain words, the Major's solicitude for the service was such, that, not content with providing the young officer with all the necessary outfit of his profession, he longed also to supply him with a comforter for his woes, a charmer for his solitary hours, in the person of one of his amiable daughters. Unluckily, however, the necessity for a wife is not enforced by "general orders," as is the cut of your coat, or the length of your sabre; consequently, the Major's success in the home department of his diplomacy was not destined for the same happy results that awaited it when engaged about drill trowsers and camp kettles, and the Misses Dalrymple remained Misses through every clime and every campaign. And yet, why was it so? It is hard to say. What would men have? Matilda was a dark-haired, dark-eyed, romantic-looking girl, with a tall figure and a slender waist, with more poetry in her head than would have turned any ordinary brain; always unhappy; in need of consolation; never meeting with the kindred spirit that understood her; destined to walk the world alone, her fair thoughts smothered in the recesses of her own heart. Devilish hard to stand this, when you began in a kind of platonic friendship on both sides. More than one poor fellow nearly succumbed, particularly when she came to quote Cowley, and told him, with tears in her eyes,

"There are hearts that live and love alone," etc.

I'm assured that this *coup de grace* rarely failed in being followed by a downright avowal of open love, which, somehow, what between the route coming, what with waiting for leave from home, etc., never got further than a most tender scene, and exchange of love tokens; and, in fact, such became so often the termination, that Power swears Matty had to make a firm

resolve about cutting off any more hair, fearing a premature baldness during the recruiting season.

Now, Fanny had selected another arm of the service. Her hair was fair; her eyes blue, laughing, languishing—mischief-loving blue, with long lashes, and a look in them that was wont to leave its impression rather longer than you exactly knew of; then, her figure was *petite*, but perfect; her feet Canova might have copied; and her hand was a study for Titian; her voice, too, was soft and musical, but full of that *gaiété de cœur* that never fails to charm. While her sister's style was *il penseroso*, hers was *l'allegro;* every imaginable thing, place, or person supplied food for her mirth, and her sister's lovers all came in for their share. She hunted with Smith Barry's hounds; she yachted with the Cove Club; she coursed, practiced at a mark with a pistol, and played chicken hazard with all the cavalry; for, let it be remarked as a physiological fact, Matilda's admirers were almost invariably taken from the infantry, while Fanny's adorers were as regularly dragoons. Whether the former be the romantic arm of the service, and the latter be more adapted to dull realities, or whether the phenomenon had any other explanation, I leave to the curious. Now this arrangement, proceeding upon that principle which has wrought such wonders in Manchester and Sheffield—the division of labor—was a most wise and equitable one; each having her one separate and distinct field of action, interference was impossible; not but that when, as in the present instance, cavalry was in the ascendant, Fanny would willingly spare a dragoon or two to her sister, who likewise would repay the debt when occasion offered.

The mamma—for it is time I should say something of the head of the family—was an excessively fat, coarse-looking, dark-skinned personage, of some fifty years, with a voice like a boatswain in a quinsy. Heaven can tell, perhaps, why the worthy Major allied his fortunes with hers, for she was evidently of a very inferior rank in society; could never have been aught than downright ugly; and I never heard that she brought him any money. "Spoiled five," the national amusement of her age and sex in Cork, scandal, the changes in the army list, the failures in speculation of her luckless husband, the forlorn fortunes of the girls, her daughters, kept her in occupation; and her days were passed in one perpetual unceasing current of dissatisfaction and ill-temper with all around, that formed a heavy counterpoise to the fascinations of the young ladies. The repeated jiltings to which they had been subject had blunted any delicacy upon the score of their marriage, and if the newly introduced Cornet or Ensign was not coming forward, as became him, at the end of the requisite number of days, he was sure of receiving a very palpable admonition from Mrs. Dalrymple. Hints, at first dimly shadowed, that Matilda was not in spirits this morning; that Fanny, poor child, had a headache—directed especially at the culprit in question, grew gradually into those little motherly fondnesses in mamma, that, like the fascinations of the rattlesnake, only lure on to ruin. The doomed man was pressed to dinner when all others were permitted to take their leave; he was treated like one of the family, God help him! After dinner, the Major would keep him an hour over his wine, discussing the misery of an ill-assorted marriage; detailing his own happiness in marrying a woman like the Tonga Islander I have mentioned; hinting that girls should be brought up, not only to become companions to their husbands, but with ideas fitting their station; if his auditor were a military man, that none but an old officer (like him) could know how to educate girls (like his); and that, feeling he possessed two such treasures, his whole aim in life was to guard and keep them,—a difficult task, when proposals of the most flattering kind were coming constantly before him. Then followed a fresh bottle, during which the Major would consult his young friend upon a very delicate affair, no less than a proposition for the hand of Miss Matilda, or Fanny, whichever he was supposed to be soft upon. This was generally a *coup de maître;* should he still resist, he was handed over to Mrs. Dalrymple, with a strong indictment against him, and rarely did he escape a heavy sentence. Now, is it not strange, that two really pretty girls, with fully enough of amiable and pleasing qualities to have excited the attention and won the affections of many a man, should have gone on for years—for, alas! they did so in every climate, under every sun—to waste their sweetness in this miserable career of intrigue and mantrap, and yet nothing come of it? But so it was: the first question a newly-landed regiment was asked, if coming from where they resided, was, "Well, how are the girls?" "Oh, gloriously. Matty is there." "Ah, indeed! poor thing." "Has Fan sported a new habit?" "Is it the old gray with the hussar braiding? confound

it, that was seedy when I saw them in Corfu. And Mother Dal as fat and vulgar as ever?" "Dawson of ours was the last, and was called up for sentence when we were ordered away; of course, he bolted," etc. Such was the invariable style of question and answer concerning them; and, although some few, either from good feeling or fastidiousness, relished but little the mode in which it had become habitual to treat them, I grieve to say that, generally, they were pronounced fair game for every species of flirtation and love-making without any "intentions" for the future. I should not have trespassed so far upon my readers' patience, were I not, in recounting these traits of my friends above, narrating matters of history. How many are there who may cast their eyes upon these pages, that will say, "Poor Matilda, I knew her at Gibraltar. Little Fanny was the life and soul of us all in Quebec."

"Mr. O'Malley," said the Adjutant, as I presented myself in the afternoon of my arrival in Cork, to a short, punchy, little red-faced gentleman, in a short jacket and ducks, "you are, I perceive, appointed to the 14th; you will have the goodness to appear on parade to-morrow morning. The riding-school hours are ———. The morning drill is ———; evening drill ———. Mr. Minchin, you are a 14th man, I believe; no, I beg pardon, a Carbineer, but no matter—Mr. O'Malley, Mr. Minchin; Captain Dounie, Mr. O'Malley; you'll dine with us to-day, and to-morrow you shall be entered at the mess."

"Yours are at Santarem, I believe?" said an old weather-beaten looking officer with one arm.

"I'm ashamed to say, I know nothing whatever of them—I received my gazette unexpectedly enough."

"Ever in Cork before, Mr. O'Malley?"

"Never," said I.

"Glorious place," lisped a white-eyelashed, knocker-kneed Ensign; "splendid *gals*, eh?"

"Ah, Brunton," said Minchin, "you may boast a little, but we poor devils—"

"Know the Dals?" said the hero of the lisp, addressing me.

"I haven't that honor," I replied, scarcely able to guess whether what he alluded to were objects of the picturesque or a private family.

"Introduce him, then, at once," said the Adjutant; "we'll all go in the evening. What will the old squaw think?"

"Not I," said Minchin. "She wrote to the Duke of York about my helping Matilda at supper, and not having any honorable intentions afterward."

"We dine at 'The George' to-day, Mr. O'Malley, sharp seven. Until then—"

So saying, the little man bustled back to his accounts, and I took my leave with the rest, to stroll about the town till dinner-time.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ADJUTANT'S DINNER.

THE Adjutant's dinner was as professional an affair as need be. A circuit or a learned society could not have been more exclusively devoted to their own separate and immediate topics than were we. Pipeclay in all its varieties came on the *tapis;* the last regulation cap—the new button—the promotions—the general orders—the Colonel, and the Colonel's wife—stoppages, and the mess fund, were all well and ably discussed; and, strange enough, while the conversation took this wide range, not a chance allusion, not one stray hint, ever wandered to the brave fellows who were covering the army with glory in the Peninsula, nor one souvenir of him that was even then enjoying a fame, as a leader, second to none in Europe. This surprised me not a little at the time; but I have, since that, learned how little interest the real services of an army possess for the ears of certain officials, who, stationed at home quarters, pass their inglorious lives in the details of drill, parade, mess-room gossip, and barrack scandal. Such, in fact, were the dons of the present dinner. We had a Commissary-General, an inspecting Brigade-Major of something, a Physician to the Forces, the Adjutant himself, and Major Dalrymple; the *oi polloi* consisting of the raw Ensign, a newly-fledged Cornet (Mr. Sparks), and myself.

The Commissary told some very pointless stories about his own department, the Doctor read a dissertation upon Walcheren fever, the Adjutant got very stupidly tipsy, and Major Dalrymple succeeded in engaging the three juniors of the party to tea, having previously pledged us to purchase nothing whatever of outfit without his advice, he well knowing (which he did) how young fellows like us were cheated, and resolving to be a father to us (which he certainly tried to be).

As we rose from the table about ten o'clock, I felt how soon a few such dinners would succeed in disenchanting me of all

my military illusions; for, young as I was, I saw that the Commissary was a vulgar bore, the Doctor a humbug, the Adjutant a sot, and the Major himself I greatly suspected to be an old rogue.

"You are coming with us, Sparks?" said Major Dalrymple, as he took me by one arm and the Ensign by the other. "We are going to have a little tea with the ladies; not five minutes' walk."

"Most happy, sir," said Mr. Sparks, with a very flattered expression of countenance.

"O'Malley, you know Sparks, and Burton too."

This served for a species of triple introduction, at which we all bowed, simpered, and bowed again. We were very happy to have the pleasure, etc.

"How pleasant to get away from these fellows!" said the Major, "they are so uncommonly prosy: that Commissary with his mess-beef, and old Pritchard, with black doses and rigors; nothing so insufferable. Besides, in reality, a young officer never needs all that nonsense: a little medicine chest—I'll get you one each tomorrow for five pounds; no, five pounds ten; the same thing—that will see you all through the Peninsula. Remind me of it in the morning." This we all promised to do, and the Major resumed: "I say, Sparks, you've got a real prize in that gray horse, such a trooper as he is. O'Malley, you'll be wanting something of that kind, if we can find it out for you."

"Many thanks, Major, but my cattle are on the way here already. I've only three horses, but I think they are tolerably good ones."

The Major now turned to Burton, and said something in a low tone, to which the other replied,

"Well, if you say so, I'll get it, but it's devilish dear."

"Dear! my young friend; cheap, dog cheap."

"Only think, O'Malley, a whole brass bed, camp-stool, basin-stand, all complete, for sixty pounds! If it was not that a widow was disposing of it in great distress, one hundred could not buy it. Here we are; come along—no ceremony. Mind the two steps; that's it. Mrs. Dalrymple, Mr. O'Malley; Mr. Sparks, Mr. Burton, my daughters. Is tea over, girls?"

"Why, papa, it's near eleven o'clock," said Fanny, as she rose to ring the bell, displaying, in so doing, the least possible portion of a very well turned ankle.

Miss Matilda Dal laid down her book, but, seemingly lost in abstraction, did not deign to look at us. Mrs. Dalrymple, however, did the honors with much politeness, and having, by a few adroit and well-put queries, ascertained everything concerning our rank and position, seemed perfectly satisfied that our intrusion was justifiable.

While my *confrère*, Mr. Sparks, was undergoing his examination, I had time to look at the ladies, whom I was much surprised at finding so very well looking; and as the Ensign had opened a conversation with Fanny, I approached my chair toward the other, and having carelessly turned over the leaves of the book she had been reading, drew her on to talk of it. As my acquaintance with young ladies hitherto had been limited to those who had "no soul," I felt some difficulty at first in keeping up with the exalted tone of my fair companion, but, by letting her take the lead for some time, I got to know more of the ground. We went on tolerably together, every moment increasing my stock of technicals, which were all that was needed to sustain the conversation. How often have I found the same plan succeed—whether discussing a question of law or medicine—with a learned professor of either; or, what is still more difficult, canvassing the merits of a preacher, or a doctrine, with a serious young lady, whose "blessed privileges" were at first a little puzzling to comprehend.

I so contrived it, too, that Miss Matilda should seem as much to be making a convert to her views as to have found a person capable of sympathizing with her; and thus long before the little supper, with which it was the Major's practice to regale his friends every evening, made its appearance, we had established a perfect understanding together—a circumstance that, a bystander might have remarked, was productive of a more widely diffused satisfaction than I could have myself seen any just cause for. Mr. Burton was also progressing, as the Yankees say, with the sister. Sparks had booked himself as purchaser of military stores enough to make the campaign of the whole globe, and we were thus all evidently fulfilling our various vocations, and affording perfect satisfaction to our entertainers.

Then came the spatch-cock, and the sandwiches, and the negus, which Fanny first mixed for papa, and, subsequently, with some little pressing, for Mr. Burton; Matilda the romantic assisted *me*. Sparks helped himself; then we laughed, and told stories, pressed Sparks to sing, which, as he declined, we only pressed the more. How, invariably, by-the-by, is it the cus-

tom to show one's appreciation of anything like a butt, by pressing him for a song. The Major was in great spirits, told us anecdotes of his early life in India, and how he once contracted to supply the troops with milk, and made a purchase, in consequence, of some score of cattle, which turned out to be bullocks. Matilda recited some lines from Pope in my ear. Fanny challenged Burton to a rowing match. Sparks listened to all around him, and Mrs. Dalrymple mixed a very little weak punch, which Dr. Lucas had recommended to her, to take the last thing at night—*Noctes cœnæque*— Say what you will, these were very jovial little *réunions*. The girls were decidedly very pretty. We were in high favor, and when we took leave at the door, with a very cordial shake hands, it was with no *arrière pensée* we promised to see them in the morning.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ENTANGLEMENT.

When we think for a moment over all the toils, all the anxieties, all the fevered excitement of a *grande passion*, it is not a little singular that love should so frequently be elicited by a state of mere idleness; and yet nothing, after all, is so predisposing a cause as this. Where is the man between eighteen and eight-and-thirty—might I not say forty—who, without any very pressing duns, and having no taste for strong liquor and *rouge et noir*, can possibly lounge through the long hours of his day, without, at least, fancying himself in love? The thousand little occupations it suggests become a necessity of existence; its very worries are like the wholesome opposition that purifies and strengthens the frame of a free state. Then, what is there half so sweet as the reflective flattery which results from our appreciation of an object who, in return, deems us the *ne plus ultra* of perfection? There it is, in fact—that confounded bump of self-esteem does it all, and has more imprudent matches to answer for than all the occipital protuberances that ever scared poor Harriet Martineau.

Now, to apply my moralizing. I very soon, to use the mess phrase, got "devilish spooney" about the "Dals." The morning drill, the riding-school, and the parade, were almost fervently consigned to a certain military character that shall be nameless, as detaining me from some appointment made the evening before; for, as I supped there each night, a party of one kind or another was always planned for the day following. Sonetimes we had a boating excursion to Cove; sometimes, a picnic at Foaty; now, a rowing party to Glanmire, or a ride, at which I furnished the cavalry. These doings were all under my especial direction, and I thus became speedily the organ of the Dalrymple family; and the simple phrase, "It was Mr. O'Malley's arrangement," "Mr. O'Malley wished it," was like the "*Moi le roi*" of Louis XIV.

Though all this while we continued to carry on most pleasantly, Mrs. Dalrymple, I could perceive, did not entirely sympathize with our projects of amusement. As an experienced engineer might feel, when watching the course of some storming projectile—some brilliant congreve—flying over a besieged fortress, yet never touching the walls nor harming the inhabitants, so she looked on at all these demonstrations of attack with no small impatience, and wondered when would the breach be reported practicable. Another puzzle also contributed its share of anxiety—which of the girls was it? To be sure, he spent three hours every morning with Fanny; but, then, he never left Matilda the whole evening. He had given his miniature to one; a locket with his hair was a present to the sister. The Major thinks he saw his arm round Matilda's waist in the garden; the housemaid swears she saw him kiss Fanny in the pantry. Matilda smiles when we talk of his name with her sister's; Fanny laughs outright, and says, "Poor Matilda, the man never dreamed of her." This is becoming uncomfortable; the Major must ask his intentions—it is, certainly, one or the other; but, then, we have a right to know which. Such was a very condensed view of Mrs. Dalrymple's reflections on this important topic—a view taken with her usual tact and clear-sightedness.

Matters were in this state, when Power at length arrived in Cork, to take command of our detachment, and make the final preparations for our departure. I had been, as usual, spending the evening at the Major's, and had just reached my quarters, when I found my friend sitting at my fire, smoking his cigar and solacing himself with a little brandy and water.

"At last," said he, as I entered—"at last! Why, where the deuce have you been till this hour—past two o'clock? There is no ball, no assembly going on, eh?"

"No," said I, half blushing at the eagerness of the inquiry; "I've been spending the evening with a friend."

"Spending the evening! say, rather, the night. Why, confound you, man, what is there in Cork to keep you out of bed till near three?"

"Well, if you must know, I've been supping at a Major Dalrymple's—a devilish good fellow—with two such daughters!"

"Ahem!" said Power, shutting one eye knowingly, and giving a look like a Yorkshire horse-dealer. "Go on."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Go on—continue."

"I've finished—I've nothing more to tell."

"So, they're here, are they!" said he, reflectingly.

"Who?" said I.

"Matilda and Fanny, to be sure."

"Why, you know them, then?"

"I should think I do?"

"Where have you met them?"

"Where have I not? When I was in the Rifles, they were quartered at Zante. Matilda was just then coming it rather strong with Villiers, of ours, a regular greenhorn. Fanny, also, nearly did for Harry Nesbitt, by riding a hurdle race. Then they left for Gibraltar, in the year ——what year was it?"

"Come, come," said I, "this is a humbug: the girls are quite young; you just have heard their names."

"Well, perhaps so; only tell me which is your peculiar weakness, as they say in the west, and maybe I'll convince you."

"Oh! as to that," said I, laughing, "I'm not very far gone on either side."

"Then Matilda, probably, has not tried you with Cowley, eh?—you look a little pink—'There are hearts that live and love alone.' Oh! poor fellow, you've got it. By Jove, how you've been coming it, though, in ten days! She ought not to have got to that for a month, at least; and how like a young one it was, to be caught by the poetry. Oh! Master Charley, I thought that the steeple-chaser might have done most with your Galway heart—the girl in the gray habit, that sings 'Moddirederoo,' ought to have been the prize. Halt! by St. George, but that tickles you also! Why, zounds, if I go on, probably, at this rate, I'll find a tender spot occupied by the 'black lady herself.'"

It was no use concealing, or attempting to conceal, anything from my inquisitive friend; so I mixed my grog, and opened my whole heart; told how I had been conducting myself for the entire preceding fortnight; and, when I concluded, sat silently awaiting Power's verdict, as though a jury were about to pronounce upon my life.

"Have you ever written?"

"Never; except, perhaps, a few lines, with tickets for the theater, or something of that kind."

"Have you copies of your correspondence?"

"Of course not. Why, what do you mean?"

"Has Mrs. Dal been ever present, or, as the French say, has she assisted, at any of your tender interviews with the young ladies?"

"I'm not aware that one kisses a girl before mamma."

"I'm not speaking of that; I merely allude to flirtation."

"Oh! I suppose she has seen me attentive."

"Very awkward, indeed! There is only one point in your favor; for, as your attentions were not decided, and as the law does not, as yet, permit polygamy—"

"Come, come, you know I never thought of marrying."

"Ah! but they did."

"Not a bit of it."

"Ay, but they did. What do you wager but that the Major asks your intentions, as he calls it, the moment he hears the transport has arrived?"

"By Jove! now you remind me, he asked this evening when he could have a few minutes' private conversation with me to-morrow, and I thought it was about some confounded military chest or sea-store, or one of his infernal contrivances that he every day assures me are indispensable; though, if every officer had only as much baggage as I have got, under his directions, it would take two armies, at least, to carry the effects of the fighting one."

"Poor fellow!" said he, starting upon his legs; "what a burst you've made of it!" So saying, he began, in a nasal twang,

"I publish the banns of marriage between Charles O'Malley, late of his Majesty's 14th Dragoons, and —— Dalrymple, spinster, of this city—"

"I'll be hanged if you do, though," said I, seeing pretty clearly, by this time, something of the estimation my friends were held in. "Come, Power, pull me through, like a dear fellow—pull me through, without doing anything to hurt the girls' feelings."

"Well, we'll see about it," said he—

"I PUBLISH THE BANNS OF MARRIAGE BETWEEN CHARLES O'MALLEY, LATE OF HIS MAJESTY'S 14TH DRAGOONS, AND —— DALRYMPLE, SPINSTER, OF THIS CITY." (P. 716.)

"we'll see about it in the morning; but, at the same time, let me assure me, the affair is not so easy as you may, at first blush, suppose. These worthy people have been so often 'done'—to use the cant phrase—before, that scarcely a *ruse* remains untried. It is of no use pleading that your family won't consent—that your prospects are null—that you are ordered for India—that you are engaged elsewhere—that you have nothing but your pay—that you are too young or too old—all such reasons, good and valid with any other family, will avail you little here. Neither will it serve your cause that you may be warranted by a doctor as subject to periodical fits of insanity; monomaniacal tendencies to cut somebody's throat, etc. Bless your heart, man, they have a soul above such littlenesses. They care nothing for consent of friends, means, age, health, climate, prospects, or temper. Firmly believing matrimony to be a lottery, they are not superstitious about the number they pitch upon; provided only that they get a ticket, they are content."

"Then it strikes me, if what you say is correct, that I have no earthly chance of escape, except some kind friend will undertake to shoot me."

"That has been also tried."

"Why, how do you mean?"

"A mock duel, got up at mess—we had one at Malta. Poor Vickers was the hero of that affair. It was right well planned, too. One of the letters was suffered, by mere accident, to fall into Mrs. Dal's hands, and she was quite prepared for the event, when he was reported shot, the next morning. Then the young lady, of course, whether she cared or not, was obliged to be perfectly unconcerned, lest the story of engaged affections might get wind, and spoil another market. The thing went on admirably, till one day, some few months later, they saw, in a confounded army-list, that the late George Vickers was promoted to the 18th Dragoons, so that the trick was discovered, and is, of course, stale at present."

"Then could I not have a wife already, and a large family of interesting babes?"

"No go—only swell the damages, when they come to prosecute. Besides, your age and looks forbid the assumption of such a fact. No, no; we must go deeper to work."

"But where shall we go?" said I, impatiently; "for it appears to me these good people have been treated to every trick and subterfuge that ever ingenuity suggested."

"Come, I think I have it; but it will need a little more reflection. So now, let us to bed. I'll give you the result of my lucubrations at breakfast; and, if I mistake not, we may get you through this without any ill consequences. Good-night, then, old boy; and now dream away of your lady-love till our next meeting."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PREPARATION.

To prevent needless repetitions in my story, I shall not record here the conversation which passed between my friend Power and myself on the morning following at breakfast. Suffice it to say, that the plan proposed by him for my rescue was one I agreed to adopt, reserving to myself, in case of failure, a *pis aller* of which I knew not the meaning, but of whose efficacy Power assured me I need not doubt.

"If all fail," said he,—"if every bridge break down beneath you, and no road of escape be left, why, then, I believe you must have recourse to another alternative. Still I should wish to avoid it, if possible, and I put it to you, in honor, not to employ it unless as a last expedient. You promise me this?"

"Of course," said I, with great anxiety for the dread final measure. "What is it?"

He paused, smiled dubiously, and resumed:

"And, after all—but, to be sure, there will not be need for it—the other plan will do—must do. Come, come, O'Malley, the Admiralty say that nothing encourages drowning in the navy like a life-buoy. The men have such a prospect of being picked up, that they don't mind falling overboard; so, if I give you this life-preserver of mine, you'll not swim an inch. Is it not so, eh?"

"Far from it," said I. "I shall feel in honor bound to exert myself the more, because I now see how much it costs you to part with it."

"Well, then, hear it. When everything fails—when all your resources are exhausted—when you have totally lost your memory, in fact, and your ingenuity in excuses, say—but mind, Charley, not till then—say that you must consult your friend, Captain Power, of the 14th, that's all."

"And is this it?" said I, quite disappointed at the lame and impotent conclusion to all the high-sounding exordium; "is this all?"

"Yes," said he, "that is all. But stop, Charley; is not that the Major crossing the street there? Yes, to be sure it is, and, by Jove! he has got on the old braided frock this morning. Had you not told me one word of your critical position, I should have guessed there was something in the wind from that. That same vestment has caused many a stout heart to tremble that never quailed before a shot or shell."

"How can that be? I should like to hear."

"Why, my dear boy, that's his explanation coat, as we called it at Gibraltar. He was never known to wear it except when asking some poor fellow's 'intentions.' He would no more think of sporting it as an every-day affair, than the Chief Justice would go cock-shooting in his black cap and ermine. Come, he is bound for your quarters, and, as it will not answer our plans to let him see you now, you had better hasten down-stairs, and get round by the back way into George's street, and you'll be at his house before he can return."

Following Power's directions, I seized my foraging-cap, and got clear out of the premises before the Major had reached them. It was exactly noon as I sounded my loud and now well-known summons at the Major's knocker. The door was quickly opened; but, instead of dashing up-stairs, four steps at a time, as was my wont, to the drawing-room, I turned short into the dingy-looking little parlor on the right, and desired Matthew, the venerable servitor of the house, to say that I wished particularly to see Mrs. Dalrymple for a few minutes, if the hour were not inconvenient.

There was something perhaps of excitement in my manner—some flurry in my look, or some trepidation in my voice—or perhaps it was the unusual hour—or the still more remarkable circumstance of my not going at once to the drawing-room, that raised some doubts in Matthew's mind as to the object of my visit; and, instead of at once complying with my request to inform Mrs. Dalrymple that I was there, he cautiously closed the door, and, taking a quick but satisfactory glance round the apartment to assure himself that we were alone, he placed his back against it, and heaved a deep sigh.

We were both perfectly silent; I in total amazement at what the old man could possibly mean; he, following up the train of his own thoughts, comprehended little or nothing of my surprise, and evidently was so engrossed by his reflections that he had neither ears nor eyes for aught around him. There was a most singular semi-comic expression in the old withered face that nearly made me laugh at first; but, as I continued to look steadily at it, I perceived that, despite the long-worn wrinkles that low Irish drollery and fun had furrowed around the angles of his mouth, the real character of his look was one of sorrowful compassion.

Doubtless my readers have read many interesting narratives, wherein the unconscious traveler in some remote land has been warned of a plan to murder him, by some mere passing wink, a look, a sign, which some one, less steeped in crime, less hardened in iniquity than his fellows, has ventured for his rescue. Sometimes, according to the taste of the narrator, the interesting individual is an old woman, sometimes a young one, sometimes a black-bearded bandit, sometimes a child, and, not unfrequently, a dog is humane enough to do this service. One thing, however, never varies; be the agent biped or quadruped, dumb or speechful, young or old, the stranger invariably takes the hint, and gets off scot free, for his sharpness. This never-varying trick on the doomed man, I had often been sceptical enough to suspect; however, I had not been many minutes a spectator of the old man's countenance, when I most thoroughly recanted my errors, and acknowledged myself wrong. If ever the look of a man conveyed a warning, his did; but there was more in it than even that; there was a tone of sad and pitiful compassion, such as an old gray-bearded rat might be supposed to put on at seeing a young and inexperienced one opening the hinge of an iron trap, to try its efficacy upon his neck. Many a little occasion had presented itself, during my intimacy with the family, of doing Matthew some small services, of making him some trifling presents; so that, when he assumed before me the gesture and look I have mentioned, I was not long in deciphering his intentions.

"Matthew!" screamed a sharp voice, which I recognized at once for that of Mrs. Dalrymple. "Matthew! where is the old fool?"

But Matthew heard not, or heeded not.

"Matthew! Matthew! I say."

"I'm comin', ma'am," said he, with a sigh, as, opening the parlor-door, he turned upon me one look of such import, that only the circumstances of my story can explain its force, or my reader's own ingenious imagination can supply.

"Never fear, my good old friend," said I, grasping his hand warmly, and leaving a guinea in the palm—"Never fear."

"God grant it, sir!" said he, settling on his wig in preparation for his appearance in the drawing-room.

"Matthew; the old wretch!"

"Mr. O'Malley," said the often-called Matthew, as, opening the door, he announced me unexpectedly among the ladies there assembled, who, not hearing of my approach, were evidently not a little surprised and astonished.

Had I really been the enamored swain that the Dalrymple family were willing to believe, I half suspect that the prospect before me might have cured me of my passion. A round bullet-head, *papillotè* with the *Cork Observer*, where still-born babes and maids of all work were descanted upon in very legible type, was now the substitute for the classic front and Italian ringlets of *la belle* Matilda, while the chaste Fanny herself, whose feet had been a fortune for a statuary, was, in the most slatternly and slipshod attire, pacing the room in a towering rage, at some thing, place, or person unknown (to me). If the ballet-master at the *Académie* could only learn to get his imps, demons, angels, and goblins "off" half as rapidly as the two young ladies retreated on my being announced, I answer for the piece so brought out having a run for half the season. Before my eyes had regained their position parallel to the plane of the horizon, they were gone, and I found myself alone with Mrs. Dalrymple. Now, she stood her ground, partly to cover the retreat of the main body, partly too, because—representing the baggage-wagons, ammunition stores, hospital staff, etc.—her retirement from the field demanded more time and circumspection than the light brigade

Let not my readers suppose that the *mère* Dalrymple was so perfectly faultless in costume that her remaining was a matter of actual indifference; far from it. She evidently had a struggle for it; but a sense of duty decided her, and, as Ney doggedly held back to cover the retreating forces on the march from Moscow, so did she resolutely lurk behind till the last flutter of the last petticoat assured her that the fugitives were safe. Then did she hesitate for a moment what course to take; but, as I assumed my chair beside her, she composedly sat down, and, crossing her hands before her, waited for an explanation of this ill-timed visit.

Had the Horse Guards, in the plenitude of their power and the perfection of their taste, ordained that the 79th and 42d Regiments should in future, in lieu of their respective tartans, wear flannel kilts and black worsted hose, I could readily have fallen into the error of mistaking Mrs. Dalrymple for a field-officer in the new regulation dress; the philabeg finding no mean representation in a capacious pincushion that hung down from her girdle, while a pair of shears, not scissors, corresponded to the dirk. After several ineffectual efforts upon her part to make her vestment (I know not its fitting designation) cover more of her legs than its length could possibly effect, and, after some most bland smiles and half blushes at dishabille, etc., were over, and that I had apologized most humbly for the unusually early hour of my call, I proceeded to open my negotiations, and unfurl my banner for the fray.

"The old *Racehorse* has arrived at last," said I, with a half sigh, "and I believe that we shall not obtain a very long time for our leave-taking; so that, trespassing upon your very great kindness, I have ventured upon an early call."

"The *Racehorse*, surely, can't sail tomorrow," said Mrs. Dalrymple, whose experience of such matters made her a very competent judge; "her stores—"

"Are taken in already," said I, "and an order from the Horse Guards commands us to embark in twenty-four hours; so that, in fact, we scarcely have time to look about us."

"Have you seen the Major?" inquired Mrs. Dalrymple, eagerly.

"Not to-day," I replied, carelessly; "but, of course, during the morning we are sure to meet. I have many thanks yet to give him for all his most kind attentions."

"I know he is most anxious to see you," said Mrs. Dalrymple, with a very peculiar emphasis, and evidently desiring that I should inquire the reasons of this anxiety. I, however, most heroically forbore indulging my curiosity, and added that I should endeavor to find him on my way to the barracks; and then, hastily looking at my watch, I pronounced it a full hour later than it really was, and, promising to spend the evening—my last evening—with them, I took my leave, and hurried away, in no small flurry, to be once more out of reach of Mrs. Dalrymple's fire, which I every moment expected to open upon me.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SUPPER.

POWER and I dined together *tête-à-tête* at the hotel, and sat chatting over my ad-

ventures with the Dalrymples till nearly nine o'clock.

"Come, Charley," said he, at length, "I see your eye wandering very often toward the time-piece; another bumper, and I'll let you off. What shall it be?"

"What you like," said I, upon whom a share of three bottles of strong claret had already made a very satisfactory impression.

"Then champagne for the *coup de grace*. Nothing like your *vin mousseux* for a critical moment—every bubble that rises sparkling to the surface, prompts some bright thought, or elicits some brilliant idea, that would only have been drowned in your more sober fluids. Here's to the girl you love, whoever she be."

"To her bright eyes, then, be it," said I, clearing off a brimming goblet of nearly half the bottle, while my friend Power seemed multiplied into any given number of gentlemen standing amid something like a glass manufactory of decanters.

"I hope you feel steady enough for this business," said my friend, examining me closely with the candle.

"I'm an Archdeacon," muttered I, with one eye involuntarily closing.

"You'll not let them double on you!"

"Trust me, old boy," said I, endeavoring to look knowing.

"I think you'll do," said he; "so now march; I'll wait for you here, and we'll go on board together; for old Bloater, the skipper, says he'll certainly weigh by daybreak."

"Till then," said I, as, opening the door, I proceeded very cautiously to descend the stairs, affecting all the time considerable *nonchalance*, and endeavoring, as well as my thickened utterance would permit, to hum,

"Oh! love is the soul of an Irish dragoon."

If I was not in the most perfect possession of my faculties in the house, the change to the open air, certainly, but little contributed to their restoration, and I scarcely felt myself in the street when my brain became absolutely one whirl of maddened and confused excitement. Time and space are nothing to a man thus enlightened, and so they appeared to me; scarcely a second had elapsed when I found myself standing in the Dalrymples' drawing-room.

If a few hours had done much to metamorphose *me*, certes, they had done something for my fair friends also—anything more unlike what they appeared in the morning can scarcely be imagined. Matilda in black, with her hair in heavy madonna bands upon her fair cheek, now paler even than usual, never seemed so handsome; while Fanny, in a light blue dress, with blue flowers in her hair, and a blue sash, looked the most lovely piece of coquetry ever man set his eyes upon. The old Major, too, was smartened up, and put into an old regimental coat that he had worn during the siege of Gibraltar; and lastly, Mrs. Dalrymple herself was attired in a very imposing costume, that made her, to my not over-accurate judgment, look very like an elderly bishop in a flame-colored cassock. Sparks was the only stranger, and wore upon his countenance, as I entered, a look of very considerable embarrassment, that even my thick-sightedness could not fail of detecting.

Parlez-moi de l'amitié, my friends. Talk to me of the warm embrace of your earliest friend, after years of absence; the cordial and heartfelt shake-hands of your old school companion, when, in after-years, a chance meeting has brought you together, and you have had time and opportunity for becoming distinguished and in repute, and are rather a good hit to be known to than otherwise; of the close grip you give your second when he comes up to say, that the gentleman with the loaded detonator opposite won't fire—that he feels he's in the wrong. Any or all of these together, very effective and powerful though they be, are light in the balance, when compared with the two-handed compression you receive from the gentleman that expects you to marry one of his daughters.

"My dear O'Malley, how goes it? Thought you'd never come," said he, still holding me fast and looking me full in the face, to calculate the extent to which my potations rendered his flattery feasible.

"Hurried to death with preparations, I suppose," said Mrs. Dalrymple, smiling blandly. "Fanny dear, some tea for him."

"Oh, mamma, he does not like all that sugar; surely not," said she, looking up with a most sweet expression; as though to say, "I at least know his tastes."

"I believed you were going without seeing us," whispered Matilda, with a very glassy look about the corner of her eyes.

Eloquence was not just then my forte, so that I contented myself with a very intelligible look at Fanny, and a tender squeeze of Matilda's hand, as I seated myself at the table.

Scarcely had I placed myself at the tea-table with Matilda beside, and Fanny opposite me, each vying with the other in

their delicate and kind attentions, when I totally forgot all my poor friend Power's injunctions and directions for my management. It is true, I remembered that there was a scrape of some kind or other to be got out of, and one requiring some dexterity too, but what, or with whom, I could not for the life of me determine. What the wine had begun the bright eyes completed; and, amid the witchcraft of silky tresses and sweet looks, I lost all my reflection, till the impression of an impending difficulty remained fixed in my mind, and I tortured my poor, weak, and erring intellect to detect it. At last, and by a mere chance, my eyes fell upon Sparks, and, by what mechanism I contrived it I know not, but I immediately saddled him with the whole of my annoyances, and attributed to him and to his fault any embarrassment I labored under.

The physiological reason of the fact I'm very ignorant of, but for the truth and frequency I can well vouch, that there are certain people, certain faces, certain voices, certain whiskers, legs, waistcoats, and guard-chains, that inevitably produce the most striking effects upon the brain of a gentleman already excited by wine, and not exactly cognizant of his own peculiar fallacies.

These effects are not produced merely among those who are quarrelsome in their cups, for I call the whole 14th to witness that I am not such; but, to any person so disguised, the inoffensiveness of the object is no security on the other hand, for I once knew an eight-day clock kicked down a barrack stairs by an old Scotch major, because he thought it was laughing at him. To this source alone, whatever it be, can I attribute the feeling of rising indignation with which I contemplated the luckless Cornet, who, seated at the fire, unnoticed and uncared for, seemed a very unworthy object to vent anger or ill-temper upon.

"Mr. Sparks, I fear," said I, endeavoring at the time to call up a look of very sovereign contempt—"Mr. Sparks, I fear, regards my visit here in the light of an intrusion."

Had poor Mr. Sparks been told to proceed incontinently up the chimney before him, he could not have looked more aghast. Reply was quite out of his power; so sudden and unexpectedly was this charge of mine made, that he could only stare vacantly from one to the other, while I, warming with my subject, and perhaps—but I'll not swear it—stimulated by a gentle pressure from a soft hand near me, continued:

"If he thinks, for one moment, that my attentions in this family are in any way to be questioned by him, I can only say—"

"My dear O'Malley, my dear boy!" said the Major, with the look of a father-in-law in his eye.

"The spirit of an officer and a gentleman spoke there," said Mrs. Dalrymple, now carried beyond all prudence, by the hope that my attack might arouse my dormant friend into a counter-declaration: nothing, however, was further from poor Sparks, who began to think he had been unconsciously drinking tea with five lunatics.

"If he supposes," said I, rising from my chair, "that his silence will pass with me as any palliation—"

"Oh dear!—oh dear! there will be a duel. Papa dear, why don't you speak to Mr. O'Malley?"

"There now, O'Malley, sit down. Don't you see he is quite in error?"

"Then, let him say so," said I, fiercely.

"Ah, yes, to be sure," said Fanny; "do say it; say anything he likes, Mr. Sparks."

"I must say," said Mrs. Dalrymple, "however sorry I may feel in my own house to condemn any one, that Mr. Sparks is very much in the wrong."

Poor Sparks looked like a man in a dream.

"If he will tell Charles—Mr. O'Malley, I mean," said Matilda, blushing scarlet, "that he meant nothing by what he said—"

"But I never spoke—never opened my lips!" cried out the wretched man, at length sufficiently recovered to defend himself.

"Oh, Mr. Sparks!"

"Oh, Mr. Sparks!"

"Oh, Mr. Sparks!" chorused the three ladies.

While the old Major brought up the rear with an "Oh! Sparks, I must say—"

"Then, by all the saints in the calendar, I must be mad," said he; "but if I have said anything to offend you, O'Malley, I am sincerely sorry for it."

"That will do, sir," said I, with a look of royal condescension at the *amende* I considered as somewhat late in coming, and resumed my seat.

This little *intermezzo*, it might be supposed, was rather calculated to interrupt the harmony of our evening: not so, however. I had apparently acquitted myself

like a hero, and was evidently in a white heat, in which I could be fashioned into any shape. Sparks was humbled so far, that he would probably feel it a relief to make any proposition; so that, by our opposite courses, we had both arrived at a point at which all the dexterity and address of the family had been long since aiming without success. Conversation then resumed its flow, and, in a few minutes, every trace of our late *fracas* had disappeared.

By degrees, I felt myself more and more disposed to turn my attention toward Matilda, and, dropping my voice into a lower tone, opened a flirtation of a most determined kind. Fanny had, meanwhile, assumed a place beside Sparks, and, by the muttered tones that passed between them, I could plainly perceive they were similarly occupied. The Major took up the *Southern Reporter*, of which he appeared deep in the contemplation, while Mrs. Dal herself buried her head in her embroidery, and neither heard nor saw anything around her.

I know, unfortunately, but very little of what passed between myself and my fair companion; I can only say that, when supper was announced at twelve (an hour later than usual), I was sitting upon the sofa, with my arm round her waist, my cheek so close, that already her lovely tresses brushed my forehead, and her breath fanned my burning brow.

"Supper, at last," said the Major, with a loud voice, to arouse us from our trance of happiness, without taking any mean opportunity of looking unobserved. "Supper, Sparks: O'Malley, come now—it will be some time before we all meet this way again."

"Perhaps not so long, after all," said I, knowingly.

"Very likely not," echoed Sparks, in the same key.

"I've proposed for Fanny," said he, whispering in my ear.

"Matilda's mine," replied I, with the look of an emperor.

"A word with you, Major," said Sparks, his eye flashing with enthusiasm, and his cheek scarlet—"one word: I'll not detain you."

They withdrew into a corner for a few seconds, during which Mrs. Dalrymple amused herself by wondering what the secret could be; why Mr. Sparks couldn't tell her; and Fanny, meanwhile, pretended to look for something at a side table, and never turned her head round.

"Then give me your hand," said the Major, as he shook Sparks's with a warmth of whose sincerity there could be no question. "Bess, my love," said he, addressing his wife: the remainder was lost in a whisper; but, whatever it was, it evidently redounded to Sparks's credit, for, the next moment, a repetition of the hand-shaking took place, and Sparks looked the happiest of men.

"*A mon tour*," thought I, "now," as I touched the Major's arm, and led him toward the window. What I said may be one day matter for Major Dalrymple's memoirs, if he ever writes them; but, for my part, I have not the least idea. I only know that, while I was yet speaking, he called over Mrs. Dal, who, in a frenzy of joy, seized me in her arms and embraced me. After which, I kissed her, shook hands with the Major, kissed Matilda's hand, and laughed prodigiously, as though I had done something confoundedly droll—a sentiment evidently participated in by Sparks, who laughed too, as did the others, and a merrier, happier party never sat down to supper.

"Make your company pleased with themselves," says Mr. Walker, in his *Original* work upon dinner-giving, "and everything goes on well." Now Major Dalrymple, without having read the authority in question, probably because it was not written at the time, understood the principle fully as well as the police-magistrate, and certainly was a proficient in the practice of it.

To be sure, he possessed one grand requisite for success—he seemed most perfectly happy himself. There was that *air dégagé* about him which, when an old man puts it on among his juniors, is so very attractive. Then the ladies, too, were evidently well pleased; and the usually austere mamma had relaxed her "rigid front" into a smile, in which any *habitué* of the house could have read our fate.

We ate, we drank, we ogled, smiled, squeezed hands beneath the table, and, in fact, so pleasant a party had rarely assembled round the Major's mahogany. As for me, I made a full disclosure of the most burning love, backed by a resolve to marry my fair neighbor, and settle upon her a considerably larger part of my native county than I had ever even rode over. Sparks, on the other side, had opened his fire more cautiously; but, whether taking courage from my boldness, or perceiving with envy the greater estimation I was held in, was now going the pace fully as fast as myself, and had commenced explanations of his intentions with regard to

Fanny that evidently satisfied her friends. Meanwhile, the wine was passing very freely, and the hints half uttered an hour before began now to be more openly spoken and canvassed.

Sparks and I hob-nobbed across the table, and looked unspeakable things at each other; the girls held down their heads; Mrs. Dal wiped her eyes; and the Major pronounced himself the happiest father in Europe.

It was now wearing late, or rather early; some gray streaks of dubious light were faintly forcing their way through the half-closed curtains, and the dread thought of parting first presented itself. A cavalry trumpet, too, at this moment sounded a call that aroused us from our trance of pleasure, and warned us that our moments were few. A dead silence crept over all, the solemn feeling which leave-taking ever inspires was uppermost, and none spoke. The Major was the first to break it.

"O'Malley, my friend; and you, Mr. Sparks; I must have a word with you, boys, before we part."

"Here let it be, then, Major," said I, holding his arm as he turned to leave the room; "here, now; we are all so deeply interested, no place is so fit."

"Well, then," said the Major, "as you desire it, now that I'm to regard you both in the light of my sons-in-law—at least, as pledged to become so—it is only fair as respects—"

"I see—I understand perfectly," interrupted I, whose passion for conducting the whole affair myself was gradually gaining on me. "What you mean is, that we should make known our intentions before some mutual friends ere we part—eh, Sparks? eh, Major?

"Right, my boy—right on every point."

"Well, then, I thought of all that; and if you'll just send your servant over to my quarters for our Captain—he's the fittest person, you know, at such a time—"

"How considerate!" said Mrs. Dalrymple.

"How perfectly just his idea is!" said the Major.

"We'll, then, in his presence, avow our present and unalterable determination as regards your fair daughters; and as the time is short—"

Here I turned toward Matilda, who placed her arm within mine; Sparks possessed himself of Fanny's hand, while the Major and his wife consulted for a few seconds.

"Well, O'Malley, all you propose is perfect. Now, then, for the Captain. Who shall he inquire for?"

"Oh, an old friend of yours," said I, jocularly; "you'll be glad to see him."

"Indeed!" said all together.

"Oh, yes, quite a surprise, I'll warrant it."

"Who can it be? who on earth is it?"

"You can't guess," added I, with a very knowing look; "knew you at Corfu: a very intimate friend indeed, if he tell the truth."

A look of something like embarrassment passed around the circle at these words, while I, wishing to end the mystery, resumed:

"Come, then, who can be so proper for all parties, at a moment like this, as our mutual friend, Captain Power?"

Had a shell fallen into the cold grouse pie in the midst of us, scattering death and destruction on every side, the effect could scarcely have been more frightful than that my last words produced. Mrs. Dalrymple fell with a sough upon the floor, motionless as a corpse; Fanny threw herself, screaming, upon a sofa; Matilda went off into strong hysterics upon the hearth-rug; while the Major, after giving me a look a maniac might have envied, rushed from the room in search of his pistols, with a most terrific oath to shoot somebody, whether Sparks or myself, or both of us, on his return, I cannot say. Fanny's sobs and Matilda's cries, assisted by a drumming process by Mrs. Dal's heels upon the floor, made a most infernal concert, and effectually prevented anything like thought or reflection; and, in all probability, so overwhelmed was I at the sudden catastrophe I had so innocently caused, I should have waited in due patience for the Major's return, had not Sparks seized my arm, and cried out:

"Run for it, O'Malley; cut like fun, my boy, or we're done for."

"Run—why?—what for?—where?" said I, stupefied by the scene before me.

"Here he is!" called out Sparks, as, throwing up the window, he sprang out upon the stone sill, and leaped into the street. I followed mechanically, and jumped after him, just as the Major had reached the window. A ball whizzed by me, that soon determined my further movements; so, putting on all speed, I flew down the street, turned the corner, and regained the hotel breathless and without a hat, while Sparks arrived a moment later, pale as a ghost, and trembling like an aspen-leaf.

"Safe, by Jove!" said Sparks, throwing himself into a chair, and panting for breath.

"Safe, at last," said I, without well knowing why or for what.

"You've had a sharp run of it, apparently," said Power, coolly, and without any curiosity as to the cause; "and, now, let us on board; there goes the trumpet again. The skipper is a surly old fellow, and we must not lose his tide for him." So saying, he proceeded to collect his cloaks, cane, etc., and get ready for departure.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE VOYAGE.

When I awoke from the long, sound sleep which succeeded my last adventure, I had some difficulty in remembering where I was, or how I had come there. From my narrow berth I looked out upon the now empty cabin, and, at length, some misty and confused sense of my situation crept slowly over me. I opened the little shutter beside me, and looked out. The bold headlands of the southern coast were frowning, in sullen and dark masses, about a couple of miles distant, and I perceived that we were going fast through the water, which was beautifully calm and still. I now looked at my watch; it was past eight o'clock; and, as it must evidently be evening, from the appearance of the sky, I felt that I had slept soundly for above twelve hours.

In the hurry of departure, the cabin had not been set to rights, and there lay every species of lumber and luggage in all imaginable confusion. Trunks, gun-cases, baskets of eggs, umbrellas, hampers of sea-store, cloaks, foraging-caps, maps, and sword-belts, were scattered on every side—while the *débris* of a dinner, not over-remarkable for its propriety in table equipage, added to the ludicrous effect. The heavy tramp of a foot overhead denoted the step of some one taking his short walk of exercise; while the rough voice of the skipper, as he gave the word to "Go about!" all convinced me that we were at last under weigh, and off to "the wars." The confusion our last evening on shore produced in my brain was such, that every effort I made to remember anything about it only increased my difficulty, and I felt myself in a web so tangled and inextricable, that all endeavor to escape free was impossible. Sometimes I thought that I had really married Matilda Dalrymple; then, I supposed that the father had called me out, and wounded me in a duel; and, finally, I had some confused notion about a quarrel with Sparks, but what for, when, and how it ended, I knew not. How tremendously tipsy I must have been! was the only conclusion I could draw from all these conflicting doubts; and, after all, it was the only thing like fact that beamed upon my mind. How I had come on board and reached my berth, was a matter I reserved for future inquiry; resolving that, about the real history of my last night on shore, I would ask no questions, if others were equally disposed to let it pass in silence.

I next began to wonder if Mike had looked after all my luggage, trunks, etc., and whether he himself had been forgotten in our hasty departure. About this latter point I was not destined for much doubt; for a well-known voice, from the foot of the companion-ladder, at once proclaimed my faithful follower, and evidenced his feelings at his departure from his home and country.

Mr. Free was, at the time I mention, gathered up like a ball opposite a small, low window, that looked upon the bluff headlands now fast becoming dim and misty as the night approached. He was apparently in low spirits; and hummed in a species of low, droning voice, the following ballad, at the end of each verse of which came an Irish chorus, which, to the erudite in such matters, will suggest the air of Moddirederoo:

"MICKEY FREE'S LAMENT.

"Then fare ye well, ould Erin dear;
To part—my heart does ache well:
From Carrickfergus to Cape Clear,
I'll never see your equal.
And, though to foreign parts we're bound,
Where cannibals may ate us,
We'll ne'er forget the holy ground
Of poteen and potatoes.
Moddirederoo aroo, aroo, etc.

"When good St. Patrick banished frogs,
And shook them from his garment,
He never thought we'd go abroad,
To live upon such varmint,
Nor quit the land where whisky grew,
To wear King George's button,
Take vinegar for mountain dew,
And toads for mountain mutton.
Moddirederoo aroo, aroo," etc.

"I say, Mike, stop that confounded keen, and tell me where are we?"

"Off the ould head of Kinsale, sir."

"Where is Captain Power?"

"Smoking a cigar on deck, with the Captain, sir."

"And Mr. Sparks?"

"Mighty sick in his own stateroom. Oh! but it's himself has enough of glory—bad luck to it!—by this time. He'd make your heart break to look at him."

"Who have you got on board besides?"

"The Adjutant's here, sir; and an old gentleman they call the Major."

"Not Major Dalrymple?" said I, starting up with terror at the thought, "eh, Mike?"

"No, sir, another Major; his name is Mulroon, or Mundoon, or something like that."

"Monsoon, you son of a lumper potato," cried out a surly, gruff voice from a berth opposite, "Monsoon. Who's at the other side?"

"Mr. O'Malley, 14th," said I, by way of introduction.

"My service to you, then," said the voice. "Going to join your regiment?"

"Yes; and you—are you bound on a similar errand?"

"No, Heaven be praised! I'm attached to the Commissariat, and only going to Lisbon. Have you had any dinner?"

"Not a morsel; have you?"

"No more than yourself; but I always lie by for three or four days this way, till I get used to the confounded rocking and pitching; and, with a little grog and some sleep, get over the time gayly enough. Steward, another tumbler like the last; there—very good—that will do. Your good health, Mr. —— what was it you said?"

"O'Malley."

"O'Malley—your good health—good-night." And so ended our brief colloquy, and, in a few minutes more, a very decisive snore pronounced my friend to be fulfilling his precept for killing the hours.

I now made the effort to emancipate myself from my crib, and at last succeeded in getting on the floor, where, after one *chassez* at a small looking-glass opposite, followed by a very impetuous rush at a little brass stove, in which I was interrupted by a trunk, and laid prostrate, I finally got my clothes on, and made my way to the deck. Little attuned as was my mind at the moment to admire anything like scenery, it was impossible to be unmoved by the magnificent prospect before me. It was a beautiful evening in summer; the sun had set above an hour before, leaving behind him in the west one vast arch of rich and burnished gold, stretching along the whole horizon, and tipping all the summits of the heavy rolling sea, as it rolled on, unbroken by foam or ripple, in vast moving mountains from the far coast of Labrador. We were already in blue water, though the bold cliffs that were to form our departing point were but a few miles to leeward. There lay the lofty bluff of Old Kinsale, whose crest, overhanging, peered from a summit of some hundred feet into the deep water that swept its rocky base, many a tangled lichen and straggling bough trailing in the flood beneath. Here and there, upon the coast, a twinkling gleam proclaimed the hut of the fisherman, whose swift hookers had more than once shot by us, and disappeared in a moment. The wind, which began to fall at sunset, freshened as the moon rose; and the good ship, bending to the breeze, lay gently over, and rushed through the waters with a sound of gladness. I was alone upon the deck; Power and the Captain, whom I expected to have found, had disappeared somehow, and I was, after all, not sorry to be left to my own reflections uninterrupted.

My thoughts turned once more to my home—to my first, my best, earliest friend, whose hearth I had rendered lonely and desolate, and my heart sunk within me as I remembered it. How deeply I reproached myself for the selfish impetuosity with which I had ever followed any rising fancy, any new and sudden desire, and never thought of him whose every hope was in, whose every wish was for me. Alas! alas! my poor uncle! how gladly would I resign every prospect my soldier's life may hold out, with all its glittering promise, and all the flattery of success, to be once more beside you; to feel your warm and manly grasp; to see your smile; to hear your voice; to be again where all our best feelings are born and nurtured, our cares assuaged, our joys more joyed in, and our griefs more wept—at home! These very words have more music to my ears than all the softest strains that ever syren sung. They bring us back to all we have loved, by ties that are never felt but through such simple associations. And in the earlier memories called up, our childish feelings come back once more to visit us, like better spirits, as we walk amid the dreary desolation that years of care and uneasiness have spread around us.

Wretched must he be who ne'er has felt such bliss; and thrice happy he, who, feeling it, knows that still there lives for him that same early home, with all its loved inmates, its every dear and devoted object waiting his coming, and longing for his approach.

Such were my thoughts as I stood gazing at the bold line of coast now gradually

growing more and more dim while evening fell, and we continued to stand farther out to sea. So absorbed was I all this time in my reflections, that I never heard the voices which now suddenly burst upon my ears quite close beside me. I turned, and saw for the first time that, at the end of the quarter-deck, stood what is called a roundhouse, a small cabin, from which the sounds in question proceeded. I walked gently forward, and peeped in, and certainly anything more in contrast with my late reverie need not be conceived. There sat the skipper, a bluff, round-faced, jolly-looking little tar, mixing a bowl of punch at a table, at which sat my friend Power, the Adjutant, and a tall, meager-looking Scotchman, whom I once met in Cork, and heard that he was the Doctor of some infantry regiment. Two or three black bottles, a paper of cigars, and a tallow candle were all the table equipage; but, certainly, the party seemed not to want for spirits and fun, to judge from the hearty bursts of laughing that every moment pealed forth, and shook the little building that held them. Power, as usual with him, seemed to be taking the lead, and was evidently amusing himself with the peculiarities of his companions.

"Come, Adjutant, fill up; here's to the campaign before us; we, at least, have nothing but pleasure in the anticipation; no lovely wife behind; no charming babes to fret, and be fretted for, eh?"

"Vara true," said the Doctor, who was mated with a *tartar;* "ye maun have less regrets at leaving hame; but a married man is no' entirely denied his ain consolations."

"Good sense in that," said the Skipper; "a wide berth and plenty of sea-room are not bad things now and then."

"Is that your experience also?" said Power, with a knowing look. "Come, come, Adjutant, we're not so ill off, you see; but, by Jove, I can't imagine how it is a man ever comes to thirty without having at least one wife; without counting his colonial possessions, of course."

"Yes," said the Adjutant, with a sigh, as he drained his glass to the bottom. "It is devilish strange—woman, lovely woman!" Here he filled and drank again, as though he had been proposing a toast for his own peculiar drinking.

"I say, now," resumed Power, catching at once that there was something working in his mind—"I say, now, how happened it that you, a right good-looking, soldier-like fellow, that always made his way among the fair ones, with that confounded roguish eye and slippery tongue—how the deuce did it come to pass that you never married?"

"I've been more than once on the verge of it," said the Adjutant, smiling blandly at the flattery.

"And nae bad notion yours just to stay there," said the Doctor, with a very peculiar contortion of countenance.

"No pleasing you—no contenting a fellow like you," said Power, returning to the charge; "that's the thing; you get a certain ascendancy; you have a kind of success that renders you, as the French say, *tête montée*, and you think no woman rich enough, or good-looking enough, or high enough."

"No; by Jove, you're wrong," said the Adjutant, swallowing the bait, hook and all—"quite wrong there; for, somehow, all my life, I was decidedly susceptible. Not that I cared much for your blushing sixteen, or budding beauties in white muslin, fresh from a back-board and a governess; no, my taste inclined rather to the more sober charms of two or three-and-thirty, the *embonpoint*, a good foot and ankle, a sensible breadth about the shoulders—"

"Somewhat Dutch-like, I take it," said the Skipper, puffing out a volume of smoke; "a little bluff in the bows, and great stowage, eh?"

"You leaned, then, toward the widows?" said Power.

"Exactly: I confess, a widow always was my weakness. There was something I ever liked in the notion of a woman who had got over all the awkward girlishness of early years, and had that self-possession which habit and knowledge of the world confer, and knew enough of herself to understand what she really wished, and where she would really go."

"Like the trade winds," puffed the Skipper.

"Then, as regards fortune, they have a decided superiority over the spinster class. I defy any man breathing—let him be half police-magistrate, half chancellor—to find out the figure of a young lady's dower. On your first introduction to the house, some kind friend whispers, 'Go it, old boy; forty thousand, not a penny less.' A few weeks later, as the siege progresses, a maiden aunt, disposed to puffing, comes down to twenty; this diminishes again one-half, but then 'the money is in Bank Stock, hard Three-and-a-Half.' You go a little farther, and, as you sit one day over your wine with papa, he certainly promulgates the fact that his daughter has five thousand pounds, two of which turn out

to be in Mexican bonds, and three in an Irish mortgage."

"Happy for you," interrupted Power, "that it be not in Galway, where a proposal to foreclose would be a signal for your being called out, and shot without benefit of clergy."

"Bad luck to it for Galway," said the Adjutant. "I was nearly taken in there once to marry a girl that her brother-in-law swore had eight hundred a year, and it came out afterward that so she had, but it was for one year only; and he challenged me for doubting his word too."

"There's an old formula for finding out an Irish fortune," says Power, "worth all the algebra they ever taught in Trinity. Take the half of the assumed sum, and divide it by three; the quotient will be a flattering representative of the figure sought for."

"Not in the north," said the Adjutant, firmly—"not in the north, Power; they are all well off there. There's a race of canny, thrifty, half-Scotch niggers—your pardon, Doctor, they are all Irish—linen-weaving, Presbyterian, yarn-factoring, long-nosed, hard-drinking fellows, that lay by rather a snug thing now and then. Do you know, I was very near it once in the north. I've half a mind to tell you the story; though, perhaps, you'll laugh at me."

The whole party at once protested that nothing could induce them to deviate so widely from the line of propriety; and the Skipper having mixed a fresh bowl, and filled all the glasses round, the cigars were lighted, and the Adjutant began.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ADJUTANT'S STORY—LIFE IN DERRY.

"It is now about eight, maybe ten, years since we were ordered to march from Belfast and take up our quarters in Londonderry. We had not been more than a few weeks altogether in Ulster, when the order came; and, as we had been, for the preceding two years, doing duty in the south and west, we concluded that the island was tolerably the same in all parts. We opened our campaign in the maiden city, exactly as we had been doing with 'unparalleled success" in Cashel, Fermoy, Tuam, etc.—that is to say, we announced garrison balls and private theatricals; offered a cup to be run for in steeple-chaise; turned out a four-in-hand drag, with mottled grays; and brought over two Deal boats to challenge the north."

"The 18th found the place stupid," said his companions.

"To be sure they did; slow fellows like them must find any place stupid. No dinners; but they gave none. No fun; but they had none in themselves. In fact, we knew better: we understood how the thing was to be done; and resolved that, as a mine of rich ore lay unworked, it was reserved for us to produce the shining metal that others, less discerning, had failed to discover. Little we knew of the matter; never was there a blunder like ours. Were you ever in Derry?"

"Never," said the three listeners.

"Well, then, let me inform you, that the place has its own peculiar features. In the first place, all the large towns in the south and west have, besides the country neighborhood that surrounds them, a certain sprinkling of gentlefolk, who, though with small fortunes and not much usage of the world, are still a great accession to society, and make up the blank which, even in the most thickly-peopled country, would be sadly felt without them. Now, in Derry, there is none of this. After the great guns—and, *per Baccho!* what great guns they are!—you have nothing but the men engaged in commerce—sharp, clever, shrewd, well-informed fellows; they are deep in flax-seed, cunning in molasses, and not to be excelled in all that pertains to coffee, sassafras, cinnamon, gum, oakum, and elephants' teeth. The place is a rich one, and the spirit of commerce is felt throughout it. Nothing is cared for, nothing is talked of, nothing alluded to, that does not bear upon this; and, in fact, if you haven't a venture in Smyrna figs, Memel timber, Dutch dolls, or some such commodity, you are absolutely nothing, and might as well be at a ball with a cork leg, or go deaf to the Opera.

"Now, when I've told thus much, I leave you to guess what impression our triumphal entry into the city produced. Instead of the admiring crowds that awaited us elsewhere, as we marched gayly into quarters, here we saw nothing but grave, sober-looking, and, I confess it, intelligent-looking faces, that scrutinized our appearance closely enough, but evidently with no great approval, and less enthusiasm. The men passed on hurriedly to the counting-houses and the wharfs; the women, with almost as little interest, peeped at us from the windows, and walked away again. Oh! how we wished

for Galway—glorious Galway, that paradise of the infantry, that lies west of the Shannon. Little we knew, as we ordered the band, in lively anticipation of the gayeties before us, to strike up 'Payne's first set,' that, to the ears of the fair listeners in Ship Quay street, the rumble of a sugar hogshead, or the crank of a weighing crane, were more delightful music."

"By Jove," interrupted Power, "you are quite right. Women are strongly imitative in their tastes. The lovely Italian, whose very costume is a natural following of a Raphael, is no more like the pretty Liverpool damsel than Genoa is to Glasnevin; and yet, what the deuce have they, dear souls! with their feet upon a soft carpet and their eyes upon the pages of Scott or Byron, to do with all the cotton or dimity that ever was printed? But let us not repine: that very plastic character is our greatest blessing."

"I'm not so sure that it always exists," said the doctor, dubiously, as though his own experience pointed otherwise.

"Well, go ahead!" said the skipper, who evidently disliked the digression thus interrupting the Adjutant's story.

"Well, we marched along, looking right and left at the pretty faces—and there were plenty of them, too—that a momentary curiosity drew to the windows; but, although we smiled, and ogled, and leered, as only a newly arrived regiment can smile, ogle, or leer, by all that's provoking we might as well have wasted our blandishments upon the Presbyterian meeting-house that frowned upon us with its high-pitched roof and round windows.

"'Droll people, these,' said one; 'Rayther rum ones,' cried another; 'The black north, by Jove!' said a third: and so we went along to the barracks, somewhat displeased to think that, though the 18th were slow, they might have met their match.

"Disappointed, as we undoubtedly felt, at the little enthusiasm that marked our *entrée*, we still resolved to persist in our original plan, and, accordingly, early the following morning, announced our intention of giving amateur theatricals. The Mayor, who called upon our Colonel, was the first to learn this, and received the information with pretty much the same kind of look the Archbishop of Canterbury might be supposed to assume, if requested by a friend to ride 'a Derby.' The incredulous expression of the poor man's face, as he turned from one of us to the other, evidently canvassing in his mind whether we might not, by some special dispensation of Providence, be all insane, I shall never forget.

"His visit was a very short one; whether concluding that we were not quite safe company, or whether our notification was too much for his nerves, I know not.

"We were not to be balked, however; our plans for gayety, long-planned and conned over, were soon announced in all form; and though we made efforts almost superhuman in the cause, our plays were performed to empty benches, our balls were unattended, our pic-nic invitations politely declined, and, in a word, all our advances treated with a cold and chilling politeness, that plainly said, 'We'll none of you.'

"Each day brought some new discomfiture, and, as we met at mess, instead of having, as heretofore, some prospect of pleasure and amusement to chat over, it was only to talk gloomily over our miserable failures, and lament the dreary quarters that our fates had doomed us to.

"Some months wore on in this fashion, and at length—what will not time do?—we began, by degrees, to forget our woes. Some of us took to late hours and brandy and water; others got sentimental, and wrote journals, and novels, and poetry; some made acquaintances among the townspeople, and cut in to a quiet rubber to pass the evening; while another detachment, among which I was, got up a little love affair to while away the tedious hours, and cheat the lazy sun.

"I have already said something of my taste in beauty; now, Mrs. Boggs was exactly the styre of woman I fancied. She was a widow; she had black eyes—not your jet-black, sparkling, Dutch-doll eyes, that roll about and twinkle, but mean nothing—no; hers had a soft, subdued, downcast, pensive look about them, and were fully as melting a pair of orbs as any blue eyes you ever looked at.

"Then, she had a short upper lip, and sweet teeth; by Jove, they were pearls! and she showed them, too, pretty often. Her figure was well rounded, plump, and what the French call *nette*. To complete all, her instep and ankle were unexceptional; and lastly, her jointure was seven hundred pounds per annum, with a trifle of eight thousand more, that the late lamented Boggs bequeathed, when, after four months of uninterrupted bliss, he left Derry for another world.

"When chance first threw me in the way of the fair widow, some casual coin-

cidence of opinion happened to raise me in her estimation, and I soon afterward received an invitation to a small evening party at her house, to which I alone of the regiment was asked.

"I shall not weary you with the details of my intimacy: it is enough that I tell you I fell desperately in love. I began by visiting twice or thrice a week, and, in less than two months, spent every morning at her house, and rarely left it till the 'Roast beef' announced mess.

"I soon discovered the widow's cue; she was serious. Now, I had conducted all manner of flirtations in my previous life; timid young ladies, manly young ladies, musical, artistical, poetical, and hysterical. Bless you, I knew them all by heart; but never before had I to deal with a serious one, and a widow to boot. The case was a trying one. For some weeks it was all very up-hill work; all the red shot of warm affection I used to pour in on other occasions was of no use here. The language of love, in which I was no mean proficient, availed me not. Compliments and flattery, those rare skirmishers before the engagement, were denied me; and I verily think that a tender squeeze of the hand would have cost me my dismissal.

"'How very slow, all this!' thought I, as, at the end of two months' siege, I still found myself seated in the trenches, and not a single breach in the fortress; 'but, to be sure, it's the way they have in the north, and one must be patient.'

"While thus I was in no very sanguine frame of mind as to my prospects, in reality my progress was very considerable. Having become a member of Mr. M'Phun's congregation, I was gradually rising in the estimation of the widow and her friends, whom my constant attendance at meeting, and my very serious demeanor, had so far impressed, that very grave deliberation was held whether I should not be made an elder at the next brevet.

"If the Widow Boggs had not been a very lovely and wealthy widow—had she not possessed the eyes, lips, hips, ankles, and jointure aforesaid—I honestly avow that neither the charms of that sweet man Mr. M'Phun's eloquence, nor even the flattering distinction in store for me, would have induced me to prolong my suit. However, I was not going to despair when in sight of land. The widow was evidently softened. A little time longer, and the most scrupulous moralist, the most rigid advocate for employing time wisely, could not have objected to my daily system of courtship. It was none of your sighing, dying, ogling, hand-squeezing, waist-pressing, oath-swearing, everlasting-adoring affairs, with an interchange of rings and lockets; not a bit of it. It was confoundedly like a controversial meeting at the Rotunda, and I myself had a far greater resemblance to Father Tom Maguire than a gay Lothario.

"After all, when mess-time came, when the 'Roast beef' played, and we assembled at dinner, and the soup and fish had gone round, with two glasses of sherry in, my spirits rallied, and a very jolly evening consoled me for all my fatigues and exertions, and supplied me with energy for the morrow; for, let me observe here, that I only made love before dinner. The evenings I reserved for myself, assuring Mrs. Boggs that my regimental duties required all my time after mess hour, in which I was perfectly correct; for at six we dined; at seven I opened the claret No. 1; at eight I had uncorked my second bottle; by half-past eight I was returning to the sherry; and at ten, punctual to the moment, I was repairing to my quarters on the back of my servant, Tim Daly, who had carried me safely for eight years, without a single mistake, as the fox-hunters say. This was a way we had in the —th. Every man was carried away from mess, some sooner, some later. I was always an early riser, and went betimes.

"Now, although I had very abundant proof, from circumstantial evidence, that I was nightly removed from the mess-room to my bed in the mode I mention, it would have puzzled me sorely to prove the fact in any direct way; inasmuch as, by half-past nine, as the clock chimed, and Tim entered to take me, I was very innocent of all that was going on, and, except a certain vague sense of regret at leaving the decanter, felt nothing whatever.

"It so chanced—what mere trifles are we ruled by in our destiny!—that just as my suit with the widow had assumed its most favorable footing, old General Hinks, that commanded the district, announced his coming over to inspect our regiment. Over he came accordingly, and, to be sure, we had a day of it. We were paraded for six mortal hours; then we were marching and countermarching; moving into line; back again into column; now forming open column, then into square; till, at last, we began to think that the old General was like the Flying Dutchman, and was probably condemned to keep on drilling us to the day of judgment. To be sure, he enlivened the proceeding to me by pronouncing the regiment the worst-drilled

and appointed corps in the service, and the Adjutant (me!) the stupidest dunderhead—these were his words—he had ever met with.

"'Never mind,' thought I; 'a few days more, and it's little I'll care for the eighteen maneuvers. It's small trouble your eyes right, or your left shoulders forward, will give me. I'll sell out, and with the Widow Boggs and seven hundred a year—but no matter.'

"This confounded inspection lasted till half-past five in the afternoon; so that our mess was delayed a full hour in consequence, and it was past seven as we sat down to dinner. Our faces were grim enough as we met together at first; but what will not a good dinner and good wine do for the surliest party? By eight o'clock we began to feel somewhat more convivially disposed; and, before nine, the decanters were performing a quick step round the table, in a fashion very exhilarating and very jovial to look at.

"'No flinching to-night,' said the senior Major. 'We've had a severe day; let us also have a merry evening.'

"'By Jove! Ormond,' cried another, 'we must not leave this to-night. Confound the old humbugs and their musty whist party; throw them over.'

"'I say, Adjutant,' said Forbes, addressing me, 'you've nothing particular to say to the fair widow this evening? You'll not bolt, I hope?'

"'That he shan't,' said one near me; 'he must make up for his absence to-morrow, for to-night we all stand fast.'

"'Besides,' said another, 'she's at meeting by this. Old—what-d'ye-call-him?—is at fourteenthly before now.'

"'A note for you, sir,' said the mess waiter, presenting me with a rose-colored three-cornered billet. It was from *la chère* Boggs herself, and ran thus:

"'DEAR SIR,—Mr. M'Phun and a few friends are coming to tea at my house after meeting: perhaps you will also favor us with your company.

"'Yours truly,

"'ELIZA BOGGS.'

"What was to be done? Quit the mess—leave a jolly party just at the jolliest moment—exchange Lafitte and red hermitage for a *soirée* of elders, presided over by that sweet man, Mr. M'Phun! It was too bad!—but then, how much was in the scale? What would the widow say if I declined? What would she think? I well knew that the invitation meant nothing less than a full-dress parade of me before her friends, and that to decline was perhaps to forfeit all my hopes in that quarter for ever.

"'Any answer, sir?' said the waiter.

"'Yes,' said I, in a half-whisper, 'I'll go—tell the servant, I'll go.'

"At this moment my tender epistle was subtracted from before me, and, ere I had turned round, had made the tour of half the table. I never perceived the circumstance, however, and filling my glass, professed my resolve to sit to the last, with a mental reserve to take my departure at the very first opportunity. Ormond and the Paymaster quitted the room for a moment, as if to give orders for a broil at twelve, and now all seemed to promise a very convivial and well-sustained party for the night.

"'Is that all arranged?' inquired the Major, as Ormond entered.

"'All right,' said he; 'and now let us have a bumper and a song. Adjutant, old boy, give us a chant.'

"'What shall it be, then?" inquired I, anxious to cover my intended retreat by any appearance of joviality.

"'Give us—

"When I was in the Fusiliers
Some fourteen years ago."'

"'No, no; confound it! I've heard nothing else since I joined the regiment. Let us have the "Paymaster's Daughter."'

"'Ah! that's pathetic; I like that,' lisped a young Ensign.

"'If I'm to have a vote,' grunted out the senior Major, 'I pronounce for "West India Quarters."'

"'Yes, yes,' said half a dozen voices together, 'let's have "West India Quarters." Come, give him a glass of sherry, and let him begin.'

"I had scarcely finished off my glass, and cleared my throat for my song, when the clock on the chimney-piece chimed half-past nine, and the same instant I felt a heavy hand fall upon my shoulder. I turned, and beheld my servant, Tim. This, as I have already mentioned, was the hour at which Tim was in the habit of taking me home to my quarters; and, though we had dined an hour later, he took no notice of the circumstance, but, true to his custom, he was behind my chair. A very cursory glance at my 'familiar' was quite sufficient to show me that we had somehow changed sides; for Tim, who was habitually the most sober of mankind, was, on the present occasion,

exceedingly drunk, while I, a full hour before that consummation, was perfectly sober.

"'What d'ye want, sir?' inquired I, with something of severity in my manner.

"'Come home,' said Tim, with a hiccup that set the whole table in a roar.

"'Leave the room this instant,' said I, feeling wrath at being thus made a butt of for his offenses. 'Leave the room, or I'll kick you out of it.' Now this, let me add in a parenthesis, was somewhat of a boast, for Tim was six feet three, and strong in proportion, and, when in liquor, fearless as a tiger.

"'You'll kick me out of the room—eh! will you? Try—only try it, that's all.' Here a new roar of laughter burst forth, while Tim, again placing an enormous paw upon my shoulder, continued, 'Don't be sitting there, making a baste of yourself, when you've got enough. Don't you see you're drunk?'

"I sprang to my legs on this, and made a rush to the fireplace, to secure the poker; but Tim was beforehand with me, and seizing me by the waist with both hands, flung me across his shoulders, as though I were a baby, saying, at the same time, 'I'll take you away at half-past eight, to-morrow, av you're as rampageous again.' I kicked, I plunged, I swore, I threatened, I even begged and implored to be set down; but, whether my voice was lost in the uproar around me, or that Tim only regarded my denunciations in the light of cursing, I know not, but he carried me bodily down the stairs, steadying himself by one hand on the banisters, while with the other he held me as in a vice. I had but one consolation all this while; it was this, that, as my quarters lay immediately behind the mess-room, Tim's excursion would soon come to an end, and I should be free once more; but guess my terror to find that the drunken scoundrel, instead of going, as usual, to the left, turned short to the right hand, and marched boldly into Ship Quay street. Every window in the mess-room was filled with our fellows, absolutely shouting with laughter. 'Go it, Tim!—that's the fellow!—hold him tight!—never let go!' cried a dozen voices; while the wretch, with the tenacity of drunkenness, gripped me still harder, and took his way down the middle of the street.

"It was a beautiful evening in July, a soft summer night, as I made this pleasing excursion down the most frequented thoroughfare in the maiden city; my struggles every moment exciting roars of laughter from an increasing crowd of spectators, who seemed scarcely less amused than puzzled at the exhibition. In the midst of a torrent of imprecations against my torturer, a loud noise attracted me. I turned my head, and saw—horror of horrors!—the door of the meeting-house just flung open, and the congregation issuing forth *en masse*. Is it any wonder if I remember no more? There I was, the chosen one of the Widow Boggs—the elder elect—the favored friend and admired associate of Mr. M'Phun, taking an airing on a summer's evening on the back of a drunken Irishman. Oh! the thought was horrible; and, certainly, the short and pithy epithets by which I was characterized in the crowd, neither improved my temper nor assuaged my wrath; and I feel bound to confess that my own language was neither serious nor becoming. Tim, however, cared little for all this, and pursued the even tenor of his way through the whole crowd, nor stopped till, having made half the circuit of the wall, he deposited me safe at my own door, adding, as he set me down, 'Oh! av you're as troublesome every evening, it's a wheelbarrow I'll be obleeged to bring for you.'

"The next day I obtained a short leave of absence, and, ere a fortnight expired, exchanged into the —th, preferring Halifax itself to the ridicule that awaited me in Londonderry."

CHAPTER XXX.

FRED POWER'S ADVENTURE IN PHILIPSTOWN.

THE lazy hours of the long summer day crept slowly over. The sea, unbroken by foam or ripple, shone like a broad blue mirror, reflecting here and there some fleecy patches of snow-white cloud as they stood unmoved in the sky. The good ship rocked to and fro with a heavy and lumbering motion; the cordage rattled; the bulkheads creaked; the sails flapped lazily against the masts; the very sea-gulls seemed to sleep as they rested on the long swell that bore them along; and everything in sea and sky bespoke the calm. No sailor trod the deck; no watch was stirring; the very tiller ropes were deserted; and, as they traversed backward and forward with every roll of the vessel, told that we had no steerage way, and lay a mere log upon the water.

I sat alone in the bow, and fell into a musing fit upon the past and the future. How happily for us is it ordained that, in the most stirring existences, there are

every here and there such little resting-spots of reflection, from which, as from some eminence, we look back upon the road we have been treading in life, and cast a wistful glance at the dark vista before us! When first we set out upon our worldly pilgrimage, these are, indeed, precious moments, when, with buoyant heart and spirit high, believing all things, trusting all things, our very youth comes back to us, reflected from every object we meet; and, like Narcissus, we are but worshiping our own image in the water. As we go on in life, the cares, the anxieties, and the business of the world, engross us more and more; and such moments become fewer and shorter. Many a bright dream has been dissolved, many a fairy vision replaced, by some dark reality; blighted hopes, false friendships, have gradually worn callous the heart once alive to every gentle feeling, and time begins to tell upon us; yet still, as the well-remembered melody to which we listened with delight in infancy brings to our mature age a touch of early years, so will the very association of these happy moments recur to us in our reverie, and make us young again in thought. Then it is that, as we look back upon our worldly career, we become convinced how truly is the child the father of the man, how frequently are the projects of our manhood the fruit of some boyish predilection; and that, in the emulative ardor that stirs the schoolboy's heart, we may read the *prestige* of that high daring that makes a hero of its possessor.

These moments, too, are scarcely more pleasurable than they are salutary to us. Disengaged, for the time, from every worldly anxiety, we pass in review before our own selves, and in the solitude of our own hearts are we judged. That still small voice of conscience, unheard and unlistened to amid the din and bustle of life, speaks audibly to us now; and, while chastened on one side by regrets, we are sustained on the other by some approving thought, and, with many a sorrow for the past, and many a promise for the future, we begin to feel "how good it is for us to be here."

The evening wore later; the red sun sank down upon the sea, growing larger and larger; the long line of mellow gold that sheeted along the distant horizon, grew first of a dark ruddy tinge, then paler and paler, till it became almost gray; a single star shone faintly in the east, and darkness soon set in. With night came the wind, for almost imperceptibly the sails swelled slowly out, a slight rustle at the bow followed, the ship lay gently over, and we were once more in motion. It struck four bells; some casual resemblance in the sound to the old pendulum that marked the hour at my uncle's house, startled me so that I actually knew not where I was. With lightning speed my once home rose up before me with its happy hearts; the old familiar faces were there; the gay laugh was in my ears; there sat my dear old uncle, as with bright eye and mellow voice he looked a very welcome to his guests; there Boyle; there Considine; there the grim-visaged portraits that graced the old walls, whose black oak wainscot stood in broad light and shadow, as the blazing turf fire shone upon it; there was my own place, now vacant; methought my uncle's eye was turned toward it, and that I heard him say, "My poor boy, I wonder where is he now!" My heart swelled; my chest heaved; the tears coursed slowly down my cheeks, as I asked myself, "Shall I ever see them more?" Oh! how little, how very little to us are the accustomed blessings of our life, till some change has robbed us of them; and how dear are they when lost to us. My uncle's dark foreboding that we should never meet again on earth came, for the first time, forcibly to my mind, and my heart was full to bursting. What could repay me for the agony of that moment, as I thought of him—my first, my best, my only friend—whom I had deserted? and how gladly would I have resigned my bright day-dawn of ambition to be once more beside his chair; to hear his voice; to see his smile; to feel his love for me! A loud laugh from the cabin roused me from my sad, depressing reverie; and, at the same instant, Mike's well-known voice informed me that the Captain was looking for me everywhere, as supper was on the table. Little as I felt disposed to join the party at such a moment, as I knew there was no escaping Power, I resolved to make the best of matters; so, after a few minutes, I followed Mickey down the companion, and entered the cabin.

The scene before me was certainly not calculated to perpetuate depressing thoughts. At the head of a rude old-fashioned table, upon which figured several black bottles, and various ill-looking drinking vessels of every shape and material, sat Fred Power; on his right was placed the Skipper; on his left, the Doctor; the bronzed, merry-looking, weather-beaten features of the one, contrasting ludicrously with the pale, ascetic, acute-looking expression of the other. Sparks, more than half drunk,

with the mark of a red-hot cigar upon his nether lip, was lower down; while Major Monsoon, to preserve the symmetry of the party, had protruded his head, surmounted by a huge red nightcap, from the berth opposite, and held out his goblet to be replenished from the punch-bowl.

"Welcome, thrice welcome, thou man of Galway!" cried out Power, as he pointed to a seat, and pushed a wine-glass toward me. "Just in time, too, to pronounce upon a new brewery; taste that; a little more of the lemon you would say, perhaps? Well, I agree with you; rum and brandy; glenlivet and guava jelly; limes, green tea, and a slight suspicion of preserved ginger—nothing else, upon honor—and the most simple mixture for the cure, the radical cure, of blue devils and debt I know of; eh, Doctor? you advise it yourself, to be taken before bedtime; nothing inflammatory in it; nothing pugnacious; a mere circulation of the better juices and more genial spirits of the marly clay, without arousing any of the baser passions; whisky is the devil for that."

"I canna say that I dinna like whisky-toddy," said the Doctor; "in the cauld winter nights it's no sae bad."

"Ah! that's it," said Power; "there's the pull you Scotch have upon us poor Patlanders; cool, calculating, long-headed fellows, you only come up to the mark after fifteen tumblers; whereas we hot-brained devils, with a blood at 212 deg. of Fahrenheit and a high-pressure engine of good spirits always ready for an explosion, we go clean mad when tipsy; not but I am fully convinced that a mad Irishman is worth two sane people of any other country under heaven."

"If you mean by that insin—insin—sinuation to imply any disrespect to the English," stuttered out Sparks, "I am bound to say that I for one, and the Doctor, I am sure, for another—"

"Na, na," interrupted the Doctor, "ye mauna coont upon me; I'm no disposed to fecht ower our liquor."

"Then, Major Monsoon, I'm certain—"

"Are ye, faith?" said the Major, with a grin; "blessed are they who expect nothing—of which number you are not—for most decidedly you shall be disappointed."

"Never mind, Sparks, take the whole fight to your own proper self, and do battle like a man; and here I stand, ready at all arms to prove my position—that we drink better, sing better, court better, fight better, and make better punch than every John Bull from Berwick to the Land's End."

Sparks, however, who seemed not exactly sure how far his antagonist was disposed to quiz, relapsed into a half-tipsy expression of contemptuous silence, and sipped his liquor without reply.

"Yes," said Power, after a pause, "bad luck to it for whisky; it nearly got me broke once, and poor Tom O'Reilly of the 5th, too, the best-tempered fellow in the service; we were as near it as touch and go; and all for some confounded Loughrea spirits, that we believed to be perfectly innocent, and used to swill away freely, without suspicion of any kind."

"Let's hear the story," said I, "by all means."

"It's not a long one," said Power; "so I don't care if I tell it; and besides, if I make a clean breast of my own sins, I'll insist upon Monsoon's telling you afterward how he stocked his cellar in Cadiz; eh, Major? there's worse tipple than the King of Spain's sherry?"

"You shall judge for yourself, old boy," said Monsoon, good-humoredly; "and, as for the narrative, it is equally at your service. Of course, it goes no further. The Commander-in-Chief, long life to him! is a glorious fellow; but he has no more idea of a joke than the Archbishop of Canterbury, and it might chance to reach him."

"Recount, and fear not!" cried Power, "we are discreet as the worshipful company of apothecaries."

"But you forget you are to lead the way."

"Here goes, then," said the jolly Captain; "not that the story has any merit in it, but the moral is beautiful.

"Ireland, to be sure, is a beautiful country, but somehow it would prove a very dull one to be quartered in, if it were not that the people seem to have a natural taste for the army. From the belle of Merrion square down to the innkeeper's daughter in Tralee, the loveliest part of the creation seem to have a perfect appreciation of our high acquirements and advantages; and, in no other part of the globe, the Tonga Islands included, is a red coat more in favor. To be sure, they would be very ungrateful if it were not the case; for we, upon our sides, leave no stone unturned to make ourselves agreeable. We ride, drink, play, and make love to the ladies, from Fairhead to Killarney, in a way greatly calculated to render us popular; and, as far as making the time pass pleasantly, we are the boys for the 'greatest happiness' principle. I repeat it; we deserve our popularity. Which of us does not get head and ears in debt with garrison balls

and steeple-chases, picnics, regattas, and the thousand-and-one inventions to get rid of one's spare cash, so called for being so sparingly dealt out by our governors? Now and then, too, when all else fails, we take a newly-joined Ensign, and make him marry some pretty but penniless lass, in a country town, just to show the rest that we are not joking, but have serious ideas of matrimony, in the midst of all our flirtations. If it were all like this, the Green Isle would be a paradise; but, unluckily, every now and then, one is condemned to some infernal place, where there is neither a pretty face nor tight ankle; where the priest himself is not a good fellow; and long, ill-paved, straggling streets, filled, on market days, with booths of striped calico and soapy cheese, is the only promenade; and a ruinous barrack, with moldy walls and a tumbling chimney, the only quarters.

"In vain, on your return from your morning stroll or afternoon canter, you look on the chimney-piece for a shower of visiting cards and pink notes of invitation; in vain you ask your servant has any one called. Alas! your only visitor has been the gauger, to demand a party to assist in still-hunting, amid that interesting class of the population who, having nothing to eat, are engaged in devising drink, and care as much for the life of a redcoat as you do for that of a crow or a curlew. This may seem overdrawn; but I would ask you, were you ever for your sins quartered in that capital city of the Bog of Allen they call Philipstown? Oh, but it is a romantic spot! They tell us somewhere that much of the expression of the human face divine depends upon the objects which constantly surround us. Thus the inhabitants of mountain districts imbibe, as it were, a certain bold and daring character of expression from the scenery, very different from the placid and monotonous look of those who dwell in plains and valleys; and I can certainly credit the theory in this instance, for every man, woman, and child you meet has a brown, baked, scruffy, turf-like face, that fully satisfies you that, if Adam were formed of clay, the Philipstown people were worse treated, and only made of bog mold.

"Well, one fine morning, poor Tom and myself were marched off from Birr, where one might 'live and love forever,' to take up our quarters at this sweet spot. Little we knew of Philipstown, and, like my friend the Adjutant there, when he laid siege to Derry, we made our *entrée* with all the pomp we could muster, and though we had no band, our drums and fifes did duty for it; and we brushed along through turf-creels and wicker-baskets of new brogues that obstructed the street till we reached the barrack, the only testimony of admiration we met with being, I feel bound to admit, from a ragged urchin of ten years, who, with a wattle in his hand, imitated me as I marched along, and, when I cried halt, took his leave of us by dexterously fixing his thumb to the side of his nose and outstretching his fingers, as if thus to convey a very strong hint that we were not half so fine fellows as we thought ourselves. Well, four mortal summer months of hot sun and cloudless sky went over, and still we lingered in that vile village, the everlasting monotony of our days being marked by the same brief morning drill, the same blue-legged chicken dinner, the same smoky Loughrea whisky, and the same evening stroll along the canal bank to watch for the Dublin packet-boat, with its never-varying cargo of cattle-dealers, priests, and peelers on their way to the west country, as though the demand for such colonial productions in these parts was insatiable. This was pleasant, you will say; but what was to be done? We had nothing else. Now, nothing saps a man's temper like *ennui*. The cranky, peevish people one meets with would be excellent folk, if they only had something to do. As for us, I'll venture to say two men more disposed to go pleasantly down the current of life it were hard to meet with; and yet, such was the consequence of these confounded four months' sequestration from all other society, we became sour and cross-grained; everlastingly disputing about trifles, and continually arguing about matters which neither were interested in, nor, indeed, knew anything about. There were, it is true, few topics to discuss; newspapers we never saw; sporting there was none; but, then, the drill, the return of duty, the probable chances of our being ordered for service, were all daily subjects to be talked over, and usually with considerable asperity and bitterness. One point, however, always served us when hard pushed for a bone of contention, and which, begun by a mere accident at first, gradually increased to a sore and peevish subject, and finally led to the consequences which I have hinted at in the beginning. This was no less than the respective merits of our mutual servants; each everlastingly indulging in a tirade against the other for awkwardness, incivility, unhandiness — charges, I am bound to confess, most amply proved on either side.

"'Well, I am sure, O'Reilly, if you can stand that fellow,—it's no affair of mine, but such an ungainly savage I never met,' I would say.

"To which he would reply, 'Bad enough he is, certainly; but, by Jove! when I only think of your Hottentot, I feel grateful for what I've got.'

"Then ensued a discussion, with attack, rejoinder, charge, and recrimination, till we retired for the night, wearied with our exertions, and not a little ashamed of ourselves at bottom for our absurd warmth and excitement. In the morning the matter would be rigidly avoided by each party until some chance occasion had brought it on the *tapis*, when hostilities would be immediately renewed, and carried on with the same vigor, to end as before.

"In this agreeable state of matters we sat, one warm summer evening, before the mess-room, under the shade of a canvas awning, discussing, by way of refrigerant, our eighth tumbler of whisky punch. We had, as usual, been jarring away about everything under heaven. A lately arrived post-chaise, with an old, stiff-looking gentleman in a queue, had formed a kind of 'godsend' for debate, as to who he was, whither he was going, whether he really had intended to spend the night there, or that he only put up because the chaise was broken; each, as was customary, maintaining his own opinion with an obstinacy we have often since laughed at, though, at the time, we had few mirthful thoughts about the matter.

"As the debate waxed warm, O'Reilly asserted that he positively knew the individual in question to be a United Irishman, traveling with instructions from the French government, while I laughed him to scorn by swearing that he was the rector of Tyrrell's Pass; that I knew him well; and, moreover, that he was the worst preacher in Ireland. Singular enough it was, that all this while the disputed identity was himself standing coolly at the inn window, with his snuff-box in his hand, leisurely surveying us as we sat, appearing, at least, to take a very lively interest in our debate.

"'Come now,' said O'Reilly, 'there's only one way to conclude this, and make you pay for your obstinacy. What will you bet that he's the rector of Tyrrell's Pass?'

"'What odds will you take that he's Wolfe Tone?' inquired I, sneeringly.

"'Five to one against the rector,' said he exultingly.

"'An elephant's molar to a toothpick against Wolfe Tone,' cried I.

"'Ten pounds even that I'm nearer the mark than you,' said Tom, with a smash of his fist upon the table.

"'Done,' said I—'done. But how are we to decide the wager?'

"'That's soon done,' said he. At the same instant he sprang to his legs, and called out, 'Pat—I say, Pat—I want you to present my respects to—'

"'No, no, I bar that—no *ex parte* statements. Here, Jem, do you simply tell that—'

"'That fellow can't deliver a message. Do come here, Pat. Just beg of—'

"'He'll blunder it, the confounded fool; so, Jem, do you go?'

"The two individuals thus addressed were just in the act of conveying a tray of glasses and a spiced round of beef for supper into the mess-room; and, as I may remark that they fully entered into the feelings of jealousy their respective masters professed, each eyed the other with a look of very unequivocal dislike.

"'Arrah! you needn't be pushing me that way,' said Pat, 'an' the round o' beef in my hands.'

"'Devil's luck to ye! it's the glasses you'll be breaking with your awkward elbow.'

"'Then why don't you leave the way? ain't I your suparior?'

"'Ain't I the Captain's own man?'

"'Ay, and if you war. Don't I belong to his betters? Isn't my master the two Liftenants?'

"This, strange as it may sound, was so far true, as I held a commission in an African corps, with my Lieutenancy in the 5th.

"'Be-gorra, av he was six——there now, you done it!'

"At the same moment a tremendous crash took place, and the large dish fell in a thousand pieces on the pavement, while the spiced round rolled pensively down the yard.

"Scarcely was the noise heard, when, with one vigorous kick, the tray of glasses was sent spinning into the air, and the next moment the disputants were engaged in bloody battle. It was at this moment that our attention was first drawn toward them, and I need not say with what feelings of interest we looked on.

"'Hit him, Pat—there, Jem, under the guard—that's it—go in—well done, left hand—by Jove, that was a facer—his eye's closed—he's down—not a bit of it—how do you like that?—unfair, unfair—no such thing—I say it was—not at all—I deny it.'

"By this time we had approached the

combatants, each man patting his own fellow on the back, and encouraging him by the most lavish promises. Now it was, but in what way I never could exactly tell, that I threw out my right hand to stop a blow that I saw coming rather too near me, when, by some unhappy mischance, my doubled fist lighted upon Tom O'Reilly's nose. Before I could express my sincere regret for the accident, the blow was returned with double force, and the next moment we were at it harder than the others. After five minutes' sharp work, we both stopped for breath, and incontinently burst out a laughing. There was Tom, with a nose as large as three; a huge cheek on one side, and the whole head swinging round like a harlequin's; while I, with one eye closed, and the other like a half-shut cockle-shell, looked scarcely less rueful. We had not much time for mirth, for at the same instant, a sharp, full voice called out close beside us:

"'To your quarters, sirs. I put you both under arrest, from which you are not to be released until the sentence of a court-martial decide if conduct such as this becomes officers and gentlemen.'

"I looked round, and saw the old fellow in the queue.

"'Wolfe Tone, by all that's unlucky!' said I, with an attempt at a smile.

"'The Rector of Tyrrell's Pass,' cried out Tom, with a snuffle; 'the worst preacher in Ireland—eh, Fred?'

"We had not much time for further commentaries upon our friend, for he at once opened his frock coat, and displayed to our horrified gaze the uniform of a general officer.

"'Yes, sir, General Johnston, if you will allow me to present him to your acquaintance: and now, guard, turn out.'

"In a few minutes more the orders were issued, and poor Tom and myself found ourselves fast confined to our quarters, with a sentinel at the door, and the pleasant prospect that, in the space of about ten days, we should be broke, and dismissed the service; which verdict, as the general order would say, the Commander of the Forces has been graciously pleased to approve.

"However, when morning came, the old General, who was really a trump, inquired a little further into the matter, saw it was partly accidental, and, after a severe reprimand, and a caution about Loughrea whisky after the sixth tumbler, released us from arrest, and forgave the whole affair."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE VOYAGE.

Ugh! what a miserable thing is a voyage! Here we are now eight days at sea; the eternal sameness of all around growing every hour less supportable. Sea and sky are beautiful things when seen from the dark woods and waving meadows on shore; but their picturesque effect is sadly marred from want of contrast; besides that, the "*toujours* pork," with crystals of salt as long as your wife's fingers; the potatoes, that seemed varnished in French polish; the tea, seasoned with geological specimens from the basin of London, yclept maple sugar; and the butter—ye gods!—the butter! But why enumerate these smaller features of discomfort, and omit the more glaring ones? The utter selfishness which blue water suggests, as inevitably as the cold fit follows the ague; the good fellow that shares his knapsack or his last guinea on land, here forages out the best corner to hang his hammock; jockeys you into a comfortless crib, where the uncalked deck-butt filters every rain from heaven on your head; he votes you the corner at dinner, not only that he may place you with your back to the thorough draft of the gangway ladder, but that he may eat, drink, and lie down, before you have even begun to feel the qualmishness that the dinner of a troop ship is well calculated to suggest; cuts his pencil with your best razor; wears your shirts, as washing is scarce, and winds up all by having a good story of you every evening for the edification of the other "sharp gentlemen," who, being too wide awake to be humbugged themselves, enjoy his success prodigiously. This, gentle reader, is neither confession nor avowal of mine. The passage I have here presented to you I have taken from the journal of my brother officer, Mr. Sparks, who, when not otherwise occupied, usually employed his time in committing to paper his thoughts upon men, manners, and things at sea in general; though, sooth to say, his was not an idle life; being voted by unanimous consent "a junior," he was condemned to offices that the veriest fag in Eton or Harrow had rebelled against. In the morning, under the pseudonym of *Mrs.* Sparks, he presided at breakfast, having previously made tea, coffee, and chocolate for the whole cabin, besides boiling about twenty eggs at various degrees of hardness; he was under heavy recognizances to provide a plate of buttered toast of very alarming

magnitude, fried ham, kidneys, etc., to no end. Later on, when others sauntered about the deck, vainly endeavoring to fix their attention upon a novel or a review, the poor Cornet might be seen with a white apron tucked gracefully round his spare proportions, whipping eggs for pancakes, or with up-turned shirt-sleeves fashioning dough for a pudding. As the day waned, the cook's galley became his haunt, where, exposed to a roasting fire, he inspected the details of a *cuisine*, for which, whatever his demerits, he was sure of an ample remuneration in abuse at dinner. Then came the dinner itself, that dread ordeal, where nothing was praised, and everything censured. This was followed by the punch-making, where the tastes of six different and differing individuals were to be exclusively consulted in the self-same beverage; and lastly, the supper at night, when Sparkie, as he was familiarly called, toward evening, grown quite exhausted, became the subject of unmitigated wrath and most unmeasured reprobation.

"I say, Sparks, it's getting late; the spatch-cock, old boy; don't be slumbering."

"By-the-by, Sparkie, what a mess you made of that pea-soup to-day! By Jove! I never felt so ill in my life."

"Na, na, it was na the soup; it was something he pit in the punch, that's burning me ever since I tuk it. Ou, man, but ye're an awfu' creture wi' vittals."

"He'll improve, Doctor, he'll improve; don't discourage him; the boy's young; be alive now, there; where's the toast—confound you—where's the toast?"

"There, Sparks, you like a drumstick, I know—mustn't muzzle the ox, eh? Scripture for you, old boy; eat away; hang the expense; hand him over the jug—empty—eh, Charley? Come, Sparkie, bear a hand, the liquor's out."

"But won't you let me eat?"

"Eat! heavens, what a fellow for eating! By George, such an appetite is clean against the articles of war! Come, man, it's drink we're thinking of; there's the rum, sugar, limes; see to the hot water. Well, Skipper, how are we getting on?"

"Lying our course; eight knots off the log; pass the rum. Why, Mister Sparks?"

"Eh, Sparks, what's this?"

"Sparks, my man, confound it." And then, *omnes* chorusing, "Sparks!" in every key of the gamut, the luckless fellow would be obliged to jump up from his meager fare, and set to work at a fresh brewage of punch for the others. The bowl and the glasses filled, by some little management on Power's part our friend the Cornet would be *drawn out*, as the phrase is, into some confession of his early years, which seemed to have been exclusively spent in love-making—devotion to the fair being as integral a portion of his character as tippling was of the worthy Major's.

Like most men who pass their lives in over-studious efforts to please—however ungallant the confession be—the amiable Sparks had had little success; his love, if not, as it generally happened, totally unrequited, was invariably the source of some awkward catastrophe, there being no imaginable error he had not, at some time or other, fallen into, nor any conceivable mischance to which he had not been exposed. Inconsolable widows, attached wives, fond mothers, newly-married brides, engaged young ladies, were, by some *contretemps*, continually the subject of his attachments; and the least mishap which followed the avowal of his passion was to be heartily laughed at, and obliged to leave the neighborhood. Duels, apologies, actions at law, compensations, etc., were of every-day occurrence; and to such an extent, too, that any man blessed with a smaller bump upon the occiput, would eventually have long since abandoned the pursuit, and taken to some less expensive pleasure; but poor Sparks, in the true spirit of a martyr, only gloried the more, the more he suffered; and, like the worthy man who continued to purchase tickets in the lottery for thirty years, with nothing but a succession of blanks, he ever imagined that Fortune was only trying his patience, and had some cool forty thousand pounds of happiness waiting his perseverance in the end. Whether this prize ever did turn up in the course of years, I am unable to say; but, certainly, up to the period of his history I now speak of, all had been as gloomy and unrequiting as need be. Power, who knew something of every man's adventures, was aware of so much of poor Sparks's career, and usually contrived to lay a trap for a confession that generally served to amuse us during an evening, as much, I acknowledge, from the manner of the recital, as anything contained in the story. There was a species of serious matter-of-fact simplicity in his detail of the most ridiculous scenes that left you convinced that his bearing upon the affair in question must have greatly heightened the absurdity; nothing, however comic or droll in itself, ever exciting in him the least approach to a smile. He sat with his

large light-blue eyes, light hair, long upper lip, and retreating chin, lisping out an account of an adventure, with a look of Liston about him that was inconceivably amusing.

"Come, Sparks," said Power, "I claim a promise you made me the other night, on condition we let you off making the oyster-patties at ten o'clock; you can't forget what I mean." Here the Captain knowingly touched the tip of his ear, at which signal the Cornet colored slightly, and drank off his wine in a hurried, confused way. "He promised to tell us, Major, how he lost the tip of his left ear. I have myself heard hints of the circumstance, but would much rather hear Sparks's own version of it."

"Another love story," said the Doctor, with a grin, "I'll be bound."

"Shot off in a duel?" said I, inquiringly; "close work, too."

"No such thing," replied Power; "but Sparks will enlighten you. It is, without exception, the most touching and beautiful thing I ever heard; as a simple story, it beats the 'Vicar of Wakefield' to sticks."

"You don't say so?" said poor Sparks, blushing.

"Ay, that I do, and maintain it too. I'd rather be the hero of that little adventure, and be able to recount it as you do—for, mark me, that's no small part of the effect—than I'd be full colonel of the regiment. Well, I am sure I always thought it affecting; but, somehow, my dear friend, you don't know your powers; you have that within you would make the fortune of half the periodicals going. Ask Monsoon or O'Malley there if I did not say so at breakfast, when you were grilling the old hen—which, by-the-by, let me remark, was not one of your *chefs-d'œuvre*."

"A tougher beastie I never put a tooth in."

"But the story; the story," said I.

"Yes," said Power, with a tone of command, "the story, Sparks."

"Well, if you really think it worth telling, as I have always felt it a very remarkable incident, here goes."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. SPARKS'S STORY.

"I SAT at breakfast one beautiful morning at the Goat Inn at Barmouth, looking out of a window upon the lovely vale of Barmouth, with its tall trees and brown trout-stream struggling through the woods, then turning to take a view of the calm sea, that, speckled over with white-sailed fishing-boats, stretched away in the distance. The eggs were fresh; the trout newly caught; the cream delicious; before me lay the *Plwdwddlwn Advertiser*, which, among the fashionable arrivals at the seaside, set forth Mr. Sparks, nephew of Sir Toby Sparks, of Manchester,—a paragraph, by the way, I always inserted. The English are naturally an aristocratic people, and set a due value upon a title."

"A very just observation," remarked Power, seriously, while Sparks continued.

"However, as far as any result from the announcement, I might as well have spared myself the trouble, for not a single person called; not one solitary invitation to dinner; not a pic-nic; not a breakfast; no, nor even a tea-party was heard of. Barmouth, at the time I speak of, was just in that transition state at which the caterpillar may be imagined, when, having abandoned his reptile habits, he still has not succeeded in becoming a butterfly. In fact, it had ceased to be a fishing-village, but had not arrived at the dignity of a watering-place. Now, I know nothing as bad as this. You have not, on one hand, the quiet retirement of a little peaceful hamlet, with its humble dwellings and cheap pleasures, nor have you the gay and animated tableau of fashion in miniature on the other; but you have noise, din, bustle, confusion, beautiful scenery, and lovely points of view, marred and ruined by vulgar associations. Every bold rock and jutting promontory has its citizen occupants; every sandy cove or tide-washed bay has its myriads of squalling babes and red baize-clad bathing-women, those veritable descendants of the nymphs of old. Pink parasols, donkey-carts, baskets of bread-and-butter, reticules, guides to Barmouth, specimens of ore, fragments of gypsum, meet you at every step, and destroy every illusion of the picturesque.

"'I shall leave this,' thought I. 'My dreams, my long-cherished dreams of romantic walks upon the sea-shore, of evening strolls by moonlight, through dell and dingle, are reduced to a short promenade through an alley of bathing-boxes, amid a screaming population of nursery-maids and sick children, with a thorough-bass of "Fresh shrimps!" discordant enough to frighten the very fish from the shores. There is no peace, no quiet, no romance, no poetry, no love.' Alas! that most of all was wanting; for, after all,

what is it which lights up the heart, save the flame of a mutual attachment? what gilds the fair stream of life, save the bright ray of warm affection? what—"

"In a word," said Power, "it is the sugar in the punch-bowl of our existence. *Perge*, Sparks; push on."

"I was not long in making up my mind. I called for my bill; I packed my clothes; I ordered post-horses; I was ready to start; one item in the bill alone detained me. The frequent occurrence of the enigmatical word 'crw' following my servant's name, demanded an explanation, which I was in the act of receiving, when a chaise-and-four drove rapidly up to the house. In a moment the blinds were drawn up, and such a head appeared at the window! Let me pause for one moment to drink in the remembrance of that lovely being; eyes, where heaven's own blue seemed concentrated, were shaded by long, deep lashes of the darkest brown; a brow fair, noble, and expansive, at each side of which masses of dark-brown hair waved half in ringlets, half in loose falling bands, shadowing her pale and downy cheek, where one faint rosebud tinge seemed lingering; lips slightly parted, as, though to speak, gave to the features all the play of animation which completed this intellectual character, and made up—"

"What I should say was a devilish pretty girl," interrupted Power.

"Back the widow against her at long odds, any day," murmured the Adjutant.

"She was an angel! an angel!" cried Sparks, with enthusiasm.

"So was the widow, if you go to that," said the Adjutant, hastily.

"And so is Matilda Dalrymple," said Power, with a sly look at me. "We are all honorable men—eh, Charley?"

"Go ahead with the story," said the Skipper; "I'm beginning to feel an interest in it."

"'Isabella,' said a man's voice, as a large, well-dressed personage assisted her to alight—'Isabella, love, you must take a little rest here before we proceed farther.'

"'I think she had better, sir,' said a matronly-looking woman, with a plaid cloak and a black bonnet.

"They disappeared within the house, and I was left alone. The bright dream was passed; she was there no longer; but in my heart her image lived, and I almost felt she was before me. I thought I heard her voice; I saw her move; my limbs trembled; my hands tingled; I rang the bell, ordered my trunks back again to No. 5, and, as I sank upon the sofa, murmured to myself, 'This is indeed love at first sight.'"

"How devilish sudden it was," said the Skipper.

"Exactly like camp-fever," responded the Doctor. "One moment ye are vara well; the next ye are seized wi' a kind of shivering; then comes a kind of mandering, dandering, traveling a'overness."

"D— the camp-fever," interrupted Power.

"Well, as I observed, I fell in love; and here let me take the opportunity of observing that all that we are in the habit of hearing about single or only attachments is mere nonsense. No man is so capable of feeling deeply as he who is in the daily practice of it. Love, like everything else in this world, demands a species of cultivation. The mere tyro in an affair of the heart thinks he has exhausted all its pleasures and pains; but only he who has made it his daily study for years, familiarizing his mind with every phase of the passion, can properly or adequately appreciate it. Thus, the more you love, the better you love; the more frequently has your heart yielded—"

"It's vara like the mucous membrane," said the Doctor.

"I'll break your neck with the decanter if you interrupt him again!" exclaimed Power.

"For days I scarcely ever left the house," resumed Sparks, "watching to catch one glance of the lovely Isabella. My farthest excursion was to the little garden of the inn, where I used to set every imaginable species of snare, in the event of her venturing to walk there. One day I would leave a volume of poetry; another, a copy of Paul and Virginia with a marked page; sometimes my guitar, with a broad, blue ribbon, would hang pensively from a tree; but, alas! all in vain; she never appeared. At length, I took courage to ask the waiter about her. For some minutes he could not comprehend what I meant; but, at last, discovering my object, he cried out, 'Oh! No. 8, sir; it is No. 8 you mean.'

"'It may be,' said I. 'What of her, then?'

"'Oh, sir, she's gone these three days.'

"'Gone!' said I, with a groan.

"'Yes, sir; she left this early on Tuesday with the same old gentleman and the old woman in a chaise-and-four. They ordered horses at Dolgelly to meet them; but I don't know which road they took afterward.'

"I fell back on my chair unable to speak. Here was I enacting Romeo for

three mortal days to a mere company of Welsh waiters and chambermaids, sighing, serenading, reciting, attitudinizing, rose-plucking, soliloquizing, half-suiciding, and all for the edification of a set of savages, with about as much civilization as their own goats.

"'The bill,' cried I, in a voice of thunder; 'my bill this instant.'

"I had been imposed upon shamefully; grossly imposed upon, and would not remain another hour in the house. Such were my feelings at least, and so thinking, I sent for my servant, abused him for not having my clothes ready packed; he replied; I reiterated; and, as my temper mounted, vented every imaginable epithet upon his head, and concluded by paying him his wages and sending him about his business. In one hour more I was upon the road.

"'What road, sir?' said the postilion, as he mounted into the saddle.

"'To the devil, if you please,' said I, throwing myself back in the carriage.

"'Very well, sir,' replied the boy, putting spurs to his horse.

"That evening I arrived in Bedgellert.

"The little humble inn of Bedgellert, with its thatched roof and earthen floor, was a most welcome sight to me, after eleven hours' traveling on a broiling July day. Behind the very house itself rose the mighty Snowdon, towering high above the other mountains, whose lofty peaks were lost amid the clouds; before me was the narrow valley—"

"Wake me up when he's under way again," said the skipper, yawning fearfully.

"Go on, Sparks," said Power, encouragingly; "I was never more interested in my life; eh, O'Malley?"

"Quite thrilling," responded I, and Sparks resumed:

"Three weeks did I loiter about that sweet spot, my mind filled with images of the past and dreams of the future, my fishing-rod my only companion; not, indeed, that I ever caught anything; for, somehow, my tackle was always getting foul of some willow tree or water-lily, and, at last, I gave up even the pretense of whipping the streams. Well, one day—I remember it as well as though it were but yesterday—it was the 4th of August—I had set off upon an excursion to Llanberris. I had crossed Snowdon early, and reached the little lake on the opposite side by breakfast time. There I sat down near the ruined tower of Dolbadern, and, opening my knapsack, made a hearty meal. I have ever been a day-dreamer; and there are few things I like better than to lie, upon some hot and sunny day, in the tall grass beneath the shade of some deep boughs, with running water murmuring near, hearing the summer bee buzzing monotonously, and in the distance, the clear, sharp tinkle of the sheep-bell. In such a place, at such a time, one's fancy strays playfully, like some happy child, and none but pleasant thoughts present themselves. Fatigued by my long walk, and overcome by heat, I fell asleep. How long I lay there I cannot tell, but the deep shadows were half way down the tall mountain when I awoke. A sound had startled me; I thought I heard a voice speaking close to me. I looked up, and for some seconds I could not believe that I was not dreaming. Beside me, within a few paces, stood Isabella, the beautiful vision that I had seen at Barmouth, but far, a thousand times, more beautiful. She was dressed in something like a peasant's dress, and wore the round hat which, in Wales at least, seems to suit the character of the female face so well; her long and waving ringlets fell carelessly upon her shoulders, and her cheek flushed from walking. Before I had a moment's notice to recover my roving thought, she spoke: her voice was full and round, but soft and thrilling, as she said,

"'I beg pardon, sir, for having disturbed you unconsciously; but, having done so, may I request you will assist me to fill this pitcher with water?'

"She pointed at the same time to a small stream which trickled down a fissure in the rock, and formed a little well of clear water beneath. I bowed deeply, and murmuring something—I know not what—took the pitcher from her hand, and scaling the rocky cliff, mounted to the clear source above, where, having filled the vessel, I descended. When I reached the ground beneath, I discovered that she was joined by another person, whom, in an instant, I recognized to be the old gentleman I had seen with her at Barmouth, and who in the most courteous manner apologized for the trouble I had been caused, and informed me that a party of his friends were enjoying a little picnic quite near, and invited me to make one of them.

"I need not say that I accepted the invitation, nor that with delight I seized the opportunity of forming an acquaintance with Isabella, who, I must confess, upon her part, showed no disinclination to the prospect of my joining the party.

"After a few minutes' walking, we came to a small rocky point which projected for some distance into the lake, and offered a

view for several miles of the vale of Llanberris. Upon this lovely spot we found the party assembled; they consisted of about fourteen or fifteen persons, all busily engaged in the arrangement of a very excellent cold dinner, each individual having some peculiar province allotted to him or her, to be performed by their own hands, Thus, one elderly gentleman was whipping cream under a chestnut-tree, while a very fashionably-dressed young man was washing radishes in the lake; an old lady with spectacles was frying salmon over a wood fire, opposite to a short, pursy man with a bald head and drab shorts, deep in the mystery of a chicken salad, from which he never lifted his eyes, when I came up. It was thus I found how the fair Isabella's lot had been cast, as a drawer of water; she, with the others, contributing her share of exertion for the common good. The old gentleman who accompanied her seemed the only unoccupied person, and appeared to be regarded as the ruler of the feast; at least, they all called him General, and implicitly followed every suggestion he threw out. He was a man of a certain grave and quiet manner, blended with a degree of mild good-nature and courtesy, that struck me much at first, and gained greatly on me, even in the few minutes I conversed with him as we came along. Just before he presented me to his friends, he gently touched my arm, and, drawing me aside, whispered in my ear,

"'Don't be surprised at anything you may hear to-day here; for I must inform you this is a kind of club, as I may call it, where every one assumes a certain character, and is bound to sustain it under a penalty. We have these little meetings every now and then; and, as strangers are never present, I feel some explanation necessary, that you may be able to enjoy the thing;—you understand?'

"'Oh, perfectly,' said I, overjoyed at the novelty of the scene, and anticipating much pleasure from my chance meeting with such very original characters.

"'Mr. Sparks, Mrs. Winterbottom. Allow me to present Mr. Sparks?'

"'Any news from Batavia, young gentleman?' said the sallow old lady addressed. 'How is coffee!'

"'The General passed on, introducing me rapidly as he went.

"'Mr. Doolittle, Mr. Sparks.'

"'Ah, how do you do, old boy?' said Mr. Doolittle; 'sit down beside me. We have forty thousand acres of pickled cabbage spoiling for want of a little vinegar.'

"'Fie, fie, Mr. Doolittle,' said the General, and passed on to another.

"'Mr. Sparks, Captain Crosstree.'

"'Ah, Sparks, Sparks! son of old Blazes! ha, ha, ha!" and the Captain fell back into an immoderate fit of laughter.

"'*Le Roi est servi*,' said the thin, meager figure in nankeens, bowing, cap in hand, before the General; and, accordingly, we all assumed our places upon the grass.

"'Say it again! say it again! and I'll plunge this dagger in your heart!' said a hollow voice, tremulous with agitation and rage, close beside me. I turned my head, and saw an old gentleman, with a wart on his nose, sitting opposite a meat pie, which he was contemplating with a look of fiery indignation. Before I could witness the sequel of the scene, I felt a soft hand pressed upon mine. I turned. It was Isabella herself, who, looking at me with an expression I shall never forget, said:

"'Don't mind poor Faddy; he never hurts any one.'

"Meanwhile the business of dinner went on rapidly. The servants, of whom enormous numbers were now present, ran hither and thither; and duck, ham, pigeon-pie, cold veal, apple tarts, cheese, pickled salmon, melon and rice pudding, flourished on every side. As for me, whatever I might have gleaned from the conversation around, under other circumstances, I was too much occupied with Isabella to think of any one else. My suit—for such it was—progressed rapidly. There was evidently something favorable in the circumstances we last met under; for her manner had all the warmth and cordiality of old friendship. It is true that, more than once, I caught the General's eye fixed upon us, with anything but an expression of pleasure, and I thought that Isabella blushed and seemed confused also. 'What care I?' however, was my reflection; 'my views are honorable; and the nephew and heir of Sir Toby Sparks—' Just in the very act of making this reflection, the old man in the shorts hit me in the eye with a roasted apple, calling out at the moment,

"'When did you join, thou child of the pale faces?'

"'Mr. Murdocks!' cried the General, in a voice of thunder, and the little man hung down his head, and spoke not.

"'A word with you, young gentleman,' said a fat old lady, pinching my arm above the elbow.

"'Never mind her,' said Isabella, smil-

ing; 'poor dear old Dorking, she thinks she's an hour-glass. How droll, isn't it?'

"'Young man, have you any feelings of humanity?' inquired the old lady, with tears in her eyes as she spoke; 'will you—dare you assist a fellow-creature under my sad circumstances?'

"'What can I do for you, madam?' said I, really feeling for her distress.

"'Just, like a good dear soul, just turn me up, for I'm nearly run out.'

"Isabella burst out a-laughing at the strange request—an excess which, I confess, I was unable myself to repress; upon which the old lady, putting on a frown of the most ominous blackness, said:

"'You may laugh, madam; but first, before you ridicule the misfortunes of others, ask yourself are you, too, free from infirmity? When did you see the ace of spades, madam? answer me that.'

"Isabella became suddenly pale as death, her very lips blanched, and her voice, almost inaudible, muttered:

"'Am I, then, deceived? Is not this he?' So saying, she placed her hand upon my shoulder.

"'That the ace of spades!' exclaimed the old lady, with a sneer—'that the ace of spades!'

"'Are you, or are you not, sir?' said Isabella, fixing her deep and languid eyes upon me. 'Answer, as you are honest; are you the ace of spades?'

"'He is the King of Tuscarora. Look at his war paint!' cried an elderly gentleman, putting a streak of mustard across my nose and cheek.

"'Then am I deceived,' said Isabella. And, flying at me, she plucked a handful of hair out of my whiskers.

"'Cuckoo, cuckoo!' shouted one; 'Bow, wow, wow!' roared another; 'Phiz!' went a third; and, in an instant, such a scene of commotion and riot ensued! Plates, dishes, knives, forks, and decanters flew right and left; every one pitched into his neighbor with the most fearful cries, and hell itself seemed broke loose. The hour-glass and the Moulah of Oude had got me down, and were pummeling me to death, when a short, thickset man came on all fours slap down upon them, shouting out, 'Way, make way for the Royal Bengal tiger!' at which they both fled like lightning, leaving me to the encounter single-handed. Fortunately, however, this was not of very long duration, for some well-disposed Christians pulled him from off me; not, however, before he had seized me in his grasp, and bitten off a portion of my right ear, leaving me, as you see, thus mutilated for the rest of my days."

"What an extraordinary club!" broke in the Doctor.

"Club! sir, club! it was a lunatic asylum. The General was no other than the famous Doctor Andrew Moorville, that had the great madhouse at Bangor, and who was in the habit of giving his patients every now and then a kind of country party; it being one remarkable feature of their malady that, when one takes to his peculiar flight, whatever it be, the others immediately take the hint, and go off at score. Hence my agreeable adventure; the Bengal tiger being a Liverpool merchant, and the most vivacious madman in England; while the hour-glass and the Moulah were both on an experimental tour to see whether they should not be pronounced totally incurable for life."

"And Isabella?" inquired Power.

"Ah! poor Isabella had been driven mad by a card-playing aunt at Bath, and was, in fact, the most hopeless case there. The last words I heard her speak confirmed my mournful impression of her case:

"'Yes,' said she, as they removed her to her carriage, 'I must, indeed, have but weak intellects, when I could have taken the nephew of a Manchester cotton-spinner, with a face like a printed calico, for a trump card, and the best in the pack!'"

Poor Sparks uttered these last words with a faltering accent, and, finishing his glass at one draught, withdrew without wishing us good-night.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SKIPPER.

In such like gossipings passed our days away, for our voyage itself had nothing of adventure or incident to break its dull monotony; save some few hours of calm, we had been steadily following our seaward track with a fair breeze, and the long pennant pointed ever to the land where our ardent expectations were hurrying before it.

The latest accounts which had reached us from the Peninsula, told that our regiment was almost daily engaged; and we burned with impatience to share with the others the glory they were reaping. Power, who had seen service, felt less on this score than we who had not "fleshed our maiden swords;" but even he sometimes gave way; and, when the wind fell,

toward sunset, he would break out into some exclamation of discontent, half fearing we should be too late; "for," said he, "if we go on in this way, the regiment will be relieved, and ordered home before we reach it."

"Never fear, my boys, you'll have enough of it. Both sides like the work too well to give in; they've got a capital ground, and plenty of spare time," said the Major.

"Only to think," cried Power, "that we should be lounging away our idle hours, when these gallant fellows are in the saddle, late and early. It is too bad; eh, O'Malley? you'll not be pleased to go back with the polish on your sabre? What will Lucy Dashwood say?"

This was the first allusion Power had ever made to her, and I became red to the very forehead.

"By-the-by," added he, "I have a letter for Hammersley, which should rather have been intrusted to your keeping."

At these words I felt cold as death, while he continued:

"Poor fellow! certainly he is most desperately smitten; for, mark me, when a man at his age takes the malady, it is forty times as severe as with a younger fellow, like you. But then, to be sure, he began at the wrong end in the matter; why commence with papa? When a man has his own consent for liking a girl, he must be a contemptible fellow if he can't get her; and, as to anything else being wanting, I don't understand it. But the moment you begin by influencing the heads of the house, good-by to your chances with the dear thing herself, if she have any spirit whatever. It is, in fact, calling on her to surrender without the honors of war; and what girl would stand that?"

"It's vara true," said the Doctor; "there's a strong speerit of opposition in the sex, from physiological causes."

"Curse your physiology, old Galen: what you call opposition, is that piquant resistance to oppression that makes half the charm of the sex. It is with them—with reverence be it spoken—as with horses; the dull, heavy-shouldered ones, that bore away with the bit in their teeth, never caring whether you are pulling to the right or to the left, are worth nothing; the real luxury is in the management of your arching necked curvetter, springing from side to side with every motion of your wrist, madly bounding at restraint; yet, to the practiced hand, held in check with a silk thread; eh, Skipper—am I not right?"

"Well, I can't say I've had much to do with horse-beasts, but I believe you're not far wrong. The lively craft that answers the helm quick, goes round well in stays, luffs up close within a point or two, when you want her, is always a good sea-boat, even though she pitches and rolls a bit; but the heavy lugger that never knows whether your helm is up or down, whether she's off the wind or on it, is only fit for firewood—you can do nothing with a ship or a woman, if she hasn't got steerage way on her."

"Come, Skipper, we've all been telling our stories; let us hear one of yours?"

"My yarn won't come so well after your sky-scrapers of love and courting, and all all that. But, if you like to hear what happened to me once, I have no objection to tell you.

"I often think how little we know what's going to happen to us any minute of our lives. To-day we have the breeze fair in our favor; we are going seven knots, studding-sails set, smooth water, and plenty of sea-room; to-morrow the wind freshens to half a gale, the sea gets up, a rocky coast is seen from the lee bow, and maybe—to add to all—we spring a-leak forward; but then, after all, bad as it looks, mayhap, we rub through even this, and, with the next day, the prospect is as bright and cheering as ever. You'll perhaps ask me what has all this moralizing to do with women and ships at sea? Nothing at all with them, except that I was going to say, that when matters looked worst, very often the best is in store for us, and we should never say strike when there is a timber together. Now for my story:

"It's about four years ago, I was strolling one evening down the side of the harbor at Cove, with my hands in my pockets, having nothing to do, nor no prospect of it, for my last ship had been wrecked off the Bermudas, and nearly all the crew lost; and, somehow, when a man is in misfortune, the underwriters won't have him at no price. Well, there I was, looking about me at the craft that lay on every side waiting for a fair wind to run down channel. All was active and busy; every one getting his vessel ship-shape and tidy, tarring, painting, mending sails, stretching new bunting, and getting in sea-store; boats were plying on every side, signals flying, guns firing from the men-of-war, and everything was lively as might be; all but me. There I was, like an old water-logged timber-ship, never moving a spar, but looking for all the world as though I were a settling fast to go down stern

most; maybe as how I had no objection to that same; but that's neither here nor there. Well, I sat down on the fluke of an anchor, and began a thinking if it wasn't better to go before the mast than live on that way. Just before me, where I sat down, there was an old schooner that lay moored in the same place for as long as I could remember: she was there when I was a boy, and never looked a bit the fresher nor newer as long as I recollected; her old bluff bows, her high poop, her round stern, her flush deck, all Dutch-like, I knew them well, and many a time I delighted to think what queer kind of a chap he was that first set her on the stocks, and pondered in what trade she ever could have been. All the sailors about the port used to call her Noah's Ark, and swear she was the identical craft that he stowed away all the wild beasts in during the rainy season. Be that as it might, since I fell into misfortune I got to feel a liking for the old schooner; she was like an old friend; she never changed to me, fair weather or foul; there she was, just the same as thirty years before, when all the world were forgetting and steering wide away from me. Every morning I used to go down to the harbor and have a look at her, just to see that all was right, and nothing stirred; and, if it blew very hard at night, I'd get up and go down to look how she weathered it, just as if I was at sea in her. Now and then I'd get some of the watermen to row me aboard of her, and leave me there for a few hours; when I used to be quite happy walking the deck, holding the old worm-eaten wheel, looking out ahead, and going down below, just as though I was in command of her. Day after day this habit grew on me, and at last my whole life was spent in watching her and looking after her,—there was something so much alike in our fortunes, that I always thought of her. Like myself, she had had her day of life and activity; we had both braved the storm and the breeze; her shattered bulwarks and worn cutwater attested that she had, like myself, not escaped her calamities. We both had survived our dangers, to be neglected and forgotten, and to lie rotting on the stream of life till the crumbling hand of Time should break us up, timber by timber. Is it any wonder if I loved the old craft? nor if, by any chance, the idle boys would venture aboard of her to play and amuse themselves, that I hallooed them away? or, when a newly-arrived ship, not caring for the old boat, would run foul of her, and carry away some spar or piece of running rigging, I would suddenly call out to them to sheer off and not damage us? By degrees, they came all to notice this; and I found that they thought me out of my senses, and many a trick was played off upon old Noah, for that was the name the sailors gave me.

"Well, this evening, as I was saying, I sat upon the fluke of the anchor, waiting for a chance boat to put me aboard. It was past sunset, the tide was ebbing, and the old craft was surging to the fast current that ran by with a short, impatient jerk, as though she were well weary, and wished to be at rest; her loose stays creaked mournfully, and, as she yawed over, the sea ran from many a breach in her worn sides, like blood trickling from a wound. 'Ay, ay,' thought I, 'the hour is not far off; another stiff gale, and all that remains of you will be found high and dry upon the shore.' My heart was very heavy as I thought of this, for, in my loneliness, the old Ark—though that was not her name, as I'll tell you presently—was all the companion I had. I've heard of a poor prisoner who, for many and many years, watched a spider that wove his web within his window, and never lost sight of him from morning till night; and, somehow, I can believe it well; the heart will cling to something, and, if it has no living object to press to, it will find a lifeless one,—it can no more stand alone than the shrouds can without the mast. The evening wore on, as I was thinking thus; the moon shone out, but no boat came, and I was just determining to go home again for the night, when I saw two men standing on the steps of the wharf below me, and looking straight at the Ark. Now, I must tell you I always felt uneasy when any one came to look at her, for I began to fear that some ship-owner or other would buy her to break up, though, except the copper fastenings, there was little of any value about her. Now, the moment I saw the two figures stop short, and point to her, I said to myself, 'Ah! my old girl, so they won't even let the blue water finish you, but they must set their carpenters and dockyard people to work upon you.' This thought grieved me more and more. Had a stiff sou'-wester laid her over, I should have felt it more natural, for her sand was run out; but, just as this passed through my mind, I heard a voice from one of the persons, that I at once knew to be the Port Admiral's:

"'Well, Dawkins,' said he to the other, 'if you think she'll hold together, I'm sure I've no objection. I don't like the

job, I confess; but still the Admiralty must be obeyed.'

"'Oh, my Lord,' said the other, 'she's the very thing; she's a rakish-looking craft, and will do admirably; any repair we want, a few days will effect; secresy is the great thing.'

"'Yes,' said the Admiral, after a pause, 'as you observed, secresy is the great thing.'

"'Ho! ho!' thought I, 'there's something in the wind here;' so I laid myself out upon the anchor-stock, to listen better, unobserved.

"'We must find a crew for her, give her a few carronades, make her as ship-shape as we can, and, if the Skipper—'

"'Ay, but there is the real difficulty,' said the Admiral, hastily; 'where are we to find a fellow that will suit us? We can't every day find a man willing to jeopardize himself in such a cause as this, even though the reward be a great one.'

"'Very true, my Lord; but I don't think there is any necessity for our explaining to him the exact nature of the service.'

"'Come, come, Dawkins, you can't mean that you'll lead a poor fellow into such a scrape blindfolded?'

"'Why, my Lord, you never think it requisite to give a plan of your cruise to your ship's crew before clearing out of harbor.'

"'This may be perfectly just, but I don't like it,' said the Admiral.

"'In that case, my Lord, you are imparting the secrets of the Admiralty to a party who may betray the whole plot.'

"'I wish, with all my soul, they'd given the order to any one else,' said the Admiral, with a sigh; and, for a few moments, neither spoke a word.

"'Well, then, Dawkins, I believe there is nothing for it but what you say; meanwhile, let the repairs be got in hand, and see after a crew.'

"'Oh, as to that,' said the other, 'there are plenty of scoundrels in the fleet here fit for nothing else. Any fellow who has been thrice up for punishment in six months, we'll draft on board of her; the fellows who have only been once to the gangway, we'll make the officers.'

"'A pleasant ship's company,' thought I, 'if the devil would only take the command.'

"'And with a Skipper proportionate to their merit,' said Dawkins.

"'Begad, I'll wish the French joy of them,' said the Admiral.

"'Ho, ho!' thought I, 'I've found you out, at last; so this is a secret expedition; I see it all; they're fitting her out as a fire-ship, and going to send her slap in among the French fleet at Brest. Well,' thought I, 'even that's better; that, at least, is a glorious end, though the poor fellows have no chance of escape.'

"'Now, then,' said the Admiral, 'tomorrow you'll look out for the fellow to take the command. He must be a smart seaman, a bold fellow, too, otherwise the ruffianly crew will be too much for him; he may bid high, we'll come to his price.'

"'So you may,' thought I, 'when you are buying his life.'

"'I hope sincerely,' continued the Admiral, 'that we may light upon some one without wife or child; I never could forgive myself—'

"'Never fear, my Lord,' said the other; 'my care shall be to pitch upon one whose loss no one would feel; some one without friend or home who, setting his life for nought, cares less for the gain than the very recklessness of the adventure.'

"'That's me,' said I, springing up from the anchor-stock, and springing between them; 'I'm that man.'

"Had the very devil himself appeared at the moment, I doubt if they would have been more scared. The Admiral started a pace or two backward, whilst Dawkins, the first surprise over, seized me by the collar, and held me fast.

"'Who are you, scoundrel, and what brings you here?' said he, in a voice hoarse with passion.

"'I'm old Noah,' said I; for, somehow, I had been called by no other name for so long, I never thought of my real one.

"'Noah!' said the Admiral—'Noah! Well, but Noah, what were you doing down here at this time of night?'

"'I was a-watching the Ark, my Lord,' said I, bowing, as I took off my hat.

"'I've heard of this fellow before, my Lord,' said Dawkins; 'he's a poor lunatic that is always wandering about the harbor, and, I believe, has no harm in him.'

"'Yes, but he has been listening, doubtless, to our conversation,' said the Admiral. 'Eh, have you heard all we have been saying?'

"'Every word of it, my Lord.'

"At this the Admiral and Dawkins looked steadfastly at each other for some minutes, but neither spoke; at last Dawkins said, 'Well, Noah, I've been told you are a man to be depended on; may we rely upon your not repeating anything you overheard this evening—at least, for a year to come?'

"'You may,' said I.

"'But, Dawkins,' said the Admiral, in a half whisper, 'if the poor fellow be mad?'

"'My Lord,' said I, boldly, 'I am not mad. Misfortune and calamity I have had enough of to make me so; but, thank God, my brain has been tougher than my poor heart. I was once the part owner and commander of a goodly craft, that swept the sea, if not with a broad pennon at her mast-head, with as light a spirit as ever lived beneath one. I was rich; I had a home and a child: I am now poor, houseless, childless, friendless, and an outcast. If, in my solitary wretchedness, I have loved to look upon that old bark, it is because its fortune seemed like my own. It had outlived all that needed or cared for it; for this reason have they thought me mad, though there are those, and not few either, who can well bear testimony if stain or reproach lie at my door, and if I can be reproached with aught save bad luck. I have heard, by chance, what you have said this night; I know that you are fitting out a secret expedition; I know its dangers, its inevitable dangers, and I here offer myself to lead it; I ask no reward, I look for no price. Alas! who is left to me for whom I could labor now? Give me but the opportunity to end my days with honor on board the old craft, where my heart still clings: give me but that. Well, if you will not do so much, let me serve among the crew; put me before the mast. My Lord, you'll not refuse this; it is an old man asks, one whose gray hairs have floated many a year ago before the breeze.'

"'My poor fellow, you know not what you ask: this is no common case of danger.'

"'I know it all, my Lord: I have heard it all.'

"'Dawkins, what is to be done here?' inquired the Admiral.

"'I say, friend,' inquired Dawkins, laying his hand upon my arm, 'what is your real name? Are you he who commanded the *Dwarf* privateer in the Isle of France?'

"'The same.'

"'Then you are known to Lord Collingwood?'

"'He knows me well, and can speak to my character.'

"'What he says of himself is all true, my Lord.'

"'True,' said I, 'true! you did not doubt it, did you?'

"'We,' said the Admiral, 'must speak together again; be here to-morrow night at this hour; keep your own counsel of what has passed; and now, good-night.' So saying, the Admiral took Dawkins by the arm, and returned slowly toward the town, leaving me where I stood, meditating on this singular meeting, and its possible consequences.

"The whole of the following day was passed by me in a state of feverish excitement, which I cannot describe; this strange adventure breaking in so suddenly upon the dull monotony of my daily existence, had so aroused and stimulated me, that I could neither rest nor eat. How I longed for night to come; for, sometimes, as the day wore later, I began to fear that the whole scene of my meeting with the Admiral had been merely some excited dream of a tortured and fretted mind; and, as I stood examining the ground where I believed the interview to have occurred, I endeavored to recall the position of different objects as they stood around, to corroborate my own failing remembrance.

"At last the evening closed in; but, unlike the preceding one, the sky was covered with masses of dark and watery cloud, that drifted hurriedly across; the air felt heavy and thick, and unnaturally still and calm; the water of the harbor looked of a dull leaden hue, and all the vessels seemed larger than they were, and stood out from the landscape more clearly than usual; now and then a low rumbling noise was heard, somewhat alike in sound, but far too faint for distant thunder; while, occasionally, the boats and smaller craft rocked to and fro, as though some groundswell stirred them, without breaking the languid surface of the sea above.

"A few drops of thick, heavy rain fell just as the darkness came on, and then all felt still and calm as before. I sat upon the anchor-stock, my eyes fixed upon the old Ark, until gradually her outline grew fainter and fainter against the dark sky, and her black hull could scarcely be distinguished from the water beneath. I felt that I was looking toward her; for, long after I had lost sight of the tall mast and high-pitched bowsprit, I feared to turn away my head, lest I should lose the place where she lay.

"The time went slowly on, and, although in reality I had not been long there, I felt as if years themselves had passed over my head. Since I had come there, my mind brooded over all the misfortunes of my life; as I contrasted its outset, bright with hope and rich in promise, with the sad reality, my heart grew heavy and my chest heaved painfully; so sunk was I in my reflections,

so lost in thought, that I never knew that the storm had broken loose, and that the heavy rain was falling in torrents. The very ground, parched with long drought, smoked as it pattered upon it; while the low, wailing cry of the sea-gull, mingled with the deep growl of far-off thunder, told that the night was a fearful one for those at sea. Wet through and shivering, I sat still; now listening, amid the noise of the hurricane and the creaking of the cordage, for any footstep to approach, and now relapsing back into a half-despairing dread, that my heated brain alone had conjured up the scene of the day before. Such were my dreary reflections, when a loud crash aboard the schooner told me that some old spar had given way. I strained my eyes through the dark to see what had happened, but in vain, the black vapor, thick with falling rain, obscured everything, and all was hid from view. I could hear that she worked violently as the waves beat against her worn sides, and that her iron cable creaked as she pitched to the breaking sea. The wind was momentarily increasing, and I began to fear lest I should have taken my last look at the old craft, when my attention was called off by hearing a loud voice cry out, 'Halloo there! Where are you?'

"'Ay, ay, sir, I'm here.' In a moment the Admiral and his friend were beside me.

"'What a night!' exclaimed the Admiral, as he shook the rain from the heavy boat-cloak, and cowered in beneath some tall blocks of granite near. 'I began half to hope that you might not have been here, my poor fellow,' said the Admiral; 'it's a dreadful time for one so poorly clad for a storm; I say, Dawkins, let him have a pull at your flask.' The brandy rallied me a little, and I felt that it cheered my drooping courage.

"'This is not a time, nor is it a place for much parley,' said the Admiral, 'so that we must even make short work of it. Since we met here last night, I have satisfied myself that you are to be trusted, that your character and reputation have nothing heavier against them than misfortune, which, certainly, if I have been rightly informed, has been largely dealt out to you. Now, then, I am willing to accept of your offer of service, if you are still of the same mind as when you made it, and if you are willing to undertake what we have to do, without any question and inquiry as to points on which we must not and dare not inform you. Whatever you may have overheard last night may, or may not, have put you in possession of our secret. If the former, your determination can be made at once; if the latter, you have only to decide whether you are ready to go blindfolded in the business.'

"'I am ready, my Lord,' said I.

"'You perhaps are then aware what is the nature of the service?'

"'I know it not,' said I. 'All that I heard, sir, leads me to suppose it one of danger, but that's all.'

"'I think, my Lord,' said Dawkins, 'that no more need now be said. Cupples is ready to engage, we are equally so to accept; the thing is pressing. When can you sail?'

"'To-night,' said I, 'if you will.'

"'Really, Dawkins,' said the Admiral, 'I don't see why—'

"'My Lord, I beg of you,' said the other, interrupting, 'let me now complete the arrangement. This is the plan,' said he, turning toward me as he spoke: 'As soon as that old craft can be got ready for sea, or some other, if she be not worth it, you will sail from this port with a strong crew, well armed and supplied with ammunition. Your destination is Malta, your object to deliver to the Admiral stationed there the dispatches with which you will be intrusted; they contain information of immense importance, which, for certain reasons, cannot be sent through a ship of war, but must be forwarded by a vessel that may not attract peculiar notice. If you be attacked, your orders are to resist; if you be taken, on no account destroy the papers, for the French vessel can scarcely escape recapture from our frigates, and it is of great consequence these papers should remain. Such is a brief sketch of our plan; the details can be made known to you hereafter.'

"'I am quite ready, my Lord: I ask for no terms; I make no stipulations. If the result be favorable, it will be time enough to speak of that. When am I to sail?'

"As I spoke, the Admiral turned suddenly round, and said something in a whisper to Dawkins, who appeared to overrule it, whatever it might be, and finally brought him over to his own opinion.

"'Come, Cupples,' said Dawkins, 'the affair is now settled; to-morrow a boat will be in waiting for you opposite Spike Island to convey you on board the *Semiramis*, where every step in the whole business shall be explained to you; meanwhile, you have only to keep your own counsel, and trust the secret to no one.'

"'Yes, Cupples,' said the Admiral, 'we rely upon you for that, so good-night.' As he spoke, he placed within my hands a crumpled note for ten pounds, and, squeezing my fingers, departed.

"My yarn is spinning out to a far greater length than I intended, so I'll try and shorten it a bit. The next day I went aboard the *Semiramis*, where, when I appeared upon the quarter-deck, I found myself an object of some interest. The report that I was the man about to command the *Brian*—that was the real name of the old craft,—had caused some curiosity among the officers, and they all spoke to me with great courtesy. After waiting a short time, I was ordered to go below, where the Admiral, his Flag-Captain Dawkins, and the others were seated. They repeated at greater length the conversation of the night before, and finally decided that I was to sail in three weeks; for, although the old schooner was sadly damaged, they had lost no time, but had her already high in dock, with two hundred ship carpenters at work upon her.

"I do not shorten sail here to tell you what reports were circulated about Cove as to my extraordinary change in circumstances, nor how I bore my altered fortunes. It is enough if I say that, in less than three weeks I weighed anchor, and stood out to sea one beautiful morning in autumn, and set out upon my expedition.

"I have already told you something of the craft. Let me complete the picture by informing you that, before twenty-four hours passed over, I discovered that so ungainly, so awkward, so unmanageable a vessel never put to sea; in light winds she scarcely stirred, or moved as if she were water-logged; if it came to blow upon the quarter, she fell off from her helm at a fearful rate; in wearing, she endangered every spar she had; and, when you put her in stays, when half round she would fall back, and nearly carry away every stitch of canvas with the shock. If the ship was bad, the crew was ten times worse. What Dawkins said turned out to be literally true: every ill-conducted, disorderly fellow who had been up the gangway once a week or so, every unreclaimed landsman of bad character and no seamanship, was sent on board of us; and, in fact, except that there was scarcely any discipline and no restraint, we appeared like a floating penitentiary of convicted felons.

"So long as we ran down channel, with a slack sea and fair wind, so long all went on tolerably well; to be sure, they only kept watch when they were tired below, when they came up reeled about the deck, did all just as they pleased, and treated me with no manner of respect. After some vain efforts to repress their excesses—vain, for I had but one to second me—I appeared to take no notice of their misconduct, and contented myself with waiting for the time when, my dreary voyage over, I should quit the command, and part company with such associates forever. At last, however, it came on to blow, and the night we passed the Lizard was indeed a fearful one. As morning broke, a sea running mountains high, a wind strong from the north-west was hurrying the old craft along at a rate I believed impossible. I shall not stop to recount the frightful scenes of anarchy, confusion, drunkenness, and insubordination which our crew exhibited; the recollection is too bad already, and I would spare you and myself the recital; but, on the fourth day from the setting in of the gale, as we entered the Bay of Biscay, some one aloft descried a strange sail to windward, bearing down as if in pursuit of us. Scarcely did the news reach the deck, when, bad as it was before, matters became now ten times worse, some resolving to give themselves up, if the chase happened to be French, and vowing that, before surrendering, the spirit-room should be forced, and every man let drink as he pleased. Others proposed, if there were anything like equality in the force, to attack, and convert the captured vessel, if they succeeded, into a slaver, and sail at once for Africa. Some were for blowing up the old *Brian* with all on board; and, in fact, every counsel that drunkenness, insanity, and crime combined could suggest was offered and descanted on. Meanwhile the chase gained rapidly upon us, and before noon we discovered her to be a French letter-of-marque, with four guns, and a long brass swivel upon the poop deck. As for us, every sheet of canvas we could crowd was crammed on, but in vain; and, as we labored through the heavy sea, our riotous crew grew every moment worse, and, sitting down sulkily in groups upon the deck, declared that, come what might, they would neither work the ship nor fight her; that they had been sent to sea in a rotten craft, merely to effect their destruction, and that they cared little for the disgrace of a flag they detested. Half furious with the taunting sarcasm I heard on every side, and nearly mad from passion, and bewildered, my first impulse was to rush amongst them with my drawn cutlass,

and, ere I fell their victim, take heavy vengeance upon the ringleaders, when suddenly a sharp booming noise came thundering along, and a round shot went flying over our heads.

"'Down with the ensign; strike at once!' cried eight or ten voices together, as the ball whizzed through the rigging. Anticipating this, and resolving, whatever might happen, to fight her to the last, I had made the mate, a stanch-hearted, resolute fellow, to make fast the signal sail-yard aloft, so that it was impossible for any one on deck to lower the bunting. Bang went another gun, and, before the smoke cleared away, a third, which, truer in its aim than the rest, went clean through the lower part of our mainsail.

"'Steady, then, boys, and clear for action,' said the mate. 'She's a French smuggling craft that will sheer off when we show fight, so that we must not fire a shot till she comes alongside.'

"'And harkee, lads,' said I, taking up the tone of encouragement he spoke with, 'if we take her, I promise to claim nothing of the prize. Whatever we capture you shall divide amongst yourselves.'

"'It's very easy to divide what we never had,' said one; 'Nearly as easy as to give it,' cried another; 'I'll never light match or draw cutlass in the cause,' said a third.

"'Surrender!' 'Strike the flag!' 'Down with the colors!' roared several voices together.

"By this time the Frenchman was close up, and ranging his long gun to sweep our decks; his crew were quite perceptible—about twenty bronzed, stout-looking fellows, stripped to the waist, and carrying pistols in broad flat belts, slung over the shoulder.

"'Come, my lads,' said I, raising my voice, as I drew a pistol from my side and cocked it, 'our time is short now; I may as well tell you that the first shot that strikes us amidship blows up the whole craft and every man on board. We are nothing less than a fire-ship, destined for Brest harbor to blow up the French fleet. If you are willing to make an effort for your lives, follow me!'

"The men looked aghast. Whatever recklessness crime and drunkenness had given them, the awful feeling of inevitable death at once repelled. Short as was the time for reflection, they felt that there were many circumstances to encourage the assertion: the nature of the vessel, her riotous, disorderly crew, the secret nature of the service, all confirmed it, and they answered with a shout of despairing vengeance, 'We'll board her; lead us on.' As the cry rose up, the long swivel from the chase rang sharply in our ears, and a tremendous discharge of grape flew through our rigging; none of our men, however, fell; and, animated now with the desire for battle, they sprang to the binnacle, and seized their arms.

"In an instant the whole deck became a scene of excited bustle; and scarcely was the ammunition dealt out, and the boarding-party drawn up, when the Frenchman broached to, and lashed his bowsprit to our own.

"One terrific yell burst from our fellows as they sprang from the rigging and the poop upon the astonished Frenchmen, who thought that the victory was already their own; with death and ruin behind, their only hope before, they dashed forward like madmen to the fray.

"The conflict was bloody and terrific, though not a long one; nearly equal in number, but far superior in personal strength, and stimulated by their sense of danger, our fellows rushed onward, carrying all before them to the quarter-deck. Here the Frenchmen rallied, and, for some minutes, had rather the advantage, until the mate, turning one of their guns against them, prepared to sweep them down in a mass. Then it was that they ceased their fire and cried out for quarter,—all, save their captain, a short, thickset fellow, with a grizzly beard and moustache, who, seeing his men fall back, turned on them one glance of scowling indignation, and, rushing forward, clove our boatswain to the deck with one blow. Before the example could have been followed, he lay a bloody corpse upon the deck, while our people, roused to madness by the loss of a favorite among the men, dashed impetuously forward, and, dealing death on every side, left not one man living among their unresisting enemies. My story is soon told now. We brought our prize safe into Malta, which we reached in five days. In less than a week our men were drafted into different men-of-war on the station. I was appointed a warrant-officer in the *Sheerwater*, forty-four guns; and, as the Admiral opened the dispatch, the only words he spoke puzzled me for many a day after.

"'You have accomplished your orders too well,' said he; 'that privateer is but a poor compensation for the whole French navy.'"

"Well," inquired Power, "and did you never hear the meaning of the words?"

"Yes," said he; "many years after, I found out that our dispatches were false ones, intended to have fallen into the hands of the French, and mislead them as to Lord Nelson's fleet, which at that time was cruising to the southward to catch them. This, of course, explained what fate was destined for us—a French prison, if not death; and, after all, either was fully good enough for the crew that sailed in the old *Brian*."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LAND.

It was late when we separated for the night, and the morning was already far advanced ere I awoke; the monotonous tramp overhead showed me that the others were stirring, and I gently moved the shutter of the narrow window beside me to look out.

The sea, slightly rippled upon its surface, shone like a plate of fretted gold; not a wave, not a breaker appeared; but the rushing sound close by showed that we were moving fast through the water.

"Always calm hereabouts," said a gruff voice on deck which I soon recognized as the Skipper's; "no sea whatever."

"I can make nothing of it," cried out Power, from the forepart of the vessel, "it appears to me all cloud."

"No, no, sir, believe me, it's no fog-bank, that large dark mass to leeward there; that's Cintra."

"Land!" cried I, springing up, and rushing upon deck; "where, Skipper,—where is the land?"

"I say, Charley," said Power, "I hope you mean to adopt a little more clothing on reaching Lisbon; for though the climate is a warm one—"

"Never mind, O'Malley," said the Major, "the Portuguese will only be flattered by the attention, if you land as you are."

"Why, how so?"

"Surely, you remember what the niggers said when they saw the 79th Highlanders landing at St. Lucie. They had never seen a Scotch regiment before, and were consequently somewhat puzzled at the costume; till, at last, one more cunning than the rest explained it by saying, 'They are in such a hurry to kill the poor black men, that they came away without their breeches.'"

"Now, what say you?" cried the Skipper, as he pointed with his telescope to a dark blue mass in the distance; "see there!"

"Ah, true enough, that's Cintra!"

"Then we shall probably be in the Tagus before morning?"

"Before midnight, if the wind holds," said the Skipper.

We breakfasted on deck, beneath an awning; the vessel scarcely seemed to move as she cut her way through the calm water.

The misty outline of the coast grew gradually more defined, and at length the blue mountains could be seen, at first but dimly; but, as the day wore on, their many-colored hues shone forth, and patches of green verdure, dotted with sheep, or sheltered by dark foliage, met the eye. The bulwarks were crowded with anxious faces; each looked pointedly toward the shore, and many a stout heart beat high as the land drew near, fated to cover with its earth more than one amongst us.

"And that's Portingale, Mister Charles," said a voice behind me. I turned, and saw my man Mike, as, with anxious joy, he fixed his eyes upon the shore.

"They tell me it's a beautiful place, with wine for nothing, and spirits for less. Isn't it a pity they won't be raisonable, and make peace with us?"

"Why, my good fellow, we are excellent friends; it's the French who want to beat us all."

"Upon my conscience, that's not right. There's an ould saying in Connaught,—it's not fair for one to fall upon twenty. Sergeant Haggarty says that I'll see none of the divarsion at all."

"I don't well understand—"

"He does be telling me that, as I'm only your footboy, he'll send me away to the rear, where there's nothing but wounded, and wagons, and women."

"I believe the sergeant is right there; but, after all, Mike, it's a safe place."

"Ah! then, musha for the safety; I don't think much of it; sure they might circumvint us. And, av it wasn't displazing to you, I'd rather list."

"Well, I've no objection, Mickey: would you like to join my regiment?"

"By coorse, your honor. I'd like to be near yourself; bekase, too, if anything happens to you—the Lord be betune us and harm,"—here he crossed himself piously,—"sure I'd like to be able to tell the master how you died; and, sure, there's Mr. Considine—God pardon him!—he'll be beating my brains out av I couldn't explain it all."

"Well, Mike, I'll speak to some of my

friends here about you, and we'll settle it all properly; here's the Doctor."

"Arrah, Mr. Charles, don't mind him; he's a poor crayture entirely; devil a thing he knows."

"Why, what do you mean, man? he's physician to the forces."

"Oh, be-gorra, and so he may be," said Mike, with a toss of his head; "those army docthers isn't worth their salt. It's thruth I'm telling you: sure didn't he come see me when I was sick below in the hould?

"'How do you feel?' says he.

"'Terribly dhry in the mouth,' says I.

"'But your bones,' says he, 'how's them?'

"'As if cripples was kicking me,' says I.

"Well, with that he wint away, and brought back two powders.

"'Take them,' says he, 'and you'll be cured in no time.'

"'What's them?' says I.

"'They're ematics,' says he.

"'Blood and ages,' says I, 'are they?'

"'Devil a lie,' says he; 'take them immediately.'

"And I tuk them—and, would you believe me, Mister Charles?—it's thruth I'm telling you—devil a one o' them would stay on my stomach. So you see what a docther he is!"

I could not help smiling at Mike's ideas of medicine, as I turned away to talk to the Major, who was busily engaged beside me. His occupation consisted in furbishing up a very tarnished and faded uniform, whose white seams and threadbare lace betokened many years of service.

"Getting up our traps, you see, O'Malley," said he, as he looked with no small pride at the faded glories of his old vestment; "astonish them at Lisbon, we flatter ourselves. I say, Power, what a bad style of dress they've got into latterly, with their tight waists and strapped trowsers—nothing free, nothing easy, nothing *dégagé* about it. When in a campaign, a man ought to be able to stow prog for twenty-four hours about his person, and no one the wiser. A very good rule, I asssure you, though it sometimes leads to awkward results. At Vimeira, I got into a sad scrape that way. Old Sir Harry, that commanded there, sent for the sick return. I was at dinner when the orderly came; so I packed up the eatables about me, and rode off. Just, however, as I came up to the quarters, my horse stumbled and threw me slap on my head.

"'Is he killed?' said Sir Harry.

"'Only stunned, your Excellency,' said some one.

"'Then he'll come to, I suppose. Look for the papers in his pocket.'

"So they turned me on my back, and plunged a hand into my side-pocket, but, the devil take it, they pulled out a roast hen. Well, the laugh was scarcely over at this, when another fellow dived into my coat behind, and lugged out three sausages; and so they went on, till the ground was covered with ham, pigeon-pie, veal, kidney, and potatoes, and the only thing like a paper was a mess roll of the 4th, with a droll song about Sir Harry, written in pencil on the back of it. Devil of a bad affair for me; I was nearly broke for it; but they only reprimanded me a little, and I was afterward attached to the victualing department."

What an anxious thing is the last day of a voyage! how slowly creep the hours, teeming with memories of the past and expectations of the future!

Every plan, every well-devised expedient to cheat the long and weary days, is at once abandoned; the chess-board and the new novel are alike forgotten, and the very quarter-deck walk, with its merry gossip and careless chit-chat, becomes distasteful. One blue and misty mountain, one faint outline of the far-off shore, has dispelled all thought of these, and, with straining eye and anxious heart, we watch for land.

As the day wears on apace, the excitement increases: the faint and shadowy forms of distant objects grow gradually clearer. Where before some tall and misty mountain peak was seen, we now descry patches of deepest blue and somber olive; the mellow corn and the waving woods, the village spire and the lowly cot, come out of the landscape; and, like some well-remembered voice, they speak of home. The objects we have seen, the sounds we have heard a hundred times before without interest, become to us now things that stir the heart.

For a time, the bright glare of the noonday sun dazzles the view, and renders indistinct the prospect; but, as evening falls, once more is all fair, and bright, and rich before us. Rocked by the long and rolling swell, I lay beside the bowsprit, watching the shore-birds that came to rest upon the rigging, or following some long and tangled sea-weed as it floated by; my thoughts now wandering back to the brown hills and the broad river of my early home—now straying off in dreary fancies of the future.

How flat and unprofitable does all ambition seem at such moments as these! how valueless, how poor, in our estima-

tion, those worldly distinctions we have so often longed and thirsted for, as with lowly heart and simple spirit we watch each humble cottage, weaving to ourselves some story of its inmates as we pass!

The night at length closed in, but it was a bright and starry one,—lending to the landscape a hue of somber shadow, while the outlines of the objects were still sharp and distinct as before. One solitary star twinkled near the horizon. I watched it as, at intervals disappearing, it would again shine out, marking the calm sea with a tall pillar of light.

"Come down, Mr. O'Malley," cried the Skipper's well-known voice; "come down below, and join us in a parting glass—that's the Lisbon light to leeward, and before two hours we drop our anchor in the Tagus."

CHAPTER XXXV.

MAJOR MONSOON.

Of my traveling companions I have already told my readers something. Power is now an old acquaintance; to Sparks I have already presented them; of the Adjutant they are not entirely ignorant; and it therefore only remains for me to introduce to their notice Major Monsoon. I should have some scruple for the digression which this occasions in my narrative, were it not that with the worthy Major I was destined to meet subsequently, and indeed served under his orders for some months in the Peninsula. When Major Monsoon had entered the army, or in what precise capacity, I never yet met the man who could tell. There were traditionary accounts of his having served in the East Indies and in Canada, in times long past. His own peculiar reminiscences extended to nearly every regiment in the service, "horse, foot, and dragoons." There was not a clime he had not basked in; not an engagement he had not witnessed. His memory, or, if you will, his invention, was never at fault; and from the siege of Seringapatam to the battle of Corunna he was perfect: besides this, he possessed a mind retentive of even the most trifling details of his profession; from the formation of a regiment to the introduction of a new button, from the laying down of a parallel to the price of a camp-kettle, he knew it all. To be sure, he had served in the Commissary-General's department for a number of years, and nothing instils such habits as this.

"The commissaries are to the army what the special pleaders are to the bar," observed my friend Power—"dry dogs; not over-creditable on the whole, but devilish useful."

The Major had begun life a two-bottle man, but, by a studious cultivation of his natural gifts, and a steady determination to succeed, he had, at the time I knew him, attained to his fifth. It need not be wondered at, then, that his countenance bore some traces of his habits. It was of a deep, sunset purple, which, becoming tropical, at the tip of the nose verged almost upon a plum color; his mouth was large, thick-lipped, and good-humored; his voice rich, mellow, and racy, and contributed, with the aid of a certain dry, chuckling laugh, greatly to increase the effect of the stories which he was ever ready to recount; and, as they most frequently bore in some degree against some of what he called his little failings, they were ever well received, no man being so popular with the world as he who flatters its vanity at his own expense. To do this the Major was ever ready, but at no time more so than when the evening wore late, and the last bottle of his series seemed to imply that any caution regarding the nature of his communication was perfectly unnecessary. Indeed, from the commencement of his evening to the close, he seemed to pass through a number of mental changes, all in a manner preparing him for this final consummation, when he confessed anything and everything; and so well-regulated had these stages become, that a friend dropping in upon him suddenly could at once pronounce, from the tone of his conversation, on what precise bottle the Major was then engaged.

Thus, in the outset he was gastronomic; discussed the dinner, from the soup to the Stilton; criticised the cutlets; pronounced upon the merits of the mutton; and threw out certain vague hints that he would one day astonish the world by a little volume upon cookery.

With bottle No. 2 he took leave of the *cuisine*, and opened his battery upon the wine. Bordeaux, Burgundy, hock, and hermitage, all passed in review before him; their flavor discussed, their treatment descanted upon, their virtues extolled; from humble port to imperial tokay, he was thoroughly conversant with all; and not a vintage escaped as to when the sun had suffered eclipse, or when a comet had wagged his tail over it.

With No. 3 he became pipeclay; talked army list and eighteen maneuvers; la-

mented the various changes in equipments which modern innovation had introduced; and feared the loss of pigtails might sap the military spirit of the nation.

With No. 4 his anecdotic powers came into play; he recounted various incidents of the war, with his own individual adventures and experience, told with an honest *naïveté* that proved personal vanity; indeed, self-respect never marred the interest of the narrative; besides, as he had ever regarded a campaign something in the light of a foray, and esteemed war as little else than a pillage excursion, his sentiments were singularly amusing.

With his last bottle, those feelings that seemed inevitably connected with whatever is last, appeared to steal over him: a tinge of sadness for pleasures fast passing and nearly passed, a kind of retrospective glance at the fallacy of all our earthly enjoyments, insensibly suggesting moral and edifying reflections, led him by degrees to confess that he was not quite satisfied with himself, though "not very bad for a commissary;" and, finally, as the decanter waxed low, he would interlard his meditations by passages of Scripture, singularly perverted by his misconception from their true meaning, and alternately throwing out prospects of censure or approval. Such was Major Monsoon; and to conclude in his own words this brief sketch, he "would have been an excellent officer if Providence had not made him such a confounded drunken old scoundrel."

"Now, then, for the King of Spain's story. Out with it, old boy; we are all good men and true here," cried Power, as we slowly came along upon the tide up the Tagus, "so you've nothing to fear."

"Upon my life," replied the Major, "I don't half like the tone of our conversation. There is a certain freedom young men affect now-a-days regarding morals that is not at all to my taste. When I was five or six and twenty—"

"You were the greatest scamp in the service," cried Power.

"Fie, fie, Fred. If I was a little wild or so"—here the Major's eyes twinkled maliciously—"it was the ladies that spoiled me; I was always something of a favorite, just like our friend Sparks there. Not that we fared very much alike in our little adventures; for, somehow, I believe I was generally in fault in most of mine, as many a good man and many an excellent man has been before." Here his voice dropped into a moralizing key, as he added, "David, you know, didn't behave well to old Uriah. Upon my life he did not, and he was a very respectable man."

"The King of Spain's sherry! the sherry!" cried I, fearing that the Major's digression might lose us a good story.

"You shall not have a drop of it," replied the Major.

"But the story, Major, the story."

"Nor the story, either."

"What," said Power, "will you break faith with us?"

"There's none to be kept with reprobates like you. Fill my glass."

"Hold there! stop!" cried Power. "Not a spoonful till he redeems his pledge."

"Well, then, if you must have a story—for most assuredly I must drink—I have no objection to give you a leaf from my early reminiscences; and, in compliment to Sparks there, my tale shall be of love."

"I dinna like to lose the King's story. I hae my thoughts it was na a bad ane."

"Nor I neither, Doctor; but—"

"Come, come, you shall have that too, the first night we meet in a bivouac, and, as I fear the time may not be very far distant, don't be impatient; besides, a love-story—"

"Quite true," said Power; "a love-story claims precedence: *place aux dames.* There's a bumper for you, old Wickedness; so go along."

The Major cleared off his glass, refilled it, sipped twice, and ogled it as though he would have no peculiar objection to sip once more, took a long pinch of snuff from a box nearly as long as, and something the shape of a child's coffin, looked around to see that we were all attention, and thus began:

"When I have been in a moralizing mood, as I very frequently am about this hour in the morning, I have often felt surprised by what little, trivial, and insignificant circumstances our lot in life seems to be cast; I mean especially as regards the fair sex. You are prospering, as it were, to-day, to-morrow a new cut of your whiskers, a novel tie of your cravat, mars your destiny and spoils your future *varium et mutabile,* as Horace has it. On the other hand, some equally slight circumstance will do what all your ingenuity may have failed to effect. I knew a fellow who married the greatest fortune in Bath, from the mere habit he had of squeezing one's hand. The lady in question thought it particular, looked conscious, and all that; he followed up the blow; and, in a word, they were married in a week. So a friend of mine, who could not help winking his left eye,

once opened a flirtation with a lively widow which cost him a special license and a settlement. In fact, you are never safe. They are like the guerillas, and they pick you off when you least expect it, and when you think there is nothing to fear. Therefore, as young fellows beginning life, I would caution you. On this head you can never be too circumspect. Do you know, I was once nearly caught by so slight a habit as sitting thus, with my legs across."

Here the Major rested his right foot on his left knee, in illustration, and continued:

"We were quartered in Jamaica. I had not long joined, and was about as raw a young gentleman as you could see; the only very clear ideas in my head being, that we were monstrous fine fellows in the 50th, and that the planters' daughters were deplorably in love with us. Not that I was much wrong on either side. For brandy-and-water, sangaree, Manilla cigars, and the ladies of color, I'd have backed the corps against the service. Proof was, of eighteen only two ever left the island; for what with the seductions of the coffee plantations, the sugar-canes, the new rum, the brown skins, the rainy season, and the yellow fever, most of us settled there.

"It's very hard to leave the West Indies if once you've been quartered there."

"So I have heard," said Power.

"In fine, if you don't knock under to the climate, you become soon totally unfit for living anywhere else. Preserved ginger, yams, flannel jackets, and grog won't bear exportation; and the free-and-easy chuck under the chin, cherishing, waist-pressing kind of way we get with the ladies, would be quite misunderstood in less favored regions, and lead to very unpleasant consequences.

"It is a curious fact now much climate has to do with love-making. In our cold country the progress is lamentably slow: fogs, east winds, sleet storms, and cutting March weather, nip many a budding flirtation; whereas warm, sunny days, and bright moonlight nights, with genial air and balmy zephyrs, open the heart, like the cup of a camelia, and let us drink in the soft dew of—"

"Devilish poetical, that!" said Power, evolving a long blue line of smoke from the corner of his mouth.

"Isn't it, though?" said the Major, smiling graciously. "'Pon my life, I thought so myself. Where was I?"

"Out of my latitude altogether," said the poor skipper, who often found it hard to follow the thread of a story.

"Yes, I remember. I was remarking that sangaree, and calipash, mangoes, and Guava jelly, dispose the heart to love, and so they do. I was not more than six weeks in Jamaica when I felt it myself. Now, it was a very dangerous symptom, if you had it strong in you, for this reason. Our colonel, the most cross-grained old crabstick that ever breathed, happened himself to be taken in when young, and resolving, like the fox who lost his tail, and said it was not the fashion to wear one, to pretend he did the thing for fun, resolved to make every fellow marry upon the slightest provocation. Begad, you might as well enter a powder magazine with a branch of candles in your hand, as go into society in the island with a leaning toward the fair sex. Very hard this was for me particularly; for, like poor Sparks there, my weakness was ever for the petticoats. I had, besides, no petty, contemptible prejudices as to nation, habits, language, color, or complexion; black, brown, or fair, from the Muscovite to the Malabar, from the voluptuous *embonpoint* of the Adjutant's widow—don't be angry, old boy—to the fairy form of Isabella herself, I loved them all round. But, were I to give a preference anywhere, I should certainly do so to the West Indians, if it were only for the sake of the planters' daughters. I say it fearlessly, these colonies are the brightest jewels in the crown. Let's drink their health, for I'm as husky as a lime-kiln."

This ceremony being performed with suitable enthusiasm, the Major cried out, "Another cheer for Polly Hackett, the sweetest girl in Jamaica. By jove, Power, if you only saw her, as I did, five and forty years ago, with eyes black as jet, twinkling, ogling, leering, teasing, and imploring, all at once, do you mind, and a mouthful of downright pearls pouting and smiling at you, why, man, you'd have proposed for her in the first half hour, and shot yourself the next, when she refused you. She was, indeed, a perfect little beauty; *rayther* dark, to be sure; a little upon the rosewood tinge, but beautifully polished, and a very nice piece of furniture for a cottage *orné*, as the French call it. Alas, alas! how these vanities do catch hold of us! My recollections have made me quite feverish and thirsty: is there any cold punch in the bowl? Thank you, O'Malley, that will do—merely to touch my lips. Well, well, it's all passed and gone now. But I was very fond of Polly Hackett, and she was of me. We used to take our little evening walks together through the coffee plantation; very romantic little strolls

they were: she in white muslin, with a blue sash and blue shoes; I in a flannel jacket and trowsers, straw hat and cravat; a Virginia cigar, as long as a walking stick, in my mouth, puffing and courting between times; then we'd take a turn to the refining house, look in at the big boilers, quiz the niggers, and come back to Twangberry Moss to supper, where old Hackett, the father, sported a glorious table at eleven o'clock. Great feeding it was. You were always sure of a preserved monkey, a baked land-crab, or some such delicacy. And such Madeira! it makes me dry to think of it!

"Talk of West India slavery, indeed! It's the only land of liberty. There is nothing to compare with the perfect free-and-easy, devil-may-care-kind-of-a-take-yourself way that every one has there. If it would be any peculiar comfort for you to sit in the saddle of mutton, and put your legs in a soup-tureen at dinner, there would be found very few to object to it. There is no nonsense of any kind about etiquette. You eat, drink, and are merry, or, if you prefer, are sad; just as you please. You may wear uniform, or you may not; it's your own affair; and, consequently, it may be imagined how insensibly such privileges gain upon one, and how very reluctant we become ever to resign or abandon them.

"I was the man to appreciate it all. The whole course of proceeding seemed to have been invented for my peculiar convenience, and not a man in the island enjoyed a more luxurious existence than myself, not knowing all the while how dearly I was destined to pay for my little comforts. Among my plenary after-dinner indulgences I had contracted an inveterate habit of sitting cross-legged, as I showed you. Now, this was become a perfect necessity of existence to me. I could have dispensed with cheese, with my glass of port, my pickled mango, my olive, my anchovy toast, my nutshell of curaçao, but not my favorite lounge. You may smile; but I've read of a man who could never dance except in a room with an old hair-brush. Now I'm certain my stomach would not digest if my legs were perpendicular. I don't mean to defend the thing. The attitude was not graceful; it was not imposing; but it suited me somehow, and I liked it,

"From what I have already mentioned, you may suppose that West India habits exercised but little control over my favorite practice, which I indulged in every evening of my life. Well, one day, old Hackett gave us a great blow-out—a dinner of two-and-twenty souls; six days' notice; turtle from St. Lucie, guinea-fowl, claret of the year forty, Madeira *à discrétion*, and all that. Very well done the whole thing: nothing wrong, nothing wanting. As for me, I was in great feather. I took Polly in to dinner, greatly to the discomfiture of old Belson, our Major, who was making up in that quarter; for, you must know, she was an only daughter, and had a very nice thing of it in molasses and niggers. The papa preferred the Major, but Polly looked sweetly upon me. Well, down we went, and really a most excellent feed we had. Now, I must mention here that Polly had a favorite Blenheim spaniel the old fellow detested: it was always tripping him up and snarling at him; for it was, except to herself, a beast of rather vicious inclinations. With a true Jamaica taste, it was her pleasure to bring the animal always into the dinner-room, where, if papa discovered him, there was sure to be a row. Servants sent in one direction to hunt him out; others endeavoring to hide him, and so on; in fact, a tremendous hubbub always followed his introduction and accompanied his exit, upon which occasions I invariably exercised my gallantry by protecting the beast, although I hated him like the devil all the time.

"To return to our dinner. After two mortal hours of hard eating, the pace began to slacken, and, as evening closed in, a sense of peaceful repose seemed to descend upon our labors. Pastilles shed an aromatic vapor through the room. The well-iced decanters went with measured pace along; conversation, subdued to the meridian of after-dinner comfort, just murmured; the open *jalousies* displayed upon the broad verandah the orange-tree in full blossom, slightly stirring with the cool sea-breeze."

"And the piece of white muslin beside you, what of her?"

"Looked twenty times more bewitching than ever. Well, it was just the hour when, opening the last two buttons of your white waistcoat (remember we were in Jamaica), you stretch your legs to the full extent, throw your arm carelessly over the back of your chair, look contemplatively toward the ceiling, and wonder, within yourself, why it is not all 'after dinner' in this same world of ours. Such, at least, were my reflections as I assumed my attitude of supreme comfort, and inwardly ejaculated a health to Sneyd and Barton. Just at this moment I heard Polly's voice gently whisper,

"'Isn't he a love? isn't he a darling?'

"'Zounds!' thought I, as a pang of jealousy shot through my heart, 'is it the Major she means?' for old Belson, with his bag wig and rouged cheeks, was seated on the other side of her.

"'What a dear old thing it is!" said Polly.

"'Worse and worse,' said I; 'it must be him.'

"'I do so love his muzzy face.'

"'It is him!' said I, throwing off a bumper, and almost boiling over with passion at the moment.

"'I wish I could take one look at him,' said she, laying down her head as she spoke.

"The Major whispered something in her ear, to which she replied,

"'Oh! I dare not; papa will see me at once.'

"'Don't be afraid, madam,' said I, fiercely; 'your father perfectly approves of your taste.'

"'Are you sure of it,' said she, giving me such a look.

"'I know it,' said I, struggling violently with my agitation.

"The Major leaned over, as if to touch her hand beneath the cloth. I almost sprang from my chair, when Polly, in her sweetest accents, said:

"'You must be patient, dear thing, or you may be found out, and then there will be such a piece of work. Though I'm sure, Major, you would not betray me.' The Major smiled till he cracked the paint upon his cheeks. 'And I am sure that Mr. Monsoon—'

"'You may rely upon me,' said I, half sneeringly.

"The Major and I exchanged glances of defiance, while Polly continued,

"'Now, come, don't be restless. You are very comfortable there. Isn't he, Major?' The Major smiled again more graciously than before, as he added,

"'May I take a look?'

"'Just one peep, then, no more!' said she, coquettishly; 'poor dear Wowski is so timid.'

"Scarcely had these words borne balm and comfort to my heart—for I now knew that to the dog, and not to my rival, were all the flattering expressions applied—when a slight scream from Polly, and a tremendous oath from the Major, raised me from my dream of happiness.

"'Take your foot down, sir. Mr. Monsoon, how could you do so?' cried Polly.

"'What the devil, sir, do you mean?' shouted the Major.

"'Oh! I shall die of shame,' sobbed she.

"'I'll shoot him like a riddle,' muttered old Belson.

"By this time the whole table had got at the story, and such peals of laughter, mingled with suggestions for my personal maltreatment, I never heard. All my attempts at explanation were in vain. I was not listened to, much less believed, and the old Colonel finished the scene by ordering me to my quarters, in a voice I shall never forget, the whole room being, at the time I made my exit, one scene of tumultuous laughter from one end to the other. Jamaica after this became too hot for me. The story was repeated on every side; for it seems I had been sitting with my foot on Polly's lap; but, so occupied was I with my jealous vigilance of the Major I was not aware of the fact until she herself discovered it.

"I need not say how the following morning brought with it every possible offer of *amende* upon my part; anything, from a written apology to a proposition to marry the lady, I was ready for, and how the matter might have ended I know not; for, in the middle of the negotiations, we were ordered off to Halifax, where, be assured, I abandoned my oriental attitude for many a long day after."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE LANDING.

WHAT a contrast to the dull monotony of our life at sea did the scene present which awaited us on landing in Lisbon. The whole quay was crowded with hundreds of people eagerly watching the vessel which bore from her mast the broad ensign of Britain. Dark-featured, swarthy, moustached faces, with red caps rakishly set on one side, mingled with the Saxon faces and fair-haired natives of our own country. Men-of-war boats plied unceasingly to and fro across the tranquil river, some slender reefer in the stern-sheets; while behind him trailed the red pennon of some "tall admiral."

The din and clamor of a mighty city mingled with the far-off sounds of military music; and in the vistas of the opening street masses of troops might be seen, in marching order; and all betokened the near approach of war.

Our anchor had scarcely been dropped,

when an eight-oar gig, with a midshipman steering, came along side.

"Ship ahoy, there! You've troops on board?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

Before the answer could be spoken, he was on the deck.

"May I ask," said he, touching his cap slightly, "who is the officer in command of the detachment?"

"Captain Power: very much at your service," said Fred, returning the salute.

"Rear-Admiral Sir Edward Douglas requests that you will do him the favor to come on board immediately, and bring your dispatches with you."

"I'm quite ready," said Power, as he placed his papers in his sabretasche; "but first tell us what's doing here. Anything new lately?"

"I have heard nothing, except of some affair with the Portuguese; they've been drubbed again; but our people have not been engaged. I say, we had better get under way: there's our first lieutenant, with his telescope up; he's looking straight at us. So, come along. Good evening, gentlemen." And in another moment the sharp craft was cutting the clear water, while Power gayly waved us a good-by.

"Who's for shore?" said the Skipper, as half a dozen boats swarmed around the side, or held on by their boat-hooks to the rigging.

"Who is not?" said Monsoon, who now appeared in his old blue frock covered with tarnished braiding, and a cocked hat that might have roofed a pagoda. "Who is not, my old boy? Is not every man amongst us delighted with the prospect of fresh prog, cool wine, and a bed somewhat longer than four feet six? I say, O'Malley! Sparks! Where's the Adjutant? Ah, there he is! We'll not mind the Doctor; he's a very jovial little fellow but a damned bore, *entre nous;* and we'll have a cosy little supper at the Rua di Toledo. I know the place well. Whew, now! Get away, boy. Sit steady, Sparks; she's only a cockle-shell. There—that's the Plaza de la Regna—there, to the left. There's the great cathedral—you can't see it now. Another seventy-four! why, there's a whole fleet here! I wish old Power joy of his afternoon with old Douglas."

"Do you know him, then, Major?"

"Do I!—I should rather think I do. He was going to put me in irons here in this river once. A great shame it was; but I'll tell you the story another time. There—gently now; that's it. Thank God! once more upon land. How I do hate a ship: upon my life, a sauce-boat is the only boat endurable in this world."

We edged our way with difficulty through the dense crowd, and at last reached the Plaza. Here the numbers were still greater, but of a different class: several pretty and well-dressed women, with their dark eyes twinkling above their black mantillas, as they held them across their faces, watched with an intense curiosity one of the streets that opened upon the square.

In a few moments the band of a regiment was heard, and very shortly after the regular tramp of troops followed, as the Eighty-seventh marched into the Plaza, and formed a line.

The music ceased; the drums rolled along the line; and the next moment all was still. It was really an inspiriting sight to one whose heart was interested in the career, to see those gallant fellows, as, with their bronzed faces and stalwart frames, they stood motionless as a rock. All continued to look, the band marched into the middle of the square, and struck up "Garryowen." Scarcely was the first part played, when a tremendous cheer burst from the troop-ship in the river. The welcome notes had reached the poor fellows there; the well-known sounds, that told of home and country, met their ears; and the loud cry of recognition bespoke their hearts' fullness.

"There they go. Your wild countrymen have heard their *Ranz des vaches,* it seems. Lord! how they frightened the poor Portuguese! look how they're running!"

Such was actually the case. The loud cheer uttered from the river was taken up by others straggling on shore, and one universal shout betokened that fully one-third of the red-coats around came from the dear island, and in their enthusiasm had terrified the natives to no small extent.

"Is not that Ferguson there?" cried the Major, as an officer passed us with his arm in a sling. "I say, Joe—Ferguson! oh! knew it was."

"Monsoon, my hearty, how goes it?—only just arrived, I see;—delighted to meet you out here once more. Why, we've been dull as a veteran battalion without you. These your friends? pray present me." The ceremony of introduction over, the Major invited Ferguson to join our party at supper. "No, not to-night, Major," said he, "you must be my

guests this evening. My quarters are not five minutes' walk from this—I shall not promise you very luxurious fare."

"A carbonade with olives, a roast duck, a bowl of Bishop, and, if you will, a few bottles of Burgundy," said the Major; "don't put yourself out for us—soldier's fare, eh?"

I could not help smiling at the *naïve* notion of simplicity so cunningly suggested by old Monsoon. As I followed the party through the streets, my step was light, my heart not less so; for what sensations are more delightful than those of landing after a voyage?—the escape from the durance vile of shipboard, with its monotonous days and dreary nights, its ill-regulated appointments, its cramped accommodation, its uncertain duration, its eternal round of unchanging amusements, for the freedom of the shore, with a land breeze, and a firm footing to tread upon; and, certainly, not least of all, the sight of that brightest part of creation, whose soft eyes and tight ankles are, perhaps, the greatest of all imaginable pleasures to him who has been the dweller on blue water for several weeks long.

"Here we are," cried out Ferguson, as we stopped at the door of a large and handsome house. We followed up a spacious stair into an ample room, sparingly, but not uncomfortably furnished; plans of sieges, maps of the seat of war, pistols, sabres, and belts, decorated the white walls, and a few books, and a stray army-list, betokened the habits of the occupant.

While Ferguson disappeared to make some preparations for supper Monsoon commenced a congratulation to the party upon the good fortune that had befallen them. "Capital fellow is Joe—never without something good, and a rare one to pass the bottle. Oh! here he comes. Be alive there, Sparks; take a corner of the cloth; how deliciously juicy that ham looks; pass the Madeira down there; what's under that cover—stewed kidneys?" While Monsoon went on thus we took our places at table, and set to with an appetite which only a newly-landed traveler ever knows.

"Another spoonful of the gravy? Thank you. And so they say we've not been faring over well latterly?" said the Major.—"Not a word of truth in the report. Our people have not been engaged. The only thing lately was a smart brush we had at the Tamega. Poor Patrick, a countryman of ours, and myself were serving with the Portuguese brigade, when Laborde drove us back upon the town, and actually routed us. The Portuguese general, caring little for anything save his own safety, was making at once for the mountains, when Patrick called upon his battalion to face about and charge; and nobly they did it too. Down they came upon the advancing masses of the French, and literally hurled them back upon the main body. The other regiments, seeing this gallant stand, wheeled about, and poured in a volley, and then, fixing bayonets, stormed a little mount beside the hedge, which commanded the whole suburb of Villa Real. The French, who soon recovered their order, now prepared for a second attack, and came on in two dense columns, when Patrick, who had little confidence in the steadiness of his people, for any lengthened resistance, resolved upon once more charging with the bayonet. The order was scarcely given when the French were upon us; their flank, defended by some of La Houssaye's heavy dragoons. For an instant the conflict was doubtful, until poor Patrick fell mortally wounded upon the parapet; when the men, no longer hearing his bold cheer, nor seeing his noble figure in the advance, turned and fled, pell-mell, back upon the town. As for me, blocked up amid the mass, I was cut down from the shoulder to the elbow by a young fellow of about sixteen, who galloped about like a schoolboy on a holiday. The wound was only dangerous from the loss of blood, and so I contrived to reach Amacante without much difficulty; from whence, with three or four others, I was ordered here until fit for service."

"But what news from our own headquarters?" inquired I.

"All imaginable kind of rumors are afloat. Some say that Craddock is retiring; others, that a part of the army is in motion upon Caldas."

"Then we are not going to have a very long sojourn here after all, eh, Major?"—"Donna Maria de Tormes will be inconsolable. By-the-by, their house is just opposite us. Have you never heard Monsoon mention his friends there?"

"Come, come, Joe, how can you be so foolish?"

"But, Major, my dear friend, what signifies your modesty? there is not a man in the service does not know it, save those in the last *Gazette*."

"Indeed, Joe, I am very angry with you."

"Well then, by Jove! I must tell it myself; though, faith, lads, you lose not a little for want of Monsoon's tact in the narrative."

"Anything is better than trusting to such a biographer," cried the Major; "so here goes:

"When I was Acting Commissary-General to the Portuguese forces, some few years ago, I obtained great experience of the habits of the people; for though naturally of an unsuspecting temperament myself, I generally contrive to pick out the little foibles of my associates, even upon a short acquaintance. Now, my appointment pleased me very much on this score; it gave me little opportunities of examining the world. 'The greatest study of mankind is man'—Sparks would say woman—but no matter.

"Now, I soon discovered that our ancient and very excellent allies, the Portuguese, with a beautiful climate, delicious wines, and very delightful wives and daughters, were the most infernal rogues and scoundrels ever met with. 'Make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the leading features of the natives,' said old Sir Harry to me, in a dispatch from headquarters, and, faith, it was not difficult; such open, palpable, undisguised rascals never were heard of. I thought I knew a thing or two myself, when I landed; but, Lord love you! I was a babe; I was an infant in swaddling clothes, compared with them; and they humbugged me,—ay, *me!*—till I began to suspect that I was only walking in my sleep.

"'Why, Monsoon,' said the General, 'they told me you were a sharp fellow, and yet the people here seem to work round you every day. This will never do. You must brighten up a little, or I shall be obliged to send you back.'

"'General,' said I, 'they used to call me no fool in England, but, somehow, here—'

"'I understand,' said he, 'you don't know the Portuguese; there's but one way with them—strike quickly, and strike home. Never give them time for roguery; for, if they have a moment's reflection, they'll cheat the devil himself; but, when you see the plot working, come slap down and decide the thing your own way.'

"Well, now, there never was anything so true as this advice, and, for the eighteen months I acted upon it, I never knew it fail.

"'I want a thousand measures of wheat.'

"'Senhor Excellenza, the crops have been miserably deficient, and—'

"'Sergeant-major,' I would say, 'these poor people have no corn; it's a wine country; let them make up the rations that way.'

"The wneat came in that evening.

"'One hundred and twenty bullocks wanted for the reserve.'

"'The cattle are all up the mountains.'

"'Let the alcalde catch them before night, or I'll catch *him*.

"Lord bless you! I had beef enough to feed the Peninsula. And in this way, while the forces were eating short allowance and half-rations elsewhere, our brigade were plump as aldermen.

"When we lay in Andalusia this was easy enough. What a country to be sure! Such vineyards, such gardens, such delicious valleys, waving with corn, and fat with olives; actually it seemed a kind of dispensation of Providence to make war in. There was everything you could desire; and, then, the people, like all your wealthy ones, were so timid, and so easily frightened, you could get what you pleased out of them by a little terror. My scouts managed this very well.

"'He is coming,' they would say, 'after to-morrow.'

"'*Madre de Dios!*'

"'I hope he won't burn the village.'

"'*Questos infernales Ingleses!* how wicked they are.'

"'You'd better try what a sack of moidores or doubloons might do with him; he may refuse them, but make the effort.'

"Ha!" said the Major, with a long-drawn sigh, "those were pleasant times; alas! that they should ever come to an end. Well, among the old hidalgos I met there was one Don Emanuel Selvio de Tormes, an awful old miser, rich as Crœsus, and suspicious as the arch-fiend himself. Lord, how I melted him down! I quartered two squadrons of horse and a troop of flying artillery upon him. How the fellows did eat! such a consumption of wines was never heard of; and, as they began to slacken a little, I took care to replace them by fresh arrivals—fellows from the mountains—*caçadores* they call them. At last, my friend Don Emanuel could stand it no longer, and he sent me a diplomatic envoy to negotiate terms, which, upon the whole, I must say, were fair enough, and, in a few days after, the *caçadores* were withdrawn, and I took up my quarters at the *château*. I have had various chances and changes in this wicked world, but I am free to confess that I never passed a more agreeable time than the seven weeks I spent there. Don Emanuel, when properly managed, became a very pleasant little fellow: Donna Maria, his wife, was a sweet creature. You need not be winking that way. Upon my life, she was; rather fat, to be sure, and her

age something verging upon the fifties; but she had such eyes, black as sloes, and luscious as ripe grapes; and she was always smiling, and ogling, and looking so sweet. Confound me, if I think she wasn't the most enchanting being in this world, with about ten thousand pounds' worth of jewels upon her fingers and in her ears. I have her before me at this instant, as she used to sit in the little arbor in the garden, with a Manilla cigar in her mouth and a little brandy-and-water—quite weak, you know—beside her.

"'Ah! General,' she used to say—she always called me General—'what a glorious career yours is! A soldier is *indeed* a man.'

"Then she would look at poor Emanuel, who used to sit in a corner, holding his hand to his face, for hours, calculating interest and cent. per cent., till he fell asleep.

"Now, he labored under a very singular malady—not that I ever knew it at the time—a kind of luxation of the lower jaw, which, when it came on, happened somehow to press upon some vital nerve or other, and left him perfectly paralyzed till it was restored to its proper place. In fact, during the time the agony lasted, he was like one in a trance; for though he could see and hear, he could neither speak nor move, and looked as if he had done with both for many a day to come.

"Well, as I was saying, I knew nothing of all this, till a slight circumstance made it known to me. I was seated one evening in the little arbor I mentioned with Donna Maria. There was a little table before us, covered with wines and fruits, a dish of olives, some Castile oranges, and a fresh pine. I remember it well; my eye roved over the little dessert, set out in old-fashioned, rich silver dishes, then turned toward the lady herself, with rings and brooches, earrings, and chains enough to reward one for sacking a town; and I said to myself, 'Monsoon, Monsoon, this is better than long marches in the Pyrenees, with a cork-tree for a bed-curtain, and wet grass for a mattress. How pleasantly one might jog on in this world with this little country-house for his abode, and Donna Maria for a companion!'

"I tasted the port—it was delicious. Now, I knew very little Portuguese, but I made some effort to ask if there was much of it in the cellar.

"She smiled, and said, 'Oh! yes.'

"'What a luxurious life one might lead here!' thought I; 'and, after all, perhaps Providence might remove Don Emanuel.'

"I finished the bottle as I thus meditated. The next was, if possible, more crusty.

"'This is a delicious retreat,' said I, soliloquizing.

"Donna Maria seemed to know what was passing in my mind, for she smiled too.

"'Yes,' said I, in broken Portuguese, 'one ought to be very happy here, Donna Maria.'

"She blushed, and I continued:

"'What can one want for more in this life?—all the charms that rendered Paradise what it was'—I took her hand here—'and made Adam blessed.'

"'Ah, General!' said she, with a sigh, 'you are such a flatterer.'

"'Who could flatter,' said I, with enthusiasm, 'when there are not words enough to express what he feels?' This was true, for my Portuguese was fast failing me. 'But if I ever was happy, it is now.'

"I took another pull at the port.

"'If I only thought,' said I, 'that my presence here was not thought unwelcome—'

"'Fie, General,' said she, 'how could you say such a thing?'

"'If I only thought I was not hated,' said I, tremblingly.

"'Oh!' said she again.

"'Despised.'

"'Oh!'

"'Loathed.'

"She pressed my hand— I kissed hers; she hurriedly snatched it from me, and pointed toward a lime-tree near, beneath which, in the cool enjoyment of his cigar, sat the spare and detested figure of Don Emanuel.

"'Yes,' thought I, 'there he is—the only bar to my good fortune; were it not for him, I should not be long before I became possessor of this excellent old *château*, with a most indiscretionary power over the cellar. Don Mauricius Monsoon would speedily assume his place among the grandees of Portugal.'

"I know not how long my reverie lasted, nor, indeed, how the evening passed; but I remember well the moon was up, and a sky bright with a thousand stars was shining, as I sat beside the fair Donna Maria, endeavoring, with such Portuguese as it had pleased fate to bestow on me, to instruct her touching my warlike services and deeds of arms. The fourth bottle of port was ebbing beneath my eloquence, as responsively her heart beat, when I heard a slight rustle in the branches near. I

looked, and, Heavens, what a sight did I behold! There was little Don Emanuel stretched upon the grass, with his mouth wide open, his face pale as death, his arms stretched out at either side, and his legs stiffened straight out. I ran over and asked if he were ill, but no answer came. I lifted up an arm, but it fell heavily upon the ground as I let it go; the leg did likewise. I touched his nose—it was cold.

"'Hollo,' thought I, 'is it so? This comes of mixing water with your sherry. I saw where it would end.'

"Now, upon my life, I felt sorry for the little fellow; but, somehow, one gets so familiarized with this sort of thing in a campaign, that one only half feels in a case like this.

"'Yes,' said I; 'man is but grass; but I, for one, must make hay when the sun shines. Now for the Donna Maria,' for the poor thing was asleep in the arbor all this while.

"'Donna,' said I, shaking her by the elbow,—'Donna, don't be shocked at what I'm going to say.'

"'Ah! General,' said she, with a sigh, 'say no more; I must not listen to you.'

"'You don't know that,' said I, with a knowing look;—'you don't know that.'

"'Why, what can you mean?'

"'The little fellow is done for;' for the port was working strong now, and destroyed all my fine sensibility. 'Yes, Donna,' said I, 'you are free,'—here I threw myself upon my knees,—'free to make me the happiest of commissaries and the jolliest grandee of Portugal that ever—'

"'But Don Emanuel?'

"'Run out—dry—empty,' inverting a finished decanter, to typify my words as I spoke.

"'He is not dead?' said she, with a scream.

"'Even so,' said I, with a hiccup; 'ordered for service in a better world, where there are neither inspections nor arrears.'

"Before the words were well out, she sprang from the bench, and rushed over to the spot where the little Don lay. What she said or did I know not, but the next moment he sat bolt upright on the grass, and, as he held his jaw with one hand and supported himself on the other, vented such a torrent of abuse and insult at me, that, for want of Portuguese enough to reply, I rejoined in English, in which I swore pretty roundly for five minutes. Meanwhile, the Donna had summoned the servants, who removed Don Emanuel to the house; where, on my return, I found my luggage displayed before the door, with a civil hint to deploy in orderly time, and take ground elsewhere.

"In a few days, however, his anger cooled down, and I received a polite note from Donna Maria, that the Don at length began to understand the joke, and begged that I would return to the *château*, and that he would expect me at dinner the same day."

"With which, of course, you complied?"

"Which of course I did. Forgive your enemies, my dear boy; it is only Christian-like; and really, we lived very happily ever after: the Donna was a mighty clever woman, and a dear good soul besides."

It was late when the Major concluded his story; so, after wishing Ferguson a good-night, we took our leave, and retired for the night to our quarters.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LISBON.

THE tramp of horses' feet and the sound of voices beneath my window roused me from a deep sleep. I sprang up, and drew aside the curtain. What a strange confusion beset me as I looked forth! Before me lay a broad and tranquil river, whose opposite shore, deeply wooded, and studded with villas and cottages, rose abruptly from the water's edge; vessels of war lay tranquilly in the stream, their pennants trailing in the tide. The loud boom of a morning gun rolled along the surface, awaking a hundred echoes as it passed, and the lazy smoke rested for some minutes on the glassy water as it blended with the thin air of the morning.

"Where am I?" was my first question to myself, as I continued to look from side to side, unable to collect my scattered senses.

One word sufficed to recall me to myself, as I heard Power's voice from without, call out,—

"Charley! O'Malley, I say! Come down here!"

I hurriedly threw on my clothes, and went to the door.

"Well, Charley! I've been put in harness rather sooner than I expected. Here's old Douglas has been sitting up all night, writing dispatches; and I must hasten on to head-quarters, without a moment's delay. There's work before us, that's certain; but when, where, and how, of that I know nothing. You may expect the

route every moment; the French are still advancing. Meanwhile, I have a couple of commissions for you to execute. First, here's a packet for Hammersley; you are sure to meet him with the regiment in a day or two. I have some scruples about asking you this—but, confound it!—you're too sensible a fellow to care—"

Here he hesitated; and, as I colored to the eyes, for some minutes he seemed uncertain how to proceed. At length, recovering himself, he went on:

"Now for the other. This is a most loving epistle from a poor devil of a midshipman, written last night, by a tallow candle, in the cockpit, containing vows of eternal adoration and a lock of hair. I promised faithfully to deliver it myself; for the *Thunderer* sails for Gibraltar next tide, and he cannot go ashore for an instant. However, as Sir Arthur's billet may be of more importance than the reefer's, I must intrust its safe keeping to your hands. Now, then, don't look so devilish sleepy; but seem to understand what I am saying. This is the address:—'La Senhora Inez da Silviero, Rua Nuova, opposite the barber's;' you'll not neglect it. So now, my dear boy, till our next meeting, *adios!*"

"Stop! for Heaven's sake, not so fast, I pray. Where's the street?"

"The Rua Nuova. Remember Figaro, my boy. Cinque perruche."

"But what am I to do?"

"To do! what a question! Anything; everything. Be a good diplomate; speak of the torturing agony of the lover, for which I can vouch (the boy is only fifteen); swear that he is to return in a month, first lieutenant of the *Thunder Bomb*, with intentions that even Madame Dalrymple would approve."

"What nonsense," said I, blushing to the eyes.

"And if that suffice not, I know of but one resource."

"Which is?"

"Make love to her yourself. Ay, even so. Don't look so confoundedly vinegar; the girl, I hear, is a devilish pretty one, the house pleasant, and I sincerely wish I could exchange duties with you, leaving you to make your bows to his Excellency the C. O. F., and myself free to make mine to La Senhora. And now, push along, old red-cap."

So saying, he made a significant cut of his whip at the Portuguese guide, and in another moment was out of sight.

My first thought was one of regret at Power's departure. For some time past we had been inseparable companions; and, notwithstanding the reckless and wild gayety of his conduct, I had ever found him ready to assist me in every difficulty, and that with an address and dexterity a more calculating adviser might not have possessed. I was now utterly alone; for, though Monsoon and the Adjutant were still in Lisbon, as was also Sparks, I never could make intimates of them.

I ate my breakfast with a heavy heart; my solitary position again suggesting thoughts of home and kindred. Just at this moment my eyes fell upon the packet destined for Hammersley; I took it up and weighed it in my hand. "Alas!" thought I, "how much of my destiny may lie within that envelope! how fatally may my after-life be influenced by it!" It felt heavy, as though there was something besides letters. True, too true; there was a picture; Lucy's portrait! The cold drops of perspiration stood upon my forehead as my fingers traced the outline of a miniature-case in the parcel. I became deadly weak, and sank, half-fainting, upon a chair. And such is the end of my first dream of happiness! How have I duped, how have I deceived myself! For, alas! though Lucy had never responded to my proffered vows of affection, yet had I ever nurtured in my heart a secret hope that I was not altogether uncared for. Every look she had given me, every word she had spoken, the tone of her voice, her step, her every gesture were before me, all confirming my delusion—and yet—I could bear no more, and burst into tears.

The loud call of a cavalry trumpet aroused me.

How long I had passed in this state of despondency I knew not; but it was long past noon when I rallied myself. My charger was already awaiting me; and a second blast of the trumpet told that the inspection in the Plaza was about to commence.

As I continued to dress, I gradually rallied from my depressing thoughts; and, ere I belted my sabretasche, the current of my ideas had turned from their train of sadness to one of hardihood and daring. Lucy Dashwood had treated me like a willful schoolboy. Mayhap, I may prove myself as gallant a soldier as even him she has preferred before me.

A third sound of the trumpet cut short my reflections, and I sprang into the saddle, and hastened toward the Plaza. As I dashed along the streets, my horse maddened with the impulse that stirred my own heart, curvetted and plunged unceas-

WITH ONE SPRING HE ROSE, AND CLEARED IT AT A BOUND. (P. 763.)

ingly. As I reached the Plaza, the crowd became dense, and I was obliged to pull up. The sound of the music, the parade, the tramp of the infantry, and the neighing of the horses, were, however, too much for my mettlesome steed, and he became nearly unmanageable; he plunged fearfully, and twice reared as though he would have fallen back. As I scattered the foot passengers right and left with terror, my eye fell upon one lovely girl, who, tearing herself from her companion, rushed wildly toward an open doorway for shelter; suddenly, however, changing her intention, she came forward a few paces, and then, as if overcome by fear, stood stock-still, her hands clasped upon her bosom, her eyes upturned, her features deadly pale, while her knees seemed bending beneath her. Never did I behold a more beautiful object. Her dark hair had fallen loose upon her shoulder, and she stood the very *idéal* of the "Madonna Supplicating." My glance was short as a lightning flash; for, the same instant, my horse swerved, and dashed forward right at the place where she was standing. One terrific cry rose from the crowd, who saw her danger. Beside her stood a muleteer, who had drawn up his mule and cart close beside the footway for safety; she made one effort to reach it, but her outstretched arms alone moved, and, paralyzed by terror, she sank motionless upon the pavement. There was but one course open to me now; so, collecting myself for the effort, I threw my horse upon his haunches, and then, dashing the spurs into his flanks, breasted him at the mule cart. With one spring he rose, and cleared it at a bound, while the very air rang with the acclamations of the multitude, and a thousand bravos saluted me as I alighted upon the opposite side.

"Well done, O'Malley!" sang out the little Adjutant, as I flew past, and pulled up in the middle of the Plaza.

"Something devilish like Galway in that leap," said a very musical voice beside me; and at the same instant a tall, soldier-like man, in an undress dragoon frock, touched his cap, and said, "A Fourteenth man, I perceive, sir. May I introduce myself?—Major O'Shaughnessy."

I bowed, and shook the Major's proffered hand, while he continued:

"Old Monsoon mentioned your name to us this morning. You came out together, if I mistake not?"

"Yes; but, somehow, I've missed the Major since my landing."

"Oh, you'll see him presently; he'll be on parade. By the-by, he wishes particularly to meet you. We dine to-day at the 'Quai de Soderi,' and if you're not engaged— Yes, this is the person," said he, turning at the moment toward a servant, who, with a card in his hand, seemed to search for some one in the crowd.

The man approached, and handed it to me.

"What can this mean?" said I. "Don Emanuel de Blacas y Silviero, Rua Nuova."

"Why, that's the great Portuguese contractor, the intendant of half the army, the richest fellow in Lisbon. Have you known him long?"

"Never heard of him till now."

"By Jove, you're in luck? No man gives such dinners; he has such a cellar! I'll wager a fifty it was his daughter you took in the flying leap a while ago. I hear she is a beautiful creature."

"Yes," thought I, "that must be it; and yet, strange enough, I think the name and address are familiar to me."

"Ten to one, you've heard Monsoon speak of him; he's most intimate there. But here comes the Major."

And, as he spoke, the illustrious Commissary came forward, holding a vast bundle of papers in one hand, and his snuff-box in the other, followed by a long string of clerks, contractors, assistant-surgeons, paymasters, etc., all eagerly pressing forward to be heard.

"It's quite impossible; I can't do it to-day. Victualing and physicking are very good things, but must be done in season. I have been up all night at the accounts—haven't I, O'Malley?"—here he winked at me most significantly;—"and then I have the forage and stoppage fund to look through (We dine at six, sharp," said he, *sotto voce*), "which will leave me without one minute unoccupied for the next twenty-four hours. Look to your toggery this evening; I've something in my eye for you, O'Malley."

"Officers unattached to their several corps will fall into the middle of the Plaza." said a deep voice among the crowd; and, in obedience to the order, I rode forward and placed myself with a number of others, apparently newly joined, in the open square. A short gray-haired old Colonel, with a dark, eagle look, proceeded to inspect us, reading from a paper as he came along:

"Mr. Hepton, 6th foot; commission bearing date 11th January; drilled; proceed to Ovar, and join his regiment.

"Mr. Gronow, Fusilier Guards, remains with the depôt.

"Captain Mortimer, 1st Dragoons; appointed aide-de-camp to the General commanding the cavalry brigade.

"Mr. Sparks—where is Mr. Sparks? Mr. Sparks absent from parade; make a note of it.

"Mr. O'Malley, 14th Light Dragoons. Mr. O'Malley—oh, I remember; I have received a letter from Sir George Dashwood concerning you. You will hold yourself in readiness to march. Your friends desire that, before you may obtain any staff appointment, you should have the opportunity of seeing some service. Am I to understand such is your wish?"

"Most certainly."

"May I have the pleasure of your company at dinner to-day?"

"I regret that I have already accepted an invitation to dine with Major Monsoon."

"With Major Monsoon? ah, indeed! Perhaps it might be as well I should mention—But no matter. I wish you good-morning."

So saying, the little Colonel rode off, leaving me to suppose that my dinner engagement had not raised me in his estimation, though why, I could not exactly determine.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE RUA NUOVA.

Our dinner was a long and uninteresting one, and, as I found that the Major was likely to prefer his seat, as chairman of the party, to the seductions of ladies' society, I took the first opportunity of escaping, and left the room.

It was a rich moonlight night, as I found myself in the street. My way, which led along the banks of the Tagus, was almost as light as in day-time, and crowded with walking parties, who sauntered carelessly along, in the enjoyment of the cool, refreshing night air. On inquiring, I discovered that the Rua Nuova was at the extremity of the city; but, as the road led along by the river, I did not regret the distance, but walked on with increasing pleasure at the charms of so heavenly a climate and country.

After three-quarters of an hour's walk, the streets became by degrees less and less crowded. A solitary party passed me now and then; the buzz of distant voices succeeded to the gay laughter and merry tones of the passing groups, and, at length, my own footsteps alone awoke the echoes along the deserted pathway. I stopped every now and then to gaze upon the tranquil river, whose eddies were circling in the pale silver of the moonlight. I listened with attentive ear, as the night breeze wafted to me the far-off sounds of a guitar, and the deep tones of some lovers' serenade; while again the tender warbling of the nightingale came borne across the stream, on a wind rich with the odor of the orange-tree.

As thus I lingered on my way, the time stole on; and it was near midnight ere I had roused myself from the reverie surrounding objects had thrown about me. I stopped suddenly, and for some minutes I struggled with myself to discover if I was really awake. As I walked along, lost in my reflections, I had entered a little garden beside the river; fragrant plants and lovely flowers bloomed on every side: the the orange, the camelia, the cactus, and the rich laurel of Portugal were blending their green and golden hues around me, while the very air was filled with delicious music. "Was it a dream? Could such ecstasy be real?" I asked myself, as the rich notes swelled upward in their strength, and sank in soft cadence to tones of melting harmony, now bursting forth in the full force of gladness, the voices blended together in one stream of mellow music, and, suddenly ceasing, the soft but thrilling shake of a female voice rose upon the air, and, in its plaintive beauty, stirred the very heart. The proud tramp of martial music succeeded to the low wailing cry of agony; then came the crash of battle, the clang of steel;—the thunder of the fight rolled on in all its majesty, increasing in its maddening excitement till it ended in one loud shout of victory.

All was still; not a breath moved, not a leaf stirred, and again was I relapsing into my dreamy skepticism, when again the notes swelled upward in concert. But now their accents were changed, and, in low, subdued tones, faintly and slowly uttered, the prayer of thanksgiving rose to heaven, and spoke their gratefulness. I almost fell upon my knees, and already the tears filled my eyes as I drank in the sounds. My heart was full to bursting, and even now as I write it, my pulse throbs as I remember the hymn of the Abencerrages.

When I rallied from my trance of excited pleasure, my first thought was—where was I, and how came I there? Before I could resolve my doubts upon the question, my attention was turned in another direction, for close beside me the branches moved forward, and a pair of

arms were thrown around my neck, while a delicious voice cried out, in an accent of childish delight, "*Trovado!*" At the same instant a lovely head sank upon my shoulder, covering it with tresses of long brown hair. The arms pressed me still more closely, till I felt her very heart beating against my side.

"*Mio fradre,*" said a soft, trembling voice, as her fingers played in my hair and patted my temples.

What a situation mine! I well knew that some mistaken identity had been the cause; but, still, I could not repress my inclination to return the embrace, as I pressed my lips upon the fair forehead that leaned upon my bosom; at the same moment, she threw back her head, as if to look me more fully in the face. One glance sufficed; blushing deeply over her cheeks and neck, she sprang from my arms, and, uttering a faint cry, staggered against a tree. In an instant I saw it was the lovely girl I had met in the morning; and, without losing a second, I poured out apologies for my intrusion with all the eloquence I was master of, till she suddenly interrupted me by asking if I spoke French. Scarcely had I recommenced my excuses in that language, when a third party appeared upon the stage. This was a short, elderly man, in a green uniform, with several decorations upon his breast, and a cocked hat, with a most flowing plume, in his right hand.

"May I beg to know whom I have the honor of receiving?" inquired he, in very excellent English, as he advanced with a look of very ceremonious and distant politeness.

I immediately explained that, presuming upon the card which his servant had presented me, I had resolved on paying my respects, when a mistake had led me accidentally into his garden.

My apologies had not come to an end, when he folded me in his arms and overwhelmed me with thanks, at the same time saying a few words in Portuguese to his daughter; she stooped down, and taking my hand gently within her own, touched it with her lips.

This piece of touching courtesy—which I afterward found meant little or nothing—affected me deeply at the time, and I felt the blood rush to my face and forehead, half in pride, half in a sense of shame. My confusion was, however, of short duration, for, taking my arm, the old gentleman led me along a few paces, and turning round a small clump of olives, entered a little summer-house. Here a considerable party were assembled, which for their picturesque effect could scarcely have been better managed on the stage.

Beneath the mild luster of a large lamp of stained glass, half hid in the overhanging boughs, was spread a table covered with vessels of gold and silver plate of gorgeous richness; drinking cups and goblets of antique pattern shone among cups of Sèvres china or Venetian glass; delicious fruit, looking a thousand times more tempting for being contained in baskets of silver foliage, peeped from amid a profusion of fresh flowers, whose odor was continually shed around by a slight *jet d'eau* that played among the leaves. Around, upon the grass, seated upon cushions or reclining on Genoa carpets, were several beautiful girls, in most becoming costumes, their dark locks and darker eyes speaking of "the soft south," while their expressive gestures and animated looks betokened a race whose temperament is glowing as their clime. There were several men also, the greater number of whom appeared in uniform—bronzed, soldier-like fellows, who had the jaunty air and easy carriage of their calling—among whom was one Englishman, or at least so I guessed from his wearing the uniform of a heavy dragoon regiment.

"This is my daughter's *fête,*" said Don Emanuel, as he ushered me into the assembly,—"her birthday; a sad day it might have been for us had it not been for your courage and forethought." So saying, he commenced a recital of my adventure to the bystanders, who overwhelmed me with civil speeches and a shower of soft looks that completed the fascination of the fairy scene. Meanwhile, the fair Inez had made room for me beside her, and I found myself at once the lion of the party, each vying with her neighbor who should show me most attention, la Senhora herself directing her conversation exclusively to me; a circumstance which, considering the awkwardness of our first meeting, I felt no small surprise at, and which led me, somewhat maliciously I confess, to make a half allusion to it, feeling some interest in ascertaining for whom the flattering reception was really intended.

"I thought you were Charles," said she, blushing in answer to my question.

"And you were right," said I, "I am Charles."

"Nay, but I meant *my* Charles."

There was something of touching softness in the tones of these few words that made me half wish I were *her* Charles.

Whether my look evinced as much or not, I cannot tell, but she speedily added:

"He is my brother; he is a captain in the *caçadores*, and I expected him here this evening. Some one saw a figure pass the gate and conceal himself in the trees, and I am sure it was he."

"What a disappointment!" said I.

"Yes; was it not?" said she, hurriedly; and then, as if remembering how ungracious was the speech, she blushed more deeply and hung down her head.

Just at this moment, as I looked up, I caught the eye of the English officer fixed steadfastly upon me. He was a tall, fine-looking fellow, of about two or three and thirty, with marked and handsome features, which, however, conveyed an expression of something sneering and sinister, that struck me the moment I saw him. His glass was fixed in his eye, and I perceived that he regarded us both with a look of no common interest. My attention did not, however, dwell long upon the circumstance, for Don Emanuel, coming behind my shoulder, asked me if I would not take out his daughter in the bolero that was just forming.

To my shame I was obliged to confess that I had not even seen the dance; and, while I continued to express my resolve to correct the errors of my education, the Englishman came up and asked the Senhora to be his partner. This put the very keystone upon my annoyance, and I half turned angrily away from the spot, when I heard her decline his invitation, and avow her determination not to dance.

There was something which pleased me so much at this refusal, that I could not help turning upon her a look of most grateful acknowledgment; but, as I did so, I once more encountered the gaze of the Englishman, whose knitted brows and compressed lips were bent upon me in a manner there was no mistaking. This was neither the fitting time nor place to seek any explanation of the circumstance; so, wisely resolving to wait a better occasion, I turned away and resumed my attentions toward my fair companion.

"Then you don't care for the bolero?" said I, as she reseated herself upon the grass.

"Oh! I delight in it," said she, enthusiastically.

"But you refused to dance?"

She hesitated, blushed, tried to mutter something, and was silent.

"I had determined to learn it," said I, half jestingly; "but, if you will not dance with me—"

"Yes; that I will—indeed I will."

"But you declined my countryman. Is it because he is inexpert?"

The Senhora hesitated; looked confused for some minutes; at length, coloring slightly, she said, "I have already made one rude speech to you this evening; I fear lest I should make a second. Tell me, is Captain Trevyllian your friend?"

"If you mean that gentleman yonder, I never saw him before."

"Nor heard of him?"

"Nor that either. We are total strangers to each other."

"Well, then, I may confess it. I do not like him. My father prefers him to any one else, invites him daily here, and, in fact, installs him as his first favorite. But still, I cannot like him; and yet I have done my best to do so."

"Indeed!" said I, pointedly. "What are his chief demerits? Is he not agreeable? is he not clever?"

"Oh! on the contrary, most agreeable; fascinating, I should say, in conversation; has traveled; seen a great deal of the world; is very accomplished, and has distinguished himself on several occasions; he wears, as you see, a Portuguese order."

"And, with all that—"

"And, with all that, I cannot bear him. He is a duelist, a notorious duelist. My brother, too, knows more of him, and avoids him. But let us not speak further: I see his eyes are again fixed on us; and, somehow, I fear him, without well knowing wherefore."

A movement among the party; shawls and mantillas were sought for on all sides; and the preparations for leave-taking appeared general. Before, however, I had time to express my thanks for my hospitable reception, the guests had assembled in a circle around the Senhora, and, toasting her with a parting bumper, they commenced in concert a little Portuguese song of farewell, each verse concluding with a Good-night! which, as they separated and held their way homeward, might now and then be heard, rising upon the breeze, and wafting their last thoughts back to her. The concluding verse, which struck me much, I have essayed to translate. It ran somehow thus:

"The morning breezes chill
Now close our joyous scene,
And yet we linger still,
Where we've so happy been.
How blest were it to live
With hearts like ours so light,
And only part to give
One long and last Good night!
Good-night!"

With many an invitation to renew my visit, most kindly preferred by Don Emanuel, and warmly seconded by his daughter, I, too, wished my Good-night! and turned my steps homeward.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE VILLA.

THE first object which presented itself to my eye, the next morning, was the midshipman's packet, intrusted to my care by Power. I turned it over to read the address more carefully, and what was my surprise to find that the name was that of my fair friend, Donna Inez!

"This certainly thickens the plot," thought I; "and so I have now fallen upon the real Simon Pure, and the reefer has had the good fortune to distance the dragoon. Well, thus far, I cannot say that I regret it. Now, however, for the parade, and then for the villa."

"I say, O'Malley," cried out Monsoon, as I appeared on the Plaza, "I have accepted an invitation for you to-day. We dine across the river. Be at my quarters a little before six, and we'll go together."

I should rather have declined the invitation, but, not well knowing why, and having no ready excuse, acceded, and promised to be punctual.

"You were at Don Emanuel's last night; I heard of you!"

"Yes: I spent a most delightful evening."

"That's your ground, my boy; a million of moidores, and such a campagna in Valencia; a better thing than the Dalrymple affair. Don't blush. I know it all. But stay; here they come."

As he spoke, the General commanding, with a numerous staff, rode forward. As they passed, I recognized a face which I had certainly seen before, and in a moment remembered it was that of the dragoon of the evening before. He passed quite close, and fixing his eyes steadfastly on me, evinced no sign of recognition.

The parade lasted above two hours, and it was with a feeling of impatience, I mounted a fresh horse to canter out to the villa. When I arrived, the servant informed me that Don Emanuel was in the city, but that the Senhora was in the garden, offering, at the same time, to escort me. Declining this honor, I intrusted my horse to his keeping, and took my way toward the arbor where last I had seen her.

I had not walked many paces, when the sound of a guitar struck on my ear. I listened. It was the Senhora's voice. She was singing a Venetian canzonetta, in a low, soft, warbling tone, as one lost in a reverie; as though the music was a mere accompaniment to some pleasant thought. I peeped through the dense leaves, and there she sat upon a low garden seat; an open book on the rustic table before her; beside her, embroidery, which seemed only lately abandoned. As I looked, she placed her guitar upon the ground, and began to play with a small spaniel, that seemed to have waited with impatience for some testimony of favor. A moment more, and she grew weary of this; then, heaving a long but gentle sigh, leaned back upon her chair, and seemed lost in thought. I now had ample time to regard her, and, certainly, never beheld anything more lovely. There was a character of classic beauty, and her brow, though fair and ample, was still strongly marked upon the temples; the eyes, being deep and squarely set, imparted a look of intensity to her features which their own softness alone subdued, while the short upper lip, which trembled with every passing thought, spoke of a nature tender and impressionable, and yet impassioned. Her foot and ankle peeped from beneath her dark robe, and certainly nothing could be more faultless; while her hand, fair as marble, blue-veined and dimpled, played amid the long tresses of her hair, that, as if in the wantonness of beauty, fell carelessly upon her shoulders.

It was some time before I could tear myself away from the fascination of so much beauty, and it needed no common effort to leave the spot. As I made a short *détour* in the garden before approaching the arbor, she saw me as I came forward, and, kissing her hand gayly, made room for me beside her.

"I have been fortunate in finding you alone, Senhora," said I, as I seated myself by her side, "for I am the bearer of a letter to you. How far it may interest you I know not, but to the writer's feelings I am bound to testify."

"A letter to me? you jest, surely?"

"That I am in earnest, this will show," said I, producing the packet.

She took it from my hands, turned it about and about, examined the seal, while, half doubtingly, she said:

"The name is mine; but still—"

"You fear to open it: is it not so? But, after all, you need not be surprised if it's from Howard; that's his name, I think."

"Howard! from little Howard!" exclaimed she, enthusiastically; and, tearing open the letter, she pressed it to her lips, her eyes sparkling with pleasure, and her cheek glowing as she read. I watched her as she ran rapidly over the lines; and I confess that, more than once, a pang of discontent shot through my heart that the midshipman's letter could call up such interest; not that I was in love with her myself, but yet, I know not how it was, I had fancied her affections unengaged, and, without asking myself wherefore, I wished as much.

"Poor, dear boy!" said she, as she came to the end.

How these few and simple words sank into my heart as I remembered how they had once been uttered to myself, and in perhaps no very dissimilar circumstances.

"But where is the souvenir he speaks of?" said she.

"The souvenir. I'm not aware—"

"Oh, I hope you have not lost the lock of hair he sent me!"

I was quite dumfounded at this, and could not remember whether I had received it from Power or not; so answered, at random,

"Yes; I must have left it on my table."

"Promise me, then, to bring it to-morrow with you?"

"Certainly," said I, with something of pique in my manner. "If I find such a means of making my visit an agreeable one, I shall certainly not omit it."

"You are quite right," said she, either not noticing, or not caring for the tone of my reply; "you will, indeed, be a welcome messenger. Do you know he was one of my lovers?"

"One of them! Indeed! Then pray how many do you number at this moment?"

"What a question! as if I could possibly count them. Besides, there are so many absent; some on leave, some deserters, perhaps, that I might be reckoning among my troops, but who, possibly, form part of the forces of the enemy. Do you know little Howard?"

"I cannot say that we are personally acquainted, but I am enabled, through the medium of a friend, to say that his sentiments are not strange to me. Besides, I have really pledged myself to support the prayer of his petition."

"How very good of you! For which reason you've forgotten, if not lost the lock of hair."

"That you shall have to-morrow," said I, pressing my hand solemnly to my heart.

"Well, then, don't forget it. But hush; here comes Captain Trevyllian. So you say Lisbon really pleases you?" said she, in a tone of voice totally changed, as the dragoon of the preceding evening approached.

"Mr. O'Malley, Captain Trevyllian."

We bowed stiffly and haughtily to each other, as two men salute who are unavoidably obliged to bow, with every wish on either side to avoid acquaintance. So, at least, I construed his bow; so I certainly intended my own.

It requires no common tact to give conversation the appearance of unconstraint and ease when it is evident that each person opposite is laboring under excited feelings; so that, notwithstanding the Senhora's efforts to engage our attention by the commonplaces of the day, we remained almost silent, and after a few observations of no interest, took our several leaves. Here again a new source of awkwardness arose; for, as we walked together toward the house, where our horses stood, neither party seemed disposed to speak.

"You are probably returning to Lisbon?" said he, coldly.

I assented by a bow; upon which, drawing his bridle within his arm, he bowed once more, and turned away in an opposite direction; while I, glad to be relieved of an unsought-for companionship, returned alone to the town.

CHAPTER XL.

THE DINNER.

It was with no peculiar pleasure that I dressed for our dinner-party. Major O'Shaughnessy, our host, was one of that class of my countrymen I cared least for—a riotous, good-natured, noisy, loud-swearing, punch-drinking western; full of stories of impossible fox hunts, and unimaginable duels, which all were acted either by himself or some member of his family. The company consisted of the Adjutant, Monsoon, Ferguson, Trevyllian, and some eight or ten officers with whom I was unacquainted. As is usual on such occasions, the wine circulated freely, and, amid the din and clamor of excited conversation, the fumes of Burgundy, and the vapor of cigar-smoke, we most of us became speedily mystified. As for me, my evil destiny would have it that I was placed exactly opposite Trevyllian, with whom, upon more than one occasion, I happened to differ in

opinion, and the question was in itself some trivial and unimportant one; yet the tone which he assumed, and of which I, too, could not divest myself in reply, boded anything rather than an amicable feeling between us. The noise and turmoil about prevented the others remarking the circumstance; but I could perceive in his manner what I deemed a studied determination to promote a quarrel, while I felt within myself a most unchristian-like desire to indulge his fancy.

"Worse fellows at passing the bottle than Trevyllian and O'Malley, there, I have rarely sojourned with," cried the Major; "look if they haven't got eight decanters between them, and here we are in a state of African thirst."

"How can you expect him to think of thirst when such perfumed billets as that come showering upon him?" said the Adjutant, alluding to a rose-colored epistle a servant had placed within my hands.

"Eight miles of a stone-wall country in fifteen minutes!—devil a lie in it!" said O'Shaughnessy, striking the table with his clenched fist; "show me the man would deny it!"

"Why, my dear fellow—"

"Don't be dearing me. Is it no you'll be saying to me?"

"Listen, now: there's O'Reilly, there—"

"Where is he?"

"He's under the table."

"Well, it's the same thing. His mother had a fox—bad luck to you: don't scald me with the jug!—his mother had a fox-cover in Shinrohan."

When O'Shaughnessy had got thus far in his narrative, I had the opportunity of opening my note, which merely contained the following words: "Come to the ball at the Casino, and bring the cadeau you promised."

I had scarcely read this over once, when a roar of laughter at something said attracted my attention. I looked up, and perceived Trevyllian's eyes bent upon me with the fierceness of a tiger; the veins in his forehead were swollen and distorted, and the whole expression of his face betokened rage and passion. Resolved no longer to submit to such evident determination to insult, I was rising from my place at table, when, as if anticipating my intention, he pushed back his chair, and left the room. Fearful of attracting attention by immediately following him, I affected to join in the conversation around me, while my temples throbbed, and my hands tingled with impatience to get away.

"Poor M'Manus!" said O'Shaughnessy, "rest his soul! he'd have puzzled the bench of bishops for hard words. Upon my conscience, I believe he spent his mornings looking for them in the Old Testament. Sure ye might have heard what happened to him at Banagher, when he commanded the Kilkennys,—ye never heard the story? well, then, ye shall. Push the sherry along first, though—old Monsoon, there, always keeps it lingering beside his left arm!

"Well, when Peter was Lieutenant-Colonel of the Kilkennys—who, I may remark, *en passant*, as the French say, were the seediest-looking devils in the whole service—he never let them alone from morning till night, drilling and pipe-claying, and polishing them up. 'Nothing will make soldiers of you,' said Peter; 'but, by the rock of Cashel, I'll keep you as clean as a new musket!' Now, poor Peter himself was not a very warlike figure; he measured five feet one in his tallest boots; but certainly, if Nature denied him length of stature, she compensated for it in another way, by giving him a taste of the longest words in the language. An extra syllable or so in a word was always a strong recommendation; and, whenever he could not find one to his mind, he'd take some quaint outlandish one, that more than once led to very awkward results. Well, the regiment was one day drawn up for parade in the town of Banagher, and, as M'Manus came down the lines, he stopped opposite one of the men, whose face, hands, and accoutrements exhibited a most woeful contempt of his orders. The fellow looked more like a turf-stack than a light-company man!

"'Stand out, sir!' cried M'Manus, in a boiling passion. 'Sergeant O'Toole, inspect this individual.' Now, the Sergeant was rather a favorite with Mac; for he always pretended to understand his phraseology, and, in consequence, was pronounced by the Colonel a very superior man for his station in life. 'Sergeant,' said he, 'we shall make an exemplary illustration of our system here!'

"'Yes, sir,' said the Sergeant, sorely puzzled at the meaning of what he spoke.

"'Bear him to the Shannon, and lave him there!' This he said in a kind of Coriolanus tone, with a toss up of his head, and a wave of his right arm, signs, whenever he made them, incontestably showing that further parley was out of the question, and that he had summed up, and charged the jury for good and all.

"'*Lave* him in the river?' said O'Toole, his eyes starting from the sockets, and his

whole face working in strong anxiety; 'is it *lave* him in the river, yer honor means?'

"'I have spoken!' said the little man, bending an ominous frown upon the Sergeant, which, whatever construction he might have put upon his words, there was no mistaking.

"'Well, well, av it's God's will he's drowned, it will not be on my head,' says O'Toole, as he marched the fellow away, between two rank and file.

"The parade was nearly over, when Mac happened to see the Sergeant coming up, all splashed with water, and looking quite tired.

"'Have you obeyed my orders?' said he.

"'Yes, yer honor; and tough work we had of it, for he struggled hard!'

"'And where is he now?'

"'Oh, troth, he's there safe! Divil a fear he'll get out!'

"'Where?' said Mac.

"'In the river, yer honor.'

"'What have you done, you scoundrel?'

"'Didn't I do as you bid me?' says he; 'didn't I throw him in, and *lave* [leave] him there?'

"And faith so they did; and if he wasn't a good swimmer, and got over to Moystown, there's little doubt but he'd have been drowned, and all because Peter M'Manus could not express himself like a Christian."

In the laughter which followed O'Shaughnessy's story, I took the opportunity of making my escape from the party, and succeeded in gaining the street unobserved. Though the note I had just read was not signed, I had no doubt from whom it came; so I hastened at once to my quarters, to make search for the lock of Ned Howard's hair, to which the Senhora alluded. What was my mortification, however, to discover that no such thing could be found anywhere! I searched all my drawers; I tossed about my papers and letters; I hunted every likely, every unlikely spot I could think of, but in vain; now cursing my carelessness for having lost it; now swearing most solemnly to myself that I never could have received it. What was to be done? It was already late: my only thought was how to replace it. If I only knew the color, any other lock of hair would, doubtless, do just as well. The chances were, as Howard was young, and an Englishman, that his hair was light; light-brown, probably; something like my own. Of course it was! why didn't that thought occur to me before? how stupid I was. So saying, I seized a pair of scissors, and cut a long lock beside my temple; this, in a calm moment, I might have hesitated about. "Yes," thought I, "she'll never discover the cheat; and, besides, I do feel—I know not exactly why—rather gratified to think that I shall have left this *souvenir* behind me, even though it call up other recollections than of me." So thinking, I wrapped my cloak about me, and hastened toward the Casino.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE ROUTE.

I HAD scarcely gone a hundred yards from my quarters, when a great tramp of horses' feet attracted my attention. I stopped to listen, and soon heard the jingle of dragoon accoutrements, as the noise came nearer. The night was dark, but perfectly still; and before I stood many minutes I heard the tones of a voice which I well knew could belong to but one, and that, Fred Power.

"Fred Power!" said I, shouting at the same time at the top of my voice—"Power!"

"Ah, Charley, is that you? come along to the Adjutant-General's quarters. I'm charged with some important dispatches, and can't stop till I've delivered them. Come along, I've glorious news for you!" So saying, he dashed spurs to his horse, and followed by two mounted dragoons, galloped past. Power's few and hurried words had so excited my curiosity, that I turned at once to follow him, questioning myself, as I walked along, to what he could possibly allude. He knew of my attachment to Lucy Dashwood—could he mean anything of her? But what could I expect there? by what flattery could I picture to myself any chance of success in that quarter? and yet, what other news could I care for or value, than what bore upon her fate upon whom my own depended? Thus ruminating, I reached the door of the spacious building in which the Adjutant-General had taken up his abode, and soon found myself among a crowd of persons whom the rumor of some important event had assembled there, though no one could tell what had occurred. Before many minutes the door opened, and Power came out; bowing hurriedly to a few, and whispering a word or two as he passed down the steps, he seized me by the arm and led me across the street. "Charley," said he, "the curtain's rising; the piece

is about to begin; a new commander-in-chief is sent out; Sir Arthur Wellesley, my boy, the finest fellow in England, is to head us on, and we march to-morrow. There's news for you!" A raw boy, unread, uninformed as I was, I knew but little of his career whose name had even then shed such luster upon our army; but the buoyant tone of Power as he spoke, the kindling energy of his voice roused me, and I felt every inch a soldier. As I grasped his hand, in delightful enthusiasm, I lost all memory of my disappointment, and, in the beating throb that shook my head, I felt how deeply slept the ardor of military glory that first led me from my home to see a battle-field.

"There goes the news!" said Frederick, pointing, as he spoke, to a rocket that shot up into the sky, and, as it broke into ten thousand stars, illuminated the broad stream where the ships of war lay darkly resting. In another moment the whole air shone with similar fires, while the deep roll of the drum sounded along the silent streets, and the city, so lately sunk in sleep, became, as if by magic, thronged with crowds of people; the sharp clang of the cavalry trumpet blended with the gay carol of the light-infantry bugle, and the heavy tramp of the march was heard in the distance. All was excitement, all bustle; but in the joyous tone of every voice was spoken the longing anxiety to meet the enemy; the gay, reckless tone of an Irish song would occasionally reach us, as some Connaught Ranger, or some Seventy-eighth man passed, his knapsack on his back; or the low monotonous pibroch of the Highlander, swelling into a war-cry, as some kilted corps drew up their ranks together. We turned to regain our quarters, when, at the corner of a street, we came suddenly upon a merry party, seated around a table before a little inn; a large street-lamp, unhung for the occasion, had been placed in the midst of them, and showed us the figures of several soldiers in undress; at the end, and raised a little above his compeers, sat one whom, by the unfair proportion he assumed of the conversation, not less than by the musical intonation of his voice, I soon recognized as my man, Mickey Free.

"I'll be hanged if that's not your fellow there, Charley," said Power, as he came to a dead stop a few yards off. "What an impertinent varlet he is: only to think of him there, presiding among a set of fellows that have fought all the battles in the Peninsular war. At this moment, I'll be hanged, if he is not going to sing."

Here a tremendous thumping upon the table announced the fact, and after a few preliminary observations from Mike, illustrative of his respect to the service in which he had so often distinguished himself, he began, to the air of the "Young May Moon," a ditty of which I only recollect the following verses:

"The pickets are fast retreating, boys,
The last tattoo is beating, boys;
So let every man
Finish his can,
And drink to our next merry meeting, boys!

"The colonel so gayly prancing, boys,
Has a wonderful trick of advancing, boys;
When he sings out so large,
'Fix bayonets and charge,'
He sets all the Frenchmen a-dancing, boys!

"Let Mounseer look ever so big, my boys,
Who cares for fighting a fig, my boys?
When we play Garryowen,
He'd rather go home;
For somehow, he's no taste for a jig, my boys!"

This admirable lyric seemed to have a perfect success, if one were only to judge from the thundering of voices, hands, and drinking vessels which followed; while a venerable gray-haired sergeant rose to propose Mr. Free's health, and speedy promotion to him.

We stood for several minutes in admiration of the party; when the loud roll of the drums beating to arms awakened us to the thought that our moments were numbered.

"Good-night, Charley!" said Power, as he shook my hand warmly; "good-night! It will be your last night under a curtain for some months to come; make the most of it. Adieu!"

So saying, we parted: he to his quarters, and I to all the confusion of my baggage, which lay in most admired disorder about my room.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE FAREWELL.

THE preparations for the march occupied me till near morning; and, indeed, had I been disposed to sleep, the din and clamor of the world without would have totally prevented it. Before daybreak the advanced guard was already in motion, and some squadrons of heavy cavalry had begun their march.

I looked around my now dismantled room as one does usually for the last time ere leaving, and bethought me if I had not

forgotten anything. Apparently all was remembered: but stay—what is this? To be sure, how forgetful I had become! It was the packet I destined for Donna Inez, and which, in the confusion of the night before, I had omitted to bring to the Casino.

I immediately dispatched Mike to the Commissary, with my luggage, and orders to ascertain when we were expected to march. He soon returned, with the intelligence that our corps was not to move before noon; so that I had yet some hours to spare, and make my adieux to the Senhora.

I cannot exactly explain the reason, but I certainly did bestow a more than common attention upon my toilet that morning. The Senhora was nothing to me. It is true, she had, as she lately most candidly informed me, a score of admirers, among whom I was not even reckoned: she was evidently a coquette, whose greatest pleasure was to sport and amuse herself with the passions she excited in others. And, even if she were not,—if her heart were to be won to-morrow, what claim—what right had I to seek it? My affections were already pledged; promised, it is true, to one who gave nothing in return, and who, perhaps, even loved another. Ah! there was the rub: that one confounded suspicion, lurking in the rear, chilled my courage and wounded my spirit.

If there be anything more disheartening to an Irishman, in his little *affaires de cœur*, than another, it is the sense of rivalry. The obstinacy of fathers, the ill-will of mothers, the coldness, the indifference of the lovely object herself,—obstacles though they be,—he has tact, spirit, and perseverance to overcome them; but, when a more successful candidate for the fair presents himself; when the eye that remains downcast at *his* suit, lights up with animation at *another's* coming; when the features, whose cold and chilling apathy to him have blended in one smile of welcome to another,—it is all up with him: he sees the game lost, and throws his cards upon the table. And yet, why is this? why is it that he, whose birthright it would seem to be sanguine when others despond,—to be confident when all else are hopeless,—should find his courage fail him here? The reason is, simply—But, in good sooth, I am ashamed to confess it!

Having jogged on so far with my reader, in all the sober seriousness which the matter-of-fact material of these memoirs demands, I fear lest a seeming paradox may cause me to lose my good name for veracity; and that, while merely maintaining a national trait of my country, I may appear to be asserting some unheard-of and absurd proposition: so far have mere vulgar prejudices gone to sap our character as a people.

The reason, then, is this—for I have gone too far to retreat—the Irishman is essentially bashful. Well, laugh if you wish; for I conclude that, by this time, you have given way to a most immoderate excess of risibility; but still, when you have perfectly recovered your composure, I beg to repeat, the Irishman is essentially a bashful man!

Do not, for a moment, fancy that I would by this imply that, in any new or unexpected situation—that from any unforeseen conjuncture of events—the Irishman would feel confused or abashed, more than any other; far from it. The cold and habitual reserve of the Englishman, the studied caution of the North Tweeder himself, would exhibit far stronger evidences of awkwardness in such circumstances as these. But, on the other hand, when measuring his capacity, his means of success, his probabilities of being preferred, with those of the natives of any other country, I back the Irishman against the world for distrust of his own powers, for an under-estimate of his real merits; in one word, for his bashfulness. But let us return to Donna Inez.

As I rode up to the villa, I found the family assembled at breakfast. Several officers were also present, among whom I was not sorry to recognize my friend Monsoon.

"Ah, Charley!" cried he, as I seated myself beside him, "what a pity all our fun is so soon to have an end! Here's this confounded Soult won't be quiet and peaceable; but he must march upon Oporto, and Heaven knows where besides, just as we were really beginning to enjoy life. I had got such a contract for blankets! and now they've ordered me to join Beresford's corps in the mountains; and you,"—here he dropped his voice,—"and you were getting on so devilish well in this quarter; upon my life, I think you'd have carried the day; old Don Emanuel—you know he's a friend of mine—likes you very much. And then, there's Sparks—"

"Ay, Major, what of him? I have not seen him for some days."

"Why, they've been frightening the poor devil out of his life, O'Shaughnessy and a set of them. They tried him by court-martial yesterday, and sentenced him to mount guard with a wooden sword

and a shooting jacket, which he did. Old Colbourne, it seems, saw him; and, faith, there would be the devil to pay if the route had not come. Some of them would certainly have got a long leave to see their friends."

"Why is not the Senhora here, Major? I don't see her at table."

"A cold; a sore throat; a wet-feet affair of last night, I believe. Pass that cold pie down here. Sherry, if you please. You didn't see Power to-day?"

"No: we parted last night; I have not been to bed."

"Very bad preparation for a march: take some burnt brandy in your coffee."

"Then you don't think the Senhora will appear?"

"Very unlikely. But stay, you know her room—the small drawing-room that looks out upon the flower-garden; she usually passes the morning there. Leap the little wooden paling round the corner, and the chances are ten to one you find her."

I saw from the occupied air of Don Antonio that there was little fear of interruption on his part; so, taking an early moment to escape unobserved, I rose and left the room. When I sprang over the oak fence, I found myself in a delicious little garden, where roses, grown to a height never seen in our colder climate, formed a deep bower of rich blossom.

The Major was right. The Senhora was in the room, and in one moment I was beside her.

"Nothing but my fears of not bidding you farewell could palliate my thus intruding, Donna Inez; but as we are ordered away—"

"When? not so soon, surely?"

"Even so; to-day, this very hour. But you see that, even in the hurry of departure, I have not forgotten my trust; this is the packet I promised you."

So saying, I placed the paper with the lock of hair within her hand, and, bending downward, pressed my lips upon her taper fingers. She hurriedly snatched her hand away, and, tearing open the inclosure, took out the lock. She looked steadily for a moment at it, then at me, and again at it, and, at length, bursting into a fit of laughing, threw herself upon a chair in a very ecstasy of mirth.

"Why, you don't mean to impose this auburn ringlet upon me for one of poor Howard's jetty curls? What downright folly to think of it! and then, with how little taste the deception was practiced—upon your very temples, too! One comfort is, you are utterly spoiled by it."

Here she again relapsed into a fit of laughter, leaving me perfectly puzzled what to think of her, as she resumed:

"Well, tell me now, am I to reckon this as a pledge of your own allegiance, or am I still to believe it to be Edward Howard's? Speak, and truly."

"Of my own, most certainly," said I, "if it will be accepted."

"Why, after such treachery, perhaps it ought not; but, still, as you have already done yourself such injury, and look so very silly withal—"

"That you are even resolved to give me cause to look more so," added I.

"Exactly," said she; "for here, now, I reinstate you among my true and faithful admirers. Kneel down, sir knight! in token of which you will wear this scarf—"

A sudden start which the donna gave at these words brought me to my feet. She was pale as death and trembling.

"What means this?" said I. "What has happened?"

She pointed with her finger toward the garden; but, though her lips moved, no voice came forth, I sprang through the open window. I rushed into the copse, the only one which might afford concealment for a figure, but no one was there. After a few minutes' vain endeavor to discover any trace of an intruder, I returned to the chamber. The donna was there still; but how changed! her gayety and animation were gone, her pale cheek and trembling lip bespoke fear and suffering, and her cold hand lay heavily beside her.

"I thought—perhaps it was merely fancy—but I thought I saw Trevyllian beside the window."

"Impossible!" said I. "I have searched every walk and alley. It was nothing but imagination—believe me, no more. There, be assured; think no more of it."

While I endeavored thus to reassure her, I was very far from feeling perfectly at ease myself; the whole bearing and conduct of this man had inspired me with a growing dislike of him, and I felt already half-convinced that he had established himself as a spy upon my actions.

"Then you really believe I was mistaken?" said the donna, as she placed her hand within mine.

"Of course I do: but speak no more of it. You must not forget how few my moments are here. Already I have heard the tramp of horses without; ah! there they are: in a moment more I shall be missed; so, once more, fairest Inez—Nay, I beg pardon if I have dared to call you thus;

but think, if it be the first it may also be the last time I shall ever speak it."

Her head gently drooped as I said these words, till it sunk upon my shoulder, her long and heavy hair falling upon my neck and across my bosom. I felt her heart almost beat against my side; I muttered some words, I know not what; I felt them like a prayer; I pressed her cold forehead to my lips; rushed from the room; cleared the fence at a spring, and was far upon the road to Lisbon ere I could sufficiently collect my senses to know whither I was going. Of little else was I conscious: my mind was full to bursting, and, in the confusion of my excited brain, fiction and reality were so inextricably mingled as to defy every endeavor at discrimination. But little time had I for reflection; as I reached the city, the brigade to which I was attached was already under arms, and Mike impatiently waiting my arrival with the horses.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE MARCH.

WHAT a strange spectacle did the road to Oliveira present upon the morning of the 7th of May! A hurried or incautious observer might, at first sight, have pronounced the long line of troops which wended their way through the valley as the remains of a broken and routed army, had not the ardent expression and bright eye that beamed on every side assured him that men who looked thus could not be beaten ones. Horse, foot, baggage, artillery, dismounted dragoons, even the pale and scarcely recovered inhabitants of the hospital, might have been seen hurrying on; for the order, "Forward!" had been given at Lisbon, and those whose wounds did not permit their joining, were more pitied for their loss that its cause. More than one officer was seen at the head of his troop with an arm in a sling, or a bandaged forehead; while, among the men, similar evidences of devotion were not unfrequent. As for me, long years and many reverses have not obliterated—scarcely blunted—the impression that sight made on me. The splendid spectacle of a review had often excited and delighted me; but here there was the glorious reality of war; the brouzed faces, the worn uniforms; the well-tattered flags, the roll of the heavy guns mingling with the wild pibroch of the Highlander, or scarcely less wild recklessness of the Irish quick-step; while the long line of cavalry, their helmets and accoutrements shining in the morning sun, brought back one's boyish dreams of joust and tournament, and made the heart beat high with chivalrous enthusiasm.

"Yes," said I, half aloud, "this is indeed a realization of what I longed and thirsted for," the clang of the music and the tramp of the cavalry responding to my throbbing pulses as we moved along.

"Close up, there; trot!" cried out a deep and manly voice; and immediately a general officer rode by, followed by an aide-de-camp.

"There goes Cotton," said Power; "you may feel easy in your mind now, Charley; there's some work before us."

"You have not heard our destination?" said I.

"Nothing is known for certain, yet. The report goes, that Soult is advancing upon Oporto; and the chances are, Sir Arthur intends to hasten on to its relief. Our fellows are at Ovar, with General Murray."

"I say, Charley, old Monsoon is in a devil of a flurry. He expected to have been peaceably settled down in Lisbon for the next six months, and he has received orders to set out for Beresford's head-quarters immediately; and, from what I hear, they have no idle time."

"Well, Sparks, how goes it man? Better fun this than the cook's galley, eh?"

"Why, do you know, these hurried movements put me out confoundedly. I found Lisbon very interesting, the little I could see of it last night."

"Ah! my dear fellow, think of the lovely Andalusian lasses, with their brown transparent skins and liquid eyes; why, you'd have been over head and ears in love in twenty-four hours more, had we stayed."

"Are they really so pretty?"

"Pretty!—downright lovely, man. Why, they have a way of looking at you, over their fans—just one glance, short and fleeting, but so smelting, by Jove— Then their walk—if it be not profane to call that springing, elastic gesture by such a name—why it's regular witchcraft. Sparks, my man, I tremble for you. Do you know, by-the-by, that same pace of theirs is a devilish hard thing to learn. I never could come it; and yet, somehow, I was formerly rather a crack fellow at a ballet. Old Alberto used to select me for a *pas de zéphyr* among a host; but there's a kind of a hop, and a slide, and a spring—in fact, you must have been wearing petticoats for eighteen years, and have an Andalusian instep, and an india-rubber sole to your foot.

or it's no use trying it. How I used to make them laugh at the old San Josef convent, formerly, by my efforts in the cause!"

"Why, how did it ever occur to you to practice it?"

"Many a man's legs have saved his head, Charley, and I put it to mine to do a similar office for me."

"True; but I never heard of a man that performed a *pas seul* before the enemy."

"Not exactly; but still you're not very wide of the mark. If you'll only wait till we reach Pontalegue, I'll tell you the story; not that it is worth the delay, but talking at this brisk pace I don't admire."

"You leave a detachment here, Captain Power," said an aide-de-camp, riding hastily up; "and General Cotton requests you will send a subaltern and two sergeants forward toward Berar, to reconnoiter the pass. Franchesca's cavalry are reported in that quarter." So speaking, he dashed spurs to his horse, and was out of sight in an instant.

Power, at the same moment, wheeled to the rear, from which he returned in an instant, accompanied by three well-mounted light dragoons. "Sparks," said he, "now for an occasion of distinguishing yourself. You heard the order—lose no time; and, as your horse is an able one, and fresh, lose not a second, but forward."

No sooner was Sparks dispatched on, what it was evident he felt to be anything but a pleasant duty, than I turned toward Power, and said, with some tinge of disappointment in the tone, "Well, if you really felt there was anything worth doing there—I flattered myself—that—"

"Speak out, man. That I should have sent you, eh—is it not so?"

"Yes, you've hit it."

"Well, Charley, my peace is easily made on this head. Why, I selected Sparks simply to spare you one of the most unpleasant duties that can be imposed upon a man; a duty which, let him discharge it to the uttermost, will never be acknowledged, and the slightest failure in which will be remembered for many a day against him; besides the pleasant and very probable prospect of being selected as a bull's-eye for a French rifle, or carried off a prisoner; eh, Charley? there's no glory in that, devil a ray of it! Come, come, old fellow, Fred Power's not the man to keep his friend out of the *mêlée*, if only anything can be made by being in it. Poor Sparks, I'd swear, is as little satisfied with the arrangement as yourself, if one knew but all."

"I say, Power," said a tall, dashing-looking man of about five-and-forty, with a Portuguese order on his breast—"I say, Power, dine with us at the halt."

"With pleasure, if I may bring my young friend here."

"Of course; pray introduce us."

"Major Hixley, Mr. O'Malley,— a 14th man, Hixley."

"Delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr. O'Malley. Knew a famous fellow in Ireland of your name, a certain Godfrey O'Malley, member of some county or other."

"My uncle," said I, blushing deeply, with a pleasurable feeling, at even this sight praise of my oldest friend.

"Your uncle! give me your hand. By Jove, his nephew has a right to good treatment at my hands; he saved my life in the year '98; and how is old Godfrey?"

"Quite well, when I left him some months ago; a little gout, now and then."

"To be sure he has; no man deserves it better; but it's a gentlemanlike gout, that merely jogs his memory in the morning of the good wine he has drank overnight. By-the-by, what became of a friend of his, a devilish eccentric fellow, who held a command in the Austrian service?"

"Oh, Considine—the Count?"

"The same."

"As eccentric as ever; I left him on a visit with my uncle. And Boyle—did you know Sir Harry Boyle?"

"To be sure I did; shall I ever forget him, and his capital blunders, that kept me laughing the whole time I spent in Ireland? I was in the house when he concluded a panegyric upon a friend, by calling him 'the father to the poor, and uncle to Lord Donoughmore.'"

"He was the only man who could render by a bull what it was impossible to convey more correctly," said Power. "You've heard of his duel with Dick Toler?"

"Never; let's hear it."

"It was a bull from beginning to end. Boyle took it into his head that Dick was a person with whom he had a serious row in Cork. Dick, on the other hand, mistook Boyle for Old Caples, whom he had been pursuing with horse-whipping intentions for some months; they met in Kildare-street Club, and very little colloquy satisfied them that they were right in their conjectures, each party being so eagerly ready to meet the views of the other. It never was a difficult matter to find a friend in Dublin; and to do them justice, Irish seconds, generally speaking, are perfectly

free from any imputation upon the score of mere delay. No men have less impertinent curiosity as to the cause of the quarrel; wisely supposing that the principals know their own affairs best, they cautiously abstain from indulging any prying spirit, but proceed to discharge their functions as best they may. Accordingly, Sir Harry and Dick were 'set up,' as the phrase is, at twelve paces, and to use Boyle's own words, for I have heard him relate the story—

"We blazed away, sir, for three rounds. I put two in his hat, and one in his neck-cloth; his shots went all through the skirt of my coat.

"'We'll spend the day here,' says Considine, 'at this rate. Couldn't you put them closer?'

"'And give us a little more time in the word,' says I.

"'Exactly,' said Dick.

"Well, they moved us forward two paces, and set to loading the pistols again.

"By this time we were so near, that we had full opportunity to scan each other's faces; well sir, I stared at him, and he at me.

"'What!' said I.

"'Eh!' said he.

"'How's this?' said I.

"'You're not Billy Caples?' said he.

"'Devil a bit,' said I, 'nor I don't think you're Archy Devine;' and, faith, sir, so it appeared, we were fighting away all the morning for nothing; for, somehow, it turned out *it was neither of us!*"

What amused me most in this anecdote was the hearing it at such a time and place. That poor Sir Harry's eccentricities should turn up for discussion on a march in Portugal was singular enough; but, after all, life is full of such incongruous accidents. I remember once supping with Calzoo on the Blue Mountains, in Jamaica. By way of entertaining his guests, some English officers, he ordered one of his suite to sing. We were of course pleased at the opportunity of hearing an Indian war-chant, with a skull and thigh-bone accompaniment; but what was our astonishment to hear the Indian—a ferocious-looking dog, with an awful scalp-lock, and two streaks of red paint across his chest—clear his voice well for a few seconds, and then begin, without discomposing a muscle of his gravity, "The Laird of Cockpen!" I need not say that the "Great Raccoon" was a Dumfries man, who had quitted Scotland forty years before, and, with characteristic prosperity, had attained his present rank in a foreign service.

"Halt, halt!" cried a deep-toned, manly voice in the leading column, and the word was repeated from mouth to mouth to the rear.

We dismounted, and picketing our horses beneath the broad-leaved foliage of the cork-trees, stretched ourselves out at full length upon the grass, while our messmen prepared the dinner. Our party at first consisted of Hixley, Power, the Adjutant, and myself; but our number was soon increased by three officers of the 6th Foot, about to join their regiment.

"Barring the ladies, God bless them!" said Power, "there's no such picnics as campaigning presents; the charms of scenery are greatly enhanced by their coming unexpectedly on you. Your chance good-fortune in the prog has an interest that no ham-and-cold-chicken affair, prepared by your servants beforehand, and got ready with a degree of fuss and worry that converts the whole party into an assembly of cooks, can ever afford; and, lastly, the excitement that this same life of ours is never without, gives a zest—"

"There you've hit it," cried Hixley, "it's that same feeling of uncertainty that those who meet now may ever do so again, full as it is of sorrowful reflection, that still teaches us, as we become inured to war, to economize our pleasures, and be happy when we may. Your health, O'Malley, and your uncle Godfey's too."

"A little more of the pastry?"

"What a capital guinea fowl this is!"

"That's some of old Monsoon's own particular port."

"Pass it round here; really this is pleasant."

"My blessing on the man who left that vista yonder; see what a glorious valley stretches out there, undulating in its richness; and look at those dark trees, where just one streak of soft sunlight is kissing their tops, giving them one chaste good-night—"

"Well done, Power!"

"Confound you, you've pulled me short, and I was about becoming downright pastoral. *A propos* of kissing, I understand Sir Arthur won't allow the convents to be occupied by troops."

"And *à propos* of convents," said I, "let's hear your story; you promised it a while ago."

"My dear Charley, it's far too early in the evening for a story; I should rather indulge my poetic fancies here, under the shade of melancholy boughs. And, besides, I am not half screwed up yet!"

"Come, Adjutant, let's have a song."

"I'll sing you a Portuguese serenade when the next bottle comes in. What capital port! Have you much of it?"

"Only three dozen. We got it late last night; forged an order from the commanding officer, and sent it up to old Monsoon —'for hospital use.' He gave it with a tear in his eye, saying, as the sergeant marched away, 'Only think of such wine for fellows that may be in the next world before morning. It's a downright sin!'"

"I say, Power, there's something going on there."

At this instant the trumpet sounded "boot and saddle," and, like one man, the whole mass rose up, when the scene, late so tranquil, became one of excited bustle and confusion. An aide-de-camp galloped past toward the river, followed by two orderly sergeants; and the next moment Sparks rode up, his whole equipment giving evidence of a hurried ride, while his cheek was deadly pale and haggard.

Power presented to him a goblet of sherry, which having emptied at a draught, he drew a long breath, and said,

"They are coming—coming in force."

"Who are coming?" said Power; "take time, man, and collect yourself."

"The French! I saw them a devilish deal closer than I liked; they wounded one of the orderlies, and took the other prisoner."

"Forward!" cried out a hoarse voice in the front. "March—trot!"

And before we could obtain any further information from Sparks, whose faculties seemed to have received a terrific shock, we were once more in the saddle, and moving at a brisk pace onward.

Sparks had barely time to tell us that a large body of French cavalry occupied the pass of Berar, when he was sent for by General Cotton to finish his report.

"How frightened the fellow is!" said Hixley.

"I don't think the worse of poor Sparks for all that," said Power; "he saw these fellows for the first time, and no bird's-eye view of them either."

"Then we are in for a skirmish at least," said I.

"It would appear not, from that," said Hixley, pointing to the head of the column, which, leaving the high-road upon the left, entered the forest by a deep cleft that opened upon a valley traversed by a broad river.

"That looks very like taking up a position, though," said Power.

"Look—look down yonder!" cried Hixley, pointing to a dip in the plain beside the river; "is there not a cavalry picket there?"

"Right, by Jove! I say, Fitzroy," said Power to an aide-de-camp as he passed, "what's going on?"

'Soult has carried Oporto," cried he, "and Franchesca's cavalry have escaped."

"And who are these fellows in the valley?"

"Our own people coming up."

In less than half an hour's brisk trotting we reached the stream, the banks of which were occupied by two cavalry regiments advancing to the main army; and what was my delight to find that one of them was our own corps, the 14th Light Dragoons.

"Hurra!" cried Power, waving his cap as he came up. "How are you, Sedgewick? Baker, my hearty, how goes it? How is Hampton and the Colonel?"

In an instant we were surrounded by our brother officers, who all shook me cordially by the hand, and welcomed me to the regiment with most gratifying warmth.

"One of us," said Power, with a knowing look, as he introduced me, and the freemasonry of these few words secured me a hearty greeting.

"Halt, halt! Dismount!" sounded again from front to rear; and in a few minutes we were once more stretched upon the grass, beneath the deep and mellow moonlight, while the bright stream ran placidly beside us, reflecting on its calm surface the varied groups as they lounged or sat around the blazing fires of the bivouac.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE BIVOUAC.

When I contrasted the gay and lively tone of the conversation which ran on around our bivouac fire, with the dry monotony and prosaic tediousness of my first military dinner at Cork, I felt how much the spirit and adventure of a soldier's life can impart of chivalrous enthusiasm to even the dullest and least susceptible. I saw even many who, under common circumstances, would have possessed no interest, nor excited any curiosity, but now, connected as they were with the great events occurring around them, absolutely became heroes; and it was with a strange, wild throbbing of excitement, I listened to the details of movements and marches, whose objects I knew not, but in which

the magical words, Corunna, Vimeira, were mixed up, and gave to the circumstances an interest of the highest character. How proud, too, I felt, to be the companion in arms of such fellows! here they sat, the tried and proved soldiers of a hundred fights, treating me as their brother and their equal. Who need wonder if I felt a sense of excited pleasure? Had I needed such a stimulant, that night beneath the cork-trees had been enough to arouse a passion for the army in my heart, and an irrepressible determination to seek for a soldier's glory.

"Fourteenth!" called out a voice from the wood behind; and, in a moment after, the aide-de-camp appeared with a mounted orderly.

"Colonel Merivale?" said he, touching his cap to the stalwart, soldier-like figure before him.

The Colonel bowed.

"Sir Stapleton Cotton desires me to request that at an early hour to-morrow you will occupy the pass, and cover the march of the troops. It is his wish that all the reinforcements should arrive at Oporto by noon. I need scarcely add, that we expect to be engaged with the enemy."

These few words were spoken hurriedly, and, again saluting our party, he turned his horse's head and continued his way toward the rear.

"There's news for you, Charley," said Power, slapping me on the shoulder. "Lucy Dashwood or Westminster Abbey!"

"The regiment was never in finer condition, that's certain," said the Colonel, "and most eager for a brush with the enemy."

"How your old friend, the Count, would have liked this work," said Hixley; "gallant fellow he was."

"Come," cried Power, "here's a fresh bowl coming. Let's drink the ladies, wherever they be: we most of us have some soft spot on that score."

"Yes," said the Adjutant, singing:

"'Here's to the maiden of blushing fifteen,
Here's to the damsel that's merry,
Here's to the flaunting, extravagant queen—'"

"And," sang Power, interrupting,

"'Here's to the 'Widow of Derry.'"

"Come, come, Fred, no more quizzing on that score. It's the only thing ever gives me a distaste to the service, the souvenir of that adventure. When I reflect what I might have been, and think what I am; when I contrast a Brussels carpet with wet grass, silk hangings with a canvas tent, Sneyd's claret with ration brandy, and Sir Arthur for a Commander-in-Chief *vice* Boggs, a widow—"

"Stop there," cried Hixley; "without disparaging the fair widow, there's nothing beats campaigning, after all; eh, Fred?"

"And to prove it," said the Colonel, "Power will sing us a song."

Power took his pencil from his pocket, and, placing the back of a letter across his shako, commenced inditing his lyric; saying, as he did so,

"I'm your man in five minutes: just fill my glass in the mean time."

"That fellow beats Dibdin hollow," whispered the Adjutant. "I'll be hanged if he'll not knock you off a song like lightning."

"I understand," said Hixley, "they have some intention at the Horse Guards of having all the general orders set to popular tunes, and sung at every mess in the service. You've heard that, I suppose, Sparks?"

"I confess I had not before."

"It will certainly come very hard upon the subalterns," continued Hixley, with much gravity; "they'll have to brush up their *sol mi fas;* all the solos are to be their part."

"What rhymes with slaughter?" said Power.

"Brandy-and-water!" said the Adjutant.

"Now, then," said Power, "are you all ready?"

"Ready!"

"You must chorus, mind; and, mark me, take care you give the hip, hip, hurra! well, as that's the whole force of the chant. Take the time from me. Now for it. Air, 'Garryowen,' with spirit, but not too quick.

"Now that we've pledged each eye of blue,
And every maiden fair and true,
And our green island home—to you
The ocean's wave adorning,
Let's give one hip, hip, hip, hurra!
And drink e'en to the coming day,
When, squadrons square,
We'll all be there,
To meet the French in the morning.

"May his bright laurels never fade,
Who leads our fighting fifth brigade,
Those lads so true in heart and blade,
And famed for danger scorning:
So join me in one hip, hurra!
And drink e'en to the coming day,
When, squadron square,
We'll all be there,
To meet the French in the morning.

"And, when with years and honors crowned,
You sit some homeward hearth around,
And hear no more the stirring sound
That spoke the trumpet's warning,—
You'll fill, and drink, one hip, hurra!
And pledge the memory of the day,
When, squadrons square,
They all were there,
To meet the French in the morning."

"Gloriously done, Fred!" cried Hixley. "If I ever get my deserts in this world, I'll make you Laureate to the Forces, with a hogshead of your own native whisky for every victory of the army."

"A devilish good chant," said Merivale; "but the air surpasses anything I ever heard: thoroughly Irish, I take it."

"Irish! upon my conscience, I believe you!" shouted O'Shaughnessy, with an energy of voice and manner that created a hearty laugh on all sides. "It's few people ever mistook it for a Venetian melody. Hand over the punch—the sherry, I mean. When I was in the Clare militia, we always went to dinner to 'Tatter Jack Walsh,' a sweet air, and had 'Garryowen' for a quick-step. Ould M'Manus, when he got the regiment, wanted to change; he said they were damned vulgar tunes, and wanted to have 'Rule Britannia,' or the 'Hundredth Psalm;' but we would not stand it; there would have been a mutiny in the corps."

"The same fellow, wasn't he, that you told the story of, the other evening, in Lisbon?" said I.

"The same. Well, what a character he was! As pompous and conceited a little fellow as ever you met with: and then, he was so bullied by his wife, he always came down to revenge it on the regiment. She was a fine, showy, vulgar woman, with a most cherishing affection for all the good things in this life, except her husband, whom she certainly held in due contempt. 'Ye little crayture,' she'd say to him with a sneer, 'it ill becomes you to drink and sing, and be making a man of yourself. If you were like O'Shaughnessy there, six foot three in his stockings—' Well, well, it looks like boasting; but no matter: here's her health, anyway."

"I knew you were tender in that quarter," said Power. "I heard it when quartered in Limerick."

"May be you heard, too, how I paid off Mac, when he came down on a visit to that county?"

"Never: let's hear it now."

"Ay, O'Shaughnessy, now's your time; the fire's a good one, the night fine, and liquor plenty."

"I'm *convanient*," said O'Shaughnessy, as, depositing his enormous legs on each side of the burning fagots, and placing a bottle between his knees, he began his story:

"It was a cold rainy night in January, in the year '98, I took my place in the Limerick mail, to go down for a few days to the west country. As the waiter of the Hibernian came to the door with a lantern, I just caught a glimpse of the other insides; none of whom were known to me, except Colonel M'Manus, that I met once in a boarding-house in Molesworth street. I did not, at the time, think him a very agreeable companion; but, when morning broke, and we began to pay our respects to each other in the coach, I leaned over, and said, 'I hope you're well, Colonel M'Manus,' just by way of civility like. He didn't hear me at first; so that I said it again, a little louder.

"I wish you saw the look he gave me; he drew himself up to the height of his cotton umbrella, put his chin inside his cravat, pursed up his dry, shriveled lips, and, with a voice he meant to be awful, replied:

"'You appear to have the advantage of me.'

"'Upon my conscience, you're right,' said I, looking down at myself, and then over at him, at which the other travelers burst out a-laughing—'I think there's few will dispute that point.' When the laugh was over, I resumed—for I was determined not to let him off so easily. 'Sure I met you at Mrs. Cayle's,' said I; 'and, by the same token—it was a Friday, I remember it well,—maybe you didn't pitch into the salt cod? I hope it didn't disagree with you?'

"'I beg to repeat, sir, that you are under a mistake,' said he.

"'Maybe so, indeed,' said I. 'Maybe you're not Colonel M'Manus at all; maybe you wasn't in a passion for losing seven-and-sixpence at loo with Mrs. Moriarty; maybe you didn't break the lamp in the hall with your umbrella, pretending you touched it with your head, and wasn't within three foot of it; maybe Counselor Brady wasn't going to put you in the box of the Foundling Hospital, if you wouldn't behave quietly in the streets—'

"Well, with this the others laughed so heartily, that I could not go on; and the next stage the bold Colonel got outside with the guard, and never came in till we reached Limerick. I'll never forget his face, as he got down at Swinburne's Hotel. 'Good-by, Colonel,' said I; but he

wouldn't take the least notice of my politeness, but, with a frown of utter defiance, he turned on his heel and walked away.

"'I haven't done with you yet,' says I; and, faith, I kept my word.

"I hadn't gone ten yards down the street, when I met my old friend Darby O'Grady.

"'Shaugh, my boy,' says he,—he called me that way for shortness,—dine with me to-day at Mosey's: a green goose and gooseberries; six to a minute.'

"'Who have you?' says I.

"'Tom Keane and the Wallers, a counselor or two, and one M'Manus, from Dublin.'

"'The Colonel?'

"The same,' said he.

"'I'm there, Darby!' said I; 'but mind, you never saw me before.'

"'What!' said he.

"'You never set eyes on me before; mind that.'

"'I understand,' said Darby, with a wink; and we parted.

"I certainly was never very particular about dressing for dinner, but on this day I spent a considerable time at my toilet; and, when I looked in my glass at its completion, was well satisfied that I had done myself justice. A waistcoat of brown rabbit-skin with flaps, a red worsted comforter round my neck, an old gray shooting jacket, with a brown patch on the arm, corduroys and leather gaiters, with a tremendous oak cudgel in my hand, made me a most presentable figure for a dinner party.

"'Will I do, Darby?' says I, as he came into my room before dinner.

"'If it's for robbing the mail you are,' says he, 'nothing could be better. Your father wouldn't know you!'

"'Would I be the better of a wig?'

"'Leave your hair alone,' said he. 'It's painting the lily to alter it.'

"'Well, God's will be done,' says I, 'so come now.'

"Well, just as the clock struck six I saw the Colonel come out of his room, in a suit of most accurate sable, stockings, and pumps. Down-stairs he went, and I heard the waiter announce him.

"'Now's my time,' thought I, as I followed slowly after.

"When I reached the door I heard several voices within, among which I recognized some ladies. Darby had not told me about them; 'But no matter,' said I; 'it's all as well;' so I gave a gentle tap at the door with my knuckles.

"'Come in,' said Darby.

"I opened the door slowly, and, putting in only my head and shoulders, took a cautious look round the room.

"'I beg pardon, gentlemen,' said I, 'but I was only looking for one Colonel M'Manus, and, as he is not here—'

"'Pray walk in, sir,' said O'Grady, with a polite bow. 'Colonel M'Manus is here. There's no intrusion whatever. I say, Colonel,' said he, turning round, 'a gentleman here desires to—'

"'Never mind it now,' said I, as I stepped cautiously into the room; 'he's going to dinner; another time will do just as well.'

"'Pray come in?'

"'I could not think of intruding—'

"'I must protest,' said M'Manus, coloring up, 'that I cannot understand this gentleman's visit.'

"'It is a little affair I have to settle with him,' said I, with a fierce look, that I saw produced its effect.

"'Then perhaps you would do me the very great favor to join him at dinner,' said O'Grady. 'Any friend of Colonel M'Manus—'

"'You are really too good,' said I, 'but as an utter stranger—'

"'Never think of that for a moment. My friend's friend, as the adage says.'

"'Upon my conscience, a good saying,' said I, 'but you see there's another difficulty. I've ordered a chop and potatoes up in No. 5.'

"'Let that be no obstacle,' said O'Grady. 'The waiter shall put it in my bill; if you will only do me the pleasure.'

"'You're a trump,' said I. 'What's your name?'

"'O'Grady, at your service.'

"'Any relation of the counselor?' said I. 'They're all one family, the O'Gradys. I'm Mr. O'Shaughnessy, from Ennis; won't you introduce me to the ladies?'

"While the ceremony of presentation was going on I caught one glance at M'Manus, and had hard work not to roar out laughing. Such an expression of surprise, amazement, indignation, rage, and misery, never was mixed up in one face before. Speak he could not; and I saw that, except for myself, he had neither eyes, ears, nor senses for anything around him. Just at this moment dinner was announced, and in we went. I never was in such spirits in my life; the trick upon M'Manus had succeeded perfectly; he believed in his heart that I had never met O'Grady in my life before, and that, upon the faith of our friendship, I had received

my invitation. As for me, I spared him but little. I kept up a running fire of droll stories; had the ladies in fits of laughing, made everlasting allusions to the Colonel; and, in a word, ere the soup had disappeared, except himself, the company were entirely with me.

"'O'Grady,' said I, 'forgive the freedom, but I feel as if we were old acquaintances.'

"'As Colonel McManus's friend,' said he, 'you can take no liberty here to which you are not perfectly welcome.'

"'Just what I expected,' said I. 'Mac and I,'—I wish you saw his face when I called him Mac—'Mac and I were schoolfellows five-and-thirty years ago; though he forgets me, I don't forget him: to be sure it would be hard for me. I'm just thinking of the day Bishop Oulahan came over to visit the college. Mac was coming in at the door of the refectory as the Bishop was going out. "Take off your caubeen, you young scoundrel, and kneel down for his reverence to bless you," said one of the masters, giving his hat a blow at the same moment that sent it flying to the other end of the room, and, with it, about twenty ripe pears that Mac had just stolen in the orchard, and had in his hat. I wish you only saw the Bishop; and Mac himself, he was a picture. Well, well, you forget it all now, but I remember it as if it was only yesterday. Any champagne, Mr. O'Grady? I'm mighty dry.'

"'Of course,' said Darby. 'Waiter, some champagne here.'

"'Ah, it's himself was the boy for every kind of fun and devilment, quiet and demure as he looks over there. Mac, your health. It's not every day of the week we get champagne.'

"He laid down his knife and fork as I said this: his face and temples grew deep purple, his eyes started as if they would spring from his head, and he put both his hands to his forehead, as if trying to assure himself that it was not some horrid dream.

"'A little slice more of the turkey,' said I, 'and then, O'Grady, I'll try your hock. It's a wine I'm mighty fond of, and so is Mac there. Oh! it's seldom, to tell you the truth, it troubles us. There, fill up the glass; that's it. Here now, Darby—that's your name, I think—you'll not think I'm taking a liberty in giving a toast: here, then, I'll give M'Manus's health, with all the honors; though it's early yet, to be sure, but we'll do it again, by-and-by, when the whisky comes. Here's M'Manus's good health! and, though his wife, they say, does not treat him well, and keeps him down—'

"The roar of laughing that interrupted me here, was produced by the expression of poor Mac's face. He had started up from the table, and, leaning with both his hands upon it, stared round upon the company like a maniac—his mouth and eyes wide open, and his hair actually bristling with amazement. Thus he remained for a full minute, gasping like a fish in a landing-net. It seemed a hard struggle for him to believe he was not deranged. At last his eyes fell upon me; he uttered a deep groan, and with a voice tremulous with rage, thundered out:

"'The scoundrel! I never saw him before.'

"He rushed from the room and gained the street. Before our roar of laughter was over he had secured post-horses, and was galloping toward Ennis at the top speed of his cattle.

"He exchanged at once into the line; but they say that he caught a glimpse of my name in the army list, and sold out the next morning; be that as it may, we never met since."

I have related O'Shaughnessy's story here, rather from the memory I have of how we all laughed at it at the time, than from any feeling as to its real desert; but, when I think of the voice, look, accent, and gesture of the narrator, I can scarcely keep myself from again giving way to laughter.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE DOURO.

NEVER did the morning break more beautifully than on the 12th of May, 1809. Huge masses of fog-like vapor had succeeded to the starry cloudless night, but, one by one, they moved onward toward the sea, disclosing as they passed, long tracts of lovely country, bathed in a rich golden glow. The Douro, with its transparent current, shone out like a bright colored ribbon, meandering through the deep garment of fairest green; the darkly shadowed mountains, which closed the background, loomed even larger than they were; while their summits were tipped with the yellow glory of the morning. The air was calm and still, and the very smoke that arose from the peasant's cot, labored as it ascended through the perfumed air, and, save the ripple of the stream, all was silent as the grave.

The squadron of the 14th, with which I was, had diverged from the road beside the river, and, to obtain a shorter path, had entered the skirts of a dark pine wood: our pace was a sharp one; an orderly had been already dispatched to hasten our arrival, and we pressed on at a brisk trot. In less than an hour we reached the verge of the wood, and, as we rode out upon the plain, what a spectacle met our eyes! Before us, in a narrow valley, separated from the river by a low ridge, were picketed three cavalry regiments; their noiseless gestures and perfect stillness bespeaking, at once, that they were intended for a surprise party. Farther down the stream, and upon the opposite side, rose the massive towers and tall spires of Oporto, displaying from their summits the broad ensign of France; while, far as the eye could reach, the broad dark masses of troops might be seen; the intervals between their columns glittering with the bright equipments of their cavalry, whose steel caps and lances were sparkling in the sunbeams. The bivouac fires were still smoldering, and marking where some part of the army had passed the night; for, early as it was, it was evident that their position had been changed; and, even now, the heavy masses of dark infantry might be seen moving from place to place, while the long line of the road to Vallonga was marked with a vast cloud of dust. The French drum and the light infantry bugle told, from time to time, that orders were passing among the troops; while the glittering uniform of a staff officer as he galloped from the town, bespoke the note of preparation.

"Dismount. Steady: quietly, my lads," said the Colonel, as he alighted upon the grass. "Let the men have their breakfast."

The little amphitheatre we occupied hid us entirely from all observation on the part of the enemy, but equally so excluded us from perceiving their movements. It may readily be supposed, then, with what impatience we waited here, while the din and clangor of the French force, as they marched and countermarched so near us, were clearly audible. The orders were, however, strict that none should approach the bank of the river, and we lay anxiously awaiting the moment when this inactivity should cease. More than one orderly had arrived among us, bearing dispatches from head-quarters; but where our main body was, or what the nature of the orders, no one could guess. As for me, my excitement was at its height, and I could not speak for the very tension of my nerves. The officers stood in little groups of two and three, whispering anxiously together; but all I could collect was, that Soult had already begun his retreat upon Amarante, and that, with the broad stream of the Douro between us, he defied our pursuit.

"Well, Charley," said Power, laying his arm upon my shoulder, "the French have given us the slip this time: they are already in march, and, even if we dared force a passage, in the face of such an enemy, it seems there is not a boat to be found. I have just seen Hammersley."

"Indeed! Where is he?" said I.

"He's gone back to Villa de Conde; he asked after you most particularly; don't blush, man; I'd rather back your chance than his, notwithstanding the long letter that Lucy sends him. Poor fellow! he has been badly wounded, but, it seems, declines going back to England."

"Captain Power," said an orderly, touching his cap, "General Murray desires to see you."

Power hastened away, but returned in a few moments.

"I say, Charlie, there's something in the wind here. I have just been ordered to try where the stream is fordable. I've mentioned your name to the General, and I think you'll be sent for soon. Good-by."

I buckled on my sword, and looking to my girths, stood watching the groops around me; when, suddenly, a dragoon pulled his horse short up, and asked a man near me if Mr. O'Malley was there?

"Yes; I am he."

"Orders from General Murray, sir," said the man, and rode off at a canter.

I opened and saw that the dispatch was addressed to Sir Arthur Wellesley, with the mere words, "With haste!" on the envelope.

Now which way to turn I knew not; so, springing into the sandle, I galloped to where Colonel Merivale was stanning talking to the Colonel of a heavy dragoon regiment.

"May I ask, sir, by which road I am to proceed with this dispatch?"

"Along the river, sir," said the heavy—a large, dark-browed man, with a most forbidding look. "You'll soon see the troops: you'd better stir yourself, sir, or Sir Arthur is not very likely to be pleased with you."

Without venturing a reply to what I felt a somewhat unnecessary taunt, I dashed spurs into my horse, and turned toward the river. I had not gained the bank

above a minute, when the loud ringing of a rifle struck upon my ear; bang went another, and another. I hurried on, however, at the top of my speed, thinking only of my mission and its pressing haste. As I turned an angle of the stream, the vast column of the British came in sight, and scarcely had my eye rested upon them when my horse staggered forward, plunged twice with his head nearly to the earth, and then, rearing madly up, fell backward upon the ground. Crushed and bruised as I felt by my fall, I was soon aroused to the necessity of exertion; for, as I disengaged myself from the poor beast, I discovered he had been killed by a bullet in the counter; and scarcely had I recovered my legs when a shot struck my shako and grazed my temples. I quickly threw myself to the ground, and, creeping on for some yards, reached at last some rising ground, from which I rolled gently downward into a little declivity, sheltered by the bank from the French fire.

When I arrived at head-quarters, I was dreadfully fatigued and heated; but resolving not to rest till I had delivered my dispatches, I hastened toward the convent of La Sierra, where I was told the Commander-in-Chief was.

As I came into the court of the convent, filled with general officers and people of the staff, I was turning to ask how I should proceed, when Hixley caught my eye.

"Well, O'Malley, what brings you here?"

"Dispatches from General Murray."

"Indeed; oh, follow me."

He hurried me rapidly through the buzzing crowd, and ascending a large gloomy stair, introduced me into a room, where about a dozen persons in uniform were writing at a long deal table.

"Captain Gordon," said he, addressing one of them, "dispatches requiring immediate attention have just been brought by this officer."

Before the sentence was finished the door opened, and a short, slight man, in a gray undress coat, with a white cravat and a cocked hat, entered. The dead silence that ensued was not necessary to assure me that he was one in authority: the look of command his bold stern features presented; the sharp piercing eye, the compressed lip, the impressive expression of the whole face, told plainly that he was one who held equally himself and others in mastery.

"Send General Sherbroke here," said he to an aide-de-camp. "Let the light brigade march into position;" and then turning suddenly to me, "Whose dispatches are these?"

"General Murray's, sir."

I needed no more than that look to assure me that this was he of whom I had heard so much, and of whom the world was still to hear so much more.

He opened them quickly, and, glancing his eye across the contents, crushed the paper in his hand. Just as he did so, a spot of blood upon the envelope attracted his attention.

"How's this—are you wounded?"

"No, sir; my horse was killed—"

"Very well, sir; join your brigade. But stay, I shall have orders for you. Well, Waters, what news?"

This question was addressed to an officer in a staff uniform, who entered at the moment, followed by the short and bulky figure of a monk, his shaven crown and large cassock strongly contrasting with the gorgeous glitter of the costumes around him.

"I say, who have we here?"

"The Prior of Amarante, sir," replied Waters, "who has just come over. We have already, by his aid, secured three large barges—"

"Let the artillery take up position in the convent at once," said Sir Arthur, interrupting. "The boats will be brought round to the small creek beneath the orchard. You, sir," turning to me, "will convey to General Murray—but you appear weak— You, Gordon, will desire Murray to effect a crossing at Avintas with the Germans and the 14th. Sherbroke's division will occupy the Villa Nuova. What number of men can that seminary take?"

"From three to four hundred, sir. The padre mentions that all the vigilance of the enemy is limited to the river below the town."

"I perceive it," was the short reply of Sir Arthur, as, placing his hands carelessly behind his back, he walked toward the window, and looked out upon the river.

All was still as death in the chamber; not a lip murmured. The feeling of respect for him in whose presence we were standing, checked every thought of utterance, while the stupendous gravity of the events before us engrossed every mind and occupied every heart. I was standing near the window; the effect of my fall had stunned me for a time, but I was gradually recovering, and watched with a thrilling heart the scene before me. Great and absorbing as was my interest in what was passing without, it was nothing compared with what I felt as I looked at him upon whom our destiny was then hanging. I

had ample time to scan his features and canvass their every lineament. Never before did I look upon such perfect impassibility; the cold determined expression was crossed by no show of passion or impatience. All was rigid and motionless, and, whatever might have been the workings of the spirit within, certainly no external sign betrayed them; and yet what a moment for him must that have been! Before him, separated by a deep and rapid river, lay the conquering legions of France, led on by one, second alone to him whose very name had been the *prestige* of victory. Unprovided with every regular means of transport, in the broad glare of day, in open defiance of their serried ranks and thundering artillery, he dared the deed. What must have been his confidence in the soldiers he commanded! what must have been his reliance upon his own genius! As such thoughts rushed through my mind, the door opened, and an officer entered hastily, and, whispering a few words to Colonel Waters, left the room.

"One boat is already brought up to the crossing place, and entirely concealed by the wall of the orchard."

"Let the men cross," was the brief reply.

No other word was spoken as, turning from the window, he closed his telescope, and, followed by all the others, descended to the court-yard.

This simple order was enough; an officer, with a company of the Buffs, embarked, and thus began the passage of the Douro.

So engrossed was I in my vigilant observation of our leader, that I would gladly have remained at the convent, when I received an order to join my brigade, to which a detachment of artillery was already proceeding.

As I reached Avintas all was in motion. The cavalry was in readiness beside the river; but as yet no boats had been discovered, and, such was the impatience of the men to cross, it was with difficulty they were prevented trying the passage by swimming, when suddenly Power appeared, followed by several fishermen. Three or four small skiffs had been found, half sunk in mud, among the rushes, and with such frail assistance we commenced to cross.

"There will be something to write home to Galway soon, Charley, or I'm terribly mistaken," said Fred, as he sprang into the boat beside me. "Was I not a true prophet when I told you 'We'd meet the French in the morning?'"

"They're at it already," said Hixley, as a wreath of blue smoke floated across the stream below us, and the loud boom of a large gun resounded through the air.

Then came a deafening shout, followed by a rattling volley of small arms, gradually swelling into a hot sustained fire, through which the cannon pealed at intervals. Several large meadows lay along the river side, where our brigade was drawn up as the detachments landed from the boats: and here, although nearly a league distant from the town, we now heard the din and crash of battle, which increased every moment. The cannonade from the Sierra convent, which at first was merely the fire of single guns, now thundered away in one long roll, amid which the sounds of falling walls and crashing roofs were mingled. It was evident to us, from the continual fire kept up, that the landing had been effected, while the swelling tide of musketry told that fresh troops were momentarily coming up.

In less than twenty minutes our brigade was formed, and we now only waited for two light four-pounders to be landed, when an officer galloped up in haste, and called out:

"The French are in retreat!" and, pointing at the same moment to the Vallonga road, we saw a long line of smoke and dust leading from the town, through which, as we gazed, the colors of the enemy might be seen as they defiled, while the unbroken lines of the wagons and heavy baggage proved that it was no partial movement, but the army itself retreating.

"Fourteenth, threes about, close up, trot," called out the loud and manly voice of our leader, and the heavy tramp of our squadrons shook the very ground as we advanced toward the road to Vallonga.

As we came on, the scene became one of overwhelming excitement; the masses of the enemy that poured unceasingly from the town could now be distinguished more clearly; and, amid all the crash of gun-carriages and caissons, the voices of the staff officers rose high as they hurried along the retreating battalions. A troop of flying artillery galloped forth at top speed, and, wheeling their guns into position with the speed of lightning, prepared, by a flanking fire, to cover the retiring column. The gunners sprang from their seats, the guns were already unlimbered, when Sir George Murray, riding up at our left, called out,

"Forward—close up—charge!"

The word was scarcely spoken, when the loud cheer answered the welcome sound,

and the same instant the long line of shining helmets passed with the speed of a whirlwind ; the pace increased at every stride, the ranks grew closer, and, like the dread force of some mighty engine, we fell upon the foe. I have felt all the glorious enthusiasm of a fox-hunt, when the loud cry of the hounds, answered by the cheer of the joyous huntsman, stirred the very heart within, but never till now did I know how far higher the excitement reaches, when, man to man, sabre to sabre, arm to arm, we ride forward to the battle-field. On we went, the loud shout of "Forward!" still ringing in our ears. One broken, irregular discharge from the French guns shook the head of our advancing column, but stayed us not as we galloped madly on.

I remember no more. The din, the smoke, the crash—the cry for quarter, mingled with the shout of victory—the flying enemy—the agonizing shrieks of the wounded—all are commingled in my mind, but leave no trace of clearness or connection between them; and it was only when the column wheeled to re-form, behind the advancing squadrons, that I awoke from my trance of maddening excitement, and perceived that we had carried the position, and cut off the guns of the enemy.

"Well done, 14th!" said an old gray-headed colonel, as he rode along our line —"gallantly done, lads!" The blood trickled from a sabre-cut on his temple, along his cheek, as he spoke; but he either knew it not, or heeded it not.

"There go the Germans!" said Power, pointing to the remainder of our brigade, as they charged furiously upon the French infantry, and rode them down in masses.

Our guns came up at this time, and a plunging fire was opened upon the thick and retreating ranks of the enemy. The carnage must have been terrific, for the long breaches in their lines showed where the squadrons of the cavalry had passed, or the most destructive tide of the artillery had swept through them. The speed of the flying columns grew momentarily more; the road became blocked up, too, by broken carriages and wounded; and, to add to their discomfiture, a damaging fire now opened from the town upon the retreating column, while the brigade of Guards and the 29th pressed hotly on their rear.

The scene was now beyond anything maddening in its interest. From the walls of Oporto the English infantry poured forth in pursuit; while the whole river was covered with boats, as they still continued to cross over. The artillery thundered from the Sierra, to protect the landing, for it was even still contested in places; and the cavalry, charging in flank, swept the broken ranks, and bore down upon the squares.

It was now, when the full tide of victory ran highest in our favor, that we were ordered to retire from the road. Column after column passed before us, unmolested and unassailed; and not even a cannon-shot arrested their steps.

Some unaccountable timidity of our leader directed this movement; and, while before our very eyes the gallant infantry were charging the retiring columns, we remained still and inactive.

How little did the sense of praise we had already won repay us for the shame and indignation we experienced at this moment, as, with burning cheek and compressed lip, we watched the retreating files. "What can he mean?" "Is there not some mistake?" "Are we never to charge?" were the muttered questions around, as a staff officer galloped up with the order to take ground still further back, and nearer to the river.

The word was scarcely spoken, when a young officer, in the uniform of a general, dashed impetuously up; he held his plumed cap high above his head, as he called out, "14th, follow me! Left face—wheel —charge!"

So, with the word, we were upon them. The French rear-guard was at this moment at the narrowest part of the road which opened by a bridge upon a large open space; so that, forming with a narrow front, and favored by a declivity in the ground, we actually rode them down. Twice the French formed, and twice were they broken. Meanwhile, the carnage was dreadful on both sides; our fellows dashing madly forward where the ranks were thickest—the enemy resisting with the stubborn courage of men fighting for their last spot of ground. So impetuous was the charge of our squadrons, that we stopped not till, piercing the dense column of the retreating mass, we reached the open ground beyond. Here we wheeled, and prepared once more to meet them; when suddenly some squadrons of Cuirassiers debouched from the road, and, supported by a field piece, showed front against us. This was the moment that the remainder of our brigade should have come to our aid; but not a man appeared. However, there was not an instant to be lost; already the plunging fire of the four-

pounder had swept through our files, and every moment increased our danger.

"Once more, my lads, forward!" cried out our gallant leader, Sir Charles Stewart, as, waving his sabre, he dashed into the thickest of the fray.

So sudden was our charge, that we were upon them before they were prepared. And here ensued a terrific struggle; for, as the cavalry of the enemy gave way before us, we came upon the close ranks of the infantry, at half-pistol distance, who poured a withering volley into us as we approached. But what could arrest the sweeping torrent of our brave fellows, though every moment falling in numbers?

Harvey, our major, lost his arm near the shoulder. Scarcely an officer was not wounded. Power received a deep sabre-cut in the cheek, from an aide-de-camp of General Foy, in return for a wound he gave the General, while I, in my endeavor to save General Laborde, when unhorsed, was cut down through the helmet, and so stunned that I remembered no more around me. I kept my saddle, it is true, but I lost every sense of consciousness; my first glimmering of reason coming to my aid as I lay upon the river bank, and felt my faithful follower Mike bathing my temples with water, as he kept up a running fire of lamentations for my being *murthered* so young.

"Are you better, Mister Charles? Spake to me, alanah; say that you're not kilt, darling; do now. Oh, wirra! what'll I ever say to the master? and you doing so beautiful! Wouldn't he give the best baste in his stable to be looking at you today? There, take a sup; it's only water. Bad luck to them, but it's hard work beatin' them. They're only gone now. That's right; now you're coming to."

"Where am I, Mike?"

"It's here you are, darling, resting yourself."

"Well, Charley, my poor fellow, you've got sore bones too," cried Power, as, his face swathed in bandages and covered with blood, he lay down on the grass beside me.

"It was a gallant thing while it lasted, but has cost us dearly. Poor Hixley—"

"What of him?" said I, anxiously.

"Poor fellow, he has seen his last battle-field. He fell across me as we came out upon the road. I lifted him up in my arms, and bore him along above fifty yards; but he was stone dead. Not a sigh, not a word escaped him; shot through the forehead." As he spoke, his lips trembled, and his voice sank to a mere whisper at the last words,—"You remember what he said last night. Poor fellow! he was every inch a soldier."

Such was his epitaph.

I turned my head toward the scene of our late encounter. Some dismounted guns and broken wagons alone marked the spot; while, far in the distance, the dust of the retreating columns showed the beaten enemy, as they hurried toward the frontiers of Spain.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE MORNING.

There are few sadder things in life than the day after a battle. The high-beating hope, the bounding spirits, have passed away; and in their stead comes the depressing reaction by which every overwrought excitement is followed. With far different eyes do we look upon the compact ranks and glistening files,

> "With helm arrayed,
> And lance and blade,
> And plume in the gay wind dancing!"

and upon the cold and barren heath, whose only memory of the past is the blood-stained turf, a mangled corpse, the broken gun, the shattered wall, the well-trodden earth where columns stood, the cut-up ground where cavalry had charged—these are the sad relics of all the chivalry of yesterday.

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The morning which followed the battle of the Douro was one of the most beautiful I ever remember. There was that kind of freshness and elasticity in the air which certain days possess, and communicate by some magic their properties to ourselves. The thrush was singing gayly out from every grove and wooded dell; the very river had a sound of gladness, as it rippled on against its sedgy banks; the foliage, too, sparkled in the fresh dew, as in its robes of holiday, and all looked bright and happy.

We were picketed near the river, upon a gently rising ground, from which the view extended for miles in every direction. Above us, the stream came winding down amid broad and fertile fields of tall grass and waving corn, backed by deep and mellow woods, which were lost to the view upon

the distant hills; below, the river, widening as it went, pursued a straighter course, or turned with bolder curves, till passing beneath the town, it spread into a large sheet of glassy water, as it opened to the sea. The sun was just rising as I looked upon this glorious scene; and already the tall spires of Oporto were tipped with a bright rosy hue, while the massive towers and dark walls threw their lengthened shadows far across the plain.

The fires of the bivouac still burned, but all slept around them. Not a sound was heard, save the tramp of a patrol, or the short, quick cry of the sentry. I sat lost in meditation, or rather in that state of dreamy thoughtfulness in which the past and present are combined, and the absent are alike before us as are the things we look upon.

One moment I felt as though I were describing to my uncle the battle of the day before, pointing out where we stood, and how we charged; then again I was at home, beside the broad, bleak Shanuon, and the brown hills of Scariff. I watched with beating heart the tall Sierra, where our path lay for the future; and then turned my thoughts to him whose name was so soon to be received in England with a nation's pride and gratitude, and panted for a soldier's glory.

As thus I followed every rising fancy, I heard a step approach; it was a figure muffled in a cavalry cloak, which I soon perceived to be Power.

"Charley!" said he, in a half-whisper, "get up and come with me. You are aware of the general order, that, while in pursuit of an enemy, all military honors to the dead are forbidden; but we wish to place our poor comrade in the earth before we leave."

I followed down a little path, through a grove of tall beech-trees, that opened upon a little grassy terrace beside the river. A stunted olive-tree stood by itself in the midst, and there I found five of our brother officers standing, wrapped in their wide cloaks. As we pressed each other's hands not a word was spoken. Each heart was full; and hard features that never quailed before the foe were now shaken with the convulsive spasm of agony, or compressed with stern determination to seem calm.

A cavalry helmet and a large blue cloak lay upon the grass. The narrow grave was already dug beside it; and in the deathlike stillness around the service for the dead was read. The last words were over. We stooped and placed the corpse, wrapped up in the broad mantle, in the earth; we replaced the mold, and stood silently around the spot. The trumpet of our regiment at this moment sounded the call: its clear notes rang sharply through the thin air; it was the soldier's requiem! and we turned away without speaking, and returned to our quarters.

I had never known poor Hixley till a day or two before; but, somehow, my grief for him was deep and heartfelt. It was not that his frank and manly bearing, his bold and military air, had gained upon me. No; these were indeed qualities to attract and delight me, but he had obtained a stronger and faster hold upon my affections—he spoke to me of home.

Of all the ties that bind us to the chance acquaintances we meet with in life, what can equal this one? What a claim upon your love has he who can, by some passing word, some fast-flitting thought, bring back the days of your youth! What interest can he not excite, by some anecdote of your boyish days, some well-remembered trait of youthful daring, or early enterprise! Many a year of sunshine and of storm have passed above my head. I have not been without my moments of gratified pride and rewarded ambition; but my heart has never responded so fully, so thankfully, so proudly to these, such as they were, as to the simple, touching words of one who knew my early home, and loved its inmates.

"Well, Fitzroy, what news?" inquired I, roused from my musing, as an aide-de-camp galloped up at full speed.

"Tell Merivale to get the regiment under arms at once. Sir Arthur Wellesley will be here in less than half an hour. You may look for the route immediately. Where are the Germans quartered?"

"Lower down; beside that grove of beech-trees, next the river."

Scarcely was my reply spoken, when he dashed spurs into his horse, and was soon out of sight. Meanwhile, the plain beneath me presented an animated and splendid spectacle. The different corps were falling into position to the enlivening sounds of their quick-step, the trumpets of the cavalry rang loudly through the valley, and the clatter of sabres and sabretasches, joined with the hollow tramp of the horses, as the squadron came up.

I had not a moment to lose; so, hastening back to my quarters, I found Mike waiting with my horse.

"Captain Power's before you, sir," said he, "and you'll have to make haste. The regiments are under arms already."

From the little mound where I stood, I could see the long line of cavalry as they deployed into the plain, followed by the horse artillery, which brought up the rear.

"This looks like a march," thought I, as I pressed forward to join my companions.

I had not advanced above a hundred yards through a narrow ravine when the measured tread of infantry fell upon my ears. I pulled up to slacken my pace, just as the head of a column turned round the angle of the road, and came in view. The tall caps of a grenadier company was the first thing I beheld, as they came on without roll of drum and sound of fife. I watched with a soldier's pride the manly bearing and gallant step of the dense mass as they defiled before me. I was struck no less by them than by a certain look of a steady but somber cast which each man wore.

"What can this mean?" thought I.

My first impression was, that a military execution was about to take place; the next moment solved my doubt; for, as the last files of the grenadiers wheeled round, a dense mass behind came in sight, whose unarmed hands, and downcast air, at once bespoke them prisoners of war.

What a sad sight it was! There was the old and weather-beaten grenadier, erect in frame and firm in step, his gray moustache scarcely concealing the scowl that curled his lip, side by side with the young and daring conscript, even yet a mere boy: their march was regular, their gaze steadfast; no look of flinching courage there. On they came, a long unbroken line. They looked not less proudly than their captors around them. As I looked with heavy heart upon them, my attention was attracted to one who marched alone behind the rest. He was a middle-sized but handsome youth of some eighteen years at most; his light helmet and waving plume bespoke him a *chasseur à cheval*, and I could plainly perceive, in his careless, half saucy air, how indignantly he felt the position to which the fate of war had reduced him. He caught my eyes fixed upon him, and, for an instant, turned upon me a gaze of open and palpable defiance, drawing himself up to his full height, and crossing his arms upon his breast; but, probably, perceiving in my look more of interest than of triumph, his countenance suddenly changed, a deep blush suffused his cheek, his eye beamed with a softened and kindly expression, and, carrying his hand to his helmet, he saluted me, saying, in a voice of singular sweetness,

"*Je vous souhaite un meilleur sort, camarade.*"

I bowed, and, muttering something in return, was about to make some inquiry concerning him, when the loud call of the trumpet rang through the valley, and apprised me that, in my interest for the prisoners, I had forgotten all else, and was probably incurring censure for my absence.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE REVIEW.

When I joined the group of my brother officers, who stood gayly chatting and laughing together before our lines, I was much surprised—nay, almost shocked—to find how little seeming impression had been made upon them by the sad duty we had performed that morning.

When last we met, each eye was downcast, each heart was full: sorrow for him we had lost from amongst us forever, mingling with the awful sense of our own uncertain tenure here, had laid its impress on each brow; but now, scarcely an hour elapsed, and all were cheerful and elated. The last shovelful of earth upon the grave seemed to have buried both the dead and the mourning. And such is war! and such the temperament it forms! Events so strikingly opposite in their character and influences succeed so rapidly one upon another, that the mind is kept in one whirl of excitement, and at length accustoms itself to change with every phase of circumstances; and between joy and grief, hope and despondency, enthusiasm and depression, there is neither breadth nor interval; they follow each other as naturally as morning succeeds to night.

I had not much time for such reflections: scarcely had I saluted the officers about me, when the loud prolonged roll of the drums along the line of infantry in the valley, followed by the sharp clatter of muskets as they were raised to the shoulder, announced the troops were under arms, and the review begun.

"Have you seen the general order this morning, Power?" inquired an old officer beside me.

"No; they say, however, that ours are mentioned."

"Harvey is going on favorably," cried a young cornet, as he galloped up to our party.

"Take ground to the left!" sung out the clear voice of the colonel, as he rode

along in front. "Fourteenth! I am happy to inform you that your conduct has met approval in the highest quarter. I have just received the general orders, in which this occurs:

"'THE TIMELY PASSAGE OF THE DOURO, AND SUBSEQUENT MOVEMENTS UPON THE ENEMY'S FLANK, BY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SHERBROKE WITH THE GUARDS AND 29TH REGIMENT, AND THE BRAVERY OF THE TWO SQUADRONS OF THE 14TH LIGHT DRAGOONS UNDER THE COMMAND OF MAJOR HARVEY, AND LED BY THE HONORABLE BRIGADIER-GENERAL CHARLES STEWART, OBTAINED THE VICTORY'—Mark that, my lads!—obtained the victory—'WHICH HAS CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO THE HONOR OF THE TROOPS ON THIS DAY.'"

The words were hardly spoken, when a tremendous cheer burst from the whole line at once.

"Steady, Fourteenth! steady, lads!" said the gallant old Colonel, as he raised his hand gently; "the staff is approaching."

At the same moment, the white plumes appeared rising above the brow of the hill. On they came, glittering in all the splendor of aiguillettes and orders; all, save one. He rode foremost, upon a small compact black horse; his dress, a plain gray frock, fastened at the waist by a red sash: his cocked-hat alone bespoke, in its plume, the general officer. He galloped rapidly on till he came to the center of the line: then, turning short round, he scanned the ranks from end to end with an eagle glance.

"Colonel Merivale, you have made known to your regiment my opinion of them, as expressed in general orders?"

The Colonel bowed low in acquiescence.

"Fitzroy, you have got the memorandum, I hope?"

The aide-de-camp here presented to Sir Arthur a slip of paper, which he continued to regard attentively for some minutes.

"Captain Powel—Power, I mean. Captain Power!"

Power rode out from the line.

"Your very distinguished conduct yesterday has been reported to me. I shall have sincere pleasure in forwarding your name for the vacant majority.

"You have forgotten, Colonel Merivale, to send in the name of the officer who saved General Laborde's life."

"I believe I have mentioned it, Sir Arthur. Mr. O'Malley."

"True, I beg pardon; so you have—Mr. O'Malley; a very young officer indeed—ha, an Irishman! the south of Ireland, eh?"

"No, sir, the west."

"Oh, yes. Well, Mr. O'Malley, you are promoted. You have the lieutenancy in your own regiment. By-the-by, Merivale,"—here his voice changed into a half-laughing tone,—"ere I forget it, pray let me beg of you to look into this honest fellow's claim; he has given me no peace the entire morning."

As he spoke, I turned my eyes in the direction he pointed, and, to my utter consternation, beheld my man Mickey Freer standing among the staff, the position he occupied, and the presence he stood in, having no more perceptible effect upon his nerves, than if he were assisting at an Irish wake; but so completely was I overwhelmed with shame at the moment, that the staff were already far down the lines ere I recovered my self-possession, to which, certainly, I was in some degree recalled by Master Mike's addressing me in a somewhat imploring voice:

"Arrah, spake for me, Master Charles, alanah; sure they might do something for me now, av it was only to make me a gauger."

Mickey's ideas of promotion, thus insinuatingly put forward, threw the whole party around into one burst of laughter.

"I have him down there," said he, pointing as he spoke to a thick grove of cork-trees at a little distance.

"Who have you got there, Mike?" inquired Power.

"Devil a one o' me knows his name," replied he; "maybe it's Bony himself."

"And how do you know he's there still?"

"How do I know, is it? Didn't I tie him last night?"

Curiosity to find out what Mickey could possibly allude to, induced Power and myself to follow him down the slope to the clump of trees I have mentioned. As we came near, the very distinct denunciations that issued fron the thicket, proved pretty clearly the nature of the affair. It was nothing less than a French officer of cavalry, that Mike had unhorsed in the *mêlée*, and wishing, probably, to preserve some testimony of his prowess, had made prisoner, and tied fast to a cork-tree, the preceding evening.

"*Sacrebleu!*" said the poor Frenchman, as we approached, "*ce sont des sauvages!*"

"Av it's making your sowl, ye are," said Mike, "you're right; for, maybe, they won't let me keep you alive."

Mike's idea of a tame prisoner threw me into a fit of laughing, while Power asked,

"And what do you want to do with him, Mickey?"

"The sorra one o' me knows, for he spakes no decent tongue. Thighum thu," said he, addressing the prisoner, with a poke in the ribs at the same moment; "but sure, Master Charles, he might tache me French."

There was something so irresistibly ludicrous in his tone and look as he said these words, that both Power and myself absolutely roared with laughter. We began, however, to feel not a little ashamed of our position in the business, and explained to the Frenchman, that our worthy countryman had but little experience in the usages of war, while we proceeded to unbind him, and liberate him from his miserable bondage.

"It's letting him loose, you are, captain? Master Charles, take care be-gorra, av you had as much trouble in catching him as I had, you'd think twice about letting him out. Listen to me, now,"—here he placed his closed fist within an inch of the poor prisoner's nose,—"listen to me; av you say peas, by the morteal, I'll not lave a whole bone in your skin."

With some difficulty we persuaded Mike that his conduct, so far from leading to his promotion, might, if known in another quarter, procure him an acquaintance with the Provost-Marshal,—a fact which, it was plain to perceive, gave him but a very poor impression of military gratitude.

"Oh, then, if they were in swarms fornent me, devil receave the prisoner I'll take again."

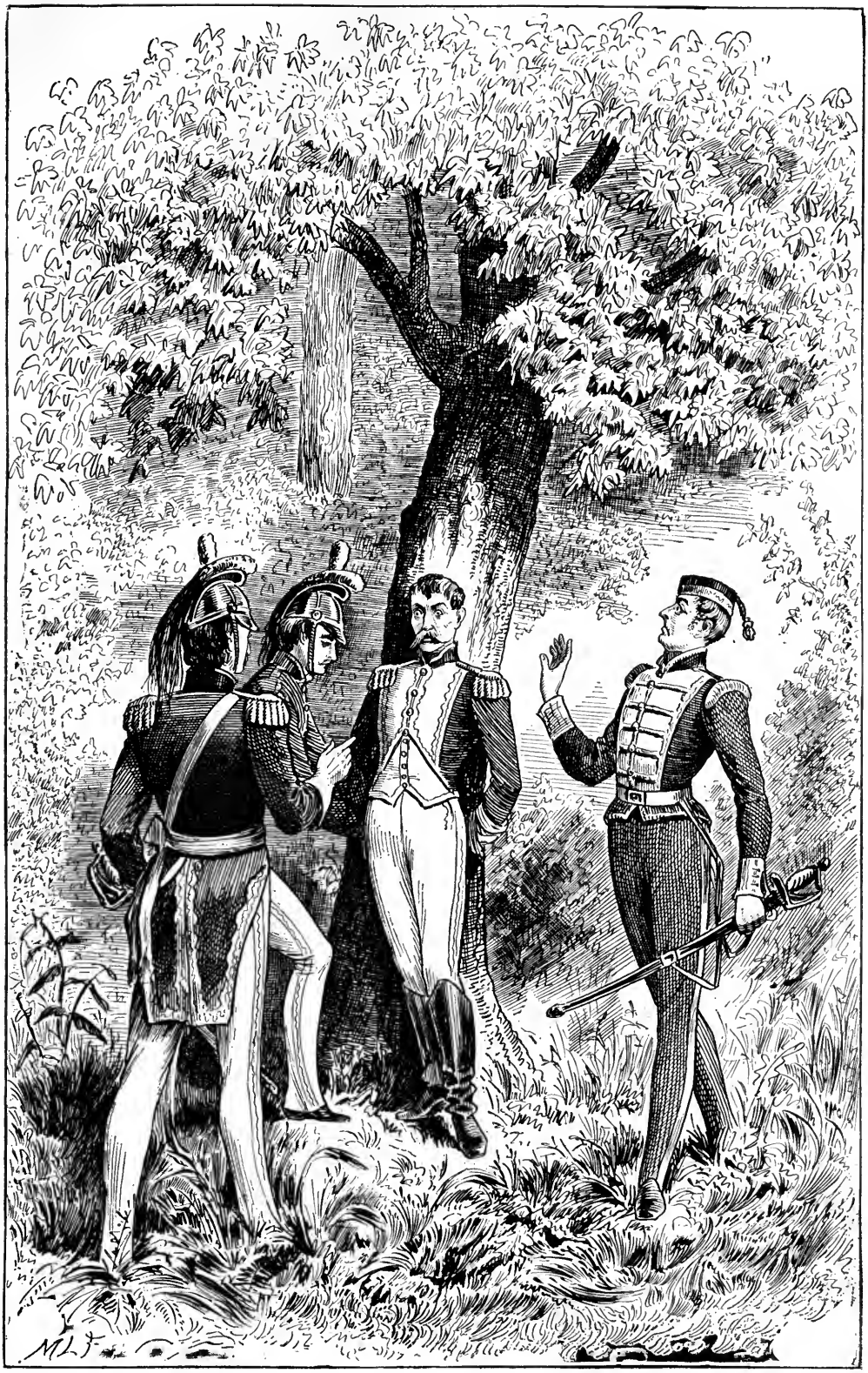
So saying, he slowly returned to the regiment, while Power and I, having conducted the Frenchman to the rear, cantered toward the town to learn the news of the day.

The city on that day presented a most singular aspect—the streets, filled with the town's-people and the soldiery, were decorated with flags and garlands—the cafés were crowded with merry groups, and the sounds of music and laughter resounded on all sides. The houses seemed to be quite inadequate to afford accommodation to the numerous guests, and, in consequence, bullock cars and forage wagons were converted into temporary hotels, and many a jovial party were collected in both. Military music, church bells, drinking choruses, were all commingled in the din and turmoil; processions in honor of "Our Lady of Succor" were jammed up among bacchanalian orgies, and their very chant half-drowned in the cries of the wounded, as they passed on to the hospitals. With difficulty we pushed our way through the dense mob, as we turned our steps toward the seminary. We both felt naturally curious to see the place where our first detachment landed, and to examine the opportunities of defense it presented. The building itself was a large and irregular one, of an oblong form, surrounded by a high wall of solid masonry, the only entrance being by a heavy iron gate.

At this spot the battle appeared to have raged with violence; one side of the massive gate was torn from its hinges, and lay flat upon the ground; the walls were breached in many places; and pieces of torn uniforms, broken bayonets, and bruised shakos, attested that the conflict was a close one. The seminary itself was in a falling state; the roof, from which Paget had given his orders, and where he was wounded, had fallen in. The French cannon had fissured the building from top to bottom, and it seemed only awaiting the slightest impulse to crumble into ruin. When we regarded the spot, and examined the narrow doorway which, opening upon a flight of a few steps to the river, admitted our first party, we could not help feeling struck anew with the gallantry of that mere handful of brave fellows, who thus threw themselves amid the overwhelming legions of the enemy, and at once, without waiting for a single reinforcement, opened a fire upon their ranks. Bold as the enterprised unquestionably was, we still felt with what consummate judgment it had been planned;—a bend of the river concealed entirely the passage the troops, the guns of the Sierra covered their landing, and completely swept one approach to the seminary. The French, being thus obliged to attack by the gate, were compelled to make a considerable *détour* before they reached it, all of which gave time for our divisions to cross; while the brigade of Guards under General Sherbroke, profiting by the confusion, passed the river below the town, and took the enemy unexpectedly in rear.

Brief as was the struggle within the town, it must have been a terrific one: the artillery were firing at musket-range; cavalry and infantry were fighting hand to hand in narrow streets, a destructive musketry pouring all the while from windows and house-tops.

At the Amarante gate, where the French defiled, the carnage was also great; their light artillery unlimbered some guns here, to cover the columns as they deployed,



"OH! THEN, IF THEY WERE IN SWARMS FORNENT ME, DEVIL RECEAVE THE PRISONER I'LL TAKE AGAIN." (P. 790.)

but Murray's cavalry having carried these, the flank of the infantry became entirely exposed to the galling fire of small-arms from the seminary, and the far more destructive shower of grape that poured unceasingly from the Sierra.

Our brigade did the rest; and, in less than one hour from the landing of the first man, the French were in full retreat from Vallonga.

"A glorious thing, Charley," said Power, after a pause, "and a proud souvenir for hereafter."

A truth I felt deeply at the time, and one my heart responds to not less fully as I am writing.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE QUARREL.

On the evening of the 12th, orders were received for the German brigade, and three squadrons of our regiment, to pursue the French upon the Terracinthe road by daybreak on the following morning.

I was busily occupied in my preparations for a hurried march, when Mike came up to say that an officer desired to speak with me; and the moment after Captain Hammersley appeared. A sudden flush colored his pale and sickly features, as he held out his hand, and said:

"I've come to wish you joy, O'Malley. I just this instant heard of your promotion. I am sincerely glad of it; pray tell me the whole affair."

"That is the very thing I am unable to do. I have some very vague, indistinct remembrance of warding off a sabre-cut from the head of a wounded and unhorsed officer in the *mêlée* of yesterday; but more I know not. In fact, it was my first day under fire; I've a tolerably clear recollection of all the events of the morning, but the word 'Charge!' once given, I remember very little more. But you, where have you been? How have we not met before?"

"I've exchanged into a heavy dragoon regiment, and am now employed upon the staff."

"You are aware that I have letters for you?"

"Power hinted, I think, something of the kind. I saw him very hurriedly."

These words were spoken with an effort at *nonchalance* that evidently cost him much.

As for me, my agitation was scarcely less, as, fumbling for some seconds in my portmanteau, I drew forth the long destined packet. As I placed it in his hands he grew deadly pale, and a slight spasmodic twitch in his upper lip bespoke some unnatural struggle. He broke the seal suddenly, and, as he did so, the morocco case of a miniature fell upon the ground; his eyes ran rapidly across the letter; the livid color of his lips, as the blood forced itself to them, added to the corpse-like hue of his countenance.

"You, probably, are aware of the contents of this letter, Mr. O'Malley?" said he, in an altered voice, whose tones, half in anger, half in suppressed irony, cut to my very heart.

"I am in complete ignorance of them," said I, calmly.

"Indeed, sir!" replied he, with a sarcastic curl of his mouth as he spoke. "Then, perhaps, you will tell me, too, that your very success is a secret to you?"

"I'm really not aware—"

"You think, probably, sir, that the pastime is an amusing one, to interfere where the affections of others are concerned. I've heard of you, sir. Your conduct at Lisbon is known to me; and, though Captain Trevyllian may bear—"

"Stop, Captain Hammersley!" said I, with a tremendous effort to be calm; "stop! you have said enough, quite enough, to convince me of what your object was in seeking me here to-day. You shall not be disappointed. I trust that assurance will save you from any further display of temper."

"I thank you; most humbly I thank you for the quickness of your apprehension; and I shall now take my leave. Good-evening, Mr. O'Malley. I wish you much joy; you have my very fullest congratulations upon *all* your good fortune."

The sneering emphasis the last words were spoken with remained fixed in my mind long after he took his departure; and, indeed, so completely did the whole seem like a dream to me, that were it not for the fragments of the miniature that lay upon the ground, where he had crushed them with his heel, I could scarcely credit myself that I was awake.

My first impulse was to seek Power, upon whose judgment and discretion I could with confidence rely.

I had not long to wait; for, scarcely had I thrown my cloak around me, when he rode up. He had just seen Hammersley, and learned something of our interview.

"Why, Charley, my dear fellow! what

is this? How have you treated poor Hammersley?"

"Treated *him!* say, rather, how has he treated *me?*"

I here entered into a short but accurate account of our meeting; during which Power listened with great composure; while I could perceive, from the questions he asked, that some very different impression had been previously made upon his mind.

"And this was all that passed?"

"All."

"But what of the business at Lisbon?"

"I don't understand."

"Why, he speaks—he has heard some foolish account of your having made some ridiculous speech there about your successful rivalry of him in Ireland—Lucy Dashwood, I suppose, is referred to. Some one has been good-natured enough to repeat the thing to him."

"But it never occurred. I never did."

"Are you sure, Charley?"

"I am sure; I know I never did."

"The poor fellow, he has been duped! Come, Charley, you must not take it ill. Poor Hammersley has never recovered a sabre-wound he received some months since upon the head; his intellects are really affected by it. Leave it all to me. Promise not to leave your quarters till I return; and I'll put everything right again."

I gave the required pledge; while Power, springing into the saddle, left me to my own reflections.

My frame of mind, as Power left me, was by no means an enviable one. A quarrel is rarely a happy incident in a man's life, still less is it so when the difference arises with one we are disposed to like and respect. Such was Hammersley; his manly, straightforward character had won my esteem and regard, and it was with no common scrutiny I taxed my memory to think what could have given rise to the impression he labored under of my having injured him. His chance mention of Trevyllian suggested to me some suspicion that his dislike of me, wherefore arising I knew not, might have its share in the matter; and in this state of doubt and uncertainty I paced impatiently up and down, anxiously watching for Power's return, in the hope of at length getting some real insight into the difficulty.

My patience was fast ebbing, Power had been absent above an hour, and no appearance of him could I detect, when suddenly the tramp of a horse came rapidly up the hill. I looked out, and saw a rider coming forward at a very fast pace. Before I had time for even a guess as to who it was, he drew up, and I recognized Captain Trevyllian. There was a certain look of easy impertinence and half-smiling satisfaction about his features I had never seen before, as he touched his cap in salute, and said,

"May I have the honor of a few words' conversation with you?"

I bowed silently, while he dismounted, and passing his bridle beneath his arm, walked on beside me.

"My friend, Captain Hammersley, has commissioned me to wait upon you about this unpleasant affair—"

"I beg pardon for the interruption, Captain Trevyllian, but as I have yet to learn to what you or your friend alludes, perhaps it may facilitate matters if you will explicitly state your meaning."

He grew crimson on the cheek as I said this, while, with a voice perfectly unmoved, he continued,

"I am not sufficiently in my friend's confidence to know the whole of the affair in question, nor have I his permission to enter into any of it, he probably presuming, as I certainly did myself, that your sense of honor would have deemed further parley and discussion both unnecessary and unseasonable."

"In fact, then, if I understand, it is expected that I should meet Captain Hammersley for some reason unknown—"

"He certainly desires a meeting with you," was the dry reply.

"And as certainly I shall not give it, before understanding upon what grounds."

"And such I am to report as your answer?" said he, looking at me at the moment with an expression of ill-repressed triumph as he spoke.

There was something in these few words, as well as in the tone in which they were spoken, that sunk deeply in my heart. Was it that by some trick of diplomacy he was endeavoring to compromise my honor and character? was it possible that my refusal might be construed into any other than the real cause? I was too young, too inexperienced in the world to decide the question for myself, and no time was allowed me to seek another's counsel. What a trying moment was that for me! my temples throbbed, my heart beat almost audibly, and I stood afraid to speak; dreading, on the one hand, lest my compliance might involve me in an act to embitter my life forever, and fearful, on the other, that my refusal might be reported as a trait of cowardice.

He saw, he read my difficulty at a glance,

and, with a smile of most supercilious expression, repeated coolly his former question. In an instant all thought of Hammersley was forgotten. I remembered no more. I saw him before me, he who had, since my first meeting, continually contrived to pass some inappreciable slight upon me. My eyes flashed, my hands tingled with ill-repressed rage, as I said,

"With Captain Hammersley I am conscious of no quarrel, nor have I ever shown by any act or look an intention to provoke one. Indeed, such demonstrations are not always successful; there are persons most rigidly scrupulous for a friend's honor, little disposed to guard their own."

"You mistake," said he, interrupting me, as I spoke these words with a look as insulting as I could make it; "you mistake. I have sworn a solemn oath never to *send* a challenge."

The emphasis upon the word "send," explained fully his meaning, when I said,

"But you will not decline—"

"Most certainly not," said he, again interrupting, while with sparkling eye and elated look he drew himself up to his full height. "Your friend is—"

"Captain Power: and yours—"

"Sir Harry Beaufort. I may observe that, as the troops are in marching order, the matter had better not be delayed."

"There shall be none on my part."

"Nor mine!" said he, as with a low bow, and a look of most ineffable triumph, he sprang into his saddle; then, "*Au revoir*, Mr. O'Malley," said he, gathering up his reins. "Beaufort is on the staff, and quartered at Oporto." So saying, he cantered easily down the slope, and once more I was alone.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE ROUTE.

I WAS leisurely examining my pistols—poor Considine's last present to me on leaving home—when an orderly sergeant rode rapidly up, and delivered into my hands the following order:

"Lieutenant O'Malley will hold himself in immediate readiness to proceed on a particular service. By order of his Excellency the Commander of the Forces.

(Signed)

"S. GORDON, Military Secretary."

"What can this mean?" thought I. "It is not possible that any rumor of my intended meeting could have got abroad, and that my present destination could be intended as a punishment?"

I walked hurriedly to the door of the little hut which formed my quarters; below me, in the plain, all was activity and preparation; the infantry were drawn up in marching order; baggage wagons, ordnance stores and artillery seemed all in active preparation; and some cavalry squadrons might be already seen, with forage allowances behind the saddle, as if only waiting the order to set out. I strained my eyes to see if Power was coming, but no horseman approached in the direction. I stood, and I hesitated whether I should not rather seek him at once, than continue to wait on in my present uncertainty; but then, what if I should miss him? and I had pledged myself to remain till he returned.

While I deliberated thus with myself, weighing the various chances for and against each plan, I saw two mounted officers coming toward me at a brisk trot. As they came nearer, I recognized one as my Colonel; the other was an officer of the staff.

Supposing that their mission had some relation to the order I had so lately received, and which until now I had forgotten, I hastily returned, and ordered Mike to my presence.

"How are the horses, Mike?" said I.

"Never better, sir. Badger was wounded slightly by a spent shot in the counter, but he's never the worse this morning, and the black horse is capering like a filly."

"Get ready my pack, feed the cattle, and be prepared to set out at a moment's warning."

"Good advice, O'Malley," said the Colonel, as he overheard the last direction to my servant. "I hope the nags are in condition?"

"Why yes, sir, I believe they are."

"All the better; you've a sharp ride before you. Meanwhile, let me introduce my friend; Captain Beaumont—Mr. O'Malley. I think we had better be seated."

"These are your instructions, Mr. O'Malley," said Captain Beaumont, unfolding a map as he spoke. "You will proceed from this, with half a troop of your regiment, by forced marches, toward the frontier, passing through the town of Calenco, and Guarda, and the Estrella pass. On arriving at the head-quarters of the Lusitanian Legion, which you will find there, you are to put yourself under the orders

of Major Monsoon, commanding that force. Any Portuguese cavalry he may have with him will be attached to yours, and under your command; your rank, for the time, being that of captain. You will, as far as possible, acquaint yourself with the habits and capabilities of the native cavalry, and make such report as you judge necessary thereupon to his Excellency the Commander of the Forces. I think it only fair to add, that you are indebted to my friend, Colonel Merivale, for the very flattering position thus opened to your skill and enterprise."

"My dear Colonel, let me assure you—"

"Not a word, my boy. I knew the thing would suit you, and I am sure I can count upon your not disappointing my expectations of you. Sir Arthur perfectly remembers your name. He only asked two questions—

"'Is he well mounted?'

"'Admirably,' was my answer.

"'Can you depend upon his promptitude?'

"'He'll leave in half an hour.'

"So you see, O'Malley, I have already pledged myself for you. And now I must say adieu; the regiments are about to take up a more advanced position, so good-by. I hope you will have a pleasant time of it till we meet again."

"It is now twelve o'clock, Mr. O'Malley," said Beaumont; "we may rely upon your immediate departure. Your written instructions and dispatches will be here within a quarter of an hour."

I muttered something—what, I cannot remember; I bowed my thanks to my worthy Colonel, shook his hand warmly, and saw him ride down the hill, and disappear in the crowd of soldiery beneath, before I could recall my faculties and think over my situation.

Then all at once did the full difficulty of my position break upon me. If I accepted my present employment, I must certainly fail in my engagement with Trevyllian. But I had already pledged myself to its acceptance. What was to be done? No time was left for deliberation. The very minutes I should have spent in preparation were fast passing. Would that Power might appear. Alas! he came not. My state of doubt and uncertainty increased every moment; I saw nothing but ruin before me, even at a moment when fortune promised most fairly for the future, and opened a field of enterprise my heart had so often and so ardently desired. Nothing was left me but to hasten to Colonel Merivale and decline my appointment; to do so was to prejudice my character in his estimation forever, for I dared not allege my reasons, and in all probability my conduct might require my leaving the army.

"Be it so, then," said I, in an accent of despair; "the die is cast."

I ordered my horse round; I wrote a few words to Power, to explain my absence, should he come while I was away, and leaped into the saddle. As I reached the plain my pace became a gallop, and I pressed my horse with all the impatience my heart was burning with. I dashed along the lines toward Oporto, neither hearing nor seeing aught around me, when suddenly the clank of cavalry accoutrements behind induced me to turn my head, and I perceived an orderly dragoon at full gallop in pursuit. I pulled up till he came alongside.

"Lieutenant O'Malley, sir," said the man, saluting, "these dispatches are for you."

I took them hurriedly, and was about to continue my route, when the attitude of the dragoon arrested my attention. He had reined in his horse to the side of the narrow causeway, and, holding him still and steadily, sat motionless as a statue. I looked behind, and saw the whole staff approaching at a brisk trot. Before I had a moment for thought they were beside me.

"Ah! O'Malley," cried Merivale, "you have your orders; don't wait; his Excellency is coming up."

"Get along, I advise you," said another, "or you'll catch it, as some of us have done this morning."

"All is right, Charley; you can go in safety," said a whispering voice, as Power passed in a sharp canter.

That one sentence was enough; my heart bounded like a deer, my cheek beamed with the glow of delighted pleasure, I closed my spurs upon my gallant gray, and dashed across the plain.

When I arrived at my quarters the men were drawn up in waiting, and provided with rations for three days' march; Mike was also prepared for the road, and nothing more remained to delay me.

"Captain Power has been here, sir, and left a note."

I took it and thrust it hastily into my sabretasche. I knew from the few words he had spoken, that my present step involved me in no ill consequences; so, giving the word to wheel into column, I rode to the front, and set out upon my march to Alcantara.

CHAPTER L.

THE WATCH-FIRE.

There are few things so inspiriting to a young soldier as the being employed with a separate command; the picket and out-post duty have a charm for him no other portion of his career possesses. The field seems open for individual boldness and heroism: success, if obtained, must redound to his own credit; and what can equal, in its spirit-stirring enthusiasm, that first moment when we become in any way the arbiter of our own fortunes?

Such were my happy thoughts, as, with a proud and elated heart, I set forth upon my march. The notice the Commander-in-Chief had bestowed upon me had already done much: it had raised me in my own estimation, and implanted within me a longing desire for further distinction. I thought, too, of those far, far away, who were yet to hear of my successes.

I fancied to myself how they would severally receive the news. My poor uncle, with tearful eye and quivering lip, was before me, as I saw him read the dispatch, then wipe his glasses, and read on, till at last, with one long-drawn breath, his manly voice, tremulous with emotion, would break forth,—"My boy! my own Charley!" Then I pictured Considine, with port erect and stern features, listening silently; not a syllable, not a motion betraying that he felt interested in my fate, till, as if impatient, at length he would break in,—"I knew it—I said so; and yet you thought to make him a lawyer!" And then old Sir Harry: his warm heart glowing with pleasure, and his good-humored face beaming with happiness. How many a blunder he would make in retailing the news, and how many a hearty laugh his version of it would give rise to!

I passed in review before me the old servants, as they lingered in the room to hear the story. Poor old Matthew, the butler, fumbling with his corkscrew to gain a little time; then looking in my uncle's face, half entreatingly, as he asked,—"Any news of Master Charles, sir, from the wars?"

While thus my mind wandered back to the scenes and faces of my early home, I feared to ask myself how *she* would feel to whom my heart was now turning? Too deeply did I know how poor my chances were in that quarter to nourish hope, and yet I could not bring myself to abandon it altogether. Hammersley's strange conduct suggested to me that he, at least, could not be *my* rival, while I plainly perceived that he regarded me as *his*. There was a mystery in all this I could not fathom, and I ardently longed for my next meeting with Power, to learn the nature of his interview, and also in what manner the affair had been arranged.

Such were my passing thoughts as I pressed forward. My men, picked no less for themselves than their horses, came rapidly along; and, ere evening, we had accomplished twelve leagues of our journey.

The country through which we journeyed, though wild and romantic in its character, was singularly rich and fertile,—cultivation reaching to the very summits of the rugged mountains, and patches of wheat and Indian corn peeping amid masses of granite rock and tangled brushwood. The vine and the olive grew wild on every side; while the orange and the arbutus, loading the air with perfume, were mingled with prickly pear-trees and variegated hollies. We followed no regular track, but cantered along over hill and valley, through forest and prairie; now in long file through some tall field of waving corn, now in open order upon some level plain; our Portuguese guide riding a little in advance of us, upon a jet-black mule, caroling merrily some wild Galician melody as he went.

As the sun was setting, we arrived beside a little stream, that, flowing along a rocky bed, skirted a vast forest of tall cork-trees. Here we called a halt; and, picketing our horses, proceeded to make our arrangements for a bivouac.

Never do I remember a more lovely night. The watch-fires sent up a delicious odor from the perfumed shrubs; while the glassy water reflected on its still surface the starry sky that, unshadowed and unclouded, stretched above us. I wrapped myself in my trooper's mantle, and lay down beneath a tree,—but not to sleep. There was a something so exciting, and withal so tranquilizing, that I had no thought of slumber, but fell into a musing revery. There was a character of adventure in my position that charmed me much. My men were gathered in little groups beside the fires; some sunk in slumber, others sat smoking silently, or chatting, in a low and under tone, of some bygone scene of battle or bivouac; here and there were picketed the horses; the heavy panoply and piled carbines flickering in the red glare of the watch-fires, which ever and anon threw a flitting glow upon the stern and swarthy faces of my bold

troopers. Upon the trees around, sabres and helmets, holsters and cross-belts, were hung like armorial bearings in some antique hall, the dark foliage spreading its heavy shadow around us. Farther off, upon a little rocky ledge, the erect figure of the sentry, with his short carbine resting in the hollow of his arm, was seen slowly pacing in measured tread, or standing for a moment silently, as he looked upon the fair and tranquil sky,—his thoughts doubtless far, far away, beyond the sea, to some humble home, where—

> "The hum of the spreading sycamore,
> That grew beside his cottage door,"

was again in his ears, while the merry laugh of his children stirred his bold heart. It was a Salvator-Rosa scene, and brought me back in fancy to the bandit legends I had read in boyhood. By the uncertain light of the wood embers I endeavored to sketch the group that lay before me.

The night wore on. One by one the soldiers stretched themselves to sleep, and all was still. As the hours rolled by, a drowsy feeling crept gradually over me. I placed my pistols by my side, and, having replenished the fire by some fresh logs, disposed myself comfortably before it.

It was during that half-dreamy state that intervenes between waking and sleep, that a rustling sound of the branches behind attracted my attention. The air was too calm to attribute this to the wind, so I listened for some minutes; but sleep, too long deferred, was over-powerful, and my head sank upon my grassy pillow, and I was soon sound asleep. How long I remained thus, I know not; but I awoke suddenly. I fancied some one had shaken me rudely by the shoulder; but yet all was tranquil. My men were sleeping soundly, as I saw them last. The fires were becoming low, and a gray streak in the sky, as well as a sharp cold feeling of the air, betokened the approach of day. Once more I heaped some dry branches together, and was about again to stretch myself to rest, when I felt a hand upon my shoulder. I turned quickly round, and, by the imperfect light of the fire, saw the figure of a man standing motionless beside me; his head was bare, and his hair fell in long curls upon his shoulders; one hand was pressed upon his bosom, and with the other he motioned me to silence. My first impression was that our party was surprised by some French patrol; but, as I looked again, I recognized, to my amazement, that the individual before me was the young French officer I had seen that morning a prisoner beside the Douro.

"How came you here?" said I, in a low voice, to him in French.

"Escaped; one of my own men threw himself between me and the sentry; I swam the Douro, received a musket-ball through my arm, lost my shako,—and here I am!"

"You are aware you are again a prisoner?"

"If you desire it, of course I am," said he, in a voice full of feeling, that made my very heart creep. "I thought you were a party of Lorge's Dragoons, scouring the country for forage; tracked you the entire day, and have only now come up with you."

The poor fellow, who had neither eaten nor drank since daybreak, wounded and footsore, had accomplished twelve leagues of a march, only once more to fall into the hands of his enemies. His years could scarcely have numbered nineteen; his countenance was singularly prepossessing; and, though bleeding and torn, with tattered uniform, and without a covering to his head, there was no mistaking for a moment that he was of gentle blood. Noiselessly and cautiously I made him sit down beside the fire, while I spread before him the sparing remnant of my last night's supper, and shared my solitary bottle of sherry with him.

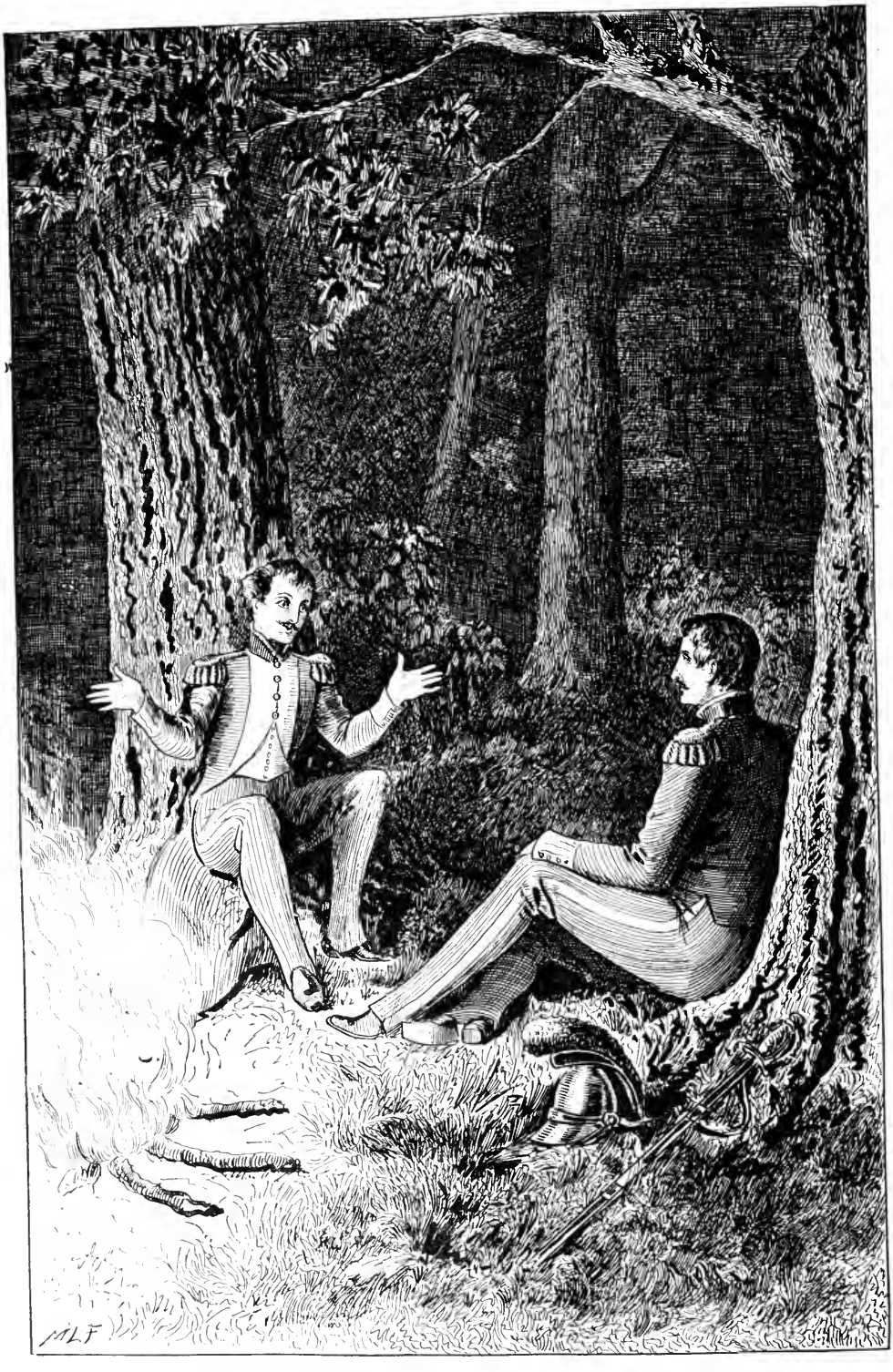
From the moment he spoke, I never entertained a thought of making him a prisoner; but, as I knew not how far I was culpable in permitting, if not actually facilitating, his escape, I resolved to keep the circumstance a secret from my party, and, if possible, get him away before daybreak.

No sooner did he learn my intentions regarding him, than in an instant all memory of his past misfortune, all thoughts of his present destitute condition, seemed to have fled; and, while I dressed his wound and bound up his shattered arm, he chattered away as unconcernedly about the past and the future as though seated beside the fire of his own bivouac, and surrounded by his own brother officers.

"You took us by surprise the other day," said he. "Our Marshal looked for the attack from the mouth of the river; we received information that your ships were expected there. In any case, our retreat was an orderly one, and must have been effected with slight loss."

I smiled at the self-complacency of this reasoning, but did not contradict him.

"Your loss must indeed have been



"IT WAS MY FIRST BATTLE; MY EPAULETTES WERE VERY SMART THINGS YESTERDAY, THOUGH THEY DO LOOK A LITTLE PASSÉES TO-DAY." (P. 797.)

great; your men crossed under the fire of a whole battery."

"Not exactly," said I; "our first party were quietly stationed in Oporto before you knew anything about it."

"*Ah! sacré Dieu!* Treachery!" cried he, striking his forehead with his clenched fist.

"Not so; mere daring—nothing more. But come, tell me something of your own adventures. How were you taken?"

"Simply thus: I was sent to the rear with orders to the artillery to cut their traces, and leave the guns; and when coming back, my horse grew tired in the heavy ground, and I was spurring him to the utmost, when one of your heavy dragoons—an officer, too—dashed at me, and actually rode me down, horse and all. I lay for some time bruised by the fall, when an infantry soldier passing by, seized me by the collar, and brought me to the rear. No matter, however, here I am now. You will not give me up; and, perhaps, I may one day live to repay the kindness."

"You have not long joined?"

"It was my first battle; my epaulettes were very smart things yesterday, though they do look a little *passées* to-day. You are advancing, I suppose?"

I smiled, without answering this question.

"Ah, I see you don't wish to speak; never mind, your discretion is thrown away upon me; for, if I rejoined my regiment to-morrow, I should have forgotten all you told me—all but your great kindness." These last words he spoke, bowing slightly his head, and coloring as he said them.

"You are a dragoon, I think?" said I, endeavoring to change the topic.

"I was, two days ago, *chasseur à cheval*, a sous-lieutenant in the regiment of my father, the General St. Croix."

"The name is familiar to me," I replied; "and I am sincerely happy to be in a position to serve the son of so distinguished an officer."

"The son of so distinguished an officer is most deeply obliged; but wishes with all his heart and soul he had never sought glory under such very excellent auspices.

"You look surprised, *mon cher;* but, let me tell you, my military ardor is considerably abated in the last three days; hunger, thirst, imprisonment, and this"—lifting his wounded limb as he spoke—"are sharp lessons in so short a campaign, and for one, too, whose life hitherto had much more of ease than adventure to boast of. Shall I tell you how I became a soldier?"

"By all means; give me your glass first; and now, with a fresh log to the fire, I'm your man."

"But stay; before I begin, look to this."

The blood was flowing rapidly from his wound, which, with some difficulty, I succeeded in stanching. He drank off his wine hastily, held out his glass to be refilled, and then began his story.

"You have never seen the Emperor?"

"Never."

"*Sacrebleu!* What a man he is! I'd rather stand under the fire of your grenadiers, than meet his eye. When in a passion, he does not say much, it is true; but what he does, comes with a kind of hissing, rushing sound, while the very fire seems to kindle in his look. I have him before me this instant, and, though you will confess that my present condition has nothing very pleasing in it, I should be sorry, indeed, to change it for the last time I stood in his presence.

"Two months ago, I sported the gay light blue and silver of a page to the Emperor, and certainly, what with balls, *bonbons*, flirtation, gossip, and champagne suppers, led a very gay, reckless, and indolent life of it. Somehow—I may tell you more accurately at another period, if we ever meet—I got myself into disgrace, and, as a punishment, was ordered to absent myself from the Tuileries, and retire, for some weeks, to Fontainebleau. Siberia, to a Russian, would scarcely be a heavier infliction than was this banishment to me. There was no court, no levee, no military parade, no ball, no opera. A small household of the Emperor's chosen servants quietly kept house there. The gloomy walls re-echoed to no music; the dark alleys of the dreary garden seemed the very impersonation of solitude and decay. Nothing broke the dull monotony of the tiresome day, except when occasionally, near sunset, the clash of the guard would be heard turning out, and the clank of presenting arms, followed by the roll of a heavy carriage into the gloomy courtyard. One lamp, shining like a star, in a small chamber on the second floor, would remain till near four, sometimes five o'clock in the morning. The same sounds of the guard and the same dull roll of the carriage would break the stillness of the early morning; and the Emperor—for it was he—would be on his road back to Paris.

"We never saw him—I say we, for, like myself, some half-dozen others were also there, expiating their follies by a life of cheerless *ennui*.

"It was upon a calm evening in April,

we sat together chatting over the various misdeeds which had consigned us to exile, when some one proposed, by way of passing the time, that we should visit the small flower garden that was parted off from the rest, and reserved for the Emperor alone. It was already beyond the hour he usually came; besides that, even should he arrive, there was abundant time to get back before he could possibly reach it. The garden we had often seen, but there was something in the fact that our going there was a transgression that so pleased us all, that we agreed at once, and set forth. For above an hour we loitered about the lonely and deserted walks, where already the Emperor's foot-tracks had worn a marked pathway, when we grew weary, and were about to return, just as one of the party suggested, half in ridicule of the sanctity of the spot, that we should have a game of leap-frog ere we left it. The idea pleased us, and was at once adopted. Our plan was this: each person stationed himself in some by-walk or alley, and waited till the other, whose turn it was, came and leaped over him; so that, besides the activity displayed, there was a knowledge of the *locale* necessary; for, to any one passed over a forfeit was to be paid. Our game began at once, and certainly I doubt if ever those green alleys and shady groves rang to such hearty laughter. Here would be seen a couple rolling over together on the grass; there some luckless wight counting out his pocket money, to pay his penalty. The hours passed quickly over, and the moon rose, and at last it came to my turn to make the tour of the garden. As I was supposed to know all its intricacies better than the rest, a longer time was given for them to conceal themselves; at length the word was given, and I started.

Anxious to acquit myself well, I hurried along at top speed, but guess my surprise to discover that nowhere could I find one of my companions; down one walk I scampered, up another, across a third, but all was still and silent; not a sound, not a breath, could I detect. There was still one part of the garden unexplored; it was a small open space before a little pond, which usually contained the gold fish the Emperor was so fond of. Thither I bent my steps, and had not gone far when, in the pale moonlight, I saw, at length, one of my companions waiting patiently for my coming, his head bent forward and his shoulders rounded. Anxious to repay him for my own disappointment, I crept silently forward on tiptoe till quite near him, when, rushing madly on, I sprang upon his back; just, however, as I rose to leap over, he raised his head, and, staggered by the impulse of my spring, he was thrown forward, and, after an ineffectual effort to keep his legs, fell flat upon his face in the grass. Bursting with laughter, I fell over him on the ground, and was turning to assist him, when suddenly he sprang upon his feet, and—horror of horrors!—it was Napoleon himself; his usually pale features were purple with rage, but not a word, not a syllable escaped him.

"'*Qui êtes vous?*' said he at length.

"'St. Croix, sire,' said I, still kneeling before him, while my very heart leaped into my mouth.

"'St. Croix! *toujours* St. Croix! Come here; approach me,' cried he, in a voice of stifled passion.

"I rose; but before I could take a step forward he sprang at me, and, tearing off my epaulettes, trampled them beneath his feet, and then he shouted out, rather than spoke, the word '*Allez!*'

"I did not wait for a second intimation, but clearing the paling at a spring, was many a mile from Fontainebleau before daybreak."

CHAPTER LI.

THE MARCH.

TWICE the *réveil* sounded; the horses champed impatiently their heavy bits; my men stood waiting for the order to mount, ere I could arouse myself from the deep sleep I had fallen into. The young Frenchman and his story were in my dreams, and, when I awoke, his figure, as he lay sleeping beside the wood embers, was the first object I perceived. There he lay, to all seeming as forgetful of his fate as though he still inhabited the gorgeous halls and gilded saloons of the Tuileries; his pale and handsome features wore even a placid smile as, doubtless, some dream of other days flitted across him; his long hair waved in luxurious curls upon his neck, and his light brown moustache, slightly curled at the top, gave to his mild and youthful features an air of saucy *fierté* that heightened their effect. A narrow blue ribbon, which he wore round his throat, gently peeped from his open bosom. I could not resist the curiosity I felt to see what it meant, and, drawing it softly forth, I perceived that a small miniature was attached to it. It was beautifully painted, and surrounded with brilliants of some

value. One glance showed me—for I had seen more than one engraving before of her—that it was the portrait of the Empress Josephine. Poor boy! he doubtless was a favorite at court; indeed, everything in his air and manner bespoke him such. I gently replaced the precious locket, and turned from the spot, to think over what was best to be done for him. Knowing the vindictive feeling of the Portuguese toward their invaders, I feared to take Pietro, our guide, into my confidence. I accordingly summoned my man Mike to my aid, who, with all his country's readiness, soon found out an expedient. It was to pretend to Pietro that the prisoner was merely an English officer, who had made his escape from the French army, in which, against his will, he had been serving for some time.

This plan succeeded perfectly; and, when St. Croix, mounted upon one of my led horses, set out upon his march beside me, none was more profuse of his attentions than the dark-brown guide, whose hatred of a Frenchman was beyond belief.

By thus giving him safe-conduct through Portugal, I knew that when we reached the frontier he could easily manage to come up with some part of Marshal Victor's force, the advanced guard of which lay on the left bank of the Tagus.

To me the companionship was the greatest boon; the gay and buoyant spirit that no reverse of fortune, no untoward event, could subdue, lightened many an hour of the journey; and though, at times, the gasconading tone of the Frenchman would peep through, there was still such a fund of good-tempered raillery in all he said, that it was impossible to feel angry with him. His implicit faith in the Emperor's invincibility also amused me. Of the unbounded confidence of the nation in general, and the army particularly, in Napoleon, I had till then no conception. It was not that in the profound skill and immense resources of the general they trusted, but they actually regarded him as one placed above all the common accidents of fortune, and revered him as something more than human.

"*Il viendra, et puis*—" was the continued exclamation of the young Frenchman. Any notion of our successfully resisting the overwhelming might of the Emperor, he would have laughed to scorn, and so I let him go on prophesying our future misfortunes till the time when, driven back upon Lisbon, we should be compelled to evacuate the Peninsula, and, under favor of a convention, be permitted to return to England. All this was sufficiently ridiculous, coming from a youth of nineteen, wounded, in misery, a prisoner; but further experience of his nation has shown me, that St. Croix was not the exception, but the rule. The conviction in the ultimate success of their army, whatever be the merely momentary mishap, is the one present thought of a Frenchman; a victory with them is a conquest; a defeat—if they are by any chance driven to acknowledge one—a *fatalité*.

I was too young a man, and, still more, too young a soldier, to bear with this absurd affectation of superiority as I ought, and consequently was glad to wander, whenever I could, from the contested point of our national superiority to other topics. St. Croix, although young, had seen much of the world, as a page in the splendid court of the Tuileries; the scenes passing before his eyes were calculated to make a strong impression; and, by many an anecdote of his former life, he lightened the road as we passed along.

"You promised, by-the-by, to tell me of your banishment. How did that occur, St. Croix?"

"*Ah! par Dieu!* that was an unfortunate affair for me: then began all my mishaps; but for that, I should never have been sent to Fontainebleau; never have played leap-frog with the Emperor; never have been sent a soldier into Spain. True," said he, laughing, "I should never have had the happiness of your acquaintance. But still, I'd much rather have met you first in the Place des Victoires than in the Estrella Mountains."

"Who knows?" said I; "perhaps, your good genius prevailed in all this?"

"Perhaps," said he, interrupting me; "that's exactly what the Empress said—she was my godmother—'Jules will be a *Maréchal de France* yet.' But, certainly, it must be confessed, I have made a bad beginning. However, you wish to hear of my disgrace at court. *Allons, donc.* But had we not better wait for a halt?"

"Agreed," said I; "and so let us now press forward."

CHAPTER LII.

THE PAGE.

UNDER the deep shade of some tall trees, sheltered from the noonday sun, we lay down to rest ourselves, and enjoy a most patriarchal dinner—some dry biscuits, a few bunches of grapes, and a little weak

wine, savoring more of the boraccio-skin than the vine-juice, were all we boasted; yet they were not ungrateful at such a time and place.

"Whose health did you pledge, then?" inquired St. Croix, with a half malicious smile, as I raised the glass silently to my lips.

I blushed deeply and looked confused.

"*A ses beaux yeux!* whoever she be," said he, gayly tossing off his wine; "and now, if you feel disposed, I'll tell you my story. In good truth, it is not worth relating, but it may serve to set you asleep, at all events.

"I have already told you I was a page. Alas! the impressions you may feel of that functionary, from having seen Cherubino, give but a faint notion of him when pertaining to the household of the Emperor Napoleon.

"The *farfallone amoroso* basked in the soft smiles and sunny looks of the Countess Almaviva; we met but the cold, impassive look of Talleyrand—the piercing and penetrating stare of Savary—or the ambiguous smile, half menace, half mockery, of Monsieur Fouché. While on service, our days were passed in the antechamber, beside the *salle d'audience* of the Emperor—reclining against the closed door, watching attentively for the gentle tinkle of the little bell which summoned us to open for the exit of some haughty diplomate, or the *entrée* of some redoubted general. Thus passed we the weary hours; the illustrious visitors by whom we were surrounded had no novelty, consequently no attraction for us, and the names already historical were but household words with us.

"We often remarked, too, the proud and distant bearing the Emperor assumed toward those of his generals who had been his former companions in arms. Whatever familiarity or freedom may have existed in the campaign or in the battle-field, the air of the Tuileries certainly chilled it. I have often heard that the ceremonious observances and rigid etiquette of the old Bourbon court were far preferable to the stern reserve and unbending stiffness of the Imperial one.

"The ante-chamber is but the reflection of the reception-room; and, whatever be the whims, the caprices, the littleness of the Great Man, they are speedily assumed by his inferiors, and the dark temper of one casts a lowering shadow on every menial by whom he is surrounded.

"As for us, we were certainly not long in catching somewhat of the spirit of the Emperor; and I doubt much if the impertinence of the waiting-room was not more dreaded and detested than the abrupt speech and searching look of Napoleon himself.

"What a malicious pleasure have I not felt in arresting the step of M. de Talleyrand, as he approached the Emperor's closet! with what easy insolence have I lisped out, 'Pardon, monsieur, but his Majesty cannot receive you'—or, 'Monsieur le Duc, his Majesty has given no orders for your admission.'—How amusing it was to watch the baffled look of each, as he retired once more to his place among the crowd; the wily diplomate covering his chagrin with a practiced smile, while the stern marshal would blush to his very eyes with his indignation. This was the great pleasure our position afforded us; and with a boyish spirit of mischief, we cultivated it to perfection, and became at last the very horror and detestation of all who frequented the levees; and the ambassador, whose fearless voice was heard among the councils of kings, became soft and conciliating in his approaches to us; and the hardy general, who would have charged upon a brigade of artillery, was timid as a girl in addressing us a mere question.

"Among the amiable class thus characterized I was most conspicuous, preserving cautiously a tone of civility that left nothing openly to complain of. I assumed an indifference and impartiality of manner that no exigency of affairs, no pressing haste, could discompose or disturb; and my bow of recognition to Soult or Massena was as coolly measured, as my monosyllabic answer was accurately conned over.

"Upon ordinary occasions, the Emperor, at the close of each person's audience, rang his little bell for the admission of the next in order as they arrived in the waiting-room; yet, when anything important was under consideration, a list was given us in the morning of the names to be presented in rotation, which no casual circumstance was ever suffered to interfere with.

"It is now about four months since, one fine morning, such a list was placed within my hands. His Majesty was just then occupied with an inquiry into the naval force of the kingdom; and, as I cast my eyes carelessly over the names, I read little else than Vice-Admiral so-and-so, Commander such-a-one, and Chef d'Escadron such another, and the levee presented accordingly, instead of its usual brilliant array of gorgeous uniform and aiguiletted marshals, the simple blue-and-gold of the naval service.

"The marine was not in high favor with the Emperor, and truly, my reception of these unfrequent visitors was anything but flattering. The early part of the morning was, as usual, occupied by the audience of the Minister of Police and the Duc de Bassano, who, evidently, from the length of time they remained, had matter of importance to communicate. Meanwhile, the ante-chamber filled rapidly, and, before noon, was actually crowded. It was just at this moment that the folding-door slowly opened, and a figure entered, such as I had never before seen in our brilliant saloon: he was a man of five or six-and-fifty, short, thickset, and strongly built, with a bronzed and weather-beaten face, and a broad open forehead, deeply scarred with a sabre-cut; a shaggy gray moustache curled over and concealed his mouth, while eyebrows of the same color shaded his dark and piercing eyes. His dress was a coarse coat of blue cloth, such as the fishermen wear in Bretagne, fastened at the waist by a broad belt of black leather, from which hung a short broad-bladed cutlass; his loose trowsers, of the same material, were turned up at the ankles, to show a pair of strong legs coarsely cased in blue stockings and thick-soled shoes—a broad-leaved oil-skin hat was held in one hand, and the other stuck carelessly in his pocket, as he entered; he came in with a careless air, and, familiarly saluting one or two officers in the room, he sat himself down near the door, appearing lost in his own reflections.

"'Who can you be, my worthy friend?' was my question to myself, as I surveyed this singular apparition. At the same time, casting my eyes down the list, I perceived that several pilots of the coast of Havre, Calais, and Boulogne had been summoned to Paris, to give some information upon the soundings and depth of water along the shore.

"'Ha,' thought I, 'I have it—the good man has mistaken his place, and instead of remaining without, has walked boldly forward to the antechamber.' There was something so strange and so original in the grim look of the old fellow, as he sat there alone, that I suffered him to remain quietly in his delusion, rather than order him back to the waiting-room without; besides, I perceived that a kind of sensation was created among the others by his appearance there, which amused me greatly.

"As day wore on, the the officers formed into little groups of three or four, chatting together in an undertone of voice; all, save the old pilot; he had taken a huge tobacco-box from his capacious breast-pocket, and inserting an immense piece of the bitter weed in his mouth, began to chew it as leisurely as though he were walking the quarter-deck. The cool insouciance of such a proceeding amused me much, and I resolved to draw him out a little.

"His strong, broad Breton features, his deep voice, his dry, blunt manner, were all in admirable keeping with his exterior, and amused me highly.

"'*Par Dieu!* my lad,' said he, after chatting some time, 'had you not better tell the Emperor that I am waiting?—It's now past noon, and I must eat something.'

"'Have a little patience,' said I; 'his Majesty is going to invite you to dinner.'

"'Be it so,' said he, gravely; 'provided the hour be an early one, I'm his man.'

"With difficulty did I keep down my laughter as he said this, and continued.

"'So you know the Emperor already, it seems?'

"'Yes, that I do! I remember him when he was no higher than yourself.'

"'How delighted he'll be to find you here—I hope you have brought up some of your family with you, as the Emperor would be so flattered by it?'

"'No, I've left them at home; this place don't suit us over well. We have plenty to do, besides spending our time and money among all you fine folks here.'

"'And not a bad life of it, either,' added I, 'fishing for cod and herrings—stripping a wreck now and then.'

"He stared at me, as I said this, like a tiger on the spring, but spoke not a word.

"'And how many young sea-wolves may you have in your den at home?'

"'Six; and all o' them able to carry you with one hand, at arm's length!'

"'I have no doubt; I shall certainly not test their ability. But you yourself, how do you like the capital?'

"'Not over well, and I'll you why—'

"As he said this, the door of the audience-chamber opened, and the Emperor appeared. His eyes flashed fire, as he looked hurriedly around the room.

"'Who is in waiting here?'

"'I am, please your majesty,' said I, bowing deeply, as I started from my seat.

"'And where is the Admiral Truguet? Why was he not admitted?'

"'Not present, your Majesty,' said I, trembling with fear.

"'Hold there, young fellow. Not so fast; here he is.'

"'Ah, Truguet, *mon ami!*' cried the Emperor, placing both hands on the old

fellow's shoulders; 'how long have you been in waiting?'

"'Two hours and a half,' said he; producing in evidence a watch like a saucer.

"'What! two hours and a half, and I not know it?'

"'No matter; I am always happy to serve your Majesty. But if that fine fellow had not told me that you were going to ask me to dinner—"

"'He! he said so, did he?' said Napoleon, turning on me a glance like a wild beast. 'Yes, Truguet, so I am; you shall dine with me to-day. And you, sir,' said he, dropping his voice to a whisper, as he came closer toward me, 'and you have dared to speak thus? Call in a guard there; Capitaine, put this person under arrest; he is disgraced; he is no longer page of the palace. Out of my presence! away, sir!'

"The room wheeled round; my legs tottered, my senses reeled; and I saw no more.

"Three weeks' bread and water in St. Pélagie, however, brought me to my recollection; and at last my kind, my more than kind friend, the Empress, obtained my pardon, and sent me to Fontainebleau, till the Emperor should forget all about it. How I contrived again to refresh his memory I have already told you; and certainly you will acknowledge that I have not been fortunate in my interviews with Napoleon."

I am conscious how much St. Croix's story loses in my telling, The simple expressions, the grace of the narrative, were its charms; and these, alas! I can neither translate nor imitate, no more than I can convey the strange mixture of deep feeling and levity, shrewdness and simplicity, that constituted the manner of the narrator.

With many a story of his courtly career he amused me as we trotted along; when, toward nightfall of the third day, a peasant informed us that a body of French cavalry occupied the convent of San Cristoval, about three leagues off. The opportunity of his return to his own army pleased him far less than I expected; he heard, without any show of satisfaction, that the time of his liberation had arrived, and when the moment of leave-taking drew near, he became deeply affected.

"*Eh bien*, Charles," said he, smiling sadly through his dimmed and tearful eyes. "You've been a kind friend to me. Is the time never to come when I can repay you?"

"Yes, yes; we'll meet again, be assured of it. Meanwhile, there is one way you can more than repay anything I have done for you."

"Oh! name it at once."

"Many a brave fellow of ours is now, and, doubtless, many more will be, prisoners with your army in this war. Whenever, therefore, your lot brings you in contact with such—"

"They shall be my brothers," said he, springing toward me, and throwing his arms round my neck. "Adieu, adieu!" With that he rushed from the spot, and, before I could speak again, was mounted upon the peasant's horse, and waving his hand to me in farewell.

I looked after him as he rode at a fast gallop down the slope of the green mountain, the noise of the horse's feet echoing along the silent plain. I turned at length to leave the spot, and then perceived, for the first time, that, when taking his farewell of me, he had hung around my neck his miniature of the Empress. Poor boy! how sorrowful I felt thus to rob him of what he held so dear! How gladly would I have overtaken him to restore it. It was the only keepsake he possessed; and, knowing that I would not accept it, if offered, he took this way of compelling me to keep it.

Through the long hours of the summer's night I thought of him; and, when at last I slept, toward morning, my first thought on waking was of the solitary day before me. The miles no longer slipped imperceptibly along; no longer did the noon and night seem fast to follow. Alas! that one should grow old! The very sorrows of our early years have something soft and touching in them. Arising less from deep wrong than slight mischances, the grief they cause comes ever with an alloy of pleasant thoughts, telling of the tender past; and, 'mid the tears called up, forming some bright rainbow of future hope.

Poor St. Croix had already won greatly upon me; and I felt lonely and desolate when he departed.

CHAPTER LIII.

ALVAS.

NOTHING of incident marked our further progress toward the frontier of Spain, and at length we reached the small town of Alvas. It was past sunset as we arrived, and, instead of the usual quiet and repose of a little village, we found the streets crowded with people, on horseback and on foot;

mules, bullocks, carts, and wagons blocked up the way, and the oaths of the drivers and the screaming of women and children resounded on all sides.

With what little Spanish I possessed I questioned some of those near me, and learned, in reply, that a dreadful engagement had taken place that day between the advanced guard of the French, under Victor, and the Lusitanian legion; that the Portuguese troops had been beaten and completely routed, losing all their artillery and baggage; that the French were rapidly advancing, and expected hourly to arrive at Alvas, in consequence of which the terror-stricken inhabitants were packing up their possessions and hurrying away.

Here, then, was a point of considerable difficulty for me at once. My instructions had never provided for such a conjuncture, and I was totally unable to determine what was best to be done; both my men and their horses were completely tired by a march of fourteen leagues, and had a pressing need of some rest; on every side of me the preparations for flight were proceeding with all the speed that fear inspires; and to my urgent request for some information as to food and shelter, I could obtain no other reply than muttered menaces of the fate before me if I remained, and exaggerated accounts of French cruelty.

Amid all this bustle and confusion a tremendous fall of heavy rain set in, which at once determined me, come what might, to house my party, and provide forage for our horses.

As we pushed our way slowly through the encumbered streets, looking on every side for some appearance of a village inn, a tremendous shout rose in our rear, and a rush of the people toward us induced us to suppose that the French were upon us. For some minutes the din and uproar were terrific—the clatter of horses' feet, the braying of trumpets, the yelling of the mob, all mingling in one frightful concert.

I formed my men in close column, and waited steadily for the attack, resolving, if possible, to charge through the advancing files; any retreat through the crowded and blocked-up thoroughfares being totally out of the question. The rain was falling in such torrents that nothing could be seen a few yards off, when suddenly a pause of a few seconds occurred, and, from the clash of accoutrements and the hoarse tones of a loud voice, I judged that the body of men before us were forming for attack.

Resolving, therefore, to take them by surprise, I gave the word to charge, and, spurring our jaded cattle, onward we dashed. The mob fled right and left from us as we came on; and through the dense mist we could just perceive a body of cavalry before us.

In an instant we were among them; down they went on every side, men and horses rolling pell-mell over each other—not a blow, not a shot striking us as we pressed on. Never did I witness such total consternation; some threw themselves from their horses, and fled toward the houses: others turned and tried to fall back, but the increasing pressure from behind held them, and finally succeeded in blocking us up amongst them.

It was just at this critical moment that a sudden gleam of light from a window fell upon the disordered mass, and to my astonishment—I need not say, to my delight—I perceived that they were Portuguese troops. Before I had well time to halt my party, my convictions were pretty well strengthened by hearing a well-known voice in the rear of the mass call out:

"Charge, ye devils! charge, will ye? illustrious Hidalgos! cut them down; *los infidelos, sacrificados los*—scatter them like chaff!"

One roar of laughter was my only answer to this energetic appeal for my destruction, and the moment after, the dry features and pleasant face of old Monsoon beamed on me by the light of a pine-torch he carried in his right hand.

"Are they prisoners?—have they surrendered?" inquired he, riding up. "It is well for them; we'd have made mincemeat of them otherwise; now they shall be well treated, and ransomed if they prefer."

"*Gracias excellenze!*" said I, in a feigned voice.

"Give up your sword," said the Major, in an undertone. "You behaved gallantly, but you fought against invincibles. Lord love them! but they are the most terrified invincibles."

I nearly burst aloud at this.

"It was a close thing which of us ran first," muttered the Major, as he turned to give some directions to an aide-de-camp. "Ask them who they are," said he, in Spanish.

By this time I came close alongside of him, and placing my mouth close to his ear, hallooed out:

"Monsoon, old fellow, how goes the King of Spain's sherry?"

"Eh!—what—why—upon my life, and so it is—Charley, my boy, so it's you, is it—egad, how good; and we were so near being the death of you! My poor fellow, how came you here?"

A few words of explanation sufficed to inform the Major why we were there, and still more to comfort him with the assurance that he had not been charging the General's staff, and the Commander-in-Chief himself.

"Upon my life, you gave me a great start; though, as long as I thought you were French, it was very well."

"True, Major, but certainly the invincibles were merciful as they were strong."

"They were tired, Charley, nothing more; why, lad, we've been fighting since daybreak—beat Victor at six o'clock—drove him back behind the Tagus—took a cold dinner, and had at him again in the afternoon. Lord love you! we've immortalized ourselves; but you must never speak of this little business here; it tells devilish ill for the discipline of your fellows, upon my life it does."

This was rather an original turn to give the transaction, but I did not oppose; and, thus chatting, we entered the little inn, where, confidence once restored, some semblance of comfort already appeared.

"And so you're come to reinforce us?" said Monsoon; "there was never anything more opportune; though we surprised ourselves to-day with valor, I don't think we could persevere."

"Yes, Major, the appointment gave me sincere pleasure; I greatly desired to see a little service under your orders. Shall I present you with my dispatches?"

"Not now, Charley—not now, my lad. Supper is the first thing at this moment; besides, now that you remind me, I must send off a dispatch myself. Upon my life, it's a great piece of fortune that you're here; you shall be Secretary at War, and write it for me; here now—how lucky that I thought of it, to be sure! and it was just a mere chance; one has so many things—" Muttering such broken, disjointed sentences, the Major opened a large portfolio with writing materials, which he displayed before me as he rubbed his hands with satisfaction, and said, "Write away, lad."

"But, my dear Major, you forget; I was not in the action. You must describe; I can only follow you."

"Begin then thus:

"'Headquarters, Alvas, June 26.

"'YOUR EXCELLENCY,

"'Having learned from Don Alphonso Xaviero da Minto, an officer upon my personal staff—'

"Luckily sober at that moment—

"'That the advanced guard of the eighth corps of the French army—'

"Stay, though, was it the eighth?—Upon my life, I'm not quite clear as to that; blot the word a little and go on—

"'That the —— corps, under Marshal Victor, had commenced a forward movement toward Alcantara, I immediately ordered a flank movement of the light infantry regiment to cover the bridge over the Tagus. After breakfast—"

"I'm afraid, Major, that is not precise enough."

"Well, 'About eleven o'clock, the French skirmishers attacked, and drove in our pickets that were posted in front of our position, and following rapidly up with cavalry, they took a few prisoners, and killed old Alphonzo; he ran like a man, they say, but they caught him in the rear.'

"You needn't put that in, if you don't like.

"'I now directed a charge of the cavalry brigade under Don Asturias Y'Hajos, that cut them up in fine style. Our artillery, posted on the heights, mowing away at their columns like fun.

"'Victor didn't like this, and got into a wood, when we all went to dinner: it was about two o'clock then.

"'After dinner, the Portuguese light corps, under Silva da Onorha, having made an attack upon the enemy's left, without my orders, got devilishly well trounced, and served them right; but, coming up to their assistance, with the heavy brigade of guns, and the cavalry, we drove back the French, and took several prisoners, none of whom we put to death.'

"Dash that—Sir Arthur likes respect for the usages of war.—Lord, how dry I'm getting!

"'The French were soon seen to retire their heavy guns, and speedily afterward retreated. We pursued them for some time, but they showed fight; and, as it was getting dark, I drew off my forces, and came here to supper. Your Excellency will perceive, by the inclosed return, that our loss has been considerable.

"'I send this dispatch by Don Emanuel Forgales, whose services—'

"I back him for mutton hash with onions against the whole regiment—

"'Have been of the most distinguished nature, and beg to recommend him to your Excellency's favor.

"'I have the honor, etc.'

"Is it finished, Charley? Egad, I'm glad of it, for here comes supper."

The door opened as he spoke, and displaying a tempting tray of smoking viands, flanked by several bottles—an officer of the

Major's staff accompanied it, and showed, by his attentions to the etiquette of the table, and the proper arrangement of the meal, that his functions in his superior's household were more than military.

We were speedily joined by two others in rich uniform, whose names I now forget, but to whom the Major presented me in all form; introducing me, as well as I could interpret his Spanish, as his most illustrious ally and friend Don Carlos O'Malley.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE SUPPER.

I HAVE often partaken of more luxurious cookery and rarer wines; but never do I remember enjoying a more welcome supper than on this occasion.

Our Portuguese guests left us soon, and the Major and myself were once more *tête-à-tête* beside a cheerful fire; a well-chosen array of bottles guaranteeing that for some time at least, no necessity of leave-taking should arise from any deficiency of wine.

"That sherry is very near the thing, Charley; a little, a very little sharp, but the after-taste perfect: and, now, my boy, how have you been doing since we parted?"

"Not so badly, Major. I have already got a step in promotion. The affair at the Douro gave me a lieutenancy."

"I wish you joy with all my heart. I'll call you Captain always while you're with me. Upon my life I will. Why, man, they style me your Excellency here. Bless your heart! we are great folk among the Portuguese, and no bad service after all."

"I should think not, Major. You seem to have always made a good thing of it."

"No, Charley; no, my boy. They overlook us greatly in general orders and dispatches. Had the brilliant action of today been fought by the British—but no matter; they may behave well in England, after all; and, when I'm called to the Upper House as Baron Monsoon of the Tagus—is that better than Lord Alcantara?"

"I prefer the latter."

"Well, then, I'll have it. Lord! what a treaty I'll move for with Portugal, to let us have wine cheap. Wine, you know, as David says, gives us a pleasant countenance; and oil, I forget what oil does,—pass over the decanter. And how is Sir Arthur, Charley? A fine fellow, but sadly deficient in the knowledge of supplies.—Never would have made any character in the commissariat.—Bless your heart, he pays for everything here, as if he were in Cheapside."

"How absurd, to be sure!"

"Isn't it, though? that was not my way, when I was commissary-general about a year or two ago. To be sure, how I did puzzle them! They tried to audit my accounts; and what do you think I did? I brought them in three thousand pounds in my debt. They never tried on that game any more. 'No! no!' said the Junta; 'Beresford and Monsoon are great men, and must be treated with respect.' Do you think we'd let them search our pockets? But the rogues doubled on us, after all; they sent us to the northward,—a poor country—"

"So that, except a little common-place pillage of the convents and nunneries, you had little or nothing?"

"Exactly so; and then I got a great shock about that time, that affected my spirits for a considerable while."

"Indeed, Major! some illness?"

"No, I was quite well; but—Lord! how thirsty it makes me to think of it! my throat is absolutely parched,—I was near being hanged!"

"Hanged!"

"Yes. Upon my life it's true—very horrible, ain't it? It had a great effect upon my nervous system; and they never thought of any little pension to me, as a recompense for my sufferings."

"And who was barbarous enough to think of such a thing, Major?"

"Sir Arthur Wellesley himself; none other, Charley."

"Oh, it was a mistake, Major, or a joke."

"It was devilish near being a practical one, though. I'll tell you how it occurred. After the battle of Vimeira, the brigade to which I was attached had their head-quarters at San Pietro, a large convent where all the church plate for miles around was stored up for safety. A sergeant's guard was accordingly stationed over the refectory, and every precaution taken to prevent pillage, Sir Arthur himself having given particular orders on the subject. Well, somehow,—I never could find out how,—but, in leaving the place, all the wagons of our brigade had got some trifling articles of small value scattered, as it might be, among their stores—gold cups, silver candlesticks, Virgin Marys, ivory crucifixes, saints' eyes set in topazes, and martyrs' toes in silver filagree, and a hundred other similar things.

"One of these confounded bullock-cars broke down just at the angle of the road

where the Commander-in-Chief was standing with his staff to watch the troops defile, and out rolled, among bread rations and salt beef, a whole avalanche of precious relics and church ornaments. Every one stood aghast: Never was there such a misfortune. No one endeavored to repair the mishap, but all looked on in terrified amazement as to what was to follow.

"'Who has the command of this detachment?' shouted out Sir Arthur, in a voice that made more than one of us tremble.

"'Monsoon, your Excellency—Major Monsoon, of the Portuguese brigade.'

"'The d—d old rogue!—I know him.' Upon my life that's what he said. 'Hang him up on the spot,' pointing with his finger as he spoke; 'we shall see if this practice cannot be put a stop to.' And with these words he rode leisurely away, as if he had been merely ordering dinner for a small party.

"When I came up to the place, the halberts were fixed, and Gronow, with a company of the Fusiliers, under arms beside them.

"'Devilish sorry for it, Major,' said he. 'It's confoundedly unpleasant, but can't be helped. We've got orders to see you hanged!'

"Faith, it was just so he said it, tapping his snuff-box as he spoke, and looking carelessly about him. Now had it not been for the fixed halberts and the Provost-Marshal, I'd not have believed him; but one glance at them, and another at the bullock-cart with all the holy images, told me at once what had happened.

"'He only means to frighten me a little? Isn't that all, Gronow?' cried I, in a supplicating voice.

"'Very possibly, Major,' said he; 'but I must execute my orders.'

"'You'll surely not—' Before I could finish, up came Dan Mackinnon, cantering smartly. 'Going to hang old Monsoon, eh, Gronow? What fun!'

"'Ain't it, though!' said I, half blubbering.

"'Well, if you're a good Catholic, you may have your choice of a saint, for, by Jupiter! there's a strong muster of them here.' This cruel allusion was made in reference to the gold and silver effigies that lay scattered about the highway.

"'Dan,' said I, in a whisper, 'intercede for me—do, like a good, kind fellow. You have influence with Sir Arthur.'

"'You old sinner,' said he, 'it's useless.'

"'Dan, I'll forgive you the fifteen pounds.'

"'That you owe *me*,' said Dan, laughing.

"'Who'll ever be the father to you I have been? Who'll mix your punch with burnt Madeira, when I'm gone?' said I.

"'Well, really, I am sorry for you, Monsoon. I say, Gronow, don't tuck him up for a few minutes; I'll speak for the old villain, and, if I succeed, I'll wave my handkerchief.'

"Well, away went Dan at a full gallop. Gronow sat down on a bank, and I fidgeted about in no very enviable frame of mind, the confounded Provost-Marshal eyeing me all the while.

"'I can only give you five minutes more, Major,' said Gronow, placing his watch beside him on the grass. I tried to pray a little, and said three or four of Solomon's proverbs, when he again called out, —'There, you see it won't do! Sir Arthur is shaking his head.'

"'What's that waving yonder?'

"'The colors of the 6th Foot.—Come, Major, off with your stock.'

"'Where is Dan now—what is he doing?'—for I could see nothing myself.

"'He's riding beside Sir Arthur. They all seem laughing.'

"'God forgive them! what an awful retrospect this will prove to some of them.'

"'Time's up!' said Gronow, jumping up and replacing his watch in his pocket.

"'Provost-Marshal, be quick now—'

"'Eh! what's that?—there I see it waving!—there's a shout, too!'

"'Ay, by Jove! so it is; well, you're saved this time, Major—that's the signal.'

"So saying, Gronow formed his fellows in line and resumed his march quite coolly, leaving me alone on the roadside to meditate over martial law and my pernicious taste for relics.

"Well, Charley, this gave me a great shock, and I think, too, it must have had a great effect upon Sir Arthur himself; but, upon my life, he has wonderful nerves. I met him one day afterward at dinner in Lisbon; he looked at me very hard for a few seconds—'Eh, Monsoon! Major Monsoon, I think?'

"'Yes, your Excellency,' said I, briefly; thinking how painful it must be for him to meet me.

"'Thought I had hanged you—know I intended it—no matter—a glass of wine with you?'

"Upon my life, that was all; how easily some people can forgive themselves! But, Charley, my hearty, we are getting on slowly with the tipple; are they all empty? so they are! let us make a sortie on the

cellar; bring a candle with you, and come along."

We had scarcely proceeded a few steps from the door, when a most vociferous sound of mirth, arising from a neighboring apartment, arrested our progress.

"Are the Dons so convivial, Major?" said I, as a hearty burst of laughter broke forth at the moment.

"Upon my life, they surprise me; I begin to fear they have taken some of our wine."

We now perceived that the sounds of merriment came from the kitchen, which opened upon a little court-yard. Into this we crept stealthily, and approaching noiselessly to the window, obtained a peep at the scene within.

Around a blazing fire, over which hung by a chain a massive iron pot, sat a goodly party of some half-dozen people. One group lay in dark shadow, but the others were brilliantly lighted up by the cheerful blaze, and showed us a portly Dominican friar, with a beard down to his waist; a buxom, dark-eyed girl of some eighteen years; and between the two, most comfortably leaning back, with an arm round each, no less a person than my trusty man, Mickey Free.

It was evident, from the alternate motion of his head, that his attentions were evenly divided between the church and the fair sex—although, to confess the truth, they seemed much more favorably received by the latter than the former—a brown earthen flagon appearing to absorb all the worthy monk's thoughts that he could spare from the contemplation of heavenly objects.

"Mary, my darlin', don't be looking at me that way, through the corner of your eye;—I know you're fond of me—but the girls always was. You think I'm joking, but troth I wouldn't say a lie before the holy man beside me; sure I wouldn't, father?"

The friar grunted out something in reply, not very unlike, in sound at least, a hearty anathema.

"Ah, then, isn't it yourself has the illigant time of it, father dear!" said he, tapping him familiarly upon his ample paunch, "and nothing to trouble you; the best of divarsion wherever you go, and whether its Badahos or Ballykilruddery, it's all one; the women is fond of ye. Father Murphy, the coadjutor in Scariff, was just such another as yourself, and he'd coax the birds off the trees with the tongue of him. Give us a pull at the pipkin before it's all gone, and I'll give you a chant."

With this he seized the jar, and drained it to the bottom; the smack of his lips as he concluded, and the disappointed look of the friar, as he peered into the vessel, throwing the others, once more, into a loud burst of laughter.

"And now, your rev'rance, a good chorus is all I'll ask, and you'll not refuse it for the honor of the church."

So saying, he turned a look of most droll expression upon the monk, and began the following ditty, to the air of

"St. Patrick was a Gentleman."

"What an illegant life a friar leads,
With a fat round paunch before him;
He mutters a prayer and counts his beads,
And all the women adore him.
It's little he's troubled to work or think,
Wherever devotion leads him:
A 'pater' pays for his dinner and drink,
For the church—good luck to her!—feeds him.

"From the cow in the field to the pig in the sty,
From the maid to the lady in satin,
They tremble, wherever he turns an eye;
He can talk to the devil in Latin!
He's mighty severe to the ugly and ould,
And curses like mad when he's near 'em;
But one beautiful trait of him I've been tould,
The innocent craytures don't fear him.

"It's little for spirits or ghosts he cares;
For 'tis true as the world supposes,
With an *ave* he'd make them march down-stairs,
Av they dared to show their noses.
The devil himself's afraid, 'tis said,
And dares not to deride him:
For 'angels make each night his bed,
And then—lie down beside him.'"

A perfect burst of laughter from Monsoon prevented my hearing how Mike's minstrelsy succeeded within doors; but, when I looked again, I found that the friar had decamped, leaving the field open to his rival—a circumstance, I could plainly perceive, not disliked by either party.

"Come back, Charley—that villain of yours has given me the cramp, standing here on the cold pavement. We'll have a little warm posset—very small and thin, as they say in Tom Jones—and then to bed."

Notwithstanding the abstemious intentions of the Major, it was daybreak ere we separated, and neither party in a condition for performing upon the tight-rope.

CHAPTER LV.

THE LEGION.

My services, while with the Legion, were of no very distinguished character, and re-

quire no lengthened chronicle. Their great feat of arms, the repulse of an advanced guard of Victor's corps, had taken place the very morning I had joined them, and the ensuing month was passed in soft repose upon their laurels.

For the first few days, indeed, a multiplicity of cares beset the worthy Major. There was a dispatch to be written to Beresford—another to the Supreme Junta—a letter to Wilson, at that time with a corps of observation to the eastward. There were some wounded to be looked after—a speech to be made to the conquering heroes themselves—and, lastly, a few prisoners were taken, whose fate seemed certainly to partake of the most uncertain of war's proverbial chances.

The dispatches gave little trouble: with some very slight alterations, the great original, already sent forward to Sir Arthur, served as a basis for the rest. The wounded were forwarded to Alcantara, with a medical staff; to whom Monsoon, at parting, pleasantly hinted, that he expected to see all the sick at their duty by an early day, or he would be compelled to report the doctors. The speech, which was intended as a kind of general order, he deferred for some favorable afternoon, when he could get up his Portuguese; and, lastly, came the prisoners, by far the most difficult of all his cares. As for the few common soldiers taken, they gave him little uneasiness; as Sir John has it, they were "mortal men, and food for powder:" but there was a staff-officer among them, aiguilletted and epauletted. The very decorations he wore were no common temptation. Now the Major deliberated a long time with himself, whether the usages of modern war might not admit of the ancient, time-honored practice of ransom. The battle, save in glory, had been singularly unproductive—plunder there was none—the few ammunition-wagons and gun-carriages were worth little or nothing; so that, save the prisoners, nothing remained. It was late in the evening—the mellow hour of the Major's meditations—when he ventured to open his heart to me upon the matter.

"I was just thinking, Charley, how very superior they were in olden time to us moderns, in many matters, and nothing more than in their treatment of prisoners. They never took them away from their friends and country; they always ransomed them—if they had wherewithal to pay their way. So good-natured—upon my life it was a most excellent custom. They took any little valuables they found about them, and then put them up at auction. Moses and Eleazar, a priest, we are told, took every piece of gold, and their wrought jewels—meaning their watches and earrings. You needn't laugh, they all wore earrings, those fellows did. Now, why shouldn't I profit by their good example? I have taken Agag the King of the Amalekites—no, but, upon my life, I have got a French Major, and I'd let him go for fifty doubloons."

It was not without much laughing and some eloquence that I could persuade Monsoon that Sir Arthur's military notions might not accept of even the authority of Moses; and, as our head-quarters were at no great distance, the danger of such a step as he meditated was too considerable at such a moment.

As for ourselves, no fatiguing drills, no harassing field-days, and no provoking inspections interfered with the easy current of our lives. Foraging parties there were, it is true, and some occasional outpost duty was performed; but the officers for both were selected with a tact that proved the Major's appreciation of character; for while the gay joyous fellow that sung a jovial song and loved his *liquor* was certain of being entertained at head-quarters, the less-gifted and less-congenial spirit had the happiness of scouring the country for forage, and presenting himself as a target to a French rifle.

My own endeavors to fulfill my instructions met with but little encouragement or support; and, although I labored hard at my task, I must confess that the soil was a most ungrateful one. The cavalry were, it is true, composed mostly of young fellows well appointed, and in most cases well mounted; but a more disorderly, careless, undisciplined set of good-humored fellows never formed a corps in the world.

Monsoon's opinions were felt in every branch of the service, from the adjutant to the drumboy—the same reckless, indolent, plunder-loving spirit prevailed everywhere. And although, under fire, they showed no lack of gallantry or courage, the moment of danger passed, discipline departed with it, and their only conception of benefiting by a victory consisted in the amount of pillage that resulted from it.

From time to time the rumors of great events reached us. We heard that Soult, having succeeded in reorganizing his beaten army, was, in conjunction with Ney's corps, returning from the north; that the Marshals were consolidating their forces in the neighborhood of Talavera, and that King Joseph himself, at the head of a large army, had marched for Madrid.

Menacing as such an aspect of affairs

was, it had little disturbed the Major's equanimity; and when our advanced posts reported daily the intelligence that the French were in retreat, he cared little with what object of concentrating they retired, provided the interval between us grew gradually wider. His speculations upon the future were singularly prophetic. "You'll see, Charley, what will happen; old Cuesta will pursue them, and get thrashed. The English will come up, and, perhaps get thrashed too; but we—God bless us!—are only a small force, partially organized and ill to depend on; we'll go up the mountains till all is over!" Thus did the Major's discretion not only extend to the avoidance of danger, but he actually disqualified himself from even making its acquaintance.

Meanwhile our operations consisted in making easy marches to Almarez, halting wherever the commissariat reported a well-stocked cellar or well-furnished hen-roost; taking the primrose path in life, and being, in the words of the Major, "contented and grateful, even amid great perils!"

CHAPTER LVI.

THE DEPARTURE.

On the morning of the 10th of July, a dispatch reached us announcing that Sir Arthur Wellesley had taken up his head-quarters at Placentia, for the purpose of communicating with Cuesta, then at Casa del Puerto, and ordering me immediately to repair to the Spanish head-quarters, and await Sir Arthur's arrival, to make my report upon the effective state of our corps. As for me, I was heartily tired of the inaction of my present life, and, much as I relished the eccentricities of my friend the Major, longed ardently for a different sphere of action.

Not so Monsoon; the prospect of active employment, and the thoughts of being left once more alone—for his Portuguese staff afforded him little society—depressed him greatly, and, as the hour of my departure drew near, he appeared lower in spirits than I had ever seen him.

"I shall be very lonely without you, Charley," said he, with a sigh, as we sat the last evening together beside our cheerful wood fire. "I have little intercourse with the Dons; for my Portuguese is none of the best, and only comes when the evening is far advanced; and, besides, the villains, I fear, may remember the sherry affair. Two of my present staff were with me then."

"Is that the story Power so often alluded to, Major, the King of Spain's—?"

"There, Charley, hush—be cautious, my boy. I'd rather not speak about that till we get amongst our own fellows."

"Just as you like, Major; but, do you know, I have a strong curiosity to hear the narrative."

"If I'm not mistaken, there is some one listening at the door—gently—that's it, eh?"

"No, we are perfectly alone; the night's early—who knows when we shall have as quiet an hour again together? Let me hear it, by all means."

"Well, I don't care; the thing, Heaven knows! is tolerably well known; so, if you'll amuse yourself making a devil of the turkey's legs there, I'll tell you the story. It's very short, Charley, and there's no moral; so you're not likely to repeat it."

So saying, the Major filled up his glass, drew a little closer to the fire, and began:

"When the French troops under Laborde were marching upon Alcobaca, in concert with Loison's corps, I was ordered to convey a very valuable present of sherry the Duc d'Albuquerque was making to the Supreme Junta—no less than ten hogsheads of the best sherry the royal cellars of Madrid had formerly contained.

"It was stored in the San Vincente convent; and the Junta, knowing a little about monkish tastes and the wants of the church, prudently thought it would be quite as well at Lisbon. I was accordingly ordered with a sufficient force to provide for its safe-conduct and secure arrival, and set out upon my march one lovely morning in April with my precious convoy.

"I don't know, I never could understand, why temptations are thrown in our way in this life, except for the pleasure of yielding to them. As for me, I'm a stoic when there's nothing to be had; but, let me get a scent of a well-kept haunch, the odor of a wine-bin once in my nose, I forget everything except appropriation.—That bone smells deliciously, Charley; a little garlic would improve it vastly.

"Our road lay through cross paths and mountain tracts—for the French were scouring the country on every side—and my fellows, only twenty altogether, trembled at the very name of them; so that our only chance was to avoid falling in with any forage parties. We journeyed along for several days, rarely making more than a few leagues between sunrise and

sunset, a scout always in advance to assure us that all was safe. The road was a lonesome one, and the way weary—for I had no one to speak to or converse with—so I fell into a kind of musing fit about the old wine in the great brown casks. I thought on its luscious flavor, its rich straw tint, its oily look as it flowed into the glass, the mellow after-taste, warming the heart as it went down, and I absolutely thought I could smell it through the wood.

"How I longed to broach one of them, if it were only to see if my dreams about it were correct. 'Maybe it's brown sherry,' thought I, 'and I am all wrong.' This was a very distressing reflection. I mentioned it to the Portuguese Intendant, who traveled with us as a kind of supercargo; but the villain only grinned, and said something about the Junta and the galleys for life; so I did not recur to it afterward. Well, it was upon the third evening of our march that the scout reported that at Merida, about a league distant, he had fallen in with an English cavalry regiment, who were on their march to the northern provinces, and remaining that night in the village. As soon, therefore, as I had made all my arrangements for the night, I took a fresh horse, and cantered over to have a look at my countrymen, and hear the news. When I arrived it was dark night; but I was not long in finding out our fellows. They were the 11th Light Dragoons, commanded by my old friend Bows, and with as jolly a mess as any in the service.

"Before half an hour's time I was in the midst of them, hearing all about the campaign, and telling them in return about my convoy—dilating upon the qualities of the wine, as if I had been drinking it every day at dinner.

"We had a very mellow night of it, and before four o'clock the senior major and four captains were under the table, and all the subs. in a state unprovided for by the articles of war. So I thought I'd be going, and, wishing the sober ones a good-by, set out on my road to join my own party.

"I had not gone above a hundred yards when I heard some one running after, and calling out my name.

"'I say, Monsoon; Major, confound you, pull up.'

"'Well, what's the matter? has any more lush turned up?' inquired I, for we had drank the tap dry when I left.

"'Not a drop, old fellow!' said he; 'but I was thinking of what you've been saying about that sherry.'

"'Well! What then?'

"'Why, I want to know how we could get a taste of it?'

"You'd better get elected one of the Cortes,' said I, laughing; 'for it does not seem likely you'll do so in any other way.'

"'I'm not so sure of that,' said he, smiling. 'What road do you travel tomorrow?'

"'By Cavalhos and Reina.'

"'Whereabouts may you happen to be toward sunset?'

"'I fear we shall be in the mountains,' said I, with a knowing look, 'where ambuscades and surprise parties would be highly dangerous.'

"'And your party consists of—?'

"'About twenty Portuguese, all ready to run at the first shot.'

"'I'll do it, Monsoon! I'll be hanged if I don't.'

"'But, Tom,' said I, 'don't make any blunder; only blank cartridge, my boy.'

"'Honor bright!' cried he; 'your fellows are armed, of course?'

"'Never think of that; they may shoot each other in the confusion; but, if you only make plenty of noise coming on, they'll never wait for you.'

"'What capital fellows they must be!'

"'Crack troops, Tom; so don't hurt them: and now, good-night.'

"As I cantered off, I began to think over O'Flaherty's idea, and, upon my life, I didn't half like it: he was a reckless devil-may-care fellow, and it was just as likely he would really put his scheme into practice.

"When morning broke, however, we got under way again, and I amused myself all the forenoon in detailing stories of French cruelty; so that, before we had marched ten miles, there was not a man amongst us not ready to run at the slightest sound of attack on any side. As evening was falling we reached Morento, a little mountain pass which follows the course of a small river, and where, in many places, the mule-carts had barely space enough to pass between the cliffs and the stream. 'What a place for Tom O'Flaherty and his foragers!' thought I, as we entered the little mountain gorge; but all was silent as the grave; except the tramp of our party, not a sound was heard. There was something solemn and still in the great brown mountain, rising like vast walls on either side, with a narrow streak of gray sky at top, and in the dark sluggish stream, that seemed to awe us, and no one spoke; the muleteer ceased his merry song, and did not crack or flourish his long whip as before, but chid his beasts in a half-muttered voice,

and urged them faster, to reach the village before nightfall.

"Egad, somehow, I felt uncommonly uncomfortable; I could not divest my mind of the impression that some disaster was impending, and I wished O'Flaherty and his project in a very warm climate. 'He'll attack us,' thought I, 'where we can't run; fair play forever; but, if they are not able to get away, even the militia will fight.' However, the evening crept on, and no sign of his coming appeared on any side, and, to my sincere satisfaction, I could see, about half a league distant, the twinkling light of the little village where we were to halt for the night. It was just at this time that a scout I had sent out some few hundred yards in advance came galloping up, almost breathless.

"'The French, captain; the French are upon us!' said he, with a face like a ghost.

"'Whew! Which way? how many?' said I, not at all sure that he might not be telling the truth.

"'Coming in force!' said the fellow: 'dragoons! by this road.'

"'Dragoons? By this road?' repeated every man of the party, looking at each other like men sentenced to be hanged.

"Scarcely had they spoken, when we heard the distant noise of cavalry advancing at a brisk trot. Lord, what a scene ensued! the soldiers ran hither and thither like frightened sheep; some pulled out crucifixes and began to say their prayers; others fired off their muskets in a panic; the mule-drivers cut their traces, and endeavored to get away by riding; and the Intendant took to his heels, screaming out to us, as he went, to fight manfully to the last, and that he'd report us favorably to the Junta.

"Just at this moment, the dragoons came in sight; they came galloping up, shouting like madmen. One look was enough for my fellows; they sprang to their legs from their devotions; fired a volley straight at the new moon, and ran like men.

"I was knocked down in the rush. As I regained my legs, Tom O'Flaherty was standing beside me, laughing like mad.

"'Eh, Monsoon! I've kept my word, old fellow! What legs they have! we shall make no prisoners, that's certain.—Now, lads, here it is! put the horses to, here. We shall take but one, Monsoon, so that your gallant defense of the rest will please the Junta. Good-night; good-night! I will drink your health every night these two months.'

"So saying, Tom sprang to his saddle, and in less time than I've been telling it the whole was over, and I sitting by myself in the gray moonlight, meditating on all I saw, and now and then shouting for my Portuguese friends to come back again. They came in time, by twos and threes, and at last the whole party reassembled, and we set forth again,—every man, from the Intendant to the drummer, lauding my valor, and saying that Don Monsoon was a match for the Cid."

"And how did the Junta behave?"

"Like trumps, Charley. Made me a Knight of Battalha, and kissed me on both cheeks, having sent twelve dozen of the rescued wine to my quarters, as a small testimony of their esteem. I have laughed very often at it since. But, hush! Charley. What's that I hear without there?"

"Oh, it's my fellow Mike. He asked my leave to entertain his friends before parting, and I perceive he is delighting them with a song."

"But, what a confounded air it is! Are the words Hebrew?"

"Irish, Major; most classical Irish, too, I'll be bound."

"Irish! I've heard most tongues; but that certainly surprises me. Call him in, Charley, and let us have the canticle."

In a few minutes more, Mr. Free appeared in a state of very satisfactory elevation, his eyebrows alternately rising and falling, his mouth a little drawn to one side, and a side motion in his knee-joints that might puzzle a physiologist to account for.

"A sweet little song of yours, Mike," said the Major; "a very sweet thing indeed. Wet your lips, Mickey."

"Long life to your honor, and Master Charles there too, and them that belongs to both of yez. May a gooseberry skin make a nightcap for the man would harm either of ye."

"Thank you, Mike. And now about that song."

"It's the ouldest tune ever was sung," said Mike, with a hiccup, "barring Adam had a taste for music; but the words—the poethry is not so ould."

"And how comes that?"

"The poethry, ye see, was put to it by one of my ancesthors—he was a great inventhor in times past, and made beautiful songs—and ye'd never guess what it's all about."

"Love, mayhap?" quoth Monsoon.

"Sorra taste of kissing from beginning to end."

"A drinking song?" said I.

"Whisky is never mentioned."

"Fighting is the only other national pastime. It must be in praise of sudden death?"

"You're out again; but sure you'd never guess it," said Mike. "Well, ye see, here's what it is. It's the praise and glory of ould Ireland in the great days that's gone, when we were all Phenayceans and Armenians, and when we worked all manner of beautiful contrivances in goold and silver; bracelets, and collars, and teapots, illigant to look at; and read Roosian and Latin, and played the harp and the barrel-organ; and ate and drank of the best, for nothing but asking."

"Blessed times, upon my life!" quoth the Major; "I wish we had them back again."

"There's more of your mind," said Mike, steadying himself. "My ancesthors was great people in them days; and sure it isn't in my present situation I'd be av we had them back again—sorra bit, faith! It isn't, 'Come here, Mickey, bad luck to you, Mike!' or, 'That blackguard, Mickey Free!' people'd be calling me. But no matter; here's your health again, Major Monsoon—"

"Never mind vain regrets, Mike. Let us hear your song; the Major has taken a great fancy to it."

"Ah, then, it's joking you are, Mister Charles," said Mike, affecting an air of most bashful coyness.

"By no means; we want to hear you sing it."

"To be sure we do. Sing it by all means; never be ashamed. King David was very fond of singing—upon my life he was."

"But you'd never understand a word of it, sir."

"No mattter; we know what it's about. That's the way with the Legion; they don't know much English, but they generally guess what I'm at."

This argument seemed to satisfy all Mike's remaining scruples, so, placing himself in an attitude of considerable pretension as to grace, he began, with a voice of no very measured compass, an air of which, neither by name nor otherwise, can I give any conception; my principal amusement being derived from a tol-de-rol chorus of the Major, which concluded each verse, and, indeed, in a lower key, accompanied the singer throughout.

Since that I have succeeded in obtaining a free-and-easy translation of the lyric; but in my anxiety to preserve the meter and something of the spirit of the original, I have made several blunders and many anachronisms. Mr. Free, however, pronounces my version a good one; and the world must take his word till some more worthy translator shall have consigned it to immortal verse.

With this apology, therefore, I present Mr. Free's song:

Air—"*Na Guilloch y' Goulen.*"

"Oh! once we were illigint people,
Though we now live in cabins of mud;
And the land that ye see from the steeple
Belonged to us all from the Flood.
My father was then King of Connaught,
My grand-aunt Viceroy of Tralee;
But the Sassenach came, and, signs on it,
The devil an acre have we.

"The least of us then were all earls,
And jewels we wore without name;
We drank punch out of rubies and pearls—
Mr. Petrie can tell you the same.
But, except some turf mold and potatoes,
There's nothing our own we can call;
And the English—bad luck to them!—hate us,
Because we've more fun than them all!

"My grand-aunt was niece to St. Kevin,
That's the reason my name's Mickey Free!
Priest's nieces—but sure he's in heaven,
And his failin's is nothin' to me.
And we still might get on without doctors,
If they'd let the ould Island alone;
And if purple men, priests, and tithe-proctors,
Were crammed down the great gun of Athlone."

As Mike's melody proceeded, the Major's thorough bass waxed beautifully less—now and then, it's true, roused by some momentary strain, it swelled upward in full chorus, but gradually these passing flights grew rarer, and finally all ceased, save a long, low, droning sound, like the expiring sigh of a wearied bagpipe. His fingers still continued mechanically to beat time upon the table, and still his head nodded sympathetically to the music; his eyelids closed in sleep, and, as the last verse concluded, a full-drawn snore announced that Monsoon, if not in the land of dreams, was, at least, in a happy oblivion of all terrestrial concerns, and caring as little for the woes of green Erin and the altered fortunes of the Free family as any Saxon that ever oppressed them.

There he sat, the finished decanter and empty goblet testifying that his labors had only ceased from the pressure of necessity; but the broken, half-uttered words that fell from his lips evinced that he reposed on the last bottle of the series.

"Oh, thin! he's a fine old gentleman," said Mike, after a pause of some minutes,

during which he had been contemplating the Major with all the critical acumen Chantrey or Canova would have bestowed upon an antique statue—"a fine ould gentleman, every inch of him; and it's the master would like to have him up at the castle."

"Quite true, Mike: but let us not forget the road. Look to the cattle, and be ready to start within an hour."

When he left the room for this purpose, I endeavored to shake the Major into momentary consciousness ere we parted.

"Major, Major," said I, "time is up. I must start."

"Yes, it's all true, your Excellency; they pillaged a little; and, if they did change their facings, there was a great temptation. All the red velvet they found in the churches—"

"Good-by, old fellow, good-by!"

"Stand at ease!"

"Can't, unfortunately, yet awhile: so farewell. I'll make a capital report of the Legion to Sir Arthur; shall I add anything particularly from yourself?"

This, and the shake that accompanied it, aroused him: he started up, and looked about him for a few seconds.

"Eh, Charley! You didn't say Sir Arthur was here, did you?"

"No, Major; don't be frightened; he's many a league off. I asked if you had anything to say when I met him?"

"Oh yes, Charley. Tell him we're capital troops in our own little way in the mountains; would never do in pitched battles; skirmishing's our forte; and, for cutting off stragglers or sacking a town, back them at any odds."

"Yes, yes, I know all that: you've nothing more?"

"Nothing," said he, once more closing his eyes and crossing his hands before him, while his lips continued to mutter on, "Nothing more—except you may say from me,—he knows me, Sir Arthur does. Tell him to guard himself from intemperance: a fine fellow if he wouldn't drink."

"You horrid old humbug, what nonsense are you muttering there?"

"Yes, yes; Solomon says, 'Who hath red eyes and carbuncles?'—they that mix their lush. Pure *Sneyd* never injured any one. Tell him so from me: it's an old man's advice, and I have drunk some hogsheads of it."

With these words he ceased to speak, while his head, falling gently forward upon his chest, proclaimed him sound asleep.

"Adieu! then, for the last time," said I, slapping him gently on the shoulder; "and now for the road."

CHAPTER LVII.

CUESTA.

The second day of our journey was drawing to a close as we came in view of the Spanish army.

The position they occupied was an undulating plain beside the Teitar river: the country presented no striking feature of picturesque beauty; but the scene before us needed no such aid to make it one of the most interesting kind. From the little mountain path we traveled, we beheld beneath a force of thirty thousand men drawn up in battle array; dense columns of infantry alternating with squadrons of horse or dark masses of artillery dotted the wide plain, the bright steel glittering in the rich sunset of a July evening, when not a breath of air was stirring: the very banners hung down listlessly, and not a sound broke the solemn stillness of the hour. All was silent: so impressive and so strange was the spectacle of a vast army thus resting mutely under arms, that I reined in my horse and almost doubted the reality of the scene as I gazed upon it. The dark shadows of the tall mountain were falling across the valley, and a starry sky was already replacing the ruddy glow of sunset as we reached the plain; but still no change took place in the position of the Spanish army.

"Who goes there?" cried a hoarse voice as we issued from the mountain gorge, and in a moment we found ourselves surrounded by an outpost party. Having explained, as well as I was able, who I was and for what reason I was there, I proceeded to accompany the officer toward the camp.

On my way thither I learned the reason of the singular display of troops which had been so puzzling to me. From an early hour of that day Sir Arthur Wellesley's arrival had been expected, and old Cuesta had drawn up his men for inspection, and remained thus for several hours patiently awaiting his coming; he himself overwhelmed with years and infirmity, sitting upon his horse the entire time.

As it was not necessary that I should be presented to the general, my report being for the ear of Sir Arthur himself, I willingly availed myself of the hospitality proffered by a Spanish officer of cavalry; and, having provided for the comforts of my tired cattle and taken a hasty supper, issued forth to look at the troops, which, although it was now growing late, were still in the same attitude.

Scarcely had I been half an hour thus

occupied, when the stillness of the scene was suddenly interrupted by the loud report of a large gun, immediately followed by a long roll of musketry, while, at the same moment, the bands of the different regiments struck up, and, as if by magic, a blaze of red light streamed across the dark ranks: this was effected by pine-torches held aloft at intervals, throwing a lurid glow upon the grim and swarthy features of the Spaniards, whose brown uniforms and slouching hats presented a most picturesque effect as the red light fell upon them.

The swell of the thundering cannon grew louder and nearer; the shouldering of muskets, the clash of sabres, and the hoarse roll of the drum mingling in one common din. I at once guessed that Sir Arthur had arrived, and, as I turned the flank of a battalion, I saw the staff approaching.

Nothing can be conceived more striking than their advance. In the front rode old Cuesta himself, clad in the costume of a past century, his slashed doublet and trunk hose reminding one of a more chivalrous period; his heavy, unwieldy figure, looming from side to side, and threatening at each moment to fall from his saddle. On each side of him walked two figures gorgeously dressed, whose duty appeared to be to sustain the chief in his seat. At his side rode a far different figure. Mounted upon a slight-made, active thorough-bred, whose drawn flanks bespoke a long and weary journey, sat Sir Arthur Wellesley, a plain blue frock and gray trowsers being his unpretending costume; but the eagle glance which he threw around on every side, the quick motion of his hand as he pointed hither and thither among the dense battalions, bespoke him every inch a soldier. Behind them came a brilliant staff, glittering in aiguillettes and golden trappings, among whom I recognized some well-remembered faces; our gallant leader at the Douro, Sir Charles Stewart, among the number.

As they passed the spot where I was standing, the torch of a foot-soldier behind me flared suddenly up, and threw a strong flash upon the party. Cuesta's horse grew frightened, and plunged so fearfully for a minute, that the poor old man could scarcely keep his seat. A smile shot across Sir Arthur's features at the moment, but the next instant he was grave and steadfast as before.

A wretched hovel, thatched and in ruins, formed the head-quarters of the Spanish army, and thither the staff now bent their steps; a supper being provided there for our Commander-in-Chief and the officers of his suite. Although not of the privileged party, I lingered round the spot for some time, anxiously expecting to find some friend or acquaintance, who might tell me the news of our people, and what events had occurred in my absence.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE LETTER.

THE hours passed slowly over, and I at length grew weary of waiting. For some time I had amused myself with observing the slouching gait and unsoldier-like air of the Spaniards as they lounged carelessly about; looking in dress, gesture, and appointment, far more like a guerilla than a regular force. Then, again, the strange contrast of the miserable hut, with falling chimney and ruined walls, to the glitter of the mounted guard of honor who sat motionless beside it, served to pass the time; but, as the night was already far advanced, I turned toward my quarters, hoping that the next morning might gratify my curiosity about my friends.

Beside the tent where I was billeted, I found Mike in waiting, who, the moment he saw me, came hastily forward with a letter in his hand. An officer of Sir Arthur's staff had left it while I was absent, desiring Mike on no account to omit its delivery the first instant he met me. The hand—not a very legible one—was perfectly unknown to me, and the appearance of the billet such as betrayed no over-scrupulous care in the writer.

I trimmed my lamp leisurely, threw a fresh log upon the fire, disposed myself completely at full length beside it, and then proceeded to form acquaintance with my unknown correspondent. I will not attempt any description of the feelings which gradually filled me as I read on; the letter itself will suggest them to those who know my story. It ran thus:

"Placentia, July 8, 1809.

"DEAR O'MALLEY,—Although I'd rather march to Lisbon barefoot than write three lines, Fred Power insists upon my turning scribe, as he has a notion you'll be up at Cuesta's head-quarters about this time. You're in a nice scrape, devil a lie in it! Here has Fred been fighting that fellow Trevyllian for you—all because you would not have patience and fight him yourself the morning you left the Douro—

so much for haste! Let it be a lesson to you for life.

"Poor Fred got the ball in his hip, and the devil a one of the doctors can find it. But he's getting better anyway, and going to Lisbon for change of air. Meanwhile, since Power's been wounded, Trevyllian's speaking very hardly of you, and they all say here you must come back—no matter how—and put matters to rights. Fred has placed the thing in my hands, and I'm thinking we'd better call out the 'heavies' by turns; for most of them stand by Trevyllian. Maurice Quill and myself sat up considering it last night; but, somehow, we don't clearly remember to-day a beautiful plan we hit upon. However, we'll have at it again this evening. Meanwhile, come over here, and let us be doing something. We hear that old Monsoon has blown up a town, a bridge, and a big convent. They must have been hiding the plunder very closely, or he'd never have been reduced to such extremities. We'll have a brush with the French soon.

"Yours most eagerly,
"D. O'SHAUGHNESSY."

My first thought, as I ran my eye over these lines, was to seek for Power's note, written on the morning we parted. I opened it, and to my horror found that it only related to my quarrel with Hammersley. My meeting with Trevyllian had been during Fred's absence, and—when he assured me that all was satisfactorily arranged and a full explanation tendered; that nothing interfered with my departure—I utterly forgot that he was only aware of one half my troubles; and, in the haste and bustle of my departure, had not a moment left me to collect myself and think calmly on the matter. The two letters lay before me, and, as I thought over the stain upon my character thus unwittingly incurred,—the blast I had thrown upon my reputation, the wound of my poor friend, who exposed himself for my sake,—I grew sick at heart, and the bitter tears of agony burst from my eyes.

That weary night passed slowly over; the blight of all my prospects, when they seemed fairest and brightest, presented itself to me in a hundred shapes; and when, overcome by fatigue and exhaustion, I closed my eyes to sleep, it was only to follow up in my dreams my waking thoughts. Morning came at length; but its bright sunshine and balmy air brought no comfort to me: I absolutely dreaded to meet my brother officers; I felt that, in such a position as I stood, no half or partial explanation could suffice to set me right in their estimation; and yet, what opportunity had I for aught else? Irresolute how to act, I sat leaning my head upon my hands, when I heard a footstep approach; I looked up and saw before me no other than my poor friend Sparks, from whom I had been separated so long. Any other adviser at such a moment would, I acknowledge, have been as welcome; for the poor fellow knew but little of the world, and still less of the service. However, one glance convinced me that his heart at least was true, and I shook his outstretched hand with delight. In a few words he informed me that Merivale had secretly commissioned him to come over, in the hope of meeting me; that although all the 14th men were persuaded that I was not to blame in what had occurred, yet that reports so injurious had gone abroad, so many partial and imperfect statements were circulated, that nothing but my return to head-quarters would avail, and that I must not lose a moment in having Trevyllian out, with whom all the misrepresentation had originated.

"This, of course," said Sparks, "is to be a secret; Merivale, being our Colonel—"

"Of course," said I, "he cannot countenance, much less counsel, such a proceeding. Now, then, for the road."

"Yes; but you cannot leave before making your report. Gordon expects to see you at eleven; he told me so last night."

"I cannot help it; I shall not wait; my mind is made up. My career here matters but little in comparison with this horrid charge. I shall be broke, but I shall be avenged."

"Come, come, O'Malley; you are in our hands now, and you must be guided. You *shall* wait; you shall see Gordon: half an hour will make your report, and I have relays of horses along the road, and we shall reach Placentia by nightfall."

There was a tone of firmness in this, so unlike anything I ever looked for in the speaker, and withal so much of foresight and precaution, that I could scarcely credit my senses as he spoke. Having, at length, agreed to his proposals, Sparks left me to think over my return of the Legion, promising that, immediately after my interview with the Military Secretary, we should start together for head-quarters.

CHAPTER LIX.

MAJOR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

"THIS is Major O'Shaughnessy's quarters, sir," said a sergeant, as he stopped short

at the door of a small low house in the midst of an olive plantation; an Irish wolf-dog—the well-known companion of the Major—lay stretched across the entrance, watching with eager and bloodshot eyes the process of cutting up a bullock, which two soldiers in undress jackets were performing within a few yards of the spot.

Stepping cautiously across the savage-looking sentinel, I entered the little hall, and, finding no one near, passed into a small room, the door of which lay half open.

A very palpable odor of cigars and brandy proclaimed, even without his presence, that this was O'Shaughnessy's sitting-room; so I sat myself down upon an old-fashioned sofa to wait patiently for his return, which I heard would be immediately after the evening parade. Sparks had become knocked up during our ride, so that for the last three leagues I was alone; and, like most men in such circumstances, pressed on only the harder. Completely worn out for want of rest, I had scarcely placed myself on the sofa when I fell sound asleep. When I awoke, all was dark around me, save the faint flickerings of the wood embers on the hearth, and for some moments I could not remember where I was; but by degrees recollection came, and as I thought over my position and its possible consequences, I was again nearly dropping to sleep, when the door suddenly opened, and a heavy step sounded on the floor.

I lay still and spoke not, as a large figure in a cloak approached the fireplace, and stooping down endeavored to light a candle at the fast expiring fire.

I had little difficulty in detecting the Major even by the half-light; a muttered execration upon the candle, given with an energy that only an Irishman ever bestows upon slight matters, soon satisfied me on this head.

"May the devil fly away with the commissary and the chandler to the forces! Ah! you've lit at last."

With these words he stood up, and his eyes falling on me at the moment, he sprang a yard or two backward, exclaiming, as he did so, "The blessed Virgin be near us, what's this?" a most energetic crossing of himself accompanying his words. My pale and haggard face, thus suddenly presented, having suggested to the worthy Major the impression of a supernatural visitor, a hearty burst of laughter, which I could not resist, was my only answer; and the next moment O'Shaughnessy was wrenching my hand in a grasp like a steel vice.

"Upon my conscience, I thought it was your ghost; and, if you kept quiet a little longer, I was going to promise you Christian burial, and as many masses for your soul as my uncle the bishop could say between this and Easter. How are you, my boy? a little thin and something paler, I think, than when you left us."

Having assured him that fatigue and hunger were in a great measure the cause of my sickly looks, the Major proceeded to place before me the *débris* of his day's dinner, with a sufficiency of bottles to satisfy a mess-table, keeping up as he went a running fire of conversation.

"I'm as glad as if the Lord took the senior Major to see you here this night. With the blessing of Providence we'll shoot Trevyllian in the morning, and any more of the heavies that like it. You are an ill-treated man, that's what it is, and Dan O'Shaughnessy says it. Help yourself, my boy: crusty old port in that bottle as ever you touched your lips to. Power's getting all right; it was contract powder, warranted not to kill. Bad luck to the commissaries once more! With such ammunition Sir Arthur does right to trust most to the bayonet. And how is Monsoon, the old rogue?"

"Gloriously; living in the midst of wine and olives."

"No fear of him, the old sinner; but he is a fine fellow, after all. Charley, you are eating nothing, boy."

"To tell you the truth, I'm far more anxious to talk with you at this moment than aught else."

"So you shall: the night's young. Meanwhile, I had better not delay matters. You want to have Trevyllian out—is not that so?"

"Of course; you are aware how it happened?"

"I know everything. Go on with your supper, and don't mind me; I'll be back in twenty minutes or less."

Without waiting for any reply, he threw his cloak around him, and strode out of the room. Once more I was alone; bu already my frame of mind was altered—the cheering tone of my reckless, gallant countryman had raised my spirits, and I felt animated by his very manner.

An hour elapsed before the Major returned, and, when he did come, his appearance and gestures bespoke anger and disappointment. He threw himself hurriedly into a seat, and for some minutes never spoke.

"The world's beautifully changed, anyhow, since I began it, O'Malley—when you thanked a man civilly that asked you to

fight him. The devil take the cowards! say I."

"What has happened? Tell me, I beseech you!"

"He won't fight," said the Major, blurting out the words as if they would choke him.

"He'll not fight! And why?"

The Major was silent: he seemed confused and embarrassed; he turned from the fire to the table, from the table to the fire, filled out a glass of wine, drank it hastily off, and, springing from his chair, paced the room with long, impatient strides.

"My dear O'Shaughnessy, explain, I beg of you. Does he refuse to meet me for any reason—"

"He does," said the Major, turning on me a look of deep feeling as he spoke; "and he does it to ruin you, my boy; but, as sure as my name is Dan, he'll fail this time. He was sitting with his friend Beaufort when I reached his quarters, and received me with all the ceremonious politeness he well knows how to assume. I told him in a few words the object of my visit; upon which Trevyllian, standing up, referred me to his friend for a reply, and left the room. I thought that all was right, and sat down to discuss, as I believed, preliminaries, when the cool puppy, with his back to the fire, carelessly lisped out, 'It can't be, Major; your friend is too late.'

"'Too late! too late?' said I.

"'Yes, precisely so. Not up to time; the affair should have come off some weeks since. We won't meet him now.'

"'This is really your answer?'

"'This is really my answer; and not only so, but the decision of our mess.'

"What I said after this *he* may remember. Devil take me if *I* can; but I have a vague recollection of saying something that the aforesaid mess will never petition the Horse Guards to put on their regimental colors: and here I am—"

With these words the Major gulped down a full goblet of wine, and once more resumed his walk through the room. I shall not attempt to record the feelings which agitated me during the Major's recital. In one rapid glance I saw the aim of my vindictive enemy. My honor, not my life, was the object he sought for; and ten thousand times more than ever did I pant for the opportunity to confront him in a deadly combat.

"Charley," said O'Shaughnessy, at length, placing his hand upon my shoulder, "you must get to bed now—nothing more can be done to-night in any way. Be assured of one thing, my boy—I'll not desert you; and if that assurance can give you a sound sleep, you'll not need a lullaby."

CHAPTER LX.

PRELIMINARIES.

I AWOKE refreshed on the following morning, and came down to breakfast with a lighter heart than I had even hoped for; a secret feeling that all would go well had somehow taken possession of me, and I longed for O'Shaughnessy's coming, trusting that he might be able to confirm my hopes. His servant informed me that the Major had been absent since daybreak, and left orders that he was not to be waited for at breakfast.

I was not destined, however, to pass a solitary time in his absence, for every moment brought some new arrival to visit me, and during the morning the Colonel and every officer of the regiment not on actual duty came over. I soon learned that the feeling respecting Trevyllian's conduct was one of unmixed condemnation among my own corps; but that a kind of party spirit, which had subsisted for some months between the regiment he belonged to and the 14th, had given a graver character to the affair, and induced many men to take up his views of the transaction; and, although I heard of none who attributed my absence to any dislike to a meeting, yet there were several who conceived that, by my going at the time, I had forfeited all claim to satisfaction at his hands.

"Now that Merivale is gone," said an officer to me, as the Colonel left the room, "I may confess to you that he sees nothing to blame in your conduct throughout; and, even had you been aware of how matters were circumstanced, your duty was too imperative to have preferred your personal considerations to it!"

"Does any one know where Conyers is?" said Baker.

"The story goes that Conyers can assist us here. Conyers is at Zarza la Mayor, with the 28th—but what can he do?"

"That I'm not able to tell you; but I know O'Shaughnessy heard something at parade this morning, and has set off in search of him on every side."

"Was Conyers ever out with Trevyllian?"

"Not as a principal, I believe. The report is, however, that he knows more about

him than other people, as Tom certainly does of everybody."

"It is rather a new thing for Trevyllian to refuse a meeting. They say, O'Malley, he has heard of your shooting!"

"No, no," said another, "he cares very little for any man's pistol. If the story be true, he fires a second or two before his adversary; at least, it was in that way he killed Carysfort."

"Here comes the great O'Shaughnessy!" cried some one at the window; and the next moment the heavy gallop of a horse was heard along the causeway.

In an instant we all rushed to the door to receive him.

"It's all right, lads," cried he, as he came up: "we have him this time."

"How? when? why? in what way have you managed?" fell from a dozen voices, as the Major elbowed his way through the crowd to the sitting-room.

"In the first place," said O'Shaughnessy, drawing a long breath, "I have promised secrecy as to the steps of this transaction; secondly, if I hadn't, it would puzzle me to break it, for I'll be hanged if I know more than yourselves. Tom Conyers wrote me a few lines for Trevyllian; and Trevyllian pledges himself to meet our friend; and that's all we need know or care for."

"Then you have seen Trevyllian this this morning?"

"No, Beaufort met me at the village: but even now it seems this affair is never to come off. Trevyllian has been sent with a forage party toward Lesco; however, that can't be a long absence. But, for Heaven's sake! let me have some breakfast."

While O'Shaughnessy proceeded to the attack of the viands before him, the others chatted about in little groups; but all wore the pleased and happy looks of men who had rescued their friend from a menaced danger. As for myself, my heart swelled with gratitude to the kind fellows around me.

"How has Conyers assisted us at this juncture?" was my first question to O'Shaughnessy, when we were once more alone.

"I am not at liberty to speak on that subject, Charley. But be satisfied the reasons for which Trevyllian meets you are fair and honorable."

"I am content."

"The only thing now to be done is, to have the meeting as soon as possible."

"We are all agreed upon that point," said I; "and the more so as the matter had better be decided before Sir Arthur's return."

"Quite true; and now, O'Malley, you had better join your people as soon as may be, and it will put a stop to all talking about the matter."

The advice was good, and I lost no time in complying with it, and, when I joined the regiment that day at mess, it was with a light heart and a cheerful spirit; for, come what might of the affair, one thing I was certain—my character was now put above any reach of aspersion, and my reputation beyond attack.

CHAPTER LXI.

ALL RIGHT.

Some days after coming back to headquarters, I was returning from a visit I had been making to a friend at one of the outposts, when an officer, whom I knew slightly, overtook me and informed me that Major O'Shaughnessy had been to my quarters in search of me, and had sent persons in different directions to find me.

Suspecting the object of the Major's haste, I hurried on at once, and, as I rode up to the spot, found him in the midst of a group of officers engaged, to all appearance, in most eager conversation. "Oh, here he comes!" cried he, as I cantered up. "Come, my boy, doff the blue frock, as soon as you can, and turn out in your best fitting black. Everything has been settled for this evening at seven o'clock, and we have no time to lose."

"I understand you," said I, "and shall not keep you waiting." So saying, I sprang from my saddle and hastened to my quarters; as I entered the room I was followed by O'Shaughnessy, who closed the door after him as he came in, and having turned the key in it, sat down beside the table, and, folding his arms, seemed buried in reflection. As I proceeded with my toilet he returned no answers to the numerous questions I put to him, either as to the time of Trevyllian's return, the place of the meeting, or any other part of the transaction.

His attention seemed to wander far from all around and about him; and, as he muttered indistinctly to himself, the few words I could catch bore not in the remotest degree upon the matter before us.

"I have written a letter or two, here, Major," said I, opening my writing-desk; "in case anything happens, you will look to a few things I have mentioned here. Somehow, I could not write to poor Fred

Power; but you must tell him from me that his noble conduct toward me was the last thing I spoke of."

"What confounded nonsense you are talking!" said O'Shaughnessy, springing from his seat and crossing the room with tremendous strides; "croaking away there as if the bullet was in your thorax. Hang it, man, bear up!"

"But, Major, my dear friend, what the deuce are you thinking of? The few things I mentioned—"

"The devil! you are not going over it all again, are you?" said he, in a voice of no measured tone.

I now began to feel irritated in turn, and really looked at him for some seconds in considerable amazement. That he should have mistaken the directions I was giving him and attributed them to any cowardice, was too insulting a thought to bear; and yet how otherwise was I to understand the very coarse style of his interruption?

At length my temper got the victory, and, with a voice of most measured calmness, I said, "Major O'Shaughnessy, I am grateful, most deeply grateful, for the part you have acted toward me in this difficult business; at the same time, as you now appear to disapprove of my conduct and bearing, when I am most firmly determined to alter nothing, I shall beg to relieve you of the unpleasant office of my friend."

"Heaven grant that you could do so!" said he, interrupting me, while his clasped hands and eager look attested the vehemence of the wish. He paused for a moment; then, springing from his chair, rushed toward me, and threw his arms around me. "No, my boy, I can't do it—I can't do it. I have tried to bully myself into insensibility for this evening's work—I have endeavored to be rude to you, that you might insult me, and steel my heart against what might happen: but it won't do, Charley; it won't do."

With these words the big tears rolled down his stern cheeks, and his voice became thick with emotion.

"But for me, all this need not have happened. I know it—I feel it. I hurried on this meeting; your character stood fair and unblemished without that—at least they tell me so now; and I still have to assure you—"

"Come, my dear, kind friend, don't give way in this fashion. You have stood manfully by me through every step of the road; don't desert me on the threshold of—"

"The grave, O'Malley?"

"I don't think so, Major; but see, half-past six! Look to these pistols for me. Are they likely to object to hair-triggers?"

A knocking at the door turned off our attention, and the next moment Baker's voice was heard.

"O'Malley, you'll be close run for time; the meeting-place is full three miles from this."

I seized the key and opened the door. At the same instant, O'Shaughnessy rose and turned toward the window, holding one of the pistols in his hand.

"Look at that, Baker—what a sweet tool it is!" said he, in a voice that actually made me start. Not a trace of his late excitement remained; his usually dry, half-humorous manner had returned, and his droll features were as full of their own easy devil-may-care fun as ever.

"Here comes the drag," said Baker. "We can drive nearly all the way, unless you prefer riding."

"Of course not. Keep your hand steady, Charley, and if you don't bring him down with that saw-handle, you're not your uncle's nephew."

With these words we mounted into the tax-cart, and set off for the meeting-place.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE DUEL.

A SMALL and narrow ravine between two furze-covered dells led to the open space where the meeting had been arranged for. As we reached this, therefore, we were obliged to descend from the drag, and proceed the remainder of the way afoot. We had not gone many yards when a step was heard approaching, and the next moment Beaufort appeared. His usually easy and *dégagé* air was certainly tinged with somewhat of constraint; and, though his soft voice and half smile were as perfect as ever, a slightly flurried expression about the lip, and a quick and nervous motion of his eyebrow, bespoke a heart not completely at ease. He lifted his foraging cap most ceremoniously to salute us as we came up, and, casting an anxious look to see if any others were following, stood quite still.

"I think it right to mention, Major O'Shaughnessy," said he, in a voice of most dulcet sweetness, "that I am the only friend of Captain Trevyllian on the ground; and, though I have not the slightest objection to Captain Baker being present, I hope you

will see the propriety of limiting the witnesses to the three persons now here."

"Upon my conscience, as far as I am concerned, or my friend either, we are perfectly indifferent if we fight before three or three thousand. In Ireland we rather like a crowd."

"Of course, then, as you see no objection to my proposition, I may count upon your co-operation in the event of any intrusion; I mean, that while we, upon our sides, will not permit any of our friends to come forward, you will equally exert yourself with yours."

"Here we are—Baker and myself—neither more nor less: we expect no one, and want no one; so that I humbly conceive all the preliminaries you are talking of will never be required."

Beaufort tried to smile and bit his lips, while a small red spot upon his cheek spoke that some deeper feeling of irritation than the mere careless manner of the Major could account for, still rankled in his bosom. We now walked on without speaking, except when occasionally some passing observation of Beaufort upon the fineness of the evening, or the rugged nature of the road, broke the silence. As we emerged from the little mountain pass into the open meadow land, the tall and soldier-like figure of Trevyllian was the first object that presented itself. He was standing beside a little stone cross that stood above a holy well, and seemed occupied in deciphering the inscription. He turned at the noise of our approach, and calmly waited our coming. His eye glanced quickly from the features of O'Shaughnessy to those of Baker; but, seeming rapidly reassured as he walked forward, his face at once recovered its usual severity and its cold, impassive look of sternness.

"All right!" said Beaufort in a whisper, the tones of which I overheard as he drew near to his friend. Trevyllian smiled in return, but did not speak. During the few moments which passed in conversation between the seconds, I turned from the spot with Baker, and had scarcely time to address a question to him, when O'Shaughnessy called out, "Holla, Baker!—come here a moment!" The three seemed now in eager discussion for some minutes, when Baker walked toward Trevyllian, and saying something, appeared to wait for his reply. This being obtained, he joined the others, and the moment afterward came to where I was standing. "You are to toss for first shot, O'Malley. O'Shaughnessy has made that proposition, and the others agree that with two crack marksmen, it is perhaps the fairest way. I suppose you have no objection?"

"Of course, I shall make none. Whatever O'Shaughnessy decides for me I am ready to abide by."

"Well, then, as to the distance?" said Beaufort, loud enough to be heard by me where I was standing. O'Shaughnessy's reply I could not catch, but it was evident, from the tone of both parties, that some difference existed on the point.

"Captain Baker shall decide between us," said Beaufort, at length, and they all walked away to some distance. During all the while I could perceive that Trevyllian's uneasiness and impatience seemed extreme—he looked from the speakers to the little mountain pass, and strained his eyes in every direction. It was clear that he dreaded some interruption. At last, unable any longer to control his feelings, he called out, "Beaufort, I say, what the devil are we waiting for now?"

"Nothing at present," said Beaufort, as he came forward with a dollar in his hand. "Come, Major O'Shaughnessy, you shall call for your friend."

He pitched the piece of money as he spoke high into the air, and watched it as it fell on the soft grass beneath.

"Head! for a thousand," cried O'Shaughnessy, running over and stooping down; "and head it is!"

"You've won the first shot," whispered Baker; "for Heaven's sake be cool!"

Beaufort grew deadly pale as he bent over the crown piece, and seemed scarcely to have courage to look his friend in the face. Not so Trevyllian; he pulled off his gloves without the slightest semblance of emotion, buttoned up his well-fitting black frock to the throat, and throwing a rapid glance around, seemed only eager to begin the combat.

"Fifteen paces, and the words 'One—two!'"

"Exactly. My cane shall mark that spot."

"Devilish long paces you make them," said O'Shaughnessy, who did not seem to approve of the distance. "They have some confounded advantage in this, depend upon it," said the Major, in a whisper to Baker.

"Are you ready?" inquired Beaufort.

"Ready—quite ready!"

"Take your ground, then!"

As Trevyllian moved forward to his place, he muttered something to his friend. I did not hear the first part, but the latter words which met me were ominous enough, —"for as I intend to shoot him, 'tis just as well as it is."

Whether this was meant to be overheard and intimidate me I knew not; but its effect proved directly opposite. My firm resolution to hit my antagonist was now confirmed, and no compunctious visitings unnerved my arm. As we took our places some little delay again took place, the flint of my pistol having fallen; and thus we remained full ten or twelve seconds steadily regarding each other. At length, O'Shaughnessy came forward, and, putting my weapon in my hand, whispered low, "Remember, you have but one chance."

"You are both ready?" cried Beaufort.

"Ready!"

"Then, One—two—"

The last word was lost in the report of my pistol, which went off at the instant.

For a second, the flash and smoke obstructed my view; but the moment after I saw Trevyllian stretched upon the ground, with his friend kneeling beside him. My first impulse was to rush over, for now all feeling of enmity was buried in most heartfelt anxiety for his fate; but as I was stepping forward, O'Shaughnessy called out, "Stand fast, boy, he's only wounded!" and the same moment he rose slowly from the ground, with the assistance of his friend, and looked with the same wild gaze around him. Such a look! I shall never forget it; there was that intense expression of searching anxiety, as if he sought to trace the outlines of some visionary spirit as it receded before him: quickly reassured, as it seemed by the glance he threw on all sides, his countenance lighted up, not with pleasure, but with a fiendish expression of revengeful triumph, which even his voice evinced as he called out,—"It's my turn now."

I felt the words in their full force, as I stood silently awaiting my death wound. The pause was a long one. Twice did he interrupt his friend, as he was about to give the word, by an expression of suffering, pressing his hand upon his side, and seeming to writhe with torture; and yet this was mere counterfeit.

O'Shaughnessy was now coming forward to interfere and prevent these interruptions, when Trevyllian called out in a firm tone, "I'm ready!" The words "One—two!" the pistol slowly rose, his dark eye measured me coolly, steadily; his lip curled, and just as I felt that my last moment of life had arrived, a heavy sound of a horse galloping along the rocky causeway seemed to take off his attention. His frame trembled, his hand shook, and jerking upward his weapon, the ball passed high above my head.

"You bear me witness I fired in the air," said Trevyllian, while the large drops of perspiration rolled from his forehead, and his features worked as if in a fit.

"You saw it, sir; and you, Beaufort, my friend,—you also. Speak! Why will you not speak?"

"Be calm, Trevyllian; be calm, for Heaven's sake! What's the matter with you?"

"The affair is then ended," said Baker, "and most happily so. You are, I hope, not dangerously wounded."

As he spoke, Trevyllian's features grew deadly livid; his half-open mouth quivered slightly; his eyes became fixed, and his arm dropped heavily beside him, and with a low moan he fell fainting to the ground.

As we bent over him I now perceived that another person had joined our party; he was a short, determined-looking man of about forty, with black eyes and aquiline features. Before I had time to guess who it might be, I heard O'Shaughnessy address him as Colonel Conyers.

"He is dying!" said Beaufort, still stooping over his friend, whose cold hand he grasped within his own. "Poor, poor fellow!"

"He fired in the air," said Baker, as he spoke in reply to a question from Conyers.

What he answered I heard not, but Baker rejoined,

"Yes, I am certain of it. We all saw it."

"Had you not better examine his wounds?" said Conyers, in a tone of sarcastic irony I could almost have struck him for. "Is your friend not hit? Perhaps he is bleeding."

"Yes," said O'Shaughnessy, "let us look to the poor fellow now." So saying, with Beaufort's aid he unbuttoned his frock and succeeded in opening the waistcoat. There was no trace of blood anywhere, and the idea of internal hemorrhage at once occurred to us; when Conyers, stooping down, pushed me aside, saying at the same time, "Your fears for his safety need not distress you much—look here!" As he spoke, he tore open his shirt, and disclosed to our almost doubting senses a vest of chain mail armor fitting close next the skin and completely pistol-proof.

I cannot describe the effect this sight produced upon us. Beaufort sprang to his feet with a bound as he screamed out, rather than spoke, "No man believes me to have been aware—"

"No, no, Beaufort; your reputation is very far removed from such a stain," said Conyers.

O'Shaughnessy was perfectly speechless. He looked from one to the other, as though some unexplained mystery still remained, and only seemed restored to any sense of consciousness as Baker said, "I can feel no pulse at his wrist—his heart, too, does not beat." Conyers placed his hand upon his bosom, then felt along his throat, lifted up an arm, and, letting it fall heavily upon the ground, he muttered, "He is dead!"

It was true. No wound had pierced him—the pistol bullet was found within his clothes. Some tremendous conflict of the spirit within had snapped the chords of life, and the strong man had perished in his agony.

CHAPTER LXIII.

NEWS FROM GALWAY.

I HAVE but a vague and most imperfect recollection of the events which followed this dreadful scene; for some days my faculties seemed stunned and paralyzed, and my thoughts clung to the minute detail of the ground—the persons about—the mountain path—and, most of all, the half-stifled cry that spoke the broken heart, with a tenacity that verged upon madness.

A court-martial was appointed to inquire into the affair: and although I have been since told that my deportment was calm, and my answers were firm and collected, yet I remember nothing of the proceedings.

The inquiry, through a feeling of delicacy for the friends of him who was no more, was made as brief and as private as possible. Beaufort proved the facts which exonerated me from any imputation in the matter; and upon the same day the court delivered the decision, "that Lieutenant O'Malley was not guilty of the charges preferred against him, and that he should be released from arrest, and join his regiment."

Nothing could be more kind and considerate than the conduct of my brother officers; a hundred little plans and devices for making me forget the late unhappy event were suggested and practiced; and I look back to that melancholy period, marked, as it was, by the saddest circumstance of my life, as one in which I received more of truly friendly companionship than even my palmiest days of prosperity boasted. While, therefore, I deeply felt the good part my friends were performing toward me, I was still totally unsuited to join in the happy current of their daily pleasures and amusements. The gay and unreflecting character of O'Shaughnessy—the careless merriment of my brother officers—jarred upon my nerves, and rendered me irritable and excited: and I sought, in lonely rides and unfrequented walks, the peace of spirit that calm reflection, and a firm purpose for the future, rarely fail to lead to.

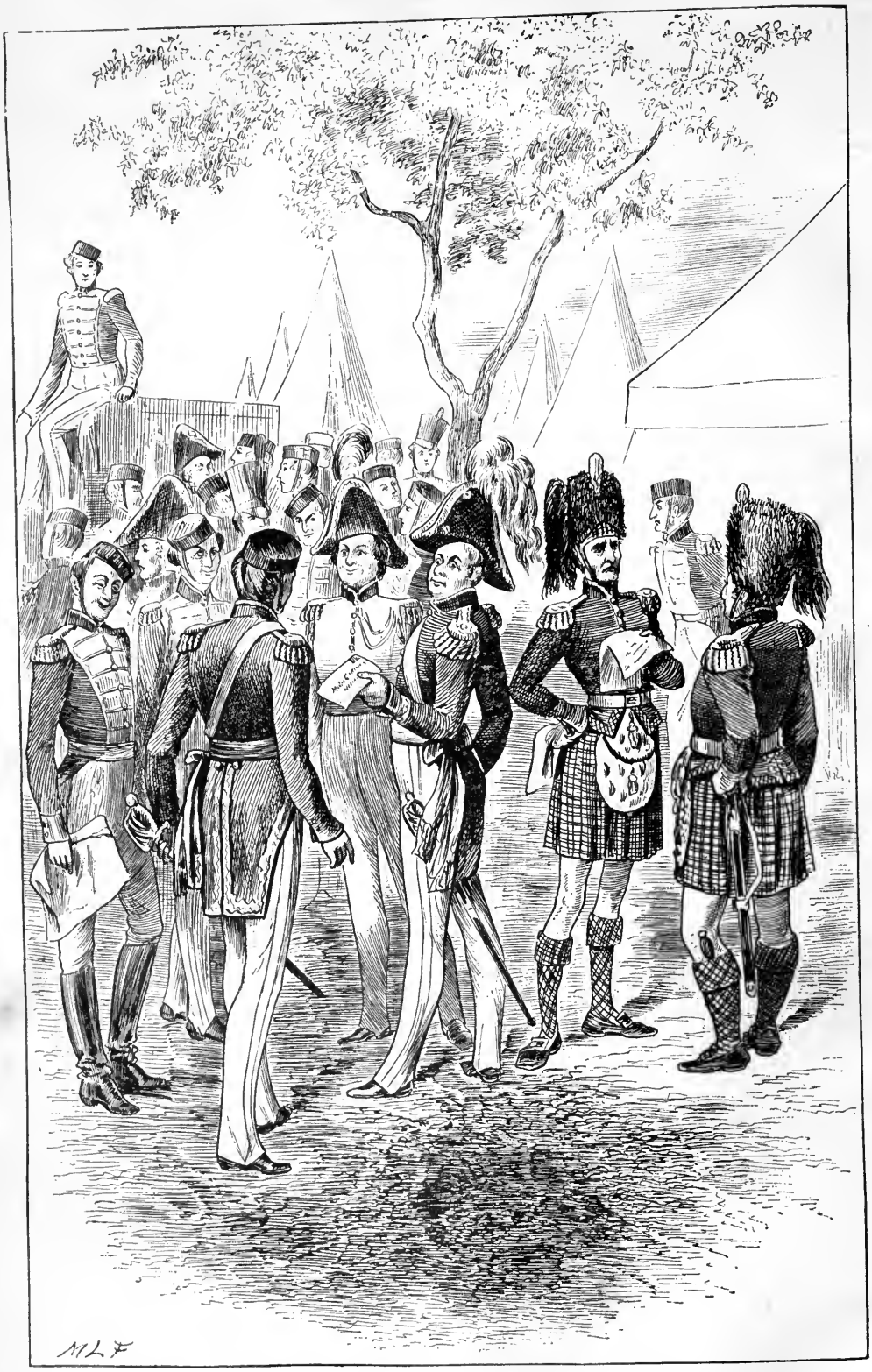
There is in deep sorrow a touch of the prophetic. It is at seasons when the heart is bowed down with grief, and the spirit wasted with suffering, that the vail which conceals the future seems to be removed, and a glance, short and fleeting as the lightning flash, is permitted us into the gloomy valley before us.

Misfortunes, too, come not singly—the seared heart is not suffered to heal from one affliction, ere another succeeds it; and this anticipation of the coming evil is, perhaps, one of the most poignant features of grief—the ever watchful apprehension—the ever rising question, "What next?" is a torture that never sleeps.

This was the frame of my mind for several days after I returned to my duty,—a morbid sense of some threatened danger being my last thought at night, and my first on awakening. I had not heard from home since my arrival in the Peninsula: a thousand vague fancies haunted me now that some brooding misfortune awaited me. My poor uncle never left my thoughts. Was he well,—was he happy? Was he, as he ever used to be, surrounded by the friends he loved,—the old familiar faces, around the hospitable hearth his kindness had hallowed in my memory as something sacred? Oh! could I but see his manly smile, or hear his voice! Could I but feel his hand upon my head, as he was wont to press it, while words of comfort fell from his lips, and sunk into my heart!

Such were my thoughts one morning as I sauntered, unaccompanied, from my quarters. I had not gone far, when my attention was aroused by the noise of a mule-cart, whose jingling bells and clattering timbers announced its approach by the road I was walking. Another turn of the way brought it into view; and I saw from the gay costume of the driver, as well as a small orange flag which decorated the conveyance, that it was the mail-cart, with letters from Lisbon.

Full as my mind was with thoughts of home, I turned hastily back, and retraced my steps toward the camp. When I reached the Adjutant-General's quarters, I found a considerable number of officers assembled; the report that the post had come was a rumor of interest to all, and,



"MASTER CHARLES O'MALLEY, IN FOREIGN PARTS!" (P. 823.)

accordingly, every moment brought fresh arrivals, pouring in from all sides, and eagerly inquiring "if the bags had been opened?" The scene of riot, confusion, and excitement, when that event did take place, exceeded all belief, each man reading his letter half aloud, as if his private affairs and domestic concerns must interest his neighbors, amid a volley of exclamations of surprise, pleasure, or occasionally anger, as the intelligence severally suggested,—the disappointed expectants cursing their idle correspondents, bemoaning their fate about remittances that never arrived, or drafts never honored; while here and there some public benefactor, with an outspread *Times* or *Chronicle*, was retailing the narrative of our own exploits in the Peninsula, or the more novel changes in the world of politics, since we left England. A cross-fire of news and London gossip ringing on every side, made up a perfect Babel, most difficult to form an idea of. The jargon partook of every accent and intonation the empire boasts of, and, from the sharp precision of the North Tweeder to the broad doric of Kerry, every portion, almost every county of Great Britain, had its representative. Here was a Scotch Paymaster, in a lugubrious tone, detailing to his friend the apparently not over-welcome news, that Mistress M'Elwain had just been safely delivered of twins, which, with their mother, were doing as well as possible. Here an eager Irishman, turning over the pages rather than reading his letter, while he exclaimed to his friend,

"Oh, the devil a rap she's sent me. The old story about runaway tenants and distress notices—sorrow else tenants seem to do in Ireland than run away every half year."

A little apart some sentimental-looking cockney was devouring a very crossed epistle, which he pressed to his lips whenever any one looked at him; while a host of others satisfied themselves by reading in a kind of buzzing undertone, every now and then interrupting themselves with some broken exclamation as commentary—such as "Of course she will!"—"Never knew him better!"—"That's the girl for my money!"—"Fifty per cent.—the devil!"—and so on. At last I was beginning to weary of the scene, and finding that there appeared to be nothing for me, was turning to leave the place, when I saw a group of two or three endeavoring to spell out the address of a letter.

"That's an Irish post-mark, I'll swear," said one; "but who can make anything of the name? It's devilish like Otaheite—isn't it?"

"I wish my tailor wrote as illegibly," said another; "I'd keep up a most animated correspondence with him."

"Here, O'Shaughnessy, you know something of savage life—spell us this word here."

"Show it here—what nonsense—it's as plain as the nose on my face!—'Master Charles O'Malley, in foreign parts!'"

A roar of laughter followed this announcement, which, at any other time, perhaps, I should have joined in, but which now grated sadly on my ruffled feelings.

"Here, Charley, this is for you," said the Major; and added, in a whisper—"and upon my conscience, between ourselves, your friend, whoever he is, has a strong action against his writing-master—devil such a fist ever I looked at!"

One glance satisfied me as to my correspondent. It was from Father Rush, my old Tutor. I hurried eagerly from the spot,—and, regaining my quarters, locked the door, and with a beating heart broke the seal and began, as well as I was able, to decipher his letter. The hand was cramped and stiffened with age, and the bold upright letters were gnarled and twisted like a rustic fence, and demanded great patience and much time in unraveling. It ran thus:

"The Priory, Lady-day, 1809.

"My dear Master Charles,—Your uncle's feet are so big and so uneasy that he can't write, and I am obliged to take up the pen myself, to tell you how we are doing here since you left us. And, first of all, the master lost the law-suit in Dublin, all for the want of a Galway jury; but they don't go up to town for strong reasons they had; and the Curranolick property is gone to Ned M'Manus, and may the devil do him good with it! Peggy Maher left this on Tuesday; she was complaining of a weakness; shes gone to consult the doctors. I'm sorry for poor Peggy.

"Owen M'Neil beat the Slatterys out of Portumna on Saturday, and Jem, they say, is fractured. I trust it's true, for he never was good, root nor branch, and we've strong reasons to suspect him for drawing the river with a net at night. Sir Harry Boyle sprained his wrist, breaking open his bedroom, that he locked when he was inside. The Count and the master were laughing all the evening at him. Matters are going very hard in the country; the people paying their rents regularly, and not caring half as much as they used about the real gentry and the old families.

"We kept your birthday at the Castle in

great style, had the militia band from the town, and all the tenants. Mr. James Daly danced with your old friend Mary Green, and sang a beautiful song, and was going to raise the devil, but I interfered; he burnt down half the blue drawing-room the last night with his tricks; not that your uncle cares, God preserve him to us!—it's little anything like that would fret him. The Count quarreled with a young gentleman in the course of the evening, but found out he was only an attorney from Dublin, so he didn't shoot him, but he was ducked in the pond by the people, and your uncle says he hopes they have a true copy of him at home, as they'll never know the original.

"Peter died soon after you went away, but Tim hunts the dogs just as well; they had a beautiful run last Wednesday, and the Lord* sent for him and gave him a five-pound note; but he says he'd rather see yourself back again than twice as much. They killed near the big turnip field, and all went down to see where you leaped Badger over the sunk fence; they call it 'Hammersley's Nose' ever since. Bodkin was at Ballinasloe the last fair, limping about with a stick; he's twice as quiet as he used to be, and never beat any one since that morning.

"Nelly Guire at the cross-roads, wants to send you four pair of stockings she knitted for you; and I have a keg of potteen of Barney's own making this two months, not knowing how to send it; maybe Sir Arthur himself would like a taste; he's an Irishman himself, and one we're proud of too! The Maynooth chaps are flying all about the country, and making us all uncomfortable—God's will be done, but we used to think ourselves good enough! Your foster-sister, Kitty Doolan, had a fine boy; it's to be called after you, and your uncle's to give a christening. He bids me tell you to draw on him when you want money, and that there's 400*l.* ready for you now somewhere in Dublin, I forget the name, and as he's asleep I don't like asking him. There was a droll devil down here in the summer that knew you well—a Mr. Webber. The master treated him like the Lord Lieutenant; had dinner parties for him, and gave him Oliver Cromwell to ride over to Meelish. He is expected again for the cock-shooting, for the master likes him greatly. I'm done at last, for my paper is finished and the candle just out; so with every good wish and every good thought, remember your own old friend, PETER RUSH.

"P.S.—It's Smart and Sykes, Fleet street, has the money. Father O'Shaughnessy, of Ennis, bids me ask if you ever met his nephew. If you do, make him sing 'Larry M'Hale.' I hear it's a treat.

"How is Mickey Free going on? There are three decent young women in the parish he promised to marry, and I suppose he's pursuing the same game with the Portuguese. But he was never remarkable for minding his duties. Tell him I am keeping my eye on him. P. R."

Here concluded this long epistle, and, though there were many parts I could not help smiling at, yet upon the whole, I felt sad and dispirited. What I had long foreseen and anticipated was gradually accomplishing—the wreck of an old and honored house—the fall of a name once the watchword for all that was benevolent and hospitable in the land. The termination of the lawsuit I knew must have been a heavy blow to my poor uncle, who, every consideration of money apart, felt in a legal combat all the enthusiasm and excitement of a personal conflict. With him, there was less a question of to whom the broad acres reverted, so much as whether that "scoundrel Tom Basset, the attorney at Athlone, should triumph over us;" or, "M'Manus live in the house as master, where his father had officiated as butler." It was at this his Irish pride took offense; and straitened circumstances and narrowed fortunes bore little upon him in comparison with this feeling.

I could see, too, that with breaking fortunes, bad health was making heavy inroads upon him; and while, with the reckless desperation of ruin, he still kept open house, I could picture to myself his cheerful eye and handsome smile, but ill concealing the slow but certain march of a broken heart.

My position was doubly painful; for any advice, had I been calculated to give it, would have seemed an act of indelicate interference from one who was to benefit by his own counsel; and, although I had been reared and educated as my uncle's heir, I had no title nor pretension to succeed him other than his kind feelings respecting me. I could, therefore, only look on in silence, and watch the painful progress of our downfall, without a power to arrest it.

These were sad thoughts, and came when my heart was already bowed down with its affliction. That my poor uncle might be

* To excuse Father Rush for any apparent impiety, I must add, that, by the "Lord," he means "Lord Clanricarde."

spared the misery which sooner or later seemed inevitable, was now my only wish; that he might go down to the grave without the embittering feelings which a ruined fortune and a fallen house bring home to the heart, was all my prayer. Let him but close his eyes in the old wainscoted bedroom, beneath the old roof where his fathers and grandfathers have done so for centuries. Let the faithful followers he has known since his childhood stand round his bed; while his fast-failing sight recognizes each old and well-remembered object, and the same bell which rang its farewell to the spirit of his ancestors, toll for him, the last of his race—and, as for me, there was the wide world before me, and a narrow resting-place would suffice for a soldier's sepulcher.

As the mail-cart was returning the next day to Lisbon, I immediately sat down and replied to the worthy Father's letter, speaking as encouragingly as I could of my own prospects. I dwelt much upon what was nearest my heart, and begged of the good priest to watch over my uncle's health, to cheer his spirits, and support his courage; and that I trusted the day was not far distant when I should be once more amongst them, with many a story of fray and battle-field to enliven their firesides. Pressing him to write frequently to me, I closed my hurried letter; and, having dispatched it, sat sorrowfully down to muse over my fortunes.

CHAPTER LXIV.

AN ADVENTURE WITH SIR ARTHUR.

THE events of the last few days had impressed me with a weight of years. The awful circumstances of that evening lay heavily at my heart, and though guiltless of Trevyllian's blood, the reproach that conscience ever carries, when one has been involved in a death-scene, never left my thoughts.

For some time previously I had been depressed and dispirited, and the awful shock I had sustained broke my nerve and unmanned me greatly.

There are times when our sorrows tinge all the colorings of our thoughts, and one pervading hue of melancholy spreads like a pall upon what we have of fairest and brightest on earth. So was it now; I had lost hope and ambition—a sad feeling that my career was destined to misfortune and mishap gained hourly upon me; and all the bright aspirations of a soldier's glory, all my enthusiasm for the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, fell coldly upon my heart; and I looked upon the chivalry of a soldier's life as the empty pageant of a dream.

In this sad frame of mind I avoided all intercourse with my brother officers—their gay and joyous spirits only jarred upon my brooding thoughts, and, feigning illness, I kept almost entirely to my quarters.

The inactivity of our present life weighed also heavily upon me. The stirring events of a campaign—the march, the bivouac, the picket—call forth a certain physical exertion that never fails to react upon the torpid mind.

Forgetting all around me, I thought of home; I thought of those whose hearts I felt were now turning toward me, and considered within myself how I could have exchanged the home—the days of peaceful happiness there, for the life of misery and disappointment I now endured.

A brooding melancholy gained daily more and more upon me. A wish to return to Ireland, a vague and indistinct feeling that my career was not destined for aught of great and good, crept upon me, and I longed to sink into oblivion, forgotten and forgot.

I record this painful feeling here, while it is still a painful memory, as one of the dark shadows that cross the bright sky of our happiest days.

Happy, indeed, are they, as we look back to them, and remember the times we have pronounced ourselves "the most miserable of mankind." This somehow is a confession we never make later on in life, when real troubles and true afflictions assail us. Whether we call in more philosophy to our aid, or that our senses become less acute and discerning, I'm sure I know not.

As for me, I confess by far the greater portion of my sorrows seemed to come in that budding period of existence when life is ever fairest and most captivating. Not, perhaps, that the fact was really so, but the spoiled and humored child, whose caprices were a law, felt heavily the threatening difficulties of his first voyage. While, as he continued to sail over the ocean of life, he braved the storm and the squall, and felt only gratitude for the favoring breeze that wafted him upon his course.

What an admirable remedy for misanthropy is the being placed in a subordinate condition in life! Had I, at the period that I write, been Sir Arthur Wellesley—had I even been Marshal Beresford,

to all certainty I'd have played the very devil with his Majesty's forces.—I'd have brought my rascals to where they'd have been well peppered—that's certain.

But as, luckily for the sake of humanity in general and the well-being of the service in particular, I was merely Lieutenant O'Malley, 14th Light Dragoons, the case was very different. With what heavy censure did I condemn the Commander of the Forces in my own mind for his want of daring and enterprise! Whole nights did I pass in endeavoring to account for his inactivity and lethargy. Why he did not *seriatim* fall upon Soult, Ney, and Victor, annihilate the French forces, and sack Madrid, I looked upon as little less than a riddle; and yet there he waited, drilling, exercising, and foraging, as if we were at Hounslow. Now most fortunately here again I was not Sir Arthur.

Something in this frame of mind, I was taking one evening a solitary ride some miles from the camp. Without noticing the circumstance, I had entered a little mountain tract, when the ground being broken and uneven, I dismounted and proceeded a-foot, with the bridle within my arm. I had not gone far when the clatter of a horse's hoofs came rapidly toward me, and, though there was something startling in the pace over such a piece of road, I never lifted my eyes as the horseman came up, but continued my slow progress onward, my head sunk upon my bosom.

"Holloa, sir!" cried a sharp voice, whose tones seemed somehow not heard for the first time. I looked up, saw a slight figure closely buttoned up in a blue horseman's cloak, the collar of which almost entirely hid his features; he wore a plain cocked hat without a feather, and was mounted upon a sharp, wiry-looking hack.

"Holloa, sir! What regiment do you belong to?"

As I had nothing of the soldier about me, save a blue foraging cap, to denote my corps, the tone of the demand was little calculated to elicit a very polished reply; but preferring as most impertinent to make no answer, I passed on without speaking.

"Did you hear, sir?" cried the same voice in a still louder key. "What's your regiment?"

I now turned round, resolved to question the other in turn; when, to my inexpressible shame and confusion, he had lowered the collar of his cloak, and I saw the features of Sir Arthur Wellesley.

"Fourteenth Light Dragoons, sir," said I, blushing as I spoke.

"Have you not read the general order, sir? Why have you left the camp?"

Now I had not read a general order nor even heard one for above a fortnight. So I stammered out some bungling answer.

"To your quarters, sir, and report yourself under arrest. What's your name?"

"Lieutenant O'Malley, sir."

"Well, sir, your passion for rambling shall be indulged. You shall be sent to the rear with dispatches; and, as the army is in advance, probably the lesson may be serviceable." So saying he pressed spurs to his horse, and was out of sight in a moment.

CHAPTER LXV.

TALAVERA.

Having been dispatched to the rear with orders for General Craufurd, I did not reach Talavera till the morning of the 28th. Two days' hard fighting had left the contending armies still face to face, and without any decided advantage on either side.

When I arrived upon the battle-field the combat of the morning was over. It was then ten o'clock, and the troops were at breakfast, if the few ounces of wheat, sparingly dealt out amongst them, could be dignified by that name. All was, however, life and animation on every side; the merry laugh, the passing jest, the careless look, bespoke the free and daring character of the soldiery, as they sat in groups upon the grass; and, except when a fatigue party passed by, bearing some wounded comrade to the rear, no touch of seriousness rested upon their hardy features. The morning was indeed a glorious one; a sky of unclouded blue stretched above a landscape unsurpassed in loveliness. Far to the right rolled on in placid stream the broad Tagus, bathing in its eddies the very walls of Talavera, the ground from which, to our position, gently undulated across a plain of most fertile richness, and terminated on our extreme left in a bold height, protected in front by a ravine, and flanked by a deep and rugged valley.

The Spaniards occupied the right of the line, connecting with our troops at a rising ground, upon which a strong redoubt had been hastily thrown up. The fourth division and the Guards were stationed here, next to whom came Cameron's brigade and the Germans; Mackenzie and Hill holding the extreme left of all, which might be called the key of our position. In the val-

ley beneath the latter were picketed three cavalry regiments, among which I was not long in detecting my gallant friends of the Twenty-third.

As I rode rapidly past, saluting some old familiar face at each moment, I could not help feeling struck at the evidence of the desperate battle that so lately had raged there. The whole surface of the hill was one mass of dead and dying, the bearskin of the French grenadier lying side by side with the tartan of the Highlander. Deep furrows in the soil showed the track of the furious cannonade, and the terrible evidences of a bayonet charge were written in the mangled corpses around.

The fight had been maintained without any intermission from daybreak till near nine o'clock that morning, and the slaughter on both sides was dreadful; the mounds of fresh earth on every side told of the soldier's sepulcher, and the unceasing tramp of the pioneers struck sadly upon the ear, as the groans of the wounded blended with the funeral sounds around them.

In front were drawn up the dark legions of France; massive columns of infantry, with dense bodies of artillery alternating along the line. They, too, occupied a gently rising ground; the valley between the two armies being crossed half way by a little rivulet, and here, during the sultry heat of the morning, the troops on both sides met and mingled to quench their thirst ere the trumpet again called them to the slaughter.

In a small ravine, near the center of our line, were drawn up Cotton's brigade, of whom the fusiliers formed a part. Directly in front of this were Campbell's brigade, to the left of which, upon a gentle slope, the staff were now assembled. Thither, accordingly, I bent my steps, and, as I came up the little scarp, found myself among the generals of division, hastily summoned by Sir Arthur to deliberate upon a forward movement. The council lasted scarcely a quarter of an hour, and when I presented myself to deliver my report, all the dispositions for the battle had been decided upon, and the Commander of the Forces, seated upon the grass at his breakfast, looked by far the most unconcerned and uninterested man I had seen that morning.

He turned his head rapidly as I came up, and, before the aide-de-camp could announce me, called out:

"Well, sir, what news of the reinforcements?"

"They cannot reach Talavera before tomorrow, sir."

"Then, before that we shall not want them. That will do, sir."

So saying, he resumed his breakfast, and I retired, more than ever struck with the surprising coolness of the man upon whom no disappointment seemed to have the slightest influence.

I had scarcely rejoined my regiment, and was giving an account to my brother officers of my journey, when an aide-de-camp came galloping at full speed down the line, and communicating with the several commanding officers as he passed.

What might be the nature of the orders we could not guess at; for no word to fall in followed, and yet it was evident something of importance was at hand. Upon the hill where the staff were assembled no unusual bustle appeared, and we could see the bay cob of Sir Arthur still being led up and down by the groom, with a dragoon's mantle thrown over him. The soldiers, overcome by the heat and fatigue of the morning, lay stretched around upon the grass, and everything bespoke a period of rest and refreshment.

"We are going to advance, depend upon it!" said a young officer beside me; "the repulse of this morning has been a smart lesson to the French, and Sir Arthur won't leave them without impressing it upon them."

"Hark, what's that?" cried Baker; "listen."

As he spoke, a strain of most delicious music came wafted across the plain. It was from the band of a French regiment, and, mellowed by the distance, it seemed, in the calm stillness of the morning air, like something less of earth than heaven.

As we listened, the notes swelled upward yet fuller; and one by one the different bands seemed to join, till at last the whole air seemed full of the rich flood of melody.

We could now perceive the stragglers were rapidly falling back, while high above all other sounds the clanging notes of the trumpet were heard along the line. The hoarse drum now beat to arms, and soon after a brilliant staff rode slowly from between two dense bodies of infantry, and advancing some distance into the plain, seemed to reconnoiter us. A cloud of Polish cavalry, distinguished by their long lances and floating banners, loitered in their rear.

We had not time for further observation, when the drums on our side beat to arms, and the hoarse cry, "Fall in—fall in there, lads!" resounded along the line.

It was now one o'clock, and before half an hour the troops had resumed the posi-

tion of the morning, and stood silent and anxious spectators of the scene before them.

Upon the table land, to the rear of the French position, we could descry the gorgeous tent of King Joseph, around which a large and splendidly-accoutered staff were seen standing. Here, too, the bustle and excitement seemed considerable, for to this point the dark masses of the infantry seemed converging from the extreme right; and here we could perceive the royal guards and the reserve now forming in column of attack.

From the crest of the hill down to the very valley, the dark, dense ranks extended, the flanks protected by a powerful artillery and deep masses of heavy cavalry. It was evident that the attack was not to commence on our side, and the greatest and most intense anxiety pervaded us as to what part of our line was first to be assailed.

Meanwhile, Sir Arthur Wellesley, who from the height had been patiently observing the field of battle, dispatched an aide-de-camp at full gallop toward Campbell's brigade, posted directly in advance of us. As he passed swiftly along he called out, "You're in for it, Fourteenth; you'll have to open the ball to-day."

Scarcely were the words spoken, when a signal gun from the French boomed heavily through the still air. The last echo was growing fainter, and the heavy smoke breaking into mist, when the most deafening thunder ever my ears heard came pealing around us; eighty pieces of artillery had opened upon us, sending a very tempest of balls upon our line, while midst the smoke and dust we could see the light troops advancing at a run, followed by the broad and massive columns in all the terror and majesty of war.

"What a splendid attack! How gallantly they come on!" cried an old veteran officer beside me, forgetting all rivalry in his noble admiration of our enemy.

The intervening space was soon passed, and the tirailleurs falling back as the columns came on, the towering masses bore down upon Campbell's division with a loud cry of defiance. Silently and steadily the English infantry awaited the attack, and returning the fire with one withering volley, were ordered to charge. Scarcely were the bayonets lowered, when the head of the advancing column broke and fled, while Mackenzie's brigade, overlapping the flank, pushed boldly forward, and a scene of frightful carnage followed; for a moment a hand to hand combat was sustained, but the unbroken files and impregnable bayonets of the English conquered, and the French fled, leaving six guns behind them.

The gallant enemy were troops of tried and proved courage, and scarcely had they retreated when they again formed, but just as they prepared to come forward, a tremendous shower of grape opened upon them from our batteries, while a cloud of Spanish horse assailed them in flank, and nearly cut them in pieces.

While this was passing on the right, a tremendous attack menaced the hill upon which our left was posted. Two powerful columns of French infantry, supported by some regiments of light cavalry, came steadily forward to the attack; Anson's brigade were ordered to charge.

Away they went at top speed, but had not gone above a hundred yards when they were suddenly arrested by a deep chasm; here the German hussars pulled short up, but the Twenty-third dashing impetuously forward, a scene of terrific carnage ensued, men and horses rolling indiscriminately together under a withering fire from the French squares. Even here, however, British valor quailed not, for Major Francis Ponsonby, forming all who came up, rode boldly upon a brigade of French chasseurs in the rear. Victor, who from the first had watched the movement, at once dispatched a lancer regiment against them, and then these brave fellows were absolutely cut to atoms, the few who escaped having passed through the French columns and reached Bassecour's Spanish division on the far right.

During this time the hill was again assailed, and even more desperately than before, while Victor himself led on the fourth corps to an attack upon our right and center.

The Guards waited without flinching the impetuous rush of the advancing columns, and, when at length within a short distance, dashed forward with the bayonet, driving everything before them. The French fell back upon their sustaining masses, and, rallying in an instant, again came forward, supported by a tremendous fire from their batteries. The Guards drew back, and the German Legion, suddenly thrown into confusion, began to retire in disorder. This was the most critical moment of the day, for, although successful upon the extreme right and left of our line, our center was absolutely broken. Just at this moment Gordon rode up to our brigade; his face was pale and his look flurried and excited.

"The Forty-eighth are coming; here they are—support them, Fourteenth."

These few words were all he spoke; and the next moment the measured tread of a column was heard behind us. On they came like one man, their compact and dense formation looking like some massive wall; wheeling by companies, they suffered the Guards and Germans to retire behind them, and then re-forming into line, they rushed forward with the bayonet. Our artillery opened with a deafening thunder behind them, and then we were ordered to charge.

We came on at a trot; the Guards, who had now recovered their formation, cheered us as we proceeded; the smoke of the cannonade obscured everything until we had advanced some distance, but just as we emerged beyond the line of the gallant Forty-eighth, the splendid panorama of the battle-field broke suddenly upon us.

"Charge! forward!" cried the hoarse voice of our Colonel; and we were upon them. The French infantry, already broken by the withering musketry of our people, gave way before us, and, unable to form a square, retired fighting, but in confusion, and with tremendous loss, to their position. One glorious cheer from left to right of our line proclaimed the victory, while a deafening discharge of artillery from the French replied to this defiance, and the battle was over. Had the Spanish army been capable of a forward movement, our successes at this moment would have been much more considerable; but they did not dare to change their position, and the repulse of our enemy was destined to be all our glory. The French, however, suffered much more severely than we did; and, retiring during the night, fell back behind the Alberche, leaving us the victory and the battle-field.

CHAPTER LXVI.

NIGHT AFTER TALAVERA.

THE night which followed the battle was a sad one. Through the darkness, and under a fast-falling rain, the hours were spent in searching for our wounded comrades amid the heap of slain upon the field; and the glimmering of the lanterns, as they flickered far and near across the wide plain, bespoke the track of the fatigue parties in their mournful round; while the groans of the wounded rose amid the silence with an accent of heartrending anguish; so true was it, as our great commander said, "there is nothing more sad than a victory, except a defeat."

Around our bivouac fires, the feeling of sorrowful depression was also evident. We had gained a great victory, it was true; we had beaten the farfamed legions of France upon a ground of their own choosing, led by the most celebrated of their Marshals and under the eyes of the Emperor's own brother; but still we felt all the hazardous daring of our position, and had no confidence whatever in the courage or discipline of our allies; and we saw that in the very *mêlée* of the battle the efforts of the enemy were directed almost exclusively against our line, so confidently did they undervalue the efforts of the Spanish troops. Morning broke at length, and scarcely was the heavy mist clearing away before the red sunlight, when the sounds of fife and drum were heard from a distant part of the field. The notes swelled or sank as the breeze rose or fell, and many a conjecture was hazarded as to their meaning, for no object was well visible for more than a few hundred yards off; gradually, however, they grew nearer and nearer, and at length, as the air cleared, and the hazy vapor evaporated, the bright scarlet uniform of a British regiment was seen advancing at a quick step.

As they came nearer, the well-known march of the gallant Forty-third was recognized by some of our people, and immediately the rumor fled like lightning,—"It is Craufurd's brigade!" and so it was; the noble fellow had marched his division the unparalleled distance of sixty English miles in twenty-seven hours. Over a burning sandy soil, exposed to a raging sun, without rations, almost without water, these gallant troops pressed on in the unwearied hope of sharing the glory of the battle-field. One tremendous cheer welcomed the head of the column as they marched past, and continued till the last file had deployed before us.

As these splendid regiments moved by we could not help feeling what signal service they might have rendered us but a few hours before; their soldierlike bearing, their high and effective state of discipline, their well-known reputation, were in every mouth; and I scarcely think that any corps who stood the brunt of the mighty battle were the subject of more encomium than the brave fellows who had just joined us.

The mournful duties of the night were soon forgotten in the gay and buoyant sounds on every side. Congratulations,

shaking of hands, kind inquiries went round; and, as we looked to the hilly ground where so lately were drawn up in battle array the dark columns of our enemy, and where not one sentinel now remained, the proud feeling of our victory came home to our hearts with the ever-thrilling thought, "What will they say at home?"

I was standing amid a group of my brother officers, when I received an order from the Colonel to ride down to Talavera for the return of our wounded, as the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief was momentarily looked for. I threw myself upon my horse, and setting out at a brisk pace, soon reached the gates.

On entering the town, I was obliged to dismount and proceed on foot. The streets were completely filled with people, treading their way among wagons, forage-carts, and sick-litters: here was a booth filled with all imaginable wares for sale; there a temporary gin-shop established beneath a broken baggage-wagon; here, might be seen a merry party throwing dice for a turkey or a kid—there, a wounded man, with bloodless cheek and tottering step, inquiring the road to the hospital; the accents of agony mingled with the drunken chorus, and the sharp crack of the Provost-Marshal's whip was heard above the boisterous reveling of the debauchee. All was confusion, bustle, and excitement. The staff-officer, with his flowing plume and glittering epaulettes, wended his way on foot amid the din and bustle, unnoticed and uncared for; while the little drummer amused an admiring audience of simple country-folk by some wondrous tale of the great victory.

My passage through this dense mass was necessarily a slow one. No one made way for another; discipline for the time was at an end, and with it all respect for rank or position. It was what nothing of mere vicissitude in the fortune of war can equal—the wild orgie of an army the day after a battle.

On turning the corner of a narrow street, my attention was attracted by a crowd which, gathered round a small fountain, seemed, as well as I could perceive, to witness some proceeding with a more than ordinary interest. Exclamations in Portuguese, expressive of surprise and admiration, were mingled with English oaths and Irish ejaculations, while high above all rose other sounds—the cries of some one in pain and suffering; forcing my way through the dense group, I at length reached the interior of the crowd, when, to my astonishment, I perceived a short, fat, punchy-looking man, stripped of his coat and waistcoat, and with his shirt sleeves rolled up to his shoulders, busily employed in operating upon a wounded soldier. Amputation knives, tourniquets, bandages, and all other imaginable instruments for giving or alleviating torture were strewed about him, and, from the arrangement and preparation, it was clear that he had pitched upon this spot as an hospital for his patients. While he continued to perform his functions with a singular speed and dexterity, he never for a moment ceased a running fire of small talk, now addressed to the patient in particular, now to the crowd at large—sometimes a soliloquy to himself, and not unfrequently, abstractedly, upon things in general. These little specimens of oratory, delivered in such a place at such a time, and, not least of all, in the richest imaginable Cork accent, were sufficient to arrest my steps, and I stopped for some time to observe him.

The patient, who was a large, powerfully-built fellow, had been wounded in both legs by the explosion of a shell, but yet not so severely as to require amputation.

"Does that plaze you, then?" said the doctor, as he applied some powerful caustic to a wounded vessel; "there's no satisfying the like of you. Quite warm and comfortable ye'll be this morning after that. I saw that same shell coming, and I called out to Maurice Blake, 'By your leave, Maurice, let that fellow pass, he's in a hurry!' and faith, I said to myself, 'there's more where you came from—you're not an only child, and I never liked the family.' —What are ye grinning for, ye brown thieves?" This was addressed to the Portuguese. "There, now, keep the limb quiet and easy. Upon my conscience, if that shell fell into ould Lundy Foot's shop this morning, there'd be plenty of sneezing in Sackville street. Who's next?" said he, looking round with an expression that seemed to threaten that, if no wounded man was ready, he was quite prepared to carve out a patient for himself. Not exactly relishing the invitation in the searching that accompanied it, I backed my way through the crowd, and continued my path toward the hospital.

Here the scene which presented itself was shocking beyond belief—frightful and ghastly wounds from shells and cannon-shot were seen on all sides, every imaginable species of suffering that man is capable of was presented to view, while, amid the dead and dying, operations the most

painful were proceeding with a haste and bustle that plainly showed how many more waited their turn for similar offices. The stairs were blocked up with fresh arrivals of wounded men, and even upon the corridors and landing-places the sick were strewn on all sides.

I hurried to that part of the building where my own people were, and soon learned that our loss was confined to about fourteen wounded; five of them were officers: but, fortunately, we lost not a man of our gallant fellows, and Talavera brought us no mourning for a comrade to damp the exultation we felt in our victory.

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE OUTPOST.

During the three days which succeeded the battle, all things remained as they were before. The enemy had gradually withdrawn all his forces, and our most advanced pickets never came in sight of a French detachment. Still, although we had gained a great victory, our situation was anything but flattering. The most strenuous exertions of the commissariat were barely sufficient to provision the troops; and we had even already but too much experience of how little trust or reliance could be reposed in the most lavish promises of our allies. It was true, our spirits failed us not, but it was rather from an implicit and never-failing confidence in the resources of our great leader, than that any amongst us could see his way through the dense cloud of difficulty and danger that seemed to envelop us on every side.

To add to the pressing emergency of our position, we learned on the evening of the 31st that Soult was advancing from the north, and at the head of fourteen thousand chosen troops in full march upon Placentia; thus threatening our rear, at the very moment, too, when any further advance was evidently impossible.

On the morning of the first of August, I was ordered with a small party to push forward in the direction of the Alberche, upon the left bank of which it was reported that the French were again concentrating their forces, and, if possible, to obtain information as to their future movements. Meanwhile, the army was about to fall back upon Oropesa, there to await Soult's advance, and, if necessary, to give him battle —Cuesta engaging with his Spaniards to secure Talavera, with its stores and hospitals, against any present movement from Victor.

After a hearty breakfast, and a kind "Good-by!" from my brother officers, I set out. My road along the Tagus, for several miles of the way, was a narrow path scarped from the rocky ledge of the river, shaded by rich olive plantations that threw a friendly shade over us during the noonday heat.

We traveled along silently, sparing our cattle from time to time, but endeavoring ere nightfall to reach Torrijos, in which village we had heard several French soldiers were in hospital. Our information leading us to believe them very inadequately guarded, we hoped to make some prisoners, from whom the information we sought could in all likelihood be obtained. More than once during the day our road was crossed by parties similar to our own, sent forward to reconnoiter; and toward evening a party of the Twenty-third Light Dragoons, returning toward Talavera, informed us that the French had retired from Torrijos, which was now occupied by an English detachment, under my old friend O'Shaughnessy.

I need not say with what pleasure I heard this piece of news, and eagerly pressed forward, preferring the warm shelter and hospitable board the Major was certain of possessing, to the cold blast and dripping grass of a bivouac. Night, however, fell fast; darkness, without an intervening twilight, set in, and we lost our way. A bleak table-land, with here and there a stunted, leafless tree, was all that we could discern by the pale light of a new moon. An apparently interminable heath, uncrossed by path or foot-track, was before us, and our jaded cattle seemed to feel the dreary uncertainty of the prospect as sensitively as ourselves—stumbling and overreaching at every step.

Cursing my ill-luck for such a misadventure, and once more picturing to my mind the bright blazing hearth and smoking supper I had hoped to partake of, I called a halt, and prepared to pass the night. My decision was hastened by finding myself suddenly in a little grove of pine-trees, whose shelter was not to be despised; besides that, our bivouac fires were now sure of being supplied.

It was fortunate the night was fine, though dark. In a calm, still atmosphere, when not a leaf moved nor a branch stirred, we picketed our tired horses, and, shaking out their forage, heaped up in the midst a blazing fire of the fir-tree. Our

humble supper was produced, and even with the still lingering reverie of the Major and his happier destiny, I began to feel comfortable.

My troopers, who probably had not been flattering their imaginations with such *gourmand* reflections and views, sat happily around their cheerful blaze, chatting over the great battle they had so lately witnessed, and mingling their stories of some comrade's prowess with sorrows for the dead and proud hopes for the future. In the midst, upon his knees beside the flame, was Mike, disputing, detailing, guessing, and occasionally inventing—all his arguments only tending to one view of the late victory—"that it was the Lord's mercy the most of the Forty-eighth was Irish, or we wouldn't be sitting there now!"

Despite Mr. Free's conversational gifts, however, his audience one by one dropped off in sleep, leaving him sole monarch of the watch-fire, and—what he thought more of—a small brass kettle nearly full of brandy-and-water. This latter, I perceived, he produced when all was tranquil, and seemed, as he cast a furtive glance around, to assure himself that he was the only company present.

Lying some yards off, I watched him for about an hour, as he sat rubbing his hands before the blaze, or lifting the little vessel to his lips; his droll features ever and anon seeming acted upon by some passing dream of former devilment, as he smiled and muttered some sentences in an undervoice. Sleep at length overpowered me; but my last waking thoughts were haunted with a singular ditty by which Mike accompanied himself as he kept burnishing the buttons of my jacket before the fire, now and then interrupting the melody by a recourse to the copper.

"Well, well; you're clean enough now, and sure it's little good brightening you up, when you'll be as bad to-morrow. Like his father's son, devil a lie in it! Nothing would serve him but his best blue jacket to fight in, as if the French was particular what they killed us in. Pleasant trade, upon my conscience! Well, never mind. That's beautiful *sperets*, any how. Your health, Mickey Free; it's yourself that stands to me.

"'It's little for glory I care;
Sure ambition is only a fable;
I'd as soon be myself as Lord Mayor,
With lashings of drink on the table.
I like to lie down in the sun
And *drame*, when my *faytures* is scorchin',
That when I'm too *ould* for more fun,
Why, I'll marry a wife with a fortune.

"'And, in winter, with bacon and eggs,
And a place at the turf-fire basking,
Sip my punch as I roasted my legs,
Oh! the devil a more I'd be asking!
For I haven't a *janius* for work,—
It was never the gift of the Bradies,—
But I'd make a most *illigant* Turk,
For I'm fond of tobacco and ladies.'"

This confounded *refrain* kept ringing through my dream, and "tobacco and ladies" mingled with my thoughts of storm and battle-field, long after their very gifted author had composed himself to slumber.

Sleep, and sound sleep, came at length, and many hours elapsed ere I awoke. When I did so, my fire was reduced to its last embers. Mike, like the others, had sunk in slumber, and mid the gray dawn that precedes the morning, I could just perceive the dark shadows of my troopers as they lay in groups around.

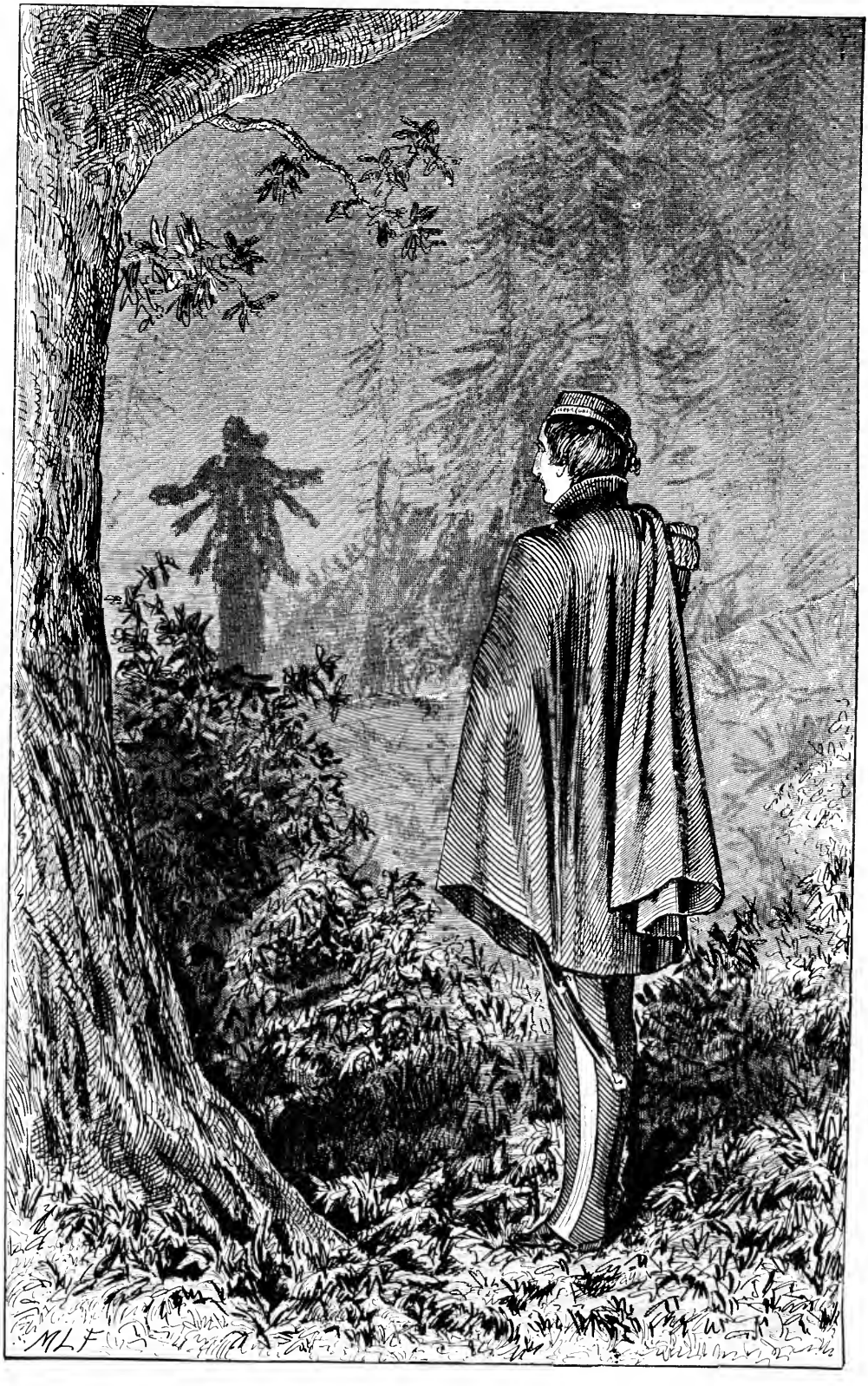
The fatigues of the previous day had so completely overcome me, that it was with difficulty I could arouse myself so far as to heap fresh logs upon the fire. This I did, with my eyes half closed, and in that listless, dreamy state which seems the twilight of sleep.

I managed so much, however, and was returning to my couch beneath a tree, when suddenly an object presented itself to my eyes that absolutely rooted me to the spot. At about twenty or thirty yards distant, where but the moment before the long line of horizon terminated the view, there now stood a huge figure of some ten or twelve feet in height; two heads—which surmounted this colossal personage—moved alternately from side to side, while several arms waved loosely to and fro in the most strange and uncouth manner. My first impression was that a dream had conjured up this distorted image; but when I had assured myself by repeated pinchings and shakings that I was really awake, still it remained there. I was never much given to believe in ghosts; but even had I been so, this strange apparition must have puzzled me as much as ever, for it could not have been the representative of anything I ever heard of before.

A vague suspicion that some French trickery was concerned, induced me to challenge it in French, so without advancing a step, I halloed out, "*Qui va là?*"

My voice aroused a sleeping soldier, who, springing up beside me, had his carbine at the cock; while, equally thunderstruck with myself, he gazed at the monster.

"*Qui va là?*" shouted I again, and no answer was returned, when suddenly the



"Qui va là?" SHOUTED I AGAIN, AND NO ANSWER WAS RETURNED, WHEN SUDDENLY THE HUGE OBJECT WHEELED RAPIDLY AROUND, AND WITHOUT WAITING FOR ANY FURTHER PARLEY, MADE FOR THE THICKET. (P. 832.)

huge object wheeled rapidly around, and without waiting for any further parley, made for the thicket.

The tramp of a horse's feet now assured me as to the nature of at least part of the spectacle, when click went the trigger behind me, and the trooper's ball rushed whistling through the brushwood. In a moment the whole party were up and stirring.

"This way, lads!" cried I, as drawing my sabre, I dashed into the pine wood.

For a few moments all was dark as midnight; but as we proceeded further, we came out upon a little open space which commanded the plain beneath for a great extent.

"There it goes!" said one of the men, pointing to a narrow, beaten path, in which the tall figure moved at a slow and stately pace, while still the same wild gestures of heads and limbs continued.

"Don't fire, men! don't fire!" I cried, "but follow me," as I set forward as hard as I could.

As we neared it, the frantic gesticulations grew more and more remarkable, while some stray words which we half-caught, sounded like English in our ears. We were now within pistol-shot distance, when suddenly the horse—for that much at least we were assured of—stumbled and fell forward, precipitating the remainder of the object headlong into the road.

In a second we were upon the spot, when the first sounds which greeted me were the following, uttered in an accent by no means new to me:

"Oh, blessed Virgin! Wasn't it yourself that threw me in the mud, or my nose was done for? Shaugh, Shaugh, my boy! since we are taken, tip them the blarney, and say we're generals of division!"

I need not say with what a burst of laughter I received this very original declaration.

"I ought to know that laugh," cried a voice I at once knew to be my friend O'Shaughnessy. "Are you Charles O'Malley, by any chance in life?"

"The same, Major, and delighted to meet you; though, faith, we were near giving you a rather warm reception. What in the devil's name did you represent just now?"

"Ask Maurice, there, bad luck to him! I wish the devil had him when he persuaded me into it."

"Introduce me to your friend," replied the other, rubbing his shins as he spoke. "Mr. O'Mealey,"—so he called me—"I think. Happy to meet you; my mother was a Ryan of Kildooley, married to a first cousin of your father's, before she took Mr. Quill, my respected progenitor. I'm Dr. Quill, of the 48th, more commonly called Maurice Quill. Tear and ages! how sore my back is! It was all the fault of the baste, Mr. O'Mealey. We set out in search of you this morning, to bring you back with us to Torrijos, but we fell in with a very pleasant funeral at Barcaventer, and joined them; they invited us, I may say, to spend the day; and a very jovial day it was. I was the chief mourner, and carried a very big candle through the village, in consideration of as fine a meat-pie, and as much lush as my grief permitted me to indulge in afterward. But, my dear sir, when it was all finished, we found ourselves nine miles from our quarters, and as neither of us were in a very befitting condition for pedestrian exercise, we stole one of the leaders out of the hearse—velvet, plumes, and all—and set off home.

"When we came upon your party, we were not over clear whether you were English, Portuguese, or French, and that was the reason I called out to you, 'God save all here!' in Irish. Your polite answer was a shot, which struck the old horse in the knee, and although we wheeled about in double quick, we never could get him out of his professional habits on the road. He had a strong notion he was engaged in another funeral—as he was very likely to be—and the devil a bit faster than a dead march could we get him to, with all our thrashing. Orderly time, for men in a hurry, with a whole platoon blazing away behind them! But long life to the cavalry, they never hit anything!"

While he continued to run on in this manner, we reached our watch-fire, when what was my surprise to discover, in my newly-made acquaintance, the worthy Doctor I had seen a day or two before, operating at the fountain at Talavera!

"Well, Mr. O'Mealey," said he, as he seated himself before the blaze, "What is the state of the larder? Anything savory—anything drink-inspiring to be had?"

"I fear, Doctor, my fare is of the very humblest; but still—"

"What are the fluids, Charley?" cried the Major; "the cruel performance I have been enacting on that cursed beast has left me in a fever."

"This was a pigeon-pie, formerly," said Dr. Quill, investigating the ruined walls of a pasty: "and—but come, here's a duck; and if my nose deceive me not, a very tolerable ham. Peter—Larry—Patsy—What's the name of your familiar there?"

"Mickey—Mickey Free."

"Mickey Free, then; come here, avick! Devise a little drink, my son—none of the weakest—no lemon—hot! You understand, hot! That chap has an eye for punch; there's no mistaking an Irish fellow, nature has endowed them richly—fine features, and a beautiful absorbent system! That's the gift! Just look at him, blowing up the fire—isn't he a picture? Well, O'Mealey, I was fretting that we hadn't you up at Torrijos, we were enjoying life very respectably; we established a little system of small tithes upon fowl—sheep—pigs' heads and wine skins, that throve remarkably for the time. Here's the lush! Put it down there, Mickey, in the middle; that's right. Your health, Shaugh. O'Mealey, here's a troop to you; and in the mean time I'll give you a chant:

"'Come, ye jovial souls, don't over the bowl be sleeping,
Nor let the grog go round like a cripple creeping;
If your care comes up—in the liquor sink it,
Pass along the lush—I'll the boy can drink it.
Isn't that so, Mrs. Mary Callaghan?
Isn't that so, Mrs. Mary Callaghan?'

"Shaugh, my hearty, this begins to feel comfortable."

"Your man, O'Mealey, has a most judicious notion of punch for a small party; and though one has prejudices about a table, chairs, and that sort of thing, take my word for it, it's better than fighting the French any day."

"Well, Charley, it certainly did look quite awkward enough the other day toward three o'clock, when the Legion fell back before that French column, and broke the Guards behind them."

"Yes, you're quite right; but I think every one felt that the confusion was but momentary; the gallant Forty-eighth was up in an instant."

"Faith! I can answer for their alacrity," said the Doctor; "I was making my way to the rear with all convenient dispatch, when an aide-de-camp called out,

"'Cavalry coming! take care, Forty-eighth.'

"'Left face, wheel! Fall in there, fall in there!' I heard on every side, and soon found myself standing in a square, with Sir Arthur himself, and Hill, and the rest of them all around me.

"'Steady, men! Steady, now!' said Hill, as he rode around the ranks, while we saw an awful column of cuirassiers forming on the rising ground to our left.

"'Here they come!' said Sir Arthur, as the French came powdering along, making the very earth tremble beneath them.

"My first thought was, 'The devils are mad! and they'll ride down into us, before they know they're kilt!' And sure enough, smash into our first rank they pitched, sabring and cutting all before them; when at last the word 'Fire!' was given, and the whole head of the column broke like a shell, and rolled horse over man on the earth.

"'Very well done! very well, indeed!' said Sir Arthur, turning as coolly round to me as if he was asking for more gravy.

"'Mighty well done!' said I in reply; and resolving not to be outdone in coolness, I pulled out my snuff-box and offered him a pinch, saying, 'The real thing, Sir Arthur; our own countryman—blackguard.'

"He gave a little grim kind of a smile, took a pinch, and then called out,

"'Let Sherbroke advance!' while turning again toward me, he said, 'Where are your people, Colonel?'

"'Colonel!' thought I; 'is it possible he's going to promote me?' But before I could answer, he was talking to another. Meanwhile, Hill came up, and, looking at me steadily, burst out with—

"'Why the devil are you here, sir? Why ain't you at the rear?'

"'Upon my conscience,' said I, 'that's the very thing I'm puzzling myself about this minute! but if you think it's pride in me, you're greatly mistaken, for I'd rather the greatest scoundrel in Dublin was kicking me down Sackville street, than be here now!'

"You'd think it was fun I was making, if you heard how they all laughed, Hill and Cameron and the others louder than any.

"'Who is he?' said Sir Arthur, quickly.

"'Dr. Quill, surgeon of the Thirty-third, where I exchanged, to be near my brother, sir, in the Thirty-fourth.'

"'A doctor,—a surgeon! That fellow a surgeon! Damn him, I took him for Colonel Grosvenor! I say, Gordon, these medical officers must be docked of their fine feathers, there's no knowing them from the staff; look to that in the next general order.'

"And sure enough they left us bare and naked the next morning; and if the French sharpshooters pick us down now, devil mend them for wasting powder, for if they look in the orderly books, they'll find their mistake."

"Ah, Maurice, Maurice!" said Shaugh,

with a sigh, "you'll never improve—you'll never improve!"

"Why the devil would I?" said he; "ain't I at the top of my profession—full surgeon—with nothing to expect—nothing to hope for? Oh, if I only remained in the light company, what wouldn't I be now?"

"Then you were not always a doctor?" said I.

"Upon my conscience I wasn't," said he. "When Shaugh knew me first, I was the Adonis of the Roscommon militia, with more heiresses in my list than any man in the regiment; but Shaugh and myself were always unlucky."

"Poor Mrs. Rogers!" said the Major, pathetically, drinking off his glass and heaving a profound sigh.

"Ah, the darling!" said the Doctor; "if it wasn't for a jug of punch that lay on the hall table, our fortune in life would be very different."

"True for you, Maurice!" quoth O'Shaughnessy.

"I should like much to hear that story," said I, pushing the jug briskly round.

"He'll tell it you," said O'Shaughnessy, lighting his cigar, and leaning pensively back against a tree,—"he'll tell it you."

"I will with pleasure," said Maurice. "Let Mr. Free meantime amuse himself with the punch-bowl, and I'll relate it."

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE DOCTOR'S TALE.*

It is now some fifteen years since—if it wasn't for O'Shaughnessy's wrinkles, I could not believe it five—we were quartered in Loughrea. There were, besides our regiment, the Fiftieth and the Seventy-third, and a troop or two of horse artillery, and the whole town was literally a barrack, and, as you may suppose, the pleasantest place imaginable. All the young ladies, and indeed all those that had got their brevet some years before, came flocking into the town, not knowing but the devil might persuade a raw ensign or so to marry some of them.

"Such dinner parties—such routs and balls—never were heard of west of Athlone. The gayeties were incessant; and if good feeding, plenty of claret, short whist, country-dances, and kissing, could have done the thing, there wouldn't have been a bachelor with a red coat for six miles around.

"You know the west, O'Mealey; so I needn't tell you what the Galway girls are like; fine, hearty, free-and-easy, talking, laughing devils; but as deep and as 'cute as a Master in Chancery—ready for any fun or merriment; but always keeping a sly look-out for a proposal or a tender acknowledgment, which—what between the heat of a ball-room, whisky negus, white satin shoes, and a quarrel with your guardian—it's ten to one you fall into before you're a week in the same town with them.

"As for the men, I don't admire them so much; pleasant and cheerful enough, when they're handicapping the coat off your back, and your new tilbury for a spavined pony and a cotton umbrella; but regular devils if you come to cross them the least in life; nothing but ten paces—three shots a piece—to begin and end with something like Roger de Coverley, when every one has a pull at his neighbor. I'm not saying they're not agreeable, well-informed, and mild in their habits; but they lean overmuch to corduroys and coroners' inquests for one's taste farther south. However, they're a fine people, take them all in all; and, if they were not interfered with, and their national customs invaded with road-making, petty-sessions, grand-jury laws, and a stray commission now and then, they are capable of great things, and would astonish the world.

"But, as I was saying, we were ordered to Loughrea, after being fifteen months in detachments about Birr, Tullamore, Kilbeggan, and all that country; the change was indeed a delightful one; and we soon found ourselves the center of the most marked and determined civilities. I told you they were wise people in the west; this was their calculation: the line—ours was the Roscommon militia—are here to-day, there to-morrow; they may be flirting in Tralee this week, and fighting on the Tagus the next; not that there was any fighting there in those times, but then there was always Nova Scotia and St. John's, and a hundred other places that a

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* I cannot permit the reader to fall into the same blunder with regard to the worthy "Maurice," as my friend Charles O'Malley has done. It is only fair to state that the Doctor in the following tale was hoaxing the "Dragoon." A braver and a better fellow than Quill never existed, equally beloved by his brother officers, as delighted in for his convivial talents. His favorite amusement was to invent some story or adventure, in which, mixing up his own name with that of some friend or companion, the veracity of the whole was never questioned. Of this nature was the pedigree he devised in the previous chapter to impose upon O'Malley, who believed implicitly all he told him.

Galway young lady knew nothing about, except that people never came back from them. Now, what good, what use was there in falling in love with them? mere transitory and passing pleasure that was. But as for us: there we were; if not in Kilkenny we were in Cork. Safe cut and come again; no getting away under pretense of foreign service; no excuse for not marrying by any cruel pictures of the colonies, where they make spatchcocks of the officers' wives, and scrape their infant families to death with a small-tooth comb. In a word, my dear O'Mealey, we were at a high premium; and even O'Shaughnessy, with his red head and the legs you see, had his admirers—there now, don't be angry, Dan—the men, at least, were mighty partial to you.

"Loughrea, if it was a pleasant, was a very expensive place. White gloves and car hire—there wasn't a chaise in the town—short whist too (God forgive me if I wrong them, but I wonder were they honest?), cost money; and as our popularity rose, our purses fell, till at length, when the one was at the flood, the other was something very like low water.

"Now, the Roscommon was a beautiful corps—no petty jealousies, no little squabbling among the officers, no small spleen between the Major's wife and the Paymaster's sister—all was amiable, kind, brotherly, and affectionate. To proceed: I need only mention one fine trait of them—no man ever refused to indorse a brother officers' bill. To think of asking the amount, or even the date, would be taken personally; and thus we went on mutually aiding and assisting each other—the Colonel drawing on me, I on the Major, the senior Captain on the Surgeon, and so on—a regular cross-fire of "promises to pay,' all stamped and regular.

"Not but the system had its inconveniences; for sometimes an obstinate tailor or bootmaker would make a row for his money, and then we'd be obliged to get up a little quarrel between the drawer and the acceptor of the bill; they couldn't speak for some days; and a mutual friend to both would tell the creditor that the slightest imprudence on his part would lead to bloodshed; 'and the Lord help him! if there was a duel, he'd proved the whole cause of it.' This and twenty other plans were employed, and, finally, the matter would be left to arbitration among our brother officers; and, I need not say, they behaved like trumps. But, notwithstanding all this, we were frequently hard-pressed for cash; as the Colonel said, 'It's a mighty expensive corps.' Our dress was costly—not that it had much lace and gold on it, but that, what between falling on the road at night, shindies at mess, and other devilment, a coat lasted no time. Wine, too, was heavy on us; for, though we often changed our wine-merchant, and rarely paid him, there was an awful consumption at the mess!

"Now, what I have mentioned may prepare you for the fact, that, before we were eight weeks in garrison, Shaugh and myself, upon an accurate calculation of our conjoint finances, discovered that, except some vague promises of discounting here and there through the town, and seven and fourpence in specie, we were innocent of any pecuniary treasures. This was embarrassing; we had both embarked in several small schemes of pleasurable amusement; had a couple of hunters each, a tandem, and a running account—I think it *galloped*—at every shop in the town.

"Let me pause for a moment here, O'Mealey, while I moralize a little in a strain I hope may benefit you. Have you ever considered—of course you have not, you're too young and unreflecting—how beautifully every climate and every soil possesses some one antidote or another to its own noxious influences? The tropics have their succulent and juicy fruits, cooling and refreshing; the northern latitudes have their beasts with fur and warm skin to keep out the frost-bites; and so it is in Ireland—nowhere on the face of the habitable globe does a man contract such habits of small debt, and nowhere, I'll be sworn, can he so easily get out of any scrape concerning them. They have their tigers in the east, their antelopes in the south, their white bears in Norway, their buffaloes in America; but we have an animal in Ireland that beats them all hollow—a country attorney!

"Now, let me introduce you to Mr. Matthew Donevan. Mat, as he was familiarly called by his numerous acquaintances, was a short, florid, rosy little gentleman of some four or five-and-forty, with a well-curled wig of the fairest imaginable auburn, the gentle wave of the front locks, which played in infantine loveliness upon his little bullet forehead, contrasting strongly enough with a cunning leer of his eye, and a certain *nisi prius* laugh that, however it might please a client, rarely brought pleasurable feelings to his opponent in a cause.

"Mat was a character in his way; deep, double, and tricky in everything that concerned his profession, he affected the gay

fellow; liked a jolly dinner at Brown's Hotel—would go twenty miles to see a steeple-chase and a coursing match—bet with any one, when the odds were strong in his favor, with an easy indifference about money that made him seem, when winning, rather the victim of good luck than anything else. As he kept a rather pleasant bachelor's house, and liked the military much, we soon became acquainted. Upon him, therefore, for reasons I can't explain, both our hopes reposed; and Shaugh and myself at once agreed that, if Mat could not assist us in our distresses, the case was a bad one.

"A pretty little epistle was accordingly concocted, inviting the worthy attorney to a small dinner at five o'clock the next day, intimating that we were to be perfectly alone, and had a little business to discuss. True to the hour, Mat was there; and, as if instantly guessing that ours was no regular party of pleasure, his look, dress, and manner were all in keeping with the occasion—quiet, subdued, and searching.

"When the claret had been superseded by the whisky, and the confidential hours were approaching, by an adroit allusion to some heavy wager then pending, we brought our finances upon the *tapis*. The thing was done beautifully; an easy *adagio* movement—no violent transition; but hang me if old Mat didn't catch the matter at once.

"'Oh! it's there ye are, Captain,' said he, with his peculiar grin; 'two-and-sixpence in the pound, and no assets.'

"'The last is nearer the mark, my old boy,' said Shaugh, blurting out the whole truth at once. The wily attorney finished his tumbler slowly, as if giving himself time for reflection, and then, smacking his lips in a preparatory manner, took a quick survey of the room with his piercing green eye.

"'A very sweet mare of yours that little mouse-colored one is, with the dip in the back; and she has a trifling curb—maybe it's a spavin, indeed—in the near hind-leg. You gave five-and-twenty for her, now, I'll be bound?'

"'Sixty guineas, as sure as my name's Dan,' said Shaugh, not at all pleased at the value put upon his hackney; 'and, as to spavin and curb, I'll wager double the sum she has neither the slightest trace of one nor the other.'

"'I'll not take the bet,' said Mat, dryly; 'money's scarce in these parts.'

"This hit silenced us both; and our friend continued:

"'Then there's the bay horse—a great strapping, leggy beast he is for a tilbury; and the hunters—worth nothing here, they don't know this country; them's neat pistols; and the tilbury is not bad—'

"'Confound you!' said I, losing all patience, 'we didn't ask you here to appraise our movables; we want to raise the wind without that.'

"'I see—I perceive,' said Mat, taking a pinch of snuff very leisurely as he spoke; 'I see. Well, that is difficult—very difficult, just now. I've mortgaged every acre of ground in the two counties near us, and a sixpence more is not to be had that way. Are you lucky at the races?'

"'Never win a sixpence.'

"'What can you do at whist?'

"'Revoke, and get cursed by my partner; devil a more!'

"'That's mighty bad, for, otherwise, we might arrange something for you. Well, I only see one thing for it—you must marry; a wife with some money will get you out of your present difficulties, and we'll manage that easily enough.'

"'Come, Dan,' said I—for Shaugh was dropping asleep—'cheer up, old fellow. Donevan has found the way to pull us through our misfortunes; a girl with forty thousand pounds, the best cock shooting in Ireland; an old family, a capital cellar, all await ye—rouse up, there!'

"'I'm convanient,' said Shaugh, with a look intended to be knowing, but really very tipsy.

"'I didn't say much for her personal attractions, Captain,' said Mat; 'nor, indeed, did I specify the exact sum; but Mrs. Rogers Dooley, of Clonakilty, might be a princess—'

"'And so she shall be, Mat; the O'Shaughnessys were Kings of Ennis in the time of Nero; and I'm only waiting for a trifle of money to revive the title. What's her name?'

"'Mrs. Rogers Dooley.'

"'Here's her health, and long life to her—

"'And may the devil cut the toes
Of all her foes,
That we may know them by their limping.'

"This benevolent wish uttered, Dan fell flat upon the hearth-rug, and was soon sound asleep. I must hasten on; so need only say that, before we parted that night, Mat and myself had finished the half-gallon bottle of Loughrea whisky, and concluded a treaty for the hand and fortune of Mrs. Rogers Dooley; he being guaranteed a very handsome percentage on the property, and the lady being reserved—for

choice between Dan and myself, which, however, I was determined should fall upon my more fortunate friend.

"The first object which presented itself to my aching senses the following morning, was a very spacious card of invitation from Mr. Jonas Malone, requesting me to favor him with the seductions of my society the next evening to a ball; at the bottom of which, in Mr. Donevan's hand, I read:

"'Don't fail; you know who is to be there. I've not been idle since I saw you. Would the Captain take twenty-five for the mare?'

"'So far so good,' thought I, as, entering O'Shaughnessy's quarters, I discovered him endeavoring to spell out his card, which, however, had no postscript. We soon agreed that Mat should have his price; so, sending a polite answer to the invitation, we dispatched a still more civil note to the attorney, and begged of him, as a weak mark of esteem, to accept the mouse-colored mare as a present."

Here O'Shaughnessy sighed deeply, and even seemed affected by the souvenir.

"Come, Dan, we did it all for the best. Oh! O'Mealey, he was a cunning fellow; but no matter. We went to the ball, and, to be sure, it was a great sight. Two hundred and fifty souls, where there was not good room for the odd fifty: such laughing, such squeezing, such pressing of hands and waists in the staircase! and then such a row and riot at the top,—four fiddles, a key bugle, and a bagpipe, playing 'Haste to the wedding,' amid the crash of refreshment-trays, the tramp of feet, and the sounds of merriment on all sides!

"It's only in Ireland, after all, people have fun; old and young, merry and morose, the gay and cross-grained, are crammed into a lively country-dance; and, ill-matched, ill-suited, go jigging away together to the blast of a bad band, till their heads, half turned by the noise, the heat, the novelty, and the hubbub, they all get as tipsy as if they were really deep in liquor.

"Then there is that particularly free-and-easy tone in every one about: here go a couple capering daintily out of the ball-room to take a little fresh air on the stairs, where every step has its own separate flirtation party; there, a riotous old gentleman, with a boarding-school girl for his partner, has plunged smack into a party at loo, upsetting cards and counters, and drawing down curses innumerable. Here are a merry knot round the refreshments, and well they may be; for the negus is strong punch, and the biscuit is tipsy cake,—and all this with a running fire of good stories, jokes, and witticisms on all sides, in the laughter for which even the droll-looking servants join as heartily as the rest.

"We were not long in finding out Mrs. Rogers, who sat in the middle of a very high sofa, with her feet just touching the floor. She was short, fat, wore her hair in a crop, had a species of shining yellow skin, and a turned-up nose, all of which were by no means prepossessing. Shaugh and myself were too hard-up to be particular, and so we invited her to dance alternately for two consecutive hours, plying her assiduously with negus during the lulls in the music.

"Supper was at last announced, and enabled us to recruit for new efforts; and so, after an awful consumption of fowl, pigeon-pie, ham, and brandy cherries, Mrs. Rogers brightened up considerably, and professed her willingness to join the dancers. As for us, partly from exhaustion, partly to stimulate our energies, and in some degree to drown reflection, we drank deep, and when we reached the drawing-room, not only the agreeable guests themselves, but even the furniture, the venerable chairs and the stiff old sofa, seemed performing 'Sir Roger de Coverley.' How we conducted ourselves till five in the morning, let our cramps confess, for we were both bed-ridden for ten days after. However, at last, Mrs. Rogers gave in; and, reclining gracefully upon a window-seat, pronounced it a most elegant party, and asked me to look for her shawl. While I perambulated the staircase with her bonnet on my head, and more wearing apparel than would stock a magazine, Shaugh was roaring himself hoarse in the street, calling Mrs. Rogers's coach.

"'Sure, Captain,' said the lady, with a tender leer, 'it's only a chair.'

"'And here it is,' said I, surveying a very portly-looking old sedan, newly painted and varnished, that blocked up half the hall.

"'You'll catch cold, my angel,' said Shaugh, in a whisper, for he was coming it very strong by this; 'get into the chair. Maurice, can't you find those fellows?' said he to me; for the chairmen had gone down-stairs, and were making very merry among the servants.

"'She's fast now,' said I, shutting the door to. 'Let us do the gallant thing, and carry her home ourselves.' Shaugh thought this a great notion; and, in a minute, we mounted the poles and sallied forth, amid a great chorus of laughing

from all the footmen, maids, and teaboys that filled the passage.

"'The big house, with the bow-window and the pillars, Captain,' said a fellow, as we issued upon our journey.

"'I know it,' said I. 'Turn to the left after you pass the square.'

"'Isn't she heavy?' said Shaugh, as he meandered across the narrow streets with a sidelong motion, that must have suggested to our fair inside passenger some notions of a sea voyage. In truth, I must confess our progress was rather a devious one; now zig-zagging from side to side, now getting into a sharp trot, and then suddenly pulling up at a dead stop, or running the machine chuck against a wall, to enable us to stand still and gain breath.

"'Which way now?' cried he, as we swung round the angle of a street, and entered the large market-place; 'I'm getting terribly tired.'

"'Never give in, Dan; think of Clonakilty, and the old lady herself;' and here I gave the chair a hoist that evidently astonished our fair friend, for a very imploring cry issued forth immediately after.

"'To the right, quick step, forward—charge!' cried I; and we set off at a brisk trot down a steep narrow lane.

"'Here it is now: the light in the window; cheer up!'

"As I said this, we came short up to a fine portly-looking doorway, with great stone pillars and cornice.

"'Make yourself at home, Maurice,' said he; 'bring her in;' and so saying we pushed forward—for the door was open—and passed boldly into a great flagged hall, silent and cold, and dark as the night itself.

"'Are you sure we're right?' said he.

"'All right,' said I; 'go ahead.'

"And so we did, till we came in sight of a small candle that burned dimly at a distance from us.

"'Make for the light,' said I; but just as I said so, Shaugh slipped and fell flat on the flagway. The noise of his fall sent up a hundred echoes in the silent building, and terrified us both dreadfully; and, after a minute's pause, by one consent, we turned and made for the door, falling almost at every step; and frightened out of our senses, we came tumbling together into the porch, and out in the street, and never drew breath till we reached the barracks. Meanwhile, let me return to Mrs. Rogers. The dear old lady, who had passed an awful time since she left the ball, had just rallied out of a fainting fit when we took to our heels; so, after screaming and crying her best, she at last managed to open the top of the chair, and by dint of great exertions succeeded in forcing the door, and at length freed herself from bondage. She was leisurely groping her way round it in the dark, when her lamentations being heard without, woke up the old sexton of the chapel—for it was there we placed her—who, entering cautiously with a light, no sooner caught a glimpse of the great black sedan and the figure beside it, than he also took to his heels, and ran like a madman to the priest's house.

"'Come, your reverance, come, for the love of marcy! sure didn't I see him myself! O wirra, wirra!'

"'What is it, ye ould fool?' said M'Kenny.

"'It's Father Con Doran, your reverance, that was buried last week, and there he is up now, coffin and all! saying a midnight mass as lively as ever.'

"Poor Mrs. Rogers, God help her! It was a trying sight for her, when the priest and the two coadjutors, and three little boys and the sexton, all came in to lay her spirit; and the shock she received that night, they say, she never got over.

"Need I say, my dear O'Mealey, that our acquaintance with Mrs. Rogers was closed? The dear woman had a hard struggle for it afterward. Her character was assailed by all the elderly ladies in Loughrea for going off in our company, and her blue satin, piped with scarlet, utterly ruined by a deluge of holy water bestowed on her by the pious sexton. It was in vain that she originated twenty different reports to mystify the world; and even ten pounds spent in masses for the eternal repose of Father Con Doran only increased the laughter this unfortunate affair gave rise to. As for us, we exchanged into the Line, and foreign service took us out of the road of duns, debts, and devilment, and we soon reformed, and eschewed such low company."

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The day was breaking ere we separated, and amid the rich and fragrant vapors that exhaled from the earth, the faint traces of sunlight dimly stealing, told of the morning. My two friends set out for Torrijos, and I pushed boldly forward in the direction of the Alberche.

It was a strange thing, that although but two days before the roads we were then traveling had been the line of retreat of the whole French army, not a vestige of their equipment nor a trace of their *matériel* had been left behind. In vain we searched each thicket by the wayside for some strag-

gling soldier, some wounded or wearied man—nothing of the kind was to be seen. Except the deeply-rutted road, torn by the heavy wheels of the artillery, and the white ashes of a wood fire, nothing marked their progress.

Our journey was a lonely one. Not a man was to be met with. The houses stood untenanted, the doors lay open, no smoke wreathed from their deserted hearths, the peasantry had taken to the mountains, and although the plains were yellow with the ripe harvest, and the peaches hung temptingly upon the trees, all was deserted and forsaken. I had often seen the blackened walls and broken rafters, the traces of the wild revenge and reckless pillage of a retiring army—the ruined castle, and the desecrated altar, are sad things to look upon; but, somehow, a far heavier depression sunk into my heart as my eye ranged over the wide valleys and broad hills, all redolent of comfort, of beauty, and of happiness, and yet not one man to say, "This is my home; these are my household gods!" The birds caroled gayly in each leafy thicket, the bright stream sung merrily as it rippled through the rocks, the tall corn, gently stirred by the breeze, seemed to swell the concert of sweet sounds; but no human voice awoke the echoes there. It was as if the earth was speaking in thankfulness to its Maker; while man, ungrateful and unworthy man, pursuing his ruthless path of devastation and destruction, had left no being to say, "I thank Thee for all these."

The day was closing as we drew near the Alberche, and came in sight of the watchfires of the enemy. Far as the eye could reach their column extended; but in the dim twilight nothing could be seen with accuracy. Yet, from the position their artillery occupied, and the unceasing din of baggage wagons and heavy carriages toward the rear, I came to the conclusion that a still further retreat was meditated. A picket of light cavalry was posted upon the river's bank, and seemed to watch with vigilance the approaches to the stream.

Our bivouac was a dense copse of pine trees, exactly opposite to the French advanced posts, and there we passed the night—fortunately, a calm and starlight one—for we dared not light fires, fearful of attracting attention.

During the long hours, I lay patiently watching the movements of the enemy till the dark shadows hid all from my sight; and even then, as my ears caught the challenge of a sentry, or the footsteps of some officer in his round, my thoughts were riveted upon them, and a hundred vague fancies as to the future were based upon no stronger foundation than the clink of a firelock or the low-muttered song of a patrol.

Toward morning I slept, and when day broke my first glance was toward the river side; but the French were gone—noiselessly—rapidly. Like one man, that vast army had departed; and a dense column of dust toward the horizon alone marked the long line of march where the martial legions were retreating.

My mission was thus ended; and, hastily partaking of the humble breakfast my friend Mike provided for me, I once more set out, and took the road toward headquarters.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE SKIRMISH.

For several months after the battle of Talavera my life presented nothing which I feel worth recording. Our good fortune seemed to have deserted us when our hopes were highest; for from the day of that splendid victory we began our retrograde movement upon Portugal. Pressed hard by overwhelming masses of the enemy, we saw the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida fall successively into their hands. The Spaniards were defeated wherever they ventured upon a battle; and our own troops, thinned by sickness and desertion, presented but a shadow of that brilliant army which only a few months previous had followed the retiring French beyond the frontiers of Portugal.

However willing I now am—and who is not?—to recognize the genius and foresight of that great man who then held the destinies of the Peninsula within his hands, I confess, at the time I speak of, I could ill comprehend and still less feel contented with the successive retreats our forces made; and while the words Torres Vedras brought nothing to my mind but the last resting place before embarkation, the sad fortunes of Corunna were now before me, and it was with a gloomy and desponding spirit I followed the routine of my daily duty.

During these weary months, if my life was devoid of stirring interest or adventure, it was not profitless. Constantly employed at the outposts, I became thoroughly inured to all the roughing of a soldier's life, and learned in the best of schools that tacit obedience which alone can form the

subordinate, or ultimately fit its possessor for command himself.

Humble and unobtrusive as such a career must ever be, it was not without its occasional rewards. From General Craufurd I more than once obtained most kind mention in his dispatches, and felt that I was not unknown or unnoticed by Sir Arthur Wellesley himself. At that time, these testimonies, slight and passing as they were, contributed to the pride and glory of my existence; and even now—shall I confess it?—when some gray hairs are mingling with the brown, and when my old dragoon swagger is taming down into a kind of half-pay shamble, I feel my heart warm at the recollection of them.

Be it so: I care not who smiles at the avowal. I know of little better worth remembering as we grow old than what pleased us while we were young. With the memory of the kind words once spoken, come back the still kinder looks of those who spoke them; and, better than all, that early feeling of budding manhood, when there was neither fear nor distrust. Alas! these are the things, and not weak eyes and tottering limbs, which form the burden of old age. Oh! if we could only go on believing, go on trusting, go on hoping to the last, who would shed tears for the bygone feats of his youthful days, when the spirit that evoked them lived young and vivid as before?

But to my story. While Ciudad Rodrigo still held out against the besieging French, its battered walls and breached ramparts sadly foretelling the fate inevitably impending, we were ordered, together with the 16th Light Dragoons, to proceed to Gallegos, to reinforce Craufurd's division, then forming a corps of observation upon Massena's movements.

The position he occupied was a most commanding one—the crown of a long mountain ridge, studded with pine copse and cork-trees, presenting every facility for light infantry movements; and here and there, gently sloping toward the plain, offering a field for cavalry maneuvers. Beneath, in the vast plain, were encamped the dark legions of France, their heavy siege-artillery planted against the doomed fortress, while clouds of their cavalry caracoled proudly before us, as if in taunting sarcasm at our inactivity.

Every artifice which his natural cunning could suggest, every taunt a Frenchman's vocabulary contains, had been used by Massena to induce Sir Arthur Wellesley to come to the assistance of the beleaguered fortress; but in vain. In vain he relaxed the energy of the siege, and affected carelessness. In vain he asserted that the English were either afraid, or else traitors to their allies. The mind of him he thus assailed was neither accessible to menace nor to sarcasm. Patiently abiding his time, he watched the progress of events, and provided for that future, which was to crown his country's arms with success, and himself with undying glory.

Of a far different mettle was the general formed under whose orders we were now placed. Hot, passionate, and impetuous, relying upon bold and headlong heroism, rather than upon cool judgment and well-matured plans, Craufurd felt in war all the asperity and bitterness of a personal conflict. Ill brooking the insulting tone of the wily Frenchman, he thirsted for any occasion of a battle; and his proud spirit chafed against the colder counsels of his superior.

On the very morning we joined, the pickets brought in the intelligence that the French patrols were nightly in the habit of visiting the villages at the outposts, and committing every species of cruel indignity upon the wretched inhabitants. Fired at this daring insult, our General resolved to cut them off, and formed two ambuscades for the purpose.

Six squadrons of the 14th were dispatched to Villa del Puerco, three of the 16th to Baguetto, while some companies of the 95th, and the caçadores, supported by artillery, were ordered to hold themselves in reserve, for the enemy were in force at no great distance from us.

The morning was just breaking as an aide-de-camp galloped up with the intelligence that the French had been seen near the Villa del Puerco, a body of infantry and some cavalry having crossed the plain, and disappeared in that direction. While our Colonel was forming us, with the intention of getting between them and their main body, the tramp of horses was heard in the wood behind, and in a few moments two officers rode up. The foremost, who was a short, stoutly-built man of about forty, with a bronzed face and eye of piercing black, shouted out as we wheeled into column:

"Halt, there! Why, where the devil are you going? That's your ground!" So saying, and pointing straight toward the village with his hand, he would not listen to our Colonel's explanation that several stone fences and inclosures would interfere with cavalry movements, but added, "Forward, I say! Proceed!"

Unfortunately, the nature of the ground

separated our squadron, as the Colonel anticipated; and although we came on at a topping pace, the French had time to form in square upon a hill to await us, and when we charged, they stood firmly, and firing with a low and steady aim, several of our troopers fell. As we wheeled round, we found ourselves exactly in front of their cavalry coming out of Baguilles; so, dashing straight at them, we revenged ourselves for our first repulse by capturing twenty-nine prisoners, and wounding several others.

The French infantry were, however, still unbroken; and Colonel Talbot rode boldly up with five squadrons of the 14th; but the charge, pressed home with all its gallantry, failed also, and the Colonel fell mortally wounded, and fourteen of his troopers around him. Twice we rode round the square seeking for a weak point, but in vain; the gallant Frenchman who commanded, Captain Guache, stood fearlessly amid his brave followers, and we could hear him, as he called out from time to time,

"*C'est ça, mes enfans! très bien fait, mes braves!*"

And at length they made good their retreat, while we returned to the camp, leaving thirty-two troopers and our brave Colonel dead upon the field in this disastrous affair.

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The repulse we had met with, so contrary to all our hopes and expectations, made that a most gloomy day to all of us. The brave fellows we had left behind us, the taunting cheer of the French infantry, the unbroken ranks against which we rode time after time in vain, never left our minds; and a sense of shame of what might be thought of us at head-quarters, rendered the reflection still more painful.

Our bivouac, notwithstanding all our efforts, was a sad one, and, when the moon rose, some drops of heavy rain falling at intervals in the still, unruffled air, threatened a night of storm; gradually the sky grew darker and darker, the clouds hung nearer to the earth, and a dense, thick mass of dark mist shrouded every object; the heavy cannonade of the siege was stilled, nothing betrayed that a vast army was encamped near us, their bivouac fires were even imperceptible, and the only sound we heard was the great bell of Ciudad Rodrigo as it struck the hour, and seemed, in the mournful cadence of its chime, like the knell of the doomed citadel.

The patrol which I commanded had to visit on its rounds the most advanced post of our position. This was a small farm-house, which, standing upon a little rising ledge of ground, was separated from the French lines by a little stream tributary to the Aguda. A party of the Fourteenth were picketed here, and beneath them, in the valley, scarce five hundred yards distant, was the detachment of cuirassiers which formed the French outpost. As we neared our picket, the deep voice of the sentry challenged us, and, while all else was silent as the grave, we could hear from the opposite side the merry chorus of a French *chanson à boire*, with its clattering accompaniment of glasses, as some gay companions were making merry together.

Within the little hut which contained *our* fellows, the scene was a different one; the three officers who commanded sat moodily over a wretched fire of wet wood; a solitary candle dimly lighted the dismantled room, where a table but ill-supplied with cheer stood unminded and uncared for.

"Well, O'Malley," cried Baker, as I came in, "what is the night about? and what's Craufurd for next?"

"We hear," cried another, "that he means to give battle to-morrow; but surely Sir Arthur's orders are positive enough. Gordon himself told me that he was forbid to fight beyond the Coa, but to retreat at the first advance of the enemy."

"I'm afraid," replied I, "that retreating is his last thought just now. Ammunition has just been served out, and I know the horse artillery have orders to be in readiness by daybreak."

"All right," said Hampden, with a half-bitter tone. "Nothing like going through with it. If he is to be brought to court-martial for disobedience, he'll take good care we shan't be there to see it."

"Why, the French are fifty thousand strong!" said Baker. "Look there! What does that mean now? That's a signal from the town."

As he spoke, a rocket of great brilliancy shot up into the sky, and bursting, at length fell in millions of red lustrous sparks on every side, showing forth the tall fortress, and the encamped army around it, with all the clearness of noonday. It was a most splendid sight; and though the next moment all was dark as before, we gazed still fixedly into the gloomy distance, straining our eyes to observe what was hid from our view forever.

"That must be a signal," repeated Baker.

"Begad! if Craufurd sees it he'll interpret it as a reason for fighting. I trust he's asleep by this time," said Hampden. "By-the-by, O'Malley, did you see the fellows at work in the trenches? How beautifully clear it was toward the southward!"

"Yes, I remarked that! and what surprised me was the openness of their position in that direction. Toward the San Benito mole I could not see a man."

"Ah! they'll not attack on that side; but if we really are—"

"Stay, Hampden!" said I, interrupting him; "a thought has just struck me. At sunset I saw, through my telescope, the French engineers marking with their white tape the line of a new intrenchment in that quarter. Would it not be a glorious thing to move the tape, and bring the fellows under the fire of San Benito?"

"By Jove! O'Malley, that is a thought worth a troop to you."

"Far more likely to forward his promotion in the next world than in this," said Baker, smiling.

"By no means," added I; "I marked the ground this evening, and have it perfectly in my mind. If we were to follow the bend of the river, I'll be bound to come right upon the spot: by nearing the fortress we'll escape the sentries; and all this portion is open to us."

The project thus loosely thrown out was now discussed in all its bearings. Whatever difficulties it presented were combated so much to our own satisfaction, that at last its very facility damped our ardor. Meanwhile, the night wore on, and the storm of rain so long impending began to descend in very torrents: hissing along the parched ground, it rose in a mist, while overhead the heavy thunder rolled in long unbroken peals, the crazy door threatened to give way at each moment, and the whole building trembled to its foundation.

"Pass the brandy down here, Hampden, and thank your stars you're where you are. Eh, O'Malley? You'll defer your trip to San Benito for finer weather."

"Well, to come to the point," said Hampden, "I'd rather begin my engineering at a more favorable season; but if O'Malley's for it—"

"And O'Malley *is* for it," said I, suddenly.

"Then, faith, I'm not the man to balk his fancy; and as Craufurd is so bent upon fighting to-morrow, it don't make much difference. Is it a bargain?"

"It is; here's my hand on it."

"Come, come, boys, I'll have none of this; we've been prettily cut up this morning already. You shall not go upon this foolish excursion."

"Confound it, old fellow! it's all very well for you to talk, with the majority before you, next step; but here we are, if peace came to-morrow, scarcely better than we left England. No, no; if O'Malley's ready—and I see he is so before me—What have you got there? Oh! I see; that's our tape-line; capital fun, by George! The worst of it is, they'll make us colonels of engineers.—Now then, what's your plan—on foot or mounted?"

"Mounted, and for this reason, the country is all open; if we are to have a run for it, our thorough-breds ought to distance them; and, as we must expect to pass some of their sentries, our only chance is on horseback."

"My mind is relieved of a great load," said Hampden; "I was trembling in my skin lest you should make it a walking party. I'll do anything you like in the saddle, from robbing the mail to cutting out a frigate; but I never was much of a footpad."

"Well, Mike," said I, as I returned to the room with my trusty follower, "are the cattle to be depended on?"

"If we had a snaffle in Malachi Daly's mouth" (my brown horse), "I'd be afeared of nothing, sir; but, if it comes to fencing, with that cruel bit—but sure, you've a light hand, and let him have his head, if it's wall."

"By Jove, he thinks it a fox-chase!" said Hampden.

"Isn't it the same, sir?" said Mike, with a seriousness that made the whole party smile.

"Well, I hope we shall not be earthed, anyway," said I. "Now, the next thing is, who has a lantern?—ah! the very thing; nothing better. Look to your pistols, Hampden; and, Mike, here's a glass of grog for you; we'll want you. And now, one bumper for good luck. Eh, Baker, won't you pledge us?"

"And spare a little for me," said Hampden. "How it does rain! If one didn't expect to be waterproofed before morning, one really wouldn't go out in such weather."

While I busied myself in arranging my few preparations, Hampden proceeded gravely to inform Mike that we were going to the assistance of the besieged fortress, which could not possibly go on without us.

"Tare and ages!" said Mike, "that's mighty quare; and the blue rocket was a letter of invitation, I suppose?"

"Exactly," said Hampden; "and you see there's no ceremony between us. We'll just drop in, in the evening, in a friendly way."

"Well, then, upon my conscience, I'd wait, if I was you, till the family wasn't in confusion. They have enough on their hands just now."

"So you'll not be persuaded?" said Baker. "Well, I frankly tell you, that come what will of it, as your senior officer, I'll report you to-morrow. I'll not risk myself for any such hare-brained expeditions."

"A mighty pleasant lookout for me," said Mike; "if I'm not shot to-night, I may be flogged in the morning."

This speech once more threw us into a hearty fit of laughter, amid which we took leave of our friends, and set forth upon our way.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE LINES OF CIUDAD RODRIGO.

The small twinkling lights which shone from the ramparts of Ciudad Rodrigo were our only guide, as we issued forth upon our perilous expedition. The storm raged, if possible, even more violently than before, and gusts of wind swept along the ground with the force of a hurricane; so that at first, our horses could scarcely face the tempest. Our path lay along the little stream for a considerable way; after which, fording the rivulet, we entered upon the open plain, taking care to avoid the French outpost on the extreme left, which was marked by a bivouac fire, burning under the heavy down-pour of rain, and looking larger through the dim atmosphere around it.

I rode foremost, followed closely by Hampden and Mike; not a word was spoken after we crossed the stream. Our plan was, if challenged by a patrol, to reply in French and press on; so small a party could never suggest the idea of attack, and we hoped in this manner to escape.

The violence of the storm was such, that many of our precautions as to silence were quite unnecessary; and we had advanced to a considerable extent into the plain before any appearance of the encampment struck us. At length, on mounting a little rising ground, we perceived several fires stretching far away to the northward; while, still to our left, there blazed one larger and brighter than the others. We now found that we had not outflanked their position as we intended, and learning, from the situation of the fires, that we were still only at the outposts, we pressed sharply forward, directing our course by the twin stars that shone from the fortress.

"How heavy the ground is here!" whispered Hampden, as our horses sunk above the fetlocks; "we had better stretch away to the right; the rise of the hill will favor us."

"Hark!" said I, "did you not hear something? Pull up; silence now; yes, there they come. It's a patrol, I hear their tramp." As I spoke, the measured tread of infantry was heard above the storm, and soon after a lantern was seen coming along the causeway near us. The column passed within a few yards of where we stood. I could even recognize the black covering of the shakos as the light fell on them. "Let us follow them," whispered I; and the next moment we fell in upon their track, holding our cattle well in hand, and ready to start at a moment.

"*Qui va là?*" a sentry demanded.

"*La deuxième division,*" cried a hoarse voice.

"*Halte là! la consigne?*"

"*Wagram!*" repeated the same voice as before, while his party resumed their march; and the next moment the patrol was again upon his post, silent and motionless as before.

"*En avant, Messieurs!*" said I aloud, as soon as the infantry had proceeded some distance; "*en avant!*"

"*Qui va là?*" demanded the sentry, as we came along at a sharp trot.

"*L'état-major, Wagram!*" responded I, pressing on without drawing rein; and in a moment we had regained our former position behind the infantry. We had scarcely time to congratulate ourselves upon the success of our scheme, when a tremendous clattering noise in front, mingled with the galloping of horses and the cracking of whips, announced the approach of the artillery as they came along by a narrow road which bisected our path; and, as they passed between us and the column, we could hear the muttered sentences of the drivers, cursing the unseasonable time for an attack, and swearing at their cattle in no measured tones.

"Did you hear that?" whispered Hampden; "the battery is about to be directed against the San Benito, which must be far away to the left. I heard one of the troop saying that they were to open their fire at daybreak."

"All right, now," said I; "look there!"

From the hill we now stood upon, a

range of lanterns was distinctly visible, stretching away for nearly half a mile.

"There are the trenches; they must be at work, too; see how the lights are moving from place to place! Straight now: forward!"

So saying, I pressed my horse boldly on.

We had not proceeded many minutes, when the sounds of galloping were heard coming along behind us.

"To the right, in the hollow," cried I; "be still."

Scarcely had we moved off when several horsemen galloped up, and, drawing their reins to breathe their horses up the hill, we could hear their voices as they conversed together.

In the few broken words we could catch, we guessed that the attack upon San Benito was only a feint to induce Craufurd to hold his position, while the French, marching upon his flank and front, were to attack him with overwhelming masses and crush him.

"You hear what's in store for us, O'Malley," whispered Hampden. "I think we could not possibly do better than hasten back with the intelligence."

"We must not forget what we came for, first," said I; and the next moment we were following the horsemen, who, from their helmets, seemed horse-artillery officers.

The pace our guides rode at showed us that they knew their ground. We passed several sentries, muttering something at each time, and seeming as if only anxious to keep up with our party.

"They've halted," said I. "Now to the left there; gently here, for we must be in the midst of their lines. Ha! I knew we were right; see there!"

Before us, now, at a few hundred yards, we could perceive a number of men engaged upon the field. Lights were moving from place to place rapidly, while immediately in front a strong picket of cavalry were halted.

"By Jove, there's sharp work of it to-night!" whispered Hampden; "they do intend to surprise us to-morrow."

"Gently now, to the left," said I, as, cautiously skirting the little hill, I kept my eye firmly fixed upon the watch-fire.

The storm, which for some time had abated considerably, was now nearly quelled, and the moon again peeped forth amid masses of black and watery clouds.

"What good fortune for us!" thought I, at this moment, as I surveyed the plain before me.

"I say, O'Malley, what are those fellows at, yonder, where the blue light is burning?"

"Ah! the very people we want; these are the sappers. Now for it; that's our ground: we'll soon come upon their track now."

We pressed rapidly forward, passing an infantry party as we went. The blue light was scarcely a hundred yards off; we could even hear the shouting of the officers to their men in the trenches, when suddenly my horse came down upon his head, and rolling over, crushed me to the earth.

"Not hurt, my boy," cried I, in a subdued tone, as Hampden jumped down beside me.

It was the angle of a trench I had fallen into; and though both my horse and myself felt stunned for the moment, we rallied the next minute.

"Here is the very spot," said I. "Now, Mike, catch the bridles and follow us closely."

Guiding ourselves along the edge of the trench, we crept stealthily forward; the only watch-fire near was where the engineer party was halted, and our object was to get outside of this.

"My turn this time," said Hampden, as he tripped suddenly, and fell head foremost upon the grass.

As I assisted him to rise, something caught my ankle; and, on stooping, I found it was a cord pegged fast into the ground, and lying only a few inches above it.

"Now, steady! see here; this is their working line; pass your hand along it there, and let us follow it out."

While Hampden accordingly crept along on one side, I tracked the cord upon the other; here I found it terminating upon a small mound, where probably some battery was to be erected. I accordingly gathered it carefully up, and was returning toward my friend, when what was my horror to hear Mike's voice, conversing, as it seemed to me, with some one in French.

I stood fixed to the spot, my very heart beating almost in my mouth as I listened.

"*Qui êtes-vous donc, mon ami?*" inquired a hoarse deep voice, a few yards off.

"*Bon cheval, non* beast, *sacré nom de Dieu!*" A hearty burst of laughter prevented my hearing the conclusion of Mike's French.

I now crept forward upon my hands and knees, till I could catch the dark outline of the horses, one hand fixed upon my pistol trigger, and my sword drawn in the other. Meanwhile the dialogue continued.

"*Vous êtes d'Alsace, n'est-ce-pas?*" ask-

ed the Frenchman, kindly supposing that Mike's French savored of Strasburg.

"Oh, blessed Virgin! av I might shoot him," was the muttered reply.

Before I had time to see the effect of the last speech, I pressed forward with a bold spring, and felled the Frenchman to the earth; my hand had scarcely pressed upon his mouth, when Hampden was beside me. Snatching up the pistol I let fall, he held it to the man's chest, and commanded him to be silent. To unfasten his girdle, and bind the Frenchman's hands behind him, was the work of a moment; and, as the sharp click of the pistol-cock seemed to calm his efforts to escape, we soon succeeded in fastening a handkerchief tight across his mouth, and, the next minute, he was placed behind Mike's saddle, firmly attached to this worthy individual by his sword-belt.

"Now, a clear run home for it, and a fair start," said Hampden, as he sprang into the saddle.

"Now, then, for it," I replied; as, turning my horse's head toward our lines, I dashed madly forward.

The moon was again obscured, but still the dark outline of the hill which formed our encampment was discernible on the horizon. Riding side by side, on we hurried; now splashing through the deep and wet marshes, now plunging through small streams. Our horses were high in mettle, and we spared them not; by taking a wide *détour* we had outflanked the French pickets, and were almost out of all risk, when suddenly, on coming to the verge of rather a steep hill, we perceived beneath us a strong cavalry picket standing around a watch-fire; their horses were ready saddled, the men accoutered, and quite prepared for the field. While we conversed together in whispers as to the course to follow, our deliberations were very rapidly cut short. The French prisoner, who hitherto had given neither trouble nor resistance, had managed to free his mouth from the incumbrance of the handkerchief; and, as we stood quietly discussing our plans, with one tremendous effort he endeavored to hurl himself and Mike from the saddle, shouting out, as he did so,

"*A moi, camarades! à moi!*"

Hampden's pistol leaped from the holster as he spoke, and, leveling it with a deadly aim, he pulled the trigger; but I threw up his arm, and the ball passed high above his head. To have killed the Frenchman would have been to lose my faithful follower, who struggled manfully with his adversary, and, at length, by throwing himself flatly forward upon the mane of his horse, completely disabled him. Meanwhile, the picket had sprung to their saddles, and looked wildly about on every side.

Not a moment was to be lost; so, turning our horses' heads toward the plain, away we went. One loud cheer announced to us that we had been seen, and the next instant the clash of the pursuing cavalry was heard behind us. It was now entirely a question of speed, and little need we have feared had Mike's horse not been doubly weighted. However, as we still had considerably the start, and the gray dawn of day enabled us to see the ground, the odds were in our favor. "Never let your horse's head go," was my often repeated direction to Mike, as he spurred with all the desperation of madness. Already the low meadow-land was in sight which flanked the stream we had crossed in the morning; but, unfortunately, the heavy rains had swollen it now to a considerable depth, and the muddy current, choked with branches of trees and great stones, was hurrying down like a torrent. "Take the river: never flinch it!" was my cry to my companions, as I turned my head and saw a French dragoon, followed by two others, gaining rapidly upon us. As I spoke, Mike dashed in, followed by Hampden, and the same moment the sharp ring of a carbine whizzed past me. To take off the pursuit from the others, I now wheeled my horse suddenly round, as if I feared to take the stream, and dashed along by the river's bank.

Beneath me, in the foaming current, the two horsemen labored; now stemming the rush of water, now reeling almost beneath. A sharp cry burst from Mike as I looked; and I saw the poor fellow bend nearly to his saddle. I could see no more, for the chase was now hot upon myself; behind me rode a French dragoon, his carbine pressed tightly to his side, ready to fire as he pressed on in pursuit. I had but one chance; so, drawing my pistol, I wheeled suddenly in my saddle, and fired straight at him. The Frenchman fell, while a regular volley from his party rung around me; one ball striking my horse, and another lodging in the pommel of my saddle. The noble animal reeled nearly to the earth, but, as if rallying for a last effort, sprang forward with renewed energy, and plunged boldly into the river.

For a moment, so sudden was my leap, my pursuers lost sight of me; but the bank being somewhat steep, the efforts of my horse to climb again discovered me,

and, before I reached the field, two pistol-balls took effect upon me: one slightly grazed my side, but my bridle-arm was broken by the other, and my hand fell motionless to my side. A cheer of defiance was, however, my reply, as I turned round in my saddle, and the next moment I was far beyond the range of their fire.

Not a man durst follow, and the last sight I had of them was the dismounted group who stood around their dead comrade; before me rode Hampden and Mike, still at top speed, and never turning their heads backward. I hastened after them; but my poor wounded horse, nearly hamstrung by the shot, became dead lame; and it was past daybreak ere I reached the first outposts of our lines.

CHAPTER LXXI.

THE DOCTOR.

"And his wound? Is it a serious one?" said a round full voice as the Doctor left my room at the conclusion of his visit.

"No, sir; a fractured bone is the worst of it; the bullet grazed, but did not cut the artery; and as—"

"Well, how soon will he be about again?"

"In a few weeks, if no fever sets in."

"There is no objection to my seeing him?—a few minutes only—I'll be cautious." So saying, and, as it seemed to me, without waiting for a reply, the door was opened by an aide-de-camp, who, announcing General Craufurd, closed it again and withdrew.

The first glance I threw upon the General enabled me to recognize the officer who, on the previous morning, had rode up to the picket and given us the orders to charge. I essayed to rise a little as he came forward, but he motioned me with his hand to lie still, while, placing a chair close beside my bed, he sat down.

"Very sorry for your mishap, sir, but glad it is no worse. Moreton says that nothing of consequence is injured; there, you mustn't speak, except I ask you. Hampden has told me everything necessary; at least, as far as he knew. Is it your opinion, also, that any movement is in contemplation? and from what circumstance?"

I immediately explained, and as briefly as I was able, the reasons for suspecting such, with which he seemed quite satisfied. I detailed the various changes in the positions of the troops that were taking place during the night, the march of the artillery, and the strong bodies of cavalry that were posted in reserve along the river.

"Very well, sir; they'll not move; your prisoner, quarter-master of an infantry battalion, says not, also. Yours was a bold stroke, but could not possibly have been of service, and the best thing I can do for you is not to mention it; a court-martial's but a poor recompense for a gun-shot wound. Meanwhile, when this blows over, I'll appoint you on my personal staff. There, not a word, I beg; and now, good-by."

So saying, and waving me an adieu with his hand, the gallant veteran withdrew before I could express my gratitude for his kindness.

I had little time for reflecting over my past adventure, such numbers of my brother officers poured in upon me. All the Doctor's cautions respecting quietness and rest were disregarded, and a perfect levee sat the entire morning in my bedroom. I was delighted to learn that Mike's wound, though painful at the moment, was of no consequence; and, indeed, Hampden, who escaped both steel and shot, was the worst off amongst us, his plunge in the river having brought on an ague he had labored under years before.

"The illustrious Maurice has been twice here this morning, but they wouldn't admit him. Your Scotch physician is afraid of his Irish *confrère*, and they had a rare set-to about Galen and Hippocrates outside," said Baker.

"By-the-by," said another, "did you see how Sparks looked when Quill joined us? Egad, I never saw a fellow in such a fright; he reddened up, then grew pale, turned his back, and slunk away at the very first moment."

'Yes, I remember it. We must find out the reason; for Maurice, depend upon it, has been hoaxing the poor fellow."

"Well, O'Malley," growled out the senior Major, "you certainly did give Hampden a benefit. He'll not trust himself in such company again; and, begad, he says, the man is as bad as the master. That fellow of yours never let go his prisoner till he reached the Quartermaster-General, and they were both bathed in blood by that time."

"Poor Mike! we must do something for him."

"Oh! he's as happy as a king. Maurice has been in to see him, and they've had a long chat about Ireland, and all the national pastimes of whisky drinking and

smashing skulls. My very temples ache at the recollection."

"Is Mr. O'Mealey at home?" said a very rich Cork accent, as the well-known and most droll features of Dr. Maurice Quill appeared at the door.

"Come in, Maurice," said the Major; "and, for Heaven's sake, behave properly. The poor fellow must not have a row about his bedside."

"A row, a row! Upon my conscience, it is little you know about a row, and there's worse things going than a row."

"Which leg is it?"

"It's an arm, Doctor, I'm happy to say."

"Not your punch hand, I hope. No; all's right. A neat fellow you have for a servant, that Mickey Free. I was asking him about a townsman of his own—one Tim Delany—the very cut of himself; the best servant I ever had. I never could make out what became of him. Old Hobson, of the 95th, gave him to me, saying, 'There he is for you, Maurice, and a bigger thief and a greater blackguard there's not in the 60th.'

"'Strong words,' said I.

"'And true,' said he; 'he'd steal your molar tooth while you were laughing at him.'

"'Let me have him and try my hand on him, anyway. I've got no one just now. Anything is better than nothing.'

"Well, I took Tim, and sending for him to my room, I locked the door, and sitting down gravely before him, explained in a few words that I was quite aware of his little propensities.

"'Now,' said I, 'if you like to behave well, I'll think you as honest as the Chief Justice; but, if I catch you stealing, if it be only the value of a brass snuff-box, I'll have you flogged before the regiment, as sure as my name's Maurice.'

"Oh! I wish you heard the volley of protestations that fell from him fast as hail. He was a calumniated man; the world conspired to wrong him; he was never a thief nor a rogue in his life. He had a weakness, he confessed, for the ladies; but, except that, he hoped he might die so thin that he could shave himself with his shin-bone if he ever so much as took a pinch of salt that wasn't his own.

"However this might be, nothing could be better than the way Tim and I got on together. Everything was in its place—nothing missing; and, in fact, for upward of a year, I went on wondering when he was to show out in his true colors—for hitherto he had been a phœnix.

"At last—we were quartered in Limerick at the time—every morning used to bring accounts of all manner of petty thefts in the barrack; one fellow had lost his belt, another his shoes, a third had three-and-sixpence in his pocket when he went to bed, and woke without a farthing, and so on. Everybody, save myself, was mulct of something. At length some rumors of Tim's former propensities got abroad; suspicion was excited; my friend Delany was rigidly watched, and some very dubious circumstances attached to the way he spent his evenings.

"My brother officers called upon me about the matter, and, although nothing had transpired like proof, I sent for Tim, and opened my mind on the subject.

"You may talk of the look of conscious innocence, but I defy you to conceive anything finer than the stare of offended honor Tim gave me as I begun.

"'They say it's me, Doctor,' said he, 'do they? And you—you believe them. You allow them to revile me that way? Well, well, the world is come to a pretty pass, anyhow! Now, let me ask your honor a few questions. How many shirts had yourself when I entered your service? Two, and one was more like a fishing-net! And how many have ye now? Eighteen; ay, eighteen bran new cambric ones; devil a hole in one of them! How many pair of stockings had you? Three and an odd one. You have two dozen this minute. How many pocket-handkerchiefs? One; devil a more! You could only blow your nose two days in the week, and now you may every hour of the twenty-four! And, as to the trifling articles of small value, snuff-boxes, gloves, boot-jacks, nightcaps, and—'

"'Stop, Tim, that's enough—'

"'No, sir, it is not,' said Tim, drawing himself up to his full height; 'you have wounded my feelings in a way I can't forget. It is impossible we can have that mutual respect our position demands. Farewell, farewell, Doctor, and forever!'

"Before I could say another word, the fellow had left the room, and closed the door after him; and from that hour to this I never set eyes on him."

In this vein did the worthy Doctor run on till some more discreet friend suggested that, however well-intentioned the visit, I did not seem to be fully equal to it—my flushed cheek and anxious eye betraying that the fever of my wound had commenced; they left me, therefore, once more alone, and to my solitary musings over the vicissitudes of my fortune.

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE COA.

WITHIN a week from the occurrence of the events just mentioned, Ciudad Rodrigo surrendered, and Craufurd assumed another position beneath the walls of Almeida. The Spanish contingent having left us, we were reinforced by the arrival of two battalions, renewed orders being sent not to risk a battle, but, if the French should advance, to retire beyond the Coa.

On the evening of the 21st July, a strong body of French cavalry advanced into the plain, supported by some heavy guns; upon which Craufurd retired upon the Coa, intending, as we supposed, to place that river between himself and the enemy. Three days, however, passed over without any movement upon either side, and we still continued, with a force of scarcely four thousand infantry and a thousand dragoons, to stand opposite to an army of nearly fifty thousand men. Such was our position as the night of the 24th set in. I was sitting alone in my quarters; Mike, whose wound had been severer than at first was supposed, had been sent to Almeida, and I was musing in solitude upon the events of the campaign, when the noise and bustle without excited my attention; the roll of artillery wagons, the clash of musketry, and the distant sounds of marching, all proved that the troops were effecting some new movement, and I burned with anxiety to learn what it was. My brother officers, however, came not as usual to my quarters; and although I waited with impatience while the hours rolled by, no one appeared.

Long, low moaning gusts of wind swept along the earth, carrying the leaves as they tore them from the trees, and mingling their sad sounds with the noises of the retiring troops; for I could perceive that gradually the sounds grew more and more remote, and only now and then could I trace their position as the roll of a distant drum swelled upon the breeze, or the more shrill cry of a pibroch broke upon my ear; a heavy down-pour of rain followed soon after, and in its unceasing plash drowned all other sounds.

As the little building shook beneath the peals of loud thunder, the lightning flashed in broad sheets upon the rapid river, which, swollen and foaming, dashed impetuously beside my window. By the uncertain but vivid glare of the flashes, I endeavored to ascertain where our force was posted; but in vain. Never did I witness such a night of storm; the deep booming of the thunder seeming never for a moment to cease, while the rush of the torrent grew gradually louder, till at length it swelled into one deep and sullen roar like that of distant artillery.

Weak and nervous as I felt from the effects of my wound, feverish and exhausted by days of suffering and sleepless nights, I paced my little room with tottering but impatient steps. The sense of my sad and imprisoned state impressed me deeply; and while from time to time I replenished my fire, and hoped to hear some friendly step upon the stair, my heart grew gradually heavier, and every gloomy and depressing thought suggested itself to my imagination. My most constant impression was, that the troops were retiring beyond the Coa, and that forgotten, in the haste and confusion of a night march, I had been left behind to fall a prisoner to the enemy.

The sounds of the troops retiring gradually farther and farther favored the idea, in which I was still more strengthened on finding that the peasants who inhabited the little hut had departed, leaving me utterly alone. From the moment I ascertained this fact, my impatience knew no bounds; and in proportion as I began to feel some exertion necessary on my part, so much more did my nervousness increase my debility, and at last I sank exhausted upon my bed, while a cold perspiration broke out upon my temples.

I have mentioned that the Coa was immediately beneath the house; I must also add, that the little building occupied the angle of a steep but narrow gorge which descended from the plain to the bridge across the stream. This, as far as I knew, was the only means we possessed of passing the river: so that, when the last retiring sounds of the troops were heard by me, I began to suspect that Craufurd, in compliance with his orders, was making a backward movement, leaving the bridge open to the French, to draw them on to his line of march, while he should cross over at some more distant point.

As the night grew later, the storm seemed to increase; the waves of the foaming river dashed against the frail walls of the hut, while its roof, rent by the blast, fell in fragments upon the stream, and all threatened a speedy and perfect ruin.

How I longed for morning! The doubt and uncertainty I suffered nearly drove me distracted. Of all the casualties my career as a soldier opened, none had such terrors for me as imprisonment; the very thought of the long years of inaction and inglorious

idleness was worse than any death. My wounds, and the state of fever I was in, increased the morbid dread upon me, and had the French captured me at the time, I know not that madness of which I was not capable. Day broke at last, but slowly and sullenly; the gray clouds hurried past upon the storm, pouring down the rain in torrents as they went, and the desolation and dreariness on all sides was scarcely preferable to the darkness and gloom of night. My eyes were turned ever toward the plain, across which the winter wind bore the plashing rain in vast sheets of water; the thunder crashed louder and louder; but except the sounds of the storm none others met my ear. Not a man, not a human figure could I see, as I strained my sight toward the distant horizon.

The morning crept over, but the storm abated not, and the same unchanged aspect of dreary desolation prevailed without. At times I thought I could hear, amidst the noises of the tempest, something like the roll of distant artillery; but the thunder swelled in sullen roar above all, and left me uncertain as before.

At last, in a momentary pause of the storm, a tremendous peal of heavy guns caught my ear, followed by the long rattling of small-arms. My heart bounded with ecstasy. The thought of the battle-field, with all its changing fortunes, was better, a thousand times better, than the despairing sense of desertion I labored under. I listened now with eagerness, but the rain bore down again in torrents, and the crumbling walls and falling timbers left no other sounds to be heard. Far as my eye could reach, nothing could still be seen save the dreary monotony of the vast plain, undulating slightly here and there, but unmarked by a sign of man.

Far away toward the horizon I had remarked for some time past that the clouds resting upon the earth grew blacker and blacker, spreading out to either side in vast masses, and not broken or wafted along like the rest. As I watched the phenomenon with an anxious eye, I perceived the dense mass suddenly appear, as it were, rent asunder, while a volume of liquid flame rushed wildly out, throwing a lurid glare on every side. One terrific clap, louder than any thunder, shook the air at this moment, while the very earth trembled beneath the shock.

As I hesitated what it might be, the heavy din of great guns again was heard, and from the midst of the black smoke rode forth a dark mass, which I soon recognized as the horse-artillery at full gallop. They were directing their course toward the bridge.

As they mounted the little rising ground, they wheeled and unlimbered with the speed of lightning, just as a strong column of cavalry showed above the ridge. One tremendous discharge again shook the field, and ere the smoke cleared away they were again far in retreat.

So much was my attention occupied with this movement, that I had not perceived the long line of infantry that came from the extreme left, and were now advancing also toward the bridge at a brisk quick-step; scattered bodies of cavalry came up from different parts, while from the little valley, every now and then, a rifleman would mount the rising ground, turning to fire as he retreated. All this boded a rapid and disorderly retreat; and although as yet I could see nothing of the pursuing enemy, I knew too well the relative forces of each to have a doubt for the result.

At last, the head of a French column appeared above the mist, and I could plainly distinguish the gestures of the officers as they hurried their men onward. Meanwhile, a loud hurrah attracted my attention, and I turned my eyes toward the road which led to the river. Here a small body of the 95th had hurriedly assembled; and, formed again, were standing to cover the retreat of the broken infantry as they passed on eagerly to the bridge; in a second after the French cuirassiers appeared. Little anticipating resistance from a flying and disordered mass, they rode headlong forward, and although the firm attitude and steady bearing of the Highlanders might have appalled them, they rode heedlessly down upon the square, sabring the very men in the front rank. Till now not a trigger had been pulled, when suddenly the word "Fire!" was given, and a withering volley of balls sent the cavalry column in shivers. One hearty cheer broke from the infantry in the rear, and I could hear "Gallant Ninety-fifth!" shouted on every side along the plain.

The whole vast space before me was now one animated battle-ground. Our own troops retiring in haste before the overwhelming forces of the French, occupied every little vantage ground with their guns and light infantry, charges of cavalry coursing hither and thither; while, as the French pressed forward, the retreating columns again formed into squares to permit stragglers to come up. The rattle of small-arms, the heavy peal of artillery, the earthquake crash of cavalry, rose on every side,

while the cheers which alternately told of the vacillating fortune of the fight rose amidst the wild pibroch of the Highlanders.

A tremendous noise now took place on the floor beneath me; and, looking down, I perceived that a sergeant and party of the Sappers had taken possession of the little hut, and were busily engaged piercing the walls for musketry; and before many minutes had elapsed, a company of the Rifles were thrown into the building, which, from its commanding position above the road, enfiladed the whole line of march. The officer in command briefly informed me that we had been attacked that morning by the French in force, and "devilishly well thrashed;" that we were now in retreat beyond the Coa, where we ought to have been three days previously, and desired me to cross the bridge and get myself out of the way as soon as I possibly could.

A twenty-four pounder from the French lines struck the angle of the house as he spoke, scattering the mortar and broken bricks about us on all sides. This was warning sufficient for me, wounded and disabled as I was; so, taking the few things I could save in my haste, I hurried from the hut, and descending the path, now slippery by the heavy rain, I took my way across the bridge, and established myself on a little rising knoll of ground beyond, from which a clear view could be obtained of the whole field.

I had not been many minutes in my present position ere the pass which led down to the bridge became thronged with troops, wagons, ammunition carts, and hospital stores, pressing thickly forward amid shouting and uproar; the hills on either side of the way were crowded with troops, who formed as they came up, the artillery taking up their position on every rising ground. The firing had already begun, and the heavy booming of the large guns was heard at intervals amid the rattling crash of musketry: except the narrow road before me, and the high bank of the stream, I could see nothing; but the tumult and din, which grew momentarily louder, told that the tide of battle raged nearer and nearer. Still the retreat continued; and at length the heavy artillery came thundering across the narrow bridge, followed by stragglers of all arms, and wounded, hurrying to the rear: the sharpshooters and the Highlanders held the heights above the stream, thus covering the retiring columns; but I could plainly perceive that their fire was gradually slackening, and that the guns which flanked their position were withdrawn, and everything bespoke a speedy retreat. A tremendous discharge of musketry at this moment, accompanied by a deafening cheer, announced the advance of the French, and soon the head of the Highland brigade was seen descending toward the bridge, followed by the Rifles and the 95th; the cavalry, consisting of the 11th and 14th Light Dragoons, were now formed in column of attack, and the infantry deployed into line; and, in an instant after, high above the din and crash of battle, I heard the word "Charge!" The rising crest of the hill hid them from my sight, but my heart bounded with ecstasy as I listened to the clanging sound of the cavalry advance. Meanwhile, the infantry pressed on, and, forming upon the bank, took up a strong position in front of the bridge; the heavy guns were also unlimbered, riflemen scattered through the low copse wood, and every precaution taken to defend the pass to the last. For a moment all my attention was riveted to the movements upon our own side of the stream, when suddenly the cavalry bugle sounded the recall, and the same moment the staff came galloping across the bridge. One officer I could perceive, covered with orders and trappings; his head was bare, and his horse, splashed with blood and foam, moved lamely and with difficulty; he turned in the middle of the bridge, as if irresolute whether to retreat farther: one glance at him showed me the bronzed, manly features of our leader. Whatever his resolve, the matter was soon decided for him, for the cavalry came galloping swiftly down the slope, and in an instant the bridge was blocked up by the retreating forces, while the French, as suddenly appearing above the height, opened a plunging fire upon their defenseless enemies: their cheer of triumph was answered by our fellows from the opposite bank, and a heavy cannonade thundered along the rocky valley, sending up a hundred echoes as it went.

The scene now became one of overwhelming interest; the French, posting their guns upon the height, replied to our fire, while their line, breaking into skirmishers, descended the banks to the river edge, and poured in one sheet of galling musketry. The road to the bridge, swept by our artillery, presented not a single file; and although a movement among the French announced the threat of an attack, the deadly service of the artillery seemed to pronounce it hopeless.

A strong cavalry force stood inactively, spectators of the combat on the French side, among whom I now remarked some

bustle and preparation, and, as I looked, an officer rode boldly to the river edge, and, spurring his horse forward, plunged into the stream. The swollen and angry torrent, increased by the late rains, boiled like barm, and foamed around him as he advanced; when suddenly his horse appeared to have lost its footing, and the rapid current, circling around him, bore him along with it. He labored madly, but in vain, to retrace his steps; the rolling torrent rose above his saddle, and all that his gallant steed could do was barely sufficient to keep afloat; both man and horse were carried down between the contending armies. I could see him wave his hand to his comrades, as if in adieu. One deafening cheer of admiration rose from the French lines, and the next moment he was seen to fall from his seat, and his body, shattered with balls, floated mournfully upon the stream.

This little incident, to which both armies were witnesses, seemed to have called forth all the fiercer passions of the contending forces; a loud yell of taunting triumph rose from the Highlanders, responded to by a cry of vengeance from the French, and the same moment the head of a column was seen descending the narrow causeway to the bridge, while an officer, with a whole blaze of decorations and crosses, sprang from his horse and took the lead. The little drummer, a child of scarcely ten years old, tripped gayly on, beating his little *pas de charge*, seeming rather like the play of infancy than the summons to death and carnage, as the heavy guns of the French opened a volume of fire and flame to cover the attacking column. For a moment all was hid from our eyes; the moment after the grape-shot swept along the narrow causeway; and the bridge, which but a second before was crowded with the life and courage of a noble column, was now one heap of dead and dying. The gallant fellow who led them on fell among the first rank, and the little child, as if kneeling, was struck dead beside the parapet; his fair hair floated across his cold features, and seemed in its motion to lend a look of life where the heart's throb had ceased forever. The artillery again re-opened upon us; and, when the smoke had cleared away, we discovered that the French had advanced to the middle of the bridge and carried off the body of their general. Twice they essayed to cross, and twice the death-dealing fire of our guns covered the narrow bridge with slain, while by the wild pibroch of the 42d, swelling madly into notes of exultation and triumph, the Highlanders could scarcely be prevented from advancing hand to hand with the foe. Gradually the French slackened their fire, their great guns were one by one withdrawn from the heights, and a dropping, irregular musketry at intervals sustained the fight, which ere sunset ceased altogether; and thus ended "The Battle of the Coa."

CHAPTER LXXIII.

THE NIGHT MARCH.

SCARCELY had the night fallen when our retreat commenced. Tired and weary as our brave fellows felt, but little repose was allowed them; their bivouac fires were blazing brightly, and they had just thrown themselves in groups around them, when the word to fall in was passed from troop to troop, and from battalion to battalion—no trumpet, no bugle called them to their ranks. It was necessary that all should be done noiselessly and speedily; while, therefore, the wounded were marched to the front, and the heavy artillery with them, a brigade of light four-pounders, and two squadrons of cavalry, held the heights above the bridge, and the infantry forming into three columns, began their march.

My wound, forgotten in the heat and excitement of the conflict, was now becoming excessively painful, and I gladly availed myself of a place in a wagon, where, stretched upon some fresh straw, with no other covering save the starry sky, I soon fell sound asleep, and neither the heavy jolting of the rough conveyance, nor the deep and rutty road, were able to disturb my slumbers. Still through my sleep I heard the sounds around me, the heavy tramp of infantry, the clash of the moving squadrons, and the dull roll of artillery; and ever and anon the half-stifled cry of pain, mingling with the reckless carol of some drinking-song, all flitted through my dreams, lending to my thoughts of home and friends a memory of glorious war.

All the vicissitudes of a soldier's life passed then in review before me, elicited in some measure by the things about. The pomp and grandeur, the misery and meanness, the triumph, the defeat, the moment of victory, and the hour of death were there, and in that vivid dream I lived a life long.

I awoke at length, the cold and chilling air which follows midnight blew around

me, and my wounded arm felt as though it were frozen. I tried to cover myself beneath the straw, but in vain, and as my limbs trembled and my teeth chattered, I thought again of home, where, at that moment, the poorest menial of my uncle's house was better lodged than I, and strange to say, something of pride mingled with the thought, and in my lonely heart a feeling of elation cheered me.

These reflections were interrupted by the sound of a voice near me, which I at once knew to be O'Shaughnessy's; he was on foot, and speaking evidently in some excitement.

"I tell you, Maurice, some confounded blunder there must be; sure he was left in that cottage near the bridge, and no one ever saw him after."

"The French took it from the Rifles before we crossed the river. By Jove! I'll wager my chance of promotion against a pint of sherry, he'll turn up somewhere in the morning; those Galway chaps have as many lives as a cat."

"See, now, Maurice, I wouldn't for a full colonelcy anything would happen to him—I like the boy."

"So do I myself; but I tell you there's no danger of him. Did you ask Sparks anything?"

"Ask Sparks! God help you! Sparks would go off in a fit at the sight of me. No, no, poor creature! it's little use it would be my speaking to him."

"Why so, Doctor?" cried I, from my straw couch.

"May I never, if it's not him! Charley, my son, I'm glad you're safe. 'Faith, I thought you were on your way to Verdun by this time."

"Sure, I told you he'd find his way here—but, O'Mealey, dear—you're mighty cowld—a rigor, as old M'Lauchlan would call it."

"E'en sae, Maister Quill," said a broad Scotch accent behind him; "and I canna see ony objection to giein' things their right names."

"The top of the morning to you," said Quill, familiarly patting him on the back; "how goes it, old Brimstone?"

The conversation might not have taken a very amicable turn had M'Lauchlan heard the latter part of this speech; but, as happily he was engaged unpacking a small canteen which he had placed in the wagon, it passed unnoticed.

"Ye'll nae dislike a toothfu' of something warm, Major," said he, presenting a glass to O'Shaughnessy; "and if ye'll permit me, Mr. O'Mealey, to help you—"

"A thousand thanks, Doctor; but I fear a broken arm—"

"There's naething in the whisky to prevent the proper formation of callus."

"By the rock of Cashel, it never made any one callous," said O'Shaughnessy, mistaking the import of the phrase.

"Ye are nae drinking frae the flask?" said the Doctor, turning in some agitation toward Quill.

"Devil a bit, my darling. I've a little horn convaniency here, that holds half a pint, nice measure."

I don't imagine that our worthy friend participated in Quill's admiration of the "convaniency," for he added, in a dry tone:

"Ye may as weel tak' your liquor frae a glass, like a Christian, as stick your nose in a coo's horn."

"By my conscience, you're no small judge of spirits, wherever you learned it," said the Major; "it's like Islay malt!"

"I was aye reckoned a gude ane," said the Doctor, "and my mither's brither, Caimbogie, had na his like in the north country. Ye maybe heerd tell what he aince said to the Duchess of Argyle, when she sent for him to taste her claret."

"Never heard of it," quoth Quill; "let's have it, by all means. I'd like to hear what the Duchess said to him."

"It was na what the Duchess said to him, but what he said to the Duchess, ye ken. The way of it was this:—My uncle, Caimbogie, was aye up at the castle, for, besides his knowledge of liquor, there was nae his match for deer-stalking, or spearing a salmon, in these parts. He was a great, rough carle, it's true, but ane ye'd rather crack wi' than fight wi'.

"Weel, ae day they had a grand dinner at the Duke's, and there were plenty o' great southern lords and braw leddies in velvets and satin; and vara muckle surprised they were at my uncle, when he came in wi' his tartan kilt, in full Highland dress, as the head of a clan ought to do. Caimbogie, however, pe'd nae attention to them, but he eat his dinner and drank his wine, and talked away about fallow and red deer, and at last the Duchess, for she was aye fond o' him, addressed him frae the head o' the table:

"'Caimbogie,' quoth she, 'I'd like to hae your opinion about that wine. It's some the Duke has just received, and we should like to hear what you think of it.'

"'It's nae sae bad, my leddy,' said my uncle; for ye see he was a man of few words, and never flattered onybody.

"'Then you don't approve much of it?' said the Duchess.

"'I've drank better, and I've drank waur,' quo' he.

"'I'm sorry you don't like it, Caimbogie,' said the Duchess, 'for it can never be popular now: we have such a dependence upon your taste.'

"'I canna say ower muckle for my *taste*, my leddy, but ae thing I *will* say—I've a most damnable SMELL!'

"I hear that never since the auld walls stood, was there ever the like o' the laughing that followed: the puir Duke himself was carried away, and nearly had a fit, and a' the grand lords and leddies a'most died of it. But, see here, the carle has nae left a drap o' whisky in the flask."

"The last glass I drained to your respectable uncle's health," said Quill, with a most professional gravity. "Now, Charley, make a little room for me in the straw."

The Doctor soon mounted beside me, and, giving me a share of his ample cloak, considerably ameliorated my situation.

"So you knew Sparks, Doctor?" said I, with a strong curiosity to hear something of his early acquaintance.

"That I did: I knew him when he was an Ensign in the 10th Foot; and, to say the truth, he is not much changed since that time;—the same lively look of a sick codfish about his gray eyes; the same disorderly wave of his yellow hair; the same whining voice, and that confounded apothecary's laugh."

"Come, come, Doctor, Sparks is a good fellow at heart; I won't have him abused. I never knew he had been in the infantry; I should think it must have been another of the same name."

"Not at all; there's only one like him in the service, and that's himself. Confound it, man, I'd know his skin upon a bush; he was only three weeks in the Tenth, and, indeed, your humble servant has the whole merit of his leaving it so soon."

"Do let us hear how that happened."

"Simply thus:—The jolly Tenth were some four years ago the pleasantest corps in the army; from the Lieutenant-Colonel down to the last joined sub., all were out-and-outers—real gay fellows. The mess was, in fact, like a pleasant club, and if you did not suit it, the best thing you could do was to sell out or exchange into a slower regiment; and, indeed, this very wholesome truth was not very long in reaching your ears some way or other, and a man that could remain after being given this hint, was likely to go afterward without one."

Just as Dr. Quill reached this part of his story, an orderly dragoon galloped furiously past, and the next moment an aide-de-camp rode by, calling, as he passed us,

"Close up, there—close up! Get forward, my lads—get forward!"

It was evident, from the stir and bustle about, that some movement was being made; and, soon after, a dropping, irregular fire from the rear showed that our cavalry were engaged with the enemy: the affair was scarcely of five minutes' duration, and our march resumed all its former regularity immediately after.

I now turned to the Doctor to resume his story, but he was gone; at what moment he left I could not say, but O'Shaughnessy was also absent, nor did I again meet with them for a considerable time after.

Toward daybreak we halted at Bonares, when my wound demanding rest and attention, I was billeted in the village, and consigned to all the miseries of a sick-bed.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE JOURNEY.

WITH that disastrous day my campaigning was destined, for some time at least, to conclude. My wound, which grew from hour to hour more threatening, at length began to menace the loss of the arm, and, by the recommendation of the regimental surgeons, I was ordered back to Lisbon.

Mike, by this time perfectly restored, prepared everything for my departure, and on the third day after the battle of the Coa, I began my journey with downcast spirits and depressed heart. The poor fellow was, however, a kind and affectionate nurse, and, unlike many others, his cares were not limited to the mere bodily wants of his patient: he sustained, as well as he was able, my drooping resolution, rallied my spirits, and cheered my courage. With the very little Portuguese he possessed, he contrived to make every imaginable species of bargain; always managed a good billet; kept every one in good humor, and rarely left his quarters in the morning without a most affecting leave-taking, and reiterated promises to renew his visit.

Our journeys were usually short ones, and already two days had elapsed, when, toward nightfall, we entered the little hamlet of Jaffra. During the entire of

that day, the pain of my wounded limb had been excruciating; the fatigue of the road and the heat had brought back violent inflammation, and, when at last the little village came in sight, my reason was fast yielding to the torturing agonies of my wound; but the transports with which I greeted my resting-place were soon destined to a change; for, as we drew near, not a light was to be seen, not a sound to be heard, not even a dog barked, as the heavy mule-cart rattled over the uneven road. No trace of any living thing was there: the little hamlet lay sleeping in the pale moonlight, its streets deserted, and its homes tenantless; our own footsteps alone echoed along the dreary causeway; here and there, as we advanced farther, we found some relics of broken furniture and house-gear; most of the doors lay open, but nothing remained within save bare walls; the embers still smoked in many places upon the hearth, and showed us that the flight of the inhabitants had been recent. Yet everything convinced us that the French had not been there; there was no trace of the reckless violence and wanton cruelty which marked their footsteps everywhere.

All proved that the desertion had been voluntary: perhaps in compliance with an order of our Commander-in-Chief, who frequently desired any intended line of march of the enemy to be left thus a desert. As we sauntered slowly on from street to street, half hoping that some one human being yet remained behind, and casting our eyes from side to side in search of quarters for the night, Mike suddenly came running up, saying,

"I have it, sir,—I've found it out—there's people living down that small street there—I saw a light this minute as I passed."

I turned immediately, and, accompanied by the mule-driver, followed Mike across a little open square into a small and narrow street, at the end of which a light was seen faintly twinkling; we hurried on, and in a few minutes reached a high wall of solid masonry, from a niche of which we now discovered, to our utter disappointment, the light proceeded. It was a small lamp placed before a little waxen image of the Virgin, and was probably the last act of piety of some poor villager ere he left his home and hearth forever: there it burned, brightly and tranquilly, throwing its mellow ray upon the cold, deserted stones.

Whatever impatience I might have given way to in a moment of chagrin, was soon repressed, as I saw my two followers, uncovering their heads in silent reverence, kneel down before the little shrine. There was something at once touching and solemn in this simultaneous feeling of homage from the hearts of those removed in country, language, and in blood; they bent meekly down; their heads bowed upon their bosoms, while with muttering voices each offered up his prayer. All sense of their disappointment, all memory of their forlorn state, seemed to have yielded to more powerful and absorbing thoughts as they opened their hearts in prayer.

My eyes were still fixed upon them, when suddenly Mike, whose devotion seemed of the briefest, sprang to his legs, and with a spirit of levity but little in accordance with his late proceedings, commenced a series of kicking, rapping, and knocking at a small oak postern sufficient to have aroused a whole convent from their cells. "House there!—good people within!"—bang, bang, bang: but the echoes alone responded to his call, and the sounds died away at length in the distant streets, leaving all as silent and dreary as before.

Our Portuguese friend, who by this time had finished his orisons, now began a vigorous attack upon the small door, and, with the assistance of Mike, armed with a fragment of granite about the size of a man's head, at length separated the frame from the hinges and sent the whole mass prostrate before us.

The moon was just rising as we entered the little park, where graveled walks, neatly kept and well trimmed, bespoke recent care and attention; following a handsome alley of lime-trees, we reached a little jet d'eau, whose sparkling fountain shone, diamond-like, in the moonbeams; and, escaping from the edge of a vast shell, ran murmuring amid mossy stones and water-lilies, that however naturally they seemed thrown around, bespoke also the hand of taste in their position. On turning from the spot, we came directly in front of an old but handsome château, before which stretched a terrace of considerable extent. Its balustraded parapet, lined with orange-trees, now in full blossom, scented the still air with their delicious odor; marble statues peeped here and there amid the foliage, while a rich acacia, loaded with flowers, covered the walls of the building, and hung in vast masses of variegated blossom across the tall windows.

As, leaning on Mike's arm, I slowly ascended the steps of the terrace, I was more than ever struck with the silence and death-like stillness around; except the gen-

tle plash of the fountain, all was at rest; the very plants seemed to sleep in the yellow moonlight, and not a trace of any living thing was there.

The massive door lay open as we entered the spacious hall, flagged with marble, and surrounded with armorial bearings. We advanced farther, and came to a broad and handsome stair, which led us to a long gallery, from which a suite of rooms opened, looking toward the front part of the building. Wherever we went, the furniture appeared perfectly untouched; nothing was removed; the very chairs were grouped around the windows and the tables; books, as if suddenly dropped from their readers' hands, were scattered upon the sofas and the ottomans; and, in one small apartment, whose blue satin walls and damask drapery bespoke a boudoir, a rich mantilla of black velvet and a silk glove were thrown upon a chair. It was clear the desertion had been most recent; and everything indicated that no time had been given to the fugitives to prepare for flight. What a sad picture of war was there! To think of those whose home, endeared to them by all the refinements of cultivated life, and all the associations of years of happiness, sent out upon the wide world—wanderers and houseless; while their hearth, sacred by every tie that binds us to our kindred, was to be desecrated by the ruthless and savage hands of a ruffian soldiery. I thought of them; perhaps at that very hour their thoughts were clinging round the old walls; remembering each well-beloved spot, while they took their lonely path through mountain and through valley; and felt ashamed and abashed at my own intrusion there. While thus my revery ran on, I had not perceived that Mike, whose views were very practical upon all occasions, had lighted a most cheerful fire upon the hearth, and disposing a large sofa before it, had carefully closed the curtains, and was, in fact, making himself and his master as much at home as though he had spent his life there.

"Isn't it a beautiful place, Misther Charles? and this little room, doesn't it remind you of the blue bedroom in O'Malley Castle, barrin' the elegant view out upon the Shannon and the mountain of Scariff?"

Nothing short of Mike's patriotism could forgive such a comparison; but, however, I did not contradict him, as he ran on:

"Faith, I knew well there was luck in store for us this evening; and ye see the handful of prayers I threw away outside wasn't lost. José's making the beasts comfortable in the stable, and I'm thinking we'll none of us complain of our quarters. But you're not eating your supper; and the beautiful hare-pie that I stole this morning, won't you taste it? Well, a glass of Malaga? not a glass of Malaga? Oh, mother of Moses! what's this for?"

Unfortunately, the fever produced by the long and toilsome journey, had gained considerably on me, and, except copious libations of cold water, I could touch nothing; my arm, too, was much more painful than before. Mike soon perceived that rest and quietness were most important to me at the moment, and having with difficulty been prevailed upon to swallow a few hurried mouthfuls, the poor fellow disposed cushions around me in every imaginable form for comfort; and then, placing my wounded limb in its easiest position, he extinguished the lamp, and sat silently down beside the hearth, without speaking another word.

Fatigue and exhaustion, more powerful than pain, soon produced their effects upon me, and I fell asleep, but it was no refreshing slumber which visited my heavy eyelids; the slow fever of suffering had been hour by hour increasing, and my dreams presented nothing but scenes of agony and torture. Now I thought that, unhorsed and wounded, I was trampled beneath the clanking hoofs of charging cavalry; now, I felt the sharp steel piercing my flesh; and heard the loud cry of a victorious enemy; then, methought I was stretched upon a litter, covered by gore and mangled by a grape-shot. I thought I saw my brother officers approach and look sadly upon me, while one, whose face I could not remember, muttered, "I should not have known him." The dreadful hospital of Talavera, and all its scenes of agony, came up before me, and I thought that I lay waiting my turn for amputation. This last impression, more horrible to me than all the rest, made me spring from my couch, and I awoke; the cold drops of perspiration stood upon my brow, my mouth was parched and open, and my temples throbbed so, that I could count their beatings; for some seconds I could not throw off the frightful illusion I labored under, and it was only by degrees I recovered consciousness, and remembered where I was. Before me, and on one side of the bright wood fire, sat Mike, who, apparently deep in thought, gazed fixedly at the blaze; the start I gave on awaking had not attracted his attention, and I could see, as the flickering glare fell upon his features, that he was pale and ghastly,

while his eyes were riveted upon the fire; his lips moved rapidly, as if in prayer, and his locked hands were pressed firmly upon his bosom; his voice, at first inaudible, I could gradually distinguish, and at length heard the following muttered sentences:

"Oh, mother of mercy! so far from his home and his people, and so young, to die in a strange land — there it is again." Here he appeared listening to some sounds from without. "Oh, wirra, wirra, I know it well!—the winding-sheet, the winding-sheet! there it is, my own eyes saw it!" The tears coursed fast upon his pale cheeks, and his voice grew almost inaudible, as, rocking to and fro, for some time he seemed in a very stupor of grief; when at last, in a faint, subdued tone, he broke into one of those sad and plaintive airs of his country, which only need the moment of depression to make them wring the very heart in agony.

His song was that to which Moore has appended the beautiful lines, "Come, rest on this bosom." The following imperfect translation may serve to convey some impression of the words, which in Mike's version were Irish:

"The day was declining,
The dark night drew near,
And the old Lord grew sadder,
And paler with fear:
'Come listen, my daughter,
Come nearer—oh! near.
Is't the wind or the water
That sighs in my ear?'

"Not the wind nor the water
Now stirr'd the night air,
But a warning far sadder—
The banshee was there!
Now rising, now swelling,
On the night wind it bore
One cadence, still telling,—
'I want thee, Rossmore!'

"And then fast came his breath,
And more fix'd grew his eye;
And the shadow of death
Told his hour was nigh.
Ere the dawn of that morning
The struggle was o'er,
For when thrice came the warning—
A corpse was Rossmore!"

The plaintive air to which these words were sung fell heavily upon my heart, and it needed but the low and nervous condition I was in to make me feel their application to myself. But so it is; the very superstition your reason rejects and your sense spurns, has, from old association, from habit, and from mere nationality too, a hold upon your hopes and fears, that demands more firmness and courage than a sick-bed possesses to combat with success; and I now listened with an eager ear to mark if the banshee cried, rather than sought to fortify myself by any recurrence to my own convictions. Meanwhile, Mike's attitude became one of listening attention. Not a finger moved; he scarce seemed even to breathe; the state of suspense I suffered from was maddening; and at last, unable to bear it longer, I was about to speak, when suddenly, from the floor beneath us, one long-sustained note swelled upon the air and died away again, and immediately after, to the cheerful sounds of a guitar, we heard the husky voice of our Portuguese guide, indulging himself in a love-ditty.

Ashamed of myself for my fears, I kept silent; but Mike, who felt only one sensation—that of unmixed satisfaction at his mistake—rubbed his hands pleasantly, filled up his glass, drank it, and refilled; while with an accent of reassured courage, he briefly remarked:

"Well, Mr. José, if that be singing, upon my conscience I wonder what crying is like!"

I could not forbear a laugh at the criticism; and, in a moment, the poor fellow, who up to that moment believed me sleeping, was beside me. I saw from his manner that he dreaded lest I had been listening to his melancholy song, and had overheard any of his gloomy forebodings; and as he cheered my spirits and spoke encouragingly, I could remark that he made more than usual endeavors to appear light-hearted and at ease. Determined, however, not to let him escape so easily, I questioned him about his belief in ghosts and spirits, at which he endeavored, as he ever did when the subject was an unpleasing one, to avoid the discussion; but rather perceiving that I indulged in no irreverent disrespect of these matters, he grew gradually more open, treating the affair with that strange mixture of credulity and mockery, which formed his estimate of most things: now seeming to suppose that any palpable rejection of them might entail sad consequences in future, now half ashamed to go the whole length in his credulity.

"And so, Mike, you never saw a ghost yourself!—that you acknowledge?"

"No, sir, I never saw a real ghost: but sure there's many a thing I never saw; but Mrs. Moore, the housekeeper, seen two. And your grandfather that's gone—the Lord be good to him!—used to walk once a year in Lurra Abbey; and sure you know the story about Tim Clinchy, that was seen every Saturday night coming out of the cellar with a candle and a mug of

wine, and a pipe in his mouth, till Mr. Barry laid him. It cost his honor your uncle ten pounds in masses to make him easy; not to speak of a new lock and two bolts on the cellar door."

"I have heard all about that; but, as you never yourself saw any of these things—"

"But sure my father did, and that's the same any day. My father seen the greatest ghost that ever was seen in the county Cork, and spent the evening with him, that's more."

"Spent the evening with him!—what do you mean?"

"Just that, devil a more nor less. If your honor wasn't so weak, and the story wasn't a trying one, I'd like to tell it to you."

"Out with it by all means, Mike; I am not disposed to sleep; and, now that we are upon these matters, my curiosity is strongly excited by your worthy father's experience."

Thus encouraged, having trimmed the fire, and reseated himself beside the blaze, Mike began; but, as a ghost is no every-day personage in our history, I must give him a chapter to himself.

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE GHOST.

"WELL, I believe your honor heard me tell long ago how my father left the army, and the way that he took to another line of life that was more to his liking. And so it was, he was happy as the day was long; he drove a hearse for Mr. Callaghan of Cork, for many years, and a pleasant place it was; for ye see, my father was a 'cute man, and knew something of the world; and though he was a droll devil, and could sing a funny song when he was among the boys, no sooner had he the big black cloak on him and the weepers, and he seated on the high box with the six long-tailed blacks before him, you'd really think it was his own mother was inside, he looked so melancholy and miserable. The sexton and gravedigger was nothing to my father; and he had a look about his eye—to be sure there was a reason for it—that you'd think he was up all night crying; though it's little indulgence he took that way.

"Well, of all Mr. Callaghan's men, there was none so great a favorite as my father. The neighbors were all fond of him.

"'A kind crayture, every inch of him!' the women would say. 'Did ye see his face at Mrs. Delany's funeral?'

"'True for you,' another would remark; 'he mistook the road with grief, and stopped at a shebeen house instead of Kilmurry church.'

"I need say no more, only one thing: that it was principally among the farmers and the country people my father was liked so much. The great people and the quality—I ax your pardon; but sure isn't it true, Mister Charles?—they don't fret so much after their fathers and brothers, and they care little who's driving them, whether it was a decent, respectable man like my father, or a chap with a grin on him like a rat-trap. And so it happened, that my father used to travel half the county; going here and there wherever there was trade stirring; and, faix, a man didn't think himself rightly buried if my father wasn't there; for ye see, he knew all about it; he could tell to a quart of spirits what would be wanting for a wake; he knew all the good criers for miles round; and I've heard it was a beautiful sight to see him standing on a hill, arranging the procession, as they walked into the churchyard, and giving the word like a captain,

"'Come on, the stiff—now the friends of the stiff—now the pop'lace.'

"That's what he used to say, and troth he was always repeating it, when he was a little gone in drink—for that's the time his spirits would rise—and he'd think he was burying half Munster.

"And sure it was a real pleasure and a pride to be buried in them times; for av it was only a small farmer with a potato garden, my father would come down with the black cloak on him, and three yards of crape behind his hat, and set all the children crying and yelling for half a mile round; and then the way he'd walk before them with a spade on his shoulder, and sticking it down in the ground, clap his hat on the top of it, to make it look like a chief mourner. It was a beautiful sight!"

"But, Mike, if you indulge much longer in this flattering recollection of your father, I'm afraid we shall lose sight of the ghost entirely."

"No fear in life, your honor; I'm coming to him now. Well, it was this way it happened: In the winter of the great frost, about forty-two or forty-three years ago, the ould priest of Tulloughmurray took ill and died; he was sixty years priest of the parish, and mightily beloved by all the people, and good reason for it: a pleasanter man, and a more social crayture, never lived—'twas himself was the life of

the whole country-side. A wedding nor a christening wasn't lucky av he wasn't there, sitting at the top of the table, with mayby his arm round the bride herself, or the baby on his lap, a smoking jug of punch before him, and as much kindness in his eye as would make the fortunes of twenty hypocrites if they had it among them, and then he was so good to the poor; the Priory was always full of ould men and ould women sitting around the big fire in the kitchen, that the cook could hardly get near it. There they were, eating their meals and burning their shins, till they were speckled like a trout's back, and grumbling all the time; but Father Dwyer liked them, and he would have them.

"'Where have they to go,' he'd say, 'av it wasn't to me? Give Molly Kinshela a lock of that bacon. Tim, it's a cowld morning; will ye have a taste of the "dew?"'

"Ah! that's the way he'd spake to them; but sure goodness is no warrant for living any more than devilment, and so he got cowld in his feet at a station, and he rode home in the heavy snow without his big coat—for he gave it away to a blind man on the road: in three days he was dead.

"I see you're getting impatient, so I'll not stop to say what grief was in the parish when it was known; but troth, there never was seen the like before—not a crayture would lift a spade for two days, and there was more whisky sold in that time than at the whole spring fair. Well, on the third day the funeral set out, and never was the equal of it in them parts; first, there was my father—he came special from Cork with the six horses all in new black, and plumes like little poplar-trees—then came Father Dwyer, followed by the two coadjutors in beautiful surplices, walking bare-headed, with the little boys of the Priory school, two and two."

"Well, Mike, I'm sure it was very fine; but, for Heaven's sake! spare me all these descriptions, and get on to the ghost."

"'Faith, your honor's in a great hurry for the ghost—maybe ye won't like him when ye have him; but I'll go faster if ye please. Well, Father Dwyer, ye see, was born at Aghan-lish, of an ould family, and he left it in his will that he was to be buried in the family vault; and as Aghan-lish was eighteen miles up the mountains, it was getting late when they drew near. By that time the great procession was all broke up and goes home. The coadjutors stopped to dine at the 'Blue Bellows' at the cross-roads, the little boys took to pelting snowballs, there was a fight or two on the way besides—and, in fact, except an ould deaf fellow that my father took to mind the horses, he was quite alone. Not that he minded that same; for when the crowd was gone, my father began to sing a droll song, and tould the deaf chap that it was a lamentation. At last they came in sight of Aghan-lish. It was a lonesome, melancholy-looking place, with nothing near it except two or three ould fir-trees, and a small slated house with one window, where the sexton lived, and even that was shut up, and a padlock on the door. Well, my father was not over-much pleased at the look of matters, but as he was never hard put to what to do, he managed to get the coffin into the vestry; and then, when he unharnessed the horses, he sent the deaf fellow with them down to the village to tell the priest that the corpse was there, and to come up early in the morning and perform mass. The next thing to do was to make himself comfortable for the night; and then he made a roaring fire on the ould hearth—for there was plenty of bog-fir there—closed the windows with the black cloaks, and, wrapping two round himself, he sat down to cook a little supper he brought with him in case of need.

"Well, you may think it was melancholy enough to pass the night up there alone, with a corpse in an ould ruined church in the middle of the mountains, the wind howling about on every side, and the snow-drift beating against the walls; but as the fire burned brightly, and the little plate of rashers and eggs smoked temptingly before him, my father mixed a jug of the strongest punch, and set down as happy as a king. As long as he was eating away he had no time to be thinking of anything else; but, when all was done, and he looked about him, he began to feel very low and melancholy in his heart. There was the great black coffin on three chairs in one corner; and then the mourning cloaks that he had stuck up against the windows moved backward and forward like living things; and, outside, the wild cry of the plover as he flew past, and the night-owl sitting in a nook of the old church. 'I wish it was morning, anyhow,' said my father, 'for this is a lonesome place to be in; and, faix, he'll be a cunning fellow that catches me passing the night this way again.' Now, there was one thing distressed him most of all—my father used always to make fun of the ghosts and sperits the neighbors would tell of, pretending there was no such thing; and now the thought came to him, 'Maybe they'll revenge them-

selves on me to-night when they have me up here alone;' and with that he made another jug stronger than the first, and tried to remember a few prayers in case of need, but somehow his mind was not too clear, and he said afterward he was always mixing up ould songs and toasts with the prayers, and when he thought he had just got hold of a beautiful psalm, it would turn out to be 'Tatter Jack Walsh,' or 'Limping James,' or something like that. The storm, meanwhile, was rising every moment, and parts of the old abbey were falling, as the wind shook the ruin, and my father's spirits, notwithstanding the punch, were lower than ever.

"'I made it too weak,' said he, as he set to work on a new jorum; and, troth, this time that was not the fault of it, for the first sup nearly choked him.

"'Ah!' said he now, 'I knew what it was; this is like the thing; and, Mr. Free, you are beginning to feel easy and comfortable. Pass the jug. Your very good health and song. I'm a little hoarse, it's true, but if the company will excuse—"

"And then he began knocking on the table with his knuckles as if there was a room full of people asking him to sing. In short, my father was drunk as a fiddler; the last brew finished him; and he began roaring away all kinds of droll songs, and telling all manner of stories, as if he was at a great party.

"While he was capering this way about the room, he knocked down his hat, and with it a pack of cards he put into it before leaving home, for he was mighty fond of a game.

"'Will ye take a hand, Mr. Free?' said he, as he gathered them up and sat down beside the fire.

"'I'm convanient,' said he, and began dealing out as if there was a partner fornenst him.

"When my father used to get this far in the story, he became very confused. He says, that once or twice he mistook the liquor, and took a pull at the bottle of potteen instead of the punch; and the last thing he remembers was asking poor Father Dwyer if he would draw near to the fire, and not be lying there near the door.

"With that he slipped down on the ground and fell fast asleep. How long he lay that way he could never tell. When he awoke and looked up, his hair nearly stood on an end with fright. What do you think he seen fornenst him, sitting at the other side of the fire, but Father Dwyer himself. There he was, divil a lie in it, wrapped up in one of the mourning cloaks, trying to warm his hands at the fire.

"'*Salve hoc nomine patri!*' said my father, crossing himself; 'av it's your ghost, God presarve me!'

"Good evening t'ye, Mr. Free,' said the ghost; 'and av I might be bould, what's in the jug?'—for ye see my father had it under his arm fast, and never let it go when he was asleep.

"'*Pater noster qui es in*—potteen, sir,' said my father; for the ghost didn't look pleased at his talking Latin.

"'Ye might have the politeness to ax if one had a mouth on him, then,' says the ghost.

"'Sure, I didn't think the like of you would taste sperits.'

"'Try me,' said the ghost; and with that he filled out a glass, and tossed it off like a Christian.

"'Beamish!' says the ghost, smacking his lips.

"'The same,' says my father; 'and sure what's happened you has not spoilt your taste.'

"'If you'd mix a little hot,' says the ghost, 'I'm thinking it would be better; the night is mighty sevare.'

"'Anything that your reverance pleases,' says my father, as he began to blow up a good fire to boil the water.

"'And what news is stirring?' says the ghost.

"'Devil a word, your reverance: your own funeral was the only thing doing last week; times is bad; except the measles, there's nothing in our parts.'

"'And we're quite dead hereabouts, too,' says the ghost.

"'There's some of us so, anyhow,' says my father, with a sly look. 'Taste that, your reverance.'

"'Pleasant and refreshing,' says the ghost; 'and now, Mr. Free, what do you say to a little spoilt five, or beggar my neighbor?'

"'What will we play for?' says my father; for a thought just struck him—'maybe it's some trick of the devil to catch my soul.'

"'A pint of Beamish,' says the ghost.

"'Done!' says my father; 'cut for deal; the ace of clubs; you have it.'

"Now, the whole time the ghost was dealing the cards my father never took his eyes off of him, for he wasn't quite asy in his mind at all; but when he saw him turn up the trump, and take a strong drink afterward, he got more at ease, and began the game.

"How long they played it was never

rightly known; but one thing is sure, they drank a cruel deal of sperits; three quart bottles my father brought with him were all finished, and by that time his brain was so confused with the liquor, and all he lost—for somehow he never won a game—that he was getting very quarrelsome.

"'You have your own luck to it,' says he, at last.

"'True for you; and, besides, we play a great deal where I come from.'

"'I've heard so,' says my father. 'I lead the knave, sir; spades! Bad cess to it, lost again!'

"Now it was really very distressing; for by this time, though they only began for a pint of Beamish, my father went on betting till he lost the hearse and all the six horses, mourning cloaks, plumes, and everything.

"'Are you tired, Mr. Free? Maybe you'd like to stop?'

"'Stop! faith it's a nice time to stop; of course not.'

"'Well, what will ye play for now?'

"The way he said these words brought a trembling all over my father, and his blood curdled in his heart. 'Oh, murther!' says he to himself, 'it's my sowl he is wanting all the time.'

"'I've mighty little left,' says my father, looking at him keenly, while he kept shuffling the cards quick as lightning.

"'Mighty little; no matter, we'll give you plenty of time to pay; and if you can't do it, it shall never trouble you as long as you live.'

"'Oh, you murthering devil!' says my father, flying at him with a spade that he had behind his chair, 'I've found you out.'

"With one blow he knocked him down; and now a terrible fight begun, for the ghost was very strong too; but my father's blood was up, and he'd have faced the devil himself then. They rolled over each other several times, the broken bottles cutting them to pieces, and the chairs and tables crashing under them. At last the ghost took the bottle that lay on the hearth, and leveled my father to the ground with one blow; down he fell, and the bottle and the whisky were both dashed into the fire; that was the end of it, for the ghost disappeared that moment in a blue flame that nearly set fire to my father as he lay on the floor.

"Och! it was a cruel sight to see him next morning, with his cheek cut open and his hands all bloody, lying there by himself; all the broken glass, and the cards all round him; the coffin, too, was knocked down off the chair: maybe the ghost had trouble getting into it. However that was, the funeral was put off for a day; for my father couldn't speak; and, as for the sexton, it was a queer thing, but when they came to call him in the morning, he had two black eyes, and a gash over his ear, and he never knew how he got them. It was easy enough to know the ghost did it; but my father kept the secret, and never told it to any man, woman, or child in them parts."

CHAPTER LXXVI.

LISBON.

I HAVE little power to trace the events which occupied the succeeding three weeks of my history. The lingering fever which attended my wound detained me during that time at the château; and when at last I did leave Lisbon, the winter was already beginning, and it was upon a cold raw evening that I once more took possession of my old quarters at the Quay de Soderi.

My eagerness and anxiety to learn something of the campaign was ever uppermost, and no sooner had I reached my destination than I dispatched Mike to the Quartermaster's office to pick up some news, and hear which of my friends and brother officers were then at Lisbon. I was sitting in a state of nervous impatience watching for his return, when at length I heard footsteps approaching my room, and the next moment Mike's voice, saying, "The ould room, sir, where he was before." The door suddenly opened, and my friend Power stood before me.

"Charley, my boy!"—"Fred, my fine fellow!" was all either could say for some minutes. Upon my part, the recollection of his bold and manly bearing in my behalf choked all utterance; while, upon his, my haggard cheek and worn look produced an effect so sudden and unexpected that he became speechless.

In a few minutes, however, we both rallied, and opened our store of mutual remembrances since we parted. My career I found he was perfectly acquainted with, and his consisted of nothing but one unceasing round of gayety and pleasure. Lisbon had been delightful during the summer; parties to Cintra, excursions through the surrounding country, were of daily occurrence; and, as my friend was a favorite everywhere, his life was one of continued amusement.

"Do you know, Charley, had it been any other man than yourself, I should not

have spared him; for I have fallen head over ears in love with your little dark-eyed Portuguese."

"Ah! Donna Inez, you mean?"

"Yes, it is she I mean, and you need not affect such an air of uncommon *nonchalance*. She's the loveliest girl in Lisbon, and with fortune to pay off all the mortgages in Connemara."

"Oh, faith! I admire her amazingly; but, as I never flattered myself upon any preference—"

"Come, come, Charley, no concealment, my old fellow; every one knows the thing's settled. Your old friend Sir George Dashwood told me yesterday."

"Yesterday! Why, is he here; at Lisbon?"

"To be sure he is; didn't I tell you that before? confound it! what a head I have! Why, man, he's come out as Deputy Adjutant-General; but for him I should not have got renewed leave."

"And Miss Dashwood, is she here?"

"Yes, she came with him. By Jove, how handsome she is! quite a different style of thing from our dark friend, but, to my thinking, even handsomer. Hammersley seems of my opinion, too."

"How! is Hammersley at Lisbon?"

"On the staff here. But, confound it, what makes you so red, you have no ill-feeling toward him now. I know he speaks most warmly of you; no later than last night, at Sir George's—"

What Power was about to add I know not, for I sprang from my chair with a sudden start, and walked to the window, to conceal my agitation from him.

"And so," said I, at length regaining my composure in some measure, "Sir George also spoke of my name in connection with the Senhora?"

"To be sure he did. All Lisbon does. Why, what can you mean? But I see, my dear boy; you know you are not of the strongest; and we've been talking far too long. Come now, Charley, I'll say good-night. I'll be with you at breakfast tomorrow, and tell you all the gossip; meanwhile, promise me to get quietly to bed, and so good-night."

Such was the conflicting state of feeling I suffered from, that I made no effort to detain Power. I longed to be once more alone, to think—calmly, if I could—over the position I stood in, and to resolve upon my plans for the future.

My love for Lucy Dashwood had been long rather a devotion than a hope. My earliest dawn of manly ambition was associated with the first hour I met her. She it was who first touched my boyish heart, and suggested a sense of chivalrous ardor within me; and, even though lost to me forever, I could still regard her as the mainspring of my actions, and dwell upon my passion as the thing that hallowed every enterprise of my life.

In a word, my love, however little it might reach her heart, was everything to mine. It was the worship of the devotee to his protecting saint. It was the faith that made me rise above misfortune and mishap, and led me onward; and in this way I could have borne anything, everything, rather than the imputation of fickleness.

Lucy might not—nay, I felt she did not—love me. It was possible that some other was preferred before me; but to doubt my own affection, to suspect my own truth, was to destroy all the charm of my existence, and to extinguish within me forever the enthusiasm that made me a hero to my own heart.

It may seem but poor philosophy, but, alas! how many of our happiest, how many of our brightest thoughts here are but delusions like this! The dayspring of youth gilds the tops of the distant mountains before us, and many a weary day through life, when clouds and storms are thickening around us, we live upon the mere memory of the past. Some fast-flitting prospect of a bright future, some passing glimpse of a sunlit valley, tinges all our after-years.

It is true that he will suffer fewer disappointments, he will incur fewer of the mishaps of the world, who indulges in no fancies such as these; but equally true is it that he will taste none of that exuberant happiness which is that man's portion who weaves out a story of his life, and who, in connecting the promise of early years with the performance of later, will seek to fulfill a fate and destiny.

Weaving such fancies, I fell sound asleep, nor woke before the stir and bustle of the great city aroused me. Power, I found, had been twice at my quarters that morning, but, fearing to disturb me, had merely left a few lines to say that, as he should be engaged on service during the day, we could not meet before the evening. There were certain preliminaries requisite regarding my leave which demanded my appearing before a board of medical officers, and I immediately set about dressing; resolving that, as soon as they were completed, I should, if permitted, retire to one of the small cottages on the opposite bank of the Tagus, there to remain until my re-

stored health allowed me to rejoin my regiment.

I dreaded meeting the Dashwoods. I anticipated with a heavy heart how effectually one passing interview would destroy all my day-dreams of happiness, and I preferred anything to the sad conviction of hopelessness such a meeting must lead to.

While I thus balanced with myself how to proceed, a gentle step came to the door, and, as it opened slowly, a servant in a dark livery entered.

"Mr. O'Malley, sir?"

"Yes," said I, wondering to whom my arrival could be thus early known.

"Sir George Dashwood requests you will step over to him as soon as you go out," continued the man; "he is so engaged that he cannot leave home, but is most desirous to see you."

"It is not far from here?"

"No, sir; scarcely five minutes' walk."

"Well, then, if you will show me the way, I'll follow you."

I cast one passing glance at myself to see that all was right about my costume, and sallied forth.

In the middle of the Black Horse square, at the door of a large, stone-fronted building, a group of military men were assembled, chatting and laughing away together; some reading the lately-arrived English papers; others were lounging upon the stone parapet, carelessly puffing their cigars. None of the faces were known to me; so, threading my way through the crowd, I reached the steps. Just as I did so, a half-muttered whisper met my ear:

"Who did you say?"

"O'Malley, the young Irishman who behaved so gallantly at the Douro."

The blood rushed hotly to my cheek; my heart bounded with exultation; my step, infirm and tottering but a moment before, became fixed and steady, and I felt a thrill of proud enthusiasm playing through my veins. How little did the speaker of those few and random words know what courage he had given to a drooping heart, what renewed energy to a breaking spirit! The voice of praise, too, coming from those to whom we had thought ourselves unknown, has a magic about it that must be felt to be understood. So it happened, that in a few seconds a revolution had taken place in all my thoughts and feelings, and I, who had left my quarters dispirited and depressed, now walked confidently and proudly forward.

"Mr. O'Malley, sir," said the servant to the officer in waiting, as we entered the ante-chamber.

"Ah! Mr. O'Malley," said the aide-de-camp, in his blandest accent, "I hope you're better. Sir George is most anxious to see you; he is at present engaged with the staff—"

A bell rang at the moment, and cut short the sentence; he flew to the door of the inner room, and, returning in an instant, said,

"Will you follow me? This way, if you please."

The room was crowded with general officers and aides-de-camp, so that for a second or two I could not distinguish the parties; but no sooner was my name announced, than Sir George Dashwood, forcing his way through, rushed forward to meet me.

"O'Malley, my brave fellow! delighted to shake your hand again! How much grown you are—twice the man I knew you! and the arm, too, is it getting on well?"

Scarcely giving me a moment to reply, and still holding my hand tightly in his grasp, he introduced me on every side.

"My young Irish friend, Sir Edward, the man of the Douro. My Lord, allow me to present Lieutenant O'Malley of the Fourteenth."

"A very dashing thing, that of yours, sir, at Ciudad Rodrigo."

"A very senseless one, I fear, my Lord."

"No, no, I don't agree with you at all; even when no great results follow, the *morale* of an army benefits by acts of daring."

A running fire of kind and civil speeches poured in on me from all quarters, and, amid all that crowd of bronzed and war-worn veterans, I felt myself the lion of the moment. Craufurd, it appeared, had spoken most handsomely of my name, and I was thus made known to many of those whose own reputations were then extending over Europe.

In this happy trance of excited pleasure I passed the morning. Amid the military chit-chat of the day around me, treated as an equal by the greatest and the most distinguished, I heard all the confidential opinions upon the campaign and its leaders; and in that most entrancing of all flatteries—the easy tone of companionship of our elders and betters—forgot my griefs, and half believed I was destined for great things.

Fearing at length that I had prolonged my visit too far, I approached Sir George to take my leave, when, drawing my arm within his, he retired toward one of the windows.

"A word, O'Malley, before you go. I've arranged a little plan for you; mind, I

shall insist upon obedience. They'll make some difficulty about your remaining here, so that I have appointed you one of our extra aides-de-camp. That will free you from all trouble, and I shall not be very exacting in my demands upon you. You must, however, commence your duties to-day, and, as we dine at seven precisely, I shall expect you. I am aware of your wish to stay in Lisbon, my boy, and, if all I hear be true, congratulate you sincerely; but more of this another time, and so good-by." So saying, he shook my hand once more, warmly; and, without well feeling how or why, I found myself in the street.

The last few words Sir George had spoken threw a gloom over all my thoughts. I saw at once that the report Power had alluded to had gained currency at Lisbon. Sir George believed it; doubtless, Lucy, too; and, forgetting in an instant all the emulative ardor that so lately stirred my heart, I took my path beside the river, and sauntered slowly along, lost in my reflections.

I had walked for above an hour, before paying any attention to the path I followed. Mechanically, as it were, retreating from the noise and tumult of the city, I wandered toward the country. My thoughts fixed but upon one theme, I had neither ears nor eyes for aught around me; the great difficulty of my present position now appearing to me in this light—my attachment to Lucy Dashwood, unrequitted and unreturned as I felt it, did not permit of my rebutting any report which might have reached her concerning Donna Inez. I had no right, no claim to suppose her sufficiently interested about me to listen to such an explanation, had I even the opportunity to make it. One thing was thus clear to me,—all my hopes had ended in that quarter; and, as this conclusion sank into my mind, a species of dogged resolution to brave my fortune crept upon me, which only waited the first moment of my meeting her to overthrow and destroy forever.

Meanwhile I walked on; now rapidly, as some momentary rush of passionate excitement; now slowly, as some depressing and gloomy notion succeeded; when suddenly my path was arrested by a long file of bullock cars which blocked up the way. Some chance squabble had arisen among the drivers, and, to avoid the crowd and collision, I turned into a gateway which opened beside me, and soon found myself in a lawn handsomely planted, and adorned with flowering shrubs and ornamental trees.

In the half-dreamy state my musings had brought me to, I struggled to recollect why the aspect of the place did not seem altogether new. My thoughts were, however, far away; now blending some memory of my distant home with scenes of battle and bloodshed, or resting upon my first interview with her whose chance word, carelessly and lightly spoken, had written the story of my life. From this reverie I was rudely awakened by a rustling noise in the trees behind me, and, before I could turn my head, the two fore-paws of a large stag-hound were planted upon my shoulders, while the open mouth and panting tongue were close beside my face. My day-dream was dispelled quick as lightning; it was Juan himself, the favorite dog of the Senhora, who gave me this rude welcome, and who now, by a thousand wild gestures and bounding caresses, seemed to do the honors of his house. There was something so like home in these joyful greetings, that I yielded myself at once his prisoner, and followed, or rather was accompanied by him toward the villa.

Of course, sooner or later, I should have called upon my kind friends; then why not now, when chance had already brought me so near? Besides, if I held to my resolution, which I meant to do—of retiring to some quiet and sequestered cottage till my health was restored—the opportunity might not readily present itself again. This line of argument perfectly satisfied my reason, while a strong feeling of something like curiosity piqued me to proceed, and, before many minutes elapsed, I reached the house. The door, as usual, lay wide open, and the ample hall, furnished like a sitting-room, had its customary litter of books, music, and flowers scattered upon the tables. My friend Juan, however, suffered me not to linger here, but, rushing furiously at a door before me, began a vigorous attack for admittance.

As I knew this to be the drawing-room, I opened the door and walked in, but no one was to be seen; a half-open book lay upon an ottoman, and a fan, which I recognized as an old acquaintance, was beside it, but the owner was absent.

I sat down, resolved to wait patiently for her coming, without any announcement of my being there. I was not sorry, indeed, to have some moments to collect my thoughts, and restore my erring faculties to something like order.

As I looked about the room, it seemed as if I had been there but yesterday. The folding-doors lay open to the garden, just as I had seen them last; and, save that

the flowers seemed fewer, and those which remained of a darker and more somber tint, all seemed unchanged. There lay the guitar, to whose thrilling chords my heart had bounded; there, the drawing over which I had bent in admiring pleasure, suggesting some tints of light or shadow, as the fairy fingers traced them; every chair was known to me, and I greeted them as things I cared for.

While thus I scanned each object around me, I was struck by a little china vase, which, unlike its other brethren, contained a bouquet of dead and faded flowers; the blood rushed to my cheek; I started up; it was one I had myself presented to her the day before we parted. It was in that same vase I placed it; the very table, too, stood in the same position beside that narrow window. What a rush of thoughts came pouring on me! And oh! shall I confess it? how deeply did such a mute testimony of remembrance speak to my heart, at the moment that I felt myself unloved and uncared for by another! I walked hurriedly up and down; a maze of conflicting resolves combating in my mind, while one thought ever recurred—"Would that I had not come there!" and yet, after all, it may mean nothing; some piece of passing coquetry, which she will be the very first to laugh at. I remember how she spoke of poor Howard; what folly to take it otherwise! "Be it so, then," said I, half aloud; "and now for my part of the game;" and with this I took from my pocket the light blue scarf she had given me the morning we parted, and, throwing it over my shoulder, prepared to perform my part in what I had fully persuaded myself to be a comedy. The time, however, passed on, and she came not; a thousand high-flown Portuguese phrases had time to be conned over again and again by me, and I had abundant leisure to enact my coming part; but still the curtain did not rise. As the day was wearing, I resolved at last to write a few lines, expressive of my regret at not meeting her, and promising myself an early opportunity of paying my respects under more fortunate circumstances. I sat down accordingly, and, drawing the paper toward me, began, in a mixture of French and Portuguese, as it happened, to indite my billet.

"Senhora Inez"—no—"Ma chère Mademoiselle Inez"—confound it, that's too intimate; well, here goes—"Monsieur O'Malley presente ses respects"—that will never do; and, then, after twenty other abortive attempts, I began thoughtlessly sketching heads upon the paper, and scribbling with wonderful facility in fifty different ways—"Ma charmante amie—Ma plus chère Inez," etc., and in this most useful and profitable occupation did I pass another half hour.

How long I should have persisted in such an employment it is difficult to say, had not an incident intervened, which suddenly but most effectually put an end to it. As the circumstance is one which, however little striking in itself, had the greatest and most lasting influence upon my future career, I shall, perhaps, be excused in devoting another chapter to its recital.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

A PLEASANT PREDICAMENT.

As I sat vainly endeavoring to fix upon some suitable and appropriate epithet by which to commence my note, my back was turned toward the door of the garden; and so occupied was I in my meditations, that, even had any one entered at the time, in all probability I should not have perceived it. At length, however, I was aroused from my study by a burst of laughter, whose girlish joyousness was not quite new to me. I knew it well; it was the Senhora herself; and the next moment I heard her voice.

"I tell you, I'm quite certain I saw his face in the mirror as I passed. Oh, how delightful! and you'll be charmed with him; so, mind, you must not steal him from me; I shall never forgive you if you do; and look, only look! he has got the blue scarf I gave him when he marched to the Douro."

While I perceived that I was myself seen, I could see nothing of the speaker, and, wishing to hear something further, appeared more than ever occupied in the writing before me.

What her companion replied I could not, however, catch, but only guess at its import by the Senhora's answer.

"*Fi donc!*—I really am very fond of him; but, never fear, I shall be as stately as a queen. You shall see how meekly he will kiss my hand, and with what unbending reserve I'll receive him."

"Indeed!" thought I; "mayhap, I'll mar your plot a little; but let us listen."

Again her friend spoke, but too low to be heard.

"It is so provoking," continued Inez; "I never can remember names, and his was something too absurd; but, never

mind, I shall make him a grandee of Portugal. Well, but come along, I long to present him to you."

Here a gentle struggle seemed to ensue; for I heard the Senhora coaxingly entreat her, while her companion steadily resisted.

"I know very well you think I shall be so silly, and perhaps wrong; eh, is it not so? but you're quite mistaken. You'll be surprised at my cold and dignified manner. I shall draw myself proudly up, thus, and courtesying deeply, say, 'Monsieur, j'ai l'honneur de vous saluer.'"

A laugh twice as mirthful as before interrupted her account of herself, while I could hear the tones of her friend evidently in expostulation.

"Well then, to be sure, you are provoking, but you really promise to follow me. Be it so; then give me that moss-rose. How you have fluttered me; now for it!"

So saying, I heard her foot upon the gravel, and the next instant upon the marble step of the door. There is something in expectation that sets the heart beating, and mine throbbed against my side. I waited, however, till she entered, before lifting my head, and then springing suddenly up, with one bound clasped her in my arms, and pressing my lips upon her roseate cheek, said,

"*Ma charmante amie!*" To disengage herself from me, and to spring suddenly back, was her first effort; to burst into an immoderate fit of laughing, her second; her cheek was, however, covered with a deep blush, and I already repented that my malice had gone so far.

"Pardon, Mademoiselle," said I, in affected innocence, "if I have so far forgotten myself as to assume a habit of my own country to a stranger."

A half-angry toss of the head was her only reply, and, turning toward the garden, she called to her friend:

"Come here, dearest, and instruct my ignorance upon your national customs; but first let me present to you—I never know his name—the Chevalier de —— What is it?"

The glass door opened as she spoke; a tall and graceful figure entered, and, turning suddenly round, showed me the features of Lucy Dashwood. We both stood opposite each other, each mute with amazement. *My* feelings let me not attempt to convey; shame, for the first moment stronger than aught else, sent the blood rushing to my face and temples, and the next I was cold and pale as death. As for her, I cannot guess at what passed in her mind. She courtesyed deeply to me, and with a half-smile of scarce recognition passed by me, and walked toward a window.

"*Comme vous êtes aimable!*" said the lively Portuguese, who comprehended little of this dumb show; "here have I been flattering myself what friends you'd be the very moment you meet, and now you'll not even look at each other."

What was to be done? The situation was every instant growing more and more embarrassing; nothing but downright effrontery could get through with it now; and never did a man's heart more fail him than did mine at this conjuncture. I made the effort, however, and stammered out certain unmeaning common-places. Inez replied, and I felt myself conversing with the headlong recklessness of one marching to a scaffold, a coward's fear at his heart, while he essayed to seem careless and indifferent.

Anxious to reach what I esteemed safe ground, I gladly adverted to the campaign; and at last, hurried on by the impulse to cover my embarrassment, was describing some skirmish with a French outpost. Without intending, I had succeeded in exciting the Senhora's interest, and she listened with sparkling eye and parted lips to the description of a sweeping charge in which a square was broken, and several prisoners carried off. Warming with the eager avidity of her attention, I grew myself more excited, when just as my narrative reached its climax, Miss Dashwood walked gently toward the bell, rang it, and ordered her carriage. The tone of perfect *nonchalance* of the whole proceeding struck me dumb: I faltered, stammered, hesitated, and was silent. Donna Inez turned from one to the other of us with a look of unfeigned astonishment, and I heard her mutter to herself something like a reflection upon "national eccentricities." Happily, however, her attention was now exclusively turned toward her friend, and while assisting her to shawl, and extorting innumerable promises of an early visit, I got a momentary reprieve; the carriage drew up also, and, as the gravel flew right and left beneath the horses' feet, the very noise and bustle relieved me.

"*Adios!*" then said Inez, as she kissed her for the last time, while she motioned to me to escort her to her carriage. I advanced—stopped—made another step forward, and again grew irresolute; but Miss Dashwood speedily terminated the difficulty; for, making me a formal courtesy, she declined my scarce-proffered attention, and left the room.

As she did so, I perceived that, on passing the table, her eyes fell upon the paper I had been scribbling over so long, and I thought that for an instant an expression of ineffable scorn seemed to pass across her features, save which—and perhaps even in this I was mistaken—her manner was perfectly calm, easy, and indifferent.

Scarce had the carriage rolled from the door, when the Senhora, throwing herself upon a chair, clapped her hands in childish ecstasy, while she fell into a fit of laughing that I thought would never have an end. "Such a scene?" cried she; "I would not have lost it for the world; what cordiality! what *empressement* to form acquaintance! I shall never forget it, Monsieur le Chevalier; your national customs seem to run sadly in extremes. One would have thought you deadly enemies; and poor me! after a thousand delightful plans about you both."

As she ran on thus, scarce able to control her mirth at each sentence, I walked the room with impatient strides, now, resolving to hasten after the carriage, stop it, explain in a few words how all had happened, and then fly from her forever; then, the remembrance of her cold, impassive look crossed me, and I thought that one bold leap into the Tagus might be the shortest and easiest solution to all my miseries; perfect abasement, thorough self-contempt had broken all my courage, and I could have cried like a child. What I said, or how I comforted myself after, I know not; but my first consciousness came to me as I felt myself running at the top of my speed far upon the road toward Lisbon.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

THE DINNER.

It may easily be imagined that I had little inclination to keep my promise of dining that day with Sir George Dashwood. However, there was nothing else for it; the die was cast—my prospects as regarded Lucy were ruined forever. We were not, we never could be anything to each other; and as for me, the sooner I braved my altered fortunes the better; and, after all, why should I call them altered. She evidently never had cared for me; and even supposing that my fervent declaration of attachment had interested her, the apparent duplicity and falseness of my late conduct could only fall the more heavily upon me.

I endeavored to philosophize myself into calmness and indifference. One by one I exhausted every argument for my defense, which, however ingeniously put forward, brought no comfort to my own conscience. I pleaded the unerring devotion of my heart—the uprightness of my motives—and when called on for the proofs—alas! except the blue scarf I wore in memory of another, and my absurd conduct at the villa, I had none. From the current gossip of Lisbon, down to my own disgraceful folly, all—all was against me.

Honesty of intention—rectitude of purpose, may be, doubtless they are, admirable supports to a rightly constituted mind; but even then they must come supported by such claims to probability as make the injured man feel he has not lost the sympathy of all his fellows. Now, I had none of these, had even my temperament, broken by sickness and harassed by unlucky conjectures, permitted my appreciating them.

I endeavored to call my wounded pride to my aid, and thought over the glance of haughty disdain she gave me as she passed on to her carriage; but even this turned against me, and a humiliating sense of my own degraded position sank deeply into my heart. "This impression at least," thought I, "must be effaced. I cannot permit her to believe—"

"His Excellency is waiting dinner, sir," said a lackey, introducing a finely powdered head gently within the door. I looked at my watch, it was eight o'clock; so, snatching my sabre and shocked at my delay, I hastily followed the servant down stairs, and thus at once cut short my deliberations.

The man must be but little observant, or deeply sunk in his own reveries, who, arriving half an hour too late for dinner, fails to detect in the faces of the assembled and expectant guests a very palpable expression of discontent and displeasure. It is truly a moment of awkwardness, and one in which few are found to manage with success; the blushing, hesitating, blundering apology of the absent man, is scarcely better than the ill-affected surprise of the more practiced offender. The bashfulness of the one is as distasteful as the cool impertinence of the other; both are so thoroughly out of place, for we are thinking of neither; our thoughts are wandering to cold soups and rechauffé pâtés, and we neither care for nor estimate the cause, but satisfy our spleen by cursing the offender.

Happily for me I was clad in a triple insensibility to such feelings, and with an

air of most perfect unconstraint and composure walked into a drawing-room where about twenty persons were busily discussing what peculiar amiability in my character could compensate for my present conduct.

"At last, O'Malley, at last!" said Sir George. "Why, my dear boy, how very late you are!"

I muttered something about a long walk—distance from Lisbon, etc.

"Ah! that was it. I was right, you see!" said an old lady in a spangled turban, as she whispered something to her friend beside her, who appeared excessively shocked at the information conveyed; while a fat, round-faced little general, after eyeing me steadily through his glass, expressed a *sotto voce* wish that I was upon *his* staff. I felt my cheek reddening at the moment, and stared around me like one whose trials were becoming downright insufferable, when happily dinner was announced, and terminated my embarrassment.

As the party filed past, I perceived that Miss Dashwood was not amongst them; and, with a heart relieved for the moment by the circumstance, and inventing a hundred conjectures to account for it, I followed with the aides-de-camp and the staff to the dinner-room.

The temperament is very Irish, I believe, which renders a man so elastic that, from the extreme of depression to the very climax of high spirits, there is but one spring. To this I myself plead guilty, and thus, scarcely was I freed from the embarrassment which a meeting with Lucy Dashwood must have caused, when my heart bounded with lightness.

When the ladies withdrew, the events of the campaign became the subject of conversation, and upon these, very much to my astonishment, I found myself consulted as an authority. The Douro, from some fortunate circumstance, had given me a reputation I never dreamed of, and I heard my opinions quoted upon topics of which my standing as an officer and my rank in the service could not imply a very extended observation. Power was absent on duty; and, happily for my supremacy, the company consisted entirely of generals in the commissariat, or new arrivals from England, all of whom knew still less than myself.

What will not iced champagne and flattery do? Singly, they are strong impulses; combined, their power is irresistible. I now heard for the first time that our great leader had been elevated to the peerage by the title of Lord Wellington, and I sincerely believe—however now I may smile at the confession—that, at the moment, I felt more elation at the circumstance than he did. The glorious sensation of being in any way, no matter how remotely, linked with the career of those whose path is a high one, and whose destinies are cast for great events, thrilled through me; and, in all the warmth of my admiration and pride for our great captain, a secret pleasure stirred within me as I whispered to myself, "And I, too, am a soldier!"

I fear me, that very little flattery is sufficient to turn the head of a young man of eighteen; and if I yielded to the "pleasant incense," let my apology be, that I was not used to it; and, lastly, let me avow, if I did get tipsy—I liked the liquor. And why not? It is the only tipple I know of that leaves no headache the next morning, to punish you for the glories of the past night. It may, like all other strong potations, it is true, induce you to make a fool of yourself when under its influence; but, like the nitrous oxide gas, its effects are passing, and as the pleasure is an ecstasy for the time, and your constitution none the worse when it is over, I really see no harm in it.

Then the benefits are manifest; for while he who gives becomes never the poorer for his benevolence, the receiver is made rich indeed. It matters little that some dear, kind friend is ready with his bitter draught, to remedy what he is pleased to call its unwholesome sweetness; you betake yourself with only the more pleasure to the "blessed elixir," whose fascinations neither the poverty of your pocket nor the penury of your brain can withstand, and by the magic of whose spell you are great and gifted. "*Vive la bagatelle!*" saith the Frenchman. "Long live Flattery!" say I, come from what quarter it will; the only wealth of the poor man,—the only reward of the unknown one; the arm that supports us in failure,—the hand that crowns us in success; the comforter in our affliction,—the gay companion in our hours of pleasure; the lullaby of the infant,—the staff of old age; the secret treasure we lock up in our own hearts, and which ever grows greater as we count it over. Let me not be told that the coin is fictitious, and the gold not genuine; its clink is as musical to the ear as though it bore the last impression of the mint, and I'm not the man to cast an aspersion upon its value.

This little digression, however seemingly out of place, may serve to illustrate what it might be difficult to convey in

other words,—namely, that if Charles O'Malley became, in his own estimation, a very considerable personage that day at dinner, the fault lay not entirely with himself, but with his friends, who told him he was such. In fact, my good reader, I was the lion of the party,—the man who saved Laborde,—who charged through a brigade of guns,—who performed feats which newspapers quoted, though he never heard of them himself. At no time is a man so successful in society as when his reputation heralds him, and it needs but little conversational eloquence to talk well, if you have but a willing and ready auditory. Of mine, I could certainly not complain; and as, drinking deeply, I poured forth a whole tide of campaigning recital, I saw the old colonels of recruiting districts exchanging looks of wonder and admiration with officers of the ordnance, while Sir George himself, evidently pleased at my *début*, went back to an early period of our acquaintance, and related the rescue of his daughter in Galway.

In an instant, the whole current of my thoughts was changed. My first meeting with Lucy, my boyhood's dream of ambition, my plighted faith, my thought of our last parting in Dublin, when, in a moment of excited madness, I told my tale of love. I remembered her downcast look, as, her cheek now flushing, now growing pale, she trembled while I spoke. I thought of her, as in the crash of battle her image flashed across my brain, and made me feel a rush of chivalrous enthusiasm to win her heart by "doughty deeds."

I forgot all around and about me. My head reeled, the wine, the excitement, my long previous illness, all pressed upon me; and, as my temples throbbed loudly and painfully, a chaotic rush of discordant, ill-connected ideas flitted across my mind. There seemed some stir and confusion in the room, but why or wherefore I could not think, nor could I recall my scattered senses, till Sir George Dashwood's voice roused me once again to consciousness.

"We are going to have some coffee, O'Malley. Miss Dashwood expects us in the drawing-room. You have not seen her yet?"

I know not my reply; but he continued:

"She has some letters for you, I think."

I muttered something, and suffered him to pass on; no sooner had he done so, however, than I turned toward the door, and rushed into the street. The cold night air suddenly recalled me to myself, and I stood for a moment, endeavoring to collect myself; as I did so, a servant stopped, and, saluting me, presented me with a letter. For a second, a cold chill came over me; I knew not what fear beset me. The letter I at last remembered must be that one alluded to by Sir George, so I took it in silence, and walked on.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE LETTER.

As I hurried to my quarters, I made a hundred guesses from whom the letter could have come; a kind of presentiment told me that it bore, in some measure, upon the present crisis of my life, and I burned with anxiety to read it.

No sooner had I reached the light, than all my hopes on this head vanished; the envelope bore the well-known name of my old college chum, Frank Webber, and none could, at the moment, have more completely dispelled all chance of interesting me. I threw it from me with disappointment, and sat moodily down to brood over my fate.

At length, however, and almost without knowing it, I drew the lamp toward me, and broke the seal. The reader being already acquainted with my amiable friend, there is the less indiscretion in communicating the contents, which ran thus:

"Trinity College, Dublin, No. 2.
"Oct. 5, 1810.

"My dear O'Malley,—Nothing short of your death and burial, with or without military honors, can possibly excuse your very disgraceful neglect of your old friends here. Nesbitt has never heard of you, neither has Smith. Ottley swears never to have seen your handwriting, save on the back of a protested bill. You have totally forgotten *me*, and the Dean informs me that you have never condescended a single line to him; which latter inquiry on my part nearly cost me a rustication.

"A hundred conjectures to account for your silence—a new feature in you since you were here—are afloat. Some assert that your soldiering has turned your head, and that you are above corresponding with civilians. Your friends, however, who know you better, and value your worth, think otherwise; and having seen a paragraph about a certain O'Malley being tried by court-martial for stealing a goose, and maltreating the woman that owned it, ascribe your not writing to other motives. Do, in any case, relieve our minds; say, is

it yourself, or only a relative that's mentioned?

"Herbert came over from London with a long story about your doing wonderful things—capturing cannon and general officers by scores—but devil a word of it is extant; and if you have really committed these acts, they have 'misused the king's press damnably,' for neither in the *Times* nor the *Post* are you heard of. Answer this point, and say also if you have got promotion; for what precise sign you are algebraically expressed by at this writing, may serve Fitzgerald for a fellowship question. As for us, we are jogging along, *semper eadem*—that is, worse and worse. Dear Cecil Cavendish, our gifted friend, slight of limb and soft of voice, has been rusticated for immersing four bricklayers in that green receptacle of stagnant water and duckweed, yclept the 'Haha.' Roper, equally unlucky, has taken to reading for honors, and obtained a medal, I fancy—at least his friends shy him, and it must be something of that kind. Belson—poor Belson (fortunately for him he was born in the nineteenth not the sixteenth century, or he'd be most likely ornamenting a pile of fagots)—ventured upon some stray excursions into the Hebrew verbs—the Professor himself never having transgressed beyond the declensions—and the consequence is, he is in disgrace among the seniors. And as for me, a heavy charge hangs over my devoted head even while I write. The Senior Lecturer, it appears, has been for some time instituting some very singular researches into the original state of our goodly college at its founding. Plans and specifications showing its extent and magnificence have been continually before the board for the last month; and in such repute have been a smashed door-sill or an old arch, that freshmen have now abandoned conic sections for crowbars, and instead of the 'Principia' have taken up the pickaxe. You know, my dear fellow, with what enthusiasm I enter into any scheme for the aggrandizement of our Alma Mater, so I need not tell you how ardently I adventured into the career now opened to me. My time was completely devoted to the matter; neither means nor health did I spare, and in my search for antiquarian lore, I have actually undermined the old wall of the fellows' garden, and am each morning in expectation of hearing that the big bell near the commons-hall has descended from its lofty and most noisy eminence, and is snugly reposing in the mud. Meanwhile, accident put me in possession of a most singular and remarkable discovery. Our chambers—I call them ours for old association sake—are, you may remember, in the Old Square. Well, I have been fortunate enough, within the very precincts of my own dwelling, to contribute a very wonderful fact to the history of the University; alone—unassisted—unaided, I labored at my discovery. Few can estimate the pleasure I felt—the fame and reputation I anticipated. I drew up a little memoir for the board, most respectfully and civilly worded, having for title the following:

'ACCOUNT
Of a remarkable Subterranean Passage lately discovered in the Old Building of Trinity College, Dublin:
With Observations upon its Extent, Antiquity, and Probable Use.
By F. WEBBER, Senior Freshman.'

"My dear O'Malley, I'll dwell upon the pride I felt in my new character of antiquarian; it is enough to state, that my very remarkable tract was well considered and received, and a commission appointed to investigate the discovery, consisting of the Vice-Provost, the Senior Lecturer, old Woodhouse, the Sub-Dean, and a few more.

"On Tuesday last they came accordingly in full academic costume, I, being habited most accurately in the like manner, and conducting them with all form into my bedroom, where a large screen concealed from view the entrance to the tunnel alluded to. Assuming a very John Kembleish attitude, I struck this down with one hand, pointing with the other to the wall, as I exclaimed, 'There! look there!'

"I need only quote Barret's exclamation to enlighten you upon my discovery, as, drawing in his breath with a strong effort, he burst out:

"'May the devil admire me, but it's a rat-hole!'

"I fear Charley, he's right, and, what's more, that the board will think so, for this moment a very warm discussion is going on among that amiable and learned body, whether I shall any longer remain an ornament to the University. In fact, the terror with which they fled from my chambers, overturning each other in the passage, seemed to imply that they thought me mad; and I do believe my voice, look, and attitude would not have disgraced a blue cotton dressing-gown and a cell in 'Swift's.' Be this as it may, few men have done more for college than I have. The sun never stood still for Joshua with more resolution than I have rested in my career of freshman; and if I have contributed

little to the fame, I have done much for the funds of the University; and when they come to compute the various sums I have paid in, for fines, penalties, and what they call properly 'impositions,' if they don't place a portrait of me in the examination-hall, between Archbishop Ussher and Flood, then do I say there is no gratitude in mankind; not to mention the impulse I have given to the various artisans whose business it is to repair lamps, windows, chimneys, iron railings, and watchmen, all of which I have devoted myself to, with an enthusiasm for political economy well known, and registered in the College street police office.

"After all, Charley, I miss you greatly. Your second in a ballad is not to be replaced; besides, Carlisle Bridge has got low; medical students and young attorneys affect minstrelsy, and actually frequent the haunts sacred to our muse.

"Dublin is, upon the whole, I think, worse; though one scarcely ever gets tired laughing at the small celebrities—"

Master Frank gets here indiscreet, so I shall skip.

* * * * *
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"And so the Dashwoods are going too; this will make mine a pitiable condition, for I really did begin to feel tender in that quarter. You may have heard that she refused me; this, however, is not correct, though I have little doubt it might have been—had I asked her.

"Hammersley has, you know, got his dismissal. I wonder how the poor fellow took it, when Power gave him back his letters and his picture. How *you* are to be treated remains to be seen; in any case, you certainly stand first favorite."

I laid down the letter at this passage, unable to read further. Here, then, was the solution of the whole chaos of mystery—here the full explanation of what had puzzled my aching brain for many a night long. These were the very letters I had myself delivered into Hammersley's hands; this the picture he had trodden to dust beneath his heel the morning of our meeting. I now felt the reason of his taunting allusion to my "success," his cutting sarcasm, his intemperate passion. A flood of light poured at once across all the dark passages of my history; and Lucy, too—dare I think of her? A rapid thought shot through my brain. What if she had really cared for me! What, if for me she had rejected another's love! What, if, trusting to my faith—my pledged and sworn faith—she had given me her heart! Oh! the bitter agony of that thought, to think that all my hopes were shipwrecked, with the very land in sight.

I sprang to my feet with some sudden impulse, but as I did so, the blood rushed madly to my face and temples, which beat violently; a parched and swollen feeling came about my throat; I endeavored to open my collar and undo my stock, but my disabled arm prevented me. I tried to call my servant, but my utterance was thick, and my words would not come; a frightful suspicion crossed me that my reason was tottering. I made toward the door, but, as I did so, the objects around me became confused and mingled, my limbs trembled, and I fell heavily upon the floor; a pang of dreadful pain shot through me as I fell—my arm was rebroken. After this, I knew no more; all the accumulated excitement of the evening bore down with one fell swoop upon my brain;—ere day broke, I was delirious.

I have a vague and indistinct remembrance of hurried and anxious faces around my bed, of whispered words and sorrowful looks; but my own thoughts careered over the bold hills of the far west as I trod them in my boyhood, free and high of heart, or recurred to the din and crash of the battle-field, with the mad bounding of the war-horse, and the loud clang of the trumpet; perhaps the acute pain of my swollen and suffering arm gave the character to my mental aberration; for I have more than once observed among the wounded in battle, that even when torn and mangled by grape from a howitzer, their ravings have partaken of a high feature of enthusiasm, shouts of triumph, and exclamations of pleasure; even songs have I heard—but never once the low muttering of despair, or the half-stifled cry of sorrow and affliction.

Such were the few gleams of consciousness which visited me, and even to such as these I soon became insensible.

Few like to chronicle, fewer still to read, the sad history of a sick-bed. Of mine, I know but little. The throbbing pulses of the erring brain, the wild fancies of lunacy, take no note of time. There is no past nor future—a dreadful present, full of its hurried and confused impressions, is all that the mind beholds; and even when some gleams of returning reason flash upon the mad confusion of the brain, they come like sunbeams through a cloud, dimmed, darkened, and perverted.

It is the restless activity of the mind in fever that constitutes its most painful anguish; the fast-flitting thoughts that rush

ever onward, crowding sensation on sensation, an endless train of exciting images, without purpose or repose; or even worse, the straining effort to pursue some vague and shadowy conception, which evades us ever as we follow, but which mingles with all around and about us—haunting us at midnight as in the noontime.

Of this nature was a vision which came constantly before me, till at length, by its very recurrence, it assumed a kind of real and palpable existence; and, as I watched it, my heart thrilled with the high ardor of enthusiasm and delight, or sunk into the dark abyss of sorrow and despair. "The dawning of morning, the daylight sinking," brought no other image to my aching sight; and of this alone, of all the impressions of the period, has my mind retained any consciousness.

Methought I stood within an old and venerable cathedral, where the dim yellow light fell with a rich but solemn glow upon the fretted capitals, or the grotesque tracings of the oaken carvings, lighting up the faded gildings of the stately monuments, and tinting the varied hues of time-worn banners. The mellow notes of a deep organ filled the air, and seemed to attune the sense to all the awe and reverence of the place, where the very footfal, magnified by its many echoes, seemed half a profanation. I stood before an altar, beside me a young and lovely girl, whose bright brown tresses waved in loose masses upon a neck of snowy whiteness; her hand, cold and pale, rested within my own; we knelt together, not in prayer, but a feeling of deep reverence stole over my heart, as she repeated some few half-uttered words after me; I knew that she was mine. Oh! the ecstasy of that moment, as, springing to my feet, I darted forward to press her to my heart! when suddenly, an arm was interposed between us, while a low but solemn voice rung in my ears, "Stir not! for thou art false and traitorous, thy vow a perjury, and thy heart a lie!" Slowly and silently the fair form of my loved Lucy—for it was her—receded from my sight. One look, one last look of sorrow—it was scarce reproach—fell upon me, and I sank back upon the cold pavement broken-hearted and forsaken.

This dream came with daybreak, and with the calm repose of evening the still hours of the waking night brought no other image to my eyes, and when its sad influence had spread a gloom and desolation over my wounded heart, a secret hope crept over me, that again the bright moment of happiness would return, and once more beside that ancient altar I'd kneel beside my bride, and call her mine.

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For the rest, my memory retains but little; the kind looks which came around my bedside brought but a brief pleasure, for in their affectionate beaming I could read the gloomy prestige of my fate. The hurried but cautious step, the whispered sentences, the averted gaze of those who sorrowed for me, sank far deeper into my heart than my friends then thought of. Little do they think, who minister to the sick or dying, how each passing word, each flitting glance is noted, and how the pale and stilly figure, which lies all but lifeless before them, counts over the hours he has to live by the smiles or tears around him!

Hours, days, weeks rolled over, and still my fate hung in the balance: and while in the wild enthusiasm of my erring faculties I wandered far in spirit from my bed of suffering and pain, some well-remembered voice beside me would strike upon my ear, bringing me back, as if by magic, to all the realities of life, and investing my almost unconscious state with all the hopes and fears about me.

One by one, at length, these fancies fled from me, and to the delirium of fever succeeded the sad and helpless consciousness of illness, far, far more depressing; for as the conviction of sense came back, the sorrowful aspect of a dreary future came with it.

CHAPTER LXXX.

THE VILLA.

The gentle twilight of an autumnal evening, calm, serene and mellow, was falling, as I opened my eyes to consciousness of life and being, and looked around me. I lay in a large and handsomely furnished apartment, in which the hand of taste was as evident in all the decorations as the unsparing employment of wealth; the silk draperies of my bed, the inlaid tables, the ormolu ornaments which glittered upon the chimney, were one by one so many puzzles to my erring senses, and I opened and shut my eyes again and again, and essayed by every means in my power to ascertain if they were not the visionary creations of a fevered mind. I stretched out my hands to feel the objects; and even while holding the freshly-plucked flowers in my grasp I could scarce persuade myself

that they were real. A thrill of pain at this instant recalled me to other thoughts, and I turned my eyes upon my wounded arm, which, swollen and stiffened, lay motionless beside me. Gradually, my memory came back, and to my weak faculties some passages of my former life were presented, not collectedly it is true, nor in any order, but scattered, isolated scenes. While such thoughts flew past, my ever rising question to myself was, "Where am I now?" The vague feeling which illness leaves upon the mind, whispered to me of kind looks and soft voices; and I had a dreamy consciousness about me of being watched and cared for, but wherefore, or by whom, I knew not.

From a partly open door which led into a garden, a mild and balmy air fanned my temples, and soothed my heated brow; and as the light curtain waved to and fro with the breeze, the odor of the rose and the orange-tree filled the apartment.

There is something in the feeling of weakness which succeeds to long illness of the most delicious and refined enjoyment. The spirit emerging as it were from the thraldom of its grosser prison, rises high and triumphant above the meaner thoughts and more petty ambitions of daily life. Purer feelings, more ennobling hopes succeed; and gleams of our childhood, mingling with our promises for the future, make up an ideal existence, in which the low passions and cares of ordinary life enter not or are forgotten. 'Tis then we learn to hold converse with ourselves; 'tis then we ask how has our manhood performed the promises of its youth? or, have our ripened prospects borne out the pledges of our boyhood? 'Tis then, in the calm justice of our lonely hearts, we learn how our failures are but another name for our faults, and that what we looked on as the vicissitudes of fortune, are but the fruits of our own vices. Alas, how short-lived are such intervals! Like the fitful sunshine in the wintry sky, they throw one bright and joyous tint over the dark landscape; for a moment the valley and the mountain-top are bathed in a ruddy glow; the leafless tree and the dark moss seem to feel a touch of spring; but the next instant it is past; the lowering clouds and dark shadows intervene, and the cold blast, the moaning wind, and the dreary waste are once more before us.

I endeavored to recall the latest events of my career, but in vain; the real and the visionary were inextricably mingled; and the scenes of my campaigns were blended with hopes, and fears, and doubts, which had no existence save in my dreams. My curiosity to know where I was grew now my strongest feeling, and I raised myself with one arm, to look around me. In the room all was still and silent, but nothing seemed to intimate what I sought for. As I looked, however, the wind blew back the curtain which half concealed the sash-door, and disclosed to me the figure of a man, seated at a table; his back was toward me; but his broad sombrero hat and brown mantle bespoke his nation; the light blue curl of smoke which wreathed gently upward, and the ample display of long-necked, straw-wrapped flasks, also attested that he was enjoying himself with true Peninsular gusto, having probably partaken of a long siesta.

It was a perfect picture in its way of the indolent luxury of the South; the rich and perfumed flowers, half-closing to the night air, but sighing forth a perfumed "*buonas noches*" as they betook themselves to rest; the slender shadows of the tall shrubs, stretching motionless across the walks, the very attitude of the figure himself was in keeping, as supported by easy chairs, he lounged at full length, raising his head ever and anon, as if to watch the wreath of eddying smoke as it rose upward from his cigar, and melted away in the distance.

"Yes," thought I, as I looked for some time, "such is the very type of his nation. Surrounded by every luxury of climate, blessed with all that earth can offer of its best and fairest, and yet only using such gifts as mere sensual gratifications." Starting with this theme, I wove a whole story for the unknown personage, whom, in my wandering fancy, I began by creating a Grandee of Portugal, invested with rank, honors, and riches; but who, effeminated by the habits and usages of his country, had become the mere idle voluptuary, living a life of easy and inglorious indolence. My further musings were interrupted at this moment, for the individual to whom I had been so complimentary in my reverie, slowly arose from his recumbent position, flung his loose mantle carelessly across his left shoulder, and, pushing open the sash-door, entered my chamber. Directing his steps to a large mirror, he stood for some minutes contemplating himself with what, from his attitude, I judged to be no small satisfaction. Though his back was still toward me, and the dim twilight of the room too uncertain to see much, yet I could perceive that he was evidently admiring himself in the glass. Of this fact I had soon the most complete proof; for, as I looked, he slowly raised his broad-

leafed Spanish hat with an air of most imposing pretension, and bowed reverently to himself.

"*Come sta vostra senoria?*" said he.

The whole gesture and style of this proceeding struck me as so ridiculous, that, in spite of all my efforts, I could scarcely repress a laugh. He turned quickly round, and approached the bed. The deep shadow of the sombrero darkened the upper part of his features, but I could distinguish a pair of fierce-looking moustaches beneath, which curled upward toward his eyes, while a stiff point beard stuck straight from his chin. Fearing lest my rude interruption had been overheard, I was framing some polite speech in Portuguese, when he opened the dialogue by asking in that language how I did.

I replied, and was about to ask some questions relative to where, and under whose protection I then was, when my grave-looking friend, giving a pirouette upon one leg, sent his hat flying into the air, and cried out in a voice that not even my memory could fail to recognize,

"By the rock of Cashel he's cured! he's cured!—the fever's over! Oh, Master Charles dear! oh, Master darling! and you ain't mad, after all?"

"Mad! no, faith! but I shrewdly suspect you must be."

"Oh, devil a taste! but spake to me, honey—spake to me, acushla."

"Where am I? Whose house is this? What do you mean by that disguise—that beard—"

"Whisht, I'll tell you all, av you have patience; but are you cured?—tell me that first: sure they was going to cut the arm off you, till you got out of bed, and with your pistols, sent them flying, one out of the window and the other down-stairs; and I bate the little chap with the saw myself till he couldn't know himself in the glass."

While Mike ran on at this rate, I never took my eyes from him, and it was all my poor faculties were equal to, to convince myself that the whole scene was not some vision of a wandering intellect. Gradually, however, the well-known features recalled me to myself, and, as my doubts gave way at length, I laughed long and heartily at the masquerade absurdity of his appearance.

Mike, meanwhile, whose face expressed no small mistrust at the sincerity of my mirth, having uncloaked himself, proceeded to lay aside his beard and moustaches, saying, as he did so,

"There now, darling; there now, master dear don't be grinning that way; I'll not be a Portigee any more, av you'll be quiet and listen to reason."

"But, Mike, where am I? Answer me that one question."

"You're at home, dear; where else would you be?"

"At home?" said I, with a start, as my eye ranged over the various articles of luxury and elegance around, so unlike the more simple and unpretending features of my uncle's house—"at home?"

"Ay, just so; sure, isn't it the same thing? It's ould Don Emanuel that owns it; and won't it be your own—when you're married to that lovely crayture herself?"

I started up, and placing my hand upon my throbbing temple, asked myself if I were really awake; or if some flight of fancy had not carried me away beyond the bounds of reason and sense. "Go on, go on!" said I, at length, in a hollow voice, anxious to gather from his words something like a clue to this mystery. "How did this happen?"

"Av ye mean how you came here, faith it was just this way: After you got the fever, and beat the doctors, devil a one would go near you but myself and the Major."

"The Major—Major Monsoon?"

"No, Major Power himself. Well, he told your friends up here how it was going very hard with you, and that you were like to die; and the same evening they sent down a beautiful litter, as like a hearse as two peas, for you, and brought you up here in state; devil a thing was wanting but a few people to raise the cry to make it as fine a funeral as ever I seen; and sure I set up a whillilew myself in the Black Horse square, and the devils only laughed at me.

"Well, you see they put you into a beautiful elegant bed, and the young lady herself sat down beside you, betune times fanning you with a big fan, and then drying her eyes, for she was weeping like a waterfall. 'Don Miguel,' says she to me,—for, ye see, I put your cloak on by mistake when I was leaving the quarters,—'Don Miguel, questa hidalgo é vostro amigo?'

"'My most particular friend,' says I; 'God spare him many years to be so.'

"'Then take up your quarters here,' said she, 'and don't leave him; we'll do everything in our power to make you comfortable.'

"'I'm not particular,' says I; 'the run of the house—'"

"Then this is the Villa Nuova?" said I, with a faint sigh.

"The same," replied Mike; "and a sweet place it is for eating and drinking—for wine in buckets full, av ye axed for it,—for dancing and singing every evening, with as pretty craytures as ever I set eyes upon. Upon my conscience, it's as good as Galway; and good manners it is they have. What's more, none of your liberties nor familiarities with strangers, but it's Don Miguel, devil a less. 'Don Miguel, av it's plazing to you to take a drop of Xeres before your meat?'—or, 'Would you have a shaugh of a pipe or cigar when you're done?' That's the way of it."

"And Sir George Dashwood," said I, "has he been here? has he inquired for me?"

"Every day, either himself or one of the staff comes galloping up at luncheon time to ask after you; and then they have a bit of tender discoorse with the Senhora herself. Oh! devil a bit need ye fear them, she's true blue; and it isn't the Major's fault,—upon my conscience it isn't; for he does be coming the blarney over her in beautiful style."

"Does Miss Dashwood ever visit here?" said I, with a voice faltering and uncertain enough to have awakened suspicion in a more practiced observer.

"Never once; and that's what I call unnatural behavior, after you saving her life; and if she wasn't—"

"Be silent, I say."

"Well—well, there; I won't say any more; and sure it's time for me to be putting on my beard again. I'm going to the casino with Catrina, and sure it's with real ladies I might be going av it wasn't for Major Power, that told them I wasn't a officer; but it's all right again. I gave them a great history of the Frees, from the time of Cuilla na Toole, that was one of the family, and a cousin of Moses, I believe; and they behave well to one that comes from an ould stock."

"Don Miguel! Don Miguel!" said a voice from the garden.

"I'm coming, my angel! I'm coming, my turtle-dove!" said Mike, arranging his moustaches and beard with amazing dexterity. "Ah, but it would do your heart good av you could take a peep at us about twelve o'clock, dancing 'dirty James' for a bolero, and just see Miss Catrina, the lady's maid, doing 'cover the buckle' as neat as nature. There now, there's the lemonade near your hand, and I'll leave you the lamp, and you may go asleep as soon as you please, for Miss Inez won't come in to-night to play the guitar, for the doctor said it might do you harm now."

So saying, and before I could summon presence of mind to ask another question, Don Miguel wrapped himself in the broad folds of his Spanish cloak, and strode from the room with the air of an hidalgo.

I slept but little that night; the full tide of memory rushing in upon me, brought back the hour of my return to Lisbon, and the wreck of all my hopes, which, from the narrative of my servant, I now perceived to be complete. I dare not venture upon recording how many plans suggested themselves to my troubled spirit, and were in turn rejected. To meet Lucy Dashwood—to make a full and candid declaration—to acknowledge that flirtation alone with Donna Inez—a mere passing, boyish flirtation—had given the coloring to my innocent passion, and that in heart and soul I was hers and hers only. This was my first resolve; but, alas! if I had not courage to sustain a common interview, to meet her in the careless crowd of a drawing-room, what could I do under circumstances like these? Besides, the matter would be cut very short by her coolly declaring that she had neither right nor inclination to listen to such a declaration. The recollection of her look as she passed me to her carriage came flashing across my brain and decided this point. No, no! I'll not encounter that; however appearances for the moment had been against me, she should not have treated me thus coldly and disdainfully. It was quite clear she had never cared for me; wounded pride had been her only feeling: and so as I reasoned, I ended by satisfying myself that in that quarter all was at an end forever.

Now then for dilemma number two, I thought. The Senhora—my first impulse was one of anything but gratitude to her, by whose kind, tender care my hours of pain and suffering had been soothed and alleviated. But for her, I should have been spared all my present embarrassment—all my shipwrecked fortunes; but for her I should now be the aide-de-camp residing in Sir George Dashwood's own house, meeting with Lucy every hour of the day, dining beside her, riding out with her, pressing my suit by every means and with every advantage of my position; but for her and her dark eyes—and, by-the-by, what eyes they are!—how full of brilliancy, yet how teeming with an expression of soft and melting sweetness; and her mouth, too, how perfectly chiseled those full lips—how different from the cold, unbending firmness of Miss Dashwood's—not but I have seen Lucy smile loo, and what a sweet

smile!—how it lighted up her fair cheek, and made her blue eyes darken and deepen till they looked like Heaven's own vault. Yes, there is more poetry in a blue eye. But still Inez is a very lovely girl, and her foot never was surpassed; she is a coquette, too, about that foot and ankle—I rather like a woman to be so. What a sensation she would make in England—how she would be the rage! and then I thought of home and Galway, and the astonishment of some, the admiration of others, as I presented her as my wife; the congratulations of my friends, the wonder of the men, the tempered envy of the women. Methought I saw my uncle, as he pressed her in his arms, say, "Yes, Charley, this is a prize worth campaigning for."

The stray sounds of a guitar which came from the garden broke in upon my musings at this moment. It seemed as if a finger was straying heedlessly across the strings. I started up, and to my surprise perceived it was Inez. Before I had time to collect myself, a gentle tap at the window aroused me; it opened softly, while from an unseen hand a bouquet of fresh flowers was thrown upon my bed; before I could collect myself to speak, the sash closed again and I was alone.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

THE VISIT.

MIKE's performances at the masquerade had doubtless been of the most distinguished character, and demanded a compensating period of repose, for he did not make his appearance the entire morning. Toward noon, however, the door from the garden gently opened, and I heard a step upon the stone terrace, and something which sounded to my ears like the clank of a sabre. I lifted my head, and saw Fred Power beside me.

I shall spare my readers the recital of my friend, which, however, more full and explanatory of past events, contained in reality little more than Mickey Free had already told me. In fine, he informed me that our army, by a succession of retreating movements, had deserted the northern provinces, and now occupied the intrenched lines of Torres Vedras. That Massena, with a powerful force, was still in march: reinforcements daily pouring in upon him—and every expectation pointing to the probability that he would attempt to storm our position.

"The wise-heads," remarked Power, "talk of our speedy embarkation—the sanguine and the hot-brained rave of a great victory, and the retreat of Massena; but I was up at headquarters last week with dispatches, and saw Lord Wellington myself."

"Well, what did you make out? Did he drop any hint of his own views?"

"Faith, I can't say he did. He asked me some questions about the troops just landed—he spoke a little of the commissary department—damned the blankets—said that green forage was bad food for the artillery horses—sent me an English paper to read about the O.P. riots, and said the harriers would throw off about six o'clock, and that he hoped to see me at dinner."

I could not restrain a laugh at Power's catalogue of his Lordship's topics. "So," said I, "he at least does not take any gloomy views of our present situation."

"Who can tell what he thinks? he's ready to fight, if fighting will do anything—and to retreat, if that be better. But that he'll sleep an hour less, or drink a glass of claret more—come what will of it—I'll believe from no man living.

"We've lost one gallant thing in any case, Charley," resumed Power. "Busaco was, I'm told, a glorious day, and our people were in the heat of it. So that if we do leave the Peninsula now—that will be a confounded chagrin. Not for you, my poor fellow, for you could not stir; but I was so cursed foolish to take the staff appointment: thus one folly ever entails another."

There was a tone of bitterness in which these words were uttered, that left no doubt upon my mind some *arrière pensée* remained lurking behind them. My eyes met his—he bit his lip, and, coloring deeply, rose from the chair, and walked toward the window.

The chance allusion of my man Mike flashed upon me at the moment, and I dared not trust myself to break silence. I now thought I could trace in my friend's manner less of that gay and careless buoyancy which ever marked him. There was a tone, it seemed, of more grave and somber character, and even when he jested, the smile his features bore was not his usual frank and happy one, and speedily gave way to an expression I had never before remarked. Our silence, which had now lasted for some minutes, was becoming embarrassing — that strange consciousness that, to a certain extent, we were reading each other's thoughts, made us both cautious of breaking it; and when, at length, turning abruptly round, he asked, "When

I hoped to be up and about again?" I felt my heart relieved from I knew not well what load of doubt and difficulty that oppressed it. We chatted on for some little time longer, the news of Lisbon, and the daily gossip finishing our topics.

"Plenty of gayety, Charley! dinners and balls to no end! so get well, my boy, and make the most of it."

"Yes," I replied, "I'll do my best; but be assured the first use I'll make of health will be to join the regiment. I am heartily ashamed of myself for all I have lost already—though not altogether my fault."

"And will you really join at once?" said Power, with a look of eager anxiety I could not possibly account for.

"Of course I will; what have I—what can I have to detain me here?"

What reply he was about to make at this moment I know not, but the door opened, and Mike announced Sir George Dashwood.

"Gently! my worthy man, not so loud, if you please?" said the mild voice of the General, as he stepped noiselessly across the room, evidently shocked at the indiscreet tone of my follower. "Ah, Power, you here! and our poor friend, how is he?"

"Able to answer for himself at last, Sir George," said I, grasping his proffered hand.

"My poor lad! you've had a long bout of it; but you've saved your arm, and that's well worth the lost time. Well, I've come to bring you good news; there's been a very sharp cavalry affair, and our fellows have been the conquerors."

"There again, Power,—listen to that! We are losing everything!"

"Not so, not so, my boy," said Sir George, smiling blandly, but archly. "There are conquests to be won here, as well as there; and, in your present state, I rather think you better fitted for such as these."

Power's brow grew clouded, he essayed a smile, but it failed, and he rose and hurried toward the window.

As for me, my confusion must have led to a very erroneous impression of my real feelings, and I perceived Sir George anxious to turn the channel of the conversation.

"You see but little of your host, O'Malley," he resumed; "he is ever from home; but I believe nothing could be kinder than his arrangements for you. You are aware that he kidnapped you from us? I had sent Forbes over to bring you to us, your room was prepared, everything in readiness, when he met your man Mike, setting forth upon a mule, who told him you had just taken your departure for the villa. We both had our claim upon you, and, I believe, pretty much on the same score. By-the-by, you have not seen Lucy since your arrival. I never knew it till yesterday, when I asked if she did not find you altered."

I blundered out some absurd reply, blushed, corrected myself, and got confused. Sir George, attributing this, doubtless, to my weak state, rose soon after, and, taking Power along with him, remarked, as he left the room,

"We are too much for him yet, I see that; so we'll leave him quiet some time longer."

Thanking him in my heart for his true appreciation of my state, I sank back upon my pillow to think over all I had heard and seen.

"Well, Mister Charles," said Mike, as he came forward with a smile, "I suppose you heard the news? The Fourteenth bate the French down at Merca there, and took seventy prisoners; but, sure, it's little good it'll do, after all."

"And why not, Mike?"

"Musha! isn't Boney coming himself? He's bringing all the Roossian down with him, and going to destroy us entirely."

"Not at all, man; you mistake. He's nothing to do with Russia, and has quite enough on his hands at this moment."

"God grant it was truth you were talking! But, you see, I read it myself in the papers,—or Sergeant Haggerty did, which is the same thing,—that he's coming with the Cusacks."

"With who?—with what?"

"With the Cusacks."

"What the devil do you mean? Who are they?"

"Oh, Tower of Ivory! did you never hear of the Cusacks, with the red beards, and the red breeches, and long poles with pike-heads on them, that does all the devilment on horseback—spiking and spitting the people like larks?"

"The Cossacks, is it, you mean? The Cossacks?"

"Ay, just so, the Cusacks. They're from Clare Island, and thereabouts; and there's more of them in Meath. They're my mother's people, and was always real devils for fighting."

I burst out into an immoderate fit of laughing at Mike's etymology, which thus converted Hetman Platoff into a Galway man.

"Oh, murder! isn't it cruel to hear you laugh that way! There now, alanna! be

asy, and I'll tell you more news. We've the house to ourselves to-day. The ould gentleman's down at Behlem, and the daughter's in Lisbon, making great preparation for a grand ball they're to give when you are quite well."

"I hope I shall be with the army in a few days, Mike; and certainly, if I'm able to move about, I'll not remain longer in Lisbon."

"Arrah! don't say so, now! When was you ever so comfortable? Upon my conscience, it's more like Paradise than anything else. If ye see the dinner we sit down to every day! and, as for drink—if it wasn't that I sleep on a ground-floor, I'd seldom see a blanket."

"Well, certainly, Mike, I agree with you, these are hard things to tear ourselves away from."

"Aren't they now, sir? And then Miss Catherine, I'm taching her Irish!"

"Teaching her Irish! for Heaven's sake, what use can she make of Irish?"

"Ah, the crayture, she doesn't know better; and, as she was always bothering me to learn her English, I promised one day to do it; but ye see, somehow, I never was very proficient in strange tongues; so I thought to myself Irish will do as well. So, you perceive, we're taking a course of Irish literature, as Mr. Lynch says in Athlone; and, upon my conscience, she's an apt scholar."

"'Good-morning to you, Katey,' says Mr. Power to her the other day, as he passed through the hall. 'Good-morning, my dear; I hear you speak English perfectly now?'

"'*Honia mon diaoul*,' says she, making a courtesy.

"Be the powers, I thought he'd die with the laughing.

"'Well, my dear, I hope you don't mean it—do you know what you're saying?'

"'Honor bright, Major!' says I—'honor bright!' and I gave him a wink at the same time.

"'Oh, that's it!' said he, 'is it?' and so he went off holding his hands to his sides with the bare laughing; and your honor knows it wasn't a blessing she wished him for all that."

CHAPTER LXXXII.

THE CONFESSION.

"WHAT a strange position this of mine!" thought I, a few mornings after the events detailed in the last chapter. "How very fascinating in some respects—how full of all the charm of romance, and how confoundedly difficult to see one's way through!"

To understand my cogitation right, *figurez-vous*, my dear reader, a large and splendidly furnished drawing-room, from one end of which an orangery in full blossom opens; from the other is seen a delicious little boudoir, where books, bronzes, pictures and statues, in all the artistic disorder of a lady's sanctum, are bathed in a deep purple light from a stained glass window of the seventeenth century.

At a small table beside the wood fire, whose mellow light is flirting with the sunbeams upon the carpet, stands an antique silver breakfast service, which none but the hand of Benvenuto could have chiseled; beside it sits a girl, young and beautiful; her dark eyes, beaming beneath their long lashes, are fixed with an expression of watchful interest upon a pale and sickly youth who, lounging upon a sofa opposite, is carelessly turning over the leaves of a new journal, or gazing steadfastly on the fretted gothic of the ceiling, while his thoughts are traveling many a mile away. The lady being the Senhora Inez; the nonchalant invalid, your unworthy acquaintance, Charles O'Malley.

What a very strange position, to be sure.

"Then you are not equal to this ball to-night?" said she, after a pause of some minutes.

I turned as she spoke; her words had struck audibly upon my ear—but, lost in my reverie, I could but repeat my own fixed thought—how strange to be so situated!

"You are really very tiresome, Signor; I assure you, you are. I have been giving you a most elegant description of the Casino fête, and the beautiful costume of our Lisbon belles, but I can get nothing from you but this muttered something, which may be very shocking for aught I know. I'm sure your friend Major Power would be much more attentive to me; that is," added she, archly, "if Miss Dashwood were not present."

"What—why—you don't mean that there is anything there—that Power is paying attention to—"

"*Madre divina*, how that seems to interest you, and how red you are! If it were not that you never met her before, and that your acquaintance did not seem to make rapid progress, then I should say you are in love with her yourself."

I had to laugh at this, but felt my face flushing more. "And so," said I, affect-

ing a careless and indifferent tone, "the gay Fred Power is smitten at last!"

"Was it so very difficult a thing to accomplish?" said she, slyly.

"He seems to say so, at least. And the lady, how does she appear to receive his attentions?"

"Oh, I should say with evident pleasure and satisfaction, as all girls do the advances of men they don't care for, nor intend to care for."

"Indeed," said I, slowly; "indeed, Senhora?" looking into her eyes as I spoke, as if to read if the lesson were destined for my benefit.

"There, don't stare so!—every one knows that."

"So you don't think, then, that Lucy—I mean Miss Dashwood,—why are you laughing so?"

"How can I help it; your calling her Lucy is so good, I wish she heard it; she's the very proudest girl I ever knew."

"But to come back; you really think she does not care for him?"

"Not more than for you; and I may be pardoned for the simile, having seen your meeting. But let me give you the news of our own *fête*. Saturday is the day fixed; and you must be quite well—I insist upon it. Miss Dashwood has promised to come—no small concession; for, after all, she has never once been here since the day you frightened her. I can't help laughing at my blunder—the two people I had promised myself should fall desperately in love with each other, and who will scarcely meet."

"But I trusted," said I, pettishly, "that you were not disposed to resign your own interest in me?"

"Neither was I," said she, with an easy smile, "except that I have so many admirers. I might even spare to my friends; though, after all, I should be sorry to lose you—I like you."

"Yes," said I, half bitterly, "as girls do those who they never intend to care for; is it not so?"

"Perhaps yes, and perhaps— But is it going to rain? How provoking! and I have ordered my horse. Well, Signor Carlos, I leave you to your delightful newspaper, and all the magnificent descriptions of battles, and sieges, and skirmishes for which you seem doomed to pine without ceasing. There, don't kiss my hand twice; that's not right."

"Well, let me begin again—"

"I shall not breakfast with you any more; but, tell me, am I to order a costume for you in Lisbon; or will you arrange all that yourself? You must come to the *fête*, you know."

"If you would be so very kind."

"I will, then, be so very kind; and, once more, *adios*." So saying, and with a slight motion of her hand, she smiled a good-by, and left me.

"What a lovely girl!" thought I, as I rose and walked to the window, muttering to myself Othello's line, and

"When I love thee not, chaos is come again."

In fact, it was the perfect expression of my feeling—the only solution to all the difficulties surrounding me, being to fall desperately, irretrievably in love with the fair Senhora, which, all things considered, was not a very desperate resource for a gentleman in trouble. As I thought over the hopelessness of one attachment, I turned calmly to consider all the favorable points of the other. She was truly beautiful, attractive in every sense; her manner most fascinating, and her disposition, so far as I could pronounce, perfectly amiable. I felt already something more than interest about her; how very easy would be the transition to a stronger feeling! There was an *éclat*, too, about being her accepted lover that had its charm. She was the belle *par excellence* of Lisbon; and then a sense of pique crossed my mind as I reflected, what would Lucy say of him whom she had slighted and insulted, when he became the husband of the beautiful and millionaire Senhora Inez?

As my meditations had reached thus far, the door opened stealthily, and Catherine appeared, her finger upon her lips, and her gesture indicating caution. She carried on her arm a mass of drapery covered by a large mantle, which, throwing off as she entered, she displayed before me a rich blue domino with silver embroidery. It was large and loose in its folds, so as thoroughly to conceal the figure of any wearer. This she held up before me for an instant without speaking; when at length, seeing my curiosity fully excited, she said,

"This is the Senhora's domino. I should be ruined if she knew I showed it; but I promised—that is, I told—"

"Yes, yes, I understand," relieving her embarrassment about the source of her civilities; "go on."

"Well, there are several others like it, but with this small difference, instead of a carnation, which all the others have embroidered upon the cuff, I have made it a rose—you perceive? La Senhora knows nothing of this—none save yourself knows

it. I'm sure I may trust you with the secret."

"Fear not in the least, Catherine; you have rendered me a great service. Let me look at it once more; ah, there's no difficulty in detecting it. And you are certain she is unaware of it?"

"Perfectly so; she has several other costumes, but in this one I know she intends some surprise, so be upon your guard."

With these words, carefully once more concealing the rich dress beneath the mantle, she withdrew; while I strolled forth to wonder what mystery might lie beneath this scheme, and speculate how far I myself was included in the plot she spoke of.

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For the few days which succeeded I passed my time much alone. The Senhora was but seldom at home; and I remarked that Power rarely came to see me. A strange feeling of half-coolness had latterly grown between us, and, instead of the open confidence we formerly indulged in when together, we appeared now rather to chat over things of mere every-day interest than of our own immediate plans and prospects. There was a kind of preoccupation, too, in his manner that struck me; his mind seemed ever straying from the topics he talked of to something remote, and, altogether, he was no longer the frank and reckless dragoon I had ever known him. What could be the meaning of this change? Had he found out by any accident that I was to blame in my conduct toward Lucy—had any erroneous impression of my interview with her reached his ears? This was most improbable; besides, there was nothing in that to draw down his censure or condemnation, however represented; and was it that he was himself in love with her—that, devoted heart and soul to Lucy, he regarded me as a successful rival, preferred before him! Oh, how could I have so long blinded myself to the fact! This was the true solution of the whole difficulty. I had more than once suspected this to be so; now all the circumstances of proof poured in upon me. I called to mind his agitated manner the night of my arrival in Lisbon, his thousand questions concerning the reasons of my furlough; and then, lately, the look of unfeigned pleasure with which he heard me resolve to join my regiment the moment I was sufficiently recovered. I also remembered how assiduously he pressed his intimacy with the Senhora, Lucy's dearest friend here; his continual visits at the villa; these long walks in the garden, where his very look betokened some confidential mission of the heart. Yes, there was no doubt of it, he loved Lucy Dashwood! Alas! there seemed to be no end to the complication of my misfortunes; one by one, I appeared fated to lose whatever had a hold upon my affections, and to stand alone, unloved and uncared for in the world. My thoughts turned toward the Senhora, but I could not deceive myself into any hope there. My own feelings were untouched, and hers I felt to be equally so. Young as I was, there was no mistaking the easy smile of coquetry, the merry laugh of flattered vanity, for a deeper and holier feeling. And then I did not wish it otherwise. One only had taught me too feel how ennobling, how elevating, in all its impulses can be a deep-rooted passion for a young and beautiful girl! From her eyes alone had I caught the inspiration—that made me pant for glory and distinction. I could not transfer the allegiance of my heart, since it had taught that very heart to beat high and proudly. Lucy, lost to me forever as she must be, was still more than any other woman ever could be; all the past clung to her memory, all the prestige of the future must point to it also.

And Power, why had he not trusted—why had he not confided in me? Was this like my old and tried friend? Alas! I was forgetting that in his eye I was the favored rival, and not the despised, rejected suitor.

"It is past now," thought I, as I rose and walked into the garden; "the dream that made life a fairy tale is dispelled; the cold reality of the world is before me, and my path lies a lonely and solitary one." My first resolution was to see Power, and relieve his mind of any uneasiness as regarded my pretensions; they existed no longer. As for me, I was no obstacle to his happiness; it was, then, but fair and honorable that I should tell him so; this done, I should leave Lisbon at once: the cavalry had for the most part been ordered to the rear; still there was always something going forward at the outposts.

The idea of active service, the excitement of a campaigning life, cheered me, and I advanced along the dark alley of the garden with a lighter and a freer heart. My resolves were not destined to meet delay; as I turned the angle of a walk, Power was before me. He was leaning against a tree, his hands crossed upon his bosom, his head bowed forward, and his whole air and attitude betokening deep reflection.

He started as I came up, and seemed almost to change color.

"Well, Charley," said he, after a moment's pause, "you look better this morning. How goes the arm?"

"The arm is ready for service again, and its owner most anxious for it. Do you know, Fred, I'm thoroughly weary of this life."

"They're little better, however, at the lines. The French are in position but never adventure a movement; and, except some few affairs at the pickets, there is really nothing to do."

"No matter, remaining here can never serve one's interests, and besides, I have accomplished what I came for—"

I was about to add, "the restoration of my health," when he suddenly interrupted me, eyeing me fixedly as he spoke.

"Indeed! indeed! Is that so?"

"Yes," said I, half puzzled at the tone and manner of the speech; "I can join now when I please; meanwhile, Fred, I have been thinking of you. Yes, don't be surprised, at the very moment we met you were in my thoughts."

I took his arm as I said this, and led him down the alley.

"We are too old, and, I trust, too true friends, Fred, to have secrets from each other, and yet we have been playing this silly game for some weeks past. Now, my dear fellow, I have yours, and it is only fair justice you should have mine, and, faith, I feel you'd have discovered it long since, had your thoughts been as free as I have known them to be. Fred, you are in love; there, don't wince, man, I know it; but hear me out. You believe me to be so also; nay, more, you think that my chances of success are better, stronger than your own; learn, then, that I have none—absolutely none. Don't interrupt me now, for this avowal cuts me deeply; my own heart alone knows what I suffer as I record my wrecked fortunes; but I repeat it, my hopes are at an end forever; but, Fred, my boy, I cannot lose my friend too. If I have been the obstacle to your path, I am so no more. Ask me not why; it is enough that I speak in all truth and sincerity. Ere three days I shall leave this, and with it all the hopes that once beamed upon my fortunes, and all the happiness,—nay, not all, my boy, for I feel some thrill at my heart yet, as I think that I have been true to you."

I know not what more I spoke, nor how he replied to me. I felt the warm grasp of his hand, I saw his delighted smile; the words of grateful acknowledgments his lips uttered conveyed but an imperfect meaning to my ear, and I remembered no more.

The courage which sustained me for the moment sank gradually as I meditated over my avowal, and I could scarce help accusing Power of a breach of friendship for exacting a confession which, in reality, I had volunteered to give him. How Lucy herself would think of my conduct was ever occurring to my thoughts, and I felt, as I ruminated upon the conjectures it might give rise to, how much more likely a favorable opinion might now be formed of me, than when such an estimation could have crowned me with delight.

"Yes," thought I, "she will at last learn to know him, who loved her with truth and with devoted affection; and, when the blight of all his hopes is accomplished, the fair fame of his fidelity will be proved. The march, the bivouac, the battle-field, are now all to me, and the campaign alone presents a prospect which may fill up the aching void that disappointed and ruined hopes have left behind them."

How I longed for the loud call of the trumpet, the clash of the steel, the tramp of the war-horse; though the proud distinction of a soldier's life were less to me in the distance than the mad and whirlwind passion of a charge, and the loud din of the rolling artillery.

It was only some hours after, as I sat alone in my chamber, that all the circumstances of our meeting came back clearly to my memory, and I could not help muttering to myself,

"It is indeed a hard lot, that, to cheer the heart of my friend, I must bear witness to the despair that sheds darkness on my own."

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

MY CHARGER.

ALTHOUGH I felt my heart relieved of a heavy load by the confession I had made to Power, yet still I shrank from meeting him for some days after; a kind of fear lest he should in any way recur to our conversation continually beset me, and I felt that the courage which bore me up for my first effort would desert me on the next occasion.

My determination to join my regiment was now made up, and I sent forward a resignation of my appointment to Sir George Dashwood's staff, which I had never been in health to fulfill, and commenced with

energy all my preparations for a speedy departure.

The reply to my rather formal letter was a most kind note written by himself. He regretted the unhappy cause which had so long separated us, and though wishing, as he expressed it, to have me near him, perfectly approved of my resolution.

"Active service alone, my dear boy, can ever place you in the position you ought to occupy, and I rejoice the more at your decision in this matter, as I feared the truth of certain reports here, which attributed to you other plans than those which a campaign suggests. My mind is now easy on this score, and I pray you forgive me if my congratulations are *mal à propos*."

After some hints for my future management, and a promise of some letters to his friends at headquarters, he concluded:

"As this climate does not seem to suit my daughter, I have applied for a change, and am in daily hope of obtaining it. Before going, however, I must beg your acceptance of the charger which my groom will deliver to your servant with this. I was so struck with his figure and action, that I purchased him before leaving England, without well knowing why or wherefore. Pray let him see some service under your auspices, which he is most unlikely to do under mine. He has plenty of bone to be a weight-carrier, and they tell me also that he has speed enough for anything."

Mike's voice in the lawn beneath interrupted my reading further, and, on looking out, I perceived him and Sir George Dashwood's servant standing beside a large and striking-looking horse, which they were both examining with all the critical accuracy of adepts.

"Arrah, isn't he a darling, a real beauty, every inch of him?"

"That 'ere splint don't signify nothing; he aren't the worse of it," said the English groom.

"Of coorse it doesn't," replied Mike. "What a forehand! and the legs, clean as a whip."

"There's the best of him, though," interrupted the other, patting the strong hind-quarters with his hand. "There's the stuff to push him along through heavy ground and carry him over timber."

"Or a stone wall," said Mike, thinking of Galway.

My own impatience to survey my present had now brought me into the conclave, and before many minutes were over I had him saddled, and was cantering around the lawn with a spirit and energy I had not felt for months long. Some small fences lay before me, and over these he carried me with all the ease and freedom of a trained hunter. My courage mounted with the excitement, and I looked eagerly around for some more bold and dashing leap.

"You may take him over the avenue gate," said the English groom, divining with a jockey's readiness what I looked for; "he'll do it, never fear him."

Strange as my equipment was, with an undress jacket flying loosely open, and a bare head, away I went. The gate which the groom spoke of was a strongly barred one of oak timber, nearly five feet high—its difficulty as a leap only consisted in the winding approach, and the fact that it opened upon a hard road beyond it.

In a second or two a kind of half fear came across me. My long illness had unnerved me, and my limbs felt weak and yielding; but as I pressed into the canter, that secret sympathy between the horse and his rider shot suddenly through me, I pressed my spurs to his flanks, and dashed him at it.

Unaccustomed to such treatment, the noble animal bounded madly forward; with two tremendous plunges he sprang wildly in the air, and shaking his long mane with passion, stretched out at the gallop.

My own blood boiled now as tempestuously as his; and, with a shout of reckless triumph, I rose him at the gate. Just at the instant two figures appeared before it—the copse had concealed their approach hitherto—but they stood now, as if transfixed; the wild attitude of the horse, the not less wild cry of his rider, had deprived them for a time of all energy; and, overcome by the sudden danger, they seemed rooted to the ground. What I said, spoke, begged, or imprecated, Heaven knows—not I. But they stirred not! One moment more, and they must lie trampled beneath my horse's hoofs—he was already on his haunches for the bound; when, wheeling half aside, I faced him at the wall. It was at least a foot higher, and of solid stone masonry, and as I did so, I felt that I was periling my life to save theirs. One vigorous dash of the spur I gave him, as I lifted him to the leap—he bounded beneath it quick as lightning—still, with a spring like a rocket, he rose into the air, cleared the wall, and stood trembling and frightened on the road outside.

"Safe, by Jupiter! and splendidly done too," cried a voice near me, that I immediately recognized as Sir George Dashwood's.

"Lucy, my love, look up—Lucy, my dear, there's no danger now. She has

fainted. O'Malley, fetch some water—fast. Poor fellow—your own nerves seem shaken. Why, you've let your horse go! Come here, for Heaven's sake!—support her for an instant. I'll fetch some water."

It appeared to me like a dream—I leaned against the pillar of the gate—the cold and death-like features of Lucy Dashwood lay motionless upon my arm—her hand, falling heavily upon my shoulder, touched my cheek—the tramp of my horse, as he galloped onward, was the only sound that broke the silence, as I stood there, gazing steadfastly upon the pale brow and paler cheek, down which a solitary tear was slowly stealing. I knew not how the minutes passed—my memory took no note of time, but at length a gentle tremor thrilled her frame, a slight, scarce-perceptible blush colored her fair face, her lips slightly parted, and heaving a deep sigh, she looked around her. Gradually her eyes turned and met mine. Oh, the bliss unutterable of that moment. It was no longer the look of cold scorn she had given me last—the expression was one of soft and speaking gratitude—she seemed to read my very heart, and know its truth: there was a tone of deep and compassionate interest in the glance; and forgetting all—everything that had passed—all save my unaltered, unalterable love, I kneeled beside her, and, in words burning as my own heart burned, poured out my tale of mingled sorrow and affection with all the eloquence of passion. I vindicated my unshaken faith—reconciling the conflicting evidences with the proofs I proffered of my attachment. If my moments were measured—I spent them not idly; I called to witness how every action of my soldier's life emanated from her—how her few and chance words had decided the character of my fate—if aught of fame or honor were my portion, to her I owed it. As, hurried onward by my ardent hopes, I forgot Power and all about him—a step up the gravel walk came rapidly nearer, and I had but time to assume my former attitude beside Lucy as her father came up.

"Well, Charley, is she better? Oh, I see she is: here we have the whole household at our heels." So saying, he pointed to a string of servants pressing eagerly forward with every species of restorative that Portuguese ingenuity has invented.

The next moment we were joined by the Senhora, who, pale with fear, seemed scarcely less in need of assistance than her friend.

Amid questions innumerable—explanations sought for on all sides—mistakes and misconceptions as to the whole occurrence—we took our way toward the villa, Lucy walking between Sir George and Donna Inez, while I followed, leaning upon Power's arm.

"They've caught him again, O'Malley," said the General, turning half round to me; "he, too, seemed as much frightened as any of us."

"It is time, Sir George, I should think of thanking you. I never was so mounted in my life—"

"A splendid charger, by Jove!" said Power; "but, Charley, my lad, no more feats of this nature if you love me. No girl's heart will stand such continual assaults as your winning horsemanship submits it to."

I was about making some half-angry reply, when he continued: "There, don't look sulky; I have news for you. Quill has just arrived. I met him at Lisbon; he has got leave of absence for a few days, and is coming to our masquerade here this evening."

"This evening!" said I, in amazement; "why, is it so soon?"

"Of course it is. Have you not got all your trappings ready? The Dashwoods came out here on purpose to spend the day—but come, I'll drive you into town. My tilbury is ready, and we'll both look out for our costumes." So saying, he led me along toward the house, when, after a rapid change of my toilet, we set out for Lisbon.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

MAURICE.

It seemed a conceded matter between Power and myself that we should never recur to the conversation we held in the garden; and so, although we dined *tête-à-tête* that day, neither of us ventured, by any allusion the most distant, to advert to what it was equally evident was uppermost in the minds of both.

All our endeavors, therefore, to seem easy and unconcerned, were in vain; a restless anxiety to seem interested about things and persons we were totally indifferent to, pervaded all our essays at conversation. By degrees, we grew weary of the parts we were acting, and each relapsed into a moody silence, thinking over his plans and projects, and totally forgetting the existence of the other.

The decanter was passed across the table without speaking, a half nod intimated the

bottle was standing; and, except an occasional malediction upon an intractable cigar, nothing was heard.

Such was the agreeable occupation we were engaged in, when, toward nine o'clock, the door opened, and the great Maurice himself stood before us.

"Pleasant fellows, upon my conscience, and jovial over their liquor! Confound your smoking! That may do very well in a bivouac. Let us have something warm!"

Quill's interruption was a most welcome one to both parties, and we rejoiced with a sincere pleasure at his coming.

"What shall it be, Maurice? Port or sherry mulled, and an anchovy?"

"Or, what say you to a bowl of bishop?" said I.

"Hurrah for the church, Charley! Let us have the bishop; and, not to disparage Fred's taste, we'll be eating the anchovy while the liquor's concocting."

"Well, Maurice, and now for the news. How are matters at Torres Vedras? Anything like movement in that quarter?"

"Nothing very remarkable. Massena made a reconnaissance some days since, and one of our batteries threw a shower of grape among the staff, which spoiled the procession, and sent them back in very disorderly time. Then we've had a few skirmishes to the front with no great results—a few courts-martial—bad grub, and plenty of grumbling."

"Why, what would they have? It's a great thing to hold the French army in check within a few marches of Lisbon."

"Charley, my man, who cares twopence for the French army, or Lisbon, or the Portuguese, or the Junta, or anything about it?—every man is pondering over his own affairs. One fellow wants to get home again, and be sent upon some recruiting station. Another wishes to get a step or two in promotion, to come to Torres Vedras, where even the *grande armée* can't. Then some of us are in love, and some of us are in debt. There is neither glory nor profit to be had. But here's the bishop, smoking and steaming with an odor of nectar!"

"And our fellows, have you seen them lately?"

"I dined with yours on Tuesday.—Was it Tuesday? Yes. I dined with them. By-the-by, Sparks was taken prisoner that morning."

"Sparks taken prisoner! Poor fellow. I am sincerely sorry. How did it happen, Maurice?"

"Very simply. Sparks had a forage patrol toward Vieda, and set out early in the morning with his party. It seemed that they succeeded perfectly, and were returning to the lines, when poor Sparks, always susceptible where the sex are concerned, saw, or thought he saw, a lattice gently open as he rode from the village, and a very taper finger make a signal to him. Dropping a little behind the rest, he waited till his men had debouched upon the road, when, riding quietly up, he coughed a couple of times to attract the fair unknown—a handkerchief waved from the lattice in reply, which was speedily closed, and our valiant Cornet accordingly dismounted and entered the house.

"The remainder of the adventure is soon told; for, in a few seconds after, two men on one horse were seen galloping at top speed toward the French lines,—the foremost being a French officer of the 4th Cuirassiers; the gentleman with his face to the tail, our friend Sparks; the lovely unknown being a *vieille moustache* of Loison's corps, who had been wounded in a skirmish some days before, and lay waiting an opportunity of rejoining his party. One of our prisoners knew this fellow well; he had been promoted from the ranks, and was a Hercules for feats of strength; so that, after all, Sparks could not help himself."

"Well, I'm really sorry; but, as you say, Sparks's tender nature is always the ruin of him."

"Of him! ay, and of you—and of Power—and of myself—of all of us. Isn't it the sweet creatures that make fools of us from Father Adam down to Maurice Quill, neither sparing age nor rank in the service, half-pay, nor the Veteran Battalion—it's all one? Pass the jug, there. O'Shaughnessy—"

"Ah, by-the-by, how's the Major?"

"Charmingly; only a little bit in a scrape just now. Sir Arthur—Lord Wellington, I mean—had him up for his fellows being caught pillaging, and gave him a devil of a rowing a few days ago.

"'Very disorderly corps yours, Major O'Shaughnessy,' said the General; 'more men up for punishment than any regiment in the service.'

"Shaugh muttered something; but his voice was lost in a loud cock-a-doo-do-doo, that some bold chanticleer set up at the moment.

"'If the officers do their duty, Major O'Shaughnessy, these acts of insubordination do not occur.'

"'Cock-a-doo-do-doo,' was the reply. Some of the staff found it hard not to laugh; but the General went on:

"'If, therefore, the practice does not cease, I'll draft the men into West India regiments.'

"'Cock-a-doo-do-doo.'

"'And if any articles pillaged from the inhabitants are detected in the quarters, or about the person of the troops—'

"'Cock-a-doo-do-*doo*,' screamed louder here than ever.

"'Damn that cock. Where is it?'

"There was a general look around on all sides, which seemed in vain; when a tremendous repetition of the cry resounded from O'Shaughnessy's coat pocket; thus detecting the valiant Major himself in the very practice of his corps. There was no standing this: every one burst out into a peal of laughing; and Lord Wellington himself could not resist, but turned away, muttering to himself as he went, 'Damned robbers—every man of them!' while a final war-note from the Major's pocket closed the interview."

"Confound you, Maurice, you've always some villanous narrative or other. You never crossed a street for shelter without making something out of it."

"True this time, as sure as my name's Maurice; but the bowl is empty."

"Never mind, here comes its successor. How long can you stay amongst us?"

"A few days at most. Just took a run off to see the sights; I was all over Lisbon this morning: saw the Inquisition and the cells, and the place where they tried the fellows—the kind of grand jury room, with the great picture of Adam and Eve at the end of it. What a beautiful creature she is! hair down to her waist, and such eyes! 'Ah, ye darling!' said I to myself, 'small blame to him for what he did. Wouldn't I ate every crab in the garden, if ye asked me!'"

"I must certainly go see her, Maurice. Is she very Portuguese in her style?"

"Devil a bit of it. She might be a Limerick woman, with elegant brown hair, and blue eyes, and a skin like snow."

"Come, come, they've pretty girls in Lisbon too, Doctor."

"Yes, faith," said Power, "that they have."

"Nothing like Ireland, boys; not a bit of it; they're the girls for my money; and where's the man can resist them? From St. Patrick, that had to go live in the Wicklow mountains—"

"St. Kevin, you mean, Doctor."

"Sure it's all the same, they were twins. I made a neat little song about them one evening last week—the women, I mean."

"Let us have it, Maurice; let us have it, old fellow. What's the measure?"

"Short measure: four little verses, devil a more."

"But the time, I mean?"

"Whenever you like to sing it; here it is."

THE GIRLS OF THE WEST.

Air—"Teddy, ye Gander."

(*With feeling; but not too slow.*)

"You may talk, if you please,
Of the brown Portuguese,
But, wherever you roam, wherever you roam,
You nothing will meet,
Half so lovely or sweet,
As the girls at home, the girls at home.

"Their eyes are not sloes,
Nor so long is their nose,
But, between me and you, between me and you,
They are just as alarming,
And ten times more charming,
With hazel and blue, with hazel and blue.

"They don't ogle a man,
O'er the top of their fan,
'Till his heart's in a flame, his heart's in a flame;
But though bashful and shy,
They've a look in their eye,
That just comes to the same, just comes to the same.

"No mantillas they sport,
But a petticoat short,
Shows an ankle the best, an ankle the best,
And a leg—but, O murther!
I dare not go further,
So here's to the West; so here's to the West."

"Now that really is a sweet little thing. Moore's, isn't it?"

"Not a bit of it; my own muse, every word of it."

"And the music?" said I.

"My own, too. Too much spice in that bowl; that's an invariable error in your devisers of drink, to suppose that the tipple you start with can please your palate to the last; they forget that as we advance either in years or lush, our tastes simplify."

"*Nous revenons à nos premières amours.* Isn't that it?"

"No, not exactly, for we go even further; for if you mark the progression of a sensible man's fluids, you'll find what an emblem of life it presents to you. What is his initiatory glass of 'Chablis' that he throws down with his oysters, but the budding expectancy of boyhood—the appetizing sense of pleasure to come; then follows the sherry with his soup, that warming glow which strength and vigor in all their consciousness impart, as a glimpse of life is opening before him. Then youth

succeeds — buoyant, wild, tempestuous youth—foaming and sparkling, like the bright champagne, whose stormy surface subsides into a myriad of bright stars."

"*Œil de perdrix.*"

"Not a bit of it; woman's own eye; brilliant, sparkling, life-giving—"

"Devil take the fellow, he's getting poetical."

"Ah, Fred! if that could only last; but one must come to the burgundies with his maturer years. Your first glass of hermitage is the algebraic sign for five-and-thirty—the glorious burst is over; the pace is still good, to be sure, but the great enthusiasm is past. You can afford to look forward, but, confound it, you've a long way to look back also."

"I say, Charley, our friend has contrived to finish the bishop during his disquisition; the bowl's quite empty."

"You don't say so, Fred. To be sure, how a man does forget himself in abstract speculations; but let us have a little more, I've not concluded my homily."

"Not a glass, Maurice; it's already past nine; we are all pledged to the masquerade, and before we've dressed and got there, 'twill be late enough."

"But I'm not disguised yet, my boy, nor half."

"Well, they must take you *au naturel*, as our countrymen do their potatoes."

"Yes, Doctor, Fred's right; we had better start."

"Well, I can't help it; I've recorded my opposition to the motion, but I must submit; and now that I'm on my legs, explain to me what's that very dull-looking old lamp, up there?"

"That's the moon, man; the full moon."

"Well, I've no objection; I'm full too; so come along, lads."

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE MASQUERADE.

To form one's impression of a masked ball from the attempts at this mode of entertainment in our country, is but to conceive a most imperfect and erroneous notion. With us, the first *coup d'œil* is everything; the nuns, the shepherdesses, the Turks, sailors, eastern princes, watchmen, moonshees, milestones, devils, and Quakers, are all very well in their way as they pass in the review before us, but when we come to mix in the crowd, we discover that, except the turban and the cowl, the crook and the broadbrim, no further disguise is attempted or thought of. The nun, forgetting her vow and her vestments, is flirting with the devil; the watchman, a very fastidious elegant, is ogling the fishwomen through his glass, while the Quaker is performing a *pas seul* Alberti might be proud of in a quadrille of riotous Turks and half-tipsy Hindoos; in fact, the whole wit of the scene consists in absurd associations. Apart from this, the actors have rarely any claims upon your attention; for even supposing a person clever enough to sustain his character, whatever it be, you must also supply the other personages of the drama, or, in stage phrase, he'll have nothing to "play up to." What would be Bardolph without Pistol? what Sir Lucius O'Trigger without Acres? It is the relief which throws out the disparities and contradictions of life that afford us most amusement; hence it is, that one swallow can no more make a summer, than one well-sustained character can give life to a masquerade. Without such sympathies, such points of contact, all the leading features of the individual, making him act and be acted upon, are lost; the characters being mere parallel lines, which, however near they approach, never bisect or cross each other.

This is not the case abroad: the domino, which serves for mere concealment, is almost the only dress assumed, and the real disguise is therefore thrown from necessity upon the talents, whatever they be, of the wearer. It is no longer a question of a beard or a spangled mantle, a Polish dress or a pasteboard nose; the mutation of voice, the assumption of a different manner, walk, gesture, and mode of expression, are all necessary, and no small tact is required to effect this successfully.

I may be pardoned this little digression, as it serves to explain in some measure how I felt on entering the splendidly lit up *salons* of the villa, crowded with hundreds of figures in all the varied costumes of a carnival. The sounds of laughter, mingled with the crash of the music; the hurrying hither and thither of servants with refreshments; the crowds gathered around fortune-tellers, whose predictions threw the parties at each moment into shouts of merriment; the eager following of some disappointed domino, interrogating every one to find out a lost mask. For some time I stood an astonished spectator at the kind of secret intelligence which seemed to pervade the whole assemblage, when suddenly a mask, who for some time had been standing beside me, whispered in French,

"If you pass your time in this manner, you must not feel surprised if your place be occupied."

I turned hastily round, but she was gone. She, I say, for the voice was clearly a woman's; her pink domino could be no guide, for hundreds of the same color passed me every instant; the meaning of the allusion I had little doubt of. I turned to speak to Power, but he was gone; and, for the first moment of my life, the bitterness of rivalry crossed my mind. It was true I had resigned all pretensions in his favor; my last meeting with Lucy had been merely to justify my own character against an impression that weighed heavily on me; still I thought he might have waited; another day and I should be far away, neither to witness nor grieve over his successes.

"You still hesitate," whispered some one near me.

I wheeled round suddenly, but could not detect the speaker, and was again relapsing into my own musings, when the same voice repeated,

"The white domino with the blue cape. Adieu."

Without waiting to reflect upon the singularity of the occurrence, I now hurried along through the dense crowd, searching on every side for the domino.

"Isn't that O'Malley?" said an Englishman to his friend.

"Yes," replied the other; "the very man we want. O'Malley, find a partner; we have been searching a vis-à-vis this ten minutes."

The speaker was an officer I had met at Sir George Dashwood's.

"How did you discover me?" said I, suddenly.

"Not a very difficult thing, if you carry your mask in your hand that way," was the answer.

And I now perceived that in the distraction of my thoughts I had been carrying my mask in this manner since my coming into the room.

"There now, what say you to the blue domino? I saw her foot, and a girl with such an instep must be a waltzer."

I looked round, a confused effort at memory passing across my mind; my eyes fell at the instant upon the embroidered sleeve of the domino, where a rosebud worked in silver at once reminded me of Catrina's secret. "Ah!" thought I, "la Senhora herself!" She was leaning upon the arm of a tall and portly figure in black; who this was I knew not, nor sought to discover, but at once advancing toward Donna Inez asked her to waltz.

Without replying to me she turned toward her companion, who seemed as it were to press her acceptance of my offer; she hesitated, however, for an instant, and, courtesying deeply, declined it. "Well," thought I, "she at least has not recognized me."

"And yet, Senhora," said I, half jestingly, "I *have* seen you join a bolero before now."

"You evidently mistake me," was the reply, but in a voice so well feigned as almost to convince me she was right.

"Nay, more," said I, "under your own fair auspices did I myself first adventure one."

"Still in error, believe me; I am not known to you."

"And yet I have a talisman to refresh your memory, should you dare me further."

At this instant my hand was grasped warmly by a passing mask. I turned round rapidly, and Power whispered in my ear,

"Yours forever, Charley; you've made my fortune."

As he hurried on I could perceive that he supported a lady on his arm, and that she wore a loose white domino with a deep blue cape. In a second all thought of Inez was forgotten, and anxious only to conceal my emotion, I turned away and mingled in the crowd. Lost to all around me, I wandered carelessly, heedlessly on, neither noticing the glittering throng around, nor feeling a thought in common with the gay and joyous spirits that flitted by. The night wore on, my melancholy and depression growing ever deeper, yet so spellbound was I that I could not leave the place. A secret sense that it was the last time we were to meet had gained entire possession of me, and I longed to speak a few words ere we parted forever.

I was leaning at a window which looked out upon the court-yard, when suddenly the tramp of horses attracted my attention, and I saw by the clear moonlight a group of mounted men, whose long cloaks and tall helmets announced dragoons, standing around the porch. At the same moment the door of the salon opened, and an officer in undress, splashed and travel-stained, entered. Making his way rapidly through the crowd, he followed the servant, who introduced him toward the supper-room. Thither the dense mass now pressed to learn the meaning of the singular apparition, while my own curiosity, not less excited, led me toward the door; as I crossed

the hall, however, my progress was interrupted by a group of persons, among whom I saw an aide-de-camp of Lord Wellington's staff, narrating, as it were, some piece of newly-arrived intelligence. I had no time for further inquiry, when a door opened near me, and Sir George Dashwood, accompanied by several general officers, came forth, the officer I had first seen enter the ball-room along with them. Every one was by this unmasked, and eagerly looking to hear what had occurred.

"Then, Dashwood, you'll send off an orderly at once?" said an old general officer beside me.

"This instant, my Lord. I'll dispatch an aide-de-camp. The troops shall be in marching order before noon. Oh, here's the man I want! O'Malley, come here. Mount your horse and dash into town. Send for Brotherton and M'Gregor to quarters, and announce the news as quickly as possible."

"But what am I to announce, Sir George?"

"That the French are in retreat.—Massena in retreat, my lad."

A tremendous cheer at this instant burst from the hundreds in the salon, who now heard the glorious tidings. Another cheer and another followed—ten thousand vivas rose amid the crash of the band, as it broke into a patriotic war chant. Such a scene of enthusiasm and excitement I never witnessed. Some wept with joy. Others threw themselves into their friends' arms.

"They're all mad, every mother's son of them!" said Maurice Quill, as he elbowed his way through the mass; "and here's an old vestal won't leave my arm. She has already embraced me three times, and we've finished a flask of Malaga between us."

"Come, O'Malley, are you ready for the road?"

My horse was by this time standing saddled at the front. I sprang at once to the saddle, and, without waiting for a second order, set out for Lisbon. Ten minutes had scarce elapsed—the very shouts of joy of the delighted city were still ringing in my ears—when I was once again back at the villa. As I mounted the steps into the hall, a carriage drew up: it was Sir George Dashwood's; he came forward — his daughter leaning upon his arm.

"Why, O'Malley, I thought you had gone."

"I have returned, Sir George. Colonel Brotherton is in waiting, and the staff also. I have received orders to set out for Benejos, where the 14th are stationed, and have merely delayed to say adieu."

"Adieu, my dear boy, and God bless you!" said the warm-hearted old man, as he pressed my hand between both his. "Lucy, here's your old friend about to leave; come and say good-by."

Miss Dashwood had stopped behind to adjust her shawl. I flew to her assistance. "Adieu, Miss Dashwood, and forever!" said I, in a broken voice, as I took her hand in mine. "This is not your domino," said I, eagerly, as a blue silk one peeped from beneath her mantle; "and the sleeve, too—did you wear this?" She blushed slightly, and assented.

"I changed with the Senhora, who wore mine all the evening."

"And Power, then, was not your partner?"

"I should think not—for I never danced."

"Lucy, my love, are you ready? Come, be quick."

"Good-by, Mr. O'Malley, and *au revoir, n'est-ce pas?*"

I drew her glove from her hand as she spoke, and, pressing my lips upon her fingers, placed her within the carriage. "Adieu, and *au revoir!*" said I; the carriage turned away, and a white glove was all that remained to me of Lucy Dashwood!

The carriage had turned the angle of the road, and its retiring sounds were growing gradually fainter, ere I recovered myself sufficiently to know where I stood. One absorbing thought alone possessed me. Lucy was not lost to me forever; Power was not my rival in that quarter—that was enough for me. I needed no more to nerve my arm and steel my heart. As I reflected thus, the long loud blast of a trumpet broke upon the silence of the night, and admonished me to depart. I hurried to my room to make my few preparations for the road, but Mike had already anticipated everything here, and all was in readiness.

But one thing now remained—to make my adieu to the Senhora. With this intent, I descended a narrow winding stair which led from my dressing-room, and opened by a little terrace upon the flower-garden beside her apartments.

As I crossed the graveled alley, I could not but think of the last time I had been there. It was on the eve of departure for the Douro. I recalled the few and fleeting moments of our leave-taking, and a thought flashed upon me—what, if she cared for me!—what, if, half in coquetry,

half in reality, her heart was mixed up in those passages which daily association gives rise to?

I could not altogether acquit myself of all desire to make her believe me her admirer; nay, more, with the indolent *abandon* of my country, I had fallen into a thousand little schemes to cheat the long hours away, which having no other object than the happiness of the moment, might yet color all her after-life with sorrow.

Let no one rashly pronounce me a coxcomb, vain and pretentious, for all this. In my inmost heart I had no feeling of selfishness mingled with the consideration. It was from no sense of my own merits, no calculation of my own chances of success, that I thought thus. Fortunately, at eighteen one's heart is uncontaminated with such an alloy of vanity. The first emotions of youth are pure and holy things, tempering our fiercer passions, and calming the rude effervescence of our boyish spirit; and when we strive to please, and hope to win affection, we insensibly fashion ourselves to nobler and higher thoughts, catching from the source of our devotion a portion of that charm that idealizes daily life, and makes our path in it a glorious and a bright one.

Who would not exchange all the triumph of his later days, the proudest moments of successful ambition, the richest trophies of hard-won daring, for the short and vivid flash that first shot through his heart and told him he was loved? It is the opening consciousness of life, the first sense of power that makes of the mere boy a man—a man in all his daring and his pride—and hence it is that in early life we feel ever prone to indulge those fancied attachments which elevate and raise us in our own esteem. Such was the frame of my mind as I entered the little boudoir, where once before I had ventured on a similar errand.

As I closed the sash-door behind me, the gray dawn of breaking day scarcely permitted my seeing anything around me, and I felt my way toward the door of an adjoining room, where I supposed it was likely I should find the Senhora. As I proceeded thus with cautious step and beating heart, I thought I heard a sound near me. I stopped and listened, and was about again to move on, when a half-stifled sob fell upon my ear. Slowly and silently guiding my steps toward the sounds, I reached a sofa, when, my eyes growing by degrees more accustomed to the faint light, I could detect a figure which, at a glance, I recognized as Donna Inez. A cashmere shawl was loosely thrown round her, and her face was buried in her hands. As she lay, to all seeming, still and insensible before me, her beautiful hair fell heavily upon her back and across her arm, and her whole attitude denoted the very abandonment of grief. A short convulsive shudder, which slightly shook her frame, alone gave evidence of life, except when a sob, barely audible in the death-like silence, escaped her.

I knelt silently down beside her, and, gently withdrawing her hand, placed it within mine. A dreadful feeling of self-condemnation shot through me as I felt the gentle pressure of her taper fingers, which rested without a struggle in my grasp. My tears fell hot and fast upon that pale hand, as I bent in sadness over it, unable to utter a word. A rush of conflicting thoughts passed through my brain, and I knew not what to do. I now had no doubt upon my mind that she loved me, and that her present affliction was caused by my approaching departure.

"Dearest Inez!" I stammered out at length, as I pressed her hands to my lips; "dearest Inez!"—a faint sob, and a slight pressure of her hand, was the only reply. "I have come to say good-by," continued I, gaining a little courage as I spoke; "a long good-by, too, in all likelihood. You have heard that we are ordered away,—there, don't sob, dearest, and, believe me, I had wished ere we parted to have spoken to you calmly and openly; but, alas! I cannot,—I scarcely know what I say."

"You will not forget me?" said she, in a low voice, that sank into my very heart. "You will not forget me?" As she spoke, her hand dropped heavily upon my shoulder, and her rich luxuriant hair fell upon my cheek. What a devil of a thing is proximity to a downy cheek and a black eyelash, more especially when they belong to one whom you are disposed to believe not indifferent to you! What I did at this precise moment there is no necessity for recording, even had not an adage interdicted such confessions, nor can I now remember what I said; but I can well recollect how, gradually warming with my subject, I entered into a kind of half-declaration of attachment, intended most honestly to be a mere *exposé* of my own unworthiness to win her favor, and my resolution to leave Lisbon and its neighborhood forever.

Let not any one blame me rashly if he has not experienced the difficulty of my position. The impetus of love-making is like the ardor of a fox-hunt. You care little that the six-bar gate before you is

the boundary of another gentleman's preserves, or the fence of his pleasure-ground. You go slap along at a smashing pace, with your head up, and your hand low, clearing all before you, the opposing difficulties to your progress giving half the zest, because all the danger to your career. So it is with love; the gambling spirit urges one ever onward, and the chance of failure is a reason for pursuit, where no other argument exists.

"And you do love me?" said the Senhora, with a soft, low whisper, that most unaccountably suggested anything but comfort to me.

"Love you, Inez? By this kiss—I'm in an infernal scrape!" said I, muttering this last half of my sentence to myself.

"And you'll never be jealous again?"

"Never, by all that's lovely!—your own sweet lips. That's the very last thing to reproach me with."

"And you promise me not to mind that foolish boy? For, after all, you know, it was mere flirtation—if even that."

"I'll never think of him again," said I, while my brain was burning to make out her meaning. "But, dearest, there goes the trumpet-call—"

"And, as for Pedro Mascarenhas, I never liked him."

"Are you quite sure, Inez?"

"I swear it!—so no more of him. Gonzales Cordenza—I've broke with him long since. So that you see, dearest Frederic—"

"Frederic!" said I, starting almost to my feet with amazement, while she continued:

"I'm your own—all your own!"

"Oh! the coquette, the heartless jilt!" groaned I, half aloud. "And O'Malley, Inez, poor Charley!—what of him?"

"Poor thing! I can't help him. But he's such a puppy, the lesson may do him good."

"But perhaps he loved you, Inez?"

"To be sure he did; I wished him to do so,—I can't bear not to be loved. But, Frederic, tell me, may I trust you—will you keep faithful to me?"

"Sweetest Inez! by this last kiss I swear, that such as I kneel before you now, you'll ever find me."

A foot upon the gravel-walk without, now called me to my feet—I sprang toward the door, and before Inez had lifted her head from the sofa, I had reached the garden. A figure muffled in a cavalry cloak passed near me, but without noticing me, and the next moment I had cleared the paling, and was hurrying toward the stable where I had ordered Mike to be in waiting.

The faint streak of dull pink which announces the coming day, stretched beneath the dark clouds of the night, and the chill air of the morning was already stirring in the leaves.

As I passed along by a low beech hedge which skirted the avenue, I was struck by the sound of voices near me. I stopped to listen, and soon detected in one of the speakers my friend Mickey Free; of the other I was not long in ignorance.

"Love you, is it—bathershin? It's worship you—adore you, my darling—that's the word—there, acushla, don't cry—dry your eyes—oh, murther, it's a cruel thing to tear one's self away from the best of living, with the run of the house in drink and kissing. Bad luck to it for campaigning, anyway, I never liked it!"

Catrina's reply—for it was she—I could not gather; but Mike resumed:

"Ay, just so, sore bones and wet grass, accadenté, and half rations. Oh, that I ever saw the day when I took to it! Listen to me now, honey; here it is, on my knees I am before you, and troth it's not more nor three, maybe four, young women I'd say the like to; bad scran to me if I wouldn't marry you out of a face this blessed morning just as soon as I'd look at ye. Arrah, there now, don't be screeching and bawling; what'll the neighbors think of us, and my own heart's destroyed with grief entirely."

Poor Catrina's voice returned an inaudible answer, and not wishing any longer to play the eavesdropper, I continued my path toward the stable. The distant noises from the city announced a state of movement and preparation, and more than one orderly passed the road near me at a gallop. As I turned into the wide courtyard, Mike, breathless and flurried with running, overtook me.

"Are the horses ready, Mike?" said I; "we must start this instant."

"They've just finished a peck of oats apiece, and faix that same may be a stranger to them this day six months."

"And the baggage, too?"

"On the cars, with the staff and the light brigade. It was down there I was now, to see all was right."

"Oh, I'm quite aware; and now bring out the cattle. I hope Catrina received your little consolations well. That seems a very sad affair."

"Murder, real murder, devil a less! It's no matter where you go, from Clonmel to Chayney, it's all one; they've a way of

"'A BONEEN, SIR,' SAYS I. 'ISN'T HE A FINE CRAYTURE?—AV HE WASN'T SO TROUBLESOME.'" (P. 891.)

getting round you. Upon my soul it's like the pigs they are."

"Like pigs, Mike? That appears a strange compliment you've selected to pay them."

"Ay, just like the pigs, no less. Maybe you never heard what happened to myself up at Moronha?"

"Look to that girth there. Well, go on."

"I was coming along one morning, just as day was beginning to break, when I sees a slip of a pig trotting before me, with nobody near him; but as the road was lonely, and myself rather down in heart, I thought, Musha! but yer fine company, anyhow, av a body could only keep you with him. But, ye see, a pig—saving your presence—is a baste not easily flattered, so I didn't waste time and blarney upon him, but I took off my belt, and put it round its neck as neat as need be; but, as the devil's luck would have it, I didn't go half an hour when a horse came galloping up behind me. I turned round, and, by the blessed light, it was Sir Dinny himself was on it!"

"Sir Denis Pack?"

"Yes, bad luck to his hook nose. 'What are you doing there, my fine fellow?' says he. 'What's that you have dragging there behind you?'

"'A boneen, sir,' says I. 'Isn't he a fine crayture?—av he wasn't so troublesome.'

"'Troublesome, troublesome—what do you mean?'

"'Just so,' says I. 'Isn't he parsecuting the life out of me the whole morning, following me about everywhere I go? Contrary bastes they always was.'

"'I advise you to try and part company, my friend, notwithstanding,' says he; 'or maybe it's the same end you'll be coming to, and not long either.' And faix, I took his advice; and ye see, Mister Charles, it's just as I was saying, they're like the women, the least thing in life is enough to bring them after us, *av ye only put the 'comether'* upon them."

"And now adieu to the Villa Nuova," said I, as I rode slowly down the avenue, turning ever and anon in my saddle to look back on each well-known spot.

A heavy sigh from Mike responded to my words.

"A long, a last farewell!" said I, waving my hand toward the trellised walls, now half hidden by the trees; and, as I spoke, that heaviness of the heart came over me that seems inseparable from leave-taking. The hour of parting seems like a warning to us, that all our enjoyments and pleasures here are destined to a short and merely fleeting existence; and, as each scene of life passes away never to return, we are made to feel that youth and hope are passing with them, and that, although the fair world be as bright, and its pleasures as rich in abundance, our capacity of enjoyment is daily, hourly diminishing; and while all around us smiles in beauty and happiness, that we, alas! are not what we were.

Such was the tenor of my thoughts as I reached the road, when they were suddenly interrupted by my man Mike, whose meditations were following a somewhat similar channel, though at last inclining to different conclusions. He coughed a couple of times as if to attract my attention, and then, as it were half thinking aloud, he muttered:

"I wonder if we treated the young ladies well, any how, Mister Charles, for, faix, I've my doubts on it."

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THE LINES.

When we reached Lescas, we found that an officer of Lord Wellington's staff had just arrived from the lines, and was occupied in making known the general order from head-quarters; which set forth with customary brevity, that the French armies, under the command of Massena, had retired from their position, and were in full retreat; the second and third corps, which had been stationed at Villa Franca, having marched during the night of the 15th, in the direction of Manal. The officers in command of divisions were ordered to repair instantly to Pero Negro, to consult upon a forward movement, Admiral Berkeley being written to, to provide launches to pass over General Hill's, or any other corps which might be selected, to the left bank of the Tagus. All was now excitement, heightened by the unexpected nature of an occurrence which not even speculation had calculated upon. It was but a few days before, and the news had reached Torres Vedras, that a powerful reinforcement was in march to join Massena's army, and their advanced guard had actually reached Santarem. The confident expectation was, therefore, that an attack upon the lines was meditated. Now, however, this prospect existed no longer; for scarcely had the heavy mists of the lowering day disap-

peared, when the vast plain, so lately peopled by the thickened ranks and dark masses of a great army, was seen in its whole extent deserted and untenanted.

The smoldering fires of the pickets alone marked where the troops had been posted, but not a man of that immense force was to be seen. General Fane, who had been dispatched with a brigade of Portuguese cavalry and some artillery, hung upon the rear of the retiring army, and from him we learned that the enemy were continuing their retreat northward, having occupied Santarem with a strong force to cover the movement. Craufurd was ordered to the front with the light division, the whole army following in the same direction, except Hill's corps, which, crossing the river at Velada, was intended to harass the enemy's flank, and assist our future operations.

Such, in brief, was the state of affairs when I reached Villa Franca toward noon, and received orders to join my regiment, then forming part of Sir Stapleton Cotton's brigade.

It must be felt, to be thoroughly appreciated, the enthusiastic pleasure with which one greets his old corps after some months of separation; the bounding ecstasy with which the weary eye rests on the old familiar faces, dear by every association of affection and brotherhood; the anxious look for this one, and for that; the thrill of delight sent through the heart as the well-remembered march swells upon the ear; the very notes of that rough voice, which we have heard amid the crash of battle and the rolling of artillery, speaks softly to our senses, like a father's welcome; from the well-tattered flag that waves above us, to the proud steed of the war-worn trumpeter—each has a niche in our affection.

If ever there was a corps calculated to increase and foster these sentiments, the 14th Light Dragoons was such. The warm affection, the truly heartfelt regard, which existed among my brother officers, made of our mess a happy home. Our veteran Colonel, grown gray in campaigning, was like a father to us; while the senior officers, tempering the warm blood of impetuous youth with their hard-won experience, threw a charm of peace and tranquility over all our intercourse that made us happy when together, and taught us to feel that, whether seated around the watch-fire or charging amid the squadrons of the enemy, we were surrounded by those devoted heart and soul to aid us.

Gallant Fourteenth!—ever first in every gay scheme of youthful jollity, as foremost in the van to meet the foe—how happy am I to recall the memory of your bright looks and bold hearts!—of your manly daring and your bold frankness—of your merry voices, as I have heard them in the battle or in the bivouac! Alas, and alas! that I should indulge such recollections alone! How few—how very few—are left of those with whom I trod the early steps of life! whose bold cheer I have heard above the clashing sabres of the enemy—whose broken voice I have listened to above the grave of a comrade! The dark pines of the Pyrenees wave above some, the burning sands of India cover others, and the wide plains of Salamanca are now your abiding-place.

"Here comes O'Malley!" shouted a well-known voice as I rode down the little slope, at the foot of which a group of officers were standing beside their horses.

"Welcome, thou man of Galway!" cried Hampden; "delighted to have you once more amongst us. How confoundedly well the fellow is looking!"

"Lisbon beef seems better prog than commissariat biscuit!" said another.

"A' weel, Charley?" said my friend, the Scotch Doctor; "how's a' wi' ye, man? Ye seem to thrive on your mishaps! How cam' ye by that braw beastie ye're mounted on?"

"A present, Doctor; the gift of a very warm friend."

"I hope you invited him to the mess, O'Malley! For, by Jove, our stables stand in need of his kind offices! There he goes! Look at him! What a slashing pace for a heavy fellow!" This observation was made with reference to a well-known officer on the commander-in-chief's staff, whose weight—some two and twenty stone—never was any impediment to his bold riding.

"Egad, O'Malley, you'll soon be as pretty a light-weight as our friend yonder. Ah! there's a storm going on there! Here comes the Colonel!"

"Well, O'Malley, are you come back to us? Happy to see you, boy!—hope we shall not lose you again in a hurry!—We can't spare the scape-graces! There's plenty of skirmishing going on!—Craufurd always asks for the scapegraces for the pickets!"

I shook my gallant Colonel's hand, while I acknowledged, as best I might, his ambiguous compliment.

"I say, lads," resumed the Colonel, "squad your men and form on the road! Lord Wellington's coming down this way

to have a look at you! O'Malley, I have General Craufurd's orders to offer you your old appointment on his staff; without you prefer remaining with the regiment!"

"I can never be sufficiently grateful, sir, to the General; but, in fact—I think—that is, I believe—"

"You'd rather be among your own fellows. Out with it, boy! I like you all the better! but come, we mustn't let the General know that; so that I shall forget to tell you all about it. Eh? isn't that best? But join your troop now; I hear the staff coming this way."

As he spoke, a crowd of horsemen were seen advancing toward us at a sharp trot; their waving plumes and gorgeous aiguilettes denoting their rank as generals of division. In the midst, as they came nearer, I could distinguish one whom, once seen, there was no forgetting; his plain blue frock and gray trowsers unstrapped beneath his boots, not a little unlike the trim accuracy of costume around him. As he rode to the head of the leading squadron, the staff fell back and he stood alone before us; for a second there was a dead silence, but the next instant—by what impulse tell who can—one tremendous cheer burst from the entire regiment. It was like the act of one man; so sudden, so spontaneous. While every cheek glowed, and every eye sparkled with enthusiasm, he alone seemed cool and unexcited as, gently raising his hand, he motioned them to silence.

"Fourteenth, you are to be where you always desire to be—in the advanced guard of the army. I have nothing to say on the subject of your conduct in the field. I know *you;* but, if in pursuit of the enemy, I hear of any misconduct toward the people of the country, or any transgression of the general orders regarding pillage, by G—, I'll punish you as severely as the worst corps in the service, and you know *me.*"

"Oh! tear an ages, listen to that; and there's to be no plunder after all!" said Mickey Free; and for an instant the most I could do was not to burst into a fit of laughter. The word "Forward!" was given at the moment, and we moved past in close column, while that penetrating eye, which seemed to read our very thoughts, scanned us from one end of the line to the other.

"I say, Charley," said the Captain of my troop in a whisper—"I say, that confounded cheer we gave got us that lesson; he can't stand that kind of thing."

"By Jove! I never felt more disposed than to repeat it," said I.

"No, no, my boy, we'll give him the honors, nine times nine; but wait till evening. Look at old Merivale there. I'll swear he's saying something devilish civil to him. Do you see the old fellow's happy look?"

And so it was; the bronzed, hard-cast features of the veteran soldier were softened into an expression of almost boyish delight, as he sat, bare-headed, bowing to his very saddle, while Lord Wellington was speaking.

As I looked, my heart throbbed painfully against my side, my breath came quick, and I muttered to myself, "What would I not give to be in his place now!"

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THE RETREAT OF THE FRENCH.

It is not my intention, were I even adequate to the task, to trace with anything like accuracy the events of the war at this period. In fact, to those who, like myself, were performing a mere subaltern character, the daily movements of our own troops, not to speak of the continual changes of the enemy, were perfectly unknown, and an English newspaper was more ardently longed for in the Peninsula than by the most eager crowd of a London coffee-room; nay, the results of the very engagements we were ourselves concerned in, more than once, first reached us through the press of our own country. It is easy enough to understand this. The officer in command of the regiment, and, how much more, the captain of a troop, or the subaltern under him, knows nothing beyond the sphere of his own immediate duty: by the success or failure of his own party his knowledge is bounded, but how far he or his may influence the fortune of the day, or of what is taking place elsewhere, he is totally ignorant; and an old Fourteenth man did not badly explain his ideas on the matter, who described Busaco as "a great noise and a great smoke, booming artillery and rattling small-arms, infernal confusion, and, to all seeming, incessant blundering, orders and counter-orders, ending with a crushing charge, when, not being hurt himself nor having hurt anybody, he felt much pleased to learn that they had gained a victory." It is then sufficient for all the purposes of my narrative, when I mention that Massena continued his retreat by Santarem and Thomar, followed by the allied army, who, however desirous of pressing upon the rear

of their enemy, were still obliged to maintain their communication with the lines, and also to watch the movement of the large armies which, under Ney and Soult, threatened at any unguarded moment to attack them in flank.

The position which Massena occupied at Santarem, naturally one of great strength, and further improved by intrenchments, defied any attack on the part of Lord Wellington, until the arrival of the long-expected reinforcements from England. These had sailed in the early part of January, but, delayed by adverse winds, only reached Lisbon on the 2d of March, and so correctly was the French Marshal apprised of the circumstance, and so accurately did he anticipate the probable result, that on the fourth he broke up his encampment, and recommenced his retrograde movement, with an army now reduced to forty thousand fighting men, and with two thousand sick; destroying all his baggage and guns that could not be horsed. By a demonstration of advancing upon the Zezere, by which he held the allies in check, he succeeded in passing his wounded to the rear, while Ney, appearing with a large force suddenly at Leiria, seemed bent upon attacking the lines: by these stratagems two days' march were gained, and the French retreated upon Torres Novas and Thomar, destroying the bridges behind them as they passed.

The day was breaking on the 12th of March, when the British first came in sight of the retiring enemy. We were then ordered to the front, and, broken up into small parties, threw out our skirmishers. The French chasseurs, usually not indisposed to accept this species of encounter, showed now less of inclination than usual, and either retreated before us, or hovered in masses to check our advance; in this way the morning was passed, when toward noon we perceived that the enemy was drawn up in battle array, occupying the height above the village of Redinha. This little straggling village is situated in a hollow, traversed by a narrow causeway, which opens by a long and dangerous defile upon a bridge; on either side of which a dense wood afforded a shelter for light troops, while upon the commanding eminence above a battery of heavy guns was seen in position.

In front of the village a brigade of artillery and a division of infantry were drawn up so skillfully as to give the appearance of a considerable force, so that, when Lord Wellington came up, he spent some time in examining the enemy's position. Erskine's brigade was immediately ordered up, and the Fifty-second and Ninety-fourth, and a company of the Forty-third were led against the wooded slopes upon the French right. Picton simultaneously attacked the left, and, in less than an hour, both were successful, and Ney's position was laid bare: his skirmishers, however, continued to hold their ground in front, and La Ferrière, a colonel of hussars, dashing boldly forward at this very moment, carried off fourteen prisoners from the very front of our line. Deceived by the confidence of the enemy, Lord Wellington now prepared for an attack in force. The infantry were therefore formed into line, and, at the signal of three shots fired from the center, began their foremost movement.

Bending up a gentle curve, the whole plain glistened with the glancing bayonets, and the troops marched majestically onward; while the light artillery and the cavalry bounding forward from the left and center rushed eagerly toward the foe. One deafening discharge from the French guns opened at the moment, with a general volley of small-arms. The smoke for an instant obscured everything; and when that cleared away no enemy was to be seen.

The British pressed madly on, like heated bloodhounds; but, when they descended the slope, the village of Redinha was in flames, and the French in full retreat beyond it; a single howitzer seemed our only trophy, and even this we were not destined to boast of, for from the midst of the crashing flame and dense smoke of the burning village, a troop of dragoons rushed forward, and, charging our infantry, carried it off. The struggle, though but for a moment, cost them dear; twenty of their comrades lay dead upon the spot; but they were resolute and determined, and the officer who led them on, fighting hand to hand with a soldier of the Forty-second, cheered them as they retired. His gallant bearing, and his coat covered with decorations, bespoke him one of note, and well it might; he who thus periled his life to maintain the courage of his soldiers at the commencement of a retreat, was no other than Ney himself, *le plus brave des braves.* The British pressed hotly on, and the light troops crossed the river almost at the same time with the French. Ney, however, fell back upon Condeixa, where his main body was posted, and all further pursuit was for the present abandoned.

At Casa Noval and at Foz d'Aronce the allies were successful; but the French still continued to retire, burning the towns and

villages in their rear, and devastating the country along the whole line of march by every expedient of cruelty the heart of man has ever conceived. In the words of one whose descriptions, however fraught with the most wonderful power of painting, are equally marked by truth—"Every horror that could make war hideous attended this dreadful march. Distress, conflagration, death in all modes—from wounds, from fatigue, from water, from the flames, from starvation—vengeance, unlimited vengeance—was on every side." The country was a desert!

Such was the exhaustion of the allies, who suffered even greater privations than the enemy, that they halted upon the 16th, unable to proceed farther, and the river Ceira, swollen and unfordable, flowed between the rival armies.

The repose of even one day was a most grateful interruption to the harassing career we had pursued for some time past; and it seemed that my comrades felt, like myself, that such an opportunity was by no means to be neglected; but, while I am devoting so much space, and trespassing on my reader's patience thus far with narrative of flood and field, let me steal a chapter for what will sometimes seem a scarcely less congenial topic, and bring back the recollection of a glorious night in the Peninsula.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

PATRICK'S DAY IN THE PENINSULA.

THE *réveil* had not yet sounded, when I felt my shoulder shaken gently as I lay wrapped up in my cloak beneath a prickly pear-tree.

"Lieutenant O'Malley, sir; a letter, sir; a bit of a note, your honor," said a voice that bespoke the bearer and myself were countrymen. I opened it, and, with difficulty, by the uncertain light, read as follows:

"DEAR CHARLEY,—As Lord Wellington, like a good Irishman as he is, wouldn't spoil Patrick's Day by marching, we've got a little dinner at our quarters to celebrate the holy times, as my uncle would call it. Maurice, Phil Grady, and some regular trumps, will all come; so don't disappoint us. I've been making punch all night, and Casey, who has a knack at pastry, has made a goose-pie as big as a portmanteau. Sharp seven, after parade. The second battalion of the Fusiliers are quartered at Melanté, and we are next them. Bring any of yours worth their liquor. Power is, I know, absent with the staff; perhaps the Scotch Doctor would come,—try him. Carry over a little mustard with you, if there be such in your parts. Yours,

"D. O'SHAUGHNESSY.

"Patrick's Day, and raining like blazes."

Seeing that the bearer expected an answer, I scrawled the words "I'm there" with my pencil on the back of the note, and again turned myself round to sleep. My slumbers were, however, soon interrupted once more; for the bugles of the light infantry, and the hoarse trumpet of the cavalry, sounded the call, and I found to my surprise that, though halted, we were by no means destined to a day of idleness. Dragoons were already mounted, carrying orders hither and thither, and staff-officers were galloping right and left. A general order commanded an inspection of the troops, and within less than an hour from daybreak the whole army was drawn up under arms. A thin, drizzling rain continued to fall during the early part of the day, but the sun gradually dispelled the heavy vapor; and, as the bright verdure glittered in its beams, sending up all the perfumes of a southern clime, I thought I had never seen a more lovely morning. The staff were stationed upon a little knoll beside the river, round the base of which the troops defiled, at first in orderly, then in quick time, the bands playing, and the colors flying. In the same brigade with us the Eighty-eighth came, and, as they neared the Commander-in-Chief, their quick-step was suddenly stopped, and, after a pause of a few seconds, the band struck up "St. Patrick's Day," the notes were caught up by the other Irish regiments, and, amid one prolonged cheer from the whole line, the gallant fellows moved past.

The grenadier company were drawn up beside the road, and I was not long in detecting my friend O'Shaughnessy, who wore a tremendous shamrock in his shako.

"Left face, wheel! quick march! Don't forget the mustard!" said the bold Major; and a loud roar of laughing from my brother officers followed him off the ground. I soon explained the injunction, and, having invited some three or four to accompany me to the dinner, waited with all patience for the conclusion of the parade.

The sun was setting as I mounted, and, joined by Hampden, Baker, the Doctor, and another, set out for O'Shaughnessy's

quarters. As we rode along, we were continually falling in with others bent upon the same errand as ourselves, and ere we arrived at Melanté our party was some thirty strong; and truly a most extraordinary procession did we form. Few of the invited came without some contribution to the general stock; and while a staff-officer flourished a ham, a smart hussar might be seen with a plucked turkey, trussed for roasting; most carried bottles, as the consumption of fluid was likely to be considerable; and one fat old major jogged along on a broken-winded pony, with a basket of potatoes on his arm. Good-fellowship was the order of the day, and certainly a more jovial squadron seldom was met together than ours. As we turned the angle of a rising ground, a hearty cheer greeted us, and we beheld in front of an old ordnance marquee a party of some fifty fellows engaged in all the pleasing duties of the *cuisine*. Maurice, conspicuous above all, with a white apron, and a ladle in his hand, was running hither and thither, advising, admonishing, instructing, and occasionally imprecating. Ceasing for a second his functions, he gave us a cheer and a yell like that of an Indian savage, and then resumed his duties beside a huge boiler, which, from the frequency of his explorations into its contents, we judged to be punch.

"Charley, my son, I've a place for you; don't forget. Where's my learned brother?—haven't you brought him with you? Ah, Doctor, how goes it?"

"Nae that bad, Master Quell: a' things considered, we've had an awfu' time of it lately."

"You know my friend Hampden, Maurice. Let me introduce Mr. Baker—Mr. Maurice Quill. Where's the Major?"

"Here I am, my darling, and delighted to see you. Some of yours, O'Malley, ain't they? Proud to have you, gentlemen. Charley, we are obliged to have several tables; but you are to be beside Maurice, so take your friends with you. There goes the 'Roast Beef;' my heart warms to that old tune."

Amid a hurried recognition, and shaking of hands on every side, I elbowed my way into the tent, and soon reached a corner, where, at a table for eight, I found Maurice seated at one end; a huge, purple-faced old major, whom he presented to us as Bob Mahon, occupied the other. O'Shaughnessy presided at the table next to us, but near enough to join in all the conviviality of ours.

One must have lived for some months upon hard biscuit and harder beef to relish as we did the fare before us, and to form an estimate of our satisfaction. If the reader cannot fancy Van Amburgh's lions in red coats and epaulettes, he must be content to lose the effect of the picture. A turkey rarely fed more than two people, and few were abstemious enough to be satisfied with one chicken. The order of the viands, too, observed no common routine, each party being happy to get what he could, and satisfied to follow up his pudding with fish, or his tart with a sausage. Sherry, champagne, London porter, Malaga, and even, I believe, Harvey's sauce, were hobnobbed in, while hot punch, in teacups or tin vessels, was unsparingly distributed on all sides. Achilles himself, they say, got tired of eating, and though he consumed something like a prize ox to his own cheek, he at length had to call for cheese, so that we at last gave in, and, having cleared away the broken tumbrels and baggage-carts of our army, cleared for a general action.

"Now, lads!" cried the Major, "I'm not going to lose your time and mine by speaking; but there are a couple of toasts I must insist upon your drinking with all the honors; and, as I like dispatch, we'll couple them. It so happens that our old island boasts of two of the finest fellows that ever wore Russia ducks. None of your nonsensical geniuses, like poets or painters, or anything like that; but downright, straightforward, no-humbug sort of devil-may-care and bad-luck-to-you kind of chaps—real Irishmen! Now, it's a strange thing that they both had such an antipathy to vermin, they spent their life in hunting them down and destroying them; and whether they met toads at home, or Johnny Crapaud abroad, it was all one. (Cheers.) Just so, boys; they made them leave that; but I see you are impatient, so I'll not delay you, but fill to the brim, and, with the best cheer in your body, drink with me the two greatest Irishmen that ever lived, 'St. Patrick and Lord Wellington.'"

The Englishmen laughed long and loud, while we cheered with an energy that satisfied even the Major.

"Who is to give us the chant? Who is to sing St. Patrick?" cried Maurice. "Come, Bob, out with it."

"I'm four tumblers too low for that yet," growled out the Major.

"Well, then, Charley, be you the man; or why not Dennis himself? Come, Dennis, we cannot better begin our evening than with a song; let us have our old friend 'Larry M'Hale.'"

"Larry M'Hale!" resounded from all parts of the room, while O'Shaughnessy rose once more to his legs.

"Faith, boys, I'm always ready to follow your lead; but what analogy can exist between 'Lary M'Hale' and the toast we have just drunk I can't see for the life of me; not but Larry would have made a strapping light company man had he joined the army."

"The song, the song!" cried several voices.

"Well, if you will have it, here goes."

LARRY M'HALE.

Air—"It's a bit of a thing," etc.

"Oh! Larry M'Hale he had little to fear,
And never could want when the crops didn't fail.
He'd a house and demesne and eight hundred a year,
And the heart for to spend it had Larry M'Hale!
The soul of a party,—the life of a feast,
And an illigant song he could sing, I'll be bail;
He would ride with the rector, and drink with the priest,
Oh! the broth of a boy was old Larry M'Hale.

"It's little he cared for the judge or recorder,
His house was as big and as strong as a jail;
With a cruel four-pounder he kept in great order,
He'd murder the country, would Larry M'Hale,
He'd a bunderbuss too; of horse-pistols a pair;
But his favorite weapon was always a flail:
I wish you could see how he'd empty a fair,
For he handled it neatly, did Larry M'Hale.

"His ancestors were kings before Moses was born,
His mother descended from great Grana Uaile;
He laughed all the Blakes and the Frenches to scorn;
They were mushroons compared to old Larry M'Hale.
He sat down every day to a beautiful dinner,
With cousins and uncles enough for a tail;
And, though loaded with debt, oh! the devil a thinner,
Could law or the sheriff make Larry M'Hale.

"With a larder supplied and a cellar well stored,
None lived half so well, from Fair-Head to Kinsale,
As he piously said, 'I've a plentiful board,
And the Lord he is good to old Larry M'Hale.'
So fill up your glass, and a high bumper give him,
It's little we'd care for the tithes or repale;
For ould Erin would be a fine country to live in,
If we only had plenty like LARRY M'HALE."

"Very singular style of person your friend Mr. M'Hale," lisped a spoony-looking Cornet at the end of the table.

"Not in the country he belongs to, I assure you," said Maurice; "but I presume you were never in Ireland."

"You are mistaken there," resumed the other; "I was in Ireland, though I confess not for a long time."

"If I might be so bold," cried Maurice, "how long?"

"Half an hour, by a stop-watch," said the other, pulling up his stock; "and I had quite enough of it in that time."

"Pray give us your experiences," cried out Bob Mahon. "They should be interesting, considering your opportunities."

"You are right," said the Cornet; "they were so; and, as they illustrate a feature in your amiable country, you shall have them."

A general knocking upon the table announced the impatience of the company, and when silence was restored the Cornet began:

"When the *Bermuda* transport sailed from Portsmouth for Lisbon, I happened to make one of some four hundred interesting individuals who, before they became food for powder, were destined to try their constitutions on pickled pork. The second day after our sailing, the winds became adverse; it blew a hurricane from every corner of the compass but the one it ought, and the good ship, that should have been standing straight for the Bay of Biscay, was scudding away under a double-reefed topsail toward the coast of Labrador. For six days we experienced every sea-maneuver that usually preludes a shipwreck, and at length, when, what from sea-sickness and fear, we had become utterly indifferent to the result, the storm abated, the sea went down, and we found ourselves lying comfortably in the harbor of Cork, with a strange suspicion on our minds that the frightful scenes of the past week had been nothing but a dream.

"'Come, Mr. Medlicot,' said the Skipper to me, 'we shall be here for a couple of days to refit; had you not better go ashore and see the country?'

"I sprang to my legs with delight; visions of cowslips, larks, daisies, and mutton-chops floated before my excited imagination, and in ten minutes I found myself standing at that pleasant little inn at Cove which, opposite Spike Island, rejoices in the name of the Goat and Garters.

"'Breakfast, waiter,' said I; 'a beefsteak—fresh beef, mark ye; fresh eggs, bread, milk, and butter, all fresh.—No more hard tack,' thought I; 'no salt butter, but a genuine land breakfast.'

"'Up-stairs, No. 4, sir,' said the waiter, as he flourished a dirty napkin, indicating the way.

"Up-stairs I went, and in due time the

appetizing little meal made its appearance. Never did a minor's eye revel over his broad acres with more complacent enjoyment than did mine skim over the mutton and the muffin, the teapot, the trout, and the deviled kidney, so invitingly spread out before me. 'Yes,' thought I, as I smacked my lips, 'this is the reward of virtue; pickled pork is a probationary state that admirably fits us for future enjoyments.' I arranged my napkin upon my knee, seized my knife and fork, and proceeded with most critical acumen to bisect a beefsteak. Scarcely, however, had I touched it, when, with a loud crash, the plate smashed beneath it, and the gravy ran piteously across the cloth. Before I had time to account for the phenomenon, the door opened hastily, and the waiter rushed into the room, his face beaming with smiles, while he rubbed his hands in an ecstasy of delight.

"'It's all over, sir,' said he; 'glory be to God! it's all done.'

"'What's over? what's done?' inquired I, with impatience.

"'Mr. M'Mahon is satisfied,' replied he, 'and so is the other gentleman.'

"'Who and what the devil do you mean?'

"'It's over, sir, I say,' replied the waiter again; 'he fired in the air.'

"'Fired in the air! Was there a duel in the room below stairs?'

"'Yes, sir,' said the waiter, with a benign smile.

"'That will do,' said I, as, seizing my hat, I rushed out of the house, and, hurrying to the beach, took a boat for the ship. Exactly half an hour had elapsed since my landing, but even those short thirty minutes had fully as many reasons that, although there may be few more amusing, there are some safer places to live in than the Green Isle."

A general burst of laughter followed the Cornet's story, which was heightened in its effect by the gravity with which he told it.

"And, after all," said Maurice Quill, "now that people have given up making fortunes for the insurance companies, by living to the age of Methuselah, there's nothing like being an Irishman. In what other part of the habitable globe can you cram so much of adventure into one year? Where can you be so often in love, in liquor, or in debt? and where can you get so merrily out of the three? Where are promises to marry and promises to pay treated with the same gentlemanlike forbearance? and where, when you have lost your heart and your fortune, are people found so ready to comfort you in your reverses? Yes," said Maurice, as he filled his glass up to the brim, and eyed it lusciously for a moment — "yes, darling, here's your health; the only girl I ever loved—in that part of the country, I mean. Give her a bumper, lads, and I'll give you a chant!"

"Name! name! name!" shouted several voices from different parts of the table.

"Mary Draper!" said Maurice, filling his glass once more, while the name was re-echoed by every lip at table.

"The song! the song!"

"Faith, I hope I haven't forgotten it," quoth Maurice. "No; here it is."

So saying, after a couple of efforts to assure the pitch of his voice, the worthy Doctor began the following words to that very popular melody, "Nancy Dawson:"

MARY DRAPER.

Air—"Nancy Dawson."

"Don't talk to me of London dames,
Nor rave about your foreign flames,
That never lived,—except in drames,
Nor shone, except on paper;
I'll sing you 'bout a girl I knew,
Who lived in Ballywhacmacrew,
And, let me tell you, mighty few
Could equal Mary Draper.

"Her cheeks were red, her eyes were blue,
Her hair was brown, of deepest hue,
Her foot was small, and neat to view,
Her waist was slight and taper;
Her voice was music to your ear,
A lovely brogue, so rich and clear,
Oh, the like I ne'er again shall hear
As from sweet Mary Draper.

"She'd ride a wall, she'd drive a team,
Or with a fly she'd whip a stream,
Or maybe sing you 'Rousseau's Dream,'
For nothing could escape her;
I've seen her, too—upon my word—
At sixty yards bring down her bird,
Oh! she charmed all the Forth-third,
Did lovely Mary Draper.

"And at the spring assizes' ball,
The junior bar would one and all
For all her fav'rite dances call,
And Harry Deane would caper;
Lord Clare would then forget his lore,
King's Counsel, voting law a bore,
Were proud to figure on the floor,
For love of Mary Draper.

"The parson, priest, sub-sheriff too,
Were all her slaves, and so would you,
If you had only but one view,
Of such a face and shape, or
Her pretty ankles—but, ohone,
It's only west of old Athlone
Such girls were found—and now they're gone—
So here's to Mary Draper!"

"So here's to Mary Draper!" sang out every voice, in such efforts to catch the tune as pleased the taste of the motley assembly.

"For Mary Draper and Co. I thank you," said Maurice. "Quill drinks to Dennis," added he, in a grave tone, as he nodded to O'Shaughnessy. "Yes, Shaugh, few men better than ourselves know these matters; and few have had more experience of the three perils of Irishmen—love, liquor, and the law of arrest."

"It's little the latter has ever troubled my father's son," replied O'Shaughnessy; "our family have been writ-proof for centuries, and he'd have been a bold man who would have ventured with an original or a true copy within the precincts of Killinahoula."

"Your father had a touch of Larry M'Hale in him," said I, "apparently."

"Exactly so," replied Dennis; "not but they caught him at last; and a scurvy trick it was, and well worthy of him who did it! Yes," said he, with a sigh, "it is only another among the many instances where the better features of our nationality have been used by our enemies as instruments for our destruction; and, should we seek for the causes of unhappiness in our wretched country, we should find them rather in our virtues than in our vices, and in the bright rather than in the darker phases of our character."

"Metaphysics, by Jove!" cried Quill; "but all true at the same time. There was a messmate of mine in the *Roscommon*, who never paid car-hire in his life. 'Head or harp, Paddy!' he would cry. 'Two tenpennies, or nothing.' 'Harp! for the honor of ould Ireland,' was the invariable response, and my friend was equally sure to make head come uppermost; and, upon my soul, they seem to know the trick at the Home Office."

"That must have been the same fellow that took my father," cried O'Shaughnessy, with energy.

"Let us hear the story, Dennis," said I.

"Yes," said Maurice, "for the benefit of self and fellows, let us hear the stratagem!"

"The way of it was this," resumed O'Shaughnessy; "my father, who, for reasons registered in the King's Bench, spent a great many years of his life in that part of Ireland geographically known as lying west of the law, was obliged, for certain reasons of family, to come up to Dublin. This he proceeded to do with due caution. Two trusty servants formed an advanced guard, and patrolled the country for at least five miles in advance; after them came skirmishing body of a few tenants, who for the consideration of never paying rent, whould have charged the whole Court of Chancery, if needful. My father himself, in an old chaise victualed like a fortress, brought up the rear; and, as I said before, he were a bold man who would have attempted to have laid siege to him. As the column advanced into the enemy's country, they assumed a closer order, the patrol and the picket falling back upon the main body; and in this way they reached that most interresting city called Kilbeggan. What a fortunate thing it is for us in Ireland that we can see so much of the world without foreign travel, and that any gentleman for six-and-eightpence can leave Dublin in the morning, and visit Timbuctoo against dinner-time! Don't stare! it's truth I'm telling; for dirt, misery, smoke, unaffected behavior, and black faces, I'll back Kilbeggan against all Africa. Free-and-easy, pleasant people ye are, with a skin as begrimed and as rugged as your own potatoes! But, to resume. The sun was just rising in a delicious morning of June, when my father—whose loyal antipathies I have mentioned made him also an early riser—was preparing for the road. A stout escort of his followers were as usual under arms to see him safe in the chaise, the passage to and from which every day being the critical moment of my father's life.

"'It's all right, your honor,' said his own man, as, armed with a blunderbuss, he opened the bedroom door.

"'Time enough, Tim,' said my father; 'close the door, for I haven't finished my breakfast.'

"Now, the real truth was, that my father's attention was at that moment withdrawn from his own concerns, by a scene which was taking place in a field beneath his window.

"But a few minutes before, a hack-chaise had stopped upon the roadside, out of which sprang three gentlemen, who, proceeding into the field, seemed bent upon something, which, whether a survey or a duel, my father could not make out. He was not long, however, to remain in ignorance. One, with an easy, lounging gait, strode toward a distant corner; another took an opposite direction; while a third, a short, pursy gentleman, in a red handkerchief and rabbit-skin waistcoat, proceeded to open a mahogany box, which, to the critical eyes of my respected father, was agreeably suggestive of bloodshed and murder.

"'A duel, by Jupiter!' said my father, rubbing his hands. 'What a heavenly morning the scoundrels have! not a leaf stirring, and a sod like a billiard-table!'

"Meanwhile, the little man who officiated as second, it would appear, to *both* parties, bustled about with an activity little congenial to his shape; and, what between snapping the pistols, examining the flints, and ramming down the charges, had got himself into a sufficient perspiration before he commenced to measure out the ground.

"'Short distance and no quarter!' shouted one of the combatants, from the corner of the field.

"'Across a handkerchief, if you like!' roared the other.

"'Gentlemen, every inch of them!' responded my father.

"'Twelve paces!' cried the little man. 'No more and no less. Don't forget that I am alone in this business!'

"'A very true remark!' observed my father; 'and an awkward predicament yours will be if they are not both shot!'

"By this time the combatants had taken their places, and the little man, having delivered the pistols, was leisurely retiring to give the word. My father, however, whose critical eye was never at fault, detected a circumstance which promised an immense advantage to one at the expense of the other; in fact, one of the parties was so placed with his back to the sun, that his shadow extended in a straight line to the very foot of his antagonist.

"'Unfair, unfair!' cried my father, opening the window as he spoke, and addressing himself to him of the rabbit-skin. 'I crave your pardon for the interruption,' said he; 'but I feel bound to observe that that gentleman's shadow is likely to make a shade of him.'

"'And so it is,' observed the short man; 'a thousand thanks for your kindness; but the truth is, I am totally unaccustomed to this kind of thing, and the affair will not admit of delay.'

"'Not an hour!' said one.

"'Not five minutes!' growled the other of the combatants.

"'Put them up north and south!' said my father.

"'Is it thus?'

"'Exactly so. But now again, the gentleman in the brown coat is covered with the ash-tree.'

"'And so he is!' said rabbit-skin, wiping his forehead with agitation.

"'Move them a little to the left,' said he.

"'That brings me upon an eminence,' said the gentleman in blue. 'I'll be d—d if I be made a cock-shot of!'

"'What an awkward little thief it is in the hairy waistcoat!' said my father; 'he's lucky if he don't get shot himself!'

"'May I never, if I'm not sick of you both!' ejaculated rabbit-skin, in a passion. 'I've moved you round every point of the compass, and the devil a nearer we are than ever.'

"'Give us the word,' said one.

"'The word!'

"'Downright murder,' said my father.

"'I don't care,' said the little man; 'we shall be here till doomsday.'

"'I can't permit this,' said my father; 'allow me.' So saying, he stepped upon the window-sill and leaped down into the field.

"'Before I can accept of your politeness,' said he of the rabbit-skin, 'may I beg to know your name and position in society?'

"'Nothing more reasonable,' said my father. 'I'm Miles O'Shaughnessy, Colonel of the Royal Raspers: here is my card.'

"The piece of pasteboard was complacently handed from one to the other of the party, who saluted my father with a smile of most courteous benignity.

"'Colonel O'Shaughnessy,' said one.

"'Miles O'Shaughnessy,' said the other.

"'Of Killinahoula Castle,' said the third.

"'At your service,' said my father, bowing as he presented his snuff box; 'and now to business, if you please; for my time also is limited.'

"'Very true,' observed he of the rabbit-skin, 'and, as you observe, now to business; in virtue of which, Colonel Miles O'Shaughnessy, I hereby arrest you in the King's name. Here is the writ: it's at the suit of Barnaby Kelly, of Loughrea, for the sum of 148*l.* 19*s.* 7½*d.*, which—'

"Before he could conclude the sentence, my father discharged one obligation, by implanting his closed knuckles in his face. The blow, well aimed and well intentioned, sent the little fellow summersetting like a sugar hogshead. But, alas! it was of no use; the others, strong and able-bodied, fell both upon him, and after a desperate struggle succeeded in getting him down. To tie his hands, and convey him to the chaise, was the work of a few moments; and, as my father drove by the inn, the last object which caught his view was a bloody encounter between his own people and the myrmidons of the law, who, in great numbers, had laid siege to the house

during his capture. Thus was my father taken; and thus, in reward for yielding to a virtuous weakness in his character, was he consigned to the ignominious durance of a prison. Was I not right, then, in saying that such is the melancholy position of our country, the most beautiful traits in our character are converted into the elements of our ruin?"

"I dinna think ye ha'e made out your case, Major," said the Scotch Doctor, who felt sorely puzzled at my friend's logic. "If your faether had na gi'en the bond—"

"There is no saying what he wouldn't have done to the bailiffs," interrupted Dennis, who was following up a very different train of reasoning.

"I fear me, Doctor," observed Quill, "you are much behind us in Scotland. Not but that some of your chieftains are respectable men, and wouldn't get on badly even in Galway."

"I thank ye muckle for the compliment," said the Doctor, dryly; "but I ha'e my doubts they'd think it ane, and they're crusty carls that's no' ower safe to meddle wi'."

"I'd as soon propose a hand of spoiled five to the Pope of Rome, as a joke to one of them," returned Maurice.

"Maybe ye are na wrang there, Maister Quell."

"Well," cried Hampden, "if I may be allowed an opinion, I can safely aver I know no quarters like Scotland. Edinburgh beyond anything or anywhere I was ever placed in."

"Always after Dublin," interposed Maurice; while a general chorus of voices reechoed the sentiment.

"You are certainly a strong majority," said my friend, "against me; but still I recant not my original opinion. Edinburgh before the world. For a hospitality that never tires; for pleasant fellows that improve every day of your acquaintance; for pretty girls that make you long for a repeal of the canon about being only singly blessed, and lead you to long for a score of them, Edinburgh, I say again, before the world."

"Their ankles are devilish thick," whispered Maurice.

"A calumny, a base calumny!"

"And then they drink—"

"Oh—"

"Yes; they drink very strong tea."

"Shall we ha'e a glass o' sherry together, Hampden?" said the Scotch Doctor, willing to acknowledge his defense of auld Reekie.

"And we'll take O'Malley in," said Hampden; "he looks imploringly."

"And now to return to the charge," quoth Maurice. "In what particular dare ye contend the palm with Dublin? We'll not speak of beauty. I can't suffer any such profane turn in the conversation as to dispute the superiority of Irishwomen's lips, eyes, noses, and eyebrows. to anything under heaven. We'll not talk of gay fellows; egad, we needn't. I'll give you the garrison—a decent present; and I'll back the Irish bar for more genuine drollery, more wit, more epigram, more ready sparkling fun, than the whole rest of the empire—ay, and all her colonies—can boast of."

"They are nae remarkable for passing the bottle, if they resemble their very gifted advocate," observed the Scotchman.

"But they are for filling and emptying both, making its current, as it glides by, like a rich stream glittering in the sunbeams, with the sparkling luster of their wit. Lord, how I'm blown! Fill my pannikin, Charley. There's no subduing a Scot. Talk with him, drink with him, fight with him, and he'll always have the last of it: there's only one way of concluding the treaty—"

"And that is—"

"Blarney him. Lord bless you, he can't stand it. Tell him Holyrood's like Versailles, and the Trossach's finer than Mont Blanc; that Geordie Buchanan was Homer, and the Canongate, Herculaneum,—then ye have him on the hip. Now ye never can humbug an Irishman that way; he'll know you're quizzing him when you praise his country."

"Ye are right, Hampden," said the Scotch Doctor, in reply to some observation. "We are vara primitive in the hielands, and we keep to our ain national customs in dress and everything; and we are vara slow to learn; and even when we try we are nae ower successfu' in our imitations, which sometimes cost us dearly enough. Ye may have heard, maybe, of the M'Nab o' that ilk, and what happened him with the King's equerry?"

"I am not quite certain," said Hampden, "if I ever heard the story."

"It's nae muckle of a story; but the way of it was this:—When Montrose came back from London, he brought with him a few Englishers to show them the Highlands, and let them see something of deer-stalking; among the rest, a certain Sir George Sowerby, an aide-de-camp or an equerry of the Prince. He was a vara fine gentleman, that never loaded his ain gun, and a'most thought it too much trouble to pull the trigger. He went out every morning to shoot with his hair curled like a woman,

and dressed like a dancing-master. Now, there happened to be at the same time at the castle the Laird o' M'Nab; he was a kind of cousin of the Montrose, and a rough old tyke of the true hieland breed, wha' thought that the head of a clan was fully equal to any king or prince. He sat opposite to Sir George at dinner the day of his arrival, and could not conceal his surprise at the many new-fangled ways of feeding himself the Englisher adopted. He ate his saumon wi' his fork in ae hand, and a bittock of bread in the other; he would na' touch the whisky; helped himself to a cutlet wi' his fingers; but, what was maist extraordinary of all, he wore a pair of braw white gloves during the whole time o' dinner; and, when they came to tak' away the cloth, he drew them off with a great air, and threw them into the middle of it, and then, leisurely taking anither pair off a silver salver which his ain man presented, he pat them on for the dessert. The M'Nab, who, although an auld-fashioned carl, was aye fond of bringing something new hame to his friends, remarked the Englisher's proceeding with great care, and the next day he appeared at dinner wi' a huge pair of hieland mittens, which he wore to the astonishment of all and the amusement of most, through the whole three courses, and, exactly as the Englishman changed his gloves, the M'Nab produced a fresh pair of goat's wool, four times as large as the first, which, drawing on with prodigious gravity, he threw the others into the middle of the cloth, remarking, as he did so,

"'Ye see, Captain, we are never ower auld to learn.'

"All propriety was now at an end, and a hearty burst of laughter from one end of the table to the other convulsed the whole company; the M'Nab and the Englishman being the only persons who did not join in it, but sat glowering at each other like twa tigers; and, indeed, it needed a' the Montrose's interference that they had na' quarreled upon it in the morning."

"The M'Nab was a man after my own heart," said Maurice; "there was something very Irish in the lesson he gave the Englishman."

"I'd rather ye'd told him that than me," said the Doctor, dryly; "he would na hae thanked ye for mistaking him for ane of your countrymen."

"Come, Doctor!" said Dennis, "could not ye give us a stave? Have ye nothing that smacks of the brown fern and the blue lakes in your memory?"

"I have na a sang in my mind just noo except Johnny Cope; which maybe might na be ower pleasant for the Englishers to listen to."

"I never heard a Scotch song worth sixpence," quoth Maurice, who seemed bent on provoking the Doctor's ire. "They contain nothing save some puling sentimentality about lasses with lint-white locks, or some absurd laudations of the Barley Bree."

"Hear till him! hear till him!" said the Doctor, reddening with impatience.

"Show me anything," said Maurice, "like the Cruiskeen Lawn or the Jug of Punch; but who can blame them, after all? You can't expect much from a people with an imagination as naked as their own knees."

"Maurice! Maurice!" cried O'Shaughnessy, reprovingly, who saw that he was pushing the other's endurance beyond all bounds.

"I mind weel," said the Scotchman, "what happened to ane o' your countrymen wha took upon him to jest as you are doing now. It was to Laurie Cameron he did it."

"And what said the redoubted Laurie in reply?"

"He did na say muckle, but he did something."

"And what might it be?" inquired Maurice.

"He threw him ower the brig of Ayr into the water, and he was drowned."

"And did Laurie come to no harm about the matter?"

"Ay! they tried him for it, and found him guilty; but when they asked him what he had to say in his defense, he merely replied, 'When the carl sneered about Scotland, I did na suspect that he did na ken how to swim;' and so the end of it was, they did naething to Laurie."

"Cool that, certainly," said I.

"I prefer your friend with the mittens, I confess," said Maurice; "though I'm sure both were most agreeable companions. But come, Doctor, couldn't you give us,

"Sit ye down, my heartie, and gie us a crack,
Let the wind tak the care o' the world on his back."

"You maunna attempt English poethry, my freend Quell; for it must be confessed ye've a damnable accent of your ain."

"Milesian-Phœnician-Corkacian; nothing more, my boy; and a coaxing kind of recitative it is, after all. Don't tell me of your soft Etruscan—your plethoric *Hoch*-Deutsch—your flattering French. To woo

and win the girl of your heart, give me a rich brogue and the least taste in life of blarney! There's nothing like it, believe me—every inflection of your voice suggesting some tender pressure of her soft hand or taper waist; every cadence falling on her gentle heart like a sea-breeze on a burning coast, or a soft sirocco over a rose-tree; and then think, my boys—and it is a fine thought after all—what a glorious gift that is, out of the reach of kings to give or to take, what neither depends upon the act of Union nor the *Habeas Corpus*. No! they may starve us—laugh at us—tax us—transport us. They may take our mountains, our valleys, and our bogs; but, bad luck to them, they can't steal our 'blarney;' that's the privilege one and indivisible with our identity; and while an Englishman raves of his liberty—a Scotchman of his oaten meal—blarney's *our* birthright, and a prettier portion I'd never ask to leave behind me to my sons. If I'd as large a family as the ould gentleman called Priam we used to hear of at school, it's the only inheritance I'd give them; and one comfort there would be besides—the legacy duty would be only a trifle. Charley, my son, I see you're listening to me, and nothing satisfies me more than to instruct aspiring youth; so never forget the old song,

"If at your ease, the girls you'd please,
And win them, like Kate Kearney,
There's but one way, I've heard them say,
Go kiss the 'Stone of Blarney.'"

"What do you say, Shaugh, if we drink it with all the honors?"

"But gently: do I hear a trumpet there?"

"Ah, there go the bugles. Can it be daybreak already?"

"How short the nights are at this season!" said Quill.

"What an infernal rumpus they're making! it's not possible the troops are to march so early."

"It wouldn't surprise me in the least," quoth Maurice; "there is no knowing what the Commander-in-Chief's not capable of: the reason's clear enough."

"And why, Maurice?"

"There's not a bit of blarney about him."

The *réveil* sang out from every brigade, and the drums beat to fall in, while Mike came galloping up at full speed to say that the bridge of boats was completed, and that the Twelfth were already ordered to cross. Not a moment was therefore to be lost; one parting cup we drained to our next meeting, and amid a hundred "good-byes" we mounted our horses. Poor Hampden's brains sadly confused by the wine and the laughing, he knew little of what was going on around him, and passed the entire time of our homeward ride in a vain endeavor to adapt Mary Draper to the air of Rule Britannia.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

FUENTES D'ONORO.

From this period the French continued their retreat, closely followed by the allied armies, and on the 5th of April Massena once more crossed the frontier into Spain, leaving thirty thousand of his bravest troops behind him, fourteen thousand of whom had fallen, or been taken prisoners: reinforcements, however, came rapidly pouring in. Two divisions of the ninth corps had already arrived, and Drouet, with eleven thousand infantry and cavalry, was preparing to march to his assistance. Thus strengthened, the French army marched toward the Portuguese frontier, and Lord Wellington, who had determined not to hazard much by his blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo, fell back upon the large table-land beyond the Turones and the Dos Casas, with his left at Fort Conception, and his right resting upon Fuentes d'Onoro. His position extended to about five miles; and here, although vastly inferior in numbers, yet relying upon the bravery of the troops, and the moral ascendancy acquired by their pursuit of the enemy, he finally resolved upon giving them battle.

Being sent with dispatches to Pack's brigade, which formed the blockading force at Almeida, I did not reach Fuentes d'Onoro until the evening of the 3d. The thundering of the guns which, even at the distance I was at, was plainly heard, announced that an attack had taken place, but it by no means prepared me for the scene which presented itself on my return.

The village of Fuentes d'Onoro, one of the most beautiful in Spain, is situated in a lovely valley, where all the charms of verdure so peculiar to the Peninsula seemed to have been scattered with a lavish hand. The citron and the arbutus, growing wild, sheltered every cottage door, and the olive and the laurel threw their shadows across the little rivulet which traversed the village. The houses, observing no uniform arrangement, stood wherever the caprice or the inclination of the builder

suggested, surrounded with little gardens, the inequality of the ground imparting a picturesque feature to even the lowliest hut, while, upon a craggy eminence above the rest, an ancient convent and a ruined chapel looked down upon the little peaceful hamlet with an air of tender protection.

Hitherto, this lovely spot had escaped all the ravages of war. The light division of our army had occupied it for months long; and every family was gratefully remembered by some one or other of our officers; and more than one of our wounded found in the kind and affectionate watching of these poor peasants the solace which sickness rarely meets with when far from home and country.

It was, then, with an anxious heart I pressed my horse forward into a gallop as the night drew near. The artillery had been distinctly heard during the day, and, while I burned with eagerness to know the result, I felt scarcely less anxious for the fate of that little hamlet whose name many a kind story had implanted in my memory. The moon was shining brightly as I passed the outpost, and, leading my horse by the bridle, descended the steep and rugged causeway to the village beneath me. The lanterns were moving rapidly to and fro; the measured tread of infantry at night—that ominous sound, which falls upon the heart so sadly—told me that they were burying the dead. The air was still and breathless; not a sound was stirring save the step of the soldiery, and the harsh clash of the shovel as it struck the earth. I felt sad, and sick at heart, and leaned against a tree: a nightingale concealed in the leaves was pouring forth its plaintive notes to the night air, and its low warble sounded like the dirge of the departed. Far beyond, in the plain, the French watch-fires were burning, and I could see from time to time the fatigue-parties moving in search of their wounded. At this moment the clock of the convent struck eleven, and a merry chime rang out, and was taken up by the echoes, till it melted away in the distance. Alas! where were those whose hearts were wont to feel cheered at that happy peal? whose infancy it had gladdened, whose old age it has hallowed? The fallen walls, the broken roof-trees, the ruin and desolation on every side, told too plainly that they had passed away forever! The smoking embers, the torn-up pathway, denoted the hard-fought struggle; and, as I passed along, I could see that every garden, where the cherry and the apple-blossom were even still perfuming the air, had now its sepulcher.

"Halt, there!" cried a hoarse voice in front. "You cannot pass this way—the Commander-in-Chief's quarters."

I looked up, and beheld a small but neat-looking cottage, which seemed to have suffered less than the others around. Lights were shining brightly from the windows, and I could even detect from time to time a figure muffled up in a cloak, passing to and fro across the window; while another, seated at a table, was occupied in writing. I turned into a narrow path which led into the little square of the village, and here, as I approached, the hum and murmur of voices announced a bivouac party. Stopping to ask what had been the result of the day, I learned that a tremendous attack had been made by the French in column upon the village, which was at first successful; but that afterward the Seventy-first and Seventy-ninth, marching down from the heights, had repulsed the enemy, and driven them beyond the Dos Casas. Five hundred had fallen in that fierce encounter, which was continued through every street and alley of the little hamlet. The gallant Highlanders now occupied the battle-field; and, hearing that the cavalry brigade was some miles distant, I willingly accepted their offer to share their bivouac, and passed the remainder of the night among them.

When day broke, our troops were under arms, but the enemy showed no disposition to renew the attack. We could perceive, however, from the road to the southward, by the long columns of dust, that reinforcements were still arriving; and learned during the morning, from a deserter, that Massena himself had come up, and Bessières also, with twelve hundred cavalry, and a battery of the Imperial Guard.

From the movements observable in the enemy, it was soon evident that the battle, though deferred, was not abandoned; and the march of a strong force toward the left of their position induced our Commander-in-Chief to dispatch the seventh division, under Houston, to occupy the height of Naval d'Aver—our extreme right—in support of which our brigade of cavalry marched as a covering force. The British position was thus unavoidably extended to the enormous length of seven miles, occupying a succession of small eminences, from the division at Fort Conception to the height of Naval d'Aver,—Fuentes d'Onoro forming nearly the center of the line.

It was evident, from the thickening combinations of the French, that a more dreadful battle was still in reserve for us;

and yet never did men look more anxiously for the morrow.

As for myself, I felt a species of exhilaration I had never before experienced; the events of the preceding day came dropping in upon me from every side, and at every new tale of gallantry or daring I felt my heart bounding with excited eagerness to win also my meed of honorable praise.

Craufurd, too, had recognized me in the kindest manner; and, while saying that he did not wish to withdraw me from my regiment on a day of battle, added that he would make use of me for the present on his staff. Thus was I engaged, from early in the morning till late in the evening, bringing orders and dispatches along the line. The troop-horse I rode—for I reserved my gray for the following day—was scarcely able to carry me along, as toward dusk I jogged along in the direction of Naval d'Aver. When I did reach our quarters, the fires were lighted, and around one of them I had the good fortune to find a party of the Fourteenth occupied in discussing a very appetizing little supper. The clatter of plates and the popping of champagne corks were most agreeable sounds. Indeed, the latter appeared to me so much too flattering an illusion, that I hesitated giving credit to my senses in the matter, when Baker called out,

"Come, Charley, sit down; you're just in the nick. Tom Marsden is giving us a benefit. You know Tom?"

And here he presented me in due form to that best of commissaries and most hospitable of horse-dealers.

"I can't introduce you to my friend on my right," continued Baker, "for my Spanish is only a skeleton battalion: but he's a trump—that I'll vouch for; never flinches his glass, and looks as though he enjoyed all our nonsense."

The Spaniard, who appeared to comprehend that he was alluded to, gravely saluted me with a low bow, and offered his glass to hobnob with me. I returned the courtesy with becoming ceremony, while Hampden whispered in my ear,

"A fine-looking fellow. You know who he is? Julian, the Guerilla chief."

I had heard much of both the strangers. Tom Marsden was a household word in every cavalry brigade, equally celebrated was his contracts and his claret. He knew every one, from Lord Wellington to the last-joined cornet; and, while upon a march, there was no piece of better fortune than to be asked to dine with him. So, in the very thick of a battle, Tom's critical eye was scanning the squadrons engaged, with an accuracy as to the number of fresh horses that would be required upon the morrow that nothing but long practice and infinite coolness could have conferred.

Of the Guerilla I need not speak. The bold feats he accomplished, the aid he rendered to the cause of his country, have made his name historical. Yet still, with all this, fatigue, more powerful than my curiosity, prevailed, and I sank into a heavy sleep upon the grass, while my merry companions kept up their revels till near morning. The last piece of consciousness I am sensible of was seeing Julian spreading his wide mantle over me as I lay, while I heard his deep voice whisper a kind wish for my repose.

CHAPTER XC.

THE BATTLE OF FUENTES D'ONORO.

So soundly did I sleep, that the tumult and confusion of the morning never awoke me; and the Guerilla, whose cavalry were stationed along the edge of the ravine near the heights of Echora, would not permit of my being roused before the last moment. Mike stood near me with my horses, and it was only when the squadrons were actually forming that I sprang to my feet and looked around me.

The day was just breaking; a thick mist lay upon the parched earth, and concealed everything a hundred yards from where we stood. From this dense vapor the cavalry defiled along the base of the hill, followed by the horse artillery and the Guards, disappearing again as they passed us, but proving, by the mass of troops now assembled, that our position was regarded as the probable point of attack.

While the troops continued to take up their position, the sun shone out, and a slight breeze blowing at the same moment, the heavy clouds moved past, and we beheld the magnificent panorama of the battle-field. Before us, at the distance of less than half a league, the French cavalry were drawn up in three strong columns: the Cuirassiers of the Guard, plainly distinguished by their steel cuirasses, flanked by the Polish Lancers and a strong hussar brigade; a powerful artillery train supported the left, and an infantry force occupied the entire space between the right and the rising ground opposite Poço Velho. Farther to the right again the column destined for the attack of Fuentes d'Onoro

were forming, and we could see that, profiting by their past experience, they were bent upon attacking the village with an overwhelming force.

For above two hours the French continued to maneuver, more than one alteration having taken place in their disposition; fresh battalions were moved toward the front, and gradually the whole of their cavalry was assembled on the extreme left in front of our position. Our people were ordered to breakfast where we stood; and a little after seven o'clock a staff officer came riding down the line, followed in a few moments after by General Craufurd, when no sooner was his well-known brown cob recognized by the troops, than a hearty cheer greeted him along the whole division.

"Thank ye, boys; thank ye, boys, with all my heart. No man feels more sensibly what that cheer means than I do. Guards! Lord Wellington relies upon your maintaining this position, which is essential to the safety of the whole line. You will be supported by the light division. I need say no more. If such troops cannot keep their ground, none can. Fourteenth, there's your place; the artillery and the Sixteenth are with you. They've the odds of us in numbers, lads; but it will tell all the better in the *Gazette*. I see they're moving; so fall in, now, fall in; and, Merivale, move to the front. Ramsey, prepare to open your fire on the attacking squadrons."

As he spoke, the low murmuring sound of distantly-moving cavalry crept along the earth, growing louder and louder, till at length we could detect the heavy tramp of the squadrons as they came on in a trot, our pace being merely a walk. While we thus advanced into the plain, the artillery unlimbered behind us, and the Spanish cavalry breaking into skirmishers dashed boldly to the front.

It was an exciting moment. The ground dipped between the two armies, so as to conceal the head of the advancing column of the French, and, as the Spanish skirmishers disappeared down the ridge, our beating hearts and straining eyes followed their last horseman.

"Halt! halt!" was passed from squadron to squadron, and the same instant the sharp ring of the pistol-shots and the clash of steel from the valley told us the battle had begun. We could hear the Guerilla war-cry mingle with the French shout, while the thickening crash of fire-arms implied a sharper conflict. Our fellows were already manifesting some impatience to press on, when a Spanish horseman appeared above the ridge—another followed, and another—and then pell-mell, broken and disordered, they fell back before the pursuing cavalry in flying masses; while the French, charging them hotly home, utterly routed and repulsed them.

The leading squadrons of the French now fell back upon their support; the column of attack thickened, and a thundering noise between their masses announced their brigade of light guns as they galloped to the front. It was then for the first time that I felt dispirited; far as my eye could stretch the dense mass of sabres extended, defiling from the distant hills and winding its slow length across the plain. I turned to look at our line, scarce one thousand strong, and could not help feeling that our hour was come: the feeling flashed vividly across my mind, but the next instant I felt my cheek redden with shame as I gazed upon the sparkling eyes and bold looks around me—the lips compressed, the hands knitted to their sabres; all were motionless, but burning to advance.

The French had halted on the brow of the hill to form, when Merivale came cantering up to us.

"Fourteenth, are you ready? Are you ready, lads?"

"Ready, sir! ready!" re-echoed along the line.

"Then push them home and charge! Charge!" cried he, raising his voice to a shout at the last word.

Heavens! what a crash was there! Our horses, in top condition, no sooner felt the spur than they bounded madly onward. The pace—for the distance did not exceed four hundred yards—was like racing. To resist the impetus of our approach was impossible; and without a shot fired, scarcely a sabre-cut exchanged, we actually rode down their advanced squadrons—hurling them headlong upon their supporting division, and rolling men and horses beneath us on every side. The French fell back upon their artillery; but, before they could succeed in opening their fire upon us, we had wheeled, and, carrying off about seventy prisoners, galloped back to our position with the loss of but two men in the affair. The whole thing was so sudden, so bold, and so successful, that I remember well, as we rode back, a hearty burst of laughter was ringing through the squadron at the ludricous display of horsemanship the French presented as they tumbled headlong down the hill; and I cannot help treasuring the recollection, for, from that moment, all thought of

anything short of victory completely quitted my mind, and many of my brother officers who had participated in my feelings at the commencement of the day, confessed to me afterward, that it was then for the first time they felt assured of beating the enemy.

While we slowly fell back to our position, the French were seen advancing in great force from the village of Almeida, to the attack of Poço Velho; they came on at a rapid pace, the artillery upon their front and flank, large masses of cavalry hovering around them. The attack upon the village was now opened by the large guns; and, amid the booming of the artillery and the crashing volleys of small fire-arms, rose the shout of the assailants, and the wild cry of the Guerilla cavalry, who had formed in front of the village. The French advanced firmly, driving back the pickets, and actually inundated the devoted village with a shower of grape; the blazing fires burst from the ignited roofs; and the black, dense smoke rising on high, seemed to rest like a pall over the little hamlet.

The conflict was now a tremendous one; our seventh division held the village with the bayonet; but the French continuing to pour in mass upon mass, drove them back with loss, and, at the end of an hour's hard fighting, took possession of the place.

The wood upon the left flank was now seen to swarm with light infantry, and the advancement of their whole left proved that they meditated to turn our flank; the space between the village and the hill of Naval d'Aver became thus the central position; and here the Guerilla force, led on by Julian Sanches, seemed to await the French with confidence. Soon, however, the cuirassiers came galloping to the spot, and, almost without exchanging a sabre-cut, the Guerillas fell back, and retired behind the Turones. This movement of Julian was more attributable to anger than to fear; for his favorite lieutenant, being mistaken for a French officer, was shot by a soldier of the Guards a few minutes before.

Montbrun pursued the Guerillas with some squadrons of horse, but they turned resolutely upon the French, and not till overwhelmed by numbers did they show any disposition to retreat.

The French, however, now threw forward their whole cavalry, and, driving back the English horse, succeeded in turning the right of the seventh division. The battle by this time was general. The staff officers who came up from the left informed us that Fuentes d'Onoro was attacked in force, Massena himself leading the assault in person; while thus for seven miles the fight was maintained hotly at intervals, it was evident that upon the maintenance of our position the fortune of the day depended. Hitherto we had been repulsed from the village and the wood; and the dark masses of infantry which were assembled upon our right, seemed to threaten the hill of Naval d'Aver with as sad a catastrophe.

Craufurd came now galloping up amongst us, his eye flashing fire, and his uniform splashed and covered with foam:

"Steady, Sixteenth, steady! Don't blow your horses! Have your fellows advanced, Malcolm?" said he, turning to an officer who stood beside him. "Ay, there they go!" pointing with his finger to the wood, where, as he spoke, the short ringing of the British rifle proclaimed the advance of that brigade. "Let the cavalry prepare to charge! And now, Ramsey, let us give it them home!"

Scarcely were the words spoken, when the squadrons were formed, and, in an instant after, the French light infantry were seen retreating from the wood, and flying in disorderly masses across the plain. Our squadrons riding down amongst them, actually cut them to atoms, while the light artillery, unlimbering, threw in a deadly discharge of grape-shot.

"To the right, Fourteenth, to the right!" cried General Stewart. "Have at their hussars!"

Whirling by them, we advanced at a gallop, and dashed toward the enemy, who, not less resolutely bent, came boldly forward to meet us. The shock was terrific! the leading squadrons on both sides went down almost to a man, and, all order being lost, the encounter became one of hand to hand.

The struggle was deadly; neither party would give way; and, while fortune now inclined hither and thither, Sir Charles Stewart singled out the French General Lamotte, and carried him off his prisoner. Meanwhile, Montbrun's cavalry and the cuirassiers came riding up, and, the retreat now sounding through our ranks, we were obliged to fall back upon the infantry. The French pursued us hotly; and so rapid was their movement, that, before Ramsey's brigade could limber up and away, their squadrons had surrounded him and captured his guns.

"Where is Ramsey?" cried Craufurd, as he galloped to the head of our division.

"Cut off—cut off! Taken, by G—! There he goes!" said he, pointing with his finger, as a dense cloud of mingled smoke and dust moved darkly across the plain. "Form into column once more!"

As he spoke, the dense mass before us seemed agitated by some mighty commotion; the flashing of blades, and the rattling of small-arms, mingled with shouts of triumph or defiance, burst forth, and the ominous cloud, lowering more darkly, seemed peopled by those in deadly strife. An English cheer pealed high above all other sounds; a second followed; the mass was rent asunder, and, like the forked lightning from a thunder-cloud, Ramsey rode forth at the head of his battery, the horses bounding madly, while the guns sprang behind them like things of no weight; the gunners leaped to their places, and, fighting hand to hand with the French cavalry, they flew across the plain.

"Nobly done, gallant Ramsey!" said a voice behind me. I turned at the sound: it was Lord Wellington who spoke. My eye fixed upon his stern features, I forgot all else,—when he suddenly recalled me to my recollection by saying,

"Follow your brigade, sir. Charge!"

In an instant I was with my people, who, intervening betwixt Ramsey and his pursuers, repulsed the enemy with loss, and carried off several prisoners. The French, however, came up in greater strength; overwhelming masses of cavalry came sweeping upon us, and we were obliged to retire behind the light division, which rapidly formed into squares to resist the cavalry. The seventh division, which was more advanced, were, however, too late for this movement, and, before they could effect their formation, the French were upon them. At this moment they owed their safety to the Chasseurs Britanniques, who poured in a flanking fire, so close, and with so deadly an aim, that their foes recoiled, beaten and bewildered.

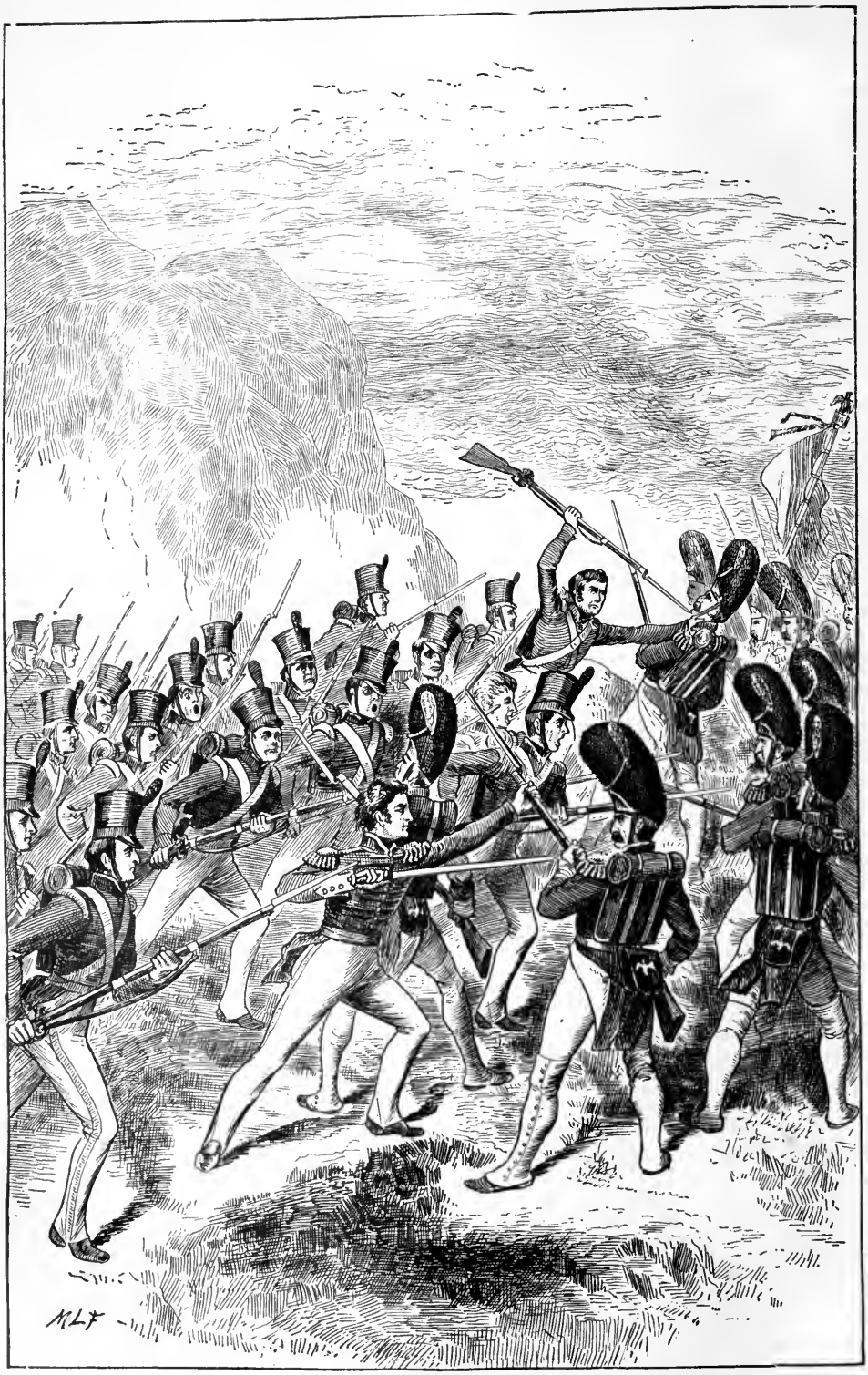
Meanwhile, the French had become masters of Poço Velho; the formidable masses had nearly outflanked us on the right. The battle was lost, if we could not fall back upon our original position, and concentrate our force upon Fuentes d'Onoro. To effect this was a work of great difficulty; but no time was to be lost. The seventh division were ordered to cross the Turones, while Craufurd, forming the light division into squares, covered their retreat, and, supported by the cavalry, sustained the whole force of the enemy's attack.

Then was the moment to witness the cool and steady bravery of British infantry: the squares dotted across the enormous plain seemed as nothing amid that confused and flying multitude, composed of commissariat baggage, camp followers, peasants, and, finally, broken pickets and videttes arriving from the wood. A cloud of cavalry hovered and darkened around them; the Polish lancers shook their long spears, impatient of delay, and the wild huzzas burst momentarily from their squadrons as they waited for the word to attack. But the British stood firm and undaunted; and, although the enemy rode round their squares, Montbrun himself at their head, they never dared to charge them. Meanwhile, the seventh division fell back, as if on a parade, and, crossing the river, took up their ground at Frenada, pivoting upon the first division; the remainder of the line fell also back, and assumed a position at right angles with their former one, the cavalry forming in front, and holding the French in check during the movement. This was a splendid maneuver, and, when made in face of an overnumbering enemy, one unmatched during the whole war.

At sight of this new front the French stopped short, and opened a fire from their heavy guns. The British batteries replied with vigor, and silenced the enemy's cannon. The cavalry drew out of range, and the infantry gradually fell back to their former position. While this was going on, the attack upon Fuentes d'Onoro was continued with unabated vigor. The three British regiments in the lower town were pierced by the French tirailleurs, who poured upon them in overwhelming numbers; the Seventy-ninth were broken, ten companies taken, and Cameron, their colonel, mortally wounded. Thus the lower village was in the hands of the enemy, while from the upper town the incessant roll of musketry proclaimed the obstinate resistance of the British.

At this period our reserves were called up from the right, in time to resist the additional troops which Drouet continued to bring on. The French, reinforced by the whole sixth corps, now came forward at a quick-step. Dashing through the ruined streets of the lower town, they crossed the rivulet, fighting bravely, and charged against the height. Already their leading files had gained the crag beside the chapel. A French colonel, holding his cap upon his sword-point, waved on his men.

The grizzly features of the grenadiers soon appeared, and the dark column, half climbing, half running, were seen scaling



"THAT WAS AN IRISH SHOUT! THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH ARE AT THEM!" (P. 909.)

the height. A rifle-bullet sent the French leader tumbling from the precipice; and a cheer—mad and reckless as the war-cry of an Indian—rent the sky, as the 71st and 79th Highlanders sprang upon the enemy.

Our part was a short one; advancing in half squadrons, we were concealed from the observation of the enemy by the thick vineyards which skirted the lower town; waiting, with impatience, the moment when our gallant infantry should succeed in turning the tide of battle. We were ordered to dismount, and stood with our bridles on our arms, anxious and expectant. The charge of the French column was made close to where we were standing—the inspiriting cheers of the officers, the loud *vivas* of the men, were plainly heard by us as they rushed to the assault; but the space between us was intersected by walls and brushwood, which totally prevented the movements of cavalry.

Fearlessly their dark column moved up the heights, fixing the bayonets as they went. No tirailleurs preceded them, but the tall shako of the Grenadier of the Guard was seen in the first rank. Long before the end of the column had passed us, the leading files were in action. A deafening peal of musketry—so loud, so dense, it seemed like artillery—burst forth. A volume of black smoke rolled heavily down from the heights and hid all from our view, except when the vivid lightning of the platoon firing rent the vail asunder, and showed us the troops almost in hand to hand conflict.

"It's Picton's division, I'm certain," cried Merivale; "I hear the bag-pipes of the Highlanders."

"You are right, sir," said Hampden, "the Seventy-first are in the same brigade, and I know their bugles well. There they go again!"

"Fourteenth! Fourteenth!" cried a voice from behind, and at the same moment, a staff officer without his hat, and his horse bleeding from a recent sabre-cut, came up. "You must move to the rear, Colonel Merivale; the French have gained the heights! Move round by the causeway—bring up your squadrons as quickly as you can, and support the infantry!"

In a moment we were in our saddles; but scarcely was the word "to fall in" given, when a loud cheer rent the very air; the musketry seemed suddenly to cease, and the dark mass which continued to struggle up the heights wavered, broke, and turned.

"What can that be?" said Merivale. "What can it mean?"

"I can tell you, sir," said I, proudly, while I felt my heart beat as though it would bound from my bosom.

"And what is it, boy? Speak!"

"There it goes again. That was an Irish shout! The Eighty-eighth are at them!"

"By Jove! here they come!" said Hampden. "God help the Frenchmen now!"

The words were not well spoken, when the red coats of our gallant fellows were seen dashing through the vineyard.

"The steel, boys—nothing but the steel!" shouted a loud voice from the crag above our heads.

I looked up. It was the stern Picton himself who spoke.

The Eighty-eighth now led the pursuit, and sprang from rock to rock in all the mad impetuosity of battle; and like some mighty billow rolling before the gale, the French went down the heights.

"Gallant Eighty-eighth! Gloriously done!" cried Picton, as he waved his hat.

"Aren't we Connaught robbers, now?" shouted a rich brogue, as its owner, breathless and bleeding, pressed forward in the charge.

A hearty burst of laughter mingled with the din of the battle.

"Now for it, boys! Now for *our* work!" said old Merivale, drawing his sabre as he spoke. "Forward! and charge!"

We waited not a second bidding, but bursting from our concealment, galloped down into the broken column. It was no regular charge, but an indiscriminate rush. Scarcely offering resistance, the enemy fell beneath our sabres, or the still more deadly bayonets of the infantry, who were inextricably mingled up in the conflict.

The chase was followed up for above half a mile, when we fell back, fortunately, in good time; for the French had opened a heavy fire from their artillery, and, regardless of their own retreating column, poured a shower of grape among our squadrons. As we retired, the struggling files of the Rangers joined us—their faces and accoutrements blackened and begrimed with powder; many of them, themselves wounded, had captured prisoners; and one huge fellow of the grenadier company was seen driving before him a no less powerful Frenchman, and to whom, as he turned from time to time reluctantly, and scowled upon his jailer, the other vociferated some Irish imprecation, whose harsh intentions were made most palpably evident by a flourish of a drawn bayonet.

"Who is he?" said Mike; "who is he, ahagur?"

"Sorra one o' me knows," said the other; "but it's the chap that shot Lieutenant Mahony, and I never took my eye off him after; and if the lieutenant's not dead, sure it'll be a satisfaction to him that I cotch him."

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The lower town was now evacuated by the French, who retired beyond the range of our artillery; the upper continued in the occupation of our troops; and, worn out and exhausted, surrounded by dead and dying, both parties abandoned the contest—and the battle was over.

Both sides laid claim to the victory: the French, because, having taken the village of Poço Velho, they had pierced the British line, and compelled them to fall back and assume a new position; the British, because the attack upon Fuentes d'Onoro had been successfully resisted, and the blockade of Almeida—the real object of the battle—maintained. The loss to each was tremendous: fifteen hundred men and officers, of whom three hundred were prisoners, were lost by the allies, and a far greater number fell among the forces of the enemy.

After the action, a brigade of the light division released the troops in the village, and the armies bivouacked once more in sight of each other.

CHAPTER XCI.

A RENCONTRE.

"LIEUTENANT O'MALLEY, 14th Light Dragoons, to serve as extra aide-de-camp to Major-General Craufurd, until the pleasure of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent is known." Such was the first paragraph of a general order, dated Fuentes d'Onoro, the day after the battle, which met me as I awoke from a sound and heavy slumber, the result of thirteen hours on horseback.

A staff appointment was not exactly what I desired at the moment; but I knew that with Craufurd my duties were more likely to be at the pickets and advanced posts of the army, than in the mere details of note-writing or dispatch-bearing; besides that, I felt, whenever anything of importance was to be done, I should always obtain his permission to do duty with my regiment.

Taking a hurried breakfast, therefore, I mounted my horse, and cantered over to Villa Formosa, where the General's quarters were, to return my thanks for the promotion, and take the necessary steps for assuming my new functions.

Although the sun had risen about two hours, the fatigue of the previous day had impressed itself upon all around. The cavalry, men and horses, were still stretched upon the sward, sunk in sleep; the videttes, weary and tired, seemed anxiously watching for the relief, and the disordered and confused appearance of everything bespoke that discipline had relaxed its stern features, in compassion for the bold exertions of the preceding day. The only contrast to this general air of exhaustion and weariness on every side was a corps of sappers, who were busily employed upon the high grounds above the village. Early as it was, they seemed to have been at work some hours—at least so their labors bespoke; for already a rampart of considerable extent had been thrown up, stockades implanted, and a breastwork was in a state of active preparation. The officer of the party, wrapped up in a loose cloak, and mounted upon a sharp-looking hackney, rode hither and thither, as the occasion warranted, and seemed, as well as from the distance I could guess, something of a tartar. At least I could not help remarking how, at his approach, the several inferior officers seemed suddenly so much more on the alert, and the men worked with an additional vigor and activity. I stopped for some minutes to watch him, and seeing an engineer captain of my acquaintance among the party, couldn't resist calling out:

"I say, Hachard, your friend on the chestnut mare must have had an easier day yesterday than some of us, or I'll be hanged if he'd be so active this morning." Hachard hung his head in some confusion, and did not reply; and, on my looking round, whom should I see before me but the identical individual I had so coolly been criticising, and who, to my utter horror and dismay, was no other than Lord Wellington himself. I did not wait for a second peep. Helter-shelter, through water, thickets, and brambles, away I went, clattering down the causeway like a madman. If a French squadron had been behind me, I should have had a stouter heart, although I did not fear pursuit. I felt his eye was upon me—his sharp and piercing glance, that shot like an arrow into me; and his firm look stared at me in every object around.

Onward I pressed, feeling in the very recklessness of my course some relief to my sense of shame, and ardently hoping that some accident—some smashed arm, or broken collar-bone—might befall me, and rescue me from any notice my conduct might otherwise call for. I never drew rein till I reached the Villa Formosa, and pulled up short at a small cottage, where a double sentry apprised me of the General's quarters. As I came up, the low lattice sprang quickly open, and a figure, half dressed and more than half asleep, protruded his head.

"Well! what has happened? Anything wrong?" said he, whom I now recognized to be General Craufurd.

"No; nothing wrong, sir," stammered I, with evident confusion. "I'm merely come to thank you for your kindness in my behalf."

"You seemed in a devil of a hurry to do it, if I'm to judge by the pace you came at. Come in and take your breakfast with us; I shall be dressed presently, and you'll meet some of your brother aides-de-camp."

Having given my horse to an orderly, I walked into a little room, whose humble accommodations and unpretending appearance seemed in perfect keeping with the simple and unostentatious character of the General. The preparations for a good and substantial breakfast were, however, before me; and an English newspaper of a late date spread its most ample pages to welcome me. I had not been long absorbed in my reading, when the door opened, and the General, whose toilet was not yet completed, made his appearance.

"Egad, O'Malley, you startled me this morning. I thought we were in for it again."

I took this as the most seasonable opportunity to recount my mishap of the morning, and accordingly, without more ado, detailed the unlucky meeting with the Commander-in-Chief. When I came to the end, Craufurd threw himself into a chair and laughed till the very tears coursed down his bronzed features.

"You don't say so, boy? You don't really tell me you said that? By Jove! I had rather have faced a platoon of musketry than have stood in your shoes! You did not wait for a reply, I think?"

"No, faith, sir, that I did not!"

"Do you suspect he knows you?"

"I trust not, sir; the whole thing passed so rapidly?"

"Well, it's most unlucky, in more ways than one!" He paused for a few moments as he said this, and then added, "Have you seen the general order?" pushing toward me a written paper as he spoke. It ran thus:

"G. O. "Adjutant-General's Office,
Villa Formosa, May 6, 1811.

"*Memorandum.*—Commanding officers are requested to send in to the Military Secretary, as soon as possible, the names of officers they may wish to have promoted in succession to those who have fallen in action."

"Now, look at this list. The Honorable Harvey Howard, Grenadier Guards, to be First Lieutenant, *vice*— No, not that: Henry Beauchamp—George Villiers—Ay, here it is! Captain Lyttleton, 14th Light Dragoons, to be Major in the 3d Dragoon Guards, *vice* Godwin, killed in action; Lieutenant O'Malley to be Captain, *vice* Lyttleton, promoted. You see, boy, I did not forget you: you were to have had the vacant troop in your own regiment. Now, I almost doubt the prudence of bringing your name under Lord Wellington's notice. He may have recognized you; and, if he did so—why, I rather think—that is, I suspect—I mean, the quieter you keep the better."

While I poured forth my gratitude as warmly as I was able for the General's great kindness to me, I expressed my perfect concurrence in his views.

"Believe me, sir," said I, "I should much rather wait any number of years for my promotion, than incur the risk of a reprimand; the more so, as it is not the first time I have blundered with his Lordship." I here narrated my former meeting with Sir Arthur, at which Craufurd's mirth again burst forth, and he paced the room, holding his sides in an ecstasy of merriment.

"Come, come, lad, we'll hope for the best; we'll give you the chance that he has not seen your face, and send the list forward as it is: but here come our fellows."

As he spoke, the door opened, and three officers of his staff entered, to whom, being severally introduced, we chatted away about the news of the morning until breakfast.

"I've frequently heard of you from my friend Hammersley," said Captain Fitzroy, addressing me; "you were intimately acquainted, I believe?"

"Oh yes! Pray where is he now? We have not met for a long time?"

"The poor fellow's invalided; that sabre-cut upon his head has turned out a sad affair, and he's gone back to England

on a sick leave. Old Dashwood took him back with him as private secretary, or something of that sort."

"Ah!" said another, "Dashwood has daughters, hasn't he? No bad notion of his; for Hammersley will be a baronet some of these days, with a rent-roll of eight or nine thousand per annum."

"Sir George Dashwood," said I, "has but one daughter, and I am quite sure that in his kindness to Hammersley no intentions of the kind you mention were mixed up."

"Well, I don't know," said the third, a pale, sickly youth, with handsome but delicate features. "I was on Dashwood's staff until a few weeks ago, and certainly I thought there was something going on between Hammersley and Miss Lucy, who, be it spoken, is a devilish fine girl, though rather disposed to give herself airs."

I felt my cheek and my temples boiling like a furnace; my hand trembled as I lifted my coffee to my lips; and I would have given my expected promotion twice over to have had any reasonable ground of quarrel with the speaker.

"Egad, lads," said Craufurd, "that's the very best thing I know about a command. As a bishop is always sure to portion off his daughters with deaneries and rectories, so your knowing old general always marries his among his staff."

This sally was met with the ready laughter of the subordinates, in which, however little disposed, I was obliged to join.

"You are quite right, sir," rejoined the pale youth; "and Sir George has no fortune to give his daughter."

"How came it, Horace, that you got off safe?" said Fitzroy, with a certain air of affected seriousness in his voice and manner; "I wonder they let such a prize escape them."

"Well, it was not exactly their fault, I do confess. Old Dashwood did the civil toward me; and *la belle Lucie* herself was condescending enough to be less cruel than to the rest of the staff. Her father threw us a good deal together; and, in fact, I believe—I fear—that is—that I didn't behave quite well."

"You may rest perfectly assured of it, sir," said I; "whatever your previous conduct may have been, you have completely relieved your mind on this occasion, and behaved most shamefully!"

Had a shell fallen in the midst of us, the faces around me could not have been more horror-struck, than when, in a cool, determined tone, I spoke these few words. Fitzroy pushed his chair slightly back from the table, and fixed his eyes full upon me. Craufurd grew dark purple over his whole face and forehead, and looked from one to the other of us, without speaking; while the Honorable Horace Delawar, the individual addressed, never changed a muscle of his wan and sickly features, but lifting his eyes slowly from his muffin, lisped softly out,

"You think so? How very good!"

"General Craufurd," said I, the moment I could collect myself sufficiently to speak, "I am deeply grieved that I should so far have forgotten myself as to disturb the harmony of your table; but when I tell you that Sir George Dashwood is one of my warmest friends on earth; that from my intimate knowledge of him, I am certain that gentleman's statements are either the mere outpourings of folly, or worse—"

"By Jove, O'Malley, you have a very singular mode of explaining away the matter. Delawar, sit down again. Gentlemen, I have only one word to say about this transaction: I'll have no squabbles nor broils here; from this room to the guard-house is a five minutes' walk. Promise me, upon your honors, this altercation ends here, or, as sure as my name's Craufurd, you shall both be placed under arrest, and the man who refuses to obey me shall be sent back to England."

Before I well knew in what way to proceed, Mr. Delawar rose and bowed formally to the General, while I imitated his example; silently we resumed our places, and, after a pause of a few moments, the current of conversation was renewed, and other topics discussed, but with such evident awkward talk and constraint, that all parties felt relieved when the General rose from the table.

"I say, O'Malley, have you forwarded the returns to the Adjutant-General's office?"

"Yes, sir; I dispatched them this morning before leaving my quarters."

"I am glad of it; the irregularities on this score have called forth a heavy reprimand at head-quarters."

I was also glad of it, and it chanced that by mere accident I remembered to charge Mike with the papers, which, had they not been lying unsealed upon the table before me, would, in all likelihood, have escaped my attention. The post started to Lisbon that same morning, to take advantage of which I had set up writing for half the night. Little was I aware at the moment what a mass of trouble and annoyance was in store for me from the circumstance.

CHAPTER XCII.

ALMEIDA.

On the morning of the 7th we perceived, from a movement in the French camp, that the wounded were being sent to the rear, and shortly afterward the main body of their army commenced its retreat. They moved with slow, and, as it were, reluctant steps; and Bessières, who commanded the Imperial Guard, turned his eyes more than once to that position which all the bravery of his troops was unavailing to capture. Although our cavalry lay in force to the front of our line, no attempt was made to molest the retreating French; and Massena, having retired beyond the Aguada, left a strong force to watch the ford, while the remainder of the army fell back upon Ciudad Rodrigo.

During this time we had succeeded in fortifying our position at Fuentes d'Onoro so strongly as to resist any new attack, and Lord Wellington now turned his whole attention to the blockade of Almeida, which, by Massena's retreat, was abandoned to its fate.

On the morning of the 10th I accompanied General Craufurd in a reconnaissance of the fortress, which, from the intelligence we had lately received, could not much longer hold out against our blockade. The fire from the enemy's artillery was, however, hotly maintained; and, as night fell, some squadrons of the Fourteenth, who were picketed near, were unable to light their watch-fires, being within reach of their shot. As the darkness increased, so did the cannonade, and the bright flashes from the walls, and the deep booming of the artillery, became incessant.

A hundred conjectures were afloat to account for the circumstance; some asserting that what we heard were mere signals to Massena's army; and others, that Brennier was destroying and mutilating the fortress before he evacuated it to the allies.

It was a little past midnight when, tired from the fatigues of the day, I had fallen asleep beneath a tree, an explosion, louder than any which preceded it, burst suddenly forth, and, as I awoke and looked about me, I perceived the whole heavens illuminated by one bright glare, while the crashing noise of falling stones and crumbling masonry told me that a mine had been sprung: the moment after all was calm, and still, and motionless; a thick black smoke increasing the somber darkness of the night, shut out every star from view, and some drops of heavy rain began to fall.

The silence, ten times more appalling than the din which preceded it, weighed heavily upon my senses, and a dread of some unknown danger crept over me; the exhaustion, however, was greater than my fear, and again I sang into slumber.

Scarcely had I been half an hour asleep, when the blast of a trumpet again awoke me, and I found, amid the confusion and excitement about, that something of importance had occurred. Questions were eagerly asked on all sides, but no one could explain what had happened. Toward the town all was still as death, but a dropping, irregular fire of musketry issued from the valley beside the Aguada. "What can this mean? what can it be?" we asked of each other. "A sortie from the garrison," said one; "A night attack by Massena's troops," cried another; and, while thus we disputed and argued, a horseman was heard advancing along the road at the top of his speed.

"Where are the cavalry?" cried a voice I recognized as one of my brother aides-de-camp. "Where are the Fourteenth?"

A cheer from our party answered this question, and the next moment, breathless and agitated, he rode in amongst us.

"What is it? are we attacked?"

"Would to Heaven that were all! But come along, lads, follow me."

"What can it be, then?" said I again; while my anxiety knew no bounds.

"Brennier has escaped; burst his way through Pack's division, and has already reached Valde Mula."

"The French have escaped!" was repeated from mouth to mouth; while, pressing spurs to our horses, we broke into a gallop, and dashed forward in the direction of the musketry. We soon came up with the 36th Infantry, who, having thrown away their knapsacks, were rapidly pressing the pursuit. The maledictions which burst from every side proved how severely the misfortune was felt by all, while the eager advance of the men bespoke how ardently they longed to repair the mishap.

Dark as was the night, we passed them in a gallop, when suddenly the officer who commanded the leading squadron called out to halt.

"Take care there, lads!" cried he; "I hear the infantry before us; we shall be down upon our own people."

The words were hardly spoken, when a bright flash blazed out before us, and a smashing volley was poured into the squadron.

"The French! the French, by Jove!"

said Hampden. "Forward, boys! charge them!"

Breaking into open order, to avoid our wounded comrades, several of whom had fallen by the fire, we rode down amongst them. In a moment their order was broken, their ranks pierced, and, fresh squadrons coming up at the instant, they were sabred to a man.

After this the French pursued their march in silence, and, even when assembling in force we rode down upon their squares, they never halted nor fired a shot. At Barba del Puerco, the ground being unfit for cavalry, the Thirty-sixth took our place, and pressed them hotly home. Several of the French were killed, and above three hundred made prisoners, but our fellows following up the pursuit too rashly, came upon an advanced body of Massena's force, drawn up to await and cover Brennier's retreat; the result was the loss of above thirty men in killed and wounded.

Thus were the great efforts of the three preceding days rendered fruitless and nugatory. To maintain this blockade, Lord Wellington, with an inferior force, and a position by no means strong, had ventured to give the enemy battle; and now, by the unskillfulness of some and the negligence of others, were all his combinations thwarted, and the French General enabled to march his force through the midst of the blockading columns almost unmolested and uninjured.

Lord Wellington's indignation was great, as well it might be; the prize for which he had contested was torn from his grasp at the very moment he had won it, and, although the gallantry of the troops in the pursuit might, under other circumstances, have called forth eulogium, his only observation on the matter was a half-sarcastic allusion to the inconclusive effects of undisciplined bravery. "Notwithstanding," says the general order of the day, "what has been printed in gazettes and newspapers, we have never seen small bodies, unsupported, successfully opposed to large; nor has the experience of any officer realized the stories which all have read, of whole armies being driven by a handful of light infantry and dragoons."

CHAPTER XCIII.

THE NIGHT ON THE AZAVA.

Massena was now recalled, and Marmont having assumed the command of the French army, retired toward Salamanca, while our troops went into cantonments upon the Aguada. A period of inaction succeeded to our previous life of bustle and excitement, and the whole interest of the campaign was now centered in Beresford's army, exposed to Soult in Estramadura.

On the 15th, Lord Wellington set out for that province, having already directed a strong force to march upon Badajos.

"Well, O'Malley," said Craufurd, as he returned from bidding Lord Wellington good-by, "your business is all right; the Commander-in-Chief has signed my recommendation, and you will get your troop."

While I continued to express my grateful acknowledgments for his kindness, the General, apparently inattentive to all I was saying, paced the room with hurried steps, stopping every now and then to glance at a large map of Spain which covered one wall of the apartment, while he muttered to himself some broken and disjointed sentences.

"Eight leagues—too weak in cavalry—with the left upon Fuenta Grenaldo—a strong position. O'Malley, you'll take a troop of dragoons and patrol the country toward Castro; you'll reconnoiter the position the sixth corps occupies, but avoid any collision with the enemy's pickets, keeping the Azava between you and them. Take rations for three days."

"When shall I set out, sir?"

"Now!" was the reply.

Knowing with what pleasure the hardy veteran recognized anything like alacrity and dispatch, I resolved to gratify him; and, before half an hour had elapsed, was ready with my troop to receive his final orders.

"Well done, boy!" said he, as he came to the door of the hut, "you've lost no time. I don't believe I have any further instructions to give you; to ascertain as far as possible the probable movement of the enemy is my object, that's all." As he spoke this, he waved his hand, and wishing me "Good-by," walked leisurely back into the house. I saw that his mind was occupied by other thoughts; and, although I desired to obtain some more accurate information for my guidance, knowing his dislike to questions, I merely returned his salute, and set forth upon my journey.

The morning was beautiful; the sun had risen about an hour, and the earth, refreshed by the heavy dew of the night, was breathing forth all its luxuriant fragrance. The river, which flowed beside us, was clear as crystal, showing beneath its eddying current the shining, pebbly

bed, while, upon the surface, the water-lilies floated or sank, as the motion of the stream inclined. The tall cork-trees spread their shadows about us, and the richly plumed birds hopped from branch to branch, awaking the echoes with their notes.

It is but seldom that the heart of man is thoroughly attuned to the circumstances of the scenery around him. How often do we need a struggle with ourselves to enjoy the rich and beautiful landscape which lies smiling in its freshness before us! How frequently do the blue sky and the calm air look down upon the heart darkened and shadowed with affliction! And how often have we felt the discrepancy between the lowering look of winter and the glad sunshine of our hearts! The harmony of the world without with our thoughts within is one of the purest, as it is one of the greatest, sources of happiness. Our hopes and our ambitions lose their selfish character when, feeling that fortune smiles upon us from all around, and the flattery which speaks to our hearts from the bright stars and the blue sky, the peaked mountain, or the humble flower, is greater in its mute eloquence than all the tongue of man can tell us.

This feeling did I experience in all its fullness, as I ruminated upon my bettered fortunes, and felt within myself that secret instinct that tells of happiness to come. In such moods of mind my thoughts strayed ever homeward, and I could not help confessing how little were all my successes in my eyes, did I not hope for the day when I should pour forth my tale of war and battle-field to the ears of those who loved me.

I resolved to write home at once to my uncle. I longed to tell him each incident of my career, and my heart glowed as I thought over the broken and disjointed sentences which every cottier around would whisper of my fortunes, far prouder as they would be in the humble deeds of one they knew, than in the proudest triumphs of a nation's glory.

Indeed, Mike himself gave the current to my thoughts. After riding beside me for some time in silence, he remarked,

"And isn't it Father Rush will be proud when he sees your honor's a captain; to think of the little boy that he used to take before him on the ould gray mare for a ride down the avenue; to think of him being a real captain, six feet two without his boots, and galloping over the French as if they were lurchers! Peggy Mahon, that nursed you, will be the proud woman the day she hears it; and there won't be a soldier sober in his quarters that night in Portumna barracks! 'Pon my soul, there's not a thing with a red coat on it, if it was even a scarecrow to frighten the birds from the barley, that won't be treated with respect when they hear of the news."

The country through which we traveled was marked at every step by the traces of a retreating army; the fields of rich corn lay flattened beneath the tramp of cavalry, or the wheels of the baggage-wagons; the roads, cut up and nearly impassable, were studded here and there with marks which indicated a bivouac; at the same time, everything around bore a very different aspect from what we had observed in Portugal; there, the vindictive cruelty of the French soldiery had been seen in full sway. The ruined châteaux, the burned villages, the desecrated altars, the murdered peasantry,—all attested the revengeful spirit of a beaten and baffled enemy. No sooner, however, had they crossed the frontiers, than, as if by magic, their character became totally changed. Discipline and obedience succeeded to recklessness and pillage; and, instead of treating the natives with inhumanity and cruelty, in all their intercourse with the Spaniards the French behaved with moderation and even kindness. Paying for everything, obtaining their billets peaceably and quietly, marching with order and regularity, they advanced into the heart of the country, showing, by the most irrefragable proof, the astonishing evidences of a discipline which, by a word, could convert the lawless irregularities of a ruffian soldiery into the orderly habits and obedient conduct of a highly-organized army.

As we neared the Azava, the tracks of the retiring enemy became gradually less perceptible, and the country, uninjured by the march, extended for miles around us in all the richness and abundance of a favored climate. The tall corn waving its yellow gold, reflected like a sea the clouds that moved slowly about it. The wild gentian and the laurel grew thickly around, and the cattle stood basking in the clear streams, while some listless peasant lounged upon the bank beside them. Strange as all these evidences of peace and tranquillity were, so near to the devastating track of a mighty army, yet I have more than once witnessed the fact, and remarked how, but a short distance from the line of our hurried march, the country lay untouched and uninjured; and though the clank of arms and the dull roll of the artillery may have struck upon the ear of the far-off

dweller in his native valley, he listened as he would have done to the passing thunder as it crashed above him; and when the bright sky and pure air succeeded to the lowering atmosphere and the darkening storm, he looked forth upon his smiling fields and happy home, while he muttered to his heart a prayer of thanksgiving that the scourge was passed.

We bivouacked upon the bank of the river, a truly Salvator Rosa scene; the rocks, towering high above us, were fissured by the channel of many a trickling stream, seeking, in its zigzag current, the bright river below. The dark pine-tree and the oak mingled their foliage with the graceful cedar, which spread its fan-like branches about us. Through the thick shade some occasional glimpses of a starry sky could yet be seen, and a faint yellow streak upon the silent river told that the queen of night was there.

When I had eaten my frugal supper, I wandered forth alone upon the bank of the stream, now standing to watch its bold sweeps as it traversed the lonely valley before me, now turning to catch a passing glance at our red watch-fires, and the hardy features which sat around. The hoarse and careless laugh, the deep-toned voice of some old campaigner holding forth his tale of flood and field, were the only sounds I heard; and gradually I strolled beyond the reach of even these. The path beside the river, which seemed scarped from the rock, was barely sufficient for the passage of one man, a rude balustrade of wood being the only defense against the precipice, which, from a height of full thirty feet, looked down upon the stream. Here and there some broad gleam of moonlight would fall upon the opposite bank, which, unlike the one I occupied, stretched out into rich meadow and pasturage, broken by occasional clumps of ilex and beech. River scenery has been ever a passion with me; I can glory in the bold and broken outline of a mighty mountain; I can gaze with delighted eyes upon the boundless sea, and know not whether to like it more in all the mighty outpouring of its wrath, when the white waves lift their heads to heaven, and break themselves in foam upon the rocky beach, or in the calm beauty of its broad and mirrored surface, in which the bright world of sun and sky are seen full many a fathom deep. But far before these, I love the happy and tranquil beauty of some bright river, tracing its winding current through valley and through plain, now spreading into some calm and waveless lake, now narrowing to an eddying stream, with mossy rocks and waving trees darkening over it. There's not a hut, however lowly, where the net of the fisherman is stretched upon the sward, around whose hearth I do not picture before me the faces of happy toil and humble contentment, while, from the ruined tower upon the crag, methinks I hear the ancient sounds of wassail and of welcome; and though the keep be fissured and the curtain fallen, and though for banner there "waves some tall wall-flower," I can people its crumbling walls with images of the past; and the merry laugh of the warder, and the clanking tread of the mailed warrior, are as palpably before me as the tangled lichen that now trails from its battlements.

As I wandered on, I reached the little rustic stair which led downward from the path to the river side; and, on examining further, perceived that at this place the stream was fordable: a huge flat rock, filling up a great part of the river's bed, occupied the middle, on either side of which the current ran with increased force.

Bent upon exploring, I descended the cliff, and was preparing to cross, when my attention was attracted by the twinkle of a fire at some distance from me, on the opposite side; the flame rose and fell in fitful flashes, as though some hand were ministering to it at the moment. As it was impossible, from the silence on every side, that it could proceed from a bivouac of the enemy, I resolved on approaching it, and examining it for myself. I knew that the shepherds in remote districts were accustomed thus to pass the summer nights, with no other covering save the blue vault above them. It was not impossible, too, that it might prove a Guerilla party, who frequently, in small numbers, hang upon the rear of a retreating army. Thus conjecturing, I crossed the stream, and, quickening my pace, walked forward in the direction of the blaze. For a moment a projecting rock obstructed my progress; and, while I was devising some means of proceeding further, the sound of voices near me arrested my attention. I listened, and what was my astonishment to hear that they spoke in French. I now crept cautiously to the verge of the rock and looked over; the moon was streaming in its full brilliancy upon a little shelving strand beside the stream, and here I now beheld the figure of a French officer. He was habited in the undress uniform of a *chasseur à cheval*, but wore no arms; indeed, his occupation at the

moment was anything but a warlike one, he being leisurely employed in collecting some flasks of champagne which apparently had been left to cool within the stream.

"*Eh bien, Alphonse!*" said a voice in the direction of the fire, "what are you delaying for?"

"I'm coming, I'm coming," said the other; "but, *par Dieu!* I can only find five of our bottles; one seems to have been carried away by the stream."

"No matter," replied the other, "we are but three of us, and one is, or should be, on the sick list."

The only answer to this was the muttered chorus of a French drinking-song, interrupted at intervals by an imprecation upon the missing flask. It chanced, at this moment, that a slight clinking noise attracted me, and, on looking down, I perceived at the foot of the rock the prize he sought for. It had been, as he conceived, carried away by an eddy of the stream, and was borne, as a true prisoner of war, within my grasp. I avow that from this moment my interest in the scene became considerably heightened: such a waif as a bottle of champagne was not to be despised in circumstances like mine; and I watched with anxious eyes every gesture of the impatient Frenchman, and alternately vibrated between hope and fear, as he neared or receded from the missing flask.

"Let it go to the devil," shouted his companion once more. "Jacques has lost all patience with you."

"Be it so, then," said the other, as he prepared to take up his burden. At this instant I made a slight effort so to change my position as to obtain a view of the rest of the party. The branch by which I supported myself, however, gave way beneath my grasp with a loud crash. I lost my footing, and slipping downward from the rock, came plump into the stream below. The noise, the splash, and, more than all, the sudden appearance of a man beside him, astounded the Frenchman, who almost let fall his pannier, and thus we stood confronting each other for at least a couple of minutes in silence. A hearty burst of laughter from both parties terminated this awkward moment, while the Frenchman, with the readiness of his country, was the first to open the negotiation.

"*Sacré Dieu!*" said he, "what can you be doing here? You're English, without doubt."

"Even so," said I; "but that is the very question I was about to ask you; what are you doing here?"

"*Eh bien,*" replied the other, gayly, "you shall be answered in all frankness. Our captain was wounded in the action of the 8th, and we heard had been carried up the country by some peasants. As the army fell back, we obtained permission to go in search of him: for two days all was fruitless; the peasantry fled at our approach; and, although we captured some of our stolen property — among other things, the contents of this basket—yet we never came upon the track of our comrade till this evening. A good-hearted shepherd had taken him to his hut, and treated him with every kindness, but no sooner did he hear the gallop of our horses and the clank of our equipments, than, fearing himself to be made a prisoner, he fled up the mountains, leaving our friend behind him: *voilà notre histoire.* Here we are, three in all, one of us with a deep sabre-cut in his shoulder. If you are the stronger party, we are, I suppose, your prisoners; if not—"

What was to have followed I know not, for at this moment his companion, who had finally lost all patience, came suddenly to the spot.

"A prisoner," cried he, placing a heavy hand upon my shoulder, while with the other he held his drawn sword pointed toward my breast.

To draw a pistol from my bosom was the work of a second; and while gently turning the point of his weapon away, I coolly said,

"Not so fast, my friend, not so fast! The game is in my hands, not yours. I have only to pull this trigger, and my dragoons are upon you; whatever fate befall me, yours is certain."

A half-scornful laugh betrayed the incredulity of him I addressed, while the other, apparently anxious to relieve the awkwardness of the moment, suddenly broke in with,

"He is right, Auguste, and you are wrong; we are in his power; that is," added he, smiling, "if he believes there is any triumph in capturing such *pauvres diables* as ourselves."

The features of him he addressed suddenly lost their scornful expression, and sheathing his sword with an air of almost melodramatic solemnity, he gravely pulled up his moustaches, and, after a pause of a few seconds, solemnly ejaculated a malediction upon his fortune.

"*C'est toujours ainsi,*" said he, with a bitterness that only a Frenchman can convey when cursing his destiny. "*Soyez bon enfant,* and see what will come of it. Only be good-natured, only be kind, and if you

haven't bad luck at the end of it, it's only because fortune has a heavier stroke in reserve for you hereafter."

I could not help smiling at the Frenchman's philosophy, which, assuming as a good augury, he gayly said, "So, then, you'll not make us prisoners. Isn't it so?"

"Prisoners," said the other, "nothing of the kind. Come and sup with us; I'll venture to say our larder is as well stocked as your own: in any case an omelet, a cold chicken, and a glass of champagne are not bad things in our circumstances."

I could not help laughing outright at the strangeness of the proposal. "I fear I must decline," said I; "you seem to forget I am placed here to watch, not to join you."

"*A la bonne heure*," cried the younger of the two; "do both. Come along; *soyez bon camarade;* you are always near your own people, so don't refuse us."

In proportion as I declined, they both became more pressing in their entreaties, and, at last, I began to dread lest my refusal might seem to proceed from some fear as to the good faith of the invitation, and I never felt so awkwardly placed as when one plumply pressed me by saying,

"*Mais pourquoi pas, mon cher?*"

I stammered out something about duty and discipline, when they both interrupted me by a long burst of laughter.

"Come, come!" said they; "in an hour—in half an hour, if you will—you shall be back with your own people. We've had plenty of fighting latterly, and we are likely to have enough in future; we know something of each other by this time in the field; let us see how we get on in the bivouac!"

Resolving not to be outdone in generosity, I replied at once, "Here goes, then!"

Five minutes afterward I found myself seated at their bivouac fire. The captain, who was the oldest of the party, was a fine soldier-like fellow of some forty years old: he had served in the Imperial Guard through all the campaigns of Italy and Austria, and abounded in anecdotes of the French army. From him I learned many of those characteristic traits which so eminently distinguish the imperial troops, and saw how completely their bravest and boldest feats of arms depended upon the personal valor of him who led them on. From the daring enterprise of Napoleon at Lodi to the conduct of the lowest corporal in the *grande armée*, the picture presents nothing but a series of brilliant and splendid chivalry; while, at the same time, the warlike character of the nation is displayed by that instinctive appreciation of courage and daring which teaches them to follow their officers to the very cannon's mouth.

"It was at Elchingen," said the Captain, "you should have seen them. The regiment in which I was a lieutenant was ordered to form close column, and charge through a narrow ravine to carry a brigade of guns, which, by a flanking fire, were devastating our troops. Before we could reach the causeway, we were obliged to pass an open plain, in which the ground dipped for about a hundred yards; the column moved on, and, though it descended one hill, not a man ever mounted the opposite one. A very avalanche of balls swept the entire valley; and yet, amid the thunder and the smoke, the red glare of the artillery, and the carnage around them, our grenadiers marched firmly up. At last, Marshal Ney sent an aide-de-camp with orders to the troops to lay flat down, and in this position the artillery played over us for above half an hour. The Austrians gradually slackened, and finally discontinued their fire: this was the moment to resume the attack. I crept cautiously to my knees, and looked about. One word brought my men around me; but I found to my horror that, of a battalion who came into action fourteen hundred strong, not five hundred remained; and that I myself, a mere lieutenant, was now the senior officer of the regiment. Our gallant colonel lay dead beside my feet. At this instant a thought struck me. I remembered a habit he possessed, in moments of difficulty and danger, of placing in his shako a small red plume which he commonly carried in his belt. I searched for it, and found it. As I held it aloft, a maddening cheer burst around me, while from out the line each officer sprang madly forward, and rushed to the head of the column. It was no longer a march. With a loud cry of vengeance the mass rushed forward, the men trying to outstrip their officers, and come first in contact with the foe. Like tigers on the spring, they fell upon the enemy, who, crushed, overwhelmed, and massacred, lay in slaughtered heaps around the cannon. The cavalry of the Guard came thundering on behind us, a whole division followed, and three thousand five hundred prisoners, and fourteen pieces of artillery, were captured.

"I sat upon the carriage of a gun, my face begrimed with powder, and my uni-

form blackened and blood-stained. The whole thing appeared like some shocking dream. I felt a hand upon my shoulder, while a rough voice called in my ear, '*Capitaine du soixante-neuvième, tu es mon frère!*'

"It was Ney who spoke. This," added the brave Captain, his eyes filling as he said the words—"this is the sabre he gave me."

I know not why I have narrated this anecdote; it has little in itself, but, somehow, to me, it brings back in all its fullness the recollection of that night.

There was something so strongly characteristic of the old Napoleonist in the tone of his narrative that I listened throughout with breathless attention. I began to feel, too, for the first time, what a powerful arm in war the Emperor had created by fostering the spirit of individual enterprise. The field thus opened to fame and distinction left no bounds to the ambition of any. The humble conscript, as he tore himself from the embraces of his mother, wiped his tearful eyes to see before him in the distance the bâton of a marshal. The bold soldier who stormed a battery, felt his heart beat more proudly and more securely beneath the cordon of the Legion than behind a cuirass of steel, and to a people in whom the sense of duty alone would seem cold, barren, and inglorious, he had substituted a highly-wrought chivalrous enthusiasm, and, by the *prestige* of his own name, the proud memory of his battles, and the glory of those mighty tournaments at which all Europe were the spectators, he had converted a nation into an army.

By a silent and instinctive compact we appeared to avoid those topics of the campaign in which the honor of our respective arms was interested; and once when, by mere accident, the youngest of the party adverted to Fuentes d'Onoro, the old Captain adroitly turned the current of the conversation by saying, "Come, Alphonse, let's have a song."

"Yes," said the other, "*Le Pas de Charge.*"

"No, no," said the Captain; "if I am to have a choice, let it be that little Breton song you gave us on the Danube."

"So be it, then," said Alphonse. "Here goes!"

I have endeavored to convey, by a translation, the words he sang; but I feel conscious how totally their feeling and simplicity are lost when deprived of their own *patois*, and the wild but touching melody that accompanied them.

THE BRETON HOME.

"When the battle is o'er, and the sounds of fight
Have closed with the closing day,
How happy, around the watch-fire's light,
To chat the long hours away;
To chat the long hours away, my boy,
And talk of the days to come,
Or a better still, and a purer joy,
To think of our far-off home.

"How many a cheek will then grow pale,
That never felt a tear!
And many a stalwart heart will quail,
That never quailed in fear!
And the breast that, like some mighty rock
Amid the foaming sea,
Bore high against the battle's shock
Now heaves like infancy.

"And those who knew each other not,
Their hands together steal,
Each thinks of some long hallowed spot,
And all like brothers feel:
Such holy thoughts to all are given;
The lowliest has his part;
The love of home, like love of Heaven,
Is woven in our heart."

There was a pause as he concluded, each sank in his own reflections. How long we should have thus remained I know not; but we were speedily aroused from our reveries by the tramp of horses near us. We listened, and could plainly detect in their rude voices and coarse laughter the approach of a body of Guerillas. We looked from one to the other in silence and in fear. Nothing could be more unfortunate should we be discovered. Upon this point we were left little time to deliberate; for, with a loud cheer, four Spanish horsemen galloped up to the spot, their carbines in the rest. The Frenchmen sprang to their feet, and seized their sabres, bent upon making a resolute resistance. As for me, my determination was at once taken. Remaining quietly seated upon the grass, I stirred not for a moment, but, addressing him who appeared to be the chief of the Guerillas, said, in Spanish:

"These are my prisoners; I am a British officer of dragoons, and my party is yonder."

This evidently unexpected declaration seemed to surprise them, and they conferred for a few moments together. Meanwhile, they were joined by two others, in one of whom we could recognize, by his costume, the real leader of the party.

"I am captain in the light dragoons," said I, repeating my declaration.

"*Morte de Dios!*" replied he; "it is false; you are a spy!"

The word was repeated from lip to lip by his party, and I saw, in their lowering

locks and darkening features, that the moment was a critical one for me.

"Down with your arms!" cried he, turning to the Frenchmen. "Surrender yourselves our prisoners; I'll not bid ye twice!"

The Frenchmen turned upon me an inquiring look, as though to say that upon me now their hopes entirely reposed.

"Do as he bids you," said I; while at the same moment I sprang to my legs, and gave a loud, shrill whistle, the last echo of which had not died away in the distance ere it was replied to.

"Make no resistance now," said I to the Frenchmen; "our safety depends on this."

While this was passing, two of the Spaniards had dismounted, and, detaching a coil of rope which hung from their saddle-peak, were proceeding to tie the prisoners wrist to wrist; the others, with their carbines to the shoulder, covered us man by man, the chief of the party having singled out me as his peculiar prey.

"The fate of Mascarenhas might have taught you better," said he, "than to play this game." And then added, with a grim smile, "But we'll see if an Englishman will not make as good a carbonado as a Portuguese!"

This cruel speech made my blood run cold, for I knew well to what he alluded. I was at Lisbon at the time it happened, but the melancholy fate of Julian Mascarenhas, the Portuguese spy, had reached me there. He was burned to death at Torres Vedras!

The Spaniard's triumph over my terror was short-lived, indeed, for scarcely had the words fallen from his lips, when a party of the Fourteenth, dashing through the river at a gallop, came riding up. The attitude of the Guerillas, as they sat with presented arms, was sufficient for my fellows, who needed not the exhortation of him who rode foremost of the party:

"Ride them down, boys! Tumble them over! Flatten their broad beavers, the infernal thieves!"

"Whoop!" shouted Mike, as he rode at the chief, with the force of a catapult. Down went the Spaniard, horse and all; and, before he could disentangle himself, Mike was upon him, his knee pressed upon his neck.

"Isn't it enough for ye to pillage the whole country, without robbing the king's throops?" cried he, as he held him fast to the earth with one hand, while he presented a loaded pistol to his face.

By this time the scene around me was sufficiently ludicrous. Such of the Guerillas as had not been thrown by force from their saddles, had slid peaceably down, and depositing their arms upon the ground, dropped upon their knees in a semicircle around us, and, amid the hoarse laughter of the troopers and the irrepressible merriment of the Frenchmen, rose up the muttered prayers of the miserable Spaniards, who believed that now their last hour was come.

"*Madre de Dios*, indeed!" cried Mike, imitating the tone of a repentant old sinner, in a patched mantle; "it's much the blessed Virgin thinks of the like o' ye, thieves and rogues as ye are; it a'most puts me beyond my senses to see ye there crossing yourselves like *rale* Christians."

If I could not help indulging myself in this retributive cruelty toward the chief, and leaving him to the tender mercies of Mike, I ordered the others to rise and form in line before me. Affecting to occupy myself entirely with them, I withdrew the attention of all from the French officers, who remained quiet spectators of the scene around them.

"*Point de façons*, gentlemen," said I, in a whisper. "Get to your horses and away! now's your time. Good-by!"

A warm grasp of the hand from each was the only reply, and I turned once more to my discomfited friends, the Guerillas.

"There, Mike, let the poor devil rise. I confess appearances were strong against me just now."

"Well, Captain, are you convinced by this time that I was not deceiving you?"

The Guerilla muttered some words of apology between his teeth, and, while he shook the dust from his cloak, and arranged the broken feather of his hat, cast a look of scowling and indignant meaning upon Mike, whose rough treatment he had evidently not forgiven.

"Don't be looking at me that way, you black thief! or I'll—"

"Hold there!" said I; "no more of this. Come, gentlemen, we must be friends. If I mistake not, we've got something like refreshment at our bivouac. In any case you'll partake of our watch-fire till morning."

They gladly accepted our invitation, and ere half an hour elapsed Mike's performance in the part of host had completely erased every unpleasant impression his first appearance gave rise to; and as for myself, when I did sleep at last, the confused mixture of Spanish and Irish airs which issued from the thicket beside me, proved that a most intimate alliance had grown up between the parties.

CHAPTER XCIV.

MIKE'S MISTAKE.

An hour before daybreak the Guerillas were in motion, and, having taken a most ceremonious leave of us, they mounted their horses and set out upon their journey. I saw their gaunt figures wind down the valley, and watched them till they disappeared in the distance. "Yes, brigands though they be," thought I, "there is something fine, something heroic, in the spirit of their unrelenting vengeance." The sleuth-hound never sought the lair of his victim with a more ravening appetite for blood than they track the retreating columns of the enemy. Hovering around the line of march, they sometimes swoop down in masses, and carry off a part of the baggage, or the wounded. The wearied soldier, overcome by heat and exhaustion, who drops behind his ranks, is their certain victim; the sentry on an advanced post is scarcely less so. Whole pickets are sometimes attacked and carried off to a man; and, when traversing the lonely passes of some mountain gorge, or defiling through the dense shadows of a wooded glen, the stoutest heart has felt a fear, lest from behind the rock that frowned above him, or from the leafy thicket whose branches stirred without a breeze, the sharp ring of a Guerilla carbine might sound his death-knell.

It was thus in the retreat upon Corunna fell Colonel Lefebvre. Ever foremost in the attack upon our rear-guard, this gallant youth (he was scarce six-and-twenty), a colonel of his regiment, and decorated with the Legion of Honor, he led on every charge of his bold "*sabreurs*," riding up to the very bayonets of our squares, waving his hat above his head, and seeming actually to court his death-wound; but so struck were our brave fellows with his gallant bearing, that they cheered him as he came on.

It was in one of these moments as, rising high in his stirrups, he bore down upon the unflinching ranks of the British infantry, the shrill whistle of a ball strewed the leaves upon the roadside, the exulting shout of a Guerilla followed it, and the same instant Lefebvre fell forward upon his horse's mane, a deluge of blood bursting from his bosom. A broken cry escaped his lips—a last effort to cheer on his men; his noble charger galloped forward between our squares, bearing to us as our prisoner the corpse of his rider.

"Captain O'Malley," said a mounted dragoon to the advanced sentry at the bottom of the little hill upon which I was standing. "Dispatches from head-quarters, sir," delivering into my hands a large sealed packet from the Adjutant-General's office. While he proceeded to search for another letter of which he was the bearer, I broke the seal and read as follows:

"Adjutant-General's Office, May 15.

"Sir,—On the receipt of this order you are directed, having previously resigned your command to the officer next in seniority, to repair to head-quarters at Fuentes d'Onoro, there to report yourself under arrest.

"I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

"George Hopeton, Military Secretary."

"What the devil can this mean?" said I to myself, as I read the lines over again and again. "What have I done lately, or what have I left undone to involve me in this scrape? Ah!" thought I, "to be sure, it can be nothing else. Lord Wellington *did* recognize me that unlucky morning, and has determined not to let me pass unpunished. How unfortunate. Scarcely twenty-four hours have elapsed since fortune seemed to smile upon me from every side, and now the very destiny I most dreaded stares me fully in the face." A reprimand, or the sentence of a court-martial, I shrank from with a coward's fear. It mattered comparatively little from what source arising, the injury to my pride as a man and my spirit as a soldier would be almost the same.

"This is the letter, sir," said the orderly, presenting me with a packet, the address of which was in Power's handwriting. Eagerly tearing it open, I sought for something which might explain my unhappy position. It bore the same date as the official letter, and ran thus:

"My dear Charley,—I joined yesterday, just in time to enjoy the heartiest laugh I have had since our meeting. If notoriety can gratify you, by Jove you have it; for Charles O'Malley and his man Mickey Free are by-words in every mess from Villa Formosa to the rear-guard. As it's only fair you should participate a little in the fun you've originated, let me explain the cause: Your inimitable man Mike, to whom it appears you intrusted the report of killed and wounded for the Adjutant-General, having just at that moment accomplished a letter to his friends at home, substituted his correspondence

for your returns, and, doubtless, sent the list of the casualties as very interesting information to his sweetheart in Ireland. If such be the case, I hope and trust she has taken the blunder in better part than old Colburn, who swears he'll bring you to a court-martial, under Heaven knows what charges. In fact his passion has known no bounds since the event; and a fit of jaundice has given his face a kind of neutral tint between green and yellow, like nothing I know of except the facings of the 'dirty Half-hundred.'*

"As Mr. Free's letter may be as great a curiosity to you as it has been to us, I inclose you a copy of it, which Hopeton obtained for me. It certainly places the estimable Mike in a strong light as a dispatch-writer. The occasional interruption to the current of the letter, you will perceive, arises from Mike having used the pen of a comrade, writing being, doubtless, an accomplishment forgotten in the haste of preparing Mr. Free for the world: and the amanuensis has, in more than one instance, committed to paper more than was meant by the author:

"'MRS. M'GRA,—Tear an ages, sure I need not be treating her that way. Now, just say Mrs. Mary—ay, that'll do—Mrs. Mary, it's maybe surprised you'll be to be reading a letter from your humble servant, sitting on the top of the Alps.—Arrah, maybe it's not the Alps; but sure she'll never know—forment the whole French army, with Bony himself and all his jinnerals—God be between us and harm—ready to murther every mother's son of us, av they was able, Molly darlin'; but, with the blessing of Providence, and Lord Wellington, and Mister Charles, we'll bate them yet, as we bate them afore.

"'My lips is wathering at the thought o' the plunder. I often think of Tim Riley, that was hanged for sheep-stealing; he'd be worth his weight in gold here.

"'Mister Charles is now a captain—devil a less—and myself might be somethin' that same, but ye see I was always of a bashful nature, and recommended the master in my place. "He's mighty young, Mister Charles is," says my Lord Wellington to me,—"he's mighty young, Mr. Free." "He is, my lord," says I; "he's young, as you obsarve, but he's as much divilment in him as many that might be his father." "That's somethin', Mr. Free," says my Lord; "ye say he comes from a good stock?" "The *rale* sort, my Lord," says I; "an ould, ancient family, that's spent every sixpence they had in treating their neighbors. My father lived near him for years,"—you see, Molly, I said that to season the discourse. "We'll make him a captain," says my Lord; "but, Mr. Free, could we do nothing for you?" "Nothing, at present, my Lord. When my friends comes into power," says I, "they'll think of me. There's many a little thing to give away in Ireland, and they often find it mighty hard to find a man for lord-lieutenant; and if that same, or a tide-waiter's place was vacant—" "Just tell me," says my lord. "It's what I'll do," says I. "And now, wishing you happy dreams, I'll take my lave." Just so, Molly, it's hand and glove we are. A pleasant face, agreeable manners, seasoned with natural modesty, and a good pair of legs, them's the gifts to push a man's way in the world. And even with the ladies—but sure I am forgetting, my master was proposed for, and your humble servant too, by two illigant creatures in Lisbon; but it wouldn't do, Molly,—it's higher nor that we'll be looking—*rale* princesses, the devil a less. Tell Kitty Hannigan I hope she's well: she was a disarving young woman in her situation in life. Shusey Dogherty, at the cross roads—if I don't forget the name—was a good-looking slip too; give her my affectionate salutations, as we say in the Portuguese. I hope I'll be able to bear the inclementuous nature of your climate when I go back; but I can't expect to stay long—for Lord Wellington can't do without me. We play duets on the guitar together every evening. The master is shouting for a blanket, so no more at present from

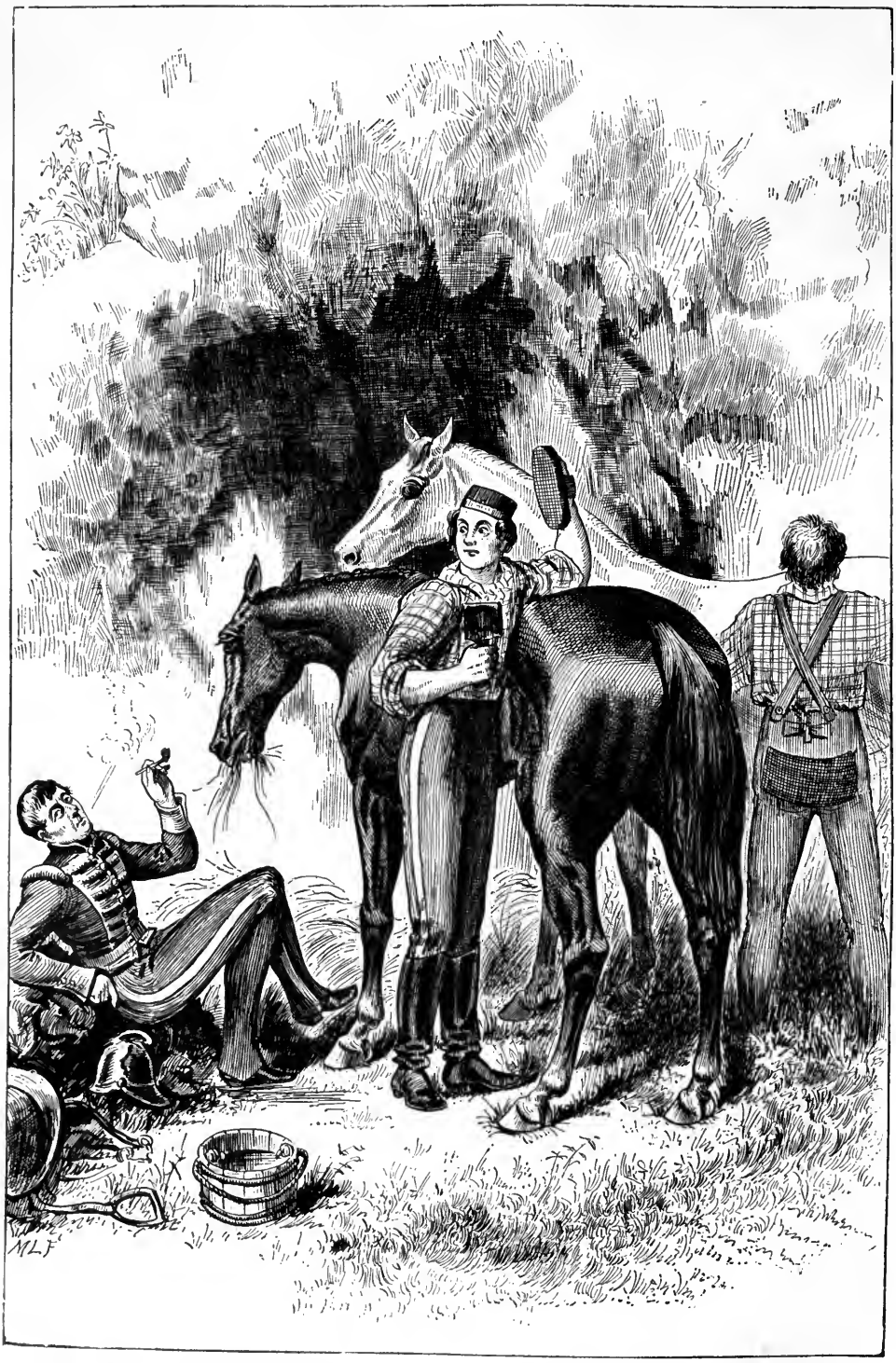
"'Your very affectionate friend,

"'MICKEY FREE.

"'P. S.—I don't write this myself, for the Spanish tongue puts me out o' the habit of English. Tell Father Rush, if he'd study the Portuguese, I'd use my interest for him with the Bishop of Toledo. It's a country he'd like—no regular stations, but promiscuous eating and drinking, and as pretty girls as ever confessed their sins.'

"My poor Charley, I think I am looking at you. I think I can see the struggle between indignation and laughter, which every line of this letter inflicts upon you. Get back as quickly as you can, and we'll try if Craufurd won't pull you through

* For the information of my unmilitary readers, I may remark that this *sobriquet* was applied to the 50th Regiment.



"TEAR AN AGES! AIN'T I COMPOSIN' IT? AV I WAS TOMMY MOORE I COULDN'T BE QUICKER." (P. 923.)

the business. In any case, expect no sympathy; and, if you feel disposed to be angry with all who laugh at you, you had better publish a challenge in the next general order. George Scott, of the Grays, bids me say, that if you're hard up for cash, he'll give you a couple of hundred for Mickey Free. I told him I thought you'd accept it, as your uncle has the breed of those fellows upon his estate, and might have no objection to weed his stud. Hammersley's gone back with the Dashwoods; but I don't think you need fear anything in that quarter. At the same time, if you wish for success, make a bold push for the peerage and half a dozen decorations, for Miss Lucy is most decidedly gone wild about military distinction. As for me, my affairs go on well; I've had half a dozen quarrels with Inez, but we parted good friends, and my bad Portuguese has got me out of all difficulties with papa, who pressed me tolerably close as to fortune. I shall want your assistance in this matter yet. If parchments will satisfy him, I think I could get up a qualification; but, somehow, the matter must be done, for I'm resolved to have his daughter.

"The orderly is starting, so no more till we meet. Yours ever,

"FRED POWER."

"Godwin," said I, as I closed the letter, "I find myself in a scrape at head-quarters; you are to take the command of the detachment, for I must set out at once."

"Nothing serious, I hope, O'Malley?"

"Oh no! nothing of consequence. A most absurd blunder of my rascally servant."

"The Irish fellow yonder?"

"The same."

"He seems to take it easily, however."

"Oh, confound him! he does not know what trouble he has involved me in; not that he'll care much when he does."

"Why, he does not seem to be of a very desponding temperament. Listen to the fellow! I'll be hanged if he's not singing!"

"I'm devilishly disposed to spoil his mirth. They tell me, however, he always keeps the troop in good humor; and see, the fellows are actually cleaning his horses for him, while he is sitting on the bank!"

"Faith, O'Malley, that fellow knows the world. Just hear him."

Mr. Free was, as described, most leisurely reposing on a bank, a mug of something drinkable beside him, and a pipe of that curtailed proportion which an Irishman loves held daintily between his fingers. He appeared to be giving his directions to some soldiers of the troop, who were busily cleaning his horses and accoutrements for him.

"That's it, Jim! Rub 'em down along the hocks; he won't kick; it's only play. Scrub away, honey; that's the devil's own carbine to get clean."

"Well, I say, Mr. Free, are you going to give us that ere song?"

"Yes; I'll be danged if I burnish your sabre if you don't sing."

"Tear an ages! ain't I composin' it? Av I was Tommy Moore I couldn't be quicker."

"Well, come along, my hearty; let's hear it."

"Oh, murther!" said Mike, draining the pot to its last few drops, which he poured pathetically upon the grass before him, and then having emptied the ashes from his pipe, he heaved a deep sigh, as though to say, life had no pleasures in store for him. A brief pause followed, after which, to the evident delight of his expectant audience, he began the following song, to the popular air of "Paddy O'Carroll."

BAD LUCK TO THIS MARCHING.

Air—"Paddy O'Carroll."

"Bad luck to this marching,
Pipeclaying and starching,
How neat one must be to be killed by the French!
I'm sick of parading,
Through wet and cowld wading,
Or standing all night to be shot in a trench.
To the tune of a fife
They dispose of your life,
You surrender your soul to some illigant lilt;
Now I like Garryowen,
When I hear it at home,
But it's not half so sweet when you're going to be kilt.

"Then though up late and early,
Our pay comes so rarely,
The devil a farthing we've ever to spare;
They say some disaster
Befell the paymaster;
On my conscience I think that the money's not there.
And, just think, what a blunder,
They won't let us plunder,
While the convents invite us to rob them, 'tis clear,
Though there isn't a village,
But cries, 'Come and pillage,'
Yet we leave all the mutton behind for Mounseer.

"Like a sailor that's nigh land,
I long for that island
Where even the kisses we steal if we please;
Where it is no disgrace,
If you don't wash your face,
And you've nothing to do but to stand at your ease.
With no sergeant t' abuse us,
We fight to amuse us,

Sure it's better bate Christians than kick a baboon.
How I'd dance like a fairy,
To see ould Dunleary,
And think twice ere I'd leave it to be a dragoon!"

"There's a sweet little bit for you," said Mike, as he concluded; "thrown off as aisy as a game at football."

"I say, Mr. Free, the Captain's looking for you; he's just received dispatches from the camp, and wants his horses."

"In that case, gentlemen, I must take my leave of you; with the more regret, too, that I was thinking of treating you to a supper this evening. You needn't be laughing, it's in earnest I am. Coming, sir,—coming!" shouted he, in a louder tone, answering some imaginary call, as an excuse for his exit.

When he appeared before me, an air of most business-like alacrity had succeeded to his late appearance, and having taken my orders to get the horses in readiness, he left me at once, and in less than half an hour we were upon the road.

CHAPTER XCV.

MONSOON IN TROUBLE.

As I rode along toward Fuentes d'Onoro, I could not help feeling provoked at the absurd circumstances in which I was involved. To be made the subject of laughter for a whole army was by no means a pleasant consideration; but what I felt far worse was, the possibility that the mention of my name in connection with a reprimand might reach the ears of those who knew nothing of the cause.

Mr. Free himself seemed little under the influence of similar feelings; for when, after a silence of a couple of hours, I turned suddenly toward him with a half-angry look, and remarked, "You see, sir, what your confounded blundering has done," his cool reply was,

"Ah! then, won't Mrs. M'Gra be frightened out of her life when she reads all about the killed and wounded in your honor's report. I wonder if they ever had the manners to send my own letter afterward, when they found out their mistake!"

"*Their* mistake, do you say? rather *yours!* You appear to have a happy knack of shifting blame from your own shoulders. And do you fancy that they've nothing else to do than to trouble their heads about your absurd letters?"

"Faith! it's easily seen you never saw my letter, or you wouldn't be saying that; and sure it's not much trouble it would give Colonel Fitzroy or any o' the staff that write a good hand, just to put in a line to Mrs. M'Gra, to prevent her feeling alarmed about that murthering paper. Well, well, it's God's blessing! I don't think there's anybody of the name of Mickey Free high up in the army but myself; so that the family won't be going into mourning for me on a false alarm."

I had not patience to participate in this view of the case; so that I contined my journey without speaking. We had jogged along for some time after dark, when the distant twinkle of the watch-fires announced our approach to the camp. A detachment of the Fourteenth formed the advanced post, and from the officer in command I learned that Power was quartered at a small mill about half a mile distant; thither I accordingly turned my steps, but finding that the path which led abruptly down to it was broken, and cut up in many places, I sent Mike back with the horses, and continued my way alone on foot.

The night was deliciously calm; and, as I approached the little rustic mill, I could not help feeling struck with Power's taste in a billet.

A little vine-clad cottage, built close against a rock, nearly concealed by the dense foliage around it, stood beside a clear rivulet whose eddying current supplied water to the mill, and rose in a dew-like spray, which sparkled like gems in the pale moonlight. All was still within, but as I came nearer I thought I could detect the chords of a guitar. "Can it be," thought I, "that Master Fred has given himself up to minstrelsy! or is it some little dress-rehearsal for a serenade? But no," thought I, "that certainly is not Power's voice." I crept stealthily down the little path, and approached the window; the lattice lay open, and, as the curtain waved to and fro with the night air, I could see plainly all who were in the room.

Close beside the window sat a large, dark-featured Spaniard, his hands crossed upon his bosom, and his head inclined heavily forward, the attitude perfectly denoting deep sleep, even had not his cigar, which remained passively between his lips, ceased to give forth its blue smoke wreath. At a little distance from him sat a young girl, who, even by the uncertain light, I could perceive was possessed of all that delicacy of form and gracefulness of carriage which characterize her nation.

Her pale features—paler still from the contrast with her jet-black hair and dark costume—were lit up with an expression of animation and enthusiasm as her fingers swept rapidly and boldly across the strings of a guitar.

"And you're not tired of it yet?" said she, bending her head downward toward one whom I now for the first time perceived.

Reclining carelessly at her feet, his arm leaning upon her chair, whilst his hand occasionally touched her taper fingers, lay my good friend, Master Fred Power. An undress jacket thrown loosely open, and a black neckcloth negligently knotted, bespoke the easy *nonchalance* with which he prosecuted his courtship.

"Do sing it again," said he, pressing her fingers to his lips.

What she replied I could not catch; but Fred resumed: "No, no, he never wakes; the infernal clatter of that mill is his lullaby."

"But your friend will be here soon," said she. "Is it not so?"

"Oh, poor Charley! I'd almost forgotten him; by-the-by, you mustn't fall in love with him: there now, do not look angry; I only meant that, as I knew he'd be desperately smitten, you shouldn't let him fancy he got any encouragement.

"What would you have me do?" said she, artlessly.

"I have been thinking over that, too. In the first place, you'd better never let him hear you sing; scarcely ever smile; and, as far as possible, keep out of his sight."

"One would think, Senhor, that all these precautions were to be taken more on my account than his. Is he so very dangerous, then?"

"Not a bit of it! Good-looking enough he is, but—only a boy; at the same time, a devilish bold one! and he'd think no more of springing through that window, and throwing his arms round your neck, the very first moment of his arrival, than I should of whispering how much I love you."

"How very odd he must be! I'm sure I should like him."

"Many thanks to both for your kind hints; and now to take advantage of them." So saying, I stepped lightly upon the window-sill, cleared the miller with one spring, and, before Power could recover his legs, or Margeritta her astonishment, I clasped her in my arms, and kissed her on either cheek.

"Charley! Charley! Damn it, man, it won't do!" cried Fred; while the young lady, evidently more amused at his discomfiture than affronted at the liberty, threw herself into a seat, and laughed immoderately.

"Ha! Hilloa there! What is't?" shouted the miller, rousing himself from his nap, and looking eagerly around. "Are they coming? Are the French coming?"

A hearty renewal of his daughter's laughter was the only reply; while Power relieved his anxiety by saying,

"No, no, Pedrillo, not the French; a mere marauding party—nothing more. I say, Charley," continued he, in a lower tone, "you had better lose no time in reporting yourself at head-quarters. We'll walk up together. Devilish awkward scrape yours."

"Never fear, Fred; time enough for all that. For the present, if you permit me, I'll follow up my acquaintance with our fair friend here."

"Gently, gently!" said he, with a look of most imposing seriousness. "Don't mistake her; she's not a mere country girl: you understand?—been bred in a convent here—rather superior kind of thing."

"Come, come, Fred, I'm not the man to interfere with you for a moment."

"Good-night, Senhor," said the old miller, who had been waiting patiently all this time to pay his respects before going.

"Yes, that's it!" cried Power, eagerly. "Good-night, Pedrillo."

"*Buonos noches*," lisped out Margeritta, with a slight courtesy.

I sprang forward to acknowledge her salutation, when Power coolly interposed between us, and, closing the door after them, placed his back against it.

"Master Charley, I must read you a lesson—"

"You inveterate hypocrite, don't attempt this nonsense with *me*. But come, tell me how long you have been here?"

"Just twenty-four of the shortest hours I ever passed at an outpost. But listen—do you know that voice? Isn't it O'Shaughnessy?"

"To be sure it is. Hear the fellow's song."

"My father cared little for shot or shell,
He laughed at death and dangers;
And he'd storm the very gates of hell
With a company of the 'Rangers.'
So sing tow, row, row, row, row," etc.

"An than, Mister Power, it's twice I'd think of returning your visit, if I knew

the state of your avenue. If there's a grand jury in Spain, they might give you a presentment for this bit of road. My knees are as bare as a commissary's conscience, and I've knocked as much flesh off my shin-bones as would make a cornet in the hussars!"

A regular roar of laughter from both of us apprised Dennis of our vicinity.

"And it's laughing ye are? Wouldn't it be as polite just to hold a candle or lantern for me in this confounded water-course?"

"How goes it, Major?" cried I, extending my hand to him through the window.

"Charley—Charley O'Malley, my son! I'm glad to see you. It's a hearty laugh you gave us this morning. My friend Mickey's a pleasant fellow for a secretary-at-war. But it's all settled now; Craufurd arranged it for you this afternoon."

"You don't say so! Pray tell me all about it."

"That's just what I won't; for, ye see, I don't know it; but I believe old Monsoon's affair has put everything out of their heads."

"Monsoon's affair! what is that? Out with it, Dennis."

"Faith, I'll be just as discreet about that as your own business. All I can tell you is, that they brought him up to head-quarters this evening with a sergeant's guard, and they say he's to be tried by court-martial; and Picton is in a blessed humor about it."

"What could it possibly have been? Some plundering affair, depend on it."

"Faith, you may swear it wasn't for his little charities, as Dr. Pangloss calls them, they've pulled him up," cried Power.

"Maurice is in high feather about it," said Dennis. "There are five of them up at Fuentes, making a list of the charges to send to Monsoon; for Bob Mahon, it seems, heard of the old fellow's doings up the mountains."

"What glorious fun!" said Power. "Let's haste and join them, boys."

"Agreed," said I. "Is it far from this?"

"Another stage. When we've got something to eat," said the Major, "if Power has any intentions that way—"

"Well, I really did begin to fear Fred's memory was lapsing; but somehow, poor fellow, smiles have been more in his way than sandwiches lately."

An admonishing look from Power was his only reply, as he walked toward the door. Bent upon teasing him, however, I continued,

"My only fear is, he may do something silly."

"Who? Monsoon, is it?"

"No, no. Not Monsoon; another friend of ours."

"Faith, I scarcely thought your fears of old Monsoon were called for. He's a fox—the devil a less."

"No, no, Dennis. I wasn't thinking of him. My anxieties were for a most soft-hearted young gentleman—one Fred Power."

"Charley, Charley!" said Fred, from the door where he had been giving directions to his servant about supper. "A man can scarce do a more silly thing than marry in the army; all the disagreeables of married life, with none of its better features."

"Marry—marry!" shouted O'Shaughnessy; "upon my conscience, it's incomprehensible to me how a man can be guilty of it. To be sure, I don't mean to say that there are not circumstances—such as half-pay, old age, infirmity, the loss of your limbs, and the like; but that, with good health and a small balance at your banker's, you should be led into such an embarrassment—"

"Men will flirt," said I, interrupting; "men will press taper fingers, look into bright eyes, and feel their witchery; and, although the fair owners be only quizzing them half the time, and amusing themselves the other, and though they be the veriest hackneyed coquettes—"

"Did you ever meet the Dalrymple girls, Dennis?" said Fred, with a look I shall never forget.

What the reply was I cannot tell. My shame and confusion were overwhelming, and Power's victory complete.

"Here comes the prog," cried Dennis, as Power's servant entered with a very plausible-looking tray, while Fred proceeded to place before us a strong army of decanters.

Our supper was excellent, and we were enjoying ourselves to the utmost, when an orderly sergeant suddenly opened the door, and raising his hand to his cap, asked if Major Power was there?

"A letter for you, sir."

"Monsoon's writing, by Jove! Come, boys, let us see what it means. What a hand the old fellow writes! The letters look all crazy, and are tumbling against each other on every side. Did you ever see anything half so tipsy as the crossing of that *t*?"

"Read it! Read it out, Fred!"

"'Tuesday Evening.

"'DEAR POWER,—I'm in such a scrape! Come up and see me at once; bring a little sherry with you, and we'll talk over what's to be done.

"'Yours ever,

"'B. MONSOON.

"'Quarter-General."

We resolved to finish our evening with the Major; so that, each having armed himself with a bottle or two, and the remnants of our supper, we set out toward his quarters, under the guidance of the orderly. After a sharp walk of half an hour, we reached a small hut, where two sentries of the Eighty-eighth were posted at the door.

O'Shaughnessy procured admittance for us, and in we went. At a small table, lighted by a thin tallow-candle, sat old Monsoon, who, the weather being hot, had neither coat nor wig on; an old cracked china teapot, in which, as we found afterward, he had mixed a little grog, stood before him, and a large mass of papers lay scattered around on every side; he himself being occupied in poring over their contents, and taking occasional draughts from his uncouth goblet.

As we entered noiselessly, he never perceived us, but continued to mumble over, in a low tone, from the documents before him:

"Upon my life, it's like a dream to me! What infernal stuff this brandy is!

"'CHARGE No. 8.—For conduct highly unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, in forcing the cellar of the San Nicholas convent at Banos, taking large quantities of wine therefrom, and subsequently compelling the prior to dance a bolero, thus creating a riot, and tending to destroy the harmony between the British and the Portuguese, so strongly inculcated to be preserved by the general orders.'

"Destroying the harmony! Bless their hearts! How little they know of it! I've never passed a jollier night in the Peninsula! The Prior's a trump, and, as for the bolero, he *would* dance it. I hope they say nothing about my hornpipe.

"'CHARGE No. 9.—For a gross violation of his duty as an officer, in sending a part of his brigade to attack and pillage the Alcalde of Banos; thereby endangering the public peace of the town, being a flagrant breach of discipline and direct violation of the articles of war.'

"Well, I'm afraid I was rather sharp on the Alcalde, but we did him no harm except the fright. What sherry the fellow had! 'twould have been a sin to let it fall into the hands of the French.

"'CHARGE No. 10.—For threatening, on or about the night of the 3d, to place the town of Banos under contribution, and subsequently forcing the authorities to walk in procession before him, in absurd and ridiculous costumes.'

"Lord, how good it was! I shall never forget the old Alcalde! One of my fellows fastened a dead lamb round his neck, and told him it was the golden fleece. The Commander-in-Chief would have laughed himself if he had been there. Picton's much too grave—never likes a joke.

"'CHARGE No. 11.—For insubordination and disobedience, in refusing to give up his sword, and rendering it necessary for the Portuguese guard to take it by force; thereby placing himself in a situation highly degrading to a British officer.'

"Didn't I lay about me before they got it!—Who's that?—Who's laughing there?—Ah, boys! I'm glad to see you.—How are you Fred?—Well, Charley, I've heard of your scrape; very sad thing for so young a fellow as you are; I don't think you'll be broke; I'll do what I can—I'll see what I can do with Picton; we are very old friends—were at Eton together."

"Many thanks, Major; but I hear your own affairs are not flourishing. What's all this court-martial about?"

"A mere trifle; some little insubordination in the legion. Those Portuguese are sad dogs. How very good of you, Fred, to think of that little supper."

While the Major was speaking, his servant, with a dexterity the fruit of long habit, had garnished the table with the contents of our baskets, and Monsoon, apologizing for not putting on his wig, sat down amongst us with a face as cheerful as though the floor was not covered with the charges of the court-martial to be held on him.

As we chatted away over the campaign and its chances, Monsoon seemed little disposed to recur to his own fortunes. In fact, he appeared to suffer much more from what he termed my unlucky predicament than from his own mishaps. At the same time, as the evening wore on, and the sherry began to tell upon him, his heart expanded into its habitual moral tendency, and, by an easy transition, he was led from the religious association of convents to the pleasures of pillaging them.

"What wine they have in their old cellars! It's such fun drinking it out of great silver vessels as old as Methuselah. 'There's much treasure in the house of the

righteous,' as David says; and any one who has ever sacked a nunnery knows that."

"I should like to have seen that prior dancing the bolero," said Power.

"Wasn't it good, though! He grew jealous of me, for I performed a hornpipe. Very good fellow the Prior; not like the Alcalde—there was no fun in him. Lord bless him! he'll never forget me."

"What did you do with him, Major?"

"Well, I'll tell you; but you mustn't let it be known, for I see they have not put it in the court-martial. Is there no more sherry there? There, that will do; I'm always contented. 'Better a dry morsel with quietness,' as Moses says. Ay, Charley, never forget that 'a merry heart is just like medicine.' Job found out that, you know."

"Well, but the Alcalde, Major."

"Oh! the Alcalde, to be sure. These pious meditations make me forget earthly matters.

"This old Alcalde at Banos, I found out, was quite spoiled by Lord Wellington. He used to read all the general orders, and got an absurd notion in his head that, because we were his allies, we were not allowed to plunder. Only think, he used to snap his fingers at Beresford; didn't care twopence about the legion; and laughed outright at Wilson. So, when I was ordered down there, I took another way with him; I waited till nightfall, ordered two squadrons to turn their jackets, and sent forward one of my aides-de-camp with a few troopers to the Alcalde's house. They galloped into the court-yard, blowing trumpets and making an infernal hubbub. Down came the Alcalde in a passion.—'Prepare quarters quickly, and rations for eight hundred men.'

"'Who dares to issue such an order?' said he.

"The aide-de-camp whispered one word in his ear, and the old fellow grew pale as death. 'Is he here?—Is he coming?—Is he coming?' said he, trembling from head to foot.

"I rode in myself at this moment, looking thus—

"'*Où est le malheureux?*' said I, in French; you know I speak French like Portuguese."

"Devilish like, I've no doubt," muttered Power.

"'*Pardon, gracias eccellenza!*' said the Alcalde, on his knees."

"Who the deuce did he take you for, Major?"

"You shall hear: you'll never guess, though. Lord! I shall never forget it. He thought I was Marmont: my aide-de-camp told him so."

One loud burst of laughter interrupted the Major at this moment, and it was some considerable time before he could continue his narrative.

"And do you really mean," said I, "that you personated the Duke de Raguse?"

"Did I not though?—If you only had seen me with a pair of great moustaches, and a drawn sabre in my hand, pacing the room up and down in presence of the assembled authorities. Napoleon himself might have been deceived. My first order was to to cut off all their heads; but I commuted the sentence to a heavy fine. Ah, boys? if they only understood at head-quarters how to carry on a war in the Peninsula, they'd never have to grumble in England about increased taxation. How I'd mulct the nunneries! How I'd grind the corporate towns! How I'd inundate the country with exchequer bills! I'd sell the priors at so much a head, and put the nuns up to auction by the dozen."

"You sacrilegious old villain! But continue the account of your exploits."

"Faith, I remember little more. After dinner, I grew somewhat mellow, and a kind of moral bewilderment, which usually steals over me about eleven o'clock, induced me to invite the Alcalde and all the aldermen to come and sup. Apparently, we had a merry night of it, and, when morning broke, we were not quite clear in our intellects. Hence came that infernal procession; for when the Alcalde rode round the town with a paper cap, and all the aldermen after him, the inhabitants felt offended, it seems, and sent for a large Guerilla force, who captured me and my staff, after a very vigorous resistance. The Alcalde fought like a trump for us, for I promised to make him Prefect of the Seine; but we were overpowered, disarmed, and carried off. The remainder you can read in the court-martial, for you may think that, after sacking the town, drinking all night, and fighting in the morning, my memory was none of the clearest."

"Did you not explain that you were not the Marshal-General?"

"No, faith, I knew better than that; they'd have murdered me, had they known their mistake. They brought me to head-quarters, in the hope of a great reward, and it was only when they reached this that they found out I was not the Duke de Raguse; so you see, boys, it's a very complicated business."

"'Gad, and so it is," said Power, "and an awkward one, too."

"He'll be hanged, as sure as my name's Dennis!" vociferated O'Shaughnessy, with an energy that made the Major jump from his chair. "Picton will hang him!"

"I'm not afraid," said Monsoon; "they know me so well. Lord bless you, Beresford couldn't get on without me!"

"Well, Major," said I, "in any case, you certainly take no gloomy nor desponding view of your case."

"Not I, boy. You know what Jeremiah says,—'A merry heart is a continual feast;' and so it is. I may die of repletion, but they'll never find me starved with sorrow."

"And, faith, it's a strange thing!" muttered O'Shaughnessy, thinking aloud; "a most extraordinary thing! An honest fellow would be sure to be hanged; and there's that old rogue, that's been melting down more saints and blessed Virgins than the whole army together, he'll escape. Ye'll see he will!"

"There goes the patrol," said Fred; "we must start."

"Leave the sherry, boys; you'll be back again. I'll have it put up carefully."

We could scarce resist a roar of laughter as we said "Good-night."

"Adieu, Major," said I; "we shall meet soon."

So saying, I followed Power and O'Shaughnessy toward their quarters.

"Maurice has done it beautifully!" said Power. "Pleasant revelations the old fellow will make on the court-martial, if he only remembers what we've heard to-night! But here we are, Charley; so good-night; and remember, you breakfast with me to-morrow."

CHAPTER XCVI.

THE CONFIDENCE.

"I HAVE changed the venue, Charley," said Power, as he came into my room the following morning. "I've changed the venue, and come to breakfast with you."

I could not help smiling, as a certain suspicion crossed my mind; perceiving which, he quickly added,

"No, no, boy! I guess what you're thinking of. I'm not a bit jealous in that quarter. The fact is, you know one cannot be too guarded."

"Nor too suspicious of one's friends, apparently."

"A truce with quizzing. I say, have you reported yourself?"

"Yes; and received this moment a most kind note from the General. But it appears I'm not destined to have a long sojourn amongst you, for I'm desired to hold myself in readiness for a journey this very day."

"Where the deuce are they going to send you now?"

"I'm not certain of my destination. I rather suspect there are dispatches for Badajos. Just tell Mike to get breakfast, and I'll join you immediately."

When I walked into the little room which served as my salon, I found Power pacing up and down, apparently wrapt in meditation.

"I've been thinking, Charley," said he, after a pause of about ten minutes,—"I've been thinking over our adventures in Lisbon. Devilish strange girl, that Senhora! When you resigned in my favor, I took it for granted that all difficulty was removed. Confound it! I no sooner began to profit by your absence, in pressing my suit, than she turned short round, treated me with marked coldness, exhibited a hundred willful and capricious fancies, and concluded one day by quietly confessing to me—you were the only man she cared for."

"You are not serious in all this, Fred?" said I.

"Ain't I, though, by Jove! I wish to Heaven I were not! My dear Charley, the girl is an inveterate flirt—a decided coquette. Whether she has a particle of heart or not, I can't say; but, certainly, her greatest pleasure is to trifle with that of another. Some absurd suspicion that you were in love with Lucy Dashwood piqued her vanity, and the anxiety to recover a lapsing allegiance led her to suppose herself attached to you, and made her treat all my advances with the most frigid indifference or wayward caprice: the more provoking," continued he, with a kind of bitterness in his tone, "as her father was disposed to take the thing favorably; and, if I must say it, I felt devilish spooney about her myself.

"It was only two days before I left, that, in a conversation with Don Emanuel, he consented to receive my addresses to his daughter on my becoming lieutenant-colonel. I hastened back with delight to bring her the intelligence, and found her with a lock of hair on the book before her, over which she was weeping. Confound me, if it was not yours! I don't know what I said, nor what she replied; but, when we parted, it was with a perfect un-

derstanding we were never to meet again. Strange girl! She came that evening, put her arm within mine as I was walking alone in the garden, and, half in jest, half in earnest, talked me out of all my suspicions, and left me fifty times more in love with her than ever. Egad! I thought I used to know something about women, but here is a chapter I've yet to read. Come, now, Charley, be frank with me: tell me all you know."

"My poor Fred! if you were not head and ears in love, you would see as plainly as I do that your affairs prosper. And after all, how invariable is it, that the man who has been the veriest flirt with women—sighing, serenading, sonneteering, flinging himself at the feet of every pretty girl he meets with—should become the most thorough dupe to his own feelings when his heart is really touched. Your man of eight-and-thirty is always the greatest fool about women."

"Confound your impertinence! How the devil can a fellow with a moustache not stronger than a Circassian's eyebrow read such a lecture *to me?*"

"Just for the very reason you've mentioned. You *glide* into an attachment at *my* time of life; you *fall* in love at *yours*."

"Yes," said Power, musingly, "there is some truth in that. This flirting is sad work. It is just like sparring with a friend; you put on the gloves in perfect good humor, with the most friendly intentions of exchanging a few amicable blows; you find yourself insensibly warm with the enthusiasm of the conflict, and some unlucky hard knock decides the matter, and it ends in a downright fight.

"Few men, believe me, are regular seducers; and among those who behave 'vilely' (as they call it), three-fourths of the number have been more sinned against than sinning. You adventure upon love as upon a voyage to India. Leaving the cold northern latitudes of first acquaintance behind you, you gradually glide into the warmer and more genial climate of intimacy. Each day you travel southward shortens the miles and the hours of your existence: so tranquil is the passage, and so easy the transition, you suffer no shock by the change of temperature about you. Happy were it for us that, in our courtship as in our voyage, there were some certain Rubicon to remind us of the miles we have journeyed! Well were it, if there were some meridian in love!"

"I'm not sure, Fred, that there is not that same shaving process they practice on the line, occasionally performed for us by parents and guardians at home; and I'm not certain that the iron hoop of old Neptune is not a pleasanter acquaintance than the hair-trigger of some indignant and fire-eating brother. But come, Fred, you have not told me the most important point—How fare your fortunes now? or, in other words, What are your present prospects as regards the Senhora?"

"What a question to ask me! Why not request me to tell you where Soult will fight us next, and when Marmont will cross the frontier? My dear boy, I have not seen her for a week, an entire week—seven full days and nights, each with their twenty-four hours of change and vacillation."

"Well, then, give me the last bulletin from the seat of war; that at least you can do. Tell me how you parted."

"Strangely enough. You must know we had a grand dinner at the villa the day before I left; and when we adjourned for our coffee to the garden, my spirits were at the top of their bent. Inez never looked so beautiful—never was one-half so gracious; and, as she leaned upon my arm, instead of following the others toward the little summer-house, I turned, as if inadvertently, into a narrow dark alley that skirts the lake."

"I know it well; continue."

Power reddened slightly; and went on:

"'Why are we taking this path?' said Donna Inez; 'this is, surely, not a short way?'

"'Oh! I—wished to make my adieux to my old friends the swans. You know I go to-morrow.'

"'Ah! that's true,' added she. 'I'd quite forgotten it.'

"This speech was not very encouraging; but, as I felt myself in for the battle, I was not going to retreat at the skirmish. 'Now or never,' thought I. I'll not tell you what I said. I couldn't, if I would. It is only with a pretty woman upon one's arm—it is only when stealing a glance at her bright eyes, as you bend beyond the border of her bonnet—that you know what it is to be eloquent. Watching the changeful color of her cheek with a more anxious heart than ever did mariner gaze upon the fitful sky above him, you pour out your whole soul in love; you leave no time for doubt, you leave no space for reply; the difficulties that shoot across her mind you reply to ere she is well conscious of them; and when you feel her hand tremble, or see her eyelid fall, like the leader of a storming party, when the guns slacken in their fire, you spring boldly forward in the breach, and, blind to every danger around

you, rush madly on, and plant your standard upon the walls."

"I hope you allow the vanquished the honors of war," said I, interrupting.

Without noticing my observation, he continued:

"I was on my knee before her, her hand passively resting in mine, her eyes bent *upon* me softly and tearfully—"

"The game was your own, in fact."

"You shall hear."

"'Have we stood long enough thus, Senhor?' said she, bursting into a fit of laughter.

"I sprang to my legs in anger and indignation.

"'There, don't be passionate; it is so tiresome. What do you call that tree there?'

"'It is a tulip-tree,' said I, coldly.

"'Then, to put your gallantry to the test, do climb up there and pluck me that flower. No, the far one. If you fall into the lake and are drowned, why, it would put an end to this foolish interview.'

"'And if not?' said I.

"'Oh, then I shall take twelve hours to consider of it; and, if my decision be in your favor, I'll give you the flower ere you leave to-morrow.'

"It's somewhat about thirty years since I went bird-nesting—and, hang me, if a tight jacket and spurs are the best equipment for climbing a tree!—but up I went, and, amid a running fire of laughter and quizzing, reached the branch, and brought it down safely.

"Inez took especial care to avoid me the rest of the evening. We did not meet until breakfast the following morning. I perceived then that she wore the flower in her belt; but, alas! I knew her too well to augur favorably from that; besides that, instead of any trace of sorrow or depression at my approaching departure, she was in high spirits, and the life of the party. 'How can I manage to speak with her?' said I to myself; 'but one word—I already anticipate what it must be; but let the blow fall—anything is better than this uncertainty.'

"'The General and the staff have passed the gate, sir,' said my servant at this moment.

"'Are my horses ready?'

"'At the door, sir; and the baggage gone forward.'

"I gave Inez one look—

"'Did you say more coffee?' said she, smiling.

"I bowed coldly, and rose from the table. They all assembled upon the terrace to see me ride away.

"'You'll let us hear from you,' said Don Emanuel.

"'And pray don't forget the letter to my brother,' cried old Madame Forjas.

"Twenty similar injunctions burst from the party, but not a word said Inez.

"'Adieu, then!' said I. 'Farewell!'

"'Adios! Go with God!' chorused the party.

"'Good-by, Senhora,' said I. 'Have *you* nothing to tell me ere we part?'

"'Not that I remember,' said she, carelessly. 'I hope you'll have good weather.'

"'There is a storm threatening,' said I, gloomily.

"'Well! a soldier cares little for a wet jacket.'

"'Adieu!' said I, sharply, darting at her a look that spoke my meaning.

"'Farewell!' repeated she, courtesying slightly, and giving one of her sweetest smiles.

"I drove the spurs into my horse's flanks, but holding him firmly on the curb at the same moment; instead of dashing forward, he bounded madly in the air.

"'What a pretty creature!' said she, as she turned toward the house; then, stopping carelessly, she looked round:

"'Should you like this bouquet?'

"Before I could reply, she disengaged it from her belt, and threw it toward me. The door closed behind her as she spoke; I galloped on to overtake the staff—*et voilà tout.* Now, Charley, read my fate for me, and tell me what this portends."

"I confess I only see one thing certain in the whole."

"And that is?" said Power.

"That Master Fred Power is more irretrievably in love than any gentleman on full pay I ever met with."

"By Jove! I half fear as much! Is that orderly waiting for you, Charley? Who do you want, my man?"

"Captain O'Malley, sir. General Craufurd desires to see you at head-quarters immediately."

"Come, Charley, I'm going toward Fuentes. Take your cap: we'll walk down together."

So saying, we cantered toward the village, where we separated—Power to join some Fourteenth men stationed there on duty, and I to the General's quarters to receive my orders.

CHAPTER XCVII.

THE CANTONMENT.

Soon after this the army broke up from Caja, and went into cantonments along the

Tagus, the head-quarters being at Portalegre; we were here joined by four regiments of infantry fately arrived from England, and the 12th Light Dragoons. I shall not readily forget the first impression created among our reinforcements by the habits of our life at this period.

Brimful of expectation, they had landed at Lisbon; their minds filled with all the glorious expectancy of a brilliant campaign, sieges, storming, and battle-fields floated before their excited imagination. Scarcely, however, had they reached the camp, when these illusions were dissipated. Breakfasts, dinners, private theatricals, pigeon matches, formed our daily occupation. Lord Wellington's hounds threw off regularly twice a week, and here might be seen every imaginable species of equipment, from the artillery officer, mounted on his heavy troop horse, to the infantry subaltern, on a Spanish jennet. Never was anything more ludicrous than our turnout. Every quadruped in the army was put into requisition; and even those who rolled not from their saddles from sheer necessity, were most likely to do so from laughing at their neighbors. The pace may not have equaled Melton, nor the fences have been as stubborn as in Leicestershire, but I'll be sworn there was more laughter, more fun, and more merriment, in one day with us, than in a whole season with the best organized pack in England. With a lively trust that the country was open and the leaps easy, every man took the field; indeed, the only anxiety evinced at all, was to appear at the meet in something like jockey fashion, and I must confess that this feeling was particularly conspicuous among the infantry. Happy the man whose kit boasted a pair of cords, or buckskins; thrice happy he who sported a pair of tops. I myself was in that enviable position, and well remember with what pride of heart I cantered up to cover in all the superior *éclat* of my costume, though, if truth were to be spoken, I doubt if I should have passed muster among my friends of the "Blazers." A round cavalry jacket, and a foraging cap with a hanging tassel, were the strange accompaniments of my more befitting nether garments. Whatever our costumes, the scene was a most animated one. Here, the shell-jacket of a heavy dragoon was seen storming the fence of a vineyard; there, the dark green of a rifleman was going the pace over the plain. The unsportsmanlike figure of a staff officer might be observed emerging from a drain, while some neck-or-nothing Irishman, with light infantry wings, was flying at every fence before him, and overturning all in his way. The rules and regulations of the service prevailed not here; the starred and gartered general, the plumed and aiguilletted colonel obtained but little deference, and less mercy, from his more humble subaltern. In fact, I am half disposed to think that many an old grudge of rigid discipline, or severe duty, met with its retribution here. More than once have I heard the muttered sentences around me which boded like this:

"Go the pace, Harry! never flinch it! There's old Colquhoun—take him in the haunches—roll him over!"

"See here, boys—watch how I'll scatter the staff—beg your pardon, General, hope I haven't hurt you. Turn about—fair play—I have taught *you* to take up a position now."

I need scarcely say there was one whose person was sacred from all such attacks; he was well mounted upon a strong half-bred horse; rode always foremost, following the hounds with the same steady pertinacity with which he would have followed the enemy; his compressed lip rarely opening for a laugh, when even the most ludicrous misadventure was enacting before him; and when, by chance, he would give way, the short ha! ha! was over in a moment, and the cold stern features were as fixed and impassive as before.

All the excitement, all the enthusiasm of a hunting-field, seemed powerless to turn his mind from the preoccupation which the mighty interests he presided over, exacted. I remember once an incident which, however trivial in itself, is worth recording, as illustrative of what I mean. We were going along at a topping pace, the hounds, a few fields in advance, were hidden from our view by a small beech copse; the party consisted of not more than six persons, one of whom was Lord Wellington himself. Our run had been a splendid one, and, as we were pursuing the fox to earth, every man of us pushed his horse to his full stride in the hot enthusiasm of such a moment.

"This way, my Lord—this way," said Colonel Conyers, an old Melton man, who led the way. "The hounds are in the valley—keep to the left." As no reply was made, after a few moments' pause, Conyers repeated his admonition, "You are wrong, my Lord, the hounds are hunting yonder."

"I know it!" was the brief answer, given with a shortness that almost savored of asperity; for a second or two not a word was spoken.

"How far is Niza, Gordon?" inquired Lord Wellington.

"About five leagues, my Lord," replied the astonished aide-de camp.

"That's the direction, is it not?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"Let's go over and inspect the wounded."

No more was said, and before a second was given for consideration, away went his Lordship, followed by his aide-de-camp, his pace the same stretching gallop, and apparently feeling as much excitement, as he dashed onward toward the hospital, as though following in all the headlong enthusiasm of a fox chase.

Thus passed our summer; a life of happy ease and recreation succeeding to the harassing fatigues and severe privations of the preceding campaign. Such are the lights and shadows of a soldier's life; such the checkered surface of his fortunes; constituting by their very change that buoyant temperament, that happy indifference, which enables him to derive its full enjoyment from each passing incident of his career.

While thus we indulged in all the fascinations of a life of pleasure, the rigid discipline of the army was never for a moment forgotten: reviews, parades, and inspections were of daily occurrence, and even a superficial observer could not fail to detect that under this apparent devotion to amusement and enjoyment, our Commander-in-Chief concealed a deep stroke of his policy.

The spirits of both men and officers, broken in spite of their successes by the incessant privations they had endured, imperatively demanded this period of rest and repose. The infantry, many of whom had served in the ill-fated campaign of Walcheren, were still suffering from the effects of the intermittent fever. The cavalry, from deficient forage, severe marches, and unremitting service, were in great part unfit for duty. To take the field under circumstances like these was therefore impossible; and, with the double object of restoring their wonted spirit to his troops, and checking the ravages which sickness and the casualties of war had made within his ranks, Lord Wellington embraced the opportunity of the enemy's inaction to take up his present position on the Tagus.

Meanwhile that we enjoyed all the pleasures of a country life, enhanced tenfold by daily association with gay and cheerful companions, the master-mind, whose reach extended from the profoundest calculations of strategy to the minutest details of military organization, was never idle. Foreseeing that a period of inaction, like the present, must only be like the solemn calm that preludes the storm, he prepared for the future by those bold conceptions and unrivaled combinations which were to guide him through many a field of battle and of danger, to end his career of glory in the liberation of the Peninsula.

The failure of the attack upon Badajos had neither damped his ardor nor changed his views; and he proceeded to the investment of Ciudad Rodrigo with the same intense determination of uprooting the French occupation in Spain, by destroying their strongholds and cutting off their resources. Carrying aggressive war in one hand, he turned the other toward the maintenance of those defenses which, in the event of disaster or defeat, must prove the refuge of the army.

To the lines of Torres Vedras he once more directed his attention. Engineer officers were dispatched thither; the fortresses were put into repair; the bridges broken or injured during the French invasion were restored; the batteries upon the Tagus were rendered more effective, and furnaces for heating shot were added to them.

The inactivity and apathy of the Portuguese government but ill corresponded with his unwearied exertions; and, despite of continual remonstrances and unceasing representations, the bridges over the Leira and Alva were left unrepaired, and the roads leading to them, so broken as to be almost impassable, might seriously have endangered the retreat of the army, should such a movement be deemed necessary.

It was in the first week of September I was sent with dispatches for the engineer officer in command at the lines, and, during the fortnight of my absence, was enabled for the first time to examine those extraordinary defenses which, for the space of thirty miles, extended over a country undulating in hill and valley, and presenting, by a succession of natural and artificial resources, the strongest and most impregnable barrier that has ever been presented against the advance of a conquering army.

CHAPTER XCVIII.

MICKEY FREE'S ADVENTURE.

When I returned to the camp, I found the greatest excitement prevailing on all sides. Each day brought in fresh rumors that Marmont was advancing in force:

that sixty thousand Frenchmen were in full march upon Ciudad Rodrigo, to raise the blockade, and renew the invasion of Portugal. Intercepted letters corroborated these reports; and the Guerillas who joined us spoke of large convoys which they had seen upon the roads from Salamanca and Tamanes.

Except the light division, which, under the command of Craufurd, were posted upon the right of the Aguada, the whole of our army occupied the country from El Bodon to Gallegos; the fourth division being stationed at Fuente Guenaldo, where some intrenchments had been hastily thrown up.

To this position Lord Wellington resolved upon retreating, as affording points of greater strength and more capability of defense than the other line of road, which led by Almeida upon the Coa. Of the enemy's intentions we were not long to remain in doubt; for, on the morning of the 24th, a strong body was seen descending from the pass above Ciudad Rodrigo, and cautiously reconnoitering the banks of the Aguada. Far in the distance a countless train of wagons, bullock-cars, and loaded mules were seen winding their slow length along, accompanied by several squadrons of dragoons.

Their progress was slow, but, as evening fell, they entered the gates of the fortress; and the cheering of the garrison mixing with the strains of martial music, faint from distance, reached us where we lay upon the far-off heights of El Bodon. So long as the light lasted, we could perceive fresh troops arriving; and even when the darkness came on, we could detect the position of the reinforcing columns by the bright watch-fires which gleamed along the plain.

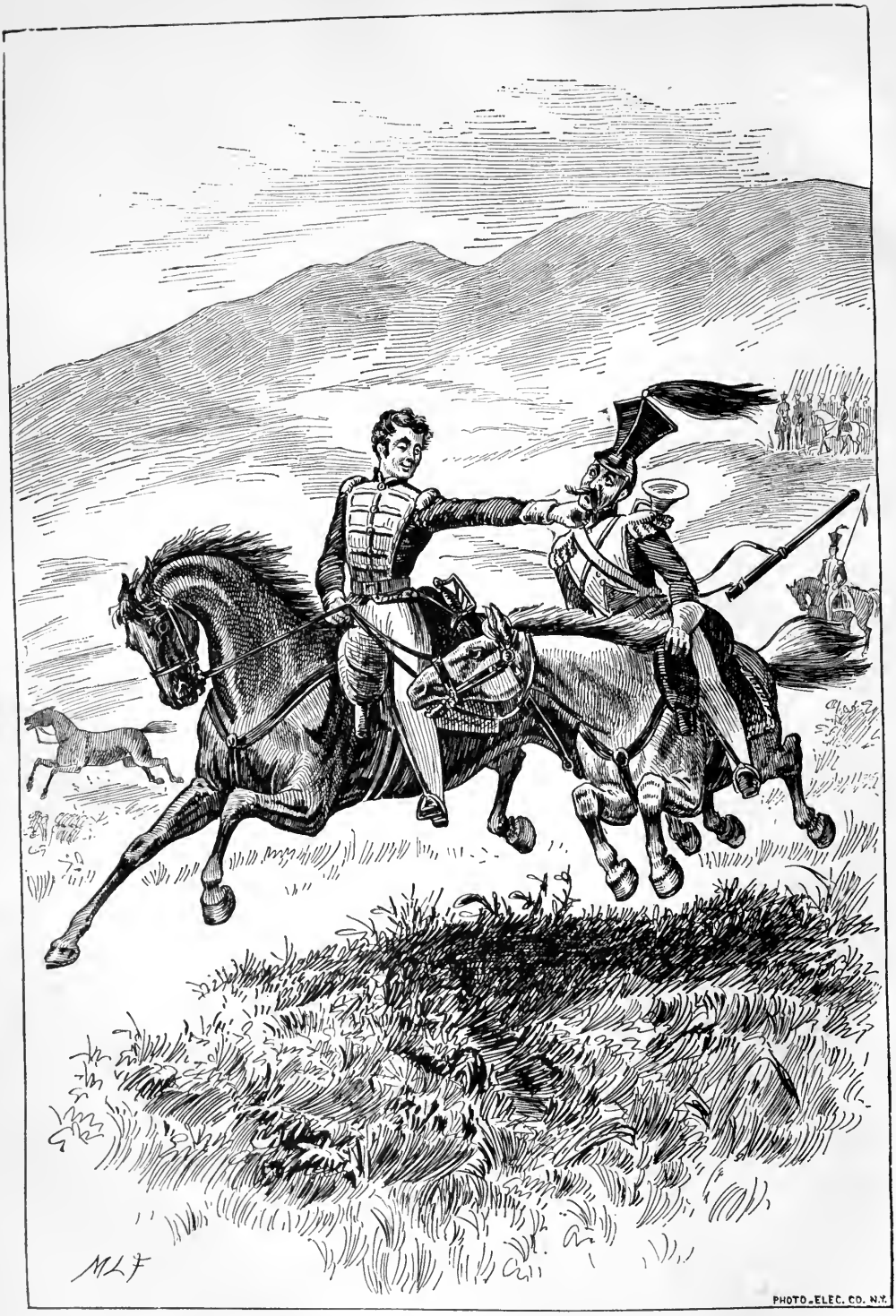
By daybreak we were under arms, anxiously watching for the intentions of our enemy, which soon became no longer dubious. Twenty-five squadrons of cavalry, supported by a whole division of infantry, were seen to defile along the great road from Ciudad Rodrigo to Guenaldo. Another column, equally numerous, marched straight upon Espeja: nothing could be more beautiful, nothing more martial, than their appearance; emerging from a close mountain gorge, they wound along the narrow road, and appeared upon the bridge of the Aguada, just as the morning sun was bursting forth; his bright beams tipping the polished cuirassiers and their glittering equipments, they shone in their panoply like the gay troop of some ancient tournament. The lancers of Berg, distinguished by their scarlet dolmans and gorgeous trappings, were followed by the Cuirassiers of the Guard, who again were succeeded by the *chasseurs à cheval*, their bright steel helmets and light-blue uniforms, their floating plumes and dappled chargers, looking the very *beau idéal* of light horsemen; behind, the dark masses of the infantry pressed forward, and deployed into the plain, while, bringing up the rear, the rolling din, like distant thunder, announced the "dread artillery."

On they came, the seemingly interminable line converging on to that one spot upon whose summit now we assembled a force of scarcely ten thousand bayonets.

While this brilliant panorama was passing before our eyes, we ourselves were not idle. Orders had been sent to Picton to come up from the left with his division. Alten's cavalry and a brigade of artillery were sent to the front, and every preparation which the nature of the ground admitted was made to resist the advance of the enemy. While these movements on either side occupied some hours, the scene was every moment increasing in interest. The large body of cavalry was now seen forming into columns of attack. Nine battalions of infantry moved up to their support, and, forming into columns, echelons, and squares, performed before us all the maneuvers of a review with the most admirable precision and rapidity; but from these our attention was soon taken by a brilliant display upon our left. Here, emerging from the wood which flanked the Aguada, were now to be seen the gorgeous staff of Marmont himself. Advancing at a walk, they came forward amid the *vivas* of the assembled thousands, burning with ardor and thirsting for victory. For a moment, as I looked, I could detect the Marshal himself, as, holding his plumed hat above his head. he returned the salute of a lancer regiment who proudly waved their banners as he passed; but, hark! what are those clanging sounds, which, rising high above the rest, seem like the war-cry of a warrior?

"I can't mistake those tones," said a bronzed old veteran beside me; "those are the brass bands of the Imperial Guard. Can Napoleon be there? See! there they come." As he spoke, the head of a column emerged from the wood, and, deploying as they came, poured into the plain. For above an hour that mighty tide flowed on, and before noon a force of sixty thousand men was collected in the space beneath us.

I was not long to remain an unoccupied spectator of this brilliant display, for I



"GALLANT FELLOW!" "HE HAS HIM! HE HAS HIM, BY—!" (P. 935.)

soon received orders to move down with my squadron to the support of the 11th Light Dragoons, who were posted at the base of the hill. The order at the moment was anything but agreeable, for I was mounted upon a hack pony, on which I had ridden over from Craufurd's division early in the morning, and, suspecting that there might be some hot work during the day, had ordered Mike to follow with my horse. There was no time, however, for hesitation, and I moved my men down the slope in the direction of the skirmishers.

The position we occupied was singularly favorable: our flanks defended on either side by brushwood, we could only be assailed in front; and here, notwithstanding our vast inferiority of force, we steadily awaited the attack. As I rode from out the thick wood, I could not help feeling surprised at the sounds which greeted me. Instead of the usual low and murmuring tones—the muttered sentences which precede a cavalry advance—a roar of laughter shook the entire division, while exclamations burst from every side around me: "Look at him now!" "They have him!—by Heavens, they have him!" "Well done!—well done!" "How the fellow rides!" "He's hit!—he's hit!" "No, no!" "Is he down?" "He's down!"

A loud cheer rent the air at this moment, and I reached the front in time to learn the reason of all this excitement. In the wide plain before me a horseman was seen, having passed the ford of the Aguada, to advance at the top of his speed toward the British lines. As he came nearer, it was perceived that he was accompanied by a led horse, and, apparently with total disregard of the presence of an enemy, rode boldly and carelessly forward. Behind him rode three lancers, their lances couched, their horses at speed: the pace was tremendous, and the excitement intense; for sometimes, as the leading horseman of the pursuit neared the fugitive, he would bend suddenly upon the saddle, and, swerving to the right or to the left, totally evade him, while again, at others, with a loud cry of bold defiance, rising in his stirrups, he would press on, and, with a shake of his bridle that bespoke the jockey, almost distance the enemy.

"That must be your fellow, O'Malley; that must be your Irish groom," cried a brother officer. There could be no doubt of it. It was Mike himself.

"I'll be hanged if he's not playing with them!" said Baker. "Look at the villain! He's holding in: that's more than the Frenchmen are doing. Look! look at the fellow on the gray horse! he has flung his trumpet to his back, and drawn his sabre."

A loud cheer burst from the French lines: the trumpeter was gaining at every stride. Mike had got into deep ground, and the horses would not keep together. "Let the brown horse go! let him go, man!" shouted the dragoons, while I re-echoed the cry with my utmost might. But not so; Mike held firmly on, and, spurring madly, he lifted his horse at each stride, turning, from to time, a glance at his pursuer. A shout of triumph rose from the French side; the trumpeter was beside him; his arm was uplifted; the sabre above his head. A yell broke from the British, and with difficulty could the squadron be restrained. For above a minute the horses went side by side, but the Frenchman delayed his stroke until he could get a little in the front. My excitement had rendered me speechless; if a word could have saved my poor fellow, I could not have spoken. A mist seemed to gather across my eyes, and the whole plain, and its peopled thousands, danced before my eyes.

"He's down!" "He's down, by Heavens!" "No! no! no!" "Look there—nobly done!" "Gallant fellow!" "He has him! he has him, by—!" A cheer that rent the very air above us broke from the squadrons, and Mike galloped in amongst us, holding the Frenchman by the throat with one hand; the bridle of his horse he firmly grasped with his own in the other.

"How was it? how did he do it?" cried I.

"He broke his sword-arm with a blow, and the Frenchman's sabre fell to the earth."

"Here he is, Mister Charles; and, musha, but it's trouble he gave me to catch him! And I hope your honor won't be displeased at me losing the brown horse. I was obliged to let him go when the thief closed on me; but, sure, there he is! May I never! if he's not galloping into the lines by himself." As he spoke, my brown charger came cantering up to the squadrons, and took his place in the line with the rest.

I had scarcely time to mount my horse, amid a buzz of congratulations, when our squadron was ordered to the front. Mixed up with detachments from the Eleventh and Sixteenth, we continued to resist the enemy for above two hours.

Our charges were quick, sharp, and successive, pouring in our numbers wherever

the enemy appeared for a moment to be broken, and then retreating under cover of our infantry when the opposing cavalry came down upon us in overwhelming numbers.

Nothing could be more perfect than the manner in which the different troops relieved each other during this part of the day. When the French squadrons advanced, ours met them as boldly. When the ground became no longer tenable, we broke and fell back, and the bayonets of the infantry arrested their progress. If the cavalry pressed heavily upon the squares, ours came up to the relief, and, as they were beaten back, the artillery opened upon them with an avalanche of grape-shot.

I have seen many battles of greater duration, and more important in result,—many there have been, in which more tactic was displayed, and greater combinations called forth,—but never did I witness a more desperate hand to hand conflict than on the heights of El Bodon.

Baffled by our resistance, Montbrun advanced with the Cuirassiers of the Guard. Riding down our advanced squadrons, they poured upon us like some mighty river, overwhelming all before it, and charged, cheering, up the heights. Our brave troopers were thrown back upon the artillery, and many of them cut down beside the guns. The artillerymen and the drivers shared the same fate, and the cannon were captured. A cheer of exultation burst from the French, and their *vivas* rent the air. Their exultation was short-lived, and that cheer their death-cry; for the 5th Foot, who had hitherto lain concealed in the grass, sprang madly to their feet, their gallant Major Ridge at their head. With a yell of vengeance they rushed upon the foe; the glistening bayonets glanced amid the cavalry of the French; the troops pressed hotly home; and, while the cuirassiers were driven down the hill, the guns were recaptured, limbered up, and brought away. This brilliant charge was the first recorded instance of cavalry being assailed by infantry in line.

But the hill could no longer be held; the French were advancing on either flank; overwhelming numbers pressed upon the front, and retreat was unavoidable. The cavalry were ordered to the rear, and Picton's division, throwing themselves into squares, covered the retreating movement.

The French dragoons bore down upon every face of those devoted battalions; the shouts of triumph cheered them as the earth trembled beneath their charge; but the British infantry, reserving their fire until the sabres clanked with the bayonet, poured in a shattering volley, and the cry of the wounded and the groans of the dying rose from the smoke around them.

Again and again the French came on; and the same fate ever awaited them. The only movement in the British squares was closing up the spaces as their comrades fell or sank wounded to the earth.

At last reinforcements came up from the left: the whole retreated across the plain, until, as they approached Guenaldo, our cavalry having re-formed, came to their aid with one crushing charge, which closed the day.

That same night Lord Wellington fell back, and, concentrating his troops within a narrow loop of land bounded on either flank by the Coa, awaited the arrival of the light division, which joined us at three in the morning.

The following day Marmont again made a demonstration of his force, but no attack followed. The position was too formidable to be easily assailed, and the experience of the preceding day had taught him that, however inferior in numbers, the troops he was opposed to were as valiant as they were ably commanded.

Soon after this, Marmont retired on the valley of the Tagus. Dorsenné also fell back, and, for the present, at least, no further effort was made to prosecute the invasion of Portugal.

CHAPTER XCIX.

THE SAN PETRO.

"Not badly wounded, O'Malley, I hope?" said General Craufurd, as I waited upon him soon after the action.

I could not help starting at the question, while he repeated it, pointing at the same time to my left shoulder, from which a stream of blood was now flowing down my coat-sleeve.

"I never noticed it, sir, till this moment: it can't be of much consequence, for I have been on horseback the entire day, and never felt it."

"Look to it at once, boy; a man wants all his blood for this campaign. Go to your quarters; I shall not need you for the present, so pray see the doctor at once."

As I left the General's quarters, I began to feel sensible of pain, and, before a quarter of an hour had elapsed, had quite con-

vinced myself that my wound was a severe one. The hand and arm were swollen, heavy, and distended with homorrhage beneath the skin; my thirst became great, and a cold shuddering sensation passed over me from time to time.

I sat down for a moment upon the grass, and was just reflecting within myself what course I should pursue, when I heard the tramp of feet approaching. I looked up, and perceived some soldiers in fatigue dresses, followed by a few others, who, from their noiseless gesture and sad countenances, I guessed were carrying some wounded comrade to the rear.

"Who is it, boys?" cried I.

"It's the Major, sir: the Lord be good to him!" said a hardy-looking Eighty-eighth man, wiping his eye with the cuff of his coat as he spoke.

"Not your Major?—not Major O'Shaughnessy?" said I, jumping up, and rushing forward toward the litter. Alas! too true, it was the gallant fellow himself; there he lay, pale and cold; his bloodless cheek and parted lips looking like death itself. A thin blue rivulet trickled from his forehead, but his most serious wound appeared to be in the side; his coat was open, and showed a mass of congealed and clotted blood, from the midst of which, with every motion of the way, a fresh stream kept welling upward. Whether from the shock, or my loss of blood, or from both together, I know not, but I sank fainting to the ground.

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It would have needed a clearer brain and a cooler judgment than I possessed to have conjectured where I was, and what had occurred to me when next I recovered my senses. Weak, fevered, and with a burning thirst, I lay, unable to move, and could merely perceive the objects which lay within the immediate reach of my vision. The place was cold, calm, and still as the grave. A lamp, which hung high above my head, threw a faint light around, and showed me, within a niche of the opposite wall, the figure of a gorgeously dressed female: she appeared to be standing motionless, but, as the pale light flickered upon her features, I thought I could detect the semblance of a smile. The splendor of her costume, and the glittering gems which shone upon her spotless robe, gleamed through the darkness with an almost supernatural brilliancy, and so beautiful did she look, so calm her pale features, that, as I opened and shut my eyes and rubbed my lids, I scarcely dared to trust my erring senses, and believe it could be real. What could it mean? Whence this silence—this cold sense of awe and reverence; was it a dream? was it the fitful vision of a disordered intellect? Could it be death? My eyes were riveted upon that beautiful figure: I essayed to speak, but could not: I would have beckoned her toward me, but my hands refused their office. I felt I know not what charm she possessed to calm my throbbing brain and burning heart; but, as I turned from the gloom and darkness around to gaze upon her fair brow and unmoved features, I felt like the prisoner who turns from the cheerless desolation of his cell, and looks upon the fair world and the smiling valleys lying sunlit and shadowed before him.

Sleep at length came over me; and when I awoke, the day seemed breaking, for a faint gray tint stole through a stained glass window, and fell, in many-colored patches, upon the pavement. A low muttering sound attracted me; I listened—it was Mike's voice. With difficulty raising myself upon one arm, I endeavored to see more around me. Scarcely had I assumed this position, when my eyes once more fell upon the white-clad figure of the preceding night. At her feet knelt Mike, his hands clasped, and his head bowed upon his bosom. Shall I confess my surprise—my disappointment! It was no other than an image of the blessed Virgin, decked out in all the gorgeous splendor which Catholic piety bestows upon her saints. The features, which the imperfect light and my more imperfect faculties had endowed with an expression of calm angelic beauty, were, to my waking senses, but the cold and barren mockery of loveliness: the eyes, which my excited brain gifted with looks of tenderness and pity, stared with no speculation in them; yet, contrasting my feelings of the night before, full as they were of their deceptions, with my now waking thoughts, I longed once more for that delusion which threw a dreamy pleasure over me, and subdued the stormy passions of my soul into rest and repose.

"Who knows," thought I, "but he who kneels yonder feels now as I did then? Who can tell how little the cold, unmeaning reality before him resembles the spiritualized creation the fervor of his love and the ardor of his devotion may have placed upon that altar? Who can limit or bound the depth of that adoration for an object whose attributes appeal not only to every sentiment of the heart, but also to every sense of the brain? I fancy that I can picture to myself how these tinseled relics,

these tasteless wax-works, changed by the magic of devotion and of dread, become to the humble worshiper images of loveliness and beauty. The dim religious light; the reverberating footsteps echoed along those solemn aisles; the vaulted arches, into whose misty heights the sacred incense floats upward, while the deep organ is pealing its notes of praise or prayer;—these are no slight accessories to all the pomp and grandeur of a church, whose forms and ceremonial, unchanged for ages, and hallowed by a thousand associations, appeal to the mind of the humblest peasant or the proudest noble, by all the weaknesses as by all the more favored features of our nature."

How long I might have continued to meditate in this strain I know not, when a muttered observation from Mike turned the whole current of my thoughts. His devotion over, he had seated himself upon the steps of the altar, and appeared to be resolving some doubts within himself concerning his late pious duties.

"Masses is dearer here than in Galway. Father Rush would be well pleased at two-and-sixpence for what I paid three doubloons for, this morning. And sure it's droll enough. How expensive an amusement it is to kill the French. Here's half a dollar I gave for the soul of a cuirassier that I kilt yesterday, and nearly twice as much for an artilleryman I cut down at the guns; and because the villain swore like a heythen, Father Pedro told me he'd cost more nor if he died like a decent man."

At these words he turned suddenly round toward the Virgin, and crossing himself devoutly, added,

"And sure it's yourself knows if it's fair to make me pay for devils that don't know their duties; and, after all, if you don't understand English nor Irish, I've been wasting my time here this two hours."

"I say, Mike, how's the Major? How's Major O'Shaughnessy?"

"Charmingly, sir. It was only loss of blood that ailed him. A thief with a pike—one of the chaps they call Poles, bekase of the long sticks they carry with them—stuck the Major in the ribs; but Doctor Quill—God reward him! he's a great doctor, and a funny divil too—he cured him in no time."

"And where is he now, Mike?"

"Just convanient, in a small chapel off the sacristy; and throuble enough we have to keep him quiet. He gave up the *confusion* of roses, and took to punch; and faith, it isn't hymns nor paslams [psalms] he's singing all night. And they had me there, mixing materials and singing songs, till I heard the bell for matins; and, what between the punch and the prayers, I never closed my eyes."

"What did they call this convent?"

"It is a hard word, I misremember. It's something like saltpeter. But how's your honor? it's time to ask."

"Much better, Mike; much better. But, as I see that either your drink or your devotion seems to have affected your nerves, you'd better lie down for an hour or two. I shall not want you."

"That's just what I can't; for you see I'm making a song for this evening. The Rangers has a little supper, and I'm to be there: and, though I've made one, I'm not sure it'll do. Maybe your honor would give me your opinion about it?"

"With all my heart, Mike: let's hear it."

"Arrah! is it here, before the Virgin and the two blessed saints that's up there in the glass cases? But sure, when they make an hospital of the place, and after the Major's songs last night—"

"Exactly so, Mike: out with it."

"Well, ma'am," said he, turning toward the Virgin, "as I suspect you don't know English, maybe you'll think it's my offices I'm singing. So, saving your favor, here it is."

MR. FREE'S SONG.

Air—"Arrah, Catty, now, can't you be asy?"

"Oh what stories I'll tell when my sodgering's o'er
And the gallant Fourteenth is disbanded,
Not a drill nor parade will I hear of no more,
When safely in Ireland landed.
With the blood that I spilt—the Frenchmen I kilt,
I'll drive the young girls half crazy;
And some 'cute one will cry, with a wink of her eye,
'Mister Free, now—*why can't you be asy?*'

"I'll tell how we routed the squadrons in fight,
And destroyed them all at 'Talavera,'
And then I'll just add how we finished the night,
In learning to dance the 'bolera;'
How by the moonshine we drank raal wine,
And rose next day fresh as a daisy;
Then some one will cry, with a look mighty sly,
'Arrah, Mickey—*now can't you be asy?*'

"I'll tell how the nights with Sir Arthur we spent,
Around a big fire in the air too,
Or maybe enjoying ourselves in a tent,
Exactly like Donnybrook fair too,
How he'd call out to me—'Pass the wine, Mr. Free,
For you're a man never is lazy!'
Then some one will cry, with a wink of her eye,
'Arrah, Mickey dear,—*can't you be asy?*'

"I'll tell, too, the long years in fighting we passed,
Till Mounseer asked Bony to lead him;
And Sir Arthur, grown tired of glory at last,
Begged of one Mickey Free to succeed him.
'But, acushla,' says I, 'the truth is I'm shy!
There's a lady in Ballymacrazy!
And I swore on the book—' He gave me a look,
And cried, 'Mickey—*now can't you be asy?*'"

"Arrah! Mickey, now can't you be *asy?*" sang out a voice in chorus, and the next moment Dr. Quill himself made his appearance.

"Well, O'Malley, is it a penitential psalm you're singing, or is my friend Mike endeavoring to raise your spirits with a Galway sonata?"

"A little bit of his own muse, Doctor, nothing more; but, tell me, how goes it with the Major—is the poor fellow out of danger?"

"Except from the excess of his appetite, I know of no risk he runs. His servant is making gruel for him all day in a thing like the grog-tub of a frigate. But you've heard the news—Sparks has been exchanged; he came here last night; but the moment he caught sight sight of me, he took his departure. Begad! I'm sure he'd rather pass a month in Verdun than a week in my company."

"By-the-by, Doctor, you never told me how this same antipathy of Sparks for you had its origin."

"Sure I drove him out of the Tenth, before he was three weeks with the regiment."

"Ay, I remember; you began the story for me one night on the retreat from the Coa, but something broke it off in the middle."

"Just so; I was sent for to the rear to take off some gentlemen's legs that weren't in dancing condition; but, as there's no fear of interruption now, I'll finish the story. But, first, let us have a peep at the wounded. What beautiful anatomists they are in the French artillery! Do you feel the thing I have now in my forceps?—there, don't jump—that's a bit of the brachial nerve, most beautifully displayed;—faith, I think I'll give Mike a demonstration."

"Oh! Mister Quill dear! Oh! Doctor darling!—"

"Arrah! Mickey, now can't ye be asy?" sang out Maurice, with a perfect imitation of Mike's voice and manner.

"A little lint here—bend your arm—that's it—don't move your fingers. Now, Mickey, make me a cup of coffee with a glass of brandy in it. And now, Charley, for Sparks. I believe I told you what kind of fellows the Tenth were—regular out-and-outers; we hadn't three men in the regiment that were not from the south of Ireland—the *bocca Corkana* on their lips, fun and devilment in their eyes, and more drollery and humbug in their hearts than in all the messes in the service put together. No man had any chance among them if he wasn't a real droll one; every man wrote his own songs, and sang them too; it was no small promotion could tempt a fellow to exchange out of the corps. You may think, then, what a prize your friend Sparks proved to us; we held a court-martial upon him the week after he joined; it was proved in evidence that he had never said a good thing in his life, and had about as much notion of a joke as a Cherokee has of the Court of Chancery; and as to singing, Lord bless you! he had a tune with wooden turns to it, it was most cruel to hear; and then the look of him—those eyes, like dropsical oysters, and the hair standing every way, like a field of insane flax, and the mouth, with a curl in it like the slit in the side of a fiddle. A pleasant fellow that for a mess that always boasted the best-looking chaps in the service.

"'What's to be done with him?' said the Major; 'Shall we tell him we are ordered to India, and terrify him about his liver?'

"'Or drill him into a hectic fever?'

"'Or drink him dry?'

"'Or get him into a fight, and wing him?'

"'Oh, no,' said I, 'leave him to me; we'll laugh him out of the corps.'

"'Yes, we'll leave him to you, Maurice,' said the rest.

"And that day week you might read in the *Gazette*, 'Pierce Flynn O'Haygerty, to be Ensign, 10th Foot, *vice* Sparks, exchanged.'"

"But how was it done, Maurice? You haven't told me that."

"Nothing easier. I affected great intimacy with Sparks; bemoaned our hard fate, mutually, in being attached to such a regiment: 'A damnable corps this—low, vulgar fellows—practical jokes—not the kind of thing one expects in the army. But as for me, I've joined it partly from necessity. You, however, who might be in a crack regiment, I can't conceive your remaining in it.'

"'But why did you join, Doctor?' said he; 'what necessity could have induced you?'

"'Ah! my friend,' said I, '*that* is the secret—*that* is the hidden grief that must lie buried in my own bosom.'

"I saw that his curiosity was excited, and took every means to increase it further. At length, as if yielding to a sudden impulse of friendship, and having sworn him to secrecy, I took him aside, and began thus:

"'I may trust you, Sparks, I feel I may; and when I tell you that my honor, my reputation, my whole fortune is at stake, you will judge of the importance of the trust.'

"The goggle eyes rolled fearfully, and his features exhibited the most craving anxiety to hear my story.

"'You wish to know why I left the Fifty-sixth. Now I'll tell you; but mind, you're pledged, you're sworn, never to divulge it.'

"'Honor bright.'

"'There, that's enough; I'm satisfied. It was a slight infraction of the articles of war; a little breach of the rules and regulations of the service; a trifling misconception of the mess-code; they caught me one evening leaving the mess with—what do you think in my pocket? But you'll never tell! no, no, I know you'll not—eight forks and a gravy-spoon; silver forks every one of them. There now,' said I, grasping his hand, 'you have my secret; my fame and character are in your hands; for, you see, they made me quit the regiment—a man can't stay in a corps where he is laughed at.'

"Covering my face with my handkerchief, as if to conceal my shame, I turned away, and left Sparks to his meditations. That same evening we happened to have some strangers at mess; the bottle was passing freely round, and, as usual, the good spirits of the party at the top of their bent, when suddenly, from the lower end of the table, a voice was heard demanding, in tones of the most pompous importance, permission to address the president upon a topic where the honor of the whole regiment was concerned.

"'I rise, gentlemen,' said Mr. Sparks, 'with feelings the most painful; whatever may have been the laxity of habit and freedom of conversation habitual in this regiment, I never believed that so flagrant an instance as this morning came to my ears—'

"'Oh, murder!' said I. 'Oh, Sparks darling! sure you're not going to tell?'

"'Doctor Quill,' replied he, in an austere tone, 'it is impossible for me to conceal it.'

"'Oh, Sparks dear! will you betray me?'

"I gave him here a look of the most imploring entreaty, to which he replied by one of unflinching sternness.

"'I have made up my mind, sir,' continued he; 'it is possible the officers of this corps may look more leniently than I do upon this transaction; but know it they shall.'

"'Out with it, Sparks—tell it by all means!' cried a number of voices; for it was clear to every one, by this time, that he was involved in a hoax.

"Amid, therefore, a confused volley of entreaty on the one side, and my reiterated prayers for his silence, on the other, Sparks thus began:

"'Are you aware, gentlemen, why Dr. Quill left the Fifty-sixth?'

"'No, no, no!' rang from all sides; 'let's have it!'

"'No, sir!' said he, turning toward me, 'concealment is impossible: an officer detected with the mess-plate in his pocket—'

"They never let him finish, for a roar of laughter shook the table from one end to the other; while Sparks, horror-struck at the lack of feeling and propriety that could make men treat such a matter with ridicule, glared around him on every side.

"'Oh! Maurice, Maurice,' cried the Major, wiping his eyes, 'this is too bad—this is too bad!'

"'Gracious Heaven!' screamed Sparks, 'can you laugh at it?'

"'Laugh at it?' re-echoed the paymaster. 'God grant I only don't burst a blood-vessel!' And once more the sounds of merriment rang out anew, and lasted for several minutes.

"'Oh! Maurice Quill,' cried an old captain, 'you've been too heavy on the lad. Why, Sparks, man, he's been humbugging you.'

"Scarcely were the words spoken when he sprang from the room; the whole truth flashed at once upon his mind; in an instant he saw that he had exposed himself to the merciless ridicule of a mess-table, and that all peace for him, in that regiment at least, was over.

"We got a glorious fellow in exchange for him; and Sparks descended into a cavalry regiment—I ask your pardon, Charley—where, as you are well aware, sharp wit and quick intellect are by no means indispensable. There, now, don't be angry, or you'll do yourself harm. So good-by, for an hour or two."

CHAPTER C.

THE COUNT'S LETTER.

O'SHAUGHNESSY'S wound, like my own, was happily only formidable from the loss

of blood. The sabre or the lance are rarely, indeed, so death-dealing as the musket or the bayonet; and the murderous fire from a square of infantry is far more terrific in its consequences than the heaviest charge of a cavalry column. In a few weeks, therefore, we were once more about, and fit for duty; but, for the present, the campaign was ended. The rainy season, with its attendant train of sickness and sorrow, set in; the troops were cantoned along the line of the frontier, the infantry occupying the villages, and the cavalry being stationed wherever forage could be obtained.

The Fourteenth were posted at Avintas, but I saw little of them. I was continually employed upon the staff; and, as General Craufurd's activity suffered no diminution from the interruption of the campaign, rarely passed a day without eight or nine hours on horseback.

The preparations for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo occupied our undivided attention. To the reduction of this fortress and of Badajos Lord Wellington looked as the most important objects, and prosecuted his plans with unremitting zeal. To my staff appointment I owed the opportunity of witnessing that stupendous feature of war, a siege; and as many of my friends formed part of the blockading force, I spent more than one night in the trenches. Indeed, except for this, the tiresome monotony of life was most irksome at this period. Day after day the incessant rain poured down; the supplies were bad, scanty, and irregular; the hospitals crowded with sick; field-sports impracticable; books there were none; and a dullness and spiritless depression prevailed on every side. Those who were actively engaged around Ciudad Rodrigo had, of course, the excitement and interest which the enterprise involved; but even there the works made slow progress; the breaching artillery was defective in every way; the rain undermined the faces of the bastions; the clayey soil sank beneath the weight of the heavy guns; and the storms of one night frequently destroyed more than a whole week's labor had effected.

Thus passed the dreary months along; the cheeriest and gayest amongst us broken in spirit, and subdued in heart, by the tedium of our life. The very news which reached us partook of the gloomy features of our prospects; we heard only of strong reinforcements marching to the support of the French in Estramadura; we were told that the Emperor, whose successes in Germany enabled him to turn his entire attention to the Spanish campaign, would himself be present in the coming spring, with overwhelming odds, and a firm determination to drive us from the Peninsula.

In that frame of mind which such gloomy and depressing prospects are well calculated to suggest, I was returning one night to my quarters at Mucia, when suddenly I beheld Mike galloping toward me with a large packet in his hand, which he held aloft to catch my attention. "Letters from England, sir," said he; "just arrived with the General's dispatches." I broke the envelope at once, which bore the War-office seal, and, as I did so, a perfect avalanche of letters fell at my feet. The first which caught my eye was an official intimation from the Horse Guards, that the Prince Regent had been graciously pleased to confirm my promotion to the troop, my commission to bear date from the appointment, etc., etc. I could not help feeling struck, as my eye ran rapidly across the lines, that, although the letter came from Sir George Dashwood's office, it contained not a word of congratulation nor remembrance on his part, but was couched in the usual cold and formal language of an official document. Impatient, however, to look over my other letters, I thought but little of this; so, throwing them hurriedly into my sabretasche, I cantered on to my quarters without delay. Once more alone in silence, I sat down to commune with my far-off friends, and yet, with all my anxiety to hear of home, passed several minutes in turning over the letters, guessing from whom they might have come, and picturing to myself their probable contents. "Ah! Frank Webber, I recognize your slap-dash, bold hand without the aid of the initials in the corner; and this—what can this be?—this queer, misshapen thing, representing nothing save the forty-seventh proposition of Euclid, and the address seemingly put on with a cat's-tail dipped in lampblack? Yes! true enough, it is from Mister Free himself. And what have we here? this queer, quaint hand, is no new acquaintance; how many a time have I looked upon it as the *ne plus ultra* of caligraphy! But here is one I'm not so sure of: who could have written this bolt-upright, old-fashioned superscription, not a letter of which seems on speaking terms with its neighbor?—the very O absolutely turns its back upon the M in O'Malley, and the final Y wags his tail with a kind of independent shake, as if he did not care a curse for his predecessors! And the seal, too—surely I know that griffin's head, and that stern motto, '*Non*

rogo sed capio.' To be sure, it is Billy Considine's, the Count himself. The very paper, yellow and time-stained, looks coeval with his youth, and I could even venture to wager that his sturdy pen was nibbed half a century since. I'll not look further among this confused mass of three-cornered billets, and long, treacherous-looking epistles, the very folding of which denote the dun. Here goes for the Count?" So saying to myself, I drew closer to the fire, and began the following epistle:

"O'Malley Castle, Nov. 3.

"DEAR CHARLEY,—Here we sit in the little parlor, with your last letter, the *Times*, and a big map before us, drinking your health, and wishing you a long career of the same glorious success you have hitherto enjoyed. Old as I am—eighty-two or eighty-three (I forget which) in June—I envy you with all my heart. Luck has stood to you, my boy; and, if a French sabre or a bayonet finish you now, you've at least had a splendid burst of it. I was right in my opinion of you, and Godfrey himself owns it now;—a lawyer, indeed! Bad luck to them! we've had enough of lawyers. There's old Hennesy—honest Jack, as they used to call him—that your uncle trusted for the last forty years, has raised eighteen thousand pounds on the title-deeds and gone off to America. The old scoundrel! But it's no use talking: the blow is a sore one to Godfrey, and the gout more troublesome than ever. Drumgold is making a motion in Chancery about it, to break the sale, and the tenants are in open rebellion, and swear they'll murther a receiver, if one is sent down among them. Indeed, they came in such force into Galway during the assizes, and did so much mischief, that the cases for trial were adjourned, and the judges left, with a military escort to protect them. This, of course, is gratifying to our feelings; for, thank Providence, there is some good in the world yet. Kilmurry was sold last week for twelve thousand. Andy Blake would foreclose the mortgage, although we offered him every kind of satisfaction. This has done Godfrey a deal of harm; and some pitiful economy—taking only two bottles of claret after his dinner—has driven the gout to his head. They've been telling him he'd lengthen his days by this, and I tried it myself, and, faith, it was the longest day I ever spent in my life. I hope and trust you take your liquer like a gentleman—and an Irish gentleman.

"Kinshela, we hear, has issued an execution against the house and furniture; but the attempt to sell the demesne nearly killed your uncle. It was advertised in a London paper, and an offer made for it by an old general, whom you may remember when down here. Indeed, if I mistake not, he was rather kind to you in the beginning. It would appear he did not wish to have his name known, but we found him out, and such a letter as we sent him! It's little liking he'll have to buy a Galway gentleman's estate over his head, that same Sir George Dashwood! Godfrey offered to meet him anywhere he pleased, and, if the doctor thought he could bear the sea voyage, he'd even go over to Holyhead; but the sneaking fellow sent an apologetic kind of a letter, with some humbug excuse about very different motives, etc. But we've done with him, and I think he with us."

When I had read thus far, I laid down the letter, unable to go on; the accumulated misfortunes of one I loved best in the world, following so fast one upon another, the insult, unprovoked, gratuitous insult, to him upon whom my hopes of future happiness so much depended, completely overwhelmed me. I tried to continue: alas! the catalogue of evils went on; each line bore testimony to some further wreck of fortune—some clearer evidence of a ruined house.

All that my gloomiest and darkest forebodings had pictured was come to pass; sickness, poverty, harassing, unfeeling creditors, treachery, and ingratitude, were goading to madness and despair a spirit whose kindliness of nature was unequaled. The shock of blasted fortunes was falling upon the dying heart; the convictions which a long life had never brought home, that men were false, and their words a lie, were stealing over the man, upon the brink of the grave; and he who had loved his neighbor like a brother was to be taught, at the eleventh hour, that the beings he trusted were perjured and forsworn.

A more unsuitable adviser than Considine, in difficulties like these, there could not be; his very contempt for all the forms of law and justice was sufficient to embroil my poor uncle still further, so that I resolved at once to apply for leave, and, if refused, and no other alternative offered, to leave the service. It was not without a sense of sorrow, bordering on despair, that I came to this determination. My soldier's life had become a passion with me; I loved it for its bold and chivalrous enthusiasm; its hour of battle and strife; its days of endurance and hardship; its trials, its triumphs,—its very reverses were endeared

by those they were shared with,—and the spirit of adventure, and the love of danger—that most exciting of all gambling—had now entwined themselves in my very nature. To surrender all these at once, and to exchange the daily, hourly enthusiasm of a campaign for the prospects now before me, was almost maddening! But still, a sustaining sense of duty of what I owed to him who, in his love, had sacrificed all for me, overpowered every other consideration. My mind was made up.

Father Rush's letter was little more than a recapitulation of the Count's. Debt, distress, sickness, and the heart-burnings of altered fortunes filled it, and, when I closed it, I felt like one over all whose views in life a dark and ill-omened cloud was closing for ever. Webber's I could not read; the light and cheerful raillery of a friend would have seemed, at such a time, like the cold, unfeeling sarcasm of an enemy. I sat down, at last, to write to the General, inclosing my application for leave, and begging of him to forward it, with a favorable recommendation, to head-quarters.

This done, I lay down upon my bed, and, overcome by fatigue and fretting, fell asleep to dream of my home and those I had left there, which, strangely, too, were presented to my mind with all the happy features that made them so dear to my infancy.

CHAPTER CI.

THE TRENCHES.

"I HAVE not had time, O'Malley, to think of your application," said Craufurd, "nor is it likely I can, for a day or two. Read that." So saying, he pushed toward me a note, written in pencil, which ran thus:

"Ciudad Rodrigo, Dec. 18.

DEAR C.,—Fletcher tells me that the breaches will be practicable by to-morrow evening, and I think so myself. Come over, then, at once, for we shall not lose any time.

Yours,
"W."

"I have some dispatches for your regiment, but if you prefer coming along with me—"

"My dear General, dare I ask for such a favor?"

"Well, come along; only remember that, although my division will be engaged, I cannot promise you anything to do; so now, get your horses ready; let's away."

It was in the afternoon of the following day that we rode into the large plain before Ciudad Rodrigo, and in which the allied armies were now assembled to the number of twelve thousand men. The loud booming of the siege artillery had been heard by me for some hours before; but notwithstanding this prelude and my own high-wrought expectations, I was far from anticipating the magnificent spectacle which burst upon my astonished view. The air was calm and still; a clear blue wintry sky stretched overhead, but, below, the dense blue smoke of the deafening guns rolled in mighty volumes along the earth, and entirely concealed the lower part of the fortress; above this the tall towers and battlemented parapets rose into the thin transparent sky like fairy palaces. A bright flash of flame would now and then burst forth from the walls, and a clanging crash of the brass metal be heard; but the unceasing roll of our artillery nearly drowned all other sounds, save when a loud cheer would burst from the trenches; while the clattering fall of masonry, and the crumbling stones as they rolled down, bespoke the reason of the cry. The utmost activity prevailed on all sides; troops pressed forward to the reliefs in the parallels; ammunition wagons moved to the front; general and staff officers rode furiously about the plain; and all betokened that the hour of attack was no longer far distant.

While all parties were anxiously awaiting the decision of our chief, the general order was made known, which, after briefly detailing the necessary arrangements, concluded with the emphatic words, "Ciudad Rodrigo *must* be stormed to-night." All speculation as to the troops to be engaged in this daring enterprise was soon at an end; for, with his characteristic sense of duty, Lord Wellington made no invidious selection, but merely commanded that the attack should be made by whatever divisions might chance to be that day in the trenches. Upon the third and light divisions, therefore, this glorious task devolved. The former was to attack the main breach; to Craufurd's division was assigned the, if possible, more difficult enterprise of carrying the lesser one; while Pack's Portuguese brigade were to menace the convent of La Caridad by a feint attack, to be converted into a real one, if circumstances should permit.

The decision, however matured and comprehensive in all its details, was finally adopted so suddenly that every staff officer upon the ground was actively engaged during the entire evening in conveying the

orders to the different regiments. As the day drew to a close, the cannonade slackened on either side, a solitary gun would be heard at intervals, and, in the calm stillness around, its booming thunder reechoed along the valleys of the Sierra; but, as the moon rose and night set in, these were no longer heard, and a perfect stillness and tranquillity prevailed around. Even in the trenches, crowded with armed and anxious soldiers, not a whisper was heard; and, amid that mighty host which filled the plain, the tramp of a patrol could be distinctly noted, and the hoarse voice of the French sentry upon the walls, telling that all was well in Ciudad Rodrigo.

The massive fortress looming larger as its dark shadow stood out from the sky, was still as the grave; while in the greater breach a faint light was seen to twinkle for a moment, and then suddenly to disappear, leaving all gloomy and dark as before.

Having been sent with orders to the third division, of which the Eighty-eighth formed a part, I took the opportunity of finding out O'Shaughnessy, who was himself to lead an escalade party in M'Kinnon's brigade. He sprang toward me as I came forward, and, grasping my hand with a more than usual earnestness, called out, "The very man I wanted! Charley, my boy, do us a service now!"

Before I could reply, he continued in a lower tone, "A young fellow of ours, Harry Beauclerc, has been badly wounded in the trenches, but by some blunder his injury is reported as a slight one, and although the poor fellow can scarcely stand, he insists upon going with the stormers."

"Come here, Major! come here!" cried a voice at a little distance.

"Follow me, O'Malley," cried O'Shaughnessy, moving in the direction of the speaker.

By the light of a lantern we could descry two officers kneeling upon the ground; between them on the grass lay the figure of a third, upon whose features, as the pale light fell, the hand of death seemed rapidly stealing. A slight froth, tinged with blood, rested on his lip, and the florid blood, which stained the buff facing of his uniform, indicated that his wound was through the lungs.

"He has fainted," said one of the officers, in a low tone.

"Are you certain it is fainting?" said the other, in a still lower.

"You see how it is, Charley," said O'Shaughnessy; "this poor boy must be carried to the rear. Will you then, like a kind fellow, hasten back to Colonel Campbell and mention the fact. It will kill Beauclerc, should any doubt rest upon his conduct, if he ever recover this."

While he spoke, four soldiers of the regiment placed the wounded officer in a blanket. A long sigh escaped him, and he muttered a few broken words.

"Poor fellow! it's his mother he's talking of. He only joined a month since, and is a mere boy. Come, O'Malley, lose no time. By Jove! it is too late, there goes the first rocket for the columns to form. In ten minutes more the stormers must fall in."

"What's the matter, Giles?" said he to one of the officers who had stopped the soldiers as they were moving off with their burden; "what is it?"

"I have been cutting the white tape off his arm; for, if he sees it on waking, he'll remember all about the storming."

"Quite right—thoughtfully done!" said the other; "but who is to lead his fellows? He was in the forlorn hope."

"I'll do it," cried I, with eagerness. "Come, O'Shaughnessy, you'll not refuse me?"

"Refuse you, boy!" said he, grasping my hand within both of his, "never! But you must change your coat. The gallant Eighty-eighth will never mistake their countryman's voice. But your uniform would be devilish likely to get you a bayonet through it; so come back with me, and we'll make you a Ranger in no time."

"I can give your friend a cap."

"And I," said the other, "a brandy flask, which, after all, is not the worst part of a storming equipage."

"I hope," said O'Shaughnessy, "they may find Maurice in the rear. Beauclerc's all safe in his hands."

"That they'll not," said Giles, "you may swear. Quill is this moment in the trenches, and will not be the last man at the breach."

"Follow me now, lads," said O'Shaughnessy, in a low voice. "Our fellows are at the angle of this trench. Who the deuce can that be, talking so loud?"

"It must be Maurice," said Giles.

The question was soon decided by the Doctor himself, who appeared giving directions to his hospital-sergeant.

"Yes, Peter, take the tools up to a convenient spot near the breach. There's many a snug corner there in the ruins; and, although we mayn't have as good an operation-room as in old 'Steevens's,' yet we'll beat them hollow in cases."

"Listen to the fellow," said Giles, with a shudder. "The thought of his con-

founded thumbscrews and tourniquets is worse to me than a French howitzer."

"The devil a kinder-hearted fellow than Maurice," said O'Shaughnessy, "for all that; and if his heart was to be known this moment, he'd rather handle a sword than a saw."

"True for you, Dennis," said Quill, overhearing him; "but we are both useful in our way, as the hangman said to Lord Clare."

"But should you not be in the rear, Maurice?" said I.

"You are right, O'Malley," said he, in a whisper; "but, you see, I owe the Cork Insurance Company a spite for making me pay a gout premium, and that's the reason I'm here. I warned them at the time that their stinginess would come to no good."

"I say, Captain O'Malley," said Giles, "I find I can't be as good as my word with you; my servant has moved to the rear with all my traps."

"What is to be done?" said I.

"Is it shaving utensils you want?" said Maurice. "Would a scalpel serve your turn?"

"No, Doctor, I'm going to take a turn of duty with your fellows to-night."

"In the breach—with the stormers?"

"With the forlorn hope," said O'Shaughnessy. "Beauclerc is so badly wounded that we've sent him back; and Charley, like a good fellow, has taken his place."

"Martin told me," said Maurice, "that Beauclerc was only stunned; but, upon my conscience, the hospital-mates, now-a-days, are no better than the watchmakers; they can't tell what's wrong with the instrument till they pick it to pieces. Whiz! there goes a blue light."

"Move on, move on," whispered O'Shaughnessy; "they're telling off the stormers. That rocket is the order to fall in."

"But what am I to do for a coat?"

"Take mine, my boy," said Maurice, throwing off an upper garment of coarse gray frieze as he spoke.

"There's a neat bit of uniform," continued he, turning himself round for our admiration; "don't I look mighty like the pictures of George the First at the battle of Dettingen?"

A burst of approving laughter was our only answer to this speech, while Maurice proceed to denude himself of his most extraordinary garment.

"What, in the name of Heaven, is it?" said I.

"Don't despise it, Charley; it knows the smell of gunpowder as well as any bit of scarlet in the service;" while he added, in a whisper, "it's the ould Roscommon Yeomanry. My uncle commanded them in the year '42, and this was his coat. I don't mean to say that it was new then; for you see it's a kind of heirloom in the Quill family; and it's not every one I'd be giving it to."

"A thousand thanks, Maurice," said I, as I buttoned it on, amid an ill-suppressed titter of laughter.

"It fits you like a senty-box," said Maurice, as he surveyed me with a lantern. "The skirts separate behind in the most picturesque manner; and when you button the collar, it will keep your head up so high, that the devil a bit you'll see except the blessed moon. It's a thousand pities you haven't the three-cocked hat, with the feather trimming. If you wouldn't frighten the French, my name's not Maurice. Turn about here till I admire you. If you only saw yourself in a glass, you'd never join the dragoons again. And look now, don't be exposing yourself, for I wouldn't have those blue facings destroyed for a week's pay."

"Ah then, it's yourself is the darling, Doctor dear!" said a voice behind me. I turned round: it was Mickey Free, who was standing with a most profound admiration of Maurice beaming in every feature of his face. "It's yourself has a joke for every hour o' the day."

"Get to the rear, Mike—get to the rear with the cattle; this is no place for you or them."

"Good-night, Mickey," said Maurice.

"Good-night, your honor," muttered Mike to himself; "may I never die till you set a leg for me."

"Are you dressed for the ball?" said Maurice, fastening the white tape upon my arm. "There now, my boy, move on, for I think I hear Picton's voice; not that it signifies now, for he's always in a heavenly temper when any one's going to be killed. I'm sure he'd behave like an angel, if he only knew the ground was mined under his feet."

"Charley—Charley!" called out O'Shaughnessy, in a suppressed voice, "come up quickly."

"No. 24, John Forbes—here! Edward Gillespie—here!"

"Who leads this party, Major O'Shaughnessy?"

"Mr. Beauclerc, sir," replied O'Shaughnessy, pushing me forward by the arm while he spoke.

"Keep your people together, sir; spare the powder, and trust to your cold iron."

He grasped my hand within his iron grip, and rode on.

"Who was it, Dennis?" said I.

"Don't you know him, Charley? That was Picton."

CHAPTER CII.

THE STORMING OF CIUDAD RODRIGO.

WHATEVER the levity of the previous moment, the scene before us now repressed it effectually. The deep-toned bell of the cathedral tolled seven, and scarcely were its notes dying away in the distance, when the march of the columns was heard stealing along the ground. A low murmuring whisper ran along the advanced files of the forlorn hope; stocks were loosened, packs and knapsacks thrown to the ground; each man pressed his cap more firmly down upon his brow, and, with lip compressed and steadfast eye, waited for the word to move.

It came at last: the word "March!" passed in whispers from rank to rank, and the dark mass moved on. What a moment was that, as we advanced to the foot of the breach! The consciousness that, at the same instant, from different points of that vast plain, similar parties were moving on; the feeling that, at a word, the flame of the artillery and the flash of steel would spring from that dense cloud, and death and carnage, in every shape our imagination can conceive, be dealt on all sides; the hurried, fitful thought of home; the years long past, compressed into one minute's space; the last adieu of all we've loved, mingling with the muttered prayer to Heaven, while, high above all, the deep pervading sense that earth has no temptation strong enough to turn us from that path whose ending must be a sepulcher!

Each heart was too full for words. We followed noiselessly along the turf, the dark figure of our leader guiding us through the gloom. On arriving at the ditch, the party with the ladders moved to the front. Already some hay-packs were thrown in, and the forlorn hope sprang forward.

All was still and silent as the grave. "Quietly, my men—quietly!" said M'Kinnon; "don't press." Scarcely had he spoken when a musket, whose charge, contrary to orders, had not been drawn, went off. The whizzing bullet could not have struck the wall when suddenly a bright flame burst forth from the ramparts, and shot upward toward the sky. For an instant the whole scene before us was bright as noonday. On one side the dark ranks and glistening bayonets of the enemy; on the other, the red uniform of the British columns: compressed like some solid wall, they stretched along the plain.

A deafening roll of musketry from the extreme right announced that the third division was already in action, while the loud cry of our leader, as he sprang into the trench, summoned us to the charge. The leading sections, not waiting for the ladders, jumped down, others pressing rapidly behind them, when a loud, rumbling thunder crept along the earth, a hissing, crackling noise followed, and from the dark ditch a forked and livid lightning burst like the flame from a volcano, and a mine exploded. Hundreds of shells and grenades scattered along the ground were ignited at the same moment; the air sparkled with the whizzing fuses, the musketry plied incessantly from the walls, and every man of the leading company of the stormers was blown to pieces. While this dreadful catastrophe was enacting before our eyes, the different assaults were made on all sides; the whole fortress seemed girt around with fire. From every part arose the yells of triumph and the shouts of the assailants. As for us, we stood upon the verge of the ditch, breathless, hesitating, and horror-struck. A sudden darkness succeeded to the bright glare, but from the midst of the gloom the agonizing cries of the wounded and the dying rent our very hearts.

"Make way there! make way! here comes Mackie's party," cried an officer in the front, and as he spoke the forlorn hope of the Eighty-eighth came forward at a run; jumping recklessly into the ditch, they made toward the breach; the supporting division of stormers gave one inspiring cheer, and sprang after them. The rush was tremendous; for scarcely had we reached the crumbling ruins of the rampart, when the vast column, pressing on like some mighty torrent, bore down upon our rear. Now commenced a scene to which nothing I ever before conceived of war could in any degree compare: the whole ground, covered with combustibles of every deadly and destructive contrivance, was rent open with a crash; the huge masses of masonry bounded into the air like things of no weight; the ringing clangor of the iron howitzers, the crackling of the fuses, the blazing splinters, the shouts of defiance, the more than savage yell of those in whose ranks alone the dead and the dying were numbered, made

up a mass of sights and sounds almost maddening with their excitement. On we struggled; the mutilated bodies of the leading files almost filling the way.

By this time the third division had joined us, and the crush of our thickening ranks was dreadful; every moment some well-known leader fell dead or mortally wounded, and his place was supplied by some gallant fellow, who, springing from the leading files, would scarcely have uttered his cheer of encouragement, ere he himself was laid low. Many a voice, with whose notes I was familiar, would break upon my ear in tones of heroic daring, and the next moment burst forth in a death-cry. For above an hour the frightful carnage continued, fresh troops continually advancing, but scarcely a foot of ground was made; the earth belched forth its volcanic fires, and that terrible barrier did no man pass. In turn the bravest and the boldest would leap into the whizzing flame, and the taunting cheers of the enemy triumphed in derision at the effort.

"Stormers, to the front! only the bayonet! trust to nothing but the bayonet!" cried a voice, whose almost cheerful accents contrasted strangely with the death-notes around, and Gurwood, who led the forlorn hope of the Fifty-second, bounded into the chasm; all the officers sprang simultaneously after him: the men pressed madly on; a roll of withering musketry crashed upon them; a furious shout replied to it. The British, springing over the dead and dying, bounded like bloodhounds on their prey. Meanwhile, the ramparts trembled beneath the tramp of the light division, who, having forced the lesser breach, came down upon the flank of the French. The garrison, however, thickened their numbers, and bravely held their ground. Man to man now was the combat. No cry for quarter. No supplicating look for mercy; it was the death-struggle of vengeance and despair. At this instant, an explosion louder than the loudest thunder shook the air; the rent and torn up ramparts sprang into the sky; the conquering and the conquered were alike the victims; for one of the greatest magazines had been ignited by a shell; the black smoke, streaked with a lurid flame, hung above the dead and the dying. The artillery and the murderous musketry were stilled, paralyzed, as it were, by the ruin and devastation before them: both sides stood leaning upon their arms; the pause was but momentary; the cries of wounded comrades called upon their hearts. A fierce burst of vengeance rent the air; the British closed upon the foe; for one instant they were met; the next, the bayonets gleamed upon the ramparts, and Ciudad Rodrigo was won.

CHAPTER CIII.

THE RAMPART.

While such were the scenes passing around me, of my own part in them I absolutely knew nothing; for, until the moment that the glancing bayonets of the light division came rushing on the foe, and the loud, long cheer of victory burst above us, I felt like one in a trance. Then I leaned against an angle of the rampart, overpowered and exhausted; a bayonet wound, which some soldier of our own ranks had given me when mounting the breach, pained me somewhat; my uniform was actually torn to rags; my head bare: of my sword, the hilt and four inches of the blade alone remained, while my left hand firmly grasped the rammer of a cannon, but why or wherefore I could not even guess. As thus I stood, the unceasing tide of soldiery pressed on; fresh divisions came pouring in, eager for plunder, and thirsting for the spoil. The dead and the dying were alike trampled beneath the feet of that remorseless mass, who, actuated by vengeance and by rapine, sprang fiercely up the breach.

Weak and exhausted, faint from my wound, and overcome by my exertions, I sank among the crumbling ruin. The loud shouts which rose from the town, mingled with cries and screams, told the work of pillage was begun; while still a dropping musketry could be heard on the distant rampart, where even yet the French made resistance. At last even this was hushed, but to it succeeded the far more horrifying sounds of rapine and of murder; the forked flames of burning houses rose here and there amid the black darkness of the night; and through the crackling of the timbers, and the falling crash of roofs, the heart-rending shriek of women rent the very air. Officers pressed forward, but in vain were their efforts to restrain their men—the savage cruelty of the moment knew no bounds of restraint. More than one gallant fellow perished in his fruitless endeavor to enforce obedience; and the most awful denunciations were now uttered against those before whom, at any other time, they dared not mutter.

Thus passed the long night, far more

terrible to me than all the dangers of the storm itself, with all its death and destruction dealing around it. I know not if I slept: if so, the horrors on every side were pictured in my dreams; and, when the gray dawn was breaking, the cries from the doomed city were still ringing in my ears. Close around me the scene was still and silent; the wounded had been removed during the night, but the thickly-packed dead lay side by side where they fell. It was a fearful sight to see them as, blood-stained and naked (for already the camp-followers had stripped the bodies), they covered the entire breach. From the rampart to the ditch, the ranks lay where they had stood in life. A faint phosphoric flame flickered above their ghastly corpses, making even death still more horrible. I was gazing steadfastly, with all that stupid intensity which imperfect senses and exhausted faculties possess, when the sound of voices near aroused me.

"Bring him along—this way, Bob. Over the breach with the scoundrel, into the fosse."

"He shall die no soldier's death, by Heaven!" cried another and a deeper voice, "if I lay his skull open with my axe."

"Oh, mercy, mercy! as you hope for—"

"Traitor! don't dare to mutter here!" As the last words were spoken, four infantry soldiers, reeling from drunkenness, dragged forward a pale and haggard wretch, whose limbs trailed behind him like those of palsy; his uniform was that of a French chasseur, but his voice bespoke him English.

"Kneel down there, and die like a man! You were one once!"

"Not so, Bill: never. Fix bayonets, boys! That's right! Now take the word from me."

"Oh, forgive me! for the love of Heaven, forgive me!" screamed the voice of the victim; but his last accents ended in a death-cry, for, as he spoke, the bayonets flashed for an instant in the air, and the next were plunged into his body. Twice I had essayed to speak, but my voice, hoarse from shouting, came not; and I could but look upon this terrible murder with staring eyes and burning brain. At last speech came, as if wrested by the very excess of my agony, and I muttered aloud, "O God!" The words were not well spoken, when the muskets were brought to the shoulders, and, reeking with the blood of the murdered man, their savage faces scowled at me as I lay.

A short and heartfelt prayer burst from my lips, and I was still. The leader of the party called out, "Be steady! and together. One, two! Ground arms, boys! Ground arms!" roared he, in a voice of thunder; "it's the Captain himself!" Down went the muskets with a crash; while, springing toward me, the fellows caught me in their arms, and with one jerk mounted me upon their shoulders, the cheer that accompanied the sudden movement seeming like the yell of maniacs. "Ha, ha, ha! we have him now!" sang their wild voices, as, with blood-stained hands and infuriated features, they bore me down the rampart. My sensations of disgust and repugnance to the party seemed at once to have evidenced themselves, for the corporal, turning abruptly round, called out,

"Don't pity *him*, Captain; the scoundrel was a deserter; he escaped from the picket two nights ago, and gave information of all our plans to the enemy."

"Ay," cried another, "and, what's worse, he fired through an embrasure near the breach, for two hours, upon his own regiment. It was there we found him. This way, lads."

So saying, they turned short from the walls, and dashed down a dark and narrow lane into the town. My struggles to get free were perfectly ineffectual, and to my entreaties they were totally indifferent.

In this way, therefore, we made our entrance into the Plaza, where some hundred soldiers, of different regiments, were bivouacked. A shout of recognition welcomed the fellows as they came; while, suddenly, a party of Eighty-eighth men, springing from the ground, rushed forward with drawn bayonets, calling out, "Give him up this minute, or, by the Father of Moses, we'll make short work of ye!"

The order was made by men who seemed well disposed to execute it; and I was accordingly grounded with a shock and a rapidity that savored much more of ready compliance than any respect for my individual comfort. A roar of laughter rang through the motley mass, and every powder-stained face around me seemed convulsed with merriment. As I sat passively upon the ground, looking ruefully about, whether my gestures or my words heightened the absurdity of my appearance, it is hard to say; but certainly the laughter increased at each moment, and the drunken wretches danced round me in ecstasy.

"Where is your Major? Major O'Shaughnessy, lads?" said I.

"He's in the church, with the General, your honor," said the sergeant of the regiment; upon whom the mention of his

officer's name seemed at once to have a sobering influence. Assisting me to rise (for I was weak as a child), he led me through the dense crowd, who, such is the influence of example, now formed into line, and, as well as their state permitted, gave me a military salute as I passed. "Follow me, sir," said the sergeant; "this little dark street to the left will take us to the private door of the chapel."

"Wherefore are they there, sergeant?"

"There's a general of division mortally wounded."

"You did not hear his name?"

"No, sir. All I know is, he was one of the storming party at the lesser breach."

A cold, sickening shudder came over me; I durst not ask further, but pressed on with anxious steps toward the chapel.

"There, sir, yonder, where you see the light. That's the door."

So saying, the sergeant stopped suddenly, and placed his hand to his cap. I saw at once that he was sufficiently aware of his condition not to desire to appear before his officers; so, hurriedly thanking him, I walked forward.

"Halt, there! and give the countersign," cried a sentinel, who with fixed bayonet stood before the door.

"I am an officer," said I, endeavoring to pass in.

"Stand bock, stand bock!" said the harsh voice of the Highlander, for such he was.

"Is Major O'Shaughnessy in the church?"

"I dinna ken," was the short, rough answer.

"Who is the officer so badly wounded?"

"I dinna ken," repeated he, as gruffly as before; while he added, in a louder key, "Stand bock, I tell ye, man! Dinna ye see the staff coming?"

I turned round hastily, and at the same instant several officers, who apparently from precaution had dismounted at the end of the street, were seen approaching. They came hurriedly forward, but without speaking. He who was in advance of the party wore a short, blue cape, over an undress uniform. The rest were in full regimentals. I had scarcely time to throw a passing glance upon him, when the officer I have mentioned as coming first, called out in a stern voice,

"Who are you, sir?"

I started at the sounds: it was not the first time those accents had been heard by me.

"Captain O'Malley, Fourteenth Light Dragoons."

"What brings you here, sir? Your regiment is at Caya."

"I have been employed as acting aide-de-camp to General Craufurd," said I, hesitatingly.

"Is that your staff uniform?" said he, as with compressed brow and stern look he fixed his eyes upon my coat. Before I had time to reply, or, indeed, before I well knew how to do so, a gruff voice from behind called out,

"Damn me! if that ain't the fellow that led the stormers through a broken embrasure! I say, my Lord, that's the yeoman I was telling you of. Is it not so, sir?" continued he, turning toward me.

"Yes, sir. I led a party of the Eighty-eighth at the breach."

"And devilish well you did it, too!" added Picton, for it was he who recognized me. "I saw him, my Lord, spring down from the parapet upon a French gunner, and break his sword as he cleft his helmet in two. Yes, yes; I shall not forget in a hurry how you laid about you with the rammer of the gun! By Jove! that's it he has in his hand!"

While Picton ran thus hurriedly on, Lord Wellington's calm but stern features never changed their expression. The looks of those around were bent upon me with interest and even admiration; but his evinced nothing of either.

Reverting at once to my absence from my post, he asked me,

"Did you obtain leave for a particular service, sir?"

"No, my Lord. It was simply from an accidental circumstance that—"

"Then, report yourself at your quarters as under arrest."

"But, my Lord—" said Picton. Lord Wellington waited not for the explanation, but walked firmly forward, and strode into the church. The staff followed in silence, Picton turning one look of kindness on me as he went, as though to say, "I'll not forget you."

"The devil take it," cried I, as I found myself once more alone, "but I'm unlucky. What would turn out with other men the very basis of their fortune, is ever with me the source of ill luck."

It was evident, from Picton's account, that I had distinguished myself in the breach; and yet, nothing was more clear than that my conduct had displeased the Commander-in-Chief. Picturing him ever to my mind's eye as the *beau idéal* of a military leader, by some fatality of fortune I was continually incurring his displeasure, for whose praise I would have risked my

life. "And this confounded costume—what, in the name of every absurdity, could have ever persuaded me to put it on? What signifies it, though a man should cover himself with glory, if in the end he is to be laughed at? Well, well, it matters not much; now my soldiering's over! And yet I could have wished that the last act of my campaigning had brought with it pleasanter recollections."

As thus I ruminated, the click of the soldier's musket near aroused me: Picton was passing out. A shade of gloom and depression was visible upon his features, and his lip trembled as he muttered some sentences to himself.

"Ha! Captain—I forget the name. Yes—Captain O'Malley; you are released from arrest. General Craufurd has spoken very well of you, and Lord Wellington has heard the circumstances of your case."

"Is it General Craufurd, then, that is wounded, sir?" said I, eagerly.

Picton paused for a moment, while with an effort he controlled his features into their stern and impassive expression, then added hurriedly and almost harshly:

"Yes, sir; badly wounded, through the arm, and in the lung. He mentioned you to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief, and your application for leave is granted. In fact, you are to have the distinguished honor of carrying back dispatches. There, now; you had better join your brigade."

"Could I not see my General once more? It may be for the last time."

"No, sir!" sternly replied Picton. "Lord Wellington believes you under arrest. It is as well he should suppose you obeyed his orders."

There was a tone of sarcasm in these words that prevented my reply; and, muttering my gratitude for his well-timed and kindly interference in my behalf, I bowed deeply, and turned away.

"I say, sir," said Picton, as he returned toward the church, "should anything befall—that is, if, unfortunately, circumstances should make you in want and desirous of a staff appointment, remember that you are known to General Picton."

Downcast and depressed by the news of my poor General, I wended my way, with slow and uncertain steps, toward the rampart. A clear, cold, wintry sky, and a sharp, bracing air, made my wound, slight as it was, more painful, and I endeavored to reach the reserves, where I knew the hospital-staff had established, for the present, their quarters. I had not gone far when, from a marauding party, I learned that my man, Mike, was in search of me through the plain. A report of my death had reached him, and the poor fellow was half distracted.

Longing anxiously to allay his fears on my account, which I well knew might lead him into any act of folly or insanity, I pressed forward; besides—shall I confess it?—amid the manifold thoughts of sorrow and affliction which weighed me down, I could not divest myself of the feeling that, so long as I wore my present absurd costume, I could be nothing but an object of laughter and ridicule to all who met me.

I had not long to look for my worthy follower, for I soon beheld him cantering about the plain. A loud shout brought him beside me; and truly the poor fellow's delight was great and sincere. With a thousand protestations of his satisfaction, and reiterated assurances of what he would not have done to the French prisoners if anything had happened me, we took our way together toward the camp.

CHAPTER CIV.

THE DISPATCH.

I WAS preparing to visit the town on the following morning, when my attention was attracted by a dialogue which took place beneath my window.

"I say, my good friend," cried a mounted orderly to Mike, who was busily employed in brushing a jacket—"I say, are you Captain O'Malley's man?"

"The least taste in life o' that same," replied he, with a half jocular expression.

"Well, then," said the other, "take up these letters to your master. Be alive, my fine fellow, for they are dispatches, and I must have a written return for them."

"Won't ye get off, and take a drop of somethin' refreshin'; the 'air is cowld this morning."

"I can't stay, my good friend, but thank you all the same: so be alive, will you!"

"Arrah! there's no hurry in life. Sure, it's an invitation to dinner to Lord Wellington, or a tea-party at Sir Denny's; sure, my master's bothered with them every day o' th' week; that's the misfortune of being an agreeable creature; and I'd be led into dissipation myself, if I wasn't rear'd prudent."

"Well, come along, take these letters, for I must be off; my time is short."

"That's more nor your nose is, honey," said Mike, evidently piqued at the little

effect his advances had produced upon the Englishman. "Give them here," continued he, while he turned the various papers in every direction, affecting to read their addresses.

"There's nothing for me here, I see. Did none of the generals ask after me?"

"You *are* a queer one!" said the dragoon, not a little puzzled what to make of him.

Mike meanwhile thrust the papers carelessly into his pocket, and strode into the house, whistling a quick-step as he went, with the air of a man perfectly devoid of care or occupation. The next moment, however, he appeared at my door, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand, and apparently breathless with haste.

"Dispatches, Mister Charles—dispatches from Lord Wellington. The orderly is waiting below for a return."

"Tell him he shall have it in one moment," replied I. "And now bring me a light."

Before I had broken the seal of the envelope, Mike was once more at the porch.

"My master is writing a few lines to say he'll do it. Don't be talking of it," added he, dropping his voice, "but they want him to take another fortress."

What turn the dialogue subsequently took, I cannot say, for I was entirely occupied by a letter which accompanied the dispatches. It ran as follows:

"Dear Sir,—The Commander-in-Chief has been kind enough to accord you the leave of absence you applied for, and takes the opportunity of your return to England to send you the accompanying letters for his Royal Highness the Duke of York. To his approval of your conduct in the assault last night you owe this distinguished mark of Lord Wellington's favor, which, I hope, will be duly appreciated by you, and serve to increase your zeal for that service in which you have already distinguished yourself.

"Believe me that I am most happy in being made the medium of this communication, and have the honor to be,

"Very truly yours,

"T. Picton.

"Quarter-General,

"Ciudad Rodrigo, Jan. 20, 1812."

I read and re-read this note again and again. Every line was conned over by me, and every phrase weighed and balanced in my mind. Nothing could be more gratifying, nothing more satisfactory to my feelings; and I would not have exchanged its possession for the brevet of a lieutenant-colonel.

"Halloo, orderly!" cried I, from the window, as I hurriedly sealed my few words of acknowledgment, "take this note back to General Picton, and here's a guinea for yourself." So saying, I pitched into his ready hand one of the very few which remained to me in the world. "This is, indeed, good news!" said I to myself; "this is, indeed, a moment of unmixed happiness!"

As I closed the window, I could hear Mike pronouncing a glowing eulogium upon my liberality, from which he could not, however, help in some degree detracting, as he added:

"But the devil thank him, after all! sure, it's himself has the illigant fortune and the fine place of it!"

Scarcely were the last sounds of the retiring horseman dying away in the distance, when Mike's meditations took another form, and he muttered between his teeth—"Oh! holy Agatha; a guinea, a raal gold guinea to a thief of a dragoon that come with the letter, and here am I wearing a picture of the holy family for a back to my waistcoat, all out of economy; and sure, God knows, but maybe they'll take their dealing trick out of me in purgatory for this hereafter; and faith, it's a beautiful pair of breeches I'd have had, if I wasn't ashamed to put the twelve apostles on my legs."

While Mike ran on at this rate, my eyes fell upon a few lines of postscript in Picton's letter, which I had not previously noticed.

"The official dispatches of the storming are of course intrusted to senior officers, but I need scarcely remind you, that it will be a polite and proper attention to his Royal Highness, to present your letters with as little delay as possible. Not a moment is to be lost on your landing in England."

"Mike!" cried I, "how look the cattle for a journey?"

"The chestnut is a little low in flesh, but in great wind, your honor; and the black horse is jumping like a filly."

"And Badger?" said I.

"Howld him, if you can, that's all; but it's murthering work this, carrying dispatches day after day."

"This time, however, Mike, we must not grumble."

"Maybe it isn't far?"

"Why, as to that, I shall not promise much. I'm bound for England, Mickey."

"For England!"

"Yes, Mike, and for Ireland."

"For Ireland! whoop!" shouted he, as he shied his cap into one corner of the room, the jacket he was brushing into the other, and began dancing round the table with no bad imitation of an Indian war dance.

"How I'll dance like a fairy,
To see ould Dunleary,
And think twice ere I leave it to be a dragoon."

"Oh! blessed hour! isn't it beautiful to think of the illuminations, and dinners, and speeches, and shaking of hands, huzzaing, and hip, hipping. Maybe there won't be pictures of us in all the shops—Mister Charles and his man Mister Free. Maybe they won't make plays out of us; myself dressed in the gray coat with the red cuffs, the cords, the tops, and the Caroline hat a little cocked, with a phiz in the side of it." Here he made a sign with his expanded fingers to represent a cockade, which he designated by this word. "I think I see myself dining with the Corporation, and the Lord Mayor of Dublin getting up to propose the health of the hero of El Bodon, Mr. Free! and three times three, hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! Musha, but it's dry I am gettin' with the thoughts of the punch and the poteen negus."

"If you go on at this rate, we're not likely to be soon at our journey's end; so be alive now; pack up my kit; I shall start by twelve o'clock."

With one spring Mike cleared the stairs, and, overthrowing everything and everybody in his way, hurried toward the stable, chanting at the top of his voice the very poetical strain he had indulged me with a few minutes before.

My preparations were rapidly made: a few hurried lines of leave-taking to the good fellows I had lived so much with and felt so strongly attached to, with a firm assurance that I should join them again ere long, was all that my time permitted. To Power I wrote more at length, detailing the circumstances which my own letters informed me of, and also those which invited me to return home. This done, I lost not another moment, but set out upon my journey.

CHAPTER CV.

THE LEAVE.

After an hour's sharp riding we reached the Aguada, where the river was yet fordable; crossing this, we mounted the Sierra by a narrow and winding pass which leads through the mountains toward Almeida. Here I turned once more to cast a last and farewell look at the scene of our late encounter. It was but a few hours that I had stood almost on the same spot, and yet how altered was all around. The wide plain, then bustling with all the life and animation of a large army, was now nearly deserted; some dismounted guns, some broken up, dismantled batteries, around which a few sentinels seemed to loiter rather than to keep guard; a strong detachment of infantry could be seen wending their way toward the fortress, and a confused mass of camp-followers, sutlers, and peasants, following their steps for protection against the pillagers and the still ruder assaults of their own Guerillas. The fortress, too, was changed indeed. Those mighty walls before whose steep sides the bravest fell back baffled and beaten, were now a mass of ruin and decay; the muleteer could be seen driving his mule along through the rugged ascent of that breach, to win whose top the best blood of Albion's chivalry was shed; and the peasant child looked timidly from those dark inclosures in the deep fosse below, where perished hundreds of our best and bravest. The air was calm, clear, and unclouded; no smoke obscured the transparent atmosphere; the cannon had ceased; and the voices that rang so late in accents of triumphant victory were stilled in death. Everything, indeed, had undergone a mighty change; but nothing brought the altered fortunes of the scenes so vividly to my mind as when I remembered that when last I had seen those walls, the dark shako of the French grenadiers peered above their battlements, and now the gay tartan of the Highlander fluttered above them, and the red flag of England waved boldly in the breeze.

Up to that moment my sensations were those of unmixed pleasure: the thought of my home, my friends, my country, the feeling that I was returning with the bronze of the battle upon my cheek, and the voice of praise still ringing in my heart; these were proud thoughts, and my bosom heaved short and quickly, as I revolved them; but, as I turned my gaze for the last time toward the gallant army I was leaving, a pang of sorrow, of self-reproach, shot through me, and I could not help feeling how far less worthily was I acting in yielding to the impulse of my wishes, than had I remained to share the fortunes of the campaign.

So powerfully did these sensations pos-

sess me, that I sat motionless for some time, uncertain whether to proceed; forgetting that I was the bearer of important information, I only remembered that by my own desire I was there; my reason but half convinced me that the part I had adopted was right and honorable, and more than once my resolution to proceed hung in the balance. It was just at this critical moment of my doubts that Mike, who had been hitherto behind, came up.

"Is it the upper road, sir?" said he, pointing to a steep and rugged path which led by a zigzag ascent toward the crest of the mountain.

I nodded in reply, when he added:

"Doesn't this remind your honor of Sieibh More, above the Shannon, where we used to be grouse-shooting? And there's the keeper's house in the valley; and that might be your uncle, the master himself, waving his hat to you."

Had he known the state of my conflicting feelings at the moment, he could not more readily have decided this doubt. I turned abruptly away, put spurs to my horse, and dashed up the steep pass at a pace which evidently surprised, and as evidently displeased, my follower.

How natural it is ever to experience a reaction of depression and lowness after the first burst of unexpected joy! The moment of happiness is scarce experienced ere come the doubts of its reality, the fears for its continuance; the higher the state of pleasurable excitement, the more painful and the more pressing the anxieties that await on it; the tension of delighted feelings cannot last, and our overwrought faculties seek repose in regrets. Happy he who can so temper his enjoyments as to view them in their shadows as in their sunshine; he may not, it is true, behold the landscape in the blaze of its noonday brightness, but he need not fear the thunder-cloud nor the hurricane. The calm autumn of *his* bliss, if it dazzle not in its brilliancy, will not any more be shrouded in darkness and in gloom.

My first burst of pleasure over, the thought of my uncle's changed fortunes pressed deeply on my heart, and a hundred plans suggested themselves in turn to my mind to relieve his present embarrassments; but I knew how impracticable they would all prove when opposed by his prejudices. To sell the old home of his forefathers, to wander from the roof which had sheltered his name for generations, he would never consent to; the law might by force expel him, and drive him a wanderer and an exile, but of his own free will the thing was hopeless. Considine, too, would encourage rather than repress such feelings; his feudalism would lead him to any lengths; and, in defense of what he would esteem a right, he would as soon shoot a sheriff as a snipe, and, old as he was, ask for no better amusement than to arm the whole tenantry and give battle to the king's troops on the wide plain of Scariff.

Amid such conflicting thoughts, I traveled on moodily and in silence, to the palpable astonishment of Mike, who could not help regarding me as one from whom fortune met the most ungrateful returns. At every new turn of the road he would endeavor to attract my attention by the objects around; no white-turreted chateau, no tapered spire in the distance, escaped him; he kept up a constant ripple of half-muttered praise and censure upon all he saw, and instituted unceasing comparisons between the country and his own, in which, I am bound to say, Ireland rarely, if ever, had to complain of his patriotism.

When we arrived at Almeida, I learned that the *Medea* sloop of war was lying off Oporto, and expected to sail for England in a few days. The opportunity was not to be neglected; the official dispatches, I was aware, would be sent through Lisbon, where the *Gorgon* frigate was in waiting to convey them; but should I be fortunate enough to reach Oporto in time, I had little doubt of arriving in England with the first intelligence of the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo. Reducing my luggage, therefore, to the smallest possible compass, and having provided myself with a juvenile guide for the pass of La Reyna, I threw myself, without undressing, upon the bed, and waited anxiously for the break of day to resume my journey.

As I ruminated over the prospect my return presented, I suddenly remembered Frank Webber's letter, which I had hastily thrust into a portfolio without reading, so occupied was I by Considine's epistle; with a little searching I discovered it, and, trimming my lamp, as I felt no inclination to sleep, I proceeded to the examination of what seemed a more than usually voluminous epistle. It contained four closely-written pages, accompanied by something like a plan in an engineering sketch. My curiosity becoming further stimulated by this, I sat down to peruse it. It began thus:

"Official Dispatch of Lieutenant-General Francis Webber to Lord Castlereagh, detailing the assault and capture of the old pump, in Trinity College, Dublin, on the night of the second of December, eigh-

teen hundred and eleven, with returns of killed, wounded, and missing, with other information from the seat of war.

"Head-quarters, No. 2, Old Square.

"My Lord,—In compliance with the instructions contained in your Lordship's dispatch of the twenty-first ultimo, I concentrated the force under my command, and, assembling the generals of division, made known my intentions in the following general order:

"A. G. O.

"The following troops will this evening assemble at head-quarters, and, having partaken of a sufficient dinner for the next two days, with punch for four, will hold themselves in readiness to march, in the following order:

"Harry Nesbitt's brigade of Incorrigibles will form a blockading force, in the line extending from the Vice-Provost's house to the library. The light division, under Mark Waller, will skirmish from the gate toward the middle of the square, obstructing the march of the Cuirassiers of the Guard, which, under the command of old Duncan, the porter, are expected to move in that direction. Two columns of attack will be formed by the senior sophisters of the Old Guard, and a forlorn hope of the 'cautioned' men at the last four examinations will form, under the orders of Timothy O'Rourke, beneath the shadow of the dining-hall.

"At the signal of the Dean's bell the stormers will move forward. A cheer from the united corps will then announce the moment of attack.

"The word for the night will be, 'May the devil admire me!'

"The Commander of the Forces desires that the different corps should be as strong as possible, and expects that no man will remain, on any pretense whatever, in the rear, with the lush. During the main assault, Cecil Cavendish will make a feint upon the Provost's windows, to be converted into a real attack if the ladies scream.

"GENERAL ORDER.

"The Commissary-General Foley will supply the following articles for the use of the troops:—Two hams, eight pair of chickens, the same to be roasted; a devilled turkey; sixteen lobsters; eight hundred of oysters, with a proportionate quantity of cold sherry and hot punch.

"The army will get drunk by ten o'clock to-night.

"Having made these dispositions, my Lord, I proceeded to mislead the enemy as to our intentions, in suffering my servant to be taken with an intercepted dispatch. This being a prescription by Doctor Colles, would convey to the Dean's mind the impression that I was still upon the sick list. This being done, and four canisters of Dartford gunpowder being procured on tick, our military chest being in a most deplorable condition, I waited for the moment of attack.

"A heavy rain, accompanied with a frightful hurricane, prevailed during the entire day, rendering the march of the troops who came from the neighborhood of Merrion square and Fitzwilliam street a service of considerable fatigue. The outlying pickets in College green, being induced, probably, by the inclemency of the season, were rather tipsy on joining, and having engaged in a skirmish with old M'Calister, tying his red uniform over his head, the moment of attack was precipitated, and we moved to the trenches by half-past nine o'clock.

"Nothing could be more orderly, nothing more perfect than the march of the troops. As we approached the corner of the commons'-hall a skirmish on the rear apprised us that our intentions had become known; and I soon learned from my aide-de-camp, Bob Moore, that the attack was made by a strong column of the enemy, under the command of Old Fitzgerald.

"Perpendicular (as your Lordship is aware he is styled by the army) came on in a determined manner, and before many minutes had elapsed had taken several prisoners, among others Tom Drummond—Long Tom—who, having fallen on all fours, was mistaken for a long eighteen. The success, however, was but momentary; Nesbitt's brigade attacked them in flank, rescued the prisoners, extinguished the Dean's lantern, and, having beaten back the heavy porters, took Perpendicular himself prisoner.

"An express from the left informed me that the attack upon the Provost's house had proved equally successful: there wasn't a whole pane of glass in the front, and from a footman who deserted, it was learned that Mrs. Hutchinson was in hysterics.

"While I was reading this dispatch, a strong feeling of the line toward the right announced that something was taking place in that direction. Bob Moore, who rode by on Drummond's back, hurriedly informed me that Williams had put the lighted end of his cigar to one of the fuses, but the powder, being wet, did not ex-

plode, notwithstanding his efforts to effect it. Upon this, I hastened to the front, where I found the individual in question kneeling upon the ground, and endeavoring, as far as punch would permit him, to kindle a flame at the port-fire. Before I could interfere, the spark had caught; a loud, hissing noise followed; the different magazines successively became ignited, and at length the fire reached the great four-pound charge.

"I cannot convey to your Lordship, by any words of mine, an idea of this terrible explosion; the blazing splinters were hurled into the air and fell in fiery masses on every side from the park to King William; Ivey, the bell-ringer, was precipitated from the scaffold beside the bell, and fell headlong into the mud beneath; the surrounding buildings trembled at the shock; the windows were shattered, and in fact, a scene of perfect devastation ensued on all sides.

"When the smoke cleared away, I rose from my recumbent position, and perceived with delight that not a vestige of the pump remained. The old iron handle was imbedded in the wall of the dining-hall, and its round knob stood out like the end of a queue.

"Our loss was, of course, considerable; and, ordering the wounded to the rear, I proceeded to make an orderly and regular retreat. At this time, however, the enemy had assembled in force. Two battalions of porters, led on by Dr. Dobbin, charged us on the flank; a heavy brigade poured down upon us from the battery, and, but for the exertions of Harry Nesbitt, our communication with our reserves must have been cut off. Cecil Cavendish also came up; for, although beaten in his great attack, the forces under his command had penetrated by the kitchen windows, and carried off a considerable quantity of cold meat.

"Concentrating the different corps, I made an echelon movement upon the chapel, to admit of the light division coming up. This they did in a few moments, informing me that they had left Perpendicular in the haha, which, as your Lordship is aware, is a fosse of the very greenest and most stagnant nature. We now made good our retreat upon number "2," carrying our wounded with us: the plunder we also secured, but we kicked the prisoners and suffered them to escape.

"Thus terminated, my Lord, one of the brightest achievements of the under-graduate career. I inclose a list of the wounded, as also an account of the various articles returned in the Commissary-General's list.

"Harry Nesbitt: severely wounded; no coat nor hat; a black eye; left shoe missing.

"Cecil Cavendish: face severely scratched; supposed to have received his wound in the attack upon the kitchen.

"Tom Drummond: not recognizable by his friends; his features resembling a transparency disfigured by the smoke of the preceding night's illumination.

"Bob Moore: slightly wounded.

"I would beg particularly to recommend all these officers to your Lordship's notice; indeed, the conduct of Moore, in kicking the Dean's lantern out of the porter's hand, was marked by great promptitude and decision. This officer will present to H.R.H. the following trophies, taken from the enemy: The Dean's cap and tassel; the key of his chambers; Dr. Dobbin's wig and bands; four porters' helmets, and a book on the cellar.

"I have the honor to remain, my Lord, etc., FRANCIS WEBBER.

"G. O.

"The commander of the forces returns his thanks to the various officers and soldiers employed in the late assault, for their persevering gallantry and courage. The splendor of the achievement can only be equaled by the humanity and good conduct of the troops. It only remains for him to add, that the less they say about the transaction, and the sooner they are severally confined to their beds with symptoms of contagious fever, the better.

"Meanwhile, to concert upon the future measures of the campaign, the army will sup to-night at Morrison's."

Here ended this precious epistle, rendering one fact sufficiently evident — that, however my worthy friend advanced in years, he had not grown in wisdom.

While ruminating upon the strange infatuation which could persuade a gifted and an able man to lavish upon dissipation and reckless absurdity the talents that must, if well directed, raise him to eminence and distinction, a few lines of a newspaper paragraph fell from the paper I was reading. It ran thus:

"LATE OUTRAGE IN TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

"We have great pleasure in stating that the serious disturbance which took place within the walls of our University a few

evenings since, was in no wise attributable to the conduct of the students. A party of ill-disposed townspeople were, it would appear, the instigators and perpetrators of the outrage. That their object was the total destruction of our venerated University there can be but little doubt. Fortunately, however, they did not calculate upon the *esprit de corps* of the students, a body of whom, under the direction of Mr. Webber, successfully opposed the assailants, and finally drove them from the walls.

"It is, we understand, the intention of the board to confer some mark of approbation upon Mr. Webber, who, independently of this, has strong claims upon their notice, his collegiate success pointing him out as the most extraordinary man of his day."

"This, my dear Charley, will give you some faint conception of one of the most brilliant exploits of modern days. The bulletin, believe me, is not Napoleonized into any bombastic extravagance of success. The thing was splendid; from the brilliant firework of the old pump itself to the figure of Perpendicular dripping with duckweed, like an insane river-god, it was unequaled. Our fellows behaved like trumps; and, to do them justice, so did the enemy. But unfortunately, notwithstanding this, and the plausible paragraphs of the morning papers, I have been summoned before the board for Tuesday next.

"Meanwhile, I employ myself in throwing off a shower of small squibs for the journals, so that if the board deal not mercifully with me, I may meet with sympathy from the public. I have just dispatched a little editorial bit for the *Times*, calling, in terms of parental tenderness, upon the University to say—

"'How long will the extraordinary excesses of a learned functionary be suffered to disgrace college? Is Doctor —— to be permitted to exhibit an example of more riotous insubordination than would be endured in an undergraduate? More on this subject hereafter.'

"'*Saunders' News-letter.*—Doctor Barret appeared at the head police-office, before Alderman Darley, to make oath that neither he nor Catty were concerned in the late outrage upon the pump,' etc. etc.

"Paragraphs like these are flying about in every provincial paper of the empire. People shake their heads when they speak of the University, and respectable females rather cross over by King William and the Bank than pass near its precincts.

"Tuesday Evening.

"Would you believe it, they've expelled me! Address your next letter as usual, for they haven't got rid of me yet.

"Yours, F. W."

"So I shall find him in his old quarters," thought I, "and evidently not much altered since we parted." It was not without a feeling of (I trust pardonable) pride that I thought over my own career in the interval. My three years of campaigning life had given me some insight into the world, and some knowledge of myself, and conferred upon me a boon, of which I know not the equal—that, while yet young, and upon the very threshold of life, I should have tasted the enthusiastic pleasures of a soldier's fortune and braved the dangers and difficulties of a campaign at a time when, under other auspices, I might have wasted my years in unprofitable idleness or careless dissipation.

CHAPTER CVI.

LONDON.

Twelve hours after my arrival in England I entered London. I cannot attempt to record the sensations which thronged my mind, as the din and tumult of that mighty city awoke me from a sound sleep I had fallen into in the corner of the chaise. The seemingly interminable lines of lamplight, the crash of carriages, the glare of the shops, the buzz of voices, made up a chaotic mass of sights and sounds, leaving my efforts at thought vain and fruitless.

Obedient to my instructions, I lost not a moment in my preparations to deliver my dispatches. Having dressed myself in the full uniform of my corps, I drove to the Horse Guards. It was now nine o'clock, and I learned that his Royal Highness had gone to dinner at Carlton House. In a few words which I spoke with the aide-de-camp, I discovered that no information of the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo had yet reached England. The greatest anxiety prevailed as to the events of the Peninsula, from which no dispatches had been received for several weeks past.

To Carlton House I accordingly bent my steps, without any precise determination how I should proceed when there, nor knowing how far etiquette might be an obstacle to the accomplishment of my mis-

sion. The news of which I was the bearer was, however, of too important a character to permit me to hesitate, and I presented myself to the aide-de-camp in waiting, simply stating that I was intrusted with important letters to his Royal Highness the purport of which did not admit of delay.

"They have not gone to dinner yet," lisped out the aide-de-camp, "and if you would permit me to deliver the letters—"

"Mine are dispatches," said I, somewhat proudly, and in no wise disposed to cede to another the honor of personally delivering them into the hands of the Duke.

"Then you had better present yourself at the levee to-morrow morning," replied he carelessly, while he turned into one of the window recesses, and resumed the conversation with one of the gentlemen in waiting.

I stood for some moments uncertain and undecided; reluctant on the one part to relinquish my claim as the bearer of dispatches, and equally unwilling to defer their delivery till the following day.

Adopting the former alternative, I took my papers from my sabretasche, and was about to place them in the hands of the aide-de-camp, when the folding-doors at the end of the apartment suddenly flew open, and a large and handsome man, with a high, bald forehead, entered hastily.

The different persons in waiting sprang from their lounging attitudes upon the sofas, and bowed respectfully as he passed on toward another door. His dress was a plain blue coat, buttoned to the collar, and his only decoration a brilliant star upon the breast. There was that air, however, of high birth and bearing about him that left no doubt upon my mind he was of the blood royal.

As the aide-de-camp to whom I had been speaking opened the door for him to pass out, I could hear some words in a low voice, in which the phrases "letters of importance" and "your Royal Highness" occurred. The individual addressed turned suddenly about, and, casting a rapid glance around the room, without deigning a word in reply, walked straight up to where I was standing.

"Dispatches for me, sir?" said he, shortly, taking, as he spoke, the packet from my hand.

"For his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief," said I, bowing respectfully, and still uncertain in whose presence I was standing. He broke the seal without answering, and, as his eye caught the first lines of the dispatch, broke out into an exclamation of—

"Ha! Peninsula news! When did you arrive, sir?"

"An hour since, sir."

"And these letters are from—"

"General Picton, your Royal Highness."

"How glorious—how splendidly done!" muttered he to himself, as he ran his eyes rapidly over the letter. "Are you Captain O'Malley, whose name is mentioned here so favorably?"

I bowed deeply in reply.

"You are most highly spoken of, and it will give me sincere pleasure to recommend you to the notice of the Prince Regent. But stay a moment." So saying, hurriedly he passed from the room, leaving me overwhelmed at the suddenness of the incident, and a mark of no small astonishment to the different persons in waiting, who had hitherto no other idea but that my dispatches were from Hounslow or Knightsbridge.

"Captain O'Malley," said an officer covered with decorations, and whose slightly foreign accent bespoke the Hanoverian, "his Royal Highness requests you will accompany me." The door opened as he spoke, and I found myself in a most splendidly lit-up apartment; the walls covered with pictures, and the ceiling divided into panels, resplendent with the richest gilding. A group of persons, in court dresses, were conversing in a low tone as we entered, but suddenly ceased, and, saluting my conductor respectfully, made way for us to pass on. The folding-doors again opened as we approached, and we found ourselves in a long gallery, whose sumptuous furniture and costly decorations shone beneath the rich tints of a massive luster of ruby glass, diffusing a glow resembling the most gorgeous sunset. Here also some persons in handsome uniform were conversing, one of whom accosted my companion by the title of "Baron;" nodding familiarly as he muttered a few words in German, he passed forward, and the next moment the doors were thrown suddenly wide, and we entered the drawing-room.

The buzz of voices and the sound of laughter reassured me as I came forward, and, before I had well time to think where and why I was there, the Duke of York advanced toward me, with a smile of peculiar sweetness in its expression, and said, as he turned toward one side:

"Your Royal Highness—Captain O'Malley!"

As he spoke, the Prince moved forward, and bowed slightly.

"You've brought us capital news, Mr. O'Malley. May I beg, if you're not too

much tired, you'll join us at dinner. I am most anxious to learn the particulars of the assault."

As I bowed my acknowledgments to the gracious invitation, he continued:

"Are you acquainted with my friend here?—but of course you can scarcely be—you began too early as a soldier. So let me present you to my friend, Mr. Tierney," a middle-aged man, whose broad, white forehead and deep-set eyes gave a character to features that were otherwise not remarkable in expression, and who bowed rather stiffly.

Before he had concluded a somewhat labored compliment to me, we were joined by a third person, whose strikingly-handsome features were lit up with an expression of the most animated kind. He accosted the Prince with an air of easy familiarity, and, while he led him from the group, appeared to be relating some anecdote, which actually convulsed his Royal Highness with laughter.

Before I had time or opportunity to inquire who the individual could be, dinner was announced, and the wide folding-doors being thrown open, displayed the magnificent dining-room of Carlton House, in all the blaze and splendor of its magnificence.

The sudden change from the rough vicissitudes of campaigning life to all the luxury and voluptuous elegance of a brilliant court, created too much confusion in my mind to permit of my impressions being the most accurate or most collected. The splendor of the scene, the rank, but, even more, the talent of the individuals by whom I was surrounded, had all their full effect upon me; and, although I found, from the tone of the conversation about, how immeasurably I was their inferior, yet, by a delicate and courteous interest in the scene of which I had lately partaken, they took away the awkwardness which, in some degree, was inseparable from the novelty of my position among them.

Conversing about the Peninsula with a degree of knowledge which I could in no wise comprehend from those not engaged in the war, they appeared perfectly acquainted with all the details of the campaign; and I heard on every side of me anecdotes and stories which I scarcely believed known beyond the precincts of a regiment. The Prince himself—the grace and charm of whose narrative talents have seldom been excelled—was particularly conspicuous, and I could not help feeling struck with his admirable imitations of voice and manner. The most accomplished actor could not have personated the cannie, calculating spirit of the Scot, or the rollicking recklessness of the Irishman, with more tact and *finesse*. But far above all this shone the person I have already alluded to as speaking to his Royal Highness in the drawing-room; combining the happiest conversational eloquence with a quick, ready, and brilliant fancy. He threw from him in all the careless profusion of boundless resource a shower of pointed and epigrammatic witticisms: now, illustrating a really difficult subject by one happy touch, as the blaze of the lightning will light up the whole surface of the dark landscape beneath it; now, turning the force of an adversary's argument by some fallacious but unanswerable jest, accompanying the whole by those fascinations of voice, look, gesture, and manner, which have made those who once have seen, never able to forget Brinsley Sheridan.

I am not able, were I even disposed, to record more particularly the details of that most brilliant evening of my life. On every side of me I heard the names of those whose fame as statesmen, or whose repute as men of letters, was ringing throughout Europe; they were then, too, not in the easy indolence of ordinary life, but displaying with their utmost effort those powers of wit, fancy, imagination, and eloquence, which had won for them elsewhere their high and exalted position. The masculine understanding and powerful intellect of Tierney vied with the brilliant and dazzling conceptions of Sheridan. The easy *bonhomie* and English heartiness of Fox contrasted with the cutting sarcasm and sharp raillery of O'Kelly. While contesting the palm with each himself, the Prince evinced powers of mind and eloquent facilities of expression that, in any walk of life, must have made their possessor a most distinguished man. Politics, war, women, literature, the turf, the navy, the opposition, architecture, and the drama, were all discussed with a degree of information and knowledge that proved to me how much of real acquirements can be obtained by those whose exalted station surrounds them with the collective intellect of a nation. As for myself, the time flew past unconsciously. So brilliant a display of all that was courtly and fascinating in manner, and all that was brightest in genius, was so novel to me, that I really felt like one entranced. To this hour, my impression, however confused in details, is as vivid as though that evening were but yesternight; and although since that period I have enjoyed numerous opportunities of meeting with the great and the gifted, yet I treasure the

memory of that evening as by far the most exciting of my whole life.

While I abstain from any mention of the many incidents of the evening, I cannot pass over one which, occurring to myself, is valuable but as showing, by one slight and passing trait, the amiable and kind feeling of one whose memory is hallowed in the service.

A little lower than myself, on the opposite side of the table, I perceived an old military acquaintance whom I had first met in Lisbon: he was then on Sir Charles Stewart's staff, and we met almost daily. Wishing to commend myself to his recollection, I endeavored for some time to catch his eye, but in vain; but at last, when I thought I had succeeded, I called to him,

"I say, Fred, a glass of wine with you."

When suddenly the Duke of York, who was speaking to Lord Hertford, turned quickly round, and, taking the decanter in his hand, replied,

"With pleasure, O'Malley; what shall it be, my boy?"

I shall never forget the manly good-humor of his look as he sat waiting for my answer. He had taken my speech as addressed to himself, and concluding that, from fatigue, the novelty of the scene, my youth, etc., I was not over collected, vouchsafed in this kind way to receive it.

"So," said he, as I stammered out my explanation, "I was deceived; however, don't cheat me out of my glass of wine. Let us have it now."

With this little anecdote, whose truth I vouch for, I shall conclude. More than one now living was a witness to it, and my only regret in the mention of it is my inability to convey the readiness with which he seized the moment of apparent difficulty to throw the protection of his kind and warm-hearted nature over the apparent folly of a boy.

It was late when the party broke up, and, as I took my leave of the Prince, he once more expressed himself in gracious terms toward me, and gave me personally an invitation to a breakfast at Hounslow on the following Saturday.

CHAPTER CVII.

THE BELL AT BRISTOL.

On the morning after my dinner at Carlton House, I found my breakfast-table covered with cards and invitations. The news of the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo was published in all the morning papers, and my own humble name, in letters of three feet long, was exhibited in placards throughout the city. Less to this circumstance, however, than to the kind and gracious notice of the Prince, was I indebted for the attentions which were shown me by every one; and, indeed, so flattering was the reception I met with, and so overwhelming the civility showered on me from all sides, that it required no small effort on my part not to believe myself as much a hero as they would make me. An eternal round of dinners, balls, breakfasts, and entertainments, filled up the entire week. I was included in every invitation to Carlton House, and never appeared without receiving from his Royal Highness the most striking marks of attention. Captivating as all this undoubtedly was, and fascinating as I felt in being the lion of London, the courted and sought after by the high, the titled, and the talented of the great city of the universe, yet, amid all the splendor and seduction of that new world, my heart instinctively turned from the glare and brilliancy of gorgeous saloons—from the soft looks and softer voice of beauty—from the words of praise, as they fell from the lips of those whose notice was fame itself—to my humble home amid the mountains of the west. Delighted and charmed as I felt by that tribute of flattery which associated my name with one of the most brilliant actions of my country, yet hitherto I had experienced no touch of home or fatherland. England was to me as the high and powerful head of my house, whose greatness and whose glory shed a halo far and near, from the proudest to the humblest of those that call themselves Britons; but Ireland was the land of my birth—the land of my earliest ties, my dearest associations—the kind mother, whose breath had fanned my brow in infancy; and for her in my manhood my heart beat with every throb of filial affection. Need I say, then, how ardently I longed to turn homeward; for, independent of all else, I could not avoid some self-reproach on thinking what might be the condition of those I prized the most on earth, at that very moment I was engaging in all the voluptuous abandonment, and all the fascinating excesses of a life of pleasure. I wrote several letters home, but received no answer; nor did I, in the whole round of London society, meet with a single person who could give me information of my family or my friends. The Easter recess had sent the different

members of Parliament to their homes; and thus, within a comparatively short distance of all I cared for, I could learn nothing of their fate.

The invitations of the Prince Regent, which were, of course, to be regarded as commands, still detained me in London; and I knew not in what manner to escape from the fresh engagements which each day heaped upon me. In my anxiety upon the subject, I communicated my wishes to a friend on the Duke's staff, and the following morning, as I presented myself at his levee, he called me toward him, and addressed me:

"What leave have you got, Captain O'Malley?"

"Three months, your Royal Highness."

"Do you desire an unattached troop? for, if so, an opportunity occurs just at this moment."

"I thank you most sincerely, sir, for your condescension in thinking of me, but my wish is to join my regiment at the expiration of my leave."

"Why, I thought they told me you wanted to spend some time in Ireland?"

"Only sufficient to see my friends, your Royal Highness. That done, I'd rather join my regiment immediately."

"Ah! that alters the case. So then, probably, you'd like to leave us at once. I see how it is; you've been staying here against your will all this while. Then, don't say a word. I'll make your excuses at Carlton House; and, the better to cover your retreat, I'll employ you on service. Here, Gordon, let Captain O'Malley have the dispatches for Sir Henry Howard at Cork." As he said this, he turned toward me with an air of affected sternness in his manner, and continued: "I expect, Captain O'Malley, that you will deliver the dispatches intrusted to your care without a moment's loss of time. You will leave London within an hour. The instructions for your journey will be sent to your hotel. And now," said he, again changing his voice to its natural tone of kindliness and courtesy—"and now, my boy, good-by, and a safe journey to you. These letters will pay your expenses, and the occasion save you all the worry of leave-taking."

I stood confused and speechless, unable to utter a single word of gratitude for such unexpected kindness. The Duke saw at once my difficulty, and, as he shook me warmly by the hand, added, in a laughing tone,

"Don't wait, now. You mustn't forget that your dispatches are pressing."

I bowed deeply, attempted a few words of acknowledgment, hesitated, blundered, and broke down; and at last got out of the room, Heaven knows how! and found myself running toward Long's at the top of my speed. Within that same hour I was rattling along toward Bristol as fast as four posters could burn the pavement, thinking with ecstasy over the pleasures of my reception in England; but, far more than all, of the kindness evinced toward me by him who, in every feeling of his nature, and in every feature of his deportment, was "every inch a prince."

However astonished I had been at the warmth by which I was treated in London, I was still less prepared for the enthusiasm which greeted me in every town through which I passed. There was not a village where we stopped to change horses whose inhabitants did not simultaneously pour forth to welcome me with every demonstration of delight. That the fact of four horses and a yellow chaise should have elicited such testimonies of satisfaction, was somewhat difficult to conceive; and, even had the important news that I was the bearer of dispatches been telegraphed from London by successive postboys, still the extraordinary excitement was unaccountable. It was only on reaching Bristol that I learned to what circumstance my popularity was owing. My friend Mike, in humble imitation of election practices, had posted a large placard on the back of the chaise, announcing, in letters of portentous length, something like the following:

"Bloody news! Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo! Five thousand prisoners and two hundred pieces of cannon taken!"

This veracious and satisfactory statement, aided by Mike's personal exertions, and an unwearied performance on the trumpet he had taken from the French dragoon, had roused the population of every hamlet, and made our journey from London to Bristol one scene of uproar, noise, and confusion. All my attempts to suppress Mike's oratory or music were perfectly unavailing. In fact, he had pledged my health so many times during the day—he had drunk so many toasts to the success of the British arms—so many to the English nation—so many in honor of Ireland—and so many in honor of Mickey Free himself, that all respect for my authority was lost in his enthusiasm for my greatness, and his shouts became wilder, and the blasts from the trumpet more fearful and incoherent; and finally, on the last stage of our journey, having exhausted as it were every tribute of his lungs, he seemed

(if I were to judge by the evidence of my ears) to be performing something very like a hornpipe on the roof of the chaise.

Happily for me, there is a limit to all human efforts, and even *his* powers at length succumbed; so that, when we arrived at Bristol, I persuaded him to go to bed, and I once more was left to the enjoyment of some quiet. To fill up the few hours which intervened before bedtime, I strolled into the coffee-room. The English look of every one, and everything around, had still its charm for me; and I was contemplating, with no small admiration, the air of neatness and propriety so observant from the bright-faced clock, that ticked unwearily upon the mantelpiece, to the trim waiter himself, with noiseless step, and that mixed look of vigilance and vacancy. The perfect stillness struck me, save when a deep voice called for "another brandy-and-water," and some more modestly-toned request would utter a desire for "more cream." The attention of each man, absorbed in the folds of his voluminous newspaper, scarcely deigning a glance at the new comer who entered, were all in keeping; giving, in their solemnity and gravity, a character of almost religious seriousness, to what, in any other land, would be a scene of riotous noise and discordant tumult. I was watching all these with a more than common interest, when the door opened, and the waiter entered with a large placard. He was followed by another with a ladder, by whose assistance he succeeded in attaching the large square of paper to the wall, above the fireplace. Every one about rose up, curious to ascertain what was going forward; and I myself joined in the crowd around the fire. The first glance of the announcement showed me what it meant; and it was with a strange mixture of shame and confusion I read:

"Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo; with a full and detailed account of the storming of the great breach—capture of the enemy's cannon, etc.—by Michael Free, 14th Light Dragoons."

Leaving the many around me busied in conjecturing who the aforesaid Mr. Free might be, and what peculiar opportunities he might have enjoyed for his report, I hurried from the room and called the waiter.

"What's the meaning of the announcement you've just put up in the coffee-room? Where did it come from?"

"Most important news, sir; exclusively in the columns of the *Bristol Telegraph;* the gentleman has just arrived—"

"Who, pray? What gentleman?"

"Mr. Free, sir, No. 13—large bedroom—blue damask—supper for two—oysters—a devil—brandy-and-water—mulled port."

"What the devil do you mean? Is the fellow at supper?"

Somewhat shocked by the tone I ventured to assume toward the illustrious narrator, the waiter merely bowed his reply.

"Show me to his room," said I; "I should like to see him."

"Follow me, if you please, sir—this way—what name shall I say, sir?"

"You need not mind announcing me—I'm an old acquaintance—just show me the room."

"I beg pardon, sir, but Mr. Meekins, the editor of the *Telegraph*, is engaged with him at present; and positive orders are given not to suffer any interruption."

"No matter: do as I bid you. Is that it? Oh! I hear his voice. There, that will do. You may go down-stairs, I'll introduce myself."

So saying, and slipping a crown into the waiter's hand, I proceeded cautiously toward the door, and opened it stealthily. My caution was, however, needless; for a large screen was drawn across this part of the room, completely concealing the door; closing which behind me, I took my place beneath the shelter of this ambuscade, determined on no account to be perceived by the parties.

Seated in a large arm-chair, a smoking tumbler of mulled port before him, sat my friend Mike, dressed in my full regimentals, even to the helmet, which, unfortunately, however, for the effect, he had put on back foremost; a short "dudeen" graced his lip, and the trumpet, so frequently alluded to, lay near him.

Opposite him sat a short, puny, round-faced little gentleman, with rolling eyes and a turned-up nose. Numerous sheets of paper, pens, etc., lay scattered about; and he evinced, by his air and gesture, the most marked and eager attention to Mr. Free's narrative, whose frequent interruptions, caused by the drink and the oysters, were viewed with no small impatience by the anxious editor.

"You must remember, Captain, time's passing; the placards are all out; must be at press before one o'clock to-night; the morning edition is everything with us. You were at the first parallel, I think."

"Devil a one o' me knows. Just ring that bell near you. Them's elegant oysters; and you're not taking your drop of liquor. Here's a toast for you: 'May—' whoop—raal Carlingfords, upon my con-

science. See now, if I won't hit the little black chap up there, the first shot."

Scarcely were the words spoken, when a little painted bust of Shakspeare fell in fragments on the floor as an oyster-shell laid him low.

A faint effort at a laugh at the eccentricities of his friend was all the poor editor could accomplish, while Mike's triumph knew no bounds.

"Didn't I tell you? But come now, are you ready? Give the pen a drink, if you won't take one yourself."

"I'm ready, quite ready," responded the editor.

"Faith, and it's more nor I am. See now, here it is: The night was murthering dark; you could not see a stim."

"Not see a—a what?"

"A stim, bad luck to you; don't you know English? Hand me the hot water. Have you that down yet?"

"Yes. Pray proceed."

"The fifth division was orthered up, bekase they were fighting chaps; the Eighty-eighth was among them; the Rangers—Oh! upon my soul, we must drink the Rangers. Here, divil a one o' me will go on till we give them all the honors—hip—begin."

"Hip," sighed the luckless editor, as he rose from his chair, obedient to the command.

"Hurra—hurra—hurra! Well done, there's stuff in you yet, ould foolscap! The little bottle's empty—ring again, if ye plaze."

"Oh, Father Magan
Was a beautiful man,
But a bit of a rogue, a bit of a rogue.
He was just six feet high,
Had a cast in his eye,
And an illigint brogue, an illigint brogue.

"He was born in Killarney,
And reared up in blarney—"

"Arrah, don't be looking miserable and dissolute that way. Sure I'm only screwing myself up for you; besides, you can print the song av you like: it's a sweet tune—'Teddy, you Gander.'"

"Really, Mr. Free, I see no prospect of our ever getting done."

"The saints in heaven forbid," interrupted Mike, piously; "the evening's young, and drink plenty. Here now, make ready!"

The editor once more made a gesture of preparation.

"Well, as I was saying," resumed Mike, "it was pitch dark when the columns moved up, and a cold, raw night, with a little thin rain falling. Have you that down?"

"Yes. Pray go on."

"Well, just as it might be here, at the corner of the trench I met Dr. Quill. 'They're waiting for you, Mr. Free,' says he, 'down there. Picton's asking for you.' 'Faith an he must wait,' says I, 'for I'm terrible dry.' With that, he pulled out his canteen and mixed me a little brandy-and-water. Are you taking it without a toast?' says Doctor Maurice. 'Never fear,' says I; 'here's Mary Brady—'"

"But, my dear sir," interposed Mr. Meekins, "pray *do* remember this is somewhat irrelevant. In fifteen minutes it will be twelve o'clock."

"I know it, ould boy, I know it. I see what you're at. You were going to observe how much better we'd be for a broiled bone."

"Nothing of the kind, I assure you. For Heaven's sake, no more eating and drinking."

"No more eating nor drinking! Why not? You've a nice notion of a convivial evening. Faith, we'll have the broiled bone sure enough, and, what's more, a half-gallon of the strongest punch they can make us; an' I hope that, grave as you are, you'll favor the company with a song."

"Really, Mr. Free—"

"Arrah! none of your blarney. Don't be misthering me. Call me Mickey, or Mickey Free, if you like better."

"I protest," said the editor, with dismay, "that here we are two hours at work, and we haven't got to the foot of the great breach."

"And wasn't the army three months and a half in just getting that far, with a battering train, and mortars, and the finest troops ever were seen? and there you sit, a little fat creature, with your pen in your hand, grumbling that you can't do more than the whole British army. Take care you don't provoke me to beat you; for I am quiet till I'm roused. But, by the Rock o' Cashel—"

Here he grasped the brass trumpet with an energy that made the editor spring from his chair.

"For mercy's sake, Mr. Free—"

"Well, I won't; but sit down there, and don't be bothering me about sieges, and battles, and things you know nothing about."

"I protest," rejoined Mr. Meekins, "that, had you not sent to my office intimating your wish to communicate an account of the siege, I never should have

thought of intruding myself upon you. And now, since you appear indisposed to afford the information in question, if you will permit me, I'll wish you a very good-night."

"Faith, and so you shall, and help me to pass one too; for not a step out o' that chair shall you take till morning. Do ye think I am going to be left here by myself, all alone?"

"I must observe," said Mr. Meekins—

"To be sure, to be sure," said Mickey; "I see what you mean. You're not the best of company, it's true; but at a pinch like this—There now, take your liquor."

"Once for all, sir," said the editor, "I would beg you to recollect that, on the faith of your message to me, I have announced an account of the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo for our morning edition. Are you prepared, may I ask, for the consequences of my disappointing ten thousand readers?"

"It's little I care for one of them. I never knew much of reading myself."

"If you think to make a jest of me," interposed Mr. Meekins, reddening with passion—

"A jest of you! Troth it's little fun I can get out of you; you're as tiresome a creature as ever I spent an evening with. See now, I told you before not to provoke me: we'll have a little more drink; ring the bell: who knows but you'll turn out better by-and-by!"

As Mike rose at these words to summon the waiter, Mr. Meekins seized the opportunity to make his escape. Scarcely had he reached the door, however, when he was perceived by Mickey, who hurled the trumpet at him with all his force, while he uttered a shout that nearly left the poor editor lifeless with terror. This time, happily, Mr. Free's aim failed him, and, before he could arrest the progress of his victim, he had gained the corridor, and, with one bound, cleared the first flight of the staircase, his pace increasing every moment as Mike's denunciations grew louder and louder, till at last, as he reached the street, Mr. Free's delight overcame his indignation, and he threw himself upon a chair and laughed immoderately.

"Oh, may I never! if I didn't frighten the editor. The little spalpeen couldn't eat his oysters and take his punch like a man. But sure if he didn't, there's more left for his betters." So saying, he filled himself a goblet and drank it off. "Mr. Free, we won't say much for your inclinations, for maybe they are not the best; but here's bad luck to the fellow that doesn't think you good company; and here," added he, again filling his glass—"and here's may the devil take editors, and authors, and compositors, that won't let us alone, but must be taking our lives, and our songs, and our little devilments, that belongs to one's own family, and tell them all over the world. A lazy set of thieves you are, every one of you; spending your time inventing lies, devil a more nor less; and here"—this time he filled again—"and here's a hot corner and Kilkenny coals, that's half sulphur, to the villain—"

For what particular class of offenders Mike's penal code was now devised, I was not destined to learn; for, overcome by punch and indignation, he gave one loud whoop, and measured his length upon the floor. Having committed him to the care of the waiters, from whom I learned more fully the particulars of his acquaintance with Mr. Meekins, I enjoined them, strictly, not to mention that I knew anything of the matter; and betook myself to my bed, sincerely rejoicing that in a few hours more Mike would be again in that land where even his eccentricities and excesses would be viewed with a favorable and forgiving eye.

CHAPTER CVIII.

IRELAND.

"You'd better call your master up," said the Skipper to Mickey Free, on the second evening after our departure from Bristol; "he said he'd like to have a look at the coast."

The words were overheard by me, as I lay between sleeping and waking in the cabin of the packet, and without waiting for a second invitation, I rushed upon deck. The sun was setting, and one vast surface of yellow golden light played upon the water, as it rippled beneath a gentle gale. The white foam curled at our prow, and the rushing sound told the speed we were going at. The little craft was staggering under every sheet of her canvas, and her spars creaked as her white sails bent before the breeze. Before us, but to my landsman's eyes scarcely perceptible, were the ill-defined outlines of cloudy darkness they called land, and which I continued to gaze at with a strange sense of interest, while I heard the names of certain well-known headlands assigned to apparently mere masses of fog-bank and vapor.

He who has never been separated in early years, while yet the budding affections

of his heart are tender shoots, from the land of his birth and of his home, knows nothing of the throng of sensations that crowd upon him as he nears the shore of his country. The names, familiar as household words, come with a train of long-buried thoughts; the feeling of attachment to all we call our own—that patriotism of the heart—stirs strongly within him, as the mingled thrills of hope and fear alternately move him to joy or sadness.

Hard as are the worldly struggles between the daily cares of him who carves out his own career and fortune, yet he has never experienced the darkest poverty of fate who has not felt what it is to be a wanderer, without a country to lay claim to. Of all the desolations that visit us, this is the gloomiest and the worst. The outcast from the land of his fathers, whose voice must never be heard within the walls where his infancy was nurtured, nor his step be free upon the mountains where he gambolled in his youth, this is indeed wretchedness. The instinct of country grows and strengthens with our years; the joys of early life are linked with it; the hopes of age point toward it; and he who knows not the thrill of ecstasy some well-remembered, long-lost-sight-of place can bring to his heart when returning after years of absence, is ignorant of one of the purest sources of happiness of our nature.

With what a yearning of the heart, then, did I look upon the dim and misty cliffs, that mighty framework of my island home, their stern sides lashed by the blue waters of the ocean, and their summits lost within the clouds! With what an easy and natural transition did my mind turn from the wild mountains and the green valleys to their hardy sons, who toiled beneath the burning sun of the Peninsula! and how, as some twinkling light of the distant shore would catch my eye, did I wonder within myself whether beside that hearth and board there might not sit some, whose thoughts were wandering over the sea beside the bold steeps of El Bodon, or the death-strewn plain of Talavera! their memories calling up some trait of him who was the idol of his home; whose closing lids some fond mother had watched over; above whose peaceful slumber her prayers had fallen; but whose narrow bed was now beneath the breach of Badajos, and his sleep the sleep that knows not waking.

I know not if in my sad and sorrowing spirit I did not envy him who thus had met a soldier's fate,—for what of promise had my own! My hopes of being in any way instrumental to my poor uncle's happiness grew hourly less. His prejudices were deeply rooted and of long standing: to have asked him to surrender any of what he looked upon as the prerogatives of his house and name, would be to risk the loss of his esteem. What then remained for me? Was I to watch, day by day and hour by hour, the falling ruin of our fortunes? Was I to involve myself in the petty warfare of unavailing resistance to the law? and could I stand aloof from my best, my truest, my earliest friend, and see him, alone and unaided, oppose his weak and final struggle to the unrelenting career of persecution? Between these two alternatives the former could be my only choice; and what a choice!

Oh, how I thought over the wild heroism of the battle-field, the reckless fury of the charge, the crash, the death-cry, and the sad picture of the morrow, when all was past, and a soldier's glory alone remained to shed its high halo over the faults and the follies of the dead.

As night fell, the twinkling of the distant lighthouses,—some throwing a column of light from the very verge of the horizon, others shining brightly, like stars, from some lofty promontory,—marked the different outlines of the coast, and conveyed to me the memory of that broken and wild mountain tract that forms the bulwark of the Green Isle against the waves of the Atlantic. Alone and silently I trod the deck, now turning to look toward the shore, where I thought I could detect the position of some well-known headland, now straining my eyes seaward to watch some bright and flitting star, as it rose from or merged beneath the foaming water, denoting the track of the swift pilot-boat, or the hardy lugger of the fisherman; while the shrill whistle of the floating sea-gull was the only sound, save the rushing waves that broke in spray upon our quarter.

What is it that so inevitably inspires sad and depressing thoughts, as we walk the deck of some little craft, in the silence of the night's dark hours? No sense of danger near, we hold on our course swiftly and steadily, cleaving the dark waves, and bending gracefully beneath the freshening breeze. Yet still the motion which, in the bright sunshine of the noonday tells of joy and gladness, brings now no touch of pleasure to our hearts. The dark and frowning sky, the boundless expanse of gloomy water, spread like some gigantic pall around us, and our thoughts either turn back upon the saddest features of the

"THE FIFTH DIVISION WAS ORTHERED UP, BEKASE THEY WERE FIGHTING CHAPS." (P. 962.)

past, or look forward to the future with a sickly hope that all may not be as we fear it.

Mine were indeed of the gloomiest, and the selfishness alone of the thought prevented me from wishing that, like many another, I had fallen by a soldier's death on the plains of the Peninsula!

As the night wore on, I wrapped myself in my cloak and lay down beneath the bulwark. The whole of my past life came in review before me, and I thought over my first meeting with Lucy Dashwood; the thrill of boyish admiration gliding into love; the hopes, the fears, that stirred my heart; the firm resolve to merit her affection, which made me a soldier. Alas! how little thought she of him to whose whole life she had been a guide-star and a beacon! And, as I thought over the hard-fought fields, the long, fatiguing marches, the nights around the watch-fires, and felt how, in the whirl and enthusiasm of a soldier's life, the cares and sorrows of every-day existence are forgotten, I shuddered to reflect upon the career that might now open before me. To abandon, perhaps forever, the glorious path I had been pursuing for a life of indolence and weariness, while my name, that had already, by the chance of some fortunate circumstances, begun to be mentioned with a testimony of approval, should be lost in oblivion, or remembered but as that of one whose early promise was not borne out by the deeds of his manhood.

As day broke, overcome by watching, I slept; but was soon awoke by the stir and bustle around me. The breeze had freshened, and we were running under a reefed mainsail and foresail; and, as the little craft bounded above the blue water, the white foam crested above her prow, and ran in boiling rivulets along toward the after-deck. The tramp of the seamen, the hoarse voice of the captain, the shrill cry of the sea-birds, betokened, however, nothing of dread or danger; and listlessly I leant upon my elbow, and asked what was going forward.

"Nothing, sir; only making ready to drop our anchor."

"Are we so near shore, then?" said I.

"You've only to round that point to windward, and have a clear run into Cork harbor."

I sprang at once to my legs; the land-fog prevented my seeing anything whatever, but I thought that in the breeze, fresh and balmy as it blew, I could feel the wind off shore.

"At last," said I, "at last!" as I stepped into the little wherry which shot alongside of us, and we glided into the still basin of Cove. How I remember every white-walled cottage, and the beetling cliffs, and that bold headland beside which the valley opens, with its dark green woods; and then Spike Island. And what a stir is yonder, early as it is; the men-of-war tenders seem alive with people, while still the little village is sunk in slumbers, not a smoke-wreath rising from its silent hearths; every plash of the oars in the calm water, as I neared the land, every chance word of the bronzed and hardy fisherman, told upon my heart. I felt it was my home.

"Isn't it beautiful, sir? isn't it illigint?" said a voice behind me, which there could be little doubt in my detecting, although I had not seen the individual since I left England.

"Is not what beautiful?" replied I, rather harshly, at the interruption of my own thoughts.

"Ireland, to be sure; and long life to her!" cried he, with a cheer, that soon found its responsive echoes in the hearts of our sailors, who seconded the sentiment with all their energy.

"How am I to get up to Cork, lads?" said I; "I am pressed for time, and must get forward."

"We'll row your honor the whole way, av it's plazing to you."

"Why, thank you, I'd rather find some quicker mode of proceeding."

"Maybe you'd have a chaise; there's an elegant one at M'Cassidy's."

"Sure the blind mare's in foal," said the bow oar; "the divil a step she can go out of a walk; so, your honor, take Tim Riley's car, and you'll get up cheap. Not that you care for money; but he's going up at eight o'clock with two young ladies."

"Oh! be-gorra," said the other, "and so he is; and faix ye might do worse—they're nice craytures."

"Well," said I, "your advice seems good; but perhaps they might object to my company."

"I've no fear; they're always with the officers. Sure the Miss Dalrymples—"

"The Miss Dalrymples!—Push ahead, boys! it must be later than I thought; we must get the chaise; I can't wait."

Ten minutes more brought us to land.

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My arrangements were soon made, and, as my impatience to press forward became greater the nearer I drew to my destination, I lost not a moment.

The yellow chaise—sole glory of Cove—was brought forth at my request; and, by good fortune, four posters which had been down the preceding evening from Cork to some gentleman's seat near, were about to return. These were also pressed into my service; and just as the first early riser of the little village was drawing his curtain to take a half-closed eye-glance upon the breaking morning, I rattled forth upon my journey at a pace which, could I only have secured its continuance, must soon have terminated my weary way.

Beautiful as the whole line of country is, I was totally unconscious of it; and even Mike's conversational powers, divided as they were between myself and the two postilions, were fruitless in arousing me from the deep preoccupation of my mind by thoughts of home.

It was, then, with some astonishment I heard the boy upon the wheeler ask whither he should drive me to.

"Tell his honor to wake up, we're in Cork now."

"In Cork! impossible already."

"Faith, maybe so—but it's Cork sure enough."

"Drive to the 'George;' it's not far from the Commander-in-Chief's quarters."

"'Tis five minutes' walk, sir; you'll be there before they're put to again."

"Horses for Fermoy!" shouted out the postilions, as we tore up to the door in a gallop. I sprang out, and, by the assistance of the waiter, discovered Sir Henry Howard's quarters, to whom my dispatches were addressed. Having delivered them into the hands of an aide-de-camp, who sat bolt upright in his bed, rubbing his eyes to appear awake, I again hurried down-stairs, and, throwing myself into the chaise, continued my journey.

"Them's beautiful streets, anyhow!" said Mike, "av they wasn't kept so dirty, and the houses so dark, and the pavement bad. That's Mr. Beamish's—that fine house there, with the brass rapper and the green lamp beside it; and there's the hospital; faix! and there's the place we beat the police, when I was here before; and the house with the sign of the Highlander is thrown down—and what's the big building with the stone posts at the door?"

"The bank, sir," said the postilion, with a most deferential air, as Mike addressed him.

"What bank, acushla?"

"Not a one of me knows, sir; but they call it the bank, though it's only an empty house."

"Cary and Moore's bank, perhaps?" said I, having heard that in days long past some such names had failed in Cork for a large amount.

"So it is; your honor's right," cried the postilion; while Mike, standing up on the box, and menacing the house with his clenched fist, shouted out at the very top of his voice,

"Oh, bad luck to your cobwebbed windows and iron railings! sure it's my father's son ought to hate the sight of you."

"I hope, Mike, your father never trusted his property in such hands?"

"I don't suspect he did, your honor; he never put much belief in the banks; but the house cost him dear enough without that."

As I could not help feeling some curiosity in this matter, I pressed Mickey for an explanation.

"But maybe it's not Cary and Moore's after all; and I'm, maybe, cursing dacent people."

Having reassured his mind, by telling him that the reservation he made by the doubt would tell in their favor should he prove mistaken, he afforded me the following information:

"When my father—the heavens be his bed!—was in the 'Cork,' they put him one night on guard at that same big house you just passed—av it was the same; but, if it wasn't that, it was another; and it was a beautiful fine night in August, and the moon up, and plenty of people walking about, and all kinds of fun and devilment going on—drinking and dancing, and everything.

"Well, my father was stuck up there, with his musket, to walk up and down, and not say, 'God save you kindly,' or the time of day, or anything, but just march as if he was in the barrack-yard; and by reason of his being the man he was he didn't like it half, but kept cursing and swearing to himself like mad when he saw pleasant fellows and pretty girls going by, laughing and joking.

"'Good evening, Mickey,' says one 'fine sport ye have all to yourself, with your long feather in your cap.'

"'Arrah, look how proud he is,' says another, 'with his head up as if he didn't see a body.'

"'Shoulder hoo!' cried a drunken chap, with a shovel in his hand. They all began laughing away at my father.

"'Let the dacent man alone,' said an ould fellow in a wig; 'isn't he guarding the bank, wid all the money in it?'

"'Faix he isn't,' says another, 'for there's none left.'

"'What's that you're saying?' says my father.

"'Just that the bank's broke, devil a more,' says he.

"'And there's no goold in it?' says my father.

"'Divil a guinea.'

"'Nor silver?'

"'No, nor silver, nor as much as sixpence, either.'

"'Didn't ye hear, that all day yesterday, when the people was coming in with their notes, the chaps there were heating the guineas in a frying-pan, pretending that they were making them as fast as they could; and sure, when they had a batch red-hot they spread them out to cool; and what betune the hating and the cooling, and the burning the fingers counting them, they kept the bank open to three o'clock, and then they ran away.'

"'Is it truth yer telling?' says my father.

"'Sorra word o' lie in it! myself had two-and-fourpence of their notes.'

"'And so they're broke,' says my father, 'and nothing left?'

"'Not a brass farden.'

"'And what am I staying here for, I wonder, if there's nothing to guard?'

"'Faix, if it isn't for the pride of the thing—'

"'Oh, sorra taste.'

"'Well, maybe for divarsion.'

"'Nor that either.'

"'Faix! then, you're a droll man, to spend the evening that way,' says he; and all the crowd—for there was a crowd—said the same. So with that my father unscrewed his bayonet, and put his piece on his shoulder, and walked off to his bed in the barrack as peaceable as need be. But well, when they came to relieve him, wasn't there a raal commotion? and faith, you see, it went mighty hard with my father the next morning; for the bank was open just as usual, and my father was sintinced to fifty lashes, but got off with a week in prison, and three more, rowling a big stone in the barrack-yard."

Thus chatting away, the time passed over, until we arrived at Fermoy. Here there was some little delay in procuring horses; and during the negotiation, Mike, who usually made himself master of the circumstances of every place through which he passed, discovered that the grocer's shop of the village was kept by a namesake, and possibly a relation of his own.

"I always had a notion, Mister Charles, that I came from a good stock; and sure enough, here's 'Mary Free' over the door there, and a beautiful place inside; full of tay and sugar, and gingerbread, and glue, and coffee, and bran, pickled herrings, soap, and many other commodities."

"Perhaps you'd like to claim kindred, Mike," said I, interrupting; "I'm sure she'd feel flattered to discover a relative in a Peninsula hero."

"It's just what I'm thinking; av we were going to pass the evening here, I'd try if I couldn't make her out a second cousin at least."

Fortune, upon this occasion, seconded Mike's wishes, for when the horses made their appearance, I learned to my surprise that the near side one would not bear a saddle, and the off-sider could only run on his own side. In this conjuncture, the postilion was obliged to drive from what, *Hibernicè* speaking, is called the perch; no ill-applied denomination to a piece of wood, which, about the thickness of one's arm, is hung between the two fore-springs, and serves as a resting-place, in which the luckless wight, weary of the saddle, is not sorry to repose himself.

"What's to be done?" cried I. "There's no room within: my traps barely leave space for myself amongst them."

"Sure, sir," said the postilion, "the other gentleman can follow in the morning coach; and if any accident happens to yourself on the road, by reason of a breakdown, he'll be there as soon as yourself."

This, at least, was an agreeable suggestion, and, as I saw it chimed with Mike's notions, I acceded at once; he came running up at the moment.

"I had a peep at her through the window, Mister Charles, and, faix, she has a great look of the family."

"Well, Mickey, I'll leave you twenty-four hours to cultivate the acquaintance; and to a man like you the time, I know, is ample. Follow me by the morning's coach. Till then, good-by."

Away we rattled once more, and soon left the town behind us. The wild mountain tract which stretched on either side of the road presented one bleak and brown surface, unrelieved by any trace of tillage or habitation; an apparently endless succession of fern-clad hills lay on every side; above, the gloomy sky of leaden, lowering aspect frowned darkly; the sad and wailing cry of the pewet or the plover was the only sound that broke the stillness, and, far as the eye could reach, a dreary waste extended. The air, too, was cold and chilly; it was one of those days which, in our springs, seemed to cast a retrospective glance toward the winter they have left

behind them. The prospect was no cheering one; from heaven above or earth below there came no sight nor sound of gladness. The rich glow of the Peninsular landscape was still fresh in my memory—the luxurious verdure—the olive, the citron, and the vine—the fair valleys teeming with abundance—the mountains terraced with their vineyards—the blue transparent sky spreading o'er all—while the very air was rife with the cheering song of birds that peopled every grove. What a contrast was here! We traveled on for miles, but no village nor one human face did we see. Far in the distance a thin wreath of smoke curled upward: but it came from no hearth; it arose from one of those field-fires by which spendthrift husbandry cultivates the ground. It was, indeed, sad; and yet, I know not how, it spoke more home to my heart than all the brilliant display and all the voluptuous splendor I had witnessed in London. By degrees some traces of wood made their appearance, and, as we descended the mountain toward Cahir, the country assumed a more cultivated and cheerful look—patches of corn or of meadow-land stretched on either side, and the voice of children, and the lowing of oxen, mingled with the cawing of the rooks as, in dense clouds, they followed the plowman's track. The changed features of the prospect resembled the alternate phases of temperament of the dweller in the soil—the gloomy determination—the smiling carelessness—the dark spirit of boding—the reckless jollity—the almost savage ferocity of purpose, followed by a child-like docility and a womanly softness—the grave, the gay, the resolute, the fickle—the firm, the yielding, the unsparing, and the tender-hearted, blending their contrarieties into one nature, of whose capabilities one cannot predicate the bounds, but to whom, by some luckless fatality of fortune, the great rewards of life have been generally withheld, until one begins to feel that the curse of Swift was less the sarcasm wrung from indignant failures than the cold and stern prophecy of the moralist.

But how have I fallen into this strain? Let me rather turn my eyes forward toward my home. How shall I find all there? Have his altered fortunes damped the warm ardor of my poor uncle's heart? Is his smile sicklied over by sorrow? Or shall I hear his merry laugh, and his cheerful voice, as in days of yore? How I longed to take my place beside that hearth, and, in the same oak-chair where I have sat telling the bold adventures of a fox-chase or some long day upon the moors, speak of the scenes of my campaigning life, and make known to him those gallant fellows by whose side I have charged in battle, or sat in the bivouac! How will he glory in the soldier-like spirit and daring energy of Fred Power! How will he chuckle over the blundering earnestness and Irish warmth of O'Shaughessy! How will he laugh at the quaint stories and quainter jests of Maurice Quill! And how often will he wish once more to be young in hand as in heart to mingle with such gay fellows, with no other care, no other sorrow to depress him save the passing fortune of a soldier's life.

CHAPTER CIX.

THE RETURN.

A RUDE shock awoke me, as I lay asleep in the corner of the chaise; a shout followed, and the next moment the door was torn open, and I heard the postilion's voice crying to me:

"Spring out! jump out quickly, sir!"

A whole battery of kicks upon the front panel drowned the rest of his speech; but before I could obey his injunction, he was pitched upon the road, the chaise rolled over, and the pole snapped short in the middle, while the two horses belabored the carriage and each other with all their might. Managing, as well as I was able, to extricate myself, I leaped out upon the road, and by the aid of a knife, and at the cost of some bruises, succeeded in freeing the horses from their tackle. The post-boy, who had escaped without any serious injury, labored manfully to aid me, blubbering the whole time upon the consequences his misfortune would bring down upon his head.

"Bad luck to ye!" cried he, apostrophizing the off-horse, a tall, raw-boned beast, with a Roman nose, a dipped back, and a tail ragged and jagged like a hand-saw. "Bad luck to ye! there never was a good one of your color!"

This, for the information of the "unjockeyed," I may add, was a species of brindled gray.

"How did it happen, Patsey—how did it happen, my lad?"

"It was the heap o' stones they left in the road since last autumn; and though I riz him at it fairly, he dragged the ould mare over it and broke the pole. Oh, wirra, wirra!" cried he, wringing his

hands in an agony of grief, "sure there's neither luck nor grace to be had with ye since the day ye drew the judge down to the last assizes!"

"Well! what's to be done?"

"Sorra a bit o' me knows; the shay's ruined intirely, and the ould devil there knows he's conquered us. Look at him there, listening to every word we're saying! You eternal thief! maybe it's plowing you'd like better."

"Come, come," said I, "this will never get us forward. What part of the country are we in?"

"We left Banagher about four miles behind us; that's Killimur you see with the smoke there in the hollow."

Now, although I did not see Killimur (for the gray mist of the morning prevented me recognizing any object a few hundred yards distant), yet, from the direction in which he pointed, and from the course of the Shannon, which I could trace indistinctly, I obtained a pretty accurate notion of where we were.

"Then, we are not very far from Portumna?"

"Just a pleasant walk before your breakfast."

"And is there not a short cut to O'Malley castle over that mountain?"

"Faix and so there is; and ye can be no stranger to these parts if ye know that."

"I have traveled it before now. Just tell me, is the wooden bridge standing over the little stream? It used to be carried away every winter, in my time."

"It's just the same now. You'll have to pass by the upper ford; but it comes to the same, for that will bring you to the back gate of the demesne, and one way is just as short as the other."

"I know it, I know it; so now, do you follow me with my luggage to the castle, and I'll set out on foot."

So saying, I threw off my cloak, and prepared myself for a sharp walk of some eight miles over the mountain. As I reached the little knoll of land which, overlooking the Shannon, affords a view of several miles in every direction, I stopped to gaze upon the scene where every object around was familiar to me from infancy. The broad, majestic river, sweeping in bold curves between the wild mountains of Connaught and the wooded hills and cultivated slopes of the more fertile Munster—the tall chimneys of many a house rose above the dense woods, where in my boyhood I had spent hours and days of happiness. One last look I turned toward the scene of my late catastrophe, ere I began to descend the mountain. The postboy, with the happy fatalism of his country, and a firm trust in the future, had established himself in the interior of the chaise, from which a blue curl of smoke wreathed upward from his pipe; the horses grazed contentedly by the roadside, and, were I to judge from the evidence before me, I should say that I was the only member of the party inconvenienced by the accident. A thin sleeting of rain began to fall, the wind blew sharply in my face, and the dark clouds collecting in masses above, seemed to threaten a storm. Without stopping for even a passing look at the many well-known spots about, I pressed rapidly on. My old experience upon the moors had taught me that sling trot in which, jumping from hillock to hillock, over the boggy surface, you succeed in accomplishing your journey not only with considerable speed, but perfectly dryshod.

By the lonely path which I traveled, it was unlikely I should meet any one; it was rarely traversed except by the foot of the sportsman, or some stray messenger from the castle to the town of Banagher. Its solitude, however, was in no wise distasteful to me; my heart was full to bursting. Each moment as I walked, some new feature of my home presented itself before me. Now, it was all happiness and comfort; the scene of its ancient hospitable board, its warm hearth, its happy faces, and its ready welcome, were all before me, and I increased my speed to the utmost, when suddenly a sense of sad and sorrowing foreboding would draw around me, and the image of my uncle's sick-bed; his worn features, his pallid look, his broken voice would strike upon my heart, and all the changes that poverty, desertion, and decay can bring to pass would fall upon my heart, and, weak and trembling, I would stand for some moments unable to proceed.

Oh! how many a reproachful thought came home to me at what I scrupled not to call to myself the desertion of my home. Oh! how many a prayer I uttered in all the fervor of devotion, that my selfish waywardness, and my yearning for ambition, might not bring upon me, in after-life, years of unavailing regret! As I thought thus, I reached the brow of a little mountain ridge, beneath which, at the distance of scarcely more than a mile, the dark woods of O'Malley Castle stretched before me. The house itself was not visible, for it was situated in a valley beside the river; but there lay the whole scene of my boy-

hood, there the little creek where my boat was kept, and where I landed on the morning after my duel with Bodkin; there stretched, for many a mile, the large, callow meadows, where I trained my horses, and schooled them for the coming season; and far in the distance, the brown and rugged peak of old Scariff was lost in the clouds. The rain by this time had ceased, the wind had fallen, and an almost unnatural stillness prevailed around. But yet the heavy masses of vapor frowned ominously, and the leaden hue of land and water wore a gloomy and depressing aspect. My impatience to get on increased every moment, and, descending the mountain at the top of my speed, I at length reached the little oak paling that skirted the wood, opened the little wicket, and entered the path. It was the self-same one I had trod in reverie and meditation the night before I left my home. I remember, too, sitting down beside the little well which, inclosed in a frame of rock, ran trickling across the path, to be lost among the gnarled roots and fallen leaves around. Yes, this was the very spot.

Overcome for the instant by my exertion and by my emotion, I sat down upon the stone, and, taking off my cap, bathed my heated and throbbing temples in the cold spring. Refreshed at once, I was about to rise and press onward, when suddenly my attention was caught by a sound which, faint from distance, scarce struck upon my ear. I listened again, but all was still and silent, the dull plash of the river, as it broke upon the reedy shore, was the only sound I heard. Thinking it probably some mere delusion of my heated imagination, I rose to push forward; but at the moment a slight breeze stirred in the leaves around me, the light branches rustled and bent beneath it, and a low, moaning sound swelled upward, increasing each instant as it came: like the distant roar of some mighty torrent it grew louder as the wind bore it toward me, and now falling, now swelling, it burst forth into one loud, prolonged cry of agony and grief. Oh, God! it was the death-wail! I fell upon my knees, my hands clasped in agony, the sweat of misery dropped off my brow, and with a heart bleeding and breaking, I prayed—I know not what. Again the terrible cry smote upon my ear, and I could mark the horrible cadences of the death-song, as the voices of the mourners joined in chorus.

My suspense became too great to bear: I dashed madly forward, one sound still ringing in my ears, one horrid image before my eyes. I reached the garden-wall, I cleared the little rivulet beside the flower-garden, I traversed its beds (neglected and decayed), I gained the avenue, taking no heed of the crowds before me—some on foot, some on horseback, others mounted upon the low country car, many seated in groups upon the grass, their heads bowed upon their bosoms, silent and speechless. As I neared the house, the whole approach was crowded with carriages and horsemen; at the foot of the large flight of steps stood the black and mournful hearse, its plumes nodding in the breeze. With the speed of madness and the recklessness of despair I tore my way through the thickly-standing groups upon the steps; I could not speak, I could not utter. Once more the frightful cry swelled upward, and in its wild notes seemed to paralyze me; for, with my hands upon my temples, I stood motionless and still. A heavy footfall, as of persons marching in procession, came nearer and nearer, and, as the sounds without sank into sobs of bitterness and woe, the black pall of a coffin, borne on men's shoulders, appeared at the door, and an old man, whose gray hair floated in the breeze, and across whose stern features a struggle for self-mastery—a kind of spasmodic effort—was playing, held out his hand to inforce silence. His eye, lackluster and dimmed with age, roved over the assembled multitude, but there was no recognition in his look until at last he turned it on me. A slight hectic flush colored his pale cheek, his lip trembled, he essayed to speak but could not. I sprang toward him, but, choked by agony, I could not utter; my look, however, spoke what my tongue could not: he threw his arms around me, and, muttering the words "Poor Godfrey!" pointed to the coffin.

CHAPTER CX.

HOME.

MANY, many years have passed away since the time I am now about to speak of, and yet I cannot revert, even for a moment, to the period, without a sad and depressing feeling at my heart. The wreck of fortune, the thwarting of ambition, the failure in enterprise, great though they be, are endurable evils. The never-dying hope that youth is blessed with will find its resting-place still within the breast, and the baffled and beaten will struggle on unconquered; but for the death of friends, for

the loss of those in whom our dearest affections were centered, there is no solace; the terrible "never" of the grave knows no remorse, and even memory, that in our saddest hours can bring bright images and smiling faces before us, calls up here only the departed shade of happiness, a passing look at that Eden of our joys from which we are separated forever. And the desolation of the heart is never perfect till it has felt the echoes of a last farewell on earth reverberating within it.

Oh, with what tortures of self-reproach we think of all former intercourse with him that is gone! How would we wish to live our lives once more, correcting each passage of unkindness or neglect! How deeply do we blame ourselves for occasions of benefit lost, and opportunities unprofited by; and how unceasingly, through after-life, the memory of the departed recurs to us! In all the ties which affection and kindred weave around us,one vacant spot is there, unseen and unknown by others, which no blandishments of love, no caresses of friendship can fill up; although the rank grass and the tall weeds of the churchyard may close around the humble tomb, the cemetery of the heart is holy and sacred, pure from all the troubled thoughts and daily cares of the busy world. To that hallowed spot do we retire as into our chamber, and when unrewarded efforts bring discomfiture and misery to our minds, when friends are false and cherished hopes are blasted, we think on those who never ceased to love till they had ceased to live; and in the lonely solitude of our affliction we call upon those who hear not, and may never return.

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Mine was a desolate hearth. I sat moodily down in the old oak parlor, my heart bowed down with grief. The noiseless steps, the mourning garments of the old servants, the unnatural silence of those walls within which from my infancy the sounds of merriment and mirth had been familiar, the large old-fashioned chair where he was wont to sit, now placed against the wall—all spoke of the sad past. Yet, when some footsteps would draw near, and the door would open, I could not repress a thrill of hope that he was coming; more than once I rushed to the window and looked out; I could have sworn I heard his voice.

The old cob pony he used to ride was grazing peacefully before the door; poor Carlo, his favorite spaniel, lay stretched upon the terrace, turning ever and anon a look toward the window, and then, as if wearied of watching for him who came not, he would utter a long, low, wailing cry, and lie down again to sleep. The rich lawn, decked with field flowers of many a hue, stretched away toward the river, upon whose calm surface the white-sailed lugger scarce seemed to move; the sounds of a well-known Irish air came, softened by distance, as some poor fisherman sat mending his net upon the bank, and the laugh of children floated on the breeze. Yes, they were happy!

Two months had elapsed since my return home; how passed by me, I know not; a lethargic stupor had settled upon me. Whole days long I sat at the window, looking listlessly at the tranquil river, and watching the white foam as, borne down from the rapids, it floated lazily along. The Count had left me soon, being called up to Dublin by some business, and I was utterly alone. The different families about called frequently to ask after me, and would, doubtless, have done all in their power to alleviate my sorrow, and lighten the load of my affliction; but, with a morbid fear, I avoided every one, and rarely left the house except at nightfall, and then only to stroll by some lonely and deserted path.

Life had lost its charm for me; my gratified ambition had ended in the blackest disappointment, and all for which I had labored and longed was only attained that I might feel it valueless.

Of my circumstances as to fortune I knew nothing, and cared not more; poverty and riches could matter little now; all my day-dreams were dissipated now, and I only waited for Considine's return to leave Ireland forever. I had made up my mind, if, by any unexpected turn of fate, the war should cease in the Peninsula, to exchange into an Indian regiment. The daily association with objects which recalled but one image to my brain, and that ever accompanied by remorse of conscience, gave me not a moment's peace. My every thought of happiness was mixed up with scenes which now presented nothing but the evidences of blighted hope: to remain, then, where I was, would be to sink into the heartless misanthropist, and I resolved that, with my sword, I would carve out a soldier's fortune and a soldier's grave.

Considine came at last. I was sitting alone, at my usual post beside the window, when the chaise rattled up to the door; for an instant I started to my legs; a vague sense of something like hope shot through me; the whole might be a dream, and *he*—

The next moment I became cold and sick, a faintish giddiness obscured my sight, and, though I felt his grasp as he took my hand, I saw him not.

An indistinct impression still dwells upon my mind of his chiding me for my weakness in thus giving way; of his calling upon me to assert my position, and discharge the duties of him whose successor I now was. I heard him in silence; and, when he concluded, faintly pledging myself to obey him, I hurried to my room, and throwing myself upon my bed, burst into an agony of tears. Hitherto my pent-up sorrow had wasted me day by day; but the rock was now smote, and in that gush of misery my heart found relief.

When I appeared the following morning, the Count was struck with my altered looks: a settled sorrow could not conceal the changes which time and manhood had made upon me; and as from a kind of fear of showing how deeply I grieved, I endeavored to conceal it, by degrees I was enabled to converse calmly and dispassionately upon my fortunes.

"Poor Godfrey," said he, "appointed me his sole executor a few days before it happened; he knew the time was drawing near, and, strange enough, Charley, though he heard of your return to England, he would not let us write. The papers spoke of you as being at Carlton House almost daily; your name appeared at every great festival; and, while his heart warmed at your brilliant success, he absolutely dreaded your coming home. 'Poor fellow,' he would say, 'what a change for him, to leave the splendor and magnificence of his Prince's board for our meager fare and altered fortunes! And then,' he added, 'as for me—God forgive me! I can go now—but how should I bear to part with him if he comes back to me.' And now," said the Count, when he had concluded a detailed history of my dear uncle's last illness—"and now, Charley, what are your plans?"

Briefly, and in a few words, I stated to him my intentions. Without placing much stress upon the strongest of my reasons—my distaste to what had once been home—I avowed my wish to join my regiment at once.

He heard me with evident impatience, and, as I finished, seized my arm in his strong grasp. "No, no, boy, none of this; your tone of assumed composure cannot impose on Bill Considine. You must not return to the Peninsula—at least not yet awhile; the disgust of life may be strong at twenty, but it's not lasting; besides, Charley"—here his voice faltered slightly—"*his* wishes you'll not treat lightly. Read this."

As he spoke, he took a blotted and ill-written letter from his breast-pocket, and handed it to me. It was in my poor uncle's hand, and dated the very morning of his death. It ran thus:

"Dear Bill,—Charley must never part with the old house, come what will; I leave too many ties behind for a stranger's heritage; he must live among my old friends, and watch, protect, and comfort them. He has done enough for fame; let him now do something for affection. We have none of us been over good to these poor people; one of the name must try and save our credit. God bless you both! It is, perhaps, the last time I shall utter it. G. O'M."

I read these few and, to me, affecting lines over and over, forgetful of all save of him who penned them; when Considine, who supposed that my silence was attributable to doubt and hesitation, called out:

"Well, what now?"

"I remain," said I, briefly.

He seized me in his arms with transport, as he said:

"I knew it, boy—I knew it. They told me you were spoiled by flattery, and your head turned by fortune; they said that home and country would weigh lightly in the balance against fame and glory; but I said no, I knew you better. I told them indignantly that I had nursed you on my knee; that I watched you from infancy to boyhood, from boy to man; that he of whose stock you came had one feeling paramount to all, his love of his own fatherland, and that you would not disgrace him. Besides, Charley, there's not an humble hearth for many a long mile around us, where, amid the winter's blast—tempered, not excluded, by frail walls and poverty—there's not one such but where poor Godfrey's name rises each night in prayer, and blessings are invoked on him by those who never felt them themselves."

"I'll not desert them."

"I know you'll not, boy—I know you'll not. Now for the means."

Here he entered into a long and complicated exposure of my dear uncle's many difficulties; by which it appeared that, in order to leave the estate free of debt to me, he had, for years past, undergone severe privations. These, however—such is the misfortune of unguided effort—had but ill succeeded; and there was scarcely a farm on the property without its mortgage.

Upon the house and demesne a bond for three thousand pounds still remained; and to pay off this, Considine advised my selling a portion of the property.

"It's old Blake lent the money; and, only a week before your uncle died, he served a notice for repayment. I never told Godfrey; it was no use; it could only imbitter his last few hours; and, besides, we had six months to think of it. The half of that time has now elapsed, however; we must see to this."

"And did Blake really make this demand, knowing my poor uncle's difficulties?"

"Why, I half think he did not, for Godfrey was too fine a fellow ever to acknowledge anything of the sort. He had twelve sheep killed for the poor in Scariff, at a time when not a servant of the house tasted meat for months; ay, and our own table, too, none of the most abundant, I assure you."

What a picture was this! and how forcibly did it remind me of what I had witnessed in times past. Thus meditating, we returned to the house; and Considine, whose activity never slumbered, sat down to con over the rent-roll with old Maguire the steward.

When I joined the Count in the evening, I found him surrounded by maps, rent-rolls, surveys, and leases. He had been poring over these various documents, to ascertain from which portion of the property we could best recruit our falling finances: to judge from the embarrassed look and manner with which he met me, the matter was one of no small difficulty. The incumbrances upon the estate had been incurred with an unsparing hand: and except where some irreclaimable tract of bog or mountain rendered a loan impracticable, each portion of the property had its share of debt.

"You can't sell Killantry, for Basset has above six thousand pounds on it already; to be sure, there's the Priest's Meadows—fine land and in good heart; but Malony was an old tenant of the family, and I cannot recommend your turning him over to a stranger; the widow M'Bride's farm is perhaps the best, after all, and it would certainly bring the sum we want; still, poor Mary was your nurse, Charley, and it would break her heart to do it."

Thus, wherever we turned, some obstacle presented itself, if not from moneyed causes, at least from those ties and associations which, in an attached and faithful tenantry, are sure to grow up between them and the owner of the soil.

Feeling how all-important these things were—endeavoring as I was to fulfill the will and work out the intentions of my uncle—I saw at once, that to sell any portion of the property must separate me, to a certain extent, from those who long looked up to our house, and who, in the feudalism of the west, could ill withdraw their allegiance from their own chief to swear fealty to a stranger. The richer tenants were those whose industry and habits rendered them objects of worth and attachment; to the poorer ones, to whose improvidence and whose follies (if you will) their poverty was owing, I was bound by those ties which the ancient habit of my house had contracted for centuries; the bond of benefit conferred can be stronger than the debt of gratitude itself. What was I then to do? My income would certainly permit of my paying the interest upon the several mortgages, and still retaining wherewithal to live; the payment of Blake's bond was my only difficulty, and, small as it was, it was still a difficulty.

"I have it, Charley!" said Considine; "I've found out the way of doing it. Blake will have no objection, I'm sure, to take the widow's farm in payment of his debt, giving you a power of redemption within five years. In that time, what with economy—some management—perhaps," added he, smiling slightly—"perhaps a wife with money, may relieve all your embarrassments at once. Well, well, I know you are not thinking of that just now; but come, what say you to my plan?"

"I know not well what to say. It seems to be the best: but still I have my misgivings."

"Of course you have, my boy; nor could I love you if you'd part with an old and faithful follower without them. But, after all, she is only a hostage to the enemy: we'll win her back, Charley."

"If you think so—"

"I do. I know it."

"Well, then, be it so; only one thing I bargain—she must herself consent to this change of masters. It will seem to her a harsh measure that the child she had nursed and fondled in her arms, should live to disunite her from those her oldest attachments upon earth. We must take care, sir, that Blake cannot dispossess her; this would be too hard."

"No, no; that we'll guard against; and now, Charley, with prudence and caution, we'll clear off every incumbrance, and O'Malley Castle shall yet be what it was in days of yore. Ay, boy! with the descendant of the old house for its master, and

not that general—how do you call him?—that came down here to contest the county, who, with his offer of thirty thousand pounds, thought to uproot the oldest family of the west. Did I ever show you the letter we wrote him?"

"No, sir," replied I, trembling with agitation as I spoke; "you merely alluded to it in one of yours."

"Look here, lad!" said he, drawing it from the recesses of a black leather pocket-book. "I took a copy of it; read that."

The document was dated "O'Malley Castle, Dec. 9th." It ran thus:

"SIR,—I have this moment learned from my agent, that you, or some one empowered by you for the purpose, made an offer of several thousand pounds to buy up the different mortgages upon my property, with a subsequent intention of becoming its possessor. Now, sir, I beg to tell you, that if your ungentlemanlike and underhand plot had succeeded, you dared not darken with your shadow the door-sill of the house you purchased. Neither your gold nor your flattery—and I hear you are rich in both—could wipe out from the minds and hearts of my poor tenantry the kindness of centuries. Be advised then, sir; withdraw your offer; let a Galway gentleman settle his own difficulties his own way; his troubles and cares are quite sufficient, without your adding to them. There can be but one mode in which your interference with him could be deemed acceptable: need I tell you, sir, who are a soldier, how that is? As I know your official duties are important, and as my nephew—who feels with me perfectly in this business—is abroad, I can only say that failing health and a broken frame shall not prevent my undertaking a journey to England, should my doing so meet your wishes on this occasion.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,
"GODFREY O'MALLEY."

"This letter," continued Considine, "I inclosed in an envelope, with the following few lines of my own:

"'Count Considine presents his compliments to Lieutenant-General Dashwood; and feeling that, as the friend of Mr. Godfrey O'Malley, the mild course pursued by that gentleman may possibly be attributed to his suggestion, he begs to assure General Dashwood that the reverse was the case, and that he strenuously counseled the propriety of laying a horsewhip upon the General's shoulders, as a preliminary step in the transaction.

"'Count Considine's address is No. 16, Kildare street.'"

"Great God!" said I, "is this possible?"

"Well may you say so, my boy: for—would you believe it?—after all that, he writes a long blundering apology, protesting I know not what about motives of former friendship, and terminating with a civil hint that we have done with him forever. And of my paragraph he takes no notice; and thus ends the whole affair."

"And with it my last hope also!" muttered I to myself.

That Sir George Dashwood's intentions had been misconstrued and mistaken I knew perfectly well; that nothing but the accumulated evils of poverty and sickness could have induced my poor uncle to write such a letter I was well aware; but now, the mischief was accomplished, the evil was done, and nothing remained but to bear with patience and submission, and to endeavor to forget what thus became irremediable.

"Sir George Dashwood made no allusion to me, sir, in his reply?" inquired I, catching at anything like a hope.

"Your name never occurs in his letter. But you look pale, boy: all these discussions come too early upon you; besides, you stay too much at home, and take no exercise."

So saying, Considine bustled off toward the stables to look after some young horses that had just been taken up; and I walked out alone to ponder over what I had heard, and meditate on my plans for the future.

CHAPTER CXI.

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

As I wandered on, the irritation of my spirit gradually subsided. It was, to be sure, distressing to think over the light in which my uncle's letter had placed me before Sir George Dashwood, had even my reputation only with him been at stake; but, with my attachment to his daughter, it was almost maddening. And yet there was nothing to be done; to disavow my participation would be to throw discredit upon my uncle. Thus were my hopes blighted; and thus, at that season when life was opening upon me, did I feel careless and indifferent to everything. Had

my military career still remained to me, that, at least, would have suggested scenes sufficient to distract me from the past; but now my days must be spent where every spot teemed with memories of bygone happiness and joys never to come back again.

My mind was, however, made up; and, without speaking a word to Considine, I turned homeward, and sat down at my writing-table. In a few brief lines I informed my army agent of my intention of leaving the service, and desired that he would sell out for me at once. Fearing lest my resolution might not be proof against the advice and solicitation of my friends, I cautioned him against giving my address, or any clue by which letters might reach me.

This done, I addressed a short note to Mr. Blake, requesting to know the name of his solicitor, in whose hands the bond was placed, and announcing my intention of immediate repayment.

Trifling as these details were in themselves, I cannot help recording how completely they changed the whole current of my thoughts. A new train of interests began to spring up within me; and where so lately the clang of the battle—the ardor of the march—the careless ease of the bivouac—had ingrossed every feeling, now more humble and homely thoughts succeeded; and, as my personal ambition had lost its stimulant, I turned with pleasure to those of whose fate and fortunes I was in some sort the guardian. There may be many a land where the verdure blooms more in fragrance and in richness,—where the clime breathes softer, and a brighter sky lights up the landscape; but there is none—I have traveled through many a one—where more touching and heart-bound associations are blended with the features of the soil than in Ireland, and cold must be the spirit, and barren the affections of him who can dwell amid its mountains and its valleys, its tranquil lakes, its wooded fens, without feeling their humanizing influence upon him. Thus gradually new impressions and new duties succeeded; and, ere four months elapsed, the quiet monotony of my daily life healed up the wounds of my suffering, and, in the calm current of my present existence, a sense of content, if not of happiness, crept gently over me, and I ceased to long for the clash of arms and the loud blast of the trumpet.

Unlike all my former habits, I completely abandoned the sports of the field. He who had participated in them with me was no longer there; and the very sight of the tackle itself suggested sad and depressing thoughts.

My horses I took but little pleasure in. To gratify the good and kind people about, I would walk through the stables, and make some passing remark, as if to show some interest; but I felt it not. No: it was only by the total change of all the ordinary channels of my ideas that I could bear up; and now my days were passed in the fields, either listlessly strolling along, or in watching the laborers as they worked. Of my neighbors I saw nothing; returning their cards, when they called upon me, was the extent of our intercourse; and I had no desire for any further. As Considine had left me to visit some friends in the south, I was quite alone; and, for the first time in my life, felt how soothing can be such solitude. In each happy face—in every grateful look around me—I felt that I was fulfilling my uncle's last behest; and the sense of duty, so strong when it falls upon the heart accompanied by the sense of power, made my days pass rapidly away.

It was toward the close of autumn, when I one morning received a letter from London, informing me that my troop had been sold, and the purchase-money—above four thousand pounds—lodged to my credit at my banker's.

As Mr. Blake had merely answered my former note by a civil message that the matter in question was by no means pressing, I lost not a moment, when this news reached me, to dispatch Mike to Gurt-na-morra with a few lines, expressing my anxious desire to finish the transaction, and begging of Mr. Blake to appoint a day for the purpose.

To this application Mr. Blake's reply was, that he would do himself the honor of waiting upon me the following day, when the arrangements I desired could be agreed upon. Now this was exactly what I wished, if possible, to avoid. Of all my neighbors, he was the one I predetermined to have no intercourse with: I had not forgotten my last evening at his house, nor had I forgiven his conduct to my uncle. However, there was nothing for it but submission; the interview need not be a long, and it should be a last one. Thus resolving, I waited in patience for the morrow.

I was seated at my breakfast the next morning, conning between whiles the columns of the last paper, and feeding my spaniel, who sat upon a large chair beside me, when the door opened, and the servant announced "Mr. Blake;" and the instant after that gentleman bustled in, holding

out both his hands with all evidences of most friendly warmth, and calling out,

"Charles O'Malley, my lad! I'm delighted to see you at last!"

Now, although the distance from the door to the table at which I sat was not many paces, yet it was quite sufficient to chill down all my respectable relative's ardor before he approached; his rapid pace became gradually a shuffle, a slide, and finally a dead stop; his extended arms were reduced to one hand, barely advanced beyond his waistcoat; his voice, losing the easy confidence of its former tone, got husky and dry, and broke into a cough; and all these changes were indebted to the mere fact of my reception of him consisting in a cold and distant bow, as I told the servant to place a chair and leave the room.

Without any preliminary whatever, I opened the subject of our negotiation, expressed my regret that it should have waited so long, and my desire to complete it.

Whether it was that the firm and resolute tone I assumed had its effect at once, or that, disappointed at the mode in which I received his advances, he wished to conclude our interview as soon as need be, I know not; but he speedily withdrew from a capacious pocket a document in parchment, which having spread at large upon the table, and having leisurely put on his spectacles, he began to hum over its contents to himself in an undertone.

"Yes, sir, here it is," said he. "'Deed of conveyance between Godfrey O'Malley, of O'Malley Castle, Esq., on the one part'—perhaps you'd like your solicitor to examine it,—'and Blake, of Gurt'—because there is no hurry, Captain O'Malley,—'on the other.' In fact, after all, it is a mere matter of form between relatives," said he, as I declined the intervention of a lawyer. "I'm not in want of the money—'all the lands and tenements adjoining, in trust, for the payment of the said three thousand'—thank God, Captain, the sum is a trifle that does not inconvenience me: the boys are provided for; and the girls—the pickpockets, as I call them, ha, ha, ha!—not ill off neither;—'with rights of turbary on the said premises'—who are most anxious to have the pleasure of seeing you. Indeed, I could scarcely keep Jane from coming over to-day. 'Sure he's my cousin,' says she; 'and what harm would it be if I went to see him?' Wild, good-natured girls, Captain! And your old friend Matthew—you haven't forgot Matthew?—has been keeping three coveys of partridge for you this fortnight. 'Charley,' says he—they call you Charley still, Captain—'shall have them, and no one else.' And poor Mary—she was a child when you were here—Mary is working a sash for you. But I'm forgetting—I know you have so much business on your hands—"

"Pray, Mr. Blake, be seated. I know nothing of any more importance than the matter before us. If you will permit me to give you a check for this money. The papers, I'm sure, are perfectly correct."

"If I only thought it did not inconvenience you—"

"Nothing of the kind, I assure you. Shall I say at sight, or in ten days hence?"

"Whenever you please, Captain. But it's sorry I am to come troubling you about such things, when I know you're thinking of other matters. And, as I said before, the money does not signify to me; the times, thank God, are good, and I've never been very improvident."

"I think you'll find that correct."

"Oh, to be sure it is! Well, well; I'm going away without saying half what I intended."

"Pray do not hurry yourself. I have not asked have you breakfasted, for I remember Galway habits too well for that. But if I might offer you a glass of sherry and water after your ride?"

"Will you think me a beast if I say yes, Captain? Time was when I didn't care for a canter of ten or fifteen miles in the morning no more than yourself; and that's no small boast: God forgive me, but I never see that clover field where you pounded the Englishman, without swearing there never was a leap made before or since. Is this Mickey, Captain? Faith, and it's a fine, brown, hearty-looking chap you're grown, Mickey. That's mighty pleasant sherry, but where would there be good wine if it wasn't here? Oh! I remember now what it was I wanted. Peter—my son Peter, a slip of a boy—he's only sixteen—well, d'you see, he's downright deranged about the army: he used to see your name in the papers every day, and that terrible business at—what's the name of the place?—where you rode on the chap's back up the breach."

"Ciudad Rodrigo, perhaps," said I, scarcely able to repress a laugh.

"Well, sir, since that, he'll hear of nothing but going into the army; ay, and into the dragoons too. Now, Captain, isn't it mighty expensive in the dragoons?"

"Why, no, not particularly so—at least in the regiment I served with."

"I promised him I'd ask you; the boy's

mad, that's the fact. I wish, Captain, you'd just reason with him a little; he'll mind what *you* say, there's no fear of that; and you see, though I'd like to do what's fair, I'm not going to cut off the girls for the sake of the boys; with the blessing of Providence, they'll never be able to reproach me for that. What I say is this: treat *me* well, and I'll treat you the same. Marry the man my choice would pick out for you, and it's not a matter of a thousand or two I'll care for. There was Bodkin—you remember him?" said he, with a grin; "he proposed for Mary, but since the quarrel with you, she could never bear the sight of him, and Alley wouldn't come down to dinner if he was in the house. Mary's greatly altered. I wish you heard her sing 'I'd mourn the hopes that leave me;' queer girl she is; she was little more than a child when you were here, and she remembers you just as if it was yesterday."

While Mr. Blake ran on at this rate, now dilating upon my own manifold virtues and accomplishments, now expatiating upon the more congenial theme—the fascinations of his fair daughters, and the various merits of his sons—I could not help feeling how changed our relative position was since our last meeting; the tone of cool and vulgar patronage he then assumed toward the unformed country lad was now converted into an air of fawning and deferential submission, still more distasteful.

Young as I was, however, I had already seen a good deal of the world; my soldiering had at least taught me something of men, and I had far less difficulty in deciphering the intentions and objects of my worthy relative, than I should have had in the enigmatical mazes of the parchment bond of which he was the bearer. After all, to how very narrow an extent in life are we fashioned by our own estimate of ourselves! My changed condition affected me but little until I saw how it affected others; that the position I occupied should seem better, now that life had lost the great stimulus of ambition, was somewhat strange; and that flattery should pay its homage to the mourning coat which it would have refused to my soldier's garb, somewhat surprised me; still my bettered fortunes shone only brightly by reflected light; for in my own heart I was sad, spiritless, and oppressed.

Feeling somewhat ashamed at the coldness with which I treated a man so much my elder, I gradually assumed toward Mr. Blake a manner less reserved. He quickly availed himself of the change, and launched out into an eloquent *exposé* of my advantages and capabilities; the only immediate effect of which was to convince me that my property and my prospects must have been very accurately conned over and considered by that worthy gentleman before he could speak of the one or the other with such perfect knowledge.

"When you get rid of these little incumbrances, your rent-roll will be close on four thousand a year. There's Basset, sure, by only reducing his interest from ten to five per cent., will give you a clear eight hundred per annum; let him refuse, and I'll advance the money. And, besides, look at Freney's farm; there's two hundred acres let for one-third of the value, and you must look to these things; for, you see, Captain, we'll want you to go into Parliament; you can't help coming forward at the next election, and by the great gun of Athlone, we'll return you."

Here Mr. Blake swallowed a full bumper of sherry, and, getting up a little false enthusiasm for the moment, grasped me by both hands and shook me violently; this done, like a skillful general, who, having fired the last shot of his artillery, takes care to secure his retreat, he retired toward the door, where his hat and coat were lying.

"I've a hundred apologies to make for incroaching upon your time; but, upon my soul, Captain, you are so agreeable, and the hours have passed away so pleasantly—May I never, if it is not one o'clock!—but you must forgive me."

My sense of justice, which showed me that the agreeability had been all on Mr. Blake's side, prevented me from acknowledging this compliment as it deserved; so I merely bowed stiffly, without speaking. By this time he had succeeded in putting on his great-coat, but still, by some mischance or other, the moment of his leave-taking was deferred; one time he buttoned it awry, and had to undo it all again; then, when it was properly adjusted, he discovered that his pocket-handkerchief was not available, being left in the inner coat pocket; to this succeeded a doubt as to the safety of the check, which instituted another search, and it was full ten minutes before he was completely caparisoned and ready for the road.

"Good-by, Captain; good-by!" said he, warmly, yet warily, not knowing at what precise temperature the metal of my heart was fusible. At a mild heat I had been evidently unsinged, and the white glow of his flattery seemed only to harden me. The interview was now over, and, as I thought

sufficient had been done to convince my friend that the terms of distant acquaintance were to be the limits of our future intercourse, I assumed a little show of friendliness, and shook his hand warmly.

"Good-by, Mr. Blake; pray present my respectful compliments to your friends. Allow me to ring for your horse; you are not going to have a shower, I hope."

"No, no, Captain, only a passing cloud," said he, warming up perceptibly under the influence of my advances, "nothing more. Why, what is it I'm forgetting now! Oh, I have it! Maybe I'm too bold; but sure an old friend and relation may take a liberty sometimes. It was just a little request of Mrs. Blake, as I was leaving the house." He stopped here as if to take soundings, and perceiving no change in my countenance, continued, "It was just to beg, that, in a kind and friendly way, you'd come over and eat your dinner with us on Sunday—nobody but the family, not a soul—Mrs. Blake and the girls—a boiled leg of mutton—Matthew—a fresh trout, if we can catch one—plain and homely—but a hearty welcome, and a bottle of old claret, maybe, too—ah! ah! ah!"

Before the cadence of Mr. Blake's laugh had died away, I politely but resolutely declined the proffered invitation, and, by way of setting the question at rest forever, gave him to understand that, from impaired health and other causes, I had resolved upon strictly confining myself to the limits of my own house and grounds, at least for the present.

Mr. Blake then saluted me for the last time, and left the room. As he mounted his hackney, I could not help overhearing an abortive effort he made to draw Mike into something like conversation; but it proved an utter failure, and it was evident he deemed the man as incorrigible as the master.

"A very fine young man the Captain is—remarkable!—and it's proud I am to have him for a nephew!"

So saying, he cantered down the avenue, while Mickey, as he looked after him, muttered between his teeth, "And faix, it's prouder you'd be av he was your son-in-law!"

Mike's soliloquy seemed to show me, in a new light, the meaning of my relative's manner. It was for the first time in my life that such a thought had occurred to me, and it was not without a sense of shame that I now admitted it.

If there be something which elevates and exalts us in our esteem, tinging our hearts with heroism and our souls with pride, in the love and attachment of some fair and beautiful girl, there is something equally humiliating in being the object of cold and speculative calculation to a match-making family. Your character studied, your pursuits watched, your tastes conned over, your very temperament inquired into—surrounded by snares, environed by practiced attentions—one eye fixed upon the registered testament of your relative, the other riveted upon your own caprices; and then those thousand little cares and kindnesses which come so pleasurably upon the heart when the offspring of true affection, perverted as they are by base views and sordid interest, are so many shocks to the feeling and understanding. Like the Eastern sirocco, which seems to breathe of freshness and of health, and yet bears but pestilence and death upon its breezes—so these calculated and well-considered traits of affection only render callous and harden the heart which had responded warmly, openly, and abundantly to the true outpourings of affection. At how many a previously happy hearth has the seed of this fatal passion planted its discord! How many a fair and lovely girl, with beauty and attractions sufficient to win all that her heart could wish of fondness and devotion, has, by this pernicious passion, become a cold, heartless, worldly coquette, weighing men's characters by the adventitious circumstances of their birth and fortune, and scrutinizing the eligibility of a match with the practiced acumen with which a notary investigates the solvency of a creditor. How do the traits of beauty, gesture, voice, and manner become converted into the common-place and distasteful trickery of the world! The very hospitality of the house becomes suspect, their friendship is but fictitious; those rare and goodly gifts of fondness and sisterly affection which grow up in happier circumstances, are here but rivalry, envy, and ill-conceived hatred. The very accomplishments which cultivate and adorn life, that light but graceful frieze which girds the temple of homely happiness, are here but the meditated and well-considered occasions of display. All the bright features of womanhood, all the freshness of youth, and all its fascinations, are but like those richly colored and beautiful fruits, seductive to the eye and fair to look upon, but which within contain nothing but a core of rottenness and decay.

No, no; unblessed by all which makes a hearth a home, I may travel on my weary way through life—but such a one as this I will not make the partner of my sorrows and my joys, come what will of it!

CHAPTER CXII.

A SURPRISE.

FROM the hour of Mr. Blake's departure, my life was no longer molested. My declaration, which had evidently, under his auspices, been made the subject of conversation through the country, was at least so far successful, as it permitted me to spend my time in the way I liked best, and without the necessity of maintaining the show of intercourse, when in reality I kept up none, with the neighborhood. While thus, therefore, my life passed on equably and tranquilly, many months glided over, and I found myself already a year at home, without it appearing more than a few weeks. Nothing seems so short in retrospect as monotony; the number, the variety, the interest of the events which occupy us, making our hours pass glibly and flowingly, will still suggest to the mind the impressions of a longer period than when the daily routine of our occupations assumes a character of continued uniformity. It seems to be the *amende* made by hours of weariness and tedium, that, in looking back upon them, they appear to have passed rapidly over. Not that my life, at the period I speak of, was devoid of interest; on the contrary, devoting myself with zeal and earnestness to the new duties of my station, I made myself thoroughly acquainted with the condition of my property, the interests of my tenantry, their prospects, their hopes, their objects. Investigating them as only he can who is the owner of the soil, I endeavored to remedy the ancient vices of the land—the habits of careless, reckless waste, of indifference for the morrow; and, by instilling a feature of prudent foresight into that boundless confidence in the future upon which every Irishman of every rank lives and trusts, I succeeded at last in so far ameliorating their situation, that a walk through my property, instead of presenting—as it at first did—a crowd of eager and anxious supplicants, entreating for abatements in rent, succor for their sick, and sometimes even food itself, showed me now a happy and industrious people, confident in themselves, and firmly relying on their own resources.

Another spring was now opening, and a feeling of calm and tranquil happiness, the result of my successful management of my estate, made my days pass pleasantly along. I was sitting at a late breakfast in my little library; the open window afforded a far and wide prospect of the country, blooming in all the promise of the season, while the drops of the passing shower still lingered upon the grass, and were sparkling like jewels under the bright sunshine. Masses of white and billowy cloud moved swiftly through the air, coloring the broad river with many a shadow as they passed. The birds sang merrily, the trees shook their leaves in concert, and there was that sense of movement in everything on earth and sky which gives to spring its character of lightness and exhilaration. The youth of the year, like the youth of our own existence, is beautiful in the restless activity which marks it. The tender flower, that seems to open as we look; the grass, that springs before our eyes; all speak of promise. The changing phases of the sky, like the smiles and tears of infancy, excite without weariness, and, while they engage our sympathies, they fatigue not our compassion.

Partly lost in thought as I looked upon the fair and varied scene before me, now turning to the pages of the book upon the breakfast-table, the hours of the morning passed quickly over, and it was already beyond noon. I was startled from my reverie by sounds which I could scarcely trust my ears to believe real. I listened again, and thought I could detect them distinctly. It seemed as though some one were rapidly running over the keys of a pianoforte, essaying with the voice to follow the notes, and sometimes striking two or three bold and successive chords—then a merry laugh would follow, and drown all other sounds. "What can it be?" thought I. "There is, to be sure, a pianoforte in the large drawing-room; but then, who would venture upon such a liberty as this? Besides, who is capable of it? There! it can be no inexperienced performer gave that shake; my worthy housekeeper never accomplished that." So saying, I jumped from the breakfast-table, and set off in the direction of the sound. A small drawing-room and the billiard-room lay between me and the large drawing-room; and, as I traversed them, the music grew gradually louder. Conjecturing that, whoever it might be, the performance would cease on my entrance, I listened for a few moments before opening the door. Nothing could be more singular—nothing more strange—than the effect of those unaccustomed sounds in that silent and deserted place. The character of the music, too, contributed not a little to this: rapidly passing from grave to gay—from the melting softness of some plaintive air to the reckless hurry and confusion of an Irish jig—the player

seemed, as it were, to run wild through all the floating fancies of his memory; now breaking suddenly off in the saddest cadence of a song, the notes would change into some quaint old-fashioned crone, in which the singer seemed so much at home, and gave the queer drollery of the words that expression of archness so eminently the character of certain Irish airs. "But what the deuce is this?" said I, as, rattling over the keys with a flowing but brilliant finger, she—for it was unquestionably a woman—with a clear and sweet voice, broken by laughter, began to sing the words of Mr. Bodkin's song, "The Man for Galway." When she had finished the last verse, her hand strayed, as it were, carelessly across the instrument, while she herself gave way to a free burst of merriment; and then, suddenly resuming the air, she chanted forth the following words, with a spirit and effect I can convey no idea of:

"To live at home,
And never roam;
To pass his days in sighing;
To wear sad looks,
Read stupid books,
And look half dead or dying:
Not show his face,
Nor join the chase,
But dwell a hermit alway:
Oh! Charley dear!
To me 'tis clear,
You're not the man for Galway!"

"You're not the man for Galway!" repeated she once more, while she closed the piano with a loud bang.

"And why not, my dear—why not the man for Galway?" said I, as, bursting open the door, I sprang into the room.

"Oh! it's you, is it?—at last. So I've unearthed you, have I?"

With these words she burst into an immoderate fit of laughter; leaving me, who intended to be the party giving the surprise, amazed, confused, and speechless, in the middle of the floor.

That my reader may sympathize a little in my distresses, let me present him with the *tableau* before me. Seated upon the piano-stool was a young lady of at most eighteen years: her face, had it not been for its expression of exuberant drollery and malicious fun, would have been downright beautiful; her eyes, of the deepest blue, and shaded by long lashes, instead of indulging the character of pensive and thoughtful beauty for which Nature destined them, sparkled with a most animated brightness; her nose, which, rather short, was still beautifully proportioned, gave, with her well-curled upper lip, a look of saucineness to the features quite bewitching; her hair—that brilliant auburn we see in a *Carlo Dolci*—fell in wild and massive curls upon her shoulders. Her costume was a dark-green riding-habit, not of the newest in its fashion, and displaying more than one rent in its careless folds; her hat, whip, and gloves lay on the floor beside her, and her whole attitude and bearing indicated the most perfect ease and carelessness.

"So you are caught—taken alive!" said she, as she pressed her hands upon her sides in a fresh burst of laughter.

"By Jove! this is a surprise indeed!" said I. "And, pray, into whose fair hands have I fallen a captive?" recovering myself a little, and assuming a half air of gallantry.

"So you don't know me, don't you?"

"Upon my life I do not."

"How good! Why, I'm Baby Blake."

"Baby Blake?" said I; thinking that a rather strange appellation for one whose well-developed proportions betokened nothing of infancy. "Baby Blake?"

"To be sure; your cousin Baby."

"Indeed!" said I, springing forward. "Let me embrace my relative."

Accepting my proffered salutation with the most exemplary coolness, she said:

"Get a chair, now, and let's have a talk together."

"Why the devil do they call you Baby?" said I, still puzzled by this palpable misnomer.

"Because I am the youngest, and I was always the baby," replied she, adjusting her ringlets with a most rural coquetry. "Now, tell me something. Why do you live shut up here like a madman, and not come near us at Gurt-na-morra?"

"Oh! that's a long story, Baby. But, since we are asking questions, how did you get in here?"

"Just through the window, my dear; and I've torn my habit, as you see."

So saying, she exhibited a rent of about two feet long, thrusting through it a very pretty foot and ankle at the same time.

"As my inhospitable customs have cost you a habit, you must let me make you a present of one."

"No! will you though? That's a good fellow. Lord! I told them I knew you weren't a miser; that you were only odd, that's all."

"And how did you come over, Baby?"

"Just cantered over with little Paddy Byrne. I made him take all the walls and ditches we met, and they're scraping the mud off him ever since. I'm glad I made

you laugh, Charley; they say you are so sad. Dear me, how thirsty I am! Have you any beer?"

"To be sure, Baby. But wouldn't you like some luncheon?"

"Of all things. Well, this is fun!" said she, as, taking my arm, I led her from the drawing-room. "They don't know where I'm gone—not one of them; and I've a great mind not to tell them, if you wouldn't blab."

"Would it be quite proper?"

"Proper!" cried she, imitating my voice; "I like that! as if I was going to run away with you. Dear me! what a pretty house! and what nice pictures! Who is the old fellow up there in the armor?"

"That's Sir Hildebrand O'Malley," said I, with some pride, in recognizing an ancestor of the thirteenth century.

"And the other old fright with the wig, and his hands stuck in his pockets?"

"My grandfather, Baby."

"Lord! how ugly he is! Why, Charley, he hasn't a look of you; one would think, too, he was angry at us. Ay, old gentleman! you don't like to see me leaning on cousin Charley's arm. That must be the luncheon; I'm sure I hear knives and forks rattling there."

The old butler's astonishment was not inferior to my own a few minutes before, when I entered the dining-room with my fair cousin upon my arm. As I drew a chair toward the table, a thought struck me that possibly it might only be a due attention to my fair guest if I invited the housekeeper, Mrs. Magra, to favor us with her presence; and accordingly, in an undertone, so as not to be overheard by old Simon, I said,

"Perhaps, Baby, you'd like to have Mrs. Magra to keep us company?"

"Who's she?" was the brief answer.

"The housekeeper; a very respectable old matron."

"Is she funny?"

"Funny! not a bit."

"Oh, then, never mind her. What made you think of her?"

"Why, I thought—perhaps you'd think—that is, people might say—in fact, I was doing a little bit proper on your account."

"Oh! that was it, was it? Thank you for nothing, my dear; Baby Blake can take care of herself. And now just help me to that wing there. Do you know, cousin Charley, I think you're an old quiz, and not half as good a fellow as you used to be."

"Come, come, Baby, don't be in such a hurry to pronounce upon me. Let us take a glass of wine. Fill Miss Blake's glass, Simon."

"Well, you may be better when one comes to know you. I detest sherry; no, never mind, I'll take it, as it's here. Charley, I'll not compliment you upon your ham; they don't know how to save them here. I'll give you such a receipt when you come over to see us. But will you come? that's the question."

"How can you ask me! Don't you think I'll return your visit?"

"Oh! hang your ceremony. Come and see us, like a good-natured fellow, that knew us since we played together, and quarreled over our toys on the grass. Is that your sword up there? Did you hear that noise? that was thunder: there it comes. Look at that!"

As she spoke, a darkness like night overspread the landscape; the waves of the river became greatly agitated, and the rain, descending in torrents, beat with tremendous force against the windows; clap after clap of thunder followed; the lightning flashed fearfully through the gloom, and the wind, growing every moment stronger, drove the rain with redoubled violence against the glass. For a while we amused ourselves with watching the effects of the storm without; the poor laborers flying from their work; the dripping figures seeking shelter beneath the trees; the barks; the very loaded carts themselves, all interested Miss Baby, whose eye roved from the shore to the Shannon, recognizing, with a practiced eye, every house upon its banks, and every bark that rocked and pitched beneath the gale.

"Well, this is pleasant to look out at," said she, at length, and after the storm had lasted for above an hour, without evincing any show of abatement; "but what's to become of *me?*"

Now, that was the very question I had been asking myself for the last twenty minutes, without ever being able to find the answer.

"Eh, Charley, what's to become of me?"

"Oh, never fear: one thing's quite certain, you cannot leave this in such weather; the river is certainly impassable by this time at the ford, and to go by the road is out of the question; it is fully twelve miles. I have it, Baby; you, as I've said before, can't leave this, but I can. Now, I'll go over to Gurtna-Morra, and return in the morning to bring you back; it will be fine by that time."

"Well, I like your notion; you'll leave

me all alone here, to drink tea, I suppose, with your friend Mrs. Magra; a pleasant evening I'd have of it: not a bit—"

"Well, Baby, don't be cross; I only meant this arrangement really for your sake. I needn't tell you how very much I'd prefer doing the honors of my poor house in person."

"Oh, I see what you mean—more propers. Well, well, I've a great deal to learn; but, look, I think it's growing lighter."

"No, far from it; it's only that gray mass along the horizon that always bodes continual rain."

As the prospects without had little cheering to look upon, we sat down beside the fire, and chatted away, forgetting very soon, in a hundred mutual recollections and inquiries, the rain and the wind, the thunder and the hurricane. Now and then, as some louder crash would resound above our heads, for a moment we would turn to the window, and comment upon the dreadful weather; but the next, we had forgotten all about it, and were deep in our confabulations.

As for my fair cousin, who at first was full of contrivances to pass the time—such as the piano; a game at backgammon; chicken hazard; battledore—she at last became mightily interested in some of my soldiering adventures, and it was six o'clock ere we again thought that some final measure must be adopted for restoring Baby to her friends, or, at least, guarding against the consequences her simple and guileless nature might have involved her in.

Mike was called into the conference, and, at his suggestion, it was decided that we should have out the phaeton, and that I should myself drive Miss Blake home; a plan which offered no other difficulties than this one, namely, that of above thirty horses in my stables, I had not a single pair which had ever been harnessed.

This, so far from proving the obstacle I deemed it, seemed, on the contrary, to overwhelm Baby with delight.

"Let's have them. Come, Charley; this will be rare fun; we couldn't have a team of four, could we?"

"Six, if you like it, my dear coz—only, who's to hold them?—they're young thorough-breds; most of them never backed; some not bitted. In fact, I know nothing of my stable. I say, Mike, is there anything fit to take out?"

"Yes, sir; there's Miss Wildespin: she's in training, to be sure; but we can't help that; and the brown colt they call 'Billy the Bolter:' they're the likeliest we have; without your honor would take the two chestnuts we took up last week; they're raal devils to go; and, if the tackle will hold them, they'll bring you to Mr. Blake's door in forty minutes."

"I vote for the chestnuts," said Baby, slapping her boot with her horse-whip.

"I move an amendment in favor of Miss Wildespin," said I, doubtfully.

"He'll never do for Galway," sang Baby, laying her whip on my shoulder with no tender hand; "yet you used to cross the country in good style when you were here before."

"And might do so again, Baby."

"Ah, no; that vile dragoon seat, with your long stirrup, and your heel dropped, and your elbow this way, and your head that! How could you ever screw your horse up to his fence, lifting him along as you came up through the heavy ground, and with a stroke of your hand sending him pop over, with his hind legs well under him?" Here she burst into a fit of laughter at my look of amazement, as with voice, gesture, and look, she actually dramatized the scene she described.

By the time that I had costumed my fair friend in my dragoon cloak and a foraging cap, with a gold band around it, which was the extent of muffling my establishment could muster, a distant noise without apprised us that the phaeton was approaching. Certainly, the mode in which that equipage came up to the door, might have inspired sentiments of fear in any heart less steeled against danger than my fair cousin's. The two blood chestnuts (for it was those Mike harnessed, having a groom's dislike to take a racer out of training) were surrounded by about twenty people: some at their heads; some patting them on the flanks; some spoking the wheels; and a few, the more cautious of the party, standing at a respectable distance, and offering advice. The mode of progression was simply a spring, a plunge, a rear, a lounge, and a kick; and, considering it was the first time they ever performed together, nothing could be more uniform than their display; sometimes the pole would be seen to point straight upward, like a lightning conductor, while the infuriated animals appeared sparring with their fore legs at an imaginary enemy. Sometimes, like the pictures in a school-book on mythology, they would seem in the act of diving, while with their hind legs they dashed the splash-board into fragments behind them; their eyes flashing fire, their nostrils distended, their flanks heaving, and every limb trembling with passion and excitement.

"That's what I call a rare turn-out,"

said Baby, who enjoyed the proceeding amazingly.

"Yes; but remember," said I, "we're not to have all these running footmen the whole way."

"I like that near sider with the white fetlock."

"You're right, Miss," said Mike, who entered at the moment, and felt quite gratified at the criticism. "You're right, Miss; it's himself can do it."

"Come, Baby, are you ready?"

"All right, sir," said she, touching her cap knowingly with her forefinger.

"Will the tackle hold, Mike?" said I.

"We'll take this with us, at any rate," pointing, as he spoke, to a considerable coil of rope, a hammer, and a basket of nails, he carried on his arm. "It's the break harness we have, and it ought to be strong enough; but sure, if the thunder comes on again, they'd smash a chain cable."

"Now, Charley," cried Baby, "keep their heads straight; for when they go that way, they mean going."

"Well, Baby, let's start; but pray remember one thing. If I'm not as agreeable on the journey as I ought to be; if I don't say as many pretty things to my pretty coz, it's because these confounded beasts will give me as much as I can do."

"Oh yes, look after the cattle, and take another time for squeezing my hand. I say, Charley, you'd like to smoke, now, wouldn't you? if so, don't mind me."

"A thousand thanks for thinking of it; but I'll not commit such a trespass on good breeding."

When we reached the door, the prospect looked dark and dismal enough; the rain had almost ceased, but masses of black cloud were hurrying across the sky, and the low rumbling noise of a gathering storm crept along the ground. Our panting equipage, with its two mounted grooms behind,—for, to provide against all accidents, Mike ordered two such to follow us, —stood in waiting; Miss Blake's horse, held by the smallest imaginable bit of boyhood, bringing up the rear.

"Look at Paddy Byrne's face," said Baby, directing my attention to the little individual in question.

Now, small as the aforesaid face was, it contrived, within its limits, to exhibit an expression of unqualified fear. I had no time, however, to give a second look, when I jumped into the phaeton and seized the reins. Mike sprang up behind at a look from me, and, without speaking a word, the stablemen and helpers flew right and left. The chestnuts, seeing all free before them, made one tremendous plunge, carrying the fore-carriage clear off the ground, and straining every nut, bolt, screw, and strap about us with the effort.

"They're off, now," cried Mickey.

"Yes, they are off, now," said Baby. "Keep them going."

Nothing could be easier to follow than this advice; and, in fact, so little merit had I in obeying it, that I never spoke a word. Down the avenue we went, at the speed of lightning, the stones, and the water from the late rain, flying and splashing about us. In one series of plunges, agreeably diversified by a strong bang upon the splash-board, we reached the gate. Before I had time to utter a prayer for our safety, we were through, and fairly upon the high-road.

"Musha, but the master's mad!" cried the old dame of the gate-lodge; "he wasn't out of this gate for a year and a half, and look now—"

The rest was lost in the clear ringing laugh of Baby, who clapped her hands in ecstasy and delight.

"What a spanking pair they are! I suppose you wouldn't let me get my hand on them?" said she, making a gesture as if to take the reins.

"Heaven forbid, my dear," said I; "they've nearly pulled my wrists off already."

Our road, like many in the west of Ireland, lay through a level tract of bog; deep ditches, half filled with water, on either side of us, but, fortunately, neither hill nor valley for several miles.

"There's the mail," said Baby, pointing to a dark speck at a long distance off.

Ere many minutes elapsed, our stretching gallop, for such had our pace sobered into, brought us up with it, and as we flew by, at top speed, Baby jumped to her feet, and turning a waggish look at our beaten rivals, burst out into a fit of triumphant laughter.

Mike was correct as to time; in some few seconds less than forty minutes we turned into the avenue of Gurt-na-Morra. Tearing along like the very moment of their starting, the hot and fiery animals galloped up the approach, and at length came to a stop in a deep plowed field, into which, fortunately for us, Mr. Blake, animated less by the picturesque than the profitable, had converted his green lawn. This check, however, was less owing to my agency than to that of my servants; for, dismounting in haste, they flew to the horses' heads, and with ready tact, and be-

fore I had helped my cousin to the ground, succeeded in unharnessing them from the carriage, and led them, blown and panting, covered with foam, and splashed with mud, into the space before the door.

By this time we were joined by the whole Blake family, who poured forth in astonishment at our strange and sudden appearance. Explanation on my part was unnecessary, for Baby, with a volubility quite her own, gave the whole recital in less than three minutes. From the moment of her advent to her departure, they had it all; and while she mingled her ridicule at my surprise, her praise of my luncheon, her jests at my prudence, the whole family joined heartily in her mirth, while they welcomed, with most unequivocal warmth, my first visit to Gurt-na-Morra.

I confess it was with no slight gratification I remarked that Baby's visit was as much a matter of surprise to them as to me. Believing her to have gone to visit at Portumna Castle, they felt no uneasiness at her absence; so that, in her descent upon me, she was really only guided by her own willful fancy, and that total absence of all consciousness of wrong which makes a truly innocent girl the hardiest of all God's creatures. I was reassured by this feeling, and satisfied that, whatever the intentions of the elder members of the Blake family, Baby was, at least, no participator in their plots, or sharer in their intrigues.

CHAPTER CXIII.

NEW VIEWS.

When I found myself the next morning at home, I could not help ruminating over the strange adventures of the preceding day, and felt a kind of self-reproach at the frigid manner in which I had hitherto treated all the Blake advances, contrasting so ill for me with the unaffected warmth and kind good-nature of their reception. Never alluding, even by accident, to my late estrangement; never, by a chance speech, indicating that they felt any soreness for the past,—they talked away about the gossip of the country,—its feuds, its dinners, its assizes, its balls, its garrisons, —all the varied subjects of country life were gayly and laughingly discussed; and when, as I entered my own silent and deserted home, and contrasted its look of melancholy and gloom with the gay and merry scene I so lately parted from; when my echoing steps reverberated along the flagged hall, I thought of the happy family picture I left behind me, and could not help avowing to myself that the goods of fortune I possessed were but ill dispensed, when, in the midst of every means and appliance for comfort and happiness, I lived a solitary man, companionless and alone.

I arose from breakfast a hundred times; now walking impatiently toward the window, now strolling into the drawing-room. Around, on every side, lay scattered the prints and drawings, as Baby had thrown them carelessly upon the floor: her handkerchief was also there. I took it up; I know not why: some lurking leaven of old romance perhaps suggested it; but I hoped it might prove of delicate texture, and bespeaking that lady-like coquetry which so pleasantly associates with the sex in our minds. Alas! no. Nothing could be more palpably the opposite: torn, and with a knot—some hint to memory—upon one corner, it was no aid to my careering fancy. And yet—and yet, what a handsome girl she is! how finely, how delicately formed that Greek outline of forehead and brow! how transparently soft that downy pink upon her cheek! with what varied expression those eyes can beam!—ay, that they can: but, confound it! there's this fault,—their very archness —their sly malice—will be interpreted by the ill-judging world to any but the real motive. "How like a flirt!" will one say; "how impertinent! how ill-bred!" The conventional stare of cold, patched, and painted beauty, upon whose unblushing cheek no stray tinge of modesty has wandered, will be tolerated—even admired; while the artless beamings of the soul upon the face of rural loveliness will be condemned without appeal.

Such a girl may a man marry who destines his days to the wild west; but woe unto him!—woe unto him! should he migrate among the more civilized and less charitable *coteries* of our neighbors.

"Ah! here are the papers, and I was forgetting. Let me see—'Bayonne'—ay, 'march of the troops—sixth corps.' What can that be without? I say, Mike, who is cantering along the avenue?"

"It's me, sir. I'm training the brown filly for Miss Mary, as your honor bid me last night."

"Ah, very true. Does she go quietly?"

"Like a lamb, sir; barrin' she does give a kick now and then at the sheet, when it bangs against her legs."

"Am I to go over with the books now,

sir?" said a wild-looking shock-head appearing within the door.

"Yes, take them over, with my compliments; and say I hope Miss Mary Blake has caught no cold."

"You were speaking about a habit and hat, sir?" said Mrs. Magra, courtesying as she entered.

"Yes, Mrs. Magra; I want your advice. Oh, tell Barnes I really cannot be bored about those eternal turnips every day of my life. And, Mike, I wish you'd make them look over the four-horse harness. I want to try those grays; they tell me they'll run well together. Well, Freney, more complaints I hope? nothing but trespasses; I don't care, so you'd not worry me, if they eat up every blade of clover in the grounds: I'm sick of being bored this way. Did you say that we'd eight couple of good dogs?—quite enough to begin with. Tell Jones to ride into Banagher and look after that box: Buckmaster sent it from London two months ago, and it has been lying there ever since. And, Mrs. Magra, pray let the windows be opened, and the house well aired: that drawing-room would be all the better for new papering."

These few and broken directions may serve to show my readers—what certainly they failed to convince myself of—that a new chapter of my life had opened before me; and that, in proportion to the length of time my feelings had found neither vent nor outlet, they now rushed madly, tempestuously into their new channels, suffering no impediment to arrest, no obstacle to oppose their current.

Nothing can be conceived more opposite to my late, than my present habits now became; the house, the grounds, the gardens, all seemed to participate in the new influence which beamed upon myself; the stir and bustle of active life was everywhere perceptible; and, amid numerous preparations for the moors and the hunting-field, for pleasure parties upon the river, and fishing excursions up the mountains, my days were spent. The Blakes, without even for a moment pressing their attentions upon me, permitted me to go and come amongst them unquestioned and unasked. When, nearly every morning, I appeared in the breakfast-room, I felt exactly like a member of the family: the hundred little discrepancies of thought and habit which struck me forcibly at first looked daily less apparent; the careless inattentions of my fair cousins as to dress, their free-and-easy boisterous manner, their very accents, which fell so harshly on my ear, gradually made less and less impression, until at last, when a raw English ensign, just arrived in the neighborhood, remarked to me in confidence, "What devilish fine girls they were, if they were not so confoundedly Irish!" I could not help wondering what the fellow meant, and attributed the observation more to his ignorance than to its truth.

Papa and Mamma Blake, like prudent generals, so long as they saw the forces of the enemy daily wasting before them—so long as they could with impunity carry on the war at his expense—resolved to risk nothing by a pitched battle. Unlike the Dalrymples, they could leave all to time.

Oh! tell me not of dark eyes swimming in their own ethereal essence; tell me not of pouting lips, of glossy ringlets, of taper fingers, and well-rounded insteps; speak not to me of soft voices, whose seductive sounds ring sweetly in our hearts; preach not of those thousand womanly graces so dear to every man, and doubly to him who lives apart from all their influences and their fascinations; neither dwell upon congenial temperament, similarity of taste, of disposition, and of thought; these are not the great risks a man runs in life. Of all the temptations, strong as these may be, there is one greater than them all, and that is—propinquity!

Show me the man who has ever stood this test; show me the man, deserving the name of such, who has become daily and hourly exposed to the breaching artillery of flashing eyes, of soft voices, of winning smiles, and kind speeches, and who hasn't felt, and that too soon too, a breach within the rampart of his heart. He may, it is true—nay, he will, in many cases—make a bold and vigorous defense; sometimes will he reintrench himself within the stockades of his prudence, but, alas! it is only to defer the moment when he must lay down his arms. He may, like a wise man, who sees his fate inevitable, make a virtue of necessity, and surrender at discretion; or, like a crafty foe, seeing his doom before him, under the cover of the night he may make a sortie from the garrison, and run for his life. Ignominious as such a course must be, it is often the only one left.

But to come back. Love, like the small-pox, is most dangerous when you take it in the natural way. Those made matches, which Heaven is supposed to have a hand in, when placing an unmarried gentleman's property in the neighborhood of an unmarried lady's, which destine two people for each other in life, because their well-judging friends have agreed "they'll

do very well; they were made for each other,"—these are the mild cases of the malady; this process of friendly vaccination takes out the poison of the disease, substituting a more harmless and less exciting affection; but the really dangerous instances are those from contact, that same propinquity, that confounded tendency every man yields to, to fall into a railroad of habit; that is the risk, that is the danger. What a bore it is to find that the absence of one person, with whom you're in no wise in love, will spoil your morning's canter, or your rowing party upon the river! How much put out are you, when she, to whom you always gave your arm in to dinner, does not make her appearance in the drawing-room; and your tea, too, some careless one, indifferent to your taste, puts a lump of sugar too little, or cream too much, while she— But no matter; habit has done for you what no direct influence of beauty could do, and, a slave to your own selfish indulgences, and the cultivation of that ease you prize so highly, you fall over head and ears in love.

Now, you are not, my good reader, by any means to suppose that this was my case. No, no; I was too much what the world terms the "old soldier" for that. To continue my illustration: like the fortress that has been often besieged, the sentry upon the walls keeps more vigilant watch; his ear detects the far-off clank of the dread artillery; he marks each parallel; he notes down every breaching battery; and, if he be captured, at least it is in fair fight.

Such were some of my reflections as I rode slowly home one evening from Gurtna-Morra. Many a time, latterly, had I contrasted my own lonely and deserted hearth with the smiling looks, the happy faces, and the merry voices I had left behind me; and many a time did I ask myself, "Am I never to partake of a happiness like this?" How many a man is seduced into matrimony from this very feeling! How many a man whose hours have passed fleetingly at the pleasant tea-table, or by the warm hearth of some old country-house, going forth into the cold and cheerless night, reaches his far-off home only to find it dark and gloomy, joyless and companionless? How often has the hard-visaged look of his old butler, as, with sleepy eyes and yawning face, he hands a bedroom candle, suggested thoughts of married happiness? Of the perils of propinquity I have already spoken; the risks of contrast are also great. Have you never, in strolling through some fragrant and rich conservatory, fixed your eye upon a fair and lovely flower, whose blossoming beauty seems to give all the luster and all the incense of the scene around? and how have you thought it would adorn and grace the precincts of your home, diffusing fragrance on every side. Alas! the experiment is not always successful. Much of the charm and many of the fascinations which delight you are the result of association of time and of place. The lovely voice, whose tones have spoken to your heart, may, like some instrument, be delightful in the harmony of the orchestra, but, after all, prove a very middling performer in a duet.

I say not this to deter men from matrimony, but to warn them from a miscalculation which may mar their happiness. Flirtation is a very fine thing, but it's only a state of transition, after all. The tadpole existence of the lover would be great fun, if one was never to become a frog under the hands of the parson. I say all this dispassionately and advisedly. Like the poet of my country, for many years of my life,

"My only books were woman's looks,"

and certainly I subscribed to a circulating library.

All this long digression may perhaps bring the reader to where it brought me—the very palpable conviction, that, though not in love with my cousin Baby, I could not tell when I might eventually become so.

CHAPTER CXIV.

A RECOGNITION.

THE most pleasing part about retrospect is the memory of our by-gone hopes. The past, however happy, however blissful, few would wish to live over again; but who is there that does not long for, does not pine after the day-dream which gilded the future—which looked ever forward to the time to come as to a realization of all that was dear to us; lightening our present cares, soothing our passing sorrows by that one thought.

Life is marked out in periods in which, like stages in a journey, we rest and repose ourselves, casting a look, now back upon the road we have been traveling, now throwing a keener glance toward the path left us. It is at such spots as these remembrance comes full upon us, and that we feel how little our intentions have

swayed our career or influenced our actions; the aspirations, the resolves of youth, are either looked upon as puerile follies, or a most distant day settled on for their realization. The principles we fondly looked to, like our guide-stars, are dimly visibly, not seen; the friends we cherished are changed and gone; the scenes themselves seem no longer the sunshine and the shade we loved; and, in fact, we are living in a new world, where our own altered condition gives the type to all around us; the only link that binds us to the past being that same memory, that, like a sad curfew, tolls the twilight of our fairest dreams and most cherished wishes.

That these glimpses of the by-gone season of our youth should be but fitful and passing—tinging, not coloring the landscape of our life—we should be engaged in all the active bustle and turmoil of the world, surrounded by objects of hope, love, and ambition, stemming the strong tide in whose fountain is fortune.

He, however, who lives apart, a dreamy and a passionless existence, will find that in the past, more than in the future, his thoughts have found their resting-place; memory usurps the place of hope, and he travels through life like one walking onward; his eyes still turning toward some loved forsaken spot, teeming with all the associations of his happiest hours, and preserving, even in distance, the outline that he loved.

Distance in time, as in space, smooths down all the inequalities of surface; and, as the cragged and rugged mountain, darkened by cliff and precipice, shows to the far-off traveler but some blue and misty mass, so the long-lost-sight-of hours lose all the cares and griefs that tinged them; and, to our mental eye, are but objects of uniform loveliness and beauty: and if we do not think of

> "The smiles—the tears
> Of boyhood's years,"

it is because, like April showers, they but checker the spring of our existence.

For myself, baffled in hope at a period when most men but begin to feel it, I thought myself much older than I really was; the disappointments of the world, like the storms of the ocean, impart a false sense of experience to the young heart, as he sails forth upon his voyage; and it is an easy error to mistake trials for time.

The goods of fortune by which I was surrounded took nothing from the bitterness of my retrospect: on the contrary, I could not help feeling that every luxury of my life was bought by my surrender of that career which had elated me in my own esteem, and which, setting a high and noble ambition before me, taught me to be a man.

To be happy, one must not only fulfill the duties and exactions of his station, but the station itself must answer to his views and aspirations in life. Now, mine did not sustain this condition: all that my life had of promise was connected with the memory of her who never could share my fortunes; of her for whom I had earned praise and honor; becoming ambitious as the road to her affection, only to learn after, that my hopes were but a dream, and my paradise a wilderness.

While thus the inglorious current of my life ran on, I was not indifferent to the mighty events the great continent of Europe was witnessing: the successes of the Peninsular campaign; the triumphant entry of the British into France; the downfall of Napoleon; the restoration of the Bourbons, followed each other with the rapidity of the most common-place occurrences; and in the few short years in which I had sprung from boyhood to man's estate, the whole condition of the world was altered. Kings deposed; great armies disbanded; rightful sovereigns restored to their dominions; banished and exiled men returned to their country, invested with rank and riches; and peace, in the fullest tide of its blessings, poured down upon the earth devastated and blood-stained.

Years passed on; and between the careless abandonment to the mere amusement of the hour, and the darker meditation upon the past, time slipped away. From my old friends and brother officers I heard but rarely. Power, who at first wrote frequently, grew gradually less and less communicative. Webber, who had gone to Paris at the peace, had written but one letter; while, from the rest, a few straggling lines was all I received. In truth be it told, my own negligence and inability to reply cost me this apparent neglect.

It was a fine evening in May, when, rigging up a spritsail, I jumped into my yawl, and dropped easily down the river. The light wind gently curled the crested water, the trees waved gently and shook their branches in the breeze, and my little bark, bending slightly beneath, rustled on her foamy track with that joyous bounding motion so inspiriting to one's heart. The clouds were flying swiftly past, tinging with their shadows the mountains beneath; the Munster shore, glowing with a rich sunlight, showed every sheep-cot and every

hedge-row clearly out, while the deep shadow of tall Seariff darkened the silent river where Holy Island, with its ruined churches and melancholy tower, were reflected in the still water.

It was a thoroughly Irish landscape: the changeful sky; the fast-flitting shadows; the brilliant sunlight; the plenteous fields, the broad and swelling stream; the dark mountain, from whose brown crest a wreath of thin blue smoke was rising,—were all there smiling yet sadly, like her own sons, across whose lowering brow some fitful flash of fancy ever playing, dallies like sunbeams on a darkening stream, nor marks the depth that lies below.

I sat musing over the strange harmony of nature with the temperament of man, every phase of his passionate existence seeming to have its type in things inanimate, when a loud cheer from the land aroused me, and the words "Charley! cousin Charley!" came wafted over the water to where I lay.

For some time I could but distinguish the faint outline of some figures on the shore, but, as I came nearer, I recognized my fair cousin Baby, who, with a younger brother of some eight or nine years old, was taking an evening walk.

"Do you know, Charley," said she, "the boys have gone over to the castle to look for you; we want you particularly this evening."

"Indeed, Baby! Well, I fear you must make my excuses."

"Then, once for all, I will not. I know this is one of your sulky moods, and I tell you frankly I'll not put up with them any more."

"No, no, Baby, not so: out of spirits if you will, but not out of temper."

"The distinction is much too fine for me, if there be any; but there now, do be a good fellow; come up with us—come up with *me!*"

As she said this she placed her arm within mine. I thought too—perhaps it was but a thought—she pressed me gently. I know she blushed and turned away her head to hide it.

"I don't pretend to be proof to your entreaty, cousin Baby," said I, with half-affected gallantry, putting her fingers to my lips.

"There, how can you be so foolish; look at William, yonder; I am sure he must have seen you." But William, God bless him! was bird's-nesting, or butterfly-hunting, or daisy-picking, or something of that kind.

Oh ye young brothers, who, sufficiently old to be deemed companions and *chaperons*, but yet young enough to be regarded as having neither eyes nor ears, what mischief have ye to answer for! what a long reckoning of tender speeches—of soft looks—of pressed hands, lies at your door! What an incentive to flirtation is the wily imp who turns ever and anon from his careless gambols to throw his laughter-loving eyes upon you, calling up the mantling blush to both your cheeks! He seems to chronicle the hours of your dalliance, making your secrets known unto each other. We have gone through our share of flirtation in this life: match-making mothers, prying aunts, choleric uncles, benevolent and open-hearted fathers, we understand to the life, and care no more for such mantraps than a Melton man, well mounted on his strong-boned thorough-bred, does for a four-barred ox-fence that lies before him. Like him, we take them flying: never relaxing the slapping stride of our loose gallop, we go straight ahead, never turning aside, except for a laugh at those who flounder in the swamps we sneer at. But we confess honestly, we fear the little brother, the small urchin who, with nankeen trowsers and three rows of buttons, performs the part of Cupid. He strikes real terror into our heart; he it is who, with a cunning wink, or sly smile, seems to confirm the soft nonsense we are weaving; by some slight gesture he seems to check off the long reckoning of our attentions, bringing us every moment nearer to the time when the score must be settled and the debt paid. He it is, who, by a memory delightfully oblivious of his task and his table-book, is tenacious to the life of what you said to Fanny; how you put your head under Lucy's bonnet; he can imitate to perfection the way you kneeled upon the grass; and the wretch has learnt to smack his lips like a *gourmand*, that he may convey another stage of your proceeding.

Oh, for infant schools for everything under the age of ten! Oh, for factories for the children of the rich! The age of prying curiosity is from four-and-a-half to nine, and Fouché himself might get a lesson in *police* from an urchin in his alphabet.

I contrived soon, however, to forget the presence of even the little brother. The night was falling; Baby appeared getting fatigued with her walk, for she leaned somewhat more heavily upon my arm, and I—I cannot tell wherefore—fell into that train of thinking aloud, which somehow, upon a summer's eve, with a fair girl be-

side one, is the very nearest thing to love-making.

"There, Charley—don't now—ah, don't—do let go my hand—they are coming down the avenue."

I had scarcely time to obey the injunction, when Mr. Blake called out:

"Well, indeed! Charley, this is really fortunate; we have got a friend to take tea with us, and wanted you to meet him."

Muttering an internal prayer for something not exactly the welfare of the aforesaid friend, whom I judged to be some Galway squire, I professed aloud the pleasure I felt in having come in so opportunely.

"He wishes particularly to make your acquaintance."

"So much the worse," thought I to myself; "it rarely happens that this feeling is mutual."

Evidently provoked at the little curiosity I exhibited, Blake added,

"He's on his way to Fermoy with a detachment."

"Indeed! what regiment, pray?"

"The 28th Foot."

"Ah! I don't know them."

By this time we reached the steps of the hall-door, and, just as we did so, the door opened suddenly, and a tall figure in uniform presented himself. With one spring he seized my hand and nearly wrung it off.

"Why, what," said I, "can this be? Is it really—"

"Sparks," said he—"your old friend Sparks, my boy; I've changed into the infantry, and here I am. Heard by chance you were in the neighborhood—met Mr. Blake, your friend here, at the inn, and accepted his invitation to meet you."

Poor Sparks, albeit the difference of his costume, was the same as ever. Having left the Fourteenth soon after I quitted them, he knew but little of their fortunes; and he himself had been on recruiting stations nearly the whole time since we had met before.

While we each continued to extol the good fortune of the other—he mine as being no longer in the service, and I his for still being so—we learned the various changes which had happened to each of us during our separation. Although his destination was ultimately Fermoy, Portumna was ordered to be his present quarter; and I felt delighted to have once more an old companion within reach, to chat over former days of campaigning and nights of merriment in the Peninsula.

Sparks soon became a constant visitor and guest at Gurt-na-Morra; his good temper, his easy habits, his simplicity of character, rapidly enabled him to fall into all their ways; and, although evidently not what Baby would call "the man for Galway," he endeavored with all his might to please every one, and certainly succeeded to a considerable extent.

Baby alone seemed to take pleasure in tormenting the poor sub. Long before she met with him, having heard much from me of his exploits abroad, she was continually bringing up some anecdote of his unhappy loves or misplaced passions; which he evidently smarted under the more, from the circumstance that he appeared rather inclined to like my fair cousin.

As she continued this for some time, I remarked that Sparks, who at first was all gayety and high spirits, grew gradually more depressed and dispirited. I became convinced that the poor fellow was in love; very little management on my part was necessary to obtain his confession; and, accordingly, the same evening the thought first struck me, as we were riding slowly home toward O'Malley Castle, I touched at first generally upon the merits of the Blakes, their hospitality, &c.; then diverged to the accomplishments and perfections of the girls; and, lastly, Baby herself, in all form, came up for sentence.

"Ah, yes!" said Sparks, with a deep sigh, "it is quite as you say; she is a lovely girl; and that liveliness in her character, that elasticity in her temperament, chastened down as it might be by the feeling of respect for the man she loved! I say, Charley, is it a very long attachment of yours?"

"A long attachment of mine! Why, my dear Sparks, you can't suppose that there is anything between us! I pledge you my word most faithfully."

"Oh no, don't tell me that; what good can there be in mystifying me?"

"I have no such intention, believe me. My cousin Baby, however I like and admire her, has no other place in my affection than a very charming girl, who has lightened a great many dreary and tiresome hours, and made my banishment from the world less irksome than I should have found it without her."

"And you are really not in love?"

"Not a bit of it!"

"Nor going to marry her either?"

"Not the least notion of it!—a fact. Baby and I are excellent friends, for the very reason that we were never lovers; we have had no *petits jeux* of fallings out and makings up; no hide-and-seek trials of affected indifference and real disappointments; no secrets, no griefs nor grudges;

neither quarrels nor keepsakes. In fact, we are capital cousins; quizzing every one for our own amusement; riding, walking, boating together; in fact, doing and thinking of everything save sighs and declarations; always happy to meet, and never broken-hearted when we parted. And I can only add, as a proof of my sincerity, that, if you feel as I suspect you do from your questions, I'll be your ambassador to the court of Gurt-na-Morra with sincere pleasure."

"Will you really?—Will you, indeed, Charley, do this for me?—Will you strengthen my wishes by your aid, and give me all your influence with the family?"

I could scarcely help smiling at poor Sparks's eagerness, or the unwarrantable value he put upon my alliance, in a case where his own unassisted efforts did not threaten much failure.

"I repeat it, Sparks, I'll make a proposal for you in all form, aided and abetted by everything recommendatory and laudatory I can think of; I'll talk of you as a Peninsular of no small note and promise; and observe rigid silence about your Welsh flirtation and your Spanish elopement."

"You'll not blab about the Dalrymples, I hope?"

"Trust me; I only hope you will be always equally discreet: but now—when shall it be?—Should you like to consider the matter more?"

"Oh no! nothing of the kind; let it be to-morrow; at once, if I am to fail; even that, anything's better than suspense."

"Well then, to-morrow be it," said I.

So I wished him a good-night, and a stout heart to hear his fortune withal.

CHAPTER CXV.

A MISTAKE.

I ORDERED my horses at an early hour; and long before Sparks—lover that he was—had opened his eyes to the light, was already on my way toward Gurt-na-Morra. Several miles slipped away before I well determined how I should open my negotiations; whether to papa Blake, in the first instance, or to madam, to whose peculiar province these secrets of the home department belonged; or why not at once to Baby? because, after all, with her it rested finally to accept or refuse. To address myself to the heads of the department seemed the more formal course; and, as I was acting entirely as an "Envoy Extraordinary," I deemed this the fitting mode of proceeding.

It was exactly eight o'clock as I drove up to the door. Mr. Blake was standing at the open window of the breakfast-room, sniffing the fresh air of the morning. The Blake mother was busily engaged with the economy of the tea-table; a very simple style of morning costume, and a nightcap with a flounce like a petticoat, marking her unaffected toilet. Above stairs, more than one head *en papillote* took a furtive peep between the curtains; and the butler of the family, in corduroys and a fur cap, was weeding turnips in the lawn before the door.

Mrs. Blake had barely time to take a hurried departure, when her husband came out upon the steps to bid me welcome. There is no physiognomist like your father of a family, or your mother with marriageable daughters. Lavater was nothing to them, in reading the secret springs of action—the hidden sources of all character. Had there been a good respectable bump allotted by Spurzheim to "honorable intentions," the matter had been all fair and easy,—the very first salute of the gentleman would have pronounced upon his views: but, alas! no such guide is forthcoming; and the science, as it now exists, is enveloped in doubt and difficulty. The gay, laughing temperament of some, the dark and serious composure of others; the cautious and reserved, the open and the candid, the witty, the sententious, the clever, the dull, the prudent, the reckless—in a word, every variety which the innumerable hues of character imprint upon the human face divine are their study. Their convictions are the slow and patient fruits of intense observation and great logical accuracy. Carefully noting down every lineament and feature,—their change, their action, and their development,—they track a lurking motive with the scent of a bloodhound, and run down a growing passion with an unrelenting speed. I have been in the witness box, exposed to the licensed badgering and privileged impertinence of a lawyer; winked, leered, frowned, and sneered at with all the long-practiced tact of a *nisi prius* torturer; I have stood before the cold, fish-like, but searching eye of a prefect of police, as he compared my passport with my person, and thought he could detect a discrepancy in both: but I never felt the same sense of total exposure as when glanced at by the half-cautious, half-prying look of a worthy father or mother, in a family where there

are daughters to marry, and "nobody coming to woo."

"You're early, Charley," said Mr. Blake, with an affected mixture of carelessness and warmth. "You have not had breakfast?"

"No, sir. I have come to claim a part of yours; and, if I mistake not, you seem a little later than usual."

"Not more than a few minutes. The girls will be down presently; they're early risers, Charley; good habits are just as easy as bad ones; and, the Lord be praised! my girls were never brought up with any other."

"I am well aware of it, sir; and, indeed, if I may be permitted to take advantage of the *à propos*, it was on the subject of one of your daughters that I wished to speak to you this morning, and which brought me over at this uncivilized hour, hoping to find you alone."

Mr. Blake's look for a moment was one of triumphant satisfaction; it was but a glance, however, and repressed the very instant after, as he said, with a well got-up indifference,

"Just step with me into the study, and we're sure not to be interrupted."

Now, although I have little time or space for such dallying, I cannot help dwelling for a moment upon the aspect of what Mr. Blake dignified with the name of his study. It was a small apartment with one window, the panes of which, independent of all aid from a curtain, tempered the daylight through the medium of cobwebs, dust, and the ill-trained branches of some wall-tree without.

Three oak chairs and a small table were the only articles of furniture, while around, on all sides, lay the *disjecta membra* of Mr. Blake's hunting, fishing, shooting, and coursing equipments—old top boots, driving whips, old spurs, a racing saddle, a blunderbuss, the helmet of the Galway Light Horse, a salmon net, a large map of the county with a marginal index to several mortgages marked with a cross, a stable lantern, the rudder of a boat, and several other articles representative of his daily associations; but not one book, save an odd volume of Watty Cox's Magazine, whose pages seemed as much the receptacle of brown hackles for trout-fishing as the resource of literary leisure.

"Here we'll be quite cozy, and to ourselves," said Mr. Blake, as, placing a chair for me, he sat down himself, with the air of a man resolved to assist, by advice and counsel, the dilemma of some dear friend.

After a few preliminary observations, which, like a breathing canter before a race, serves to get your courage up, and settle you well in your seat, I opened my negotiation by some very broad and sweeping truism about the misfortunes of a bachelor existence, the discomforts of his position, his want of home and happiness, the necessity for his one day thinking seriously about marriage; it being in a measure almost as inevitable a termination of the free-and-easy career of his single life as transportation for seven years is to that of a poacher. "You cannot go on, sir," said I, "trespassing forever upon your neighbors' preserves; you must be apprehended sooner or later; therefore, I think, the better way is to take out a license."

Never was a small sally of wit more thoroughly successful. Mr. Blake laughed till he cried, and, when he had done, wiped his eyes with a snuffy handkerchief, and cried till he laughed again. As, somehow, I could not conceal from myself a suspicion as to the sincerity of my friend's mirth, I merely consoled myself with the French adage, that "he laughs best who laughs last;" and went on:

"It will not be deemed surprising, sir, that a man should come to the discovery I have just mentioned much more rapidly by having enjoyed the pleasure of intimacy with your family; not only by the example of perfect domestic happiness presented to him, but by the prospect held out that a heritage of the fair gifts which adorn and grace a married life, may reasonably be looked for among the daughters of those themselves the realization of conjugal felicity."

Here was a canter, with a vengeance; and as I felt blown, I slackened my pace, coughed, and resumed:

"Miss Mary Blake, sir, is, then, the object of my present communication; she it is who has made an existence that seemed fair and pleasurable before, appear blank and unprofitable without her. I have, therefore, to come at once to the point, visited you this morning, formally to ask her hand in marriage: her fortune, I may observe at once, is perfectly immaterial—a matter of no consequence (so Mr. Blake thought also); a competence fully equal to every reasonable notion of expenditure—"

"There—there; don't—don't," said Mr. Blake, wiping his eyes, with a sob like a hiccup; "don't speak of money. I know what you would say; a handsome settlement—a well-secured jointure, and all that. Yes, yes, I feel it all."

"Why yes, sir, I believe I may add, that

everything in this respect will answer your expectations."

"Of course; to be sure. My poor dear Baby! How to do without her, that's the rub. You don't know, O'Malley, what that girl is to me—you can't know it; you'll feel it one day though—that you will."

"The devil I shall!" said I to myself. "The great point is, after all, to learn the young lady's disposition in the matter—"

"Ah, Charley! none of this with me, you sly dog! You think I don't know you. Why, I've been watching—that is, I have seen—no, I mean I've heard—they—they,—people will talk, you know."

"Very true, sir. But, as I was going to remark—"

Just at this moment the door opened, and Miss Baby herself, looking most annoyingly handsome, put in her head.

"Papa, we're waiting breakfast. Ah, Charley, how d'ye do?"

"Come in, Baby," said Mr. Blake; "you haven't given me my kiss this morning."

The lovely girl threw her arms around his neck, while her bright and flowing locks fell richly upon his shoulder. I turned rather sulkily away, the thing always provokes me. There is as much cold, selfish cruelty in such *coram publico* endearments, as in the luscious display of rich rounds and sirloins in a chop-house to the eyes of the starved and penniless wretch without, who, with dripping rags and watering lip, eats imaginary slices, while the pains of hunger are torturing him!

"There's Tim!" said Mr. Blake, suddenly. "Tim Cronin!—Tim!" shouted he to, as it seemed to me, an imaginary individual outside; while, in the eagerness of pursuit, he rushed out of the study, banging the door as he went, and leaving Baby and myself to our mutual edification.

I should have preferred it being otherwise; but, as the Fates willed it thus, I took Baby's hand, and led her to the window. Now, there is one feature of my countrymen which, having recognized strongly in myself, I would fain proclaim; and, writing as I do—however little people may suspect me—solely for the sake of a moral, would gladly warn the unsuspecting against. I mean, a very decided tendency to become the consoler, the confidant of young ladies; seeking out opportunities of assuaging their sorrow, reconciling their afflictions, breaking eventful passages to their ears; not from any inherent pleasure in the tragic phases of the intercourse, but for the semi-tenderness of manner, that harmless hand-squeezing, that innocent waist-pressing, without which consolation is but like salmon without lobster—a thing maimed, wanting, and imperfect.

Now, whether this with me was a natural gift, or merely a "way we have in the army," as the song says, I shall not pretend to say; but I venture to affirm that few men could excel me in the practice I speak of some five-and-twenty years ago. Fair reader, do pray, if I have the happiness of being known to you, deduct them from my age before you subtract from my merits.

"Well, Baby dear, I have just been speaking about you to papa. Yes, dear—don't look so incredulous—even of your own sweet self. Well, do you know, I almost prefer your hair worn that way; those same silky masses look better falling thus heavily—"

"There, now, Charley! ah, don't!"

"Well, Baby, as I was saying, before you stopped me, I have been asking your papa a very important question, and he has referred me to you for the answer. And now will you tell me, in all frankness and honesty, your mind on the matter?"

She grew deadly pale as I spoke these words; then suddenly flushed up again, but said not a word. I could perceive, however, from her heaving chest and restless manner, that no common agitation was stirring her bosom. It was cruelty to be silent, so I continued:

"One who loves you well, Baby dear, has asked his own heart the question, and learned that without you he has no chance of happiness; that your bright eyes are to him bluer than the deep sky above him; that your soft voice, your winning smile—and what a smile it is!—have taught him that he loves, nay, adores you! Then, dearest—what pretty fingers those are! Ah! what is this? Whence came that emerald? I never saw that ring before, Baby!"

"Oh, that," said she, blushing deeply—"that is a ring the foolish creature Sparks gave me a couple of days ago; but I don't like it—I don't intend to keep it."

So saying, she endeavored to draw it from her finger, but in vain.

"But why, Baby, why take it off? Is it to give him the pleasure of putting it on again? There, don't look angry; we must not fall out, surely."

"No, Charley, if you are not vexed with me—if you are not—"

"No, no, my dear Baby; nothing of the kind. Sparks was quite right in not trusting his entire fortune to my diplomacy; but, at least, he ought to have told me that

he had opened the negotiation. Now, the question simply is—Do you love him? or, rather, because that shortens matters, Will you accept him?"

"Love who?"

"Love whom? Why Sparks, to be sure!"

A flash of indignant surprise passed across her features, now pale as marble; her lips were slightly parted, her large full eyes were fixed upon me steadfastly, and her hand, which I had held in mine, she suddenly withdrew from my grasp.

"And so—and so it is of Mr. Sparks's cause you are so ardently the advocate?" said she, at length, after a pause of most awkward duration.

"Why, of course, my dear cousin. It was at his suit and solicitation I called on your father; it was he himself who entreated me to take this step; it was he—"

But before I could conclude, she burst into a torrent of tears, and rushed from the room.

Here was a situation! What the deuce was the matter? Did she, or did she not, care for him? Was her pride or her delicacy hurt at my being made the means of the communication to her father? What had Sparks done or said to put himself and me in such a devil of a predicament? Could she care for any one else?

"Well, Charley!" cried Mr. Blake, as he entered, rubbing his hands in a perfect paroxysm of good temper—"well, Charley, has love-making driven breakfast out of your head?"

"Why faith, sir, I greatly fear I have blundered my mission sadly. My cousin Mary does not appear so perfectly satisfied; her manner—"

"Don't tell me such nonsense. The girl's manner! Why, man, I thought you were too old a soldier to be taken in that way."

"Well then, sir, the best thing, under the circumstances, is, to send over Sparks himself. Your consent, I may tell him, is already obtained."

"Yes, my boy; and my daughter's is equally sure. But I don't see what we want with Sparks at all. Among old friends and relatives, as we are, there is, I think, no need of a stranger."

"A stranger! Very true, sir, he is a stranger; but when that stranger is about to become your son-in-law—"

"About to become what?" said Mr. Blake, rubbing his spectacles, and placing them leisurely on his nose to regard me—"to become what?"

"Your son-in-law. I hope I have been sufficiently explicit, sir, in making known Mr. Sparks's wishes to you."

"Mr. Sparks! Why, damn me, sir—that is—I beg pardon for the warmth—you—you never mentioned his name to-day till now. You led me to suppose that—in fact, you told me most clearly—"

Here, from the united effects of rage and a struggle for concealment, Mr. Blake was unable to proceed, and walked the room with a melodramatic stamp perfectly awful.

"Really, sir," said I at last, "while I deeply regret any misconception or mistake I have been the cause of, I must, in justice to myself, say, that I am perfectly unconscious of having misled you. I came here this morning with a proposition for the hand of your daughter in behalf of—"

"Yourself, sir. Yes, yourself. I'll be—no! I'll not swear; but—but just answer me, if you ever mentioned one word of Mr. Sparks—if you ever alluded to him till the last few minutes?"

I was perfectly astounded. It might be; alas! it was exactly as he stated. In my unlucky effort at extreme delicacy, I became only so very mysterious, that I left the matter open for them to suppose that it might be the Khan of Tartary was in love with Baby.

There was but one course now open. I most humbly apologized for my blunder; repeated, by every expression I could summon up, my sorrow for what had happened; and was beginning a renewal of negotiation "*in re* Sparks," when, overcome by his passion, Mr. Blake could hear no more, but snatched up his hat and left the room.

Had it not been for Baby's share in the transaction I should have laughed outright. As it was, I felt anything but mirthful; and the only clear and collected idea in my mind was, to hurry home with all speed, and fasten a quarrel on Sparks, the innocent cause of the whole mishap. Why this thought struck me let physiologists decide.

A few moments' reflection satisfied me that, under present circumstances, it would be particularly awkward to meet with any others of the family. Ardently desiring to secure my retreat, I succeeded, after some little time, in opening the window-sash; consoling myself for any injury I was about to inflict upon Mr. Blake's young plantation in my descent, by the thought of the service I was rendering him while admitting a little fresh air into his sanctum.

For my patriotism's sake I will not record my sensations as I took my way through the shrubbery toward the stable.

Men are ever so prone to revenge their faults and their follies upon such inoffensive agencies as time and place, wind or weather, that I was quite convinced that to any other but Galway ears my *exposé* would have been perfectly clear and intelligible; and that in no other country under heaven would a man be expected to marry a young lady from a blunder in his grammar.

"Baby may be quite right," thought I; "but one thing is assuredly true—if I'll never do for Galway, Galway will never do for me. No, hang it! I have endured enough for above two years. I have lived in banishment, away from society, supposing that, at least, if I isolated myself from the pleasures of the world, I was exempt from its annoyances." But no; in the seclusion of my remote abode troubles found their entrance as easily as elsewhere, so that I determined at once to leave home; where for, I knew not. If life had few charms, it had still fewer ties for me. If I was not bound by the bonds of kindred, I was untrammeled by their restraints.

The resolution once taken I burned to put it into effect; and so impatiently did I press forward, as to call forth more than one remonstrance on the part of Mike at the pace we were proceeding at. As I neared home, the shrill but stirring sounds of drum and fife met me; and, shortly after, a crowd of country people filled the road. Supposing it some mere recruiting party, I was endeavoring to press on, when the sounds of a full military band, in the exhilarating measure of a quick-step, convinced me of my error; and, as I drew to one side of the road, the advanced guard of an infantry regiment came forward. The men's faces were flushed, their uniform dusty and travel-stained, their knapsacks strapped firmly on, and their gait the steady tramp of the march. Saluting the subaltern, I asked if anything of consequence had occurred in the south, that the troops were so suddenly under orders. The officer stared at me for a moment or two without speaking; and, while a slight smile half curled his lip, answered:

"Apparently, sir, you seem very indifferent to military news, otherwise you can scarcely be ignorant of the cause of our route."

"On the contrary," said I, "I am, though a young man, an old soldier, and feel most anxious about everything connected with the service."

"Then it is very strange, sir, you should not have heard the news. Bonaparte has returned from Elba, has arrived at Paris, been received with the most overwhelming enthusiasm, and at this moment the preparations for war are resounding from Venice to the Vistula. All our forces, disposable, are on the march for embarkation. Lord Wellington has taken the command, and already, I may say, the campaign has begun."

The tone of enthusiasm in which the young officer spoke, the astounding intelligence itself, contrasting with the apathetic indolence of my own life, made me blush deeply, as I muttered some miserable apology for my ignorance.

"And you are now *en route?*"

"For Fermoy; from which we march to Cove for embarkation. The first battalion of our regiment sailed for the West Indies a week since, but a frigate has been sent after them to bring them back; and we hope all to meet in the Netherlands before the month is over. But I must beg your pardon for saying adieu. Good-by, sir."

"Good-by, sir; good-by," said I, as, still standing in the road, I was so overwhelmed with surprise that I could scarcely credit my senses.

A little farther on, I came up with the main body of the regiment, from whom I learned the corroboration of the news, and also the additional intelligence that Sparks had been ordered off with his detachment early in the morning, a veteran battalion being sent into garrison in the various towns of the south and west.

"Do you happen to know a Mr. O'Malley, sir?" said the Major, coming up with a note in his hand.

"I beg to present him to you," said I, bowing.

"Well, sir, Sparks gave me this note, which he wrote with a pencil as we crossed each other on the road this morning. He told me you were an old Fourteenth man; but your regiment is in India, I believe; at least Power said they were under orders when we met him."

"Fred Power! are you acquainted with him? Where is he now, pray?"

"Fred is on the staff with General Vandeleur, and is now in Belgium."

"Indeed!" said I, every moment increasing my surprise at some new piece of intelligence. "And the Eighty-eighth?" said I, recurring to my old friends in that regiment.

"Oh, the Eighty-eighth are at Gibraltar, or somewhere in the Mediterranean: at least, I know they are not near enough to open the present campaign with us. But if you'd like to hear any more news, you

must come over to Borrisokane; we stop there to-night."

"Then I'll certainly do so."

"Come at six, then, and dine with us."

"Agreed," said I; "and now, good-morning."

So saying, I once more drove on; my head full of all that I had been hearing, and my heart bursting with eagerness to join the gallant fellows now bound for the campaign.

CHAPTER CXVI.

BRUSSELS.

I MUST not protract a tale already far too long, by the recital of my acquaintance with the gallant Twenty-sixth. It is sufficient that I should say that, having given Mike orders to follow me to Cove, I joined the regiment on their march, and accompanied them to Cork. Every hour of each day brought us in news of moment and importance; and, amid all the stirring preparations for the war, the account of the splendid spectacle of the *Champ de Mai* burst upon astonished Europe, and the intelligence spread far and near that the enthusiasm of France never rose higher in favor of the Emperor; and, while the whole world prepared for the deadly combat, Napoleon surpassed even himself, by the magnificient conceptions for the coming conflict, and the stupendous nature of those plans by which he resolved on resisting combined and united Europe.

While our admiration and wonder of the mighty spirit that ruled the destinies of the Continent rose high, so did our own ardent and burning desire for the day when the open field of fight should place us once more in front of each other.

Every hard-fought engagement of the Spanish war was thought of and talked over; from Talavera to Toulouse, all was remembered; and while among the old Peninsulars the military ardor was so universally displayed, among the regiments who had not shared the glories of Spain and Portugal, an equal, perhaps a greater, impulse was created for the approaching campaign.

When we arrived at Cork, the scene of bustle and excitement exceeded anything I ever witnessed; troops were mustering in every quarter; regiments arriving and embarking; fresh bodies of men pouring in; drills, parades, and inspections going forward; arms, ammunition, and military stores distributing; and, amid all, a spirit of burning enthusiasm animated every rank for the approaching glory of the newly-arisen war.

While thus each was full of his own hopes and expectations, I alone felt depressed and downhearted. My military caste was lost to me forever; my regiment many, many a mile from the scene of the coming strife; though young, I felt like one already old and by-gone. The last-joined ensign seemed, in his glowing aspiration, a better soldier than I, as, sad and dispirited, I wandered through the busy crowds, surveying with curious eye each gallant horseman as he rode proudly past. What was wealth and fortune to me? What had they ever been, compared with all they cost me?—the abandonment of the career I loved—the path in life I sought and panted for. Day after day I lingered on, watching with beating heart each detachment as they left the shore; and when their parting cheer rang high above the breeze, turned sadly back to mourn over a life that had failed in its promise, and an existence now shorn of its enjoyment.

It was on the evening of the 3d of June that I was slowly wending my way back toward my hotel; latterly I had refused all invitations to dine at the mess; and, by a strange spirit of contradiction, while I avoided society, could yet not tear myself away from the spot where every remembrance of my past life was daily imbittered by the scenes around me. But so it was; the movement of the troops, their reviews, their arrivals and departures, possessed the most thrilling interest for me; while I could not endure to hear the mention of the high hopes and glorious vows each brave fellow muttered.

It was, as I remember, on the evening of the 3d of June, I entered my hotel, lower in spirits even than usual: the bugles of the gallant Seventy-first, as they dropped down with the tide, played a well-known march I had heard the night before Talavera; all my bold and hardy days came rushing madly to my mind; and my present life seemed no longer endurable. The last army list and the newspapers lay on my table, and I turned to read the latest promotions with that feeling of bitterness by which an unhappy man loves to tamper with his misery.

Almost the first paragraph I threw my eyes upon ran thus:

"OSTEND, MAY 24th.—The *Vixen* sloop-of-war, which arrived in our port this morning, brought, among several other

officers of inferior note, Lieutenant-General Sir George Dashwood, appointed as Assistant Adjutant-General on the staff of his Grace the Duke of Wellington. The gallant General was accompanied by his lovely and accomplished daughter, and his military secretary and aide-de camp, Major Hammersley of the 2d Life Guards. They partook of a hurried *déjeûné* with the Burgomaster, and left immediately after for Brussels."

Twice I read this over, while a burning, hot sensation settled upon my throat and temples. "So Hammersley still persists—he still hopes. And what then?—what can it be to me?—my prospects have long since faded and vanished! doubtless, ere this, I am as much forgotten as though we had never met,—would that we never had!" I threw up the window-sash; a light breeze was gently stirring, and, as it fanned my hot and bursting head, I felt cool and relieved. Some soldiers were talking beneath the window, and among them I recognized Mike's voice.

"And so you sail at daybreak, sergeant?"

"Yes, Mr. Free; we have our orders to be on board before the flood-tide. The *Thunderer* drops down the harbor to-night, and we are merely here to collect our stragglers."

"Faix, it's little I thought I'd ever envy a sodger any more; but, someway, I wish I was going with you."

"Nothing easier, Mike," said another, laughing.

"Oh, true for you, but that's not the way I'd like to do it. If my master, now, would just get over his low spirits, and spake a word to the Duke of York, devil a doubt but he'd give him his commission back again, and then one might go in comfort."

"Your master likes his feather pillow better than a mossy stone under his head, I'm thinking; and he ain't far wrong, either."

"Ye're out there, neighbor. It's himself cares as little for hardship as any one of you; and sure it's not becoming me to say it, but the best blood and the best bred was always the last to give in for either cold or hunger, ay, or even complain of it."

Mike's few words shot upon me a new and a sudden conviction—what was to prevent my journey once more? Obvious as such a thought now was, yet never until this moment did it present itself so palpably. So habituated does the mind become to a certain train of reasoning, framing its convictions according to one preconceived plan, and making every fact and every circumstance concur in strengthening what often may be but a prejudice,—that the absence of the old Fourteenth in India, the sale of my commission, the want of rank in the service, all seemed to present an insurmountable barrier to my re-entering the army. A few chance words now changed all this, and I saw that, as a volunteer, at least, the path of glory was still open, and the thought was no sooner conceived, than the resolve to execute it. While, therefore, I walked hurriedly up and down, devising, planning, plotting, and contriving, each instant I would stop to ask myself how it happened I had not determined upon this before.

As I summoned Mike before me, I could not repress a feeling of false shame, as I remembered how suddenly so natural a resolve must seem to have been adopted; and it was with somewhat of hesitation that I opened the conversation.

"And so, sir, you are going, after all?—long life to you! But I never doubted it. Sure, you wouldn't be your father's son, and not join divarsion when there was any going."

The poor fellow's eyes brightened up, his look gladdened, and, before he reached the foot of the stairs, I heard his loud cheer of delight, that once more we were off to the wars.

The packet sailed for Liverpool the next morning; by it we took our passage, and on the third morning I found myself in the waiting-room at the Horse Guards, expecting the moment of his Royal Highness's arrival; my determination being to serve as a volunteer in any regiment the Duke might suggest, until such time as a prospect presented itself of entering the service as a subaltern.

The room was crowded by officers of every rank and arm in the service: the old, gray-headed general of division; the tall, stout-looking captain of infantry; the thin and boyish figure of the newly-gazetted cornet, were all there; every accent, every look that marked each trait of national distinction in the empire, had its representative: the reserved and distant Scotchman; the gay, laughing, exuberant Patlander; the dark-eyed and dark-browed North Briton, collected in groups, talked eagerly together; while every instant, as some new arrival would enter, all eyes would turn to the spot, in eager expectation of the Duke's coming. At last the clash of arms, as the guard turned out, apprised us of his approach, and we had

scarcely time to stand up and stop the buzz of voices, when the door opened, and an aide-de-camp proclaimed in a full tone,

"His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief!"

Bowing courteously on every side, he advanced through the crowd, turning his rapid and piercing look here and there through the room, while with that tact, the essential gift of his family, he recognized each person by his name, directing from one to the other some passing observation.

"Ah, Sir George Cockburn, how d'ye do?—your son's appointment is made out. Major Conyers, that application shall be looked to. Forbes, you must explain, that I cannot possibly put men in the regiment of their choice—the service is the first thing. Lord L——, your memorial is before the Prince Regent—the cavalry command will, I believe, however, include your name."

While he spoke thus, he approached the place where I was standing, when, suddenly checking himself, he looked at me for a moment somewhat sternly.

"Why not in uniform, sir?"

"Your Royal Highness, I am not in the army."

"Not in the army—not in the army? And why, may I beg to know, have you—, but I'm speaking to *Captain* O'Malley, if I mistake not?"

"I held that rank, sir, once, but family necessities compelled me to sell out; I have now no commission in the service, but am come to beseech your Royal Highness's permission to serve as a volunteer."

"As a volunteer, eh—a volunteer? Come, that's right, I like that; but still, we want such fellows as you—the man of Ciudad Rodrigo. Yes, my Lord L——, this is one of the stormers; fought his way through the trench among the first; must not be neglected. Hold yourself in readiness, Captain —— hang it, I was forgetting —Mr. O'Malley, I mean—hold yourself in readiness for a staff appointment. Smithson, take a note of this." So saying, he moved on; and I found myself in the street, with a heart bounding with delight, and a step proud as an emperor's.

With such rapidity the events of my life now followed one upon the other, that I could take no note of time as it passed. On the fourth day after my conversation with the Duke I found myself in Brussels. As yet, I heard nothing of the appointment, nor was I gazetted to any regiment or any situation on the staff. It was strange enough, too, I met but few of my old associates, and not one of those with whom I had been most intimate in my Peninsular career; but it so chanced that very many of the regiments who most distinguished themselves in the Spanish campaigns, at the peace of 1814 were sent on foreign service. My old friend Power was, I learned, quartered at Courtrai; and, as I was perfectly at liberty to dispose of my movements at present, I resolved to visit him there.

It was a beautiful evening on the 12th of June. I had been inquiring concerning post-horses for my journey, and was returning slowly through the park. The hour was late—near midnight—but a pale moonlight, a calm, unruffled air, and stronger inducements still, the song of the nightingales that abound in this place, prevailed on many of the loungers to prolong their stay; and so, from many a shady walk and tangled arbor, the clank of a sabre would strike upon the ear, or the low, soft voice of woman would mingle her dulcet sound with the deep tones of her companion. I wandered on, thoughtful and alone; my mind preoccupied so completely with the mighty events passing before me, I totally forgot my own humble career, and the circumstances of my fortune. As I turned into an alley which leads from the Great Walk toward the Palace of the Prince of Orange, I found my path obstructed by three persons who were walking slowly along in front of me. I was, as I have mentioned, deeply absorbed in thought, so that I found myself close behind them before I was aware of their presence. Two of the party were in uniform, and by their plumes, upon which a passing ray of moonlight flickered, I could detect they were general officers; the third was a lady. Unable to pass them, and unwilling to turn back, I was unavoidably compelled to follow, and, however unwilling, to overhear somewhat of their conversation.

"You mistake, George, you mistake. Depend upon it, this will be no lengthened campaign; victory will soon decide for one side or the other. If Napoleon beats the Prussians one day, and beat us the next, the German states will rally to his standard, and the old confederation or the Rhine will spring up once more, in all the plenitude of its power. The *Champ de Mai* has shown the enthusiasm of France for their emperor. Louis XVIII. fled from his capital, with few to follow, and none to say 'God bless him!' The warlike spirit of the nation is roused again; the interval of peace, too short to teach habits of patient and enduring industry, is yet

sufficient to whet the appetite for carnage; and nothing was wanting, save the presence of Napoleon alone, to restore all the brilliant delusions and intoxicating splendors of the empire."

"I confess," said the other, "I take a very different view from yours in this matter: to me, it seems that France is as tired of battles as of the Bourbons—"

I heard no more; for, though the speaker continued, a misty confusion passed across my mind. The tones of his voice, well remembered as they were by me, left me unable to think; and, as I stood motionless on the spot, I muttered half aloud, "Sir George Dashwood." It was he, indeed; and she who leaned upon his arm could be no other than Lucy herself. I know not how it was; for many a long month I had schooled my heart, and taught myself to believe that time had dulled the deep impression she had made upon me, and that, were we to meet again, it would be with more sorrow on my part for my broken dream of happiness than of attachment and affection for her who inspired it; but now, scarcely was I near her—I had not gazed upon her looks, I had not even heard her voice—and yet, in all their ancient force, came back the early passages of my love; and, as her footfall sounded gently upon the ground, my heart beat scarce less audibly. Alas! I could no longer disguise from myself the avowal that she it was, and she only, who implanted in my heart the thirst for distinction; and the moment was ever present to my mind in which, as she threw her arms around her father's neck, she muttered, "Oh, why not a soldier?"

As I thus reflected, an officer in full dress passed me hurriedly, and taking off his hat as he came up with the party before me, bowed obsequiously.

"My Lord ——, I believe, and Sir George Dashwood?" They replied by a bow. "Sir Thomas Picton wishes to speak with you both for a moment; he is standing beside the 'Basin.' If you will permit—" said he, looking toward Lucy.

"Thank you, sir," said Sir George; "if you will have the goodness to accompany us, my daughter will wait our coming here. Sit down, Lucy, we shall not be long away."

The next moment she was alone. The last echoes of their retiring footsteps had died away in the grassy walk, and in the calm and death-like stillness I could hear every rustle of her silk dress. The moonlight fell in fitful, straggling gleams between the leafy branches, and showed me her countenance, pale as marble. Her eyes were upturned slightly; her brown hair, divided upon her fair forehead, sparkled with a wreath of brilliants, which heightened the lustrous effect of her calm beauty; and now I could perceive her dress bespoke that she had been at some of the splendid entertainments which followed day after day in the busy capital.

Thus I stood within a few paces of *her*, to be near to whom, a few hours before, I would willingly have given all I possessed in the world; and yet now a barrier, far more insurmountable than time and space, intervened between us; still, it seemed as though fortune had presented this incident as a last farewell between us. Why should I not take advantage of it? Why should I not seize the only opportunity that might ever occur of rescuing myself from the apparent load of ingratitude which weighed on my memory? I felt in the cold despair of my heart that I could have no hold upon her affection; but a pride, scarce less strong than the attachment that gave rise to it, urged me to speak. By one violent effort I summoned up my courage; and, while I resolved to limit the few words I should say merely to my vindication, I prepared to advance. Just at this instant, however, a shadow crossed the path; a rustling sound was heard among the branches, and the tall figure of a man in a dragoon cloak stood before me. Lucy turned suddenly at the sound; but scarcely had her eyes been bent in the direction, when, throwing off his cloak, he sprang forward, and dropped at her feet. All my feeling of shame at the part I was performing was now succeeded by a sense of savage and revengeful hatred. It was enough that I should be brought to look upon her whom I had lost forever without the added bitterness of witnessing her preference for a rival. The whirlwind passion of my brain stunned and stupefied me. Unconsciously I drew my sword from my scabbard, and it was only as the pale light fell upon the keen blade that the thought flashed across me, "What could I mean to do?"

"No, Hammersley"—it was he indeed—said she, "it is unkind, it is unfair, nay, it is unmanly to press me thus; I would not pain you, were it not that, in sparing you now, I should entail deeper injury upon you hereafter. Ask me to be your sister—your friend; ask me to feel proudly in your triumphs—to glory in your success; all this I do feel; but, oh! I beseech you as you value your happiness—as you prize mine—ask me no more than this."

There was a pause of some seconds; and, at length, the low tones of a man's voice, broken and uncertain in their utterance, said,

"I know it—I feel it—my heart never bade me hope—and now—'tis over."

He stood up as he spoke, and while he threw the light folds of his mantle round him, a gleam of light fell upon his features. They were pale as death; two dark circles surrounded his sunken eyes, and his bloodless lip looked still more ghastly, from the dark moustache that drooped above it.

"Farewell!" said he, slowly, as he crossed his arms sadly upon his breast; "I will not pain you more."

"Oh! go not thus from me," said she, as her voice became tremulous with emotion; "do not add to the sorrow that weighs upon my heart. I cannot, indeed I cannot, be other than I am; and I do but hate myself to think that I cannot give my love where I have given all my esteem. If time—" But before she could continue further, the noise of approaching footsteps was heard, and the voice of Sir George, as he came near. Hammersley disappeared at once, and Lucy, with rapid steps, advanced to meet her father, while I remained riveted upon the spot. What a torrent of emotions then rushed upon my heart! What hopes, long dead or dying, sprang up to life again! What visions of long-abandoned happiness flitted before me! Could it be, then? dare I trust myself to think it, that Lucy cared for me? The thought was maddening! With a bounding sense of ecstasy, I dashed across the park, resolving, at all hazards, to risk everything upon the chance, and wait the next morning upon Sir George Dashwood. As I thought thus, I reached my hotel, where I found Mike in waiting with a letter. As I walked toward the lamp in the *porte cochère*, my eye fell upon the address. It was General Dashwood's hand; I tore it open, and read as follows:

"Dear Sir,—Circumstances into which you will excuse me entering, having placed an insurmountable barrier to our former terms of intimacy, you will, I trust, excuse me declining the honor of any nearer acquaintance, and also forgive the liberty I take in informing you of it, which step, however unpleasant to my feelings, will save us both the great pain of meeting.

"I have only this moment heard of your arrival in Brussels, and take thus the earliest opportunity of communicating with you.

"With every assurance of my respect for you personally, and an earnest desire to serve you in your military career,

"I beg to remain,

"Very faithfully yours,

"George Dashwood."

"Another note, sir," said Mike, as he thrust into my unconscious hands a letter he had just received from an orderly.

Stunned, half stupefied, I broke the seal. The contents were but three lines:

"Sir,—I have the honor to inform you, that Sir Thomas Picton has appointed you an extra aide-de-camp on his personal staff. You will, therefore, present yourself tomorrow morning at the Adjutant-General's office, to receive your appointment and instructions.

"I have the honor to be, etc.,

"G. Fitzroy."

Crushing the two letters in my fevered hand, I retired to my room, and threw myself, dressed as I was, upon my bed. Sleep, that seems to visit us in the saddest as in the happiest times of our existence, came over me, and I did not wake until the bugles of the Ninety-fifth were sounding the *réveil* through the park, and the bright beams of the morning sun were peering through the window.

CHAPTER CXVII.

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

"Mr. O'Malley," said a voice, as my door opened, and an officer in undress entered. "Mr. O'Malley, I believe you received your appointment last night on General Picton's staff?"

I bowed in reply, as he resumed:

"Sir Thomas desires you will proceed to Courtrai with these dispatches in all haste. I don't know if you are well mounted, but I recommend you, in any case, not to spare your cattle."

So saying, he wished me a good-morning, and left me, in a state of no small doubt and difficulty, to my own reflections. What the deuce was I to do? I had no horse; I knew not where to find one. What uniform should I wear? For, although appointed on the staff, I was not gazetted to any regiment that I knew of, and hitherto had been wearing an undress frock and a foraging cap; for I could not bring myself to appear as a civilian among so many military acquaintances. No time

was, however, to be lost; so I proceeded to put on my old Fourteenth uniform, wondering whether my costume might not cost me a reprimand in the very outset of my career. Meanwhile I dispatched Mike to see after a horse, caring little for the time, the merits, or the price of the animal, provided he served my present purpose.

In less than twenty minutes my worthy follower appeared beneath my window, surrounded by a considerable mob, who seemed to take no small interest in the proceedings.

"What the deuce is the matter?" cried I, as I opened the sash, and looked out.

"Mighty little's the matter, your honor; it's the savages here that's admiring my horsemanship," said Mike, as he belabored a tall, scraggy-looking mule with a stick which bore an uncommon resemblance to a broom-handle.

"What do you mean to do with that beast?" said I. "You surely don't expect me to ride a mule to Courtrai?"

"Faith, and if you don't, you are likely to walk the journey; for there isn't a horse to be had for love or money in the town: but I am told that Mr. Marsden is coming up to-morrow with plenty, so that you may as well take the journey out of the soft horns as spoil a better; and if he only makes as good use of his forelegs as he does of the hind ones, he'll think little of the road."

A vicious lash out behind served in a moment to corroborate Mike's assertion, and to scatter the crowd on every side.

However indisposed to exhibit myself with such a turn-out, my time did not admit of any delay; and so, arming myself with my dispatches, and having procured the necessary information as to the road, I set out from the Belle Vue, amid an ill-suppressed titter of merriment from the mob, which nothing but fear of Mike and his broomstick prevented becoming a regular shout of laughter.

It was near nightfall, as, tired and weary of the road, I entered the little village of Halle. All was silent and noiseless in the deserted streets; not a lamp threw its glare upon the pavement, nor even a solitary candle flickered through the casement. Unlike a town garrisoned by troops, neither sentry nor outpost was to be met with; nothing gave evidence that the place was held by a large body of men; and I could not help feeling struck, as the footsteps of my mule were echoed along the causeway, with the silence almost of desolation around me. By the creaking of a sign, as it swung mournfully to and fro, I was directed to the door of the village inn, where, dismounting, I knocked for some moments, but without success. At length, when I had made an uproar sufficient to alarm the entire village, the casement above the door slowly opened, and a head enveloped in a huge cotton nightcap—so, at least, it appeared to me from the size—protruded itself. After muttering a curse in about the most barbarous French I ever heard, he asked me what I wanted there; to which I replied most nationally, by asking, in return, where the British dragoons were quartered?

"They have left for Nivelle, this morning, to join some regiments of your own country."

"Ah! ah!" thought I, "he mistakes me for a Brunswicker;" to which, by the uncertain light, my uniform gave me some resemblance. As it was now impossible for me to proceed further, I begged to ask where I could procure accommodation for the night.

"At the Burgomaster's. Turn to your left at the end of this street, and you will soon find it. They have got some English officers there, who, I believe in my soul, never sleep."

This was, at least, pleasant intelligence, and promised a better termination to my journey than I had begun to hope for; so, wishing my friend a good-night, to which he willingly responded, I resumed my way down the street. As he closed the window, once more leaving me to my own reflections, I began to wonder within myself to what arm of the service belonged these officers to whose convivial gifts he bore testimony. As I turned the corner of the street, I soon discovered the correctness of his information. A broad glare of light stretched across the entire pavement from a large house with a clumsy stone portico before it. On coming nearer, the sound of voices, the roar of laughter, the shouts of merriment that issued forth, plainly bespoke that a jovial party were seated within. The half-shutter which closed the lower part of the windows prevented my obtaining a view of the proceedings; but, having cautiously approached the casement, I managed to creep on the window-sill, and look into the room.

There the scene was certainly a curious one. Around a large table sat a party of some twenty persons, the singularity of whose appearance may be conjectured, when I mention that all those who appeared to be British officers were dressed in the robes of the *échevins* (or aldermen) of the village; while some others, whose looks

bespoke them as sturdy Flemings, sported the cocked hats and cavalry helmets of their associates. He who appeared the ruler of the feast sat with his back toward me, and wore, in addition to the dress of burgomaster, a herald's tabard, which gave him something the air of a grotesque screen at its potations. A huge fire blazed upon the ample hearth, before which were spread several staff uniforms, whose drabbled and soaked appearance denoted the reason of the party's change of habiliments. Every imaginable species of drinking-vessel figured upon the board, from the rich flagon of chased silver to the humble *cruche* we see in a Teniers picture. As well as I could hear, the language of the company seemed to be French, or, at least, such an imitation of that language which served as a species of neutral territory for both parties to meet in.

He of the tabard spoke louder than the others, and although, from the execrable endeavors he made to express himself in French, his natural voice was much altered, there was yet something in his accents which seemed perfectly familiar to me.

"*Mosheer l'Abbey,*" said he, placing his arm familiarly on the shoulder of a portly personage, whose shaven crown strangely contrasted with a pair of corked moustachios—"*Mosheer l'Abbey, nous sommes frères, et moi, savez-vous, suis évêque,*—'pon my life it's true; I might have been Bishop of Saragossa, if I only consented to leave the Twenty-third. *Jé suis bong Catholique.* Lord bless you, if you saw how I loved the nunneries in Spain! *J'ai très* jolly *souvenirs* of those nunneries; a goodly company of little silver saints; and this waistcoat you see—*mong gilet*—was a satin petticoat of our Lady of Loretto."

Need I say, that before this speech was concluded, I had recognized in the speaker nobody but that inveterate old villain, Monsoon himself.

"*Permettez, votre Excellence,*" said a hale, jolly-looking personage on his left, as he filled the Major's goblet with obsequious politeness.

"*Bong engfong,*" replied Monsoon, tapping him familiarly on the head. "Burgomaster, you are a trump; and when I get my promotion, I'll make you prefect in a wine district. Pass the lush, and don't look sleepy! 'Drowsiness,' says Solomon, 'clothes a man in rags;' and no man knew the world better than Solomon. Don't you be laughing, you raw boys. Never mind them, *Abbey; ils sont petits garçongs*—fags from Eton and Harrow; better judges of mutton broth than sherry negus."

"I say, Major, you are forgetting this song you promised us."

"Yes, yes," said several voices together; "the song, Major! the song!"

"Time enough for that; we're doing very well as it is. Upon my life, though, they hold a deal of wine. I thought we'd have had them fit to bargain with before ten; and see, it's near midnight; and I must have my forage accounts ready for the Commissary-General by to-morrow morning."

This speech having informed me the reason of the Major's presence there, I resolved to wait no longer a mere spectator of their proceedings; so, dismounting from my position, I commenced a vigorous attack upon the door.

It was some time before I was heard; but at length the door was opened, and I was accosted by an Englishman, who, in a strange compound of French and English, asked "what the devil I meant by all that uproar?" Determining to startle my old friend the Major, I replied, that "I was an aide-de-camp to General Picton, and had come down on very unpleasant business." By this time the noise of the party within had completely subsided, and, from a few whispered sentences, and their thickened breathing, I perceived that they were listening.

"May I ask, sir," continued I, "if Major Monsoon is here?"

"Yes," stammered out the Ensign, for such he was.

"Sorry for it, for his sake," said I; "but my orders are peremptory."

A deep groan from within, and a muttered request to pass down the sherry, nearly overcame my gravity; but I resumed:

"If you will permit me, I will make the affair as short as possible. The Major, I presume, is here?"

So saying, I pushed forward into the room, where now a slight scuffling noise and murmur of voices had succeeded silence. Brief as was the interval of our colloquy, the scene within had, notwithstanding, undergone considerable change. The English officers, hastily throwing off their aldermanic robes, were busily arraying themselves in their uniforms, while Monsoon himself, with a huge basin of water before him, was endeavoring to wash the cork from his countenance in the corner of his tabard.

"Very hard upon me, all this; upon my life, so it is. Picton is always at me, just as if we had not been school-fellows. The

service is getting worse every day. *Regardez-moi, Curey, mong* face *est propre?* Eh? There, thank you. Good fellow the Curey is, but takes a deal of fluid. Oh, Burgomaster! I fear it is all up with me! No more fun, no more jollification, no more plunder—and how I did do it! Nothing like watching one's little chances! 'The poor is hated even by his neighbor.' *Oui, Curey,* it is Solomon says that, and they must have had a heavy poor-rate in his day to make him say so. Another glass of sherry!"

By this time I approached the back of his chair, and, slapping him heartily on the shoulder, called out,

"Major! old boy, how goes it?"

"Eh?—what?—how!—who is this? It can't be—egad, sure it is, though. Charley! Charley O'Malley, you scapegrace, where have you been? When did you join?"

"A week ago, Major. I could resist it no longer. I did my best to be a country gentleman, and behave respectably, but the old temptation was too strong for me. Fred Power and yourself, Major, had ruined my education; and here I am once more amongst you."

"And so Picton, and the arrest, and all that, was nothing but a joke?" said the old fellow, rolling his wicked eyes with a most cunning expression.

"Nothing more, Major; set your heart at rest."

"What a scamp you are," said he, with another grin. "*Il est mon fils—il est mon fils, Curey,*" presenting me as he spoke, while the Burgomaster, in whose eyes the Major seemed no inconsiderable personage, saluted me with profound respect.

Turning at once toward this functionary, I explained that I was the bearer of important dispatches, and that my horse—I was ashamed to say my mule—having fallen lame, I was unable to proceed.

"Can you procure me a remount, Monsieur?" said I, "for I must hasten on to Courtrai."

"In half an hour you shall be provided, as well as with a mounted guide for the road. *Le fils de son Excellence,*" said he, with emphasis, bowing to the Major as he spoke; who, in his turn, repaid the courtesy with a still lower obeisance.

"Sit down, Charley; here is a clean glass. I am delighted to see you, my boy! They tell me you have got a capital estate, and plenty of ready. Lord! we so wanted you, as there's scarcely a fellow with sixpence among us. Give me the lad that can do a bit of paper at three months, and always be ready for a renewal! You haven't got a twenty-pound note?" This was said *sotto voce.* "Never mind, ten will do; you will give me the remainder at Brussels. Strange, is it not, I have not seen a bit of clean bank paper like this for above a twelvemonth!" This was said as he thrust his hand into his pocket, with one of those peculiar leers upon his countenance which, unfortunately, betrayed more satisfaction at his success than gratitude for the service. "You are looking fat—too fat, I think," said he, scrutinizing me from head to foot; "but the life we are leading just now will soon take that off. The slave-trade is luxurious indolence compared to it. Post haste to Nivelle one day; down to Ghent the next; forty miles over a paved road in a hand-gallop, and an aide-de-camp with a watch in his hand at the end of it, to report if you are ten minutes too late. And there is Wellington has his eye everywhere; there is not a truss of hay served to the cavalry, nor a pair of shoes half-soled in the regiment, that he don't know of it. I've got it over the knuckles already."

"How so, Major?—how was that?"

"Why, he ordered me to picket two squadrons of the Seventh, and a supper was waiting. I didn't like to leave my quarters, so I took up my telescope and pitched upon a sweet little spot of ground on a hill; rather difficult to get up, to be sure, but a beautiful view when you're on it. 'There is your ground, Captain,' said I, as I sent one of my people to mark the spot. He did not like it much; however, he was obliged to go. And, would you believe it?—so much for bad luck!—there turned out to be no water within two miles of it—not a drop, Charley; and so, about eleven at night, the two squadrons moved down into Grammont to wet their lips, and, what is worse, to report me to the commanding officer. And, only think! they put me under arrest because Providence did not make a river run up a mountain!"

Just as the Major finished speaking, the distant clatter of horses' feet and the clank of cavalry was heard approaching. We all rushed eagerly to the door; and scarcely had we done so, when a squadron of dragoons came riding up the street, at a fast trot.

"I say, good people," cried the officer in French, "where does the Burgomaster live here?"

"Fred Power, 'pon my life!" shouted the Major.

"Eh, Monsoon! that you? Give me a

tumbler of wine, old boy; you are sure to have some, and I am desperately blown."

"Get down, Fred, get down; we have an old friend here."

"Who the deuce d'ye mean?" said he, as, throwing himself from the saddle, he strode into the room. "Charley O'Malley! by all that's glorious!"

"Fred, my gallant fellow!" said I.

"It was but this morning, Charley, that I so wished for you here. The French are advancing, my lad: they have crossed the frontier; Ziethen's corps have been attacked, and driven in; Blucher is falling back upon Ligny; and the campaign is opened. But I must press forward: the regiment is close behind me, and we are ordered to push for Brussels in all haste."

"Then these dispatches," said I, showing my packet, "'tis unnecessary to proceed with?"

"Quite so. Get into the saddle, and come back with us."

The Burgomaster had kept his word with me; so, mounted upon a strong hackney, I set out with Power on the road to Brussels. I have had occasion more than once to ask pardon of my reader for the prolixity of my narrative, so I shall not trespass on him here by the detail of our conversation as we jogged along. Of me and my adventures he already knows enough—perhaps too much. My friend Power's career, abounding as it did in striking incidents, and all the light and shadow of a soldier's life, yet not bearing upon any of the characters I have presented to your acquaintance, except in one instance, of that only shall I speak.

"And the Senhora, Fred, how goes your fortune in that quarter?"

"Gloriously, Charley! I am every day expecting the promotion in my regiment which is to make her mine."

"You have heard from her lately, then?"

"Heard from her! Why, man, she is in Brussels."

"In Brussels?"

"To be sure. Don Emanuel is in high favor with the Duke, and is now Commissary-General with the army; and the Senhora is the *belle* of the Rue Royale, or, at least, it's a divided sovereignty between her and Lucy Dashwood. And now, Charley, let me ask, what of her? There—there, don't blush, man; there is quite enough moonlight to show how tender you are in that quarter."

"Once for all, Fred, pray spare me on that subject. You have been far too fortunate in your *affaire de cœur*, and I too much the reverse, to permit much sympathy between us."

"Do you not visit, then? or is it a cut between you?"

"I have never met her since the night of the masquerade of the Villa—at least, to speak to—"

"Well, I must confess, you seem to manage your own affairs much worse than your friends'; not but that in so doing you are exhibiting a very Irish feature of your character. In any case, you will come to the ball? Inez will be delighted to see you; and I have got over all my jealousy."

"What ball? I never heard of it."

"Never heard of it! Why, the Duchess of Richmond's, of course. Pooh, pooh! man; not invited?—of course you are invited; the staff are never left out on such occasions. You will find your card at your hotel on your return."

"In any case, Fred—"

"I shall insist upon your going. I have no *arrière pensée* about a reconciliation with the Dashwoods; no subtle scheme, on my honor; but simply I feel that you will never give yourself fair chances in the world, by indulging your habit of shrinking from every embarrassment. Don't be offended, boy; I know you have pluck enough to storm a battery; I have seen you under fire before now. What avails your courage in the field if you have not presence of mind in the drawing-room? Besides, everything else out of the question, it is a breach of etiquette toward your chief to decline such an invitation."

"You think so?"

"Think so?—no; I am sure of it."

"Then, as to uniform, Fred?"

"Oh, as to that, easily managed. And, now I think of it, they have sent me an unattached uniform, which you can have; but remember, my boy, if I put you in my coat, I don't want you to stand in my shoes. Don't forget, also, that I am your debtor in horse-flesh, and fortunately able to repay you. I have got such a charger; your own favorite color, dark chestnut, and, except one white leg, not a spot about him; can carry sixteen stone over a five-foot fence, and as steady as a rock under fire."

"But, Fred, how are you—"

"Oh, never mind me; I have six in my stable, and intend to share with you. The fact is, I have been transferred from one staff to another for the last six months, and four of my number are presents. Is Mike with you? Ah! glad to hear it: you will never get on without that fellow. Besides, it is a capital thing to have such a

connecting link with one's nationality. No fear of your ever forgetting Ireland with Mr. Free in your company. You are not aware that we have been correspondents?—a fact, I assure you. Mike wrote me two letters; and such letters they were! The last was a Jeremiad over your decline and fall, with a very ominous picture of a certain Miss Baby Blake."

"Confound the rascal!"

"By Jove, though, Charley, you were coming it rather strong with Baby. Inez saw the letter, and as well as she could decipher Mike's hieroglyphics, saw there was something in it; but the name Baby puzzled her immensely, and she set the whole thing down to your great love of children. I don't think that Lucy quite agreed with her."

"Did she tell it to Miss Dashwood?" I inquired with fear and trembling.

"Oh, that she did; in fact, Inez never ceases talking of you to Lucy. But come, lad, don't look so grave; let's have another brush with the enemy; capture a battery of their guns; carry off a French marshal or two; get the Bath for your services, and be thanked in general orders, and I will wager all my *châteaux en Espagne* that everything goes well."

Thus chatting away, sometimes over the past, of our former friends and gay companions, of our days of storm and sunshine; sometimes indulging in prospects for the future, we trotted along, and, as the day was breaking mounted the ridge of low hills, from whence, at the distance of a couple of leagues, the city of Brussels came into view.

CHAPTER CXVIII.

THE DUCHESS OF RICHMOND'S BALL.

WHETHER we regard the illustrious and distinguished personages who thronged around, or we think of the portentous moment in which it was given, the Duchess of Richmond's ball, on the night of the 15th of June, 1815, was not only one of the most memorable, but, in its interest, the most exciting entertainment that the memory of any one now living can compass.

There is always something of no common interest in seeing the bronzed and war-worn soldier mixing in the crowd of light-hearted and brilliant beauty. To watch the eye whose proud glance has flashed o'er the mail-clad squadrons, now bending meekly beneath the look of some timid girl; to hear the voice that, high above the battle or the breeze, has shouted the hoarse word "Charge!" now subdued into the low, soft murmur of flattery or compliment; this, at any time, is a picture full of its own charm; but when we see these heroes of a hundred fights; when we look upon these hardy veterans, upon whose worn brow the whitened locks of time are telling, indulging themselves in the careless gayety of a moment, snatched, as it were, from the arduous career of their existence, while the tramp of the advancing enemy shakes the very soil they stand on, and where it may be doubted whether each aide-de-camp who enters comes a new votary of pleasure or the bearer of tidings that the troops of the foe are advancing, and already the work of death has begun;—this is, indeed, a scene to make the heart throb, and the pulse beat high; this is a moment, second in its proud excitement only to the very crash and din of battle itself; and into this entrancing whirlwind of passion and of pleasure, of brilliant beauty and ennobled greatness of all that is lovely in woman, and all that is chivalrous and heroic in man, I brought a heart which, young in years, was yet tempered by disappointment; still, such was the fascination, such the brilliancy of the spectacle, that scarcely had I entered, than I felt a change come over me—the old spirit of my boyish ardor—that high-wrought enthusiasm to do something—to be something which men may speak of—shot suddenly through me, and I felt my cheek tingle, and my temples throb, as name after name of starred and titled officers were announced, to think that to me, also, the path of glorious enterprise was opening.

"Come along, come along," said Power, catching me by the arm, "you've not been presented to the Duchess; I know her, I'll do it for you—or perhaps it is better Sir Thomas Picton should; in any case, '*filez*' after me, for the dark-eyed Senhora is surely expecting us. There, do you see that dark, intelligent-looking fellow leaning over the end of the sofa? that is Alava; and there, you know who that is, that *beau idéal* of a hussar? Look how jauntingly he carries himself; see the careless but graceful sling with which he edges through the crowd; and look!—mark his bow!—did you see that, Charley?—did you catch the quick glance he shot yonder, and the soft smile that showed his white teeth? Depend upon it, boy, some fair heart is not the better nor the easier for that look."

"Who is it?" said I.

"Lord Uxbridge, to be sure; the handsomest fellow in the service: and there

goes Vandeleur, talking with Vivian; the other, to the left, is Ponsonby."

"But stay, Fred, tell me who that is?" For a moment or two, I had some difficulty in directing his attention to the quarter I desired. The individual I pointed out was somewhat above the middle size; his uniform of blue and gold, though singularly plain, had a look of richness about it; besides that, among the orders which covered his breast, he wore one star of great brilliancy and size. This, however, was his least distinction; for although surrounded on every side by those who might be deemed the very types and pictures of their *caste*, there was something in the easy but upright carriage of his head, the intrepid character of his features, the bold and vigorous flashing of his deep blue eye, that marked him as no common man. He was talking with an old and prosy-looking personage, in civilian dress; and while I could detect an anxiety to get free from a tiresome companion, there was an air of deferential, and even kind attention in his manner, absolutely captivating.

"A thorough gentleman, Fred, whoever he be," said I.

"I should think so," replied Power, dryly, "and as our countrymen would say, 'The devil thank him for it!' That is the Prince of Orange; but see, look at him now, his features have learned another fashion." And true it was; with a smile of the most winning softness, and with a voice, whose slightly foreign accent took nothing from its interest, I heard him engaging a partner for a waltz.

There was a flutter of excitement in the circle as the lady rose to take his arm, and a muttered sound of, "How very beautiful, *quelle est belle! c'est un ange!*" on all sides. I leaned forward to catch a glance as she passed—it was Lucy Dashwood. Beautiful beyond anything I had ever seen her, her lovely features lit up with pleasure and with pride, she looked in every way worthy to lean upon the arm of royalty. The graceful majesty of her walk, the placid loveliness of her gentle smile, struck every one as she passed on. As for me, totally forgetting all else, not seeing or hearing aught around me, I followed her with my eye until she was lost amongst the crowd, and then, with an impulse of which I was not master, followed in her steps.

"This way, this way," said Power; "I see the Senhora." So saying, we entered a little boudoir, where a party was playing at cards. Leaning on the back of a chair, Inez was endeavoring, with that mixture of coquetry and half malice she possessed, to distract the attention of the player. As Power came near, she scarcely turned her head to give him a kind of saucy smile; while, seeing me, she held out her hand with friendly warmth, and seemed quite happy to meet me.

"Do, pray, take her away: get her to dance, to eat ice, or flirt with you, for Heaven's sake!" said the half-laughing voice of her victim. "I have revoked twice, and misdealt four times, since she has been here. Believe me, I shall take it as the greatest favor, if you will—"

As he got thus far he turned round toward me, and I perceived it was Sir George Dashwood. The meeting was as awkward for him as for me; and, while a deep flush covered my face, he muttered some unintelligible apology, and Inez burst into a fit of laughter at the ludricous *contretemps* of our situation.

"I will dance with you now, if you like," said she, "and that will be punishing all three. Eh, Master Fred?"

So saying, she took my arm as I led her toward the ball-room.

"And so you really are not friends with the Dashwoods! How very provoking, and how foolish, too! But, really, Chevalier, I must say you treat ladies very ill. I don't forget your conduct to me. Dear me, I wish we could move forward, there is some one pushing me dreadfully!"

"Get on, ma'am, get on!" said a sharp, decided voice behind me. I turned, half smiling, to see the speaker. It was the Duke of Wellington himself, who, with his eye fixed upon some person at a distance, seemed to care very little for any intervening obstruction. As I made way for him to pass between us, he looked hardly at me, while he said, in a short, quick way,

"Know your face very well: how d'ye do?" With this brief recognition he passed on, leaving me to console Inez for her crushed sleeve, by informing her who had done it.

The ball was now at its height. The waltzers whirled past in the wild excitement of the dance. The inspiriting strains of the music, the sounds of laughter, the din, the tumult, all made up that strange medley which, reacting upon the minds of those who cause it, increases the feeling of pleasurable abandonment, making the old feel young, and the young intoxicated with delight.

As the Senhora leaned upon me, fatigued with waltzing, I was endeavoring to sustain a conversation with her; while my thoughts were wandering with my eyes to where I had last seen Lucy Dashwood.

"It must be something of importance; I'm sure it is," said she, at the conclusion of a speech of which I had not heard one word. "Look at General Picton's face!"

"Very pretty, indeed," said I; "but the hair is unbecoming," replying to some previous observation she had made, and still lost in a reverie. A hearty burst of laughter was her answer, as she gently shook my arm, saying,

"You really are too bad! You never listened to one word I've been telling you, but keep continually staring with your eyes here and there, turning this way, and looking that; and the dull and vacant unmeaning smile; answering at random, in the most provoking manner. There, now, pray pay attention, and tell me what that means." As she said this, she pointed with her fan to where a dragoon officer, in splashed and spattered uniform, was standing, talking to some three or four general officers. "But here comes the Duke; it can't be anything of consequence."

At the same instant the Duke of Wellington passed with the Duchess of Richmond on his arm.

"No, Duchess; nothing to alarm you. Did you say ice?"

"There, you heard that, I hope?" said Inez; "there is nothing to alarm us."

"Go to General Picton at once; but don't let it be remarked," said an officer, in a whisper, as he passed close by me.

"Inez, I have the greatest curiosity to learn what that new arrival has to say for himself; and, if you will permit me, I'll leave you with Lady Gordon for one moment—"

"Delighted, of all things. You are, without exception, the most tiresome—Good-by."

"*Sans adieu*," said I, as I hurried through the crowd toward an open window, on the balcony outside of which Sir Thomas Picton was standing.

"Ah, Mr. O'Malley! have you a pencil? There, that'll do. Ride down to Etterbeeck with this order for Godwin. You have heard the news, I suppose, that the French are in advance? The Seventy-ninth will muster in the Grande Place. The Ninety-second and the Twenty-eighth along the Park and the Boulevard. Napoleon left Fresne this morning. The Prussians have fallen back. Ziethen has been beaten. We march at once."

"To-morrow, sir?"

"No, sir; to-night. There! don't delay. But, above all, let everything be done quietly and noiselessly. The Duke will remain here for an hour longer, to prevent suspicion. When you've executed your orders, come back here."

I mounted the first horse I could find at the door, and galloped with top speed over the heavy causeway to Etterbeeck. In two minutes the drum beat to arms, and the men were mustering as I left. Thence I hastened to the barracks of the Highland brigade and the 28th Regiment; and, before half an hour, was back in the ball-room, where, from the din and tumult, I guessed the scene of pleasure and dissipation continued unabated. As I hurried up the staircase, a throng of persons were coming down, and I was obliged to step aside to let them pass.

"Ah! come here, pray," said Picton, who, with a lady, cloaked and hooded, leaning upon his arm, was struggling to make way through the crowd. "The very man!"

"Will you excuse me, if I commit you to the care of my aide-de-camp, who will see you to your carriage? The Duke has just desired to see me." This he said in a hurried and excited tone; and the same moment beckoned to me to take the lady's arm.

It was with some difficulty I succeeded in reaching the spot, and had only time to ask whose carriage I should call for, ere we arrived in the hall.

"Sir George Dashwood's," said a low, soft voice, whose accents sank into my very heart. Heaven! it was Lucy herself; it was her arm that leaned on mine, her locks that fluttered beside me, her hand that hung so near, and yet I could not speak. I tried one word; but a choking feeling in my throat prevented utterance, and already we were upon the door-steps.

"Sir George Dashwood's carriage," shouted the footman, and the announcement was repeated by the porter. The steps were hurried down; the footman stood, door in hand; and I led her forward, mute and trembling. Did she know me? I assisted her as she stepped in; her hand touched mine: it was the work of a second; to me it was the bliss of years. She leaned a little forward, and, as the servant put up the steps, said, in her soft, sweet tone, "Thank you, sir. Good-night."

I felt my shoulder touched by some one, who, it appeared, was standing close to me for some seconds; but so occupied was I in gazing at her, that I paid no attention to the circumstance. The carriage drove away, and disappeared in the thick darkness of a starless night. I turned to re-enter the house, and, as I did so, the night lamp of the hall fell upon the features of

the man beside me, and showed me the pale and corpse-like face of Fred Hammersley. His eye was bent upon me with an expression of fierce and fiery passion, in which the sadness of long suffering also mingled. His bloodless lips parted, moved as though speaking, while yet no sound issued; and his nostril, dilating and contracting by turns, seemed to denote some deep and hidden emotion that worked within him.

"Hammersley," said I, holding out my hand toward him. "Hammersley, do not always mistake me."

He shook his head mournfully as it fell forward upon his breast; and, covering his arm, moved slowly away without speaking.

General Picton's voice, as he descended the stairs, accompanied by Generals Vandeleur and Vivian, aroused me at once, and I hurried toward him.

"Now, sir; to horse. The troops will defile by the Namur gate; and meet me there in an hour. Meanwhile tell Colonel Cameron that he must march with the light companies of his own and the Ninety-second at once."

"I say, Picton, they'll say we were taken by surprise in England; won't they?" said a sharp, strong voice, in a half-laughing tone, from behind.

"No, your Grace," said Sir Thomas, bowing slightly; "they'll scarcely do so, when they hear the time we took to get under arms."

I heard no more; but, throwing myself into the saddle of my troop-horse, once more rode back to the Belle Vue, to make ready for the road.

The thin pale crescent of a new moon, across which masses of dark and inky clouds were hurrying, tipped with its faint and sickly light the tall minarets of the Hôtel de Ville, as I rode into the "Grande Place." Although midnight, the streets were as crowded as at noonday; horse, foot, and dragoons passing and hurrying hither; the wild pibroch of the Highlander; the mellow bugle of the Seventy-first; the hoarse trumpet of the cavalry; the incessant roll of the drum, mingled their sounds with the tide of human voices, in which every accent was heard, from the reckless cheer of anticipated victory, to the heart-piercing shriek of woman's agony. Lights gleamed from every window; from the doors of almost every house poured forth a crowd of soldiers and townsfolk. The sergeants on one side might be seen telling off their men, their cool and steady countenances evidencing no semblance of emotion; while near them, some young ensign, whose beardless cheek and vacant smile bespoke the mere boy, looked on, with mingled pride and wonder, at the wild scene before him. Every now and then some general officer, with his staff, came cantering past; and, as the efforts to muster and form the troops grew more pressing, I could mark how soon we were destined to meet the enemy.

There are few finer monuments of the architecture of the middle ages than the Grande Place of Brussels: the rich façade of the Hôtel de Ville, with its long colonnade of graceful arches, upon every keystone of which some grim, grotesque head is peering; the massive cornices; the heavy corbels carved into ten thousand strange and uncouth fancies; but, finer than all, the taper and stately spire, fretted and perforated like some piece of silver filagree, stretches upward toward the sky, its airy pinnacle growing finer and more beautiful as it nears the stars it points to. How full of historic associations is every dark embrasure, every narrow casement around! Here may have stood the great Emperor Charles the Fifth, meditating upon that greatness he was about to forego forever; here, from this tall window, may have looked the sad and sickly features of Jeanne Laffolle, as, with wandering eye and idiot smile, she gazed upon the gorgeous procession beneath. There is not a stone that has not echoed to the tread of haughty prince or bold baron; yet never, in the palmiest days of ancient chivalry, did those proud dwellings of the great of old look out upon a braver and more valiant host than now thronged beneath their shadow. It was indeed a splendid sight, where the bright gleams of torch and lantern threw the red light around, to watch the measured tread and steady tramp of the Highland regiments as they defiled into the open space; each footstep, as it met the ground, seeming, in its proud and firm tread, to move in more than sympathy with the wild notes of their native mountains; silent and still they moved along; no voice spoke within their ranks, save that of some command to "Close up—take ground—to the right—rear rank—close order." Except such brief words as these, or the low muttered praise of some veteran general as he rode down the line, all was orderly and steady as on a parade. Meanwhile, from an angle of the square, the band of an approaching regiment was heard; and to the inspiriting quickness of "The Young May Moon," the gallant Twenty-eighth came forward, and took up their ground opposite to the Highlanders.

The deep bell of the Hôtel de Ville tolled one. The solemn sound rang out and died away in many an echo, leaving upon the heart a sense of some unknown depression; and there was something like a knell in the deep cadence of its bay; and over many a cheek a rapid trace of gloomy thought now passed; and true—too true, alas!—how many now listened for the last time!

"March! march!" passed from front to rear; and, as the bands burst forth again in streams of spirit-stirring harmony, the Seventy-ninth moved on; the Twenty-eighth followed; and as they debouched from the "Place" the Seventy-first and the Ninety-second succeeded them. Like wave after wave, the tide of armed men pressed on, and mounted the steep and narrow street toward the upper town of Brussels. Here Pack's brigade was forming in the Place Royale; and a crowd of staff officers dictating orders, and writing hurriedly on the drum-heads, were also seen. A troop of dragoons stood beside their horses at the door of the Belle Vue, and several grooms with led horses walked to and fro.

"Ride forward, sir, to the Bois de Cambre," said Picton, "and pivot the troops on the road to Mont St. Jean. You will then wait for my coming up, or further orders."

This command, which was given to me, I hastened to obey; and with difficulty forcing my way through the opposing crowd, at length reached the Namur gate. Here I found a detachment of the Guards, who as yet had got no orders to march, and were somewhat surprised to learn the forward movement. Ten minutes' riding brought me to the angle of the wood, whence I wrote a few lines to my host of the Belle Vue, desiring him to send Mike after me with my horses and my kit. The night was cold, dark, and threatening: the wind howled with a low and wailing cry through the dark pine-trees; and as I stood alone and in solitude, I had time to think of the eventful hours before me, and of that field which ere long was to witness the triumph or the downfall of my country's arms. The road which led through the forest of Soignies caught an additional gloom from the dark, dense woods around. The faint moon only showed at intervals; and a lowering sky, without a single star, stretched above us. It was an awful and a solemn thing to hear the deep and thundering roll of that mighty column, awakening the echoes of the silent forest as they went. So hurried was the movement, that we had scarcely any artillery, and that of the lightest caliber; but the clash and clank of the cavalry, the heavy monotonous tramp of infantry, were there; and as division followed after division, staff officers rode hurriedly to and fro, pressing the eager troops still on.

"Move up there, Ninety-fifth. Ah! Forty-second, we've work before us!" said Picton, as he rode up to the head of his brigade. The air of depression which usually sat upon his careworn features now changed for a light and laughing look, while his voice was softened and subdued into a low and pleasing tone. Although it was midsummer, the roads were heavy and deep with mud. For some weeks previously the weather had been rainy: and this, added to the haste and discomfort of the night march, considerably increased the fatigue of the troops. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, not a murmur nor complaint was heard on any side.

"I'm unco glad to get a blink o' them, onyhow," said a tall, raw-boned sergeant, who marched beside me.

"Faith, and maybe you won't be overpleased at the expression of their faces, when you see them," said Mike, whose satisfaction at the prospect before him was still as great as that of any other amid the thousands there.

The day was slowly breaking, as a Prussian officer, splashed and covered with foam, came galloping up at full speed past us. While I was yet conjecturing what might be the intelligence he brought, Power rode up to my side.

"We're in for it, Charley," said he. "The whole French army are in march; and Blucher's aide-de-camp, who has arrived, gives the number at one hundred and fifty thousand men. The Prussians are drawn up between Saint Amand and Sombref, and the Nassau and Dutch troops are at Quatre Bras, both expecting to be attacked."

"Quatre Bras was the original rallying spot for our troops, was it not?" said I.

"Yes, yes. It is that we're now marching upon; but our Prussian friend seems to think we shall arrive too late. Strong French corps are already at Fresnes, under the command, it is said, of Marshal Ney."

The great object of the British Commander-in-Chief was to arrive at Quatre Bras in sufficient time to effect his junction with Blucher before a battle should be fought. To effect this no exertion was spared: efforts almost superhuman were made; for, however prepared for a forward

movement, it was impossible to have anticipated anything until the intentions of Napoleon became clearly manifest. While Nivelles and Charleroi were exposed to him on one side, Namur lay open on the other; and he could either march upon Brussels, by Mons or Halle, or, as he subsequently attempted, by Quatre Bras and Waterloo. No sooner, however, were his intentions unmasked, and the line of his operations manifested, than Lord Wellington, with an energy equal to the mighty occasion that demanded it, poured down with the whole force under his command to meet him.

The march was a most distressing one: upward of three-and-twenty miles, with deep and cut-up roads, in hot, oppressive weather, in a country almost destitute of water. Still the troops pressed forward, and by noon came within hearing of the heavy cannonade in front, which indicated the situation of the battle. From this time aide-de-camp followed aide-de-camp in quick succession, who, from their scared looks and hurried gestures, seemed to bode but ill fortune to the cause we cared for. What the precise situation of the rival armies might be we knew not; but we heard the French were in overwhelming numbers; that the Dutch troops had abandoned their position; the Hanoverians being driven back, the Duke of Brunswick—the brave sovereign of a gallant people—fell charging at the head of his black hussars. From one phrase which constantly met our ears, it seemed that the Bois de Bossu was the key of the position. This had been won and lost repeatedly by both sides; and as we neared the battle-field a dispatch hurriedly announced to Picton the importance of at once recovering this contested point. The Ninety-fifth were ordered up to the attack. Scarcely was the word given, when fatigue, thirst, and exhaustion were forgotten: with one cheer the gallant regiment formed into line, and advanced upon the wood. Meanwhile, the Highland brigade moved down toward the right; the Royals and the Twenty-eighth debouched upon the left of the road; and in less than half an hour after our arrival our whole force was in action.

There is something appalling, to the bravest army, in coming up to battle at the time that an overwhelming and conquering foe are carrying victory triumphantly before them: such was our position at Quatre Bras. Bravely and gloriously as the forces of the Prince of Orange fought, the day, however, was not theirs. The Bois de Bossu, which opened to the enemy the road to Brussels, was held by their tirailleurs; the valley to the right was rode over by their mounted squadrons, who with lance and sabre carried all before them; their dark columns pressed steadily on; and a death-dealing artillery swept the allied ranks from flank to flank. Such was the field when the British arrived, and, throwing themselves into squares, opposed their unaided force to the dreadful charges of the enemy. The batteries showered down their storms of grape; Milhaud's heavy dragoons, assisted by crowds of lancers, rushed upon the squares, but they stood unbroken and undaunted, as sometimes upon three sides of their position the infuriated horsemen of the enemy came down. Once, and once only, were the French successful; the 42d, who were stationed amid tall corn-fields, were surrounded with cavalry before they knew it. The word was given to form square; the Lancers were already among them, and, fighting back to back, the gallant Highlanders met the foe. Fresh numbers poured down upon them, and already half the regiment was disabled and their colonel killed. These brave fellows were rescued by the 44th, who, throwing in a withering volley, fixed bayonets and charged. Meanwhile, the 95th had won and lost the wood, which, now in the possession of the French tirailleurs, threatened to turn the left of our position. It was at this time that a body of cavalry were seen standing to the left of the Enghien road, as if in observation. An officer sent forward to reconnoitre, returned with the intelligence that they were British troops, for he had seen their red uniforms.

"I can't think it, sir," said Picton. "It is hardly possible that any regiment from Enghien could have arrived already. Ride forward, O'Malley, and, if they be our fellows, let them carry that height yonder; there are two guns there cutting the 92d to pieces."

I put spurs to my horse, cleared the road at once, and dashing across the open space to the left of the wood, rode on in the direction of the horsemen. When I came within the distance of three hundred yards I examined them with my glass, and could plainly detect the scarlet coats and bright helmets. "Ha," thought I, "the 1st Dragoon Guards, no doubt." Muttering to myself thus much, I galloped straight on; and waving my hand as I came near, announced that I was the bearer of an order. Scarcely had I done so, when four horsemen, dashing spurs into their steeds, plunged hastily out from the line, and,

before I could speak, surrounded me; while the foremost called out, as he flourished his sabre above his head, "*Rendez-vous!*" At the same moment I was seized on each side, and led back a captive into the hands of the enemy.

"We guess your mistake, Capitaine," said the French officer before whom I was brought. "We are the regiment of Berg, and our scarlet uniform cost us dearly enough yesterday."

This allusion, I afterward learnt, was in reference to a charge by a cuirassier regiment, which, in mistaking them for English, poured a volley into them, and killed and wounded about twenty of their number.

CHAPTER CXIX.

QUATRE BRAS.

Those who have visited the field of Quatre Bras will remember that on the left of the high-road, and nearly at the extremity of the Bois de Bossu, stands a large Flemish farm-house, whose high, pitched roof, pointed gables, and quaint, old-fashioned chimneys, remind one of the architecture so frequently seen in Teniers's pictures. The house, which, with its dependencies of stables, granaries, and out-houses, resembles a little village, is surrounded by a large, straggling orchard of aged fruit-trees, through which the approach from the high-road leads. The interior of this quaint dwelling, like all those of its class, is only remarkable for a succession of small, dark, low-ceiled rooms, leading one into another; their gloomy aspect increased by the dark oak furniture, the heavy armories, and old-fashioned presses, carved in the grotesque taste of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Those who visit it now may mark the trace of cannon-shot here and there through the building; more than one deep crack will attest the force of the dread artillery. Still the traveler will feel struck with the rural peace and quietude of the scene: the speckled oxen that stand lowing in the deep meadows; the splash of the silvery trout as he sports in the bright stream that ripples along over its gravelly bed; the cawing of the old rooks in the tall beech-trees; but, more than all, the happy laugh of children—speak of the spot as one of retired and tranquil beauty; yet, when my eyes oped upon it on the morning of the 17th of June, the scene presented features of a widely different interest. The day was breaking as the deep, full sound of the French bugles announced the *réveil*. Forgetful of where I was, I sprang from my bed and rushed to the window; the prospect before me at once recalled me to my recollection, and I remembered that I was a prisoner. The exciting events around left me but little time and as little inclination to think over my old misfortunes; and I watched, with all the interest of a soldier, the movement of the French troops in the orchard beneath. A squadron of dragoons, who seemed to have passed the night beside their horses, lay stretched or seated in all the picturesque groupings of a bivouac: some, already up and stirring; others, leaned half listlessly upon their elbows, and looked about as if unwilling to believe the night was over; and some, stretched in deep slumber, woke not with the noise and tumult around them. The room in which I was confined looked out upon the road to Charleroi; I could therefore see the British troops; and as the French army had fallen back during the night, only an advance guard maintaining the position, I was left to my unaided conjectures as to the fortune of the preceding day of battle. What a period of anxiety and agitation was that morning to me; what would I not have given to learn the result of the action since the moment of my capture! Stubborn as our resistance had been, we were evidently getting the worst of it; and, if the Guards had not arrived in time, I knew we must have been beaten.

I walked up and down my narrow room, tortured and agonized by my doubts, now stopping to reason over the possibilities of success, now looking from the window to try if, in the gesture and bearing of those without, I could conjecture anything that passed. Too well I knew the vaunting character of the French soldier, in defeat as in victory, to put much confidence in their bearing. While, however, I watched them with an eager eye, I heard the tramp of horsemen coming along the paved causeway. From the moment my ear caught the sound to that of their arrival at the gate of the orchard, but few minutes elapsed; their pace was indeed a severe one, and, as they galloped through the narrow path that led to the farm-house, they never drew rein till they reached the porch. The party consisted of about a dozen persons, whose plumed hats bespoke them staff officers; but their uniforms were concealed beneath their great-coats. As they came along the picket sprang to their feet, and the guard at the door

beneath presented arms: this left no doubt upon my mind that some officer of rank was among them, and, as I knew that Ney himself commanded on the preceding day, I thought it might be he. The sound of voices beneath informed me that the party occupied the room under that in which I was; and, although I listened attentively, I could hear nothing but the confused murmur of persons conversing together without detecting even a word. My thoughts now fell into another channel, and, as I ruminated over my old position, I heard the noise of the sentry at my door as he brought his musket to the shoulder, and the next moment an officer in the uniform of the Chasseurs of the Guard entered. Bowing politely as he advanced to the middle of the room, he addressed me thus:

"You speak French, sir?" and, as I replied in the affirmative, continued:

"Will you then have the goodness to follow me this way?"

Although burning with anxiety to learn what had taken place, yet somehow I could not bring myself to ask the question. A secret pride mingled with my fear that all had not gone well with us, and I durst not expose myself to hear of our defeat from the lips of an enemy. I had barely time to ask into whose presence I was about to be ushered, when, with a slight smile of a strange meaning, he opened the door and introduced me into the saloon. Although I had seen at least twelve or fourteen horsemen arrive, there were but three persons in the room as I entered. One of these, who sat writing at a small table near the window, never lifted his head on my entrance, but continued assiduously his occupation. Another, a tall, fine-looking man of some sixty years or upward, whose high, bald forehead and drooping moustache, white as snow, looked in every way the old soldier of the empire, stood leaning upon his sabre; while the third, whose stature, somewhat below the middle size, was yet cast in a strong and muscular mold, stood with his back to the fire, holding on his arms the skirts of a gray surtout which he wore over his uniform; his legs were cased in the tall *bottes à l'écuyère* worn by the *chasseur à cheval*, and on his head a low cocked hat, without plume or feather, completed his costume. There was something which, at the very moment of my entrance, struck me as uncommon in his air and bearing, so much so that when my eyes had once rested on his pale but placid countenance, his regular, handsome, but somewhat stern features, I totally forgot the presence of the others and looked only at him.

"What's your rank, sir?" said he, hurriedly, and with a tone which bespoke command.

"I have none at present, savè—"

"Why do you wear your epaulettes then, sir?" said he harshly, while from his impatient look and hurried gesture I saw that he put no faith in my reply.

"I am an aide-de-camp to General Picton, but without regimental rank."

"What was the British force under arms yesterday?"

"I do not feel myself at liberty to give you any information as to the number or the movements of our army."

"*Diantre! Diantre!*" said he, slapping his boot with his horsewhip, "do you know what you've been saying there, eh? Cambronne, you heard him, did you?"

"Yes, sire, and if your Majesty would permit me to deal with him, I would have his information, if he possess any, and that ere long, too."

"Eh, *gaillard*," said he, laughing, as he pinched the old general's ear in jest, "I believe you, with all my heart."

The full truth flashed upon my mind. I was in presence of the Emperor himself. As, however, up to this moment, I was unconscious of his presence, I resolved now to affect ignorance of it throughout.

"Had you dispatches, sir?" said he, turning toward me with a look of stern severity. "Were any dispatches found upon him when he was taken?" This latter question was directed to the aide-de-camp who introduced me, and who still remained at the door.

"No, sire, nothing was found upon him except this locket."

As he said these words he placed in Napoleon's hands the keepsake which St. Croix had left with me years before in Spain, and which, as the reader may remember, was a miniature of the Empress Josephine.

The moment the Emperor threw his eyes upon it, the flush which excitement had called into his cheek disappeared at once: he became pale as death, his very lips as bloodless as his wan cheek.

"Leave me, Lefebvre; leave me, Cambronne, for a moment; I will speak with this gentleman alone."

As the door closed upon them he leaned his arm upon the mantelpiece, and, with his head sunk upon his bosom, remained some moments without speaking.

"*Augure sinistre!*" muttered he within his teeth, as his piercing gaze was riveted upon the picture before him. "*Voilà la*

troisième fois; peut-être la dernière." Then suddenly rousing himself, he advanced close to me, and, seizing me by the arm with a grasp like iron, inquired .

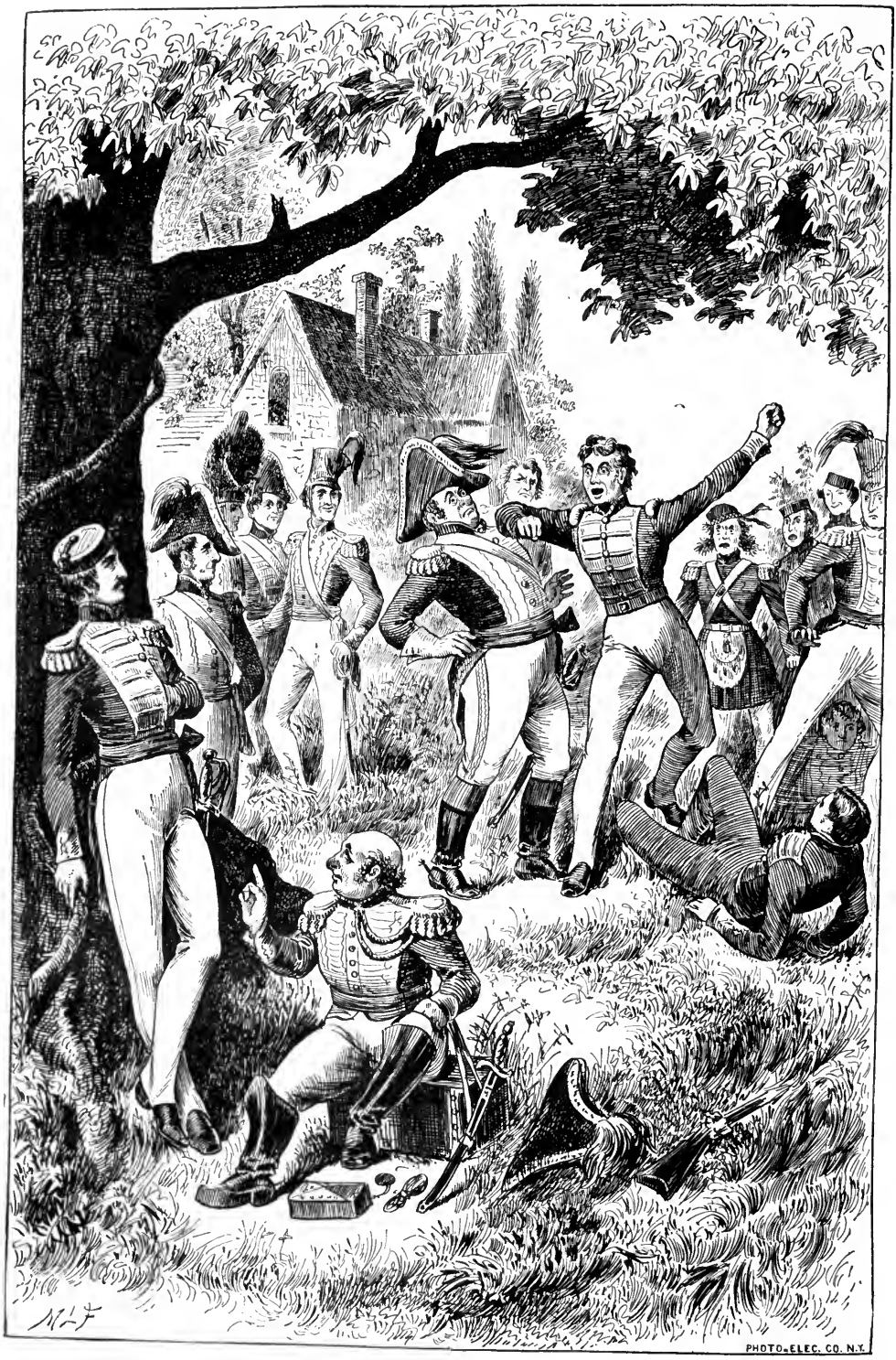
"How came you by this picture? The truth, sir: mark me, the truth."

Without showing any sign of feeling hurt at the insinuation of this question, I detailed, in as few words as I could, the circumstance by which the locket became mine. .Long before I had concluded, however, I could mark that his attention flagged, and finally wandered far away from the matter before him.

"Why will you not give me the information I look for? I seek for no breach of faith. The campaign is all but over. The Prussians were beaten at Ligny, their army routed, their artillery captured, ten thousand prisoners taken. Your troops and the Dutch were conquered yesterday, and they are in full retreat on Brussels. By to-morrow evening I shall date my bulletin from the palace at Laeken. Antwerp will be in my possession within twenty-four hours. Namur is already mine. Cambronne, Lefebvre," cried he, "*cet homme-là n'en sait rien,*" pointing to me as he spoke. "Let us see the other." With this he motioned slightly with his hand, as a sign for me to withdraw, and the next moment I was once more in the solitude of my prison-room, thinking over the singular interview I had just had with the great Emperor.

How anxiously pass the hours of one who, deprived of other means of information, is left to form his conjectures by some passing object or some chance murmur. The things which, in the ordinary course of life, are passed by unnoticed and unregarded, are now matters of moment: with what scrutiny he examines the features of those whom he dare not question; with what patient ear he listens to each passing word. Thus to me, a prisoner, the hours went by tardily yet anxiously: no sabre clanked; no war-horse neighed; no heavy-booted cuirassier tramped in the court-yard beneath my window, without setting a hundred conjectures afloat as to what was about to happen. For some time there had been a considerable noise and bustle in and about the dwelling. Horsemen came and went continually. The sounds of galloping could be heard along the paved causeway; then the challenge of the sentry at the gate; then the nearer tread of approaching steps, and many voices speaking together, would seem to indicate that some messenger had arrived with dispatches. At length all these sounds became hushed and still; no longer were the voices heard; and except the measured tread of the heavy cuirassier, as he paced on the flags beneath, nothing was to be heard. My state of suspense, doubly greater now than when the noise and tumult suggested food for conjecture, continued till toward noon, when a soldier in undress brought me some breakfast, and told me to prepare speedily for the road.

Scarcely had he left the room, when the rumbling noise of wagons was heard below, and a train of artillery-carts moved into the little court-yard, loaded with wounded men. It was a sad and frightful sight to see these poor fellows, as, crammed side by side in the straw of the *charrette*, they lay, their ghastly wounds opening with every motion of the wagon, while their wan, pale faces were convulsed with agony and suffering. Of every rank, from the sous-lieutenant to the humble soldier, from every arm of the service, from the heavy Cuirassier of the Guard to the light and intrepid tirailleur, they were there. I well remember one, an artilleryman of the Guard, who, as they lifted him forth from the cart, presented the horrifying spectacle of one both of whose legs had been carried away by a cannon-shot; pale, cold, and corpse-like, he lay in their arms; his head lay heavily to one side, and his arms fell passively, as in death. It was at this moment a troop of lancers, the advanced guard of D'Erlon's division, came trotting up the road; the cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" burst from them as they approached; its echo rang within the walls of the farm-house, when suddenly the dying man, as though some magic touch had called him back to life and vigor, sprang up erect between his bearers, his filmy eye flashing fire, a burning spot of red coloring his bloodless cheek; he cast one wild and hurried look around him, like one called back from death to look upon the living; and, as he raised his blood-stained hand above his head, shouted, in a heart-piercing cry, "*Vive l'Empereur!*" The effort was his last. It was the expiring tribute of allegiance to the chief he adored. The blood spouted in cataracts from his half-closed wounds, a convulsive spasm worked through his frame, his eyes rolled fearfully, as his outstretched hands seemed striving to clutch some object before them—and he was dead. Fresh arrivals of wounded continued to pour in; and now I thought I could detect at intervals the distant noise of a cannonade: the wind, however, was from the southward, and the sounds were too indistinct to be relieved on.



"TEAR AN AGES! DON'T HOWLD ME—THAT'S HIMSELF—DEVIL A ONE ELSE." (P. 1027.)

"*Allons! allons! mon cher,*" said a rough but good-humored looking fellow, as he strode into my room: he was the quartermaster of Milhaud's dragoons, under whose care I was now placed, and came to inform me that we were to set out immediately.

Monsieur Bonnard was a character in his way; and if it were not so near the conclusion of my history, I should like to present him to my readers. As it is, I shall merely say he was a thorough specimen of one class of his countrymen—a loud talker, a louder swearer, a vaporing, boasting, overbearing, good-natured, and even soft-hearted fellow, who firmly believed that Frenchmen were the climax of the species, and Napoleon the climax of Frenchmen. Being a great *bavard*, he speedily told me all that had taken place during the last two days. From him I learned that the Prussians had really been beaten at Ligny, and had fallen back, he knew not where: they were, however, he said, hotly pursued by Grouchy, with thirty-five thousand men, while the Emperor himself was now following the British and Dutch armies with seventy thousand more.

"You see," continued he, "*l'affaire est faite!* who can resist the Emperor?"

These were sad tidings for me; and, although I did not place implicit confidence in my informant, I had still my fears that much of what he said was true.

"And the British, now," said I; "what direction have they taken?"

"Bah! they're in retreat on Brussels, and will probably capitulate to-morrow."

"Capitulate!"

"*Oui, oui: ne vous fâchez pas, camarade,*" said he, laughing. "What could you do against Napoleon? you did not expect to beat him, surely? But come, we must move on; I have my orders to bring you to Planchenoit this evening, and our horses are tired enough already."

"Mine, methinks, should be fresh," said I.

"*Parbleu, non,*" replied he: "he has twice made the journey to Fresnes this morning with dispatches for Marshal Ney; the Emperor is enraged with the Marshal for having retreated last night, having the wood in his possession; he says he should have waited till daybreak, and then fallen upon your retreating columns. As it is, you are getting away without much loss. *Sacristie*, that was a fine charge!" These last words he muttered to himself; adding, between his teeth, "sixty-four killed and wounded."

"What was that? who were they?" said I.

"Our fellows," replied he, frankly; "the Emperor ordered up two twelve-pounders, and eight squadrons of lancers; they fell upon your light dragoons in a narrow part of the high-road. But suddenly we heard a noise in front; your hussars fell back, and a column of your heavy dragoons came thundering down upon us. *Parbleu!* they swept over us as if we were broken infantry; and there! there!" said he, pointing to the court-yard, from whence the groans of the wounded still rose, "there are the fruits of that terrible charge."

I could not restrain an outbreak of triumphant pleasure at this gallant feat of my countrymen.

"Yes, yes," said the honest quartermaster, "it was a fine thing; but a heavy reckoning is at hand. But come, now, let us take the road."

In a few moments more I found myself seated upon a heavy Norman horse, whose lumbering demi-peak saddle was nearly cleft in two by a sabre-cut.

"Ay, ay," said Monsieur Bonnard, as he saw my eye fixed on the spot, "it was one of your fellows did that; and the same cut clove poor Pierre from the neck to the seat."

"I hope," said I, laughing, "the saddle may not prove an unlucky one."

"No, no," said the Frenchman, seriously; "it has paid its debt to fate."

As we pressed on our road, which, broken by the heavy guns, and plowed up in many places by the artillery, was nearly impassable, we could distinctly hear from time to time the distant boom of the large guns, as the retiring and pursuing armies replied to each other; while behind us, but still a long way off, a dark mass appeared on the horizon: they were the advancing columns of Ney's division.

"Have the troops come in contact more than once this morning?"

"Not closely," said the quartermaster; "the armies have kept a respectful distance; they were like nothing I can think of," said the figurative Frenchman, "except two hideous serpents wallowing in mire, and vomiting at each other whole rivers of fire and flame."

As we approached Planchenoit, we came up to the rear-guard of the French army; from them we learned that Ney's division, consisting of the eighth corps, had joined the Emperor; that the British were still in retreat, but that nothing of any importance had occurred between the rival armies, the French merely firing their heavy guns from time to time, to ascertain by the reply the position of the retreating forces; the rain

poured down in torrents; gusts of cold and stormy wind swept across the wide plains, or moaned sorrowfully through the dense forest. As I rode on by the side of my companion, I could not help remarking how little the effects of a fatiguing march and unfavorable weather were apparent on those around me. The spirit of excited gayety pervaded every rank; and, unlike the stern features which the discipline of our service inforces, the French soldiers were talking, laughing, and even singing, as they marched; the canteens passed freely from hand to hand, and jests and toasts flew from front to rear along the dark columns; many carried their loaves of dark rye-bread on the tops of their bayonets; and to look upon that noisy and tumultuous mass as they poured along, it would have needed a practiced eye to believe them the most disciplined of European armies.

The sun was just setting as, mounting a ridge of high land beside the high-road, my companion pointed with his finger to a small farm-house, which, standing alone in the plain, commands an extensive view on every side of it.

"There," said he, "there is the *quartier général;* the Emperor sleeps there to-night. The King of Holland will afford him a bed to-morrow night."

The dark shadows of the coming night were rapidly falling as I strained my eyes to trace the British position. A hollow, rumbling sound announced the movement of artillery in our front.

"What is it, Arnotte?" said the Quartermaster to a dragoon officer who rode past.

"It is nothing," replied the other, laughing, "but a *ruse* of the Emperor. He wishes to ascertain if the enemy are in force, or if we have only a strong rear-guard before us."

As he spoke, fifteen heavy guns opened their fire, and the still air reverberated with a loud thunder. The sound had not died away—the very smoke lay yet heavily upon the moist earth—when forty pieces of British cannon rang out their answer, and the very plain trembled beneath the shock.

"Ha! they are there, then," exclaimed the dragoon, as his eyes flashed with ecstasy. "Look! see! the artillery are limbering up already. The Emperor is satisfied."

And so it was. A dark column of twelve hundred horse that accompanied the guns into the plain, now wheeled slowly round, and wound their long track far away to the right. The rain fell in torrents; the wind was hushed; and, as the night fell in darkness, the columns moved severally to their destinations. The bivouacs were formed, the watch-fires were lighted, and seventy thousand men and two hundred pieces of cannon occupied the heights of Planchenoit.

"My orders are to bring you to La Caillon," said the Quartermaster; "and if you only can spur your jaded horse into a trot we shall soon reach it."

About a hundred yards from the little farm-house stood a small cottage of a peasant. Here some officers of Marshal Soult's staff had taken up their quarters; and thither my guide now bent his steps.

"*Comment! Bonnard,*" said an aide-de-camp, as we rode up, "another prisoner? *Sacrebleu!* we shall have the whole British staff among us. You are in better luck than your countryman, the general, I hope," said the aide-de-camp; "his is a sad affair; and I'm sorry for it, too; he's a fine, soldier-like looking fellow."

"Pray, what has happened?" said I. "To what do you allude?"

"Merely to one of your people who has just been taken with some letters and papers of Bourmont's in his possession. The Emperor is in no very amicable humor toward that traitor, and resolves to pay off some part of his debt on his British correspondent."

"How cruel! how unjust!"

"Why, yes, it is hard, I confess, to be shot for the fault of another. *Mais, que voulez-vous?*"

"And when is this atrocious act to take place?"

"By daybreak to-morrow," said he, bowing as he turned toward the hut. "Meanwhile, let me counsel you, if you would not make another in the party, to reserve your indignation for your return to England."

"Come along," said the Quartermaster; "I find they have got quarters for you in the granary of the farm. I'll not forget you at supper time."

So saying, he gave his horse to an orderly, and led me by a little path to a back entrance of the dwelling. Had I time or inclination for such a scene, I might have lingered long to gaze at the spectacle before me. The guard held their bivouac around the quarters of the Emperor; and here, beside the watch-fires, sat the bronzed and scarred veterans who had braved every death and danger from the Pyramids to the Kremlin. On every side I heard the names of those whom history has already consigned to immortality; and, as the fitful

blaze of a wood-fire flashed from within the house, I could mark the figure of one who, with his hands behind his back, walked leisurely to and fro, his head leaned a little forward, as though in deep thought; but as the light fell upon his pale and placid feacures, there was nothing there to indicate the stormy strife of hope and fear that raged beneath. From the rapid survey I took around I was roused by an officer, who, saluting me, politely desired me to follow him. We mounted a flight of stone steps, which, outside the wall of the building, led to the upper story of a large but ruined granary. Here a sentry was posted, who, permitting us to pass forward, I found myself in a small, mean-looking apartment, whose few articles of coarse furniture were dimly lighted by the feeble glimmer of a lamp. At the further end of the room sat a man, wrapped in a large blue cavalry cloak, whose face, covered with his hands as he bent downward, was completely concealed from view. The noise of the opening door did not appear to arouse him, nor did he notice my approach. As I entered, a faint sigh broke from him, as he turned his back upon the light; but he spoke not a word.

I sat for some time in silence, unwilling to obtrude myself upon the sorrows of one to whom I was unknown; and, as I walked up and down the gloomy chamber, my thoughts became riveted so completely upon my own fortunes that I ceased to remember my fellow-prisoner. The hours passed thus lazily along, when the door suddenly opened, and an officer in the dress of a lancer of the Guard stood for an instant before me, and then springing forward, clasped me by both hands, and called out:

"Charles, *mon ami, c'est bien toi?*"

The voice recalled to my recollection what his features, altered by time and years, had failed to do. It was Jules St. Croix, my former prisoner in the Peninsula. I cannot paint the delight with which I saw him again; his presence now, while it brought back the memory of some of my happiest days, also assured me that I was not friendless.

His visit was a brief one, for he was in attendance on Marshal Lobau's staff. In the few minutes, however, of his stay, he said:

"I have a debt to pay, Charles, and have come to discharge it. In an hour hence I shall leave this with dispatches for the left of our line. Before I go I'll come here with two or three others, as it were, to wish you a good-night: I'll take care to carry a second cloak and a foraging cap: I'll provide a fast horse; you shall accompany us for some distance. I'll see you safe across our pickets; for the rest, you must trust to yourself. *C'est arrangé, n'est-ce pas?*"

One firm grasp of his hand, to which I responded by another, followed, and he was gone.

Everything concurred to show me that a tremendous battle must ensue on the morrow, if the British forces but held their position. It was then with a feeling of excitement approaching to madness that I saw my liberty before me; that once more I should join in the bold charge and the rude shock of arms, hear the wild cry of my gallant countrymen, and either live to triumph with them in victory, or wait not to witness our defeat. Thus flew my hopes as, with increasing impatience, I waited St. Croix's coming, and with anxious heart listened to every sound upon the stairs which might indicate his approach. At length he came. I heard the gay and laughing voices of his companions as they came along: the door opened, and affecting the familiarity of old acquaintance, to deceive the sentry, they all shook me by the hand, and spoke in terms of intimacy.

"Labedoyère is below," said St. Croix, in a whisper; "you must wait here a few moments longer, and I'll return for you; put on the cloak and cap, and speak not a word as you pass out. The sentry will suppose that one of our party has remained behind; for I shall call out as if speaking to him, as I leave the room."

The voice of an officer calling in tones of impatience for the party to come down, cut short the interview, and again assuring me of their determination to stand by me, they left the chamber, and descended into the court. Scarcely had the door closed behind them, when my fellow-prisoner, whom I had totally forgotten, sprang on his legs, and came toward me. His figure screening the lamplight as he stood, prevented my recognizing his features; but the first tones of his voice told me who he was.

"Stay, sir," cried he, as he placed his hand upon my arm; "I have overheard your project. In an hour hence you will be free. Can you—will you perform a service for one who will esteem it not the less that it will be the last that man can render him? The few lines which I have written here with my pencil are for my daughter."

I could bear no more, and called out in a voice broken as his own,

"Oh, be not deceived, sir. Will you, even in an hour like this, accept a service from one whom you have banished from your house?"

The old man started as I spoke; his hand trembled till it shook my very arm, and, after a pause and with an effort to seem calm and collected, he added:

"My hours are few. Some dispatches of General Bourmont with which the Duke intrusted me were found in my possession. My sentence is a hurried one—and it is death! By to-morrow's sunrise—"

"Stay, stay!" said I. "You shall escape; my life is in no danger. I have, as you see, even friends among the staff; besides, I have done nothing to compromise or endanger my position."

"No, sir," said he sternly, "I will not act such a part as this. The tears you have seen in these old eyes are not for myself. I fear not death. Better it were it should have come upon the field of glorious battle; but as it is, my soldier's honor is intact, untainted."

"You refuse the service on account of him who proffers it," said I, as I fell heavily upon a seat, my head bowed upon my bosom.

"Not so, not so, my boy," replied he, kindly; "the near approach of death, like the fading light of day, gives us a longer and a clearer view before us. I feel that I have wronged you; that I have imputed to you the errors of others; but, believe me, if I have wronged you, I have punished my own heart; for, Charles, I have loved you like a son."

"Then prove it," said I, "and let me act toward you as toward a father. You will not? You refuse me still? Then, by Heaven, I remain to share your fate! I well know the temper of him who has sentenced you, and that, by one word of mine, my destiny is sealed forever."

"No, no, boy! This is but rash and insane folly. Another year or two, nay, perhaps a few months more, and in the common course of nature I had ceased to be; but you, with youth, with fortune, and with hope—"

"Oh, not with hope!" said I, in a voice of agony.

"Nay, say not so," replied he, calmly, while a sickly smile played sadly over his face; "you will give this letter to my daughter, you will tell her that we parted as friends should part; and if, after that, when time shall have smoothed down her grief, and her sorrow be rather a dark dream of the past than a present suffering; if, then, you love her, and if—"

"Oh, tempt me not thus!" said I, as the warm tears gushed from my eyes; "lead me not thus astray from what my honor tells me I should do. Hark! they are coming already. I hear the clank of their sabres; they are mounting the steps; not a moment is to be lost! Do you refuse me still?"

"I do," replied he, firmly; "I am resolved to bide my fate."

"Then so do I," cried I, as, folding my arms, I sat down beside the window, determined on my course.

"Charley, Charley," said he, stooping over me, "my friend, my last hope, the protector of my child—"

"I will not go," said I, in a hollow whisper.

Already they were at the door; I heard their voices as they challenged the sentry; I heard his musket as he raised it to his shoulder. The thought flashed across me—I jumped up, and, throwing the loose mantle of the French dragoon around him, and replacing his own with the foraging cap of St. Croix, I sprang into a corner of the room, and, seating myself so as to conceal my face, waited the result. The door opened, the party entered, laughing and talking together.

"Come, Eugène," said one, taking Sir George by the arm, "you have spent long enough time here to learn the English language. We shall be late at the outpost. *Messieurs les Anglais*, good-night, good-night!"

This was repeated by the others as they passed out with Sir George Dashwood among them, who, seeing that my determination was not to be shaken, and that any demur on his part must necessarily compromise both, yielded to a *coup de main* what he never would have consented to from an appeal to his reason. The door closed; their steps died away in the distance. Again a faint sound struck my ear; it was the challenge of the sentry beneath, and I heard the tramp of horses' feet. All was still, and in a burst of heartfelt gratitude I sank upon my knees, and thanked God that he was safe.

So soundly did I sleep, that not before I was shaken several times by the shoulder could I awake on the following morning.

"I thought there were two prisoners here," said a gruff voice, as an old moustached-looking veteran cast a searching look about the room. "However, we shall have enough of them before sunset. Get—get up; *Monsieur le Duc de Dalmatie* desires some information you can give him.

As he said this, he led me from the

room, and, descending the flight of stone steps, we entered the court-yard. It was but four o'clock, the rain still falling in torrents, yet every one was up and stirring.

"Mount this horse," said my gruff friend, "and come with me toward the left; the Marshal has already gone forward."

The heavy mist of the morning, darkened by the lowering clouds which almost rested on the earth, prevented our seeing above a hundred yards before us; but the hazy light of the watch-fires showed me the extent of the French position, as it stretched away along the ridge toward the Halle road. We rode forward at a trot, but in the deep clayey soil we sank at each moment to our horses' fetlocks. I turned my head as I heard the tramp and splash of horsemen behind, and perceived that I was followed by two dragoons, who, with their carbines on the rest, kept their eyes steadily upon me to prevent any chance of escape. In a slight hollow of the ground before us stood a number of horsemen, who conversed together in a low tone as we came up.

"There! that is the Marshal," said my companion, in a whisper, as we joined the party.

"Yes, Monsieur le Duc," said an engineer colonel, who stood beside Soult's horse, with a colored plan in his hand—"Yes, that is the *Château de Goumont*, yonder. It is, as you perceive, completely covered by the rising ground marked here; they will, doubtless, place a strong artillery force in this quarter."

"Ah! who is this?" said the Marshal, turning his eyes suddenly upon me, and then casting a look of displeasure around him, lest I should have overheard any portion of their conversation. "You are deficient in cavalry, it would appear, sir?" said he to me.

"You must feel, Monsieur le Duc," said I, calmly, "how impossible it is for me, as a man of honor and a soldier, to afford you any information as to the army I belong to."

"I do not see that, sir. You are a prisoner in our hands; your treatment, your fortune, your very life depends on us. Besides, sir, when French officers fall into the power of your people, I have heard they meet not very ceremonious treatment."

"Those who say so, say falsely," said I, "and wrong both your countrymen and mine. In any case—"

"The Guards are an untried force in your service," said he, with a mixture of inquiry and assertion.

I replied not a word.

"You must see, sir," continued he, "that all the chances are against you. The Prussians beaten, the Dutch discouraged, the Belgians only waiting for victory to incline to our standard, to desert your ranks, and pass over to ours; while your troops, scarcely forty thousand, nay, I might say, not more than thirty-five thousand. Is it not so?"

Here was another question, so insidiously conveyed that even a change of feature on my part might have given the answer. A half smile, however, and at slight bow was all my reply; while Soult muttered something between his teeth, which called forth a laugh from those around him.

"You may retire, sir, a little," said he, dryly, to me.

Not sorry to be freed from the awkwardness of my position, I fell back to the little rising ground behind. Although the rain poured down without ceasing, the rising sun dispelled, in part, the heavy vapor, and by degrees different portions of the wide plain presented themselves to view; and, as the dense masses of fog moved slowly along, I could detect, but still faintly, the outline of the large, irregular building which I had heard them call the *Château de Goumont*, and from whence I could hear the clank of masonry, as, at intervals, the wind bore the sounds toward me. These were the sappers piercing the walls for musketry; and this I could now perceive was looked upon as a position of no small importance. Surrounded by a straggling orchard of aged fruit-trees, the château lay some hundred yards in advance of the British line, commanded by two eminences; one of which, in the possession of the French, was already occupied by a park of eleven guns; of the other I knew nothing, except the passing glance I had obtained of its position on the map. The second corps, under Jerome Bonaparte, with Foy and Kellermann's brigade of light artillery, stretched behind us. On the right of these came D'Erlon's corps, extending to a small wood, which my companion told me was Frischermont; while Lobau's division was stationed to the extreme right toward St. Lambert, to maintain the communication with Grouchy at Wavre, or, if need be, to repel the advance of the Prussians, and prevent their junction with the Anglo-Dutch army. The Imperial Guard with the cavalry formed the reserve. Such was, in substance, the information given me by my guide, who seemed to expatiate with pleasure

over the magnificent array of battle, while he felt a pride in displaying his knowledge of the various divisions and their leaders.

"I see the Marshal moving toward the right," said he; "we had better follow him."

It was now about eight o'clock, as from the extremity of the line I could see a party of horsemen advancing at a sharp canter.

"That must be Ney," said my companion. "See how rashly he approaches the English lines!"

And so it was. The party in question rode fearlessly down the slope, and did not halt until they reached within about three hundred yards of what appeared a ruined church.

"What is that building yonder?"

"That—that," replied he, after a moment's thought, "that must be La Haye Sainte; and yonder, to the right of it, is the road to Brussels. There, look now! your people are in motion. See! a column is moving toward the right, and the cavalry are defiling on the other side of the road. I was mistaken—that cannot be Ney. *Sacre Dieu!* it was the Emperor himself, and here he comes."

As he spoke, the party galloped forward, and pulled up short within a few yards of where we stood.

"Ha!" cried he, as his sharp glance fell upon me, "there is my taciturn friend of Quatre Bras. You see, sir, I can dispense with your assistance now; the chessboard is before me;" and then added, in a tone he intended not to be overheard, "Everything depends on Grouchy."

"Well, Haxo," he called out to an officer who galloped up, *chapeau* in hand, "what say you? are they intrenched in that position?"

"No, sire, the ground is open, and in two hours more will be firm enough for the guns to maneuver."

"Now, then, for breakfast," said Napoleon, as with an easy and tranquil smile he turned his horse's head, and cantered gently up the heights toward La Belle Alliance. As he approached the lines, the cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" burst forth. Regiment after regiment took it up; and from the distant wood of Frischermont to the far left beside Merke-braine, the shout resounded. So sudden, so simultaneous the outbreak, that he himself, accustomed as he well was to the enthusiasm of his army, seemed, as he reined in his horse, and looked with proud and elated eye upon the countless thousands, astounded and amazed. He lifted with slow and graceful action his unplumed hat above his head, and, while he bowed that proud front before which kings have trembled, the acclamation burst forth anew, and rent the very air.

At this moment the sun shone brilliantly out from the dark clouds, and flashed upon the shining blades and glistening bayonets along the line. A dark and lowering shadow hung gloomily over the British position, while the French sparkled and glittered in the sunbeams. His quick glance passed with lightning speed from one to the other; and I thought that, in his look, upturned to heaven, I could detect the flitting thought which bade him hope it was an augury. The bands of the Imperial Guard burst forth in joyous and triumphant strains; and amid the still repeated cries of "*l'Empereur! l'Empereur!*" he rode slowly along toward La Belle Alliance.

CHAPTER CXX.

WATERLOO.

NAPOLEON'S first intention was, to open the battle by an attack upon the extreme right; but Ney, who returned from an observation of the ground, informed him that a rivulet, swollen by the late rains, had now become a foaming torrent, perfectly impassable to infantry. To avoid this difficulty he abandoned his favorite maneuver of a flank movement, and resolved to attack the enemy by the center. Launching his cavalry and artillery by the road to Brussels, he hoped thus to cut off the communication of the British with their own left, as well as with the Prussians, for whom he trusted that Grouchy would be more than a match.

The reserves were in consequence all brought up to the center. Seven thousand cavalry and a massive artillery assembled upon the heights of La Belle Alliance, and waited but the order to march. It was eleven o'clock, and Napoleon mounted his horse and rode slowly along the line; again the cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" resounded, and the bands of the various regiments struck up their spirit-stirring strains as the gorgeous staff moved along. On the British side all was tranquil; and still the different divisions appeared to have taken up their ground, and the long ridge from Terla-Haye to Merke-braine bristled with bayonets. Nothing could possibly be more equal than the circumstances of the field. Each army possessed an eminence whence

their artillery might play. A broad and slightly undulating valley lay between both. The ground permitted in all places both cavalry and infantry movements, and except the crumbling walls of the Château of Hougoumont, or the farm-house of La Haye Sainte, both of which were occupied by the British, no advantage either by nature or art inclined to either side. It was a fair stand-up fight. It was the mighty tournament, not only of the two greatest nations, but the two deadliest rivals and bitterest enemies, led on by the two greatest military geniuses that the world has ever seen: it might not be too much to say, or ever will see. As for me, condemned to be an inactive spectator of the mighty struggle, doomed to witness all the deep-laid schemes and well-devised plans of attack which were destined for the overthrow of my country's arms, my state was one of torture and suspense. I sat upon the little rising ground of Rossomme: before me, in the valley, where yet the tall corn waved in ripe luxuriance, stood the quiet and peaceful-looking old Château of Hougoumont, and the blossoming branches of the orchard; the birds were gayly singing their songs, the shrill whistle of the fatal musketry was to be heard, and through my glass I could detect the uniform of the soldiers who held the position, and my heart beat anxiously and proudly as I recognized the Guards. In the orchard and the garden were stationed some riflemen—at least their dress and the scattered order they assumed bespoke them such. While I looked, the tirailleurs of Jerome's division advanced from the front of the line, and, descending the hill in a sling trot, broke into scattered parties, keeping up, as they went, a desultory and irregular fire. The English skirmishers, less expert in this peculiar service, soon fell back, and the head of Reille's brigade began their march toward the château. The English artillery is unmasked and opens its fire. Kellermann advances at a gallop his twelve pieces of artillery; the château is concealed from view by the dense smoke, and as the attack thickens, fresh troops pour forward, the artillery thundering on either side; the entire lines of both armies stand motionless spectators of the terrific combat, while every eye is turned toward that devoted spot from whose dense mass of cloud and smoke the bright glare of artillery is flashing, as the crashing masonry, the burning rafters, and the loud yell of battle add to the frightful interest of the scene. For above an hour the tremendous attack continues without cessation; the artillery stationed upon the height has now found its range, and every ringing shot tells upon the tottering walls; some wounded soldiers return faint and bleeding from the conflict, but there are few who escape. A crashing volley of fire-arms is now heard from the side where the orchard stands; a second, and a third succeed, one after the other, as rapid as lightning itself. A silence follows, when, after a few moments, a deafening cheer bursts forth, and an aide-de-camp gallops up to say that the orchard has been carried at the point of the bayonet, the Nassau sharpshooters who held it having, after a desperate resistance, retired before the irresistible onset of the French infantry. "*A moi! maintenant!*" said General Foy, as he drew his sabre, and rode down to the head of his splendid division, which, anxious for the word to advance, were standing in the valley. "*En avant! mes braves,*" cried he, while, pointing to the château with his sword, he dashed boldly forward. Scarcely had he advanced a hundred yards, when a cannon-shot, "ricocheting" as it went, struck his horse in the counter, and rolled him dead on the plain. Disengaging himself from the lifeless animal, at once he sprang to his feet, and hurried forward. The column was soon hid from my view, and I was left to mourn over the seemingly inevitable fate that impended over my gallant countrymen.

In the intense interest which chained me to this part of the field, I had not noticed till this moment that the Emperor and his staff were standing scarcely thirty yards from where I was. Napoleon, seated upon a gray, almost white, Arabian, had suffered the reins to fall loosely on the neck, as he held with both hands his telescope to his eye; his dress, the usual green coat with white facings, the uniform of the *chasseurs à cheval*, was distinguished merely by the cross of the legion; his high boots were splashed and mud-stained, from riding through the deep and clayey soil; his compact and clean-bred charger looked also slightly blown and heated, but he himself, and I watched his features well, looked calm, composed, and tranquil. How anxiously did I scrutinize that face; with what a throbbing heart did I canvass every gesture, hoping to find some passing trait of doubt, of difficulty, or of hesitation; but none was there: unlike one who looked upon the harrowing spectacle of a battle-field, whose all was depending on the game before him; gambling with one throw his last, his only stake, and that the empire of the world. Yet, could I picture

to myself one who felt at peace within himself—nought of reproach, nought of regret to move or stir his spirit, whose tranquil bark had glided over the calm sea of life, unruffled by the breath of passion—I should have fancied such was he.

Beside him sat one whose flashing eye and changing features looked in every way his opposite; watching with intense anxiety the scene of the deadly struggle round the château, every look, every gesture told the changing fortune of the moment; his broad and brawny chest glittered with orders and decorations, but his heavy brow and lowering look, flushed almost black with excitement, could not easily be forgotten. It was Soult, who, in his quality of major-general, accompanied the Emperor throughout the day.

"They have lost it again, sire," said the Marshal, passionately; "and see, they are forming beneath the cross-fire of the artillery; the head of the column keeps not its formation two minutes together: why does he not move up?"

"Domont, you know the British; what troops are those in the orchard? They use the bayonet well."

The officer addressed pointed his glass for a moment to the spot. Then, turning to the Emperor, replied, as he touched his hat, "They are the Guards, sire."

During this time Napoleon spoke not a word; his eye ever bent upon the battle, he seemed to pay little if any attention to the conversation about him. As he looked, an aide-de-camp, breathless and heated, galloped up.

"The columns of attack are formed, sire; everything is ready, and the Marshal only waits the order."

Napoleon turned upon his saddle, and, directing his glass toward Ney's division, looked fixedly for some moments at them. His eye moved from front to rear slowly, and at last carrying his telescope along the line, he fixed it steadily upon the far left. Here, toward St. Lambert, a slight cloud seemed to rest on the horizon, as the Emperor continued to gaze steadfastly at it. Every glass of the staff was speedily turned in that direction.

"It is nothing but a cloud; some exhalation from the low grounds in that quarter," whispered one.

"To me," said another, "they look like trees, part of the Bois de Wavre."

"They are men," said the Emperor, speaking for the first time. "*Est-ce Grouchy? Est-ce Blucher?*"

Soult inclines to believe it to be the former, and proceeds to give his reasons, but the Emperor, without listening, turns toward Domont, and orders him, with his division of light cavalry and Subervic's brigade, to proceed thither at once. If it be Grouchy, to establish a junction with him; to resist, should it prove to be the advanced guard of Marshal Blucher. Scarcely is the order given when a column of cavalry, wheeling "fours about," unravels itself from the immense mass, and seems to serpentine like an enormous snake between the squares of the mighty army. The pace increases at every moment, and at length we see them merge from the extreme right and draw up, as if on parade, above half a mile from the wood. This movement, by its precision and beauty, had attracted our entire attention, not only from the attack upon Hougoumont, but also an incident which had taken place close beside us. This was the appearance of a Prussian hussar who had been taken prisoner between Wavre and Planchenoit: he was the bearer of a letter from Bulow to Wellington, announcing his arrival at St. Lambert, and asking for orders.

This at once explains the appearance on the right; but the prisoner also adds, that the three Prussian corps were at Wavre, having pushed their patrols two leagues from that town without ever encountering any portion of the force under the command of Grouchy. For a moment not a word is spoken. A silence like a panic pervades the staff; the Emperor himself is the first to break it.

"This morning," said he, turning toward Soult, "the chances were ninety to one in our favor; Bulow's arrival has already lost us thirty of the number; but the odds are still sufficient, if Grouchy but repair the *horrible fault* he has committed."

He paused for a moment, and, as he lifted up his own hand, and turned a look of indignant passion toward his staff, added in a voice the sarcasm of whose tone there is no forgetting:

"*Il s'amuse à Gembloux!* Still," said he, speaking rapidly and with more energy than I had hitherto noticed, "Bulow may be entirely cut off. Let an officer approach. Take this letter, sir,"—giving, as he spoke, Bulow's letter to Lord Wellington—"give this letter to Marshal Grouchy; tell him that at this moment he should be before Wavre; tell him that already, had he obeyed his orders—but no, tell him to march at once, to press forward his cavalry, to come up in two hours, in three at furthest. You have but five leagues to ride:

see, sir, that you reach him within an hour."

As the officer hurries away at the top of his speed, an aide-de-camp from General Domont confirms the news; they are the Prussians whom he has before him. As yet, however, they are debouching from the wood, and have attempted no forward movement.

"What's Bulow's force, Marshal?"

"Thirty thousand, sire."

"Let Lobau take ten thousand, with the Cuirassiers of the Young Guard, and hold the Prussians in check."

"*Maintenant pour les autres.*" This he said with a smile, as he turned his eyes once more toward the field of battle. The aide-de-camp of Marshal Ney, who, bareheaded and expectant, sat waiting for orders, presented himself to view. The Emperor turned toward him as he said, with a clear and firm voice:

"Tell the Marshal to open the fire of his batteries; to carry La Haye Sainte with the bayonet, and leaving an infantry division for its protection, to march against La Papelotte and La Haye. They must be carried by the bayonet."

The aide-de-camp was gone; Napoleon's eye followed him as he crossed the open plain and was lost in the dense ranks of the dark columns. Scarcely five minutes elapsed when eighty guns thundered out together, and, as the earth shook and trembled beneath, the mighty movement of the day began its execution. From Hougoumont, where the slaughter and the carnage continued unslackened and unstayed, every eye was now turned toward the right. I knew not what troops occupied La Haye Sainte, or whether they were British who crowned the heights above it; but in my heart how fervently did I pray that they might be so. Oh! in that moment of suspense and agonizing doubt, what would I not have given to know that Picton himself and the fighting Fifth were there; that behind that ridge the Grays, the Royals, and the Enniskilleners sat motionless, but burning to advance; and the breath of battle waved among the tartans of the Highlanders, and blew upon the flashing features of my own island countrymen. Had I known this, I could have marked the onset with a less failing spirit.

"There goes Marcognet's division," said my companion, springing to his legs; "they're moving to the right of the road. I should like to see the troops that will stand before them."

So saying, he mounted his horse, and, desiring me to accompany him, rode to the height beside La Belle Alliance. The battle was now raging from the Château de Hougoumont to St. Lambert, where the Prussian tirailleurs, as they issued from the wood, were skirmishing with the advance posts of Lobau's brigade. The attack upon the center, however, ingrossed all my attention, and I watched the dark columns as they descended into the plain, while the incessant roll of the artillery played about them. To the right of Ney's attack, D'Erlon advanced with three divisions, and the artillery of the Guard. Toward this part of the field my companion moved. General Le Vasseur desired to know if the division on the Brussels road were English or Hanoverian troops, and I was sent for to answer the question. We passed from square to square until at length we found ourselves upon the flank of D'Erlon's division. Le Vasseur, who at the head of his cuirassiers waited but the order to charge, waved impatiently with his sword for us to approach. We were now to the right of the high-road, and about four hundred yards from the crest of the hill where, protected by a slight hedge, Picton with Kempt's brigade waited the attack of the enemy.

Just at this moment an incident took place which, while in itself one of the most brilliant achievements of the day, changed in a signal manner my own fortunes. The head of D'Erlon's column pressed with fixed bayonets up the gentle slope. Already the Belgian infantry give way before them. The brave Brunswickers, overwhelmed by the heavy cavalry of France, at first begin to waver; then are broken; and at last retreat in disorder up the road, a whirlwind of pursuing squadrons thundering behind them. "*En avant! en avant! la victoire est à nous,*" is shouted madly through the impatient ranks; and the artillery is called up to play upon the British squares: upon which, fixed and immovable, the cuirassiers have charged without success. Like a thunderbolt, the flying artillery dashes to the front; but scarcely has it reached the bottom of the ascent, when, from the deep ground, the guns become imbedded in the soil: the wheels refuse to move. In vain the artillery drivers whip and spur their laboring cattle. Impatiently the leading files of the column prick with their bayonets the struggling horses. The hesitation is fatal; for Wellington, who, with eagle glance, watches from an eminence beside the high-road the advancing column, sees the accident. An order is given; and, with one fell swoop, the heavy cavalry brigade pour

down. Picton's division deploys into line; the bayonets glance above the ridge; and with a shout that tells above the battle, on they come, the fighting Fifth. One volley is exchanged; but the bayonet is now brought to the charge, and the French division retreat in close column, pursued by their gallant enemy. Scarcely have the leading divisions fallen back, and the rear pressed down upon, or thrown into disorder, when the cavalry trumpets sound a charge: the bright helmets of the Enniskilleners come dashing in the sunbeams, and the Scotch Grays, like a white-crested wave, are rolling upon the foe. Marcognet's division is surrounded; the dragoons ride them down on every side; the guns are captured; the drivers cut down, and two thousand prisoners are carried off. A sudden panic seems to sieze upon the French, as cavalry, infantry, and artillery are hurried back on each other. Vainly the French attempt to rally: the untiring enemy press madly on; the household brigade, led on by Lord Uxbridge, came thundering down the road, riding down with their gigantic force the mailed cuirassiers of France. Borne along with the retreating torrents, I was carried on amidst the densely commingled mass. The British cavalry, which, like the lightnings that sever the thundercloud, pierce through in every direction, plunged madly upon us. The roar of battle grew louder, as hand to hand they fought. Milhaud's heavy dragoons, with the 4th Lancers, came up at a gallop. Picton presses forward, waving his plumed hat above his head; his proud eye flashes with the fire of victory. That moment is his last. Struck in the forehead by a musket-ball, he falls dead from the saddle; and the wild yell of the Irish regiments, as they ring his death-cry, are the last sounds which he hears. Meanwhile, the Life Guards are among us; prisoners of rank are captured on every side: and I, seizing the moment, throw myself among the ranks of my countrymen, and am borne to the rear with the retiring squadrons.

As we reached the crest of the hill above the road, a loud cheer in the valley beneath us burst forth, and from the midst of the dense smoke a bright and pointed flame shot up toward the sky. It was the farmhouse La Haye Sainte, which the French had succeeded in setting fire to with hot shot. For some time past the ammunition of the corps that held it had failed, and a dropping, irregular musketry was the only reply to the incessant rattle of the enemy. As the smoke cleared away we discovered that the French had carried the position; and, as no quarter was given in that deadly hand-to-hand conflict, not one returned to our ranks to tell the tale of their defeat.

"This is the officer that I spoke of," said an aide-de-camp, as he rode up to where I was standing, bareheaded and without a sword. "He has just made his escape from the French lines, and will be able to give your Lordship some information."

The handsome features and gorgeous costume of Lord Uxbridge were known to me; but I was not aware, till afterward, that a soldier-like, resolute-looking officer beside him was General Graham. It was the latter who first addressed me.

"Are you aware, sir," said he, "if Grouchy's force is arrived?"

"They had not: on the contrary, as, shortly before I escaped, an aide-de-camp was dispatched to Gembloux, to hasten his coming. And the troops, for they must be troops, were debouching from the wood yonder. They seem to form a junction with the corps to the right; they are the Prussians. They arrived there before noon from St. Lambert, and are part of Bulow's corps. Count Lobau and his division of ten thousand men were dispatched, about an hour since, to hold them in check."

"This is great news," said Lord Uxbridge. "Fitzroy must know it at once."

So saying, he dashed spurs into his horse, and soon disappeared amid the crowd on the hill-top.

"You had better see the Duke, sir," said Graham. "Your information is too important to be delayed. Captain Calvert, let this officer have a horse; his own is too tired to go much further."

"And a cap, I beg of you," added I, in an under tone, "for I have already found a sabre."

By a slight circuitous route we reached the road, upon which a mass of dismounted artillery-carts, baggage-wagons and tumbrils were heaped together as a barricade against the attack of the French dragoons, who more than once had penetrated to the very crest of our position. Close to this, and on a little rising gound, from which a view of the entire field extended, from Hougoumont to the far left, the Duke of Wellington stood, surrounded by his staff. His eye was bent upon the valley before him, when the advancing columns of Ney's attack still pressed onward; while the fire of sixty great guns poured death and carnage into his lines. The second Belgian division, routed and broken, had fallen back upon the 27th Regiment, who

had merely time to throw themselves into square, when Milhaud's cuirassiers, armed with their terrible long, straight swords, came sweeping down upon them. A line of impassable bayonets, a living *chevaux-de-frise* of the best blood of Britain, stood firm and motionless before the shock. The French *mitraille* played mercilessly on the ranks, but the chasms were filled up like magic, and in vain the bold horsemen of Gaul galloped round the bristling files. At length the word "Fire!" was heard within the square, and, as the bullets at pistol-range rattled upon them, the cuirass afforded them no defense against the deadly volley. Men and horses rolled indiscriminately upon the earth. Then would come a charge of our dashing squadrons, who, riding recklessly upon the foe, were in their turn to be repulsed by numbers, and fresh attacks poured down upon our unshaken infantry.

"That column yonder is wavering. Why does he not bring up his supporting squadrons?" inquired the Duke, pointing to a Belgian regiment of light dragoons, who were formed in the same brigade with the 7th Hussars.

"He refuses to oppose his light cavalry to cuirassiers, my Lord," said an aide-de-camp, who had just returned from the division in question.

"Tell him to march his men off the ground," said the Duke, with a quiet and impassive tone.

In less than ten minutes the "Belgian regiment" was seen to defile from the mass, and take the road to Brussels, to increase the panic of that city, by circulating and strengthening the report that the English were beaten, and Napoleon in full march upon the capital.

"What's Ney's force? can you guess, sir?" said the Duke of Wellington, turning to me.

"About twelve thousand men, my Lord."

"Are the Guard among them?"

"No, sir; the Guard are in reserve above La Belle Alliance."

"In what part of the field is Bonaparte?"

"Nearly opposite to where we stand."

"I told you, gentlemen, Hougoumont never was the great attack. The battle must be decided here," pointing, as he spoke, to the plain beneath us, where Ney still poured on his devoted columns, where yet the French cavalry rode down upon our firm squares.

As he spoke, an aide-de-camp rode up from the valley.

"The Ninety-second requires support, my Lord. They cannot maintain their position half an hour longer without it."

"Have they given way, sir?"

"No—"

"Well, then, they must stand where they are. I hear cannon toward the left; yonder, near Frischermont."

At this moment the light cavalry swept past the base of the hill on which we stood, hotly followed by the French heavy cuirassier brigade. Three of our guns were taken; and the cheering of the French infantry, as they advanced to the charge, presaged their hope of victory.

"Do it, then," said the Duke, in reply to some whispered question of Lord Uxbridge; and shortly after the heavy trot of advancing squadrons was heard behind.

They were the Life Guards and the Blues, who, with the 1st Dragoon Guards and the Enniskilleners, were formed into close column.

"I know the ground, my Lord," said I to Lord Uxbridge.

"Come along, sir, come along," said he, as he threw his hussar jacket loosely behind him, to give freedom to his sword-arm. "Forward, my men, forward; but steady, hold your horses in hand, threes about, and together, charge."

"Charge!" he shouted; while, as the word flew from squadron to squadron, each horseman bent upon his saddle, and that mighty mass, as though instinct with but one spirit, dashed like a thunderbolt upon the column beneath them. The French, blown and exhausted, inferior besides in weight, both of man and horse, offered but a short resistance. As the tall corn bends beneath the sweeping hurricane, wave succeeding wave, so did the steel-clad squadrons of France fall before the nervous arm of Britain's cavalry. Onward they went, carrying death and ruin before them, and never stayed their course until the guns were recaptured, and the cuirassiers, repulsed, disordered, and broken, had retired beneath the protection of their artillery.

There was, as a brilliant and eloquent writer on the subject mentions, a terrible sameness in the whole of this battle. Incessant charges of cavalry upon the squares of our infantry, whose sole maneuver consisted in either deploying into line to resist the attack of infantry, or falling back into square when the cavalry advanced; performing those two evolutions under the devastating fire of artillery, before the unflinching heroism of that veteran infantry, whose glories had been reaped upon the blood-stained fields of Austerlitz, Marengo, and Wagram, or opposing an unbroken

front to the whirlwind swoop of infuriated cavalry. Such were the enduring and devoted services demanded from the English troops, and such they failed not to render. Once or twice had temper nearly failed them, and the cry ran through the ranks, "Are we never to move forward? Only let us at them!" But the word was not yet spoken which was to undam the pent-up torrent, and bear down with unrelenting vengeance upon the now exulting columns of the enemy.

It was six o'clock: the battle had continued with unchanged fortune for three hours. The French, masters of La Haye Sainte, could never advance further into our position. They had gained the orchard of Hougoumont, but the château was still held by the British Guards, although its blazing roof and crumbling walls made its occupation rather the desperate stand of unflinching valor than the maintenance of an important position. The smoke which hung upon the field rolled in slow and heavy masses back upon the French lines, and gradually discovered to our view the entire of the army. We quickly perceived that a change was taking place in their position. The troops, which on their left stretched far beyond Hougoumont, were now moved nearer to the center. The attack upon the château seemed less vigorously supported, while the oblique direction of their right wing, which, pivoting upon Planchenoit, opposed a face to the Prussians, all denoted a change in their order of battle. It was now the hour when Napoleon, at last convinced that nothing but the carnage he could no longer support could destroy the unyielding ranks of British infantry; that although Hougoumont had been partially, La Haye Sainte completely won; that upon the right of the road the farm-houses Papelotte and La Haye were nearly surrounded by his troops, which with any other army must prove the forerunner of defeat, yet still the victory was beyond his grasp. The bold stratagems, whose success the experience of a life had proved, were here to be found powerless. The decisive maneuver of carrying one important point of the enemy's lines, of turning him upon the flank, or piercing him through the center, were here found impracticable. He might launch his avalanche of grape-shot, he might pour down his crashing columns of cavalry, he might send forth the iron storm of his brave infantry; but, though death in every shape heralded their approach, still were others found to fill the fallen ranks, and feed with their heart's blood the unslaked thirst for slaughter. Well might the gallant leader of this gallant host, as he watched the reckless onslaught of the untiring enemy, and looked upon the unflinching few who, bearing the proud badge of Britain, alone sustained the fight, well might he exclaim, "Night or Blucher!"

It was now seven o'clock, when a dark mass was seen to form upon the heights above the French center, and divide into three gigantic columns, of which the right occupied the Brussels road. These were the reserves, consisting of the Old and Young Guards, and amounting to twelve thousand—the *élite* of the French army—reserved by the Emperor for a great *coup de main*. These veterans of a hundred battles had been stationed, from the beginning of the day, inactive spectators of the fight; their hour was now come, and with a shout of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" which rose triumphantly over the din and crash of battle, they began their march. Meanwhile, aides-de-camp galloped along the lines, announcing the arrival of Grouchy, to reanimate the drooping spirits of the men; for, at last, a doubt of victory was breaking upon the minds of those who never before, in the most adverse hour of fortune, deemed *his* star could be set that led them on to glory.

"They are coming; the attack will be made on the center, my Lord," said Lord Fitzroy Somerset, as he directed his glass upon the column. Scarcely had he spoken, when the telescope fell from his hand, as his arm, shattered by a French bullet, fell motionless to his side.

"I see it," was the cool reply of the Duke, as he ordered the Guards to deploy into line, and lie down behind the ridge, which now the French artillery had found the range of, and were laboring at their guns. In front of them the Fifty-second, Seventy-first, and Ninety-fifth were formed; the artillery stationed above and partly upon the road, loaded with grape, and waited but the word to open.

It was an awful, a dreadful moment: the Prussian cannon thundered on our left, but so desperate was the French reistance, they made but little progress: the dark columns of the Guard had now commenced the ascent, and the artillery ceased their fire as the bayonets of the grenadiers showed themselves upon the slope. Then began that tremendous cheer from right to left of our line, which those who heard never can forget. It was the impatient, long-restrained burst of unslaked vengeance. With the instinct which valor teaches, they knew the hour of trial was

come; and that wild cry flew from rank to rank, echoing from the blood-stained walls of Hougoumont to the far-off valley of La Papelotte. "They come! they come!" was the cry; and the shout of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" mingled with the outburst of the British line.

Under an overwhelming shower of grape, to which succeeded a charge of cavalry of the Imperial Guard, the head of Ney's column fired its volley and advanced with the bayonet. The British artillery now opened at half range, and, although the plunging fire scathed and devastated the dark ranks of the Guard, on they came, Ney himself, on foot, at their head. Twice the leading division of that gallant column turned completely round, as the withering fire wasted and consumed them; but they were resolved to win.

Already they gained the crest of the hill, and the first line of the British were falling back before them. The artillery closes up; the flanking fire from the guns upon the road opens upon them; the head of their column breaks like a shell; the Duke seizes the moment, and advances on foot toward the ridge.

"Up, Guards, and at them!" he cried.

The hour of triumph and vengeance had arrived. In a moment the Guards were on their feet; one volley was poured in; the bayonets were brought to the charge; they closed upon the enemy: then was seen the most dreadful struggle that the history of all war can present. Furious with long-restrained passion, the Guards rushed upon the leading divisions; the Seventy-first, and Ninety-fifth, and Twenty-sixth overlapped them on the flanks. Their generals fell thickly on every side; Michel, Jamier, and Mallet are killed; Friant lies wounded upon the ground; Ney, his dress pierced and ragged with balls, shouts still to advance; but the leading files waver; they fall back; the supporting divisions thicken; confusion, panic succeeds; the British press down; the cavalry come galloping up to their assistance; and at last, pell-mell, overwhelmed and beaten, the French fall back upon the Old Guard. This was the decisive moment of the day—the Duke closed his glass, as he said,

"The field is won. Order the whole line to advance."

On they came, four deep, and poured like a torrent from the height.

"Let the Life Guards charge them," said the Duke; but every aide-de-camp on his staff was wounded, and I myself brought the order to Lord Uxbridge.

Lord Uxbridge had already anticipated his orders, and bore down with four regiments of heavy cavalry upon the French center. The Prussian artillery thundered upon their flank, and at their rear. The British bayonet was in their front; while a panic fear spread through their ranks, and the cry of "*Sauve qui peut!*" resounded on all sides. In vain Ney, the bravest of the brave; in vain Soult, Bertrand, Gourgaud, and Labedoyère, burst from the broken disorganized mass, and called on them to stand fast. A battalion of the Old Guard, with Cambronne at their head, alone obeyed the summons; forming into square, they stood between the pursuers and their prey, offering themselves a sacrifice to the tarnished honor of their arms: to the order to surrender they answered with a cry of defiance; and as our cavalry, flushed and elated with victory, rode round their bristling ranks, no quailing look, no craven spirit was there. The Emperor himself endeavored to repair the disaster; he rode with lightning speed hither and thither, commanding, ordering, nay imploring too; but already the night was falling, the confusion became each moment more inextricable, and the effort was a fruitless one. A regiment of the Guards and two batteries were in reserve behind Planchenoit: he threw them rapidly into position; but the overwhelming impulse of flight drove the mass upon them, and they were carried away upon the torrent of the beaten army. No sooner did the Emperor see this his last hope desert him, than he dismounted from his horse, and, drawing his sword, threw himself into a square, which the first regiment of Chasseurs of the Old Guard had formed with a remnant of the battalion. Jerome followed him, as he called out,

"You are right, brother: here should perish all who bear the name of Bonaparte."

The same moment the Prussian light artillery rend the ranks asunder, and the cavalry charge down upon the scattered fragments. A few of his staff, who never left him, place the Emperor upon a horse and fly through the death-dealing artillery and musketry. A squadron of the Life Guards, to which I had attached myself, came up at the moment, and as Blucher's hussars rode madly here and there, where so lately the crowd of staff officers had denoted the presence of Napoleon, expressed their rage and disappointment in curses and cries of vengeance.

Cambronne's battalion stood yet unbroken, and seemed to defy every attack that was brought against them. To the second

summons to surrender they replied as indignantly as at first; and Vivian's brigade was ordered to charge them. A cloud of British horse bore down on every face of the devoted square; but firm as in their hour of victory, the heroes of Marengo never quailed; and twice the bravest blood of Britain recoiled, baffled and dismayed. There was a pause for some minutes, and even then, as we surveyed our broken and blood-stained squadrons, a cry of admiration burst from our ranks at the gallant bearing of that glorious infantry. Suddenly the tramp of approaching cavalry was heard; I turned my head and saw two squadrons of the Second Life Guards. The officer who led them on was bareheaded; his long dark hair streaming wildly behind him and upon his pale features, to which not even the headlong enthusiasm of battle had lent one touch of color. He rode straight to where I was standing, his dark eyes fixed upon me with a look so fierce, so penetrating, that I could not look away: the features, save in this respect, had almost a look of idiocy. It was Hammersley.

"Ha!" he cried at last, "I have sought you out the entire day, but in vain. It is not yet too late. Give me your hand, boy. You once called on me to follow *you*, and I did not refuse; I trust you'll do the like by *me*. Is it not so?"

A terrible perception of his meaning shot through my mind as I clasped his clay-cold hand in mine, and for a moment I did not speak.

"I hoped for better than this," said he, bitterly, and as a glance of withering scorn flashed from his eye. "I did trust that he who was preferred before me was at least not a coward."

As the word fell from his lips I nearly leaped from my saddle, and mechanically raised my sabre to cleave him on the spot.

"Then follow me!" shouted he, pointing with his sword to the glistening ranks before us.

"Come on!" said I, with a voice hoarse with passion, while, burying my spurs in my horse's flanks, I sprang on a full length before him, and bore down upon the enemy. A loud shout, a deafening volley, the agonizing cry of the wounded and the dying, were all I heard, as my horse, rearing madly upward, plunged twice into the air, and then fell dead upon the earth, crushing me beneath his cumbrous weight, lifeless and insensible.

* * * * *

The day was breaking; the cold, gray light of morning was struggling through the misty darkness, when I once more recovered my consciousness. There are moments in life when memory can so suddenly conjure up the whole past before us, that there is scarcely time for a doubt ere the disputed reality is palpable to our senses. Such was this to me. One hurried glance upon the wide, bleak plain before me, and every circumstance of the battle-field was present to my recollection. The dismounted guns, the broken wagons, the heaps of dead or dying, the straggling parties who on foot or horseback traversed the field, and the dark litters which carried the wounded, all betokened the sad evidences of the preceding day's battle.

Close around me where I lay the ground was marked with the bodies of our cavalry, intermixed with the soldiers of the Old Guard. The broad brow and stalwart chest of the Saxon lay bleaching beside the bronzed and bearded warrior of Gaul, while the torn-up ground attested the desperation of that struggle which closed the day.

As my eye ranged over this harrowing spectacle, a dreadful anxiety shot through me as I asked myself whose had been the victory. A certain confused impression of flight and of pursuit remained in my mind; but, at the moment, the circumstances of my own position in the early part of the day increased the difficulty of reflection, and left me in a state of intense and agonizing uncertainty. Although not wounded, I had been so crushed by my fall that it was not without pain I got upon my legs. I soon perceived that the spot around me had not yet been visited by those vultures of the battle-field who strip alike the dead and dying. The distance of the place from where the great conflict of the battle had occurred was probably the reason; and now, as the straggling sunbeams fell upon the earth, I could trace the helmet of the Enniskilleners, or the tall bearskin of the Scotch Grays, lying in thick confusion where the steel cuirass and long sword of the French dragoons showed the fight had been hottest. As I turned my eyes hither and thither I could see no living thing near me. In every attitude of struggling agony they lay around; some buried beneath their horses, some bathed in blood, some, with clenched hands and darting eye-balls, seemed struggling even in death: but all was still—not a word, not a sigh, not a groan was there. I was turning to leave the spot, and, uncertain which way to direct my steps, looked once more around, when my glance rested upon the pale and marble features of one who, even in that moment of doubt and difficulty,

there was no mistaking. His coat, torn widely open, was grasped in either hand, while his breast was shattered with balls, and bathed in gore. Gashed and mutilated as he lay, still the features wore no trace of suffering; cold, pale, motionless, but with the tranquil look of sleep, his eyelids were closed, and his half-parted lips seemed still to quiver in life. I knelt down beside him; I took his hand in mine; I bent over and whispered his name; I placed my hand upon his heart, where even still the life-blood was warm—but he was dead. Poor Hammersley. His was a gallant soul; and, as I looked upon his blood-stained corpse, my tears fell fast and hot upon his brow to think how far I had myself been the cause of a life blighted in its hope, and a death like his.

CHAPTER CXXI.

BRUSSELS.

ONCE more I would entreat my reader's indulgence for the prolixity of a narrative which has grown beneath my hands to a length I had never intended. This shall, however, be the last time for either the offense or the apology. My story is now soon concluded.

After wandering about for some time, uncertain which way to take, I at length reached the Charleroi road, now blocked by carriages and wagons conveying the wounded toward Brussels. Here I learnt, for the first time, that we had gained the battle, and heard of the total annihilation of the French army, and the downfall of the Emperor. On arriving at the farm-house of Mont St. Jean, I found a number of officers, whose wounds prevented their accompanying the army in its forward movement. One of them, with whom I was slightly acquainted, informed me that General Dashwood had spent the greater part of the night upon the field in search of me, and that my servant, Mike, was in a state of distraction at my absence that bordered on insanity. While he was speaking, a burst of laughter and the tones of a well-remembered voice behind attracted my attention.

"Made a very good thing of it, upon my life. A dressing-case—not gold, you know, but silver-gilt—a dozen knives, with bloodstone handles, and a little coffee-pot, with the imperial arms—not to speak of three hundred Naps in a green silk purse—Lord! it reminds me of the Peninsula. Do you know, those Prussians are mere barbarians—haven't a notion of civilized war. Bless your heart, my fellows in the Legion would have ransacked the whole coach, from the boot to the sword-case, in half the time they took to cut down the coachman."

"The Major! as I live," said I. "How goes it, Major?"

"Eh, Charley, when did you turn up? Delighted to see you. They told me you were badly wounded, or killed, or something of that kind; but I should have paid the little debt to your executors all the same."

"All the same, no doubt, Major; but where, in Heaven's name, did you fall upon that mine of pillage you have just been talking of?"

"In the Emperor's carriage, to be sure, boy. While the Duke was watching all day the advance of Ney's columns, and keeping an anxious look-out for the Prussians, I sat in a window in this old farm-house, and never took my eye off the garden at Planchenoit. I saw the imperial carriage there in the morning—it was there also at noon—and they never put the horses to it till past seven in the evening. The roads were very heavy, and the crowd was great. I judged the pace couldn't be a fast one; and with four of the Enniskilleners I charged it like a man. The Prussians, however, had the start of us; and if they hadn't thought, from my seat on horseback and my general appearance, that I was Lord Uxbridge, I should have got but a younger son's portion. However, I got in first, filled my pockets with a few little *souvenirs* of the Emperor, and then, laying my hands upon what was readiest, got out in time to escape being shot; for two of Blucher's hussars, thinking I must be the Emperor, fired at me through the window."

"What an escape you had!"

"Hadn't I though? Fortunate, too, my Enniskilleners saw the whole thing; for I intend to make the circumstance the ground of an application for a pension. Harkye, Charley, don't say anything about the coffee-pot and the knives. The Duke, you know, has strange notions of his own on these matters. But isn't that your fellow fighting his way yonder?"

"Tear an ages! don't howld me—that's himself—devil a one else."

This exclamation came from Mickey Free, who, with his dress torn and disheveled, his eyes bloodshot and strained, was upsetting and elbowing all before him, as he made his way toward me through the crowd.

"Take that fellow to the guard-house!

Lay hold of him, sergeant. Knock him down! Who is the scoundrel?"

Such were the greetings he met with on every side. Regardless of everything and everybody, he burst his way through the dense mass.

"O murther! O Mary! O Moses! Is he safe here after all?"

The poor fellow could say no more, but burst into a torrent of tears. A roar of laughter around him soon, however, turned the current of his emotions; when, dashing the scalding drops from his eyelids, he glared fiercely like a tiger on every side.

"Ye're laughing at me, are ye?" cried he, "bekase I love the hand that fed me, and the master that stood to me. But let us see now which of us two has the stoutest heart; you with your grin on you, or myself with the salt tears on my face."

As he spoke, he sprang upon them like a madman, striking right and left at everything before him. Down they went beneath his blows, leveled with the united strength of energy and passion, till at length, rushing upon him in numbers, he was overpowered and thrown to the ground. It was with some difficulty I accomplished his rescue; for his enemies felt by no means assured how far his amicable propensities for the future could be relied upon; and, indeed, Mike himself had a most constitutional antipathy to binding himself by any pledge. With some persuasion, however, I reconciled all parties; and having, by the kindness of a brother-officer, provided myself with a couple of troop horses, I mounted, and set out for Brussels, followed by Mickey, who had effectually cured his auditory of any tendency to laughter at his cost.

As I rode up to the Belle Vue, I saw Sir George Dashwood in the window. He was speaking to the Ambassador, Lord Clancarty; but the moment he caught my eye, hurried down to meet me.

"Charley, safe—safe, my boy! Now am I really happy. The glorious day had been one of sorrow to me for the rest of my life had anything happened to you. Come up with me at once; I have more than one friend here who longs to thank you."

So saying, he hurried me along; and, before I could well remember where I was, introduced me to a number of persons in the saloon.

"Ah! very happy to know you, sir," said Lord Clancarty; "perhaps we had better walk this way. My friend Dashwood has explained to me the very pressing reasons there are for this step; and I, for my part, see no objection."

"What, in Heaven's name, can he mean!" thought I, as he stopped short, expecting me to say something, while, in utter confusion, I smiled, simpered, and muttered some common-places.

"Love and war, sir," resumed the Ambassador, "very admirable associates, and you certainly have contrived to couple them most closely together. A long attachment, I believe?"

"Yes, sir, a very long attachment," stammered I, not knowing which of us was about to become insane.

"A very charming person, indeed; I have seen the lady," replied his Lordship, as he opened the door of a small room, and beckoned me to follow. The table was covered with paper and materials for writing; but before I had time to ask for any explanation of this unaccountable mystery, he added, "Oh, I was forgetting; this must be witnessed: wait one moment."

With these words he left the room, while I, amazed and thunderstruck, vacillating between fear and hope, trembling lest the delusive glimmering of happiness should give way at every moment, and yet totally unable to explain by any possible supposition how fortune could so far have favored me.

While yet I stood hesitating and uncertain, the door opened, and the Senhora entered. She looked a little pale, though not less beautiful than ever; and her features wore a slight trace of seriousness, which rather heightened than took from the character of her loveliness.

"I heard you had come, Chevalier," said she, "and so I ran down to shake hands with you. We may not meet again for some time."

"How so, Senhora? You are not going to leave us, I trust?"

"Then you have not seen Fred. Oh, I forgot, you know nothing of our plans."

"Here we are at last," said the Ambassador, as he came in, followed by Sir George, Power, and two other officers. "Ah, *ma belle*, how fortunate to find you here! I assure you it is a matter of no small difficulty to get people together at such a time as this."

"Charley, my dear friend," cried Power, "I scarcely hoped to have had a shake hands with you ere I left."

"Do, Fred, tell me what all this means? I am in a perfect maze of doubt and difficulty, and cannot comprehend a word I hear about me."

"Faith, my boy, I have little time for explanation. The man who was at Waterloo yesterday, is to be married to-morrow,

and to sail for India in a week, has quite enough upon his hands."

"Colonel Power, you will please to put your signature here," said Lord Clancarty, addressing himself to me.

"If you will allow me," said Fred, "I had rather represent myself."

"Is not this the Colonel, then? Why, confound it, I have been wishing him joy the last quarter of an hour."

A burst of laughter from the whole party, in which it was pretty evident I took no part, followed this announcement.

"And so you are not Colonel Power? Nor going to be married either?"

I stammered out something, while, overwhelmed with confusion, I stooped down to sign the paper. Scarcely had I done so, when a renewed burst of laughter broke from the party.

"Nothing but blunders, upon my soul," said the Ambassador, as he handed the paper from one to another.

What was my confusion to discover that, instead of Charles O'Malley, I had written the name Lucy Dashwood. I could bear no more. The laughing and raillery of my friends came upon my wounded and irritated feelings like the most poignant sarcasm. I seized my cap and rushed from the room. Desirous of escaping from all that knew me, anxious to bury my agitated and distracted thoughts in solitude and quiet, I opened the first door before me, and, seeing it an empty and unoccupied room, threw myself upon a sofa, and buried my head within my hands. Oh, how often had the phantom of happiness passed within my reach, but still glided from my grasp! How often had I beheld the goal I aimed at, as it were before me, and the next moment all the bleak reality of my evil fortune was lowering around me.

"Oh, Lucy, Lucy!" I exclaimed aloud, "but for you and a few words carelessly spoken, I had never trod that path of ambition, whose end has been the wreck of all my happiness. But for you, I had never loved so fondly; I had never filled my mind with one image which, excluding every other thought, leaves no pleasure but in it alone. Yes, Lucy, but for you I should have gone tranquilly down the stream of life with nought of grief or care, save such as are inseparable from the passing chances of mortality: loved, perhaps, and cared for by some one who would have deemed it no disgrace to have linked her fortune to my own. But for you, and I had never been—"

"A soldier, you would say," whispered a soft voice, as a light hand gently touched my shoulder. "I had come," continued she, "to thank you for a gift no gratitude can repay,—my father's life; but, truly, I did not think to hear the words you have spoken; nor, having heard them, can I feel their justice. No, Mr. O'Malley, deeply grateful as I am to you for the service you once rendered myself, bound as I am, by every tie of thankfulness, by the greater one to my father, yet do I feel that in the impulse I had given to your life, if so be that to me you owe it, I have done more to repay my debt to you, than by all the friendship, all the esteem I owe you; if, indeed, by my means, you became a soldier, if my few and random words raised within your breast that fire of ambition which has been your beacon-light to honor and to glory, then am I indeed proud."

"Alas, alas! Lucy—Miss Dashwood I would say—forgive me if I know not the very words I utter. How has my career fulfilled the promise that gave it birth? For you, and you only, to gain your affection, to win your heart, I became a soldier; hardship, danger, even death itself were courted by me, supported by the one thought that you had cared for, or had pitied me; and now, and now—"

"And now," said she, while her eyes beamed upon me with a very flood of tenderness, "is it nothing that in my woman's heart I have glowed with pride at triumphs I could read of, but dared not share in? Is it nothing that you have lent to my hours of solitude and of musing the fervor of that career, the maddening enthusiasm of that glorious path my sex denied me? I have followed you in my thoughts across the burning plains of the Peninsula, through the long hours of the march in the dreary nights, even to the battle-field. I have thought of you; I have dreamed of you; I have prayed for you."

"Alas! Lucy, but not loved me."

The very words, as I spoke them, sank with a despairing cadence upon my heart. Her hand, which had fallen upon mine, trembled violently; I pressed my lips upon it, but she moved it not. I dared to look up; her head was turned away, but her heaving bosom betrayed her emotion.

"No, no, Lucy," cried I, passionately, "I will not deceive myself; I ask for more than you can give me. Farewell!"

Now, and for the last time, I pressed her hand once more to my lips; my hot tears fell fast upon it. I turned to go, and threw one last look upon her. Our eyes met—I cannot say what it was—but in a moment the whole current of my thoughts was changed; her look was bent

upon me beaming with softness and affection, her hand gently pressed my own, and her lips murmured my name.

The door burst open at this moment, and Sir George Dashwood appeared. Lucy turned one fleeting look upon her father, and fell fainting into my arms.

"God bless you, my boy!" said the old general, as he hurriedly wiped a tear from his eye; "I am now, indeed, a happy father."

CHAPTER CXXII.

CONCLUSION.

* * * * *

The sun had set about half an hour. Already were the dusky shadows blending with the faint twilight, as on a lovely July evening we entered the little village of Portumna:—we, I say; for Lucy was beside me. For the last few miles of the way I had spoken little; thoughts of the many times I had traveled that same road, in how many moods, occupied my mind; and although, as we flew rapidly along, some well-known face would every now and then present itself, I had but time for the recognition ere we were passed. Arousing myself from my reverie, I was pointing out to Lucy certain well-known spots in the landscape, and directing her attention to places with the names of which she had been for some time familiar, when suddenly a loud shout rent the air, and the next moment the carriage was surrounded by hundreds of country people, some of whom brandished blazing pine torches; others carried rude banners in their hands; but all testified the most fervent joy as they bade us welcome. The horses were speedily unharnessed, and their places occupied by a crowd of every age and sex, who hurried us along through the straggling street of the village, now a perfect blaze of bonfires.

Mounds of turf, bog-fir, and tar-barrels sent up their ruddy blaze, while hundreds of wild, but happy faces, flitted around and through them—now dancing merrily in chorus; now plunging madly into the midst of the fire, and scattering the red embers on every side. Pipers were there too, mounted upon cars or turf-kishes; even the very roof-tops rang out their merry notes; the ensigns of the little fishing-craft waved in the breeze, and seemed to feel the general joy around them; while over the door of the village inn stood a brilliantly lighted transparency, representing the head of the O'Malleys holding a very scantily robed young lady by the tips of the fingers; but whether this damsel was intended to represent the genius of the west, or my wife, I did not venture to inquire.

If the welcome were rude, assuredly it was a hearty one. Kind wishes and blessings poured in on every side, and even our own happiness took a brighter coloring from the beaming looks around us. The scene was wild: the lurid glare of the red torchlight, the frantic gestures, the maddening shouts, the forked flames rising amidst the dark shadows of the little hamlet, had something strange and almost unearthly in their effect; but Lucy showed no touch of fear: it is true she grasped my hand a little closer, but her fair cheek glowed wiih pleasure, and her eye brightened as she looked; and, as the rich light fell upon her beauteous features, how many a blessing, heartfelt and deep, how many a word of fervent praise was spoken.

"Ah! then, the Lord be good to you; it's yourself has the darling blue eyes. Look at them, Mary; ain't they like the blossoms on a peacock's tail?—Musha, may sorrow never put a crease in that beautiful cheek! The saints watch over you! for your mouth is like a moss-rose. Be good to her, yer honor, for she's a raal gem: devil fear you, Mr. Charles, but you'd have a beauty."

We wended our way slowly, the crowd ever thickening around us, until we reached the market-place. Here the procession came to a stand, and I could perceive, by certain efforts around me, that some endeavor was making to enforce silence.

"Whisht there; hould your prate; be still, Paddy. Tear an ages, Molly Blake, don't be holding me that way; let us hear his reverence: put him up on the barrel: haven't you got a chair for the priest? Run, and bring a table out of Mat Haley's. Here, father—here, your reverence;—take care, will you?—you'll have the holy man in the blaze!"

By this time I could perceive that my worthy old friend, Father Rush, was in the midst of the mob, with what appeared to be a written oration, as long as the tail of a kite, between his hands.

"Be aisy, there, ye savages—who's tearing the back of my neck?—howld me up straight—steady, now—hem!"

"Take the laste taste in life to wet your lips, your riverence," said a kind voice, while at the same moment a smoking tumbler of what seemed to be punch appeared on the heads of the crowd.

"Thank ye, Judy," said the father, as he drained the cup. "Howld the light

up higher; I can't read my speech; there now; be quiet, will ye? Here goes. Peter, stand to me now and give me the word."

This admonition was addressed to a figure on a barrel behind the priest, who, as well as the imperfect light would permit me to descry, was the coadjutor of the parish, Peter Nolan. Silence being perfectly established, Father Rush began:

"When Mars, the God of war, on high,
Of battles first did think,
He girt his sword upon his thigh,
And—

And—what is't, Peter?"

"And mixed a drop of drink."

"And mixed a drop of drink," quoth Father Rush, with great emphasis; when scarcely were the words spoken than a loud shout of laughter showed him his mistake, and he overturned upon the luckless curate the full vial of his wrath.

"What is it you mean, Father Peter? I'm ashamed of ye; faith it's maybe yourself, not Mars, you are speaking of."

The roar of merriment around prevented me hearing what passed; but I could see by Peter's gestures—for it was too dark to see his face—that he was expressing deep sorrow for the mistake. After a little time, order was again established, and Father Rush resumed:

"But love drove battles from his head
And sick of wounds and scars,
To Venus bright he knelt, and said—

And said—and said; what the blazes did he say?"

"I'll make you Mrs. Mars,"

shouted Peter, loud enough to be heard.

"Bad luck to you, Peter Nolan, it's yourself's the ruin of me this blessed night. Here have I come four miles with my speech in my pocket, '*per imbres et ignes.*'" Here the crowd crossed themselves devoutly. "Ay, just so; and he spoilt it for me entirely." At the earnest entreaty, however, of the crowd, Father Rush, with renewed caution to his unhappy prompter, again returned to the charge:

"Thus love compelled the god to yield
And seek for purer joys;
He laid aside his helm and shield,
And took—

Took—took—"

"And took to corduroys,"

cried Father Nolan.

This time, however, the good priest's patience could endure no more, and he leveled a blow at his luckless colleague, which, missing his aim, lost him his own balance, and brought him down from his eminence upon the heads of the mob.

Scarcely had I recovered the perfect convulsion of laughter into which this scene had thrown me, when the broad brim of Father Nolan's hat appeared at the window of the carriage. Before I had time to address him, he took it reverently from his head, disclosing in the act the ever-memorable features of Master Frank Webber!

"What! Eh!—can it be?" said I.

"It is surely not——" said Lucy, hesitating at the name.

"Your aunt, Miss Judy Macan, no more than the Rev. Peter Nolan, I assure you; though, I confess, it has cost me much more to personate the latter character than the former, and the reward by no means so tempting."

Here poor Lucy blushed deeply at the remembrance of the scene alluded to; and, anxious to turn the conversation, I asked by what stratagem he had succeeded to the functions of the worthy Peter?

"At the cost of twelve tumblers of the strongest punch ever brewed at the O'Malley Arms. The good father gave in only ten minutes before the oration began, and I had barely time to change my dress and mount the barrel, without a moment's preparation."

The procession once more resumed its march, and hurried along through the town; we soon reached the avenue. Here fresh preparations for welcoming us had also been made; but, regardless of blazing tar-barrels and burning logs, the reckless crowd pressed madly on, their wild cheers waking the echoes as they went. We soon reached the house, but with a courtesy which even the humblest and poorest native of this country is never devoid of, the preparations of noise and festivity had not extended to the precincts of the dwelling. With a tact which those of higher birth and older blood might be proud of, they limited the excesses of their reckless and careless merriment to their own village: so that, as we approached the terrace, all was peaceful, still, and quiet.

I lifted Lucy from the carriage, and, passing my arm around her, was assisting her to mount the steps, when a bright gleam of moonlight burst forth, and lit up the whole scene. It was, indeed, an im-

pressive one. Among the assembled hundreds there who stood bare-headed, beneath the cold moonlight, not a word was now spoken—not a whisper heard. I turned from the lawn, where the tall beech-trees were throwing their gigantic shadows, to where the river, peering at intervals through the foliage, was flowing on its silvery track, plashing amid the tall flaggers that lined its banks—all were familiar, all were dear to me from childhood. How doubly were they so now! I lifted up my eyes toward the door, and what was my surprise at the object before them! Seated in a large chair was an old man, whose white hair, flowing in straggling masses upon his neck and shoulders, stirred with the night air; his hands rested upon his knees, and his eyes, turned slightly upward, seemed to seek for some one he found it difficult to recognize. Changed as he was by time, heavily as years had done their work upon him, the stern features were not to be mistaken; but, as I looked, he called out, in a voice whose unshaken firmness seemed to defy the touch of time,

"Charley O'Malley! come here, my boy. Bring her to me, till I bless you both. Come here, Lucy: I may call you so. Come here, my children. I have tried to live on to see this day, when the head of an old house comes back with honor, with fame, and with fortune, to dwell amidst his own people in the old home of his fathers."

The old man bent above us, his white hair falling upon the fair locks of her who knelt beside him, and pressed his cold and quivering hand within her own.

"Yes, Lucy," said I, as I led her within the house, "this is home."

Here now ends my story. The patient reader who has followed me so far, deserves at my hands that I should not trespass upon his kindness one moment beyond the necessity; if, however, any lurking interest may remain for some of those who have accompanied me through this my history, it may be as well that I should say a few words further, ere they disappear forever.

Power went to India immediately after his marriage, distinguished himself repeatedly in the Burmese war, and finally rose to a high command that he this moment holds, with honor to himself and advantage to his country.

O'Shaughnessy, on half-pay, wanders about the Continent; passing his summers on the Rhine, his winters at Florence or Geneva. Known to and by everybody, his interest in the service keeps him *au courant* to every change and regulation, rendering him an invaluable companion to all to whom an army list is inaccessible. He is the same good fellow he ever was, and adds to his many excellent qualities the additional one of being the only man who can make a bull in French!

Monsoon, the Major, when last I saw him, was standing on the pier at Calais, endeavoring, with a cheap telescope, to make out the Dover cliffs, from a nearer prospect of which certain little family circumstances might possibly debar him. He recognized me in a moment, and held out his hand, while his eye twinkled with its ancient drollery.

"Charley, my son, how goes it? delighted to see you. What a pity I did not meet you yesterday! Had a little dinner at Crillon's. Harding, Vivian, and a few others. They all wished for you; 'pon my life they did."

"Civil, certainly," thought I, "as I have not the honor of being known to them."

"You are at Meurice's," resumed he; "a very good house, but give you bad wine, if they don't know you. They know me," added he, in a whisper; "never try any tricks upon me. I'll just drop in upon you at six."

"It is most unfortunate, Major; I can't have the pleasure you speak of; we start in half an hour."

"Never mind, Charley, never mind; another time. By-the-by, now I think of it, don't you remember something of a ten-pound note you owe me?"

"As well as I remember, Major, the circumstance was reversed: you are the debtor."

"Upon my life you are right: how droll! No matter, let me have the ten, and I'll give you a check for the whole."

The Major thrust his tongue into his cheek as he spoke, gave another leer, pocketed the note, and sauntered down the pier muttering something to himself about King David and greenhorns; but how they were connected I could not precisely overhear.

Baby Blake, or Mrs. Sparks, to call her by her more fitting appellation, is as handsome as ever, and not less good-humored and light-hearted, her severest trials being her ineffectual efforts to convert Sparks into something like a man for Galway.

Last of all, Mickey Free. Mike remains attached to our fortune firmly, as at first he opened his career; the same gay, rollicksome Irishman, making songs, making love, and occasionally making punch, he spends his days and his nights pretty much

as he was wont to do some thirty years ago. He obtains an occasional leave of absence for a week or so, but for what precise purpose, or with what exact object, I have never been completely able to ascertain. I have heard it as true, that a very fascinating companion and a most agreeable gentleman frequents a certain oyster-house in Dublin, called Burton Bindon's. I have also been told of a distinguished foreigner, whose black moustache and broken English were the admiration of Cheltenham for the last two winters. I greatly fear from the high tone of the conversation in the former, and for the taste in continental characters in the latter resort, that I could fix upon the individual whose convivial and socials gifts have won so much of their esteem and admiration; but were I to run on thus, I should recur to every character of my story, with each and all of whom you have, doubtless, grown well wearied: so here for the last time, and with every kind wish, I say—adieu!

JACK HINTON,

THE GUARDSMAN.

PREFACE.

THE unlooked-for favor with which the public received Charles O'Malley, and the pleasant notices forwarded to me from my publisher, gave me great courage; and when asked if I could be ready by a certain date with a new story, I never hesitated to say, Yes. My first thought was, that in the campaign of the Great Napoleon, I might find what would serve as a "pendant" to the story I had just completed, and that by making—as there would be no impropriety in doing—an Irishman a soldier of France, I could still have on my side certain sympathies of my reader which would not so readily attach to a foreigner. I surrounded myself at once with all the histories and memoirs I could find of the Consulate and the Empire; and, so far as I could, withdrew my mind from questions of home interest, and lived entirely amidst the mighty events that began at Marengo and ended at Waterloo.

Whether I failed to devise such a narrative as I needed, or whether—and I suspect this must have been the real reason—I found that the vastness of the theme overpowered me, I cannot at this distance of time remember. But so it was, that I found much time had slipped over, and that beyond some few notes and some scattered references, I had actually done nothing; and my publisher had applied to me for the title of my story for advertisement, before I had begun or written one line of it.

Some disparaging remarks on Ireland and Irishmen in the London press, not very unfrequent at the time, nor altogether obsolete even now, had provoked me at the moment; and the sudden thought occurred of a reprisal by showing the many instances in which the Englishman would almost of necessity mistake and misjudge my countrymen, and that out of these blunders and misapprehensions, situations might arise that, if welded into a story, might be made to be amusing. I knew that there was not a class nor a condition in Ireland which had not marked differences from the correlative rank in England; and that not only the Irish squire, the Irish priest, and the Irish peasant, were unlike anything in the larger island, but that the Dublin professional man, the official, and the shopkeeper had traits and distinctions essentially their own. I had frequently heard opinions pronounced on Irish habits which I could easily trace to that quizzing habit of my countrymen, who never can deny themselves the enjoyment of playing on the credulity of the traveler—all the more eagerly when they see his note-book taken out to record their shortcomings and absurdities.

These thoughts suggested Jack Hinton, and led me to turn from my intention to follow the French arms, or rather to postpone the plan to another opportunity, for it had got too strong hold on me to be utterly abandoned.

I have already acknowledged, in a former notice to this story, that I strayed from the path I had determined on, and with very little reference to my original intention, suffered my hero to take his chance among the natives. Indeed, I soon found him too intensely engaged in the cares of self-preservation to have much time or taste for criticism on his neighbors.

I have owned elsewhere, that for Mr. Paul Rooney, Father Tom Loftus, Bob Mahon, O'Grady, Tipperary Joe, and even Corny Delany, I had not to draw on imagination, but I never yet heard one correct guess as to the originals. While on this theme, I may recall an incident which occurred about three years after the story was published, and which, if only for the trait of good humor it displayed, is worth remembering. I was making a little rambling tour through Ireland with my wife, following for the most part the seaboard, and only taking such short cuts inland as should bring us to some spot of especial interest. We journeyed with our own horses, and consequently rarely exceeded five-and-twenty or thirty miles in a day. While I was thus refreshing many an old memory, and occasionally acquiring some new experience, the ramble interested me much. It was in the course of this almost capricious journey—for we really had nothing like a plan—we reached the little town of Gort, where, to rest our horses, we were obliged to remain a day. There was not much to engage attention in the place. It was, perhaps, less marked by poverty than most Irish towns of its class, and somewhat cleaner and more orderly; but the same distinctive signs were there of depression, the same look of inertness that one remarks almost universally through the land.

In strolling half listlessly about on the outskirts of the town, we were overtaken by a heavy thunderstorm, and driven to take shelter in a little shop where a number of other people had also sought refuge. As we stood there, an active-looking but elderly man in the neat black of an ecclesiastic, and with a rosette in his hat, politely addressed us; and proposed that instead of standing there in the crowd we would accept the hospitality of his lodging, which was in the same house, till such time as the storm should have passed over. His manner, his voice, and his general appearance convinced me he was a dignitary of our church. I thanked him at once for his courtesy, and accepted his offer. He proceeded to show us the way, and we entered a very comfortably furnished sitting-room where a pleasant fire was burning, and sat down well pleased with our good fortune.

While we chatted freely over the weather and the crops, some chance expression escaped me to show that I had regarded him as a clergyman of the established church. He at once, but with peculiar delicacy, hastened to correct my mistake and introduced himself as the Roman Catholic Dean O'Shaughnessy. "I am aware whom I am speaking to," added he, pronouncing my name. Before I could express more than my surprise at being recognized where I had not one acquaintance, he explained that he had read of my being in the neighborhood in some local paper, which described our mode of traveling, and led him at once to guess our identity.

After a few very flattering remarks on the pleasure something of mine had afforded him, he said, "You are very hard upon *us*, Mr. Lever. You never let *us* off easily, but I assure you for all that we bear you no ill-will. There is a strong national tie between us, and we can stand a great deal of quizzing for the sake of that bond."

I knew that he was alluding to his order, and when I said something—I cannot remember what—about the freedoms that fiction led to, he stopped, saying, "Well! well! The priests are not very angry with you after all; if it wasn't for one thing."

"Oh, I know," cried I, "that stupid story of Father Darcy and the Pope."

"No, no, not that; we laughed at that as much as any Protestant of you all. What we couldn't bear so well was an ugly remark you made in 'Harry Lorrequer,' where—when there was a row at a wake and the money was scattered over the floor—you say that the priest gathered more than his share because—and here was the bitterness—old habit had accustomed him to scrape up his corn in low places! Now, Mr. Lever, that was not fair, it was not generous, surely."

The good temper and the gentlemanlike quietness of the charge made me very uncomfortable at the time, and now, after many years, I recall the incident to show the impression it made on me,—the only atonement I can make for the flippancy.

I had begun this story of Jack Hinton at Brussels, but on a proposition made to me by the publisher and proprietor of the *Dublin Magazine* to take the editorship of that journal, I determined to return to Ireland.

To do this I was not alone to change my abode and country, but to alter the whole destiny of my life. I was at the time a practicing physician attached to the British Legation, with the best practice of any Englishman in the place, a most pleasant society, and, what I valued not less than them all, the intimacy of the most agreeable and companionable man I ever knew in my life, whose friendship I have never ceased to treasure with pride and affection. I dedicated to him my first book, and it is

with deep gratitude and pleasure I recall him while I give the last touches to these volumes.

There is one character in this story, and only one, to which imagination contributed scarcely anything in the portraiture, though I do not pretend to say that the situations in which I have placed him are derived from facts. Tipperary Joe was a real personage; and if there are among my readers any who remember the old coaching days between Dublin and Kilkenny, they cannot fail to recall the curious figure, clad in a scarlet hunting coat, and black velvet cap, who used, at the stage between Carlow and the Royal Oak, to emerge from some field beside the road, and after a trot of a mile or so beside the horses, crawl up at the back of the coach and over the roof, collecting what he called his rent from the passengers. A very humble tribute generally, but the occasion for a good deal of jesting and merriment;—not diminished if by any accident an English traveler were present, who could neither comprehend the relations between Joe and the gentlemen, nor the marvelous freedom with which this poor, ragged fellow discussed the passengers and their opinions.

Joe—I must call him so, for his real name has escaped me—once came to see me in Trinity College, and was curious to visit the chapel, the library, and the examination hall. I will not pretend that I undertook my office of cicerone without some misgivings, for though I was prepared to endure all the quizzings of my friends and acquaintances, I was not quite at my ease as to how the authorities—the dons—as they are called elsewhere, would regard this singular apparition within academic precincts. Joe's respectful manner, and an air of interest that bespoke how much the place engaged his curiosity, soon set me at my ease, while the ready tact with which he recognized and uncovered to such persons as held rank or station, at once satisfied me that I was incurring no risk whatever in my office of guide.

The kitchen and the sight of those gigantic spits, on which a whole series of legs of mutton were turning slowly, overcame all the studied reserve of his manner, and he burst out into a most enthusiastic encomium on the merits of an institution so admirably suited to satisfy human requirements.

When he learned, from what source I do not know, that I had put him in a book, he made it—not unreasonably, perhaps—the ground of a demand on my purse, and if the talented artist who had illustrated the tale had been accessible to him, I suspect that he, too, would have had to submit to the levy of a black mail; all the more heavily, as Joe was by no means pleased with a portrait which really only self-flattery could have objected to.

Hablot K. Browne never saw him, and yet in his sketch of him standing to say his "good-bye" to Jack Hinton, at Kingston, he has caught the character of his figure and the moping lounge of his attitude to perfection. Indeed, though there is no resemblance in the face to Joe, the pose of the head and the position of the limbs recall him at once.

I have already said elsewhere that the volume amused me while I was writing it. Indeed, I had not at that time exhausted, if I had even tapped, the cask of a buoyancy of temperament which carried me along through my daily life in the sort of spirit one rides a fresh horse over a swelling sward. If this confession will serve to apologize for the want of studied coherency in the narrative, and the reckless speed in which events succeed events throughout, I shall deem myself much indebted to the generous indulgence of my readers.

I am now, so far as this book is concerned, at the end of my explanations. My excuses for its shortcomings, its errors, and extravagances, would not—were I to undertake them—be so easily dismissed. For my reader's sake, and for my own, I will not enter upon them, but write myself—for the favor which has not remembered these blemishes, nor suffered them to damage the tale in its effect as a whole—

Most gratefully and sincerely,
CHARLES LEVER.

TRIESTE, 1872.

CHAPTER I.

A FAMILY PARTY.

IT was on a dark and starless night in February, 181—, as the last carriage of a dinner-party had driven from the door of a large house in St. James's Square, when a party drew closer around the drawing-room fire, apparently bent upon that easy and familiar chit-chat the presence of company interdicts.

One of these was a large and fine-looking man of about five-and-forty, who, dressed in the full uniform of a general officer, wore, besides, the ribbon of the Bath; he leaned negligently upon the chimney-piece, and, with his back toward the fire, seemed

to follow the current of his own reflections; this was my father.

Beside him, but almost concealed in the deep recess of a well-cushioned armchair, sat, or rather lay, a graceful figure, who with an air of languid repose was shading her fine complexion as well from the glare of the fire as from the trying brilliancy of an Argand lamp upon the mantelpiece. Her rich dress, resplendent with jewels, while it strangely contrasted with the careless ease of her attitude, also showed that she had bestowed a more than common attention that day upon her toilet: this, fair reader, was my mother.

Opposite to her, and disposed in a position of rather studied gracefulness, lounged a tall, thin, fashionable-looking man, with a dark olive complexion, and a short black moustache. He wore in the buttonhole of his blue coat the ribbon of St. Louis. The Count de Grammont, for such he was, was an *émigré* noble, who, attached to the fortunes of the Bourbons, had resided for some years in London, and who, in the double capacity of adviser of my father and admirer of my lady-mother, obtained a considerable share of influence in the family and a seat at its councils.

At a little distance from the rest, and apparently engaged with her embroidery, sat a very beautiful girl, whose dark hair and long lashes deepened the seeming paleness of features a Greek sculptor might have copied. While nothing could be more perfect than the calm loveliness of her face and the delicate penciling of her slightly-arched eyebrows, an accurate observer could detect that her tremulous lip occasionally curled with a passing expression of half scorn, as from time to time she turned her eyes toward each speaker in turn, while she herself maintained a perfect silence. My cousin, Lady Julia Egerton, had indeed but that one fault: shall I venture to call by so harsh a name that spirit of gentle malice which loved to look for the ludicrous features of everything around her, and inclined her to indulge what the French call the *esprit moqueur* even on occasions where her own feelings were interested?

The last figure of the group was a stripling of some nineteen years, who, in the uniform of the Guards, was endeavoring to seem perfectly easy and unconcerned, while it was evident that his sword-knot divided his attention with some secret thoughts that rendered him anxious and excited: this was myself!

A silence of some moments was at length broken by my mother, who, with a kind of sigh Miss O'Neill was fond of, turned toward the count, and said,—

"Do confess, Count, we were all most stupid to-day. Never did a dinner go off so heavily. But it's always the penalty one pays for a royal duke. *A propos*, General, what did he say of Jack's appointment?"

"Nothing could be more kind, nothing more generous than his royal highness. The very first thing he did in the room was to place this dispatch in my hands. This, Jack," said my father, turning to me, "this is your appointment as an extra aide-de-camp."

"Very proper, indeed," interposed my mother; "I am very happy to think you'll be about the court. Windsor, to be sure, is stupid."

"He is not likely to see much of it," said my father drily.

"Oh, you think he'll be in town then?"

"Why, not exactly that either."

"Then, what can you mean?" said she, with more of animation than before.

"Simply, that his appointment is on the staff in Ireland."

"In Ireland!" repeated my mother, with a tragic start. "In Ireland!"

"In Ireland!" said Lady Julia, in a low, soft voice.

"En Irlande!" echoed the count, with a look of well-got-up horror, as he elevated his eyebrows to the very top of his forehead; while I myself, to whom the communication was as sudden and as unexpected, assumed a kind of soldier-like indifference, as though to say, "What matters it to me? what do I care for the rigors of climate? the snows of the Caucasus, or the suns of Bengal, are quite alike; even Ireland, if his majesty's service require it."

"Ireland!" repeated my mother once more; "I really never heard anything so very shocking. But, my dear Jack, you can't think of it. Surely, General, you had presence of mind to decline."

"To accept, and to thank most gratefully his royal highness for such a mark of his favor, for this I had quite presence of mind," said my father, somewhat haughtily.

"And you really will go, Jack?"

"Most decidedly," said I, as I put on a kind of Godefroy de Bouillon look and strutted about the room.

"And pray what can induce you to such a step?"

"Oui, 'que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?'" said the count.

"By Jove!" cried my father, hastily, "you are intolerable; you wished your

boy to be a guardsman in opposition to my desire for a regiment on service. You would have him an aide-de-camp: now he is both one and the other. In heaven's name, what think ye of getting him made a lady of the bedchamber? for it's the only appointment I am aware of——"

"You are too absurd, general," said my mother, pettishly. "Count, pray touch the bell; the fire is so very hot, and I really was quite unprepared for this piece of news."

"And you, Julia," said I, leaning over the back of my cousin's chair, "what do you say to all this?"

"I've just been thinking what a pity it is I should have wasted all my skill and my worsted on this foolish rug, while I could have been embroidering a gay banner for our young knight bound for the wars. 'Partant pour la Syrie,'" hummed she, half pensively, while I could see a struggling effort to suppress a laugh. I turned indignantly away, and walked toward the fire, where the count was expending his consolations on my mother.

"After all, miladi, it is not so bad as you think in the provinces; I once spent three weeks in Brittany, very pleasantly indeed: *oui, pardieu*, it's quite true. To be sure, we had Perlet, and Mademoiselle Mars, and got up the *Précieuses Ridicules* as well as in Paris."

The application of this very apposite fact to Ireland was clearly satisfactory to my mother, who smiled benignly at the speaker, while my father turned upon him a look of the most indescribable import.

"Jack, my boy!" said he, taking me by the arm, "were I your age, and had no immediate prospect of active service, I should prefer Ireland to any country in the world. I have plenty of old friends on the staff there. The duke himself was my schoolfellow——"

"I hope he will be properly attentive," interrupted my mother. "Dear Jack, remind me to-morrow to write to Lady Mary."

"Don't mistake the country you are going to," continued my father; "you will find many things very different from what you are leaving; and, above all, be not over ready to resent, as an injury, what may merely be intended as a joke: your brother officers will always guide you on these points."

"And above all things," said my mother, with great earnestness, "do not adopt that odious fashion of wearing their hair. I've seen members of both Houses, and particularly that little man they talk so much of. Mr. Grattan, I believe they call him——"

"Make your mind perfectly easy on that head, my lady," said my father, drily, "your son is not particularly likely to resemble Henry Grattan."

My cousin Julia alone seemed to relish the tone of sarcasm he spoke in, for she actually bestowed on him a look of almost grateful acknowledgment.

"The carriage, my lady," said the servant. And at the same moment my mother, possibly not sorry to cut short the discussion, rose from her chair.

"Do you intend to look in at the duchess's, General?"

"For half an hour," replied my father; "after that I have my letters to write. Jack, you know, leaves us to-morrow."

"'Tis really very provoking," said my mother, turning at the same time a look toward the count.

"A vos ordres, madame," said he, bowing with an air of most deferential politeness, while he presented his arm for her acceptance.

"Good-night, then," cried I, as the party left the room; "I have so much to do and to think of, I shan't join you." I turned to look for Lady Julia, but she was gone, when and how I knew not: so I sat down at the fire to ruminate alone over my present position, and my prospects for the future.

* * * * * *

These few and imperfect passages may put the reader in possession of some, at least, of the circumstances which accompanied my outset in life; and if they be not sufficiently explicit, I can only say, that he knows fully as much of me as at the period in question I did of myself.

At Eton, I had been what is called rather a smart boy, but incorrigibly idle; at Sandhurst, I showed more ability, and more disinclination to learn. By the favor of a royal duke (who had been my godfather), my commission in a marching regiment was exchanged for a lieutenancy in the Guards; and at the time I write of I had been some six months in the service, which I spent in all the whirl and excitement of London society. My father, who, besides being a distinguished officer, was one of the most popular men among the clubs, my mother, a London beauty of some twenty years' standing, were claims sufficient to ensure me no common share of attention, while I added to the number what, in my own estimation at least were, certain very decided advantages of a purely personal nature.

To obviate, as far as might be, the evil results of such a career, my father secretly asked for the appointment on the staff of the noble duke then viceroy of Ireland, in preference to what my mother contemplated—my being attached to the royal household. To remove me alike from the enervating influence of a mother's vanity, and the extravagant profusion and voluptuous abandonment of London habits, this was his object. He calculated, too, that by new ties, new associations, and new objects of ambition, I should be better prepared, and more desirous of that career of real service to which in his heart he destined me. These were his notions, at least: the result must be gleaned from my story.

CHAPTER II.

THE IRISH PACKET.

A FEW nights after the conversation I have briefly alluded to, and pretty much about the same hour, I aroused myself from the depression of nearly thirty hours' sea-sickness, on hearing that at length we were in the bay of Dublin. Hitherto I had never left the precincts of the narrow den denominated my berth; but now I made my way eagerly on deck, anxious to catch a glimpse, however faint, of that bold coast I had more than once heard compared with, or even preferred to, Naples. The night, however, was falling fast, and, worse still, a perfect downpour of rain was falling with it; the sea ran high, and swept the little craft from stem to stern; the spars bent like whips, and our single topsail strained and stretched as though at every fresh plunge it would part company with us altogether. No trace or outline of the coast could I detect on any side; a deep red light appearing and disappearing at intervals, as we rode upon or sank beneath the trough of the sea, was all that my eye could perceive: this the dripping helmsman briefly informed me was the "Kish," but, as he seemed little disposed for conversation, I was left to my unassisted ingenuity to make out whether it represented any point of the capital we were approaching or not.

The storm of wind and rain increasing at each moment, drove me once more back to the cabin, where, short as had been the period of my absence, the scene had undergone a most important change. Up to this moment my sufferings and my seclusion gave me little leisure or opportunity to observe my fellow travelers. The stray and scattered fragments of conversation that reached me rather puzzled than enlightened me. Of the topics which I innocently supposed occupied all human attention, not a word was dropped; Carlton House was not once mentioned; the St. Leger and the Oakes not even alluded to; whether the prince's breakfast was to come off at Knightsbridge or Frogmore, no one seemed to know, or even care; nor was a hint dropped as to the fashion of the new bearskins the guard were to sport at the review on Hounslow. The price of pigs, however, in Ballinasloe, they were perfect in. Of a late row in Kil—something, where one half of the population had massacred the other, they knew everything, even to the names of the defunct. A few of the better dressed chatted over country matters, from which I could glean that game and gentry were growing gradually scarcer; but a red-nosed, fat old gentleman, in rusty black and high boots, talked down the others by an eloquent account of the mawling that he, a certain Father Tom Loftus, had given the Reverend Paul Strong, at a late controversial meeting in the Rotunda.

Through all this "bald, disjointed chat," unceasing demands were made for bottled porter, "matarials," or spirits and wather, of which, were I to judge from the frequency of the requests, the consumption must have been awful.

There would seem something in the very attitude of lying down that induces reflection, and, thus stretched at full length in my berth, I could not help ruminating upon the land I was approaching, in a spirit which, I confess, accorded much more with my mother's prejudices than my father's convictions. From the few chance phrases dropped around me, it appeared that even the peaceful pursuits of a country market, or the cheerful sports of the field, were followed up in a spirit of recklessness and devilment; so that many a head that left home without a care went back with a crack in it. But to return once more to the cabin. It must be borne in mind that some thirty odd years ago the passage between Liverpool and Dublin was not, as at present, the rapid flight of a dozen hours, from shore to shore; where, on one evening, you left the thundering din of wagons, and the iron crank of cranes and windlasses, to wake the next morning with the rich brogue of Paddy floating softly around you. Far from it! the thing was then a voyage. You took a solemn leave of your friends, you tore

yourself from the embraces of your family, and, with a tear in your eye and a hamper on your arm, you betook yourself to the pier to watch, with an anxious and a beating heart, every step of the three hours' proceeding that heralded your departure. In those days there was some honor in being a traveler; and the man who had crossed the Channel a couple of times became a kind of Captain Cook among his acquaintances.

The most singular feature of the whole affair, however, and the one to which I am about now to allude, proceeded from the fact that the steward in those days, instead of the extensive resources of the present period, had little to offer you, save some bad brandy and a biscuit, and each traveler had to look to his various wants with an accuracy and foresight that required both tact and habit. The mere demands of hunger and thirst were not only to be considered in the abstract, but a point of far greater difficulty, the probable length of the voyage, was to be taken into consideration; so that you brought your beefsteaks with your eye upon the barometer, and laid in your mutton by the age of the moon. While thus the agency of the season was made to react upon your stomach, in a manner doubtless highly conducive to the interests of science, your part became one of the most critical nicety.

Scarcely were you afloat, and on the high seas, when your appetite was made to depend on the aspect of the weather. Did the wind blow fresh and fair, you ate away with a careless ease and a happy conscience, highly beneficial to your digestion. With a glance through the skylight at the blue heaven, with a sly look at the prosperous dog-vane, you helped yourself to the liver wing, and took an extra glass of your sherry. Let the breeze fall, however, let a calm come on, or, worse still, a trampling noise on deck, and a certain rickety motion of the craft betoking a change of wind, the knife and fork fell listlessly from your hand, the unlifted cutlet was consigned to your plate, the very spoonful of gravy you had devoured in imagination was dropped upon the dish, and you replaced the cork in your bottle, with the sad sigh of a man who felt that, instead of his income, he has been living on the principal of his fortune.

Happily, there is a reverse to the medal, and this it was to which now my attention was directed. The trip, as occasionally happened, was a rapid one; and while under the miserable impression that a fourth part of the journey had not been accomplished, we were blessed with the tidings of land. Scarcely was the word uttered, when it flew from mouth to mouth; and I thought I could trace the elated look of proud and happy hearts, as home drew near. What was my surprise, however, to see the enthusiasm take another and very different channel. With one accord a general rush was made upon the hampers of prog. Baskets were burst open on every side. Sandwiches and sausages, porter bottles, cold punch, chickens, and hard eggs, were strewn about with a careless and reckless profusion; none seemed too sick or too sore for this general epidemic of feasting. Old gentlemen sat up in their beds and bawled for beef; children of tender years brandished a drumstick. Individuals who but a short half-hour before seemed to have made a hearty meal, testified by the ravenous exploits of their appetites to their former forbearance and abstemiousness. Even the cautious little man in the brown spencer, who wrapped up the remnant of his breakfast in the *Times*, now opened his whole store, and seemed bent upon a day of rejoicing. Never was such a scene of riotous noise and tumultuous mirth. Those who scowled at each other till now, hob-nobbed across the table; and simpering old maids cracked merry thoughts with gay bachelors, without even a passing fear for the result. "Thank heaven," said I, aloud, "that I see all this with my sense and my intellects clear about me." Had I suddenly awoke to such a prospect from the disturbed slumber of sickness, the chances were ten to one I had jumped overboard, and swam for my life. In fact, it could convey but one image to the mind, such as we read of, when some infuriated and reckless men, despairing of safety, without a hope left, resolve upon closing life in the mad orgies of drunken abandonment.

Here were the meek, the tranquil, the humble-minded, the solitary, the sea-sick, all suddenly converted into riotous and roystering feasters. The lips that scarcely moved, now blew the froth from a porter cup with the blast of a Boreas: and even the small urchin in the green face and nankeen jacket, bolted hard eggs with the dexterity of a clown in a pantomime. The end of all things (eatable) had certainly come. Chickens were dismembered like felons, and even jokes and witticisms were bandied upon the victuals. "What, if even yet," thought I, "the wind should change!" The idea was a malicious one, too horrible to indulge in. At this mo-

ment the noise and turmoil on deck apprised me that our voyage was near its termination.

The night, as I have said, was dark and stormy. It rained too—as it knows only how to rain in Ireland. There was that steady persistence, that persevering monotony of downpour, which, not satisfied with wetting you to the skin, seems bent upon converting your very blood into water. The wind swept in long and moaning gusts along the bleak pier, which, late and inclement as it was, seemed crowded with people. Scarcely was a rope thrown ashore, when we were boarded on every side, by the rigging, on the shrouds, over the bulwarks, from the anchor to the taff-rail; the whole population of the island seemed to flock in upon us; while sounds of welcome and recognition resounded on all sides,—

"How are you, Mister Maguire?" "Is the mistress with you?" "Is that you, Mr. Tierney?" "How are you, ma'am?" "And yourself, Tim?" "Beautiful, glory be to God!" "A great passage, entirely, ma'am." "Nothing but rain since I seen you." "Take the trunks up to Mrs. Tunstall; and, Tim, darling, oysters and punch for four."

"Great mercy!" said I, "eating again!"

"Morrison, your honor," said a ragged ruffian, nudging me by the elbow.

"Reilly, sir; isn't it? It's me, sir—the club. I'm the man always drives your honor?"

"Arrah, howld your prate," said a deep voice, "the gentleman hasn't time to bless himself."

"It's me, sir; Owen Daly, that has the black horse."

"More by token, with a spavin," whispered another; while a roar of laughter followed the joke.

"A car, sir—take you up in five minutes."

"A chaise, your honor—do the thing dacently."

Now, whether my hesitation at this moment was set down by the crowd of my solicitors to some doubt of my solvency or not, I cannot say; but true it is, their tone of obsequeous entreaty gradually changed into one of rather caustic criticism.

"Maybe it's a gossoon you'd like to carry the little trunk."

"Let him alone; it's only a carpet-bag; he'll carry it himself."

"Don't you see the gentleman would rather walk? and as the night is fine, 'tis pleasanter—and—cheaper."

"Take you for a fipp'ny bit and a glass of sparits," said a gruff voice in my ear.

By this time I had collected my luggage together, whose imposing appearance seemed once more to testify in my favor, particularly the case of my cocked hat, which to my ready-witted acquaintances proclaimed me a military man. A general rush was accordingly made upon my luggage; and while one man armed himself with a portmanteau, another laid hands on a trunk, a third a carpet-bag, a fourth a gun-case, and so on until I found myself keeping watch and ward over my epaulet-case and my umbrella, the sole remnant of my effects. At the same moment a burst of laughter and a half shout broke from the crowd, and a huge, powerful fellow jumped on the deck, and, seizing me by the arm, cried out,—

"Come along now, Captain, it's all right. This way—this way, sir."

"But why am I to go with you?" said I, vainly struggling to escape his grasp.

"Why is it?" said he, with a chuckling laugh; "reason enough—didn't we toss up for ye, and didn't I win ye?"

"Win me!"

"Ay; just that same."

By this time I found myself beside a car, upon which all my luggage was already placed.

"Get up, now," said he.

"It's a beautiful car, and a dhry cushion," added a voice near, to the manifest mirth of the bystanders.

Delighted to escape my tormenters, I sprang up opposite to him, while a cheer, mad and wild enough for a tribe of Iroquois, yelled behind us. Away we rattled over the pavement, without lamp or lantern to guide our path, while the sea dashed its foam across our faces, and the rain beat in torrents upon our backs.

"Where to, Captain?" inquired my companion, as he plied his whip without ceasing.

"The Castle; you know where that is?"

"Faix I ought," was the reply. "Ain't I there at the levées. But howld fast, your honor; the road isn't good; and there is a hole somewhere hereabouts."

"A hole! For heaven's sake, take care. Do you know where it is?"

"Begorra! you're in it," was the answer, and, as he spoke, the horse went down head foremost, the car after him; away flew the driver on one side, while I myself was shot some half dozen yards on the other, a perfect avalanche of trunks, boxes, and portmanteaux rattling about my doomed head. A crashing shower of kicks,

the noise of the flying splinters, and the imprecations of the carman, were the last sounds I heard, as a heavy imperial full of books struck me on the head, and laid me prostrate.

Through my half-consciousness, I could still feel the rain as it fell in sheets; the heavy plash of the sea sounded in my ears; but, somehow, a feeling like sleepiness crept over me, and I became insensible.

CHAPTER III.

THE CASTLE.

When I next came to my senses, I found myself lying upon a sofa in a large room, of which I appeared the only occupant. A confused and misty recollection of my accident, some scattered fragments of my voyage, and a rather aching sensation in my head, were the only impressions of which I was well conscious. The last evening I spent at home was full in my memory, and I could not help thinking over my poor mother's direful anticipations in my vain endeavors to penetrate what I felt had been a misfortune of some kind or other. The mystery was, however, too deep for my faculties; and so, in despair of unraveling the past, I set myself to work to decipher the present. The room, I have already said, was large; and the ceiling, richly stuccoed and ornamented, spoke of a day whose architecture was of a grand and massive character. The furniture, now old and time-worn, had once been handsome, even magnificent—rich curtains of heavy brocaded silk, with deep gold fringes, gorgeously carved and gilded chairs, in the taste of Louis XV.; marble consoles stood between the windows, and a mirror of gigantic proportions occupied the chimney-breast. Years and neglect had not only done their worst, but it was evident that the hand of devastation had also been at work. The marbles were cracked; few of the chairs were available for use; the massive luster, intended to shine with a resplendent glare of fifty wax-lights, was now made a resting-place for shakos, bearskins, and foraging caps; an ominous-looking star in the looking-glass bore witness to the bullet of a pistol; and the very Cupids carved upon the frame, who once were wont to smile blandly at each other, were now disfigured with cork moustaches, and one of them even carried a short pipe in his mouth. Swords, sashes, and sabretasches, spurs and shot-belts, with guns, fishing-tackle, and tandem whips, were hung here and there upon the walls, which themselves presented the strangest spectacle of all, there not being a portion of them unoccupied by caricature sketches, executed in every imaginable species of taste, style, and coloring. Here was a field-day in the park, in which it was easy to see the prominent figures were portraits: there an enormous nose, surmounted by a grenadier cap, was passing in review some trembling and terrified soldiers. In another, a commander of the forces was seen galloping down the lines, holding on by the pommel of the saddle. Over the sofa I occupied, a levée at the castle was displayed, in which, if the company were not villainously libeled, the viceroy had little reason to be proud of his guests. There were also dinners at the lodge; guards relieved by wine puncheons dressed up like field-officers; the whole accompanied by doggrel verses explanatory of the views.

The owner of this singular chamber had, however, not merely devoted his walls to the purposes of an album, but he had also made them perform the part of a memorandum-book. Here were the "meets" of the Kildare and the Dubber for the month of March; there, the turn of duty for the garrison of Dublin, interspersed with such fragments as the following:—"Mem. To dine at Mat Kean's on Tuesday, 4th.—Not to pay Hennessy till he settles about the handicap.—To ask Courtenay for Fanny Burke's fan; the same Fanny has pretty legs of her own.—To tell Holmes to have nothing to do with Lanty Moore's niece, in regard to a reason!—Five to two on Giles's two-year-old, if Tom likes. N.B. The mare is a roarer.—A heavenly day; what fun they must have!—may the devil fire Tom O'Flaherty, or I would not be here now." These and a hundred other similar passages figured on every side, leaving me in a state of considerable mystification, not as to the character of my host, of which I could guess something, but as to the nature of his abode, which I could not imagine to be a barrack-room.

As I lay thus pondering, the door cautiously opened, and a figure appeared, which, as I had abundant leisure to examine it, and as the individual is one who occasionally turns up in the course of my history, I may as well take the present opportunity of presenting to my reader. The man who entered, scarcely more than four feet and a half high, might be about sixty years of age. His head, enormously disproportioned to the rest of his figure, presented a number of flat surfaces, as though

nature had originally destined it for a crystal. Upon one of these planes the eyes were set; and, although as far apart as possible, yet upon such terms of distance were they, that they never, even by an accident, looked in the same direction. The nose was short and snubby; the nostrils wide and expanded, as if the feature had been pitched against the face in a moment of ill-temper, and flattened by the force. As for the mouth, it looked like the malicious gash of a blunt instrument, jagged, ragged, and uneven. It had not even the commonplace advantage of being parallel to the horizon, but ran in an oblique direction from right to left, enclosed between a parenthesis of the crankiest wrinkles that ever human cheek were creased by. The head would have been bald but for a scanty wig, technically called a "jasy," which, shrunk by time, now merely occupied the apex of the scalp, where it moved about with every action of the forehead and eyebrows, and was thus made to minister to the expression of a hundred emotions that other men's wigs know nothing about. Truly, it was the strangest peruke that ever covered a human cranium. I do not believe that another like it ever existed. It had nothing in common with other wigs. It was like its owner, perfectly *sui generis*. It had not the easy flow and wavy curl of the old beau. It had not the methodical precision and rectilinear propriety of the elderly gentleman. It was not full, like a lawyer's, nor horse-shoed, like a bishop's. No. It was a cross-grained, ill-tempered, ill-conditioned old scratch, that looked like nothing under heaven save the husk of a hedgehog.

The dress of this strange figure was a suit of very gorgeous light brown livery, with orange facings, a green plush waist-coat and shorts, frogged, flapped, and embroidered most lavishly with gold lace, silk stockings, with shoes, whose enormous buckles covered nearly the entire foot, and rivaled. in their paste brilliancy, the piercing brightness of the wearer's eye. Having closed the door carefully behind him, he walked toward the chimney, with a certain air of solemn and imposing dignity that very nearly overcame all my efforts at seriousness; his outstretched and expanded hands, his averted toes and waddling gait, giving him a most distressing resemblance to the spread eagle of Prussia, had that respectable bird been pleased to take a promenade in a showy livery. Having snuffed the candles, and helped himself to a pinch of snuff from a gold box on the mantlepiece, he stuck his arms, nearly to the elbows, in the ample pockets of his coat, and with his head a little elevated, and his under-lip slightly protruded, seemed to medidate upon the mutability of human affairs, and the vanity of all worldly pursuits.

I coughed a couple of times to attract his attention, and, having succeeded in catching his eye, I begged, in my blandest imaginable voice, to know where I was.

"Where are ye, is it?" said he, repeating my question in a tone of the most sharp and querulous intonation, to which not even his brogue could lend one touch of softness,—"where are ye? and where would you like to be? or where would anyone be that was disgracing himself, or blackguarding about the streets till he got his head cut and his clothes torn, but in Master Phil's room: devil other company it's used to. Well, well! It is more like a watch-house nor a gentleman's parlor, this same room. It's little his father, the Jidge"—here he crossed himself piously—"it is little he thought the company his son would be keeping; but it is no matter. I gave him warning last Tuesday, and with the blessin' o' God——"

The remainder of this speech was lost in a low muttering grumble, which I afterwards learnt was his usual manner of closing an oration. A few broken and indistinct phrases being only audible, such as —"Sarve ye right"—"Fifty years in the family"—"Slaving like a negur"—"Oh, the Turks! the haythins!"

Having waited what I deemed a reasonable time for his honest indignation to evaporate, I made another effort to ascertain who my host might be.

"Would you favor me," said I, in a tone still more insinuating, "with the name of——"

"It's my name ye want? Oh, sorrow bit I am ashamed of it! Little as you think of me, Cornelius Delany is as good a warrant for family as many a one of the dirty spalpeens about the Coort, that haven't a civiler word in their mouth than Cross Corny! Bad luck to them for that same."

This honest admission as to the world's opinion of Mr. Delany's character was so far satisfactory as it enabled me to see with whom I had to deal; and, although for a moment or two it was a severe struggle to prevent myself from bursting into laughter, I fortunately obtained the mastery, and once more returned to the charge.

"And now, Mr. Delany, can you inform me how I came here? I remember some-

HAVING SNUFFED THE CANDLES, AND HELPED HIMSELF TO A PINCH OF SNUFF FROM A GOLD BOX ON THE MANTELPIECE, HE STUCK HIS ARMS, NEARLY TO THE ELBOWS, IN THE AMPLE POCKETS OF HIS COAT, AND WITH HIS HEAD A LITTLE ELEVATED, AND HIS UNDER LIP SLIGHTLY PROTRUDED, SEEMED TO MEDITATE UPON THE MUTABILITY OF HUMAN AFFAIRS, AND THE VANITY OF ALL WORLDLY PURSUITS. (P. 716.)

thing of an accident on my landing; but when, where, and how, I am totally ignorant."

"An accident!" said he, turning up his eyes; "an accident, indeed! that's what they always call it when they wring off the rappers, or bate the watch: ye came here in a hackney-coach, with the police, as many a one came before you."

"But where am I?" said I, impatiently.

"In Dublin Castle; bad luck to it for a riotous, disorderly place."

"Well, well," said I, half angrily, "I want to know whose room is this?"

"Captain O'Grady's. What have you to say agin the room? Maybe you're used to worse. There' now, that's what you've got for that. I'm laving the place next week, but that's no rayson——"

Here he went off, *diminuendo*, again, with a few flying imprecations upon several things and persons unknown.

Mr. Delany now dived for a few seconds into a small pantry at the end of the room, from which he emerged with a tray between his hands, and two decanters under his arms.

"Draw the little table this way," he cried, "more toward the fire, for, av coorse, you're fresh and fastin'; there now, take the sherry from under my arm—the other's port: that *was* a ham, till Captain Mills cut it away, as ye see—there's a veal pie, and here's a cold grouse—and, maybe, you've eat worse before now—and will again, plaze God."

I assured him of the truth of his observation in a most conciliating tone.

"Oh, the devil fear ye," was the reply, while he murmured somewhat lower, "the half of yees isn't used to meat twice in the week."

"Capital fare this, Mr. Delany," said I, as, half famished with long fasting, I helped myself a second time.

"You're eating as if you liked it," said he, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Upon my word," said I, after throwing down a bumper of sherry, "that's a very pleasant glass of wine; and on the whole, I should say, there are worse places than this in the world."

A look of unutterable contempt—whether at me for my discovery, or at the opinion itself, I can't say—was the sole reply of my friend; who, at the same moment, presuming I had sufficient opportunities for the judgment I pronounced, replaced the decanters upon the tray, and disappeared with the whole in the most grave and solemn manner.

Repressing a very great inclination to laughter, I sat still; and a silence of a few moments ensued, when Mr. Delany walked toward the window, and, drawing aside the curtains, looked out. All was in darkness save on the opposite side of the court-yard, where a blaze of light fell upon the pavement from over the half shutters of an apparently spacious apartment. "Ay, ay, there you go; hip, hip, hurrah! you waste more liquor every night than would float a lighter; that's all you're good for. Bad luck to your Grace—making fun of the people, laughing and singing as if the potatoes wasn't two shillings a stone."

"What's going on there?" said I.

"The ould work, nather more nor less. The Lord-Liftinnant, and the bishops, and the jidges, and all the privy councillors roaring drunk. Listen to them. May I never, if it isn't the Dean's voice I hear—the ould beast; he is singing 'The Night before Larry was stretched.'"

"That's a good fellow, Corny—Mr. Delany I mean—do open the window for a little, and let's hear them."

"It's a blessed night you'd have the window open to listen to a set of drunken devils: but here's Master Phil; I know his step well. It's long before his father that's gone would come tearing up the stairs that way as if the bailiffs was after him; rack and ruin, sorrow else, av I never got a place—the haythins! the Turks!"

Mr. Delany, who, probably from motives of delicacy, wished to spare his master the pain of an interview, made his exit by one door as he came in at the other. I had barely time to see that the person before me was in every respect the very opposite of his follower, when he called out in a rich, mellow voice,—

"All right again, I hope, Mr. Hinton; it's the first moment I could get away; we had a dinner of the Privy Council, and some of them are rather late sitters; you're not hurt, I trust?"

"A little bruised or so, nothing more; but, pray, how did I fall into such kind hands?"

"Oh! the watchman, it seems, could read, and, as your trunks were addressed to the Castle, they concluded you ought to go there also. You have dispatches, haven't you?"

"Yes," said I, producing the packet; "when must they be delivered?"

"Oh, at once. Do you think you could make a little change in your dress, and manage to come over? his grace always likes it better; there's no stiffness, no for-

mality whatever; most of the dinner-party have gone home; there are only a few of the government people, the duke's friends, remaining, and, besides, he's always kind and good-natured."

"I'll see what I can do," replied I, as I rose from the sofa; "I put myself into your hands altogether."

"Well, come along," said he; "you'll find everything ready in this room. I hope that old villain has left hot water. Corny! Corny, I say! Confound him, he's gone to bed, I suppose."

Having no particular desire for Mr. Delany's attentions, I prevailed on his master not to disturb him, and proceeded to make my toilet as well as I was able.

"Didn't that stupid scoundrel come near you at all?" cried O'Grady.

"Oh yes, we have had a long interview; but, somehow, I fear I did not succeed in gaining his good graces."

"The worst-tempered old villain in Europe."

"Somewhat of a character, I take it."

"A crab-tree planted in a lime-kiln, cranky and cross-grained; but he is a legacy, almost the only one my father left me. I've done my best to part with him every day for the last twelve years, but he sticks to me like a poor relation, giving me warning every night of his life, and every morning kicking up such a row in the house that every one is persuaded I am beating him to a jelly before turning him out to starve in the streets."

"Oh, the haythins! the Turks!" said I, slyly.

"Confound it!" cried he, "the old devil has been opening upon you already; and yet, with all that, I don't know how I should get on without Corny; his gibes, his jeers, his everlasting ill-temper, his crankiness that never sleeps, seem to agree with me: the fact is, one enjoys the world from all its contrasts. The olive is a poor thing in itself, but it certainly improves the smack of your Burgundy. In this way Corny Delany does me good service. Come, by Jove, you have not been long dressing. This way: now follow me." So saying, Captain O'Grady led the way down the stairs to the colonnade, following which to the opposite side of the quadrangle we arrived at a brilliantly lighted hall, where several servants in full-dress liveries were in waiting. Passing hastily through this, we mounted a handsome staircase, and, traversing several ante-chambers, at length arrived at one whose contiguity to the dinner-room I could guess at from the loud sound of many voices. "Wait one moment here," said my companion, "until I speak to his grace." He disappeared as he spoke, but before a minute had elapsed he was again beside me. "Come this way; it's all right," said he. The next moment I found myself in the dinner-room.

The scene before me was altogether so different from what I had expected, that for a moment or two I could scarce do ought else than stand still to survey it. At a table which had been laid for about forty persons, scarcely more than a dozen were now present. Collected together at one end of the board, the whole party were roaring with laughter at some story of a strange, melancholy-looking man, whose whining voice added indescribable ridicule to the drollery of his narrative. Gray-headed general officers, grave-looking divines, lynx-eyed lawyers, had all given way under the irresistible impulse, and the very table shook with laughter.

"Mr. Hinton, your excellency," said O'Grady for the third time, while the duke wiped his eyes with his napkin, and, pushing his chair a little back from the table, motioned me to approach.

"Ah, Hinton, glad to see you; how is your father?—a very old friend of mine, indeed; and Lady Charlotte—well, I hope? O'Grady tells me you've had an accident—something slight, I trust. So these are the dispatches." Here he broke the seal of the envelope, and ran his eye over the contents. "There, that's your concern." So saying, he pitched a letter across the table to a shrewd-looking personage in a horse-shoe wig. "They won't do it, Dean, and we must wait. Ah!—so they don't like my new commissioners; but, Hinton, my boy, sit down. O'Grady, have you room there? A glass of wine with you."

"Nothing the worse of your mishap, sir?" said the melancholy-looking man who sat opposite to me.

I replied by briefly relating my accident.

"Strange enough," said he, in a compassionate tone, "your head should have suffered; your countrymen generally fall upon their legs in Ireland." This was said with a sly look at the viceroy, who, deep in his dispatches, paid no attention to the allusion.

"A very singular thing, I must confess," said the duke, laying down the paper. "This is the fourth time the bearer of dispatches has met with an accident. If they don't run foul of a rock in the Channel, they are sure to have a delay on the pier."

"It is so natural, my lord," said the gloomy man, "that the carriers should stop at the Pigeon-house."

"Do be quiet, Curran," cried the duke, "and pass around the decanter. They'll not take the duty off claret, it seems."

"And Day, my lord, won't put the claret on duty; he has kept the wine at his elbow for the last half hour. Upon my soul your grace ought to knight him."

"Not even his Excellency's habits," said a sharp, clever-looking man, "would excuse his converting day into knight."

Amid a shower of smart, caustic, and witty sayings, droll stories, retort and repartee, the wine circulated freely from hand to hand; the presence of the duke adding fresh impulse to the sallies of fun and merriment around him. Anecdotes of the army, the bench, and the bar, poured in unceasingly, accompanied by running commentaries of the hearers, who never let slip an opportunity for a jest or a rejoinder. To me, the most singular feature of all this was, that no one seemed too old or too dignified, to high in station, or too venerable from office, to join in this headlong current of conviviality. Austere churchmen, erudite chief justices, profound politicians, privy counselors, military officers of high rank and standing, were here all mixed up together into one strange medley, apparently bent on throwing an air of ridicule over the graver business of life, and laughing alike at themselves and the world. Nothing was too grave for a jest, nothing too solemn for a sarcasm. All the soldier's experience of men and manners, all the lawyer's acuteness of perception and readiness of wit, all the politician's practiced tact and habitual subtlety, were brought to bear upon the common topics of the day with such promptitude, and such power, that one knew not whether to be more struck by the mass of information they possessed, or by that strange fatality which could make men, so great and so gifted, satisfied to jest where they might be called on to judge.

Play and politics, wine and women, debts and duels, were discussed, not only with an absence of all restraint, but with a deep knowledge of the world and a profound insight into the heart, which often imparted to the careless and random speech the sharpness of the most cutting sarcasm. Personalities, too, were rife; no one spared his neighbor, for he did not expect mercy for himself; and the luckless wight who tripped in his narrative, or stumbled in his story, was assailed on every side, until some happy expedient of his own, or some new victim being discovered, the attack would take another direction, and leave him once more at liberty. I feel how sadly inadequate I am to render even the faintest testimony to the talents of those, any one of whom, in after-life, would have been considered to have made the fortune of a dinner-party, and who now were met together, not in the careless ease and lounging indifference of relaxation, but in the open arena where wit met wit, and where even the most brilliant talker, the happiest relater, the quickest in sarcasm, and the readiest in reply felt he had need of all his weapons to defend and protect him. This was a *mêlée* tournament, where each man rode down his neighbor, with no other reason for attack than detecting a rent in his armor. Even the viceroy himself, who, as judge of the lists, might be supposed to enjoy an immunity, was not safe here, and many an arrow, apparently shot at an adversary, was sent quivering into his corslet.

As I watched, with all the intense excitement of one to whom such a display was perfectly new, I could not help feeling how fortunate it was that the grave avocations and the venerable pursuits of the greater number of the party should prevent this firework of wit from bursting into the blaze of open animosity. I hinted as much to my neighbor, O'Grady, who at once broke into a fit of laughter at my ignorance; and I now learnt to my amazement that the common pleas had winged the exchequer, that the attorney-general had pinked the rolls, and, stranger than all, that the provost of the university himself had planted his man in the phœnix.

"It is just as well for us," continued he, in a whisper, "that the churchmen can't go out; for the dean, yonder, can snuff a candle at twenty paces, and is rather a hot-tempered fellow to boot. But come, now, his grace is about to rise. We have a field-day to-morrow in the park, and break up somewhat earlier in consequence."

As it was now near two o'clock, I could see nothing to cavil at as to the earliness of the hour, although, I freely confess, tired and exhausted as I felt, I could not contemplate the moment of separation without a sad foreboding that I ne'er should look upon the like again. The party rose at this moment, and the duke, shaking hands cordially with each person as he passed down, wished us all a good night. I followed with O'Grady and some others of the household, but when I reached the anti-chamber, my new friend

volunteered his services to see me to my quarters.

On traversing the lower castle-yard, we mounted an old-fashioned and rickety stair, which conducted to a gloomy, ill-lighted corridor. I was too much fatigued, however, to be critical at the moment, and so, having thanked O'Grady for all his kindness, I threw off my clothes hastily, and, before my head was well upon the pillow, was sound asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BREAKFAST.

THERE are few persons so unreflective as not to give way to a little self-examination on waking for the first time in a strange place. The very objects about are so many appeals to your ingenuity or to your memory, that you cannot fail asking yourself how you became acquainted with them: the present is thus made the herald of the past, and it is difficult, when unraveling the tangled web of doubt that assails you, not to think over the path by which you have been traveling.

As for me, scarcely were my eyes opened to the light, I had barely thrown one glance around my cold and comfortless chamber, when thoughts of home came rushing to my mind. The warm earnestness of my father, the timid dreads of my poor mother, rose up before me, as I felt myself, for the first time, alone in the world. The elevating sense of heroism, that more or less blends with every young man's dreams of life, gilds our first journey from our father's roof. There is a feeling of freedom in being the arbiter of one's actions, to go where you will and when you will. Till that moment the world has been a comparative blank; the trammels of school or the ties of tutorship have bound and restrained you. You have been living, as it were, within the rules of court—certain petty privileges permitted, certain small liberties allowed; but now you come forth disenchanted, disenthralled, emancipated, free to come as to go—a man in all the plenitude of his volition; and, better still, a man without the heavy, depressing weight of responsibility that makes manhood less a blessing than a burden. The first burst of life is indeed a glorious thing; youth, health, hope, and confidence have each a force and vigor they lose in after years: life is then a splendid river, and we are swimming with the stream—no adverse waves to weary, no billows to buffet us, we hold on our course rejoicing.

The sun was peering between the curtains of my window, and playing in fitful flashes on the old oak floor, as I lay thus ruminating and dreaming over the future. How many a resolve did I then make for my guidance—how many an intention did I form—how many a groundwork of principle did I lay down, with all the confidence of youth! I fashioned to myself a world after my own notions; in which I conjured up certain imaginary difficulties, all of which were surmounted by my admirable tact and consummate cleverness. I remembered how, at both Eton and Sandhurst, the Irish boy was generally made the subject of some jest or quiz, at one time for his accent, at another for his blunders. As a guardsman, short as had been my experience of the service, I could plainly see that a certain indefinable tone of superiority was ever asserted toward our friends across the sea. A wide-sweeping prejudice, whose limits were neither founded in reason, justice, or common sense, had thrown a certain air of undervaluing import over every one and every thing from that country. Not only were its faults and its follies heavily visited, but those accidental and trifling blemishes—those slight and scarce perceptible deviations from the arbitrary standard of fashion—were deemed the strong characteristics of the nation, and condemned accordingly; while the slightest use of any exaggeration in speech—the commonest employment of a figure or a metaphor—the casual introduction of an anecdote or a repartee, were all heavily censured, and pronounced "so very Irish!" Let some fortune-hunter carry off an heiress—let a lady trip over her train at the drawing-room—let a minister blunder in his mission—let a powder-magazine explode and blow up one-half of the surrounding population, there was but one expression to qualify all—"how Irish! how very Irish!" The adjective had become one of depreciation; and an Irish lord, an Irish member, an Irish estate, and an Irish diamond, were held pretty much in the same estimation.

Reared in the very hot-bed, the forcing-house, of such exaggerated prejudice, while imbibing a very sufficient contempt for everything in that country, I obtained proportionably absurd notions of all that was Irish. Our principles may come from our fathers; our prejudices certainly descend from the female branch. Now, my mother, notwithstanding the example of the Prince Regent himself, whose chosen associates were Irish, was most thoroughly ex

"THE HAYTHINS!—THE TURKS!" (P. 715.)

clusive on this point. She would admit that a native of that country could be invited to an evening party under extreme and urgent circumstances—that some brilliant orator, whose eloquence was at once the dread and the delight of the house—that some gifted poet, whose verses came home to the heart alike of prince and peasant—that the painter, whose canvas might stand unblushingly amid the greatest triumphs of art—could be asked to lionize for those cold and callous votaries of fashion, across the lake of whose stagnant nature no breath of feeling stirred, esteeming it the while, that in her card of invitation he was reaping the proudest proof of his success; but that such could be made acquaintances or companions, could be regarded in the light of equals or intimates, the thing never entered into her imagination, and she would as soon have made a confidant of the king of Kongo as a gentleman from Connaught.

Less for the purposes of dwelling upon my lady-mother's "Hibernian horrors," than of showing the school in which I was trained, I have made this somewhat lengthened *exposé*. It may, however, convey to my reader some faint impression of the feelings which animated me at the outset of my career in Ireland.

I have already mentioned the delight I experienced with the society at the viceroy's table. So much brilliancy, so much wit, so much of conversational power, until that moment I had no conception of. Now, however, while reflecting on it, I was actually astonished to find how far the whole scene contributed to the support of my ancient prejudices. I well knew that a party of the highest functionaries—bishops and law-officers of the crown—would not have conducted themselves in the same manner in England. I stopped not to inquire whether it was more the wit or the will that was wanting; I did not dwell upon the fact that the meeting was a purely convivial one, to which I was admitted by the kindness and condescension of the duke; but, so easily will a warped and bigoted impression find food for its indulgence, I only saw in the meeting an additional evidence of my early convictions. How far my theorizing on this point might have led me—whether eventually I should have come to the conclusion that the Irish nation were lying in the darkest blindness of barbarism, while, by a special intervention of Providence, I was about to be erected into a species of double revolving light—it is difficult to say, when a tap at the door suddenly aroused me from my musings.

"Are ye awake, yet?" said a harsh, husky voice, like a bear in bronchitis, which I had no difficulty in pronouncing to be Corny's.

"Yes, come in," cried I; "what hour is it?"

"Somewhere after ten," replied he, sulkily; "you're the first I ever heerd ask the clock, in the eight years I have lived here. Are you ready for your morning?"

"My what!" said I, with some surprise.

"Didn't I say it, plain enough? Is it the brogue that bothers you?"

As he said this with a most sarcastic grin, he poured, from a large jug he held in one hand, a brimming goblet full of some white compound, and handed it over to me. Preferring at once to explore, rather than to question the intractable Corny, I put it to my lips, and found it to be capital milk punch, concocted with great skill, and seasoned with what O'Grady afterwards called "a notion of nutmeg."

"Oh! devil fear you, that he'll like it. Sorrow one of you ever left as much in the jug as 'ud make a foot-bath for a flea."

"They don't treat you over well, then, Corny," said I, purposely opening the sorest wound of his nature.

"Trate me well! faix them that 'ud come here for good tratement, would go to the devil for divarsion. There's Master Phil himself, that I used to bate, when he was a child, many's the time, when his father, rest his sowl, was up at the coorts—ay, strapped him, till he hadn't a spot that wasn't sore an him—and look at him now! oh, wirra!—you'd think I never took a ha'porth of pains with him. Ugh!—the haythins!—the Turks!"

"This is all very bad, Corny; hand me those boots."

"And thim's boots!" said he, with a contemptuous expression on his face that would have struck horror to the heart of Hoby. "Well, well." Here he looked up as though the profligacy and degeneracy of the age were transgressing all bounds. "When you're ready, come over to the master's, for he's waiting breakfast for you. A beautiful hour for breakfast, it is! Many's the day his father sentenced a whole dockful before the same time!"

With the comforting reflection that the world went better in his youth, Corny drained the few remaining drops of the jug, and muttering the while something that did not sound exactly like a blessing, waddled out of the room with a gait of the most imposing gravity.

I had very little difficulty in finding my friend's quarters; for, as his door lay open, and as he himself was caroling away, at the very top of his lungs, some popular melody of the day, I speedily found myself beyond the threshold.

"Ah! Hinton, my hearty, how goes it? your headpiece nothing the worse, I hope, for either the car or the claret? By the by, capital claret that is! you've nothing like it in England."

I could scarce help a smile at the remark, as he proceeded.

"But come, my boy, sit down; help yourself to a cutlet, and make yourself quite at home in Mount O'Grady."

"Mount O'Grady," repeated I. "Ha! in allusion, I suppose, to these confounded two flights one has to climb up to you."

"Nothing of the kind; the name has a very different origin. Tea or coffee? there's the tap! Now, my boy, the fact is, we O'Grady's were once upon a time very great folk in our way; lived in an uncouth old barrack, with battlements and a keep, upon the Shannon, where we ravaged the country for miles round, and did as much mischief, and committed as much pillage upon the peaceable inhabitants, as any respectable old family in the province. Time, however, wagged on; luck changed; your countrymen came pouring in upon us with new-fangled notions of reading, writing, and road-making; police and petty sessions, and a thousand other vexatious contrivances followed, to worry and puzzle the heads of simple country gentlemen; so that, at last, instead of taking to the hill-side for our mutton, we were reduced to keep a market-cart, and employ a thieving rogue in Dublin to supply us with poor claret, instead of making a trip over to Galway, where a smuggling craft brought us our liquor, with a bouquet fresh from Bordeaux. But the worst wasn't come; for, you see, a litigious spirit grew up in the country, and a kind of vindictive habit of pursuing you for your debts. Now, we always contrived, somehow or other, to have rather a confused way of managing our exchequer. No tenant on the property ever precisely knew what he owed; and, as we possessed no record of what he paid. our income was rather obtained after the manner of levying a tribute, than receiving a legal debt. Meanwhile, we pushed our credit like a new colony; whenever a loan was to be obtained, it was little we cared for ten, twelve, or even fifteen per cent.; and as we kept a jolly house, a good cook, good claret, and had the best pack of beagles in the country, he'd have been a hardy creditor who'd have ventured to push us to extremities. Even sheep, however, they say, get courage when they flock together, and so this contemptible herd of tailors, tithe-proctors, butchers, barristers, and bootmakers, took heart of grace, and laid siege to us in all form. My grandfather, Phil—for I was called after him—who always spent his money like a gentleman, had no notion of figuring in the Four Courts; but he sent Tom Darcy, his cousin, up to town, to call out as many of the plaintiffs as would fight, and to threaten the remainder that, if they did not withdraw their suits, they'd have more need of the surgeon than the attorney-general; for they shouldn't have a whole bone in their body by Michaelmas-day. Another cutlet, Hinton? But I am tiring you with all these family matters."

"Not at all; go on, I beg of you. I want to hear how your grandfather got out of his difficulties."

"Faith, I wish you could! it would be equally pleasant news to myself; but, unfortunately, his beautiful plan only made bad worse, for they began fresh actions. Some, for provocation to fight a duel; others, for threats of assault and battery; and the short of it was, as my grandfather wouldn't enter a defence, they obtained their verdicts, and got judgment, with all the costs."

"The devil they did! That must have pushed him hard."

"So it did; indeed it got the better of his temper, and he that was one of the heartiest, pleasantest fellows in the province, became, in a manner, morose and silent; and, instead of surrendering possession, peaceably and quietly, he went down to the gate, and took a sitting shot at the sub-sheriff, who was there in a tax-cart."

"Bless my soul! Did he kill him?"

"No; he only ruffled his feathers, and broke his thigh; but it was bad enough, for he had to go over to France till it blew over. Well, it was either vexation or the climate, or, maybe, the weak wines, or, perhaps, all three, undermined his constitution, but he died at eighty-four—the only one of the family ever cut off early, except such as were shot, or the like."

"Well, but your father——"

"I am coming to him. My grandfather sent for him from school when he was dying, and he made him swear he would be a lawyer. 'Morris will be a thorn in their flesh, yet,' said he; 'and look to it, my boy' he cried, 'I leave you a chancery suit that has nearly broke eight families and the hearts of two chancellors;—see

that you keep it going—sell every stick on the estate—put all the beggars in the barony on the property—beg, borrow, and steal them—plough up all the grazing-land; and I'll tell you a better trick than all——' Here a fit of coughing interrupted the pious old gentleman, and when it was over, so was he!"

"Dead!" said I.

"As a door-nail! Well, my father was dutiful; he kept the suit moving until he got called to the bar! Once there, he gave it all his spare moments; and when there was nothing doing in the common pleas or king's bench, he was sure to come down with a new bill, or a declaration, before the master, or a writ of error, or a point of law for a jury, till at last, when no case was ready to come on, the sitting judge would call out, 'Let us hear O'Grady,' in appeal, or in error, or whatever it was. But, to make my story short, my father became a first-rate lawyer, by the practice of his own suit,—rose to a silk gown—was made solicitor and attorney-general—afterwards, chief-justice——"

"And the suit?"

"Oh! the suit survived him, and became my property; but, somehow, I didn't succeed in the management quite as well as my father; and I found that my estate cost me somewhere about fifteen hundred a year—not to mention more oaths than fifty years of purgatory could pay off. This was a high premium to pay for figuring every term on the list of trials, so I raised a thousand pounds on my commission, gave it to Nick M'Namara, to take the property off my hands, and as my father's last injunction was 'Never rest till you sleep in Mount O'Grady,'—why, I just baptized my present abode by that name, and here I live with the easy conscience of a dutiful and affectionate child that took the shortest and speediest way of fulfilling his father's testament."

"By Jove! a most singular narrative. I shouldn't like to have parted with the old place, however."

"Faith, I don't know! I never was much there. It was a rackety, tumble-down old concern, with rattling windows, rooks, and rats, pretty much like this; and, what between my duns and Corny Delany, I very often think I am back there again. There wasn't as good a room as this in the whole house, not to speak of the pictures. Isn't that likeness of Darcy capital? You saw him last night. He sat next Curran. Come, I've no curaçoa to offer you, but try this usquebaugh."

"By the by, that Corny is a strange character. I rather think, if I were you, I should have let him go with the property."

"Let him go! Egad, that's not so easy as you think. Nothing but death will ever part us."

"I really cannot comprehend how you endure him; he'd drive me mad."

"Well, he very often pushes me a little hard or so; and, if it wasn't that, by deep study and minute attention, I have at length got some insight into the weak parts of his nature, I frankly confess I couldn't endure it much longer."

"And, pray, what may these amiable traits be?"

"You will scarcely guess."

"Love of money, perhaps?"

"No."

"Attachment to your family, then?"

"Not that either."

"I give it up."

"Well, the truth is, Corny is a most pious Catholic. The church has unbounded influence and control over all his actions. Secondly, he is a devout believer in ghosts, particularly my grandfather's, which, I must confess, I have personated two or three times myself, when his temper had nearly tortured me into a brain fever; so that between purgatory and apparitions, fears here and hereafter, I keep him pretty busy. There's a friend of mine, a priest, one Father Tom Loftus——"

"I've heard that name before, somewhere."

"Scarcely, I think; I'm not aware that he was ever in England; but he's a glorious fellow; I'll make you known to him, one of these days; and when you have seen a little more of Ireland, I am certain you'll like him. But I'm forgetting; it must be late; we have a field-day, you know, in the park."

"What am I to do for a mount? I've brought no horses with me."

"Oh, I've arranged all that. See, there are the nags already. That dark chestnut I destine for you; and, come along, we have no time to lose; there go the carriages, and here comes our worthy colleague and fellow aid-de-camp. Do you know him?"

"Who is it, pray?"

"Lord Dudley de Vere, the most confounded puppy, and the emptiest ass—— But here he is."

"De Vere, my friend Mr. Hinton—one of ours."

His lordship raised his delicate-looking eyebrows as high as he was able, letting fall his glass at the same moment from the

corner of his eye; and while he adjusted his stock at the glass, lisped out,—

"Ah—yes—very happy. In the Guards, I think. Know Douglas, don't you?"

"Yes, very slightly."

"When did you come—to-day?"

"No; last night."

"Must have got a buffeting; blew very fresh. You don't happen to know the odds on the Oaks?"

"Hecate, they say, is falling. I rather heard a good account of the mare."

"Indeed," said he, while his cold, inanimate features brightened up with a momentary flush of excitement. "Take you five to two, or give you the odds, you don't name the winner on the double event."

A look from O'Grady decided me at once on declining the proffered wager; and his lordship once more returned to the mirror and his self-admiration.

"I say, O'Grady, do come here for a minute. What the deuce can that be?"

Here an immoderate fit of laughter from his lordship brought us both to the window. The figure to which his attention was directed was certainly not a little remarkable. Mounted upon an animal of the smallest possible dimensions, sat, or rather stood, the figure of a tall, gaunt, raw-boned looking man, in a livery of the gaudiest blue and yellow, his hat garnished with silver lace, while long tags of the same material were festooned gracefully from his shoulder to his breast; his feet nearly touched the ground, and gave him rather the appearance of one progressing with a pony between his legs, than of a figure on horseback; he carried under one arm a leather pocket, like a dispatch bag; and, as he sauntered slowly about, with his eyes directed hither and thither, seemed like some one in search of an unknown locality.

The roar of laughter which issued from our window drew his attention to that quarter, and he immediately touched his hat, while a look of pleased recognition played across his countenance.

"Holloa, Tim!" cried O'Grady, "what's in the wind now?"

Tim's answer was inaudible, but inserting his hand into the leathern conveniency already mentioned, he drew forth a card of most portentous dimensions. By this time Corny's voice could be heard joining the conversation.

"Arrah, give it here, and don't be making a baste of yourself. Isn't the very battle-axe Guards laughing at you? I'm sure I wonder how a Christian would make a merry-andrew of himself by wearing such clothes; you're more like a play-actor nor a respectable servant."

With these words he snatched rather than accepted the proffered card; and Tim, with another flourish of his hat, and a singularly droll grin, meant to convey his appreciation of Cross Corny, plunged the spurs till his legs met under the belly of the little animal, and cantered out of the court-yard amid the laughter of the bystanders, in which even the sentinels on duty could not refrain from participating.

"What the devil can it be?" cried Lord Dudley; "he evidently knows you, O'Grady."

"And you, too, my lord; his master has helped you to a cool hundred or two more than once before now."

"Eh—what—you don't say so! Not our worthy friend Paul—eh? Why, confound it, I never should have known Timothy in that dress."

"No," said O'Grady, slyly; "I acknowledge it is not exactly his costume when he serves a latitat."

"Ha, ha!" cried the other, trying to laugh at the joke, which he felt too deeply; "I thought I knew the pony, though. Old three-and-fourpence; his infernal canter always sounds in my ears like the jargon of a bill of costs."

"Here comes Corny," said O'Grady. "What have you got there?"

"There, 'tis for you," replied he, throwing, with an air of the most profound disdain, a large card upon the table; while, as he left the room, he muttered some very sagacious reflections about the horrors of low company—his father the jidge—the best in the land—riotous, disorderly life; the whole concluding with an imprecation upon heathens and Turks, with which he managed to accomplish his exit.

"Capital, by Jove!" said Lord Dudley, as he surveyed the card with his glass.

"'Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rooney presents'—the devil they does—'presents their compliments, and requests the honor of Captain O'Grady's company at dinner on Friday, the 8th, at half-past seven o'clock.'"

"How good! glorious, by Jove! eh, O'Grady? You are a sure ticket there—*l'ami de la maison!*"

O'Grady's cheek became red at these words; and a flashing expression in his eyes told how deeply he felt them. He turned sharply round, his lip quivering with passion; then, checking himself suddenly, he burst into an affected laugh.

"You'll go too, won't you?"

"I? No, faith, they caught me once;

but then the fact was, a protest and an invitation were both served on me together. I couldn't accept one, so I did the other."

"Well, I must confess," said O'Grady, in a firm, resolute tone, "there may be many more fashionable people than our friends; but I, for one, scruple not to say I have received many kindnesses from them, and am deeply, sincerely grateful."

"As far as doing a bit of paper now and then, when one is hard up," said Lord Dudley, "why, perhaps, I'm somewhat of your mind; but if one must take the discount out in dinners, it's an infernal bore."

"And yet," said O'Grady, maliciously, "I've seen your lordship tax your powers to play the agreeable at these same dinners; and I think your memory betrays you in supposing you have only been there once. I myself have met you at least four times."

"Only shows how devilish hard up I must have been," was the cool reply; "but now, as the governor begins to behave better, I think I'll cut Paul."

"I'm certain you will," said O'Grady, with an emphasis that could not be mistaken. "But, come, Hinton, we had better be moving; there's some stir at the portico yonder, I suppose they're coming."

At this moment the tramp of cavalry announced the arrival of the guard of honor; the drums beat, the troops stood to arms, and we had barely time to mount our horses, when the viceregal party took their places in the carriages, and we all set out for the Phœnix.

"Confess, Hinton, it is worth while being a soldier to be in Ireland." This was O'Grady's observation as we rode down Parliament Street, beside the carriage of the viceroy. It was the first occasion of a field-day since the arrival of his Excellency, and all Dublin was on the tiptoe of expectation at the prospect. Handkerchiefs were waved from the windows; streamers and banners floated from the house-tops; patriotic devices and allegoric representations of Erin sitting at a plentiful board, opposite an elderly gentleman with a ducal coronet, met us at every turn of the way. The streets were literally crammed with people. The band played "Patrick's Day;" the mob shouted; his grace bowed; and down to Phil O'Grady himself, who winked at the pretty girls as he passed, there did not seem an unoccupied man in the whole procession. On we went, following the line of the quays, threading our way through a bare-legged, ragged population, bawling themselves hoarse with energetic desires for prosperity to Ireland. "Yes," thought I, as I looked upon the worn, dilapidated houses, the faded and bygone equipages, the tarnished finery of better days—"yes, my father was right, these people are very different from their neighbors; their very prosperity has an air quite peculiar to itself." Everything attested a state of poverty, a lack of trade, a want of comfort and cleanliness; but still there was but one expression prevalent in the mass—that of unbounded good humor and gayety. With a philosophy quite his own, poor Paddy seemed to feel a reflected pleasure from the supposed happiness of those around him, the fine clothes, the gorgeous equipages, the prancing chargers, the flowing plumes—all, in fact, that forms the appliances of wealth—constituting in his mind a kind of paradise on earth. He thought their possessors at least ought to be happy, and, like a good-hearted fellow, he was glad of it for their sakes.

There had been in the early part of the day an abortive effort at a procession. The lord mayor and the sheriffs, in their state liveries, had gone forth with a proud following of their fellow-citizens; but a manœuvre, which hitherto has been supposed exclusively the province of the navy, was here employed with unbounded success; and the hackney coachmen, by "cutting the line" in several places, had completely disorganized the procession, which now presented the singular spectacle of an aldermanic functionary with emblazoned panels and bedizened horses, followed by a string of rackety jaunting-cars, or a noddy with its fourteen insides. Horsemen there were, too, in abundance. Were I to judge from the spectacle before me, I should say that the Irish were the most equestrian people of the globe; and at what a pace they went! Caring little or nothing for the foot-passengers, they only drew rein when their blown steeds were unable to go farther, and then dashed onward like a charge, amid a shower of oaths, curses, and imprecations, half drowned in the laughter that burst on every side. Deputations there were also from various branches of trade, entreating their graces to wear and to patronize the manufacture of the country, and to conform in many respects to its habits and customs: by all of which, in my then ignorance, I could only understand the vehement desire of the population that the viceregal court should go about in a state of nature, and limit their diet to poteen and potatoes.

"Fine sight this, Hinton! Isn't it cheering?" said O'Grady, as his eye beamed with pleasure and delight.

"Why, yes," said I, hesitatingly; "but don't you think if they wore shoes——"

"Shoes!" repeated he, contemptuously, "they'd never suffer such restrictions on their liberties. Look at them! They are the fellows to make soldiers of! The only fear of half-rations with them would be the risk of indigestion."

On we went, a strange and motley mass, the only grave faces being a few of those who sat in the gilded coaches, with embroidered hammercloths, while every half-naked figure that flitted past had a countenance of reckless jolity and fun. But the same discrepancy that pervaded the people and the procession was visible even in their dwellings, and the meanest hovels stood side by side with the public and private edifices of elegance and beauty.

"This, certainly," thought I, "is a strange land." A reflection I had reason to recur to more than once in my after experience of Ireland.

CHAPTER V.

THE REVIEW IN THE PHŒNIX.

Winding along the quays, we crossed an old and dilapidated bridge; and after traversing some narrow and ruinous-looking streets, we entered the park, and at length reached the Fifteen Acres.

The carriages were drawn up in a line; his grace's led horses were ordered up, and staff-officers galloped right and left to announce the orders for the troops to stand to arms.

As the duke descended from his carriage he caught my eye, and turning suddenly toward the duchess, said, "Let me present Mr. Hinton to your grace."

While I was making my bows and acknowledgments, his grace put his hand upon my arm.

"You know Lady Killimore, Hinton? Never mind, it's of no consequence. You see her carriage yonder—they have made some blunder in the road, and the dragoons, it seems, won't let them pass. Just canter down and rescue them."

"Do, pray, Mr. Hinton," added the duchess. "Poor Lady Killimore is so very nervous she'll be terrified to death if they make any fuss. Her carriage can come up quite close; there is plenty of room."

"Now, do it well," whispered O'Grady: "there's a pretty girl in the case; it's your first mission; acquit yourself with credit."

An infernal brass band playing "Rule Britannia" within ten paces of me, the buzz of voices, the crowd, the novelty of the situation, the excitement of the moment, all conspired to addle and confuse me; so that when I put spurs to my horse and struck out into a gallop, I had no very precise idea of what I was to do, and not the slightest upon earth of where I was to do it.

A pretty girl in a carriage beset by dragoons was to be looked for—Lady Kil—somebody's equippage—"Oh! I have it; there they are," said I, as a yellow barouche, with four steaming posters caught my eye in a far part of the field. From the number of dragoons that surrounded the carriage, no less than their violent gestures, I could perceive that an altercation had taken place; pressing my horse to the top of his speed, I flew across the plain, and arrived flushed, heated, and breathless beside the carriage.

A large and strikingly handsome woman in a bonnet and plumes of the most gaudy and showy character, was standing upon the front seat, and carrying on an active, and, as it seemed, acrimonious controversy with the sergeant of the horse police.

"You must go back—can't help it, ma'am—nothing but the members of the household can pass this way."

"Oh dear! where's Captain O'Grady?—sure it's not possible I could be treated tnis way. Paul, take that man's name, and mind you have him dismissed in the morning. Where are you, Paul? Ah! he's gone. It is the way with him always; and here you sit, Bob Dwyer, and you are no more good than a stick of sealing-wax!"

Here a suppressed titter of laughter from the back of the carriage induced me to turn my eyes in that direction, and I beheld one of the most beautiful girls I ever looked at, holding her handkerchief to her mouth to conceal her laughter. Her dark eyes flashed, and her features sparkled, while a blush, at being so discovered, if possible, added to her beauty.

"All right," said I to myself, as taking off my hat I bowed to the very mane of my horse.

"If your ladyship will kindly permit me," said I, "his grace has sent me to show you the way."

The dragoons fell back as I spoke; the horse police looked awfully frightened; while the lady whose late eloquence manifested little of fear or trepidation, threw herself back in the carriage, and, covering her face with her handkerchief, sobbed violently.

"Ah, the duchess said she was nervous. Poor Lady Kil—"

"Speak to me, Louisa dear. Who is it? Is it Mr. Wellesley Pole? Is it—"

I did not wait for a further supposition, but in a most insinuating voice added,—

"Mr. Hinton, my lady, extra aide-de-camp on his excellency's staff. The duchess feared you would be nervous, and hopes you'll get as close to her as possible."

"Where's Paul?" said the lady, once more recovering her animation. "If this is a hoax, young gentleman—"

"Madam," said I, bowing stiffly, "I am really at a loss to understand your meaning."

"Oh, forgive me, Mr. Hilton."

"Hinton, my lady."

"Yes, Hinton," said she. "I am a beast to mistrust you, and you so young and so artless; the sweetest blue eyes I ever looked at."

This was said in a whisper to her young friend, whose mirth now threatened to burst forth.

"And was it really his royal highness that sent you?"

"His grace, my lady, I assure you, dispatched me to your aid. He saw your carriage through his glass, and, guessing what had occurred, directed me to ride over and accompany your ladyship to the viceregal stand."

Poor Lady Kil—'s nervousness again seized her, and, with a faint cry for the ever-absent Paul, she went off into rather smart hysterics. During this paroxysm, I could not help feeling somewhat annoyed at the young lady's conduct, who, instead of evincing the slightest sympathy for her mother, held her head down, and seemed to shake with laughter. By this time however, the postilions were again under way, and, after ten minutes' sharp trotting, we entered the grand stand, with whips cracking, ribbons fluttering, and I myself caracoling beside the carriage with an air of triumphant success.

A large dusky traveling carriage had meanwhile occupied the place the duchess designed for her friend. The only thing to do, therefore, was to place them as conveniently as I could, and hasten back to inform her grace of the success of my mission. As I approached her carriage I was saluted by a burst of laughter from the staff, in which the duke himself joined most extravagantly; while O'Grady, with his hands on his sides, threatened to fall from the saddle.

"What the deuce is the matter?" thought I. "I didn't bungle it?"

"Tell her grace," said the duke, with his hand upon his mouth, unable to finish the sentence with laughter.

I saw something was wrong, and that I was in some infernal scrape; still, resolved to go through with it, I drew near, and said,—

"I am happy to inform your grace that Lady Kil—"

"Is here," said the duchess, bowing haughtily, as she turned toward a spiteful-looking dowager beside her.

Here was a mess! So, bowing and backing, I dropped through the crowd to where my companions still stood convulsed with merriment.

"What, in the devil's name, is it?" said I to O'Grady. "Whom have I been escorting this half-hour?"

"You've immortalized yourself," said O'Grady, with a roar of laughter. "Your bill at twelve months for five hundred pounds is as good this moment as bank paper."

"What is it?" said I, losing all patience. "Who is she?"

"Mrs. Paul Rooney, my boy, the gem of attorneys' wives, the glory of Stephen's Green, with a villa at Bray, a box at the theater, champagne suppers every night in the week, dinners promiscuously, and lunch *à discrétion;* there's glory for you. You may laugh at a latitat, sneer at the king's bench, and snap your fingers at any process-server from here to Kilmainham!"

"May the devil fly away with her!" said I, wiping my forehead with passion and excitement.

"The heavens forbid!" said O'Grady, piously. "Our exchequer may be guilty of many an extravagance, but it could not permit such a flight as that. It is evident, Hinton, that you did not see the pretty girl beside her in the carriage."

"Yes, yes, I saw her," said I, biting my lip with impatience, "and she seemed evidently enjoying the infernal blunder I was committing. And Mrs. Paul—oh, confound her! I can never endure the sight of her again!"

"My dear young friend," replied O'Grady, with an affected seriousness, "I see that already the prejudices of your very silly countrymen have worked their effect upon you. Had not Lord Dudley de Vere given you such a picture of the Rooney family, you would probably be much more lenient in your judgment: besides, after all, the error was yours, not hers. You told her that the duke had sent you; you told her the duchess wished her carriage beside her own."

"You take a singular mode," said I, pettishly, "to bring a man back to a good temper, by showing him that he has no one to blame for his misfortunes but himself. Confound them! look how they are all laughing about us. Indeed, from the little I've seen, it is the only thing they appear to do in this country."

At a signal from the duke, O'Grady put spurs to his horse and cantered down the line, leaving me to such reflections as I could form, beneath the gaze of some forty persons, who could not turn to look without laughing at me.

"This is pleasant," thought I; "this is really a happy *début:* that I, whose unimpeachable accuracy of manner and address should have won for me, at the Prince's levée, the approbation of the first gentleman of Europe, should here, among these semi-civilized savages, become an object of ridicule and laughter. My father told me they were very different; and my mother—" I had not patience to think of the frightful effects my absurd situation might produce upon her nerves. "Lady Julia, too—ah! there's the rub—my beautiful cousin, who, in the slightest solecism of London manners, could find matter for sarcasm and raillery. What would she think of me now? And this it is they persuaded me to prefer to active service! What wound to a man's flesh could equal one to his feelings? I would rather be condoled with than scoffed at any day; and see! by Jove, they're laughing still. I would wager a fifty that I furnish the dinner conversation for every table in the capital this day."

The vine twig shows not more ingenuity, as it traverses some rocky crag in search of the cool stream, at once its luxury and its life, than does our injured self-love, in seeking for consolation from the inevitable casualties of fate, and the irresistible strokes of fortune! Thus I found comfort in the thought that the ridicule attached to me rather proceeded from the low standard of manners and habits about me than from anything positively absurd in my position; and, in my warped and biased imagination, I actually preferred the insolent insipidity of Lord Dudley de Vere to the hearty raciness and laughter-loving spirit of Phil O'Grady.

My reflections were now cut short by the order of the staff to mount, and, following the current of my present feelings, I drew near to Lord Dudley, in whose emptiness and inanity I felt a degree of security from sarcasm, that I could by no means be so confident of in O'Grady's company.

Amid the thunder of cannon, the deafening roll of drums, the tramp of cavalry, and the measured footfall of the infantry columns, these thoughts rapidly gave way to others, and I soon forgot myself in the scene around me. The sight, indeed, was an inspiriting one; for, although but the mockery of glorious war, to my unpracticed eye the deception was delightful: the bracing air, the bright sky, the scenery itself, lent their aid, and, in the brilliant panorama before me, I soon regained my light-heartedness, and felt happy as before.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHAM BATTLE.

I HAVE mentioned in my last chapter how very rapidly I forgot my troubles in the excitement of the scene around me. Indeed, they must have been much more important, much deeper woes, to have occupied any place in a head so addled and confused as mine was. The manœuvres of the day included a sham battle; and scarcely had his excellency passed down the line, when preparations for the engagement began. The heavy artillery was seen to limber up, and move slowly across the field, accompanied by a strong detachment of cavalry; columns of infantry were marched hither and thither with the most pressing and eager haste; orderly dragoons and staff officers galloped to and fro like madmen; red-faced plethoric little colonels bawled out the word of command till one feared they might burst a blood-vessel; and already two companies of light infantry might be seen stealing cautiously along the skirts of the wood, with the apparently insidious design of attacking a brigade of guns. As for me, I was at one moment employed in carrying dispatches to Sir Charles Asgill, at another conveying intelligence to Lord Harrington; these, be it known, being the rival commanders, whose powers of strategy were now to be tested before the assembled and discriminating citizens of Dublin. Not to speak of the eminent personal hazard of a service which required me constantly to ride between the lines of contending armies, the fatigue alone had nigh killed me. Scarcely did I appear, breathless, at head-quarters, on my return from one mission, when I was dispatched on another. Tired and panting, I more than once bungled my directions, and communicated to Sir Charles the secret intentions of his lordship, while

with a laudable impartiality I disarranged the former's plans by a total misconception of the orders. Fatigue, noise, chagrin, and incessant worry had so completely turned my head, that I became perfectly incapable of the commonest exercises of reason. Some of the artillery I ordered into a hollow, where I was told to station a party of riflemen. Three squadrons of cavalry I desired to charge up a hill, which the 71st Highlanders were to have scrambled up if they were able. Light dragoons I posted in situations so beset with brushwood and firs, that all movement became impossible; and, in a word, when the signal-gun announced the commencement of the action, my mistakes had introduced such a new feature into tactics, that neither party knew what his adversary was at, nor, indeed, had any accurate notion of which were his own troops. The duke, who had watched with the most eager satisfaction the whole of my proceedings, sat laughing upon his horse till the very tears coursed down his cheeks; and, as all the staff were more or less participators in the secret, I found myself once more the center of a grinning audience, perfectly convulsed at my exploits. Meanwhile, the guns thundered, the cavalry charged, the infantry poured in a rattling roar of small arms; while the luckless commanders, unable to discover any semblance of a plan, and still worse, not knowing where one-half of their forces were concealed, dared not adventure upon a movement, and preferred trusting to the smoke of the battle as a cover for their blunders. The fusilade, therefore, was hotly sustained; all the heavy pieces were brought to the front; and while the spectators were anxiously looking for the manœuvres of a fight, the ammunition was waxing low, and the day wearing apace. Dissatisfaction at length began to show itself on every side; and the duke assuming, as well as he was able, somewhat of a disappointed look, the unhappy generals made a final effort to retrieve their mishaps, and aides-de-camp were dispatched through all the highways and byways, to bring up whoever they could find as quickly as possible. Now then began such a scene as few even of the oldest campaigners ever witnessed the equal of. From every dell and hollow, from every brake and thicket, burst forth some party or other, who up to this moment believed themselves lying in ambush. Horse, foot, and dragoons, artillery, sappers, light infantry, and grenadiers, rushed forward wherever chance or their bewildered officers led them. Here might be seen one-half of a regiment blazing away at a stray company of their own people, running like devils for shelter; here some squadrons of horse, who, indignant at their fruitless charges and unmeaning movements, now doggedly dismounted, were standing right before a brigade of twelve-pounders, thundering mercilessly amongst them. Never was witnessed such a scene of riot, confusion, and disorder. Colonels lost their regiments, regiments their colonels. The fusiliers captured a band of royal Irish, and made them play through the heat of the engagement. Those who at first expressed ennui and fatigue at the sameness and monotony of the scene, were now gratified to the utmost by its life, bustle, and animation. Elderly citizens in drab shorts and buff waistcoats explained to their listening wives and urchins the plans and intentions of the rival heroes, pronouncing the whole thing the while the very best field-day that ever was seen in the Phœnix.

In the midst of all this confusion, a new element of discord suddenly displayed itself. That loyal corps, the Cork militia, who were ordered up to attack close to where the duke and his staff were standing, deeming that no better moment could be chosen to exhibit their attachment to church and state than when marching on to glory, struck up, with all the discord of their band, the redoubted air of "Protestant Boys." A cheer burst from the ranks as the loyal strains filled the air; but scarcely had the loud burst subsided, when the Louth militia advanced with a quick step, their fifes playing "Vinegar Hill."

For a moment or two the rivalry created a perfect roar of laughter; but this very soon gave way, as the two regiments, instead of drawing up at a reasonable distance for the interchange of an amicable blank cartridge, rushed down upon each other with the fury of madmen. So sudden, so impetuous was the encounter, all effort to prevent it was impracticable. Muskets were clubbed or bayonets fixed, and in a moment really serious battle was engaged; the musicians on each side encouraging their party, as they racked their brains for party-tunes of the most bitter and taunting character; while cries of "Down with King William!" "To hell with the Pope!" rose alternately from either side.

How far this spirit might have extended, it is difficult to say, when the duke gave orders for some squadrons of cavalry to charge down upon them, and separate the contending forces. This order was fortu-

nately in time; for scarcely was it issued, when a west country yeomanry corps came galloping up to the assistance of the brave Louth.

"Here we are, boys!" cried Mike Westropp, their colonel—"here we are! lave the way for us! and we'll ride down the murthering Orange villains, every man of them!"

The Louth fell back, and the yeomen came forward at a charge; Westropp standing high in his stirrups, and flourishing his saber above his head. It was just then that a heavy brigade of artillery, unconscious of the hot work going forward, was ordered to open their fire upon the Louth militia. One of the guns, by some accident, contained an undue proportion of wadding, and to this casual circumstance may, in a great degree, be attributed the happy issue of what threatened to be a serious disturbance; for, as Westropp advanced, cheering and encouraging his men, he received this wadding slap in his face. Down he tumbled at once, rolling over and over with the shock; while, believing that he had got his death-wound, he bellowed out,—

"Oh! blessed Virgin! there's threason in the camp! hit in the face by a four-pounder, by Jove! Oh! duke darling! Oh! your grace! Oh! holy Joseph, look at this! Oh! bad luck to the arthillery, for spoiling a fair fight! Peter"—this was the major of the regiment—"Peter Darcy, gallop into town and lodge informations against the brigade of guns. I'll be dead before you come back."

A perfect burst of laughter broke from the opposing ranks, and while his friends crowded round the discomfited leader, the rival bands united in a roar of merriment that for a moment caused a suspension of hostilities. For a moment, I say; for scarcely had the gallant Westropp been conveyed to the rear, when once more the bands struck up their irritating strains, and preparations for a still more deadly encounter were made on every side. The matter now assumed so serious an aspect, that the duke was obliged himself to interfere, and order both parties off the ground; the Cork deploying toward the lodge, while the brave Louth marched off with banners flying and drums beating in the direction of Knockmaroon.

These movements were conducted with a serio-comic solemnity of the most ludicrous kind; and although the respect for viceregal authority was great, and the military devotion of each party strong, yet neither one nor the other was sufficient to prevent the more violent on both sides from occasionally turning, as they want, to give expression to some taunting allusion or some galling sarcasm, well calculated, did the opportunity permit, to renew the conflict.

A hearty burst of laughter from the duke indicated pretty clearly how he regarded the matter; and, however the grave and significant looks of others might seem to imply that there was more in the circumstance than mere food for mirth, he shook his sides merrily; and, as his bright eye glistened with satisfaction, and his cheek glowed, he could not help whispering his regret that his station compelled him to check the very best joke he ever witnessed in his life.

"This is hot work, Sir Charles," said he, wiping his forehead as he spoke; "and, as it is now past three o'clock, and we have a privy council at four, I fear I must leave you."

"The troops will move past in marching order," replied Sir Charles, pompously: "will your grace receive the salute at this point!"

"Wherever you like, Sir Charles; wherever you like. Would to heaven that some good Samaritan could afford me a little brandy-and-water from his canteen. I say, Hinton, they seem at luncheon yonder in that carriage: do you think your diplomacy could negotiate a glass of sherry for me?"

"If you'll permit me, my lord, I'll try," said I, as, disengaging myself from the crowd, I set off in the direction he pointed.

As I drew near the carriage—from which the horses had been taken—drawn up beside a clump of beech-trees for the sake of shelter—I was not long in perceiving that it was the same equipage I had so gallantly rescued in the morning from the sabers of the horse police. Had I entertained any fears for the effects of the nervous shock upon the tender sensibilities of Mrs. Paul Rooney, the scene before me must have completely dispelled my uneasiness. Never did a merrier peal of laughter ring from female lungs than hers as I rode forward. Seated in the back of the carriage, the front cushion of which served as a kind of table, sat the lady in question. One hand, resting upon her knee, held a formidable carving-fork, on the summit of which vibrated the short leg of a chicken; in the other she grasped a silver vessel, which, were I to predicate from the froth, I fear I should pronounce to be a porter. A luncheon on the most liberal scale displayed, in all the confusion and disorder

inseparable from such a situation, a veal pie, cold lamb, tongue, chickens, and sandwiches; drinking vessels of every shape and material; a smelling-bottle full of mustard, and a newspaper paragraph full of salt. Abundant as were the viands, the guests were not wanting; crowds of infantry officers, flushed with victory or undismayed by defeat, hobnobbed from the rumble to the box; the steps, the springs, the very splinter-bar had its occupant; and, truly, a merrier party, or a more convivial, it were difficult to conceive.

So environed was Mrs. Rooney by her friends, that I was enabled to observe them some time, myself unseen.

"Captain Mitchell, another wing? Well, the least taste in life of the breast? Bob Dwyer, will ye never have done drawing that cork?"

Now this I must aver was an unjust reproach, inasmuch as to my own certain knowledge he had accomplished three feats of that nature in about as many minutes; and, had the aforesaid Bob been reared from his infancy in drawing corks, instead of declarations, his practice could not have been more expert. Pop, pop, they went; glug, glug, glug, flowed the bubbling liquor, as sherry, shrub, cold punch, and bottled porter succeeded each other in rapid order. Simpering ensigns, with elevated eyebrows, insinuated nonsense, soft, vapid, and unmeaning as their own brains, as they helped themselves to ham or dived into the pasty; while a young dragoon, who seemed to devote his attention to Mrs. Rooney's companion, amused himself by constant endeavors to stroke down a growing moustache, whose downy whiteness resembled nothing that I know of save the ill-omened fur one sees on an antiquated apple-pie.

As I looked on every side to catch a glance at him whom I should suppose to be Mr. Rooney, I was myself detected by the watchful eye of Bob Dwyer, who, at that moment having his mouth full of three hard eggs, was nearly asphyxiated in his endeavors to telegraph my approach to Mrs. Paul.

"The edge-du-cong, by the mortial!" said he, spluttering out the words, as his bloodshot eyes nearly bolted out of his head.

Had I been a Bengal tiger, my advent might have caused less alarm. The officers not knowing if the duke himself were coming, wiped their lips, resumed their caps and shakos, and sprang to the ground in dismay and confusion: as Mrs. Rooney herself, with an adroitness an Indian juggler might have envied, plunged the fork, drumstick and all, into the recesses of her muff; while with a back hand she decanted the XX upon a bald major of infantry, who was brushing the crumbs from his facings. One individual alone seemed to relish and enjoy the discomfiture of the others: this was the young lady whom I before remarked, and whose whole air and appearance seemed strangely at variance with everything around her. She gave free current to her mirth; while Mrs. Paul, now suddenly restored to a sense of her nervous constitution, fell back in her carriage, and appeared bent upon a scene.

"You caught us enjoying ourselves, Mr. Stilton?"

"Hinton, if you'll allow me, madam."

"Ay, to be sure—Mr. Hinton. Taking a little snack, which I am sure you'd be the better for after the fatigues of the day."

"Eh, au, au! a devilish good luncheon," chimed in a pale sub, the first who ventured to pluck up his courage.

"Would a sandwich tempt you, with a glass of champagne?" said Mrs. Paul, with the blandest of smiles.

"I can recommend the lamb, sir," said a voice behind.

"Begad, I'll vouch for the porter," said the major. "I only hope it is a good cosmetic."

"It is a beautiful thing for the hair," said Mrs. Rooney, half venturing upon a joke.

"No more on that head, ma'am," said the little major, bowing pompously.

By this time, thanks to the assiduous attentions of Bob Dwyer, I was presented with a plate, which, had I been an anaconda instead of an aide-de-camp, might have satisfied my appetite. A place was made for me in the carriage; and the faithful Bob, converting the skirt of his principal blue into a glass cloth, polished a wine-glass for my private use.

"Let me introduce my young friend, Mr. Hinton," said Mrs. Paul, with a graceful wave of her jeweled hand toward her companion. "Miss Louisa Bellew, only daughter of Sir Simon Bellew, of—" what the place was I could not well hear, but it sounded confoundedly like Killhiman-smotherum—"a beautiful place in the County Mayo. Bob, is it punch you are giving?"

"Most excellent, I assure you, Mrs. Rooney."

"And how is the duke, sir? I hope his grace enjoys good health. He is a darling of a man."

By the by, it is perfectly absurd the sym-

pathy your third or fourth-rate people feel in the health and habits of those above them in station, pleased as they are to learn the most commonplace and worthless trifles concerning them, and happy when, by any chance, some accidental similitude would seem to exist even between their misfortunes.

"And the dear duchess," resumed Mrs. Rooney, "she's troubled with the nerves like myself. Ah! Mr. Hinton, what an affliction it is to have a sensitive nature; that's what I often say to my sweet young friend here. It's better for her to be the gay, giddy, thoughtless, happy thing she is than—" Here the lady sighed, wiped her eyes, flourished her cambric, and tried to look like Agnes in the "Bleeding Nun." "But here they come. You don't know Mr. Rooney? Allow me to introduce him to you."

As she spoke, O'Grady cantered up to the carriage, accompanied by a short, pursy, round-faced little man, who, with his hat set knowingly on one side, and his top-boots scarce reaching to the middle of the leg, bestrode a sharp, strong-boned hackney, with cropped ears and short tail. He carried in his hand a hunting-whip, and seemed, by his seat in the saddle and the easy finger upon the bridle, no indifferent horseman.

"Mr. Rooney," said the lady, drawing herself up with a certain austerity of manner, "I wish you to make the acquaintance of Mr. Hinton, the aid-de-camp to his grace."

Mr. Rooney lifted his hat straight above his head, and replaced it a little more obliquely than before over his right eye.

"Delighted, upon my honor—faith, quite charmed—hope you got something to eat—there never was such a murthering hot day—Bob Dwyer, open a bottle of port, the Captain is famished."

"I say, Hinton," called out O'Grady, "you forgot the duke, it seems; he told me you had gone in search of some sherry, or something of the kind; but I can readily conceive how easily a man may forget himself in such a position as yours."

Here Mrs. Paul dropped her head in deep confusion, Miss Bellew looked saucy, and I, for the first time remembering what brought me there, was perfectly overwhelmed with shame at my carelessness.

"Never mind, boy, don't fret about it, his grace is the most forgiving man in the world; and when he knows where you were—"

"Ah, Captain!" sighed Mrs. Rooney.

"Master Phil, it's yourself can do it," murmured Paul, who perfectly appreciated O'Grady's powers of "blarney," when exercised on the susceptible temperament of his fair spouse.

"I'll take a sandwich," continued the Captain. "Do you know, Mrs. Rooney, I've been riding about this half-hour to catch my young friend, and introduce him to you; and here I find him comfortably installed, without my aid or assistance. The fact is, these English fellows have a flattering, insinuating way of their own there's no coming up to. Isn't that so, Miss Bellew?"

"Very likely," said the young lady, who now spoke for the first time; "but it is so very well concealed that I for one could never detect it."

This speech uttered with a certain pert and saucy air nettled me for the moment; but as no reply occurred to me, I could only look at the speaker a tacit acknowledgment of her sarcasm; while I remembered, for the first time, that, although seated opposite my very attractive neighbor, I had hitherto not addressed to her a single phrase of commonplace attention.

"I suppose you put up in the castle, sir?" said Mr. Rooney.

"Yes, two doors lower down than Mount O'Grady," replied the captain for me. "But come, Hinton, the carriages are moving, we must get back as quick as we can. Good-bye, Paul. Adieu, Mrs. Rooney. Miss Bellew, good-morning."

It was just at the moment when I had summoned up my courage to address Miss Bellew, that O'Grady called me away: there was nothing for it, however, but to make my adieux; while, extricating myself from the débris of the luncheon, I once more mounted my horse, and joined the viceregal party as they drove from the ground.

"I'm delighted you know the Rooneys," said O'Grady, as we drove along; "they are by far the best fun going. Paul good, but his wife superb!"

"And the young lady?" said I.

"Oh, a different kind of thing altogether. By-the-by, Hinton, you took my hint, I hope, about your English manner?' '

"Eh—why—how—what did you mean?"

"Simply, my boy, that your Coppermine-river kind of courtesy may be a devilish fine thing in Hyde Park or St. James's, but will never do with us poor people here. Put more warmth into it, man. Dash the lemonade with a little maraschino; you'll feel twice as comfortable yourself, and the girls like you all the better. You take the suggestion in good part, I'm sure."

"Oh, of course," said I, somewhat stung that I should get a lesson in manner where I had meant to be a model for imitation; "if they like that kind of thing, I must only conform."

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROONEYS.

I CANNOT proceed farther in this my veracious history without dwelling a little longer upon the characters of the two interesting individuals I have already presented to my readers as Mr. and Mrs. Rooney.

Paul Rooney, attorney-at-law, 42, Stephen's Green, North, was about as well known in his native city of Dublin as Nelson's Pillar. His reputation, unlimited by the adventitious circumstances of class, spread over the whole surface of society; and, from the chancellor down to the carman, his claims were confessed.

It is possible that, in many other cities of the world, Mr. Rooney might have been regarded as a commonplace, everyday personage, well to do in the world, and of a free and easy character, which, if it left little for reproach, left still less for remark; but in Ireland, whether it was the climate or the people, the poteen or the potatoes, I cannot say, but certainly he "came out," as the painters call it, in a breadth of color quite surprising.

The changeful character of the skies has, they tell us, a remarkable influence in fashioning the ever-varying features of Irish temperament; and, certainly, the inconstant climate of Dublin had much merit if it produced in Mr. Rooney the versatile nature he rejoiced in.

About ten o'clock, on every morning during term, might be seen a shrewd, cunning-looking, sly little fellow, who, with pursed-up lips and slightly elevated nose, wended his way toward the Four Courts, followed by a ragged urchin with a well-filled bag of purple stuff. His black coat, drab shorts, and gaiters had a plain and business-like cut: and the short, square tie of his white cravat had a quaint resemblance to a flourish on a deed; the self-satisfied look, the assured step, the easy roll of the head—all bespoke one with whom the world was thriving; and it did not need the additional evidence of a certain habit he had of jingling his silver in his breeches pocket as he went, to assure you that Rooney was a warm fellow, and had no want of cash.

Were you to trace his steps for the three or four hours that ensued, you would see him bustling through the crowded hall of the Four Courts—now, whispering some important point to a leading barrister, while he held another by the gown lest he should escape him; now, he might be remarked seated in a niche between the pillars, explaining some knotty difficulty to a western client, whose flushed cheek and flashing eye too plainly indicated his impatience of legal strategy, and how much more pleased he would feel to redress his wrongs in his own fashion; now browbeating, now cajoling, now encouraging, now condoling, he edged his way through the bewigged and dusty throng, not stopping to reply to the hundred salutations he met with, save by a knowing wink, which was the only civility he did not put down at three-and-fourpence. If his knowledge of law was little, his knowledge of human nature—at least of such of it as Ireland exhibits—was great; and no case of any importance could come before a jury, where Paul's advice and opinion were not deemed of considerable importance. No man better knew all the wiles and twists, all the dark nooks and recesses of Irish character. No man more quickly could ferret out a hoarded secret; no one so soon detect an attempted imposition. His was the secret *police* of law; he read a witness as he would a deed, and detected a flaw in him to the full as easily.

As he sat near the leading counsel in a cause, he seemed a kind of middle term between the lawyer and the jury. Marking by some slight but significant gesture every point of the former, to the latter he impressed upon their minds every favorable feature of his client's cause; and twelve deaf men might have followed the pleadings in a cause through the agency of Paul's gesticulations. The consequence of these varied gifts was, business flowed in upon him from every side, and few members of the bar were in the receipt of one-half his income.

Scarcely, however, did the court rise, when Paul, shaking from his shoulders the learned dust of the exchequer, would dive into a small apartment which, in an obscure house in Maas Lane, he dignified by the name of his study. Short and few as were his moments of seclusion, they sufficed to effect in his entire man a complete and total change. The shrewd little attorney that went in with a *nisi prius* grin, came out a round, pleasant-looking fellow, with a green coat of jockey cut, a buff waistcoat, white cords, and tops; his hat

set jauntily on one side, his spotted neck-cloth knotted in a bang-up mode,—in fact, his figure the *beau idéal* of a west country squire taking a canter among his covers before the opening of the hunting.

His gray eyes, expanded to twice their former size, looked the very soul of merriment; his nether lip, slightly dropped, quivered with the last joke it uttered. Even his voice partook of the change, and was now a rich, full, mellow Clare accent, which, with the recitative of his country, seemed to Italianize his English. While such was Paul, his *accessoires*—as the French would call them—were in admirable keeping: a dark chestnut cob, a perfect model of strength and symmetry, would be led up and down by a groom, also mounted upon a strong hackney, whose flat rib and short pastern showed his old Irish breeding; the well-fitting saddle, the well-balanced stirrup, the plain but powerful snaffle, all looked like the appendages of one whose jockeyism was no assumed feature; and, indeed, you had only to see Mr. Rooney in his seat, to confess that he was to the full as much at home there as in the Court of Chancery.

From this to the hour of a late dinner the Phœnix Park became his resort. There, surrounded by a gay and laughing crowd, Paul cantered along, amusing his hearers with the last *mot* from the King's Bench, or some stray bit of humor or fun from a case on circuit. His conversation, however, principally ran on other topics: the Curragh Meeting, the Loughrea Steeplechase, the Meath Cup, or Lord Boyne's Handicap; with these he was thoroughly familiar. He knew the odds of every race, could apportion the weights, describe the ground, and, better than all, make rather a good guess at the winner. In addition to these gifts, he was the best judge of a horse in Ireland; always well mounted, and never without at least two hackneys in his stable, able to trot their fifteen Irish miles within the hour. Such qualities as these might be supposed popular ones in a country proverbially given to sporting; but Mr. Rooney had other and very superior powers of attraction,—he was the Amphitryon of Dublin. It was no figurative expression to say that he kept open house. *Déjeûners*, dinners, routs, and balls followed each other in endless succession. His cook was French, his claret was Sneyd's; he imported his own sherry and Madeira, both of which he nursed with care and affection truly paternal. His venison and black-cock came from Scotland; every Holyhead packet had its consignment of Welsh mutton; and, in a word, whatever wealth could purchase, and a taste, nurtured as his had been by the counsel of many who frequented his table, could procure, such he possessed in abundance, his greatest ambition being to outshine in splendor, and surpass in magnificence, all the other dinner-givers of the day, filling his house with the great and titled of the land, who ministered to his vanity with singular good-nature, while they sipped his claret, and sat over his Burgundy.

His was indeed a pleasant house. The *bons vivants* liked it for its excellent fare, the perfection of its wines, the certainty of finding the first rarity of the season before its existence was heard of at other tables; the lounger liked it for its ease and informality; the humorist, for the amusing features of its host and hostess; and not a few were attracted by the gracefulness of one who, by some strange fatality of fortune, seemed to have dropped down into the midst of this singular *ménage*.

Of Mr. Rooney, I have only further to say that, hospitable as a prince, he was never so happy as at the head of his table; for, although his natural sharpness could not but convince him of the footing which he occupied among his high and distinguished guests, yet he knew well there are few such levelers of rank as riches, and he had read in his youth that even the lofty Jove himself was accessible by the odor of a hecatomb.

Mrs. Rooney—or, as she wrote herself upon her card, Mrs. Paul Rooney (there seemed something distinctive in the prenom.)—was a being of a very different order. Perfectly unconscious of the ridicule that attaches to vulgar profusion, she believed herself the great source of attraction of her crowded staircase and besieged drawing-room. True it was, she was a large and very handsome woman. Her deep, dark brown eyes, and brilliant complexion would have been beautiful, had not her mouth somewhat marred their effect, by that coarse expression which high living and a voluptuous life is sure to impress upon those not born to be great. There is no doubt of it, the mouth is your thoroughbred feature. You will meet eyes as softly beaming, as brightly speaking, among the lofty cliffs of the wild Tyrol, or in the deep valleys of the far West; I have seen, too, a brow as fairly penciled, a nose no Grecian statue could surpass, a skin whose tint was fair and transparent as the downy rose-leaf, amid

the humble peasants of a poor and barren land; but never have I seen the mouth whose clean-cut lip and chiseled arch betokened birth. No; that feature would seem the prerogative of the highly born; fashioned to the expression of high and holy thoughts; molded to the utterance. of ennobling sentiment, or proud desire. Its every lineament tells of birth and blood.

Now, Mrs. Rooney's mouth was a large and handsome one, her teeth white and regular withal, and, when at rest, there was nothing to find fault with; but let her speak—was it her accent?—was it the awful provincialism of her native city?—was it that strange habit of contortion any *patois* is sure to impress upon the speaker?—I cannot tell, but certainly it lent to features of very considerable attraction a vulgarizing character of expression.

It was truly provoking to see so handsome a person mar every effect of her beauty by some extravagant display. Dramatizing every trivial incident in life, she rolled her eyes, looked horror-struck or happy, sweet or sarcastic, lofty or languishing, all in one minute. There was an eternal play of feature of one kind or other; there was no rest, no repose. Her arms—and they were round, and fair, and well-fashioned—were also enlisted in the service; and to a distant observer Mrs. Rooney's animated conversation appeared like a priest performing mass.

And that beautiful head, whose fair and classic proportions were balanced so equally upon her white and swelling throat, how tantalizing to know it full of low and petty ambitions, of vulgar tastes, of contemptible rivalries, of insignificant triumph. To see her, amid the voluptuous splendor and profusion of her gorgeous house, resplendent with jewelry, glistening in all the blaze of emeralds and rubies; to watch how the poisonous venom of innate vulgarity had so tainted that fair and beautiful form, rendering her an object of ridicule who should have been a thing to worship. It was too bad; and, as she sat at dinner, her plump but taper fingers grasping a champagne glass, she seemed like a Madonna enacting the part of Moll Flagon.

Now, Mrs. Paul's manner had as many discrepancies as her features. She was by nature a good, kind, merry, coarse personage, who loved a joke not the less if it were broad as well as long. Wealth, however, and its attendant evils, suggested the propriety of a very different line; and catching up as she did at every opportunity that presented itself such of the airs and graces as she believed to be the distinctive traits of high life, she figured about in these cast-off attractions, like a waiting-maid in the abandoned finery of her mistress.

As she progressed in fortune, she "tried back" for a family, and discovered that she was an O'Toole by birth, and consequently of Irish blood-royal; a certain O'Toole being king of a nameless tract, in an unknown year, somewhere about the time of Cromwell, who, Mrs. Rooney had heard, came over with the Romans.

"Ah, yes, my dear," as she would say, when, softened by sherry and sorrow, she would lay her hand upon your arm—"ah, yes, if every one had their own, it isn't married to an attorney I'd be, but living in regal splendor in the halls of my ancestors. Well, well!" Here she would throw up her eyes with a mixed expression of grief and confidence in heaven, that if she hadn't got her own, in this world, Oliver Cromwell, at least, was paying off, in the other, his foul wrongs to the royal house of O'Toole.

I have only one person more to speak of ere I conclude my rather prolix account of the family. Miss Louisa Bellew was the daughter of an Irish baronet, who put the keystone upon his ruin by his honest opposition to the passing of the union. His arge estates, loaded with debt and encumbered by mortgage, had been for half a century a kind of battlefield for legal warfare at every assizes. Through the medium of his difficulties he became acquainted with Mr. Rooney, whose craft and subtlety had rescued him from more than one difficulty, and whose good-natured assistance had done still more important service by loans upon his property.

At Mr. Rooney's suggestion, Miss Bellew was invited to pass her winter with them in Dublin. This proposition, which, in the palmier days of the baronet's fortune, would in all probability never have been made, and would certainly never have been accepted, was now entertained with some consideration, and finally acceded to, on prudential motives. Rooney had lent him large sums; he had never been a pressing, on the contrary, he was a lenient creditor; possessing great power over the property, he had used it sparingly, even delicately, and showed himself, upon more than one occasion, not only a shrewd adviser, but a warm friend. "'Tis true," thought Sir Simon, "they are vulgar people, of coarse tastes and low habits, and those with whom they associate laugh at, though they live upon them; yet, after

all, to refuse this invitation may be taken in ill part; a few months will do the whole thing. Louisa, although young, has tact and cleverness enough to see the difficulties of her position; besides, poor child, the gayety and life of a city will be a relief to her, after the dreary and monotonous existence she has passed with me."

This latter reason he plausibly represented to himself as a strong one for complying with what his altered fortunes and ruined prospects seemed to render no longer a matter of choice.

To the Rooneys, indeed, Miss Bellew's visit was a matter of some consequence; it was like the recognition of some petty state by one of the great powers of Europe. It was an acknowledgment of a social existence, an evidence to the world not only that there was such a thing as the kingdom of Rooney, but also that it was worth while to enter into negotiation with it, and even accredit an ambassador to its court.

Little did that fair and lovely girl think, as with tearful eyes she turned again and again to embrace her father, as the hour arrived, when for the first time in her life she was to leave her home, little did she dream of the circumstances under which her visit was to be paid. Less a guest than a hostage, she was about to quit the home of her infancy, where, notwithstanding the inroads of poverty, a certain air of its once greatness still lingered; the broad and swelling lands, that stretched away with wood and coppice, far as the eye could reach—the woodland walks—the ancient house itself, with its discordant pile, accumulated at different times by different masters—all told of power and supremacy in the land of her fathers. The lonely solitude of those walls, peopled alone by the grim-visaged portraits of long-buried ancestors, were now to be exchanged for the noise and bustle, the glitter and the glare of second-rate city life; profusion and extravagance, where she had seen but thrift and forbearance; the gossip, the scandal, the tittle-tattle of society, with its envies, its jealousies, its petty rivalries, and its rancors, were to supply those quiet evenings beside the winter hearth, when reading aloud some old and valued volume she learned to prize the treasures of our earlier writers under the guiding taste of one whose scholarship was of no mean order, and whose cultivated mind was imbued with all the tenderness and simplicity of a refined and gentle nature.

When fortune smiled, when youth and wealth, an ancient name and a high position, all concurred to elevate him, Sir Simon Bellew was courteous almost to humility; but when the cloud of misfortune lowered over his house, when difficulties thickened around him, and every effort to rescue seemed only to plunge him deeper, then the deep-rooted pride of the man shone forth: and he who in happier days was forgiving even to a fault, became now scrupulous about every petty observance, exacting testimonies of respect from all around him, and assuming an almost tyranny of manner totally foreign to his tastes, his feelings, and his nature; like some mighty oak of the forest, riven and seathed by lightning, its branches leafless and its roots laid bare, still standing erect, it stretches its sapless limbs proudly toward heaven, so stood he, reft of nearly all, yet still presenting to the adverse wind of fortune his bold, unshaken front.

Alas and alas! poverty has no heavier evil in its train than its power of perverting the fairest gifts of our nature from their true channel,—making the bright sides of our character dark, gloomy, and repulsive. Thus the high-souled pride that in our better days sustains and keeps us far above the reach of sordid thoughts and unworthy actions, becomes, in the darker hour of our destiny, a misanthropic selfishness, in which we wrap ourselves as in a mantle. The caresses of friendship, the warm affections of domestic love, cannot penetrate through this; even sympathy becomes suspect, and then commences that terrible struggle against the world, whose only termination is a broken heart.

Notwithstanding, then, all Mr. Rooney's address in conveying the invitation in question, it was not without a severe struggle that Sir Simon resolved on its acceptance; and when at last he did accede, it was with so many stipulations, so many express conditions, that, had they been complied with *de facto*, as they were acknowledged by promise, Miss Bellew would, in all probability, have spent her winter in the retirement of her own chamber in Stephen's Green, without seeing more of the capital and its inhabitants than the view from her window presented. Paul, it is true, agreed to everything; for, although, to use his own language, the codicil revoked the entire body of the testament, he determined in his own mind to break the will. "Once in Dublin," thought he, "the fascinations of society, the pleasures of the world, with such a guide as Mrs. Rooney"—and here let me mention, that for his wife's tact and social cleverness Paul had the most heartfelt admiration—"with advantages like these, she will soon forget the humdrum

life of Kilmorran Castle, and become reconciled to a splendor and magnificence unsurpassed by even the viceregal court."

Here, then, let me conclude this account of the Rooneys, while I resume the thread of my own narrative. Although I feel for and am ashamed of the prolixity in which I have indulged, yet, as I speak of real people, well known at the period of which I write, and as they may to a certain extent, convey an impression of the tone of one class in the society of that day, I could not bring myself to omit their mention, nor even dismiss them more briefly.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VISIT.

I HAVE already recorded the first twenty-four hours of my life in Ireland; and, if there was enough in them to satisfy me that the country was unlike in many respects that which I had left, there was also some show of reason to convince me that, if I did not conform to the habits and tastes of those around me, I should incur a far greater chance of being laughed at by them than be myself amused by their eccentricities. The most remarkable feature that struck me was the easy, even cordial manner with which acquaintance was made. Every one met you as if he had in some measure been prepared for the introduction; a tone of intimacy sprang up at once; your tastes were hinted, your wishes guessed at, with an unaffected kindness that made you forget the suddenness of the intimacy; so that, when at last you parted with your dear friend of some half an hour's acquaintance, you could not help wondering at the confidences you had made, the avowals you had spoken, and the lengths to which you had gone in close alliance with one you had never seen before, and might possibly never meet again. Strange enough as this was with men, it was still more singular when it was extended to the gentler sex. Accustomed as I had been all my life to the rigid observances of etiquette in female society, nothing surprised me so much as the rapid steps by which Irish ladies passed from acquaintance to intimacy, from intimacy to friendship. The unsuspecting kindliness of woman's nature has certainly no more genial soil than in the heart of Erin's daughters. There is besides, too, a winning softness in their manner toward the stranger of another land that imparts to their hospitable reception a tone of courteous warmth I have never seen in any other country.

The freedom of manner I have here alluded to, however delightful it may render the hours of one separated from home, family, and friends, is yet not devoid of its inconveniences. How many an undisciplined and uninformed youth has misconstrued its meaning and mistaken its import. How often have I seen the raw subaltern elated with imaginary success—flushed with a fancied victory—where, in reality, he had met with nothing save the kind looks and the kind words in which the every-day courtesies of life are couched, and by which, what in less favored lands are the cold and chilling observances of ceremony, are here the easy and familiar intercourse of those who wish to know each other.

The coxcomb who fancies that he can number as many triumphs as he has passed hours in Dublin, is like one who, estimating the rich production of a southern clime by their exotic value in his own colder regions, dignifies by the name of luxury what are in reality but the every-day productions of the soil; so he believes peculiarly addressed to himself the cordial warmth and friendly greeting which make the social atmosphere around him.

If I myself fell deeply into this error, and if my punishment was a heavy one, let my history prove a beacon to all who follow in my steps; for Dublin is still a garrison city, and I have been told that lips as tempting and eyes as bright are to be met there as heretofore. Now to my story.

Life in Dublin, at the time I write of, was about as gay a thing as a man can well fancy. Less debarred than in other countries from partaking of the lighter enjoyments of life, the members of the learned professions mixed much in society; bringing with them stores of anecdote and information unattainable from other sources, they made what elsewhere would have proved the routine of intercourse a season of intellectual enjoyment. Thus, the politician, the churchman, the barrister, and the military man, shaken as they were together in close intimacy, lost individually many of the prejudices of their caste, and learned to converse with a wider and more extended knowledge of the world. While this was so, another element, peculiarly characteristic of the country, had its share in modeling social life—that innate tendency to drollery, that bent to laugh with every one and at everything, so eminently

Irish, was now in the ascendant. From the viceroy downwards, the island was on the broad grin. Every day furnished its share, its quota of merriment. Epigrams, good stories, repartees, and practical jokes rained in showers over the land. A privy council was a *conversazione* of laughing bishops and droll chief justices. Every trial at the bar, every dinner at the court, every drawing-room, afforded a theme for some ready-witted absurdity; and all the graver business of life was carried on amid this current of unceasing fun and untiring drollery, just as we see the serious catastrophe of a modern opera assisted by the crash of an orchestral accompaniment.

With materials like these society was made up: and into this I plunged with all the pleasurable delight of one who, if he could not appreciate the sharpness, was at least dazzled by the brilliancy of the wit that flashed around him. My duties as aide-de-camp were few, and never interfered with my liberty: while in my double capacity of military man and *attaché* to the court I was invited everywhere, and treated with marked courtesy and kindness. Thus passed my life pleasantly along, when a few mornings after the events I have mentioned, I was sitting at my breakfast, conning over my invitations for the week, and meditating a letter home, in which I should describe my mode of life with as much reserve as might render the record of my doings a safe disclosure for the delicate nerves of my lady-mother. In order to accomplish this latter task with success, I scribbled with some notes a sheet of paper that lay before me. "Among other particularly nice people, my dear mother," wrote I, "there are the Rooneys. Mr. Rooney—a member of the Irish bar, of high standing and great reputation—is a most agreeable and accomplished person. How much I should like to present him to you." I had got thus far, when a husky, asthmatic cough, and a muttered curse on the height of my domicile apprised me that some one was at my door. At the same moment a heavy single knock, that nearly stove in the panel, left no doubt upon my mind.

"Are ye at home, or is it sleeping ye are? May I never, if it's much else the half of ye's fit for. Ugh, blessed hour! three flights of stairs, with a twist in them instead of a landing. Ye see he's not in the place. I tould you that before I came up. But it's always the same thing. Corny, run here; Corny, fly there; get me this; take that. Bad luck to them! One would think they badgered me for bare divarsion, the haythins, the Turks!"

A fit of coughing, that almost convinced me that Corny had given his last curse, followed this burst of eloquence, just as I appeared at the door.

"What's the matter, Corny?"

"The matter?—ugh, ain't I coughing my soul out with a wheezing and whistling in my chest like a creel of chickens? Here's Mr. Rooney wanting to see ye; and faith," as he added in an undertone, "it's not long you wor in making his acquaintance. That's his room," added he, with a jerk of his thumb. "Now lave the way if you plase, and let me get a howld of the banisters."

With these words Corny began his descent, while I, apologizing to Mr. Rooney for not having sooner perceived him, bowed him into the room with all proper ceremony.

"A thousand apologies, Mr. Hinton, for the unseasonable hour of my visit, but business—"

"Pray not a word," said I; "always delighted to see you. Mrs. Rooney is well, I hope?"

"Charming, upon my honor. But, as I was saying, I could not well come later; there is a case in the King's Bench—Rex *versus* Ryves—a heavy record, and I want to catch the counsel to assure him that all's safe. God knows, it has cost me an anxious night. Everything depended on one witness, an obstinate beast that wouldn't listen to reason. We got hold of him last night; got three doctors to certify he was out of his mind; and, at this moment, with his head shaved, and a gray suit on him, he is the noisiest inmate in Glassnevin madhouse."

"Was not this a very bold, a very dangerous expedient?"

"So it was. He fought like a devil, and his outrageous conduct has its reward, for they put him on low diet and handcuffs the moment he went in. But excuse me, if I make a hurried visit. Mrs. Rooney requests that—that—but where the devil did I put it?"

Here Mr. Rooney felt his coat-pockets, dived into those of his waistcoat, patted himself all over, then looked into his hat, then round the room, on the floor, and even outside the door upon the lobby.

"Sure it is not possible I've lost it."

"Nothing of consequence, I hope?" said I.

"What a head I have!" replied he, with a knowing grin, while at the same moment throwing up the sash of my window, he

thrust out the head in question, and gave a loud shrill whistle.

Scarcely was the casement closed when a ragged urchin appeared at the door, carrying on his back the ominous stuff-bag containing the record of Mr. Rooney's roguieries.

"Give me the bag, Tim," quoth he; at the same moment he plunged his hand deep among the tape-tied parcels, and extricated a piece of square pasteboard, which, having straightened and flattened upon his knee, he presented to me with a graceful bow, adding, jocosely, "An ambassador without his credentials would never do."

It was an invitation to dinner at Mr. Rooney's for the memorable Friday for which my friend O'Grady had already received his card.

"Nothing will give me more pleasure—"

"No, will it though? how very good of you! a small cosy party—Harry Burgh, Bowes Daley, Barrington, the judges, and a few more. There now, no ceremony, I beg of you. Come along, Joe. Good morning, Mr. Hinton: not a step farther."

So saying, Mr. Rooney backed and shuffled himself out of my room, and, followed by his faithful attendant, hurried downstairs, muttering a series of self-gratulations, as he went, on the successful result of his mission. Scarcely had he gone, when I heard the rapid stride of another visitor, who, mounting four steps at a time, came along chanting, at the top of his voice,—

"My two back teeth I will bequeath
To the Reverend Michael Palmer;
His wife has a tongue that'll match them well.
She's a devil of a scold, God d—n her!"

"How goes it, Jack, my hearty?" cried he, as he sprang into the room, flinging his saber into the corner, and hurling his foraging cap upon the sofa.

"You have been away, O'Grady? What became of you for the last two days?"

"Down at the Curragh, taking a look at the nags for the spring meeting. Dined with the bar at Naas; had a great night with them; made old Moore gloriously tipsy, and sent him into court the next morning with the overture to *Mother Goose* in his bag instead of his brief. Since daybreak I have been trying a new horse in the park, screwing him all over the fences, and rushing him at the double rails in the pathway, to see if he can't cross the country."

"Why the hunting season is nearly over."

"Quite true; but it is the Loughrea Steeplechase I am thinking of. I have promised to name a horse, and I only remembered last night that I had but twenty-four hours to do it. The time was short, but by good fortune I heard of this gray on my way up to town."

"And you think he'll do?"

"He has a good chance, if one can only keep on his back; but what between bolting, plunging, and rushing through the fences, he is not a beast for a timid elderly gentleman. After all, one must have something; the whole world will be there; the Rooneys are going; and that pretty little girl with them. By the bye, Jack, what do you think of Miss Bellew?"

"I can scarcely tell you; I only saw her for a moment, and then that Hibernian hippopotamus, Mrs. Paul, so completely overshadowed her, there was no getting a look at her."

"Devilish pretty girl, that she is; and one day or other, they say, will have an immense fortune. Old Rooney always shakes his head when the idea is thrown out, which only convinces me the more of her chance."

"Well, then, Master Phil, why don't you do something in that quarter?"

"Well, so I should; but somehow, most unaccountably, you'll say, I don't think I made any impression. To be sure, I never went vigorously to work; I couldn't get over my scruples of making up to a girl who may have a large fortune, while I myself am so confoundedly out at the elbows; the thing would look badly, to say the least of it; and so, when I did think I was making a little running, I only 'held in' the faster, and at length gave up the race. *You* are the man, Hinton. *Your* chances, I should say—"

"Ah, I don't know."

Just at this moment the door opened, and Lord Dudley de Vere entered, dressed in colored clothes, cut in the most foppish style of the day, and with his hands stuck negligently behind in his coat-pockets. He threw himself affectedly into a chair, and eyed us both without speaking.

"I say, messieurs, Rooney or not Rooney? that's the question. Do we accept this invitation for Friday?"

"I do, for one," said I, somewhat haughtily.

"Can't be, my boy," said O'Grady; "the thing is most unlucky; they have a dinner at court that same day; our names are all on the list; and thus we lose the Rooneys, which, from all I hear, is a very serious loss indeed. Daley, Barrington,

Harry Martin, and half a dozen others, the first fellows of the day, are all to be there."

"What a deal they will talk!" yawned out Lord Dudley. "I feel rather happy to have escaped it. There's no saying a word to the woman beside you, as long as those confounded fellows keep up a roaring fire of what they think wit. What an idea! to be sure; there is not a man among them that can tell you the odds upon the Derby, nor what year there was a dead heat for the St. Leger. That little girl the Rooneys have got is very pretty, I must confess; but I see what they are at: won't do though. Ha! O'Grady, you know what I mean?"

"Faith, I am very stupid this morning; can't say that I do?"

"Not see it! It is a hollow thing; but perhaps you are in the scheme too. There, you needn't look angry; I only meant it in joke—ha! ha! ha! I say, Hinton, do you take care of yourself: Englishers have no chance here; and when they find it won't do with *me*, they'll take you in training."

"Anything for a *pis-aller*" said O'Grady, sarcastically; "but let us not forget there is a levée to-day, and it is already past twelve o'clock."

"Ha! to be sure, a horrid bore."

So saying, Lord Dudley lounged once more round the room, looked at himself in the glass, nodded familiarly to his own image, and took his leave. O'Grady soon followed; while I set about my change of dress with all the speed the time required.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BALL.

As the day of Mr. Rooney's grand entertainment drew near, our disappointment increased tenfold at our inability to be present. The only topic discussed in Dublin was the number of the guests, the splendor and magnificence of the dinner, which was to be followed by a ball, at which above eight hundred guests were expected. The band of the Fermanagh militia, at that time the most celebrated in Ireland, was brought up expressly for the occasion. All that the city could number of rank, wealth, and beauty had received invitations, and scarcely a single apology had been returned.

"Is there no possible way," said I, as I chatted with O'Grady on the morning of the event—"is there no chance of our getting away in time to see something of the ball at least?"

"None whatever," replied he despondingly; "as ill luck will have it, it's a command-night at the theater. The duke has disappointed so often, that he is sure to go now, and for the same reason he'll sit the whole thing out. By that time it will be half-past twelve, we shan't get back here before one, then comes supper; and—in fact, you know enough of the habits of this place now, to guess that after that, there is very little use of thinking of going anywhere."

"It is devilish provoking," said I.

"That it is: and you don't know the worst of it. I've got rather a heavy book on the Loughrea race, and shall want a few hundreds in a week or so; and, as nothing renders my friend Paul so sulky as not eating his dinners, it is five-and-twenty per cent. at least out of my pocket, from this confounded disappointment. There goes De Vere. I say, Dudley, who have we at dinner to-day?"

"Harrington and the Asgills, and that set," replied he, with an insolent shrug of his shoulder.

"More of it, by Jove!" said O'Grady, biting his lip. "One must be as particular before these people as a young sub at a regimental mess. There's not a button of your coat, nor a loop of your aiguillette, not a twist of your sword-knot, little Charley won't note down; and as there is no orderly-book in the drawing-room, he'll whisper it to his Grace before coffee."

"What a bore!"

"Ay, and to think that all that time we might have been up to the very chin in fun. The Rooneys to-day will outdo even themselves. They've got half a dozen new lords on trial; all the judges; a live bishop; and better than all, every pretty woman in the capital. I've a devil of a mind to get suddenly ill, and slip off to Paul's for the dessert."

"No, no, that's out of the question; we must only put up with our misfortunes as well as we can. As for me, the dinner here is I think the worst part of the matter."

"I estimate my losses at a very different rate. First, there is the three hundred, which I should certainly have had from Paul, and which now becomes a very crooked contingency. Then there's the dinner and two bottles—I speak moderately—of such Burgundy as nobody has but himself. These are the positive bonâ fide losses: then, what do you say to my chance of picking up some lovely girl, with

a stray thirty thousand, and the good taste to look out for a proper fellow to spend it with? Seriously, Jack, I must think of something of that kind one of these days. It's wrong to lose time; for, by waiting, one's chances diminish, while becoming more difficult to please. So you see what a heavy blow this is to me: not to mention my little gains at short-whist, which in the half-hour before supper I may fairly set down as a fifty."

"Yours is a very complicated calculation; for, except the dinner—and I suppose we shall have as good a one here—I have not been able to see anything but problematic loss or profit."

"Of course you haven't: your English education is based upon grounds far too positive for that; but we mere Irish get a habit of looking at the possible as probable, and the probable as most likely. I don't think we build castles more than our neighbors, but we certainly go live in them earlier; and if we do, now and then, get a chill for our pains, why we generally have another building ready to receive us elsewhere for change of air."

"This is, I confess, somewhat strange philosophy."

"To be sure it is, my boy; for it is of pure native manufacture. Every other people I ever heard of deduce their happiness from their advantages and prosperity. As we have very little of the one or the other, we extract some fun out of our misfortunes; and, what between laughing occasionally at ourselves, and sometimes at our neighbors, we push along through life right merrily after all. So now, then, to apply my theory: let us see what we can do to make the best of this disappointment. Shall I make love to Lady Asgill? Shall I quiz Sir Charles about the review? Or can you suggest anything in the way of a little extemporaneous devilry, to console us for our disappointment? But, come along, my boy, we'll take a canter; I want to show you Moddiridderoo. He improves every day in his training; but they tell me there is only one man can sit him across a country, a fellow I don't much fancy, by the bye; but the turf, like poverty, leads us to form somewhat strange acquaintances. Meanwhile, my boy, here comes the nags; and now for the park till dinner."

During our ride, O'Grady informed me that the individual to whom he so slightly alluded was a Mr. Ulick Burke, a cousin of Miss Bellew. This individual, who by family and connections was a gentleman, had contrived by his life and habits to disqualify himself from any title to the appellation in a very considerable degree. Having squandered the entire of his patrimony on the turf, he had followed the apparently immutable law on such occasions, and ended by becoming a hawk, where he had begun as a pigeon. For many years he had lived by the exercise of those most disreputable sources, his own wits. Present at every race-course in the kingdom, and provided with that under-current of information obtainable from jockeys and stablemen, he understood all the intrigue, all the low cunning of the course: he knew when to back the favorite, when to give—when to take the odds, and if upon any occasion, he was seen to lay heavily against a well-known horse, the presumption became a strong one that he was either "wrong" or withdrawn. But his qualifications ended not here; for he was also that singular anomaly in our social condition, a gentleman rider; ready upon any occasion to get into the saddle for any one that engaged his services; a flat race or a steeple chase, all the same to him. His neck was his livelihood, and to support, he must risk it. A racing-jacket, a pair of leathers and tops, a heavy-handled whip and a shot-belt, were his stock-in-trade, and he traveled through the world, a species of sporting Dalgetty, *minus* the probity which made the latter firm to his engagements, so long as they lasted: at least report denied this quality to Mr. Burke, and those who knew him well scrupled not to say that fifty pounds had exactly twice as many arguments in its favor as five-and-twenty.

So much, then, in brief concerning a character to whom I shall hereafter have occasion to recur; and now to my own narrative.

O'Grady's anticipations as to the Castle dinner were not in the least exaggerated; nothing could possibly be more stiff or tiresome; the entertainment being given, as a kind of *ex-officio* civility, to the commander of the forces and his staff, the conversation was purely professional, and never ranged beyond the discussion of military topics, or such as bore in any way upon the army. Happily, however, its duration was short. We dined at six, and by half-past eight we found ourselves at the foot of the grand staircase of the theater in Crow Street, with Mr. Jones, in the full dignity of his managerial costume, waiting to receive us.

"A little late, I fear, Mr. Jones," said his grace with a courteous smile. "What have we got?"

"Your excellency selected the *Incon-*

stant," said the obsequious manager; while a lady of the party darted her eyes suddenly toward the duke, and with a tone of marked sarcastic import, exclaimed, "How characteristic!"

"And the afterpiece, what is it?" said the duchess, as she fussed her way upstairs.

"*Timour the Tartar*, your grace."

The next moment the thundering applause of the audience informed us that their excellencies had taken their places. Cheer after cheer resounded through the building, and the massive luster itself shook under the deafening acclamations of the audience. The scene was truly a brilliant one. The boxes presented a perfect blaze of wealth and beauty; nearly every person in the pit was in full dress; to the very ceiling itself the house was crammed. The progress of the piece was interrupted, while the band struck up "God save the King," and, as I looked upon the brilliant dress-circle, I could not but think that O'Grady had been guilty of some exaggeration when he said that Mrs. Rooney's ball was to monopolize that evening the youth and beauty of the capital. The national anthem over, "Patrick's Day" was called for loudly from every side, and the whole house beat time to the strains of their native melody with an energy that showed it came as fully home to their hearts as the air that preceded it. For ten minutes at least the noise and uproar continued; and, although his grace bowed repeatedly, there seemed no prospect to an end of the tumult, when a voice from the gallery called out, "Don't make a stranger of yourself, my lord; take a chair and sit down." A roar of laughter, increased as the duke accepted the suggestion, shook the house; and poor Talbot, who all this time was kneeling beside Miss Walstein's chair, was permitted to continue his tale of love, and take up the thread of his devotion where he had left it twenty minutes before.

While O'Grady, who sat in the back of the box, seemed absorbed in his chagrin and disappointment, I myself became interested in the play, which was admirably performed; and Lord Dudley, leaning affectedly against a pillar, with his back toward the stage, scanned the house with his vapid, unmeaning look, as though to say they were unworthy of such attention at his hands.

The comedy was at length over, and her grace, with the ladies of her suite, retired, leaving only the Asgills and some members of the household in the box with his excellency. He apparently was much entertained by the performance, and seemed most resolutely bent on staying to the last. Before the first act, however, of the afterpiece was over, many of the benches in the dress-circle became deserted, and the house altogether seemed considerably thinner.

"I say, O'Grady," said he, "what are these good people about? there seems to be a general move amongst them. Is there anything going on?"

"Yes, your grace," said Phil, whose impatience now could scarcely be restrained, "they are going to a great ball in Stephen's Green; the most splendid thing Dublin has witnessed these fifty years."

"Ah, indeed! Where is it? Who gives it?"

"Mr. Rooney, a very well-known attorney, and a great character in town."

"How good! And he does the thing well?"

"He flatters himself that he rivals your grace."

"Better still! But who has he—what are his people?"

"Every one: there is nothing too high, nothing too handsome, nothing too distinguished for him; his house, like the Holyhead packet, is open to all comers, and the consequence is, his parties are by far the pleasantest thing going. One has such strange rencontres, sees such odd people, hears such droll things; for, besides having everything like a character in the city, the very gravest of Mr. Rooney's guests seems to feel his house as a place to relax and unbend in; thus, I should not be the least surprised to see the chief justice and the attorney general playing small plays, nor the Bishop of Cork dancing Sir Roger de Coverley."

"Glorious fun, by Jove! But why are you not there, lads? Ah! I see, on duty. I wish you had told me. But come, it is not too late yet. Has Hinton got a card?"

"Yes, your grace."

"Well, then, don't let me detain you any longer. I see you are both impatient; and faith, if I must confess it, I half envy you; and mind you give me a full report of the proceedings to-morrow morning."

"How I wish your Grace could only witness it yourself."

"Eh! Is it so very good, then?"

"Nothing ever was like it; for, although the company is admirable, the host and hostess are matchless."

"Egad! you've quite excited my cu-

riosity. I say, O'Grady, would they know me, think ye? Have you no uncle or country-cousin about my weight and build?"

"Ah, my lord, that is out of the question; you are too well known to assume an incognito; but still, if you wish to see it for a few minutes, nothing could be easier than just to walk through the rooms and come away. The crowd will be such the thing is quite practicable, done in that way."

"By Jove! I don't know; but if I thought—To be sure, as you say, for five minutes or so one might get through. Come, here goes; order up the carriages. Now mind, O'Grady, I am under your management. Do the thing as quietly as you can."

Elated at the success of his scheme, Phil scarcely waited for his grace to conclude, but sprang down the box-lobby to give the necessary orders, and was back again in an instant.

"Don't you think I had better take this star off?"

"Oh, no, my lord, it will not be necessary. By timing the thing well, we'll contrive to get your grace into the midst of the crowd without attracting observation. Once there, the rest is easy enough."

Many minutes had not elapsed ere we reached the corner of Grafton street. Here we became entangled with the line of carriages, which extended more than half way round Stephen's Green, and, late as was the hour, were still thronging and pressing onwards toward the scene of festivity. O'Grady, who contrived entirely to engross his grace's attention by many bits of the gossip and small-talk of the day, did not permit him to remark that the viceregal liveries and the guard of honor that accompanied us enabled us to cut the line of carriages, and, taking precedence of all others, arrive at the door at once. Indeed, so occupied was the duke with some story at the moment, that he was half provoked as the door was flung open, and the clattering clash of the steps interrupted the conversation.

"Here we are, my lord," said Phil.

"Well, get out, O'Grady. Lead on. Don't forget it is my first visit here: and you, I fancy, know the map of the country."

The hall in which we found ourselves, brilliantly lighted and thronged with servants, presented a scene of the most strange confusion and tumult; for, such was the eagerness of the guests to get forward, many persons were separated from their friends; turbaned old ladies called in cracked voices for their sons to rescue them, and desolate daughters seized distractedly the arm nearest them, and implored succor with an accent as agonizing as though on the eve of shipwreck. Mothers screamed, fathers swore, footmen laughed, and high above all came the measured tramp of the dancers overhead, while fiddles, French-horns, and dulcimers, scraped and blew their worst, as if purposely to increase the inextricable and maddening confusion that prevailed.

"Sir Peter and Lady Macfarlane!" screamed the servant at the top of the stairs.

"Counsellor and Mrs. Blake."

"Captain O'Ryan of the Rifles."

"Lord Dumboy—"

"Dunboyne, you villain!"

"Ay, Lord Dunboyne and five ladies."

Such were the announcements that preceded us as we wended our way slowly on, while I could distinguish Mr. Rooney's voice receiving and welcoming his guests, for which purpose he used a formula, in part derived from the practice of an auction-room.

"Walk in, ladies and gentlemen, walk in. Whist, tea, dancing, negus and blind-hookey—delighted to see you—walk in;" and so, *da capo*, only varying the ritual when a lord or a baronet necessitated a change of title.

"You're quite right, O'Grady: I wouldn't have lost this for a great deal," whispered the duke.

"Now, my lord, permit me," said Phil. "Hinton and I will engage Mr. Rooney in conversation, while your grace can pass on and mix with the crowd."

"Walk in, walk in, ladies, and—Ah! how are you, captain? This is kind of you. Mr. Hinton, your humble servant. Whist, dancing, blind-hookey, and negus. Walk in. And Captain Phil," added he, in a whisper, "a bit of supper by-and-by below stairs."

"I must tell you an excellent thing, Rooney, before I forget it," said O'Grady, turning the host's attention away from the door as he spoke, and inventing some imaginary secret for the occasion; while I followed his grace, who now was so inextricably jammed up in the dense mob, that any recognition of him would have been very difficult, if not actually impossible.

For some time I could perceive that the duke's attention was devoted to the conversation about him. Some half-dozen ladies were carrying on a very active and almost acrimonious controversy on the

subject of dress; not, however, with any artistic pretension of regulating costume or color, not discussing the rejection of an old or the adoption of a new mode, but with a much more practical spirit of inquiry they were appraising and valuing each other's finery, in the most sincere and simple way imaginable.

"Seven-and-sixpence a yard, my dear; you'll never get it less, I assure you." "That's elegant lace, Mrs. Mahoney; was it run, ma'am?" Mrs. Mahoney bridled at the suggestion, and replied that, "though neither her lace nor her diamonds were Irish—" "Six breadths, ma'am, always in the skirt," said a fat, little, dumpy woman, holding up her satin petticoat in evidence.

"I say, Hinton," whispered the duke, "I hope they won't end by an examination of us. But what the deuce is going on here?"

This remark was caused by a very singular movement in the room: the crowd, which had succeeded to the dancers, and filled the large drawing-room from end to end, now fell back to either wall, leaving a space of about a yard wide down the entire center of the room, as though some performance was about to be enacted, or some procession to march there.

"What can it be?" said the duke, "some foolery of O'Grady's, depend upon it; for look at him up there talking to the band."

As he spoke, the musicians struck up the grand march in *Blue Beard*, and Mrs. Paul Rooney appeared in the open space in all the plentitude of her charms, a perfect blaze of rouge, red feathers, and rubies—marching in solemn state. She moved along in time to the music, followed by Paul, whose cunning eyes twinkled with more than a common shrewdness as he peered here and there through the crowd, They came straight toward where we were standing; and while a whispered murmur ran through the room, the various persons around us drew back, leaving the duke and myself completely isolated. Before his grace could recover his concealment, Mrs. Rooney stood before him. The music suddenly ceased; while the lady, disposing her petticoats as though the object were to conceal all the company behind her, courtesied down to the very floor.

"Ah, your grace!" uttered in an accent of the most melting tenderness, were the only words she could speak, as she bestowed a look of still more speaking softness. "Ah! did I ever hope to see the day when your highness would honor—"

"My dear madam," said the duke, as, taking her hand with great courtesy, "pray don't overwhelm me with obligations.. A very natural, I hope a very pardonable desire, to witness hospitality I have heard so much of has led me to intrude thus uninvited upon you. Will you allow me to make Mr. Rooney's acquaintance?"

Mrs. Rooney moved gracefully to one side, waving her hand with the air of a magician about to summon an attorney from the earth, when suddenly a change came over his grace's features; and, as he covered his mouth with his handkerchief, it was with the greatest difficulty he refrained from an open burst of laughter. The figure before him was certainly not calculated to suggest gravity. Mr. Paul Rooney, for the first time in his life, found himself the host of a viceroy, and, amid the fumes of his wine and the excitement of the scene, entertained some very confused notion of certain ceremonies observable on such occasions. He had read of curious observances in the East, and strange forms of etiquette in China, and probably had the Khan of Tartary dropped in on the evening in question, his memory would have supplied him with some hints for his reception; but with the representative of Britannic majesty, before whom he was so completely overpowered, he could not think of, nor decide upon anything. A very misty impression flitted through his mind, that people occasionally knelt before a lord-lieutenant; but whether they did so at certain moments, or as a general practice, for the life of him he could not tell. While, therefore, the dread of omitting a customary etiquette weighed with him on one hand, the fear of ridicule actuated him on the other; and thus he advanced into the presence with bent knees and a supplicating look eagerly turned toward the duke, ready at any moment to drop down or stand upright before him as the circumstances might warrant.

Entering at once into the spirit of the scene, the duke bowed with the most formal courtesy, while he vouchsafed to Mr. Rooney some few expressions of compliment. At the same time drawing Mrs. Rooney's arm within his own, he led her down the room, with a grace and dignity of manner no one was more master of than himself. As for Paul, apparently unable to stand upright under the increasing load of favors that fortune was showering upon his head, he looked over his shoulder at Mrs. Rooney, as she marched off exultingly, with the same exuberant triumph Young used to throw into Othello, as he passionately exclaims—

"Excellent wench! perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee!"

Not but that, at the very moment in question, the object of it was most ungratefully oblivious of Mr. Rooney and his affection.

Had Mrs. Paul Rooney been asked, on the morning after her ball, what was her most accurate notion of Elysian bliss, she probably would have answered—leaning upon a viceroy's arm in her own ball-room, under the envious stare and jealous gaze of eight hundred assembled guests. Her flushed look, her flashing eye, the trembling hand with which she waved her fan, the proud imperious step, all spoke of triumph. In fact, such was the halo of reverence, such the reflected brightness the representative of monarchy then bore, she felt it a prouder honor to be thus escorted, than if the emperor of all the Russias had deigned to grace her mansion with his presence. How she loved to run over every imaginable title she conceived applicable to his rank—"Your Royal Highness," "Your Grace," "Your noble Lordship," varying and combining them, like a child who runs his erring fingers over the keys of a pianoforte, and is delighted with the efforts of his skill.

While this kingly scene was thus enacting, the ball-room resumed its former life and vivacity. This, indeed, was owing to O'Grady; no sooner had his scheme succeeded of delivering up the duke into the hands of the Rooneys, than he set about restoring such a degree of turmoil, tumult, noise, and merriment, as, while it should amuse his grace, would rescue him from the annoyance of being stared at by many who never had walked the boards with a live viceroy.

"Isn't it gloriously done, Hinton?" he whispered in my ear as he passed. "Now lend me your aid, my boy, to keep the whole thing moving. Get a partner as quick as you can, and let us try if we can't do the honors of the house, while the master and mistress are basking in the sunshine of royal favor."

As he spoke, the band struck up "Haste to the Wedding!" The dancers assumed their places. Phil himself flying hither and thither, arranging, directing, ordering, countermanding, providing partners for persons he had never seen before, and introducing individuals of whose very names he was ignorant.

"Push along, Hinton," said he; "only set them going—speak to every one—half the men in the room answer to the name of 'Bob,' and all the young ladies are 'Miss Magees.' Go it, my boy; this is a great night for Ireland!"

This happy land, indeed, which, like a vast powder-magazine, only wants but the smallest spark to ignite it, is always prepared for an explosion of fun. No sooner, then, did O'Grady, taking out the fattest woman in the room, proceed to lead her down the middle to the liveliest imaginable country-dance, than at once the contagious spirit flew through the room, and dancers pressed in from every side. Champagne served round in abundance, added to the excitement; and, as eight-and-thirty couple made the floor vibrate beneath them, such a scene of noise, laughter, uproar, and merriment ensued, as it were difficult to conceive or describe.

CHAPTER X.

A FINALE TO AN EVENING.

A BALL, like a battle, has its critical moment: that one short and subtle point, on which its trembling fate would seem to hesitate, ere it incline to this side or that. In both, such is the time for generalship to display itself: and of this my friend O'Grady seemed well aware; for, calling up his reserve for an attack in force, he ordered strong negus for the band; and ere many minutes, the increased vigor of the instruments attested that the order had been attended to.

"Right and left!" "Hands across!" "Here we are!" "This way, Peter!" "Ah! Captain, you're a droll crayture!" "Move along, Alderman!" "That negus is mighty strong!" "The Lord grant the house is!"

Such and such like phrases broke around me, as, under the orders of the irresistible Phil, I shuffled down the middle with a dumpy little schoolgirl, with red hair and red shoes; which, added to her capering motion, gave her a most unhappy resemblance to a cork fairy.

"You are a trump, Jack," said Phil. "Never give in. I never was in such spirits in my life. Two bottles of champagne under my belt, and a check for three hundred Paul has just given me, without a scrape of my pen; it might have been five, if I had only had presence of mind."

"Where is Miss Bellew all this time?" inquired I.

"I only saw her for a moment; she looks saucy, and won't dance."

My pride somewhat stimulated by a fact

which I could not help interpreting in Miss Bellew's favor, I went through the rooms in search of her, and at length discovered her in a boudoir, where a whist-party were assembled. She was sitting upon a sofa, beside a tall, venerable-looking old man, to whom she was listening with a semblance of the greatest attention as I entered. I had some time to observe her, and could not help feeling struck how much handsomer she was than I had formerly supposed. Her figure, slightly above the middle size, and most graceful in all its proportions, was, perhaps, a little too much disposed to fullness; the character of her features, however, seemed to suit, if not actually to require as much. Her eyes of deep blue, set well beneath her brow, had a look of intensity in them that evidenced thought; but the other features relieved by their graceful softness this strong expression, and a nose short and slight, very slightly *retroussé*, with a mouth, the very perfection of eloquent and winning softness, made ample amends to those who prefer charms purely feminine to beauty of a severer character. Her hair, too, was of that deep auburn, through which a golden light seems forever playing; and this, contrary to the taste of the day, she wore simply braided upon her temple and cheeks, marking the oval contour of her face, and displaying, by this graceful coquetry, the perfect chiseling of her features. Let me add to this that her voice was low and soft in all its tones; and, if the provincialism with which she spoke did at first offend my ear, I learned afterward to think that the musical intonations of the West lent a charm of their own to all she said, deepening the pathos of a simple story, or heightening the drollery of a merry one. Yes, laugh if you will, ye high-bred and high-born denizens of a richer sphere, whose ears, attuned to the rhythm of Metastasio, softly borne on the strains of Donizetti, can scarce pardon the intrusion of your native tongue in the every-day concerns of life—smile if it so please ye; but from the lips of a lovely woman, a little, *a very little* of the brogue is most seductive. Whether the subject be grave or gay, whether mirth or melancholy be the mood, like the varnish upon a picture, it brings out all the color into strong effect, brightening the lights and deepening the shadows; and then, somehow, there is an air of *naïveté*, a tone of simplicity about it, that appeals equally to your heart as your hearing.

Seeing that the conversation in which she was engaged seemed to engross her entire attention, I was about to retire without addressing her, when suddenly she turned round, and her eyes met mine; I accordingly came forward, and, after a few of the commonplace civilities of the moment asked her to dance.

"Pray excuse me, Mr. Hinton; I have declined already several times. I have been fortunate enough to meet with a very old and dear friend of my father—"

"Who is much too attached to his daughter to permit her to waste an entire evening upon him. No, sir, if you will allow me, I will resign Miss Bellew to your care."

She said something in a low voice, to which he muttered in reply; the only words which I could catch—"No, no; very different indeed—this is a most proper person"—seemed, as they were accompanied by a smile of much kindness, in some way to concern me; and the next moment Miss Bellew took my arm and accompanied me to the ball-room.

As I passed the sofa where the duke and Mrs. Rooney were still seated, his grace nodded familiarly to me, with a gesture of approval; while Mrs. Paul clasped both her hands before her with a movement of ecstasy, and seemed as if about to bestow upon us a maternal blessing. Fearful of incurring a scene, Miss Bellew hastened on, and, as her arm trembled within mine, I could perceive how deeply the ridicule of her friend's position wounded her own pride. Meanwhile, I could just catch the tones of Mrs. Rooney's voice, explaining to the duke Miss Bellew's pedigree. "One of the oldest families of the land, your grace; came over with Romulus and Remus; and if it were not for Oliver Cromwell and the Danes,"—the confounded fiddles lost me the rest, and I was left in the dark to guess what these strange allies had inflicted upon the Bellew family. The dancing now began, and only between the intervals of the dance had I an opportunity of conversing with my partner. Few and brief as these occasions were, I was delighted to find in her a tone and manner quite different from anything I had ever met before. Although having seen scarcely anything of the world, her knowledge of character seemed an instinct, and her quick appreciation of the ludicrous features of many of the company was accompanied by a sly expression, and at the same time a witty terseness of phrase, that showed me how much real intelligence lay beneath that laughing look. Unlike my fair cousin, Lady Julia, her raillery never wounded; hers were the fanciful combinations which

a vivid and sparkling imagination conjures up, but never the barbed and bitter arrows of sarcasm. Catching up in a second any passing absurdity, she could laugh at the scene, yet seem to spare the actor. Julia, on the contrary, never felt that her wit had hit its mark till she saw her victim writhing and quivering beneath her.

There is always something in being the partner of the *belle* of a ball-room. The little bit of envy and jealousy whose limit is to be the duration of a waltz or quadrille, has somehow its feeling of pleasure. There is a reflective flattery in the thought of a fancied preference that raises one in his own esteem; and, as the muttered compliments and half-spoken praises of the bystanders fall upon your ears, you seem to feel that you are a kind of shareholder in the company, and ought to retire from business with your portion of the profits. Such, I know, were some of my feelings at the period in question; and, as I pulled up my stock and adjusted my sash, I looked upon the crowd about me with a sense of considerable satisfaction, and began heartily to enjoy myself.

Scarcely was the dance concluded when a general move was perceptible toward the door, and the word "Supper," repeated from voice to voice, announced that the merriest hour in Irish life had sounded. Delighted to have Miss Bellew for my companion, I edged my way into the mass, and was borne along on the current. The view from the top of the staircase was sufficiently amusing: a waving mass of feathers of every shape and hue, a crowd of spangled turbans, bald and powdered heads, seemed wedged inextricably together, swaying backwards and forwards with one impulse, as the crowd at the door of the supper-room advanced or receded. The crash of plates and knives, the jingling of glasses, the popping of champagne corks, told that the attack had begun, had not even the eager faces of those nearer the door indicated as much. "No look behind" seemed the motto of the day, save when some anxious mother would turn a backward and uneasy glance toward the staircase, where her daughter, preferring a lieutenant to a lobster, was listening with elated look to his tale of love and glory. "Eliza, my dear, sit next me"—"Anna, my love, come down here." These brief commands, significantly as they were uttered, would be lost to those for whom intended, and only serve to amuse the bystanders, and awaken them to a quicker perception of the passing flirtation. Some philosopher has gravely remarked that the critical moments of our life are the transitions from one stage or state of our existence to another, and that our fate for the future depends in a great measure upon those hours in which we emerge from infancy to boyhood, from boyhood to manhood, from manhood to maturer years. Perhaps the arguments of time might be applied to place, and we might thus be enabled to show how a staircase is the most dangerous portion of a building. I speak not here of the insecurity of the architecture, nor, indeed, of any staircase whose well-tempered light shines down at noonday through the perfumed foliage of a conservatory; but of the same place, a blaze of lamp-light, about two in the morning, crowded, crammed, and creaking, by an anxious and elated throng pressing toward a supper-room. Whether it is the supper or the squeeze, the odor of balmy lips or the savory smell of roast partridges—whether it be the approach to silk tresses or *Sillery mosseux*—whatever the provocation, I cannot explain it; but the fact is so; one is tremendously given in such a place, at such a time, to the most barefaced and palpable flirtation. So strongly do I feel this point, that, were I a lawgiver, I would never award damages for a breech of contract where the promise was made on a staircase.

As for me, my acquaintance with Miss Bellew was not of more than an hour's standing; during that time we had contrived to discuss the ball-room, its guests, its lights, its decorations, the music, the dancers—in a word all the commonplaces of an evening party; thence we wandered on to Dublin, society in general, to Ireland, and Irish habits, and Irish tastes; quizzed each other a little about our respective peculiarities, and had just begun to discuss the distinctive features which characterize the softer emotions in the two nations, when the announcement of supper brought us on the staircase. *A propos* or *mal à propos*, this turn of our conversation, let the reader decide by what I have already stated; so it was, however, and, in a little nook of the landing, I found myself with my fair companion's arm pressed closely to my side, engaged in a warm controversy on the trite subject of English coldness of manner. Advocating my country, I deemed that no more fitting defense could be entered, than by evidencing in myself the utter absence of the frigidity imputed. Champagne did something for me; Louisa's bright eyes assisted; but the staircase, the

confounded staircase, crowned all. In fact, the undisguised openness of Miss Bellew's manner, the fearless simplicity with which she had ventured upon topics a hardened coquette would not dare to touch upon, led me into the common error of imputing to flirtation what was only due to the untarnished freshness of happy girlhood.

Finding my advances well received, I began to feel not a little proud of my success, and disposed to plume myself upon the charm of my eloquence, when, as I concluded a high-flown and inflated phrase of sentimental absurdity, she suddenly turned round, fixed her bright eyes upon me, and burst out into a fit of laughter.

"There, there, pray don't try that; no one but an Irishman ever succeeds in blarney. It is our national dish, and can never be seasoned by a stranger."

This pull up, for such it most effectually was, completely unmanned me. I tried to stammer out an explanation, endeavored to laugh, coughed, blundered, and broke down; while, merciless in her triumph, she only laughed the more, and seemed to enjoy my confusion.

With such a failure hanging over me, I felt happy when we reached the supper-room; and the crash, din, and confusion about us once more broke in upon our conversation. It requires far less nerve for the dismounted jockey, whose gay jacket has been rolled in the mud of a race-course, resuming his saddle, to ride in amid the jeers and scoffs of ten thousand spectators, than for the gallant who has blundered in the full tide of a flirtation, to recover his lost position, and sustain the current of his courtship. The sarcasm of our sex is severe enough, heaven knows; but no raillery, no ridicule, cuts half so sharp or half so deep as the bright twinkle of a pretty girl's eye, when, detecting some exhibition of dramatized passion, some false glitter of pinchbeck sentiment, she exchanges her look of gratified attention for the merry mockery of a hearty laugh; no tack, no *savoir faire*, no knowledge of the world, no old soldierism, that ever I heard of, was proof against this. To go back is bad; to stand still, worse; to go on, impossible. The best—for I believe it is the only thing to do—is to turn approver on your own misdeeds, and join in the laughter against yourself. Now this requires no common self-mastery, and a readiness few young gentlemen under twenty possess, hence both my failure and its punishment.

The staircase which, but a moment before, I wished might be as long as a journey to Jerusalem, I now escaped from with thankfulness. Concealing my discomfiture as well as I was able, I bustled about, and finally secured a place for my companion at one of the side tables. We were too far from the head of the table, but the clear ringing of his grace's laughter informed me of his vicinity, and, as I saw Miss Bellew shrank from approaching that part of the room, I surrendered my curiosity to the far more grateful task of cultivating her acquaintance.

All the ardor of my attentions—and I had resumed them with nearly as much warmth, although less risk of discomfiture, for I began to feel what before I had only professed—all the preoccupation of my mind, could not prevent my hearing, high above the clash and clatter of the tables, the rich roundness of Mrs. Rooney's brogue. as she recounted to the duke some interesting trait of the O'Toole family, or adverted to some classical era in Irish history, when, possibly, Mecænas was mayor of Cork, or Diogenes an alderman of Skinner's Alley.

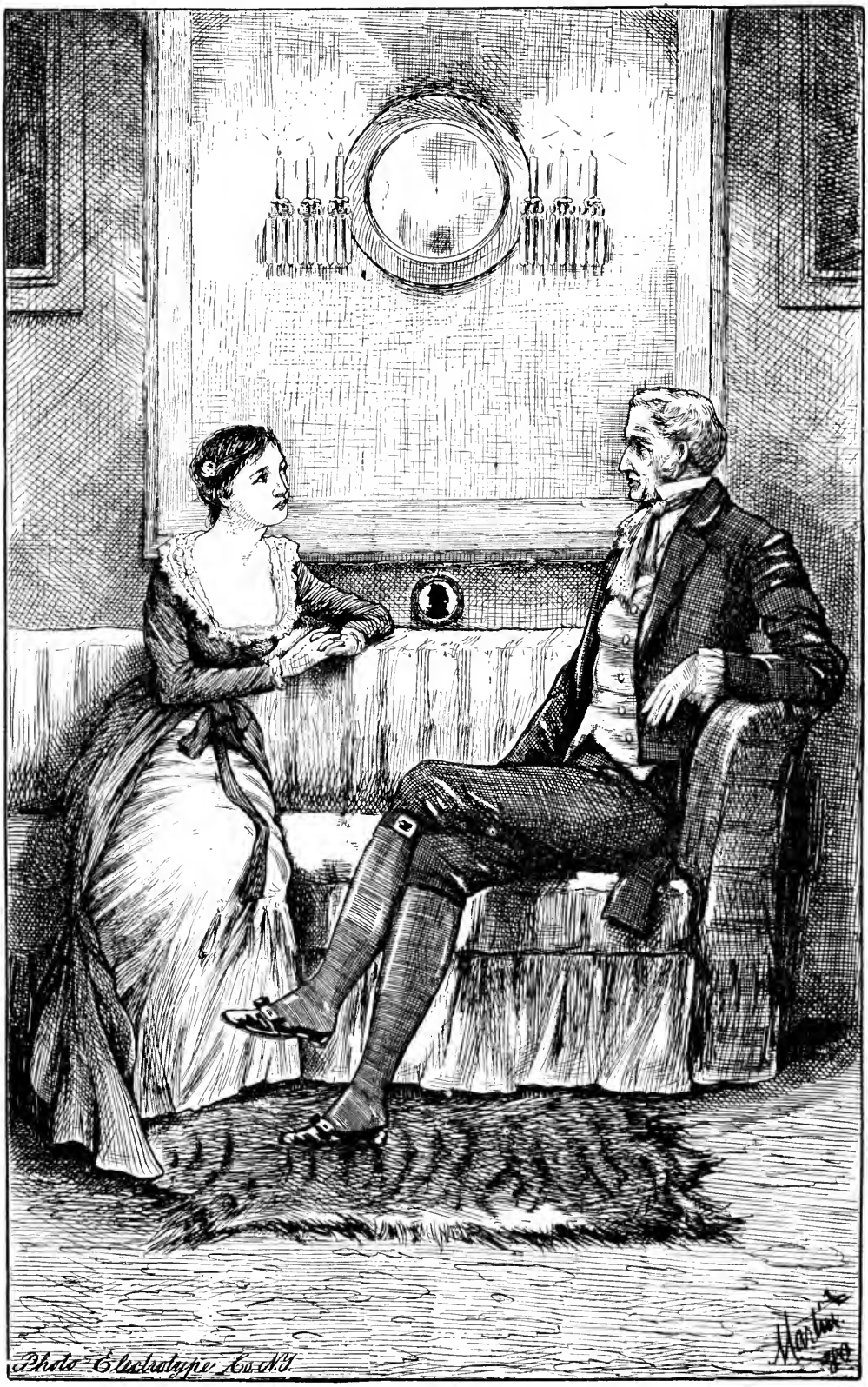
"Ah! my dear! the Lord forgive me, I mean your grace."

"I shall never forgive you, Mrs. Rooney, if you change the epithet."

"Ah! your grace's worship, them was fine times; and the husband of an O'Toole, in them days, spent more of his time harreying the country with his troops at his back, than driving about in an old gig full of writs and latitats, with a process-server beside him."

Had Mr. Rooney, who at that moment was carving a hare in total ignorance of his wife's sarcasm, only heard the speech, the chances are ten to one he would have figured in a steel breastplate and an iron headpiece before the week was over. I was unable to hear more of the conversation, notwithstanding my great wish to do so, as a movement of those next the door implied that a large instalment of the guests who had not supped would wait no longer, but were about to make what Mr. Rooney called a forcible entry on a summary process, and eject the tenant in possession.

We accordingly rose, and all (save the party round the viceroy) along with us, once more to visit the ball-room, where already dancing had begun. While I was eagerly endeavoring to persuade Miss Bellew that there was no cause or just impediment to prevent her dancing the next set with me, Lord Dudley de Vere lounged affectedly forward, and mumbled out some broken, indistinct phrases, in which the word "da—ance" was alone audible. Miss



SHE WAS SITTING UPON A SOFA, BESIDE A TALL VENERABLE-LOOKING OLD MAN. (P. 740.)

Bellew colored slightly, turned her eyes toward me, courtesied, took his arm, and the next moment was lost amid the crowd.

I am not aware of any readier method of forming a notion of the perpetual motion, than watching the performance of Sir Roger de Coverley at an evening party in Dublin. It seems to be a point of honor never to give in; and thus the same complicated figures, the same mystic movements that you see in the beginning, continue to succeed each other in a never-ending series. You endeavor in vain to detect the plan, to unravel the tangled web of this strange ceremony; but somehow it would seem as if the whole thing was completely discretionary with the dancers, there being only one point of agreement among them, which is, whenever blown and out of breath, to join in a vigorous hands-round; and, the motion being confined to a shuffling of the feet and a shaking of the elbows, little fatigue is incurred. To this succeeds a capering, forward movement of a gentleman, which seemingly magnetizes an opposite lady to a similar exhibition. Then, after seizing each other rapturously by the hands, they separate to run the gauntlet in and out down the whole line of dancers, to meet at the bottom, when, apparently reconciled, they once more embrace. What follows, the devil himself may tell. As for me, I heard only laughing, tittering, now and then a slight scream, and a cry of "Behave, Mr. Murphy!" etc.; but the movements themselves were conic sections to me, and I closed my eyes as I sat alone in my corner, and courted sleep as a short oblivion to the scene. Unfortunately, I succeeded; for, wild and singular as the gestures, the looks, and the voices were before, they now became to my dreaming senses something too terrible. I thought myself in the center of some hobgoblin orgie, where demons, male and female, were performing their fantastic antics around me, grinning hideously, and uttering cries of menacing import. Tam-o'-Shanter's vision was a respectable tea-party of Glasgow matrons, compared to my imaginings; for, so distorted were the pictures of my brain, that the leader of the band, a peaceable-looking old man in shorts and spectacles, seemed to me like a grim-visaged imp, who flourished his tail across the strings of his instrument in lieu of a bow.

I must confess that the dancers, without any wish on my part to detract from their efforts, had not the entire merit of this transmutation. Fatigue, for the hour was late, chagrin at being robbed of my partner, added to the heat and crowd, had all their share in the mystification. Besides, if I must confess it, Mr. Rooney's champagne was strong. My friend O'Grady, however, seemed but little of my opinion; for, like the master-spirit of the scene, he seemed to direct every movement and dictate every change—no touch of fatigue, no semblance of exhaustion about him. On the contrary, as the hour grew later, and the pale gray of morning began to mingle with the glare of wax-lights, the vigor of his performance only increased, and several new steps were displayed, which, like a prudent general, he seemed to have kept in reserve for the end of the engagement. And what a sad thing is a ball as it draws toward the close! What an emblem of life at a similar period! How much of freshness has faded! how much of beauty has passed away! how many illusions are dissipated! how many dreams the lamp-light and chalked floors have called into life, fly like spirits with the first beam of sunlight! The eye of proud bearing is humbled now! the cheek, whose downy softness no painter could have copied, has grown pale and wan and haggard! the beaming looks, the graceful bearing, the elastic step, where are they? Only to be found where youth—bright, joyous, and elastic youth—unites itself to beauty.

Such were my thoughts as the dancers flew past—and many whom I had remarked at the beginning of the evening as handsome and attractive, seemed now without a trace of either—when suddenly Louisa Bellew came by, her step as light, her every gesture as graceful, her cheek as blooming, and her liquid eye as deeply beaming as when first I saw her. The excitement of the dance had slightly flushed her face, and heightened the expression its ever-varying emotions lent it.

Handsome as I before had thought her, there was a look of pride about her now that made her lovely to my eyes. As I continued to gaze after her, I did not perceive for some time that the guests were rapidly taking their leave, and already the rooms were greatly thinned. Every moment now, however, bore evidence of the fact; the unceasing roll of carriages to the door, the clank of the steps, the reiterated cry to drive on, followed by the call for the next carriage, all betokened departure. Now and then, too, some cloaked and hooded figure would appear at the door of the drawing-room, peering anxiously about for a daughter, a sister, or a friend, who still lingered in the dance, averring it

"was impossible to go, that she was engaged for another set." The disconsolate gestures, the impatient menaces of the shawled specters—for in truth, they seemed like creatures of another world come back to look upon the life they left—are of no avail. The seductions of the "major" are stronger than the frowns of mamma; and though a scolding may come in the morning, she is resolved to have a waltz at night.

An increased noise and tumult below stairs at the same moment informed me that the supper party were at length about to separate. I started up at once, wishing to see Miss Bellew again ere I took my leave, when O'Grady seized me by the arm and hurried me away. "Come along, Hinton! Not a moment to lose; the duke is going."

"Wait an instant," said I; "I wish to speak to—"

"Another time, my dear fellow; another time. The duke is delighted with the Rooneys, and we are going to have Paul knighted!"

With these words he dragged me along, dashing down the stairs like a madman. As we reached the door of the dining-room we found his grace, who, with one hand on Lord Dudley's shoulder, was endeavoring to steady himself by the other.

"I say, O'Grady, is that you? Very powerful Burgundy this. It's not possible it can be morning?"

"Yes, your grace, half-past seven o'clock."

"Indeed, upon my word, your friends are very charming people. What did you say about knighting some one? Oh! I remember. Mr. Rooney, wasn't it? Of course, nothing could be better!"

"Come, Hinton, have you got a sword?" said O'Grady; "I've mislaid mine, somehow. There, that'll do. Let us try and find Paul now."

Into the supper-room we rushed: but what a change was there! The brilliant tables, resplendent with gold plate, candelabras, and flowers, were now despoiled and dismantled. On the floor, among broken glasses, cracked decanters, pyramids of jelly, and pagodas of blanc-mange, lay scattered in every attitude the sleeping figures of the late guests. Mrs. Rooney alone maintained her position; seated in a large chair, her eyes closed, a smile of Elysian happiness playing upon her lips, her right arm hung gracefully over the side of the chair, where lately his grace had kissed her hand at parting. Overcome, in all probability, by the more than human happiness of such a moment, she had sunk into slumber, and was murmuring in her dreams such short and broken phrases as the following: "Ah! happy day—What will Mrs. Tait say?—The lord mayor, indeed!—Oh! my poor head! I hope it won't be turned—Holy Agatha, pray for us! your grace pray for us!—Isn't he a beautiful man? hasn't he the darling white teeth?"

"Where's Paul?" said O'Grady; "where's Paul, Mrs. Rooney?" as he jogged her rather rudely by the arm.

"Ah! who cares for Paul?" said she, still sleeping. "Don't be bothering me about the like of him."

"Egad! this is conjugal at any rate," said Phil.

"I have him!" cried I; "here he is!" as I stumbled over a short, thick figure, who was propped up in a corner of the room. There he sat, his head sunk upon his bosom, his hands listlessly resting on the floor. A large jug stood beside him, in the concoction of whose contents he appeared to have spent the last moments of his waking state. We shook him, and called him by his name, but to no purpose; and, as we lifted up his head, we burst out a-laughing at the droll expression of his face; for he had gone asleep in the act of squeezing a lemon in his teeth, the half of which not only remained there still, but imparted to his features the twisted and contorted expression that act suggests.

"Are you coming, O'Grady?" cried the duke impatiently.

"Yes, my lord," cried Phil, as he rushed toward the door. "This is too bad, Hinton. That confounded fellow could not possibly be moved; I'll try and carry him." As he spoke, he hurried back toward the sleeping figure of Mr. Rooney, while I made toward the duke.

As Lord Dudley had gone to order up the carriages, his grace was standing alone at the foot of the stairs, leaning his back against the banisters, his eyes opening and shutting alternately as his head nodded every now and then forward, overcome by sleep and the wine he had drunk. Exactly in front of him, but crouching in the attitude of an Indian monster, sat Corny Delaney. To keep himself from the cold, he had wrapped himself up in his master's cloak, and the only part of his face perceptible was the little wrinkled forehead, and the malicious-looking, fiery eyes beneath it, firmly fixed on the duke's countenance.

"Give me your sword," said his grace, turning to me, in a tone, half sleeping,

half commanding; "give me your sword, sir."

Drawing it from the scabbard, I presented it respectfully.

"Stand a little on one side, Hinton. Where is he? Ah! quite right. Kneel down, sir; kneel down, I say!" These words, addressed to Corny, produced no other movement in him than a slight change in his attitude, to enable him to extend his expanded hand above his eyes, and take a clearer view of the duke.

"Does he hear me, Hinton? Do you hear me, sir?"

"Do you hear his grace?" said I, endeavoring with a sharp kick of my foot to assist his perceptions.

"To be sure I hear him," said Corny; "why wouldn't I hear him?"

"Kneel down, then," said I.

"Devil a bit of me'll kneel down. Don't I know what he's after well enough? *Ach ma bocklish!* Sorrow else he ever does nor make fun of people."

"Kneel down, sir," said his grace, in an accent there was no refusing to obey. "What is your name?"

"O murther! O heavenly Joseph!" cried Corny, as I hurled him down on his knees, "that I'd ever lived to see the day!"

"What is his d—d name?" said the duke, passionately.

"Corny, your grace, Corny Delany."

"There, that'll do," as with a hearty slap of the sword, not on his shoulder, but on his bullet head, he cried out, "Rise, Sir Corny Delany!"

"Och! the devil a one of me will ever get up out of this same spot. O wirra, wirra! how will I ever show myself again after this disgrace?"

Leaving Corny to his lamentations, the duke walked toward the door. Here above a hundred people were now assembled, their curiosity excited in no small degree by a picket of light dragoons, who occupied the middle of the street, and were lying upon the ground, or leaning on their saddles, in all the wearied attitudes of a night-watch. In fact, the duke had forgotten to dismiss his guard of honor, who had accompanied him to the theater, and thus had they spent the dark hours of the night keeping watch and ward over the proud dwelling of the Rooneys. A dark frown settled on the duke's features as he perceived the mistake, and muttered between his teeth, "How they will talk of this in England!" The next moment, bursting into a hearty fit of laughter, he stepped into the carriage, and, amid a loud cheer from the mob, by whom he was recognized, drove rapidly away.

Seated beside his grace, I saw nothing more of O'Grady, whose efforts to ennoble the worthy attorney only exposed him to the risk of a black eye; for no sooner did Paul perceive that he was undergoing rough treatment, than he immediately resisted, and gave open battle.

O'Grady accordingly left him, to seek his home on foot, followed by Corny, whose cries and heart-rending exclamations induced a considerable crowd of well-disposed citizens to accompany them to the Castle gate. And thus ended the great Rooney ball.

CHAPTER XI.

A NEGOTIATION.

From what I have already stated, it may be inferred that my acquaintance with the Rooneys was begun under favorable auspices; indeed, from the evening of the ball, the house was open to me at all hours, and, as the hour of luncheon was known to every lounger about town by dropping in about three o'clock one was sure to hear all the chit-chat and the gossip of the day. All the dinners and duels of the capital, all its rows and run-away matches, were there discussed, while future parties of pleasure were planned and decided on, the Rooney equipages, horses, servants, and cellar being looked upon as common property, the appropriation of which was to be determined on by a vote of the majority. At all these domestic parliaments O'Grady played a prominent part. He was the speaker and the whipper-in; he led for both the government and the opposition; in fact, since the ever-memorable visit of the viceroy, his power in the house was absolute. How completely they obeyed, and how implicitly they followed him, may be guessed, when I say that he even persuaded Mrs. Rooney herself not only to abstain from all triumph on the subject of their illustrious guest, but actually to maintain a kind of diplomatic silence on the subject; so that many simple-minded people began to suspect that his grace had never been there at all, and that poor Mrs. Rooney, having detected the imposition, prudently held her tongue, and said nothing about the matter.

As this influence might strike my reader as somewhat difficult in its exercise, and also as it presents a fair specimen of my

friend's ingenuity, I cannot forbear mentioning the secret of its success.

When the duke awoke late in the afternoon that followed Mrs. Rooney's ball, his first impression was one bordering on irritation with O'Grady. His quicksightedness enabled him at once to see how completely he had fallen into the trap of his worthy aide-de-camp; and although he had confessedly spent a very pleasant evening, and laughed a great deal, now, that all was over, he would have preferred if the whole affair could be quietly consigned to oblivion, or only remembered as a good joke for after dinner. The scandal and the *eclat* it must cause in the capital annoyed him considerably, and he knew that before a day passed over, the incident of the guard of honor, lying in bivouac around their horses, would furnish matter for every caricature-shop in the capital. Ordering O'Grady to his presence, and with a severity of manner in a great degree assumed, he directed him to remedy, as far as might be, the consequences of this blunder, and either contrive to give a totally different version of the occurrence, or else by originating some new subject of scandal, to eclipse the memory of this unfortunate evening.

O'Grady promised and pledged himself to everything; vowed that he would give such a turn to the affair, that nobody would ever believe a word of the story; assured the duke (God forgive him!) that, however ridiculous the Rooneys at night, by day they were models of discretion; and at length took his leave to put his scheme into execution, heartily glad to discover that his grace had forgotten all about Corny and the knighthood, the recollection of which might have been attended with very grave results to himself.

So much for his interview with the duke. Now for his diplomacy with Mrs. Rooney! It was about five o'clock on the following day, when O'Grady cantered up to the door: giving his horse to his groom he dashed boldly upstairs, passed through the ante-chamber and the drawing-room, and, tapping gently at the door of a little boudoir, opened it at the same moment, and presented himself before Mrs. Paul.

That amiable lady, reclining à la Princess O'Toole, was gracefully disposed on a small sofa, regarding with fixed attention a little plaster bust of his grace, which, with considerable taste and propriety, was dressed in a blue coat and bright buttons, with a star on the breast, a bit of sky-blue satin representing the ribbon of the Bath; nothing was forgotten; and a faint attempt was even made to represent the coloring of the viceregal nose, which I am bound to confess was not flattered in the model.

"Ah, captain! is it you?" said Mrs. Paul, with a kind of languishing condescension, very different from her ordinary reception of a Castle aide-de-camp. "How is his grace this morning?"

Drawing his chair beside her, Phil proceeded to reply to her questions, and assured her that, whatever her admiration for the duke, the feeling was perfectly mutual. "Egad," said he, "the thing may turn out very ill for me, when the duchess finds out that it was all my doing. Speaking in confidence to you, my dear Mrs. Paul, I may confess that, although without exception she is the most kind, amiable, excellent soul breathing, yet she has one fault—We all have our faults."

"Ah!" sighed Mrs. Rooney, as she threw down her eyes, as though to say, that's very true, but you will not catch me telling what mine is.

"As I was observing, there never was a more estimable being, save in this one respect— You guess it; I see you do."

"Ah! the creature, she drinks!"

The captain found it not a little difficult to repress a burst of laughter at Mrs. Rooney's suggestion. He did so, however, and proceeded: "No, my dear madam, you mistake: jealousy is her failing; and when I tell you this, and when I add that, unhappily for her, the events of last night may only afford but too much cause, you will comprehend the embarrassment of my present position."

Having said thus much, he walked the room for several minutes, as if sunk in meditation, while he left Mrs. Rooney to ruminate over an announcement, the bare possibility of which was ecstasy itself. To be the rival of a peeress; that peeress a duchess; that duchess the lady of the viceroy! These were high thoughts indeed. "What would Mrs. Riley say now? How would the Maloneys look? Wouldn't Father Glynn be proud to meet her at the door of Luffey street chapel, in full pontificals, as she drove up, who knows but with a guard of honor beside her." Running on in this way, she had actually got so far as to be discussing with herself what was to be done with Paul; not that her allegiance was shaken toward that excellent individual—not a single unworthy thought crossed her mind; far from it, poor Mrs. Rooney was purity itself: she merely dreamt of those outward manifestations of the viceroy's preference, which were to procure for her consideration in the world,

a position in society, and those attentions from the hands of the great and the titled, which she esteemed at higher price than the real gifts of health, wealth, and beauty, so bounteously bestowed upon her by Providence.

She had come then to that difficult point in her mind as to what was to be done with Paul; what peculiar course of training could he be submitted to, to make him more presentable in the world; how were they to break him off whisky-and-water and small jokes? "Ah!" thought she, "it's very hard to make a real gentleman out of such materials as grog and drab gaiters;" when suddenly O'Grady, wiping his forehead with his handkerchief, and then flourishing it theatrically in the air, exclaimed,—

"Yes, Mrs. Rooney, everything depends on you. His grace's visit—I have just been with him talking the whole thing over—must be kept a profound secret. If it ever reach the ears of the duchess we are ruined and undone."

Here was a total overthrow of all Mrs. Paul's speculations. Here was a beautiful castle uprooted from its very foundation; all her triumph, all her vaunted superiority over her city acquaintance, was vanishing like a mirage before her. What was the use of his coming, after all; what was the good of it, if not to be spoken of, if not talked over at tea, written of in notes, discussed at dinner, and displayed in the morning papers? Already was her brow contracted, and a slight flush of her cheek showed the wily captain that resistance was in preparation.

"I know, my dear Mrs. Paul, how gratifying it would be for even the highest in the land to speak of his grace's condescension in such terms as you might speak; but then, after all, how very fleeting such a triumph! Many would shrug their shoulders, and not believe the story. Some of those who believed would endeavor to account for it as a joke: one of those odd, wild fancies the duke is ever so fond of." Here she reddened deeply. "In fact, the malevolence and the envy of the world will give a thousand turns to the circumstance. Besides that, after all, they would seem to have some reason on their side; for the publicity of the affair must forever prevent a repetition of the visit; whereas, on the other side, by a little discretion, by guarding our own secret"—here Phil looked knowingly in her eyes, as though to say they had one—"not only will the duke be delighted to continue his intimacy, but from the absence of all mention of the matter, all display on the subject, the world will be ten times more disposed to give credence to the fact than if it were paragraphed in every newspaper in the kingdom."

This was hitting the nail on the head with a vengeance. Here was a picture—here a vision of happiness! Only to think of the duke dropping in, as a body might say, to take his bit of dinner or his dish of tea in the evening, just in a quiet, homely, family way. She thought she saw him sitting with his feet on the fender, talking about the king and the queen, and "the rest of the royal family," just as he would of herself and Paul, and her eyes involuntarily turned toward the little bust, and two round, full tears of pure joy trickled slowly down her cheeks.

Yielding at length to these and similar arguments, Mrs. Rooney gave in her adhesion, and a treaty was arranged and agreed upon between the high contracting parties, which ran somewhat to this effect:

"In the first place, for the enjoyment of certain advantages to be hereafter more fully set forth, the lady was bound to maintain in all large companies—balls, dinners, drums, and *déjeûners*—a rigid silence regarding the duke's visit to her house; never speaking of, nor alluding to it, in any manner whatever; and, in fact, conducting herself in all respects as if such a thing had never taken place.

"Secondly, she was forbid from making any direct inquiries in public respecting the health of the duke or duchess, or exercising any overt act of personal interest in these exalted individuals.

"Thirdly, so long as Mrs. Rooney strictly maintained the terms of the covenant, nothing in the foregoing was to preclude her from certain other privileges—viz., blushing deeply when the duke's name was mentioned, throwing down her eyes, gently clasping her hands, and even occasionally proceeding to a sigh; neither was she interdicted from regarding any portion of her domicile as particularly sacred in consequence of its viceregal associations. A certain arm-chair might be selected for peculiar honors, and preserved inviolate, etc.

"And lastly, nevertheless, notwithstanding that in all large assemblies Mrs. Rooney was to conduct herself with the reserve and restrictions aforesaid, yet in small *réunions de famille*,"—this O'Grady purposely inserted in French, for, as Mrs. Paul could not confess her ignorance of that language the interpretation must rest with himself—"she was to enjoy a perfect

liberty of detailing his grace's advent, entering into all its details, discussing, explaining, expatiating, inquiring with a most minute particularity concerning his health and habits, and, in a word, conduct herself in all respects, to use her own expressive phrase, 'as if they were thick since they were babies.'"

Armed with this precious document, formally signed and sealed by both parties, O'Grady took his leave of Mrs. Rooney—not, indeed, in his usual free-and-easy manner, but with the respectful and decorous reserve of one addressing a favorite near the throne. Nothing could be more perfect than Phil's profound obeisance, except perhaps the queenly demeanor of Mrs. Rooney herself; for, with the ready tact of a woman, she caught up in a moment the altered phase of her position, and in the reflective light of O'Grady's manner she learned to appreciate her own brilliancy.

"From this day forward," muttered O'Grady, as he closed the door behind him and hurried downstairs—"from this day forward she'll be greater than ever. Heaven help the lady mayoress that ventures to shake hands with her; and the attorney's wife will be a bold woman that asks her to a tea-party henceforth."

With these words he threw himself upon his horse and cantered off toward the park, to inform the duke that all was happily concluded, and amuse him with a sight of the great Rooney treaty, which he well knew would throw the viceroy into convulsions of laughter.

CHAPTER XII.

A WAGER.

In a few weeks after the events I have mentioned, the duke left Ireland to resume his parliamentary duties in the House of Lords, where some measure of considerable importance was at that time under discussion. Into the hands of the lords justices, therefore, the government *ad interim* was delivered; while upon Mrs. Paul Rooney devolved the more pleasing task of becoming the leader of fashion, the head and fountain of all the gayeties and amusements of the capital. Indeed, O'Grady half hinted that his grace relied upon her to supply his loss, which manifestation of his esteem, so perfectly in accordance with her own wishes, she did not long hesitate to profit by.

Had a stranger on his first arrival in Dublin passed along that part of Stephen's Green in which the "Hotel Rooney," as it was familiarly called, was situated, he could not have avoided being struck, not only with the appearance of the house itself, but with that of the strange and incongruous assembly of all ranks and conditions of men that lounged about its door. The house, large and spacious, with its windows of plate glass, its venetian blinds, its gaudily gilt and painted balcony, and its massive brass knocker, betrayed a certain air of pretension, standing as it did among the more somber-looking mansions, where the real rank of the country resided. Clean windows and a bright knocker, however—distinctive features as they were in the metropolis in those days—would not have arrested the attention of the passing traveler to the extent I have supposed, but that there were other signs and sights than these. At the open hall-door, to which you ascended by a flight of granite steps, lounged some half-dozen servants in powdered heads and gaudy liveries—the venerable porter in his leather chair, the ruddy coachman in his full-bottomed wig, tall footmen with bouquets in their buttonholes were here to be seen reading the morning papers, or leisurely strolling to the steps to take a look at the weather, and cast a supercilious glance at the insignificant tide of population that flowed on beneath them; a lazy and an idle race, they toiled not, neither did they spin, and I sincerely trust that Solomon's costume bore no resemblance to theirs. More immediately in front of the house stood a mixed society of idlers, beggars, horse-boys, and grooms, assembled there from motives of curiosity or gain. Indeed, the rich odor of savory viands that issued from the open kitchen-windows and ascended through the area to the nostrils of those without, might, in its appetizing steam have brought the dew upon the lips of greater gourmands than they were. All that French cookery could suggest to impart variety to the separate meals of breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and supper, here went forward unceasingly; and the beggars who thronged around the bars, and were fed from the rich man's table, became by degrees so habituated to the delicacies and refinements of good living, that they would have turned up their noses with contempt at the humble and more homely fare of the respectable shopkeeper. Truly, it was a strange picture to see these poor and ragged men as they sat in groups upon the steps and on the bare

flagway exposed to every wind of heaven, the drifting rain soaking through their frail and threadbare garments, yet criticising with practiced acumen the savory food before them. Consommés, ragoûts, pâtés, potages, jellies, with an infinity of that smaller grape-shot of epicurism with which fine tables are filled, all here met a fair and a candid appreciation. A little farther off, and toward the middle of the street, stood another order of beings, who, with separate and peculiar privileges, maintained themselves as a class apart; these were the horse-boys, half-naked urchins, whose ages varied from eight to fourteen—but whose looks of mingled cunning and drollery would defy any guess as to their time of life—here sported in all the wild untrammeled liberty of African savages; the only art they practiced was to lead up and down the horses of the various visitors whom the many attractions of the "Hotel Rooney" brought daily to the house; and here you saw the proud and pampered steed, with fiery eye and swelling nostrils, led about by this ambulating mass of rags and poverty, whose bright eye wandered ever from his own tattered habiliments to the gorgeous trappings and gold embroidery of the sleek charger beside him. In the midst of these, such as were not yet employed amused themselves by cutting summersets, standing on their heads, walking crab-fashion, and other classical performances, which form the little distractions of life for this strange sect.

Jaunting-cars there were, too, whose numerous fastenings of rope and cordage looked as though they were taken to pieces every night and put together in the morning; while the horse, a careworn and misanthropic-looking beast, would turn his head sideways over the shaft to give a glance of compassionating scorn at the follies and vanities of a world he was sick of. Not so the driver: equally low in condition, and fully as ragged in coat, the droll spirit that made his birthright was with him a lamp that neither poverty nor penury could quench. Ever ready with his joke, never backward with his repartee, prepared to comfort you with assurances of the strength of his car and the goodness of his horse, while his own laughing look give the lie to his very words, he would persuade you that with him alone there was safety, while it was a risk of life and limb to travel with his rivals.

These formed the ordinary *dramatis personæ*, while every now and then some flashy equipage, with armorial bearings and showy liveries, would scatter the crowd right and left, set the led horses lashing among the bystanders, and even break up the decorous conviviality of a dinner-party gracefully disposed upon the flags. Curricles, tandems, tilburies, and dennets, were constantly arriving and departing. Members of Daly's, with their green coats and buff waistcoats, whiskered dragoons, and plumed aides-de-camp, were all mixed up together, while on the open balcony an indiscriminate herd of loungers telegraphed the conversation from the drawing-room to the street, and thus all the *bons mots*, all the jests, all the witticisms that went forward within doors, found also a laughing auditory without; for it is a remarkable feature of this singular country, that there is no turn of expression whose raillery is too delicate, no repartee whose keenness is too fine, for the appreciation of the poorest and meanest creature that walks the street. Poor Paddy, if the more substantial favors of fortune be not your lot, nature has linked you by a strong sympathy with tastes, habits, and usages, which by some singular intuition you seem thoroughly to comprehend. One cannot dwell long among them without feeling this, and witnessing how generally, how almost universally, poverty of condition and wealth of intellect go hand in hand together; and as it is only over the bleak and barren surface of some fern-clad heath the wildfire flashes through the gloom of night, so it would seem the more brilliant firework of fancy would need a soil of poverty and privation to produce it.

But at length, to come back, the Rooneys now were installed as the great people of the capital; many of the *ancien régime* who held out sturdily before, and who looked upon the worthy attorney in the light of an usurper, now gave in their allegiance, and regarded him as the true monarch: what his great prototype effected by terror, he brought about by turtle; and if Napoleon consolidated his empire and propped his throne by the bayonets of the grand army, so did Mr. Rooney establish his claims to power by the more satisfactory arguments—which, appealing not only to the head but to the stomach, convince while they conciliate. You might criticise his courtesy, but you could not condemn his claret. You might dislike his manners, but you could not deny his mutton. Besides, after all, matters took pretty much the same turn in Paris as in Dublin: public opinion ran strong in both cases; the mass of the world consists of those who receive benefits, and he who confers them

deserves to be respected. We certainly thought so; and among those of darker hue who frequented Mr. Rooney's table, three red coats might daily be seen, whose unchanged places, added to their indescribable air of at-homishness, bespoke them as the friends of the family.

O'Grady, at Mrs. Rooney's right hand, did the honors of the soup; Lord Dudley, at the other end of the table, supported Mr. Rooney, while to my lot Miss Bellew fell; but as our places at the table never changed, there was nothing marked in my thus every day finding myself beside her, and resuming my place on our return to the drawing-room. To me, I confess, she formed the great attraction of the house; less imbued than my friend O'Grady with the spirit of fun, I could not have gone on from day to day to amuse myself with the eccentricities of the Rooneys, while I could not, on the other hand, have followed Lord Dudley's lead, and continued to receive the hospitalities of a house that I might sneer at the pretensions of its owner.

Under any circumstances Louisa Bellew might be considered a very charming person; but contrasted with those by whom she was surrounded, her attractions were very great; indeed, her youth, her lightheartedness, and the buoyancy of her spirit, concealed to a great degree the sorrow it cost her to be associated with her present hosts; for although they were kind to her, and she felt and acknowledged their kindness, yet the humiliating sense of a position which exposed her to the insolent familiarity of the idle, the dissipated, or the underbred visitors of the house, gradually impressed itself upon her manner, and tempered her mild and graceful nature with a certain air of pride and distance. A circumstance, slight in itself, but sufficiently indicative of this, took place some weeks after what I have mentioned. Lord Dudley de Vere, who from his rank and condition, was looked upon as a kind of privileged person in the Rooney family, sitting rather later than usual after dinner, and having drunk a great deal of wine, offered a wager that on his appearance in the drawing-room, not only would he propose for, but be accepted by any unmarried lady in the room. The puppyism and coxcombery of such a wager might have been pardoned, were it not that the character of the individual, when sober, was in perfect accordance with this drunken boast. The bet, which was for three hundred guineas, was at once taken up, and one of the party running hastily up to the drawing-room, obtained the names of the ladies there, which, being written on slips of paper, were thrown into a hat, thus leaving chance to decide upon whom the happy lot was to fall.

"Mark you, Upton," cried Lord Dudley, as he prepared to draw forth his prize—"mark you, I didn't say I'd marry her."

"No, no," resounded from different parts of the room; "we understand you perfectly."

"My bet," continued he, "is this; I have booked it." With these words he opened a small memorandum-book, and read forth the following paragraph:—"'Three hundred with Upton that I ask and be accepted by any girl in Paul's drawing-room this evening, after tea. The choice to be decided by lottery.' Isn't that it?"

"Yes, yes, quite right, perfectly correct," said several persons round the table. "Come, my lord, here is the hat."

"Shake them up well, Upton."

"So here goes," said De Vere, as, affectedly tucking up the sleeve of his coat, he inserted two fingers and drew forth a small piece of paper carefully folded in two. "I say, gentlemen, this is your affair; it don't concern me." With these words he threw it carelessly on the table, and resuming his seat, leisurely filled his glass, and sipped his wine.

"Come, read it, Blake; read it up; who is she?"

"Gently, lads, gently; patience for one moment. How are we to know if the wager be lost or won? Is the lady herself to declare it?"

"Why, if you like it, it is perfectly the same to me."

"Well, then," rejoined Blake, "it is—Miss Bellew."

No sooner was the name read aloud, than, instead of the roar of laughter which it was expected to follow the announcement, a kind of awkward and constrained silence settled on the party. Mr. Rooney himself—who felt shocked beyond measure at this result, had been so long habituated to regard himself as nothing at the head of his own table, accepting, not dictating, its laws—would, had he dared, have at once interfered to stay any further proceedings. Many of these, too, around the table, who knew Sir Simon Bellew, and felt how unsuitable and inadmissible such a jest as this would be, if practiced upon *his* daughter, whispered among themselves a hope that the wager would be abandoned, and never thought of more by either party.

"Yes, yes," said Upton, who was an officer in a dragoon regiment, and al-

though of a high family and well connected, was yet very limited in his means. "Yes, yes, I quite agree. This foolery might be very good fun with some young ladies we know, but with Miss Bellew the circumstances are quite different; and, for *my* part, I withdraw from the bet."

"Eh—aw! Pass down the claret, if you please. You withdraw from the bet, then: that means, you pay me three hundred guineas; for d—n me if I do! No, no; I am not so young as that. I haven't lost fifteen thousand on the Derby without gaining some little insight into these matters—every bet is a p. p., if not stated to be the reverse. I leave it to any gentleman in the room."

"Come, come, De Vere," said one, "listen to reason, my boy."

"Yes, Dudley," cried another, "only think over the thing. You must see—"

"I only wish to see a check for three hundred. And I'll not be done."

"Sir!" said Upton, springing from his chair, as his blood mounted to his face and temples, "did you mean that expression to apply to me?"

"Sit down, Mr. Upton, for the love of heaven! Sit down; do, sir; his lordship never meant it at all. See, now, I'll pay the money myself. Give me a pen and ink. I'll give you a check on the bank this minute. What the devil signifies a trifle like that?" stammered out poor Paul, as he wiped his forehead with his napkin, and looked the very picture of terror. "Yes, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, we agree to pay the whole costs of this suit."

A perfect roar of laughter interrupted the worthy attorney, and as it ran from one end of the table to the other, seemed to promise a happier issue to this unpleasant discussion.

"There, now," said honest Paul, "the Lord be praised, it is all settled! so let us have another cooper up, and then we'll join the ladies."

"Then I understand it thus," said Lord Dudley; "you pay the money for Mr. Upton, and I may erase the bet from my book."

"No, sir!" cried Upton, passionately. "I pay my own wagers—and if you still insist—"

"No, no, no," cried several voices; while, at the same time, to put an end at once to any further dispute, the party suddenly rose to repair to the drawing-room.

On passing through the hall, chance, or perhaps design, on Lord Dudley's part, brought him beside Upton. "I wish you to understand, once more," said he, in a low whisper, "that I consider this bet to hold."

"Be it so," was the brief reply, and they separated.

O'Grady and myself having dined that day in the country, only arrived in the Rooneys' drawing-room as the dinner-party was entering it. Contrary to their wont, there was less of loud talking, less of uproarious and boisterous mirth, as they came up the stairs, than usual. O'Grady remarked this to me afterwards. At the time, however, I paid but little attention to it. The fact was, my thoughts were principally running in another channel. Certain innuendoes of Lord Dudley de Vere, certain broad hints he had ventured upon even before Mrs. Rooney, had left upon my mind a kind of vague, undecided impression that, somehow or other, I was regarded as their dupe. Miss Bellew's manner was certainly more cordial, more kind to me than to any of the others who visited the house. The Rooneys themselves omitted nothing to humor my caprices and indulge my fancies, affording me, at all times, opportunities of being alone with Louisa, joining in her walks, and accompanying her on horseback. Could there be anything in all this? Was this the quarter in which the mine was to explode? This painful doubt hanging upon my mind, I entered the drawing-room.

The drawing-room of 42, Stephen's Green, had often afforded me an amusing study. Its strange confusion of ranks and classes; its mixture of lordly loungers and city beauties; the discordant tone of conversation, where each person discussed the very thing he knew least of; the blooming daughters of a lady Mayoress talking "fashion and the musical glasses:" while the witless scion of a noble house was endeavoring to pass himself off as a sayer of good things—these now, however, afforded me neither interest nor pleasure: bent solely upon one thought, eager alone to ascertain how far Louisa Bellew's manner toward me was the fruit of artifice, or the offspring of an artless and unsuspecting mind, I left O'Grady to entertain a whole circle of turbaned ladies, while I directed my course toward the little boudoir where Louisa usually sat.

In a house where laxity of etiquette and a freedom of manner prevailed to the extent I have mentioned, Miss Bellew's more cautious and reserved demeanor was anything but popular; and, as there was no lack of beauty, men found it more suitable to their lounging and indolent habits, to

engage those in conversation who were less exacting in their demands for respect, and were equally merry themselves, as mercifully disposed when the mirth became not only easy but free.

Miss Bellew, therefore, was permitted to indulge many of her tastes unmolested; and, as one of these was to work at embroidery in the small room in question, few persons intruded themselves upon her; and even they but for a short time, as if merely paying their required homage to a member of the family.

As I approached the door of the boudoir, my surprise was not a little to hear Lord Dudley de Vere's voice, the tones of which, though evidently subdued by design, had a clear distinctness that made them perfectly audible where I stood.

"Eh! you can't mean it, though? 'Pon my soul it is too bad! You know I shall lose my money if you persist."

"I trust Lord Dudley de Vere is too much of a gentleman to make my unprotected position in this house the subject of an insolent wager; I'm sure nothing in my manner could ever have given encouragement to such a liberty."

"There now; I knew you didn't understand it. The whole thing was a chance; the odds were at least eighteen to one against you—ha! ha! I mean in your favor. Devilish good mistake that of mine. They were all shaken up in a hat. You see there was no collusion—could be none."

"My lord, this impertinence becomes past enduring; and if you persist—"

"Well, then, why not enter into the joke? It'll be a devilish expensive one to me if you don't, that I promise you. What a confounded fool I was not to draw out when Upton wished it! D—n it! I ought to have known there is no trusting to a woman." As he said this, he walked twice or thrice hurriedly to and fro, muttering as he went, with ill-suppressed passion, "Laughed at, d—n me! that I shall be, all over the kingdom. To lose the money is bad enough; but the ridicule of the thing, that's the devil! Stay, Miss Bellew, stop one minute: I have another proposition to make. Begad! I see nothing else for it. This, you know, was all a humbug; mere joke, nothing more. Now, I can't stand the way I shall be quizzed about it at all. So, here goes! hang me, if I don't make the proposition in real earnest! There, now, say yes at once, and we'll see if I can't turn the laugh against them." There was a pause for an instant, and then Miss Bellew spoke. I would have given worlds to have seen her at that moment; but the tone of her voice, firm and unshaken, sank deep into my heart.

"My lord," said she, "this must now cease; but, as your lordship is fond of a wager, I have one for your acceptance. The sum shall be your own choosing. Whatever it be, I stake it freely; that, as I walk from this room, the first gentleman I meet—you like a chance, my lord, and you shall have one—will chastise you before the world for your unworthy, unmanly insult to a weak and unoffending girl."

As she spoke, she sprang from the room, her eyes flashing with indignant fire; while her cheek, pale as death, and her heaving throat attested how deep was her passion. As she turned the corner of the door her eyes met mine. In an instant the truth flashed upon her mind. She knew I had overheard all that passed: she gasped painfully for breath, her lips moved with scarce a sound, a violent trembling shook her from head to foot, and she fell fainting to the ground.

I followed her with my eyes as they bore her from the room; and then, without a thought for anything around me, I hurriedly left the room, dashed downstairs, and hastened to my quarters in the castle.

CHAPTER XIII.

A NIGHT OF TROUBLE.

UNTIL the moment when I reached the room and threw myself into a chair, my course respecting Lord Dudley de Vere seemed to present not a single difficulty. The appeal so unconsciously made to me by Miss Bellew, not less than my own ardent inclination, decided me on calling him out. No sooner, however, did calm reflection succeed to the passionate excitement of the moment, than at once I perceived the nicety of my position. Under what possible pretext could I avow myself as her champion; not as of her own choosing? for I knew perfectly well that the words she uttered were merely intended as a menace, without the slightest idea of being acted on. To suffer her name, therefore, to transpire in the affair, would be to compromise her in the face of the world. Again, the confusion and terror she evinced when she beheld me at the door proved to me that, perhaps of all others, I was the last person she would have wished to have been a witness to the interview. What was to be done? The very difficulty of the affair only made my deter-

mination to go through with it the stronger. I have already said my inclination also prompted me to this course. Lord Dudley's manner to me, without being such as I could make a plea for resenting, had ever been of a supercilious and almost offensive character. If there be anything which more deeply than another wounds our self-esteem, it is the assumed superiority of those whom we heartily despise. More than once he ventured upon hinting at the plans of the Rooneys respecting me, suggesting that their civilities only concealed a deeper object; and all this he did with a tone of half-insolence, that irritated me ten times more than an open affront.

Often and often had I promised myself that a day of retribution must come. Again and again did I lay this comfort to my heart: that one time or other his habitual prudence would desert him; that his transgression would exceed the narrow line that separates an impertinent freedom from an insult, and then — Now, this time had come at last. Such a chance might not again present itself, and must not be thrown away.

My reasonings had come to this point, when a tremendous knocking at the door, and a loud shout of "Jack! Jack Hinton!" announced O'Grady. This was fortunate. He was the only man whom I knew well enough to consult in such a matter; and, of all others, he was the one on whose advice and counsel I could place implicit reliance.

"What the deuce is all this, my dear Hinton?" said he, as he grasped my hand in both his. "I was playing whist with the tabbies when it occurred, and saw nothing of the whole matter. She fainted, didn't she? What the deuce could you have said or done?"

"Could I have said or done? What do you mean, O'Grady?"

"Come, come—be frank with me; what was it? If you are in a scrape, I am not the man to leave you in it."

"First of all," said I, assuming with all my might a forced and simulated composure—"first of all, tell me what you heard in the drawing-room."

"What I heard? Egad, it was plain enough. In the beginning, a young lady came souse down upon the floor—screams and smelling-bottles followed—a general running hither and thither; in which confusion, by-the-bye, our adversaries contrived to manage a new deal, though I had four by honors in my hand. Old Miss Macan upset my markers, drank my negus, and then fainted off herself, with a face like an apothecary's rose."

"Yes, yes; but," said I impatiently, "what of Miss Bellew?"

"What of her? That you must know best. You know, of course, what occurred between you."

"My dear O'Grady," said I, with passionate eagerness, "do be explicit. What did they say in the drawing-room? What turn has been given to this affair?"

"Faith! I can't tell you; I am as much in the dark as my neighbors. After the lady was carried out and you ran away, they all began talking it over. Some said you had been proposing an elopement; others said you hadn't. The Rileys swore you had asked to have your picture back again; and old Mrs. Ram, who had planted herself behind a curtain to overhear all, forgot, it seems, that the window was open, and caught such a cold in her head, and such a deafness, that she heard nothing. She says, however, that your conduct was abominable; and, in fact, my dear Hinton, the whole thing is a puzzle to us all."

"And Lord Dudley de Vere," said I, "did he offer no explanation?"

"Oh yes—something pretty much in his usual style: pulled up his stock, ran his fingers through his hair, and muttered some indistinct phrases about lovers' quarrels."

"Capital!" exclaimed I, with delight; "nothing could be better, nothing more fortunate than this! Now, O'Grady, listen to my version of the matter, and then tell me how to proceed in it." I here detailed to my friend every circumstance that had occurred, from the moment of my entering to my departure from the drawing-room.

"As to the wager," said I, "what it was, when made, and with whom I know not."

"Yes, yes; I know all that," interrupted O'Grady; "I have the whole thing perfectly before me. Now, let us see what is to be done; and first of all, allow me to ring the bell for some sherry-and-water—that's the head and front of a consultation."

When O'Grady had mixed his glass, sipped, corrected, and sipped again, he beat the bars of the grate a few moments contemplatively with the poker, and then turning to me, gravely said, "We must parade him, Jack, that's certain. Now for the how. Our friend Dudley is not much given to fighting, and it will be rather difficult to obtain his consent. Indeed, if it had not been for the insinuation he threw out, after you had left the room, I don't well see how you could push him to it."

"Why, my dear O'Grady, wasn't there quite cause enough?"

"Plenty, no doubt, my dear Jack, as far as feeling goes; but there are innumerable cases in this life, which, like breaches of trust in law, escape with slight punishment. Not but that, when you owe a man a grudge, you have it always in your power to make him sensible of it; and among gentlemen there is the same intuitive perception of a contemplated collision as you see at a dinner-party, when one fellow puts his hand on a decanter—his friend at the end of the table smiles, and cries, 'With pleasure, my boy!' There is one thing, however, in your favor."

"What is that?" said I, eagerly.

"Why, he has lost his wager; that's pretty clear; and, as that won't improve his temper—it's possible—mind, I don't say more—but it's possible he may feel better disposed to turn his irritation into valor; a much more common process in metaphysical chemistry than the world wots of. Under these circumstances, the best thing to do, as it strikes me, is to try the cause, as our friend Paul would say, on the general issue. That is, to wait on De Vere; tell him we wish to have a meeting; that, after what has passed—that's a sweet phrase, isn't it? and has got more gentlemen carried home on a door than any other I know—that after what has passed, the thing is unavoidable, and the sooner it comes off the better. He can't help referring me to a friend, and he can scarcely find one that won't see the thing with our eyes. It's quite clear Miss Bellew's name must be kept out of the matter. And now, my boy, if you agree with me, leave the whole affair in my hands, tumble into bed, and go to sleep as fast as you can."

"I leave it all to you, Phil," said I, shaking his hand warmly; "and, to prove my obedience, I'll be in bed in ten minutes."

O'Grady finished the decanter of sherry, buttoned up his coat, and, slapping his boot with his cane, sauntered down stairs, whistling an Irish quick step as he went.

When I had half accomplished my undressing, I sat down before the fire, and, unconsciously to myself, fell into a train of musing about my present condition. I was very young; knew little of the world: the very character of my education had been so much under the eye and direction of my mother, that my knowledge was even less than that of the generality of young men of my own time of life. It is not surprising, then, if the events which my new career hurried so rapidly one upon another in some measure confused me. Of dueling I had, of course, heard repeatedly, and had learned to look upon the necessity of it as more or less imperative upon every man in the outset of his career. Such was, in a great measure, the tone of the day; and the man who attained a certain period of life without having had at least one affair of honor, was rather suspected of using a degree of prudent caution in his conduct with the world, than of following the popular maxim of the period, which said, "Be always ready with the pistol."

The affair with Lord George, therefore, I looked upon rather as a lucky hit; I might as well make my *début* with him as with any other. So much, then, for the prejudice of the period. Now for my private feelings on the subject; they were, I confess, anything but satisfactory. Without at all entering into any anticipation I might have felt as to the final result, I could not avoid feeling ashamed of myself for my total ignorance about the whole matter; not only, as I have said, had I never seen a duel, but I had never fired a pistol twice in my life. I was naturally a nervous fellow, and the very idea of firing, at a word, would, I knew, render me more so. My dread that the peculiarity of my constitution might be construed into want of courage increased my irritability; while I felt that my endeavor to acquit myself with all the etiquette and punctilio of the occasion, would inevitably lead me to the commission of some mistake or blunder.

And then, as to my friends at home, what would my father say? His notions on the subject I knew were very rigid, and only admitted the necessity of an appeal to arms as the very last resort. What account could I give him sufficiently satisfactory of my reasons for going out? How would my mother feel, with all her aristocratic prejudices, when she heard of the society where the affair originated—when some glowing description of the Rooneys should reach her?—and this some kind friend or other was certain to undertake—and, worse than all, Lady Julia, my high-born cousin, whose beauty and sarcasm had inspired me with a mixture of admiration and dread. How should I ever bear the satirical turn she would give the whole affair? her malice increased, as it would be by the fact that a young and pretty girl was mixed up in it; for, somehow, I must confess, a kind of half-flirtation had always subsisted between my cousin and me. Her beauty, her wit, her fascinating manner, rendering

me at times over head and ears in love with her: while, at others, the indifference of her manner toward me, or, still worse, the ridicule to which she exposed me, would break the spell and dissipate the enchantment. Thoughts like these were far from assuring me, and contributed but little toward that confidence in myself I stood so much in need of. And, again, what if I were to fall? As this thought settled on my mind, I resolved to write home—not to my father, however. I felt a kind of constraint about unburdening myself to him at such a moment. My mother was equally out of the question; in fact, a letter to her could only be an apologetic narrative of my life in Ireland; softening down what she would call the atrocities of my associates, and giving a kind of Rembrandt tint to the Rooneys, which might conceal the more vivid coloring of their vulgarity. At such a moment I had no heart for this; such trifling would ill suit me now. To Lady Julia, then, I determined to write; she knew me well. Besides, I felt that, when I was no more, the kindliness of her nature would prevail, and she would remember me but as the little lover that brought her flowers from the conservatory; that wrote letters to her from Eaton; that wore her picture round his neck at Sandhurst—and, by the bye, that picture I had still in my possession: this was the time to restore it. I opened my writing-desk and took it out. It was a strange love-gift, painted when she was barely ten years old. It represented a very lovely child, with dark eyes, and a straight regularity of feature, like a Grecian statue. The intensity of look that after years developed more fully, and the slight curl of the lip, that betrayed the incipient spirit of mockery, were both there: still was she very beautiful. I placed the miniature before me,and fixed my eyes upon it, while, carried away by the illusion of the moment, I burst into a rhapsody of proffered affection, while I vindicated myself against any imputation my intimacy with Miss Bellew might give rise to. As I proceeded, however, I discovered that my pleading scarce established my innocence even to myself; so I turned away, and once more sat down moodily before the fire.

The castle clock struck two; I started up, somewhat ashamed of myself at not having complied with O'Grady's advice, and at once threw myself on my bed, and fell sound asleep. Some confused impression upon my mind of a threatened calamity, gave a gloomy character to all my dreams; and more than once I awoke with a sudden start, and looked about me. The flickering and uncertain glare of the dying embers threw strange and goblin shapes upon the wall, and on the old oak floor. The window-curtains waved mournfully to and fro, as the sighing night wind pierced the openings of the worn casement, adding, by some unknown sympathy, to my gloom and depression; and although I quickly rallied myself from these foolish fancies, and again sank into slumber, it was always again to wake with the same unpleasant impressions, and with the same sights and sounds about me. Toward morning, at length I fell into a deep, unbroken sleep, from which I was awakened by the noise of some one rudely drawing my curtains. I looked up, as I rubbed my eyes; it was Corny Delany, who with a mahogany box under his arm, and a little bag in his hand, stood eyeing me with a look, in which his habitual ill-temper was dashed with a slight mixture of scorn and pity.

"So you are awake at last!" said he; "faith, and you sleep sound, and"—this he muttered between his teeth—"and maybe it's sounder you'll sleep to-morrow night! The captain bid me call you at seven o'clock, and it's near eight now. That bla-guard of a servant of yours wouldn't get up to open the door till I made a cry of fire outside, and puffed a few mouthfuls of smoke through the key-hole!"

"Well done, Corny! But where's the captain?"

"Where is he? sorrow one o' me knows! Maybe at the watchhouse, maybe in George's Street barrack, maybe in the streets, maybe—Och, troth! there's many a place he might be, and good enough for him any of them. Them's the tools, well oiled. I put flints in them."

"And what have you got in the bag, Corny?"

"Maybe you'll see time enough. It's the lint, the sticking-plaster, and the bandages, and the turn-an'-twist." This, be it known, was the Delany for "tourniquet." "And, faith, it's a queer use to put the same bag to; his honor the judge had it made to carry his notes in. Ugh, ugh, ugh! a bloody little bag it always was! Many's the time I seen the poor creatures in the dock have to hould on by the spikes when they'd see him put his hands in it! It's not lucky, the same bag! Will you have some brandy and water and a bit of dry toast? It's what the captain always gives them the first time they go out. When they're used to

it, a cup of chocolate with a spoonful of whisky is a fine thing for the hand."

I could scarce restrain a smile at the notion of dieting a man for a duel, though, I confess, there seemed something excessively bloodthirsty about it. However, resolved to give Corny a favorably impression of my coolness, I said, "Let me have the chocolate and a couple of eggs."

He gave a grin a demon might have envied, as he muttered to himself, "He wants to try and die game, ugh, ugh!" With these words he waddled out of the room to prepare my breakfast; his alacrity certainly increased by the circumstance in which he was employed.

No sooner was I alone than I opened the pistol-case to examine the weapons; they were, doubtless, good ones; but a ruder, more ill-fashioned, clumsy pair it would be impossible to conceive. The stock, which extended nearly to the end of the barrel, was notched with grooves for the fingers to fit in; the whole terminating in an uncouth knob, inlaid with small pieces of silver, which at first I imagined were purely ornamental. On looking closer, however, I perceived that each of them contained a name and a date, with an ominous phrase beneath, which ran thus, "Killed!" or thus: "Wounded!"

"Egad," thought I, "they are certainly the coolest people in the world in this island, and have the strangest notions withal of cheering a man's courage!" It was growing late, meanwhile; so that, without further loss of time, I sprang out of bed, and set about dressing, huddling my papers and Julia's portrait into my writing-desk. I threw into the fire a few letters, and was looking about my room lest anything should have escaped me, when suddenly the quick movement of horses' feet on the pavement beneath drew me to the window. As I looked out, I could just catch a glimpse of O'Grady's figure as he sprang from a high tandem; I then heard his foot as he mounted the stairs, and the next moment he was knocking at my door.

"Holloa!" cried he; "by Jove, I have had a night of it! Help me off with the coat, Jack, and order breakfast, with any number of mutton chops you please; I never felt so voracious in my life. Early rising must be a bad thing for the health, if it makes a man's appetite so painful."

While I was giving my necessary directions, O'Grady stirred up the fire, drew his chair close to it, and planting his feet upon the fender, and expanding his hands before the blaze, called out,—

"Yes, yes, quite right: cold ham and a deviled drumstick by all means; the mulled claret must have nothing but cloves and a slice of pine-apple in it; and, mind, don't let them fry the kidneys in champagne; they are fifty times better in Moselle: we'll have the champagne *au naturel:* there, now, shut the door, there's a confounded current of air comes up that cold staircase. So, come over, my boy, let me give you all the news, and to begin: After I parted with you, I went over to De Vere's quarters, and heard that he had just changed his clothes and driven over to Clare Street: I followed immediately, but, as ill-luck would have it, he left that just five minutes before, with Watson of the 5th, who lives in one of the hotels near; this, you know, looked like business, and, as they told me they were to be back in half an hour, I cut into a rubber of whist with Darcy and the rest of them, where, what between losing heavily, and waiting for those fellows, I never got up till half-past four; which I did, minus Paul's check, all the loose cash about me, and a bill for one hundred and thirty to Vaughan. Pleasant, all that, wasn't it? Monk, who took my place, told me that De Vere and Watson were gone out together to the park, where I should certainly find them. Off then I set for the Phœnix, and, just as I was entering the gate of the lodge, a chaise, covered with portmanteaux and hat boxes, drove past me; I had just time to catch a glimpse of De Vere's face, as the light fell suddenly upon it; I turned as quick as possible, and gave chase down Barrack Street; we flew, he leading, and I endeavored to keep up; but my poor hack was so done up, between waiting at the club and the sharp drive, that I found we couldn't keep up the pace; fortunately, however, a string of coal cars blocked up Essex bridge, upon which my friend came to a check, and I also. I jumped out immediately, and running forward, just got in the nick, as they were once more about to move forward. 'Ah! Dudley,' cried I, 'I've had a sharp run for it, but by good fortune have found you at last.' I wish you had seen his face as I said these words; he leaned forward in the carriage, so as completely to prevent Watson, who was with him, overhearing what passed.

"'May I ask,' said he, endeavoring to get up a little of his habitual coolness—'may I ask, what so very pressing has sent you in pursuit of me?'

"'Nothing which should cause your present uneasiness,' replied I, in a tone and a look he could not mistake.

"'Eh—aw! don't take you exactly; anything gone wrong?'

"'You've a capital memory, my lord, when it suits you: pray call it to your aid for a few moments, and it will save us both a deal of trouble. My business with you is on the part of Mr. Hinton, and I have to request you will, at once, refer me to a friend.'

"'Eh! you want to fight? is that it? I say, Watson, they want to make a quarrel out of that foolish affair I told you of.'

"'Is Major Watson your friend on this occasion, my lord?'

"'No; oh no; that is, I didn't say—I told Watson how they walked into me for three hundred at Rooney's—must confess I deserve it richly for dining among such a set of fellows; and, as I've paid the money, and cut the whole concern, I don't see what more's expected of me.'

"'We have very little expectation, my lord, but a slight hope that you'll not disgrace the cloth you wear, and the profession you follow.'

"'I say, Watson, do you think I ought to take notice of these words?"

"'Would your lordship like them stronger?'

"'One moment, if you please, Captain O'Grady,' said Major Watson, as, opening the door of the chaise, he sprang out. 'Lord Dudley de Vere has detailed to me, and of course correctly, the whole of his last night's proceedings. He has expressed himself as ready and anxious to apologize to your friend for any offense he may have given him; in fact, that their families are in some way connected, and any falling out would be a very unhappy thing between them; and, last of all, Lord Dudley has resigned his appointment as aide-de-camp, and resolved on leaving Ireland. In two hours more he will sail from this; so I trust that, under every circumstance, you will see the propriety of not pressing the affair any farther.'

"'With the apology—'

"'That, of course,' said Watson.

"'I say,' cried De Vere, 'we shall be late at the Pigeon-house: it's half-past seven.'

"Watson whispered a few words into his ear; he was silent for a second, and a slight crimson flush settled on his cheek.

"'It won't do for me if they talk of this afterwards; but tell him—I mean Hinton—that I am sorry; that is, I wish him to forgive—'

"'There, there,' said I, impatiently, 'drive on, that is quite enough.'

"The next moment the chaise was out of sight, and I leaned against the ballustrade of the bridge, with a sick feeling at my heart I never felt before. Vaughan came by at the moment with his tandem; so I made him turn about and set me down; and here I am, my boy, now that my qualmishness has passed off, ready to eat you out of house and home, if the means would only present themselves."

Here ended O'Grady's narrative, and, as breakfast very shortly after made its appearance, our conversation dropped into broken, disjointed sentences; the burden of which, on his part, was, that although no man could deserve more gratitude from the household and the garrison generally than myself for being the means of exporting Lord George, yet, that under every view of the case, all effort should be made to prevent publicity, and stop the current of scandal such an event was calculated to give rise to in the city.

"No fear of that, I hope?" said I.

"Every fear, my dear boy. We live in a village here; every man hears his friend's watch tick, and every lady knows what her neighbor paid for her paste diamonds. However, be comforted; your reputation will scarcely stretch across the channel; and one's notoriety must have strong claims before it pass the custom-house at Liverpool."

"Well that is something; but, hang it, O'Grady, I wish I had had a shot at him."

"Of course you do; nothing more natural, and, at the same time, if you care for the lady, nothing more unreasonable. Do what you will, her name will be mixed up in the matter; but had it gone farther she must have been deeply compromised between you. You are too young, Jack, to understand much of this; but, take my word for it,—fight about your sister, your aunt, your maternal grandmother, if you like, but never for the girl you are about to marry. It involves a false position to both her and yourself; and now that I am giving advice, just give me another cutlet. I say, Corny, any hot potatoes?"

"Thim was hot a while ago," said Corny, without taking his hands from his pockets.

"Well, it is pleasant to know even that. Put that pistol-case back again. Ah! there goes Vaughan; I want a word with him."

So saying, he sprang up and hastened downstairs.

"What did he say I was to do with the pistols?" said Corny, as he polished the case with the ample cuff of his coat.

"You are to put them by—we shan't want them this morning."

"And there is to be no dewil after all," said he, with a most fiendish grin. "Ugh, ugh, didn't I know it. Ye's come from the wrong side of the water for that. It's little powder ye blaze, for all your talking."

Taking out one of the pistols as he spoke, he examined the lock for a few minutes patiently, and then muttered to himself—"Wasn't I right to put in the ould flints? The devil a more ye'd be doing, I guessed, nor making a flash in the pan!"

It was rather difficult, even with every allowance for Mr. Delany's temper, to submit to his insolence patiently. After all, there was nothing better to be done; for Corny was even greater in reply than attack, and any rejoinder on my part would unquestionably have made me fare the worse. Endeavoring, therefore, to hum a tune, I strolled to the window and looked out; while the imperturbable Corny, opening the opposite sash, squibbed off both pistols previous to replacing them in the box.

I cannot say what it was in the gesture and the action of this little fiend, but, somehow, the air of absurdity thus thrown over our quarrel by this ludicrous termination, hurt me deeply; and Corny's face as he snapped the trigger, was a direct insult. All my self-respect, all my self-approval, gave way in a moment, and I could think of nothing but Cross Corny's commentary on my courage.

"Yes," said I, half aloud, "it is a confounded country! If for nothing else, that every class and condition of man thinks himself capable to pronounce upon his neighbor. Hard drink and dueling are the national *penates;* and Heaven help him who does not adopt the religion of the land! My English servant would as soon have thought of criticising a chorus of Euripides as my conduct; and yet this little wretch not only does so, but does it to my face, superadding a sneer upon my country."

This, like many other of my early reflections on Ireland, had its grain of truth and its bushel of fallacy; and before I quitted the land I learned to make the distinction.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PARTING.

From motives of delicacy toward Miss Bellew, I did not call that day at the Rooneys'. For many months such an omission on my part had never occurred. Accordingly, when O'Grady returned at night to the castle, he laughingly told me that the house was in half mourning. Paul sat moodily over his wine, scarce lifting his head, and looking what he himself called nonsuited. Mrs. Paul, whose grief was always in the active mood, sobbed, hiccoughed, gulped, and waved her arms as if she had lost a near relative. Miss Bellew did not appear at all; and Phil discovered that she had written home that morning, requesting her father to send for her without loss of time. "The affair, as you see," continued O'Grady, "has turned out ill for all parties. Dudley has lost his post, you your mistress, and I my money; a pretty good illustration how much mischief a mere fool can at any moment make in society."

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when I mounted my horse to ride over to Stephen's Green. As I passed slowly along Dame Street, my attention was called to a large placard which, in front of a house opposite the lower castle gate, had attracted a considerable crowd around it. I was spared the necessity of stopping to read by the hoarse shout of a ragged ruffian who elbowed his way through the mob, carrying on one arm a mass of printed handbills, the other hand he held beside his mouth to aid the energy of his declamation. "Here's the full and true account," cried he, "of the bloody and me-lan-cho-ly duel that tuk place yesterday morning in the Phaynix Park between Lord Dudley de Vere and Mr. Hinton, two edge-du-congs to his grace the lord-liftin-int, wid all the particulars, for one ha'-penny."

"Here's the whole correspondence between the castle bucks," shouted a rival publisher,—the Colburn to this Bentley,—"wid a beautiful new song to an old tune.

"'Bang it up, bang it up to the lady in the Green.'"

"Give me one, if you please," said a motherly-looking woman in a gray cloak.

"No, ma'am, a penny," responded the vendor. "The bloody fight for a halfpenny! What!" said he, "would you have an Irish melody and the picture of an illegant female for a copper?"

"Sing us the song, Peter," called out another.

"This is too bad!" said I, passionately, as driving the spurs into my horse, I dashed through the ragged mob, upsetting and overturning all before me. Not, however,

before I was recognized; and, as I cantered down the street, a shout of derision, and a hailstorm of offensive epithets, followed me as I went.

It was, I confess, some time before I recovered my equanimity enough to think of my visit. For myself, individually, I cared little or nothing; but who could tell in what form these things might reach my friends in England? How garbled! how exaggerated! how totally perverted!—and then, too, Miss Bellew! It was evident that she was alluded to. I trembled to think that her name, polluted by the lips of such wretches as these, should be cried through the dark alleys and purlieus of the capital, a scoff and a mockery among the very outcasts of vice!

As I turned the corner of Grafton Street, a showy carriage with four gray horses passed me by. I knew it was the Rooney equipage, and, although for a moment I was chagrined that the object of my visit was defeated, on second thoughts I satisfied myself that, perhaps, it was quite as well; so I rode on to leave my card. On reaching the door, from which already some visitors were turning away, I discovered that I had forgotten my ticket-case; so I dismounted to write my name in the visiting-book: for this observance among great people Mrs. Rooney had borrowed, to the manifest horror and dismay of many respectable citizens.

"A note for you, sir," said the butler, in his most silvery accent, as he placed a small sealed billet in my hand. I opened it hastily. It contained but two lines: "Miss Bellew requests Mr. Hinton will kindly favor her with a few moments' conversation at an early opportunity."

"Is Miss Bellew at home?"

"Yes, sir," said the servant, who stood, waiting to precede me upstairs, and announce me.

"Mr. Hinton," said the man; and the words echoed in the empty drawing-room as he closed the door behind me: the next moment I heard the rustle of a silk dress, and Miss Bellew came out of the boudoir and walked toward me. Contrary to her usual habit—which was to hold out her hand to me—she now came timidly, hesitatingly forward; her eyes downcast, and her whole air and appearance indicating not only the traces of sorrow, but of physical suffering.

"Mr. Hinton," said she, in a voice every accent of which vibrated in my heart, "I have taken the liberty to ask a few moments' interview with you; for, although it is not only probable, but almost certain, we shall not meet again, yet I wish to explain certain portions of my conduct, and, indeed, to make them the reason of a favor I have to ask at your hand."

"Permit me to interrupt you for a moment," said I. "It is evident how painful the matter you would speak of is to you: you have no need of explanation, least of all to me. By accident I overheard that which, however high my esteem for Miss Bellew before, could but elevate her in my eyes. Pass then at once, I beseech you, to what you call a favor: there is no service you can seek for—"

"I thank you," replied she, in a voice scarcely articulate; "you have, indeed, spared me much, in not asking me to speak of what it is misery enough to remember; but it is not the first time my unprotected position in this house has exposed me to outrage, though assuredly it shall be the last." The tone of indignation she spoke in supplied her with energy as she hurriedly continued: "Already, Mr. Hinton, persons have dared to build a scandal upon the frail foundation of this insolent wager. Your name has been mixed up with it in such a way that no possible intercourse could exist between us without being construed into evidence of a falsehood; therefore, I have made up my mind to ask you to discontinue your visits here for the few days I may yet remain. I have already written home—the answer may arrive the day after to-morrow; and, while I feel that I but ill-repay the hospitality and kindness I have received and have met with, in closing the door to a most valued guest, I am assured you will understand and approve my motives, and not refuse me my request."

Delighted at the prospect of being in some way engaged in her service, I had listened with a throbbing heart up to the moment she concluded. Nothing could so completely overthrow all my hopes as these last few words. Seeing my silence and my confusion—for I knew not what to say—she added in a slightly tremulous voice,—

"I am sorry, Mr. Hinton, that my little knowledge of the world should have led me into this indiscretion. I perceive from your manner that I have asked a sacrifice you are unwilling to make: I ought to have known that habits have their influence as well as inclinations, and that this house being the resort of your friends—"

"Oh, how much—how cruelly you have mistaken me! Not on this account—not for such reasons as you suppose did I hesitate in my reply; far from it: indeed, the

very cause which made me a frequent visitor of this house is that which now renders me unable to answer you." A slight flush upon her cheek and a tremulous motion of her lip prevented my adding more. "Fear not, Miss Bellew," said I—"fear not from me: however different the feeling that would prompt it, no speech of mine shall cause you pain to listen to, however the buried thought may rack my own bosom. You shall have your request: good bye."

"Nay, nay, not so," said she, as she raised her handkerchief to her eyes, and gave a soft but sickly smile; "you mustn't go without my thanking you for all your kindness. It may so chance that one day or other you will visit the wild west; if so, pray don't forget that my father, of whom you have heard me speak so much, would be but too happy to thank one who has been so kind to his daughter; and if that day should come"—here a slight gleam of animation shot across her features—"I beseech you not to think, from what you will see of me there, that I have forgotten all your good teaching, and all your lessons about London manners, though I sadly fear that neither my dress nor deportment will testify in my favor; and so good bye." She drew her glove from her hand as she spoke. I raised the taper fingers respectfully to my lips, and, without venturing another look, muttered "Good bye," and left the room.

As step by step I loitered on the stairs, I struggled with myself against the rising temptation to hurry back to her presence, and tell her that, although hitherto the fancied security of meeting her every day had made me a stranger to my own emotions, the hour of parting had dispelled the illusion—the thought of separation had unveiled the depths of my heart, and told me that I loved her. Was this true? It was.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LETTER FROM HOME.

Feigning illness to O'Grady as the reason of my not going to the Rooneys', I kept my quarters for several days; during which time it required all my resolution to enable me to keep my promise; and scarcely an hour of the day went over without my feeling tempted to mount my horse, and try if, perchance, I could not catch even a passing look at her once more. Miss Bellew was the first woman who had ever treated me as a man: this, in itself, had a strong hold on my feelings, for, after all, what flattery is there so artful as that which invests us with a character to which we feel in our hearts our pretension is doubtful? Why has college life—why has the army—such a claim upon our gratitude at our outset in the world? Is it not the acknowledgment of our manhood? And for the same reason the man who first discounts our bill, and the woman who first receives our addresses, have an unqualified right to our regard for evermore.

It is the sense of what we seem to others that moulds and fashions us through life; and how many a character that seems graven in letters of adamant, took its type, after all, from some chance or casual circumstance, some passing remark, some hazarded expression! We begin by simulating a part, and we end by dovetailing it into our nature; thence the change which a first passion works in every young mind. The ambition to be loved, the desire to win affection, teach us those ways of pleasing, which whether real or affected, become part and parcel of ourselves. Little know we that in the passion we believe to be the most disinterested, how much of pure egotism is mixed up: and well is it for us such is the case. The imaginary standard we set up before ourselves is a goal to strive for, an object of high hope before us; and few, if any, of our bolder enterprises in after life have not their birth in the cradle of first love.

The accolade that in olden days by its magic touch converted the humble squire into the spurred and belted knight, had no such charm as the first beam from a bright eye when, fallen upon the hidden depths of our heart, it has shown us a mine of rich thoughts, of dazzling hopes, of bright desires. This, indeed, is a change; and who is there, having felt it, has not walked forth a prouder and a nobler spirit?

Thoughts like these came rushing on my mind as I reflected on my passion for Louisa Bellew; and as I walked my room my heart bounded with elation, and my step grew firm in its tread; for I felt that already a new influence was beaming on me, a new light was shining upon my path in life. Musing thus, I paid but little attention to my servant, who had just left a letter upon my table; my eye, at length, glanced at the address, which I perceived was in my mother's handwriting; I opened it somewhat carelessly, for somehow my dear mother's letters had gradually decreased in their interest as my anti-Irish

prejudices grew weaker by time; her exclusively English notions I could no longer respond to so freely as before; and as I knew the injustice of some of her opinions, I felt proportionately disposed to mistrust the truth of many others. The letter, as usual, was crossed and recrossed: for nothing, after all, was so thorough a criterion of fashion as a penurious avoidance of postage, and, in consequence, scarcely a portion of the paper was uncovered by ink. The detail of balls and dinners, the *on dits* of the town, the rumored changes in the ministry, who was to come in and who to go out, whether Lord Arthur got a regiment, or Lady Mary a son, had all become comparatively uninteresting to me. What we know and what we live in is the world to us; and the arrival of a new bear is as much a matter of interest in the prairies of the far West, as the first night of a new ballet in the circles of Paris. In all probability, therefore, after satisfying myself that my friends were well, I should have been undutiful enough to put my mother's letter to bed in a card-rack without any very immediate attention of disturbing its slumbers, when suddenly the word Rooney attracted my eye, and at once awakened my curiosity. How the name of these people should have come to my mother's aristocratic ears I could not conceive; for, although I had myself begun a letter about them, yet, on second thoughts, I deemed it better to consign it to the fire than risk a discovery by no means necessary.

I now sat patiently down before the fire, resolved to spell over the letter from beginning to end, and suffer nothing to escape me. All her letters, like the preamble of a deed, began with a certain formula—a species of lamentation over her wretched health; the difficulty of her case, which, consisting in the absence of all symptoms, had puzzled the faculty for years long—the inclemency of the weather, which by some fatality of fortune was sure to be rainy when Dr. Y—— said it ought to be fine, and oppressively hot when he assured her she required a bracing element; besides, it was evident the medical men mistook her case, and what chance had she with Providence and the College of Physicians against her! Then every one was unkind—nobody believed her sick, or thought her valuable life in danger, although from four o'clock in the afternoon to the same hour the next morning, she was continually before their eyes, driving in the park, visiting, dining, and even dancing; in fact, exerting herself in every imaginable shape and form for the sake of an ungrateful world that had nothing but hollow civilities to show her, instead of tears for her sufferings. Skimming my eye rapidly over this I came at length to the well-known paragraph which always concluded this exordium, and which I could have repeated by heart, the purport of it being simply a prophetic menace, of what would be the state, what the feelings, of various persons unknown, when at her demise they discovered how unjustly, how ungenerously, how cruelly they had complimented her upon her health and looks during her lifetime. The undying remorse of those unfeeling wretches, among whom it was very plain my father was numbered, was expatiated upon with much force and Christian charity; for as certain joint-stock companies contrive in their advertisements to give an apparent stability to their firm, by quoting some well-known Coutts or Drummond as their banker, so my poor mother, by simply introducing the word "Providence" into all her worldly transactions, thought she was discharging the most rigid of Christian duties, and securing a happy retreat for her when that day should arrive, when neither rouge, nor false hair, would supply the deficiencies of youth, and death should unlock the jaw the dentist had furnished.

After this came the column of court gossip, the last pun of the prince, and a "*mot*" of Mr. Canning. "We hope," continued she, "poor Somerset will go to Madrid as ambassador; to refuse him would be a great cruelty, as he has been ordered by his medical men to try a southerly climate—hum—ah—Lady Jane to replace Miss Barclay with the Landgravine." Very stupid all this; but come, here we have it, the writing too changes, as if a different spirit had dictated it. "Two o'clock. I've just returned from the Grevilles', seriously ill from the effects of the news that has reached me. Wretched boy! what have you done? What frightful career of imprudence have you entered upon? Write to me at once; for although I shall take immediate steps for your recall, I shall be in a fever of impatience till you tell me all about it. Poor dear Lord Dudley de Vere, how I love him for the way he speaks of you; for although, evidently, your conduct to him has been something very gross, yet his language respecting you is marked, not only by forbearance, but by kindness. Indeed, he attributes the spirit you have manifested to the instigation of another member of the staff, whose name, with his habitual delicacy, we could not prevail upon him to dis-

close. His account of that wretched country is distressing indeed; the frightful state of society, the barbarism of the natives, and the frequency of bloodshed. I shall not close my eyes to-night thinking of you; though he has endeavored to reassure me, by telling us, that as the castle is a strong place, and a considerable military force always there, you are in comparative safety. But, my dear child, who are these frightful Rooneys, with the odious house where all this gambling and ruin goes forward? How feelingly poor Lord Dudley spoke of the trials young men are exposed to. His parents have indeed a treasure in him. Rooney appears to be a money-lender, a usurer—most probably a Jew. His wretched wife, what can she be? and that designing minx, niece, daughter, or whatever this Miss Belloo—what a shocking name—may be! To think you should have fallen among such people. Lord George's debts are, they say, very considerable, all owing, as he assures me, to his unfortunate acquaintance with this Rooney, with whom he appears to have had bill transactions for some time past. If your difficulties were only on the score of money, I should think little of it; but a quarrelsome, rancorous spirit, a taste for low company and vulgar associates, and a tendency to drink—these, indeed, are very shocking features, and calculated to inflict much misery on your parents.

"However, let us, as far as possible, endeavor to repair the mishap. I write by this post to this Mr. Rooney, requesting him to send in his account to your father, and that in future any dinners, or wine, you may have at his house, will not be paid for, as you are under age. I shall also let him know that the obscurity of his rank in life, and the benighted state of the country he lives in, shall prove no safeguard to him from our vigilance; and as the chancellor dines with us to-morrow, I think of asking him if he couldn't be punished some way. Transportation, they tell me, has already nearly got rid of the gipsies. As for yourself, make your arrangements to return immediately; for although your father knows nothing about it, I intend to ask Sir Henry Gordon to call on the Duke of York, and contrive an exchange for you. How I hate this secret adviser of yours—how I detest the Rooneys—how I abhor the Irish. You have only to come back with long hair, and the frightful accent, to break the heart of your affectionate, but afflicted mother.

"Your cousin Julia desires her regards. I must say, she has not shown a due respect to my feelings since the arrival of this sad intelligence; it is only this minute she has finished a caricature of you, making love to a wild Irish girl with wings. This is not only cruel toward me, but an unbecoming sarcasm toward a wretched people, to whom the visitations of Providence should not be made matters of reproach."

Thus concluded this famous epistle, at which, notwithstanding that every line offended me deeply, I could not refrain from bursting into laughter. My opinion of Lord Dudley had certainly not been of the highest; but yet was I totally unprepared for the apparent depth of villainy his character possessed. But I knew not then how strong an alloy of cunning exists in every fool; and how, almost invariably, a narrow intellect and a malevolent disposition are associated in the same individual.

There is no prejudice more popular, nor is there any which is better worth refuting, than that which attributes to folly certain good qualities of heart, as a kind of compensation for the deficiency in those of the head. Now, although there are of course instances to the contrary, yet will the fact be found generally true, that inferiority of mind has its influence in producing a mischievous disposition. Unable to carry on any lengthened chain of reasoning, the man of narrow intellect looks for some immediate result, and in his anxiety to attain his object, forgetful of the value of both character and credit, he is prepared to sacrifice the whole game of life, provided he secure but the odd trick. Besides, the very insufficiency of his resources leads him out of himself for his enjoyments and his occupations. Watching, therefore, the game of life he gradually acquires a certain low and underhand cunning, which, being mistaken by himself for ability, he omits no occasion to display it; and hence begins the petty warfare of malice he wages against the world with all the spiteful ingenuity and malevolence of a monkey.

I could trace through all my mother's letter the dexterity with which Lord Dudley avoided committing himself respecting me, while his delicacy regarding O'Grady's name was equally conspicuous to a certain extent. He might have been excused if he bore no good-will to one or other of us; but what could palliate his ingratitude to the Rooneys? what could gloss over the base return he made them for all their hospitalities and attention? For nothing was more clear than that the light in which he represented them to my mother made them appear as low and intriguing adventurers.

This was all bad enough; but what should I say of the threatened letter to them. In what a position would it place *me* before those who had been uniformly kind and good-natured toward me : the very thought of this nearly drove me to distraction; and I confess it was in no dutiful mood I crushed up the epistle in my hand, and walked my room in an agony of shame and vexation.

CHAPTER XVI.

A MORNING IN TOWN.

THE morning after the receipt of the letter, the contents of which I have in part made known to the reader, O'Grady called on me to accompany him into the city.

"I am on a borrowing expedition, Jack," cried he, "and there's nothing like having a new face with one. Cavendish, Hopeton, and the rest of them are so well known, it's of no use having them. But you, my boy, you're fresh, your smooth chin does not look like a protested bill, and you have got an easy, careless manner, a kind of unsuspicious look about you, a man never has after a bailiff has given him an epaulette of five dirty fingers."

"But, Phil," said I, "if you really want money—"

"My very excellent young friend," interrupted he, in a kind of sermon voice, "don't finish it, I beseech you; that is the very last thing in the way of exchequer a gentleman is ever driven to—borrowing from a friend. Heaven forbid! But even supposing the case that one's friend has money, why the presumption is, that he must have borrowed it himself; so that you are sponging upon his ingenuity, not his income: besides, why riddle one's own ships while there is an enemy before us to fight. Please to remember the money-lenders, the usurers, the stock-broking knaves at fifty per cent. that the world is glutted with; these are the true game for a sporting gentleman, who would rather harpoon a shark any day than spear a salmon."

"But what's become of Paul? Is he not available?"

"Don't you know what has happened there? But I was forgetting you've kept the house this week past. In the first place, *la belle* Louise has gone home; Paul has taken his departure for the circuit; and Mrs. Paul, after three days' sharp hysterics, has left town for her villa near Bray,—old Harvey finding it, doubtless, more convenient to visit her there with twenty guineas for his fee, than to receive one for his call at Stephen's Green."

"And what is supposed to be the cause of all this?" said I, scarce able to conceal my agitation.

"The report goes," replied he, "that some bank has broke in Calcutta or the Caucasus, or somewhere; or that some gold-mine in Peru, in which Paul had a share, has all turned out to be only plated goods; for it was on the receipt of a letter, on the very morning of Paul's departure, that she took so dangerously ill; and as Paul, in his confusion, brought the attorney instead of the surgeon-general, the case became alarming; and they gave her so much ether and sal volatile, that it required the united strength of the family to keep her from ascending like a balloon. However, the worst of it all is, the house is shut, the windows closed, and where lately on the door-steps a pair of yellow plushed breeches figured bright and splendent as the glorious sun, a dusky-looking planet in threadbare black now informs you that the family are from home, and not expected back for the summer."

"Perhaps I can explain the mystery," said I, as a blush of shame burnt on my cheek; "read this." So saying, I handed O'Grady the letter, doubled down at the part where Lord Dudley's mention of the Rooneys began. Grieved as I felt thus to expose the absurd folly of my mother's conduct, yet I felt the necessity of having at least one friend to advise with, and that, to render his counsel of any value, a perfect candor on my part was equally imperative.

While his eye glanced over the lines, I walked toward the window, expecting at each moment some open burst of indignation would escape him—some outbreak of passionate warmth—at the cold-blooded ingratitude and malevolence of one whom previously we had regarded but as a fool. Not so; on the contrary, he read the letter to the end with an unchanged countenance, folded it up with great composure, and then, turning his back to the fire, he burst out into a fit of the most immoderate laughter.

"Look you, Jack," cried he, in a voice almost suffocated with the emotion, "I am a poor man, have scarcely a guinea I can call my own, yet I'd have given the best hack in my stable to have seen the Rooneys reading that letter. There, there; don't talk to me, boy, about villainy, ingratitude, and so forth. The fun of it,

man, covers all the rest. Only to think of Mr. Paul Rooney, the Amphitryon of viceroys, chancellors, bishops, major-generals, and lord mayors, asked for his bill; to score up all your champagne and curaçoa—your turtle, your deviled kidneys—all the heavy brigade of your grand dinners, and all the light infantry of luncheons, breakfasts, grilled bones, and sandwiches! The Lord forgive your mother for putting it in his head! *My* chalk would be a fearful one—not to speak of the ugly item of cash advanced. Oh! it'll kill me—I know that. Don't look so serious, man; you may live fifty years, and never have so good a joke to laugh at. Tell me, Jack, do you think your mother has kept a copy of the letter? I would give my right eye for it. What a fearful temper Paul will be in on circuit; and as to Mrs. Rooney, it will go hard with her but she cuts the whole aristocracy for at least a week! There never was anything like it,—to hint at transporting the Princess O'Toole, whose ancestor was here in the time of Moses. Ah, Jack, how little respect your mother appears to have for an old family! She evidently has no classical associations to hallow her memory withal."

"I confess," said I, somewhat tartly, "had I anticipated the spirit with which you have taken up this matter, I doubt whether I should have shown you the letter."

"And if you had not," replied he, "I'd not have forgiven you till the day of my death. Next to a legacy, a good laugh is the best thing I know; indeed, sometimes it is better, for you can't be choused out of it by your lawyer."

"Laughing is a very excellent practice, no doubt; but I looked for some advice."

"Advice! to be sure, my boy; and so you shall have it. Only give me a good training-canter of a hearty laugh, and you'll see what running I'll make when it comes to sound discretion afterwards. The fun of a man's temperament is like the froth on your champagne—while it gives a zest to the liquor of life by its lightness and its sparkle, it neither detracts from the flavor nor the strength of the beverage. At the same time, when I begin to froth up, don't expect me to sober down before twenty-four hours. So take your hat, come along into town, and thank your stars that you have been able to delight the heart of a man who's trying to get a bill discounted. Now, hear me, Jack," said he, as we descended the stairs, "if you expect me to conduct myself with becoming gravity and decorum, you had better avoid any mention of the Rooneys for the rest of the day; and now *à l'ouvrage.*"

As we proceeded down Dame Street, my friend scientifically explained to me the various modes there were of obtaining money on loan.

"I don't speak," said he, "of those cases where a man has landed security, or property of one kind or other, or even expectations, because all these are easy—the mere rule of three in financial arithmetic. What I mean are the decimal fractions of a man's difficulties; when, with as many writs against him as would make a carpet for his bedroom, he can still go out with an empty pocket in the morning, and come back with it furnished at night. And now to begin. The maxims of the sporting world are singularly applicable to the practice before us. You're told that before you enter a preserve, your first duty is to see that your gun is properly loaded—all the better if it be a double-barreled one. Now look here,"—as he spoke, he drew from his sabretasche five bills for one hundred pounds each,—"you see I am similarly prepared. The game may get up at any moment, and not find me at half-cock; and although I only go out for a single bird—that is, but one hundred—yet, if by good luck I flush a covey, you see I am ready for them all. The doctrine of chances shows us that five to one is better than an even bet; so, by scattering these five bills in different directions, the odds are exactly so many in my favor that I raise a hundred somewhere."

"And now," said I, "where does the game lie?"

"I'm coming to that, Jack. Your rich preserves are all about the neighborhood of Clare Street, Park Street, Merrion Street, and that direction. With them; alas! I have nothing to do. My broad acres have long since taken wings to themselves; and I fear a mortgage upon Mount O'Grady, as it at present exists, would be a poor remedy for an empty pocket. The rich money-lenders despise poor devils like me; they love not contingencies; and, as Macbeth says, 'They have no speculation in their eyes.' For them, my dear Jack, you must have messuages, and tenements, and out-houses, town-lands, and turbaries; corn, cattle, and cottages; pigs, potatoes, and peasantry. They love to let their eye range over a rich and swelling scene of woodland and prairie; for they are all the landscape gardeners of usury—they are the Hobbimas and Berghems of the law.

"Others again, of smaller range and humbler practice, there are to whom, upon

occasion, you assign your grandfather's plate and the pictures of your grand-aunts for certain moneyed conveniences you stand in need of. These are a kind of Brobdignag pawnbrokers, who have fine houses, the furniture of which is everlastingly changing, each creditor sending his representative, like a minister to a foreign court: with them, also, I have nothing to do. The family have had so little to eat for the last two generations, that they trouble themselves but slightly, on the score of silver dishes; and as to pictures, I possess but one in the world—a portrait of my father, in his wig and robes. This, independent of other reasons, I couldn't part with, as it is one of the only means I possess of controlling Corny, when his temper becomes more than usually untractable. Upon these occasions, I hang up the 'jidge' over the chimney-piece; and the talisman has never failed yet.

"Now, Jack, my constituency live about Fleet Street, and those small, obscure, dingy-looking passages that branch from it on either side. Here live a class of men who, having begun life as our servants or valets, are in perfect possession of all our habits of life, our wants, and our necessities. Having amassed enough by retail robbery of us, while in our service, to establish some petty tavern, or some low livery-stable, they end by cheating us wholesale, for the loan of our own money at their rate of interest. Well aware that, however deferred, we must pay eventually, they are satisfied, good, easy souls, to renew and renew bills, whose current percentage varies from five-and-twenty to forty. And even, notwithstanding all this, Jack, they are difficult devils to deal with; any appearance of being hard up, any show of being out at elbows, rendering a negotiation as difficult as the assurance of a condemned ship for a China voyage. No, my boy; though your house be besieged by duns, though in every passenger you see a bailiff, and never nap after dinner without dreaming of the Marshalsea, yet still, the very moment you cross the precincts of their dwelling, you must put your care where your cash ought to be—in your pocket. You must wear the easy smile of a happy conscience, and talk of your want of a few hundreds as though it were a question of a pinch of snuff, or a glass of brandy-and-water, while you agree to the exorbitant demands they exact, with the careless indifference of one to whom money is no object, rather than with the despair of a wretch who looks for no benefit in life, save in the act for insolvent debtors. This, you'll say, is a great bore: and so I once thought too; now, however, I have got somewhat used to it, and sometimes don't actually dislike the fun. Why, man, I have been at it for three months at a time. I remember when I never blew my nose without pulling out a writ along with my pocket-handkerchief, and I never was in better spirits in all my life. But here we are. This is Billy Fagan's, a well-known drysalter; you'll have to wait for me in the front parlor for a moment while I negotiate with Billy."

Elbowing our way through a squalid and miserable-looking throng of people that filled the narrow hall of a house in Fleet Street, we forced on till we reached an inner door, in which a sliding panel permitted those within to communicate with others on the outside. Tapping at this with his cane, O'Grady called out something which I could not catch, the panel at once flew back, a red carbuncled face appeared at the opening, the owner of which, with a grin of very peculiar signification, exclaimed,—

"Ah! is't yourself, Captain——? Walk in, sir."

With these words the door was opened, and we were admitted into the inner hall. This was also crowded, but with a different class from what I had seen without. These were apparently men in business, shopkeepers and traders, who, reduced by some momentary pressure to effect a loan, were content to prop up their tottering credit by sapping the very core of their prosperity. Unlike the others, on whom habitual poverty and daily misery had stamped its heavy impress, and whose faces, too, inured to suffering, betrayed no shame at being seen, these, on the contrary, looked downward or aside, seemed impatient, fretful, and peevish, and indicated in a hundred ways how unused they were to exigencies of this nature, muttering to themselves, in angry mood, at being detained, and feigning a resolution to depart at every moment. O'Grady, after a conference of a few moments with the rubicund Cerebus I have mentioned, beckoned to me to follow him. We proceeded accordingly up a narrow creaking stair, into a kind of front drawing-room, in which about a dozen persons were seated, or listlessly lounging in every imaginable attitude, some on chairs, some on the window-sills, some on the tables, and one even on the mantelpiece, with his legs gracefully dangling in front of the fire. Perfectly distinct from the other two classes I have mentioned, these were all young men,

whose dress, look, and bearing bespoke them of rank and condition. Chatting away gayly, laughing, joking, and telling good stories, they seemed but little to care for circumstances which brought them there; and, while they quizzed each other about their various debts and difficulties, seemed to think want of money as about the very best joke a gentleman could laugh at. By all of these O'Grady was welcomed with a burst of applause, as they eagerly pressed forward to shake hands with him.

"I say, O'Grady," cried one, "we muster strong this morning. I hope Fagan's bank will stand the run on it. What's your figure?"

"Oh, a couple of hundreds," said Phil, carelessly; "I have got rather a heavy book on the steeplechase."

"So I hear," said another; "and they say Ulick Burke won't ride for you; he knows no one can sit the horse but himself; and Maher, the story goes, has given him a hundred and fifty to leave you in the lurch!"

"How good!" said Phil, smiling; for although this intelligence came upon him thus suddenly, he never evinced the slightest surprise, nor the most trifling irritation.

"You'll pay forfeit, of course, Phil," said the gentleman on the chimney.

"I fancy not."

"Then, will you take two fifties to one against your horse?"

"Will you give it?" was the cool reply.

"Yes."

"And I—and I also," said different voices round the room.

"Agreed, gentlemen, with all of you. So, if you please, we'll book this. Jack, have you got a pencil?"

As I drew forth my pocket-book, I could not help whispering to O'Grady that there seemed something like a coalition among his opponents. Before I could conclude, the red face appeared at the door. O'Grady hastily muttered, "Wait for me here," and left the room.

During his absence, I had abundant time to study those about me; indeed, a perfect sameness in their characters, as in their pursuits, rendered it an easy process; for, as with unguarded frankness they spoke of their several difficulties, their stories presented one uniform feature—reckless expenditure and wasteful extravagance, with limited means and encumbered fortunes; they had passed through every phase of borrowing, every mode of raising money, and were now reduced to the last rung of the ladder of expediency, to become the prey of the usurer, who meted out to them a few more months of extravagance at the cost of many a future year of sorrow and repining.

I was beginning to grow impatient, as the door gently opened and I saw my friend, as he emerged from the back drawing-room. Without losing a moment's time, I joined him. We descended the stairs together, and walked out into the street.

"Are you fond of pickled herrings, Jack?" said O'Grady, as he took my arm.

"Pickled herrings! Why, what do you mean?"

"Probably," resumed he, in the same dry tone of voice, "you prefer ash bark, or asafœtida?"

"Why, I can't say."

"Ah, my boy! you're difficult to please. Then, what do you say to whale oil and Welsh wigs?"

"Confound me if I understand you."

"Nothing more easy, after all, for of each of these commodities I'm now a possessor to the amount of some two hundred and twenty pounds. You look surprised, but such is the nature of our transactions here; and for my bill of five hundred, payable in six months, I have become a general merchant to the extent I've told you, not to mention paying eighty more for a certain gig and horse, popularly known in this city as 'the discount dennet.' This," continued he, with a sigh, "is about the tenth time I've been the owner of that vile conveyance; for you must know, whenever Fagan advances a good round sum, he always insists upon something of this kind forming part of it; and thus, according to the figure of your loan, you may drive from his door in anything, from a wheelbarrow to a stage-coach. As for the discount dennet, it is as well known as the black-cart that conveys the prisoners to Newgate; and the reputation of him who travels in either is pretty much on a par. From the crank of the rusty springs to the limping amble of the malicious old black beast in the shafts, the whole thing has a look of beggary about it. Every jingle of the ragged harness seems to whisper in your ear fifty per cent.; and drive which way you will, it is impossible to get free of the notion that you're not trotting along the road to ruin. To have been seen in it once is as though you had figured in the pillory; and the very fact of its being in your possession, is a blow of a battering-ram to your credit forever!"

"But why venture into it? If you must have it, let it be like the pickled her-

rings and the paving stones—so much of pure loss."

"The fact is, Jack, it is generally passed off on a young hand the first time he raises money;—he knows little of the town, less of its secret practices, and not until he has furnished a hearty laugh to all his acquaintances does he discover the blunder he has committed;—besides, sometimes you're hard up for something to bring you about. I remember once keeping it an entire winter; and as I painted Latitat a good piebald, and had his legs whitewashed every morning, few recognized him, except such as had paid for their acquaintance. After this account, probably, you'll not like to drive with me; but as I'm going to Loughrea for the race, I've determined to take the dennet down, and try if I can't find a purchaser among the country gentlemen. And now let's think of dinner. What do you say to a cutlet at the Club? and perhaps we shall strike out something there to finish our evening."

CHAPTER XVII.

AN EVENING IN TOWN.

We dined at the club-house, and sat chatting over our wine till near ten o'clock. The events of the morning were our principal topics; for although I longed myself to turn the conversation to the Rooneys, I was deterred from doing so by the fear of another outbreak of O'Grady's mirth. Meanwhile, the time rolled on, and rapidly too, for my companion, with an earnestness of manner and a force of expression I little knew he possessed, detailed to me many anecdotes of his own early career. From these I could glean, that while O'Grady suffered himself to be borne along the current of dissipation and excess, yet in his heart he repudiated the life he led, and, when a moment of reflection came, felt sorrow for the past, and but little hope for the future.

"Yes, Jack," said he, on concluding a narrative of continual family misfortune, "there would seem a destiny in these things; and if we look about us in the world, we cannot fail to see that families, like individuals, have their budding spring of youth and hope, their manhood of pride and power, and their old age of feebleness and decay. As for myself, I am about the last branch of an old tree, and all my endeavor has been to seem green and cheerful to the last.

"My debts have hung about my neck all through life; the extravagances of my early years have sat like a millstone upon me, and I who began the world with a heart brimful of hope, and a soul bounding with ambition, have lingered on my path like a truant schoolboy; and here I am, at the age of three-and-thirty, without having realized a single promise of my boyhood, the poorest of all imaginable things—a gentleman, without fortune—a soldier, without service—a man of energy, without hope."

"But why, Phil," said I, "how comes it that you never went out to the Peninsula?"

"Alas, my boy! from year to year I have gone on expecting my gazette to a regiment on service—too poor to purchase, too proud to solicit, I have waited in anxious expectancy, from some of those with whom, high as was their station, I've lived on terms of intimacy and friendship, that notice they extended to others less known than I was; but somehow the temperament, that would seem to constitute my happiness, has proved my bane, and those qualities which have made me a boon companion, have left me a beggar. Handed over from one Viceroy to another, like a state trumpeter or a butt of sherry, I have been left to linger out my best years a kind of court jester; my only reward being, the hour of merriment over, that they who laughed with, should laugh at, me."

There was a tone of almost ferocity in the way he spoke these words; while the trembling lip, the flashing eye, and the swollen veins of his temple, betrayed that the very bitterest of all emotions—self-scorn—was racking his heart within him.

For some time we were both silent; had I even known what to say at such a moment, there was that comfortless expression about his face, that look of riveted despair, which would have rendered any effort, on my part, to console him, a vain and presumptuous folly.

"But come, Jack," said he, filling his glass and pushing over the decanter to me, "I have learned to put little faith in patrons; and although the information has been long in acquiring, still it has come at last, and I am determined to profit by it. I am now endeavoring to raise a little money to pay off the most pressing of my creditors, and have made an application to the Horse Guards to be appointed to any regiment on service, wherever it may be. If both these succeed, and it is necessary both should, then, Jack, I'll try a new path, and even though it lead to nothing, yet, at least, it will be a more manly one

to follow; and if I am to linger on to that period of life, when to look back is nearly all that's left us—why then the retrospect will be less dashed with shame than with such a career as this is. Meanwhile, my boy, the decanter is with you, so fill your glass; I'll join you presently."

As he spoke, he sprang up and walked to the other end of the room, where a party of some half-dozen persons were engaged in putting on greatcoats, and buttoning up previous to departure. In an instant I could hear his voice high above the rest—that cheerful, ringing tone that seemed the very tocsin of a happy heart, while at some observation he made, the whole party around him were convulsed with laughter. In the midst of all this he drew one of them aside, and conversing eagerly with him for a few seconds, pointed to me as he spoke.

"Thank you, my lord, thank you," said he, as he turned away. "I'll be answerable for my friend. Now, Hinton," whispered he, as he leaned his hand on my shoulder and leant over me, "we're in luck to-night, at all events, for I have just got permission to bring you with me where I am to spend the evening—it's no small favor, if you knew but all; so finish your wine, for my friends there are moving already."

All my endeavors to ascertain where we were going, or to whose house, were in vain; the only thing I could learn was, that my admission was a prodigious favor—while, to satisfy my scruples about dress, he informed me that no change of costume was necessary.

"I perceive," said O'Grady, as he drew the curtain and looked out into the street, "the night is fine and starlight; so what say you if we walk? I must tell you, however, our place of rendezvous is somewhat distant."

Agreeing to the proposition with pleasure, I took his arm, and we sallied forth together. Our way led at first through a most crowded and frequented part of the capital. We traversed Dame Street, passed by the Castle, and ascended a steep street beyond it; after this we took a turning to the left, and entered a part of the city, to me, at least, utterly unknown; for about half an hour we continued to wander on, now to the right, now to the left, the streets becoming gradually narrower, less frequented, and less lighted; the shops were all closed, and few persons stirred in the remote thoroughfares.

"I fear I have made a mistake," said O'Grady, "endeavoring to take a short cut; but there comes a watchman. I say, is this Kevin Street?"

"No, sir; the second turning to your right brings you into it."

"Kevin Street!" said I, repeating the name, half aloud to myself.

"Yes, Jack, so it is called; but all your ingenuity will prove too little in discovering whither you are going; so come along—leave time to tell you what guessing never will."

By this time we arrived at the street in question, when very soon after O'Grady called out,—

"All right—here we are!"

With these words, he knocked three times in a peculiar manner at the door of a large and gloomy-looking house. An ill-trimmed lamp threw a faint and flickering light upon the old and ruined building, and I could trace here and there, through all the wreck of time, some remnants of a better day. The windows now, however, were broken in several places, those on the lower story being defended on the outside by a strong iron railing. Not a gleam of light shone through any one of them; but a darkness unrelieved save by the yellow gleam of the street lamp, enveloped the entire building. O'Grady's summons was twice repeated ere there seemed any chance of its being replied to, when, at last, the step of a heavy foot descending the stairs announced the approach of some one. While I continued my survey of the house O'Grady never spoke, and, perceiving that he made a mystery of our visit, I resolved to ask no further questions, but patiently await the result; my impression, however, was, that the place was the resort either of thieves or of some illegal association, of which more than one, at that time, were known to have their meetings in the capital. While I was thus occupied in my conjectures, and wondering within myself how O'Grady had become acquainted with his friends, the door opened, and a diminutive, mean-looking old man, shading the candle with his hand, stood at the entrance.

"Good evening, Mickey," cried O'Grady, as he brushed by him into the hall. "Are they come?"

"Yes, Captain," said the little man, as, snuffing the long wick with his fingers, he held the light up to O'Grady's face. "Yes, Captain, about fifteen."

"This gentleman's with me — come along, Jack, he is my friend, Mickey."

"Oh, I can't do it by no means, Master Phil," said the dwarf, opposing himself as a barrier to my entrance—"you know

what they said the last night;" here he strained himself on his toes, and, as O'Grady stooped down, whispered some words I couldn't catch, while he continued aloud, "and you know after that, Captain I daren't do it."

"I tell you, you old fool, I've arranged it all; so get along there, and show us the light up these confounded stairs. I suppose they never mended the hole on the lobby?"

"Troth they didn't," growled the dwarf, "and it would be chaper for them nor breaking their shins every night."

I followed O'Grady up the stairs, which creaked and bent beneath us at every step; the handrail, broken in many places, swung to and fro with every motion of the stair, and the walls, covered with green and damp mould, looked the very picture of misery and decay. Still grumbling at the breach of order incurred by my admission, the old man shuffled along, wheezing, coughing, and cursing between times, till at length we reached the landing-place, where the hole of which I heard them speak permitted a view of the hall beneath. Stepping across this, we entered a large room lighted by a lamp upon the chimney-piece; around the walls were hung a variety of what appeared to be cloaks of a lightish drab color, while over each hung a small skull-cap of yellow leather.

"Don't you hear the knocking below, Mickey? There's some one at the door," said O'Grady.

The little man left the room, and as we were now alone, I expected some explanation from my friend as to the place we were in, and the people who frequented it. Not so, however; Phil merely detached one of the cloaks from its peg, and proceeded to invest himself in its folds; he placed the skull-cap on his head, after which, covering the whole with a hood, he fastened the garment around his waist with a girdle of rope, and stood before me the perfect picture of a monk of St. Benedict, as we see them represented in old pictures; the only irregularity of costume being, that instead of a rosary, the string from his girdle supported a corkscrew and a horn spoon of most portentous proportions.

"Come, my son," said he, reverently, "indue thy garment;" so saying, he proceeded to clothe me in a similar manner, after which he took a patient survey of me for a few seconds. "You'll do very well: wear the hood well forward; and mark me, Jack, I've but one direction to give you—never speak a word, not a syllable, so long as you remain in the house; if spoken to, cross your arms thus upon your breast, and bow your head in this manner. Try that—perfectly—you have your lesson; now don't forget it."

O'Grady now, with his arms crossed upon his bosom, and his head bent slightly forward, walked slowly forth, with a solemn gravity well befitting his costume. Imitating him as well as I was able, I followed him up the stairs. On reaching the second landing, he tapped twice with his knuckles at a low door, whose pointed arch and iron grating were made to represent the postern of a convent.

"Benedicite," said Phil, in a low tone.

"Et tu quoque, frater," responded some one from within, and the door was opened. Saluting a venerable-looking figure, who, with a long gray beard, bowed devoutly as we passed, we entered an apartment, where, so sudden was the change from what I had hitherto seen, I could scarcely trust my eyes. A comfortable, well-carpeted room, with curtained windows, cushioned chairs, and, not least inviting of all, a blazing fire of wood upon the hearth, were objects I was little prepared for; but I had little time to note them, my attention being directed with more curiosity to the living occupants of this strange dwelling. Some fifteen or sixteen persons, costumed like ourselves, either walked up and down engaged in conversation, or sat in little groups around the fire. Card-tables there were in different parts of the room, but one only was occupied. At this a party of reverend fathers were busily occupied at whist.

In the corner next the fire, seated in a large chair of carved oak, was a figure, whose air and bearing bespoke authority; the only difference in his costume from the others being a large embroidered corkscrew, which he wore on his left shoulder.

"Holy prior, your blessing," said Phil, bowing obsequiously before him.

"You have it, my son; much good may it do you," responded the superior, in a voice which, somehow or other, seemed not perfectly new to me. While O'Grady engaged in a whispered conversation with the prior, I turned my eyes toward a large-framed paper which hung above the chimney. It ran thus:—"Rules and Regulations to be observed in the Monastery of the venerable and pious brothers, the Monks of the Screw." Conceiving it scarcely delicate in a stranger to read over the regulations of a society of which he was not a member, I was turning away, when O'Grady, seizing me by the arm, whispered, "Remember your lesson;" then add-

ed aloud, "Holy father, this is the lay brother of whom I spoke." The prior bowed formally, and extended his hands toward me with a gesture of benediction.

"Accipe benedictionem—"

"Supper, by the Lord Harry!" cried a jolly voice behind me, and at the same moment a general movement was made by the whole party.

The prior now didn't wait to conclude his oration; but, tucking up his garments, put himself at the head of the procession, which had formed two-and-two in order of march. At the same moment, two fiddles from the supper-room, after a slight prelude, struck up the anthem of the order, which was the popular melody of "The night before Larry was stretched!"

Marching in measured tread, we entered the supper-room, when, once having made the circuit of the table, at a flourish of the fiddles we assumed our places, the superior seating himself at the head in a chair of state, slightly elevated above the rest. A short Latin grace, which I was unfortunate enough not to catch, being said, the work of eating began; and certainly, whatever might have been the feats of the friars of old when the bell summoned them to the refectory, their humble followers, the monks of the screw, did them no discredit. A profusion of dishes covered the table, and although the entire service was of wood, and the whole "equipage" of the most plain and simple description, yet the cookery was admirable, and the wines perfection itself. While the supper proceeded, scarcely a word was spoken. By the skillful exercise of signs, with which they all seemed familiar, roast ducks, lobsters, veal-pies, and jellies flew from hand to hand; the decanters also paraded up and down the table with an alacrity and dispatch I had seldom seen equaled. Still, the pious brethren maintained a taciturn demeanor that would have done credit to La Trappe itself. As for me, my astonishment and curiosity increased every moment. What could they be? What could they mean? There was something too farcical about it all to suppose that any political society or any dangerous association could be concealed under such a garb; and if mere conviviality and good-fellowship were meant, their unbroken silence and grave demeanor struck me as a most singular mode of promoting either.

Supper at length concluded, the dishes were removed by two humble brethren of the order, dressed in a species of gray serge; after which, marching to a solemn tune, another monk appeared, bearing a huge earthenware bowl brimful of steaming punch—at least, so the odor and the floating lemons bespoke it. Each brother was now provided with a small, quaint-looking pipkin; after which the domestics withdrew, leaving us in silence as before. For about a second or two this continued, when suddenly the fiddles gave a loud twang, and each monk, springing to his legs, threw back his cowl, and, bowing to the superior, reseated himself. So sudden was the action, so unexpected the effect, for a moment or two I believed it a dream. What was my surprise, what my amazement, that this den of thieves, this hoard of burglars, this secret council of rebels, was nothing more nor less than an assemblage of nearly all the first men of the day in Ireland! And as my eye ran rapidly over the party, here I could see the chief baron, with a venerable dignitary of St. Patrick's on his right; there was the attorney-general; there the provost of Trinity College; lower down, with his skull-cap set jauntingly on one side, was Wellesley Pole, the secretary of state—Yelverton, Day, Plunket, Parsons, Toler; in a word, all those whose names were a guarantee for everything that was brilliant, witty, and amusing were there; while, conspicuous among the rest, the prior himself was no other than John Philpot Curran! Scarcely was my rapid survey of the party completed, when the superior, filling his pipkin from the ample bowl before him, rose to give the health of the order. Alas, me! that time should have so sapped my memory: I can but give my impression of what I heard.

The speech, which lasted about ten minutes, was a kind of burlesque on speeches from the throne, describing in formal phrase the prosperous state of their institution, its amicable foreign relations, the flourishing condition of its finances—brother Yelverton having paid in the two-and-sixpence he owed for above two years; concluding all with the hope that, by a rigid economy—part of which consisted in limiting John Toler to ten pipkins—they would soon be enabled to carry into effect the proposed works on the frontier, and expend the sum of four shillings and ninepence in the repair of the lobby; winding up all with a glowing eulogium on monastic institutions in general, he concluded with recommending to their special devotion and unanimous cheers "The Monks of the Screw." Never, certainly, did men compensate for their previous silence better than the worthy brethren in question.

Cheering with an energy I never heard the like of, each man finished his pipkin with just voice enough left to call for the song of the order.

Motioning with his hand to the fiddlers to begin, the prior cleared his throat, and, to the same simple but touching melody they had marched in to supper, sang the following chant :—

GOOD LUCK TO THE FRIARS OF OLD.

"Of all trades that flourished of old,
Before men knew reading and writing,
The friars' was best I am told,
If one wasn't much given to fighting,
For, rent free, you lived at your ease—
You had neither to work nor to labor—
You might eat of whatever you please,
For the prog was supplied by your neighbor.

Oh, good luck to the friars of old !

"Your dress was convenient and cheap—
A loose robe like this I am wearing :
It was pleasant to eat in or sleep,
And never much given to tearing.
Not tightened nor squeezed in the least—
How of modern days you might shame us !
With a small bit of cord round your waist—
With what vigor you'd chant the oremus!

Oh, good luck to the friars of old!

"What miracles then, too, you made,
The fame to this hour is lasting;
But the strangest of all, it is said,
You grew mighty fat upon fasting .
And though strictly forbid to touch wine,
How the fact all your glory enhances !
You well knew the taste of the vine—
Some miraculous gift of Saint Francis !

Oh, good luck to the friars of old!

"To trace an example so meek,
And repress all our carnal desires,
We mount two pair stairs every week,
And put on the garment of friars;
And our order itself it is old—
The oldest between me and you, sir ;
For King David, they say, was enrolled,
And a capital Monk of the Screw, sir.

So, good luck to the friars of old!"

The song over, and another cheer given to the Brethren of the Screw, the pipkins were replenished, and the conversation, so long pent up, burst forth in all its plenitude. Nothing but fun, nothing but wit, nothing but merriment was heard on either side. Here were not only all the bright spirits of the day, but they were met by appointment ; they came prepared for the combat, armed for the fight ; and certainly never was such a joust of wit and brilliancy. Good stories rained around ; jests, repartees, and epigrams flew like lightning; and one had but time to catch some sparkling gem as it glittered, ere another and another succeeded.

But even already I grow impatient with myself while I speak of these things. How poor, how vapid, and how meager, is the effort to recall the wit that set the table in a roar ! Not only is the memory wanting, but how can one convey the incessant roll of fun, the hailstorm of pleasantry, that rattled about our ears ; each good thing that was uttered ever suggesting something still better ; the brightest fancy and the most glowing imagination stimulated to their utmost exercise ; while powers of voice, of look, and of mimicry unequaled, lent all their aid to the scene.

While I sat entranced and delighted with all I saw and all I heard, I had not remarked that O'Grady had been addressing the chair for some time previous.

"Reverend brother," replied the prior, "the prayer of thy petition is inadmissible. The fourth rule of our faith says, *de confessione*. No subject, mirthful, witty, or jocose, known to, or by, any member of the order, shall be withheld from the brotherhood, under a penalty of the heaviest kind. And it goes on to say, that whether the jest involves your father or your mother, your wife, your sister, or the aunt from whom you expect a legacy, no exception can be made. What you then look for is clearly impossible ; make a clean breast of it, and begin."

This being a question of order, a silence was soon established, when, what was my horror to find Phil O'Grady began the whole narrative of my mother's letter on the subject of the Rooneys ! not limiting himself, however, to the meager document in question, but coloring the story with all the force of his imagination, he displayed to the brethren the ludicrous extremes of character personated by the London fine lady and the Dublin attorney's wife ! Shocked as I was at first, he had not proceeded far, when I was forced to join the laughter ; the whole table pounced upon the story ; the Rooneys were well known to them all ; and the idea of poor Paul, who dispensed his hospitalities with a princely hand, having his mansion degraded to the character of a chop-house, almost convulsed them with laughter.

"I am going over to London next week," said Parsons, "with old Lambert ; and if I thought I should meet this Lady Charlotte Hinton, I'd certainly contrive to have him presented to her as Mr. Paul Rooney."

This observation created a diversion in favor of my lady-mother, to which I had

the satisfaction of listening, without the power to check.

"She has," said Dawson, "most admirable and original views about Ireland; and were it only for the fact of calling on the Rooneys for their bill, deserves our gratitude. I humbly move, therefore, that we drink to the health of our worthy sister, Lady Charlotte Hinton."

The next moment found me hip, hipping, in derision, to my mother's health, the only consolation being, that I was escaping unnoticed and unknown.

"Well, Barrington, the duke was delighted with your corps; nothing could be more soldier-like than their appearance when they marched past."

"Ah, the attorneys', isn't it? the Devil's Own, as Curran calls them."

"Yes, and remarkably well they looked. I say, Parsons, you heard what poor Rooney said, when Sir Charles Asgill read aloud the general order, complimenting them. 'May I beg, Sir Charles,' said he, 'to ask if the document in your hand be an attested copy?'"

"Capital, faith! By the bye what's the reason, can any one tell me, Paul has never invited me to dine for the last two years?"

"Indeed?" said Curran; "then your chance is a bad one, for the statute of limitations is clearly against you."

"Ah, Kellar, the Rooneys have cut all their low acquaintances, and your prospects look very gloomy. You know what took place between Paul and Lord Manners?"

"No, Barrington, let's hear it, by all means."

"Paul had met him at Kinnegad, where both had stopped to change horses. 'A glass of sherry, my lord?' quoth Paul, with a most insinuating look.

"'No, sir, thank you,' was the distant reply.

"'A bowl of gravy, then, my lord?' rejoined he.

"'Pray excuse me,' more coldly than before.

"'Maybe a chop and a crisped potato would tempt your lordship?'

"'Neither, sir, I assure you.'

"'Nor a glass of egg-flip?' repeated Paul, in an accent bordering on despair.

"'Nor even the egg-flip,' rejoined his lordship, in the most pompous manner.

"'Then, my lord,' said Paul, drawing himself up to his full height, and looking him firmly in the face, 'I've only to say, the "onus" is now on you.' With which he stalked out of the room, leaving the chancellor to his own reflections."

"Brethren, the saint!" cried out the prior, as he rose from the chair.

"The saint! the saint!" re-echoed from lip to lip; and at the same moment the door opened, and a monk appeared, bearing a silver image of St. Patrick, about a foot and a half high, which he deposited in the middle of the table with the utmost reverence. All the monks rose, filling their pipkins, while the junior of the order, a fat little monk with spectacles, began the following ditty, in which all the rest joined, with every energy of voice and manner:—

"When St. Patrick our order created,
And called us the Monks of the Screw,
Good rules he revealed to our abbot
To guide us in what we should do.

"But first he replenished his fountain
With liquor the best in the sky,
And he swore by the word of his saintship
That fountain should never run dry.

"My children, be chaste, till you're tempted;
While sober, be wise and discreet;
And humble your bodies with fasting
Whene'er you've nothing to eat.

"Then be not a glass in the convent,
Except on a festival, found;
And this rule to enforce, I ordain it
A festival all the year round."

A hip, hip, hurrah! that made the very saint totter on his legs, shook the room; and once more the reverend fathers reseated themselves to resume their labors.

Again the conversation flowed on in its broader channel, and scarcely was the laughter caused by one anecdote at an end when another succeeded; the strangest feature of all this being, that he who related the story was, in almost every instance, less the source of amusement to the party than they who, listening to the recital, threw a hundred varied lights upon it, making even the tamest imaginable adventure the origin of innumerable ludicrous situations, and absurd fancies. Besides all this, there were characteristic differences in the powers of the party, which deprived the display of any trace or appearance of sameness: the epigrammatic terseness and nicety of Curran—the jovial good humor and mellow raciness of Lawrence Parsons—the happy facility of converting all before him into a pun or a repartee so eminently possessed by Toler—and, perhaps, more striking than all, the caustic irony and piercing sarcasm of Yelverton's wit, relieved and displayed each other; each man's talent having only so much of rivalry as to excite opposition and give interest to the combat, yet never by

any accident originating a particle of animosity, or even eliciting a shade of passing irritation.

With what pleasure could I continue to recount the stories, the songs, the sayings I listened to. With what satisfaction do I yet look back upon that brilliant scene, nearly all the actors in which have since risen to high rank and eminence in the country. How often, too, in their bright career, when I have heard the warm praise of the world bestowed upon their triumphs and their successes, has my memory carried me back to that glorious night when, with hearts untrammeled by care, high in hope, and higher in ambition, these bright spirits sported in all the wanton exuberance of their genius, scattering with profusion the rich ore of their talent, careless of the depths to which the mine should be shafted hereafter. Yes, it is true there were giants in those days! However much one may be disposed to look upon the eulogist of the past as one whose fancy is more ardent than his memory is tenacious, yet, with respect to this, there is no denial of the fact, that great convivial gifts, great conversational power, no longer exist as they did some thirty or forty years ago. I speak more particularly of the country where I passed my youth—of Ireland; and who that remembers those names I have mentioned—who that can recall the fascination and charm which almost every dinner-party of the day could boast—who that can bring to mind the brilliancy of Curran, the impetuous power of Plunket, or the elegance of manner and classical perfection of wit that made Burke the Cicero of his nation—who, I say, with all these things before his memory, can venture to compare the society of that period with the present? No, no; the gray hairs that mingle with our brown may convict us of being a prejudiced witness, but we could call into court every one whose testimony is available, and confidently await the verdict.

"And so they ran away," said the prior, turning toward a tall, gaunt-looking monk, who, with a hollow voice and solemn manner, was recording the singular disappearance of the militia regiment he commanded, on the morning they were to embark for England. "The story we heard," resumed the prior, "was, that when drawn up in the Fifteen Acres, one of the light company caught sight of a hare, and flung his musket at it. The grenadiers followed the example, and that then the whole battalion broke loose, with a loud yell, and set off in pursuit—"

"No, sir," said the gaunt man, waving his hand to suppress the laughter around him. "They were assembled on the lighthouse wall, as it might be here, and we told them off by tallies as they marched on board, not perceiving, however, that as fast as they entered the packet on one side they left it on the opposite, there being two jolly-boats in waiting to receive them; and, as it was dusk at the time, the scheme was undetected until the corporal of a flank company shouted out for them to wait for him, that being his boat. At this time we had fifty men of our four hundred and eighty."

"Ay, ay, holy father," cried the prior, as he helped himself to a deviled bone, "your fellows were like the grilled bone before me; when they were mustered, they would not wait to be peppered."

This sally produced a roar of laughter, not the less hearty that the grim-visaged hero it was addressed to never relaxed a muscle of his face. It was now late, and what between the noise, the wine, and the laughter, my faculties were none of the clearest. Without having drunk much, I felt all the intoxication of liquor, and a whirlwind of confusion in my ideas that almost resembled madness. To this state one part of their proceedings in a great measure contributed; for every now and then, on some signal from the prior, the whole party would take hands and dance round the table to the measure of an Irish jig, wilder and even more eccentric than their own orgies. Indeed, I think this religious exercise finished me; for, after the third time of its performance, the whole scene became a confused and disturbed mass, and, amid the crash of voices, the ringing of laughter, the tramping of feet, I sank into something which, if not sleep, was at least unconsciousness; and thus is a wet sponge drawn over the immediately succeeding portion of my history.

Some faint recollection I have of terrifying old Corny by my costume; but what the circumstances, or how they happened, I cannot remember. I can only call to mind one act in vindication of my wisdom—I went to bed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CONFIDENCE.

I SLEPT late on the morning after my introduction to the Monks of the Screw, and probably should have continued to indulge still longer had not O'Grady awoke me.

"Come, Jack," he cried, "this is the third time I have been here to-day. I can't have mercy on you any longer; so rub your eyes, and try if you can't wake sufficiently to listen to me. I have just received my appointment in a company in the 41st, with an order to repair immediately to Chatham to join the regiment, which is under orders for foreign service."

"And when do you go, Phil?"

"To-night, at eight o'clock. A private note from a friend at the Horse Guards tells me not to lose a moment; and as I shall have to wait on the duke to thank him for his great kindness to me, I have no time to spare."

This news so stunned me, that for a moment or two I couldn't reply. O'Grady perceived it, and patting me gayly on the shoulder, said,—

"Yes, Jack, I am sorry we are to separate: but, as for me, no other course was open; and as to you, with all your independence from fortune, and with all your family influence to push your promotion, the time is not very distant when you will begin to feel the life you are leading vapid and tiresome. You will long for an excitement more vigorous and more healthy in its character; and then, my boy, my dearest hope, is that we may be thrown once more together."

Had my friend at the moment been able to have looked into the secret recesses of my heart, and read there my inmost thoughts, he could not more perfectly have depicted my feelings, nor pictured the impressions that, at the very moment he spoke, were agitating my mind. The time he alluded to had indeed arrived. The hour had come when I wished to be a soldier in more than the mere garb; but with that wish came linked another even stronger still; and this was that, before I went on service, I should once more see Louisa Bellew, explain to her the nature and extent of my attachment to her, and obtain, if possible, some pledge on her part that, with the distinction I hoped to acquire, I should look to the possession of her love as my reward and my recompense. Young as I was, I felt ashamed at avowing to O'Grady the rapid progress of my passion. I had not courage to confess upon what slight encouragement I built my hopes, and, at the same time, was abashed at being compelled to listen tamely to his prophecy, when the very thoughts that flashed across me would have indicated my resolve.

While I thus maintained an awkward silence, he once more resumed:

"Meanwhile, Jack, you can serve me, and I shall make no apologies for enlisting you. You've heard me speak of this great Loughrea steeple-chase: now, somehow or other, with my usual prudence, I have gone on adding wager to wager, until at last I find myself with a book of some eight hundred pounds—to lose which at a moment like this, I need not say would almost ruin all my plans. To be free of the transaction, I this morning offered to pay half forfeit, and they refused me. Yes, Hinton, they knew, every man of them, the position I stood in. They saw that not only my prospects, but my honor was engaged; that before a week I should be far away, without any power to control, without any means to observe them; they knew well that, thus circumstanced, I must lose; and if I lost, I must sell my commission, and leave the army beggared in character and fortune."

"And now, my dear friend," said I, interrupting, "how happens it that you bet with men of this stamp? I understood you it was a friendly match, got up at a dinner-party."

"Even so, Jack. The dinner was in my own rooms, the claret mine, the men my *friends*. You may smile, but so the world is pleased to call those with whom from day to day we associate, with no other bond of union than the similarity of a pursuit which has nothing more reprehensible in it than the character of the intimacies it engenders. Yes, Hinton, these are my sporting friends, sipping my wine while they plot my wretchedness. Conviviality with them is not the happy abandonment of good-fellowship and enjoyment, but the season of cold and studied calculation—the hour when, unexcited themselves, they trade upon the unguarded and unwary feelings of others. They know how imperative is the code of honor as regards a bet, and they make a virtue to themselves in the unflinching firmness of their exaction, as a cruel judge would seek applause for the stern justice with which he condemns a felon. It is usual, however, to accept half forfeit in circumstances like these of mine; the condition did not happen to be inserted, and they rejected my offer."

"Is this possible?" said I: "and that these men call themselves your friends?"

"Yes, Jack; a betting-book is like Shylock's bond, and the holder of one pretty much about as merciful as the worthy Israelite. But come, come; it is but boyish weakness in one like me to complain of these things; nor, indeed, would I speak of them now, but with the hope that my

words may prove a warning to you, while they serve to explain the service I look for from you, and give you some insight into the character of those with whom you'll have to deal."

"Only tell me," said I, "only explain, my dear O'Grady, what I can do, and how: it is needless for me to say I'm ready."

"I thought as much: now listen to me. When I made this unlucky match, it was, as I have said, over a dinner-party, when, excited by wine, and carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, I made a proposition which, with a calmer head, I should never have ventured. For a second or two it was not accepted, and Mr. Burke, of whom you've heard me speak, called out from the end of the table, 'A sporting offer, by Jove! and I'll ride for you myself.' This I knew was to give me one of the first horsemen in Ireland; so, while filling my glass, I nodded to him, and accepted his offer. I cried out, 'Two to one against any horse named at this moment.' The words were not spoken, when I was taken up at both sides of the table: and, as I leaned across to borrow a pencil from a friend, I saw that a smile was curling every lip, and that Burke himself endeavored, with his wine-glass, to conceal the expression of his face. I needed no stronger proof that the whole match had been a preconcerted scheme between the parties, and that I had fallen into a snare laid purposely to entrap me. It was too late, however, to retract—I booked my debts, drank my wine, took leave of my friends, went to bed, and woke the next morning to feel myself a dupe. But come, Jack; at this rate, I shall never have done. The match was booked, the ground chosen, Mr. Burke to be my jockey; and, in fact, everything arranged, when, what was my surprise, my indignation, to find that the horse I destined for the race (at that time in the possession of a friend) was bought up for five hundred, and sent off to England. This disclosed to me how completely I was entrapped. Nothing remained for me then but to purchase one which offered at the moment, and this one, I've told you already, has the pleasant reputation of being the most wicked devil and the hardest to ride in the whole west; in fact, except Burke himself, nobody would mount him on a road, and as to crossing a country with him, even *he*, they say, has no fancy for it. In any case, he made it the ground of a demand which I could not refuse—that, in the event of my winning, he was to claim a third of the stakes. At length the horse is put in training, improves every hour, and matters seem to be taking a favorable turn. In the midst of this, however, the report reaches me, as you heard yourself yesterday morning, that Burke will not ride: however, I affected to discredit it at the moment, I had great difficulty to preserve the appearance of calm. This morning settles the question by this letter:

"'DEAR SIR.—A friendly hint has just reached me that I am to be arrested on the morning of the Loughrea race for a trifle of a hundred and eighteen pounds and some odd shillings. If it suits your convenience to pay the money, or enter into bail for the amount, I'll be very happy to ride your horse; for, although I don't care for a double ditch, I've no fancy to take the wall of the county jail, even on the back of as good a horse as Moddiridderoo.

"Yours truly,

"ULICK BURKE.

"'Wednesday morning, Red House.'"

"Well," said I, as after some difficulty, I spelled through this ill-written and dirty epistle, "and what do you mean to do here?"

"If you ask me," said Phil, "what I'd like to do, I tell you fairly, it would be to horsewhip my friend Mr. Burke as a preliminary, pay the stakes, withdraw my horse, and cut the whole concern; but my present position is, unhappily, opposed to each of these steps. In the first place, a rencontre with Burke would do me infinite disservice at the Horse Guards, and as to the payment of eight hundred pounds, I don't think I could raise the money, without some one would advance five hundred of it for a mortgage on Corny Delany. But to be serious, Jack, and, as time presses, I must be serious—I believe the best way on this occasion is to give Burke the money (for as to the bill, that's an invention); but, as I must start tonight for England, and the affair will require some management, I must put the whole matter into your hands, with full instructions how to act."

"I am quite ready and willing," said I; "only give me the '*carte du pays.*'"

"Well, then, my boy, you'll go down to Loughrea for me the day before the race, establish yourself as quietly as you can in the hotel, and, as the riders must be named on the day before the running, contrive to see Mr. Burke, and inform him that his demand will be complied with. Have no delicacy with him, it is a mere money question; and although, by the courtesy of the turf, he is a gentleman, yet there is

no occasion to treat him with more of ceremony than is due to yourself in your negotiation. This letter contains the sum he mentions. In addition to that, I have inclosed a blank check for whatever you like to give him; only remember one thing, Hinton—*he* must ride, and *I* must win."

All the calmness with which O'Grady had hitherto spoken deserted him at this moment! his face became scarlet, his brow was bent, and his lip quivered with passion, while, as he walked the room with hurried steps, he muttered between his teeth,—

"Yes, though it cost my last shilling, I'll win the race. They thought to ruin me; the scheme was deeply laid and well planned, too, but they shall fail. No, Hinton," resumed he, in a louder tone—"no, Hinton, believe me, poor man that I am, this is not with me a question of so many pounds. It is the wounded self-esteem of a man who, all through his life, held out the right hand of fellowship to those very men who now conspire to be his ruin. And such, my dear boy, such, for the most part, are the dealings of the turf. I do not mean to say that men of high honor and unblemished integrity are not foremost in the encouragement of a sport which, from its bold and manly character, is essentially an English one; but this I would assert, that probity, truth, and honor are the gifts of but a very small number of those who make a traffic of the turf, and are what the world calls 'racing men.' And oh! how very hard the struggle; how nice the difficulty of him who makes these men his daily companions, to avoid the many artifices which the etiquette of the race-course permits, but which the feelings of a gentleman would reject as unfair and unworthy! How contaminating that laxity of principle that admits of every stratagem, every trick, as legitimate, with the sole proviso that it be successful! and what a position is it that admits of no alternative save being the dupe of the blackleg! How hard for the young fellow entering upon life with all the ardor, all the unsuspecting freshness of youth about him, to stop short at one, without passing to the other stage! How difficult, with offended pride and wounded self-love, to find himself the mere tool of sharpers! How very difficult to check the indignant spirit, that whispers retaliation by the very arts by which he has been cheated! Is not such a trial as this too much for any boy of twenty? and is it not to be feared that, in the estimation he sees those held in whose blackguardism is their pre-eminence, a perverted ambition to be what is called a sharp fellow, may sap and undermine every honorable feeling of the heart, break down the barriers of rigid truth and scrupulous fidelity, teaching him to exult at what formerly he had blushed, and to recognize no folly so contemptible as that of him who believes the word of another? Such a career as this has many a one pursued, abandoning, bit by bit, every grace, every virtue, and every charm of his character, that, at the end, he should come forth a 'sporting gentleman.'" He paused for a few seconds, and then, turning toward me, added, in a voice tremulous from emotion, "And yet, my boy, to men like this I would now expose you! No, no, Jack; I'll not do it. I care not what turn the thing may take; I'll not imbitter my life with this reflection." He seized the letter, and crushing it in his hand, walked toward the window.

"Come, come, O'Grady," said I, "this is not fair; you first draw a strong picture of these men, and then you deem me weak enough to fall into their snares; that would hardly say much for my judgment and good sense; besides, you have stimulated my curiosity, and I shall be sadly disappointed if I'm not to see them."

"Be it so, Jack!" said he, with a sigh; "I shall give you a couple of letters to some friends of mine down there, and I know but one recompense you'll have for all the trouble and annoyance of this business—your pretty friend, Miss Bellew, is on a visit in the neighborhood, and is certain to be at the race."

Had O'Grady looked at me while he spoke, he would have seen how deeply this intelligence affected me, while I myself could with difficulty restrain the increased interest I now felt in all about the matter, questioning him on every particular, inquiring into a hundred minute points, and, in fact, displaying an ardor on the subject that nothing short of my friend's preoccupation could have failed in detecting the source of. My mind now fixed on one object, I could scarcely follow him in his directions as to how I was to travel.

I heard something about the canal-boat, and some confused impression was on my mind about a cross-road and a jaunting-car; but the prospect of meeting Louisa, the hope of again being in her society, rendered me indifferent to all else; and as I thrust the letters he gave me into my coat pocket, and promised an implicit observance of all his directions, I should have been sorely puzzled had he asked me to repeat them.

"Now," continued O'Grady, at the end

of about half an hour's rapid speaking, "I believe I've put you in possession of all the bearings of this case. You understand, I hope, the kind of men you have to deal with, and I trust Mr. Ulick Burke is thoroughly known to you by this time?"

"Oh, perfectly," said I, half mechanically.

"Well, then, my boy, I believe I had better say good-bye; something tells me we shall meet ere long; meanwhile, Jack, you have my best wishes." He paused for a moment and turned away his head, evidently affected, then added, "You'll write to me soon, of course, and as that old fool, Corny, follows me in a week—"

"And is Corny going abroad?"

"Ay! confound him, like the old man in Sinbad, there's no getting him off one's shoulders; besides, he has a kind of superstition that he ought to close the eyes of the last of the family; and, as he has frankly confessed to me this morning, he knows I am in that predicament, he esteems it a point of duty to accompany me. Poor fellow, with all his faults, I can't help feeling attached to him, and were I to leave him behind me, what would become of him? No, Jack, I am fully sensible of all the inconvenience, all the ridicule of this step, but faith, I prefer both to the imbittering reflections I should have, did I desert him."

"Why does he remain after you, Phil?—he'll never find his way to London."

"Oh, trust him! What with scolding, cursing, and abusing every one he meets, he'll attract notice enough on the road never to be forgotten, or left behind. But the fact is, it is his own proposition, and Corny has asked for a few days' leave of absence, for the first time in seven-and-twenty years!"

"And what the deuce can that be for?"

"You'd never guess if you tried until to-morrow—to see his mother."

"Corny's mother!—Corny Delany's mother!"

"Just so—his mother. Ah, Hinton! you still have much to learn about us all here, and now, before we part, let me instruct you on this point; not that I pretend to have a reason for it, nor do I know that there is any, but somehow I'll venture to say, that whenever you meet with a little cross-grained, ill-thriven old fellow, with a face as if carved in the knot of a crab-tree, the odds are about fifteen to one that the little wretch has a mother alive; whether it is that the tenacity of life among such people is greater, or whether nature has any peculiar objects of her own in view in the matter, I can't say; but trust me for the fact. And now, I believe, I have run myself close to time, so once more, Jack, good-bye, and God bless you!"

He hurried from the room as he spoke, but as the door was closing, I saw that his lip trembled and his cheek was pale; while I leaned against the window shutter and looked after him with a heavy and oppressed heart, for he was my first friend in the world!

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CANAL-BOAT.

In obedience to O'Grady's directions, of which, fortunately for me, he left a memorandum in writing, I started from Portobello in the canal-boat on the afternoon of the day after his departure. The day was dark and lowering, with occasional showers of cold and sleety rain; however, the casual glance I took of the gloomy cell denominated cabin, deterred me from seeking shelter there, and, buttoned up in my greatcoat, and with my traveling cap drawn firmly over my eyes, I walked the deck for several hours, my own thoughts affording me sufficient occupation, and even had the opportunity presented itself, I should not have desired any other. On this score, however, there was no temptation, and as I looked at my fellow-passengers, there was nothing either in their voice, air, or appearance, to induce me to care for any closer intimacy. The majority of them were stout, plain-looking country folk, with coats of brown or gray frieze, leather gaiters, and thick shoes, returning, as I could guess from some chance expressions they dropped, from the Dublin market, whither they had proceeded with certain droves of bullocks, wedders, and hoggets, the qualities of which formed the staple of conversation; there were also some lady passengers, one a rather good-looking woman, with a certain air of half gentility about her, which enabled her at times to display to her companion her profound contempt for the rest of the company; this companion was a poor, subdued-looking girl of about eighteen or twenty years, who scarcely ventured to raise her haggard eyes, and spoke with an accent painful from agitation; her depressed look and her humble manner did not conceal, however, a certain air of composed and quiet dignity, which spoke of happier days. A host of ill-bred, noisy, and unmannerly children accompanied them, and I soon

discovered that the mother was the wife of the great shopkeeper in Loughrea, and her pale companion a governess she had just procured in Dublin, to initiate the promising offspring in the accomplished acquirements of French and Italian, music and painting; their only acquaintance on board seemed to be a jolly-looking man, who, although intimate with every one, seemed, somehow, not to suffer in the grand lady's esteem from the familiarities he dispensed on all sides. He was a short, florid-looking little fellow, with a round, bullet head, the features of which seemed at first sight so incongruous, that it was difficult to decide on their prevailing expression; his large gray eyes, which rolled and twinkled with fun, caught a character of severity from his heavy overhanging eyebrows, and there was a stern determination in his compressed lips that every moment gave way to some burst of jocular good humor, as he accosted one or other of his friends; his voice, however, was the most remarkable thing about him, for while at one moment he would declaim in the full round tone of a person accustomed to speak in public, in the next he would drop down into an easy and familiar accent to which the mellowness of his brogue imparted a raciness quite peculiar.

His dress was a suit of rusty black, with leather breeches of the same color, and high boots: this costume, which pronounced him a priest, might also, had I known more of the country, have explained the secret of that universal understanding he maintained with all on board. He knew every one's business—whither they were going, where they had been, what success had attended them in the market, how much the black heifer brought, what the pigs sold for; he asked why Tim didn't come to his duties, and if Mollie's child was well of the measles; he had a word, too, for the shopkeeper's wife, but that was said in a whisper; and then producing a copper snuff-box, about the size of a saucer, he presented it to me with a graceful bow, saying,—

"This is not the first time I have had the honor of being your fellow-traveler, captain. We came over from Liverpool together."

I now remembered that this was the same priest whose controversial powers had kept me awake for nearly half the night, and whose convivial ones filled up the remainder. I was delighted, however, to renew my acquaintance, and we soon cemented an intimacy, which ended in his proposing that we should sit together at dinner, to which I at once assented.

"Dacent people, dacent people, captain, but *bastes* after all in the ways of the world: none of the *usage de société*, as we used to say at St. Omer's. No, no—*feræ naturæ*, devil a more. But here comes the dinner: the ould story—leg of mutton and turnips, boiled chickens and ham, a cod and potatoes. By the mass! they would boil one's father if they had him on board;" while he added, in a whisper, "by rason they can't roast. So now, will you move down, if you please?"

"After your reverence, if you'll permit. *Arma cedant togæ.*"

"Thrue for you, my son—*sacerdotes priores;* and though I am only a priest—"

"More's the pity," said I, interrupting.

"You're right," said he, with a slight pinch of my arm, "whether you are joking or not."

The dinner was not a very appetizing one, nor, indeed, the company over seductive; so that I disappeared with the cloth, glad to find myself once more in the open air with the deck to myself; for my fellow-travelers had one and all begun a very vigorous attack upon sundry jugs of hot water and crucibles full of whisky, the fumes of which, added to the heat, the smoke, and other disagreeables, made me right happy to escape.

As the evening wore late, the noise and uproar grew louder and more vociferous, and had not frequent bursts of laughter proclaimed the spirit of the conviviality, I should have been tempted to believe the party were engaged in deadly strife. Sometimes a single narrator would seem to hold the company in attentive silence; then a general chorus of the whole would break in, with shouts of merriment, knocking of knuckles on the table, stamping of feet, and other signs of approbation and applause. As this had now continued for some time, and it was already verging toward midnight, I began to grow impatient, for, as sleep stole over my eyelids, I was desirous of some little quiet to indulge myself in a nap. Blessings on my innocent delusion! the gentlemen below stairs had as much notion of swimming as sleeping. Of this, a rapid glance through a little window at the extremity of the cabin soon satisfied me. As well as the steamed and heated glass would permit my seeing, the scene was a strange one. About forty persons were seated around a narrow table, so closely packed that any attitude but the bolt upright was impracticable. There they were, of every age and sex; some asleep, with Welsh wigs and red pocket-handkerchiefs, screening their heads from

cold, and their ears, as well as might be, from uproar; some were endeavoring to read by the light of mutton candles, with wicks like a light infantry feather, with a nob at the head; others, with their heads bent down together, were confidently exchanging the secrets of the last market: while here and there were scattered about little convivial knots of jolly souls, whose noisy fun and loud laughter indicated but slight respect for their drowsy neighbors.

The group, however, which attracted most of my attention, was one near the fire at the end; this consisted of his reverence, Father Tom, a stout, burly-looking old farmer opposite him, the austere lady from Loughrea, and a little dried-up potted-herring of a man, who, with a light-brown coat and standing collar, sat up perpendicularly on his seat, and looked about him with an eye as lively, and an accent as sharp, as though it were only noonday. This little personage, who came from that Irish Pennsylvania called Moate, was endeavoring to maintain a controversy with the worthy priest, who, in addition to his polemics, was deep in a game of spoiled five with the farmer, and carrying on besides another species of warfare with his fair neighbor. The diversity of all these occupations might possibly have been overmuch for him, were it not for the aid of a suspicious-looking little kettle that sat hissing and rocking on the hob, with a look of pert satisfaction, that convinced me its contents were something stronger than water.

Perceiving a small space yet unoccupied in the party, I made my way thither by the stair near it, and soon had the satisfaction to find myself safely installed, without attracting any other notice from the party than a proud stare from the lady, as she removed a little farther from beside the priest.

As to his reverence, far too deeply interested in his immediate pursuits to pay any attention to me, he had quite enough on his hands with his three antagonists, none of whom did he ever for a moment permit to edge in even a word. Conducting his varied warfare with the skill of a general, who made the artillery, the infantry, and the cavalry of mutual aid and assistance to each other, he continued to keep the church, the courtship, and the cards all moving together, in a manner perfectly miraculous, the vehemence with which he thumped down a trump upon the table serving as a point in his argument, while the energy of the action permitted a squeeze of the lady's hand with the other.

"There ye go, six of spades. Play a spade, av ye have one, Mr. Larkins. For a set of shriveled-up craytures, with nothing but thee and thou for a creed, to deny the real ould ancient faith, that Saint Peter and——the ace of diamonds; *that* tickled you under the short ribs—not you, Mrs. Carney——for a sore time you have of it; and an angel of a woman ye are; and the husband that could be cruel to you, and take——the odd trick out of you, Mr. Larkins. No, no, I deny it—*nego in omnibus, Domine.* What does Origen say? The rock, says he, is Peter; and if you translate the passage without——Another kettleful, if you please. I go for the ten, Misther Larkins. Trumps! another—another—hurroo! By the tower of Clonmacnoise, I'll beggar the bank to-night. *Malheureux au jeu, heureux en amour,* as we used to say formerly. God forgive us!"

Whether it was the French, or the look that accompanied it, I cannot aver, but certainly the lady blushed and looked down. In vain did the poor Quaker essay a word of explanation. In vain did Mrs. Carney herself try to escape from the awkward inferences some of his allusions seemed to lead to. Even the old farmer saw his tricks confiscated, and his games estreated, without a chance of recovery; for, like Cœur de Lion with his iron mace, the good priest laid about him, smashing, slaying, and upsetting all before him, and never giving his adversaries a moment to recover from one blow ere he dealt another at their heads.

"To be sure, Mrs. Carney, and why not? it's as mild as mother's milk. Come, ould square-toes, take a thimbleful of it, and maybe it'll lead you to a better understanding. I play the five fingers, Mr. Larkins. There goes Jack, my jewel. Play to that—the trick is mine. Don't be laughing. I've a bit of fat in the heel of my fist for you yet. There now, what are you looking at? Don't you see the cards? Troth, you're as bad as the Quaker, you won't believe your own eyes; and ye see, ma'am"—here he whispered something in the lady's ear for a few seconds, adding, as he concluded—"and thim, Mrs. Carney, thim's the rights of the church. Friends, indeed! ye call yourselves Friends! faix, ye're the least social friends I ever forgathered with, even if the bare look of you wasn't an antidote to all kinds of amusements. Cut, Mr. Larkins. And it's purgatory ye don't like. Ye know what Father O'Leary said—some of ye may go farther and fare worse—not to speak of what a place heaven would be with the

likes of you in it. Av it was Mrs. Carney, indeed. Yes, Mary, your own beautiful self, that's fit to be an angel any day, and discoorse with angels. Howld, av you please, I've a club for that. Don't you see what nonsense you're talking, the little kettle is laughing at you. What's that you're mumbling about my time of life! Show me the man that'll carry twelve tumblers with me—show me the man that'll cross a country—show me the man that'll——Never mind Mrs. Carney. Time of life, indeed! Faix I'll give you a song."

With these words the priest pushed the cards aside, replenished the glasses, and began the following melody, to an air much resembling Sir Roger de Coverley :—

"To-morrow I'll just be threescore ;
May never worse fortune betide me,
Than to have a hot tumbler before,
And a beautiful crayture beside me.
If this world's a stage, as they say,
And that men are the actors, I'm certain,
In the afterpiece I'd like to play,
And be there at the fall of the curtain.
Whack ! fol lol."

No, no, Mrs. Carney, I'll take the vestment on it, nothing of the kind—the allusion is most discreet—but there is more :—

"For the pleasures of youth are a flam ;
To try them again, pray excuse me,
I'd rather be priest that I am,
With the rights of the church to amuse me.
Sure there's nought like a jolly old age,
And the patriarchs knew this, it said is ;
For though they looked sober and sage,
Faith they had their own fun with the ladies !
Whack ! fol lol."

"Come now, Captain, you are a man that knows his humanities ; I'll be judged by you."

"I protest," said I, laughingly, "I'd rather pronounce on your punch than your polemics."

"No, would you, though ?" said the priest, with a joyous twinkle in his eye that showed which controversy had more attraction for him. "Faix, then, you shall have a fair trial. Reach me that glass, Mr. Larkins, and, if it isn't sweet enough, maybe Mrs. Carney would stir it for you with her finger. There now, we'll be comfortable and social, and have no more bother about creeds nor councils ; for, although it is only child's play for me to demolish a hundred like you, I'd rather be merciful, and leave you, like Alexander the Coppersmith, to get the reward of your works."

Whether it was the polite attention bestowed upon me by his reverence, or that the magical word "captain," so generic for all things military in Ireland, had its effect, or that any purely personal reasons were the cause, I cannot aver ; but, certainly, Mrs. Carney's manner became wonderfully softened. She smiled at me slyly, when the priest wasn't looking, and vouchsafed an inquiry as to whether I had ever served in the Roscommon yeomanry.

The kettle once more sent forth its fragrant steam, the glasses were filled, the vanquished Quaker had extinguished both himself and his argument beneath his broad beaver, and Father Tom, with a glance of pleasure at the party, pronounced our arrangements perfect, and suggested a round game, by way of passing the time.

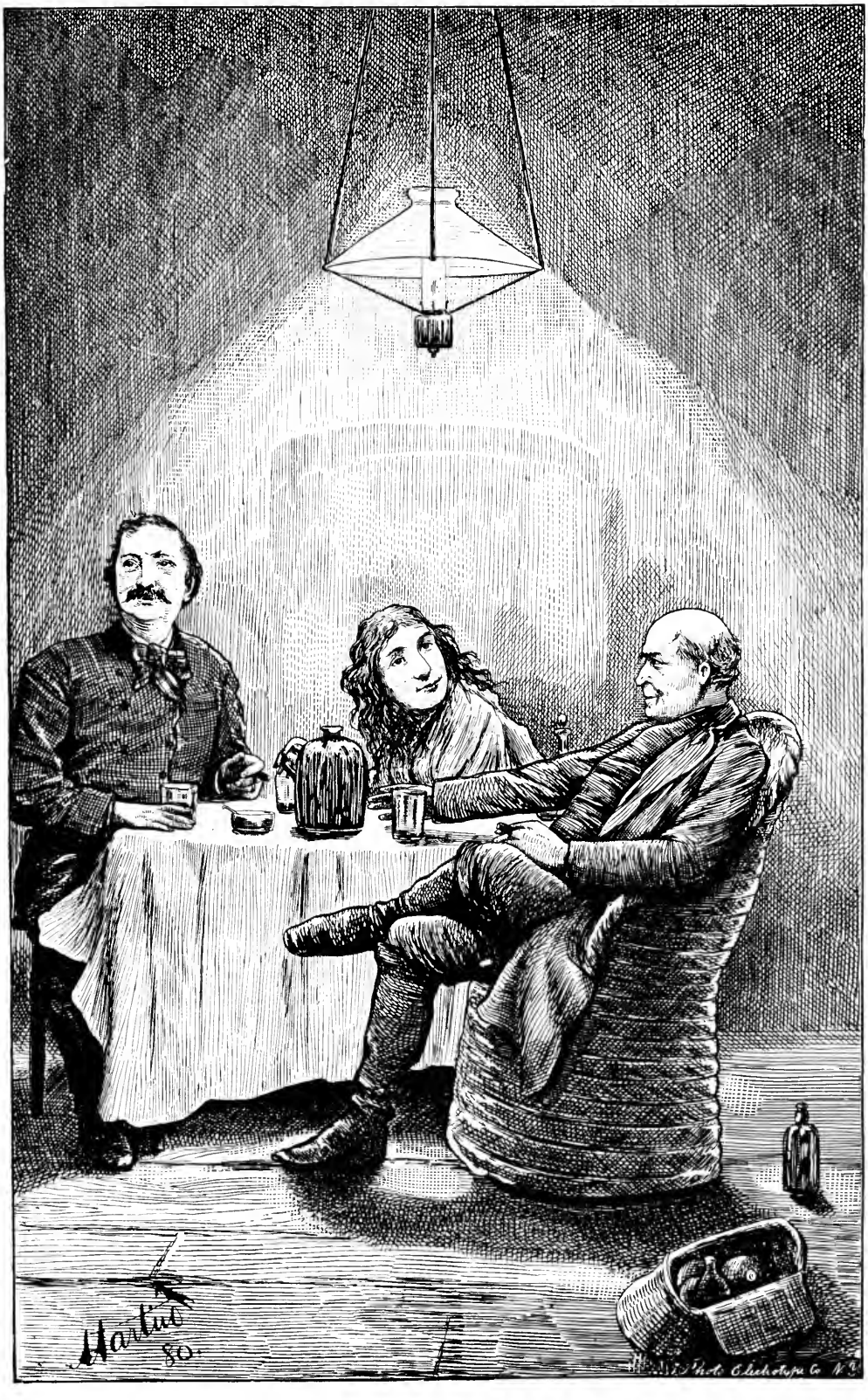
"We are now," said he, "on the long level for eighteen miles ; there's neither a lock nor a town to disturb us. Give Mrs. Carney the cards."

The proposition was met with hearty approval ; and thus did I, Lieutenant Hinton, of the Grenadier Guards, extra aide-de-camp to the Viceroy, discover myself at four in the morning engaged at a game of loo, whose pecuniary limits were fourpence, but whose boundaries as to joke and broad humor were wide as the great Atlantic. Day broke, and I found myself richer by some tumblers of the very strongest whisky-punch, a confounded headache, and two and eightpence in bad copper jingling in my pocket.

CHAPTER XX.

SHANNON HARBOR.

LITTLE does he know who voyages in a canal-boat, dragged along some three miles and a half per hour, ignominiously at the tails of two ambling hackneys, what pride, pomp and circumstance await him at the first town he enters. Seated on the deck, watching with a Dutchman's apathy the sedgy bank, whose tall flaggers bow their heads beneath the ripple that eddies from the bow ; now lifting his eyes from earth to sky, with nothing to interest, nothing to attract him ; turning from the gaze of the long, dreary tract of bog and moorland, to look upon his fellow-travelers, whose features are, perhaps, neither more striking nor more pleasing—the monotonous jog of the postilion before, the impassive placidity of the helmsman behind—the lazy smoke, that seems to lack energy to issue from the little chimney—the



"NO, NO, MRS. CARNEY, I'LL TAKE THE VESTMENT ON IT, NOTHING OF THE KIND:—THE ALLUSION IS MOST DISCREET." (P. 780.)

brown and leaden look of all around—have something dreamy and sleep-compelling, almost impossible to resist. And already, as the voyager droops his head, and lets fall his eyelids, a confused and misty sense of some everlasting journey, toilsome, tedious, and slow, creeps over his besotted faculties; when suddenly the loud bray of the horn breaks upon his ears—the sound is re-echoed from a distance—the far-off tinkle of a bell is borne along the water, and he sees before him, as if conjured up by some magician's wand, the roofs and chimneys of a little village. Meanwhile the excitement about him increases; the deck is lumbered with hampers, and boxes, and parcels; the note of departure to many a cloak and frieze-coated passenger has rung; for, strange as it may seem, in that little assemblage of mud hovels, with their dunghills and their dock-pools around them, with its one-slated house and its square chapel—yet there are people who live there; and, stranger still, some of those who have left it, and seen other places, are going back there again, to drag on life as before. But the plot is thickening; the large brass bell at the stern of the boat is thundering away with its clanging sound; the banks are crowded with people; and, as if to favor the melodramatic magic of the scene, the track-rope is cast off, the weary posters trot away toward their stable, and the stately barge floats on to its destined haven without the aid of any visible influence. He who watches the look of proud important bearing that beams upon "the captain's" face at a moment like this, may philosophize upon the charms of that power which man wields above his fellow-men; such, at least, were some of my reflections, and I could not help muttering to myself, "If a man like this feel pride of station, what a glorious service must be the navy!"

Watching with interest the nautical skill with which, having fastened a rope to the stern, the boat was swung round, with her head in the direction from whence she came, intimating thereby the monotonous character of her avocations, I did not perceive that, one by one, the passengers were taking their departure.

"Good-bye, captain!" cried Father Tom, as he extended his ample hand to me; "we'll meet again in Loughrea. I'm going on Mrs. Carney's car, or I'd be delighted to join you in a conveyance; but you'll easily get one at the hotel."

I had barely time to thank the good father for his kind advice, when I perceived him adjusting various duodecimo Carneys in the well of the car, and then, having carefully included himself in the frieze coat that wrapped Mrs. Carney, he gave the word to drive on.

As the day following was the time appointed for naming the horses and the riders, I had no reason for haste. Loughrea, from what I had heard, was a commonplace country town, in which, as in all similar places, every new-comer was canvassed with a prying and searching curiosity. I resolved, therefore, to stop where I was; not, indeed, that the scenery possessed any attractions—a prospect more bleak, more desolate, and more barren, it would be impossible to conceive; a wide river with low and reedy banks, moving sluggishly on its yellow current, between broad tracts of bog or callow meadow-land; no trace of cultivation, not even a tree was to be seen.

Such is Shannon Harbor. "No matter," thought I, "the hotel at least looks well." This consolatory reflection of mine was elicited by the prospect of a large stone building of some stories high, whose granite portico and wide steps stood in strange contrast to the miserable mud hovels that flanked it on either side. It was a strange thought to have placed such a building in such a situation. I dismissed the ungrateful notion as I remembered my own position, and how happy I felt to accept its hospitality.

A solitary jaunting-car stood on the canal side, the poorest specimen of its class I had ever seen; the car—a few boards cobbled up by some country carpenter—seemed to threaten disunion even with the coughing of the wretched beast that wheezed between its shafts, while the driver, an emaciated creature of any age from sixteen to sixty, sat shivering upon the seat, striking from time to time with his whip at the flies that played about the animal's ears, as though anticipating their prey.

"Banagher, yer honor? Loughrea, sir? Rowl ye over in an hour and a half. Is it Portumna, sir?"

"No, my good friend," replied I, "I stop at the hotel."

Had I proposed to take a sail down the Shannon on my portmanteau, I don't think the astonishment could have been greater. The bystanders, and they were numerous enough by this time—looked from one to the other with expressions of mingled surprise and dread; and, indeed, had I, like some sturdy knight-errant of old, announced my determination to pass the

night in a haunted chamber, more unequivocal evidences of their admiration and fear could not have been evoked.

"In the hotel?" said one.

"He is going to stop at the hotel!" cried another.

"Blessed hour!" said a third; "wonders will never cease!"

Short as had been my residence in Ireland, it had at least taught me one lesson—never to be surprised at anything I met with. So many views of life peculiar to the land met me at every turn—so many strange prejudices—so many singular notions—that were I to apply my previous knowledge of the world, such as it was, to my guidance here, I should be like a man endeavoring to sound the depths of the sea with an instrument intended to ascertain the distance of a star. Leaving, therefore, to time the explanation of the mysterious astonishment around me, I gathered together my baggage, and left the boat.

The first impressions of a traveler are not uncommonly his best. The finer and more distinctive features of a land require deep study and long acquaintance, but the broader traits of nationality are caught in an instant, or not caught at all. Familiarity with them destroys them, and it is only at first blush that we learn to appreciate them with force. Who that has landed at Calais, at Rotterdam, or at Leghorn, has not felt this? The Flemish peasant, with her long-eared cap and heavy sabots—the dark Italian, basking his swarthy features in the sun, are striking objects when we first look on them. But days and weeks roll on, the wider characteristics of human nature swallow up the smaller and more narrow features of nationality, and in a short time we forget that the things which have surprised us at first are not what we have been used to from our infancy.

Gifted with but slender powers of observation, such as they were, this was to me always a moment of their exercise. How often in the rural districts of my own country had the air of cheery and healthy contentment spoken to my heart; how frequently in the manufacturing ones had the din of hammers, the black smoke, or the lurid flame of furnaces, turned my thoughts to those great sources of our national wealth, and made me look on every dark and swarthy face that passed, as on one who ministered to his country's weal. But now I was to view a new and very different scene. Scarcely had I put foot on shore, when the whole population of the village thronged around me. "What are these," thought I? "What art do they practice? What trade do they profess?" Alas! their wan looks, their tattered garments, their outstretched hands, and imploring voices, gave the answer—they were all beggars! It was not as if the old, the decrepit, the sickly, or the feeble, had fallen on the charity of their fellow-men in their hour of need; but here were all—all—the old man and the infant, the husband and the wife, the aged grandfather and the tottering grandchild, the white locks of youth, the whiter hairs of age—pale, pallid, and sickly—trembling between starvation and suspense, watching, with the hectic eye of fever, every gesture of him on whom their momentary hope was fixed; canvassing, in muttered tones, every step of his proceeding, and hazarding a doubt upon its bearing on their own fate.

"Oh! the heavens be your bed, noble gentleman, look at me. The Lord reward you for the little sixpence that you have in your fingers there. I'm the mother of ten of them."

"Billy Cronin, yer honor. I'm dark since I was nine years old."

"I'm the ouldest man in the town-land," said an old fellow with a white beard, and a blanket strapped round him.

While bursting through the crowd came a strange, odd-looking figure, in a huntsman's coat and cap, but both so patched and tattered, it was difficult to detect their color.

"Here's Joe, your honor," cried he, putting his hand to his mouth at the same moment. "Tally ho! ye ho! ye ho!" he shouted with a mellow cadence I never heard surpassed. "Yow! yow! yow!" he cried, imitating the barking of dogs, and then uttering a long low wail, like the bay of a hound, he shouted out, "Hark away! hark away!" and at the same moment pranced into the thickest of the crowd, upsetting men, women, and children, as he went, the curses of some, the cries of others, and the laughter of nearly all, ringing through the motley mass, making their misery look still more frightful.

Throwing what silver I had about me amongst them, I made my way toward the hotel, not alone, however, but heading a procession of my ragged friends, who, with loud praises of my liberality, testified their gratitude by bearing me company. Arrived at the porch, I took my luggage from the carrier, and entered the house. Unlike any other hotel I had ever seen, there was neither stir nor bustle, no burly landlord, no buxom landlady, no dapper

waiter with napkin on his arm, no pert-looking chambermaid with a bedroom candlestick. A large hall, dirty and unfurnished, led into a kind of bar, upon whose unpainted shelves a few straggling bottles were ranged together, with some pewter measures and tobacco pipes; while the walls were covered with placards, setting forth the regulations for the "Grand Canal Hotel," with a list, copious and abundant, of all the good things to be found therein, with the prices annexed; and a pressing entreaty to the traveler, should he not feel satisfied with his reception, to mention it in a "book kept for that purpose by the landlord." I cast my eye along the bill of fare, so ostentatiously put forth—I read of rump-steaks, and roast fowls, of red rounds and sirloins, and I turned from the spot resolved to explore farther. The room opposite was large and spacious, and probably destined for the coffee-room, but it also was empty; it had neither chair nor table, and save a pictorial representation of a canal-boat, drawn by some native artist with a burnt stick upon the wall, it had no decoration. Having amused myself with the *Lady Caher*—such was the vessel called—I again set forth on my voyage of discovery, and bent my steps toward the kitchen. Alas! my success was no better there—the goodly grate before which should have stood some of that luscious fare of which I had been reading, was cold and deserted; in one corner, it was true, three sods of earth, scarce lighted, supported an antiquated kettle, whose twisted spout was turned up, with a misanthropic curl at the misery of its existence. I ascended the stairs; my footsteps echoed along the silent corridor, but still no trace of human habitant could I see, and I began to believe that even the landlord had departed with the larder.

At this moment the low murmur of voices caught my ear; I listened, and could distinctly catch the sound of persons talking together, at the end of the corridor. Following along this, I came to a door, at which, having knocked twice with my knuckles, I waited for the invitation to enter. Either indisposed to admit me, or not having heard my summons, they did not reply; so turning the handle gently, I opened the door, and entered the room unobserved. For some minutes I profited but little by this step; the apartment, a small one, was literally full of smoke, and it was only when I had wiped the tears from my eyes three times that I at length began to recognize the objects before me.

Seated upon two low stools, beside a miserable fire of green wood, that smoked, not blazed upon the hearth, were a man and a woman; between them a small and rickety table supported a tea equipage of the humblest description, and a plate of fish whose odor pronounced them red herrings. Of the man I could see but little, as his back was turned toward me, but, had it been otherwise, I could scarcely have withdrawn my looks from the figure of his companion. Never had my eyes fallen on an object so strange and so unearthly. She was an old woman—so old, indeed, as to have numbered nearly a hundred years; her head, uncovered by cap or quoif, displayed a mass of white hair that hung down on her back and shoulders, and even partly across her face, not sufficiently, however, to conceal two dark orbits, within which her dimmed eyes faintly glimmered; her nose was thin and pointed, and projecting to the very mouth, which, drawn backwards at the angles by the tense muscles, wore an expression of hideous laughter. Over her coarse dress of some country stuff, she wore for warmth the cast-off coat of a soldier, giving to her uncouth figure the semblance of an aged baboon at a village show. Her voice, broken with coughing, was a low feeble treble, that seemed to issue from passages where lingering life had left scarce a trace of vitality; and yet she talked on without ceasing, and moved her skinny fingers among the tea-cups and knives upon the table, with a fidgety restlessness, as though in search of something.

"There, acushla, don't smoke; don't, now: sure it's at the ruin of your complexion. I never see boys take to tobacco this way when I was young."

"Whist, mother, and don't be bothering me," was the cranky reply, given in a voice which, strange to say, was not quite unknown to me.

"Ay, ay," said the old crone; "always the same, never mindin' a word I say; and maybe in a few years I won't be to the fore to look after you, and watch you."

Here the painful thought of leaving a world, so full of its seductions and sweets, seemed too much for her feelings, and she began to cry. Her companion, however, appeared but little affected, but puffed away his pipe at his ease, waiting with patience till the paroxysm was past.

"There, now," said the old lady, brightening up, "take away the tay-things, and you may go and take a run on the common; but mind you don't be pelting Jack Moore's goose, and take care of Bryan's sow; she is as wicked as the divil now

that she has boneens after her. D'ye hear me, darlin', or is it sick you are? Och! wirra! wirra! What's the matter with you, Corny *mabouchal?*"

"Corny!" exclaimed I, forgetful of my incognito.

"Ay, Corny, nayther more nor less than Corny himself," said that redoubted personage, as rising to his legs he deposited his pipe upon the table, thrust his hands into his pockets, and seemed prepared to give battle.

"Oh, Corny," said I, "I am delighted to find you here. Perhaps you can assist me. I thought this was an hotel."

"And why wouldn't you think it an hotel? Hasn't it a bar and a coffee-room? Isn't the regulations of the house printed, and stuck up on all the walls? Ay, that's what the directors did—put the price on everything, as if one was going to cheat the people. And signs on it, look at the place now—ugh! the haythins! the Turks!"

"Yes, indeed, Corny, look at the place now;" glad to have an opportunity to chime in with my friend's opinions.

"Well, and look at it," replied he, bristling up; "and what have you to say agin it? Isn't it the Grand Canal Hotel?"

"Yes; but," said I, conciliatingly, "an hotel ought at least to have a landlord or a landlady."

"And what do you call my mother there?" said he, with indignant energy.

"Don't bate Corny, sir! don't strike the child!" screamed the old woman, in an accent of heartrending terror. "Sure he doesn't know what he is saying."

"He is telling me it isn't the Grand Canal Hotel, mother," shouted Corny in the old lady's ears, while at the same moment he burst into a fit of most discordant laughter. By some strange sympathy the old woman joined in, and I myself, unable to resist the ludicrous effect of a scene which still had touched my feelings, gave way also, and thus we all three laughed on for several minutes.

Suddenly recovering himself in the midst of his cachinnations, Corny turned briskly round, fixed his fiery eyes upon me, and said,—

"And did you come all the way from town to laugh at my mother and me?"

I hastened to exonorate myself from such a charge, and in a few words informed him of the object of my journey, whither I was going, and under what painful delusion I labored in supposing the internal arrangements of the Grand Canal Hotel bore any relation to its imposing exterior.

"I thought I could have dined here?"

"No, you can't," was the reply, "av ye're not fond of herrins."

"And had a bed too?"

"Nor that either, av ye don't like straw."

"And has your mother nothing better than that?" said I, pointing to the miserable plate of fish.

"Whisht, I tell you, and don't be putting the like in her head; sometimes she hears as well as you or me"—here he dropped his voice to a whisper—"herrins is so cheap that we always make her believe it's Lent: this is nine years now she's fasting." Here a fit of laughing at the success of this innocent *ruse* again broke from Corny, in which, as before, his mother joined.

"Then what am I to do," asked I, "if I can get nothing to eat here? Is there no other house in the village?"

"No, devil a one."

"How far is it to Loughrea?"

"Fourteen miles and a bit."

"I can get a car, I suppose?"

"Ay, if Mary Doolan's boy is not gone back."

The old woman, whose eyes were impatiently fixed upon me during this colloquy, but who heard not a word of what was going forward, now broke in:

"Why doesn't he pay the bill and go away? Devil a farthing I'll take off it. Sure av ye were a raal gentleman ye'd be givin' a fippenny-bit to the gossoon there, that sarved you. Never mind, Corny dear, I'll buy a bag of marbles for you at Banagher."

Fearful of once more giving way to unseasonable mirth, I rushed from the room, and hurried downstairs; the crowd that had so lately accompanied me was now scattered, each to his several home. The only one who lingered near the door was the poor idiot (for such he was) that wore the huntsman's dress.

"Is the Loughrea car gone, Joe?" said I, for I remembered his name.

"She is, yer honor; she's away."

"Is there any means of getting over to-night?"

"Barrin' walking there's none."

"Ay; but," said I, "were I even disposed for that, I have got my luggage."

"Is it heavy?" said Joe.

"This portmanteau, and the carpet-bag you see there."

"I'll carry them," was the brief reply.

"You'll not be able, my poor fellow," said I.

"Ay, and you on the top of them."

"You don't know how heavy I am," said I, laughingly.

"Begorra, I wish you was heavier."

"And why so, Joe?"

"Because one that was so good to the poor, is worth his weight in goold any day."

I do not pretend to say whether it was the flattery, or the promise these words gave me of an agreeable companion, *en route*, but, certain it is, I at once closed with his proposal, and, with a ceremonious bow to the Grand Canal Hotel, took my departure, and set out for Loughrea.

CHAPTER XXI.

LOUGHREA.

With the innate courtesy of his country, my humble companion endeavored to lighten the road by song and story. There was not a blackened gable, not a ruined tower, not even a well we passed, without its legend. The very mountains themselves that reared their mighty peaks toward the clouds, had their tale of superstitious horror; and, though these stories were simple in themselves, there was something in the association of the scene, something in the warm fervor of his enthusiasm that touched and thrilled my heart.

Like a lamp, whose fitful glare flickers through the gloomy vault of some rocky cavern, too feeble to illumine it, but yet calling up wild and goblin shapes on every side, and peopling space with flickering specters; so did the small modicum of intellect this poor fellow possessed enable him to look at life with strange distorted views. Accustomed to pass his days in the open air—the fields, the flowers, the streams, his companions—he had a sympathy in the eddying current that flowed on beneath—in the white cloud that rolled above him; happy, for he had no care, he journeyed about from one county to another. In the hunting season he would be seen lounging about a kennel, making or renewing his intimacy with the dogs, who knew and loved him; then he was always ready to carry a drag, to stop an earth, or do a hundred other of those minor services that are ever wanted. Many who lived far from a post-town knew the comfort of falling in with poor "Tipperary Joe," for such was he called. Not more fleet of foot than honest in heart, oftentimes was a letter entrusted to his keeping, that with any other messenger would have excited feelings of anxiety.

His was an April-day temperament—ever varying, ever changing. One moment would he tell with quivering lip and broken voice some story of wild and thrilling interest; the next, breaking suddenly off, he would burst out into some joyous rant, generally ending in a loud "tally-ho!" in which all his enthusiasm would shine forth, and in his glistening eye and flushed cheek one could mark the pleasure that stirred his heart. He knew every one, not only in this, but in the surrounding counties; and they stood severally classed in his estimation by their benevolence to the poor, and their prowess in the hunting-field. These with him, were the two great qualities of mankind. The kind man and the bold rider made his *beau idéal* of all that was excellent, and it was strange to watch with what ingenuity he could support his theory.

"There's Burton Pearse—that's the darling of a man; it's he that's good to the poor and takes his walls flying—it isn't a lock of bacon or a bag of meal he cares for—begorra, it's not that, not a double ditch would ever stop him. Hurroo! I think I'm looking at him throwing up his whip-hand this way, going over a gate and calling out to the servant, 'Make Joe go in for his dinner, and give him half-a-crown'—devil a less; and then there's Mr. Power of Kilfane—maybe your honor knows him? Down in Kilkenny, there; he's another of them—one of the right sort. I wish ye seen him facing a leap—a little up his stirrups, just to look over and see the ground, and then—hoo! he's across and away. A beautiful place he has of it, and an elegant pack of dogs, fourteen hunters in the stable, and as pleasant a kitchen as ever I broke my fast in. The cook's a mighty nice woman—a trifle fat, or so; but a good sowl and a raal warrant for an Irish stew."

"And Mr. Ulick Burke, Joe; do you know him?"

"Is it blazing Burke?—faix, I do know him! I was as near him as I am to you when he shot Matt Callanan at the mills. 'There, now,' says he, when he put a ball in his hip, and lamed him for life, 'you were always fond of your trade, and I'll make you a hopper.' And, sure enough, this is the way he goes ever since."

"He is a good horseman, they tell me, Joe?"

"The best in Ireland: for following the dogs, flat race, or steeple-chase, show me his equal. Och! it's himself has the seat in the saddle. Mighty short he rides with his knees up, this way, and his toes out. Not so purty to look at, till you are used

to it; but watch him fingering his baste—feeling his mouth with the snaffle—never tormenting, but just letting him know who is on his back. It's raal pleasure to look at him; and then to see him taking a little canter before he sets off, with his hand low, and just tickling the flanks with his spurs, to larn the temper of the horse. May I never! If it isn't a heavenly sight!"

"You like Mr. Burke, then, I see, Joe?"

"Like him—who wouldn't like him a horseback? Isn't he the moral of a rider, that knows his baste better than I know my Hail Mary; but see him a foot, he's the greatest divil from here to Croaghpatrick—nothing civiler in his mouth than a curse and a 'bloody end' to ye! Och, it's himself hates the poor, and they hate him: the beggars run away from him as if he was the police; and the blind man that sits on Banagher Bridge take up his bags, and runs for the bare life the minit he hears the trot of his horse. Isn't it a wonder how he rides so bowld with all the curses over him? Faix, myself wouldn't cross that little stream there if I was like him. Well, well, he'll have a hard reckoning at last; he's killed five men already, and wounded a great many more; but they say he won't be able to go on much farther, for when he kills another the divil's to come for him—the Lord be about us! by rason he never lets any one kill more nor six."

Thus chatting away, the road passed over, and as the sun was setting we came in sight of the town, now not above a mile distant.

"That's Loughrea you see there—it's a mighty fine place," said Joe. "There's slate houses, and a market, and a barrack; but you'll stop a few days in the town?"

"Oh, certainly; I wish to see this race."

"That will be the fine race. It is a great country entirely—every kind of fence, gates, ditches, and stone walls, as thick as they can lie. I'll show you all the course, for I know it well, and tell you the names of all the gentlemen, and the names of their horses, and their servants; and I'll bring you where you'll see the whole race, from beginning to end, without stirring an inch. Are you going to bet any money?"

"I believe not, Joe; but I'm greatly interested for a friend."

"And who is he?"

"Captain O'Grady."

"Master Phil! Tear-an'-ages, are you a friend of Master Phil's? Arrah, why didn't you tell me that before? Why didn't you mintion his name to me? Och, isn't myself proud this evening to be with a friend of the captain's. See, now, what's your name?"

"Hinton," said I.

"Ay, but your Christian name?"

"They who know me best call me Jack Hinton."

"Musha! but I'd like to call you Jack Hinton just for this once. Now, will you do one thing for me?"

"To be sure, Joe; what is it?"

"Make them give me a half pint to drink your health and the Captain's; for, faix, you must be the right sort, or he wouldn't keep company with you. It's just like yesterday to me, the day I met him, down at Bishop's Loch; the hounds came to a check, and a hailstorm came on, and all the gentlemen went into a little shebeen house for shelter. I was standing outside, as it may be here, when Master Phil saw me. 'Come in, Joe,' says he; 'you're the best company, and the pleasantest fellow over a mug of egg-flip;' and, may I never! if he didn't make me sit down fornint him, at a little table, and drink two quarts of as beautiful flip as ever I tasted. And Master Phil has a horse here, ye tell me—what's his name?"

"That, Joe, I am afraid I can't pronounce for you; it's rather beyond my English tongue; but I know that his color is gray, and that he has one cropped ear."

"That's Moddiridderoo!" shouted Joe, as, throwing my portmanteau to the ground, he seated himself leisurely on it, and seemed lost in meditation.

"Begorra," said he at length, "he chose a good-tempered one, when he was about it; there never was such a horse foaled in them parts. Ye heard what he did to Mr. Shea, the man that bred him? He threw him over a wall, and then jumped after him, and if it wasn't that his guardian angel made his leather breeches so strong, he'd have ate him up entirely. Sure, there's no one can ride him, barrin' the man I was talking of."

"Well, Joe, I believe Mr. Burke is to ride him."

"Musha! but I am sorry for it."

"And why so? you seem to think highly of his horsemanship."

"There's no misliking that, av it was fair; but, then, you see, he has as many tricks in him as the devil. Sometimes he'll break his stirrup leather, or he'll come in a pound too heavy, or he'll slip the snaffle out of the mouth; for he doesn't

care for his neck. Once I see him stake his baste, and bring him in dead lame."

Here ended our conversation; for by this time we entered the town, and proceeded to Mrs. Doolan's. The house was full, or the apartments bespoke; and I was turning away disappointed, when I accidentally overheard the landlady mention the two rooms ordered by Captain O'Grady. A little explanation ensued, and I discovered, to my delight, that these were destined for me by my friend, who had written some time before to secure them. A few minutes more saw me comfortably installed in the little inn, whose unpretending exterior, and cheerful comfort within doors, were the direct antithesis to the solemn humbug I had left at Shannon Harbor.

Under Joe's auspices—for he had established himself as my own man—tea and rashers made their appearance. My clothes were unpacked and put by; and as he placed my dressing-gown and slippers in readiness before the fire, I could not help observing the servant-like alacrity of his manner, perfect in everything, save in his habit of singing to himself as he went; which I can't say, however, that I disliked, and certainly never dreamed of checking.

Having written a few lines to Mr. Burke, expressing my desire for a few minutes' interview the following morning, I dispatched the note and prepared for bed.

I had often listened with apathy to the wise saws of people who, never having felt either hunger or fatigue, are so fond of pronouncing a glowing eulogium on such luxuries when the period of their gratification has arrived; but, I confess, as I lay down that night in bed, and drew the clothes around me, I began to believe that they had underrated the pleasures they spoke of. The house clock ticked pleasantly in the room without: the cheerful turf fire threw its mild red light across the room; the sounds from the street were those of happy voices and merry laughter; and when I ceased to hear them, I had fallen into a sound and peaceful sleep.

It was after about a dozen efforts, in which I had gone through all the usual formula on such occasions—rubbing my eyes, stretching, and even pinching myself, before I could awake on the following morning. I felt somewhat stiffened from the unaccustomed exertions of the day before, but somehow my spirits were unusually high, and my heart in its very lightest mood. I looked about me through the little room, where all was order, neatness, and propriety. My clothes carefully brushed and folded, my boots, resplendent in their blacking, stood basking before the fire; even my hat, placed gently on one side, with my gloves carefully flattened, were laid out in true valet fashion. The door into my little sitting-room lay open, and I could mark the neat and comfortable preparations for my breakfast, while at a little distance from the table, and in an attitude of patient attention, stood poor Joe himself, who, with a napkin across his arm, was quietly waiting the moment of awaking.

I know not if my reader will have any sympathy with the confession, but I own I have always felt a higher degree of satisfaction from the unbought and homely courtesy chance has thrown in my way, than from the more practiced and dearly paid for attentions of the most disciplined household. There is something flattering in the personal devotion which seems to spring from pure good-will, that insensibly raises one in their own esteem. In some such reflection as this was I lost, when the door of my outer room was opened, and a voice inquired if Mr. Hinton stopped there.

"Yes, sir," replied Joe; "he is in bed, and asleep."

"Ah! is it you, Joe?" replied the other; "so you are turned footman, I see. If the master be like the man, it ought to be a shrewd establishment."

"No," replied Joe, carelessly: "he's not very like anything down in these parts; for he appears to be a gentleman."

"Tell him I am here, and be d—d to you," was the indignant reply, as the speaker threw himself into his chair, and stirred the fire with his foot.

Suspecting at once who my visitor was, I motioned to Joe to leave the room, and proceeded to dress myself with all dispatch. During the operation, however, my friend without manifested several symptoms of impatience: now walking the room with rapid strides, as he whistled a quick step; now beating the bars of the grate with a poker; and occasionally performing that popular war dance, "The Devil's Tattoo," with his knuckles upon the table. At length his endurance seemed pushed to its length, and he knocked sharply at the door, calling out at the same moment,—

"I say, sir, time's up, if you please."

The next moment I was before him.

Mr. Ulick Burke—for I need not say it was he—was a well-looking man, of about eight-and-twenty or thirty years of age. Although his height was below the mid-

dle size, he was powerfully and strongly made; his features would have been handsome, were it not for a certain expression of vulgar suspicion that played about the eyes, giving him a sidelong look when he spoke; this, and the loss of two front teeth, from a fall, disfigured a face originally pleasing. His whiskers were large, bushy, and meeting beneath his chin. As to his dress, it was in character with his calling; a green coat, cut round in jockey fashion, over which he wore a white "bang-up," as it was called, in one pocket of which was carelessly thrust a lash whip; a Belcher handkerchief knotted loosely about his neck, buckskin breeches, reaching far down upon the leg, and top-boots completed his costume. I had almost forgotten a hat, perhaps the most characteristic thing of all. This, which once had been white, was now, by stress of time and weather, of a dirty drab color, its crown dinged in several places, and the leaf jagged and broken, bespoke the hard usage to which it was subjected. While speaking, he held it firmly clutched in his ungloved hand, and, from time to time, struck it against his thigh with an energy of manner that seemed habitual. His manner was a mixture of timid embarrassment and vulgar assurance, feeling his way, as it were, with one while he forgot himself with the other. With certain remnants of the class he originally belonged to, he had associated the low habitudes and slang phraseology of his daily associates, making it difficult for one, at first sight, to discover to which order he belonged. In the language of his companions, Ulick Burke "could be a gentleman when he pleased it." How often have we heard this phrase; and with what a fatal mistake is it generally applied! He who can be a gentleman when he pleases, never pleases to be anything else. Circumstances may, and do, every day in life, throw men of cultivated minds and refined habits into the society of their inferiors; but while, with the tact and readiness that is their especial prerogative, they make themselves welcome among those with whom they have few, if any, sympathies in common, yet never by any accident do they derogate from that high standard that makes them gentlemen. So, on the other hand, the man of vulgar tastes and coarse propensities may simulate, if he be able, the outward habitudes of society, speaking with practiced intonation and bowing with well-studied grace, yet is he no more a gentleman in his thought or feeling than is the tinseled actor who struts the board the monarch his costume would bespeak him. This being the "gentleman when he likes" is but the mere performance of the character. It has all the smell of the orange-peel and the foot-lights about it, and never can be mistaken by any one who knows the world. But to come back to Mr. Burke.

Having eyed me for a second or two, with a look of mingled distrust and impertinence, he unfolded my note, which he held beneath his fingers, and said,—

"I received this from you last night, Mr. ——"

"Hinton," said I, assisting him.

"Mr. Hinton," repeated he, slowly.

"Won't you be seated?" said I, pointing to a chair, and taking one myself.

He nodded familiarly, and placing himself on the window-sill, with one foot upon a chair, resumed:

"It's about O'Grady's business, I suppose, you've come down here; the captain has treated me very ill."

"You are quite right," said I coolly, "in guessing the object of my visit; but I must also let you know that in any observations you make concerning Captain O'Grady, they are made to a friend, who will no more permit his name to be slightingly treated than his own."

"Of course," pronounced with a smile of the most insulting coolness, was the only reply. "That, however, is not the matter in hand. *Your friend*, the Captain, never condescended to answer my letter."

"He only received it a few days ago."

"Why isn't he here himself? Is a gentleman rider to be treated like a common jockey that's paid for his race?"

I confess the distinction was too subtle for me, but I said nothing in reply.

"I don't even know where the horse is, nor if he is here at all—will you call that handsome treatment, Mr. Hinton?"

"One thing I am quite sure of, Mr. Burke—Captain O'Grady is incapable of anything unworthy or unbecoming a gentleman; the haste of his departure for foreign service may have prevented him observing certain matters of etiquette toward you, but he has commissioned me to accept your terms. The horse is, or will be here to-night, and I trust nothing will interrupt the good understanding that has hitherto subsisted between you."

"And will he take up the writ?"

"He will," said I, firmly.

"He must have a heavy book on the race."

"Nearly a thousand pounds."

"I'm sorry for it, for his sake," was the cool reply, "for he'll lose his money."

"Indeed!" said I; "I understand that you thought well of his horse, and that with your riding—"

"Ay; but I won't ride for him."

"You won't ride!—not on your own terms?"

"No; not even on my own terms. Don't be putting yourself into a passion, Mr. Hinton—you've come down to a country where that never does any good; we settle all our little matters here in a social, pleasant way of our own—but I repeat it, I won't ride for your friend; so you may 'scratch' his horse as soon as you like; except," added he, with a most contemptuous sneer, "you have a fancy for riding him yourself."

Resolving that whatever course I should follow, I should at least keep my temper for the present, I assumed as much calmness as I could command, and said,—

"And what is there against O'Grady's horse?"

"A chestnut mare of Tom Molloy's, that can beat him over any country—the rest are withdrawn; so that I'll have a 'ride over' for my pains."

"Then you ride for Mr. Molloy?" said I.

"You've guessed it," replied he, with a wink, as throwing his hat carelessly on one side of his head, he gave me an insolent nod, and lounged out of the room.

I need not say that my breakfast appetite was not improved by Mr. Burke's visit; in fact, never was a man more embarrassed than I was. Independent of the loss of his money, I knew how poor Phil would suffer from the duplicity of the transaction; and in my sorrow for his sake I could not help accusing myself of ill-management in the matter. Had I been more conciliating, or more blunt—had I bullied, or bid higher, perhaps a different result might have followed. Alas! in all my calculations, I knew little or nothing of him with whom I had to deal. Puzzled and perplexed, uncertain how to act, now resolving on one course, now deciding on the opposite, I paced my little room for above an hour, the only conviction I could come to being the unhappy choice that poor O'Grady had made when he selected me for his negotiator.

The town clock struck twelve. I remembered suddenly that was the hour when the arrangements for the race were to be ratified; and without a thought of what course I should pursue, what plan I should adopt, I took my hat and sallied forth.

The main street of the little town was crowded with people, most of them of that class which, in Irish phrase, goes by the appellation of squireen, a species of human lurcher, without any of the good properties of either class from which it derives its origin, but abounding in the bad traits of both. They lounged along, followed by pointers and wire-haired greyhounds, their hands stuck in their coat pockets, and their hats set well back on their heads. Following in the train of this respectable cortége, I reached the market-house, upon the steps of which several "sporting gentlemen" of a higher order were assembled. Elbowing my way, with some difficulty, through these, I mounted a dirty and sandy stair, to a large room, usually employed by the magistrates for their weekly sessions; here, at a long table, sat the race committee, an imposing display of books, pens, and papers before them. A short little man, with a powdered head, and a certain wheezing chuckle when he spoke, that involuntarily suggested the thought of apoplexy, seemed the president of the meeting.

The room was so crowded with persons of every class, that I could with difficulty catch what was going forward. I looked anxiously round to see if I could not recognize some friend or acquaintance, but every face was strange to me. The only one I had ever seen before was Mr. Burke himself, who, with his back to the fire, was edifying a select circle of his friends by what I discovered, from the laughter of his auditory, was a narrative of his visit to myself. The recital must have owed something to his ingenuity in telling, for, indeed, the gentlemen seemed convulsed with mirth; and when Mr. Burke concluded, it was plain to see that he stood several feet higher in the estimation of his acquaintances.

"Silence!" wheezed the little man with the white head: "it is a quarter past twelve o'clock, and I'll not wait any longer."

"Read the list, Maurice," cried some one. "As it is only a 'walk over,' you needn't lose any time."

"Here, then, No. 1: Captain Fortescue's Tramp."

"Withdrawn," said a voice in the crowd.

"No. 2: Harry Studdart's Devil-may-care!"

"Paid forfeit," cried another.

"No. 3: Sir George O'Brien's Billy-the Bowl!"

"Gone home again," was the answer.

"No. 4: Tom Molloy's Cathleen!"

"All right!" shouted Mr. Burke, from the fireplace.

"Who rides?" asked the president.

"Ulick!" repeated half a dozen voices together.

"Eleven stone eight," said the little man.

"And a pound for the martingale," chimed in Mr. Burke.

"Well, I believe that's all—No: there's another horse—Captain O'Grady's Moddiridderoo."

"Scratch him out with the rest," said Mr. Burke.

"No!" said I, from the back of the room.

The word seemed electric: every eye was turned toward the quarter where I stood; and as I moved forward toward the table, the crowd receded to permit my passage.

"Are you on the part of Mr. O'Grady, sir?" said the little man with a polite smile.

I bowed an affirmative.

"He does not withdraw his horse, then?" said he,

"No!" said I again.

"But you are aware, sir, that Mr. Burke is going to ride for my friend Mr. Molloy here. Are you prepared with another gentleman?"

I nodded shortly.

"His name, may I ask?" continued he.

"Mr. Hinton."

By this time Mr. Burke, attracted by the colloquy, had approached the table, and, stooping down, whispered some words in the president's ear.

"You will forgive me, I am sure," said the latter, addressing me, "if I ask, as the name is unknown to me, if this be a gentleman rider?"

The blood rushed to my face and temples. I knew at once from whom this insult proceeded. It was no time, however, to notice it, so I simply replied,—

"Mr. Hinton is an officer of the Guards, an aide-de-camp to the lord-lieutenant, and I beg leave respectfully to present him to you."

The obsequious civility exhibited by the party, as I pronounced these few words, were an ample *amende* for what I had suffered a few minutes before. Meanwhile, Mr. Burke had resumed his place at the fire, once more surrounded by his admiring satellites.

Being accommodated with a chair at the table, I proceeded to read over and sign the usual papers, by which I bound myself to abide by the regulations of the course, and conform in all things to the decision of the stewards. Scarcely had I concluded, when Mr. Burke called out,—

"Who'll take eight to one on the race?"

Not a word was spoken in reply.

"Who'll take fifty to five?" cried he again.

"I will," said a voice from the door.

"Who is that takes my bet? What is his name?"

"Tom Loftus, P.P. of Murranakilty."

"A better fellow nor an honester couldn't do it," said the president.

"Book your bet, sir," said Mr. Burke; "or, if it is equally convenient to you, you can pay it at present."

"I never make a memorandum of such trifles," said the priest; "but I'll stake the money in some decent man's hands."

A roar of laughter followed the priest's proposition, than which nothing could be less to Mr. Burke's taste. This time, however, he was in funds; and while the good father disengaged his five-pound note from the folds of a black leather pocket-book, as large as a portfolio, his antagonist threw a fifty on the table, with an air of swaggering importance. I turned now to shake hands with my friend, but, to my surprise and astonishment, he gave me a look of cold and impassive import, that showed me at once he did not wish to be recognized, and the next moment left the room. My business there was also concluded, and, having promised to be forthcoming the following day, at two o'clock, I bowed to the chairman and withdrew.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MOONLIGHT CANTER.

I WAS not quite satisfied with the good priest for his having cut me, no matter what his reasons—I was not overmuch so with the tone of the whole meeting itself, and certainly I was very little satisfied with the part I had myself taken therein; for as cooler judgment succeeded to hot excitement, I perceived in what a mass of difficulty I had involved myself, and how a momentary flush of passionate indignation had carried me away, beyond the bounds of reason and sense, to undertake what, but half an hour previously, I should have shrunk from with shame, and the very thought of which now filled me with apprehension and dread, not indeed as to the consequences to myself, physically considered, for most willingly would I have com-

HE NODDED FAMILIARLY, AND PLACED HIMSELF ON THE WINDOW-SILL WITH ONE FOOT UPON A CHAIR. (P. 788.)

pounded for a fractured limb, or even two, to escape the ridicule I was almost certain of incurring; this it was which I could not bear, and my heart recoiled from the thought of being a laughing-stock to the under-bred and ill-born horde that would assemble to witness me.

When I arrived at the inn, poor Joe was there awaiting me; he had been down to see the horse, which for precaution's sake was kept at a mill a little distance from the town, and of whose heart and condition he spoke in glowing terms.

"Och! he is a raal beauty—a little thick in fat about the crest, but they say he always trains fleshy, and his legs are as clean as a whistle. Sorra bit but it'll give Mr. Ulick as much as he can do to ride him to-morrow. I know, by the way he turns his eyes round to you in the stable, he's in the devil's temper."

"But it is not Mr. Burke, Joe—I am going to ride him."

"You are going to do it! You! Oh! by the powers, Mr. Ulick wasn't far out, when he said the master was as mad as the man. 'Tell me your company,' says the old proverb; and you see there it is—what comes of it? If you lie down with dogs, you'll get up with fleas; and that's the fruits of traveling with a fool."

I was in no temper for badinage at the moment, and replied to the poor fellow in a somewhat harsher tone than I should have used; and as he left the room without speaking, I felt ashamed and angry with myself for thus banishing the only one that seemed to feel an interest in my fortunes.

I sat down to my dinner discontented and unhappy. But a few hours previous, and I awoke high in heart and hope; and now, without any adverse stroke of fortune, without any of those casualties of fate that come on us, unlooked for and unthought of, but simply by the unguided exercise of a passionate temperament, I found myself surrounded by embarrassments, and environed by difficulties, without one friend to counsel or advise me.

Yes; I could not conceal it from myself—my determination to ride the steeple-chase was the mere outbreak of passion. The taunting insolence of Burke had stung me to adopt a course which I had neither previously considered, nor, if suggested by another, could ever have consented to. True, I was what would be called a good horseman. In the two seasons I had spent in Leicestershire, on a visit to a relative, I had acquitted myself with credit and character; but a light weight splendidly mounted on a trained hunter over his accustomed country, has no parallel with the same individual upon a horse he has never crossed, over a country he has never seen. These, and a hundred similar considerations, came rushing on me now when it was too late; however, the thing was done, and there being no possible way of undoing it, there was but one road—the straightforward—to follow in the case. Alas! half of our philosophy in difficulties consists in shutting our eyes firmly against consequences, and rushing headlong at the future. Though few may be found willing to admit that the bull in the china-shop is the model of their prudence, I freely own it was mine, and that I made up my mind to ride the horse with the unspeakable name, as long as he would permit me to ride him, at everything, over everything, or through everything, before me. This conclusion at length come to, I began to feel more easy in my mind. Like the felon that feels there is no chance of a reprieve, I could look my fate more steadily in the face.

I had no great appetite for my dinner, but I sat over an excellent bottle of port; sipping, and sipping, each glass I swallowed lending a rose tint to the future. The second bottle had just been placed on the table before me, when O'Grady's groom came in to receive his instructions. He had heard nothing of my resolution to ride, and certainly looked aghast when I announced it to him. By this time, however, I had combated *my own* fears, and I was not going to permit *his* to terrify me. Affecting the easy indifference of that excellent type, Mr. Ulick Burke, I thrust my hands into my coat pockets, and standing with my back to the fire, began questioning him about the horse. Confound it! there's no man so hard to humbug as an Irishman, but if he be a groom, I pronounce the thing impossible. The fellow saw through me in a moment; and as he sipped the glass of wine I had filled out for him, he approached me confidentially, while he said in a low tone,—

"Did you say you'd ride him?"

"Yes, to be sure I did."

"You did; well, well! there's no helping it, since you said it. There's only one thing to be done,"—he looked cautiously about the room, lest any one should overhear him—"there's but one thing I know of—let him throw you at the first leap. Mind me, now, just leave it to himself; he'll give you no trouble in life; and all you have to do is to choose the soft side. It's not your fault after that, you know,

for I needn't tell you he won't be caught before night."

I could not help laughing at this new receipt for riding a steeple-chase, although I confess it did not raise my courage regarding the task before me.

"But what does he do?" said I; "this infernal beast; what trick has he?"

"It isn't one, but a hundred that he has. First of all, it isn't so easy to get on his back, for he is as handy with his hind foot as a fiddler; and if you are not mighty quick in mounting, he'll strike you down with it; then, when you are up, maybe, he won't move at all, but stand with his fore-legs out, his head down, and his eyes turned back just like a picture, hitting his flanks between times with his long tail. You may coax him, pet him, and pat him—faith, you might as well be tickling a milestone; for it's laughing at you he'll be all the time. Maybe at last you'll get tired, and touch him with the spur. Hurroo! begorra you'll get it then!"

"Why—what happens then?"

"What happens, is it? Maybe it's your neck is broke, or your thigh, or your collar-bone, at least; he'll give you a straight plunge up in the air, about ten feet high, throw his head forward, till he either pulls the reins out of your hands, or lifts you out of the saddle, and at the same moment he'll give you a blow with his head-quarters in the small of the back. Och, murther!" said he, placing both hands upon his loins, and writhing as he spoke, "it'll be six weeks to-morrow since he made one of them buckleaps with me, and I never walked straight since. But that is not all."

"Come, come," said I, impatiently, "this is all nonsense; he only wants a man with a little pluck to bully him out of all this."

As I said these valorous words, I own that, to my own heart, I didn't exactly correspond to the person I described; but as the bottle of port was now finished, I set forth with my companion to pay my first visit to this redoubted animal.

The mill where the stable lay was about a mile from the town; but the night was a fine moonlight one, with not an air of wind stirring, and the walk delightful. When we reached the little stream that turned the mill, over which a plank was thrown as a bridge, we perceived that a country lad was walking a pair of saddle-horses backwards and forwards near the spot. The suspicion of some trickery, some tampering with the horse, at once crossed me; and I hinted as much to the groom.

"No, no," said he, laughing; "make your mind easy about that. Mr. Ulick Burke knows the horse well, and he'll leave all to himself."

The allusion was a pleasant one; but I said nothing, and walked on.

Having procured a lantern at the mill, the groom preceded me to the little out-house, which acted as stable. He opened the door cautiously, and peeped in.

"He's lying down," said he to me in a whisper, and at the same moment taking the candle from the lantern, he held it up to permit my obtaining a better view; "don't be afeard," continued he, "he'll not stir now, the thief of the arth; when once he's down that way, he lies as peaceable as a lamb."

As well as I could observe him, he was a magnificent horse. A little too heavy perhaps about the crest and forehand, but then so strong behind, such powerful muscle about the haunches, his balance was well preserved. As I stood contemplating him in silence, I felt the breath of some one behind me. I turned suddenly around: it was Father Tom Loftus himself. There was the worthy priest, mopping his forehead with a huge pocket-handkerchief and blowing like a rhinoceros.

"Ugh!" said he at length, "I have been running up and down the roads this half hour after you, and there's not a puff left in me."

"Ah! Father, I hoped to have seen you at the inn."

"Whisht! I daren't. I thought I'd do it better my own way; but, see now, we've no time to lose. I know as well as yourself you never intended to ride this race. No matter; don't say a word, but listen to me: I know the horse better than any one in these parts; and it isn't impossible, if you can keep the saddle over the first two or three fences, that you may win. I say if you can—for, faith, it's not in a 'swing-swong' you'll be. But, come now, the course was marked out this evening. Burke was over it before dinner; and, with a blessing, we will before supper. I've got a couple of hacks here that'll take us over every bit of it, and perhaps it is not too much to say you might have a worse guide."

"Faith, your reverence," chimed in the groom, "he'd find it hard to have a better."

Thanking the kind priest for his good-natured solicitude, I followed him out upon the road, where the two horses were waiting us.

"There now," said he, "get up; the

stirrups are about your length. He looks a little low in flesh; but you'll not complain of him when he's under you."

The next moment we were both in the saddle. Taking a narrow path that led off from the high road, we entered a large tilled field; keeping along the headlands of which, we came to a low stone wall, through a gap of which we passed, and came out upon an extensive piece of grassland, that gently sloped away from where we were standing, to a little stream at its base, an arm of that which supplied the mill.

"Here now," said the priest, "a little to the left yonder is the start: you come down this hill, you take the water there, and you keep along by Freney's house, where you see the trees there. There's only a small stone wall, and a clay ditch, between this and that; afterwards you turn off to the right. But, come now, are you ready? We'll explore a bit."

As he spoke, the good priest, putting spurs to his hack, dashed on before me, and, motioning me to follow, cantered down the slope. Taking the little mill-stream at a fly, he turned in his saddle to watch my performance.

"Neat, mighty neat!" cried he, encouraging me. "Keep your hand a little low. The next is a wall——"

Scarcely had he spoke when we both came together at a stone fence about three feet high. This time I was a little in advance, as my horse was fresher, and took it first.

"Oh, the devil a better!" said Father Tom. "Burke himself couldn't beat that. Here now; keep this way out of the deep ground, and rush him at the double ditch there."

Resolved on securing his good opinion, I gripped my saddle firmly with my knees, and rode at the fence. Over we went in capital style, but, lighting on the top of a rotten ditch, the ground gave way, and my horse's hind legs slipped backwards into the grip. Being at full stretch, the poor animal had no power to recover himself, so that, disengaging his fore-legs, I pulled him down into the hollow, and then, with a vigorous dash of the spur, and a bold lift, carried him clean over it into the field.

"Look, now!" said the priest; "that pleases me better than all you did before. Presence of mind—that's the real gift for a horseman, when he's in a scrape; but mind me, it was your own fault, for here's the way to take the fence." So saying, he made a slight semicircle in the field, and then, as he headed his horse toward the leap, rushed him at it furiously, and came over like the bound of a stag!

"Now," said Father Tom, pointing with his whip as he spoke, "we have a beautiful bit of galloping ground before us; and if you ever reach this far, and I don't see why you shouldn't, here's where you ought to make play. Listen to me now," said he, dropping his voice. "Tom Molloy's mare isn't thoroughbred, though they think she is. She has got a bad drop in her. Now the horse is all right, clean-bred, sire and dam, by reason he'll be able to go through the dirt when the mare can't, so that all you've to do, if, as I said before, you get this far, is to keep straight down to the two thorn-bushes—there, you see them yonder—Burke won't be able to take that line, but must keep upon the headlands, and go all round yonder; look now, you see the difference—so that before he can get over that wide ditch you'll be across it, and making for the stone wall. After that, by the powers, if you don't win I can't help you!"

"Where does the course turn after, father?" said I.

"Oh! a beautiful line of flat country, intersprinkled with walls, ditches, and maybe a hedge or two; but all fair, and only one rasping fence, the last of all. After that, you have a clean gallop of about a quarter of a mile, over as nice a sod as ever you cantered."

"And that last fence, what is it like?"

"Faith, it is a rasper; it's a wide gully, where there was a *boreen* once, and they say it's every inch of sixteen feet, that'll make it close upon twenty when you clear the clay on both sides. The gray horse, I'm told, has a way of jumping in and jumping out of these narrow roads; but take my advice, and go it in a fly. And now, captain, what between the running and the riding, and the talking together, I am as dry as a lime-kiln; so what do you say if we turn back to town, and have a bit of supper together? There's a kind of a cousin of mine, one Bob Mahon, a major in the Roscommon, and he has got a grouse-pie, and something hot to dilute it with waiting for us."

"Nothing will give me more pleasure, father; and there's only one thing more—indeed, I had nearly forgotten it altogether——"

"What s that?" said the priest, with surprise.

"Not having any intention to ride, I left town without any racing equipment;

breeches and boots I have, but as to a cap and a jacket——"

"I've provided for both," said Father Tom. "You saw the little man with a white head that sat at the head of the table, Tom Dillon, of Mount Brown, you know him?"

"I am not acquainted with him."

"Well, he knows you, that's all the same: his son, that's just gone to Gibraltar with his regiment, was about your size, and he had a new cap and jacket made for this very race, and of course they are lying there, doing nothing. So I sent over a little *gossoon* with a note, and I don't doubt but they are all at the inn this moment."

"By Jove, father!" said I, "you are a real friend, and a most thoughtful one too."

"Maybe I'll do more than that for you," said he, with a sly wink of his eye, that somehow suggested to my mind that he knew more of, and took a deeper interest in me, than I had reason to believe.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MAJOR MAHON AND HIS QUARTERS.

THE major's quarters were fixed in one of the best houses in the town, in the comfortable back parlor of which was now displayed a little table, laid for three persons: a devilled lobster, the grouse-pie already mentioned, some fried ham, and crisped potatoes, were the viands; but each was admirable in its kind, and with the assistance of an excellent bowl of hot punch, and the friendly welcome of the host, left nothing to be wished for or desired.

Major Bob Mahon was a short, thick-set little man, with round blue eyes, a turned-up nose, and a full underlip, which he had a habit of protruding with an air of no mean pretension; a short crop of curly black hair covered a head as round as a billiard-ball; these traits, with a certain peculiar smack of his mouth, by which he occasionally testified the approval of his own eloquence, were the most remarkable things about him. His great ambition was to be thought a military man; but somehow his pretensions in this respect smacked much more of the militia than the line. Indeed, he possessed a kind of adroit way of asserting the superiority of the former to the latter, averring that they who fought *pro aris et focis*—the major was fond of Latin—stood on far higher ground than the traveled mercenaries who only warred for pay. This peculiarity, and an absurd attachment to practical jokes, the result of which had frequently through life involved him in lawsuits, damages, compensations, and even duels, formed the great staple of his character, of all which the good priest informed me most fully on our way to the house.

"Captain Hinton, I believe," said the major, as he held out his hand in welcome.

"Mr. Hinton," said I, bowing.

"Ay, yes; Father Tom there doesn't know much about these matters. What regiment, pray?"

"The Grenadier Guards."

"Oh! a very good corps—mighty respectable corps; not that, between ourselves, I think overmuch of the regulars—between you and me, I never knew foreign travel do good to man or beast. What do they bring back with them, I'd like to know—French cookery and Italian licentiousness. No, no; give me the native troops! You were a boy at the time, but maybe you have heard how they behaved in the West, when Hoche landed. Egad! if it wasn't for the militia, the country was sacked. I commanded a company of the Roscommon at the time. I remember well we laid siege to a windmill, held by a desperate fellow, the miller—a resolute character, Mr. Hinton—he had two guns in the place with him."

"I wish to the Lord he had shot you with one of them, and we'd have been spared this long story!"

"I opened a parallel—"

"Maybe you'd open the pie?" said the priest, as he drew his chair, and sat down to the table. "Perhaps you forget, Bob, we have had a sharp ride of it this evening."

"Upon my conscience, so I did," replied the major, good-humoredly. "So let us have a bit of supper now, Mr. Hinton, and I'll finish my story by-and-by."

"The Heavens forbid!" piously ejaculated the priest, as he helped himself to a very considerable portion of the lobster.

"Is this a fast," said I, slyly, "Father Loftus?"

"No, my son; but we'll make it one. That reminds me of what happened to me, going up in the boat. It was a Friday, and the dinner, as you may suppose, was not over good; but there was a beautiful cut of fried salmon just before me, about a pound and a half, maybe two pounds; this I slipped quietly on my plate, observing to the company, in this way—'Ladies and gentlemen, this is a fast day with me'

—when a big fellow, with red whiskers, stooped across the table, cut my bit of fish in two halves, calling out, as he carried off one, 'Bad scran to ye, d'ye think nobody has a sowl to be saved but yourself?'"

"Ah! they're a pious people, are the Irish," said the major, solemnly; "and you'll remark that when you see more of them. And now, captain, how do you like us here?"

"Exceedingly," said I, with warmth. "I have had every reason to be greatly pleased with Ireland."

"That's right! and I'm glad of it! though, to be sure, you have not seen us in our holiday garb. Ah! if you were here before the union; if you saw Dublin as I remember it—and Tom, there, remembers it—'that was a pleasant place.' It was not trusting to balls and parties, to dinners and routs, but to all kinds of fun and devilment besides. All the members of Parliament used to be skylarking about the city, playing tricks on one another, and humbugging the Castle people—and, to be sure, the Castle was not the grave, stupid place it is now—they were convivial, jovial fellows—"

"Come, come, major," interrupted I; "you are really unjust—the present court is not the heavy—"

"Sure. I know what it is well enough. Hasn't the duke all the privy council and the bishops as often to dinner as the garrison and the bar? Isn't he obliged to go to his own apartment when they want to make a night of it, and sing a good chorus? Don't tell me—sure, even as late as Lord Westmoreland's time, it was another thing—pleasant and happy times they were, and the country will never be the same till we have them back again!"

Being somewhat curious to ascertain in what particular our degeneracy consisted—for, in my ignorance of better, I had hitherto supposed the present *régime* about as gay a thing as need be—I gradually led the major on to talk of those happier days, when Ireland kept all its fun for home consumption, and never exported even its surplus produce.

"It was better in every respect," responded the major. "Hadn't we all the patronage amongst us? There's Jonah, there—Barrington, I mean: well, he and I could make anything, from a tide-waiter to a master in chancery. It's little trouble small debts gave us then—a pipe of sherry never cost me more than a storekeeper in the ordnance, and I kept my horses at livery for three years with a washerwoman to Kilmainham Hospital; and as for fun—look at the Castle now! Don't I remember the time when we used to rob the coaches coming from the drawing-rooms; and pretty girls they were, inside of them."

"For shame, for shame!" cried Father Tom, with a sly look in the corner of his eye that by no means bespoke a suitable degree of horror at such unwarrantable proceedings.

"Well, if it was a shame it was no sin," responded the major; "for we never took anything more costly than kisses. Ah, dear me! them was the times! And, to be sure, every now and then we got a pull up from the lady-lieutenant, and were obliged to behave ourselves for a week or two together. One thing she never could endure—was a habit we had of leaving the Castle before they themselves left the ball-room. I'm not going to defend it—it was not very polite, I confess; but somehow or other there was always something going on we couldn't afford to lose—maybe a supper at the barrack, or a snug party at Daly's, or a bit of fun elsewhere. Her Excellency, however, got angry about it, and we got a quiet hint to reform our manners. This, I need not tell you, was a hopeless course; so we hit on an expedient that answered to the full as well. It was by our names being called out, as the carriages drove up, that our delinquency became known. So Matt Fortescue suggested that we should adopt some feigned nomenclature, which would totally defy every attempt at discovery; the idea was excellent, and we traded on it for many a day with complete success. One night, however, from some cause or other, the carriages were late in arriving, and we were all obliged to accompany the court into the supper-room; angry enough we were, but still there was no help for it; and so 'smiling through tears,' as the poet says, in we went. Scarcely, however, had we taken our places, when a servant called out something from the head of the stairs; another re-echoed it at the ante-chamber, and a third at the supper-room, shouted out, 'Oliver Cromwell's carriage stops the way!' The roar of laughter the announcement caused shook the very room; but it had scarcely subsided when there was another call for 'Brian Boru's coach,' quickly followed by 'Guy Fawkes's' and 'Paddy O'Rafferty's jingle,' which latter personage was no other than the Dean of Cork. I need not tell you that we kept our secret, and joined in the universal opinion of the whole room, 'that the household was shamefully disguised in drink;' and indeed there was no end to the mistakes that

night, for every now and then some character in heathen or modern history would turn up among the announcements; and as the laughter burst forth, the servants would grow ashamed for a while, and refuse to call any carriage where the style and title was a little out of the common. Ah! Mr. Hinton, if you had lived in those days—Well, well, no matter—here's a glass to their memory, anyway. It is the first time you've been in these parts, and I suppose you haven't seen much of the country?"

"Very little, indeed," replied I; "and even that much only by moonlight."

"I'm afraid," said Father Tom, half pensively, "that many of your countrymen take little else than a 'dark view' of us."

"See, now," said the major, slapping his hand on the table with energy, "the English know as much about Pat as Pat knows of purgatory—no offence to you, Mr. Hinton. I could tell you a story of a circumstance that once happened to myself."

"No, no, Bob," said the priest. It is bad taste to tell a story *en petit comité*. I'll leave it to the captain."

"If I am to be the judge," said I, laughingly, "I decide for the story."

"Let's have it then," said the priest. "Come, Bob, a fresh brew, and begin your tale."

"You are a sensual creature, Father Tom," said the major, "and prefer drink to intellectual discussion; not but that you may have both here at the same time; but in honor of my friend beside me, I'll not bear malice, but give you the story: and let me tell you, it is not every day in the week a man hears a tale with a moral to it, particularly down in this part of the country."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DEVIL'S GRIP.

"THE way of it was this. There was a little estate of mine in the county of Waterford that I used now and then to visit in the shooting season. In fact, except for that, there was very little inducement to go there: it was a bleak, ugly part of the country, a bad market-town near it, and not a neighbor within twelve miles. Well, I went over there—it was, as well as I remember, December two years—never was there such weather: it rained from morning till night, and blew and rained from night till morning; the slates were flying about on every side, and we used to keep fellows up all night that in case the chimneys were blown away we'd know where to find them in the morning. This was the pleasant weather I selected for my visit to the 'Devil's Grip'—that was the name of the townland where the house stood; and no bad name either; for, faith, if he hadn't his paw on it, it might have gone in law, like the rest of the property. However, down I went there, and only remembered on the evening of my arrival, that I had ordered my gamekeeper to poison the mountain to get rid of the poachers; so that, instead of shooting, which as I said before was all you could do in the place, there I was, with three brace of dogs, two guns, and powder enough to blow up a church, walking a big dining-parlor, all alone by myself, as melancholy as may be.

"You may judge how happy I was, looking out upon the bleak country side, with nothing to amuse me, except when now and then the roof of some cabin or other would turn upside down, like an umbrella, or watching an old windmill that had gone clean mad, and went round at such a pace that nobody dare go near it. All this was poor comfort: however, I got out of temper with the place; and so I sat down, and wrote a long advertisement for the English papers, describing the Devil's Grip as a little terrestrial paradise, in the midst of picturesque scenery, a delightful neighborhood, and an Arcadian peasantry, the whole to be parted with—a dead bargain—as the owner was about to leave the country; I didn't add that he had some thought of blowing his brains out with sheer disgust of his family residence. I wound up the whole with a paragraph to the effect, that if not disposed of within the month, the proprietor would break it up into small farms. I said this, because I intended to remain so long there; and, although I knew no purchaser would treat after he saw the premises, yet still some one might be fool enough to come over and look at them, and even that would help me to pass the Christmas. My calculation turned out correct; for before a week was over, a letter reached me, stating that a Mr. Green, of 196 High Holborn, would pay me a visit as soon as the weather moderated, and permitted him to travel. 'If he waits for that,' thought I, 'he'll not find me here; and if it blows as hard for the next week, he'll not find the house either;' so I mixed another tumbler of punch, and hummed myself to sleep with the 'Battle of Ross.'

"It was about four or five evenings after I received this letter, that old Dan M'Cormick, a kind of butler I have, a handy fellow—he was a steward for ten years in the Holyhead packet—burst into the room about ten o'clock, when I was disputing with myself whether I took six tumblers or seven. I said one, the decanter said the other.

"'It's blowing terrible, Mr. Bob,' says Dan.

"'Let it blow—what else has it to do?'

"'The trees is tumbling about as if they was drunk; there won't be one left before morn.'

"'They're right,' says I, 'to leave that, for the soil was never kind for planting.'

"'Two of the chimneys is down,' said he.

"'Devil mend them,' said I, 'they were always smoking.'

"'And the hall-door,' cried he, 'is blown flat into the hall.'

"'It's little I care,' said I; 'if it couldn't keep out the sheriff, it may let in the storm if it pleases.'

"'Murther! murther!' said he, wringing his hands, 'I wish we were at say—it's a cruel thing to have one's life perilled this way!'

"While we were talking a gossoon burst into the room with the news that the Milford packet had just gone ashore somewhere below the Hook Tower, adding, as is always the case on such occasions, that they were all drowned.

"I jumped up at this, put on my shooting-shoes, buttoned up my frieze coat, and, followed by Dan, took a short cut over the hills toward Passage, where I now found the packet had been driven in. Before we had gone half a mile, I heard the voices of some country people coming up the road toward me; but it was so dark you couldn't see your hand.

"'Who's there?' said I.

"'Tim Molloy, your honor,' was the answer.

"'What's the matter, Tim?' said I. 'Is there anything wrong?'

"'Nothing, sir, glory be to God!—it's only the corpse of the gentleman that was drowned there below.'

"'I ain't dead, I tell you; I'm only faint,' called out a shrill voice.

"'He says he's better,' said Tim; 'and maybe it's only the salt water that's in him; and, faix, when we found him, there was no more spark in him than in a wet sod.'

"Well, the short of it was we brought him up to the house, rubbed him with gunpowder before the fire, gave him about half a pint of burnt spirits, and put him to bed, he being just able to tell me, as he was dropping asleep, that he was my friend from No. 196 High Holborn.

"The next morning I sent up Dan to ask how he was, and he came down with the news that he was fast asleep. 'The best thing he could do,' said I—and I began to think over what a mighay load it would be upon my conscience if the decent man had been drowned; 'for, maybe, after all,' thought I, 'he is in earnest; maybe he wished to buy a beautiful place like that I have described in the papers;' and so I began to relent, and wonder with myself how I could make the country pleasant for him during his stay. 'It'll not be above a day or two at furthest, particularly after he sees the place. Ay, there's the rub! the poor devil will find out then that I have been hoaxing him.' This kept fretting me all day, and I was continually sending up word to know if he was awake, and the answer always was, 'Still sleeping.' Well, about four o'clock, as it was growing dark, Oakley, of the Fifth, and two of his brother officers, came bowling up to the door, on their way to Carrick. Here was a piece of luck! So we got dinner ready for the party, brought up a good store of claret at one side of the fireplace, and a plentiful stock of bog-fir at the other, and resolved to make a night of it; and just as I was describing to my friends the arrival of my guest above stairs, who should enter the room but himself. He was a round little fellow, about my size, with a short, quick, business-like way about him. Indeed, he was a kind of a drysalter, or something of that nature, in London, had made a large fortune, and wished to turn country gentleman. I had only time to learn these few particulars, and to inform that he was at that moment in the mansion he had come to visit, when dinner was announced.

"Down we sat; and, faith, a jollier party rarely met together. Poor Mr. Green knew but little of Ireland; but we certainly tried to enlighten him; and he drank in wonders with his wine, at such a rate that by eleven o'clock he was carried to his room, pretty much in the same state as on his arrival the night before, the only difference being it was Sneyd, not salt water this time, that filled him.

"'I like the cockney,' said Oakley; 'that fellow's good fun. I say, Bob, bring him over with you to-morrow to dinner. We halt at Carrick till the detachment comes up.'

"'Could you call it breakfast?' said I. 'There's a thought just strikes me; we'll be over in Carrick with you about six o'clock; we'll have our breakfast—whatever you like to give us—and dine with you about eleven or twelve afterwards.'

"Oakley liked the project well, and, before we parted, the whole thing was arranged for the next day.

"Towards four o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, Mr. Green was informed by Daniel that, as we had made an engagement to take an early breakfast some miles off, he ought to be up and stirring; at the same time a pair of candles were brought into the room, hot water for shaving, etc.; and the astonished cockney, who looked at his watch, perceived that it was but four.

"'These are very early people,' thought he. 'However, the habits of the country must be complied with.' So saying, he proceeded with his toilet, and at last reached the drawing-room just as my drag dashed up to the door, the lamps fixed and shining, and everything in readiness for departure.

"'We'll have a little shooting, Mr. Green,' said I. 'After breakfast, we'll see what my friend's preserves offer. I suppose you're a good shot?'

"'I can't say much for my performance; but I'm passionately fond of it.'

"'Well,' added I, 'I believe I can answer for it, you'll have a good day here.'

"So chatting, we rolled along, the darkness gradually thickening round us, and the way becoming more gloomy and deserted.

"'It's strange,' says Mr. Green, after a while—'it's strange, how very dark it grows before sunrise; for I perceive it much blacker now than when we set out.'

"'Every climate has its peculiarities,' said I; 'and now that we're used to this, we like it better than any other: but see, there—yonder where you observe the light in the valley—that's Carrick. My friend's house is a little at the side of the town. I hope you've a good appetite for breakfast.'

"'Trust me, I never felt so hungry in my life.'

"'Ah, here they come!' said Oakley, as he stood with a lantern in his hand, at the barrack-gate; 'here they are! Good morning, Mr. Green. Bob, how goes it? Heavenly morning!'

"'Delightful, indeed,' said poor Green, though evidently not knowing why.

"'Come along, boys, now,' said Oakley; 'we've a great deal before us, though I am afraid, Mr. Green, you will think little of our Irish sporting after your English preserves. However, I have kept a few brace of pheasants, very much at your service, in a snug clover field near the house. So now to breakfast.'

"There were about half a dozen of the Fifth at that time in the barrack, who all entered heart and hand in the scheme, and with them we sat down to a capital meal, which, if it was not for a big teapot and an urn that figured in the middle of the table, might very well have been called dinner. Poor Mr. Green, who for old prejudice' sake began with his congo and a muffin, soon afterwards, and by an easy transition, glided into soup and fish, and went the pace with the rest of us. The claret began to circulate briskly, and after a couple of hours the whisky made its appearance. The Englishman, whose attention was never suffered to flag, with singular anecdotes of a country whose eccentricities he already began to appreciate, enjoyed himself to the utmost. He laughed, he drank, he even proposed to sing; and with one hand on Oakley's shoulder, and the other on mine, he registered a vow to purchase an estate and spend the rest of his days in Ireland. It was now about eleven o'clock, when I proposed that we should have a couple of hours at the woodcocks before luncheon.

"'Ah! yes,' said Green, rubbing his hands, 'let us not forget the shooting. I'm passionately fond of sport.'

"It took some time to caparison ourselves for the field. Shot-bags, flasks, and powder-horns were distributed about, while three brace of dogs caracoled round the room, and increased the uproar. We now sallied forth. It was a dark and starless night—the wind still blowing a hurricane from the northeast, and not a thing to be seen two yards from where you stood.

"'Glorious weather,' said Oakley.

"'A delicious morning,' cried another. 'When those clouds blow over, we shall have no rain.'

"'That's a fine line of country, Mr. Green,' said I.

"'Eh—what—a fine what? I can see nothing—it's pitch dark!'

"'Ah, I forgot,' said I. "How stupid we were, Oakley, not to remember that Mr. Green was not used to our climate! We can see everything, you know; but come along, you'll get better by-and-by.'

"With this we hurried him down a lane, through a hedge, and into a ploughed field; while on every side of him pop, pop went the guns, accompanied by exclamations of enthusiastic pleasure and delight.

POOR M'GRIEN ALMOST IN A PANIC OF EXCITEMENT AND TREPIDATION, PULLED BOTH TRIGGERS, AND NEARLY FELL BACK WITH THE RECOIL. (P. 798.)

"'There they go—mark!—that's yours, Tom—well done—cock pheasant, by Jove! Here, Mr. Green; this way, Mr. Green—that dog is pointing—there, there; don't you see there?' said I, almost lifting the gun to his shoulder, while poor Mr. Green, almost in a panic of excitement and trepidation, pulled both triggers, and nearly fell back with the recoil.

"'Splendid shot, begad!—killed both,' said Oakley. 'Ah! Mr. Green, we have no chance with you. Give him another gun at once.'

"'I should like a little brandy,' said Mr. Green, 'for my feet are wet.'

"I gave him my flask, which he emptied at a pull; while, at the same time, animated with fresh vigor, he tramped manfully forward, without fear or dread. The firing still continued hotly around us; and as Mr. Green discharged his piece whenever he was bid, we calculated that, in about an hour and a half, he had fired about a hundred and fifty times. Wearied and fatigued by his exertions, at length he sat down upon a bank, while one of the gamekeepers covered the ground about him with ducks, hens, and turkey-cocks, as the spoils of his exertions.

"At Oakley's proposal we now agreed to go back to luncheon, which I need not tell you was a hot supper, followed by mulled claret and more punch. Here the cockney came out still better than before. His character as a sportsman raised him in his own esteem, and he sang 'The Poacher' for two hours, until he fell fast asleep on the carpet. He was then conveyed to bed, where, as on the former day, he slept till late in the afternoon.

"Meanwhile, I had arranged another breakfast party at Ross, where we arrived about seven o'clock in the evening; and so on for the rest of the week, occasionally varying the amusement by hunting, fishing, or coursing.

"At last poor Mr. Green, when called on one morning to dress, sent down Dan with his compliments, that he wished to speak to me. I went to him at once, and found him sitting up in his bed.

"'Ah! Mr. Mahon,' said he, 'this will never do; it's a pleasant life no doubt, but I never could go on with it. Will you tell me one thing—do you never see the sun here?'

"'Oh, bless you! yes,' said I; 'repeatedly. He was out for two hours on last Patrick's Day, and we have him now and then, promiscuously!'

"'How very strange! how very remarkable,' said he, with a sigh, 'that we in England should know so little of all this! but to tell you the truth, I don't think I could ever get used to Lapland—it's Ireland I mean—I beg your pardon for the mistake; and now, may I ask you another question—is this the way you always live?'

"'Why pretty much in this fashion; during the hazy season we go about to each other's houses, as you see; and one gets so accustomed to the darkness—'

"'Ah, now, don't tell me that, I know I never could; it's no use my trying it; I'm used to the daylight; I have seen it, man and boy, for above fifty years, and I never could grope about this way. Not but that I am very grateful to you for all your hospitality; but I had rather go home.'

"'You'll wait for morning at all events,' said I; 'you will not leave the house in the dead of the night.'

"'Oh, indeed, for the matter of that it doesn't signify much; night and day is much about the same thing in this country.'—

And so he grew obstinate, and, notwithstanding all I could say, insisted on his departure; and the same evening he sailed from the quay of Waterford, wishing me every health and happiness, while he added, with a voice of trembling earnestness,

"'Yes, Mr. Mahon, pardon me if I am wrong, but I wish to Heaven *you had a little more light in Ireland!*'"

I am unable to say how far the good things of Major Mahon's table seasoned the story I have just related, but I confess I laughed at it loud and long—a testimony on my part which delighted the major's heart; for, like all anecdote-mongers, he was not indifferent to flattery.

"The moral particularly pleases me," said I.

"Ay, but the whole thing's true as I am here. Whist! there's somebody at the door. Come in, whoever you are."

At these words the door cautiously opened, and a boy of about twelve years of age entered. He carried a bundle under one arm, and held a letter in his hand.

"Oh, here it is!" said Father Tom. "Come here, Patsey, my boy, here's the penny I promised you. There now, don't make a bad use of your money."

The little fellow's eyes brightened, and, with a happy smile and a pull of his forelock for a bow, he left the room delighted.

"Twelve miles—ay, and long miles, too—in less than three hours; not bad traveling, captain, for a bit of a gossoon like that!"

"And for a penny?" said I, almost starting with surprise.

"To be sure," said the priest, as he cut the cord of the package, and opened it on the table. "Here we are, as nate a jacket as ever I set my eyes on—green and white, with a cap of the same." So saying, he unfolded the racing-costume, which by the desire of both parties I was obliged immediately to try on. "There, now," resumed he, "turn about; it fits you like your skin."

"It looks devilish well, upon my word," said the major; "put on the cap; and see, too, he has sent a whip—that was very thoughtful of Dillon. But what's this letter here? For you, I think, Mr. Hinton."

The letter was in a lady's hand. I broke the seal, and read as follows:

"Dear Sir,—My uncle Dillon requests you will give us the pleasure of your company at dinner to-morrow, at six o'clock. I have taken the liberty to tell him that, as we are old acquaintances, you will perhaps kindly overlook his not having visited you to-day; and I shall feel happy if, by accepting the invitation, you will sustain my credit on this occasion.

"He desires me to add, that the racing-jacket, etc., are most perfectly at your service, as well as any articles of horse-gear you may be in want of.

"Believe me, dear sir, truly yours,

"Louisa Bellew.

"Mount Brown, Wednesday evening."

A thrill of pleasure ran through me as I read these lines; and, notwithstanding my efforts to conceal my emotion from my companions, they but too plainly saw the excitement I felt.

"Something agreeable there. You don't look, Mr. Hinton, as if that were a latitat or a bill of costs you were reading."

"Not exactly," said I, laughing; "it is an invitation to dinner from Mount Brown—wherever that may be."

"The best house in the country," said the major; "and a good fellow he is, Hugh Dillon. When is it for?"

"To-morrow, at six."

"Well, if he has not asked me to meet you, I'll invite myself, and we'll go over together."

"Agreed," said I; "but how shall I send back the answer?"

The major promised to send his servant over with the reply, which I penned at once.

"Just tell Hugh," said the major, "that I'll join you."

I blushed, stammered, and looked confused.

"I am not writing to Mr. Dillon," said I, "for the invitation came through a lady of the family, Miss Bellew—his niece, I believe."

"Whew!" said the major, with a long whistle; "is it there we are? Oh, by the powers! Mr. Hinton, that's not fair; to come down here, not only to win our money in a steeple-chase, but to want to carry off the belle of our country besides—that'll never do."

"She doesn't belong to you at all," said Father Tom; "she is a parishioner of mine, and so were her father and grandfather before her; and moreover than that, she is the prettiest girl, and the best too, in the country she lives in, and that's no small praise—for it's Galway I'm talking of. And now, here's a bumper to her—and who'll refuse it?"

"Not I, certainly."

"Nor I," said the major, as we drank her health with all the honors. "Now for another jug," quoth he, as he moved toward the fireplace in search of the kettle.

"After that toast, not another drop," said I, resolutely.

"Well said, chimed in the priest; "may I never, if that wasn't very Irish."

Firmly resisting all the major's solicitations to resume my place at the table, I wished both my friends good-night; and having accepted Bob Mahon's offer of a seat in his tax-cart to the race, I shook their hands warmly, and took my leave.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE STEEPLE-CHASE.

I did not awake till past noon the next day, and had only completed my dressing when Major Mahon made his appearance. Having pronounced my costume accurate, and suggested that, instead of carrying my racing-cap in my hat, I should tie the string round my neck and let it hang down in front, he assisted me on with my great-coat, in which, notwithstanding that the season was summer and the day a hot one, he buttoned me up to the chin and down to the knees.

"There, now," said he, "you look mighty like the thing—where's your whip? We have no time to lose; so jump into the tax-cart, and let us be off."

As my reader may remember, the race-ground lay about a mile from the town,

but the road thither, unlike the peaceful quiet of the preceding night, was now thronged with people on foot and horseback. Vehicles, too, of every description were there,—barouches and landaus, hack chaises, buggies, and jaunting-cars, whiskies, noddies, and, in fact, every species of conveyance pronounced capable of rolling upon its wheels, were put into requisition; nor was the turnout of cavalry of a character less mixed. Horses of every shape and color,—some fat from grass; others lean, like anatomical specimens; old and young; the rich and the poor; the high sheriff of the county, with his flashy four-in-hand; the mendicant on his crutches—all pressed eagerly forward; and as I surveyed the motley mass, I felt what pleasure I could take in the scene were I not engaged as a principal performer.

On reaching the course, we found it already occupied by numerous brilliant equipages, and a strong cavalcade of horsemen; of these the greater number were well mounted, and amused themselves and the bystanders by leaping the various fences around, a species of pastime which occasionally afforded food for laughter, many a soiled coat and broken hat attesting the color and consistence of the clayey ground. There were also refreshment-booths, stalls for gaming on an humble scale, tables laid out with beer, hard eggs, and gingerbread—in a word, all the ordinary and extraordinary preparations which accompany any great assemblage of people whose object is amusement.

A temporary railing of wood, rudely and hastily put together, enclosed a little space, reserved as a weighing-stand; here the stewards of the course were assembled, along with "the dons" of the country, and into this privileged sanctum was I introduced by the major in due form. All eyes were turned on me as I entered, and, whether from the guardianship of him who acted as my chaperon, or that the costume of my coat and overalls had propitiated their favor, I cannot say; but, somehow, I felt that there was more courtesy in their looks, and an air of greater civility in their bearing, than I had remarked the preceding day at the town-hall. True, these were, for the most part, men of better stamp—the real gentry of the country—who, devotedly attached to field sports, had come, not as betting characters, but to witness a race. Several of them took off their hats as I approached, and saluted me with politeness. While returning their courtesy, I felt my arm gently touched, and, on looking around, perceived Mr. Dillon, of Mount Brown, who, with a look of most cordial greeting, and an outstretched hand, presented himself before me.

"You'll dine with us, Mr. Hinton, I hope?" said he. "No apology, pray. You shall not lose the ball, for my girls insist on going to it; so that we can all come in together. There, now, that is settled. Will you permit me to introduce you to a few of my friends? Here's Mr. Barry Connolly wishes much to know you. You'll pardon me, Mr. Hinton, but your name is so familiar to me through my niece, I forget that we are not old acquaintances."

So saying, the little man took my arm, and led me about through the crowd, introducing me right and left. Of the names, the rank, and the residences of my new friends, I knew as much as I did of the domestic arrangements of the King of Congo; but one thing I can vouch for—more unbounded civility and hospitable attention never did man receive. One gentleman begged me to spend a few days with him at his shooting lodge in the mountains—another wanted to make up a coursing-party for me—a third volunteered to mount me if I'd come down in the hunting-season; one and all gave me most positive assurance that if I remained in the country I should neither lack bed nor board for many a day to come.

But a few days before, and, in my ignorance, I had set down this same class as rude, under-bred, and uncivilized, and, had I left the country on the preceding evening, I should have carried away my prejudices with me. The bare imitation of his better that the squireen presents was the source of this blunder; the spurious currency had, by its false glitter, deteriorated the sterling coin in my esteem; but now I could detect the counterfeit from the genuine metal.

"The ladies are on this side," said Mr. Dillon. "Shall we make our bow to them?"

"You'll not have time, Dillon," said a friend who overheard his remark; here comes the horses."

As he spoke, a distant cheer rose from the bottom of the hill, which, gradually taken up by those nearer, grew louder and louder, till it filled the very air.

"What is it?" said I, eagerly.

"It's 'Cathleen,'" said a person beside me. "The mare was bred in the neighborhood, and excites a great interest among the country people."

The crowd now fell back rapidly, and Mr. Burke, seated in a high tandem, dashed up to the weighing-stand, and, giving the reins to his servant, sprang to the ground."

His costume was a loose coat, of coarse drab cloth, beset on every side by pockets of various shapes and dimensions, long gaiters of the same material encased his legs, and the memorable white hat, set most rakishly on the head, completed his equipment. Scarcely had he put foot to ground, when he was surrounded by a number of his obsequious followers; but, paying little or no attention to their proffered civilities, he brushed rudely through them, and walked straight up to where I was standing. There was an air of swaggering insolence in his manner which could not be mistaken, and I could mark that, in the sidelong glance he threw about him, he intended that our colloquy should be for the public ear. Nodding familiarly, while he touched his hat with one finger, he addressed me:

"Good morning, sir; I am happy to have met you so soon. There is a report that we are to have no race. May I ask you if there be any ground for it?"

"Not so far as I'm concerned," replied I, in a tone of quiet indifference.

"At least," resumed he, "there would seem some color for the rumor. Your horse is not here—I understand he has not left the stable—and your groom is among the crowd below. I only ask the question, as it affects my betting-book; there are doubtless here many gentlemen among your friends who would wish to back you."

This was said with an air of sneering mockery so palpable as to call forth an approving titter from the throng of satellites at his back.

Without deigning any reply to his observation, I whispered a few words to the major, who at once, taking a horse from a farmer, threw himself into the saddle, and cantered off to the mill.

"In fifteen minutes the time will be up," said Mr. Burke, producing his watch. "Isn't that so, Dillon? You are the judge here."

"Perfectly correct," replied the little man, with a hasty, confused manner, that showed me in what awe he stood of his redoubted relative.

"Then in that time I shall call on you to give the word to start; for I believe the conditions require me to ride over the course, with or without a competitor."

So saying, Mr. Burke proceeded leisurely to unbutton his great coat, which, with the assistance of his friend, he drew off. Two sedulous familiars were meanwhile unbuttoning his gaiters, and in a few seconds he stood forth, what even my most prejudiced judgment could not deny, the very *beau idéal* of a gentleman rider. His jacket, of black and yellow, bore the stains of more than one race; but his whole carriage, not less than his costume, looked like one who felt every inch the jockey.

His mare was led within the ropes to be saddled—a proceeding conducted under his own eye, and every step of which he watched with critical nicety; this done, he sat down upon a bench, and with watch in hand, seemed to count the minutes as they flew past.

"Here we are—here we are—all right, Hinton!" shouted the major, as he galloped up the hill. "Jump into the scale, my lad, your saddle is beside you; don't lose a moment."

"Yes, off with your coat," said another, "and jump in."

Divesting myself of my outer garments with a speed not second to that of Mr. Burke, I took my saddle under my arm, and seated myself in the scale. The groom fortunately had left nothing to a moment, and my saddle being leaded to the required weight, the operation took not a minute.

"Saddle now as quickly as you can," whispered Dillon.

While he was yet speaking, the gallant grey was led in, covered with clothing from head to tail.

"All was quite right," said Mahon, in a low whisper; "your horse won't bear a crowd. and the groom kept him stabled to the last moment; you are in luck, besides," continued he; "they say he is in a good temper this morning—and indeed he walked up from the mill as gently as a lamb."

"Mount, gentlemen," cried Mr. Dillon, as, with watch in hand, he ascended a little platform in front of the weighing-stand.

I had but time to throw one glance at my horse, when the major gave me his hand to lift me into the saddle.

"After you, sir, said Mr. Burke, with a mock politeness, as he drew back to permit me to pass out first.

I touched my horse gently with the snaffle, but he stood stock still: I essayed again, but with no better success. The place was too crowded to permit of any attempt to bully him, so I once more tried gentle means: it was of no use; he stood rooted to the ground. Before I could de-

termine what next to do, Mahon sprang forward and took him by the head, when the animal walked quietly forward without a show of restiveness.

"He's a droll devil," said the groom, "and in one of his odd humors this morning, for that's what I never saw him do before."

I could see, as I passed out, that this little scene, short as it was, had not impressed the bystanders with any exalted notion of my horsemanship; for although there was nothing actually to condemn, my first step did not seem to augur well. Having led me forth before the stand, the major pointed with his finger to the line of country before me, and was repeating the priest's injunctions, when Mr. Burke rode up to my side, and, with a smile of very peculiar meaning, said,—

"Are you ready *now*, sir?"

I nodded assent—the major let go the bridle.

"We are all ready, Dillon!" cried Burke, turning in his saddle.

"All ready!" repeated Dillon; "then, away!"

As he spoke the bell rang, and off we went.

For about thirty yards we cantered side by side, the gray horse keeping stroke with the other, and not betraying the slightest evidence of bad temper. Whatever my own surprise, the amazement of Burke was beyond all bounds. He turned completely round in his saddle to look, and I could see, in the workings of his features, the distrustful expression of one who suspected he had been duped. Meanwhile, the cheers of the vast multitude pealed high on every side; and as the thought flashed across me that I might still acquit myself with credit, my courage rose, and I gripped my saddle with double energy.

At the foot of the slope there was, as I have already mentioned, a small fence; toward this we were now approaching at the easy sling of a hand-gallop, when suddenly Burke's features—which I watched from time to time with intense anxiety—changed their expression of doubt and suspicion for a look of triumphant malice: putting spurs to his horse he sprang a couple of lengths in advance, and rode madly at the fence; the gray stretched out to follow; and already was I preparing for the leap, when Burke, who had now reached the fence, suddenly swerved his horse round, and affecting to balk, cantered back toward the hill. The manœuvre was perfectly successful. My horse, who up to that moment was going on well, threw his fore-legs far out, and came to a dead stop. In an instant the trick was palpable to my senses: and, in the heat of my passion, I dashed in both spurs, and endeavored to lift him by the rein. Scarcely had I done so, when, as if the very ground beneath had jerked us upwards, he sprang into the air, dashing his head forward between the fore-legs, and throwing up his haunches behind, till I thought we should come clean over in the summersault. I kept my seat, however, and thinking that boldness alone could do at such a moment, I only waited till he reached the ground, when I again drove the spurs up to the rowels in his flanks; with a snort of passion he bounded madly up, and pawing the air for some moments with his fore-legs, lit upon the earth, panting with rage, and trembling in every limb. The shouts which now filled my ears seemed but like mockery and derision; and, stung almost to madness, I fixed myself in my seat, pulled my cap upon my brows, and with clenched teeth gathered up the reins to renew the conflict; there was a pause now of a few seconds; both horse and man seemed to feel there was a deadly strife before them, and each seemed to collect his energy for the blow. The moment came; and, driving in the spurs with all my force, I struck him with the whip between the ears. With a snort like a yell, the savage animal sprang into the air, writhing his body like a fish. Bound after bound he made, as though goaded on to madness; and at length, after several fruitless efforts to unseat me, he dashed straight upwards, struck out with his fore-legs, poised for a second or two, and then with a crash fell back upon me, rolling me on the ground, bruised, stunned, and senseless.

How long this state lasted I cannot tell, but when half-consciousness returned to me, I found myself standing in the field, my head reeling with the shock, my clothes torn and ragged; my horse was standing beside me, with some one at his head, while another, whose voice I thought I could recognize, called out,—

"Get up, man, get up! you'll do the thing well yet. There, don't lose time."

"No, no," said another voice, "it's a shame; the poor fellow is half killed already—and there, don't you see Burke's at the second fence?"

Thus much I heard amid the confusion around me; but more I know not. The next moment I was in the saddle, with

only sense enough left to feel reckless to desperation. I cried out to leave the way, and turned toward the fence. A tremendous cut of a whip fell upon the horse's quarter from some one behind, and, like a shell from a mortar, he sprang wildly out. With one fly he cleared the fence, dashed across the field, and, before I was firm in my seat, was over the second ditch. Burke had barely time to look round him, ere I had passed. He knew that the horse was away with me, but he also knew his bottom, and that if I could but keep my saddle, the chances were now in my favor. Then commenced a terrible struggle. In advance of him about four lengths, I took everything before me, my horse flying straight as an arrow. I dared not turn my head, but I could mark that Burke was making every effort to get before me. We were now approaching a tall hedge, beyond which lay the deep ground, of which the priest had already spoken; so long as the fences presented nothing of height, the tremendous pace I was going was all in my favor; but now there was fully five feet of a hedge standing before me. Unable to collect himself, my horse came with his full force against it, and chesting the tangled branches, fell head foremost into the field. Springing to my legs unhurt, I lifted him at once; but ere I could remount, Burke came bounding over the hedge, and lit safely beside me. With a grin of malice he turned one look toward me, and dashed on. For some seconds my horse was so stunned he could scarcely move, and as I pressed him forward, the heavy action of his shoulder, and his drooping head, almost bid me to despair. By degrees, however, he warmed up, and got into his stride; before me, and nearly a hundred yards in advance, rode Burke, still keeping up his pace, but skirting the headlands to my right. I saw now the force of the priest's remark, that were I to take a straight line through the deep ground, the race was still in my favor; but dare I do so with a horse so dead beat as mine was? The thought was quick as lightning; it was my only chance to win, and I resolved to take it. Plunging into the soft and marshy ground before me, I fixed my eye upon the blue flag that marked the course; at this moment Burke turned and saw me, and I could perceive that he immediately slackened his pace, "Yes," thought I, "he thinks I am pounded, but it is not come to that yet;" in fact, my horse was improving at every stride, and although the ground was trying, his breeding began to tell, and I could feel that he had plenty of running still in him. Affecting, however, to lift him at every stroke, and seeming to labor to help him through, I induced Burke to hold in, until I gradually crept up to the fence before he was within several lengths of it. The gray no sooner caught sight of the wall than he pricked up his ears and rushed toward it; with a vigorous lift I popped him over, without touching a stone. Burke followed in splendid style, and in an instant, was alongside of me.

Now began the race in right earnest. The cunning of his craft could avail him little here, except as regarded the superior management of his own horse; so Burke, abandoning every *ruse*, rode manfully on; as for me, my courage rose every moment, and so far from feeling any fear, I only wished that the fences were larger, and, like a gambler who would ruin his adversary at one throw, I would have taken a precipice if he pledged himself to follow. For some fields we rode within a few yards of each other, side by side, each man lifting his horse at the same moment to his leap, and alighting with the same shock beyond it. Already our heads were turned homewards, and I could mark on the distant hill the far-off crowds whose echoing shouts came floating toward us; but one fence of any consequence remained, that was the large grip that formed the last of the race; we had cleared a low stone wall, and now entered the field that led to the great leap. It was evident that Burke's horse, both from being spared the shocks that mine had met with, and from his better riding, was the fresher of the two; we had neither of us, however, much to boast of on that score, and, perhaps, at a calmer moment would have little fancied facing such a leap as that before us. It was evident that the first over must win, and as each man measured the other's stride, the intense anxiety of the moment nearly rose to madness. From the instant of entering the field, I had marked out with my eye where I meant to take the leap; Burke had evidently done this also, and we now slightly diverged, each to his allotted spot. The pace was awful. All thought of danger lost, or forgotten, we came nearer and nearer with knitted brow and clenched lip —I, the first. Already I was on the side, with a loud cry and a cut of my whip I rose my horse to it, the noble beast sprang forward, but his strength was spent, and he fell downwards on his head; recovering him without losing my seat, I scrambled up the opposite bank and looked round. Burke, who had pressed the pace

so hotly before, had only done so to blow my horse and break him down at his leap; and I saw him now approaching the fence with his mare fully in hand, and her haunches well under her. Unable to move forward, save at a walk, I turned in my saddle to watch him; he came boldly to the brink of the fence, his hand was prepared to strike, when from the bottom of the grip a figure sprang wildly up, and as the horse rose into the air, he jumped at the bridle, pulling down both the horse and the rider with a crash upon him, a loud cry of agony rising 'mid the struggle.

As they disappeared from my sight I felt like one in a trance; all thoughts, however, were lost in the desire to win, and collecting my energies for a last struggle, I lifted the gallant gray with both hands, and by dint of spurring, shaking, pressed him to a canter, and rode in the winner, amid the deafening cheers and cries of thousands.

"Keep back—keep back," cried Mahon, restraining with his whip the crowd that bore down upon me. "Hinton, take care that no one touch your horse; ride inside, take off your saddle, and get into the scale."

Moving onward like one in a dream, I mechanically obeyed the direction, while the cries and shouts around me grew each moment louder and wilder.

"Here he comes!—here he comes!" shouted several voices, and Burke galloped up, and without drawing rein rode into the weighing stand.

"Foul play," roared he, in a tone hoarse with passion. "I protest against the race. Holloa, sir!" he shouted, turning toward me.

"There—there," said Mahon, as he hurried me along toward the scale; "you have nothing to do with him;" and at the same moment a number of others pressed eagerly forward to shake my hand and wish me joy.

"Look here, Dillon," cried the major, "mark the weight—eleven stone two, and two pounds over, if he wanted it. There now," whispered he, in a voice which, though not meant for my hearing, I could distinctly catch—"there now, Dillon, take him into your carriage and get him off the ground as fast as you can."

Just at this instant, Burke, who had been talking with loud voice and violent gesticulations, burst through the crowd, and stood before us.

"Do you say, Dillon, that I have lost this race?"

"Yes, yes, to be sure," cried out full twenty voices.

"My question was not addressed to you, sirs," said he, boiling with passion; "I ask the judge of this course, have I lost?"

"My dear Ulick—" said Dillon, in a voice scarce audible from agitation.

"No cursed palaver with me," said he, interrupting. "Lost or won, sir—one word."

"Lost, of course," replied Dillon, with more of firmness than I had believed him capable.

"Well, sir," said Burke, as he turned toward me, his teeth clenched with passion, "it may be some alloy to your triumph to know that your accomplice has smashed his thigh-bone in your service; and yet I can tell you, you have not come to the end of this matter."

Before I could reply, Burke's friends tore him from the spot and hurried him to a carriage; while I, still more than ever puzzled by the words I had heard, looked from one to the other of those around for an explanation.

"Never mind, Hinton," said Mahon, as, half breathless with running, he rushed up and seized me by the hand. "The poor fellow was discharging a double debt in his own rude way: gratitude on your score, vengeance on his own."

"Tally-ho, tally-ho!—hark, there—stole away!" shouted a wild cry from without, and at the same instant four countrymen came forward, carrying a door between them, on which was stretched the pale and mangled figure of Tipperary Joe. "A drink of water—spirits—tay—anything for the love of the Virgin! I'm famished, and I want to drink Captain Phil's health. Ah! darling!" said he, as he turned his filmy eyes up toward me, "didn't I do it beautiful? didn't I pay him off for this?" With these words he pointed to a blue welt that stretched across his face, from the mouth to the ear. "He gave me that yesterday, for saying long life and success to you!"

"Oh! this is too horrible," said I, gasping for breath, "my poor fellow; and I who had treated you so harshly." I took his hand in mine, but it was cold and clammy; his features were sunken too—he had fainted.

"Come, Hinton," said the major, "we can do no good here; let us move down to the inn at once, and see after this poor boy."

"You are coming with us, Mr. Hinton?" cried Dillon.

"Not now, not now," said I, while my throat was swelling with repressed emotion. Without suffering me to say more, Mahon

almost lifted me into the tax-cart, and, putting his horse to the gallop, dashed toward the town, the cheers of the people following us as we went: for, to their wild sense of justice, Joe was a genuine martyr, and I shared in the glory of his self-devotion.

The whole way toward Loughrea Mahon continued to talk, but not a word could I catch; my thoughts were fixed on the poor fellow who had suffered for my sake, and I would have given all I possessed in the world to have lost the race, and seen him safe and sound before me.

"There! there!" said the major, as he shook me by the arm; "don't take it to heart this way; you know little of Ireland, that's plain; that poor fellow will be prouder for the feeling you have shown toward him this night than many a king upon his throne. To have served a gentleman, to have put him under an obligation—*that* has a charm you can't estimate the extent of. Beware, only beware of one thing—do not, by any offer of money, destroy the illusion; do what you like for him, but take care of that."

We now reached the little inn, and Mahon—for I was incapable of all thought or exertion—got a room in readiness for Joe, and summoning the doctor of the place, provided everything for his care and accommodation.

"Now, Hinton," said he, as he burst into my room, "all's right; Joe's comfortable in bed; the fracture turns out not to be a bad one. So rouse yourself, for Dillon's carriage, with all the ladies, is waiting these ten minutes."

"No, no," cried I; "I can't go to this dinner-party; I'll not quit—"

"Nonsense, man!" said he, interrupting me; "you can only do harm here; the doctor says he must be left quite quiet, and alone; besides, Dillon has behaved so well to-day—so stoutly, for *him*—that you mustn't forget it. There, now, where are your clothes? I'll pack them for you."

I started up to obey him, but a giddiness came over me, and I sank into my chair, weak and sick.

"This will never do," said Mahon; "I had better tell them I'll drive you over myself; and, now, just lie down for an hour or two, and keep quiet."

This advice I felt was good, and, thanking my kind friend with a squeeze of the hand, for I could not speak, I threw myself upon my bed, and, strange enough, while such contending emotions disturbed my brain, fell asleep almost immediately.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DINNER-PARTY AT MOUNT BROWN.

I AWOKE refreshed after half an hour's doze, and then every circumstance of the whole day was clear and palpable before me. I remembered each minute particular, and could bring to my mind all the details of the race itself, notwithstanding the excitement they had passed in, and the rapidity with which they succeeded each other.

My first thought was to visit poor Joe, and, creeping stealthily to his room, I opened the door. The poor fellow was fast asleep, his features had already become colored with fever, and a red, hectic spot on either cheek told that the work of mischief had begun; yet still his sleep was tranquil, and a half smile curled his bloodless lips. On his bed his old hunting-cap was placed, a bow of white and green ribbons—the colors I wore—fastened gaudily in the front; upon this, doubtless, he had been gazing to the last moment of his waking. I now stole noiselessly back, and began a letter to O'Grady, whose anxiety as to the result would, I knew, be considerable.

It was not without pride, I confess, that I narrated the events of the day; yet, when I came to that part of my letter in which Joe was to be mentioned, I could not avoid a sense of shame in acknowledging the cruel contrast between *my* conduct and *his* gratitude. I did not attempt to theorize upon what he had done; for I felt that O'Grady's better knowledge of his countrymen would teach him to sound the depths of a motive, the surface of which I could but skim. I told him frankly that the more I saw of Ireland, the less I found I knew about it; so much of sterling good seemed blended with unsettled notions and unfixed opinions, such warmth of heart, such frank cordiality, with such traits of suspicion and distrust, that I could make nothing of them. "Either," thought I, "these people are born to present the anomaly of all that is most opposite and contradictory in human nature, or else the fairest gifts that ever graced manhood have been perverted and abused by mismanagement and misguidance."

I had just finished my letter, when Bob Mahon drove up, his honest face radiant with smiles and good-humor.

"Well, Hinton," cried he, "the whole thing is properly settled; the money is paid over, and, if you are writing to O'Grady, you may mention that he can draw on the Limerick Bank, at sight, if

he pleases. There's time enough, however, for all this; so get up beside me; we've only half an hour to do our five miles, and dress for dinner."

I took my place beside the major, and, as we flew fast through the air, the cool breeze and his enlivening conversation rallied and refreshed me. Such was our pace, we had ten minutes to spare, as we entered a dark avenue of tall beech-trees, and a few seconds after arrived at the door of a large, old fashioned looking manor-house, on the steps of which stood Hugh Dillon himself, in all the plenitude of a white waistcoat and black silk tights. While he hurried me to a dressing-room he overwhelmed me with felicitations on the result of the day.

"You'll think it strange, Mr. Hinton," said he, "that I should congratulate you, knowing that Mr. Burke is a kind of relation of mine; but I have heard so much of your kindness to my niece, Louisa, that I cannot but rejoice in your success."

"I should rather," said I, "for many reasons, had it been more legitimately obtained; and, indeed, were I not acting for another, I doubt how far I should feel justified in considering myself a winner."

"My dear sir," interrupted Dillon, "the laws of racing are imperative in the matter; besides, had you waived your right, all who backed you must have lost their money."

"For that matter," said I, laughing, "the number of my supporters was tolerably limited."

"No matter for that; and even if you had not a single bet upon you, Ulick's conduct, in the beginning, deserved little favor at your hands."

"I confess," said I, "that there you have touched on the saving clause to my feeling of shame; had Mr. Burke conducted himself in a different spirit toward my friend and myself, I should feel sorely puzzled this minute."

"Quite right, quite right," said Dillon; "and now try if you can't make as much haste with your toilet as you did over the clover-field."

Within a quarter of an hour I made my appearance in the drawing-room, now crowded with company, the faces of many among whom I remembered having seen in the morning. Mr. Dillon was a widower, but his daughters — three fine, tall, handsome-looking girls—did the honors. While I was making my bows to them, Miss Bellew came forward, and, with an eye bright with pleasure, held out her hand toward me.

"I told you, Mr. Hinton, we should meet in the West; have I been as good a prophetess in saying that you would like it?"

"If it afforded me but this one minute," said I, in a half whisper.

"Dinner," said the servant, and, at the same moment, that scene of pleasant confusion ensued that preludes the formal descent of a party to the dining-room.

The host had gracefully tucked a large lady under his arm, beside whose towering proportion he looked pretty much like what architects call a "lean-to," superadded to a great building. He turned his eyes toward me "to go and do likewise," with a significant glance at a heaving mass of bugles and ostrich feathers, that sat panting on a sofa. I parried the stroke, however, by drawing Miss Bellew's arm within mine, while I resigned the post of honor to my little friend the major.

The dinner passed off like all other dinners: there was the same routine of eating and drinking, and pretty much the same ritual of table-talk. As a kind of commentary on the superiority of natural gifts over the affected and imitated graces of society, I could not help remarking, that those things which figured on the table, of homely origin, were actually luxurious, while the exotic resources of the cookery were in every instance miserable failures. Thus, the fish was excellent, and the mutton perfect, while the *fricandeau* was atrocious, and the *petits pâtés* execrable.

Should my taste be criticised, that, with a lovely girl beside me, for whom I already felt a strong attachment, I could thus set myself to criticise the *cuisine*, in lieu of any other more agreeable occupation, let my apology be that my reflection was an *apropos*, called forth by comparing Louisa Bellew with her cousins, the Dillons. I have said they were handsome girls; they were more—they were beautiful: they had all that fine penciling of the eyebrow, that deep, square orbit, so characteristically Irish, and which gives an expression to the eye, whatever be its color, of inexpressible softness; their voices, too, albeit the accent was provincial, were soft and musical, and their manners quiet and lady-like, yet somehow they stood immeasurably apart from her.

I have already ventured on one illustration from the cookery, may I take another from the cellar? How often in wines of the same vintage, of even the same cask, do we find one bottle, whose bouquet is more aromatic, whose flavor is richer, whose color is more purely brilliant?

There seems to be no reason why this should be so, nor is the secret appreciable to our senses; however, the fact is incontestable. So among women: you meet some half-dozen in an evening party, equally beautiful, equally lovely, yet will there be found one among the number, toward whom, without any assignable cause, more eyes are turned, and more looks bent: around whose chair more men are found to linger, and in whose slightest word some cunning charm seems ever mingled. Why is this so? I confess I cannot tell you, but trust me for the fact. If, however, it will satisfy you that I adduce an illustration—Louisa Bellew was one of these. With all the advantages of a cultivated mind, she possessed that fearlessness that only girls really innocent of worldly trickery and deceit ever have; and thus, while her conversation ranged far beyond the limits the cold ordeal of fashion would prescribe to a London beauty, the artless enthusiasm of her manner was absolutely captivating.

In Dublin, the most marked feature about her was an air of lofty pride and hauteur, by which, in the mixed society of Rooney's house, was she alone enabled to repel the obtrusive and impertinent attentions it was the habit of the place to practice. Surrounded by those who resorted there for a lounge, it was a matter of no common difficulty for her, a young and timid girl, to assert her own position, and exact the respect that was her due. Here, however, in her uncle's house, it was quite different. Relieved from all performance of a part, she was natural, graceful, and easy; and her spirits, untrammeled by the dread of misconstruction, took their own free and happy flight, without fear and without reproach.

When we returned to the drawing-room, seated beside her, I entered into an explanation of all my proceedings since my arrival in the country, and had the satisfaction to perceive, that not only did she approve of everything I had done, but, assuming a warmer interest than I could credit in my fortunes, she counseled me respecting the future. Supposing that my success might induce me to further trials of my horsemanship, she cautioned me about being drawn into any matches or wagers.

"My cousin Ulick," said she, "is one of those who rarely let a prey escape him. I speak frankly to you, for I know I may do so; therefore, I would beseech you to take care of him, and, above all things, do not come into collision with him. I have told you, Mr. Hinton, that I wisn you to know my father: for this object, it is essential you should have no misunderstanding with my cousin; for although his whole conduct through life has been such as to grieve and afflict him, yet the feeling for his only sister's child has sustained him against all the rumors and reports that have reached him, and even against his own convictions."

"You have, indeed," said I, "suggested a strong reason for keeping well with your cousin: my heart is not only bent on being known to your father, but, if I dare hope it, on being liked by him also."

"Yes, yes," said she, quickly, blushing while she spoke, "I am sure he'll like you—and I know you'll like him. Our house, perhaps, I should tell you, is not a gay one: we lead a secluded and retired life; and this has had its effect upon my poor father, giving a semblance of discontent—only a semblance, though—to a nature mild, manly, and benevolent."

She paused an instant, and, as if fearing that she had been led away to speak of things she should not have touched upon, added, with a more lively tone,—

"Still, we may contrive to amuse you: you shall have plenty of fishing and coursing, the best shooting in the west, and as for scenery, I'll answer for it you are not disappointed."

While we chatted thus, the time rolled on, and, at last, the clock on the mantelpiece apprised us that it was time to set out for the ball. This, as it may be believed, was anything but a promise of pleasure to me. With Louisa Bellew beside me, talking in a tone of confidential intimacy she had never ventured on before, I would have given worlds to have remained where I was; however, the thing was impossible; the ball—the ball! passed from lip to lip, and already the carriages were assembled before the door, and cloaks, hoods, and mantles were distributed on all sides.

Resolving, at all events, to secure Miss Bellew as my fellow-traveler, I took her arm to lead her downstairs.

"Holloa! Hinton," cried the Major, "you're coming with me, ain't you?"

I got up a tremendous fit of coughing, as I stammered out an apology about night air, etc.

"Ah, true, my poor fellow," said the simple-hearted Bob, "you must take care of yourself—this has been a severe day's work for you."

"With such a heavy cold," said Louisa, laughing, as her bright eyes sparkled with

fun, "perhaps you'll take a seat in our carriage?"

I pressed her arm gently, and whispering my assent, assisted her in, and placed myself beside her.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RACE BALL.

FAST as had been the pace in the Major's tax-cart, it seemed to me as though the miles flew much more quickly by as I returned to the town; how, indeed, they passed, I cannot well say; but, from the moment that I quitted Mr. Dillon's house, to that of my arrival at Loughrea, there seemed to be but one brief, delightful moment. I have already said that Miss Bellew's manner was quite changed; and, as I assisted her from the carriage, I could not but mark the flashing brilliancy of her eye and the sparkling animation of her features, lending, as they did, an added loveliness to her beauty.

"Am I to dance with you, Mr. Hinton?" said she, laughingly, as I led her up the stairs. "If so, pray be civil enough to ask me at once; otherwise, I must accept the first partner that offers himself."

"How very stupid I have been! Will you, pray, let me have the honor?"

"Yes, yes—you shall have the honor; but now that I think of it, you mustn't ask me a second time: we country folks are very prudish about these things; and, as you are the lion of the party, I should get into a sad scrape were I to appear to monopolize you."

"But you surely will have compassion on me," said I, in a tone of affected bashfulness. "You know I am a stranger here—neither known to nor by anyone save you."

"Ah, trêve de modestie!" said she, coquettishly. "My cousins will be delighted, and, indeed, you owe them some *amende* already."

"As how?" said I; "what have I done?"

"Rather, what have you left undone? I'll tell you. You have not come to the ball in your fine uniform, with your aiguillettes and your showy feathers, and all the pride, pomp, and circumstance of your dignity as aide-de-camp. Learn that in the West we love the infantry, dote on the dragoons, but we adore the staff. Now, a child would find it as difficult to recognize a plump gentleman with a star on his breast as a king, as we Western ladies would to believe in the military features of a person habited in quiet black. You should, at least, have some symbol of your calling. A little bit of moustache, like a Frenchman—a foreign order at your button hole—your arm in a sling, from a wound as it were—even a pair of brass spurs would redeem you. Poor Mary, here, won't believe that you wear a great sword, and are the most warlike-looking person imaginable on occasions."

"Dearest Louisa, how silly you are!" said her cousin, blushing deeply. "Pray, Mr. Hinton, what do you think of the rooms?"

This question happily recalled me to myself; for up to that very moment, forgetful of everything save my fair companion, I had not noticed our entrance into the ball-room, around which we were promenading with slow steps. I now looked up, and discovered that we were in the town hall, the great room of which building was generally reserved for occasions like the present. Nothing could be more simple than the decorations of the apartment. The walls, which were whitewashed, were tastefully ornamented with strings and wreaths of flowers suspended between the iron chandeliers, while over the chimney-piece were displayed the colors of the marching regiment then quartered in the town: indeed, to do them justice, the garrison were the main contributors to the pleasures of the evening. By *them* were the garlands so gracefully disposed; by *them* were the rat-holes and other dangerous crevices in the floor calked with oakum; *their* band was now blowing "God save the king" and "Rule Brittania" alternately for the last hour; and *their* officers, in all the splendor of scarlet, were parading the room, breaking the men's hearts with envy and the women's with admiration.

O'Grady was quite right—it is worth while being a soldier in Ireland; and, if such be the case in the capital, how much more true is it in Connaught? Would that some minute anatomist of human feeling could demonstrate that delicate fiber in an Irishwoman's heart that vibrates so responsively to everything in the army list! In this happy land you need no nitrous oxide to promote the high spirits of your party; I had rather have a sub in a marching regiment, than a whole gasometer of it. How often have I watched the sleepy eye of languid loveliness brighten up—how often have I seen features, almost plain in their character, assume a kind of beauty as some red-coat drew near? Don't

tell me of your insurrection acts, of your nightly outrages, your outbreaks, and your burnings, as a reason for keeping a large military force in Ireland; nothing of the kind! A very different object, indeed, is the reason—Ireland is garrisoned to please the ladies. The war-office is the most gallant of public bodies, and, with a true appreciation of the daughters of the west, it inundates the land with red-coats. These observations were forced upon me as I looked about the room, and saw on every side how completely the gallant seventy-something had cut out the country gentry. Poor fellows! you are great people at the assizes—you are strong men at a road-sessions—but you're mighty small folk indeed before your wives and daughters, when looked at to the music of "Paddy Carey," and by the light of two hundred and fifty mutton candles.

The country dance was at length formed, and poor Mr. Harkin, the master of the ceremonies and Coryphæus in ordinary of Loughrea, had, by dint of scarce less fatigue than I experienced in my steeple-chase, by running hither and thither, imploring, beseeching, wheedling, coaxing, and even cursing, at length succeeded in assembling sixty-four souls, in a double file, upon the floor. Poor fellow! never was there a more disorderly force. Nobody would keep his own place, but was always trying to get above his neighbor. In vain did he tell the men to stand at their own side. Alas! they thought that side their own where the ladies were also. Then the band added to his miseries; for scarcely had he told them to play "The Wind that shakes the Barley," when some one changed it to "The Priest in his Boots," and afterwards to "The Dead March in Saul." These were heavy afflictions; for be it known that he could not give way, as other men would in such circumstances, to a good outbreak of passion—for Mr. Harkin was a public functionary, who, like all other functionaries, had a character to sustain before the world. When kings are angry, we are told by Shakespeare, Schiller, and others, that they rant it in good royal style. Now, when a dancing-master is excited by passion, he never loses sight of the unities. If he flies down the floor to chide the little fat man that is talking so loud, he contrives to do it with a step, a spring, and a hop, to the time of one, two, three. Is there a confusion in the figure—he advances to rectify it with a chassé rigadoon. Does Mr. Somebody turn his toes too much out, or is Miss So-and-so holding her petticoats too high—he fugles the correction in his own person, first imitating the deformity he would expose, and then displaying the perfection he would point to.

On the evening in question, this gentleman afforded me by far the most of the amusement of the ball; nearly half the company had been in time of yore his pupils, or were actually so at the very moment; so that, independent of his cares as conductor of the festivities, he had also the *amour propre* of one who saw his own triumphs reflected in the success of his disciples.

At last the dancers were arranged. A certain kind of order was established in the party, and Mr. Harkin, standing in the fifth position, with all his fingers expanded, gave three symbolic claps of his hand, and cried out "Begin!" Away went the band at once, and down the middle I flew with my partner, to the measure of a quick country-dance, that no human legs could keep time to. Two others quickly followed, more succeeding them, like wave after wave—nothing was too fat, nothing too short, nothing too long to dance. There they were, as ill-paired as though, instead of treading a merry measure, they had been linked in the very bonds of matrimony—old and young, the dwarf and the brobdignag, the plump and the lean, each laughing at the eccentricities of his neighbor, and happily indifferent to the mirth he himself afforded. By the bye, what a glorious thing it would be, if we would carry out this principle of self-esteem into all our reciprocity treaties, and, while we enjoyed what we derived from others, be unconscious of the loss we sustained ourselves!

Unlike our English performance, the dance here was as free-and-easy a thing as needs be. Down the middle you went, holding, mayhap squeezing, your partner's hand, laughing, joking, flirting, venturing occasionally on many a bolder flight than at other times you could have dared; for there was no time for the lady to be angry as she tripped along to "The Hare in the Corn;" and besides, but little wisdom could be expected from a man while performing more antics than Punch in a pantomime. With all this, there was a running fire of questions, replies, and recognitions, from every one you passed:

"That's it, captain: push along—begad, you're doing it well!"—"Don't forget to-morrow!"—"Hands round!"—"Hasn't she a leg of her own!"—"Keep it up!"—"This way!—turn, Miss Malone!"—"You'll come to breakfast"—"How are ye, Joe?" etc.

Scarcely was the set concluded, when Miss Bellew was engaged by another partner; while I, at her suggestion, invited her cousin Mary to become mine. The ball-room was now crowded with people; the mirth and fun grew fast and furious; the country-dance occupied the whole length of the room—and round the walls were disposed tables for whist or loo, where the elders amused themselves with as much pleasure, and not less noise.

I fear that I gave my fair partner but a poor impression of an aide-de-camp's gallantry—answering at random, speaking vaguely and without coherence, my eyes fixed on Miss Bellow, delighted when by chance I could catch a look from her, and fretful and impatient when she smiled at some remark of her partner. In fact, love has as many stages as a fever, and I was in that acute period of the malady when the feeling of devotion, growing every moment stronger, is checkered by a doubt lest the object of your affections should really be indifferent to you—thus suggesting all the torturing agonies of jealousy to your distracted mind. At such times as these, a man can scarcely be very agreeable even to the girl he loves; but he is a confounded bore to a chance acquaintance. So, indeed, did poor Mary Dillon seem to think; and as, at the conclusion of the dance, I resigned her hand to a Lieutenant Somebody, with pink cheeks, black eyebrows, and a most martial air, I saw she looked upon her escape as a direct mercy from Providence. Just at this moment Mr. Dillon, who had only been waiting for the propitious moment to pounce upon me, seized me by the arm, and led me down the room. There was a charming woman dying to know me in one corner;—the best cock-shooter in Ireland wished to make my acquaintance in another;—thirty thousand pounds, and a nice bit of property in Leitrim, was sighing for me near the fire; and three old ladies, the "dignitaries" of the land, had kept the fourth place at the whist-table vacant for my sake, and were at length growing impatient at *my* absence.

Non sunt mea verba, good reader.—Such was Mr. Dillon's representation to me, as he hurried me along, presenting me as he went to every one we met—a ceremony in which I soon learned to perform my part respectably, by merely repeating a formula I had adopted for my guidance—"Delighted to know you, Mr. Burke," or "Charmed to make your acquaintance, Mrs. French;" for as nine-tenths of the men were called by the one, and nearly all the ladies by the other appellation, I seldom blundered in my addresses.

The evening wore on, but the vigor of the party seemed unabated. The fatigues of fashionable life seemed to be as little known in Ireland as its apathy and its ennui. Poor, benighted people! you appear to enjoy society, not as a refuge for your own weariness, not as an escape-valve for your own vapors, but really as a source of pleasurable emotions—an occasion for drawing closer the bonds of intimacy, for being agreeable to your friends, and for making yourselves happy. Alas! you have much to learn in this respect; you know not yet how preferable is the languid look of tired beauty, to the brilliant eye and glowing cheek of happy girlhood; you know not how superior is the cutting sarcasm, the whispered equivoque, to the kind welcome and the affectionate greeting; and, while enjoying the pleasure of meeting your friends, you absolutely forget to be critical upon their characters or their costume!

What a pity it is that good nature is under-bred, and good feeling is vulgarity; for, after all, while I contrasted the tone of everything around me with the supercilious cant and unimpassioned coldness of London manners, I could not but confess to myself that the difference was great, and the interval enormous. To which side my own heart inclined, it needed not my affection for Louisa Bellew to tell me. Yes, I had seen enough of life to learn how far are the real gifts of worth and excellence preferable to the adventitious polish of high society. While these thoughts rushed through my mind, another flashed across it. What if my lady-mother were here! What if my proud cousin! How would her dark eyes brighten, as some absurd or ludicrous feature of the company would suggest its *mot* of malice or its speech of sarcasm! How would their air, their carriage, their deportment appear in *her* sight! I could picture to myself the cold scorn of her manner toward the men, the insulting courtesy of her demeanor to the women; the affected innocence with which she would question them as to their every-day habits and habitudes, their usages and their wants, as though she were inquiring into the manners and customs of South-Sea Islanders! I could imagine the ineffable scorn with which she would receive what were meant to be kind and polite attentions; and I could fashion to myself her look, her manner, and her voice, when escaping, as she would call it, from her *Nuit parmi*

sauvages: she would caricature every trait, every feature of the party, converting into food for laughter their frank and hospitable bearing, and making their very warmth of heart the groundwork of a sarcasm!

The ball continued with unabated vigor, and as, in obedience to Miss Bellew's request, I could not again ask her to dance, I myself felt little inclination to seek for another partner. The practice of the place seemed, however, as imperatively to exclude idleness as the discipline of a man-of-war. If you were not dancing, you ought to be playing cards, making love, drinking negus, or exchanging good stories with some motherly fat old lady, too heavy for a reel, too stupid for loo. In this dilemma I cut into a round game, which I remember often to have seen at Rooney's, technically called speculation. A few minutes before, and I was fancying to myself what my mother would think of all this; and now, as I drew my chair to the table, I muttered a prayer to my own heart that she might never hear of my doings. How strange it is that we would much rather be detected in some overt act of vice than caught in any ludicrous situation or absurd position! I could look my friends and family steadily enough in the face while standing amid all the blacklegs of Epsom and the swindlers of Ascot, exchanging with them the courtesies of life, and talking on terms of easy and familiar intercourse; yet would I rather have been seen with the veriest pickpocket in fashionable life than seated amid that respectable and irreproachable party who shook their sides with laughter around the card-table!

Truly, it was a merry game, and well suited for a novice, as it required no teaching. Each person had his three cards dealt him, one of which was displayed to the company in rotation. Did this happen to be a knave or some other equally reproachful character, the owner was mulcted to the sum of fivepence; and he must indeed have had a miser's heart who could regret a penalty so provocative of mirth! Often as the event took place, the fun never seemed to grow old; and from the exuberance of the delight and the unceasing flow of the laughter, I began to wonder within myself if these same cards had not some secret and symbolic meaning unknown to the neophyte. But the drollery did not end here: you might sell your luck, and put up your hand to auction. This led to innumerable droll illusions and dry jokes, and, in fact, if ever a game was contrived to make one's sides ache, this was it.

A few sedate and sober people there were, who, with bent brow and pursed-up lip, watched the whole proceeding; they were the secret police of the card-table; it was in vain to attempt to conceal your luckless knave from their prying eyes; with the glance of a tax collector they pounced upon the defaulter, and made him pay; rarely or never smiling themselves, they really felt all the eagerness, all the excitement of gambling; and I question if, after all, their hard looks and stern features were not the best fun of the whole.

After about two hours thus occupied, during which I had won the esteem and affection of several elderly ladies by the equanimity and high-mindedness with which I bore up against the loss of two whole baskets of counters, amounting to the sum of four-and-sixpence, I felt my shoulder gently touched, and at the same moment Bob Mahon whispered in my ear,

"The Dillons are going; and he wants to speak a word with you; so give me your cards and slip away."

Resigning my place to the major, whose advent was received with evident signs of dissatisfaction, inasmuch as he was a shrewd player, I hurried through the room to find out Dillon.

"Ah! here he is," said Miss Bellew to her uncle, while she pointed to me. "How provoking to go away so early—isn't it, Mr. Hinton?"

"You, doubtless, feel it so," said I, with something of pique in my manner; "your evening has been so agreeably passed."

"And yours too, if I am to judge from the laughter of your card-table. I am sure I never heard so noisy a party. Well, Mary! does he consent?"

"No: papa is still obstinate; and the carriage is ordered. He says we shall have so much gayety this week that we must go home early to-night."

"There—there! now be good girls. Get on your muffling, and let us be off! Ah! Mr. Hinton!—the very man I wanted. Will you do us the very great favor of coming over for a few days to Mount Brown? We shall have the partridge-shooting after to-morrow, and I think I can show you some sport. May I send in for you in the morning? What hour will suit you? You will not refuse me, I trust?"

"I need not say, my dear sir, how obliged I feel for, and with what pleasure I should accept your kind invitation; but the truth is, I've come away without leave of absence. The duke may return any day, and I shall be in a sad scrape."

"Do you think a few days— ?"

A look from Louisa Bellew at this moment came most powerfully in aid of her uncle's eloquence.

I hesitated, and looked uncertain how to answer.

"There, girls! now is your time. He is half persuaded to do a kind thing; do try and convince him the whole way. Come Mary! Fanny! Louisa!"

A second look from Miss Bellew decided the matter; and as a flush of pleasure colored my cheek, I shook Dillon warmly by the hand, and promised to accept his invitation.

"That is like a really good fellow," said the little man, with a face sparkling with pleasure. "Now what say you if we drive over for you about two o'clock? The girls are coming in to make some purchases, and we can all drive out together."

This arrangement, so very palatable to me, was agreed upon, and I now took Miss Bellew's arm to lead her to the carriage. On descending to the hall, a delay of a few minutes ensued, but the number of vehicles prevented the carriage coming up. The weather appeared to have changed; and it was now raining heavily, and blowing a perfect storm.

As the fitful gusts of wind howled along the dark corridors of the old building, dashing the rain upon our faces even where we stood, I drew my fair companion closer to my side, and held her cloak more firmly round her. What a moment was that! her arm rested on mine; her very tresses were blown each moment across my cheek! I know not what I said, but I felt that in the tones of my voice they were the utterings of my heart that fell from my lips. I had not remembered that Mr. Dillon had already placed his daughters in the carriage, and was calling to us loudly to follow.

"No, no; I pray you not," said Louisa, in reply to I know not what. "Don't you hear my uncle?"

In her anxiety to press forward, she had slightly disengaged her arm from mine as she spoke. At this instant a man rushed forward, and catching her hand drew it rudely within his arm, calling out as he did so,—

"Never fear, Louisa! you shall not be insulted while your cousin is here to protect you."

She sprang round to reply. "You are mistaken, Ulick! It is Mr. Hinton!" She could say no more; for he lifted her into the carriage, and, closing the door with a loud bang, desired the coachman to drive on.

Stupefied with amazement, I stood still and motionless. My first impulse was to strike him to the ground; for although a younger and a weaker man, I felt within me at the moment the strength to do it. My next thought was of Louisa's warning not to quarrel with her cousin. The struggle was indeed a severe one, but I gained the victory over my passion. Unable, however, to quit the spot, I stood with my arms folded, and my eyes riveted upon him. He returned my stare; and with a sneer of insufferable insolence passed me by, and walked upstairs. Not a word was spoken on either side! but there are moments in one's life in which a look or passing glance rivets an undying hate. Such a one did we exchange, and nothing that the tongue could speak could compass that secret instinct by which we satisfied our enmity.

With slow, uncertain steps, I mounted the stairs; some strange fascination led me, as it were, to dog his steps; and although in my heart I prayed that no collision should ever come between us, yet I could not resist the headlong impulse to follow, and to watch him. Like that unexplained temptation that leads the gazer over some lofty precipice to move on, step by step, yet nearer to the brink, conscious of his danger, yet unable to recede, so did I track this man from place to place, following him as he passed from one group to the other of his friends, till at length he seated himself at a table, around which a number of persons were engaged in noisy and boisterous conversation; he filled a tumbler to the brim with wine, and drinking it off at a draught refilled again.

"You are thirsty, Ulick," said some one.

"Thirsty! On fire, by G—! You'll not believe me when I tell you—I can't do it; no, by Heaven, there is nothing in the way of provocation—"

As he said thus much, some lady passing near induced him to drop his voice, and the remainder of the sentence was inaudible to me. Hitherto I had been standing beside his chair; I now moved round to the opposite side of the table, and, with my arms folded and my eyes firmly fixed, stood straight before him. For an instant or two he did not remark me, as he continued to speak with his head bent downwards. Suddenly lifting up his eyes, he started—pushed his chair slightly back from the table,—

"And look!—see!" cried he, as with outstretched finger he pointed toward me—"see! if he isn't there again!" Then

suddenly changing the tone of his voice to one of affected softness, he continued, addressing me: "I have been explaining, sir, as well as my poor powers will permit, the excessive pains I have taken to persuade you to prove yourself a gentleman. One half the trouble you have put me to, would have told an Irish gentleman what was looked for at his hands; you appear, however, to be the best-tempered fellows in the world at your side of the channel. Come, now, boys! if any man likes a bet, I'll wager ten guineas that even this won't ruffle his amiable nature. Pass the sherry here, Godfrey! Is that a clean glass beside you?"

So saying, he took the decanter, and leisurely filling the glass stood up as if to present it, but when he attained the erect position, he looked at me fixedly for a second, and then dashed the wine in my face. A roar of laughter burst around me, but I saw nor heard no more. The moment before, and my head was cool, my senses clear, my faculties unclouded; but now, as if derangement had fallen upon me, I could see nothing but looks of mockery and scorn, and hear nothing save the discordant laugh and the jarring accent of derision.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE INN FIRE.

How I escaped from that room, and by what means I found myself in the street, I know not. My first impulse was to tear off my cravat that I might breathe more freely; still a sense of suffocation oppressed me, and I felt stunned and stupefied.

"Come along, Hinton—rouse yourself, my boy. See, your coat is drenched with rain," said a friendly voice behind me; while, grasping me forcibly by the arm, the major led me forward.

"What have I done?" cried I, struggling to get free. "Tell me—oh tell me, have I done wrong? Have I committed any dreadful thing? There is an aching pain here—here in my forehead, as though—I dare not speak my shame."

"Nothing of the kind, my boy," said Mahon; "you've conducted yourself admirably. Matt Keane saw it all, and he says he never witnessed anything finer; and he's no bad judge, let me tell you. So there now, be satisfied, and take off your wet clothes."

There was something imperative in the tone in which he spoke; besides, the Major was one of those people who somehow or other always contrive to have their own way in the world, so that I yielded at once, feeling, too, that any opposition would only defer my chance of an explanation.

While I was thus engaged in my inner room, I could overhear my friend without, engaged in the preparation of a little supper, mingling an occasional soliloquy with the simmering of the grilled bone that browned upon the fire. The clink of glasses and plates, and all the evidences of punchmaking, breaking every now and then amid such reflections as these,—

"A mighty ugly business—nothing for it but meeting him—poor lad, they'll say we've murdered him among us—och, he's far too young for Galway. Holloa, Hinton, are you ready? Now you look something reasonable; and when we've eaten a bit we'll talk this matter over coolly and sensibly; and to make your mind easy, I may tell you at once I have arranged a meeting for you with Burke at five to-morrow morning."

I grasped his hand convulsively within mine, as a gleam of savage satisfaction shot through me.

"Yes, yes," said he, as if replying to my look; "it's all as it ought to be. Even his own friends are indignant at his conduct; and, indeed, I may say it's the first time a stranger has met with such treatment in our country."

"I can believe it well, major," said I; "for unless from the individual in question, I have met with nothing but kindness and good feeling amongst you; he indeed would seem an exception to his countrymen."

"Therefore the sooner you shoot him the better. But I wish I could see Father Tom."

"*Adest, domine,*" cried the priest, at the same moment, as he entered the room; throwing his wet greatcoat into a corner, and giving himself a shake a Newfoundland dog might have envied. "Isn't this pretty work, Bob?" said he, turning to his cousin with a look of indignant reproach: "he is not twenty-four hours in the town, and you've got him into a fight already: and sure it's my own fault, that ever brought you together. *Nec fortunam nec gratiam habes*—no, indeed, you have neither luck nor grace. *Mauvaise tête*, as the French say—always in trouble. Arrah, don't be talking to me at all, at all—reach me over the spirits—sorra better I ever saw you!—disturbing me out of my virtuous dreams at two in the morning. True enough, *dic mihi societatem tuam*——; but

little I thought he'd be getting you shot before you left the place."

I endeavored to pacify the good priest as well as I was able; the major, too, made every explanation, but what between his being called out of bed, his anger at getting wet, and his cousin's well-known character for affairs of this nature, it was not before he had swallowed his second tumbler of punch that he would "listen to rayson."

"Well, well, if it is so, God's will be done," said he, with a sigh. "*Un bon coup dépée*, as we used to say formerly, is beautiful treatment for bad blood; but maybe you're going to fight with pistols—oh, murther, them's dreadful things!"

"I begin to suspect," said the major, slyly, "that Father Tom's afraid if you shoot Ulick he'll never get that fifty pounds he won—*hinc illæ lacrymæ*—eh, Tom?"

"Ah, the spalpeen," said the priest, with a deep groan. "Didn't he do me out of that money already."

"How so, Father?" said I, scarce able to repress my laughter at the expression of his face.

"I was coming down the main street yesterday evening, with Doctor Plunket, the bishop, beside me, discoursing a little theology, and looking as pious and respectable as may be, when that villain Burke came running out of a shop, and pulling out his pocket-book, cried,—

"'Wait a bit, Father Tom; you know I am a little in your debt about that race, and as you're a sporting character, it's only fair to book up at once.'

"'What is this I hear, Father Loftus?' says the bishop.

"'Oh, my Lord,' says I, "he's a *jocosus puer*—a humbugging bla-guard; a *farceur*, your reverence, and that's the way he is always cutting his jokes upon the people.'

"'And so he does not owe you this money?' said the bishop, looking mighty hard at us both.

"'Not a farthing of it, my lord.'

"'That's comfortable any how,' says Burke, putting up his pocket-book; 'and faith, my lord,' said he, with a wink, 'I wish I had a loan of you for an hour or two every settling day, for troth you're a trump;' and with that he went off laughing till ye'd have thought he'd split his sides, and I am sure I wish he had."

I don't think Mr. Burke himself could have laughed louder or longer at his scheme, than did we in hearing it. The priest at length joined in the mirth, and I could perceive, as the punch made more inroads upon him and the evening wore on, that his holy horror of dueling was gradually melting away before the warmth of his Hibernian propensities. Like a wet sponge passed across the surface of a dark picture, bringing forth from the gloom many a figure and feature indistinct before, and displaying touches of light not hitherto appreciable, so whisky seems to exercise some strange power of displaying its votaries in all their breadth of character, divesting them of the adventitious clothes in which position or profession has invested them; thus a tipsy Irishman stands forth in the exuberance of his nationality *Hibernicis Hibernior*. Forgetting all his moral declamation on dueling, oblivious of his late indignation against his cousin, he rubbed his hands pleasantly, and related story after story of his own early experiences, some of them not a little amusing.

The major, however, seemed not fully to enjoy the priest's anecdotical powers, but sipped his glass with a grave and sententious air.

"Very true, Tom," said he, at length breaking silence; "you have seen a fair share of these things for a man of your cloth; but where's the man living—show him to me, I say—that has had my experience, either as principal or second? Haven't I had my four men out in the same morning?"

"Why, I confess," said I, meekly, "that does seem an extravagant allowance."

"Clear waste, downright profusion, *du luxe, mon cher*, nothing else," observed Father Tom. Meanwhile the major rolled his eyes fearfully at me, and fidgeted in his chair with impatience to be asked for his story, and, as I myself had some curiosity on the subject, I begged him to relate it.

"Tom, here, doesn't like a story at supper," said the major, pompously, for, perceiving our attitude of attention, he resolved on being a little tyrannical before telling it.

The priest made immediate submission, and, slyly hinting that his objection only lay against stories he had been hearing for the last thirty years, said he could listen to the narration in question with much pleasure.

"You shall have it, then?" said the major, as he squared himself in the chair, and thus began:

"You have never been in Castle Connel, Hinton? Well, there is a wide bleak line of country there, that stretches away to the westward, with nothing but large, round-backed mountains, low, boggy swamps, with here and there a miserable mud hovel, surrounded by, maybe, half an acre of lumpers, or bad oats; a few small

streams struggle through this on their way to the Shannon, but they are brown and dirty as the soil they traverse; and the very fish that swim in them are brown and smutty also.

"In the very heart of this wild country, I took it into my head to build a house. A strange notion it was, for there was no neighborhood and no sporting; but, somehow, I had taken a dislike to mixed society some time before that, and I found it convenient to live somewhat in retirement; so that, if the partridges were not in abundance about me, neither were the process-servers; and the truth was, I kept a much sharper look-out for the sub-sheriff than I did for the snipe.

"Of course, as I was over head and ears in debt, my notion was to build something very considerable and imposing; and to be sure, I had a fine portico, and a flight of steps leading up to it; and there were ten windows in front, and a grand balustrade at the top; and, faith, taking it all in all, the building was so strong, the walls so thick, the windows so narrow, and the stones so black, that my cousin, Darcy Mahon, called it Newgate—and not a bad name either—and the devil another it ever went by; and even that same had its advantages, for when the creditors used to read that at the top of my letters, they'd say, 'Poor devil! he has enough on his hands; there's no use troubling him any more.' Well, big as Newgate looked from without, it had not much accommodation when you got inside. There was, it is true, a fine hall, all flagged, and out of it you entered what ought to have been the dinner-room, thirty-eight feet by seven-and-twenty, but which was used for herding sheep in winter. On the right hand there was a cosy little breakfast-room, just about the size of this we are in. At the back of the hall, but concealed by a pair of folding-doors, there was a grand staircase of old Irish oak, that ought to have led up to a great suite of bedrooms, but it only conducted to one, a little crib I had for myself. The remainder were never plastered nor floored; and, indeed, in one of them, that was over the big drawing-room, the joists were never laid, which was all the better, for it was there we used to keep our hay and straw.

"Now, at the time I mention, the harvest was not brought in, and, instead of its being full, as it used to be, it was mighty low; so that, when you opened the door above stairs, instead of finding the hay up beside you, it was about fourteen feet down beneath you.

"I can't help boring you with all these details, first, because they are essential to my story; and next, because, being a young man, and a foreigner to boot, it may lead you to a little better understanding of some of our national customs. Of all the partialities we Irish have, after wine and the ladies, I believe our ruling passion is to build a big house, spend every shilling we have, or that we have not, as the case may be, in getting it half finished, and then live in a corner of it 'just for grandeur," as a body may say. It's a droll notion, after all; but show me the county in Ireland that hasn't at least six specimens of what I mention.

"Newgate was a beautiful one; and although the sheep lived in the parlor, and the cows were kept in the blue drawing-room, Darby Whaley slept in the boudoir, and two bulldogs and a buck goat kept house in the library, faith, upon the outside it looked very imposing, and not one that saw it from the high-road to Ennis—and you could see it for twelve miles in every direction—didn't say, 'That Mahon must be a snug fellow; look what a beautiful place he has of it there!' Little they knew that it was safer to go up the 'Reeks' than my grand staircase, and it was like rope-dancing to pass from one room to the other.

"Well, it was about four o'clock in the afternoon of a dark, leaden day in December, that I was treading homeward in no very good humor, for, except a brace and a half of snipe, and a gray plover, I had met with nothing the whole day. The night was falling fast, so I began to hurry on as quickly as I could, when I heard a loud shout behind me, and a voice called out,—

"It's Bob Mahon, boys! By the Hill of Scariff, we are in luck!'

"I turned about, and what did I see but a parcel of fellows in red coats; they were the Blazers. There was Dan Lambert, Tom Burke, Harry Eyre, Joe M'Mahon, and the rest of them: fourteen souls in all. They had come down to draw a cover of Stephen Blake's, about ten miles from me, but in the strange mountain country they lost the dogs, they lost their way, and their temper; in truth, to all appearance they lost everything but their appetites. Their horses were dead beat, too, and they looked as miserable a crew as ever you set eyes on.

"'Isn't it lucky, Bob, that we found you at home?' said Lambert.

"'They told us you were away,' says Burke.

"'Some said that you were grown so pious that you never went out except on Sundays,' added old Harry, with a grin.

"'Begad,' said I, 'as to the luck, I won't say much for it; for here's all I can give you for your dinner;' and so I pulled out the four birds and shook them at them; 'and as to the piety, troth, maybe, you'd like to keep a fast with as devoted a son of the church as myself.'

"'But isn't that Newgate up there?' said one.

"'That same.'

"'And you don't mean to say that such a house as that hasn't a good larder and a fine cellar?'

"'You're right,' said I, 'and they're both full at this very moment—the one with seed-potatoes, and the other with Whitehaven coals.'

"'Have you got any bacon?' said Mahon.

"'Oh, yes,' said I, 'there's bacon.'

"'And eggs?' said another.

"'For the matter of that, you might swim in batter.'

"'Come, come,' said Dan Lambert, 'we're not so badly off after all.'

"'Is there whisky?' cried Eyre.

"'Seventy-three gallons, that never paid the king sixpence!'

"As I said this, they gave three cheers you'd have heard a mile off.

"After about twenty minutes' walking we got up to the house, and when poor Darby opened the door, I thought he'd faint, for, you see, the red coats made him think it was the army coming to take me away, and he was for running off to raise the country, when I caught him by the neck.

"'It's the Blazers! ye old fool,' said I. 'The gentlemen are come to dine here.'

"'Hurroo!' said he, clapping his hands on his knees, 'there must be great distress entirely down about Nenagh and them parts, or they'd never think of coming up here for a bit to eat.'

"'Which way lie the stables, Bob?' said Burke.

"'Leave all that to Darby,' said I; for ye see he had only to whistle and bring up as many people as he liked—and so he did, too; and as there was room for a cavalry regiment, the horses were soon bedded down and comfortable, and in ten minutes' time we were all sitting pleasantly round a big fire, waiting for the rashers and eggs.

"'Now, if you'd like to wash your hands before dinner, Lambert, come along with me.'

"'By all means,' said he.

"The others were standing up too; but, I observed, that as the house was large, and the ways of it unknown to them, it was better to wait till I'd come back for them.

"'This was a real piece of good luck, Bob,' said Dan, as he followed me upstairs; 'capital quarters we've fallen into; and what a snug bedroom ye have here.'

"'Yes,' said I, carelessly; 'it's one of the small rooms—there are eight like this, and five large ones, plainly furnished, as you see; but for the present, you know—'

"'Oh, begad; I wish for nothing better. Let me sleep here—the other fellows may care for your four-posters with satin hangings.'

"'Well,' said I, 'if you are really not joking, I may tell you that the room is one of the warmest in the house,' and this was telling no lie.

"'Here I'll sleep,' said he, rubbing his hands with satisfaction, and giving the bed a most affectionate look. 'And now let us join the rest.'

"When I brought Dan down, I took up Burke, and after him M'Mahon, and so on to the last; but every time I entered the parlor I found them all bestowing immense praises on my house, and each fellow ready to bet he had got the best bedroom.

"Dinner soon made its appearance; for if the cookery was not perfect, it was at least wonderfully expeditious. There were two men cutting rashers, two more frying them in the pan, and another did nothing but break the eggs; Darby running from the parlor to the kitchen and back again, as hard as he could trot.

"Do you know now, that many a time since, when I have been giving venison, and Burgundy, and claret enough to swim a life-boat in, I often thought it was a cruel waste of money; for the fellows weren't half as pleasant as they were that evening on bacon and whisky!

"I've a theory on that subject, Hinton, I'll talk to you more about another time; I'll only observe now, that I'm sure we all over-feed our company. I've tried both plans; and my honest experience is, that as far as regards conviviality, fun, and good fellowship, it is a great mistake to provide too well for your guests. There is something heroic in eating your mutton-chop or your leg of turkey among jolly fellows; there is a kind of reflective flattering about it that tells you you have been invited for your drollery, and not for your digestion; and that your jokes, and not your flattery, have been your recommendation. Lord bless you! I've laughed

more over red-herrings and poteen than ever I expect to do again over turtle and tokay.

"My guests were, to do them justice, a good illustration of my theory. A pleasanter and a merrier party never sat down together. We had good songs, good stories, plenty of laughing, and plenty of drink; until at last poor Darby became so overpowered by the fumes of the hot water, I suppose, that he was obliged to be carried up to bed, and so we were compelled to boil the kettle in the parlor. This, I think, precipitated matters; for, by some mistake, they put punch into it instead of water, and the more you tried to weaken the liquor, it was only the more tipsy you were getting.

"About two o'clock, five of the party were under the table, three more were nodding backwards and forwards like insane pendulums, and the rest were mighty noisy, and now and then rather disposed to be quarrelsome.

"'Bob,' said Lambert to me, in a whisper, 'if it's the same thing to you, I'll slip away, and get into bed.'

"'Of course, if you won't take anything more. Just make yourself at home; and as you don't know the way here, follow me!'

"'I'm afraid,' said he, 'I'd not find my way alone.'

"'I think,' said I, 'it's very likely. But come along!'

"I walked upstairs before him; but instead of turning to the left I went the other way, till I came to the door of the large room that I have told you already was over the big drawing-room. Just as I put my hand on the lock, I contrived to blow out the candle as if it was the wind.

"'What a draught there is here," said I; "but just step in, and I'll go for a light.'

"He did as he was bid; but instead of finding himself on my beautiful little carpet, down he went fourteen feet into the hay at the bottom! I looked down after him for a minute or two, and then called out,—

"'As I am doing the honors of Newgate, the least I could do was to show you the drop. Good night, Dan! but let me advise you to get a little farther from the door, as there are more coming.'

"Well, sir, when they missed Dan and me out of the room, two or three more stood up, and declared for bed also. The first I took up was Ffrench, of Green Park; for, indeed, he wasn't a 'cute fellow at the best of times; and if it wasn't that the hay was so low, he'd never have guessed that it was not a feather-bed till he woke in the morning. Well, down he went. Then came Eyre! Then Joe Mahon—two-and-twenty stone—no less. Lord pity them!—this was a great shock entirely! But when I opened the door for Tom Burke, upon my conscience you'd think it was a pandemonium they had down there. They were fighting like devils, and roaring with all their might.

"'Good night, Tom!' said I, pushing Burke forward. 'It's the cows you hear underneath.'

"'Cows!' said he. 'If they're cows, bedad they must have got at that seventy-three gallons of poteen you talked of for they're all drunk.'

"With that he snatched the candle out of my hand, and looked down into the pit. Never was such a sight seen before or since. Dan was pitching into poor Ffrench, who, thinking he had an enemy before him, was hitting out manfully at an old turf-creell, that rocked and creaked at every blow, as he called out,—

"'I'll smash you! I'll dinge your ribs for you, you infernal scoundrel!'

"Eyre was struggling in the hay, thinking he was swimming for his life; and poor Joe Mahon was patting him on the head, and saying, 'Poor fellow! good dog!' for he thought it was Towser, the bull-terrier, that was prowling round the calves of his legs.

"'If they don't get tired, there'll not be a man of them alive by morning!' said Tom, as he closed the door. 'And now, if you'll allow me to sleep on the carpet, I'll take it as a favor.'

"By this time they were all quiet in the parlor; so I lent Tom a couple of blankets and a bolster, and having locked my door, went to bed with an easy mind and a quiet conscience. To be sure, now and then a cry would burst forth, as if they were killing somebody below stairs, but I soon fell asleep, and heard no more of them.

"By daybreak next morning they made their escape; and when I was trying to awake, at half-past ten, I found Colonel M'Morris, of the Mayo, with a message from the whole four.

"'A bad business, this, Captain Mahon,' said he; 'my friends have been shockingly treated.'

"'It's mighty bad,' said I, 'to want to shoot me because I hadn't fourteen feather-beds in the house.'

"'They will be the laugh of the whole country, sir.'

"'Troth!' said I, 'if the country is not in very low spirits, I think they will.'

"'There's not a man of them can see—their eyes are actually closed up!'

"'The Lord be praised!' said I. 'It's not likely they'll hit me.'

"But to make a short story of it, out we went. Tom Burke was my friend; I could scarce hold my pistol with laughing; for such faces no man ever looked at. But for self-preservation sake, I thought it best to hit one of them; so I just pinked Ffrench a little under the skirt of the coat.

"'Come, Lambert!' said the colonel, 'it's your turn now.'

"'Wasn't that Lambert,' said I, 'that I hit?'

"'No,' said he, 'that was Ffrench.'

"'Begad, I'm sorry for it. Ffrench, my dear fellow, excuse me; for you see you're all so like each other about the eyes this morning—'

"With this there was a roar of laughing from them all, in which, I assure you, Lambert took not a very prominent part; for somehow he didn't fancy my polite inquiries after him; and so we all shook hands, and left the ground as good friends as ever, though to this hour the name of Newgate brings less pleasant recollections to their minds than if their fathers had been hanged at its prototype."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE DUEL.

When morning broke I started up and opened the window. It was one of those bright and beauteous daybreaks which would seem to be the compensation a northern climate possesses for its want of the azure sky of noon and the silvery moonlight of night, the gifts of happier climes.

The pink hue of the sky was gradually replacing the paler tints, like a deep blush mantling the cheek of beauty; the lark was singing high in the heaven, and the deep note of the blackbird came mellowed from the leafy grove; the cattle were still at rest, and seemed half unwilling to break the tranquil stillness of the scene, as they lay breathing the balmy odors from the wild flowers that grew around them. Such was the picture that lay on one side of me; on the other was the long street of a little town, on which yet the shadows of night were sleeping; the windows were closed; not a smoke-wreath rose from any chimney, but all was still and peaceful.

In my little parlor I found the good priest and the major fast asleep in their chairs, pretty much in the same attitudes I had left them in some hours before. The fire had died away; the square decanter of whisky was emptied to its last drop, and the kettle lay pensively on one side, like some shipwrecked craft, high and dry upon the shore. I looked at my watch; it was but four o'clock. Our meeting was appointed for half-past five; so I crept noiselessly back to my room, not sorry to have half an hour to myself of undisturbed reflection. When I had finished my dressing, I threw up the sash and sprang out into the garden. It was a wild, uncultivated spot, but still there was something of beauty in those old trees, whose rich blossoms scented the air, while the rank weeds of many a gay and gaudy hue shot up luxuriantly about their trunks, the pink marsh-mallow and the taper fox-glove mingling their colors with the sprayey meadow-sweet and the wild sweet-briar. There was an air of solitude in the neglect around me that seemed to suit the habit of my soul; and I strolled along from one walk to another, lost in my own thoughts.

There were many things at a moment like that I would fain have written—fain have said; but so it is, in the wealth of our emotions we can give nothing; and I could not bring myself to write to my friends, even to say farewell. Although I felt that in every stage of this proceeding I had nothing to reproach myself with, this duel being thrust on me by one who had singled me out for his hatred, yet I saw, as its result, nothing but the wreck of all my hopes. Already had *she* intimated how strong was her father's attachment to his nephew, and with an expressive fear cautioned me against any collision with him. How vain are all our efforts, how fruitless are all our endeavors to struggle against the current of our fate! We may stem for a short time the full tide of fortune—we may breast, with courage high and spirit fierce, the rough billows as they break upon us, but we are certain to succumb in the end. With some men failure is a question of fear—some want the persevering courage to drag on amid trials and difficulties—and some are deficient in the temper which, subduing our actions to a law, governs and presides over every moment of our lives, rendering us even in our periods of excitement and irritation amenable to the guidance of our reason.

This was my case; and I felt that, notwithstanding all my wishes to avoid a quarrel with Burke, yet in my heart a lurking spirit urged me to seek him out and offer him defiance. While these thoughts were passing through my mind, I suddenly heard a voice which somehow seemed half familiar to my ear. I listened. It came from a room of which the window was partly opened. I now remembered that poor Joe lay in that part of the house, and the next moment I knew it to be his. Placing a ladder against the wall, I crept quietly up till I could peep into the room. The poor fellow was alone—sitting up in his bed, with his hunting-cap on, an old whip in his hand, which he flourished from time to time with no small energy; his cheek was flushed; and his eye, prominent and flashing, denoted the access of high fever. It was evident that his faculties, clouded as they were even in his happiest moments, were now under the wilder influence of delirium. He was speaking rapidly to himself in a quick undertone, calling the dogs by name; caressing this one, scolding that; and then, bursting forth into a loud tally-ho! his face glowed with an ecstatic pleasure, and he broke forth into a rude chant, the words of which I have never forgotten; for as he sung them in a voice of wild and touching sweetness, they seemed the very outpourings of his poor simple heart:

"I never yet owned a horse or hound,
I never was lord of a foot of ground;
Yet few are richer, I will be bound,
Than me of a hunting morning.

"I'm far better off nor him that pays,
For though I've no money, I live at my ease,
With hunting and shooting whenever I please,
And a tally-high-ho in the morning.

"As I go on foot, I don't lose my sate,
As I take the gaps, I don't brake a gate;
And if I'm not first, why I'm seldom late,
With my tally-high-ho in the morning.

"And there's not a man, be he high or low,
In the parts down here, or wherever you go,
That doesn't like poor Tipperary Joe,
With his tally-high-ho in the morning."

A loud view-halloo followed this wild chant, and then the poor fellow, as if exhausted by his efforts, sank back in the bed, muttering to himself, in a low, broken voice, but with a look so happy and a smile so tranquil, he seemed more a thing to envy, than one to commiserate and pity.

"I say, Hinton," shouted the Major from the window of my bedroom, "what the deuce are you doing up that ladder there? Not serenading Mrs. Doolan, I hope. Are you aware it is five o'clock?"

I descended with all haste, and, joining my friend, took his arm, and set out toward the rendezvous.

"I didn't order the horses," said Mahon, "for the rumor of such a thing as this always gets abroad through one's servants."

"Ah, yes," said I; "and then you have the police."

"The police!" repeated he laughing; "not a bit of it, my boy: don't forget you're in glorious old Ireland, where no one ever thinks of spoiling a fair fight. It is possible the magistrate might issue his warrant if you would not come up to time, but for anything else—"

"Well," said I, "that does afford me another glimpse of your habits. How far have we to go, major?"

"You remember the grass field below the sunk fence, to the left of the mill?"

"Where the stream runs?"

"Exactly; that's the spot. It was old Pigott chose it, and no man is a better judge of these things. By the bye it is very lucky that Burke should have pitched upon a gentleman for his friend—I mean a real gentleman—for there are plenty of his acquaintances who, under that name, would rob the mail."

Thus chatting as we went, Mahon informed me that Pigott was an old half-pay colonel, whose principal occupation for thirteen years had been what the French would call "*to assist*" at affairs of honor. Even the major himself looked up to him as a last appeal in a disputed or a difficult point; and many a reserved case was kept for his opinion with the same ceremonious observance as a knotty point of law for the consideration of the twelve judges. Crossing the little rivulet near the mill, we held on by a small by-path which brought us over the starting ground of the steeple-chase, by the scene of part of my preceding day's exploits. While I was examining, with some curiosity, the ground cut up and trod by the horse's feet, and looking at the spot where he had taken the fence, the sharp sound of two pistol-shots quickly aroused me, and I eagerly asked what it was

"Snapping the pistols," said Mahon. "Ah, by the bye, all this kind of thing is new to you: never mind; put a careless, half indifferent kind of face on the matter. Do you take snuff? It doesn't signify; put your hands in your pockets, and hum 'Tatter Jack Walsh!'"

As I supposed there was no specific charm in the melody he alluded to, nor, if

there had been, had I any time to acquire it, I consoled myself by observing the first part of his direction, and strolled after him into the field with an indifference only, perhaps, a little too perfect.

Mr. Burke and his friends, to the number of about a dozen persons, were already assembled; and were one to judge from their loud talking and hearty laughter as we came forward, it would seem difficult to credit the occasion that brought them there; so, at least, I thought. Not so, however, the major; for, with a hop, step and a jump, performed by about the shortest pair of legs in the barony, he sprang into the midst of the party, with some droll observation on the benefits of early rising, which once more called forth their merriment. Seating myself on a large moss-covered stone, I waited patiently for the preliminaries to be settled. As I threw my eye among the group, I perceived that Burke was not there; but on turning my head, I remarked two men walking arm-in-arm on the opposite side of the hedge. As they paced to and fro, I could see, by the violence of his gesticulations, and the energy of his manner, that one was Burke. It seemed as though his companion was endeavoring to reason with, and dissuade him from some course of proceeding he appeared bent on following; but there was a savage earnestness in his manner that would not admit of persuasion; and at last, as if wearied and vexed by his friend's importunities, he broke rudely from him, and springing over the fence, called out, "Pigott, are you aware it is past six?" Then, pulling out his watch, he added, "I must be at Ballinasloe by eleven o'clock."

"If you speak another word, sir," said the old Colonel, with an air of offended dignity, "I leave the ground. Major Mahon, a word if you please."

They walked apart from the rest for a few seconds, and then the colonel, throwing his glove upon the grass, proceeded to step off the ground with a military precision and formality, that I am sure at any other time would have highly amused me.

After a slight demur from the major, to which I could perceive the colonel readily yielded, a walking-stick was stuck at either end of the measured distance, while the two seconds, placing themselves beside them, looked at each other with very great satisfaction, and mutually agreed it was a sweet spot.

"Would you like to look at these?" said Pigott, taking up the pistols from where they lay on the grass.

"Ah, I know them well," replied the Major, laughing; "these were poor Tom Casey's, and a better fellow, and handier with his iron, never snapped a trigger. These are ours, colonel;" presenting, as he spoke, two splendid-looking Mortimers, in all the brilliancy of their maiden freshness. A look of contempt from the colonel, and a most expressive shrug of his shoulders, was the reply.

"Begad, I think so," said Mahon, as if appreciating the gesture; "I had rather have that old tool with the cracked stock—not but this is a very sweet instrument, and elegantly balanced in the hand."

"We are now ready," said Pigott; "bring up your man, major."

As I started up to obey the summons, a slight bustle near attracted me. Two or three of Burke's friends were endeavoring, as it were, to pacify and subdue him; but his passion knew no bounds, and as he broke from them, he said in a voice perfectly audible where I stood, "Won't I by G—; then I'll tell you, if I don't shoot him—"

"Sir," said the colonel, turning on him a look of passionate indignation, "if it were not that you were here to answer the appeal of wounded honor, I'd leave you to your fate this moment; as it is, another such expression as that you have used, and I abandon you on the spot."

Doggedly and without speaking, Burke drew his hat far down upon his eyes, and took the place marked out for him.

"Mr. Hinton," said the colonel, as he touched his hat with most courteous politeness, "will you have the goodness to stand there?"

Mahon, meanwhile, handed each man his pistol, and whispering in my ear "Aim low," retired.

"The word, gentlemen," said the colonel, "will be one, two, three. Mr. Hinton, pray observe, I beg of you, you'll not reserve your fire after I say three." With his eyes fixed upon us, he walked back about ten paces. "Are you ready—are you both ready?"

"Yes, yes," said Burke, impatiently.

"Yes," said I.

"One, two, three."

I lifted my pistol at the second word, and as the last dropped from the colonel's lips one loud report rang through the air, and both pistols went off together. A quick, sharp pang shot through my cheek, as though it had been seared by a hot instrument. I put up my hand, but the ball had only touched the flesh, and a few drops of blood were all the damage. Not

so Burke; my ball had entered above the hip, and already his trousers were stained with blood, and notwithstanding his endeavors, he could not stand up straight.

"Is he hit, Pigott?" cried he in a voice harsh from agony. "Is he hit, I say?"

"Only grazed," said I tranquilly, as I wiped the stain from my face.

"Another pistol, quick? Do you hear me, Pigott?"

"We are not the arbiters in this case," replied the colonel, coolly. "Major Mahon, is your friend satisfied?"

"Perfectly satisfied on our own account," said the major; "but if the gentleman desires another shot—"

"I do, I do!" screamed Burke, as writhing with pain, he pressed both hands to his side, from which the blood, now gushing in torrents, formed a pool about his feet. "Be quick there, Pigott, I am getting faint." He staggered forward as he spoke, his face pale and his lips parted; then, suddenly clutching his pistol by the barrel, he fixed his eyes steadily on me, while with a curse he hurled the weapon at my head, and fell senseless to the earth. His aim was true, for straight between the eyes the weapon struck me, and felled me to the ground. Although stunned for the moment, I could hear the cry of horror and indignant shame that broke from the bystanders; but the next instant a dreamy confusion came over me, and I became unconscious of what was passing around.

CHAPTER XXX.

A COUNTRY DOCTOR.

SHOULD my readers feel any interest concerning that portion of my history which immediately followed the events of my last chapter, I believe I must refer him to Mrs. Doolan, the amiable hostess of the Bonaveen Arms. She could probably satisfy any curious inquiry as to the confusion produced in her establishment by the lively sallies of Tipperary Joe in one quarter, and the more riotous madness of myself in another. The fact is, good reader, my head was an English one; and although its contents were gradually acclimating themselves to the habits of the country, the external shell had not assumed that proper thickness and due power of resistance which Irish heads would appear to be gifted with. In plain words, the injury had brought on delirium.

It was somewhere in the third week after this unlucky morning, that I found myself lying in my bed, with a wet cloth upon my temples; while over my whole frame was spread that depressing sense of great debility, more difficult to bear than acute bodily suffering. Although unable to speak, I could distinctly hear the conversation about me, and recognize the voices of both Father Tom and the major as they conversed with a third party, whom I afterward learned was the Galen of Loughrea. Dr. Mopin, surgeon of the Roscommon militia, had been for forty years the terror of the sick of the surrounding country; for, independent of a naturally harsh and disagreeable manner, he had a certain slang and sneering way of addressing his patients, that was perfectly shocking. Amusing himself the while at their expense by suggesting the various unhappy and miserable consequences that might follow on their illness, he appeared to take a diabolical pleasure in the terror he was capable of eliciting.

There was something almost amusing in the infernal ingenuity he had acquired in this species of torture. There was no stage of your illness, no phase of your constitution, no character, no condition of your malady, that was not the immediate forerunner of one or more afflicting calamities. Were you getting weaker, it was "the way they always died out;" did you gain strength, it was a "rally before death;" were you despondent, it was "best for you to know your state;" were you sanguine, he would rebuke your good spirits, and suggest the propriety of a priest. However, with all these qualifications, people put up with him: and, as he had a certain kind of rude skill, and never stuck at a bold method, he obtained the best practice of the country, and a wide-spread reputation.

"'Well," said Father Tom, in a low voice—"well, Doctor, what do you think of him this evening?"

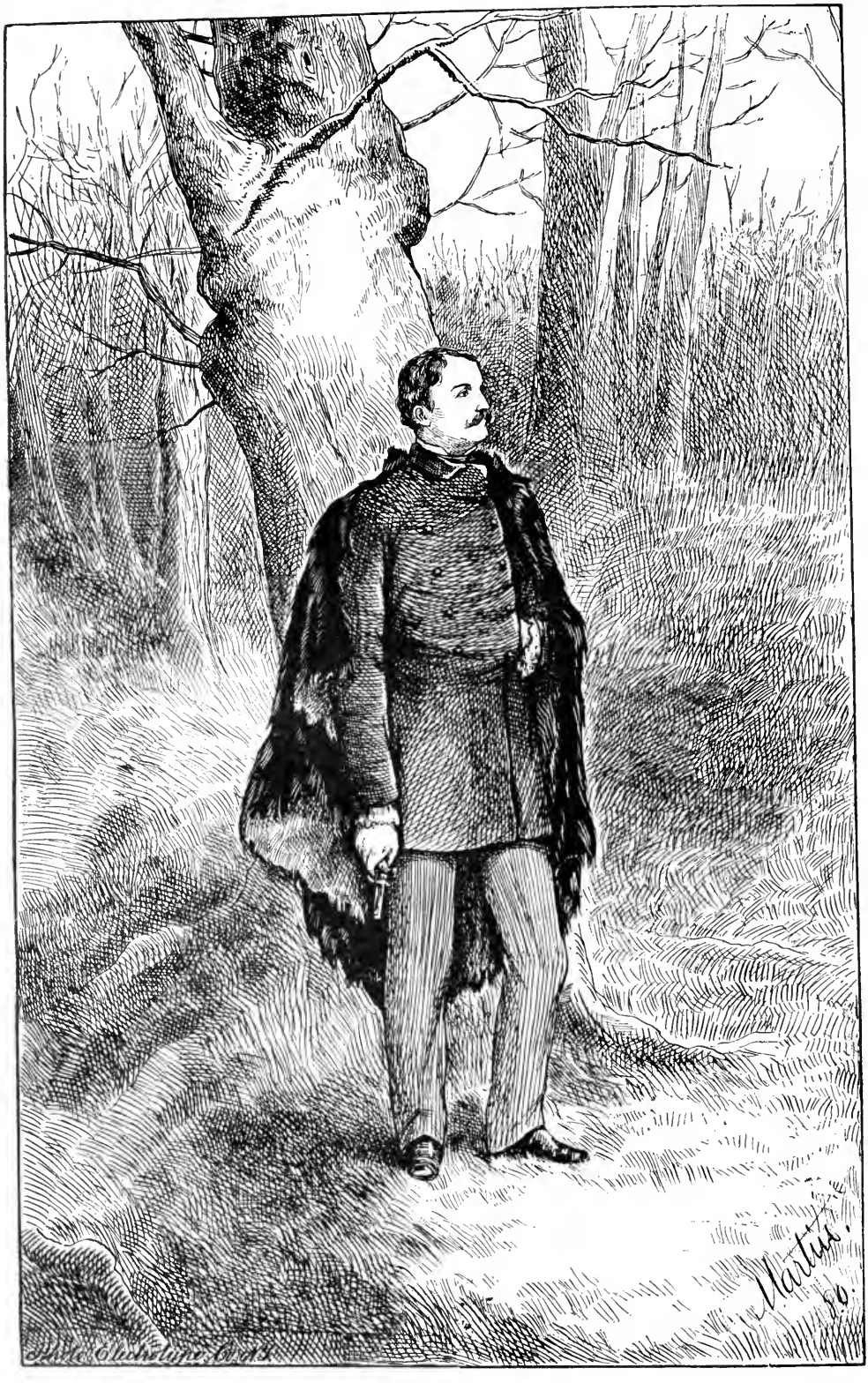
"What do I think of him? Just what I thought before—congestion of the membranes. This is the low stage he is in now. I wouldn't be surprised if he'd get a little better in a few days, and then go off like the rest of them."

"Go off! eh? Now, you don't mean—"

"Don't I? Maybe not. The ould story—coma, convulsions, and death."

"Damn the fellow," said the major, in a muttered voice; "I feel as if I was in a well. But, I say, Doctor, what are we to do?"

"Anything you please. They say his family is mighty respectable, and have



MAHON, MEANWHILE, HANDED EACH MAN HIS PISTOL, AND WHISPERING IN MY EAR "AIM LOW," RETIRED. (P. 821.)

plenty of money. I hope so; for here am I coming three times a day, and maybe when he dies it will be a mourning ring they'll be sending me instead of my fee. He was a dissipated chap, I am sure: look at the circles under his eyes!"

"Ay, ay," said the priest, "but they only came since his illness."

"So much the worse," added the invincible doctor; "that's always a symptom that the base of the brain is attacked."

"And what happens then?" said the major.

"Oh, he might recover. I knew a man once get over it, and he is alive now, and in Swift's hospital."

"Mad?" said the priest.

"Mad as a March hare," grinned the doctor; "he thinks himself the postoffice clock, and chimes all the hours and half hours day and night."

"The heavens be about us!" said Father Tom, crossing himself piously. "I had rather be dead than that."

"When did you see Burke?" inquired the major, wishing to change the conversation.

"About an hour ago; he is going fast!"

"Why, I thought he was better," said Father Tom; "they told me he ate a bit of chicken, and took a little wine and water."

"Ay; so he did; I bid them give him whatever he liked, as his time was so short: so, after all, maybe it is as well for this young chap here not to get over it."

"How so?" said the major; "what do you mean by that?"

"Just that it is as good to die of a brain fever as be hanged, and it won't shock the family."

"I'd break his neck," muttered Bob Mahon, "if there was another doctor within forty miles."

Of all his patients, Tipperary Joe was the only one of whom he spoke without disparagement: whether that the poor fellow's indifference to his powers of terrorizing had awed or conciliated him, I know not; but he expressed himself favorably regarding his case, and his prospects of recovery.

"Them chaps always recover," drawled out the doctor, in a dolorous cadence.

"Is it true," said the major, with a malicious grin—"is it true that he changed all the splints and bandages to the sound leg, and that you didn't discover the mistake for a week afterward? Mary Doolan told me."

"Mrs. Doolan," said the doctor, "ought to be thinking of her own misfortunes; and with a chronic inflammation of the pericardium, she might be making her sowl."

"She ill?—that fine, fat, comfortable-looking woman!"

"Ay, just so; they're always fat, and have a sleepy look about the eyes, just like yourself. Do you ever bleed at the nose?"

"Never, without a blow on it. Come, come, I know you well, doctor; you shall not terrify me."

"You're right not to fret, for it will take you off suddenly, with a giddiness in your head, and a rolling in your eyes, and a choking feel about your throat—"

"Stop, and be d—d to you," said the major, as he cleared his voice a couple of times, and loosened the tie of his cravat. "This room is oppressively hot."

"I protest to God," said Father Tom, "my heart is in my mouth, and there isn't a bone in my body that's not aching."

"I don't wonder," chimed in the doctor; "you are another of them, and you are a surprising man to go on so long. Sure, it is two years ago I warned your niece that when she saw you fall down, she must open a vein in your neck, if it was only with the carving-knife."

"The saints in Heaven forbid!" said the priest, cutting the sign of the cross in the air; "it's maybe the jugular she'd cut."

"No," drawled out the doctor, "she needn't go so deep; and if her hand doesn't shake, there won't be much danger. Good evening to you both."

So saying, with his knees bent, and his hands crossed under the skirts of his coat, he sneaked out of the room; while the others, overcome with fear, shame and dismay, sat silently, looking misery itself, at each side of the table.

"That fellow would kill a regiment," said the major, at length. "Come, Tom, let's have a little punch, I've a kind of trembling over me."

"Not a drop of anything stronger than water will cross my lips this blessed night. Do you know, Bob, I think this place doesn't agree with me; I wish I was back in Murranakilty: the mountain air and regular habits of life—that's the thing for me."

"We are none of us abstemious enough," said the major, "and then we bachelors—to be sure, you have your niece."

"Whisht!" said the priest; "how do you know who is listening? I vow to God I am quite alarmed at his telling that

to Mary; some night or other, if I take a little too much, she'll maybe try her anatomy upon me."

This unhappy reflection seemed to weigh upon the good priest's mind, and set him a mumbling certain Latin offices between his teeth for a quarter of an hour.

"I wish," said the major, "Hinton was able to read his letters, for here is a whole bundle of them—some from England, some from the Castle, and some marked 'On his Majesty's Service.'"

"I'll wait another week, anyhow, for him," said the priest. "To go back to Dublin in the state he is now would be the ruin of him, after the shake he has got: the dissipation, the dining out, and all the devilment would destroy him entirely; but a few weeks' peace and quietness up at Murranakilty will make him as sound as a bell."

"You are right, Tom, you are right," said the major, "the poor fellow mustn't be lost for the want of a little care; and now that Dillon has gone, there is no one here to look after him. Let us go down and see if the post is in: I think a walk would do us good."

Assenting to this proposition, the priest bent over me mournfully for a moment, shook his head, and, having muttered a blessing, walked out of the room with the major, leaving me in silence to think over all I had overheard.

Whether it was that youth suggested the hope, or that I more quickly imbibed an appreciation of the doctor's character from being the looker-on at the game, I am not exactly sure; but certainly I felt little depressed by his gloomy forebodings respecting me, and greatly lightened at my heart by the good news of poor Tipperary Joe.

Of all the circumstances which attended my illness, the one that most impressed me was the warm, affectionate solicitude of my two friends—the priest and his cousin. There was something of kindness and good feeling in their care of me, that spoke rather of a long friendship than of the weaker ties of chance and passing acquaintance. Again I thought of home, and, while I asked myself if the events which beset my path in Ireland could possibly have happened to me there, I could not but acknowledge that, if they had so, I could scarcely have hoped to have suddenly conjured up such faithful and benevolent friends, with no other claim, nor other recommendation, save that of being a stranger.

The casual observation concerning my letters had, by stimulating my curiosity, awakened my dormant energy; and, by a great effort, I stretched out my hand to the little bell beside my bed, and rang it. The summons was answered by the bare-legged girl who acted as waiter in the inn. When she had sufficiently recovered from her astonishment to comprehend my request, I persuaded her to place a candle beside me, and having given me the packet of letters that lay on the chimney-piece, I desired her on no account to admit any one, but say that I had fallen into a sound sleep, and should not be disturbed.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE LETTER-BAG.

THE package of letters was a large one, of all sizes; from all quarters they came: some from home, some from my brother officers of the Guards, some from the Castle, and even one from O'Grady.

The first I opened was a short note from Horton, the private secretary to the viceroy: this informed me that Major Mahon had written a statement to the duke of all the circumstances attending my duel; and that his grace had not only expressed himself highly satisfied with my conduct, but had ordered a very polite reply to be addressed to the major, thanking him for his great kindness, and saying with what pleasure he found that a member of his staff had fallen into such good hands.

"His grace desires me to add," continued the writer, "that you need only consult your own health and convenience with respect to your return to duty; and, in fact, your leave of absence is perfectly discretionary."

My mind relieved of a weighty load by the contents of this letter, I recovered my strength already so far that I sat up in bed to peruse the others. My next was from my father; it ran thus:

"DEAR JACK.—Your friend, Major Mahon, to whom I write by this post, will deliver this letter to you when he deems fit. He has been most good-natured in conveying to me a narrative of your late doings; and I cannot express how grateful we all are to him for the truly friendly part he has taken toward you. After the strictest scrutiny, for I confess to you I feared lest the major's might be too partial an account, I rejoice to say that your conduct meets with my entire approbation. An older and a wiser head might, it is possible, have avoided some of the difficulties you

have met with; but this I will add, that once in trouble, no one could have shown better temper, nor a more befitting spirit than you did. While I say this, my dear Jack, understand me clearly, that I speak of you as a young, inexperienced man, thrown, at his very outset of life, not only among strangers, but in a country where, as I remarked to you at first, everything was different from those in your own. You have now shown yourself equal to any circumstances in which you may be placed; I therefore not only expect that you will meet with fewer embarrassments in future, but that, should they arise, I shall have the satisfaction of finding your character and habits will be as much your safeguard against insult, as your readiness to resent any will be sure and certain.

"I have seen the duke several times, and he expresses himself as much pleased with you. From what he mentions, I can collect that you are well satisfied with Ireland, and therefore I do not wish to remove you from it. At the same time, bear in mind, that by active service alone can you ever attain to, or merit rank in the army; and that hitherto you have only been a soldier by name."

After some further words of advice respecting the future, and some few details of family matters, he concluded by intrusting to my mother the mention of what she herself professed to think lay more in her peculiar province.

As usual, her letter opened with some meteorological observations upon the climate of England for the preceding six weeks; then followed a journal of her own health, whose increasing delicacy, and the imperative necessity of being near Doctor Y——, rendered a journey to Ireland too dangerous to think of.

"Yes, my dearest boy," wrote she, "nothing but this would keep me from you a moment; however, I am much relieved at learning that you are now rapidly recovering, and hope soon to hear of your return to Dublin. It is a very dreadful thing to think of, but perhaps, upon the whole, it is better that you did kill this Mr. Burke. De Grammont tells me that a *mauvaise tête* like that must be shot sooner or later. It makes me nervous to dwell on this odious topic, so that I shall pass on to something else. The horrid little man that brought your letters, and who calls himself a servant of Captain O'Grady, insisted on seeing me yesterday; I never was more shocked in my life. From what he says, I gather that he may be looked on as rather a favorable specimen of the natives. They must, indeed, be a very frightful people; and, although he assured me he would do me no injury, I made Thomas stay in the room the entire time, and told Chubbs to give the alarm to the police if he heard the slightest noise; the creature, however, did nothing, and I am quite recovered from my fear already. What a picture, my dear boy, did he present to me of your conduct and your habits. Your intimacy with that odious family I mentioned in my last, seems the root of all your misfortunes. Why will such people thrust themselves forward? What do they mean by inviting you to their frightful parties? Have they not their own peculiar horrors? not but I must confess that they are more excusable than you; and I cannot conceive how you could so soon have forgotten the lessons instilled into you from your earliest years. As your poor, dear grandfather, the admiral, used to say, 'A vulgar acquaintance is a shifting sand:' you can never tell where you won't meet it; always at the most inopportune moment; and then, if you remark, your underbred people are never content with a quiet recognition, but they must always indulge in a detestable cordiality there is no escaping from. Oh, John, John! when at ten years of age, you made the banker's son at Northampton hold your stirrup as you mounted your pony, I never thought I should have this reproach to make you! The little fiend who calls himself Corny something, also mentions your continued familiarity with the young woman I spoke of before. What her intentions are is perfectly clear; and should she accomplish her object, your position in society and future fortune might possibly procure her large damages; but pause, my dear boy, before you go any farther. I do not speak of the moral features of the case, for you are of an age to judge of them yourself; but think, I beseech you, of the difficulties it will throw around your path in life, and the obstacles it will oppose to your success. There is poor Lord Henry Effingham; and since that foolish business with the clergyman's wife or daughter, where somebody went mad, and some one else drowned or shot himself, they have never given him any appointment whatever. The world is a frightful and unforgiving thing, as poor Lord Henry knows; therefore beware!

"The more I think of it, the more strongly do I feel the force of my first impressions respecting Ireland; and were it not that we so constantly hear of bat-

tles and bloodshed in the Peninsula, I should even prefer your being there. There would seem to be an unhappy destiny over everything belonging to me; my poor dear father, the admiral, had a life of hardship, almost unrewarded; for eleven years he commanded a guardship in the Nore; many a night have I seen him, when I was a little girl, come home dripping with wet, and perfectly insensible, from the stimulants he was obliged to resort to, and be carried in that state to his bed; and after all this, he didn't get his blue ribbon till he was near sixty.

"De Vere is constantly with us, and is, I remark, attentive to your cousin Julia; this is not of so much consequence, as I hear that her chancery suit is taking an unhappy turn; should it be otherwise, your interests will, of course, be looked to. De Vere is most amusing, and has a great deal of wit; but for him and the count we should be quite dreary, as the season is over, and we can't leave town for at least three weeks." The epistle concluded with a general summing up of its contents, and an affectionate entreaty to bear in mind her caution regarding the Rooneys. "Once more, my dear boy, remember that vulgar people are a part of our trials in this life; as that delightful man the dean of St. George's, says, 'they are the snares of our feet; and their subservient admiration of us is a dangerous and a subtle temptation.' Read this letter again, and believe me, my dearest John,

"Your affectionate and unhappy mother,
"CHARLOTTE HINTON."

I shall not perform so undutiful a task as to play the critic on my excellent mother's letter; there were, it is true, many new views in life presented to me by its perusal, and I should feel sadly puzzled were I to say at which I was more amused or shocked—at the strictness of her manners, or the laxity of her morals; but I confess that the part which most outraged me of all, was the eulogy on Lord Dudley De Vere's conversational gifts; but a few short months before, and it is possible I should not only have credited, but concurred in the opinion; brief, however, as had been the interval, it had shown me much of life; it had brought me into acquaintance, and even intimacy, with some of the brightest spirits of the day; it had taught me to discriminate between the unmeaning jargon of conventional gossip, and the charm of a society, where force of reasoning, warmth of eloquence, and brilliancy of wit, contested for the palm; it had made me feel that the intellectual gifts reserved in other countries for the personal advancement of their owner, by their public and ostentatious display, can be made the ornament and the delight of the convivial board, the elegant accompaniment to the hours of happy intercourse, and the strongest bond of social union.

So gradually had this change of opinion crept over me, I did not recognize in myself the conversion, and, indeed, had it not been for my mother's observations on Lord Dudley, I could not have credited how far my convictions had gone round. I could now understand the measurement by which Irishmen were estimated in the London world. I could see that if such a character as De Vere had a reputation for ability, how totally impossible it was for those who appreciated him to prize the great and varied gifts of such men as Grattan, Curran, and many more.

Lost in such thoughts, I forgot for some moments that O'Grady's letter lay open before me. It was dated Chatham, and written the night before he sailed. The first few lines showed me that he knew nothing of my duel, having only received my own letter with an account of the steeple-chase. He wrote in high spirits. The commander-in-chief had been most kind to him, appointing him to a vacant majority, not as he anticipated, in the 41st, but in the 9th Light Dragoons.

"I am anxiously looking out for Corny," said he, "and a great letter-bag from Ireland, the only bit of news from which place, except your own, is, that the Rooney's have gone into deep mourning, themselves and their whole house. Various rumors are afloat as to whether any money speculations of Paul's may have suggested the propriety of retrenchment, or whether there may not have been a death in the royal family of O'Toole. Look to this for me, Hinton; for even in Canada I shall preserve the memory of that capital house, its excellent *cuisine*, its charming hostess. Cultivate them, my dear Jack, for your sake and for mine. One Rembrandt is as good as a gallery: so sit down before them and make a study of the family."

The letter concluded as it began, by hearty thanks for the service I had rendered him, begged me to accept of Moddiridderoo as a *souvenir* of his friendship, and in a postscript, to write which the letter had evidently been reopened, was a warning to me against any chance collision with Ulick Burke.

"Not, my dear boy, because he is a dead shot, although that same is something, but

that a quarrel with him could scarcely be reputable in its commencement, and must be bad whatever the result."

After some further cautioning on this matter, the justice of which was tolerably evident from my own experience, O'Grady concluded with a hurried postscript:

"Corny has not yet arrived, and we have received our orders for embarkation within twenty-four hours. I begin half to despair of his being here in time. Should this be the case, will you, my dear Hinton, look after the old villain for me, at least until I write to you again on the subject?"

While I was yet pondering on these last few lines, I perceived that a card had fallen from my father's letter. I took it up, and what was my astonishment to find that it contained a correct likeness of Corny Delany, drawn with a pen, underneath which was written, in my cousin Julia's hand, the following few lines:

"The dear old thing has waited three days, and I think I have at length caught something like him. Dear Jack, if the master be only equal to the man, we shall never forgive you for not letting us see him.—Yours, "JULIA."

This, of course, explained the secret of Corny's delay. My cousin, with her habitual willfulness, preferring the indulgence of a caprice to anything resembling a duty, and I now had little doubt upon my mind that O'Grady's fears were well founded, and that he had been obliged to sail without his follower.

The exertion it cost me to read my letters, and the excitement produced by their perusal, fatigued and exhausted me, and, as I sank back upon my pillow, I closed my eyes and fell sound asleep, not to awake until late on the following day; but strange enough, when I did so, it was with a head clear and faculties collected—my mind refreshed by rest, unbroken by a single dream: and so restored did I feel, that, save in the debility from long confinement to bed, I was unconscious of any sense of malady.

From this hour my recovery dated. Advancing every day with rapid steps, my strength increased; and, before a week elapsed, I so far regained my lost health, that I could move about my chamber, and even lay plans for my departure.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BOB MAHON AND THE WIDOW.

It was about eight or ten days after the events I have mentioned, when Father Tom Loftus, whose care and attention to me had been unceasing throughout, came in to inform me that all the preparations for our journey were properly made, and that by the following morning at sunrise we should be on the road.

I confess that I looked forward to my departure with anxiety. The dreary monotony of the day, spent in either perambulating my little room, or in a short walk up and down before the inn door, had done more to depress and dispirit me than even the previous illness. The good priest, it is true, came often to see me, but then there were hours spent quite alone, without the solace of a book or the sight of even a newspaper. I knew the face of every man, woman, and child in the village. I could tell their haunts, their habits, and their occupations—even the very hours of the tedious day were marked in my mind by various little incidents, that seemed to recur with unbroken precision; and if, when the pale apothecary disappeared from over the half-door of his shop, I knew that he was engaged at his one-o'clock dinner, so the clink of the old ladies' pattens, as they passed to an evening tea, told me that the day was waning, and that the town-clock should strike seven. There was nothing to break the monotonous jog-trot of daily life save the appearance of a few raw subalterns, who, from some cause or other, less noticed than others of the regiment by the neighboring gentry, strolled about the town, quizzing and laughing at the humble townsfolk, and endeavoring, by looks of most questionable gallantry, to impress the female population with a sense of their merits.

After all, mankind is pretty much the same in every country and every age. Some men ambitioning the credit of virtues the very garb of which they know not; others, and a large class too, seeking for the reputation of vices the world palliates with the appellation of fashionable. We laugh at the old courtier of Louis XIV.'s time, who, in the flattery of the age he lived in, preferred being called a "*scélérat*," an "*infâme scélérat*," that, by the excesses he professed, the vicious habits of the sovereign might seem less striking, and yet we see the very same thing under our own eyes every day we live. But to return.

There was nothing to delay me longer at Loughrea. Poor Joe was so nearly recovered, that in a few days more it was hoped he might leave his bed. He was in kind hands, however, and I had taken every precaution that he should want for

nothing in my absence. I listened, then, with pleasure to Father Tom's detail of all his preparations; and, although I knew not whither we were going, nor how long the journey was likely to prove, yet I looked forward to it with pleasure, and only longed for the hour of setting out.

As the evening drew near, I looked anxiously out for the good father's coming. He had promised to come in early with Major Mahon, whom I had not seen for the two days previous: the major being deeply engaged in consultations with his lawyer regarding an approaching trial at the assizes. Although I could gather from his manner, as well as from the priest's, that something of moment impended, yet, as neither of them more than alluded to the circumstance, I knew nothing of what was going forward.

It was eight o'clock when Father Tom made his appearance. He came alone; and, by his flurried look and excited manner, I saw there was something wrong.

"What is it, Father?" said I. "Where is the major?"

"Och, confound him! they have taken him at last," said he, wiping his forehead with agitation.

"Taken him!" said I. "Why, was he hiding?"

"Hiding—to be sure, he was hiding, and masquerading, and disguising himself; but, faith, those Clare fellows—there's no coming up to them; they have such practice in their own county, they would take the devil himself, if there was a writ out against him. And, to be sure, it was a clever trick they played old Bob."

Here the good priest took such a fit of laughing, that he was obliged to wipe his eyes.

"May I never!" said he, "if it wasn't a good turn they played him, after what he did himself."

"Come, Father, let's hear it."

"This was the way of it. Maybe you never remarked—of course you didn't, for you were only there a couple of times—that opposite Bob's lodgings there was a mighty sweet-looking creature, a widow woman; she was dressed in very discreet black, and had a sorrowful look about her, that, somehow or other, I think, made her even more interesting.

"'I'd like to know that widow,' said Bob, 'for now that the fellows have a warrant against me, I could spend my days so pleasantly over there; comforting and consoling her.'

"'Whisht!' said I, 'don't you see that she is in grief?'

"'Not so much in grief,' said he, 'but she lets down two beautiful braids of her brown hair under her widow's cap; and whenever you see that, Father Tom, take my word for it, the game's not up.'

"I believe there was some reason in what he said, for, the last time I went up to see him, he had the window open, and he was playing 'Planxty Kelly,' with all his might, on an old fiddle; and the widow would come, now and then, to the window, to draw the little muslin curtains; or she would open it, to give a halfpenny to the beggars; or she would hold out her hand, to see if it was raining—and a beautiful lily-white hand it was; but all the time, you see, it was only exchanging looks they were. Bob was a little ashamed, when he saw me in the room; but he soon recovered.

"'A very charming woman that Mrs. Moriarty is,' said he, closing the window. 'It's a cruel pity that her fortune is all in the Grand Canal—I mean Canal debentures. But, indeed, it comes pretty much to the same thing.'

"And so he went on, raving about the widow; for by this time he knew all about it. Her maiden name was Cassidy, and her father a distiller; and, in fact, Bob was quite delighted with his beautiful neighbor. At last, I bid him good-bye, promising to call for him at eight o'clock, to come over here to you; for you see there was a back-door to the house, that led into a small alley, but which Mahon used to make his escape in the evening. He was sitting, it seems, at his window, looking out for the widow, who, for some cause or other, hadn't made her appearance the entire of the day. There he sat, with his hand on his heart, and a heavenly smile on him, for a good hour, sipping a little whisky-and-water between times, to keep up his courage.

"'She must be out,' said Bob to himself. 'She's gone to pass the day somewhere. I hope she doesn't know any of those impudent vagabonds up at the barracks. Maybe, after all, it's sick she is.'

"While he was ruminating this way, who should he see turn the corner but the widow herself. There she was, coming along, in deep weeds, with her maid after her—a fine, slashing-looking figure, rather taller than herself, and lustier every way; but it was the first time he saw her in the streets. As she got near to her door, Bob stood up to make a polite bow. Just as he did so, the widow slipped her foot, and fell down on the flags with a loud scream. The maid ran up, endeavoring to assist her, but

she couldn't stir; and, as she placed her hand on her leg, Bob perceived at once she had sprained her ankle. Without waiting for his hat, he sprang downstairs, and rushed across the street.

"'Mrs. Moriarty, my angel!' said Bob, putting his arm round her waist. 'Won't you permit me to assist you?'

"She clasped his hand with fervent gratitude, while the maid, putting her hand into her reticule, seemed fumbling for a handkerchief.

"'I'm a stranger to you, ma'am,' said Bob; 'but if Major Mahon, of the Roscommon—'

"'The very man we want,' said the maid, pulling a writ out of the reticule: for devil a thing else they were but two bailiffs from Ennis.

"'The very man we want,' said the bailiffs.

"'I am caught!' said Bob.

"'The devil a doubt of it.'"

"The poor major," said I. "And where is he now?"

"On his way to Ennis in a post-chaise, for it seems the ladies had a hundred pounds for their capture. Ah! poor Bob! But there is no use fretting; besides it would be sympathy thrown away, for he'll give them the slip before long. And now, Captain, are you ready for the road? I have got a peremptory letter from the bishop, and must be back in Murranakilty as soon as I can."

"My dear Father, I am at your disposal. I believe we can do no more for poor Joe; and as to Mr. Burke—and by the bye, how is he?"

"Getting better, they say. But I believe, you've spoiled a very lucrative source of his income. He was the best jumper in the west of Ireland; and, they tell me, you've lamed him for life. He is down at Milltown, or Kilkee, or somewhere on the coast; but sure we'll have time enough to talk of these things as we go along. I'll be with you by seven o'clock. We must start early, and get to Portumna before night."

Having promised implicit obedience to the worthy priest's directions, be they what they might, I pledged myself to make up my baggage in the smallest possible space, and have breakfast ready for him before starting. After a few other observations, and some suggestions as to the kind of equipment he deemed suitable to the road, he took his leave, and I sat down alone to a little quiet reckoning with myself as to the past, the present, and the future.

From my short experience of Ireland, the only thing approaching to an abstract principle I could attain to, was the utter vanity, the perfect impossibility of any man's determining on a given line of action, or the steady pursuit of any one enterprise. No; the inevitable course of fate seems to have chosen this happy island to exhibit its phenomena—whether your days be passed in love or war, or your evenings in drink or devotion, not yours be the glory; for there would seem to be a kind of headlong influence at work, impelling you ever forward. Acquaintances grow up, ripen, and even bear fruit, before, in other lands, their roots would have caught the earth; by them your tastes are regulated, your habits controlled, your actions fashioned. You may not, it is true, lisp in the tongue of blarney. You may weed your phraseology of its tropes and figures, but trust me, that if you live in Ireland—if you like the people, and who does not?—and if you are liked by them, and who would not be?—then, do I say, you will find yourself, without knowing or perceiving it, going the pace with the natives,—courtship, fun, frolic, and devilment, filling up every hour of your day, and no inconsiderable portion of your night also. One grand feature of the country seemed to me, that no matter what particular extravagance you were addicted to—no matter what strange or absurd passion to do, or seem something remarkable—you were certain of always finding some one to sympathize with, if not actually to follow you. Nothing is too strange, nothing too ridiculous, nothing too convivial, nothing too daring for Paddy. With one intuitive bound he springs into your confidence and enters into your plans. Only be open with him, conceal nothing, and he's yours, heart and hand; ready to indorse your bill, to carry off a young lady, or carry a message—to burn a house for a joke, or jeopardy his neck for mere pastime—to go to the world's end to serve you, and, on his return, shoot you afterwards out of downright good-nature. As for myself, I might have lived in England to the age of Methuselah, and yet never have seen as much of life as in the few months spent in Ireland. Society in other lands seems a kind of freemasonry, where, for lack of every real or important secret, men substitute signs and passwords, as if to throw the charm of mystery where, after all, nothing lies concealed; but in Ireland, where national character runs in a deep or hidden channel, with cross currents and back waters ever turning and winding—where all the

incongruous and discordant elements of what is best and worst seem blended together—their social intercourse is free, cordial, warm, and benevolent. Men come together disposed to like each other; and what an Irishman is disposed to, he usually has a way of effecting. My brief career had not been without its troubles; but who would not have incurred such, or as many more, to have evoked such kind interest and such warm friendship? From Phil O'Grady, my first, to Father Tom, my last friend, I had met with nothing but almost brotherly affection; and yet I could not help acknowledging to myself that, but six short months before, I would have recoiled from the friendship of the one and the acquaintance of the other as something to lower and degrade me. Not only would the outward observances of their manner have deterred me, but, in their very warm and earnest proffers of good-nature, I would have seen cause for suspecting and avoiding them. Thank heaven, I now knew better and felt deeper. How this revolution became effected in me I am not myself aware; perhaps—I only say perhaps—Miss Bellew had a share in effecting it.

Such were some of my thoughts as I betook myself to bed, and soon after to sleep.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE PRIEST'S GIG.

I AM by no means certain that the prejudices of my English education were sufficiently overcome to prevent my feeling a kind of tingling of shame as I took my place beside Father Tom Loftus in his gig. Early as it was, there were still some people about; and I cast a hurried glance around to see if our equipage was not as much a matter of amusement to them as of affliction to me.

When Father Tom first spoke of his "dennet," I innocently pictured to myself something resembling the indigenous productions of Loughrea. "A little heavy or so," thought I; "strong for country roads—mayhap somewhat clumsy in the springs, and not over refined about the shafts." Heaven help my ignorance! I never fancied a vehicle whose component parts were two stout poles, surmounting a pair of low wheels, high above which was suspended, on two lofty C springs, the body of an ancient buggy; the lining of a bright scarlet, a little faded and dimmed by time, bordered by a lace of the most gaudy pattern; a flaming coat of arms, with splendid blazonry and magnificent quarterings ornamented each panel of this strange-looking tub, into which, for default of steps, you mounted by a ladder.

"Eh, Father," said I, "what have we here? This is surely not the—"

"Ay, Captain," said the good priest, as a smile of proud satisfaction curled his lip, "that's 'the convaniency;' and a pleasanter and an easier never did man sit in—a little heavy, to be sure; but then one can always walk up the hills, and if they're very stiff ones entirely, why it's only throwing out the ballast."

"The ballast?—what do you mean?"

"Just them," said he, pointing with his whip to some three or four huge pieces of limestone rock that lay in the bottom of the gig; "there's seven, maybe eight stone weight—every pound of it."

"And for heaven's sake," said I, "why do you carry that mass of rubbish along with you?"

"I'll just tell you then. The road has holes in it you could bury your father in, and when the convaniency gets into one of them, she has a way of springing up into the air, that if you're not watching is sure to pitch you out—maybe into the bog at the side—maybe on the beast's back. I was once actually thrown into a public-house window, where there was a great deal of fun going on, and the bishop came by before I extricated myself. I assure you I had hard work to explain it to his satisfaction." There was a lurking drollery in his eye as he said these last few words, that left me to the full as much puzzled about the accident as his worthy diocesan. "But look at the springs," he continued; "there's metal for you! and do you mind the shape of the body? It's for all the world like the ancient *curriculus*. And look at Bathershin himself—the old varmint! Sure he's classical too—hasn't he a Roman nose? and ain't I a Roman myself? So get up, Captain—*ascendite ad curram*—get into the shay. And now for the *doch an dhurras*—the stirrup-cup, Mrs. Doolan, that's the darlin'. Ah, there's nothing like it!

"'Sit mihi lagena,
Ad summum plena.'

Here, Captain, take a pull—beautiful milk punch!"

Draining the goblet to the bottom, which I confess was no unpleasant task, I pledged

my kind hostess, who, courtesying deeply, refilled the vessel for Father Tom.

"That's it Mary; froth it up, acushla. Hand it here, my darling!—my blessing on ye!"

As he spoke, the worthy father deposited the reins at his feet, and lifted the cup with both hands to his mouth; when suddenly the little window over the inn door was burst open, and a loud tally-ho was shouted out, in accents the wildest I ever listened to. I had barely time to catch the merry features of poor Tipperary Joe, when the priest's horse, more accustomed to the hunting-field than the high-road, caught up the welcome sound, gave a wild toss of his head, cocked up his tail, and, with a hearty bang of both hind-legs against the front of the chariot, set off down the street as if the devil were after him. Feeling himself at liberty, as well as favored by the ground, which was all down hill, the pace was really terrific. It was some time before I could gather up the reins, as Father Tom, jug and all, had been thrown at the first shock on his knees to the bottom of the convaniency, where, half-suffocated by fright and the milk punch that went wrong with him, he bellowed and coughed with all his might.

"Howld him tight—ugh, ugh, ugh! not too hard—don't chuck him for the love of —ugh, ugh, ugh! the reins is rotten, and the traces no better—ugh, ugh, ugh! Bad luck to the villains, why didn't they catch his head?—and the *stultus execrabilis!*—the damned fool! how he yelled!"

Almost fainting with laughter, I pulled my best at the old horse, not, however, neglecting the priest's caution about the frailty of the harness. This, however, was not the only difficulty I had to contend with, for the *curriculus* participating in the galloping action of the horse, swung upward and downward, backward and forward, and from one side to the other—all at once, too—in a manner so perfectly addling, that it was not before we reached the first turnpike that I succeeded in arresting our progress. Here a short halt was necessary for the priest to recover himself, and examine whether either his bones or or any portion of the harness had given way; both had happily been found proof against mishaps, and drew from the reverend father strong encomiums upon their merits; and after a brief delay we resumed our road, but at a much more orderly and becoming pace than before.

Once more *en route*, I bethought me it was high time to inquire about the direction we were about to travel, and the probable length of our journey; for I confess I was sadly ignorant as to the geography of the land we were traveling, and the only point I attempted to keep in view was the number of miles we were distant from the capital. The priest's reply was, however, anything but instructive to me, consisting merely of a long catalogue of names, in which the syllables "kill," "whack," "nock," "shock" and "bally," jostled and elbowed each other in the rudest fashion imaginable; the only intelligible portion of his description being, that a blue mountain, scarcely perceptible in the horizon, lay about half way between us and Murranakilty.

My attention was not, however, permitted to dwell on these matters; for my companion had already begun a narrative of the events which had occurred during my illness. The Dillons, I found, had left for Dublin soon after my mishap. Louisa Bellew returned to her father; and Mr. Burke, whose wound had turned out a more serious affair than was at first supposed, was still confined to his bed, and a lameness for life anticipated as the inevitable result of the injury.

"Sir Simon, for once in his life," said the priest, "has taken a correct view of his nephew's character; and has, now that all the danger to life is past, written him a severe letter, reflecting on his conduct. Poor Sir Simon! his life has been one tissue of trial and disappointment throughout. Every buttress that supported his venerable house giving way, one by one, the ruin seems to threaten total downfall, ere the old man exchange the home of his fathers for his last narrow rest beside them in the churchyard. Betrayed on every hand, wronged, and ruined, he seems merely to linger on in life; like the stern timbers of some mighty wreck that marks the spot where once the goodly vessel perished, and are now the beacon of the quicksand to others. You know the sad story, of course, that I chiefly allude to—"

"No. I am completely ignorant of the family history," said I.

The priest blushed deeply, as his dark eyebrows met in a heavy frown; then turning hastily toward me, he said, in a voice whose thick, low utterance bespoke his agitation,—

"Do not ask me, I beseech you, to speak further of what—had I been more collected —I had never alluded to! An unhappy duel, the consequence of a still more unhappy event, has blasted every hope in life of my poor friend. I thought—that

is, I feared—lest the story might have reached you. As I find this is not so, you will spare me recurring to that, the bare recollection of which comes like a dark cloud over the happiest day of my existence. Promise me this, or I shall not forgive myself."

I readily gave the pledge he required, and we pursued our road; not, however, as before, but each sunk in his own reflections—silent, reserved, and thoughtful.

"In about four days," said Father Tom, at last breaking the silence, "perhaps five, we'll be drawing near Murranakilty." He then proceeded, at more length, to inform me of the various counties through which we were to pass, detailing with great accuracy the several seats we should see, the remarkable places, the ruined churches, the old castles, and even the very fox-covers that lay on our route. And although my ignorance was but little enlightened by the catalogue of hard names that fell as glibly from his tongue as Italian from a Roman, yet I was both entertained and pleased with the many stories he told: some of them legends of bygone days, some of them the more touching and truth-dealing records of what had happened in his own time. Could I have borrowed any portion of his narrative power—were I able to present, in his strong but simple language, any of the curious scenes he mentioned, I should, perhaps, venture on relating to my reader one of his stories; but when I think how much of the interest depended on his quaint and homely, but ever forcible manner, as, pointing with his whip to some ruined house with blackened walls and fallen chimneys, he told some narrative of rapine and of murder, I feel how much the force of reality added power to a story that in repetition might be weak and ineffective.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MOUNTAIN PASS.

On the whole, the journey, to me, was a delightful one, and certainly not the least pleasant portion of my life in Ireland. Endowed—partly from his individual gifts, partly from the nature of his sacred functions—with influence over all the humble ranks in life, the good priest jogged along with the assurance of a hearty welcome wherever he pleased to halt; the only look of disappointment being when he declined some proffered civility, or refused an invitation to delay his journey. The chariot was well known in every town and village, and scarcely was the rumble of its wheels heard coming up the "street," when the population might be seen assembling in little groups and knots, to have a word with "the father"—to get his blessing, to catch his eye, or even obtain a nod from him. He knew every one and every thing; and, with a tact which is believed to be the prerogative of royalty, he never miscalled a name, nor mistook an event. Inquiring after them for soul and body, he entered with real interest into all their hopes and plans, their fears and anticipations, and talked away about pigs, penances, purgatory, and potatoes, in a way that showed his information, on any of these matters, to be of no mean or common order.

By degrees our way left the more traveled high road, and took by a mountain track, through a wild, romantic line of country, beside the Shannon. No villages now presented themselves, and indeed, but little trace of any habitation whatever: large, misshapen mountains, whose granite sides were scarce concealed by the dark fern, the only vegetation that clothed them, rose around and about us. In the valleys some strips of bog might be seen, with little hillocks of newly cut turf, the only semblance of man's work the eye could rest on. Tillage there was none. A dreary silence, too, reigned throughout. I listened in vain for the bleating of a lamb, or the solitary tinkle of a sheep-bell; but no—save the cawing of the rooks, or the mournful cry of the plover, I could hear nothing. Now and then, it is true, the heavy flapping of a strong wing would point the course of a heron soaring toward the river; but his low flight even spoke of solitude, and showed he feared not man in his wild and dreary mountains. At intervals we would see the Shannon winding along, far, far down below us; and I could mark the islands in the bay of Scariff, with their ruined churches and one solitary tower; but no sail floated on the surface, nor did an oar break the sluggish current of the stream. It was, indeed, a dreary scene, and, somehow, my companion's manner seemed colored by its influence; for scarcely had we entered the little valley that led to this mountain track, than he became silent and thoughtful, absorbed in reflection, and when he spoke, either doing so at random, or in a vague and almost incoherent way, that showed his ideas were wandering.

I remarked that, as we stopped at a little

forge shortly after daybreak, the smith had taken the priest aside and whispered to him a few words, at which he seemed strangely moved; and as they spoke together for some moments in an undertone, I perceived by the man's manner and gesture, as well as by the agitation of the good father himself, that something of importance was being told. Without waiting to finish the little repair to the carriage which had caused our halt, he remounted hastily, and, beckoning me to take my place, drove on at a pace that spoke of haste and eagerness. I confess that my curiosity to know the reason was great, but as I could not with propriety ask, nor did my companion seem disposed to give the information, I soon relapsed into a silence unbroken as his own, and we traveled along for some miles without speaking. Now and then the priest would make an effort to relieve the weariness of the way by some remark upon the scenery, or some allusion to the wild grandeur of the pass; but it was plain he spoke only from constraint, and that his mind was occupied on other and very different thoughts. It was now wearing late, and yet no trace of any house or habitation could I see where to rest for the night. Not wishing, however, to interrupt the current of my friend's thoughts, I maintained my silence, straining my eyes on every side, from the dark mountains that towered above me, to the narrow gloomy valley that lay several hundred feet beneath our track—but all in vain. The stillness was unbroken, and not a roof, not even a smoke-wreath, could be seen, far as the view extended.

The road by which we traveled was scarped from the side of a mountain, and for some miles pursued a gradually descending course. On suddenly turning the angle of rocky wall that skirted us for above a mile, we came in sight of a long reach of the Shannon, upon which the sun was now setting in all its golden luster. The distant shore of Munster, rich in tillage and pasture-land, was lit up, too, with cornfield and green meadow, leafy wood and blue mountain, all glowing in their brightest hue. It was a vivid and a gorgeous picture, and I could have looked on it long with pleasure, when suddenly, I felt my arm grasped by a strong finger. I turned round, and the priest, relaxing his hold, pointed down into the dark valley below us, as he said, in a low and agitated voice, "You see the light—it is there—there." Quickening our pace by every effort, we began rapidly to descend the mountain by a zig-zag road, whose windings soon lost us the view I have mentioned, and left nothing but the wild and barren mountains around us. Tired as our poor horse was, the priest pressed him forward, and, regardless of the broken and rugged way, he seemed to think of nothing but his haste, muttering between his teeth with a low but rapid articulation, while his face grew flushed and pale at intervals, and his eye had all the lustrous glare and restless look of fever. I endeavored, as well as I was able, to occupy my mind with other thoughts, but with that invincible fascination that turns us ever to the side we try to shun, I found myself again and again gazing on my companion's countenance. Every moment now his agitation increased; his lips were firmly closed; his brow contracted; his cheek flattened, and quivering with a nervous spasm, while his hand trembled violently as he wiped the big drops of sweat that rolled in agony from his forehead.

At last we reached the level, where a better road presented itself before us, and enabled us so to increase our speed that we were rapidly coming up with the light, which, as the evening closed in, seemed larger and brighter than before. It was now that hour when the twilight seems fading into night, a gray and somber darkness coloring every object, but yet marking grass and rock, pathway and river, with some seeming of their noonday hues, so that as we came along I could make out the roof and walls of a mud cabin built against the very mountain side, in the gable of which the light was shining. A rapid, a momentary thought flashed across my mind as to what dreary and solitary man could fix his dwelling-place in such a spot as this, when in an instant the priest suddenly pulled up the horse, and, stretching out one hand with a gesture of listening, whispered, "Hark!—did you not hear that?" As he spoke, a cry, wild and fearful, rose through the gloomy valley—at first in one prolonged and swelling note, then broken as if by sobs, it faltered, sank, and rose again wilder and madder, till the echoes, catching up the direful sounds, answered and repeated them as though a chorus of unearthly spirits were calling to each other through the air.

"O God! too late—too late!" said the priest, as he bowed his face upon his knees, and his strong frame shook in agony. "O Father of mercy!" he cried, as he lifted his eyes, bloodshot and tearful, toward heaven, "forgive me this,—and if unshriven before Thee—" Another cry, more frantic than before, here burst upon

us, and the priest, muttering with rapid utterance, appeared lost in prayer. But at him I looked no longer, for straight before us on the road, and in front of the little cabin, now not above thirty paces from us, knelt the figure of a woman, whom, were it not from the fearful sounds we had heard, one could scarcely believe a thing of life; her age not more than thirty years; she was pale as death; not a tinge, not a ray of color streaked her bloodless cheek; her black hair, long and wild, fell upon her back and shoulders, straggling and disordered; her hands were clasped as she held her stiffened arms straight before her. Her dress bespoke the meanest poverty, and her sunk cheek and drawn-in lips betokened famine and starvation. As I gazed on her, almost breathless with awe and dread, the priest leaped out, and hurrying forward, called out to her in Irish; but she heard him not, saw him not—dead to every sense, she remained still and motionless. No feature trembled, no limb was shaken; she knelt before us, like an image of stone; and then, as if by some spell that worked within her, once more gave forth the heart-rending cry we heard at first. Now low and plaintive, like the sighing night-wind, it rose fuller and fuller, pausing and continuing at intervals, and then breaking into short and fitful efforts, it grew wilder and stronger, till at last, with one outbreak like the overflowing of a heart of misery, it ceased abruptly.

The priest bent over her and spoke to her; he called her by her name, and shook her several times—but all in vain.

Her spirit—if, indeed, present with her body—had lost all sympathy with things of earth.

"God help her," said he; "God comfort her! This is sore affliction."

As he spoke, he walked toward the little cabin, the door of which now stood open. All was still and silent within its wall. Unused to see the dwellings of the poor in Ireland, my eye ranged over the bare walls, the damp and earthen floor, the few and miserable pieces of furniture—when suddenly my attention was called to another and a sadder spectacle. In one corner of the hovel, stretched upon a bed, whose poverty might have made it unworthy of a dog to lie in, lay the figure of a large and powerfully-built man, stone dead. His eyes were closed, and the chin bound up with a white cloth; and a sheet, torn and ragged, was stretched above his cold limbs, while on either side of him two candles were burning. His features, though rigid and stiffened, were manly, and even handsome; the bold character of the face heightened in effect by his beard and moustache, which appeared to have been let grow for some time previous, and whose black and waving curl looked darker from the pallor around it. Some lines there were about the mouth that looked like harshness and severity, but the struggle of departing life might have caused them.

Gently withdrawing the sheet that covered him, the priest placed his hand upon his heart. It was evident to me from his manner, that he still believed him living; and as he rolled back the covering he felt for his hand. Suddenly starting, he fell back for an instant, and as he moved his fingers backward and forward, I saw that they were covered with blood. I drew near, and now perceived that the dead man's chest was laid open by a wound of several inches in extent. The ribs had been cut across, and some portion of the heart or lung seemed to protrude. At the slightest touch of the body the blood gushed forth anew, and ran in streams upon him. His right hand, too, was cut across the entire palm, the thumb nearly severed at the joint. This appeared to have been rudely bound together: but it was evident, from the nature and size of the other wound that he could not have survived it many hours.

As I looked in horror at the frightful spectacle before me, my foot struck at something beneath the bed. I stooped down to examine, and found it was a carbine, such as dragoons usually carry. It was broken at the stock, and bruised in many places, but still seemed not unserviceable. Part of the butt-end was also stained with blood. The clothes of the dead man, clotted and matted with gore, were also there, adding, by their terrible testimony, to the dreadful fear that haunted me. Yes, everything confirmed it—murder and crime had been there. A low, muttering sound near made me turn my head, and I saw the priest kneeling beside the bed, engaged in prayer. His head was bare, and he wore a kind of scarf of blue silk, and the small case that contained the last rites of his church were placed at his feet.

Apparently lost to all around save the figure of the man that lay dead before him, he muttered, with ceaseless rapidity, prayer after prayer, stopping ever and anon to place his hand on the cold heart, or to listen, with his ear upon the livid lips: and then resuming with greater

eagerness, while the big drops rolled from his forehead, and the agonizing torture he felt convulsed his entire frame.

"O God!" he exclaimed, after a prayer of some minutes, in which his features worked like one in a fit of epilepsy—"O God! is it, then, too late?"

He started to his feet as he spoke, and, bending over the corpse, with hands clasped over his head, he poured forth a whole torrent of words in Irish, swaying his body backward and forward, as his voice, becoming broken by emotion, now sunk into a whisper, or broke into a discordant shout. "Shaun! Shaun!" cried he, as, stooping down to the ground, he snatched up the little crucifix and held it before the dead man's face, at the same time he shook him violently by the shoulder, and cried, in accents I can never forget, some words aloud, among which alone I could recognize one word Thea—the Irish word for God. He shook him till the head rocked heavily from side to side, and the blood oozed from the opening wound, and stained the ragged covering of the bed. At this instant the priest stopped suddenly, and fell upon his knees, while, with a low, faint sigh, he who seemed dead lifted his eyes and looked around him; his hands grasped the sides of the bed, and, with a strength that seemed supernatural, he raised himself to the sitting posture. His lips were parted and moved, but without a sound, and his filmy eyes turned slowly in their sockets from one object to another, till at length they fell upon the little crucifix that had dropped from the priest's hand upon the bed. In an instant the corpse-like features seemed inspired with life—a gleam of brightness shot from his eyes—the head nodded forward a couple of times, and I thought I heard a discordant, broken sound issue from the open mouth, and, a moment after, the head dropped upon the chest, and the hands relaxed, and he fell back with a crash, never to move more.

Overcome with horror, I staggered to the door, and sank upon a little bench in front of the cabin. The cool air of the night soon brought me to myself, and while in my confused state I wondered if the whole might not be some dreadful dream, my eyes once more fell upon the figure of the woman, who still knelt in the attitude we had first seen her. Her hands were clasped before her, and from time to time her wild cry rose into the air, and woke the echoes of that silent valley. A faint moonlight lay in broken patches around her, and mingled its beams with the red glare of the little candles within, as their light fell upon her marble features. From the cabin I could hear the sounds of the priest's voice, as he continued to pray without ceasing. As the hours rolled on nothing changed, and when, prompted by curiosity, I looked within the hovel, I saw the priest still kneeling beside the bed, his face pale, and sunk, and haggard, as though months of sickness and suffering had passed over him.

I dared not speak—I dared not disturb him, and I sat down near the door in silence.

It is one of the strange anomalies of our nature that the feelings which rent our hearts with agony have a tendency, by their continuance, to lull us into slumber. The watcher by the bedside of his dying friend—the felon in his cell, but a few hours before death—sleep, and sleep soundly. The bitterness of grief would seem to blunt sensation, and the mind, like the body, can only sustain a certain amount of burden, after which it succumbs and yields; so I found it amid this scene of horror and anguish, with everything to excite that can operate upon the mind—the woman stricken motionless and senseless by grief—the dead man, as it were, recalled to life by the words that were to herald him into life everlasting—the old man, whom I had known but as a gay companion, displayed now before my eyes in all the workings of his feeling heart, called up by the afflictions of one world and the terrors of another,—and this in a wild and dreary valley, far from man's dwelling. Yet, amid all this, and, more than all, the harassing conviction that some deed of blood, some dark hour of crime had been here at work, perhaps to be concealed forever, and go unavenged, save of Heaven—and yet, with all this around and about me, I slept. How long I know not; but when I woke the mist of morning hung in the valley, or rolled in masses of cloud-like vapor along the mountain-side. In an instant, the whole scene of the previous night was before me, and the priest still knelt beside the bed and prayed. I looked for the woman, but she was gone.

The noise of wheels at some distance could now be heard on the mountain-road, and, as I walked stealthily from the door, I could see three figures descending the path, followed by a car and horse. As they came along, I marked that beneath the straw on the car something protruded itself on either side, and this I soon saw was a coffin. As the men approached the angle of the road they halted and seemed

to converse in an eager and anxious manner, when suddenly one of them broke from the others, and, springing to the top of a low wall that skirted the road, continued to look steadily at the house for some minutes together. The thought flashed on me at the moment that perhaps my being a stranger to them might have caused their hesitation, so I waved my hat a couple of times above my head. Upon this they resumed their march, and in a few minutes more were standing beside me. One of them, who was an old man, with hard, weather-beaten features, addressed me, first in Irish, but, correcting himself at once, asked, in a low, steady voice,—

"Was the priest in time? Did he get the rites?"

I nodded in reply; when he muttered, as if to himself,—

"God's will be done. Shaun didn't tell of Hogan—"

"Whist! father—whist!" said one of the younger men, as he laid his hand upon the old man's arm: while he added something in Irish, gesticulating with energy as he spoke.

"Is Mary come back, sir?" said the third, as he touched his hat to me respectfully.

"The woman—his wife?" said I; "I have not seen her to-day."

"She was up with us at Kiltimmon, at two o'clock this morning, but wouldn't wait for us. She wanted to get back at once, poor crayture. She bears it well, and has the stout heart. Faith, maybe before long she'll make some others faint in their hearts, that have stricken hers this night."

"Was she calm, then?" said I.

"As you are this minute; and sure enough she helped me with her own hands to put the horse in the car; for you see I couldn't lift the shaft with my one arm."

I now saw that his arm was bound up, and buttoned within the bosom of his greatcoat.

The priest now joined us, and spoke for several minutes in Irish; and although ignorant of all he said, I could mark in the tone of his voice, his look, his manner, and his gesture, that his words were those of rebuke and reprobation. The old man heard him in silence, but without any evidence of feeling. The others, on the contrary, seemed deeply affected, and the younger of the two, whose arm was broken, seemed greatly moved, and the tears rolled down his hardy cheeks.

These signs of emotion were evidently displeasing to the old man, whose nature was of a sterner and more cruel mold; and, as he turned away from the father's admonition, he moved past me, muttering, as he went,—

"Isn't it all fair?—blood for blood; and sure they dhruv him to it."

After a few words from the priest, two of the party took their spades from the car, and began digging the grave; while Father Loftus, leading the other side, talked to him for some time.

"Begorra," said the old man, as he shoveled the earth to either side, "Father Tom isn't like himself, at all, at all. He used to have pity, and the kind word for the poor when they were turned out on the world to starve, without as much as a sheaf of straw to lie upon, or potatoes enough for the children to eat."

"Whisht, father, or the priest will hear ye," said the younger one, looking cautiously around.

"Sorrow bit o' me cares; if he does, it's truth I'm telling. You are not long in these parts, sir, av I may make so bowld?"

"No," said I, "I'm quite a stranger."

"Well, anyhow ye may understand that this isn't a fine soil for a potato-garden; and yet the devil a other poor Shaun had, since they turned him out on the road last Michaelmas day, himself, and his wife, and the little gossoon—the only one they had, too—with a fever and hague upon him. The poor child, however, didn't feel it long, for he died ten days after. Well, well! the ways of God there's no saying against. But sure, if the little boy didn't die, Shaun was off to America, for he tuk his passage, and got a sea-chest of a friend, and was all ready to go; but, you see, when the child died he could not bring himself to leave the grave, and there he used to go and spend half of his days fixing it, and settling the sod about it, and wouldn't take a day's work from any of the neighbors; and at last he went off one night, and we never knew what was become of him till a peddler brought word, that he and Mary was living in the Cluan Beg, away from everybody, without a friend to say 'God save you!'—It's deep enough now, Mickey—there's nobody will turn him out of this. And so, sir, he might have lived for many a year; but when we heard that the boys was up, and going to settle a reckoning with Mr. Tarleton—"

"Come, now," cried the priest, who joined us at the moment, and who, from his look, I could perceive was evidently

displeased at the old man's communicativeness—"come, now, the sooner you all get back the better. We must look after Mary, too, for God knows where she is wandering. And now let us put the poor boy in the earth."

With slow and sullen steps the old man entered the house, followed by the others. I did not accompany them, but stood beside the grave, my mind full of all I heard. In a few minutes they returned, carrying the coffin, one corner of which was borne by the priest himself. Their heads were bare, and their features were pale and careworn. They placed the body in the grave, and gazed down after it for some seconds. The priest spoke a few words in a low, broken voice, the very sounds of which, though their meaning was unknown to me, sunk deep into my heart. He whispered for an instant to one of the young men, who went into the cabin, and speedily returned, carrying with him some of the clothes of the deceased, and the old carbine that lay beneath the bed.

"Throw them in the grave, Mickey—throw them in," said the priest. "Where's his coat?"

"It isn't there, sir," said the man. "That's everything that has a mark of blood upon it."

"Give me that gun," cried the priest; and at the same moment he took the carbine by the end of the barrel, and by one stroke of his strong foot snapped it at the breech. "My curse be on you," said he, as he kicked the fragments into the grave; "there was peace and happiness in the land before men knew ye, and owned ye! Ah! Hugh," said he, turning his eyes fiercely on the old man, "I never said ye hadn't griefs and trials, and sore ones, too, some of them; but, God help ye, if ye think that an easy conscience and a happy home can be bought by murder." The old man started at the words, and as his dark brow loured, and his lip trembled, I drew near to the priest, fearful lest an attack might be made on him. "Ay, murder, boys—that's the word, and no less. Don't tell me about righting yourselves, and blood for blood, and all that. There's a curse upon the land where these things happen, and the earth is not lucky that is moistened with the blood of God's creatures."

"Cover him up—cover him up!" said the old man, shoveling in the earth, so as to drown the priest's words, "and let us be going. We ought to be back by six o'clock, unless," added he, with a sarcastic bitterness that made him look like a fiend—"unless your reverence is going to set the police on our track."

"God forgive you, Hugh, and turn your heart," said the old man, as he shook his outstretched hands at him. As he spoke these words, he took me by the arm, and led me within the house. I could feel his hand tremble as it leaned upon me, and the big tears rolled down his cheeks in silence.

We sat down in the little cabin, but neither of us spoke. After some time we heard the noise of the cart-wheels, and the sound of voices, which grew fainter and fainter as they passed up the glen, and at length all became still.

"And the poor wife," said I, "what think you has become of her?"

"Gone home to her people, most likely," answered the priest. "Her misfortunes will make her a home in every cabin. None so poor, none so wretched, as not to succor and shelter her. But let us hence."

We walked forth from the hovel, and the priest, closing the door after him, fastened it with a padlock that he had found within, and then, placing the key upon the door-sill he turned to depart—but, suddenly stopping, he took my hand in both of his, and said, in a voice of touching earnestness,—

"This has been a sad scene. Would to God you had not witnessed it. Would to God, rather, that it might not have occurred. But promise me, on the faith of a man of honor, and the word of a gentleman, that what you have seen this night you reveal to no man, until I have passed away myself, and stand before that judgment to which we all are coming."

"I promise you faithfully," said I. "And now let us leave a spot that has thrown a gloom upon my heart a lifelong will never obliterate."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE JOURNEY.

As we issued from the glen the country became more open, patches of cultivation presented themselves, and an air of comfort and condition superior to what we had hitherto seen was observable in the dwellings of the country people. The road led through a broad valley bounded on one side by a chain of lofty mountains, and on the other separated by the Shannon from the swelling hills of Munster. Deep-

ly engaged in our thoughts, we traveled along for some miles without speaking. The scene we had witnessed was of that kind that seemed to forbid our recurrence to it, save in our own gloomy reflections. We had not gone far when the noise of horsemen on the road behind us induced us to turn our heads. They came along at a sharp trot, and we could soon perceive that although the two or three foremost were civilians, they who followed were dragoons. I thought I saw the priest change color as the clank of the accouterments struck upon his ear. I had, however, but little time for the observation, as the party soon overtook us.

"You are early on the road, gentlemen," said a strong, powerfully-built man, who, mounted upon a gray horse of great bone and action, rode close up beside us.

"Ah, Sir Thomas, is it you?" said the priest, affecting at once his former easy and indifferent manner. "I had rather see the hounds at your back than those beagles of King George there. Is there anything wrong in the country?"

"Let me ask you another question," said the knight in answer. "How long have you been in it, and where did you pass the night, not to hear of what has occurred?"

"Faith, a home question," said the priest, summoning up a hearty laugh to conceal his emotion; "but if the truth must out, we came round by the priory at Glenduff, as my friend here being an Englishman—may I beg to present him to you?—Mr. Hinton—Sir Thomas Garland—he heard wonders of the monks' way of living up there, and I wished to let him judge for himself."

"Ah, that accounts for it," said the tall man to himself. "We have had a sad affair of it, Father Tom. Poor Tarleton has been murdered."

"Murdered!" said the priest, with an expression of horror in his countenance I could scarcely believe feigned.

"Yes, murdered. The house was attacked a little after midnight. The party must have been a large one, for while they forced in the hall door, the haggard and the stables were seen in a blaze. Poor George had just retired to bed, a little later than usual, for his sons had returned a few hours before from Dublin, where they had been to attend their college examination. The villains, however, knew the house well, and made straight for his room. He was up in an instant, and, seizing a saber that hung beside his bed, defended himself with the courage of desperation against them all. The scuffle and the noise soon brought his sons to the spot, who, although mere boys, behaved in the most gallant manner. Overpowered at last by numbers, and covered with wounds, they dragged poor Tarleton down the stairs, shouting out as they went, 'Bring him down to Freney's—let the bloody villain see the black walls and the cold hearth he has made before he dies.' It was their intention to murder him on the spot where, a few weeks before, a distress for rent had been executed against some of the tenants. He grasped the banisters with a despairing clutch, while, fixing his eyes upon his servant, who had lived with him for some years past, he called out to him in his agony to save him; but the fellow came deliberately forward and held the flame of a candle beneath the dying man's fingers, until he relaxed his hold and fell back among his murderers. Yes, yes, father, Henry Tarleton saw it with his own eyes; for while his brother was stretched senseless on the floor, he was struggling with the others at the head of the staircase; and strange enough, too, they never hurt the boys, but when they had wreaked their vengeance on the father, bound them back to back, and left them."

"Can they identify any of them?" said the priest, with intense emotion in his voice and manner.

"Scarcely, I fear; their faces were blackened, and they wore shirts over their coats. Henry thinks he could swear to two or three of the number; but our best chance of discovery lies in the fact that several of them were badly wounded, and one in particular, whom he saw cut down by his father's saber, was carried downstairs by his comrades bathed in blood.

"He didn't recognize him?" said the priest, eagerly,

"No; but here comes the poor boy, so I'll wish you good-morning."

He put spurs to his horse as he spoke, and dashed forward, followed by the dragoons; while at the same moment, on the opposite side of the road, a young man—pale, with his dress disordered, his arm in a sling—rode by. He never turned a look aside; his filmy eye was fixed, as it were, on some far-off object, and he seemed scarce to guide his horse as he galloped onward over the rugged road.

The priest relaxed his pace to permit the crowd of horsemen to pass on, while his countenance once more assumed its drooping and despondent look, and he relapsed into his former silence.

"You see that high mountain to the left there," said he, after a long pause.

"Well, our road lies round the foot of it; and, please God, by to-morrow evening we'll be some five-and-twenty miles on the other side, in the heart of my own wild country, with the big mountains behind you, and the great blue Atlantic rearing its frothing waves at your feet." He stopped for an instant, and then grasping my arm with a strong hand, continued in a low and distinct voice,—"Never speak to me nor question me about what we saw last night, and try to remember it as a dream. And now let me tell you how I intend to amuse you in the far West."

Here the priest began a spirited and interesting description of the scenery and the people—their habits, their superstitions, and their pastimes. Sustaining the interest of his account with legend and story—now grave, now gay; sometimes recalling a trait from the older history of the land; sometimes detailing an incident of the fair or the market, but always by his wonderful knowledge of the peasantry, their modes of thinking and reasoning, and by his imitation of their figurative and forcible expressions, able to carry me with him, whether he took the mountain side for his path, sat beside some cotter's turf fire, or skimmed along the surface of the summer sea in the frail bark of an Achill fisherman.

I learnt from him that in the wild region where he lived there were above fifteen thousand persons, scarce one of whom could speak or understand a word of English. Of these he was not only the priest, but the ruler and the judge. Before him all their disputes were settled—all their differences reconciled. His word, in the strongest sense of the phrase, was a law—not indeed to be enforced by bayonets and policeman, by constables and sheriffs' officers—but one which in its moral force demanded obedience, and would have made him who resisted it an outcast among his fellows.

"We are poor," said the priest, "but we are happy. Crime is unknown amongst us, and the blood of man has not been shed in strife for fifty years within the barony. When will ye learn this in England? When will ye know that these people may be led but never driven—that they may be persuaded but never compelled? When will ye condescend to bend so far the prerogative of your birth, your riches, and your rank, as to reason with the poor and humble peasant that looks up to you for protection? Alas! my young friend, were you to ask me what is the great source of misery of this unhappy land, I should tell you the superior intelligence of its people. I see a smile; but hear me out. Unlike the peasantry of other countries, they are not content. Their characters are mistaken, their traits misconstrued—partly from indifference, partly from prejudice, and in a great measure because it is the fashion to recognize in the tiller of the soil a mere drudge, with scarce more intelligence than the cattle in his plow, or the oxen in his team; but here you have a people quick, sharp-sighted and intelligent, able to scan your motives with ten times the accuracy you can guess at theirs; suspicious, because their credulity has been abused; revengeful, because their wild nature knows no other vindicator than their own right arm; lawless, for they look upon your institutions as the sources of their misery and the instruments of your tyranny toward them; reckless, for they have nothing to lose; indolent, for they have nothing to gain. Without an effort to win their confidence or secure their good will, you overwhelm them with institutions—cumbrous, complicated, and unsuitable; and while you neglect or despise all appeal to their feelings or affections, you place your faith in your soldiery or a special commission. Heaven help you! You may thin them off by the gallows and transportation, but the root of the evil is as far from you as ever. You do not know them—you will not know them: more prone to punish than prevent, you are satisfied with the working of the law, and not shocked with the accumulation of crime: and, when broken by poverty and paralyzed by famine, a gloomy desolation spreads over the land, you meet in terms of congratulation to talk over tranquilized Ireland."

In this strain did the good priest continue to develop his views concerning his country; the pivot of his argument being that to a people so essentially different in every respect, English institutions and English laws were inadequate and unsuitable. Sometimes I could not only follow, but agree with him. At others I could but dimly perceive his meaning, and dissent from the very little I could catch. Enough of this, however. In a biography so flimsy as mine, politics would play but an unseemly part; and even were it otherwise, my opportunities were too few, and my own incapacity too great, to make my opinions of any value on a subject so complicated and so vast. Still the topic served to shorten the road, and when, toward evening, we found ourselves in the comfortable parlor of the little inn at Bally-

hocsousth,* so far had we both regained our spirits that once more the priest's jovial good humor irradiated his happy countenance, and I myself, hourly improving in health and strength, felt already the bracing influence of the mountain air, and that strong sense of liberty, never more thoroughly appreciated than when regaining vigor after the sufferings of a sick bed.

We were seated by an open window looking out upon the landscape. It was past sunset, and the tall shadows of the mountains were meeting across the lake, like spirits who waited for the night-hour to interchange their embraces. A thin pale crescent of a new moon marked the blue sky, but did not dim the luster of the thousand stars that glittered round it. All was hushed and still, save the deep note of the rail, or the measured plash of oars heard from a long distance. The rich meadows that sloped down to the water sent up their delicious odors in the balmy air, and there stole over the senses a kind of calm and peaceful pleasure that such a scene at such an hour can alone impart.

"This is beautiful—this is very beautiful, father," said I.

"So it is, sir," said the priest. "Let no Irishman wander for scenery. He has as much right to go travel in search of wit and good fellowship. We don't want for blessings. All we need is, to know how to enjoy them. And, believe me, there is a plentiful feast on the table if gentlemen would only pass down the dishes. And now, that reminds me—what are you drinking?—negus. I wouldn't wish it to my greatest enemy. But, to be sure, I am always forgetting you are not one of ourselves. There, reach me over that square decanter. It wouldn't have been so full now if we had had poor Bob here—poor fellow. But one thing is certain, wherever he is, he is happy. I believe I never told you how he got into his present scrape."

"No, father; and that's precisely the very thing I wish to ask you."

"You shall hear it, and it isn't a bad story in its way. But don't you think the night air is a little too much for you—shall we close the window?"

"If it depend on me, father, pray leave it open."

"Ha, ha! I was forgetting again," said the old fellow, laughing roguishly: "*stellæ sunt amantium oculi*, as Pharis says. There now, don't be blushing, but listen to me.

"It was somewhere about last November that Bob got a quiet hint from some one at Daly's that the sooner he got out of Dublin the more conducive it would be to his personal freedom, as various writs were flying about the capital after him. He took the hint, and set off the same night, and reached his beautiful chateau of Newgate without let or molestation, in which, having victualed for the winter, he could, if necessary, sustain a reasonable siege against any force the law was likely to bring up. The house had an abundant supply of arms: there were guns that figured in '41, pikes that had done good service a little later, swords of every shape—from the two-handed weapon of the twelfth century to a Roman pattern made out of a scythe by a smith in the neighborhood; but the grand terror of the country was an old four-pounder of Cromwell's time, that the major had mounted on the roof, and whose effects, if only proportionately injurious to the enemy to the results nearer home, must indeed, have been a formidable engine; for the only time it was fired—I believe to celebrate Bob's birthday—it knocked down a chimney with the recoil, blew the gardener and another man about ten feet into the air, and hurled Bob himself through a skylight into the housekeeper's room. No matter for that, it had a great effect in raising the confidence of the country people, some of whom verily believed that the ball was rolling for a week after.

"Bob, I say, victualed the fortress; but he did more—for he assembled all the tenants, and in a short but pithy speech he told them the state of his affairs, explaining with considerable eloquence what a misfortune it would be for them if by any chance they were to lose him for a landlord.

"'See now, boys,' said he, 'there's no knowing what misfortune wouldn't happen ye; they'd put a receiver on the property—a spalpeen with bailiffs and constables after him that would be making you pay up the rent; and, faith, I wouldn't say but maybe he'd ask you for the arrears.'

"'Oh, murther, murther! did any one ever hear the like,' the people cried on every side; and Bob, like a clever orator, continued to picture forth additional miseries and misfortunes to them if such a calamitous event were to happen, explaining at the same time the contemptible nature of the persecution practiced against him.

"'No, boys,' cried he, 'there isn't a man among them all that has the courage to come down and ask for his money, face

* *Anglicè*—Town of the Fight of Flail.

to face, but they set up a pair of fellows they call John Doe and Richard Roe—there's names for you. Did you ever hear of a gentleman in the county with names like that? But that's not the worst of it, for you see even these two chaps can't be found. It's truth I'm telling you, and some people go so far as to say that there is no such people at all, and it's only a way they have to worry and annoy country gentlemen with what they call a fiction of the law; and my own notion is, that the law is nothing but lies and fiction from beginning to end.'

"A very loud cheer from Bob's audience proclaimed how perfectly they coincided in his opinion; and a keg of whisky being brought into the lawn, each man drained a glass to his health, uttering at the same time a determination with respect to the law officers of the crown that boded but little happiness to them when they made a tour in the neighborhood.

"In about a week after this there was a grand drawing home; that's, you understand, what we call in Ireland bringing in the harvest; and sure enough the farmyard presented a very comely sight, with ricks of hay, and stacks of corn, and oats, and barley, and out-houses full of potatoes, and, in fact, everything the country produces, besides cows and horses, sheep, pigs, goats, and even turkeys, for most of the tenants paid their rents in kind, and as Bob was an easy landlord, very few came without a little present—a game-cock, a jackass, a ram, or some amusing beast or other. Well, the next day—it was a fine dry day with a light frost, and as the bog was hard, Bob sent them all away to bring in the turf. Why then, but it is a beautiful sight, captain, and I wish you saw it; maybe two or three hundred cars all going as fast as they can pelt, on a fine bright day with a blue sky and a sharp air, the boys standing up in the kishes, driving without rein or halter—always at a gallop—for all the world like Ajax, Ulysses, and the rest of them that we read of; and the girls, as pretty craytures as ever you threw an eye upon, with their short red petticoats, and their hair plaited and fastened up at the back of their heads. On my conscience, the Trojan women were nothing to them. But to come back. Bob Mahon was coming home from the bog about five o'clock in the evening, cantering along on a little dun pony he had, thinking of nothing at all, except, maybe, the elegant rick of turf that he'd be bringing home in the morning, when what did he see before him but a troop of dragoons, and at their head old Basset, the sub-sheriff, and another fellow whose face he had often seen in the Four Courts of Dublin. 'By the mortial,' said Bob, 'I am done for;' for he saw in a moment that Basset had waited until all the country people were employed at a distance to come over and take him. However, he was no ways discouraged, but brushing his way through the dragoons, he rode up beside Basset's gig, and taking a long pistol out of the holster, he began to examine the priming as cool as may be.

"'How are you, Nick Basset,' said Bob; 'and where are you going this evening?'

"'How are you, Major,' said Basset, with his eye all the while upon the pistol. 'It is an unpleasant business—a mighty unpleasant business to me, Major Bob,' says he; 'but the truth is, there is an execution against you, and my friend here, Mr. Hennessy—Mr. Hennessy, Major Mahon—asked me to come over with him, because as I knew you—'

"'Well, well, said Bob, interrupting him. 'Have you a writ against me—is it me you want?'

"'Nothing of the kind, Major Mahon. God forbid we'd touch a hair of your head. It's just a kind of a capias, as I may say, nothing more.'

"'And why did you bring the dragoons with you?' said Bob, looking at him mighty hard.

"Basset looked very sheepish, and didn't know what to say, but Mahon soon relieved him,—

"'Never mind, Nick, never mind, you can't help your trade; but how would you look if I was to raise the country on ye?'

"'You wouldn't do the like, major—but surely if you did, the troops—'

"'The troops!' said Bob: 'God help you! we'd be twenty—ay, thirty to one. See, now, if I give a whistle, this minute—'

"'Don't distress, yourself, major,' said Basset, 'for the decent people are a good six miles off at the bog, and couldn't hear you if you whistled ever so loud.'

"The moment he said this Bob saw that the old rogue was up to him, and he began to wonder within himself what was the best to be done.

"'See, now, Nick,' said he, 'it isn't like a friend to bring up all these red coats here upon me before my tenantry, disgracing me in the face of my people. Send them back to the town, and go up yourself with Mr. Hennessy there, and do whatever you have to do.'

"'No, no,' screamed Hennessy, 'I'll never part with the soldiers.'

"'Very well,' said Bob, 'take your own way, and see what will come of it.'

"He put spurs to his pony as he said this, and was just striking into the gallop, when Nick called out,—

"'Wait a bit, Major, wait a bit. If we leave the dragoons where we are now, will you give us your word of honor not to hurt or molest us in the discharge of our duty, nor let any one else do so?'

"'I will,' said Bob; 'now that you talk reasonably, I'll treat you well.'

"After a little parley it was settled that part of the dragoons were to wait on the road, and the rest of them in the lawn before the house, while Nick and his friend were to go through the ceremony of seizing Bob's effects, and make an inventory of everything they could find.

"'A mere matter of form, Major Mahon,' said he: 'we'll make it as short as possible, and leave a couple of men in possession; and as I know the affair will be arranged in a few days—'

"'Of course,' says Bob, laughing; 'nothing easier. So come along now, and let me show you the way.'

"When they reached the house, Bob ordered up dinner at once, and behaved as politely as possible, telling them it was early and they would have plenty of time for everything in the evening. But whether it was that they had no appetite just then, or that they were not over easy in their minds about Bob himself, they declined everything, and began to set about their work. To it they went with pen and ink, putting down all the chairs and tables, the cracked china, and the fire-irons, and at last Bob left them counting over about twenty pairs of old top-boots that stood along the wall of his dressing-room.

"'Ned,' said Bob, to his own man, 'get two big padlocks and put them on the door of the hayloft as fast as you can.'

"Sure it is empty, sir,' said Ned; 'barrin' the rats, there's nothing in it.'

"'Don't I know that as well as you,' said Bob; 'but can't you do as you are bid; and when you've done it, take the pony and gallop over to the bog, and tell the people to throw the turf out of their carts, and gallop up here as fast as they can.'

"He'd scarcely said it when Nick called out, 'Now, Major, for the farm-yard, if you please.' And so, taking Hennessy's arm, he walked out, followed by the two big bailiffs, that never left them for a moment. To be sure it was a great sight when they got outside and saw all the ricks and stacks as thick as they could stand; and so they began counting, and putting them down on paper, and the devil a thing they forgot, not even the boneens and the bantams, and at last Nick fixed his eye upon the little door into the loft, upon which now two great big padlocks were hanging.

"'I suppose it's oats you have up there, Major,' said he.

"'No, indeed,' said Bob, looking a little confused.

"'Maybe seed potatoes,' said Hennessy.

"'Nor it neither,' said he.

"'Barley, it's likely,' cried Nick; 'it is a fine dry loft.'

"'No,' said Bob, 'it is empty.'

"And with that he endeavored to turn them away, and get them back into the house; but old Basset turned back, and fixing his eye upon the door, shook his head for a couple of minutes.

"'Well,' said he, 'for an empty loft it has the finest pair of padlocks I ever looked at. Would there be any objection, Major, to our taking a peep into it?'

"'None,' said Bob, 'but I haven't a ladder that long in the place.'

"'I think this might reach,' said Hennessy, as he touched one with his foot that lay close along the wall, partly covered with straw.

"'Just the thing,' said Nick; while poor Bob hung down his head and said nothing. With that they raised the ladder and placed it against the door.

"'Might I trouble you for the key, Major Mahon?' said Hennessy.

"'I believe it is mislaid,' said Bob, in a kind of sulky way; at which they both grinned at each other, as much as to say, 'We have him now.'

"'You'll not take it amiss then, Major, if we break the door,' said Nick.

"'You may break it, and be hanged,' said Bob, as he stuck his hands into his pockets, and walked away.

"'This will do,' cried one of the bailiffs, taking up a big stone as he mounted the ladder, followed by Nick, Hennessy, and the other.

"It took some time to smash the locks, for they were both strong ones, and all the while Nick and his friend were talking together in great glee, but poor Bob stood by himself against a hayrick, looking as melancholy as might be. At last the locks gave way, and down went the door with a bang. The bailiffs stepped in, and then Nick and the others followed. It took

them a couple of minutes to satisfy themselves that the loft was quite empty, but when they came back again to the door, what was their surprise to discover that Bob was carrying away the ladder upon his shoulders to a distant part of the yard.

"'Halloa, major,' cried Basset, 'don't forget us up here.'

"'Devil a fear of that,' said Bob, 'few that know you ever forgot you.'

"'We are quite satisfied, sir,' said Hennessy; 'what you said was perfectly correct.'

"'And why didn't you believe it before, Mr. Hennessy? You see what you have brought upon yourself.'

"'You are not going to leave us up here, sir?' cried Hennessy; 'will you venture upon false imprisonment?'

"'I'd venture on more than that, if it were needful; but see now, when you get back don't be pretending that I didn't offer to treat you well, little as you deserved it. I asked you to dinner, and would have given you your skinful of wine afterwards, but you preferred your own dirty calling, and so take the consequences.'

"While he was speaking a great cheer was heard, and all the country people came galloping into the yard with their turf cars.

"'Be alive now, my boys,' cried Bob. 'How many cars have you?'

"'Seventy, sir, here, but there is more coming.'

"'That'll do,' said he, 'so now set to work and carry away all the oats, and the wheat, the hay, barley, and potatoes; let some of you take the calves and the pigs, and drive the bullocks over the mountain to Mr. Bodkin's; don't leave a turkey behind you, boys, and make haste, for these gentlemen have so many engagements I can scarcely prevail on them to pass more than a day or two amongst us.'

"Bob pointed as he spoke to the four figures that stood trembling at the hayloft door. A loud cheer, and a roar of laughter to the full as loud, answered his speech; and at the same moment to it they went, loading their cars with the harvest or the live stock as fast as they could; to be sure, such a scene was never witnessed—the cows bleating, pigs grunting, fowl cackling, men and women all running here and there, laughing like mad, and Nick Basset himself swearing like a trooper the whole time that he'd have them all hanged at the next assizes. Would you believe, the harvest it took nearly three weeks to bring home, was carried away that night, and scattered all over the country at different farms, where it never could be traced; all the cattle, too, were taken away, and before sunrise there wasn't as much as a sheep or lamb left to bleat on the lawn.

"The next day Bob set out on a visit to a friend at some distance, leaving directions with his people to liberate the gentlemen in the hayloft in the course of the afternoon. The story made a great noise in the country, but before people were tired laughing at it an action was entered against Bob for false imprisonment, and heavy damages awarded against him: so that you may see there was a kind of poetic justice in the manner of his capture, for after all it was only trick for trick."

The worthy priest now paused to mix another tumbler, which, when he had stirred and tasted and stirred again, he pushed gently before him on the table, and seemed lost in reverie.

"Yes," said he, half aloud, "it is a droll country we live in, and there's not one of us doesn't waste more ingenuity and display more cunning in getting rid of his fortune than the cleverest fellows elsewhere evince in accumulating theirs. But you are looking a little pale, I think: these late hours won't suit you, so I'll just send you to bed."

I felt the whole force of my kind friend's advice, and yielding obedience at once, I shook him by the hand and wished him good-night.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MURRANAKILTY.

If my kind reader is not already tired of the mountain-road and the wild West, may I ask him—dare I say to her?—to accompany me a little farther, while I present another picture of its life?

You see the bold mountain, jagged and ragged in outline, like the spine of some gigantic beast, that runs far out into the Atlantic, and ends in a bold, abrupt headland, against which the waves, from the very coast of Labrador, are beating without one intervening rock to break their force. Carry your eye along its base, to where you can mark a little clump of alder and beach, with here and there a taper poplar interspersed, and see if you cannot detect the gable of a long, low, thatched house, that lies almost buried in the foliage. Before the door a little patch of green stretches down to the shore, where a sandy beech, glowing in all the richness of a morning sun, glitters with many a shell and brilliant pebble,—that, then, is Mur-

ranakilty. But approach, I beg you, a little nearer; let me suppose that you have traced the winding of that little bay, crossing the wooden bridge over the bright trout stream, as it hastens on to mingle its waters with the ocean; you have climbed over the rude stile, and stopped for an instant to look into the holy well, in whose glassy surface the little wooden crucifix above is dimly shadowed, and, at length, you stand upon the lawn before the cottage. What a glorious scene is now before you! On the opposite side of the bay, the mountain, whose summit is lost among the clouds, seems, as it were, cleft by some earthquake's force, and through its narrow gorge you can trace the blue water of the sea passing in, while each side of the valley is clothed with wood. The oak of a hundred years, here sheltered from the rude wind of the Atlantic, spreads its luxuriant arms, while the frothy waves are breaking at its feet. High, however, above their tops you may mark the irregular outline of a large building, with battlements and towers, and massive walls, and one tall and loopholed turret, that rises high into the air, and around whose summit the noisy rooks are circling in their flight. That is Kilmorran Castle, the residence of Sir Simon Bellew. There for centuries past his ancestors were born and died; there, in the midst of that wild and desolate grandeur, the haughty descendants of an ancient house lived on from youth to age, surrounded by all the observances of feudal state, and lording it far and near for many a mile with a sway and power that would seem to have long since passed away.

You carry your eye seaward, and I perceive your attention is fixed upon the small schooner that lies anchored in the offing; her topsail is in the clews, and flaps lazily against the mast as she rolls and pitches in the breaking surge. The rake of her low masts, and the long boom that stretches out far beyond her taffrail, have, you deem it, a somewhat suspicious look; and you are right. She is *La Belle Louise*, a smuggling craft from Dieppe, whose crew—half French, half Irish—would fight her to the gunwale, and sink with, but never surrender her. You hear the plash of oars; and there now you can mark the eight-oared gig, springing to the stroke as it shoots from the shore and heads out to sea. Sir Simon loves claret, and, like a true old Irish gentleman, he drinks it from the wood; there may, therefore, be some reason why those wild-looking red caps have pulled in shore. But now I'll ask you to turn to an humbler scene, and look within that room where the window, opened to the ground, is bordered by blossoming honeysuckle: it is the priest's parlor. At a little breakfast-table, whose spotless cloth and neat but simple equipage has a look of propriety and comfort, is seated one whose gorgeous dressing-gown and lounging attitude seems strangely at variance with the humble objects around him. He seems endeavoring to read a newspaper, which ever and anon he lays down beside him, and turns his eyes in the direction of the fire; for, although it is July, yet a keen freshness of the morning air makes the blazing turf by no means objectionable. He looks toward the fire, perhaps, you would say, lost in his own thoughts and musings. But no; truth must out, and his attention is occupied in a very different way. Kneeling before the fire is a young and lovely country girl, engaged in toasting a muffin for the priest's breakfast. Her features are flushed, partly with shame, partly with heat; and as now and then she throws back her long hair from her face with an impatient toss of her head, she steals a glance at the stranger, from a pair of eyes so deeply blue, that at first you were unjust enough to think them black. Her dress is a low bodice, and a short skirt of that brilliant dye the Irish peasant of the West seems to possess the secret for. The jupe is short, I say, and so much the better for you, as it displays a pair of legs which, bare of shoe or stocking, are perfect in their symmetry; the rounded instep and the swelling ankle chiseled as cleanly as a statue of Canova.

And now, my good reader, having shown you all this, let me proceed with my narrative.

"And sure now, sir, wouldn't it be better for you, and you sickly, to be eating your breakfast, and not be waiting for Father Tom; maybe he wouldn't come in this hour yet."

"No, thank you, Mary; I had rather wait. I hope you are not so tired of my company that you want an excuse to get away."

"Ah, be asy now, if you plaze, sir! It's myself that's proud to be talking to you." And as she spoke she turned a pair of blue eyes upon me with such a look that I could not help thinking if the gentlemen of the west be exposed to such, their blood is not as hot as is reputed. I suppose I looked as much, for she blushed deeply, and calling out "Here's Father Tom!" sprang to her legs, and hurried from the room.

"Where are you scampering that way?"

cried the good priest, as he passed her in the hall. "Ah, captain, captain! behave yourself."

"I protest, father—" cried I.

"To be sure you do. Why wouldn't you protest? But see now, it was your business brought me out this morning. Hand me over the eggs; I am as hungry as a hawk. The devil is in that girl—they are as hard as bullets! I see how it was, plain enough. It's little she was thinking of the same eggs. Well, well! this is an ungrateful world; and only think of me, all I was doing for you."

"My dear father, you are quite wrong—"

"No matter. Another slice of bacon. And, after all, who knows if I have the worst of it. Do you know, now, that Miss Bellew has about the softest cheek—"

"What the devil do you mean?" said I, reddening.

"Why, just that I was saluting her *à la Française* this morning; and I never saw her look handsomer in my life. It was scarce seven o'clock when I was over at Kilmorran; but, early as it was, I caught her making breakfast for me; and, father and priest that I am, I couldn't help falling in love with her. It was a beautiful sight just to watch her light step and graceful figure moving about the parlor—now opening the window to let in the fresh air of the morning; now arranging a bouquet of moss-roses; now busying herself among the breakfast-things, and all the while stealing a glance at Sir Simon, to see if he were pleased with what she was doing. He'll be over here by-and-by to call on you; and, indeed, it is an attention he seldom pays any one, for latterly, poor fellow, he is not over satisfied with the world; and, if the truth were told, he has not had too much cause to be so."

"You mentioned to him, then, that I was here?"

"To be sure I did; and the doing so cost me a scalded finger, for Miss Louisa, who was pouring out my tea at the moment, gave a jerk with her hand, and spilt the boiling water all over me. Bad cess to you, Mary, but you've spoilt the toast this morning: half of it never saw the fire, and the other half is as black as my boot. But, as I was saying, Sir Simon knows all about you, and is coming over to ask us to dine there, though I offered to give the invitation myself, and accept it first; but he is very punctilious about these things, and wouldn't hear of anything but doing it in the regular way."

"Did he allude to Mr. Ulick Burke's affair?"

"Not a word. And even when I wished to touch on it, for the sake of a little explanation, he adroitly turned the subject, and spoke of something else. But it is drawing late, and I have some people to see this morning, so come along now into my little library here, and I'll leave you for a while to amuse yourself."

The priest led me, as he spoke, into a small room, whose walls were covered with books from the floor to the ceiling; even the very door by which we entered had its shelves like the rest, so that when once in you could see no trace of it. A single window looked seaward, toward the wide Atlantic, and presented a view of many miles of coast, indented with headland and promontory. Beneath, upon the placid sea, was a whole fleet of fishing-boats, the crews of which were busily engaged in collecting the seaweed to manure the land. The sight was both curious and picturesque. The light boats, tossing on the heavy swell, were crowded with figures whose attitude evinced all the eagerness of a chase. Sometimes an amicable contest would arise between two parties, as their boat-hooks were fixed in the same mass of tangled weed. Sometimes two rival crews would be seen stretching upon their oars, as they headed out to sea in search of a new prize; the merry voices, and the loud laughter, however, that arose above all other sounds, told that good humor and good-will never deserted them in all the ardor of the contest.

Long after the priest left me I continued to watch them. At last I set myself to explore the good father's shelves, which I found, for the most part, were filled with portly tomes of divinity and polemics, huge folio copies of St. Augustine, Origen, Eusebius, and others; innumerable volumes of learned tractates on disputed points in theology, none of which possessed any interest for me. In one corner, however, beside the fire, whose convenience to the habitual seat of Father Tom argued that they were not least in favor with his reverence, was an admirable collection of the French dramatists—Molière, Beaumarchais, Racine, and several more; these were a real treat, and seating myself beside the window, I prepared, for about the twentieth time in my life, to read "La Folle Journée."

I had scarcely got to the end of the second act, when the door was gently opened, and Mary made her appearance, not in the dishabille of the morning, however, but with a trim cotton gown, and smart shoes and stockings; her hair, too,

was neatly dressed, in the country fashion; yet still I was more than half disposed to think she looked even better in her morning costume.

The critical scrutiny of my glance had evidently disconcerted her, and made her for the moment forget the object of her coming. She looked down and blushed; she fumbled with the corner of her apron, and at last, recollecting herself, she dropped a little courtesy, and, opening the door wide, announced Sir Simon Bellew.

"Mr. Hinton, I believe," said Sir Simon, with a slight smile, as he bowed himself into the apartment; "will you allow me to introduce myself?—Sir Simon Bellew."

The baronet was a tall, thin, meager-looking old man, somewhat stooped by age, but preserving, both in look and gesture, not only the remains of good looks, but the evident traces of one habituated to the world. His dress was very plain, but the scrupulous exactitude of his powdered cue, and the massive gold-headed cane he carried, showed he had not abandoned those marks of his position, so distinctive of rank in those days. He wore, also, large and handsome buckles in his shoes, but in every other particular his costume was simplicity itself.

Conversing with an ease which evinced his acquaintance with all the forms of society, he touched shortly upon my former acquaintance with his daughter, and acknowledged in terms slight, but suitable, how she had spoken of me. His manner was, however, less marked by everything I had deemed to be Irish than that of any other person I had met with in the country; for, while he expressed his pleasure at my visit to the West, and invited me to pass some days at his house, his manner of doing so had nothing whatever of the warmth and geniality I had so often seen. In fact, save a slight difference in accent, it was as English as need be.

Whether I felt disappointed at this, or whether I had myself adopted the habits and prejudices of the land, I am unable to say, but certainly I felt chilled and repulsed; and although our interview scarce lasted twenty minutes, was delighted when he rose to take his leave, and say "Good morning!"

"You are good enough, then, to promise you'll dine with us to-morrow, Mr. Hinton? I need scarcely remark, I can have no party to meet you, for this wild neighborhood has denied us that; but as I am aware that your visit to the west is less for society than scenery, perhaps I may assure you you will not be disappointed. So now, *au revoir.*" Sir Simon bowed deeply as he spoke, and with a wave of his hat that would have done honor to the Court of Louis XV., he took his leave and departed.

I followed him with my eye, as, mounted on his old gray pony, he ambled quietly down the little path that led to the shore. Albeit an old man, his seat was firm, and not without a certain air of self-possession and ease; and, as he returned the salutations of the passing country people, he did so with the quiet dignity of one who felt he conveyed an honor even in the recognition. There was something singular in the contrast of that venerable figure with the wild grandeur of the scene; and, as I gazed after him, it set me thinking on the strange vicissitudes of life that must have made such as he pass his days in the dreary solitudes of these mountains.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SIR SIMON.

My journey had so far fatigued me that I wasn't sorry to have a day of rest, and, as Father Tom spent the greater part of it from home, I was left to myself and my own reflections. The situation in which I found myself was singular enough—the guest of a man whose acquaintance I had made by chance, and who, knowing as little of me as I did of him, yet showed by many an act of kindness, not less than by many a chance observation, a deep interest in myself and my fortunes. Here, then, I was; far from the sphere of my duties, neglecting the career I had adopted, and suffering days, weeks, to pass over without bestowing a thought upon my soldier's life. Following on this train of thought, I could not help acknowledging to myself that my attachment to Miss Bellew was the cause of my journey, and the real reason of my wandering. However sanguine may be the heart when touched by a first passion, the doubts that will now and then shoot across it are painful and poignant; and now in the calmness of my judgment, I could not but see the innumerable obstacles my family would raise to all my hopes. I well knew my father's predilection for a campaigning life, and that nothing would compensate him for the defeat of this expectation. I had but too many proofs of my mother's aristocratic prejudices to suppose that she ever could acknowledge as her daughter-in-law one whose preten-

sions to rank, although higher than her own, were yet neither trumpeted by the world nor blazoned by fashion; and lastly, changed as I was myself since my arrival in Ireland, there was yet enough of the Englishman left in me to see how unsuited was Louisa Bellew, in many respects, to be launched forth in the torrent of London life, while yet her experience of the world was so narrow and limited. Still, I loved her. The very artless simplicity of her manner, the untutored freshness of her mind, had taught me to know that even great personal attractions may be the second excellence of a woman. And besides, I was just at that time of life when ambition is least natural. One deems it more heroic to renounce all that is daring in enterprise, all that is great in promise, merely to be loved. My mind was therefore made up. The present opportunity was a good one to see her frequently, and learn thoroughly her tastes and dispositions. Should I succeed in gaining her affections, however opposed my family might prove at first, I calculated on their fondness for me as an only son, and knew that, in regard to fortune, I should be independent enough to marry whom I pleased.

In speculations such as these the time passed over, and although I waited with impatience for the hour of our visit to Kilmorran Castle, still, as the time drew near, many a passing doubt would flit across me, how far I had mistaken the promptings of my own affection for any return of my love. True it was, that more than once her look and manner testified I was not indifferent to her; still, when I remembered that I had ever seen her surrounded by persons she was anxious to avoid, a suspicion crossed me, that perhaps I owed the little preference she showed me less to any qualities I possessed than to my own unobtrusiveness. These were galling and unpleasant reflections, and whither they might have led me I know not, when the priest tapped with his knuckles at my window, and called out,—

"Captain, we shall be late if you don't hurry a bit; and I had rather be behind time with his gracious majesty himself than with old Sir Simon."

I opened the window at once, and jumped out into the lawn.

"My dear father, I've been ready this half hour, but fell into a dreamy fit, and forgot everything. Are we to walk it?"

"No, no; the distance is much greater than you think. Small as the bay looks, it is a good three miles from this to Kilmorran; but here comes your old friend the *curriculus*."

I once more mounted to my old seat, and the priest, guiding the horse down to the beach, selected the strand, from which the waves had just receded, as the hardest road, and pressed on a pace that showed his desire to be punctual.

"Get along, there! Nabocklish! How lazy the devil is; faith, we'll be late, do our best. Captain, darling, put your watch back a quarter of an hour, and I'll stand to it that we are both by Dublin time."

"Is he, then, so very particular," said I, "as all that comes to?"

"Particular, is it? Faith he is. Why, man, there is as much ringing of bells before dinner in that house as if every room in it were crammed with company. And the old butler will be there, all in black, and his hair powdered, and beautiful silk stockings on his legs, every day in the week, although, maybe, it is a brace of snipe will be all that is on the table. Take the whip for a while, and lay into that baste—my heart is broke flogging him."

Had Sir Simon only watched the good priest's exertions for the preceding quarter of an hour, he certainly would have had a hard heart if he had criticised his punctuality. Shouting one moment—cursing the next—thrashing away with his whip, and betimes striding over the splash-board to give a kick with his foot, he undoubtedly spared nothing in either voice or gesture.

"There!—glory be to God!" cried he at last, as he turned sharp from the shady road into a narrow avenue of tall lime-trees; "take the reins, captain, till I wipe my face. Blessed hour, look at the state I am in! Lift him to it, and don't spare him. May I never! if that isn't the last bell, and he only gives five minutes after that!"

Although I certainly should have preferred that Father Tom had continued his functions as charioteer now that we were approaching the house, common humanity, however, compelled me to spare him, and I flogged and chucked the old beast with all my might up the rising ground toward the house.

I had but just time to see that the building before us was a large embattled structure, which, although irregular, and occasionally incongruous in detail, was yet a fine specimen of the castellated Gothic of the seventeenth century. Massive square towers flanked the angles, themselves surmounted by smaller turrets, that shot up into the air high above the dark woods

around them. The whole was surmounted by a fosse, now dry and overgrown with weeds; but the terrace, which lay between this and the castle, was laid out as a flower-garden with a degree of taste and beauty that, to my mind at least, bespoke the fostering hand of Louisa Bellew. Upon this the windows of a large drawing-room opened, at one of which I could mark the tall and stately figure of Sir Simon, as he stood, watch in hand, awaiting our arrival. I confess it was not without a sense of shame that I continued my flagellations at this moment. Under any circumstances, our turn-out was not quite unexceptionable; but when I thought of my own position, and of the good priest who sat beside me, mopping his head and face with a huge red cotton handkerchief, I cursed my stars for the sad exposure. Just at this instant the skirt of a white robe passed one of the windows, and I thought—I hope it was but a thought—I heard the sound of laughter.

"There—that will do. Phœbus himself couldn't do it better. I wouldn't wish my worst enemy to be in a pair of shafts before you."

Muttering a curse on the confounded beast, I pulled short up and sprang out.

"Not late, Nicholas, I hope?" said the priest to a tall, thin, old butler, who wore a most absurd resemblance to his master.

"Your reverence has a minute and a half yet; but the soup's on the table." As he spoke, he drew from his pocket a small bit of looking-glass in a wooden frame, and, with a pocket-comb, arranged his hair in the most orderly and decorous manner; which being done, he turned gravely round and said, "Are ye ready, now, gentlemen?"

The priest nodded, and forward we went. Passing through a suite of rooms whose furniture, however handsome once, was now worm-eaten and injured by time, we at length reached the door of the drawing-room, when the butler, after throwing one more glance at us, to assure himself that we were in presentable array, flung the door wide open, and announced with the voice of a king-at-arms,—

"The Reverend Father Loftus and Mr. Hinton."

"Serve!" said Sir Simon, with a wave of his hand; while, advancing toward us, he received us with the most polished courtesy.

"You are most welcome to Kilmorran, Mr. Hinton. I need not present my daughter."

He turned toward the priest, and the same moment I held Miss Bellew's hand in mine. Dressed in white, and with her hair plainly braided on her cheek, I thought she looked handsomer than I had ever seen her. There was an air of assured calmness in her manner, that sat well upon her lovely features, as, with a tone of winning sweetness, she seconded the words of her father, and welcomed me to Kilmorran.

The first step in the knowledge of the female heart is, to know how to interpret any constraint or reserve of manner on the part of the woman you are in love with. Your mere novice is never more tempted to despair than at the precise moment his hopes should grow stronger; nor is he ever so sanguine as when the prospect is gloomy before him. The quick perceptions of even a very young girl enable her to perceive when she is loved; and however disposed she may feel toward the individual, a certain mixture of womanly pride and coquetry will teach her a kind of reserve toward him.

Now, there was a slight dash of this constrained tone through Miss Bellew's manner to me, and, little experience as I had had in such matters, I knew enough to augur favorably from it. While doing the honors of her house, a passing timidity would seem, every now and then, to check her advances, and I could remark how carefully she avoided any allusion, however slight, to our past acquaintance.

The austerity of Sir Simon's manner at his first visit, as well as the remarks of my friend the priest, had led me to suspect that our dinner-party would prove cold, formal, and uncomfortable. Indeed, the baronet's constrained and measured courtesy in the drawing-room, gave me but little encouragement to expect anything better. Most agreeable, therefore, was my disappointment to find, that before the soup was removed he had thawed considerably. The stern wrinkles of his haughty face relaxed, and a bland and good-humored smile had usurped the place of his former fixed and determined look. Doing the honors of his table with the most perfect tact, he contrived, while most monopolizing the conversation, to appear the least obtrusive amongst us; his remarks being ever accompanied by some appeal to his daughter, the priest, or myself, seemed to link us in the interest of all he said, and make his very listeners deem themselves entertaining and agreeable.

Unfortunately, I can present but a very meager picture of this happy gift, but I remember well how insensibly my preju-

dices gave way, one by one, as I listened to his anecdotes, and heard him recount, with admirable humor, many a story of his early career. To be sure, it may be said that my criticism was not likely to be severe while seated beside his beautiful daughter, whose cheek glowed with pleasure, and whose bright eye glistened with added luster, as she remarked the impression her father's agreeability was making on his guests. Such may, I doubt not, have increased the delight I felt; but Sir Simon's own claims were still indisputable.

I know not how far I shall meet my reader's concurrence in the remark, but it appears to me that conversational talent, like wine, requires age to make it mellow. The racy flavor that smacks of long knowledge of life—the reflective tone that deepens without darkening the picture—the freedom from exaggeration, either in praise or censure, are not the gifts of young men usually; and certainly they do season the intercourse of older ones, greatly to its advantage. There is, moreover, a pleasant flattery in listening to the narratives of those who were mixing with the busy world—its intrigues, its battles, and its by-play, while we were but boys. How we like to hear of the social, every-day life of those great men of a bygone day whose names have become already historical; what a charm does it lend to reminiscence when the names of Burke, Sheridan, Grattan, and Curran start up amid memories of youthful pleasure; and how we treasure every passing word that is transmitted to us; and how much, in spite of all the glorious successes of their after days, do we picture them to ourselves, from some slight or shadowy trait of their school or college life.

Sir Simon Bellew's conversation abounded in features of this kind. His career had begun, and continued for a long time, in the brightest period of Ireland's history—when wealth and genius were rife in the land, and when the joyous traits of Irish character were elicited in all their force by prosperity and happiness. It was then shone forth in all their brilliancy the great spirits whose flashing wit and glittering fancy have cast a sunlight over their native country, that even now, in the twilight of the past, continues to illumine it. Alas! they have had no heritors to their fame—they have left no successors behind them. I have said that Miss Bellew listened with delight to all her father's stories of amusement, happy to see him once more aroused to the exertion of his abilities, and pleased to watch how successfully his manner had won over us. With what added loveliness she looked up to him as he narrated some circumstances of his political career, where his importance with his party was briefly alluded to; and how proudly her features glowed as some passing sentiment of high and simple patriotism would break from him. At such moments, the resemblance between them both became remarkably striking, and I deemed her even more beautiful than when her face wore its habitual calm and peaceful expression.

Father Loftus himself seemed also to have undergone a change; no longer indulging in his accustomed free-and-easy manner, seasoning his conversation with droll allusions and sly jokes, he now appeared a shrewd, intelligent reasoner—a well-informed man of the world; and, at times, evinced traits of reading and scholarship I was nowise prepared for. But how vain is it for one of any other country to fathom one-half the depth of Irish character, or say what part is inapplicable to an Irishman! My own conviction is, that we are all mistaken in our estimate of them—that the gay and reckless spirit, the wild fun, and frantic, impetuous devilment, are their least remarkable features, and, in fact, only the outside emblem of the stirring nature within.

When we retired to the drawing-room, Sir Simon, who had something to communicate to Father Tom, took him apart into one of the deep window recesses, and I was left for the first time alone beside Miss Bellew. There was something of awkwardness in the situation, for as neither of us could allude to the past without evoking recollections we both shunned to touch on, we knew not well of what to speak. The window lay open to the ground, displaying before us a garden in all the richness of fruit and blossom—the clustering honeysuckle and the dog-rose hung in masses of flower across the casement, and the graceful hyacinth and the deep carnation were bending to the night air, scented with the odor of many a flower. I looked wistfully without; she caught my glance, a slight hesitation followed, and then, as if assuming more courage, she said,—

"Are you fond of a garden?—would you like to walk?"

The haste with which I caught at the proposal half disconcerted her; but, with a slight smile, she stepped out into the walk.

How I do like a large, old-fashioned garden, with its venerable fruit-trees, its shady alleys, its overgrown and tangled

beds, in which the very luxuriance sets all efforts of art at defiance, and where rank growth speaks of wildness rather than culture. I like those grassy walks, where the footstep falls unheard, those shady thickets of nut-trees which the blackbird haunts in security, and where the thrush sings undisturbed—what a sense of quiet home-happiness there breathes in the leafy darkness of the spot, and how meet for reverie and reflection does it seem!

As I sauntered along beside my companion these thoughts crowded on me. Neither spoke; but her arm was in mine, our footsteps moved in unison, our eyes followed the same objects, and I felt as though our hearts beat responsively. On turning from one of the darker walks, we suddenly came upon an elevated spot, from which, through an opening in the wood, the coast came into view, broken into many a rocky promontory, and dotted with small islands. The sea was calm and waveless, and stretched away toward the horizon in one mass of unbroken blue, where it blended with the sky. An exclamation of "How beautiful!" broke from me at once; and as I turned toward Louisa, I perceived that her eyes sparkled with pleasure, and a half blush was mantling her cheek.

"You are not, then, disappointed with the West?" said she, with animation.

"No, no. I did not look for anything like this; nor," added I, in a lower tone, while the words trembled on my lips, "did I hope to enjoy it thus."

She seemed slightly confused; but, with woman's readiness to turn the meaning of my speech, added,—

"Your recovery from illness doubtless gives a heightened pleasure to everything like this—the dark hour of sickness is sometimes needed to teach us to feel strongly, as we ought, the beauty of the fair world we live in."

"It may be so; but still I find that every sorrow leaves a scar upon the heart, and he who has mourned much loses the zest for happiness."

"Or, rather, his views of it are different. I speak, happily for me, in ignorance; yet it seems as though every trial in life was a preparation for some higher scale of blissful enjoyment; and that as our understandings mature in power so do our hearts in goodness, chastening at each ordeal of life, till, at the last, the final sorrow, death, bids us prepare for the eternity where there is no longer grief, and where the weary are at rest."

"Is not your view of life rather derived from the happy experience of this quiet spot, than suited for the collisions of the world, where, as men grow older, their consciences grow more seared—their hearts less open?"

"Perhaps—but is not my philosophy a good one, that fits me for my station? My life has been cast here; I have no wish to leave it—I hope I never shall."

"Never! Surely, you would like to see other countries—to travel?"

"No, no. All the brilliant pleasures you can picture for me would never requite the fears I must suffer, lest these objects should grow less dear to me when I came back to them. The Tyrol is doubtless grander in its wild magnificence; but can it ever come home to my heart with so many affections and memories as these bold cliffs I have gazed on in my infancy? or should I benefit in happiness if it were? Can your Swiss peasant, be his costume ever so picturesque, interest me one-half so much as yonder poor fisherman, who is carrying up his little child in his arms from the beach? I know him—his home—his hearth; I have seen his grateful smile for some small benefit, and heard his words of thankfulness; and think you not that such recollections as these are mingled in every glance I throw around me, and that every sunlit spot of landscape shines not more brightly in my heart for its human associations? These may be narrow prejudices—I see you smile at me."

"No, no. Trust me, I do not undervalue your reasons."

"Well, here comes Fother Loftus, and he shall be judge between us. We were discussing the advantages of contrasting our home with other countries—"

"Ahem! a very difficult point," said the priest, interrupting her, and drawing himself up with a great air of judicial importance. "*Ubi bene ibi patria:* which may be rendered, 'there's potatoes everywhere.' Not that I incline to the doctrine myself: Ireland is the only enjoyable country I know of. *Utamur creaturam dum possumus:* that means, 'a moderate use of creature comforts,' Miss Louisa. But, truth, I'm so heated with an argument I had with Sir Simon, that I'm noways competent—did I tell you he was waiting for his tea?"

"No, indeed, you did not," said Miss Bellew, giving vent to a laugh she had been struggling against for the last few minutes; and which I did not at the moment know was caused by her perceiving the priest's air of chagrin and discontent, the evident proofs of his being worsted by

the old baronet, whose chief pleasure in life was to worry the father into a discussion, and either confuse or confute him. "My father seems in such good spirits to-night. Don't you think so?" said she, roguishly, looking over at the priest.

"Never saw him better; quite lively and animated, and"—dropping his voice to a whisper—"as obstinate as ever."

As we entered the house, we found Sir Simon walking leisurely up and down the drawing-room, with his hands behind his back, his face radiant with smiles, and his eye gleaming with conscious triumph toward the corner where the priest stood tumbling over some books to conceal his sense of defeat. In a few minutes after we were seated round the tea-table, the little cloud was dispelled, and a happier party it were difficult to imagine.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ST. SENAN'S WELL.

How shall I trace this, the happiest period of my life! when days and weeks rolled on, and left no track behind, save in that delicious calm that stole over my senses gradually and imperceptibly. Each morning saw me on my way to Castle Bellew: the mountain path that led up from the little strand was well worn by my footsteps—I knew its every turn and winding; scarcely a dog-rose bloomed along the way with which I had not grown familiar. And how each object spoke to my heart!—for I was happy! The clouds that moved above, the rippling tide that flowed beneath, the sunny shore, the shady thicket,—were all to me as though I had known them from boyhood. For so it is, in our glad moments we cling to all things that surround us; and, giving to external nature the high coloring of our own hearts, we feel how beautiful is this world! Yet was my mind not all tranquil; or often, as I hastened on, some passing thought would shoot across me. Where is this to end? Can I hope ever to overcome the deep-rooted prejudices of my family, and induce them to receive amongst them, as my wife, the beautiful and artless daughter of the wild West? or could I dare to expose her, on whom all my affections were centered, to the callous criticism of my fine lady-mother, and her fashionable friends in London? What right had I to stake her happiness on such a chance—to take her from all the objects endeared to her by taste, by time, by long-hallowed associations, and place her amid those among whom the very charm of her untarnished nature would have made her their inferior?

Is it that trait of rebellious spirit, that would seem to leaven every portion of our nature, which makes our love strongest when some powerful barrier has been opposed to our hopes and wishes? or is it, rather, that in the difficulties and trials of life, we discover those deeper resources of our hearts that, under happier auspices, had lain dormant and unknown? I scarcely know: but true it is, after such reflections as these, I ever hurried on the faster to meet her, more resolutely bent than ever, in weal or woe, to link my fortune with her own.

Though I returned each night to the priest's cottage, my days were entirely spent at Castle Bellew. How well do I remember every little incident that marked their tranquil course! The small breakfast-parlor, with its old Tudor window looking out upon the flower-garden: how often have I paced it, impatient for her coming; turning ever and anon to the opening door, when the old butler, with the invariable habits of his kind, continually appeared with some portion of the breakfast equipage. How I started as some distant door would shut or open—some far-off footstep on the stair; and wonder, within myself, why felt she not some of this impatient longing. And when, at last, tortured with anxiety and disappointment, I had turned away toward the window, the gentle step, the rustling dress, and, more than all, the indescribable something that tells us we are near those we love, bespoke her coming—oh! the transport of that moment! With what a fervid glow of pleasure I sprang to meet her—to touch her hand—to look upon her! How rapidly, too, I endeavored to speak my few words of greeting, lest her father's coming might interfere with even this short-lived period of happiness; and, after all, how little meaning were the words themselves, save in the tone I spoke them!

Then followed our rambles through the large but neglected garden, where the rich blossoming fruit-tree scented the air, loaded with all the fragrance of many a wild flower. Now strolling onwards—silent, but full of thought, we trod some dark and shaded alley; now entering upon some open glade, where a view of the far-off mountains would break upon us, or where some chance vista showed the deep

blue sunny sea, swelling with sullen roar against the rocky coast.

How often, at such times as these, have I asked myself if I could look for greater happiness than thus to ramble on, turning from the stupendous majesty of nature to look into her eyes, whose glance met mine so full of tender meaning; while words would pass between us, few and low-voiced, but all so thrilling—their very accent spoke of love. Yet, amid all this, some agonizing doubt would shoot across me, that my affection was not returned; the very frankness of her nature made me fear: and when we parted at night, and I held my homeward way toward the priest's cottage, I would stop from time to time, conning over every word she spoke, calling to mind each trivial circumstance; and if by accident some passing word of jest, some look of raillery, recurred to my memory, how have the warm tears rushed to my eyes, as, with my heart full to bursting, I muttered to myself, "She loves me not!" These fears would then give way to hope, as in my mind's eye she stood before me, all beaming in smiles: and amid these alternate emotions I trod my lonely path, longing for the morrow, when we should meet again, when I vowed within my heart to end my life of doubt by asking if she loved me. But with that morrow came the same spell of happiness that lulled me; but, like the gambler who had set his life upon the die, and durst not throw, so did I turn with trembling fear from tempting the chance that might in a moment dispel the bright dream of my existence, and leave life bleak and barren to me forever.

The month of August was drawing to a close, as we sauntered one fine evening toward the seashore. There was a little path which wound down the side of a bold crag, partly by steps, and partly by a kind of sloping way, defended at the sides by a rude wooden railing, which led down upon the beach exactly at the spot where a well of clear spring water sprang up, and tracked its tiny stream into the blue ocean. This little spring, which was always covered by the sea at high water, was restored, on the tide ebbing, to its former purity, and bubbled away as before; and from this cause had obtained from the simple peasantry the reputation of being miraculous, and was believed to possess innumerable properties of healing and consoling.

I had often heard of it, but never visited it before; and thither we now bent our steps, more intent upon catching the glorious sunset that was glowing on the Atlantic, than of testing the virtues of St. Senan's Well—for so it was called. The evening, an autumnal one, was calm and still; not a leaf stirred; the very birds were hushed; and there was all that solemn silence that sometimes threatens the outbreak of a storm. As we descended the crag, however, the deep booming of the sea broke upon us, and between the foliage of the oak trees we could mark the heavy rolling of the mighty tide, as wave after wave swelled on, and then was dashed in foam and spray upon the shore. There was something peculiarly grand and almost supernatural in the heavy swell of the great sea, rearing its white crest afar, and thundering along the weather-beaten rocks, when everything else was calm and unmoved around: the deep and solemn roar, echoing from many a rocky cavern, rose amid the crashing spray that sent up a thin veil of mist, through which the setting sun was reflected in many a bright rainbow. It was indeed a glorious sight! and we stopped for several minutes gazing on it; when suddenly Louisa, letting go my arm, exclaimed, as she pointed downward,—

"See! see the swell beneath that large black rock yonder; the tide is making fast; we must get quickly down if you wish to test St. Senan's power."

I had no time left me to ask what peculiar virtues the saint dispensed through the mediation of his well, when she broke from my side, and hurried down the steep descent: in a moment we had reached the shore, upon which already the tide was fast encroaching, and had marked with its dark stain the yellow sand within a few feet of the well. As we drew nearer, I perceived the figure of an old woman, bent with age, who seemed busily occupied sprinkling the water of the spring over something that, as I came closer, seemed like a sailor's jacket. She was repeating some words rapidly to herself; but on hearing our approach, she quickly collected her bundle together under her remnant of a cloak, and sat waiting our approach in silence.

"It's Molly Ban!" said Louisa, suddenly, and growing pale as she spoke. "Give her something—if you have any money—I beseech you."

There was no opportunity for inquiring further about her now, for the old woman slowly rose from the stone, by the aid of a stick, and stood confronting us. Her figure was singularly short—scarce four feet in height, but her head was enormously large, and her features, which were almost

terrific in ugliness, were swarthy as a gipsy's; a man's hat was fastened upon her head by a red kerchief, which was knotted beneath her chin; a short cloak of faded scarlet, like what the peasantry of the West usually wear, covered her shoulders; beneath which a patched and many-colored petticoat appeared, that reached to the middle of her legs, which, as well as her feet, were completely naked, giving a look of wildness and poverty in one so old I cannot attempt to convey.

The most singular part of her costume, however, was a rude collar she wore round her neck of sea-shells—among which, here and there, I could detect some bits of painted and gilded carving, like fragments of a wreck. This strange apparition now stood opposite me, her dark eyes fixed steadily on my companion, to whom, unlike the people of the country, she never made the slightest reverence, or showed any semblance of respect.

"And was it to spy after me, Miss Loo, ye brought down yer sweetheart to the well this evening?" said the hag, in a harsh, grating voice, that seemed the very last effort of some suppressed passion.

Louisa's arm grasped mine, and I could feel it tremble with agitation, as she whispered in my ear,—

"Give her money quickly; I know her."

"And is your father going to send me back to jail because the cattle's got the rot amongst them? ha, ha, ha!" said she, breaking into a wild, discordant laugh. "There'll be more mourning than for that, at the castle, before long."

Louisa leaned against me, faint and almost falling, while, drawing out my purse hastily, I held forth my hand full of silver. The old hag clutched at it eagerly, and, as her dark eyes flashed fire, she thrust the money into a pocket at her side, and again broke out into a horrid laugh.

"So, you're beginnin' to know me, are ye? Ye won't mock Molly Ban now—eh? No, faith, nor Mary Lafferty either, that turned me from the door and shut it agin me. Where'll her pride be to-morrow night, when they bring in her husband a corpse to her. Look at that."

With these words she threw her cloak on one side, and showed the blue jacket of a fisherman, which I had seen her sprinkling with the water as we came up.

"The blue water will be his winding-sheet this night, calm as it is now."

"Oh, Molly dear, don't speak this way!"

"Molly dear!" echoed the beldame, in an accent of biting derision. "Who ever heerd one of your name call me that? or are ye come for a charm for that young man beside you? See now; the sun's just gone; in a minit more the sea'll be in, and it'll be too late. Here, come near me—kneel down there—kneel down, I say; or is it only my curse ye mind?"

"She's mad, poor thing," said I in my companion's ear. "Let her have her way—do as she bids you."

Sinking with terror, pale as death, and trembling all over, Louisa bent one knee upon the little rock beside the well, while the old hag took her fair hand within her own skinny fingers and plunged it rudely in the well.

"There, drink," said she, offering me the fair palm, through which the clear water was running rapidly, while she chanted rather than spoke the rude rhyme that follows:

"By the setting sun,
The flowing sea,
The waters that run,
I swear to thee
That my faith shall be true, as this moment now
In weal or in woe, wherever, or how,
So help me, St. Senan, to keep my vow."

The last words had scarcely been uttered when Louisa, who apparently had been too much overcome by terror to hear one word the hag muttered, sprang up from the stone, her face and neck covered with a deep blush, her lip trembling with agitation, while her eyes were fixedly directed toward the old woman with an expression of haughty anger.

"Ay, ye may look as proud as ye like. It's little I mind ye, in love or in hate. Ye are well humbled enough now. And as for you," said she, turning toward me with a look of scornful pity—"you, I wish ye joy of your fair sweetheart—let her only keep her troth like her own mother, and ye'll have a happy heart to sit at your fireside with."

The blood fled from Louisa's cheek as she said this—a deadly paleness spread over her features—her lips were bloodless and parted—and her hands firmly clenched together and pressed against her side, bespoke the agony of the moment. It lasted not longer, for she fell back fainting and insensible into my arms. I bathed her face and temples from the well—I called upon her—rubbed her hands within my own, and endeavored by every means to arouse her but in vain. I turned to beg for aid from the woman, but she was gone. I again endeavored to awake her from the stupor, but she lay cold, rigid, and motionless—her features had stiffened like a corpse, and showed no

touch of life. I shouted aloud for aid; but, alas! we were far from all human habitations, and the wild cries of the curlew were the only sounds that met my ear, or the deep rushing of the sea as it broke nearer and nearer to where I stood. A sudden pang of horror shot across me as I look around and below, and saw no chance of aid from any quarter. Already the sun was below the horizon, and the gray twilight gave but gloomy indications of all around—the sea, too, was making fast—the foam had reached us, and even now the salt tide had mingled its water with the little spring. No more time was to be lost. A projecting point of rock intervened between us and the little path by which we had descended to the beach, over this the spray was now splashing, and its base was only to be seen at intervals between the advancing or retiring wave. A low wailing sound, like distant wind, was creeping over the water, which from time to time was curled along the round-backed wave with all the threatening aspect of a coming storm—the sea-birds wheeled around in circles, waking the echoes with their wild notes; and the heavy swell of the breaking sea roared through many a rocky cavern with a sad and mournful melody. I threw one last look above where the tall beetling cliff was lost in the gloom of coming night; another on the broad bleak ocean; and then, catching up my companion in my arms, set forward. For the first few moments I felt not my burden. My beating heart throbbed proudly; and as I pressed her to my bosom, how I nerved myself for any coming danger by the thought that all the world to me lay in my arms. Every step, however, brought me farther out; the sea, which at first washed only to my ankles, now reached my knees; my step became unsteady; and when, for an instant, I turned one look on her who lay still and insensible within my grasp, I felt my head reel, and my sight wander, as I again looked out on the dark water that rolled around us. We were now near the rocky point which, once passed, placed us in safety; and to reach this I summoned up every effort. Around this the waves had worn a deeper track, and against its side they beat and lashed themselves to foam, which boiled in broad sheets around. A loud cheer from some one on the cliff above us turned my glance upwards, and I could see lights moving backwards and forwards through the darkness. Before I could reply to the voice, however, a large wave came mantling near, gathering force as it approached, and swelling its gigantic mass so as to shut out all besides. I fixed myself firmly to resist the shock; and slightly bending, opposed my shoulder to the mighty roll of water that now towered like a wall above us. On it came, till its dark crest frowned above our heads. For a second or two it seemed to pause, as the white curl tipped its breaking hedge, and then, with a roll like thunder, broke over us. For an instant I held my footing; at length, however, my step tottered—I felt myself lifted up, and then hurled headlong beneath the swollen volume of water that closed above my head. Stunned, but not senseless, I grasped my burden closer to my heart, and struggled to regain my footing. The wave passed inwards as I rose to my feet and a sea of boiling foam hissed around me. Beyond, all was dim and indistinct; a brooding darkness stretched toward the sea, and landward the tall cliffs were wrapped in deep shadow, except when the light that I saw before flitted from place to place, like the dancing wildfire. A loud cheer from on high made me suppose that we were perceived; but my attention was turned away by a low moaning sound that came floating over the water; and, as I looked I could see that the black surface swelled upwards, as if by some mighty force beneath, and rose towering into the air. The wave that now approached us was much greater than the former one, and came thundering on as if impatient for its prey. My fear was of being carried out to sea, and I looked hastily around for some rocky point to hold on by; but in vain. The very sands beneath me seemed moving and shifting; the voice of thunder was in my ears, my senses reeled, and the thought of death by drowning, with all its agony, came over me.

"Oh, my poor father! my poor father!" said a low, plaintive voice beside my cheek; and the next instant the blood rushed warm to my heart. My courage rallied; my arm grew nerved and strong; my footsteps seemed to grasp the very ground; and, with a bold and daring spirit, I waited for the coming shock. On it came—a mighty flood—sweeping high above us, as we struggled in the midst. The blue water moved on unbroken. For a moment or two I felt we were borne along with a whirlwind speed; then suddenly we touched the strand, but only for a second, for the returning wave came thundering back, and carried us along with it. My senses now began to wander: the dark and gloomy sea stretched around us; the stars seemed to flit to and fro; the roar of water and the sounds of human voices were mingled in

my ears. My strength, too, was failing me, and I buffeted the waves with scarcely consciousness. Just at that moment, when, all dread of danger past, the gloomy indifference to life is fast succeeding, I saw a bright gleam of light flying rapidly across the water; the shouts of voices reached me also, but the words I heard not. Now falling beneath, now rising above the foamy surface, I struggled on, my only strength to press home closer to my bosom the form of her my heart was filled by; when, of a sudden, I felt my arm rudely grasped on either side. A rope, too, was thrown around my waist, and I was hurried inwards toward the shore, amid cries of "All safe! all safe! Not too fast there!" A dreary indistinctness of what followed even still haunts my mind. A huge wood fire upon the beach—the figures of the fishermen—the country people passing hither and thither—the tumult of voices—and a rude chair in which lay a pale, half-fainting form. The rest I know not.

It was dark—so dark I could not see the persons that moved beside me. As we passed along the grassy turf in silence, I held a soft hand in mine, and a fair cheek rested on my shoulder, while masses of long and dripping hair fell on my neck and bosom. Carried by two stout peasant fishermen in a chair, Louisa Bellew, faint but conscious of the danger past, was borne homeward. I walked beside her, my heart too full for words. A loud wild cheer burst suddenly forth, and a bright gleam of light aroused me from my trance of happiness. The steps were crowded with people—the large hall so full we scarce could force our way. The door of the parlor was now thrown open, and there sat the pale, gaunt figure of the old man; his eyes staring wildly, and his lips parted; his hands resting on each arm of his chair, but all still and motionless. Bursting from those that carried her, she sprang toward him with a cry; but ere she reached his arms he had fallen from his seat to his knees, and with his hands clasped above his head, and upturned eyes, poured forth his prayer to God. Sinking to his side, she twined her hands with his; and, as if moved by the magic of the scene, the crowd fell to their knees, and joined in the thanksgiving. It was a moment of deep and touching feeling, to hear the slow, scarce articulate words of that old man, who turned from the sight of her his heart treasured to thank the great Father of Mercy, who had not left him childless in his age—to mark the low sobs of those around as they strove to stifle them; while tears coursed down the hard and weather-beaten cheeks of humble poverty, as they muttered to themselves their heartfelt thanks for her preservation. There was a pause. The old man turned his eyes upon his child, and like a dammed-up torrent breaking forth, the warm tears gushed out, and, with a cry of "My own, my only one!" he fell upon her neck and wept.

I could hear no more. Springing to my feet, I dashed through the hall, and, resisting every effort to detain me, rushed down the steps and gained the lawn. Once there alone, I sank down upon the sward, and poured forth my heart in tears of happiness.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AN UNLOOKED-FOR MEETING.

I MADE many ineffectual efforts to awake in the morning after my adventure. Fatigue and exhaustion, which seem always heaviest when incurred by danger, had completely worn me out, and scarcely had I succeeded in opening my eyes and muttering some broken words, ere again I dropped off to sleep, soundly and without a dream.

It was late in the afternoon when at length I sat up in my bed and looked about me. A gentle hand suddenly fell upon my shoulder, and a low voice, which I at once recognized as Father Tom's, whispered,—

"There now, my dear fellow, lie down again. You must not stir for a couple of hours yet."

I looked at him fixedly for a moment, and, as I clasped his hand in mine, asked,—

"How is she, father?"

Scarcely were the words spoken when I felt a burning blush upon my cheek. It was the confidence of months long that found vent in one second—the pent-up secret of my heart that burst from me unconsciously, and I hid my face upon the pillow, and felt as though I had betrayed her.

"Well—quite well," said the old man, as he pressed my hand forcibly in his own. "But let us not speak now. You must take more rest, and then have your arm looked to. I believe you have forgotten all about it."

"My arm!" repeated I, in some surprise; while, turning down the clothes, I perceived that my right arm was sorely bruised, and swollen to an immense size. "The rocks have done this," muttered I. "And she, father—what of her, for heaven's sake?"

"Be calm, or I must leave you," said the priest. "I said before that she was well. *Poor boy!*"

There was something so touching in the tone of the last words that, without my knowing why, I felt a kind of creeping fear pass across me, and a dread of some unknown evil steal over me.

"Father," said I, springing up and grasping him with both my hands, while the pain of my wounded arm shot through my very heart, "you are an honest man, and you are a man of God—you would not tell me a lie. Is she well?" The big drop fell from my brow as I spoke.

He clasped his hands fervently together as he replied, in a voice tremulous with agitation,—

"I never told a lie."

He turned away as he spoke, and I lay down in my bed with a mind relieved, but not at rest.

Alas, how hard it is to be happy! The casualties of this world come on like waves, one succeeding the other. We may escape the heavy roll of the mighty ocean, and be wrecked in the still, smooth waters of the land-locked bay. We dread the storm and the hurricane, and we forget how many have perished within sight of shore. But yet a secret fear is ever present with us when danger hovers near; and this sense of some impending evil it was which now darkened me, and whispered me to be prepared.

I lay for some time sunk in my reflections, and when I looked up, the priest was gone. A letter had fallen on the ground, as if by accident, and I rose to place it on my table, when, to my surprise, I found it addressed to myself. It was marked, "On his Majesty's Service," and ran thus:—

"Sir,—I have received his excellency's orders to inform you, that unless you, on receipt of the present letter, at once return to your duty as a member of the staff, that your name will be erased from the list, and the vacancy immediately filled up.

"I have the honor to be, etc., etc.,
"Henry Howard."

"Dublin Castle."

What could have caused the great alteration in his excellency's feelings that this order evinced I could not conceive, and felt hurt and indignant at the tone of a letter which came on me so completely by surprise. I knew, however, how much my father looked to my strict obedience to every call of duty, and resolved that, come what would, I should at once resume my position on the duke's staff.

These were but momentary reflections. My thoughts recurred at once to where my heart was dwelling—with her whose very image lived with me. Try how I would, I could think of no pleasure in which she took not part—imagine no scheme of life in which she was not concerned. Ambition had lost its charm; the path of glory I had longed to tread, I felt now as nothing beside that heather-walk which led me toward her; and if I were to have chosen between the most brilliant career, high station, influence, and fortune could bestow, and the lowly condition of a dweller in these wild mountain solitudes, I felt that not a moment of hesitation or doubt would mark my decision.

There was a kind of heroism in the relinquishing all the blandishments of fortune, all the seductions of the brilliant world, for one whose peaceful and humble life strayed not beyond the limits of these rugged mountains; and this had its charm. There were times when I loved to ask myself whether Louisa Bellew would not, even amid all the splendor and display of London life, be as much admired and courted as the most acknowledged of beauty's daughters; now I turned rather to the thought of how far happier and better it was to know that a nature so unhackneyed, a heart so rich in its own emotions, was never to be exposed to the coarse collision of society, and all the hardened hypocrisy of the world.

My own lot, too, how many more chances of happiness did it not present as I looked at the few weeks of the past, and thought of whole years thus gliding away, loving and beloved. A kind of stir, and the sound of voices beneath my window, broke my musings, and I rose and looked out. It proceeded from the young girl and the country lad who formed the priest's household. They were talking together before the door, and pointing in the direction of the high road, where a cloud of dust had marked the passage of some carriage, an event rare enough to attract attention in these wild districts.

"And did his reverence say that the captain was to be kept in bed till he came back?"

"Ah, then, sure, he knew well enough," said Biddy, "that the young man would be up and off to the castle the moment he was able to walk—ay, and maybe, before it too. Troth, Patsey, it's what I'm thinking, there's nobody knows how to court like a raal gentleman."

"Och, botheration," said Patsey, with an offended toss of his head, and a look of half malice.

"Faix, you may look how you like, but it's truth I'm telling ye. They know how to do it. It isn't winking at a body, nor putting their great rough arms round their neck; but it's a quiet, mannerly, dacent way they have, and soothering voice, and a look undher their eyes, as much as to say, 'Maybe you wouldn't now.'"

"Troth, Biddy," said Patsey, sharply, "it strikes me that you know more of their ways than is just convanient—eh, do you understand me now?"

"Well, and if I do," replied Biddy, "there's no one can be *evenen* it to you, for I'm sure it wasn't *you* taught me."

"Ye want to provoke me," said the young man, rising, and evidently more annoyed than he felt disposed to confess; "but faix, I'll keep my temper. It's not after speaking to his reverence, and buying a cow and a dresser, that I'm going to break it off."

"Heigh-ho!" said Biddy, as she adjusted a curl that was most coquettishly half falling across her eyes; "sure there's many a slip betune the cup and the lip, as the poor dear young gentleman will find out when he wakes."

A cold fear ran through me as I heard these words, and the presentiment of some mishap, that for a few moments I had been forgetting, now came back in double force. I set about dressing myself in all haste, and notwithstanding that my wounded arm interfered with me at each instant, succeeded at last in my undertaking. I looked at my watch; it was already six o'clock in the afternoon, and the large mountains were throwing their great shadows over the yellow strand. Collecting from what I had heard from the priest's servants that it was their intention to detain me in the house, I locked my door on leaving the room, and stole noiselessly down the stairs, crossed the little garden, and passing through the beech hedge, soon found myself upon the mountain path. My pace quickened as I breasted the hill-side; my eyes firmly fixed upon the tall towers of the old castle, as they stood proudly topping the dense foliage of the oak trees. Like some mariner who gazes on the long-wished-for beacon that tells of home and friends, so I bent my steadfast looks to that one object, and conjured up many a picture to myself of the scene that might be at that moment enacting there. Now I imagined the old man seated, silent and motionless, beside the bed where his daughter, overcome with weakness and exhaustion, still slept, her pale face scarce colored by a pinkish stain that marked the last trace of feverish excitement; now I thought of her as if still seated in her own drawing-room, at the little window that looked seaward — looking, perhaps, upon the very spot that marked our last night's adventure, and, mayhap, blushing at the memory.

As I came near the park, I turned from the regular approach to a small path which, opening by a wicket, led to a little flower-garden beside the drawing-room. I had not walked many paces when the sound of some one, as if sobbing caught my ear. I stopped to listen, and could distinctly hear the low, broken voice of grief quite near me. My mind was in that excited state that every breeze that rustled, every leaf that stirred, thrilled through my heart; the same dread of something, I knew not what, that agitated me as I awoke, came fresh upon me, and a cold tremor crept over me. The next moment I sprang forward, and, as I turned the angle of the walk, beheld, with what relief of heart, that the cries proceeded from a little child, who, seated in the grass, was weeping bitterly. It was a boy of scarce ten years old that Louisa used to employ about the garden, rather to amuse the little fellow, to whom she had taken a liking, than for the sake of services, which at the best were scarcely harmless.

"Well, Billy," said I, "what has happened to you, my boy? Have you fallen and hurt yourself?"

"Na," was the reply; and, sinking his head between his knees, he sobbed more bitterly than ever.

"Has Miss Loo been angry with you, then?"

"Na, na," was the only answer, as he poured forth a flood of tears.

"Come, come, my little man, what is it? Tell me, and perhaps we can set it all to rights."

"Gone! gone away forever!" cried the child, as a burst of pent-up agony broke from him; and he cried as though his very heart would break.

Again my terrible foreboding crossed my mind, and, waiting to ask another question, I rushed forward, cleared the little fence of the flower-garden at a spring, and stood within a few yards of the window. It lay open as usual; the large china vase of moss-roses that she had plucked the evening before, stood on the little table beside it. I stopped for an instant to breathe; the beating of my heart was so

painful, that I pressed my hand upon my side. At that instant I had given my life to have heard her voice—but for one single word I had bartered my heart's blood; but all was as hushed and still as midnight. I thought I did hear something like a sigh—yes—and I now could distinctly hear the rustling sound of some one as if turning in a chair. Sir Simon Bellew, for some cause or other, I knew never came into that room. I listened again—yes!—and now, too, I could see the shadow of a figure on the floor. I sprang forward to the window, and cried out, "Louisa!" The next instant I was in the room, and my eyes fell full upon the figure of—Ulick Burke! Seated in a deep arm-chair, his leg resting on a low stool, he was reclining at half-length, his face pale as death, and his very lips blanched, but then there rested on the mouth the same curl of insolent mockery that marked it when first we met.

"Disappointed, I fear, sir," said he, in a tone which, however weakened by sickness, had lost nothing of its sneering bitterness.

"I confess, sir," said I, confusedly, "that this is a pleasure I had not anticipated."

"Nor I either, sir," replied he, with a dark frown. "Had I been able to have rung the bell before, the letter that lies there should have been sent to you, and might have spared both of us this 'pleasure,' as you are good enough to call it."

"A letter for me!" said I, eagerly; then, half ashamed of my own emotion, and not indifferent to the sickly and apparently dying form before me, I hesitated, and added, "I trust that you are recovering from the effects of your wound."

"Damn the wound, sir! don't speak to me about it! You never came here for that, I suppose. Take your letter, sir!" A purple flush here colored his features, as though some pang of agonizing pain had shot through him, and his livid lip quivered with passion. "Take your letter, sir!" and he threw it toward me as he spoke. I stood amazed and thunder-struck at this sudden outbreak of anger, and for a second or two could not recover myself to speak.

"You mistake me," said I.

"Mistake you! No, confound me, I don't mistake you! I know you well and thoroughly! But you mistake me—ay, and damnably too—if you suppose that, because I'm crippled here, this insolence shall pass unpunished! Who but a coward, sir, would come thus, to taunt a man like me? Yes, sir, a coward! I spoke it—I said it—would you like to hear it over again?—or, if you don't like it, the remedy is near you—nearer than you think. There are two pistols in that case—both loaded with ball; take your choice, and your own distance, and here, where we are, let us finish this quarrel; for, mark me," and here his brow darkened till the veins, swelled and knotted in his forehead, looked like indigo—"mark me, the account shall be closed one day or other!"

I saw at once that he had lashed his fury up to an ungovernable pitch, and that to speak to him was only to increase his passion, so I stooped down without saying a word, and took up the letter that lay at my feet.

"I am waiting your reply, sir," said he, with a low voice, subdued by an inward effort into a seeming quietness of tone.

"You cannot imagine," said I, mildly, "that I could accept of such a challenge as this, nor fight with a man who cannot leave his chair?"

"And who has made me so, sir? Who has made me a paralytic thing for life? But, if that be all, give me your arm, and help me through that window—place me against that yew-tree, yonder. I can stand well enough. You won't—you refuse me this? Oh, coward! coward! You grow pale and red again! Let your white lip mutter, and your nails eat into your hands with passion! Your heart is craven—and you know it!"

Shall I dare to own it? For an instant or two my resolution tottered, and involuntarily my eyes turned to the pistol-case upon the table beside me. He caught the look, and in a tone of triumphant exultation, cried out,—

"Bravo! bravo! What! you hesitate again? Oh, that this should not be before the world!—in some open and public place!—that men should not look on and see us here!"

"I leave you, sir," said I, sternly, "thankful, for *your* sake, at least, that this is not before the world."

"Stop, sir—stop!" cried he, hoarse with rage. "Ring that bell!"

I hesitated, and he called out again, "Ring that bell, sir!"

I approached the chimney, and did as he desired. The butler immediately made his appearance.

"Nicholas," cried the sick man, "bring in the servants—bring them in here; you hear me well. I want to show them something they have never seen. Go!"

The man disappeared at once, and as I

met the scowling look of hate that fixed its glare upon me, once more I felt myself waver. The struggle was but momentary. I sprang to the window, and leaped into the garden. A loud curse broke from Burke as I did so; a cry of disappointed wrath, like the yell of a famished wolf, followed. The next moment I was beyond the reach of his insolence and his invective.

The passionate excitement of the moment over, my first determination was to gain the approach, and return to the house by the hall-door; my next, to break the seal of the letter which I held in my hand, and see if its contents might not throw some light upon the events which somehow I felt were thickening around me, but of whose nature and import I knew nothing.

The address was written in a stiff, old-fashioned hand, but the large seal bore the arms of the Bellew family, and left no doubt upon my mind that it had come from Sir Simon. I opened it with a trembling and throbbing heart, and read as follows:—

"My dear Sir,—The event of last night has called back upon a failing and broken memory the darkest hour of a long and blighted life, and made the old man, whose steadfast gaze looked onward to the tomb, turn once backward to behold the deepest affliction of his days—misfortune, crime, remorse. I cannot, even now, while already the very shadow of death is on me, recount the sad story I allude to; enough for the object I have in view if I say, that where I once owed the life of one I held dearest in life, the hand that saved lived to steal, and the voice that blessed me was perjured and forsworn; since that hour I have never received a service of a fellow-mortal, until the hour when you rescued my child. And oh! loving her as I do—wrapped up as my soul is in her image—I could have borne better to see her cold and dripping corse laid down beside me, than to behold her, as I have done, in your arms. You must never meet more. The dreadful anticipation of long suffering years is creeping stronger and stronger upon me; and I feel in my inmost heart that I am reserved for another and a last bereavement ere I die.

"We shall have left before this letter reaches you. You may, perhaps, hear the place of our refuge—for such it is—but I trust that to your feelings as a gentleman and a man of honor, I can appeal, in the certain confidence that you will not abuse my faith—you will not follow us.

"I know not what I have written, nor dare I read it again. Already my tears have dimmed my eyes, and are falling on the paper, so let me bid you farewell—an eternal farewell. My nephew has arrived here. I have not seen him, nor shall I: but he will forward this letter to you after our departure.

"Yours,
"S. Bellew."

The first stunning feeling past, I looked around me to see if it were not some horrid dream, and the whole events but the frightful deception of a sleeping fancy. But bit by bit the entire truth broke upon me—the full tide of sorrow rushed in upon my heart. The letter I could not comprehend further than that some deep affliction had been recalled by my late adventure. But then the words of the hag—the brief, half-uttered intimations of the priest—came to my memory. "Her mother!" said I; "what of her mother?" I remembered Louisa had never mentioned, nor even alluded to her; and now a thousand suspicions crossed my mind, which all gave way before my own sense of bereavement, and the desolation and desertion I felt in my own heart. I threw myself upon the ground where she walked so often beside me, and burst into tears. But a few brief hours, and how surrounded by visions of happiness and love. Now, bereft of everything, what charm had life for me! How valueless, how worthless did all seem! The evening sun I loved to gaze on, the bright flowers, the waving grass, the low murmur of the breaking surf, that stole like music over the happy sense, were now but gloomy things or discordant sounds. The very high and holy thoughts that used to stir within me were changed to fierce and wrathful passions, or the low drooping of despair. It was night—still and starry night—when I arose and wended my way toward the priest's cottage.

CHAPTER XL.

THE PRIEST'S KITCHEN.

The candles were burning brightly, and the cheerful bog fire was blazing on the hearth, as I drew near the window of the priest's cottage; but yet there was no one in the room. The little tea-kettle was hissing on the hob, and the room had all that careful look of watchful attention

bestowed upon it that showed the zeal of his little household.

Uncertain how I should meet him—how far explain the affliction that had fallen on me—I walked for some time up and down before the door; at length I wandered to the back of the house, and passing the little stable, I remarked that the pony was absent. The priest had not returned, perhaps, since morning—perhaps he had gone some distance off—in all likelihood accompanied the Bellews. Again the few words he had spoken that morning recurred to me, and I pondered in silence over their meaning. As I thus mused, a strong flood of mellow light attracted me, as it fell in a broad stream across the little paved court, and I now saw that it came from the kitchen. I drew near the window in silence, and looked in; before the large turf fire were seated three persons—two of them, who sat in the shining light, I at once recognized as the servants, but the third was concealed in the shadow of the chimney, and I could only trace the outline of his figure against the blaze; I was not long, however, in doubt as to his identity.

"Seemingly, then, you're a great traveler," said Patsey, the priest's man, addressing the unknown.

A long whiff of smoke, patiently emitted, and a polite wave of the hand in assent, was the reply.

"And how far did you come to-day, av I might be so bould?" said Mary.

"From the cross of Kiltermon, beyond Gurtmore, my darling; and sure it is a real pleasure and a delight to come so far to see as pretty a crayture as yourself"—here Patsey looked a little put out, and Mary gave a half-smile of encouragement—"for," continued the other, breaking into a song,—

"Though I love a fox in a cover to find,
When the clouds is low, with a sou'-west wind,
Faix, a pretty girl is as much to my mind
As the tally-high-ho of a morning."

I need scarcely say that the finale of this rude verse was given in a way that only Tipperary Joe could accomplish, as he continued:

"And just show me one with an instep high,
A saucy look and a roguish eye,
Who'd smile ten times for once she'd sigh,
And I'm her slave till morning."

"And that's yourself, devil a less—ye ho, ye ho, tally-ho!—I hope the family isn't in bed?"

"Troth, seemingly," said Patsey, in a tone of evident pique, "it would distress you little av they were: you seem mighty well accustomed to making yourself at home."

"And why wouldn't the young man?" said Mary, apparently well pleased to encourage a little jealousy on the part of her lover, "and no harm neither. And ye do be always with the hounds, sir?"

"Yes, miss, that's what I be doing; but I wonder what's keeping the captain—I've a letter here for him, that I know ought to have no delay. I ran all the way for fourteen miles over Mey'nacurraghew mountain, to be here quick with it."

I opened the door as I heard this, and entered the kitchen.

"Hurroo! by the mortial," cried Joe, with one of his wild shouts, "it's himself. Arrah, darlin', how is every bit in your skin?"

"Well, Joe, my poor fellow, I'm delighted to see you safe and sound once more. Many a day have I reproached myself for the way you suffered for my sake, and for the manner I left you."

"There's only one thing you have any rayson to grieve over," said the poor fellow, as the tears started to his eyes, and rolled in heavy drops down his cheeks, "and here it is."

As he spoke, he drew from his bosom a little green silk purse, half filled with gold.

"Ah! Captain, jewel, why wouldn't you let a poor fellow taste happiness his own way? Is it because I had no shoes on me, that I hadn't any pride in my heart? and is it because I wasn't rich that you wouldn't let me be a friend to you, just to myself alone? Oh! little as we know of grand people and their ways, troth, they don't see our hearts half as plain. See, now, I'd rather you'd have come up to the bed that morning and left me your curse—ay, devil a less than that purse of money, and it wouldn't do me as much harm."

He dropped his head as he spoke, and his arm fell listlessly to his side, while he stood mute and sorrow-struck before me.

"Come, Joe," said I, holding out my hand to him—"come, Joe, forgive me. If I don't know better, remember we were only new acquaintances at that time—from this hour we are more."

The words seemed to act like a spell upon him; he stood proudly up, and his eyes flashed with their wildest glare, while, seizing my hand, he pressed it to his lips, and called out,—

"While there's a drop in my heart, darlin'—"

"You have a letter for me," said I, glad to turn the channel of both our thoughts. "Where did you get it?"

"At the Curragh, sir; no less. I was standing beside the staff, among all the grand generals and the quality, near the lord-liftinint, and I heard one of the officers say, 'If I knew where to write to him, I'd certainly do so; but he has never written to any of us since his duel.' 'Ah,' said another, 'Hinton's an odd fellow that way.' The minit I heard the name, I up and said to him, 'Write the letter, and I'll bring it, and bring ye an answer beside, av ye want it.'

"'And who the devil are you?' said he.

"'Troth,' said I, 'there's more on this race knows me nor yourself, fine as you are.' And they all began laughing at this—for the officer grew mighty red in the face, and was angry—and what he was going to say it's hard to tell, for just then Lord Clonmel called out,—

"'Sure it's Tipperary Joe himself; begad, every one knows him. Here, Joe, I owe you half-a-crown since last meeting at the Lough.'

"'Faix, you do,' says I, 'and ten shillings to the back of it, for Lanty Cassan's mare that I hired to bring you home when you staked the horse—you never paid it since.' And then there was another laugh; but the end of it all was, he writ a bit of a note where he was on horseback, with a pencil, and here it is."

So saying, he produced a small crumpled piece of paper, in which I could with some difficulty trace the following lines:—

"DEAR JACK,—If the fool who bears this ever arrives with it, come back at once. Your friends in England have been worrying the D— to command your return to duty; and there are stories afloat about your western doings that your presence here can alone contradict.

"Yours,
"J. HORTON."

It needed not a second for me to make up my mind as to my future course, and I said,—

"How can I reach Limerick the shortest way?"

"I know a short cut," said Joe, "and if we could get a pony, I'd bring you over the mountain before to-morrow evening."

"And you," said I—"how are you to go?"

"On my feet, to be sure; how else would I go?"

Dispatching Joe, in company with Patsey, in search of a pony to carry me over the mountain, I walked into the little parlor, which I was now about to take my leave of forever.

It was only then, as I threw myself upon a seat, alone and in solitude, that I felt the full force of all my sorrow—the blight that had fallen on my dearest hopes, and the blank, bleak prospect of life before me. Sir Simon Bellew's letter I read over once more; but now the mystery it contained had lost all interest for me, and I had only thoughts for my own affliction. Suddenly, a deep burning spot glowed on my cheek, as I remembered my interview with Ulick Burke, and I sprang to my legs, and, for a second or two felt undecided whether I would not give him the opportunity he so longed for. It was but a second, and my better reason came back; and I blushed even deeper with shame than I did with passion.

Calming myself with a mighty effort, I endeavored to pen a few lines to my worthy and kind friend, Father Loftus. I dared not tell him the real cause of my departure, though, indeed, I guessed from his absence that he had accompanied the Bellews, and but simply spoke of my return to duty as imperative, and my regret that after such proofs of his friendship I could not shake his hand at parting. The continued flurry of my feelings doubtless made this a very confused and inexplicit document; but I could do no better. In fact, the conviction I had long been laboring under, but never could thoroughly appreciate, broke on me at the moment. It was this: the sudden vicissitudes of every-day life in Ireland are sadly unsuited to our English natures and habits of thought and action. These changes from grave to gay—these outbreaks of high-souled enthusiasm, followed by dark reflective traits of brooding thought—these noble impulses of good—these events of more than tragic horror—demand a changeful, even a forgetful temperament to bear them; and while the Irishman rises or falls with every emergency of his fate, with us impressions are eating deeper and deeper into our hearts, and we become sad, and thoughtful, and prematurely old. Thus, at least, did I feel, and seemed to myself as though very many years had passed over me since I had left my father's house. The tramp of feet, and the sounds of speaking and laughter outside, interrupted my musings, and I heard my friend Joe caroling at the top of his voice,—

"Sir Pat bestrode a high-bred steed,
And the huntsman one that was broken-kneed;
But Father Fitz had a wiry weed,
With his tally-high-ho in the morning."

"Faith, and you're a great beast entirely, and one might dance a jig on your back, and leave room for the piper besides."

I opened the window, and in the bright moonlight beheld the party leading up a short, rugged-looking pony, whose breadth of beam and square proportions fully justified all Joe's enconiums.

"Have you bought this pony for me, Joe?" cried I.

"No, sir, only borrowed him. He'll take you up to Wheley's mills, where we'll get Andy's mare to-morrow morning."

"Borrowed him?"

"Yes."

"Where's his owner?"

"He's in bed, where he ought to be. I tould him through the door who it was for, and that he needn't get up, as I'd find the ways of the place myself, and ye see so I did."

"Told him who it was for! Why, he never heard of me in his life."

"Devil may care; sure you're the priest's friend; and who has a better warrant for everything in the place? Don't you know the song,—

"And Father Fitz had no cows nor sheep,
And the devil a hen or pig to keep;
But a pleasanter house to dine or sleep
You'd never find till morning.

"'For Molly,' says he, 'if the fowls be few,
I've only one counsel to give to you:
There's hens hard by—go "kill for two,"
For I've a friend till morning.'

By the rock of Cashel, it 'ud be a hard case av a priest was to want. Look how the ould saddle fits him—faix, ye'd think he was made for it."

I am not quite sure that I felt all Joe's enthusiasm for the beast's perfections; nor did the old yeomanry "demi-pique," with its brass mountings and holsters, increase my admiration. Too happy, however, to leave a spot where all my recollections were now turned to gloom and despondence, I packed my few traps and was soon ready for the road.

It was not without a gulping feeling in my throat, and a kind of suffocating oppression at my heart, that I turned from the little room where, in happier times, I had spent so many pleasant hours; and, bidding a last good bye to the priest's household, told them to say to Father Tom how sad I felt at leaving before he returned. This done, I mounted the little pony, and, escorted by Joe, who held the bridle, descended the hill, and soon found myself by the little rivulet that murmured along the steep glen through which our path was lying.

CHAPTER XLI.

TIPPERARY JOE.

I HAVE already passingly alluded to Joe's conversational powers; and certainly they were exercised on this occasion with a more than common ability, either taking my silence as a suggestion for him to speak—or, perhaps, and more probably, perceiving that some deep depression was over me—the kind-hearted fellow poured forth his stores of song and legend without ceasing. Now amusing me by his wild and fitful snatches of old ballads—now narrating in his simple but touching eloquence some bygone story of thrilling interest—the long hours of the night passed over, and at daybreak we found ourselves descending the mountain toward a large and cultivated valley, in which I could faintly distinguish in the misty distance the little mill where our relay was to be found.

I stopped for a few minutes to gaze upon the scene before me. It was one of those peaceful landscapes of rural beauty, which beam more of soothing influence upon the sorrow-struck heart than the softest voice of consolation. Unlike the works of man, they speak directly to our souls, while they appeal to our reason; and the truth comes forced upon us, that we alone must not repine. A broad and richly cultivated valley, bounded by mountains whose sides were clothed with deep wood—a stream, whose wayward course watered every portion of the plain was seen now flowing among the grassy meadows, or peeping from the alders that lined the banks. The heavy mist of morning was rolling lazily up the mountain-side; and beneath its gray mantle the rich green of pasture and meadow land was breaking forth, dotted with cattle and sheep. As I looked, Joe knelt down and placed his ear upon the ground, and seemed for some minutes absorbed in listening. Then suddenly springing up, he cried out,—

"The mill isn't going to-day—I wonder what's the matter. I hope Andy isn't sick."

A shade of sorrow came over his wild features, as he muttered between his teeth

the verse of some old song, of which I could but catch the last two lines :

> "And when friends are crying around the dying,
> Who wouldn't wish he had lived alone !"

"Ay," cried he aloud, as his eye glistened with an unnatural luster, "better be poor Tipperary Joe, without house or home, father or mother, sister or friend, and when the time comes, run to earth, without a wet eye after him."

"Come, come, Joe, you have many a friend ; and when you count them over, don't forget me in the reckoning."

"Whist, whist," he whispered in a low voice, as if fearful of being overheard ; "don't say that—them's dangerous words."

I turned toward him with astonishment, and perceived that his whole countenance had undergone a striking change. The gay and laughing look had gone ; the bright color had left his cheek ; and a cold ghastly paleness was spread over his features ; and as he cast a hurried and stealthy look around him, I could mark that some secret fear was working within him.

"What is it, Joe ?" said I ; "what's the matter ? Are you ill ?"

"No," said he, in a tone scarce audible, "no ; but you frightened me just now, when you called me your friend."

"How could that frighten you, my poor fellow ?"

"I'll tell you—that's what they called my father—they said he was friendly with the gentlemen, and signs on it." He paused, and his eye became rooted to the ground, as if on some object there from which he could not turn his gaze. "Yes, I mind it well—we were sitting by the fire in the guard-room all alone by ourselves—the troops was away. I don't know where—when we heard the tramp of men marching, but not regular, but coming as if they didn't care how, and horses and carts rattling and rumbling among them.

"'Thim's the boys,' says my father. 'Give me that ould cockade there, till I stick it in my cap, and reach me over the fiddle, till I rise a tune for them.'

"I mind little more till we was marching at the head of them through the town, down toward the new college that was building—it's Maynooth I'm speaking about—and then we turned to the left, my father scraping away all the time every tune he thought they'd like ; and if now and then by mistake he'd play anything that did not plaze them, they'd damn and blast him with the dreadfullest curses, and stick a pike into him, till the blood would come running down his back ; and then my father would cry out,—

"'I'll tell my friends on you for this—devil a lie on it, but I will.'

"At last we came to the Duke's wall, and then my father sat down on the roadside, and cried out that he wouldn't go a step farther, for I was crying away with sore feet at the pace we were going, and asking every minute to be let sit down to rest myself.

"'Look at the child,' says he, 'his feet's all bleeding.'

"'Ye have only a little farther to go,' says one of them that had cross-belts on, and a green sash about him.

"'The divil resave another step,' says my father.

"'Tell Billy to play us the "The Farmer's Daughter" before he goes,' says one in the crowd.

"'I'd rather hear the "The Little Bowld Fox,"' says another.

"'No, no, "Baltiorum ! Baltiorum !"' says many more behind.

"'Ye shall have them all,' says my father, 'and that'll plaze ye.'

"And so he set to, and played the three tunes as beautiful as ever ye heard ; and when he was done, the man with the belts ups and says to him,—

"'Ye're a fine hand, Billy, and it's a pity to lose you, and your friends will be sorry for you'—and he said this with a grin—'but take the spade there and dig a hole, for we must be jogging, it's nigh day.'

"Well, my father, though he was tired enough, took the spade, and began digging as they told him, for he thought to himself, 'The boys is going to hide the pikes and the carbines before they go home.' Well, when he worked half an hour, he threw off his coat, and set to again ; and at last he grew tired and sat down on the side of the big hole, and called out,—

"'Isn't it big enough now, boys ?"

"'No,' says the Captain, 'nor half.'

"So my father set to once more, and worked away with all his might, and they all stood by, talking and laughing with one another.

"'Will it do now ?' says my father ; 'for sure enough I'm clean beat.'

"'Maybe it might,' says one of them : 'lie down and see if it's the length.'

"'Well, is it that it's for ?' says my father : 'faix, I never guessed it was a grave.' And so he took off his cap and lay down his full length in the hole.

"'That's all right,' says the others, and began with spades and shovels to cover him up. At first he laughed away as

hearty as the rest; but when the mold grew heavy on him, he began to screech out to let him up, and then his voice grew weaker and fainter, and they waited a little, then worked harder, and then came a groan, and all was still; and they patted the sods over him and heaped them up; and then they took me and put me in the middle of them, and one called out, 'March!' I thought I saw the green sod moving on the top of the grave as we walked away, and heard a voice half-choking calling out, 'There, boys, there!' and then a laugh. But sure I often hear the same still, when there's nobody near me, and I do be looking on the ground by myself."

"Great God!" cried I, "is this true?"

"True as you're there," replied he. "I was ten years of age when it happened, and I never knew how time went since, nor how long it is ago, only it was in the year of the great troubles here, and the soldiers and the country people never could be cruel enough to one another; and whatever one did to-day, the others would try to beat it out to-morrow. But it's truth every word of it; and the place is called 'Billy the fool's grave' to this hour. I go there once a year to see it myself."

This frightful story—told, too, with all the simple power of truth—thrilled through me with horror, long after the impression seemed to have faded away from him who told it; and though he still continued to speak on, I heard nothing; nor did I mark our progress, until I found myself beside the little stream which conducted to the mill.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE HIGH ROAD.

Joe was right, the mill was not at work, for "Andy" had been summoned to Ennis, where the assizes were then going forward. The mare which had formed part of our calculations was also absent; and we sat down in the little porch to hold a council of war as to our future proceedings. After canvassing the question for some time, Joe left me for a few minutes, and returned with the information that the high road to Ennis lay only a couple of miles distant, and that the stage-coach would pass there in about two hours, by which I could reach the town that evening. It was therefore decided that he should return with the pony to Murranakilty; while I, having procured a gossoon to carry my baggage, made the best of my way toward the Ennis road.

Joe soon found me an urchin to succeed him as my guide and companion, and with an affectionate leave-taking, and a faithful promise to meet me some time and somewhere, we parted.

So long as I had journeyed along beside my poor, half-witted follower, the strange and fickle features of his wandering intellect had somehow interrupted the channels of my own feelings, and left me no room for reflection on my changed fortunes. Now, however, my thoughts returned to the past with all the force of some dammed-up current, and my blighted hopes threw a dark and somber shadow over all my features. What cared I what became of me? why did I hasten hither and thither? were my first reflections. If life had lost its charm, so had misfortune its terror for me. There seemed something frivolous and contemptible in the return to those duties, which in all the buoyant exhilaration of my former life had ever seemed unfitting and unmanly. No: rather let me seek for some employment on active service—the soldier's career I once longed for, to taste its glorious enthusiasm, I wished for now, to enjoy its ceaseless movement and exertion.

As I thought over all I had seen and gone through since my arrival in Ireland—its varied scenes of mirth and woe: its reckless pleasures, its wilder despair—I believed that I had acquired a far deeper insight into my own heart, in proportion as I looked more into those of others. A not unfrequent error this. The outstretched page of human nature that I had been gazing on had shown me the passions and feelings of other men laid bare before me, while my own heart lay dark, enshrined, and unvisited within me. I believed that life had no longer anything to tie me to it—and I was not then twenty! Had I counted double as many years, I had had more reason for the belief, and more difficulty to think so.

Sometimes I endeavored to console myself by thinking of all the obstacles that, under the happiest circumstances, must have opposed themselves to my union with Louisa Bellew. My mother's pride alone seemed an insurmountable one. But then I thought of what a noble part had lain before me, to prefer the object of my love—the prize of my own winning—to all the caresses of fortune—all the seductions of the world. Sir Simon Bellew, too, what could he mean? The secret he alluded to, what was it? Alas? what mattered

it—my doom was sealed—my fate decided—I had no care for how!

Such were my thoughts as I journeyed along the path that conducted toward the high road, while my little guide, bare-legged and barefooted, trotted on merrily before me, who, with none of this world's goods, had no room in his heart for sorrow or repining.

We at last reached the road, which, dusty and deserted, skirted the side of a bleak mountain for miles—not a house to be seen, not a traveler, nor scarce a wheel-track to mark the course of any one having passed there. I had not followed it for more than half an hour, when I heard the tramp of horses and the roll which announced the approach of an equipage. A vast cloud of dust, through which a pair of leaders were alone visible, appeared at a distance. I seated myself at the roadside to await its coming, my little gossoon beside me, evidently not sorry to have reached a resting-place; and once more my thoughts returned to their well-worn channel, and my head sank on my bosom. I forgot where I was, when suddenly the prancing of a pair of horses close to me aroused me from my stupor, and a postilion called out to me in no very subdued accent,—

"Will ye hook on that trace there, avick, av ye're not asleep?"

Whether it was my look of astonishment at the tone and the nature of the request, or delay in acceding to it, I know not, but a hearty curse from the fellow on the wheelers perfectly awakened me, and I replied by something not exactly calculated to appease the heat of the discussion.

"Begorra," said he of the leaders, "it's always the way with your shabby genteels;" and he swung himself down from the saddle to perform the required service himself.

During this I took the opportunity of looking at the carriage, which was a large and handsome barouche, surrounded by all the appurtenances of travel—cap-cases, imperials, etc.,—a fat-looking, lazy footman nodding sleepily on the box, a well-tanned lady's maid was reading a novel in the rumble. Within I saw the figure of a lady, whose magnificent style of dress but little accorded with the unfrequented road she was traversing, and the wild inhabitants so thinly scattered through it. As I looked, she turned round suddenly, and before I could recognize her, called out my name. The voice in an instant reassured me—it was Mrs. Paul Rooney herself.

"Stop," cried she with a wave of her jeweled hand. "Michael, get down. Only think of meeting you here, Captain."

I stammered out some explanation about a cross-cut over the mountain to catch the stage, and my desire to reach Ennis; while the unhappy termination of our intimacy, and my mother's impertinent letter, kept ever uppermost in my mind, and made me confused and uneasy. Mrs. Paul, however, had evidently no participation in such feelings, but welcomed me with her wonted cordiality, and shook my hand with a warmth that proved if she had not forgotten, she had certainly forgiven the whole affair.

"And so you are going to Ennis," said she, as I assumed the place beside her in the barouche, while Michael was busily engaged in fastening on my luggage behind; the which two movements seemed to be as naturally performed as though the amiable lady had been in the habit of taking up walking gentlemen with a portmanteau every day of her life. "Well, how fortunate! I'm going there too. Pole"—so she now designated her excellent spouse, it being the English for Paul—"has some little business with the chief-justice—two murder cases, and a forcible abduction—and I promised to take him up on my return from Miltown, where I have been spending a few weeks. After that we return to our little place near Bray, where I hope you'll come and spend a few weeks with us."

"This great pleasure I fear I must deny myself," said I, "for I have already outstayed my leave, and have unfortunately somehow incurred the displeasure of his excellency; and unless"—here I dropped my voice, and stole a half-timid look at the lady under my eyelashes—"some one with influence over his grace shall interfere on my behalf, I begin to half fear lest I may find myself in a sad scrape."

Mrs. Paul blushed, turned away her head, while pressing my hand softly in her own she murmured,—

"Don't fret about it—it won't signify."

I could scarce repress a smile at the success of my bit of flattery, for as such alone I intended it, when she turned toward me, and, as if desirous to change the topic, said,—

"Well, we heard of all your doings—your steeplechase, and your duel, and your wound, and all that—but what became of you afterwards?"

"Oh!" said I, hesitatingly, "I was fortunate enough to make a most agreeable acquaintance, and with him I have been spending a few weeks on the coast—Father Tom Loftus."

"Father Tom!" said Mrs. Rooney, with a laugh; "the pleasantest crayture in Ireland. There isn't the like of him. Did he sing you the 'Priest's Supper?'" The lady blushed as she said these words, as if carried away by a momentary excitement to speak of matters not exactly suitable; and then drawing herself up, she continued, in a more measured tone, "You know, Captain, one meets such strange people in this world."

"To be sure, Mrs. Rooney," said I, encouragingly; "and to one like yourself, who can appreciate character, Father Loftus is indeed a gem."

Mrs. Rooney, however, only smiled her assent, and again changed the course of the conversation.

"You met the Bellews, I suppose, when down in the West?"

"Yes," stammered I; "I saw a good deal of Sir Simon when in that country."

"Ah, the poor man!" said she, with real feeling; "what an unhappy lot his has been!"

Supposing that she alluded to his embarrassment as to fortune, the difficulties which pressed upon him from money causes, I merely muttered my assent.

"But I suppose," continued she, "you have heard the whole story—though the unhappy event occurred when you were a mere child."

"I am not aware to what you allude," said I, eagerly, while a suspicion shot across my mind that the secret of Sir Simon Bellew's letter was at length to be cleared up.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Rooney, with a sigh, "I mean poor, dear Lady Bellew's affair—when she went away with a major of dragoons; and, to be sure, an elegant young man he was, they said. Pole was on the inquest, and I heard him say he was the handsomest man he ever saw in his life."

"He died suddenly, then?"

"He was shot by Sir Simon in a duel the very day week after the elopement."

"And she?" said I.

"Poor thing, she died of a consumption, or some say a broken heart, the same summer."

"That is a sad story, indeed," said I, musingly, "and I no longer wonder that the poor old man should be such as he is."

"No, indeed; but then he was very much blamed after all, for he never had that Jerningham out of the house."

"Horace Jerningham!" cried I, as a cold, sickening fear crept over me.

"Oh yes, that was his name. He was the Honorable Horace Jerningham, the younger son of some very high family in England; and, indeed, the elder brother has died since, and they say the title has become extinct."

It is needless for me to attempt any description of the feelings that agitated my heart, when I say that Horace Jerningham was the brother of my own mother. I remembered when a child to have heard something of a dreadful duel, when all the family went into deep mourning, and my mother's health suffered so severely that her life was at one time feared for; but that fate should ever have thrown me into intimacy with those upon whom this grievous injury was inflicted, and by whom death and mourning were brought upon my house, was a sad and overwhelming affliction, that rendered me stunned and speechless. "How came it, then," thought I, "that my mother never recognized the name of her brother's antagonist when speaking of Miss Bellew in her letter to me?" Before I had time to resolve this doubt in my mind, Mrs. Rooney had explained it.

"And this was the beginning of all his misfortunes. The friends of the poor young man were people of great influence, and set every engine to work to ruin Sir Simon, or, as he then was, Mr. Simon Barrington. At last they got him outlawed; and it was only the very year he came to the title and estates of his uncle that the outlawry was taken off, and he was once more enabled to return to Ireland. However, they had their revenge if they wished for it; for what between recklessness and bad company, he took to gambling when abroad, contracted immense debts, and came into his fortune little better than a beggar. Since that the world has seen little of him, and indeed he owes it but little favor. Under Pole's management the property is now rapidly improving; but the old man cares little for this, and all I believe he wishes for is, to have health enough to go over to the continent and place his daughter in a convent before he dies."

Little did she guess how every word sank deep into my heart. Every sentence of the past was throwing its shadow over all my future, and the utter wreck of my hopes seemed now inevitable.

While thus I sat brooding o'er my gloomiest thoughts, Mrs. Rooney, evidently affected by the subject, maintained a perfect silence. At last, however, she seemed to have summed up the whole case in her mind, as, turning to me confiden-

tially, with her hand pressed upon my arm, she added, in a true moralizing cadence, very different from that she had employed when her feelings were really engaged,—

"And that's what always comes of it when a gallant, gay Lutherian gets admission into a family."

Shall I confess, that notwithstanding the deep sorrow of my heart, I could scarce repress an outbreak of laughter at these words. We now chatted away on a variety of subjects, till the concourse of people pressing onward to the town, the more thickly populated country, and the distant view of chimneys, apprised us we were approaching Ennis. Notwithstanding all my wishes to get on as fast as possible, I found it impossible to resist an invitation to dine that day with the Rooneys, who had engaged a small, select party at the head inn, where Mrs. Rooney's apartments were already awaiting her.

It was dusk when we arrived, and I could only perceive that the gloomy and narrow streets were densely crowded with country people, who conversed together in groups. Here and there a knot of legal folk were congregated, chatting in a louder tone; and before the court-house stood the carriage of the chief-justice, with a guard of honor of the county yeomanry, whose unsoldierlike attitudes and droll equipments were strongly provocative of laughter. The postilions, who had with true tact reserved a "trot for the town," whipped and spurred with all their might; and, as we drove through the thronged streets, a strange impression fled abroad that we were the bearers of a reprieve, and a hearty cheer from the mob followed us to our arrival at the inn-door—a compliment which Mrs. Paul, in no wise attributing to anything save her own peculiar charms and deserts, most graciously acknowledged by a smile and a wave of her hand, accompanied by an unlimited order for small beer—which act of grace was, I think, even more popular than their first impression concerning us.

"Ah, captain," said the lady, with a compassionate smile, as I handed her out of the carriage, "they are so attached to the aristocracy!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE ASSIZE TOWN.

When I had dressed, I found that I had above an hour to spare before dinner, so taking my hat I strolled into the town. The streets were even more crowded now than before. The groups of country people were larger, and as they conversed together in their native tongue, with all the violent gesticulations and energetic passion of their nature, an inexperienced spectator might well have supposed them engaged in active strife.

Now and then a kind of movement, a species of suppressed murmur from the Court-house, would turn every eye in that direction, and then every voice was hushed; not a man moved. It was evident that some trial of the deepest interest was going forward, and on inquiry I learned that it was a murder case, in which six men were concerned. I heard also that the only evidence against them was from one of their own party, who had turned, as the lawyers term it, approver. I knew well that no circumstance was more calculated than this to call forth all that is best and worst in Irish character, and thought, as I walked along through the dense crowd, I could trace in the features around me the several emotions by which they were moved. Here was an old gray-headed man leaning on a staff; his lackluster eyes gazing in wonder at some speaker who harrated a portion of the trial—his face all eagerness, and his hands tremulous with anxiety; but I felt I could read the deep sorrow of his heart as he listened to the deed of blood, and wondered how men would risk their tenure of a life which, in a few days more, perhaps, he himself was to leave forever. Here beside him was a tall and powerfully-built countryman; his hat drawn down upon his eyes, that peered forth from their shadow—dark, lustrous, and almost wild in their expression; his face, tanned by season and exposure, was haggard and care-worn, and in his firmly clenched lips and fast-locked jaw you could read the resolute purpose of one who could listen to nothing save the promptings of the spirit of vengeance, and his determination that blood should have blood.

Some there were whose passionate tones and violent gestures showed that all their sympathy for the prisoners was merged in the absorbing feeling of detestation for the informer; and you could mark in such groups as these, that more women were mingled, whose bloodshot eyes and convulsed features made them appear the very demons of strife itself. But the most painful sight of all was the children who were assembled around every knot of speakers — their eyes staring, and their ears eagerly drinking in each word that dropped; no trace of childhood's happy

carelessness was there; no sign of that light-hearted youth that knows no lasting sorrow. No: theirs were the rigid features of intense passion, in which fear, suspicion, craft, but, above all, the thirst for revenge, were writ. There were some whose clenched hand and darkened brow betokened the gloomy purpose of their hearts. There were others whose outpoured wrath heaped curses on him who had betrayed his fellows—there was grief, violent, wild, and frantic—there was mute and speechless suffering, but not a tear did I see, not even on the cheek of childhood or of woman. No! Their seared and withered sorrow no dew of tears had ever watered. Like a blighting simoon, the spirit of revenge had passed over them, and scorched and seathed all the verdant charities of life. The law, which in other lands is looked to for protection and security, was regarded by them as an instrument of tyranny; they neither understood its spirit, nor trusted its decisions; and when its blow fell upon them, they bent their heads in mournful submission, to raise them when opportunity offered, in wild and stern defiance. Its denunciations came to them sudden and severe: they deemed the course of justice wayward and capricious—the only feature of certainty in its operation being, that its victim was ever the poor man. The passionate elements of their wild natures seemed but ill-adapted to the slow-sustained current of legal investigation: they looked upon all the details of evidence as the signs of vindictive malice, and thought that trickery and deceit were brought in arms against them. Hence each face among the thousands there bore the traces of that hardened, dogged suffering, that tells us that the heart is rather steeled with the desire to avenge, than bowed to weep over the doomed.

Before the court-house a detachment of soldiers was drawn up, under arms: their unmoved features and fixed attitudes presenting a strange contrast to the excited expressions and changeful gestures of those about them. The crowd at this part was thickest, and I could perceive in their eager looks and mute expressions, that something more than common had attracted their attention; my own interest was, however, directed in another quarter; for through the open window of the court-house I could hear the words of a speaker, whom I soon recognized as the counsel for the prisoner addressing the jury. My foraging cap passed me at once through the ranks, and after some little crushing I succeeded in gaining admission to the body of the court.

Such was the crowd within, I could see nothing but the heads of a closely-wedged mass of people—save, at the distant part of the court, the judges, and to their right the figure of the pleader, whose back was turned toward me.

Little as I heard of the speech, I was overwhelmed with surprise at what I did hear. Touching on the evidence of the "approver" but slightly, the advocate dwelt with a terrific force upon the degraded character of a man who could trade upon the blood of his former friends and associates; scarce stopping to canvass how the testimony bore home upon the prisoners, he burst forth into an impassioned appeal to the hearts of the jury, on faith betrayed and vows forsworn; and pictured forth the man who could thus surrender his fellows to the scaffold, as a monster whose evidence no man could trust—no jury confide in; and when he had thus heightened the coloring of his description by every power of an eloquence that made the very building ring, he turned suddenly toward the informer himself, as, pale, wan, and conscience-stricken, he cowered beneath the lightning glance from an eye that seemed to pierce his secret soul within him, and, apostrophizing his virtues, he directed every glance upon the miserable wretch that writhed beneath his sarcasm. This seemed indeed the speaker's forte. Never did I hear anything so tremendous as the irony with which he described the credit due to one who had so often been sworn and forsworn—"who took an oath of allegiance to his king, and an oath of fealty to his fellows, and then was there that day with a third oath, by which, in the blood of his victim, he was to ratify his perjury to both, and secure himself an honorable independence." The caustic satire verged once—only once—on something that produced a laugh, when the orator suddenly stopped—

"I find, my lord, I have raised a smile. God knows, never did I feel less merriment. Let me not be condemned. Let not the laugh be mistaken—few are those events that are produced by folly and vice that fire the hearts with indignation, but something in them will shake the sides with laughter. So, when the two famous moralists of old beheld the sad spectacle of life, the one burst into laughter, the other melted into tears. They were each of them right, and equally right. But these laughs are the bitter, rueful laughs of honest indignation, or they are the laughs of hectic

melancholy and despair. But look there, and tell me where is your laughter now."

With these words he turned fully round and pointed his finger to the dock, where the six prisoners, side by side, leaned their haggard, death-like faces upon the rail, and gazed with stupid wonder upon the scene before them. Four of the number did not even know the language, but seemed, by the instinct of their position, to feel the nature of the appeal their advocate was making, and turned their eyes around the court as if in search of some one look of pity or encouragement that should bring comfort to their hearts. The whole thing was too dreadful to bear longer, so I forced my way through the crowd, and at last reached the steps in front of the building. But here a new object of horror presented itself, and one which to this hour I cannot chase from before me. In the open space between the line formed by the soldiers and the court knelt a woman, whose tattered garments scarce covered a figure emaciated nearly to starvation—her cheeks, almost blue with famine, were pinched inward—and her hands, which she held clasped with outstretched arms before her, were like the skinny claws of some wild animal. As she neither spoke nor stirred, there was no effort made to remove her; and there she knelt, her eyes bloodshot and staring, bent upon the door of the building. A vague fear took possession of me. Somehow I had seen that face before. I drew near, and as a cold thrill ran through my blood, I remembered where. She was the wife of the man by whose bedside I had watched in the mountains. A half dread of being recognized by her kept me back for a moment—then came the better feeling, that perhaps I might be able to serve her, and I walked toward her; but though she turned her eyes toward me as I approached, her look had no intelligence in it, and I could plainly see that reason had fled, and left nothing save the poor suffering form behind it. I endeavored to attract her attention, but all in vain; and at last tried by gentle force to induce her to leave the place; but a piercing shriek, like one whose tones had long dwelt in my heart, broke from her, and a look of such unutterable anguish, that I was obliged to desist and leave her.

The crowd made way for me as I passed out, and I could see in their looks and demeanor the expression of grateful acknowledgment for even this show of feeling on my part—while some muttered as I went by "God reward ye," "The Lord be good to ye," as though at that moment they had nothing in their hearts save thoughts of kindness and words of blessing.

I reached my room, and sat down a sadder, perhaps a wiser man; and yet I know not this. It would need a clearer head than mine to trace all the varying and discordant elements of character I had witnessed to their true source—to sift the evil from the good, to know what to cherish, what to repress, whereon to build hope, or what to fear. Such was this country once—has it changed since?

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE BAR DINNER.

At nine o'clock the jury retired, and a little afterwards the front drawing-room at the head inn was becoming every moment more crowded, as the door opened to admit the several members of the bar, invited to partake of Mrs. Rooney's hospitalities. Mrs. Rooney's I say; for the etiquette of the circuit forbidding the attorney to entertain the dignitaries of the craft, Paul was only present at his own table on sufferance, and sought out the least obtrusive place he could find among the juniors and side-dishes.

No one who could have seen the gay, laughing, merry mob of shrewd, cunning-looking men, that chatted away there, would have imagined them, a few moments previously engaged in a question where the lives of six of their fellow-men hung in the balance, and where, at the very moment, the deliberation was continued that should perhaps, sentence them to death upon the scaffold.

The instincts of a profession are narrow and humiliating things to witness. The surgeon who sees but in the suffering agony of his patient the occasional displacement of certain anatomical details, is little better than a savage; the lawyer who watches the passions of hope and fear, distrust, dread, and suspicion, only to take advantage of them in his case, is far worse than one. I confess, on looking at these men, I could never divest myself of the impression that the hired and paid-for passion of the advocate, the subtlety that is engaged special, the wit that is briefed, the impetuous rush of indignant eloquence that is bottled up from town to town in circuit, and, like soda-water, grows weaker at every corking, make but a poor *ensemble* of

qualities for the class who, *par excellence,* stand at the head of professional life.

One there was, indeed, whose haggard eye and blanched cheek showed no semblance of forgetting the scene in which so lately he had been an actor. This was the lawyer who had defended the prisoners. He sat in a window, resting his head upon his hand—fatigue, exhaustion, but, more than all, intense feeling portrayed in every lineament of his pale face.

"Ah," said the gay, jovial-looking Attorney-General, slapping him familiarly on the shoulder—"ah, my dear fellow! not tired, I hope. The court was tremendously hot; but come, rally a bit; we shall want you. Bennett and O'Grady have disappointed us, it seems; but you are a host in yourself."

"Maybe so," replied the other, faintly, and scarce lifting his eyes; "but you can't depend on my 'elevation.'"

The ease and readiness of the reply, as well as the tones of the voice, struck me, and I perceived that it was no other than the prior of the Monks of the Screw who had spoken. Mrs. Rooney made her appearance at the moment, and my attention was soon taken away by the announcement of dinner.

One of the judges arrived in time to offer his arm, and I could not help feeling amused at the mock solemnity of the procession as we moved along. The judge, I may observe, was a young man, lately promoted, and one whose bright eye, and bold dashing expression bore many more traces of the outer bar, than it smacked of the dull gravity of the bench. He took the end of the table beside Mrs. Paul, and the others soon seated themselves promiscuously along the board.

There is a species of gladiatorial exhibition in lawyers' society that is certainly very amusing. No one speaks without the foreknowledge that he is to be caught up, punned on, or ridiculed, as the case may be. The whole conversation is, therefore, a hailstorm of short stories, quips, and retorts, intermingled with details of successful bar stratagems, and practical jokes played off upon juries. With less restraint than at a military mess, there is a strong professional feeling of deference for the seniors, and much more tact and knowledge of the world to unite them. While thus the whole conversation ran on topics of the circuit, I was amazed at Mrs. Rooney's perfect intimacy with all the niceties of a law joke, or the fun of a *nisi prius* story. She knew the chief peculiarities of the several persons alluded to, and laughed loud and long at the good things she listened to. The judge alone, above all others, had the lady's ear. His bold but handsome features, his rich commanding voice—nothing the worse that it was mellowed by a little brogue—his graceful action and manly presence, stamped him as one well suited to be successful wherever good looks, ready tact, and consummate conversational powers have a field for their display. His stories were few, but always pertinent and well told; and frequently the last joke at the table was clapped by him, when no one else could have ventured to try it, while the rich roll of his laugh was a guaranty for mirth that never failed.

It was when my attention was drawn off by Mrs. Rooney to some circumstance of our former intimacy, that a hearty burst of laughing, from the end of the table, told that something unusually absurd was being related.

"Yes, sir," said a shrewd-looking, thin old fellow in spectacles, "we capitulated, on condition of leaving the garrison with all the honors of war; and, faith, the sheriff was only too glad to comply."

"Bob Mahon is certainly a bold fellow, and never hard-pushed, whatever you may do with him."

"Bob Mahon!" said I; "what of him?"

"Keatley has just been telling how he held out the jail of Ennis for four weeks against the sheriff. The jailor was an old tenant of his, and readily came into his plans. They were victualed for a long siege, and, as the place was strong, they had nothing to fear. When the garrison was summoned to surrender, they put a charge of No. 4 into the sub-sheriff, that made him move to the rear; and as the prisoners were all coming from the assizes, they were obliged to let him have his own terms, if he'd only consent to come out. So they gave him twelve hours' law, and a clear run for it; and he's away."

This was indeed a very quick realization of Father Tom's prediction, and I joined in the mirth the story elicited; not the less readily that I was well acquainted with the principal actor in it.

While the laughter still continued, the door opened, and a young barrister stole into the room and whispered a few words into the ear of the counsel for the prisoners. He leaned back in his chair, and pushed his wine-glass hurriedly before him.

"What! Collinson," cried the Attorney-General, "have they agreed?"

"Yes, sir—a verdict of guilty."

"Of course; the evidence was too home

for a doubt," said he, filling his glass from the decanter.

A sharp glance from the dark eye of the opposite counsel was the only reply, as he rose and left the room.

"Our friend has taken a more than common interest in this case," was the cool observation of the last speaker; "but there was no getting over Hanlon's testimony." Here he entered into some detail of the trial, while the buzz and confusion of voices became greater than ever. I took this opportunity of making my escape, and joined Mrs. Rooney, who a short time before had retired to the drawing-room.

Mrs. Paul had contrived, even in the short space since her arrival, to have converted the drawing-room into a semblance of something like an apartment in a private house; books, prints, and flowers, judiciously disposed, as well as an open pianoforte, giving it an air of comfort and propriety far different from its ordinary seeming. She was practicing Moore's newly-published song of "Fly from this world, dear Bessie, with me," as I entered.

"Pray continue, my dear Mrs. Rooney," said I; "I will take it as the greatest possible favor—"

"Ah!" said Mrs. Paul, throwing up her eyes in the most languishing ecstasy—"ah! you have a soul; I know you have."

Protesting that I had strong reasons to believe so, I renewed my entreaty.

"Yes," said she, musing, and in a Siddons' tone of soliloquy—"yes, the poet is right—

'Music hath charms to *smooth* the savage *beast*.'

But I really can't sing the melodies—they are too much for me. The allusion to former times, when King O'Toole and the rest of the royal house—Ah! you are aware, I believe, that family reasons—"

Here she pressed her embroidered handkerchief to her eyes with one hand, while she grasped mine convulsively with the other.

"Yes, yes," said I, hurriedly, while a strong temptation to laugh outright seized me. "I have heard that your descent—"

"Yes, my dear; if it wasn't for the Danes, and the cruel Battle of the Boyne, there's no saying where I might not be seated now."

She leaned on the piano as she spoke, and seemed overpowered with sorrow. At this instant the door opened, and the judge made his appearance.

"A thousand pardons for the indiscretion," said he, stepping back as he saw me sitting with the lady's hand in mine. I sprang up, confused and ashamed; and, rushing past him, hurried downstairs.

I knew how soon my adventure—for such it would grow into—would be the standing jest of the bar mess; and not feeling disposed to be present at their mirth, I ordered a chaise, and, before half an hour elapsed, was on my road to Dublin.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE RETURN.

We never experience to the full how far sorrow has made its inroads upon us until we come back, after absence, to the places where we have once been happy, and find them lone and tenantless. While we recognize each old familiar object, we see no longer those who gave them all their value in our eyes. Every inanimate thing about speaks to our senses; but where are they who were wont to speak to our hearts? The solitary chamber is then, indeed, but the body of all our pleasure, from which the soul has departed forever. These feelings were mine as I paced the old, well-worn stairs, and entered my quarters in the castle. No more I heard the merry laugh of my friend O'Grady, nor his quick step upon the stair. The life, the stir, the bustle of the place itself seemed to have all fled. The court only echoed to the measured tread of the grenadier who marched backwards and forwards beside the flagstaff in the center of the open space. No cavalcade of joyous riders, no prancing horses led about by grooms, no showy and splendid equipages; all was still, sad and neglected-looking. The dust whirled about in circling eddies as the cold wind of an autumnal day moaned through the arched passages and gloomy corridors of the old building. A careworn official, or some slatternly inferior of the household, would perhaps pass from time to time; but except such as these, nothing stirred.

The closed shutters and drawn-down blinds showed that the viceroy was absent; and I found myself the only occupant of the building.

It requires the critical eye of the observant resident of great cities to mark the changes which season and fashion effect in their appearance. To one unaccustomed to their phases it seems strange to hear, "How empty the town is; how very few people are in London!" while the heavy tide of population pours incessantly around

him, and his ear is deafened with the ceaseless roll of equipages. But in such a city as Dublin the alteration is manifest to the least remarking. But little frequented by the country gentry—and never, except for the few months when the court is there,—still less visited by foreigners,—deserted by the professional classes—at least such of them as are independent enough to absent themselves—the streets are actually empty. The occupations of trade, the bustle of commerce, that through every season continue their onward course in the great trading cities, such as Liverpool, Hamburg, Frankfort and Bordeaux, scarce exist here; and save that the tattered garments of mendicancy, and the craving cries of hunger are ever before you, you might fall into a drowsy reverie as you walked, and dream yourself in Palmyra.

I had strolled about for above an hour, in the moody frame of mind my own reflections and the surrounding objects were well calculated to suggest, when, meeting by accident a subaltern with whom I was slightly acquainted, I heard that the court had that morning left the lodge in the park for Kilkenny, where the theatricals of that pleasant city were going forward; a few members of the household alone remaining, who were to follow in a day or two.

For some days previous I had made up my mind not to remain in Ireland. Every tie that bound me to the country was broken. I had no heart to set about forming new friendships, while the wounds of former ones were still fresh and bleeding; and I longed for change of scene and active occupation, that I might have no time to reflect or look back.

Resolving to tender my resignation on the duke's staff without any further loss of time, I set out at once for the park.

I arrived there in the very nick of time. The carriages were at the entrance waiting for the private secretary of his grace, and two of the aides-de-camp, who were eating a hurried luncheon before starting. One of the aides-de-camp I knew but slightly, the other was a perfect stranger to me; but Moreton was an intimate acquaintance. He jumped up from his chair as my name was announced, and a deep blush covered his face as he advanced to meet me.

"My dear Hinton, how unfortunate! Why weren't you here yesterday? It's too late now."

"Too late for what? I don't comprehend you."

"Why, my dear fellow," said he, drawing his arm within mine, and leading me toward a window, as he dropped his voice to a whisper, "I believe you heard from me that his grace was provoked at your continued absence, and expected at least that you would have written, to ask an extension of your leave. I don't know how it was, but it seemed to me that the duchess came back from England with some crotchet in her head, about something she heard in London. In any case they ordered me to write."

"Well, well," said I, impatiently; "I guess it all. I have got my dismissal. Isn't that the whole of it?"

He nodded twice without speaking.

"It only anticipates my own wishes," said I, coolly, "as this note may satisfy you." I placed the letter I had written for the purpose of my resignation in his hand, and continued, "I am quite convinced in my own mind that his grace, whose kindness toward me has never varied, would never have dreamed of this step on such slight grounds as my absence. No, no; the thing lies deeper. At any other time, I should certainly have wished to trace this matter to its source; now, however, chiming as it does with my own plans, and caring little how fortune intends to treat me, I'll submit in silence."

"And take no notice of the affair further?"

"Such is my determination," said I, resolutely.

"In that case," said Moreton, "I may tell you, that some story of a lady had reached the Duchess, when in London; some girl that it was reported you endeavored to seduce, and had actually followed for that purpose to the West of Ireland. There, there, don't take the matter up that way, for heaven's sake! My dear fellow, hear me out!" But I could hear no more; the rushing blood that crowded on my brain stunned and stupefied me, and it took several minutes before I became sufficiently collected to ask him to go on.

"I heard the thing so confusedly," said he, "that I cannot attempt anything like connection in relating it. But the story goes, that your duel in Loughrea did not originate about the steeple-chase at all, but in a quarrel about this girl, with her brother, or her cousin, who, having discovered your intentions regarding her, you deemed proper to get rid of, as a preliminary. No one but a fool could credit such a thing."

"None but such could have invented it," said I as my thoughts at once recurred to Lord Dudley de Vere.

"The duke, however, spoke to General Hinton—"

"To my father! And how did he—"

"Oh, behaved as only he could have done. 'Stop, my lord,' said he. 'I'll spare you any further relation of this matter. If it be true, my son is unworthy of remaining on your staff. If it be false, I'll not permit him to hold an appointment where his reputation has been assailed, without affording him an opportunity of defense.' High words ensued, and the end was, that if you appeared before to-day, you were to hear the charge, and have an opportunity for reply. If not, your dismissal was to be made out, and another appointed in your place. Now that I have told you, what I feel the indiscretion of my ever having spoken of, promise me, my dear Hinton, that you will take no step in the matter. The intrigue is altogether beneath you, and your character demands no defense on your part."

"I almost suspect I know the party," said I, gloomily.

"No, no; I'm certain you can't. It is some woman's story—some peace of tea-table gossip, depend on it. In any case, quite unworthy of caring about."

"At all events, I am too indifferent at this moment to feel otherwise about anything," said I. "So, good bye, Moreton—my regards to all our fellows—good bye!"

"Good bye, my boy!" said he, warmly shaking my hand. "But, stop a moment, I have got some letters for you; they arrived only a few days since."

He took a packet from the drawer as he spoke, and, once more bidding adieu, I set out on my return to the Castle.

CHAPTER XLVI.

FAREWELL TO IRELAND.

My first care on reaching my quarters was to make preparations for my departure by the packet of the same evening; my next was to sit down and read over my letters. As I turned them over, I remarked that there were none from my father nor Lady Charlotte; there was, however, one in Julia's hand, and also a note from O'Grady; the others were the mere commonplace correspondence of every day acquaintances, which I merely threw my eyes carelessly over ere I consigned them to the fire. My fair cousin's possessed—I cannot explain why—a most unusual degree of interest for me, and, throwing myself back in my chair, I gave myself up to its perusal.

The epistle opened by a half satirical account of the London season—then nearly drawing to its close—in which various characters and incidents which I have not placed before my readers, but all well-known to me, were touched with that quiet, subdued raillery she excelled in. The flirtations, the jiltings, the matches that were on or off, the rumored duels, debts, and difficulties of every one we were acquainted with, were told with a most amusing smartness, all showing, young as she was, how thoroughly the wear and tear of fashionable life had invested her with an intricate knowledge of character, and a perfect acquaintance with all the intrigues and by-play of the world. "How unlike Louisa Bellew!" said I, as I laid down the letter after reading a description of a maneuvering mamma and obedient daughter to secure the prize of the season, with a peerage and some twenty thousand pounds per annum. It was true, they were the vices and the follies of the age which she ridiculed, but why should she have ever known them, or ought she to have been conversant with such a state of society as would expose them? Were it not better, like Louisa Bellew, to have passed her days amid the simple, unexciting scenes of secluded life, than to have purchased all the brilliancy of her wit, and the dazzle of her genius, at the price of true female delicacy and refinement? While I asked and answered myself these questions to the satisfaction of my own heart, I could not dismiss the thought that, amid such scenes as London presented, with such associates as fashion necessitated, the unprotected simplicity of Miss Bellew's character would expose her to much both of raillery and coldness; and felt that she would be nearly as misplaced among the proud daughters of haughty England, as my fair cousin in the unfashionable freedom of Dublin life.

I confess, as I read on, that old associations came crowding upon me; the sparkling brilliancy of Julia's style reminded me of the charms of her conversational powers, aided by all the loveliness of her beauty, and all the witchery which your true belle of fashion knows how, so successfully, to spread around her; and it was with a flush of burning shame on my cheek I acknowledged to myself how much her letter interested me. As I continued, I saw O'Grady's name, and, to my astonishment, found the following:—

"Lady Charlotte came back from the

Duke's ball greatly pleased with a certain major of dragoons, who, among his other excellent qualities, turns out to be a friend of yours. This estimable person, whose name is O'Grady, has done much to dissipate her ladyship's prejudices regarding Irishmen: the repose of his manner, and the quiet, unassuming, well-bred tone of his address, being all so opposed to her preconceived notions of his countrymen. He dines here twice or thrice a week: and as he is to sail soon, may happily preserve the bloom of his reputation to the last. My estimate of him is somewhat different: I think him a bold, conceited kind of person, esteeming himself very highly, and thinking little of other people. He has, however, a delightful old thing, his servant Corny, whom I am never tired of, and shall really miss much when he leaves us. Now, as to yourself, dear cousin, what mean all the secret hints, and sly looks, and doubtful speeches about you here? The Mysteries of Udolpho are plain reading, compared to your doings. Her ladyship never speaks of you but as 'that poor boy,' accompanying the epithet with the sigh with which one speaks of a shipwreck. Sir George calls you John, which shows he is not quite satisfied about you; and, in fact, I begin to suspect you must have become a United Irishman, with 'a lady in the case,' and even this would scarcely demand one-half the reserve and caution with which you are mentioned. Am I discreet in saying that I don't think De Vere likes you? The major, however, certainly does; and his presence has banished the lordling, for which, really, I owe him gratitude." The letter concluded by saying that my mother had desired her to write in her place, as she was suffering from one of her nervous headaches, which only permitted her to go to the exhibition at Somerset House. My father, too, was at Woolwich on some military business, and had no time for anything, save to promise to write soon; and that she herself being disappointed by the milliner in a new bonnet, dedicated the morning to me, with a most praiseworthy degree of self-denial and benevolence. I read the signature some half-a-dozen times over, and wondered what meaning in her own heart she ascribed to the words—"Yours, Julia."

"Now for O'Grady," said I, breaking the seal of the major's envelope:—

"My Dear Jack,—I was sitting on a hencoop, now pondering on my fortunes, now turning to con over the only book on board,—a very erudite work on naval tactics, with directions how 'to moor a ship in the Downs'—when a gun came booming over the sea, and a frigate, with certain enigmatical colors flying at her maintop, compelled the old troop-ship we were in to back her topsails and lie to; we were then steering straight for Madeira, in latitude —, longitude the same; our intention being, with the aid of Providence, to reach Quebec at some remote period of the summer, to join our service companies in Canada. Having obeyed the orders of H.M.S. *Blast*, to wait until she overtook us—a measure that nearly cost us two of our masts and the cook's galley, we not being accustomed to stand still, it seemed—a boat came alongside with the smallest bit of a midshipman I ever looked at sitting in the stern-sheets, with orders for us to face about, left shoulder forward, and march back to England, where, having taken in the second battalion of the twenty-eighth, we were to start for Lisbon. I need not tell you what pleasure the announcement afforded us; delighted as we were to exchange tomahawks and bowie-knives for civilized warfare, even against more formidable foes. Behold us then in full sail back to old England, which we reached within a fortnight; only to touch however, for the twenty-eighth were most impatiently expecting us; and having dedicated three days to taking in water and additional stores, and once more going through the horrible scene of leave-taking between soldiers and their wives, we sailed again. I have little inclination to give you the detail, which newspapers would beat me hollow in, of our march, or where we first came up with the French. A smart affair took place at daybreak, in which your humble servant, to use the appropriate phrase, distinguished himself—'egad, I had almost said extinguished—for I was shot through the side, losing part of that conjugal portion of the human anatomy called the rib, and sustaining several other minor damages, that made me appear to the regimental doctor a very unserviceable craft for his Majesty's service. The result was, I was sent back with that plaster for a man's vanity, though not for his wounds, a dispatch-letter to the Horse Guards, and an official account of the action.

"As nothing has occurred since in the Peninsula to eclipse my performance, I continue to star it here with immense success, and am quite convinced that, with a little more loss, I might make an excellent match out of the affair. Now, to the pleasant part of my epistle. Your father

found me out, a few evenings since, at an evening party at the Duke of York's, and presented me to your lady-mother, who was most gracious in her reception of me; an invitation to dinner the next day followed, and since, I have spent almost every day at your house. Your father, my dear Jack, is a glorious fellow, a soldier in every great feature of the character. You never can have a finer object of your imitation, and your best friend cannot wish you to be more than his equal. Lady Charlotte is the most fascinating person I ever met! her abilities are first-rate, and her powers of pleasing exceed all that ever I fancied, even of London fashionables. How you could have left such a house I can scarcely conceive, knowing as I do, something of your taste for comfort and voluptuous ease; besides *la cousine*, Lady Julia—Jack, Jack, what a close fellow you are: and how very lovely she is; she certainly has not her equal even here. I scarcely know her, for, somehow, she rather affects distance with my cloth, and rarely deigns any notice of the red-coats so plentifully sprinkled along your father's dinner-table. Her kindness to Corny, who was domesticated at your house for the last five weeks, I can never forget; and even he can't, it would appear, conjure up any complaint against her: what a testimony to her goodness!

"This life, however, cannot last forever, and as I have now recovered so far as to mount a horse once more, I have applied for a regimental appointment; your father most kindly interests himself for me, and before the week is over I may be gazetted. That fellow De Vere was very intimate here when I arrived; since he has seen me, however, his visits have become gradually less frequent, and now have almost ceased altogether. This, *entre nous*, does not seem to have met completely with Lady Julia's approval, and I think she may have attributed to me a circumstance in which certainly I was not an active cause. However happy I may feel at being instrumental in a breach of intimacy between her and one so very unworthy of her, even as a common acquaintance, I will ask you, Jack, when opportunity offers, to put the matter in its true light; for although I may, in all likelihood, never meet her again, I should be sorry to leave her with a more unfavorable impression of me than I really deserve."

Here the letter broke off. Lower down on the paper were the following lines, written in evident haste, and with a different ink.

"We sail to-night—Oporto is our destination. Corny is to remain behind, and I must ask of you to look to him on his arrival in Dublin. Lady Julia likes De Vere, and you know him too well to permit of such a fatal misfortune. I am, I find meddling in what really I have no right to touch upon. This is, however, 'in confidence.' God bless you.

"Yours ever,
"PHIL O'GRADY."

"Poor Phil," said I, as I laid down the letter; "in his heart he believes himself disinterested in all this, but I see plainly he is in love with her himself. Alas! I cannot conceive a heavier affliction to befall the man without fortune than to be thrown among those whose prospects render an alliance impossible, and to bestow his affections on an object perfectly beyond his reach of attainment. Many a proud heart has been torn in the struggle between its own promptings and the dread of the imputation, which the world so hastily confers, of 'fortune-hunting;' many a haughty spirit has quailed beneath this fear, and stifled in his bosom the thought that made his life a blessed dream. My poor friend, how little will she that has stolen away your peace think of your sorrows!"

A gentle tap at my door aroused me from my musings. I opened it, and saw, to my surprise, my old companion, Tipperary Joe. He was covered with dust, heated, and travel-stained, and leaned against the door-post to rest himself.

"So," cried he, when he had recovered his breath, "I'm in time to see you once more before you go. I ran all the way from Carlow, since twelve o'clock last night."

"Come in, my poor boy, and sit down. Here's a glass of wine; 'twill refresh you. We'll get something for you to eat presently."

"No; I couldn't eat now. My throat is full, and my heart is up here. And so you are going away—going for good and all! never to come back again?"

"Who can say so much as that, Joe? I should, at least, be very sorry to think so."

"And would you, now? And will you really think of ould Ireland when you're away? Hurroo! by the mortial, there's no place like it, for fun, divilment, and divarsion. But, musha, musha! I'm forgettin', and it's getting dark. May I go with you to the packet?"

"To be sure, my poor boy; and I believe we have not many minutes to spare."

I dispatched Joe for a car, while I threw a last look around my room. Sad things, these last looks, whether bestowed on the living or the dead, the life-like or the inanimate.

There is a feeling that resembles death in the last glance we are ever to bestow on a loved object. The girl you have treasured in your secret heart, as she passes by on her wedding-day, it may be happy and blissful, lifts up her laughing eyes, the symbol of her own light heart, and leaves, in that look, darkness and desolation to you forever. The boy your father-spirit has clung to, like the very light of your existence, waves his hand from the quarter-deck, as the gigantic ship bends over to the breeze; the wind is playing through the locks your hand so oftentimes has smoothed; the tears have dimned his eyes, for, mark! he moves his fingers over them —and this is a last look.

My sorrow had no touch of these. My eye ranged over the humble furniture of my little chamber, while memories of the past came crowding on me; hopes that I had lived to see blighted; day-dreams dissipated; heartfelt wishes thwarted and scattered. I stood thus for some minutes, when Joe again joined me.

Poor fellow! his wayward and capricious flights, now grave, now gay, were but the mockery of that sympathy my heart required. Still did he heal the sadness of the moment.

We need the voice, the look, the accent of affection, when we are leaving the spot where we have once been happy. It will not do to part from the objects that have made our home, without the connecting link of human friendship. The hearth, the roof-tree, the mountain, and the rivulet, are not so eloquent as the once syllabled "Good-by," come it from ever so humble a voice.

The bustle and excitement of the scene beside the packet seemed to afford Joe the most lively gratification; and, like the genius of confusion, he was to be seen flitting from place to place, assisting one, impeding another, while snatches of his wild songs broke from him every moment. I had but time to press his hand, when he was hurried ashore amongst the crowd, and the instant after the vessel sheered off from the pier, and got under weigh.

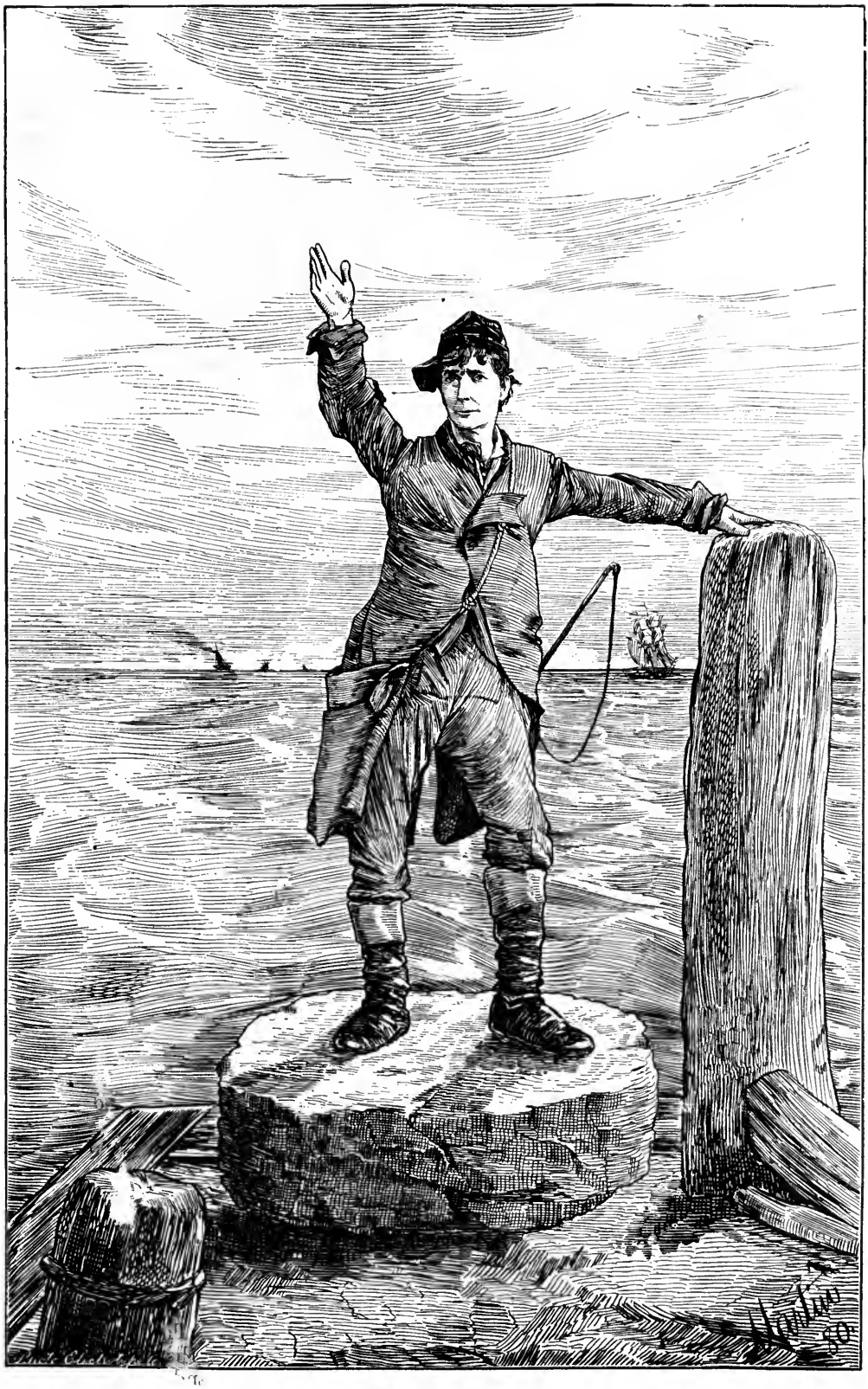
The poor boy stood upon a block of granite, waving his cap over his head. He tried a faint cheer, but it was scarcely audible: another; it, too, failed. He looked wildly around him on the strange, unknown faces, as if a scene of desolation had fallen on him, burst into a torrent of tears, and fled wildly from the spot. And thus I took my leave of Ireland.

When I arrived in Ireland I knew scarcely anything of the world. My opportunities had shown me life only through the colored gloss of certain fashionable prejudices; but of the real character, motives and habitual modes of acting and thinking of others, still more of myself, I was in total ignorance. The rapidly succeeding incidents of Irish life—their interest, variety, and novelty, all attracted and excited me; and without ever stopping to reflect upon causes, I found myself becoming acquainted with facts. That the changeful pictures of existence so profusely scattered through the land should have made their impression upon me, is natural enough; and because I have found it easier and pleasanter to tell my reader the machinery of this change in me, than to embody that change itself, is the reason why I have presented before him views of life under so many different circumstances, and when, frequently, they had no direct relation to the current of my own fate and the story of my own fortunes. It is enough of myself to say, that though scarcely older in time, I had grown so in thought and feeling. If I felt, on the one hand, how little my high connections, and the position in fashionable life which my family occupied, availed me, I learned, on the other, to know that friends, and staunch ones, could be made at once, on the emergency of a moment, and without the imposing ceremony of introduction, and the diplomatic interchange of visits. And now to my story.

CHAPTER XLVII.

LONDON.

It was late when I arrived in London and drove up to my father's house. The circumstances under which I had left Ireland weighed more heavily on me as I drew near home, and reflected over the questions I should be asked, and the explanations I should be expected to afford; and I half dreaded lest my father should disapprove of my conduct before I had an opportunity of showing him how little I had been to blame throughout. The noise and din of the carriages, the oaths and exclamations of the coachmen, and the uproar of the streets, turned my attention from these thoughts, and I asked what was the meaning of the crowd.



HE TRIED A FAINT CHEER, BUT IT WAS SCARCELY AUDIBLE. (P. 876.)

"A great ball, sir, at Lady Charlotte Hinton's."

This was a surprise, and not of the pleasantest. I had wished that my first meeting, with my father at least, should have been alone and in quietness, where I could fairly have told him every important event of my late life, and explained wherefore I so ardently desired immediate employment on active service, and a total change in that career which weighed so heavily on my spirits. The carriage drew up at the instant, and I found myself once more at home. What a feeling does that simple word convey to his ears who knows the real blessing of a home—that shelter from the world, its jealousies and its envies, its turmoils and its disappointments—where, like some land-locked bay, the still, calm waters sleep in silence, while the storm and hurricane are roaring without—where glad faces and bright looks abound—where each happiness is reflected back from every heart, and ten times multiplied, and every sorrow comes softened by consolation and words of comfort: and how little like this is the abode of the leader of fashion; how many of the fairest gifts of humanity are turned back by the glare of a hundred wax-lights, and the glitter of gilded lackeys; and how few of the charities of life find entrance where the splendor and luxury of voluptuous habits have stifled natural feeling, and made even sympathy unfashionable.

It was not without difficulty I could persuade the servants, who were all strangers to me, that the travel-stained, dusty individual before them was the son of the celebrated and fashionable Lady Charlotte Hinton, and at length reached my room to dress.

It was near midnight: the rooms were filled as I entered the drawing-room. For a few moments I could not help feeling strongly the full influence of the splendid scene before me. The undoubted evidences of rank and wealth that meet the eye on every side, in London life, are very striking. The splendor of the women's dress—their own beauty—a certain air of haughty bearing, peculiarly English—a kind of conscious superiority to the rest of the world marks them; and, in their easy, unembarrassed, steady glance, you read the proud spirit of Albion's "haughty dames." This alone was very different from the laughing spirit of Erin's daughters—their sparkling looks and smiling lips. The men, too, were so dissimilar: their reserved and stately carriage, their low voices, and deferential but composed manner, contrasting strongly with Irish volubility, quickness, and gesticulation. I stood unnoticed and alone for some time, quietly observant of the scene before me, and as I heard name after name announced, many of them the greatest and the highest in the land, there was no semblance of excitement as they entered—no looks of admiring wonder as they passed on and mingled with the crowd. This showed me I was in a mighty city, where the chief spirits that ruled the age moved daily before the public eye; and again I thought of Dublin, where some third-rate notoriety would have been hailed with almost acclamation, and lionized to the "top of his bent."

I could remember but few of those around, and even they had either forgotten me altogether, or, having no recollection of my absence, saluted me with the easy indifference of one who is seen every evening of his life.

"How are you, Hinton?" said one, with something more of warmth than the rest. "I have not met you for some weeks past."

"No," said I, smiling, "I have been nearly a year from home."

"Ah, indeed! In Spain?"

"No, in Ireland!"

"In Ireland! How odd!"

"Who has been in Ireland?" said a low, plaintive voice, turning round as she spoke, and my lady-mother stood before me. "I should like to hear something—But, dear me, this must be John!" And she held out her jeweled hand toward me.

"My dear mother, I am so happy to see you look so very well—"

"No, no, my dear," said she, sighing, "don't speak of that. When did you arrive?—I beg your royal highness's pardon—I hope you have not forgotten your *protégé*, my son."

I bowed respectfully as a large, full, handsome man, with bald head, and a most commanding expression, drew himself up before me.

"No, madam, I have not forgotten him, I assure you!" was the reply, as he returned my salute with marked coldness, and passed on.

Before Lady Charlotte could express her surprise at such an unlooked-for mark of displeasure, my father, who had just heard of my arrival, came up.

"Jack, my dear fellow, I am glad to see you. How large you have grown, boy, and how brown!"

The warm welcome of his manly voice, the affectionate grasp of his strong hand, rallied me at once, and I cared little for the looks of king or kaiser at that moment.

He drew his arm within mine, and led me through the rooms to a small boudoir, where a party at cards were the only occupants.

"Here we shall be tolerably alone for a little while, at least," said he; "and now, my lad, tell me everything about you."

In less than half an hour I ran over the principal events of my life in Ireland, omitting only those in which Miss Bellew bore a part. On this account my rupture with Lord de Vere was only imperfectly alluded to; and I could perceive that my father's brow became contracted, and his look assumed a severer expression at this part of my narrative.

"You have not been very explicit, Jack, about this business; and this it is which I am really uneasy about. I have never known you do a mean or a shabby thing—I will never suspect you of one. So now let me clearly understand the ground of this quarrel."

There was a tone of command in his voice as he said this which decided me at once, and without further hesitation I resolved on laying everything before him. Still I knew not how to begin—the mention of Louisa's name alone staggered me, and for a second or two I stammered and looked confused.

Unlike his wonted manner, my father looked impatient—almost angry. At last, when seeing that my agitation only increased upon me, and my difficulty grew each moment greater, he looked me sternly in the face, and, with a voice full of meaning, said,—

"Tell me everything—I cannot bear to doubt you. Was this a play transaction?"

"A play transaction! No, sir, nothing like it."

"Was there not a bet—some disputed wager—mixed up in it?"

"Yes, there was a wager, sir; but—"

Before I could conclude, my father pressed his hands against his eyes, and a faint sigh broke from him.

"But hear me out, sir. The wager was none of mine."

In a few moments I ran over the whole circumstances of De Vere's bet, his conduct to Miss Bellew, and my own subsequent proceedings; but when I came to the mention of O'Grady's name, he stopped me suddenly, and said,—

"Major O'Grady, however, did not approve of your conduct, in the affair."

"O'Grady! He was my friend all through it."

My father remained silent for a few minutes, and then in a low voice added,—

"There has been misrepresentation here."

The words were not well spoken when Lord Dudley de Vere, with my cousin Lady Julia on his arm, came up. The easy coolness of his manner, the tone of quiet indifference he assumed, were well known to me; but I was in no wise prepared for the look of insufferable, patronizing impertinence he had now put on. My cousin, more beautiful, far than ever I had seen her, took off my attention from him, and I turned with a feeling of half-pride, half-wonder to pay my respects to her. Dressed in the most perfect taste of the fashion, her handsome features wore the assured and tranquil expression which conscious beauty gives. And here let no inexperienced observer rashly condemn the placid loveliness of the queen of beauty—the sanctioned belle of fashionable life; it is, indeed, very different from the artless loveliness of innocent girlhood; but its claim is not less incontestable. The features, like the faculties, can be cultivated; and when no unnatural effort suggests the expression, who shall say that the mind habitually exercised in society of the highest and most gifted circle, will not impart a more elevated character to the look, than when the unobtrusive career of every-day life flows on calm and unruffled, steeping the soul in a dreary monotony, and calling for no effort save of the commonest kind. Julia's was indeed splendid beauty: the lustrous brilliancy of her dark blue eyes, shaded by long black lashes—the perfect contour of her cheeks—her full short lips, slightly, so slightly curled, you knew not if it were not more smile than sarcasm—the low tones of her voice were rich and musical, and her carriage and demeanor possessed all the graceful elegance which is only met with in the society of great cities. Her manner was most frank and cordial: she held out her hand to me at once, and looked really glad to see me. After a few words of recognition, she turned toward De Vere,—

"I shall ask you to excuse me, my lord, this set. It is so long since I have seen my cousin."

He bowed negligently, muttered something carelessly about the next waltz, and with a familiar nod to me, lounged away. O'Grady's caution about this man's attentions to Julia at once came to my mind, and the easy tone of his manner toward her alarmed me; but I had no time for reflection, as she took my arm and sauntered down the room.

"And so, my dear cousin, you have been

leading a very wild life of it — fighting duels, riding steeplechases, breaking your own bones and ladies' hearts, in a manner exceedingly Irish," said Julia, with a smile.

"From your letter I can learn, Julia, a very strange account of my doings must have reached my friends here. Except from yourself I have met with scarcely anything but cold looks since my arrival."

"Oh, never mind that—people will talk, you know. For my part, Jack, I never will believe you anything but what I have always known you. The heaviest charge I have heard against you is that of trifling with a poor girl's affections; and as I know that the people who spread these rumors generally don't know at which side either the trifling or the affections reside, why, I think little about it."

"And this has been said of me?"

"To be sure it has, and ten times as much. As to your gambling sins, there is no end to their enormity. A certain Mr. Rooney, I think the name is, a noted playman—"

"How absurd, Julia! Mr. Rooney never played in his life; nor have I, except in the casual way every one does in a drawing-room."

"*N'importe*—you are a lady-killer, and a gambler. Now as to count number three—for being a jockey?"

"My dear Julia, if you saw my steeplechase you'd acquit me of that."

"Indeed I did hear," said she, roguishly, "that you acquitted yourself admirably—but still you won. And then we come to the great offense—your quarrelsome habits. We heard, it is true, that you behaved, as it is called, very honorably, etc. But really dueling is so detestable—"

"Come, come, fair cousin, let us talk of something else besides my delinquencies. What do you think of my friend O'Grady?"

I said this suddenly, by way of reprisal; but to my utter discomfiture, she replied with perfect calmness,—

"I rather was amused with him at first. He is very odd—very unlike other people—but Lady Charlotte took him up so, and we had so much of him here, I grew somewhat tired of him. He was, however, very fond of you, and you know that made up for much with us all."

There was a tone of sweetness and almost of deep interest in these few last words that made my heart thrill, and unconsciously I pressed her arm closer to my side, and felt the touch returned. Just at the instant my father came forward, accompanied by another, who I soon perceived was the royal duke that had received me so coldly a few minutes before. His frank, manly face was now all smiles, and his bright eye glanced from my fair cousin to myself with a quick, meaning expression.

"Another time, General, will do quite as well. I say, Mr. Hinton, call on me tomorrow morning about ten, will you? I have something to say to you."

I bowed deeply in reply, and he passed on.

"And let me see you after breakfast," said Julia, in a half whisper, as she turned toward De Vere, who now came forward to claim her for the waltz.

My father, too, mixed with the crowd, and I felt myself alone and a stranger in what should have been my home. A kind of cold thrill came over me as I thought how unlike was my welcome to what it would have been in Ireland; for although I felt that in my father's manner toward me there was no want of affection or kindness, yet somehow I missed the exuberant warmth and ready cordiality I had latterly been used to; and soon turned away, sad and disappointed, to seek my own room.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

AN UNHAPPY DISCLOSURE.

"WHAT!" cried I, as I awoke the next morning, and looked with amazement at the figure who waddled across the room with a boot in either hand—"what, not Corny Delany, surely?"

"Ugh, that same," said he, with a cranky creak; "I don't wonder ye don't know me; hardship's telling on me every day."

Now really, in vindication of my father's household, in which Sir Corny had been domesticated for the last two months, I must observe, that the alteration in his appearance was not exactly such as to justify his remark; on the contrary, he had grown fatter and more ruddy, and looked in far better case than I had ever seen him: his face, however, most perseveringly preserved its habitual sour and crabbed expression, rather increased than otherwise by his improved condition.

"So, Corny, you are not comfortable here I find."

"Comfortable! The ways of this place would kill the Danes! Nothing but ringing bells from morning till night; carriages drivin' like wind up to the door; and bang, bang away at the rapper; then

more ringing to let them out again; and bells for breakfast, and for luncheon, and the hall dinner; and then the sight of vi'tals that's wasted; meat, and fish, and fowl, and vegetables, without end. Ugh, the haythins, the Turks; eating and drinking as if the world was all their own."

"Well, apparently they take good care of you in that respect."

"Devil a bit of care; here it's every man for himself; but I'll give warning on Saturday; sorrow one o' me'll be kilt for the like of them."

"You prefer Ireland, then, Corny?"

"Who said I did?" said he, snappishly; "isn't it as bad there? Ugh, ugh, the Captain won't rest asy in his grave, after the way he trated *me;* leaving me here alone and dissolate in this place, amongst strangers."

"Well, you must confess, the country is not so bad."

"And why would I confess it? What's in it that I don't mislike? Is it the heap of houses, and the smoke, and the devil's noise that's always going on that I'd like? Why isn't it peaceful and quiet like Dublin?"

And as I conversed further with him, I found that all his dislikes proceeded from the discrepancy he everywhere discovered from what he had been accustomed to in Ireland, and which, without liking, he still preferred to our Saxon observances; the few things he saw worthy of praise being borrowed or stolen from his own side of the Channel. And in this his ingenuity was striking, inasmuch that the very trees in Woburn Park owed their goodness to the owner having been once a lord-lieutenant in Ireland; where, as Corny expressed it, "Devil thank him to have fine trees; hadn't he the pick of the Phaynix!"

I knew that candor formed a most prominent feature in Mr. Delany's character, and consequently had little difficulty in ascertaining his opinion of every member of my family; indeed, to do him justice, no one ever required less of what is called pumping. His judgment on things and people flowed from him without effort or restraint, so that, ere half an hour elapsed he had expatiated on my mother's pride and vanity, apostrophized my father's hastiness and determination, and was quite prepared to enter upon a critical examination of my cousin Julia's failings; concerning whom, to my astonishment, he was not half so lenient as I expected.

"Arrah, isn't she like the rest of them, coorting one day with Captain Phil, and another with the young lord there, and then laughing at them both with the ould duke that comes here to dinner. She thinks I don't be minding her; but didn't I see her taking myself off one day on paper, making a drawing of me, as if I was a baste! 'Maybe there's worse nor me," said the little man, looking down upon his crooked shins and large knee-joints with singular complacency; "and maybe she'd get one of them yet." A harsh cackle, the substitute for a laugh, closed this speech.

"Breakfast on the table, sir," said a servant, tapping gently at the door.

"I'll engage it is, and will be till two o'clock, when they'll be calling out for luncheon," said Corny, turning up the whites of his eyes, as though the profligate waste of the house was a sin he wished to wash his hands of; "that wasn't the way at his honor the *Jidge's;* he'd never taste a bit from morning till night; and many a man he'd send to his long account in the meantime. Ugh! I wish I was back there."

"I have spent many happy days in Ireland, too," said I, scarce following him in more than the general meaning of his speech.

A fit of coughing from Corny interrupted his reply, but as he left the room I could hear his muttered meditations, something in this strain:—

"Happy days, indeed; a dacent life you led! tramping about the country with a fool! horse-riding and fighting! ugh!"

I found my cousin in the breakfast-room alone; my father had already gone out; and as Lady Charlotte never left her room before three or four o'clock, I willingly took the opportunity of our *tête-à-tête,* to inquire into the cause of the singular reception I had met with, and to seek an explanation, if so might be, of the viceroy's change toward me since his visit to England.

Julia entered frankly and freely into the whole matter, with the details of which, though evidently not trusting me to the full, she was, somehow, perfectly conversant.

"My dear John," said she, "your whole conduct in Ireland has been much mistaken—"

"Calumniated, apparently, were the better word, Julia," said I, hastily.

"Nay, hear me out: it is so easy, when people have no peculiar reasons to vindicate another, to misconstrue—perhaps condemn. It is so much the way of the world to look at things in their worst

light, that I am sure you will see no particular ingenuity was required to make your career in Dublin appear a wild one, and your life in the country still more so. Now you are growing impatient; you are getting angry; so I shall stop."

"No, no; Julia; a thousand pardons if a passing shade of indignation did show itself in my face. Pray go on."

"Well, then, when a young gentleman, whose exclusive leanings were even a little quizzed here—there, no impatience!—condescends at one spring to frequent third-rate people's houses, fall in love with a niece, or a daughter. or a something, there, plays high among riotous associates, makes rash wagers, and fights with his friends, who endeavor to rescue him—"

"Thank you, Julia—a thousand thanks, sweet cousin. The whole narrative and its author are palpably before me."

A deep blush covered her cheek as I rose hastily from my chair.

"John, dear John, sit down again," said she; "I have only been in jest all this time. You surely do not suppose me silly enough to credit one word of all this."

"It must have been told you, however," said I, fixing my eyes on her as I spoke.

The redness of her cheek grew deeper, and her confusion increased to a painful extent as, taking my hand in hers, she said in a low, soft voice,—

"I have been very, very foolish; but you will promise me never to remember—at least never to act upon—the—"

The words became fainter and fainter as she spoke, and at last died away inaudibly; and suddenly there shot across my mind the passage in O'Grady's letter—the doubt, once suggested, gained strength every moment—she loved De Vere. I will not attempt to convey the conflicting storm of passion this thought stirred up within me. I turned toward her. Her head was thrown gently back, and her deep blue lustrous eyes were fixed on me as if waiting my reply. A tear rolled heavily along her cheek—it was the first I ever saw her shed. Pressing her hand to my lips, I muttered the words—"Trust me, Julia," and left the room.

"Sir George wishes to see you, sir, in his own room," said a servant, as I stood stunned and overcome by the discovery I had made of my cousin's affection. I had no time given me for further reflection as I followed him to my father's room.

"Sit down, Jack," said my father, as he turned the key in the door; "I wish to talk with you alone, here. I have been with the duke this morning; a little explanation has satisfied him that your conduct was perfectly irreproachable in Ireland. He writes by this post to the viceroy to make the whole thing clear; and, indeed, he offered to reinstate you at once, which I refused, however. Now to something graver still, my boy, and which I wish I could spare you—but it cannot be."

As he spoke these words, he leaned his head in both his hands and was silent. A confused imperfect sense of some impending bad news rendered me motionless and still, and I waited without speaking. When my father lifted up his head, his face was pale and careworn, and an expression such as long illness leaves, had usurped the strong and manly character of his countenance.

"Come, my boy, I must not keep you longer in suspense. Fortune has dealt hardly with me since we parted. Jack, I am a ruined man!"

A convulsive gulp, and a rattling sound in the throat, followed the words; and, for a second or two, his fixed looks and purple color made me fear a fit was approaching. But in a few minutes he recovered his calmness, and proceeded, but still with a broken and tremulous voice, to relate the circumstances of his altered fortune.

It appeared that many British officers of high rank had involved themselves deeply in a loan to the Spanish Government, under the faith of speedy repayment. The varying chances of the peninsular struggle had given this loan all the character of a gambling speculation, the skill in which consisted in the anticipation of the result of the war we were then engaged in. My father's sanguine hopes of ultimate success induced him to enter deeply in the speculation, from which, having once engaged in, there was no retreat. Thousand after thousand followed, to secure the sum already advanced; and at last, hard pressed by the increasing demands for money, and confident that the first turn of fortune would lead to repayment, he had made use of the greater part of my cousin Julia's fortune, whose guardian he was, and in whose hands this trust-money had been left. My cousin would come of age in about four months, at which time she would be eighteen; and then, if the money were not forthcoming, the consequences were utter ruin, with the terrific blow of blasted character and reputation.

There was a sum of ten thousand pounds settled on me by my grandfather, which I at once offered to place at his disposal.

"Alas, my poor fellow! I have advanced already upwards of thirty thousand of Julia's fortune! No, no, Jack; I have thought much over the matter; there is but one way of escaping from this difficulty. By disposing of these bonds at considerable loss, I shall be enabled to pay Julia's money. This will leave us little better than above actual want; still it must be done. I shall solicit a command abroad: they'll not refuse me, I know. Lady Charlotte must retire to Bath, or some quiet place, which in my absence will appear less remarkable. Strict economy and time will do much. And as to yourself, I know that having once learned what you have to look to, I shall have no cause of complaint on your score; the duke has promised to take care of you. And now my heart is lighter than it has been for some months past."

Before my father had ceased speaking, the shock of his news had gradually subsided with me, and I was fully intent on the details by which he hoped to escape his embarrassment.

My mother was my first thought. Lady Charlotte, I knew, could never encounter her changed condition; she was certain to sink under the very shock of it.

My father, however, supposed that she need not be told its full extent; that by management the circumstance should be gradually made known to her; and he hoped, too, her interest in her husband and son, both absent from her, would withdraw her thoughts in great measure from the routine of fashionable life, and fix them in a channel more homely and domestic. "Besides," added he, with more animation of voice, "they may offer me some military appointment in the colonies, where she could accompany me, and this would prevent an exposure. And, after all, Jack, there is nothing else for it." As he said this he fixed his eyes on me, as though rather asking than answering the question.

Not knowing what to reply, I was silent.

"You were fond of Julia as a boy," said he, carelessly.

The blood rushed to my cheek, as I answered, "Yes, sir; but—but—"

"But you have outgrown that," added he, with a smile.

"Not so much, sir, as that she has forgotten me. In fact, I believe we are excellent cousins."

"And it is not now, my dear boy, that I would endeavor to make you more to each other. What is not a union of inclination shall never be one of sordid interest; besides, Jack, why should we not take the field together?—the very thought of it makes me feel young enough."

I saw his lip quiver as he spoke, and unable to bear more, I wrung his hand warmly and hurried away.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE HORSE-GUARDS.

I WILL not say that my reverse of fortune did not depress me; indeed, the first blow fell heavily; but that once past, a number of opposing motives rallied my courage and nerved my heart. My father, I knew, relied on me in this crisis to support his own strength; I had learned to care less for extravagant habits and expensive tastes, by living among those who accorded them little sympathy, and less respect; besides, if my changed career excluded me from the race of fashion, it opened the brilliant path of a soldier's life before me. And now every hour seemed an age, until I should find myself among the gallant fellows who were winning their laurels in the battle-fields of the Peninsula.

According to the duke's appointment of the preceding evening, I found myself, at ten o'clock punctually, awaiting my turn to be introduced, in the ante-chamber of the Horse Guards. The room was crowded with officers in full dress: some old white-haired generals of division coming daily for years past to solicit commands their fitness for which lay only in their own doting imaginations; some, broken by sickness and crippled with wounds, were seeking colonial appointments they never could live to reach; hale and stout men, in the prime of life, were there also, entreating exchanges which should accommodate their wives and daughters, who preferred Bath or Cheltenham to the banks of the Tagus or the snows of Canada. Among these, however, were many fine soldier-like fellows, whose only request was to be sent where hard knocks were going, careless of the climate, and regardless of the cause. Another class were thinly sprinkled around; young officers of the staff, many of them delicate effeminate-looking figures, herding scrupulously together, and never condescending, by word or look, to acknowledge their brethren about them. In this knot De Vere was conspicuous, by the loud tone of his voice, and the continued titter of his unmeaning laugh. I have already mentioned the consummate ease with which he

could apparently forget all unpleasant recollections, and accost the man whom he should have blushed to meet. Now he exhibited this power in perfection: saluting me across the room with a familiar motion of his head, he called out,—

"Ah, Hinton, you here too? Sick of Ireland; I knew it would come to that. Looking for something near town?"

A cold negative, and a colder bow, was my only answer.

Nothing abashed by this, indeed, to all seeming, quite indifferent to it, he continued,—

"Bad style of thing, Dublin; couldn't stand those confounded talkers, with their old jokes from circuit. You were bored, too; I saw it."

"I beg, my lord," said I, in a tone of seriousness, the best exchange I could assume for the deep annoyance I felt—"I beg that you will not include me in your opinions respecting Ireland; I opine we differ materially in our impressions of that country, and perhaps not without reason too." These latter words I spoke with marked emphasis, and fixing my eyes steadily on him.

"Very possibly," lisped he, as coolly as before. "I left it without regret; you apparently ought to be there still. Ha, ha, ha! he has it there, I think."

The blood mounted to my face and temples as I heard these words, and stepping close up beside him, I said slowly and distinctly,—

"I thought, sir, that one lesson might have taught you with whom these liberties were practicable."

As I said thus much the door opened, and his grace the Duke of York appeared. Abashed at having so far forgotten where I was, I stood motionless and crimson for shame. Lord Dudley, on the contrary, bowed reverently to his royal highness, without the slightest evidence of discomposure or irritation, his easy smile curling his lip.

The duke turned from one to the other of us without speaking, his dark eyes piercing, as it were, into our very hearts. "Lord Dudley de Vere," said he at length, "I have signed your appointment. Mr. Hinton, I am sorry to find that the voice I have heard more than once within the last five minutes, in an angry tone, was yours. Take care, sir, that this forgetfulness does not grow upon you. The colonel of the Twenty-seventh is not the person to overlook it, I promise you."

"If your royal highness—"

"I must entreat you to spare me any explanations. You are gazetted to the Twenty-seventh. I hope you will hold yourself in readiness for immediate embarkation. Where is the detachment, Sir Howard?"

"At Chatham, your royal highness," replied an old officer behind the duke's shoulder. At the same moment his grace passed through the room, conversing as he went with different persons about him.

As I turned away, I met Lord Dudley's eyes; they were riveted on me with an expression of triumphant malice I had never seen in them before, and I hurried homeward with a heart crushed and wounded.

I have but one reason for the mention of this trivial incident; it is to show how often the studied courtesy, the well-practiced deception that the fashion of the world teaches, will prevail over the heartfelt, honest indignation which deep feeling evinces; and what a vast superiority the very affectation of temper confers, in the judgment of others, who stand by the game of life, and care nothing for the players of either side.

Let no one suspect me of lauding the mockery of virtue in what I say here. I would merely impress on the young man who can feel for the deep sorrow and abasement I suffered, the importance of the attainment of that self-command, of that restraint over any outbreak of passion, when the very semblance of it insures respect and admiration.

It is very difficult to witness with indifference the preference of those we have once loved for some other person; still more so, when that other chances to be one we dislike; the breach of affection seems then tinctured with a kind of betrayal: we call to mind how once we swayed the temper and ruled the thoughts of her who has now thrown off her allegiance; we feel, perhaps, for the first time too, how forgotten are our lessons, how dead is all our wonted influence; we remember when the least word, the slightest action, bent beneath our will; when our smile was happiness, and our very sadness a reproof; and now we see ourselves unminded and neglected, with no more liberty to advise, no more power to control, than the merest stranger of the passing hour. What a wound to our self-love!

That my cousin Julia loved De Vere, O'Grady's suspicions had already warned me; the little I had seen of her since my return strengthened the impression; while his confident manner and assured tone confirmed my worst fears. In my heart I knew how utterly unworthy he was of such

a girl; but, then, if he had already won her affections, my knowledge came too late: besides, the changed circumstances of my own fortune, which must soon become known, would render my interference suspected, and consequently of no value; and after all, if I determined on such a course, what allegation could I bring against him which he could not explain away, as the mere levity of the young officer, associating among those he looked down upon and despised.

Such were some of my reflections, as I slowly returned homeward from the Horse Guards. As I arrived a traveling-carriage stood at the door; boxes, imperials, and cap-cases littered the hall and steps; servants were hurrying back and forward, and Mademoiselle Clemence, my mother's maid, who with a poodle under one arm, and a macaw's cage in the other, was adding to the confusion, by directions in a composite language, that would have astonished Babel itself.

"What means all this?" said I. "Is Lady Charlotte leaving town?"

"Miladi va partir—"

"Her ladyship's going to Hastings, sir," said the butler, interrupting, "Dr. Y—— has been here this morning, and recommends an immediate change of air for her ladyship."

"Is Sir George in the house?"

"No, sir, he's just gone out with the doctor."

"Ah," thought I, "this then is a concerted measure, to induce my mother to leave town. Lady Julia at home?"

"Yes, sir, in the drawing-room."

"Whose horse is that with the groom?"

"Lord Dudley de Vere's, sir; he's upstairs."

Already had I turned to go to the drawing-room, when I heard these words. Suddenly a faint, half-sick feeling came over me, and I hastened upstairs to my own room, actually dreading to meet any one as I went.

The blank future before me never seemed so cheerless as at that moment: separated, without a chance of ever meeting, from the only one I ever really loved; tortured by my doubts of her feeling for me—for even now, what would I not have given to know she loved me; my worldly prospects ruined; without a home; my cousin Julia the only one who retained either an interest in me or seemed to care for me, about to give her hand to the man I hated and despised.

"How soon! and I shall be alone in the world," thought I; and already the cold selfishness of isolation presented itself to my mind.

A gentle tap came to the door; I opened it; it was a message from Lady Charlotte, requesting to see me in her room. As I passed the door of the drawing-room, I heard Lady Julia and Lord de Vere talking and laughing together: he was, as usual, "so amusing," as my mother's letter called him; doubtless, relating my hasty and intemperate conduct at the Horse Guards; for an instant I stopped, irresolute as to whether I should not break suddenly in, and disconcert his lordship's practical coolness by a disclosure: my better reason prevented me, and I passed on. Lady Charlotte was seated in a deep armchair, inspecting the packing of various articles of toilet and jewelry which were going on around her, her cheek somewhat flushed from even this small excitement.

"Ah, dearest John, how d'ye do? Find a chair somewhere, and sit down by me; you see what confusion we're in; Dr. Y—— found there was not an hour to spare; the heart he suspects to be sympathetically engaged—don't put that Chantilly veil there, I shall never get at it—and he advises Hastings for the present; he's coming with us, however—I'll wear that ring, Clemence—and I must insist at his looking at you; you are very pale to-day, and dark under the eyes; have you any pain in the side?"

"None, whatever, my dear mother; I'm quite well."

"Pain is, however, a late symptom; my attack began with an—a sense of—it was rather—has Rundel not sent back that bracelet? How very provoking! Could you call there, dear John; that tiresome man never minds the servants. It's just on your way to the club, or the Horse Guards, or somewhere."

I could scarce help a smile, as I promised not to forget the commission.

"And now, my dear, how did his grace receive you? you saw him this morning."

"My interview was quite satisfactory on the main point; I am appointed to the 27th."

"Why not on the staff, dear John? You surely do not mean to leave England, having been abroad already—in Ireland, I mean; it's very hard to expect you to go so soon again. Lady Jane Colthurst's son has never been farther from her than Knightsbridge; and I am sure I don't see why we are to be treated worse than her."

"But my own wish—"

"Your own wish, my dear, could never

be to give me uneasiness, which, I assure you, you did, very considerably while in Ireland; the horrid people you made acquaintance with—my health, I'm certain, could never sustain a repetition of the shock I experienced then."

My mother leaned back and closed her eyes, as if some very dreadful circumstance was passing across her memory; and I, half ashamed of the position to which she would condemn me, was silent.

"There, that *aigrette* will do very well there, I'm sure; I don't know why you are putting in all these things; I shall never want them again, in all likelihood."

The depressed tone in which these words were spoken did not affect me much, for I knew well, from long habit, how my mother loved to dwell on the possibility of that event, the bare suggestion of which, from another, she couldn't have endured.

Just at this moment Julia entered in her travelling dress, a shawl thrown negligently across her shoulders.

"I hope I have not delayed you. John, are we to have your company too?"

"No, my dear," said my mother, languidly, "he's going to leave us. Some foolish notion of active service—"

"Indeed," said Julia, not waiting for the conclusion of the speeeh— "indeed!" She drew near me, and as she did so her color became heightened, and her dark eyes grew darker and more meaning. "You never told me this."

"I only knew it about an hour ago myself," replied I, coolly; "and when I was about to communicate my news to you, I found you were engaged with a visitor—Lord De Vere, I think."

"Ah, yes, very true, he was here," she said quickly; and then perceiving that my eyes were fixed upon her, she turned away her head hastily, and in evident confusion.

"Dear me, it is so late," said my mother, with a sigh. "I have some calls to make yet. Don't you think, John, you could take them off my hands? It's only to drop a card at Lady Blair's, and you could ask if Caroline's better—though, poor thing! she can't be, of course. Doctor Y—— says her malady is exactly my own; and then, if you are passing Long's, tell Sir Charles that our whist party is put off—perhaps Grammont has told him already. You may mention to Saunders that I shall not want the horses till I return; and say I detest grays, they are so like city people's equipages; and wait an instant—" here her ladyship took a small ivory memorandum tablet from the table, and began reading from it a list of commissions, some of them most ludicrously absurd. In the midst of the catalogue my father entered hastily, with a watch in his hand.

"You'll be dreadfully late on the road, Charlotte, and you forget Y—— must be back here early to-morrow."

"So I had forgotten it," said she, with some animation; "but we're quite ready now—Clemence has done everything, I think. Come, John, give me your arm, my dear—Julia always takes this side. Are you certain it won't rain, Sir George?"

"I really cannot be positive," said my father, smiling.

"I'm sure there's thunder in the air," rejoined my mother; "my nerves would never bear a storm."

Some dreadful catastrophe in the West Indies, where an earthquake had swallowed up a whole population, occurred to her memory at the instant, and the possibility of something similar occurring between Seven Oaks and Tunbridge seemed to engross her entire attention. By this time we reached the hall, where the servants, drawn up in double file, stood in respectful silence. My mother's eyes were, however, directed upon a figure which occupied the place next the door, and whose costume certainly was strangely at variance with the accurate liveries about him. An old white greatcoat with some twenty capes reaching nearly to the ground—for the garment had been originally destined for a much larger person—a glazed hat, fastened down with a handkerchief passed over it and tied under the chin, and a blackthorn stick with a little bundle at the end of it, were the most remarkable equipments.

"What is it? What can it be doing there?" said my mother, in a Siddons tone of voice.

"What is it? Corny Delany, no less," croaked out the little man, in the crankiest tone of his harsh voice. "It's what remains of me, at laste!"

"Oh yes," said Julia, bursting into a laugh, "Corny's coming as my body-guard. He'll sit in the rumble with Thomas."

"What a shocking figure it is," said my mother, surveying him through her glass. "Time doesn't improve either of us," said Corny, with the grin of a demon—happily the observation was only heard by myself. "Is it in silk stockings I'd be trapesing about the roads all night, with the rheumatiz in the small of my back—ugh, the haythins!"

My mother was at length seated in the carriage, with Julia beside her—the hun-

dred and one petty annoyances to make traveling uncomfortable, by way of rendering it supportable, around her; Corny had mounted to his place beside Thomas, who regarded him with a look of as profound contempt as a sleek, well-fed pointer would confer upon some mangy mongrel of the roadside; a hurried good-bye from my mother, a quick, short glance from Julia, a whisper lost in the crash of the wheels, and they were gone.

CHAPTER L.

THE RETREAT FROM BURGOS.

Few men have gone through life without passing through certain periods which, although not marked by positive misfortune, were yet so impressed by gloom and despondence, that their very retrospect is saddening. Happy it is for us that in after-days our memory is but little retentive of these. We remember the shadows that darkened over the landscape; but we forget in great part their cause and their duration, and perhaps even sometimes are disposed to smile at the sources of grief to which long habit of the world and its ways would have made us callous.

I was almost alone in the world—bereft of fortune, separated irrevocably from the only one I loved, and by whom I had reason to think my affection was returned. In that home to which I should have looked for fondness, I found only gloom and misfortune. My mother grown insensible to everything save some frivolous narrative of her own health; my father, once high-spirited and freehearted, careworn, depressed, and broken; my cousin, my early playfellow, half sweetheart and half sister, bestowing her heart and affections on one so unworthy of her. All lost to me: and at a time, too, when the heart is too weak and tender to stand alone, but must cling to something, or it sinks upon the earth, crushed and trodden upon.

I looked back upon my past life, and thought over the happy hours I had passed in the wild West, roaming through its deep valleys and over its heath-clad mountains. I thought of her, my companion through many a long summer-day, along the rocky shore, against which the white waves were ever beating, watching the sea-birds careering full many a fathom deep below us, mixing their shrill cries with the wilder plash of the ever restless sea; and how we dreamed away those hours, now half in sadness, now in bright hope of long years to come, and found ourselves thus wandering hand in hand, loved and loving; and then I looked out upon the bleak world before me, without an object to win, without a goal to strive at.

"Come, Jack," said my father, laying his hand on my shoulder, and startling me out of my reverie, "one piece of good fortune we have had. The duke has given me the command at Chatham. Some hint of my altered circumstances, it seems, had reached him, and, without my applying, he most kindly sent for me, and told me of my appointment. You must join the service companies of the Twenty-seventh by to-morrow. They are under sailing orders, and no time is to be lost. I told his Grace, that for all your soft looks and smooth chin, there was no lack of spirit in your heart; and you must take an eagle, Jack, if you would keep up my credit."

Laughingly spoken as these few words were, they somehow struck upon a chord that had long lain silent in my heart, and as suddenly awoke in me the burning desire for distinction, and the ambitious thirst to military glory.

The next evening, at sunset, the transport weighed anchor and stood out to sea. A slight breeze off shore, and an ebb tide, carried us gently away from land, and as night was falling I stood alone, leaning on the bulwarks, and looking fixedly on the faint shadows of the tall chalk cliffs, my father's last words, "You must take an eagle, Jack!" still ringing in my ears, and sinking deeply into my heart.

The subaltern of a marching regiment—a crack corps, it is true—I saw merely the ordinary detail of a campaigning life; and although my desire to distinguish myself rose each day higher, the greatest extent of my renown went no further than the admiration of my comrades, that one so delicately nurtured and brought up should bear so cheerfully and well the roughings of a soldier's life; and my sobriquet of "Jack Hinton, the Guardsman," was earned among the stormy scenes and blood-stained fields of the Peninsula.

My first experiences of military life were indeed but little encouraging. I joined the army in the disastrous retreat from Burgos. What a shock to all my cherished notions of a campaign! How sadly different to my ideas of the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war! I remember well we first came up with the retiring forces on the morning of the 4th of November. The day broke heavily; masses of

dark and weighty cloud drifted across the sky. The ground was soaked with rain, and a cold, chilling wind swept across the bleak plain and moaned dismally in the dark pine woods. Our party, which consisted of draughts from the Fiftieth, Twenty-seventh, and Seventy-first regiments, were stationed in a few miserable hovels on the side of the high road from Madrid to Labeyos. By a mistake of the way, we had missed a body of troops on the preceding day, and were now halted here in expectation of joining some of the corps retiring on the Portuguese frontier. Soon after daybreak a low rumbling sound, at first supposed to be the noise of distant cannonading, attracted our attention; but some stragglers coming up soon after, informed us that it proceeded from tumbrils and ammunition wagons of Sir Lowry Cole's brigade, then on the march. The news was scarcely communicated, when the head of a column appeared topping the hill.

As they came nearer, we remarked that the men did not keep their ranks, but strayed across the road from side to side; some carried their muskets by the sling, others on the shoulder; some leant on their companions, as though faint and sick; and many there were whose savage looks and bloated features denoted drunkenness. The uniforms were torn and ragged, several had no shoes, and some even had lost their caps and shakos, and wore handkerchiefs bound round their heads. Among these the officers were almost undistinguishable: fatigue, hardship, and privation had leveled them with the men; and discipline scarcely remained in that disorganized mass. On they came, their eyes bent only on the long vista of road that lay before them. Some, silent and sad, trudged on side by side; others, maddened by drink or wild with the excitement of fever, uttered frightful and horrible ravings. Some flourished their bayonets, and threatened all within their reach; and denunciations of their officers and open avowals of desertion were heard on every side as they went. The bugle sounded a halt as the column reached the little hamlet where we were stationed; and in a few seconds the road and the fields at either side were covered by the figures of the men, who threw themselves down on the spot where they stood, in every posture that weariness and exhaustion could suggest.

All the information we could collect was, that this force formed part of the rear-guard of the army; that the French under Marshal Soult were hotly in pursuit, having already driven in the cavalry outpost, and more than once throwing their skirmishers amongst our fellows. In a few minutes the bugle again sounded to resume the march; and however little disposed to yield to the dictates of discipline, old habit, stronger than even lawless insubordination, prevailed; the men rose, and, falling in with some semblance of order, continued their way. Nothing struck me more in that motley mass of ragged uniform and patched clothing, than the ferocious, almost savage expression of the soldiers as they marched past our better equipped and better disciplined party. Their dark scowl betokened deadly hate; and I could see the young men of our detachment quail beneath the insulting ruffianism of their gaze. Every now and then some one or other would throw down his pack or knapsack to the ground, and with an oath asseverate his resolve to carry it no longer. Some even declared they would abandon their arms; and more than one sat down by the wayside, preferring death or imprisonment from the enemy to the horrors and severities of that dreadful march.

The Highland regiments and the Guards alone preserved their former discipline; the latter, indeed, had only lately joined the army, having landed at Corunna a few weeks previously, and were perfect in every species of equipment. Joining myself to a group of their officers, I followed in the march, and was enabled to learn some tidings of my friend O'Grady, who, I was glad to hear, was only a few miles in advance of us, with his regiment.

Toward three o'clock we entered a dark pine wood, through which the route continued for several miles. Here the march became extremely difficult, from the deep clayey soil, the worn and cut-up road, and more than all, the torrents of rain that swept along the narrow gorge, and threw a darkness, almost like night, over everything. We plodded on gloomily, and scarcely speaking, when suddenly the galloping of horses was heard in the rear, and we were joined by Sir Edward Paget, who, with a single aide-de-camp, rode up to our division. After a few hurried questions to the officer in command, he wheeled his horse round, and rode back toward the next column, which, from some accidental delay, was yet two miles in the rear. The sound of the horses' hoofs were still ringing along the causeway, when a loud shout, followed by the sharp reports of pistol-firing, mingled with the voice. In an instant all was still as before, and save the crash-

ing of the pine branches and the beating rain, no other sound was heard.

Our conjectures as to the cause of the firing were just making, when an orderly dragoon, bare-headed and wounded, came up at the top of his horse's speed. The few hurried words he spoke in a half whisper to our commanding officer were soon reported through the lines. Sir Edward Paget, our second in command, had been taken prisoner, carried away by a party of French cavalry, who were daring enough to dash in between the columns, which in no other retreat had they ventured to approach.

The temerity of our enemy, added to our own dispirited and defenseless condition, was the only thing wanting to complete our gloom and depression, and the march was now resumed in the dogged sullenness of despair.

Day followed day, and all the miseries of our state but increased with time, till on the morning of the 17th the town of Ciudad Rodrigo came in view, and the rumor spread that stores of all kinds would be served out to the famished troops.

By insubordination and intemperance we had lost seven thousand men since the day the retreat from Burgos began, and although neither harassed by night marches nor excessive journeys—losing neither guns, ammunition, nor standards—yet was the memorable document addressed by Wellington to the officers commanding divisions but too justly merited, concluding in these words: "The discipline of every army, after a long and active campaign, becomes in some degree relaxed, but I am concerned to observe that the army under my command has fallen off in this respect to a greater degree than any army with which I have ever been, or of which I have ever read."

CHAPTER LI.

A MISHAP.

If I began my career as a soldier at one of the gloomiest periods of our Peninsular struggle, I certainly was soon destined to witness one of the most brilliant achievements of our arms in the opening of the campaign of 1813.

On the 22d of May the march began—that forward movement, for the hour of whose coming many a heart had throbbed, and many a bosom beat high. From Ciudad Rodrigo to the frontier, our way led through the scenes of former glory; and if the veterans of the army exulted at once again beholding the battle-fields where victory had crowned their arms, the new soldiers glowed with ambition to emulate their fame. As for myself, short as the period had been since I quitted England, I felt that my character had undergone a very great change; the wandering fancies of the boy had sobered down into the more fixed, determined passions of the man. The more I thought of the inglorious indolence of my former life, the stronger was now my desire to deserve a higher reputation than that of a mere lounger about a court, the military accompaniment of a pageant. Happily for me, I knew not at the time how few opportunities for distinction are afforded by the humble position of a subaltern—how seldom occasions arise where, amid the mass around him, his name can win praise or honor. I knew not this; and my reverie by day, my dream by night, presented but one image—that of some bold successful deed, by which I should be honorably known and proudly mentioned; or my death be that of a brave soldier in the field of glory.

It may be remembered by my reader, that in the celebrated march by which Wellington opened that campaign—whose result was the expulsion of the French armies from the Peninsula—the British left, under the command of Graham, was always in advance of the main body; their route traversed the wild and dreary passes of the Tras-os-Montes, a vast expanse of country, with scarcely a road to be met with, and but few inhabitants. The solitary glens and gloomy valleys whose echoes had waked to no other sounds save those of the wild heron or the eagle, were now to resound with the thundering roll of artillery wagons, the clanking crash of cavalry columns, or the monotonous din of the infantry battalions, as from sunrise to sunset they poured along: now scaling the rugged height of some bold mountain, now disappearing among the wooded depths of some dark ravine.

Owing to a temporary appointment on the staff, I was continually passing and repassing between this portion of the army and the force under the immediate command of Lord Wellington. Starting at daybreak, I have set off alone through these wild, untraveled tracts, where mountains rose in solemn grandeur, their dark sides wooded with the gloomy cork-tree, or rent by some hissing torrent, whose splash was the only sound that broke the universal silence. Now dashing on with

speed across the grassy plain, now toiling along on foot, the bridle on my arm, I have seen the sun go down and never heard a human voice, nor seen the footsteps of a fellow-man; and yet what charms had those lonely hours for me, and what a crowd of blissful thoughts and happy images they yet bring back to me! The dark glen, the frowning precipice, the clear rivulet gurgling on amid the mossy stones, the long and tangled weeds that hung in festoons down some rocky cliff, through whose fissured sides the water fell in heavy drops into a little basin at its foot,—all spoke to me of the happiest hours of my life, when, loved and loving, I wandered on the livelong day.

How often, as the day was falling, have I sat down to rest beneath some tall beech, gazing on the glorious expanse of mountain and valley, hill and plain, and winding river—all beneath me; and how, as I looked, have my thoughts wandered away from those to many a far-off mile; and then what doubts and hopes would crowd upon me. Was I forgotten? Had time and distance wiped away all memory of me? Was I as one she had never seen, or was she still to me as when we parted? In such moments as these how often have I recurred to our last meeting at the holy well; and still, I own it, some vague feeling of superstition has spoken hope to my heart, when reason alone had bid me despair.

It was at the close of a sultry day—the first of June, I shall not readily forget it—that, overcome by fatigue, I threw myself down beneath the shelter of a grove of acacias, and, tethering my horse with his bridle, fell into one of my accustomed reveries. The heat of the day, the drowsy hum of the summer insects, the very monotonous champ of my horse feeding beside me—all conspired to make me sleepy, and I fell into a heavy slumber. My dreams, like my last waking thoughts were of home; but, strangely enough, the scenes through which I had been traveling, the officers with whom I was intimate, the wild guerilla chiefs, who from time to time crossed my path or shared my bivouac, were mixed up with objects and persons many a mile away; making that odd and incongruous collection which we so often experience in sleep.

A kind of low, unbroken sound, like the tramp of cavalry over grass, awoke me; but still, such was my drowsiness, that I was again about to relapse into sleep, when the sound of a manly voice, singing at the foot of the rock beneath me, fully aroused me. I started up, and, peeping cautiously over the head of the cliff, beheld, to my surprise and terror, a party of French soldiers stretched upon the green sward around a fire. It was the first time I had ever seen the Imperial troops, and, notwithstanding the danger of my position, I felt a most unaccountable longing to creep nearer and watch their proceedings. The sounds I had heard at first became at this moment more audible, and, on looking down the glen, I perceived a party of about twenty dragoons cantering up the valley. They were dressed in the uniform of the Chasseurs Légers, and in their light blue jackets and silvered helmets, had a most striking and picturesque effect. My astonishment at their appearance was not diminished by the figure who rode gayly along at their head. She was a young and pretty-looking girl, dressed in a blue frock and jean trousers; a light foraging-cap, with the number of the regiment worked in silver on the front; a small canteen suspended from one shoulder by a black belt completed her equipments. Her hair, of a glossy black, was braided richly at either side of her face, and a couple of bows of light blue attested a degree of coquetry the rest of her costume gave no evidence of. She rode *en cavalier*, and by the easy attitude in which she sat, and her steady hand on the bridle, denoted that the regimental riding-school had contributed to her accomplishments. I had heard before of the vivandières of the French army, but was in no wise prepared for the really pretty figure and costume I now beheld.

As the riding party approached, the others sprang to their feet, and, drawing up in a line, performed a mock salute, which the young lady returned with perfect gravity, and then, carelessly throwing her bridle to the one nearest, dismounted. In a few moment the horses were picketed, the packs were scattered about the grass, cooking utensils, provisions, and wine were distributed, and, amid a perfect din of merry voices and laughter the preparations for dinner were commenced. Mademoiselle's part, on the whole, amused me not a little. Not engaging in any of the various occupations about her, she seated herself on a pile of cavalry cloaks at a little distance from the rest, and, taking out a much-worn and well-thumbed-looking volume from the pocket of her coat, she began to read to herself with the most perfect unconcern of all that was going on about her. Meanwhile the operations of the cuisine were conducted with a dispatch

and dexterity that only French soldiers ever attain to; and—shall I confess it?—the rich odor that steamed up from the well-seasoned potage—the savory smell of the roast kid, albeit partaking of onions—and the brown breasts of certain *poulets*, made me wish heartily that for half an hour or so I could have changed my allegiance, converted myself into a *soldat de la Garde*, and led Mademoiselle in to dinner. At length the party beneath had arranged their meal upon the grass, and the corporal, with an air of no inconsiderable pretension, took Mademoiselle's hand to conduct her to the place of honor at the head of the feast, calling out, as he did so,—

"Place, Messieurs, place pour Madame la Duchesse de—de—"

"N'importe quoi," said another; "the Emperor has many a battle to win yet, and many a kingdom and a duchy to give away. As for myself, I count upon the *bâton* of a marshal before the campaign closes."

"Have done, I beg you, with such folly, and help me to some of that *salmi*," said the lady, with a much more practical look about her than her expression a few moments before denoted.

The feast now progressed with all the clatter which little ceremony, hearty appetites, and good fellowship produce. The wine went round freely, and the *qui quo quos*, if I might judge from their mirth, were not wanting, for I could but catch here and there a stray word or so of the conversation. All this time my own position was far from agreeable. Independent of the fact of being a spectator of a good dinner and a jolly party while famishing with hunger and thirst, my chance of escape depended either on the party moving forward, or being so insensible from the effects of their carouse that I might steal away unobserved. While I balanced with myself which of these alternatives was more likely, an accident decided the question. My horse, who, up to this moment, was grazing close beside me, hearing one of the troop-horses neigh in the valley beneath, pricked up his ears, plunged upward, broke the bridle with which I had fastened him, and cantered gayly down into the midst of the picketed animals. In an instant every man sprang to his legs: some rushed to their holsters and drew forth their pistols; others caught up their sabers from the grass; and the young lady herself tightened her horse's girth and sprang into her saddle with the alacrity of one accustomed to moments of danger. All was silent now for a couple of minutes, except the slight noise of the troopers engaged in bridling their horses and fixing on their packs, when a loud voice cried out, "*Voilà!*" and the same instant every eye in the party was directed to my shako, which hung on a branch of a tree above me, and up to this moment I had forgotten. Before I could determine on any line of escape, three of the number had rushed up the rock, and, with drawn sabers, commanded me to surrender myself their prisoner. There was no choice. I flung down my sword with an air of sulky resignation, and complied. My dispatches, of which they soon rifled me, sufficiently explained the cause of my journey, and allayed any apprehension they might have felt as to a surprise party. A few brief questions were all they put to me, and then, conducting me down the cliff to the scene of their bivouac, they proceeded to examine my holsters and the flaps of my saddle, for any papers which I might have concealed in these places.

"Eh bien! mon colonel," said the leader of the party, as he drew himself up before me, and carried his hand to his cap in a salute as respectful and orderly as though I were his officer, "what say you to a little supper ere we move forward?"

"There's the bill of fare," said another, laughing as he pointed to the remnants of roast fowls and stewed kid that covered the grass.

I was too young a soldier to comport myself at the moment with that philosophic resignation to circumstances which the changeful fortunes of war so forcibly instill; and I merely answered by a brief refusal, while half unconsciously I threw my eyes around to see if no chance of escape presented itself.

"No, no," cried the corporal, who at once read my look and its meaning; "don't try *that*, or you reduce me to the extremity of trying *this*," patting, as he spoke, the butt of his carbine, with an air of easy determination there was no mistaking.

"Let me rather recommend Monsieur le Capitaine to try this," said the vivandière, who, unperceived by me, was all this while grilling the half of a *poulet* over the embers. There was something in the kindness of the act, coupled as it was with an air of graceful courtesy, that touched me; so, smothering all my regretful thoughts at my mishap, I summoned up my best bow and my best French to acknowledge the civility, and the moment after was seated on the grass beside Mademoiselle Annette, discussing my supper with the appetite of a man whose sorrows were far inferior to his hunger.

As the moon rose, the party, who evidently had been waiting for some others they expected, made preparations for continuing their journey, the first of which consisted in changing the corporal's pack and equipments to the back of my English thorough-bred—his own meager and raw-boned quadruped being destined for me. Up to this instant the thought of escape had never left my mind—I knew I could calculate on the speed of my horse—I had had some trials of his endurance, and the only thing was to obtain such a start as might carry me out of bullet range at once, and all was safe. Now this last hope deserted me, as I beheld the miserable hack to which I was condemned; and yet poignant as this feeling was—shall I confess it?—it was inferior in its pain to the sensation I experienced as I saw the rude French soldier, with clumsy jack-boots and heavy hand, curveting about upon my mettlesome charger, and exhibiting his paces for the amusement of his companions.

The order was now given to mount, and I took my place in the middle file, the dragoons on either side of me having unslung their carbines, and given me laughingly to understand that I was to be made a riddle of if I attempted an escape.

The long months of captivity that followed have, somehow, I cannot at all explain why, left no such deep impression on my mind as the simple events of that night—I remember it still like a thing of yesterday. We traveled along the crest of a mountain—the valley lying in deep, dark shadow beneath—the moon shone brightly out upon the gray granite rocks beside us; our pace was sometimes pushed to a fast trot, and then relaxed to a walk, the rather, as it appeared to me, to indulge the conversational tastes of my escort than for any other reason. Their spirits never flagged for a moment—some jest or story was ever going forward—some anecdote of the campaign, or some love adventure, of which the narrator was the hero, commented on by all in turn, with a degree of sharp wit and ready repartee that greatly surprised me. In all these narratives Mademoiselle played a prominent part, being invariably referred to for any explanation which the difficulties of female character seemed to require; her opinion on such points being always regarded as conclusive. At times, too, they would break forth into some rude hussar song—some regular specimen of camp lyric poetry—each verse being sung by a different individual, and chorused by the whole party in common.

CHAPTER LII.

THE MARCH.

Such, with little variety, was the history of each day and night of our march. The days usually passed in some place of security and concealment, while a reconnoissance would be made by some three or four of the party; and, as night fell, the route was continued.

One incident alone broke the monotony of the journey. On the fourth night we left the mountain, and descended into a large open plain, taking for our guide the course of a river which seemed familiar to my companions. The night was dark, heavy masses of cloud concealed the moon, and not a star was visible; the atmosphere was close and oppressive, and there reigned around a kind of unnatural stillness, unbroken by the flow of the sluggish river which moved on beside us. Our pace had been a rapid one for some time; and, contrary to their wont, the dragoons neither indulged in their gay songs nor merry stories, but kept together with more of military precision than they had hitherto assumed.

I conjectured from this that we were probably approaching the French lines; and, on questioning the corporal, was told that such was the case.

A little after midnight we halted for a few moments to refresh the horses. Each man dismounted, and stood with his hand upon the bridle; and I could not but mark how the awful silence of the hour seemed to prey upon their spirits as they spoke together in low and broken whispers, as if fearful to interrupt the deep sleep of nature. It was just then that every eye was directed to a bright star that burst out above the horizon, and seemed to expand gradually into a large mass of great brilliancy, and again to diminish to a mere speck, which it remained for some time, and then disappeared entirely. We remained gazing on the dark spot where this phenomenon had appeared, endeavoring by a hundred conjectures to explain it. Wearied at length with watching, we were about to continue our journey, when, suddenly from the quarter from where the star had shone, a rocket shot up into the dark sky, and broke into ten thousand brilliant fragments, which seemed to hang suspended on high in the weight of the dense atmosphere. Another followed, and another; then, after a pause of some minutes, a blue rocket was seen to mount into the air, and explode with a report which, even

at the distance we stood, was audible. Scarcely had its last fragments disappeared in the darkness, when a low rumbling noise, like the booming of distant thunder, seemed to creep along the ground. Then came a rattling volley, as if of small-arms; and at last the whole horizon burst into a red glare, which forked up from earth to sky, with a crash that seemed to shake the very ground beneath us. Masses of dark, misshapen rock sprang into the blazing sky; millions upon millions of sparks glittered through the air, and a cry, like the last expiring wail of a drowning crew, rose above all other sounds—and all was still. The flame was gone—the gloomy darkness had returned—not a sound was heard—but in that brief moment four hundred of the French army met their graves beneath the castle of Burgos, which, in their hurried retreat, they had blown up, without apprising the troops, who were actually marching beneath its very walls.

Our route was now resumed in silence—even the levity of the French soldiers had received a check; and scarcely a word passed as we rode on through the gloomy darkness, anxiously looking for daybreak, to learn something of the country about us.

Toward sunrise we found ourselves at the entrance of a mountain pass traversed by the Ebro, which in some places almost filled the valley, and left merely a narrow path between its waters and the dark cliffs that frowned above. Here we proceeded, sometimes in single file, now tracing the signs of the retreating force which had just preceded us, now lost in astonishment at the prodigious strength of the position thus abandoned. But even these feelings gave way before a stronger one—our admiration of the exquisite beauty of the scenery. Glen after glen was seen opening as we advanced into this wide valley, each bearing its tributary stream to the mighty Ebro; the clear waters reflecting the broken crags, the waving foliage, and the bright verdure that beamed around, as orange-trees, laurels and olives bent over the current, or shot up in taper spires toward the clear blue sky. How many a sheltered nook we passed, with an involuntary longing to rest and linger among scenes so full of romantic beauty. But already the din of the retreating column was borne toward us on the breeze; the heavy monotonous roll of large guns and caissons; while now and then we thought to catch the swell of martial music blending through the other sounds. But soon we came up with wagons carrying the wounded and sick, who, having joined by another road, had fallen to the rear of the march. From them we learned that the king of Spain, Joseph himself, was with the advanced guard; that the destination of the forces was Vittoria, where a junction with the *corps d'armée* of the other generals being effected, it was decided on giving battle to the Anglo-Spanish army.

As we advanced, our progress became slower and more difficult; close columns of infantry blocked up the road, or dense masses of cavalry, with several hundred led horses and baggage mules prevented all chance of getting forward. Gradually, however, the valley widened, the mountain became less steep, and by evening we reached a large plain, closed toward the north-east by lofty mountains, which I learned were the Pyrenees, and beheld, in the far distance, the tall spires of the city of Vittoria. Several roads crossed the plain toward the city, all of which were now crowded with troops; some pressing on in the direction of the town, others were taking up their position, and throwing up hasty embankments and stockades. Meanwhile, the loaded wagons, with the spoil of the rich convents and the royal treasure, were seen wending their slow way beneath the walls of Vittoria, on the road to Bayonne, escorted by a strong cavalry force, whose bright helmets and breastplates pronounced them Cuirassiers de la Garde. The animation and excitement of the whole scene was truly intense; and as I rode along beside the corporal, I listened with eagerness to his account of the various regiments as they passed hither and thither, and took up their position on the wide plain. "There, look yonder," said he, "where that dark mass is defiling beside the pine wood; see how they break into parties, watch them how they scatter along the low bank beside the stream under shelter of the brushwood. There were eight hundred men in that battalion; where are they now?—all concealed. They are the tirailleurs of the army. And see on that low mound above them, where the flag is flying; the guns are about to occupy that height. I was right, you see; there they come—six, seven, eight pieces of heavy metal. *Sacrebleu!* that must be a place of some consequence."

"What are the troops yonder, with the red tufts in their caps and scarlet trousers?"

"*Ah! parbleu!* your countrymen will soon know to their cost: they are the 'Infanterie de la Garde.' There's not a man in the column you are looking at who is not *décoré*."

"Look at this side, monsieur; see the Chasseurs à Cheval," said Annette, putting her hand on my arm, while her bright eyes glanced proudly at the glittering column which advanced by a road near us, coming along at a sharp trot; their equipments clattering, their horses highly conditioned, and the splendid uniform of light blue and silver giving them a most martial air.

"Bah!" said the corporal, contemptuously, "these are the dragoons to my taste." So saying, he pointed to a dark column of heavy cavalry, who led their horses slowly along by a narrow causeway; the long black horse-hair tailed from their dark helmets with something of a gloomy aspect, to which their flowing cloaks of deep blue added. "*Les Cuirassiers de Milhauds;* —but look—look yonder—*tonnerre de ciel,* see that." The object to which my attention was now directed was a park of artillery that covered the whole line of road from the Miranda Pass to the very walls of Vittoria.

"Two hundred, at least," exclaimed he, after counting some twenty or thirty of the foremost. "*Ventrebleu!* what chance have you before the batteries of the Guard?" As he spoke, the drums beat across the wide plain; a continuous dull roll murmured along the ground—it ceased—the trumpets brayed forth a call—a clanging crash followed, and I saw that the muskets were brought to the shoulder, as the bayonets glanced in the sun, and the sharp sabers glittered along the squadrons. For a second or two all was still, and then the whole air was rent with a loud cry of *Vive le Roi!*—while a mounted party rode slowly from the left, and entering one of the gates of the city, disappeared from our sight. Night was now beginning to fall as we wended our way slowly along toward the walls of Vittoria; it being the corporal's intention to deliver his prisoner into the hands of the *état-major* of Marshal Jourdan.

CHAPTER LIII.

VITTORIA.

What a contrast to the scene without the walls did the city of Vittoria present. Scarcely had we left behind us the measured tread of moving battalions, the dark columns of winding cavalry, when we entered the streets brilliantly lighted; gorgeous and showy equipages turned everywhere, music resounded on all sides, servants in splendid liveries made way for ladies in all the elegance of evening dress, enjoying the delicious coolness of a southern climate at sunset: groups of officers in full uniform chatted with their fair friends from the balconies of the large majestic houses. The sounds of gayety and mirth were heard from every open lattice, and the chink of the castanet and the proud step of the fandango echoed around us.

Women, dressed in all the perfection of Parisian coquetry, loitered along the streets, wondering at the strange sights the Spanish city afforded—themselves scarcely less objects of wonder to the dark-eyed senhoras, who, with close-drawn mantillas, peered cautiously around them to see the strangers. Young French officers swaggered boastfully about, with the air of conquerors, while now and then some tall and swarthy Spaniard might be seen louring with gloomy frown from under the broad shadow of his sombrero, as if doubting the evidence of his own senses, at seeing his native city in the occupation of the usurper.

In the open plazas, too, the soldiers were picketed, and stood in parties around their fires, or lay stretched on the rich tapestries they had carried away as spoils from the southern provinces. Cups and goblets of the rarest handiwork and of the most costly materials were strewn about them: the vessels of the churches, the rich cloths of gold embroidery that had decorated the altars, pictures—the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the first masters—all were there, in one confused heap, among baskets of fruit, wine-skins, ancient armor, and modern weapons. From time to time some brilliant staff would pass, usually accompanied by ladies, who seemed strangely mixed up, with all the military display of the scene.

My guide, after conversing for a few moments with a *sous-officier* of his regiment, turned from the plaza into a narrow street, the termination to which was formed by a large building, now brilliantly lit up. As we approached, I perceived that two sentries were on guard at the narrow gate, and a large banner with the imperial "N" in the center, waved heavily over the entrance. "This is 'le quartier général,'" said the corporal, dropping his voice respectfully, as he drew near. At the same instant, a young officer, whose long plume bespoke him as an aide-de camp, pushed past us; but turning hastily round, said something I could not catch to the corporal. "Bien, mon lieutenant," said the latter, carrying his hand to his shako. "Follow me, monsieur," said the officer,

addressing me; and the next moment I found myself in a large and richly furnished room, when, having motioned me to be seated, he left me.

My meditations, such as they were, were not suffered to be long, for in a few seconds the aide-de-camp made his appearance, and with a low bow requested me to accompany him.

"The general will receive you at once," said he.

I eagerly asked his name.

"Le Général Oudinot."

"Ah! the marshal?"

"No; his brother. I perceive you are a young soldier, so let me give you a hint: don't mind his manner—'*c'est un brave homme*' at bottom, but—" The loud burst of laughter from a room at the end of the corridor drowned the conclusion of his speech, and before I had time for another question, the door opened and I was introduced.

In a small but richly furnished chamber sat four officers round a table covered with a magnificent display of silver cups and plate, and upon which a dessert was spread—flasks of French and Spanish wine, a salver holding cigars, and a book—apparently an orderly book—before them, from which one of the party was reading as I came in. As the aide-de-camp announced me they all looked up, and the general, for I knew him at once, fixing his eyes steadily on me, desired me to approach.

As I obeyed his not very courteous order, I had time to perceive that the figure before me was that of a stout, square-built man of about fifty-five or sixty. His head was bald; his eyebrows, of a bushy gray, were large and meeting. A moustache of the same grizzly appearance shaded his lip, and served to conceal two projecting teeth, which, when he spoke displayed themselves like boar's tusks, giving a peculiarly savage expression to his dark and swarthy countenance. The loose sleeve of his coat denoted that he had lost his left arm high up; but whenever excited, I could see that the short stump of the amputated limb jerked convulsively in a manner it was painful to look at.

"What! A deserter! a spy! Eh! what is it, Alphonse?"

The aide-de-camp, blushing, whispered some few words rapidly, and the general resumed:

"Ha! Be seated, monsieur. The officers of the Imperial army know how to treat their prisoners; though, *pardieu!* they can't teach their enemies the lesson. You have floating prisons, they tell me, in England, where my poor countrymen die of disease and starvation. *Sacredieu!* what cruelty."

"You have been misinformed, general. The nation I belong to is uniformly humane to all whom chance of war has made its prisoners, and never forgets that the officers of an army are gentlemen."

"Ha! what do you mean?" said he, becoming dark with passion, as he half rose from his seat; then stopping suddenly short, he continued in a voice of suppressed anger; "Where are your troops? What number of men has your 'Villainton' got with him?"

"Of course," said I, smiling, "you do not expect me to answer such questions?"

"Do you refuse it?" said he, with a grim smile.

"I do distinctly refuse," was my answer.

"What rank do you hold in your service?"

"I am but a subaltern."

"*Tenez,*" said another of the party, who for some time past had been leisurely conning over the dispatches which had been taken from me—"you are called 'capitaine' here, monsieur."

"Ha! ha! What say you to that?" cried the general, exultingly. "Read it, Chamont."

"The dispatches which Captain Airey will deliver—"

"Is it not so?" said he, handing me the paper.

"Yes," said I, coolly; "he is the senior aide-de-camp, but being employed on General Graham's staff, now occupied in the pursuit of your army—"

"*Mille tonneres!* Young man, you have chosen an unsuitable place to cut your jokes."

"*Sa Majesté le Roi,*" said an aide-de-camp, entering hastily, and throwing the door open to its full extent; and scarcely had the party time to rise when the Emperor's brother appeared. Of the middle size, pale, and with a thoughtful, expressive countenance, Joseph Bonaparte's appearance was much in his favor. His forehead was lofty and expansive, his eye large and full, and the sweet smile which seemed the gift of every member of the family, he possessed in perfection. After a few words with General Oudinot—whose rough manner and coarse bearing suffered no change by his presence—he turned toward me, and with much mildness of voice and courtesy of demeanor inquired if I were wounded. On hearing

that I was not, he expressed a hope that my captivity would be of brief duration, as exchanges were already in progress. "Meanwhile," said he, "you shall have as little to complain of as possible."

As he concluded these few but, to me, most comforting words, I received a hint from the aide-de-camp to withdraw, which I did, into an adjoining room. The same aide-de-camp by whom I had hitherto been accompanied now joined me, and, slapping me familiarly on the shoulder, cried out, "*Eh bien!* I hope now you are satisfied—Joseph is a fine, generous fellow, and will take care not to forget his promise to you. Meanwhile, come and take a share of my supper." He opened a door in the wainscot as he spoke, and introduced me into a perfectly fitted-up little room, where a supper had been laid out for him. Another cover was soon provided for me, and in a few minutes we were seated at table, chatting away about the war and the opposing armies, as though instead of partisans we had merely been lookers-on at the great game before us. My companion, though but a year or two older than myself, held the grade of colonel, every step to which he won at the point of his sword: he was strikingly handsome, and his figure, though slight, powerfully knit. As the champagne passed back and forward between us, confidences became interchanged, and before midnight sounded I found my companion quite familiar with the name of Louisa Bellew, while, to my equal astonishment, I was on terms of perfect intimacy with a certain lovely Marquise of the Chaussée d'Antin. The tinkle of a sharp bell suddenly called the aide-de-camp to his legs; so drinking off a large goblet of cold water, and taking up his chapeau, he left the room.

I now threw myself back into my chair, and, tossing off a bumper of champagne, began to reason myself into the belief that there were worse things even than imprisonment among the French; flitting thoughts of the past, vague dreams of the future, confused images of the present, were all dancing through my brain, when the door again opened, and I heard my companion's footsteps behind me.

"Do you know, Alphonse," said I, without turning in my chair, "I have been seriously thinking of making my escape; it is quite clear that a battle is not far off; and by Jove, if I only have the good fortune to meet with your *chef d'état major*, that savage old Oudinot, I'll pledge myself to clear off scores with him."

A half chuckle of laughter behind induced me to continue:

"That old fellow certainly must have risen from the ranks,—not a touch of breeding about him. I am certain his majesty rated him soundly for his treatment of me, when I came away. I saw his old moustaches bristling up—he knew he was in for it." A louder laugh than the first, but in somewhat of a different cadence, induced me to turn my head, when what was my horror to see before me, not my new friend the aide-de-camp, but General Oudinot himself, who had all this time been listening to my polite intentions regarding his future welfare! There was a savage exultation in his look, as his eye met mine, and for a second or two he seemed to enjoy my confusion too much to permit him to break silence. At last he said,—

"Are you on parole, sir?"

"No," I briefly replied, "nor shall I be."

"What—have I heard you aright—do you refuse your parole?"

"Yes—I shall not pledge myself against attempting my escape the very first opportunity that offers."

"Indeed," said he, slowly,—"indeed. What is to become of poor General Oudinot if such a casualty take place. But come, sir, I have his majesty's orders to accept your parole; if you refuse it you are then at *my* disposal. I have received no other instructions about you. Yes or no—I ask you for the last time."

"No—distinctly no."

"Cest bien; holà, garde! numéros dix et onze."

Two soldiers of the grenadiers, with fixed bayonets, appeared at the door—a few hurried words were spoken, the only part of which I could catch was the word "*cachot*." I was at once ordered to rise—a soldier walked on either side of me, and I was in this way conducted through the city to the prison of the gendarmerie, where for the night I was to remain, with orders to forward me the next morning at daybreak, with some Spanish prisoners, on the road to Bayonne.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE RETREAT.

My cell, for such it was, although dignified with the appellation of chamber, looked out by a small window upon a narrow street, the opposite side to which was formed by the wall of a churchyard

pertaining to a convent. As day broke I eagerly took my place at the casement to watch what was going on without; but except some bareheaded figure of a monk gliding along between the dark yew avenues, or some female in deep mourning passing to her morning's devotions beside the grave of a relative, I could see nothing; a deep silence seemed to brood over the city, so lately the scene of festivity and mirth. Toward four o'clock, however, I could hear the distant roll of drums, which gradually extended from the extreme right to the left of the plain before the town; then I heard the heavy monotonous tramp of marching, broken occasionally by the clank of the brass bands of the cavalry, or the deep sullen thunder of artillery wagons, as they moved along the paved roads; the sounds came gradually nearer; the trumpets too joined the clamor with the shrill *reveillé*, and soon the street toward the front of the prison re-echoed with the unceasing clatter of troops moving forward. I could hear the voices of the officers calling to the men to move up; heard more than once the names of particular regiments, as some distinguished corps were passing; the music of the bands was quick and inspiriting, and as some popular air was struck up, the men would break forth suddenly into the words, and the rough-voiced chorus rang through the narrow streets, and fell heavily on my own heart, as I lay there a prisoner. Hour after hour did this continue; but yet the silence behind remained as unbroken as ever; the lonely churchyard, with its dark walls and sad-looking trees, was still and deserted.

By degrees the din in front diminished; regiments passed now only at intervals, and their pace increased to a run left no time for the bands; the cavalry, too, trotted rapidly by, and at last all was still as in the gloomy street before me. It was now eight o'clock, and no summons had yet come to me, although I had heard myself the order for our marching on the Bayonne road by sunrise; the prison was still as the grave, not a step could I hear—not a bolt nor a hinge creaked; I looked to the window, but the strong iron grating that defended it left no prospect for escape; the door was even stronger, and there was no chimney.

Sometimes the thought occurred to me that the party had forgotten me, and had gone away with the other prisoners; this thought somehow had its consolation; but the notion of being left to starve came suddenly across me, and I hastened to the window to try and make myself known to some chance passer-by; just then the loud boom of a gun struck upon my ear; another followed, louder still; and then a long, heavy, crashing noise, which rose and fell as the wind bore it, told me that the work of death had begun. The sound of the large guns, which at first came only at intervals, now swelled into one loud continuous roar that drowned all other noise; the strong frames of the windows shook, and the very ground beneath my feet seemed to tremble with the dreadful concussion of the artillery; sometimes the din would die away for a few seconds, and then, as the wind freshened, it would swell into a thunder, so loud as to make me almost think the battle was close to where I stood. Hour after hour did this continue; and now, although the little street beside me was thronged with many an anxious group, I no longer thought of questioning them; my whole soul was wrapped up in the one thought—that of the dreadful engagement; and as I listened, my mind was carrying on with itself some fancied picture of the fight, with no other guide to my imaginings than the distant clangor of the battle; now I thought that the French were advancing; that their battery of guns had opened; and I could imagine the dark mass that moved on, their tall shakos and black belts peering amidst the smoke that lay densely in the field. On they poured, thousand after thousand; ay, there goes the fusilade: the platoons are firing; but now they halt! the crash of fixing bayonets is heard; a cheer breaks forth; the cloud is rent; the thick smoke is severed as if by a lightning flash; the red coats have dashed through at the charge; the enemy waits not; the line wavers and breaks; down come the cavalry, like an eagle on the swoop; but again, the dread artillery opens; the French form beneath the lines, and the fight is renewed.

The fever of my mind was at its height; I paced my room with hurried steps, and, springing to the narrow casement, held my ear to the wall to listen. Forgetting where I was, I called out as though at the head of my company, with the wild yell of the battle around me, and the foe before me; suddenly the crowd beneath the window broke; and the crash of cavalry equipments resounded through the street, and the head of a squadron of cuirassiers came up at a trot, followed by a train of baggage wagons, with six horses to each; the drivers whipped and spurred their cattle, and all betokened haste. From the strength of the guard, and the appearance of the

wagons, I conjectured that they were the treasures of the army : an opinion in which I was strengthened by the word "Bayonne" chalked in large letters on a chest thrown on the top of a carriage.

Some open wagons followed, in which the invalids of the army lay, a pale and sickly mass : their lackluster eyes gazed heavily around with a stupid wonder, like men musing in a dream—even they, however, had arms given them, such was the dread of falling into the hands of the guerilla bands who infested the mountain passes, and never gave quarter, even to the wounded and dying. The long file at length passed, but only to make way for a still longer procession of Spanish prisoners, who, bound wrist to wrist, marched between two files of mounted gendarmes ; the greater number of these were mountaineers, guerillas of the south, condemned to the galleys for life, their bronzed faces and stalwart figures a striking contrast to their pale and emaciated companions, the inhabitants of the towns, who could scarce drag their weary limbs along, and seemed at every step ready to sink between misery and privation. The ribald jests and coarse language of the soldiers were always addressed to these, there seeming to be a kind of respect for the bolder guerillas, even in the hour of their captivity. The tramp of led horses, the roll of wagons, the cracking of whips, mingled with the oaths of the muleteers, and the fainter cries of the sick, now filled the air, and only occasionally did the loud cannonade rise above them : from every window faces appeared turned with excited eagerness toward the dense crowds ; and though I could perceive that inquiries as to the fate of the day were constantly made and answered, my ignorance of Spanish prevented my understanding what was said.

The noise in front of the prison, where the thoroughfare was wider and larger, far exceeded that around me ; and at last I could hear the steps of persons marching overhead, and ascending and descending the stairs. Doors clapped and slammed on every side ; when, suddenly, the door of my own cell was shaken violently, and a voice cried out in French, "Try this ; I passed twice without perceiving it." The next moment the lock turned, and my room was filled with dragoons, their uniforms splashed and dirty, and evidently bearing the marks of a long and severe march.

"Are you the Guerilla Guiposcoa de Condeiga ?" said one of the party, accosting me, as I stood wrapped up in my cloak.

"No ; I am an English officer."

"Show your epaulettes, then," said another, who knew that Spanish officers never wore such.

I opened my cloak, when the sight of my red uniform at once satisfied them. At this instant a clamor of voices without was heard, and several persons called out, "We have him ; here he is !" The crowd around me rushed forth at the sound ; and, following among them, I reached the street, now jammed up with horse and foot, wagons, tumbrils, and caissons—some endeavoring to hasten forward toward the road to Bayonne ; others as eagerly turned toward the plain of Vittoria, where the deafening roll of artillery showed the fight was at its fiercest. The dragoons issued forth, dragging a man amongst them, whose enormous stature and broad chest towered above the others, but who apparently made not the slightest resistance as they hurried him forward, shouting as they went, "*A la grand place!—à la place!*"

It was the celebrated Guerilla Guiposcoa, who had distinguished himself by acts of heroic daring, and sometimes savage cruelty, toward the French, and who had fallen into their hands that morning. Anxious to catch a glance of one of whom I had heard so often, I pressed forward among the rest, and soon found myself in the motley crowd of soldiers and townspeople that hurried toward the plaza.

Scarcely had I entered the square when the movement of the multitude was arrested, and a low whispering murmur succeeded to the deafening shouts of vengeance and loud cries of death I had heard before ; then came the deep roll of a muffled drum. I made a strong effort to press forward, and at length reached the rear of a line of dismounted dragoons, who stood leaning on their carbines, their eyes steadily bent on a figure some twenty paces in front. He was leisurely employed in divesting himself of some of his clothes ; which, as he took off, he piled in a little heap beside him ; his broad guerilla hat, his dark cloak, his sheep's-wool jacket slashed with gold, fell one by one from his hand ! and his broad manly chest at last lay bare, heaving with manifest pride and emotion, as he turned his dark eyes calmly around him. Nothing was now heard in that vast crowd, save when some low broken sob of grief would burst from the close-drawn mantillas of the women, as they offered up their heartfelt prayers for the soul of the patriot.

A low parapet wall, surmounted by an iron railing, closed in this part of the plaza, and separated it from a deep and rapid

river that flowed beneath—a branch of the Ebro.

Beyond, the wide plain of Vittoria stretched away toward the Pyrenees; and although two leagues distant, the scene of the battle was discernible, from the heavy mass of cloud that lowered overhead, and the deep booming of the guns, that seemed to make the air tremulous.

The Spaniard turned his calm look toward the battle-field, and for an instant his dark eye flashed back upon his foes with an expression of triumphant daring, which seemed, as it were, to say, "I am avenged already!" A cry of impatience burst from the crowd of soldiers, and the crash of their firelocks threatened that they would not wait longer for his blood. But the guerilla's manner changed at once; and holding up a small ebony crucifix before him, he seemed to ask a moment's respite for a short prayer.

The stillness showed his request was complied with; he turned his back toward the crowd, and placing the crucifix on the low parapet, he bent down on both his knees, and seemed lost in his devotions. As he rose, I thought I could perceive that he threw a glance, rapid as lightning, over the wall toward the river that flowed beneath. He now turned fully round; and unfastening the girdle of many a gay color that he wore round his waist, he threw it carelessly on his left arm; and then, baring his breast to the full, knelt slowly down, and with his arms wide apart called out in Spanish, "Here is my life—come take it." The words were scarcely uttered, when the carbines clanked as they brought them to the shoulder; the sergeant of the company called out the words, "*Donnez*"—a pause—"*feu!*" The fusillade rang out, and, as my eyes pierced the smoke, I could see that the guerilla had fallen to the earth, his arms crossed upon his bosom.

A shriek wild and terrific burst from the crowd. The blue smoke slowly rose, and I perceived the French sergeant standing over the body of the guerilla, which lay covered with blood upon the turf. A kind of convulsive spasm seemed to twitch the limbs, upon which the Frenchman drew his saber. The rattle of the steel scabbard rang through my heart; the bright weapon glanced as he raised it above his head. At the same instant the guerilla chief sprang to his legs; he tottered as he did so, for I could see that his left arm hung powerless at his side: but his right held a long poniard. He threw himself upon the Frenchman's bosom—a yell followed, and the same moment the guerilla sprang over the battlements, and with a loud splash dropped into the river beneath. The water had scarce covered his body as the Frenchman fell a corpse upon the ground.

A perfect roar of madness and rage burst from the French soldiers as, rushing to the parapet, a hundred balls swept the surface of the river; but the tall reeds of the bank had already concealed the bold guerilla, whose left arm had received the fire of the soldiers, who now saw the meaning of that quick movement by which he had thrown his girdle around it. The incident was but the work of a few brief moments; nor was there longer time to think on it, for suddenly a squadron of cavalry swept past, at the full speed of their horses, calling out the words, "Place there—make way there in front. The ambulance—the ambulance!"

A low groan of horror rose around; the quick retreat of the wounded betokened that the battle was going against the French; the words "beaten and retreat" re-echoed through the crowd; and as the dark suspicion crept amid the moving mass, the first wagon of the wounded slowly turned the angle of the square, a white flag hung above it. I caught but one glance of the sad convoy; but never shall I forget that spectacle of blood and agony. Torn and mangled they lay, an indiscriminate heap; their faces blackened with powder, their bodies shattered with wounds. High above the other sounds their piercing cries rent the air—with mingled blasphemies and insane ravings. Meanwhile the drivers seemed only anxious to get forward; as, deaf to every prayer and entreaty, they whipped their horses, and called out to the crowd to make way.

Escape was now open; but where could I go? My uniform exposed me to immediate detection; should I endeavor to conceal myself, discovery would be my death. The vast tide of people that poured along the streets was a current too strong to stem, and I hesitated what course to follow. My doubts were soon resolved for me; an officer of General Oudinot's staff, who had seen me the previous night, rode up close to where I stood, and then turning to his orderly, spoke a few hurried words. The moment after, two heavy dragoons, in green uniform and brass helmets, came up, one at either side of me; without a second's delay, one of them unfastened a coil of small rope that hung at his saddle-bow, which, with the assistance of the other, was passed over my right wrist and drawn tight. In this

way, secured like a malefactor, I was ordered forward. In vain I remonstrated; in vain I told them I was a British officer; to no purpose did I reiterate that hitherto I had made no effort to escape. It is not in the hour of defeat Frenchmen can behave either with humanity or justice. A volley of "*sacrés*" was the only answer I received, and nothing was left me but to yield.

Meanwhile the tumult and confusion of the town was increasing every minute. Heavy wagons—inscribed in large letters "*Domaine extérieur de sa Majesté l'Empereur*"—containing the jewels and treasures of Madrid, passed by, drawn by eight, sometimes ten horses, and accompanied by strong cavalry detachments. Infantry regiments, blackened with smoke and gunpowder, newly arrived from the field, hurried past to take up positions on the Bayonne road to protect the retreat: then came the nearer din and crash of the artillery as the French army were falling back upon the town.

Scarcely had we issued from the walls of the city, when the whole scene of flight and ruin was presented to our eyes. The country for miles round was one moving mass of fugitives—cannon, wagons, tumbrils, wounded soldiers, horsemen, and even splendid equipages, were all mixed up together on the Pampeluna road, which lay to our right. The march was there intercepted by an overturned wagon—the horses were plunging, and the cries of wounded men could be heard even where we were. The fields at each side of the way were soon spread over by the crowd eager to press on. Guns were now abandoned and thrown into ditches and ravines; the men broke their muskets, and threw the fragments on the roadside, and vast magazines of powder were exploded here and there through the plain.

But my attention was soon drawn to objects more immediately beside me. The Bayonne road, which we now reached was the last hope of the retiring army. To maintain this line of retreat, strong detachments of infantry, supported by heavy guns, were stationed at every eminence commanding the position; but the swooping torrent of the retreat had left little time for these to form, many of whom were borne along with the flying army. Discipline gave way on every side—the men sprang upon the wagons, refusing to march—the treasures were broken open and thrown upon the road. Frequently the baggage-guard interchanged shots and saber-cuts with the infuriated soldiers, who only thought of escape; and the ladies, who but yesterday were the objects of every care and solicitude, were hurried along amid that rude multitude, some on foot, others glad to be allowed to take a place in the ambulance among the wounded—their dresses blood-stained and torn, adding to the horror and misery of the scene. Such was the prospect before us. Behind a dark mass hovered, as if even yet withstanding the attack of the enemy, whose guns thundered nearer and clearer every moment. Still the long line of wounded came on—some in wide, open carts—others stretched upon the gun-carriages, mangled and bleeding. Among these my attention was drawn to one whose head having fallen over the edge of the cart, was endangered by every roll of the heavy wheel that grazed his very skull. There was a halt, and I seized the moment to assist the poor fellow as he lay thus in peril. His helmet had fallen back, and was merely retained by the brass chain beneath his chin; his temples were actually cleft open by a saber-cut, and I could see that he had also received some shot-wounds in the side, where he pressed his hands, the blood welling up between the fingers.

As I lifted the head to place it within the cart, the eyes opened and turned fully upon me. A faint smile of gratitude curled his lip; I bent over him, and, to my horror, recognized in the mangled and shattered form before me the gallant fellow with whom the very night before I had formed almost a friendship. The word "cold," muttered between his teeth, was the only answer I could catch, as I called him by his name. The order to march rang out from the head of the convoy, and I had barely time to unfasten my cloak, and throw it over him, ere the wagon moved on. I never saw him after.

A squadron of cavalry now galloped past, reckless of all before them; the traces of the artillery were cut, and the men, mounting the horses, deserted the guns, and rode for their lives. In the midst of the flying mass, a splendid equipage flew past, its six horses lashed to madness by the postilions; a straggling guard of honor galloped at either side, and a grand ecuyer in scarlet, who rode in front, called out incessantly, *Place—place pour sa Majesté!*" but all to no purpose. The road, blocked up by broken wagons, dense crowds of horse and foot, dead and dying, soon became impassable. An effort to pass a heavily-loaded wagon entangled the coach; the axle was caught by the huge wagon; the horses plunged when they

felt the restraint, and the next moment the royal carriage was hurled over on its side, and fell with a crash into the ravine at the roadside. While the officers of his staff dismounted to rescue the fallen monarch, a ribald burst of laughter rose from the crowd, and a pioneer actually gave the butt of his carbine to assist the king as, covered with mud, he scrambled up the ditch.

I had but an instant to look upon his pale countenance, which even since the night before seemed to have grown many years older, ere I was myself dragged forward among the crowd.

Darkness now added its horror to the scene of riot and confusion; the incessant cries of the fugitives told that the English cavalry were upon them; the artillery came closer and closer, and the black sky was traversed by many a line of fire, as the shells poured down upon the routed army; the English guns, regardless of roads, dashed down on the terrified masses, raining balls and howitzer-shells on every side. Already the cheers of my gallant countrymen were within my hearing, and, amid all the misery and danger around me, my heart rose proudly at the glorious victory they had gained.

Meanwhile my escort, whose feeling toward me became more brutal as their defeat was more perceptible, urged me forward with many an oath and imprecation. Leaving the main road, we took the fields, already crowded with the infantry. At last, as the charges of the English came closer, they seemed to hesitate upon being any longer burdened by me, and one, after interchanging some angry words with his companion, rode off, leaving me to the care of him who passed the cord round my wrist. For a second or two this fellow seemed to waver whether he might not dispose of me more briefly, and once he half withdrew his pistol from the holster, and turned round in his saddle to regard me more steadily; a better feeling however, gained the mastery; the hope, too, of promotion, could he bring in an officer his prisoner, had, doubtless, its share in his decision. He ordered me to jump up behind him, and dashing spurs into his troop-horse, rode forward.

I have, perhaps, lingered too long in my recollections of this eventful night; it was, however, the last striking incident which preceded a long captivity. On the third day of the retreat I was joined to a band of Spanish prisoners marching toward Bayonne. Of the glorious victory which rescued the Peninsula from the dominion of the French, and drove their beaten armies beyond the Pyrenees, or of the great current of events which followed the battle of Vittoria, I do not purpose to speak. Neither will I trouble my reader with a narrative of hardship and suffering; it is enough to mention that my refusal to give my parole subjected me in all cases to every indignity.

Wearied out at length, I accepted this only chance of rendering life endurable; and on reaching Bayonne gave my word not to attempt my escape, and was accordingly separated from my companions in misfortune, and once more treated as a gentleman.

The refusal to accept "parole," I learned afterwards, was invariably construed by the French authorities of the day into a direct avowal not only to attempt escape by any means that might present themselves, but was also deemed a rejection of the hospitality of the country, which placed the recusant beyond the pale of its courtesy.

No sooner, then, had I complied with this necessity—for such it was—than I experienced the greatest kindness and politeness in every quarter. Through every village in the south the house of the most respectable inhabitant was open to me; and with a delicacy it would be difficult to match elsewhere, although the events of the Spanish war were the subject of general interest wherever we passed, not a word was spoken nor a hint dropped before the "prisoner," which could in the slightest degree offend his nationality, or hurt his susceptibility as an enemy.

* * * * *

I shall now beg of my reader to pass over with me a long interval of time, during which my life presented nothing of interest or incident, and accompany me to the environs of St. Omer, where, in the commencement of the year 1814, I found myself domesticated as a prisoner of war on parole. During the long period that had elapsed since the battle of Vittoria, I had but once heard from home: matters there were pretty much as I had left them. My father had removed to a colonial appointment, whence he transmitted the rich revenues of his office to my mother, whose habitual economy had enabled her to dispense at Bath, much in the same kind of way as she had formerly done in London. My lovely cousin—in the full possession of her beauty and a large fortune—had refused some half-dozen brilliant proposals, and was reported to have an unswerving attachment to some near relative, which happy individual, my mother suggested,

was myself. Of the Bellews, I learned from the newspapers that Sir Simon was dead; and Miss Bellew, having recovered most of the great estates of her family through the instrumentality of a clever attorney—whom I guessed to be my friend Paul—was now the *belle* and fortune of Dublin. I had frequently written home, and once or twice to the Rooneys and the major, but never received any answer; so that at last I began to think myself forgotten by every one, and dreamed away my life in a state of almost apathy—dead to the exciting events of the campaign, which, even in the seclusion where I lived, were from time to time reported. The brilliant march of our victorious troops through the Pyrenees and the south of France, Nivelle, Orthes, and Toulouse, I read of as people read of long past events; life to me appeared to have run out; and my thoughts turned ever backward to the bright morning of my career in Ireland—my early burst of manhood—my first and only passion.

The old royalist seigneur, upon whom I was billeted, could evidently make nothing of the stolid indifference with which I heard him and his antiquated spouse discuss the glorious prospect of a restoration of the Bourbons: even the hope of liberty was dying away within me. One ever-present thought had damped all ardor and all ambition—I had done nothing as a soldier—my career had ended as it began—and, while others had risen to fame and honor, *my* name had won nothing of distinction and repute. Instead of anxiously looking forward to a meeting with Louisa Bellew, I dreaded the very thoughts of it. My mother's fashionable calm and indifference I should now feel as a sarcasm on my own failure; and as to my cousin Julia, the idea alone of her raillery was insufferable. The only plan I could devise for the future was, as soon as I should recover my liberty, to exchange into some regiment in the East Indies, and never to return to England.

It was, then, with some surprise, and not much sympathy, that I beheld my venerable host appear one morning at breakfast with a large white cockade in the breast of his frock coat, and a large white lily in a wine-glass before him. His elated manner and joyous looks were all so many riddles to me; while the roll of the drums in the peaceful little town, the ringing of bells, and the shouts of the inhabitants, were all too much even for apathy like mine.

"What is the uproar about?" said I, pettishly, as I saw the old gentleman fidget from the table to the window and then back again, rubbing his hands, admiring his cockade, and smelling at the lily, alternately.

"*Tintamarre!*" said he, indignantly, "*savez-vous, Monsieur, ce n'est pas le mot, celui-là?* We are restored, sir! We have regained our rightful throne! We are no longer exiles!"

"Yes!" said the old lady, bursting into the room, and throwing herself into her husband's arms, and then into mine, in a rapture of enthusiasm—"Yes, brave young man, to you and your victorious companions in arms we owe the happiness of this moment. We are restored!"

"*Oui!* restored! restored!" echoed the old gentleman, throwing open the window, and shouting as though he would have burst a blood-vessel, while the mob without, catching up the cry, yelled it louder than ever.

"These people must be all deranged," thought I, unable to conjecture at the moment the reasons for such extravagant joy. Meanwhile, the room became crowded with townspeople in holiday costume, all wearing the white cockade, and exchanging with each other the warmest felicitations at the happy event.

I now soon learned that the allies were in possession of Paris, that Napoleon had abdicated, and the immediate return of Louis XVIII. was already decided upon. The trumpets of a cavalry regiment on the march were soon added to the uproar without, accompanied by the cries of "The English!" "The brave English!" I rushed to the door, and, to my astonishment, beheld above the heads of the crowd the tall caps of a British dragoon regiment towering aloft. Their band struck up as they approached; and what a sensation did my heart experience as I heard the well-remembered air of "Garryowen" resound through the little streets of a French village.

"An Irish regiment!" said I, half aloud.

The word was caught by a bystander, who immediately communicated it to the crowd, adding, by way of explanation, "*Les Irlandais; oui, ce sont les Cosaques de l'Angleterre.*" I could not help laughing at the interpretation, when suddenly my own name was called out loudly by some person from the ranks. I started at the sound, and, forcing my way through the crowd, I looked eagerly on every side, my heart beating with anxiety lest some deception might have misled me.

"Hinton! Jack Hinton!" cried the voice again. At the head of the regiment

rode three officers, whose looks were bent steadily on me, while they seemed to enjoy my surprise and confusion. The oldest of the party who rode between the two others, was a large swarthy-looking man, with a long drooping moustache—at that time rarely worn by officers of our army. His left arm he wore in a sling; but his right was held in a certain easy, jaunty manner I could not soon forget. A burst of laughter broke from him at length, as he called out,—

"Come, Jack, you must remember me."

"What!" cried I; "O'Grady!—is it possible?"

"Even so, my boy," said he, as throwing his reins on his wrist, he grasped my hand and shook it with all his heart. "I knew you were here, and I exerted all my interest to get quartered near you. This is my regiment—eh?—not fellows to be ashamed of, Jack? But come along with us; we mustn't part company now."

Amid the wildest cries of rejoicing, and frantic demonstration of gratitude from the crowd, the regiment moved on to the little square of the village. Here the billets were speedily arranged;—the men betook themselves to their quarters—the officers broke into small parties—and O'Grady and myself retired to the inn, where having dined *tête-à-tête*, we began the interchange of our various adventures since we parted.

CHAPTER LV.

THE FOUR-IN-HAND.

My old friend, save in the deeper brown upon his cheek, and some scars from French sabers, was nothing altered from the hour in which we parted. The same bold, generous temperament, the same blending of recklessness and deep feeling, the wild spirit of adventure, and the gentle tenderness of a child—were all mixed up in his complex nature, for he was every inch an Irishman.

While the breast of his uniform glittered with many a cross and decoration, he scarcely ever alluded to his own feats in the campaign; nor did he more than passingly mention the actions where his own conduct had been most conspicuous. Indeed, there was a reserve in his whole manner, while speaking of the Peninsular battles, which I soon discovered proceeded from delicacy toward me, knowing how little I had seen of service from my early imprisonment, and fearing lest, in the detail of the glorious career of our armies, he might be inflicting fresh wounds on one whose fortune forbade him to share in it.

He often asked me about my father, and seemed to feel deeply the kindness he had received from him when in London. Of my mother, too, he sometimes spoke, but never even alluded to Lady Julia; and when once I spoke of her as the protector of Corny, he fidgeted for a second or two, seemed uneasy and uncomfortable, and gave me the impression that he felt sorry to be reduced to accept a favor for his servant, where he himself had been treated with coldness and distance.

Apart from this—and it was a topic we mutually avoided—his spirits were as high as ever. Mixing much with the officers of his corps, he was actually beloved by them. He had joined in all their schemes of pleasure and amusement with the zest of his own buoyant nature; and the youngest cornet in the regiment felt himself the colonel's inferior in the gayety of the mess, as much as at the head of the squadrons.

At the end of a few days, I received from Paris the papers necessary to relieve me from the restraint of my parole, and was concerting with O'Grady the steps necessary to be taken to resume my rank in the service, when an incident occurred which altered all our plans for the moment, and by one of those strange casualties which so often occur in life, gave a new current to my own fate forever.

I should mention here that, amid all the rejoicing which ushered in the restoration—amid all the flattery by which the allied armies were received—one portion of the royalists maintained a dogged, ungenial spirit toward the men by whom their cause was rendered victorious, and never forgave them the honor of reviving a dynasty to which they themselves had contributed nothing. These were the old militaires of Louis XVIII.—the men who, too proud or too good-for-nothing to accept service under the emperor, had lain dormant during the glorious career of the French armies, and who now, in their hour of defeat and adversity, started into life as the representatives of the military genius of the country;—these men, I say, hated the English with a vindictive animosity which the old Napoleonist could not equal. Without the generous rivalry of an open foe, they felt themselves humbled by comparison with the soldiers whose weather-beaten faces and shattered limbs bore token of a hundred battles, and for the very cause, too, for which they themselves were the

most interested. This ungenerous spirit found vent for itself in a thousand petty annoyances, which were practiced upon our troops in every town and village of the north of France; and every officer whose billet consigned him to the house of a royalist soldier would gladly have exchanged his quarters for the companionship of the most inveterate follower of Napoleon. To an instance of what I have mentioned was owing the incident which I am about to relate.

To relieve the ennui of a French village, the officers of the 18th had, with wonderful expenditure of skill and labor, succeeded in getting up a four-in-hand drag, which, to the astonishment and wonder of the natives, was seen daily wending its course through the devious alleys and narrow streets of the little town, the roof covered with dashing dragoons, whose laughing faces and loud-sounding bugles were all deemed so many direct insults by the ill-conditioned party I have mentioned.

The unequivocal evidences of dislike they exhibited to this dashing "turn-out" formed, I believe, one of its great attractions to the 18th, who never omitted an occasion, whatever the state of the weather, to issue forth every day, with all the noise and uproar they could muster.

At last, however, the old *commissaire de police*, whose indignation at the proceeding knew no bounds, devised an admirable expedient for annoying our fellows—one which, supported as it was by the law of the country, there was no possibility of evading. This was, to demand the name of every officer who passed the gate of the fortress, thus necessitating him to get down from the roof of the coach, present his papers, and have them carefully conned and scrutinized, their *visa* looked into, and all sorts of questions propounded.

When it is understood that the only drive led through one or other of these barriers, it may be imagined how provoking and vexatious such a course of proceeding became. Representations were made to the mayor ever and anon, explaining that the papers once produced no further inconvenience should be incurred—but all to no purpose. Any one who knows France will acknowledge how totally inadequate a common-sense argument is in the decision of a question before a government functionary. The mayor, too was a Royalist, and the matter was decided against us.

Argument and reason having failed, the gallant 18th come to the resolution to try force, and accordingly it was decided that next morning we should charge the *barrière* in full gallop, as it was rightly conjectured that no French *employé* would feel disposed to encounter the rush of a four-in-hand, even with the law on his side.

To render the *coup de main* more brilliant, and perhaps, too, to give an air of plausibility to the infraction, four dashing thoroughbred light chestnuts—two of the number having never felt a collar in their lives—were harnessed for the occasion. A strong force of the wildest spirits of the regiment took their places on the roof; and amid a cheer that actually made the street ring, and a tantarara from the trumpets, the equipage dashed through the town, the leaders bounding with the swingle bars every moment over their backs. Away we went, the populace flying in terror on every side, and every eye turned toward the *barrière*, where the dignified official stood, in the calm repose of his station, as if daring us to transgress his frontier. Already had he stepped forward with his accustomed questions; the words, "*Messieurs, je vous demande*—" had escaped his lips, when he had barely time to spring into his den, as the furious leapers tore past, the pavement crashing beneath their hoofs, and the shouts of laughter mingling with the uproar. Having driven for a league or so at a slow pace to breathe our cattle, we turned homeward, rejoicing in the success of our scheme, which had fully satisfied our expectations. What was our chagrin, however, as we neared the *barrière*, to discover that a strong force of mounted gendarmes stopped the way, their drawn sabers giving us plainly to understand the fate that awaited our horses if we persisted in our plan! What was to be done? To force a passage, under the circumstances, was only to give an opportunity to the gendarmerie they were long anxious for—to cut our whole equipage in pieces. To yield was the only alternative; but what an alternative!—to be laughed at by the whole town on the very day of our victory!

"I have it!" said O'Grady, whose left arm being wounded, sat on the box beside the driver; "I have it, lads. Pull up when they tell you, and do as they direct."

With some difficulty, the four dashing nags were reined in, as we came up to the *barrière;* and the commissaire, bursting with passion, appeared at the door of the lodge, and directed us to get down.

"Your papers will avail little on the present occasion," said he insolently, as we produced them. "Your carriage and horses are confiscated. St. Omer has now

privilege as a fortified town. The fortresses of France enforce a penalty of forty thousand francs—" A burst of laughter from the bystanders at our rueful faces prevented us hearing the remainder of the explanation. Meanwhile, to our horror and disgust, some half-dozen gendarmes, with their long caps and heavy boots, were crawling up the sides of the drag, and taking their seats upon the top. Some crept into the interior, and showed their grinning faces at the windows; others mounted into the rumble; and two more aspiring spirits ascended to the box, by one of whom O'Grady was rudely ordered to get down, a summons enforced by the commissaire himself in a tone of considerable insolence. O'Grady's face for a minute or two seemed working with a secret impulse of fun and devilment, which I could not account for at such a moment, as he asked, in a voice of much humility,—

"Does monsieur the commissaire require me to come down?"

"Instantly," roared the Frenchman, whose passion was now boiling over.

"In that case, gentlemen, take charge of the team." So saying, he handed the reins to the passive gendarmes, who took them without well knowing why. "I have only a piece of advice," continued Phil, as he slowly descended the side; "keep a steady hand on the near-side leader, and don't let the bar strike her; and now, good-bye." He flourished his four-in-hand whip as he spoke, and with one tremendous cut came down on the team, from leader to wheeler, accompanying his stroke with a yell there was no mistaking. The heavy carriage bounded from the earth, as the infuriated cattle broke away at full gallop; a narrow street and a sharp angle lay straight in front; but few of those on the drag waited for the turn; as at every step some bearskin shako shot into the air, followed by a tall figure, whose heavy boots seemed ill-adapted for flying in.

The corporal himself had abandoned the reins, and held on manfully by the rail of the box. On every side they fell, in every attitude of distress. But already the leaders reached the corner, round went the swingle bars, the wheelers followed, the coach rocked to one side, sprang clean off the pavement, came down with a crash, and then fell right over; while the maddened horses, breaking away, dashed through the town, the harness in fragments behind them, and the pavement flying at every step.

The immediate consequences of this affair were some severe bruises, and no small discouragement to the gendarmerie of St. Omer; the remoter ones, an appeal from the municipal authorities to the commander-in-chief, by whom the matter was referred for examination to the adjutant-general. O'Grady was accordingly summoned to Paris, to explain, if he could, his conduct in the matter. The order for his appearance there came down at once, and I, having nothing to detain me at St. Omer, resolved to accompany my friend for a few days at least, before I returned to England. Our arrangements were easily made; and the same night we received the adjutant-general's letter we started by post for Paris.

CHAPTER LVI.

ST. DENIS.

We were both suddenly awakened from a sound sleep in the *caleche* by the loud cracking of the postilion's whip, the sound of street noises, and the increased rattle of the wheels over the unequal pavement. We started up just as, turning round in his saddle, and pointing with his long whip to either side of him, the fellow called out,—

"Paris, messieurs, Paris! This is the Faubourg St. Denis; there, before you, lies the Rue St. Denis. *Sacristi,* the streets are as crowded as at noonday."

By this time we had rubbed the sleep from our eyelids and looked about us, and truly the scene before us was one to excite all our astonishment. The Quartier St. Denis was then in the occupation of the Austrian troops, who were not only billeted in the houses, but bivouacked in the open streets; their horses picketed in long files along the *pavé,* the men asleep around their watch-fires, or burnishing arms and accouterments beside them. The white-clad cuirassier from the Danube, the active and sinewy Hungarian, the tall and swarthy Croat, were all there, mixed up among groups of peasant girls coming in to market with fowls and eggs. Carts of forage and wagons full of all manner of provisions were surrounded by groups of soldiers and country-people, trading amicably together, as though the circumstances which had brought them together were among the ordinary events of commerce.

Threading our way slowly through these, we came upon the Jäger encampment, their dark green uniform and brown carbines giving that *air sombre* to their ap-

pearance so striking after the steel-clad cuirassier and the bright helmets of the dragoons. Farther on, around a fountain, were a body of dismounted dragoons, their tall calpacks and scarlet trowsers bespeaking them Polish lancers; their small but beautifully formed white horses pawed the ground, and splashed the water round them, till the dust and foam rose high above them. But the strangest of all were the tall, gigantic figures, who, stretched alongside of their horses, slept in the very middle of the wide street. Lifting their heads lazily for a moment, they would gaze on us as we passed, and then lie down again to sleep. Their red beards hung in masses far down upon their breasts, and their loose trowsers, of a reddish dye, but half concealed boots of undressed skin. Their tall lances were piled around them; but these were not wanting to prove that the savage, fierce-looking figures before us were the Cossacks of the Don, thus come for many a hundred mile, to avenge the slaughter of Borodino and the burning of Moscow. As we penetrated farther into the city, the mixture of nation and costume became still more remarkable. The erect and soldier-like figure of the Prussian; the loose, wild-eyed Tartar; the brown-clad Russian, with russet beard, and curved saber; the stalwart Highlander, with nodding plume and waving tartan; the Bashkir, with naked scimitar; the gorgeous hussar of Hungary; the tall and manly form of the English guardsman, passed and repassed before us, adding, by the Babel of discordant sound, to the wild confusion of the scene.

It was a strange sight to see the savage soldier from the steppes of Russia; the dark-eyed, heavy-browed Gallician; the yellow-haired Saxon; the rude native of the Caucasus—who had thus given themselves a "rendezvous" in the very heart of European civilization—wandering about; now stopping to admire some magnificent palace, now gazing with greedy wonder at the rich display of some jeweler, or the costly and splendid dresses which were exhibited in the shop windows; while here and there were gathered groups of men whose looks of undisguised hate and malignity were bent unceasingly upon the moving mass: their *bourgeois* dress could not conceal that they were the old soldiers of the Empire—the men of Wagram, of Austerlitz, of Jena, and of Wilna—who now witnessed within their own capital the awful retribution of their own triumphant aggressions.

As the morning advanced the crowds increased, and as we approached the Place Carrousel, regiments poured in from every street to the morning parade. Among these, the Russian *garde*—the *Bonnets d'or*—were conspicuous for the splendor of their costume and the soldier-like precision of their movements; the clash of their brass cymbals and the wild strains of their martial music adding indescribably to their singular appearance. As the infantry drew up in line we stopped to regard them, when, from the Place Louis Quinze, the clear notes of a military band rang out a quickstep, and the 28th British marched in to the air of "The Young May Moon." O'Grady's excitement could endure no longer. He jumped up in the *caleche*, and, waving his hat above his head, gave a cheer that rang through the long corridor beneath the Louvre. The Irish regiment caught up the cry, and a yell as wild as ever rose above the din of battle shook the air. A Cossack picket then cantering up suddenly halted, and, leaning down upon their horses' manes, seemed to listen; and then dashing spurs into their flanks, made the circuit of the place at full gallop, while their "Hurra!" burst forth with all the wild vehemence of their savage nature.

"We shall get into some precious scrape with all this," said O'Grady, as, overcome with laughing, he fell back into the *caleche*.

Such was my own opinion; so, telling the postilion to turn short into the next street, we hurried away unperceived, and drove, with all the speed we could muster, for the Rue St. Honoré. The Hôtel de la Paix fortunately had room for us; and, ordering our breakfasts, we adjourned to dress, each resolving to make the most of his few hours at Paris.

I had just reached the breakfast rooms and was conning over the morning papers, when O'Grady entered, in full uniform, his face radiant with pleasure, and the same easy, jaunty swagger in his walk as on the first day I met him.

"When do you expect to have your audience, Phil?" said I.

"I have had it, my boy. It's all over, finished, completed. Never was anything so successful. I talked over the old adjutant in such a strain, that, instead of dreaming about a court-martial on us, the worthy man is seriously bent on our obtaining compensation for the loss of the drag. He looked somewhat serious when I entered; but when I once made him laugh, the game was my own. I wish you saw him wiping his dear old eyes as I

described the covey of gendarmes taking the air. However, the main point is, the regiment is to be moved up to Paris, the commissaire is to receive a reprimand, our claim for some ten thousand francs is to be considered, and I am to dine with the adjutant to-day, and tell the story after dinner.

"Do you know, Phil, I have a theory that an Irishman never begins to prosper but just at the moment that any one else would surely be ruined."

"Don't make a theory of it, Jack, for it may turn out unlucky. But the practice is pretty much what you represent it. Fortune never treats people so well as when they don't care a fig about her. She's exactly like a lady patroness—confoundedly impertinent, if you'll bear it, but all smiles, if you won't. Have you ever met Tom Burke—'Burke of ours,' as they called him, I believe, in half the regiments in the service?"

"No, never."

"Well, the loss is yours. Tom's a fine fellow in his way; and if you could get him to tell you his story—or rather one of his stories, for his life is a succession of them—perhaps you would find that this same theory of yours has some foundation. We'll pick him up one of these days, and I'll introduce you. But now, Jack, I have a piece of news for you. What do you think of it, my lad?—Lady Charlotte Hinton's at Paris."

"My mother here? Is it possible?"

"Yes. Her ladyship resides at No. 4, Place Vendôme opposite the Hotel de Londres. There's accuracy for you."

"And who is with her? My father?"

"No. The general is expected in a few days. Lady Julia, I believe, is her only companion."

There was a kind of reserve suddenly in his manner, as he mentioned this name, which made us both pause for a few seconds.

At length O'Grady broke the awkwardness of the silence, by saying, in his usual laughing way,—

"I contrived to pick up all the gossip of Paris in half an hour. The town is full of English—and such English too!—the Cossacks are civilized people, of quiet, retiring habits, compared to them. I verily believe the French are more frightened by our conviviality than ever they were by the bayonets of the allies. I'm dying to hear your lady-mother's account of everything here."

"What say you, then, if you come along with me? I'm becoming very impatient to see my people once more. Julia will, I am certain, be very amusing."

"Ah! and I have a debt of gratitude in that quarter," said O'Grady, hesitatingly. "Lady Julia was so very kind as to extend her protection to that old villain, Corny. I cannot for the life of me understand how she endured him."

"As to that," said I, "Julia has a taste for character; and not even the Chevalier Delany's eccentricities would pain her. So let's forward."

"Did I tell you that De Vere is here?" said O'Grady.

"No; not with my friends, I trust?"

"On the contrary, I ascertained that he does not visit at Lady Charlotte's. He is attached to Lord Cathcart's embassy; he's very little in society, and rarely to be seen but at the *salon*, where he plays tremendously high, loses every night, but reappears each day with a replenished pocket. But I intend to know the secret of all this, and many other matters, ere long. So now let us proceed."

CHAPTER LVII.

PARIS IN 1814.

If the strange medley of every nation and costume which we beheld on entering Paris surprised us, how much greater was our astonishment when, having finished a hurried breakfast, we issued forth into the crowded streets. Here were assembled among the soldiers of every country, visitors from all parts of Europe, attracted by the novel spectacle thus presented to them; and eager to participate in the pleasures of a capital whose rejoicings, so far from being checked by the sad reverse of fortune, were now at the highest pitch; and the city much more resembled the gay resort of an elated people than a town occupied by the troops of conquering enemies. The old soldier of the Empire alone grieved in the midst of this general joy; with the downfall of Napoleon died his every hope. The spirit of conquest, by which for so many years the army had been intoxicated, was annihilated by the one line that signed the treaty of Fontainebleau; and thus among the gay and laughing groups that hurried onward, might now and then be seen some veteran of the Old Guard scowling with contemptuous look upon that fickle populace as eager to celebrate the downfall, as ever they had been to greet the glory of their nation.

Nothing more strikingly marked the

incongruous host that filled the city than the different guards of honor which were mounted at the several hotels where officers and generals of distinction resided. At this time the regulation was not established which prevailed somewhat later, and gave to the different armies of the allies the duty of mounting all the guards in rotation. And now at one door might be seen the tall cuirassier of Austria, his white cloak falling in heavy folds over the flank and haunches of his coal-black horse, looking like some Templar of old; at another, the plumed bonnet of a Highlander fluttered in the breeze, as some hardy mountaineer paced to and fro, his gray eye and stern look unmoved by the eager and prying gaze of the crowd that stopped to look upon so strange and singular a costume; here was the impatient schimmel of some Hungarian hussar pawing the ground with restless eagerness, as his gay dolman slashed with gold glittered in the sun. The Jäger from Bohemia, the deadly marksman with the long rifle; the savage Tartar of the Ukraine, devouring his meal on his guard, and turning his dark suspicious eye around him, lest every passer-by might mean some treachery; all denoted that some representative of their country dwelt within, while every now and then the clank of a musket would be heard, as a heavy *porte cochère* opened to permit the passage of an equipage, as strange and as characteristic as the guard himself. Here would issue the heavy "wagon" of some German prince, with emblazoned panels and scarlet hammercloth; the horses as fat and lethargic as the smoking and moustached figure they were drawing. There was the low droschki of a Russian, three horses abreast, their harness tinkling with brass bells as the spirited animals plunged and curvetted along; the quiet and elegant-looking phaeton of English build, with its perfection of appointment, rolled along, with its deep woody sound, beside the quaint, old-fashioned *calèche* of Northern Germany, above whose cumbrous side-panels the heads of the passengers were visible only; nor were the horsemen less dissimilar: the stately Prussian, with his heel in line beneath his elbow; the Cossack, with short stirrups, crouched upon his horse's mane; the English horse artilleryman, powdering along with massive accouterments and gigantic steed; the Polish light cavalry soldier, standing high in his stirrups, and turning his restless eye on every side,—were all subjects for our curiosity and wonder.

The novelty of the spectacle seemed, however, to have greatly worn off for the Parisians, who rarely noticed the strange and uncouth figures that every moment passed before their eyes, and now talked away as unconcernedly amid the scene of tumult and confusion as though nothing new or remarkable was going on about them; their very indifference and carelessness one of the strangest sights we witnessed.

Our progress, which at first was a slow one, ceased entirely at the corner of the palace, where a considerable crowd was now collected. Although we asked of the bystanders, no one could tell what was going forward; but the incessant roars of laughter showed that something droll or ridiculous had occurred. O'Grady, whose taste in such matters would suffer no denial, elbowed his way through the mob, I following as well as I was able. When we reached the first rank of the spectators, we certainly needed no explanation of the circumstances to make us join in the mirth about us.

It was a single combat of a very remarkable description. A tall Cossack, with a long red beard now waving wildly on every side, was endeavoring to recover his mutcka cap from a little decrepit old fellow, from whom he had stolen a basket of eggs. The eggs were all broken on the ground, and the little man danced among them like an infuriated fiend, flourishing a stick all the while in the most fearful fashion. The Cossack, whose hand at every moment sought the naked knife that was stuck in his girdle, was obliged to relinquish his weapon by the groans of the mob, who unequivocally showed that they would not permit foul play; and being thus unarmed, could make nothing of an adversary whose contemptible appearance caused all the ridicule of the scene. Meanwhile, the little fellow, his clothes in rags, and his head surmounted by a red cossack mutcka capered about like nothing human, uttering the most frightful sounds of rage and passion. At length, in a paroxysm of fury, he dealt the tall Cossack a rap over the temples which made him reel again. Scarcely had the blow descended, when, stung by the insult and the jeers of the mob, the enraged savage grasped his knife. With one spring he pounced upon the little man; but, as he did so, a strong hand from behind seized him by the collar, and with one tremendous jerk hurled him back upon the crowd, where he fell stunned and senseless.

I had only time to perceive that it was O'Grady who had come to the rescue, when

the old fellow, turning fully round, looked up in his face, and without evincing any emotion of surprise or wonder, or even of gratitude, croaked out,—

"And it's standin' looking on ye wor all the time, and I fighting my sowle out! Ugh! bad luck to sarvice. Look at my coat and small-clothes! Ay, you may laugh, ye grinning bastes as ye are: and a basket of fresh eggs in smithereens, and this Friday!"

The convulsions of laughter which this apparition and the speech excited prevented our hearing more. The mob, too, without understanding a word, were fully sensible of the absurdity of the scene, and a perfect chorus of laughter rang through the street.

"And my elegant beaver—see it now!" said Corny—for we hope our reader recognizes him—as he endeavored to empty the batter from his headpiece, and restore it to shape. "Ugh! the haythins — the Turks! See now, Master Phil, it's warning I'm giving you this minit—here, where I stand. May the divil— Ah! if ye dare, ye eternal robber!" This elegant exordium was directed to the poor Cossack, who, having regained his feet, was skulking away from the field, throwing as he went, a lingering look at his red cap, which Mr. Delany still wore as a spoil of his victory.

We now made our way through the crowd, followed by Corny, whose angry looks on either side elicited peals of laughter; and thus accompanied we approached the massive *porte cochère* of a large hotel in the Place Vendôme, where a Swiss, in full costume of porter, informed us that Lady Charlotte Hinton resided.

While I endeavored to pass on, he interposed his burly person, informing me, in very short phrase, that her ladyship did not receive before four o'clock.

"Arrah, hould your prate!" cried Corny; "sure it's the woman's son you're talking to. Two pair of stairs to your left hand, and the first doore in the passage. Look at the crowd there, the lazy craytures! that has nothing better to do than follow a respectable man. Be off! Bad luck to yez! ye ought to be crying over the disgrace ye're in. Be the light that shines! but you desarved it well."

Leaving Corny to his oration before the mob, of which, happily for the safety of his own skin, they did not comprehend one word, I took the direction he mentioned, and soon found out the door, on which a visiting card with my mother's name was fastened.

We were now introduced into a large and splendidly furnished saloon, with all that lightness and elegance of decoration which in a foreign apartment is the compensation—a poor one sometimes—for the more comfortable look of our English houses; the room was empty, but the morning papers and all the new publications of the day were scattered about with profusion; consigning my friend for a short time to these, I followed the maid, who had already brought in my card to my mother, to her ladyship's dressing-room. The door was opened noiselessly by the maid, who whispered my name; a gentle "Let him come in" followed, and I entered. My mother was seated before a glass, under the hands of a coiffeur, and dared not turn her head. As I approached she reached me her hand, however, which having kissed dutifully, I drew my chair, and sat down beside her.

"My dear boy," said she, as her eyes turned toward me, and a tear fell from the lid and trickled down her cheek. In spite of the unnatural coldness of such a meeting, the words, the accents, and the look that accompanied them, came home to my heart, and I was glad to hide my emotion by again pressing my lips to her hand. Having kindly informed me that the ceremony she was then submitted to was imperative, inasmuch as if she had not M. Dejoncourt then, she could not have him at all—that his time was so filled up, every moment of it, from eight in the morning till eleven at night, that the Emperor Alexander himself couldn't obtain his services, if he wished for them—she proceeded to give me some details of my father, by which I could learn that the change in his circumstances had never been made known to her, and that she had gone on since we last met in her old career of extravagance and expense—the indulgence of which, and the cares of her ever-declining health, had given her abundant occupation.

As I looked at her beautiful features and delicately fair complexion, upon which time had scarcely laid a touch, I sighed to think at what a frightful sacrifice of feeling, of duty, and of happiness too, such loveliness had been purchased. If the fine penciling of that brow had never known a wrinkle, the heart had never throbbed to one high or holy thought—if the smile sat easily on the lip, it was the habitual garb of fashionable captivation, and not the indication of one kind thought or one affectionate feeling; I felt shocked, too, that I could thus criticise my mother; but

in truth, for a minute or two I forgot she was such.

"And Julia," said I, at length—"what of her?"

"Very handsome indeed—strikingly so. Beulwitz, the Emperor's aide-de-camp, admires her immensely. I am sincerely glad that you are come, dear John. You know Julia's fortune has all been saved; but of that another time. The first point now is to secure you a ticket for this ball, and how to do it I'm sure I know not."

"My dear mother, believe me I have not the slightest desire—"

"How very unkind you are, to think we could separate from you after such an absence; besides, Julia would be seriously offended, and I think with cause. But the ticket—let's consider about that. Dejoncourt, is it true that the Princess of Nassau was refused a card for the ball?"

"*Oui, miladi.* The King of Prussia has sent her one of his, and is to take her; and Madame la Duchesse de St. Bieve is so angry at being left out, that she tried to get up an alarm of conspiracy in the *faubourgs* to prevent the Sovereigns from going."

"But they will go, surely—won't they?"

"Ah, to be sure. *Pardieu*, they would say to-morrow that they had been omitted too, if they didn't appear."

"What are we to do?" said her ladyship, with energy. "Grammont can be of no use here; for unfortunately these people are not French."

"What then?" said I; "it is some of the crowned heads who are the entertainers?"

"Oh, no; indeed I don't know who they are; nor do I know any one who does. The only fact of importance is, that this is their third fête; the two first were the most brilliant things ever given in Paris—that the Emperor of Russia always dances there—the King of Prussia makes his whist party—that Blucher takes the head of one of the supper-tables—and, in a word, Talleyrand himself has employed more diplomacy to secure an extra ticket, than he has often dispensed in carving out a new monarchy."

My mother handed me a splendidly embossed card as she spoke, upon which, in letters of pale burnished gold, were inscribed the following words: "Madame de Roni, née Cassidy de Kilmainham, prie l'honneur," etc. A burst of laughing at the absurdity of the title stopped my reading further.

"She's an Italian, possibly," said my mother.

"I should think not," I replied; "the née Cassidy de Kilmainham smacks of something nearer home—what think you of Ireland?"

"Ireland! Are these people Irish?" said she, starting with horror at the thought. "I trust, my dear John, you would not think proper to jest on such a subject."

"My dear mother, I never heard of them before; the only thing that strikes me is the name. Cassidy is assuredly more Milesian than Roman."

"But she has birth: that's certain," replied my mother, proudly.

Not caring to argue the point, which, after all, resolved itself into the question that the lady was the child of somebody, and that somebody was called "Cassidy," I began to meditate on the singularity of such a phase in life as the entertainer of sovereigns, kaisers, kings, princes, archdukes, and ambassadors, being a person utterly unknown.

"But here's Grammont," said my mother, as a gentle tap was heard at the door, and the count entered; the only change in his appearance since last I saw him being the addition of another cordon to his blue coat, and a certain springiness in his walk, which I afterward remarked as common among all the returned *émigrés* at the restoration.

"*Que diable faut-il faire?*" said the count, entering, "with this Madame de Roni? she refuses all the world. Ah, Jack, *mon cher*, how do you do?—safe and sound from all the perils of these terrible French, that cut you all to pieces in the Peninsula. But only think, *miladi*, no card for la Duchesse de Tavanne; Madame de Givry left out. *Sacristi!* I hope there is nothing against *ce pauvre* Roi de Prusse."

"Well, and here is John," said my mother; "what are we to do about him?"

My renewed denial of any wish in the matter was cut short by a look of reproof, and I waited the whole discussion with patience.

"Never was there such a difficulty," said the count, musing. "There is certainly nothing to be done through the worthy husband of Madame. Dejoncourt and two or three more gave him a *dîner en gourmand* at Very's, to seduce him; and after his fifth glass of champagne he frankly confessed he was sorry he could not return their civilities as he wished. 'I'll entertain you here, and have Blucher and Platoff, Fouché, and any one else you like to meet you. I'll introduce you to old Prussia and the Czar whenever you please;

you shall have permission to shoot at Fontainebleau any day you mention; but as to Madame de Roni, she is devilish exclusive; I really cannot manage that for you.'"

"I wish you could prevail on yourself to be serious," said my mother, in no wise pleased with the jocular spirit the count's anecdote had excited; "but here is Julia—what does she advise?"

As my mother spoke, the door opened, and my cousin appeared. Her figure had more of the roundness of womanhood, and her face, though paler, was fuller, and its expression had assumed a more decided character than when I last saw her. Her winning smile and graceful carriage were all unchanged; and her low, soft voice never struck me as more fascinating than when she held out her hand and said,—

"My dear cousin! how happy it makes me to see you again!"

Her dark blue eyes were tearful as she spoke, and her lip—that haughty lip—trembled. A strange wild thrill crept through my heart as I pressed her hand within both of mine—a vague feeling which I dared not suffer to dwell in my mind, and yet feared lest when it should depart, that I had lost my chance of happiness. Yes! there are times when a man, without the admixture of any coxcombry in the feeling—without a particle of vanity—nay, with a deep sense of his own unworthiness, can ask himself—"Does this woman like me?" And at such moments, if his own heart give not the ready answer, it were far better that he sought not the reply from his reason.

It was only when my mother asked, for the second time, what was to be done about John's ticket, that Julia seemed aware of the question, a slight—a very slight—curving of her lip showing the while the sense she entertained of such an inquiry, after long years of separation; and at last, as if unable to repress the indignation of the moment, she said, abruptly,—

"But of course, as we shall not think of going to-night—"

"We not go! *Eh, pardieu!* why not?" said the count.

"The colonel below stairs, begs to say that he will call somewhat later," said the *femme de chambre*, at this juncture.

"The colonel! Whom does she mean?"

"Oh, my friend O'Grady. Poor fellow! I have been forgetting him all this while. So allow me to join him, and we'll wait for your appearance in the drawing-room."

"I remember him perfectly," said my mother; "an agreeable person, I think. So take Julia and the count with you, and I'll follow as soon as I can."

Julia blushed deeply, and as suddenly grew pale again as my mother spoke. I knew that she had always treated my friend with hauteur and reserve, without any assignable reason, and had long determined that when an opportunity arose I would endeavor to get rid of the unjust impression she had somehow conceived of my warmest, truest friend. This was, however, not the time for explanations; and I merely said, as I offered my arm,—

"Poor O'Grady has been badly wounded; but I think he's now getting on favorably."

She said something in reply, but the words were lost in the noise of descending the stairs. Just as we reached the landing, I caught a glimpse of my friend issuing from the gate, and only in time to call him by his name—

"Holloa, Phil! Don't go away."

As he turned back toward the drawing-room, he cried out,—

"It's only this instant, Jack, I remembered how very awkward it was of me to come here with you at this hour. You have, of course, so much to say and hear after your absence—"

The sight of my fair cousin cut short his speech, as she stood near the door, with her hand out to receive him. As O'Grady took her taper fingers within his own, there was an air of cold distance in his manner that actually offended me. Bowing deeply, he said a few brief words in a tone of gravity and stiffness quite unusual with him; and then, turning to Grammont, shook his hand with a warmth and cordiality most markedly different. I only dared to glance at Julia, but as I did so I could mark an expression of haughty displeasure that settled on her brow, while her heightened color made her turn away toward the window.

I was myself so much annoyed by the manner in which O'Grady had received advances which I had never seen made to any one before, that I was silent. Even Grammont saw the awkwardness of all parties so much in need of his intervention, that he at once opened the whole negotiation of the ball to O'Grady, describing, with a Frenchman's volubility and sarcasm, the stratagems and devices which were employed to obtain invitations—the triumph of the successful, the despairing malice of the unfortunate—heightening his narrative by the mystery of the fair hostess, who—herself unknown, unheard of till now—was at this moment at the pinnacle of fash-

ion, dictating the laws and distributing the honors of fashion to the greatest sovereigns of Europe.

"She is very beautiful, no doubt?" asked O'Grady."

"*Oui—pas mal,*" said Grammont, with that all-explaining shrug of the shoulders by which a foreigner conveys so much.

"Very rich, perhaps?"

"*Millionnaire!*" said the Frenchman, in a tone of exultation that bespoke his full acquiescence in that surmise at least.

"And her rank?"

"Ah! I don't read riddles. All I know is, her house is the best thing at Paris; she has secured old Cambacérès's *chef de cuisine;* has bought up the groom of the chambers of the ex-Emperor; keeps an estafette going on the Strasbourg road for *pâtés de foie gras;* and is on such terms with the sovereigns that she has their private bands to play at all her parties. *Que voulez-vous!*"

"Nothing more, indeed!" said O'Grady, laughing. "Such admirable supremacy in the world of fashion it would be rank heresy to question further, and I no longer wonder at the active canvass for her invitations."

"*Oui parblieu!*" said the Frenchman, gayly, "If monsieur the Comte d'Artois does not exert himself, people will be more proud of a ticket to these balls than of the Croix de St. Louis. For my own part, I think of wearing mine over the cordon."

As he spoke, he flourished his card of invitation in the air, and displayed it in his bosom.

"Madame de Roni, née Cassidy de Kilmainham," said O'Grady, bursting into a perfect roar of laughter. "This is glorious, Jack. Did you see this?"

"See—eh?—to be sure; and what then?"

But O'Grady's mirth had burst all bounds, and he sat back in an armchair laughing immoderately. To all our questions he could give no other reply than renewed bursts of merriment, which, however enjoyed by himself, were very provoking to us.

"He knows her," whispered Grammont in my ear; "Be assured he knows Madame."

"Jack, where shall we meet in half an hour?" said Phil at length, jumping up and wiping his eyes.

"Here, if you like," said I; "I shall not leave this till you return."

"Be it so," said he; and then with a bow to my cousin and an easy nod to Grammont, O'Grady took his hat and departed.

Grammont now looked at his watch, and remembering some half-dozen very important appointments, took his leave also, leaving me once more, after so long an interval, alone with Julia.

There were so many things to talk over since we had met, so many reminiscences which each moment called up, that I never thought of the hours as they ran over; and it was only by Lady Charlotte's appearance in the drawing-room that we were apprised it was already past four o'clock, and that the tide of her morning visitors would now set in, and break up all hopes of continuing our colloquy.

"Where is your friend?" said my mother, as she carried her eyes languidly round the spacious apartment.

"Gone some hours ago: but he promised to take me up here. We shall see him soon, I suspect."

"Colonel O'Grady," said a servant; and my cousin had just time to leave the room by one door as he entered by another.

Advancing to my mother with a manner of respectful ease which he possessed to perfection, O'Grady contrived in a few brief words to resume the ground he had formerly occupied in her acquaintance, throwing out as he went an occasional compliment to her looks, so naturally and unaffectedly done as not to need acknowledgment or reply, but yet with sufficient sincerity to show interest.

"I have heard since my arrival that you were interested about this ball, and took the opportunity to secure you some tickets, which, though late, some of your friends may care for."

He presented my mother as he spoke with several blank cards of invitation, who, as she took them, could not conceal her astonishment, nor repress the look of curiosity, which she could scarcely repel in words, as to how he had accomplished a task the highest people in Paris had failed in. I saw what was passing in her mind, and immediately said,—

"My mother would like to know your secret about these same cards, O'Grady, for they have been a perfect subject of contention here for the last three weeks."

"Her ladyship must excuse me—at least for the present—if I have one secret I cannot communicate to her," said O'Grady, smiling. "Let me only assure her, no one shall know it before she herself does."

"And there is a secret," said Lady Charlotte, eagerly.

"Yes, there is a secret," replied O'Grady, with a most ludicrous gravity of tone.

"Well, at least we have profited by it,

and so we may wait in patience. Your friend Colonel O'Grady will give us the pleasure of his company at dinner, I hope," continued my mother, with her most winning smile.

O'Grady declined, having already accepted the invitation of the adjutant-general, but begged he might be permitted to join our party at the ball; which being graciously acceded to by my mother, we both made our bows and sauntered out to see more of the sights of Paris.

"Come, Phil," said I, when we were once more alone, "what is this secret? Who is Madame de Roni?"

"Not even to you, Jack," was his answer; and we walked on in silence.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE "RONI FETE."

There is no epidemic more catching than excitement. The fussy manner and feverish bustle of the people about you are sure, after a time, to communicate themselves to you, the very irritation they create being what the physicians call a predisposing cause. I became an illustration in point, as the hour of this ball drew nigh. At first I could not but wonder how, in the midst of such stupendous events as were then taking place—in the heart of a city garrisoned by an enemy—with everything that could wound national pride and offend national honor—even French levity could raise itself to the enjoyment of fashionable frivolity; but, by degrees, the continual recurrence of the subject familiarized my mind to it, wore off my first and more natural impressions, and at last I began, like my neighbors, not only to listen with patience, but even to join in the various discussions with animation and interest.

No sooner had the report gained currency that Lady Charlotte was in possession of blank invitations, than our hotel was besieged by half Paris—the unfortunate endeavoring, by every species of flattery, and every imaginable stratagem, to obtain tickets; the lucky ones all anxious to find out the mystery of her ladyship's success, which at first seemed almost incredible. The various surmises, guesses, hints, allusions and subterfuges which followed each other in rapid succession, as this motley mob of fashionables came and went, and went and came again, amused me considerably—the more so, perhaps, as the occasion called into full play all my cousin Julia's powers of flippant raillery and sarcasm, both of which she exercised without scruple, but never within range of discovery by any of her victims.

Everything gave way to the convenience of this splendid fête. The eight o'clock dinner was anticipated by full two hours—no other subject of conversation was ever broached by the company—and at nine the carriages were ordered to the door, it being wisely calculated that if we reached our destination at eleven we should esteem ourselves fortunate.

How often, as the dashing equipage whirls past to some scene of pleasure, where beauty, and rank, and riches await the sated votary of fashion, will the glare of the carriage lamps fall upon the gloomy footway, where, wet and weary, some melancholy figure steals along with downcast head and plodding step — his thoughts turned ever to some accustomed scene of wretchedness, where want and misery, disease, neglect, decay, all herd together, and not even hope can enter. The poor man, startled, looks up—the rich one, lolling back upon his easy cushion, casts a downward glance—their eyes meet—it is but a second—there is no sympathy between them—the course of one lies north, the other south. Thus at each moment did my sad heart turn away from all the splendor of the preparation about me, to wonder with myself how, even for an instant, I could forget my own path in life, which, opening with every prospect of happiness, yet now offered not a hope for the future. Between these two alternate states the hours crept on. As I sat beside Julia in the carriage, I couldn't but mark that something weighed also on her spirits. More silent than usual, she replied, when spoken to, with effort, and more than once returned wrong answers to my mother, who talked away unceasingly of the ball and the guests.

It was near midnight when we drove into the large archway of the Hôtel de Rohan, where Madame de Roni held her court. Brilliantly lighted with lamps of various colors, the very equipages were made a part of the spectacle, as they shone in bright and changeful hues, reflected from gorgeous housings, gilded trappings, and costly liveries. A large dark-colored traveling carriage, with a single pair of horses, stood in the corner of the court: the only thing to distinguish it being two mounted Light Dragoons, who waited beside it, and a chasseur in green and gold uniform, who stood at the door. This simple equipage belonged to the King of Prussia. Around

on every side were splendidly appointed carriages, glittering with emblazonry and gilding, from which, as the guests descended and entered the marble vestibule, names of European celebrity were called out, and repeated from voice to voice along the lofty corridors. Le Prince de Schwartzenberg, Count Pozzo di Borgo, Le Duc de Dalberg, Milord Cathcart, Le Comte de Nesselrode, Monsieur Talleyrand de Perigord, with others equally noble and exalted, followed in rapid succession.

Our turn came at last; and as we reached the hall we found O'Grady waiting for our arrival.

"There's no use in attempting to get forward for some time," said he; "so follow me, and I'll secure you a more comfortable place to wait in."

As he spoke he passed through the hall, and, whispering a few words to a servant, a door was opened in the wainscot, admitting us to a small and neatly fitted up library, where a good fire and some easy-chairs awaited us.

"I see your surprise," said O'Grady, as my mother looked about her with astonishment at his perfect acquaintance with the whole locality, "but I can't explain—it's part of my secret: meanwhile, I have another for your ear," said he, in a low whisper, as he drew me aside into a corner. "I have made a very singular discovery, Jack, to-day, and I have a notion it may lead to more. I met, by accident, at the Adjutant-General's table, the brother of a French officer whose life I saved at Nivelle; he remembered my name in a moment and we became sworn friends. I accepted his offer of a seat in his carriage to this ball, and on the way he informed me that he was the chief of the secret police of Paris, whose business it is to watch all the doings of the regular police and report upon them to Fouché, whose spies are in every *salon* and at every dinner-table in the capital. I have no time at present to repeat any of the extraordinary stories he told me of this horrible system; but just as we entered the court-yard of this hotel, our carriage was jammed up in the line, and detained for some minutes. Guillemain suddenly let down the glass, and gave a low, peculiar whistle, which, if I had not been paying considerable attention to everything about him, might have escaped my notice. In about a minute after, a man with a hat slouched over his face, and a large cravat covering his mouth, approached the carriage. They conversed together for some time, and I could perceive that the new comer spoke his French in a broken manner and with a foreign accent. By a slight movement of the horses one of the lamps threw the light full upon this man's face; I fixed my eyes rapidly on him, and recognized—whom, think you—but you'd never guess—no other than your old antagonist, Ulick Burke?"

"Ulick Burke! You must have been mistaken."

"No, no. I knew him at once: the light rested on him for full five minutes, and I had time enough to scan every feature of his face. I could swear to the man now. He left us at last, and I watched him till he disappeared among the crowd of servants that filled the court-yard."

"'That's one of your people,' said I, carelessly, as Guillemain drew up the glass, and sat back in the carriage.

"'Yes, and a thorough scoundrel he is—capable of anything.'

"'He's not French,' said I, with the same indifference of manner I had feigned at first.

"Guillemain started as I spoke; and I half feared I had destroyed all by venturing too much; at length, after a short pause, he replied, 'You're right, he's not French; but we have them of all nations—Poles, Swedes, Germans, Italians, Greeks—that fellow is English.'

"'Say Irish, rather,' said I, determined to risk all—to know all.

"'You know him, then?' said Guillemain, hurriedly; 'where did you see Fitzgerald?'

"'Fitzgerald!' said I, repeating the name after him; and then, affecting disappointment, added, 'that's not the name.'

"'Ha! I knew you were mistaken,' said Guillemain, with animation; 'the fellow told me he defies recognition; and I certainly have tried him often among his countrymen, and he has never been detected; and yet he knows the English thoroughly and intimately. It was through him I first found out these very people we are going to.'

"Here, Jack, he entered upon a long account of our worthy host, who, with great wealth, great pretensions, and as great vulgarity, came to Paris some weeks ago in that mighty flood of all sorts of people that flocked here since the peace. Their desire to be ranked among the fashionable entertainers of the day was soon reported to the Minister of Police, who, after considering how far such a house might be useful, where persons of all shades of political opinion might meet—friends of the Bourbons, Jacobites, Napoleonists, the men of '88, and the admirers of the old

régime—measures were accordingly taken that their invitations should go out to the first persons in Paris, and, more still, should be accepted by them.

"While these worthy people are, therefore, distributing their hospitalities with all the good faith imaginable, their hotel is nothing more nor less than a *cabinet de police*, where Fouché and his agents are unraveling the intrigues of Paris, or weaving fresh ones for their own objects."

"Infamous system! But how comes it, Phil, that they have never discovered their anomalous position?"

"What a question, Jack! Vulgar pretension is a triple shield that no eye can pierce, and, as you know the parties—"

"Know them! No, I never heard of them before."

"What, Jack! Is your memory so short-lived? And yet there was a pretty girl in the house who might have rested longer in your memory."

The announcement of Lady Charlotte and my cousin's names by the servant at the foot of the stairs broke up our conference, and we had only time to join our party as we fell into that closely-wedged phalanx that wound its slow length up the spacious staircase. O'Grady's last words had excited my curiosity to the highest pitch; but, as he preceded me with my mother on his arm, I was unable to ask for any explanation.

At last we reached the ante-chamber, from which a vista of *salons* suddenly broke upon the view, and, although anticipating much, I had formed no conception whatever of the splendor of the scene before me. More brilliant than noon-day itself, the room was a blaze of wax-lights; the ceilings of fretted gold and blue enamel, glittering like a gorgeous firmament; the walls were covered with pictures in costly frames of Venetian taste; but the decorations, magnificent and princely as they were, were as nothing to that splendid crowd of jeweled dames and glittering nobles; of all that was distinguished in beauty, in rank, in military glory, or in the great contest of political life. Here were the greatest names of Europe—the kings and princes of the earth, the leaders of mighty armies, the generals of a hundred battles—here was the collective greatness of the world—all that can influence mankind, hereditary rank, military power, stupendous intellect, beauty, wealth—mixing in the vast vortex of fashionable dissipation, and plunging into all the excesses of voluptuous pleasure. The band of the Imperial Guard, stationed near the staircase, were playing with all the delicious softness of their national instrument—the Russian horn—a favorite mazurka of the Emperor's as we entered, and a partial silence reigned among the hundred listeners.

O'Grady conveyed my mother through the crowd to a seat, where, having placed my cousin beside her, he once more came near me.

"Jack," whispered he, "come a little this way." He drew aside a curtain as he spoke, and we entered a boudoir, where a buffet of refreshments was placed; here the scene was ludicrous in the extreme, from the incongruous mixture of persons of so many nations and languages who were chatting away and hob-nobbing to each other in all the dismembered phrases of every tongue in Europe; roars of laughter, however, poured from one corner of the room, whither O'Grady directed his steps, still holding my arm. A group of Cossack officers, in full scarlet costume, their loose trousers slashed with gold embroidery, and thrust into wide boots of yellow leather, stood in a circle round a person whom we could not yet perceive, but who, we were enabled to discover, was exercising his powers of amusement for this semi-savage audience, whose wild shouts of laughter broke forth at every moment. We made our way at length through the crowd, and my eyes at last fell upon the figure within. I stared—I rubbed my eyes—I actually began to doubt my very senses, when suddenly turning his joyous face, beaming with good humor, toward me, he held forth his hand, and called out,—

"Captain, my darling, the top of the morning to you! This beats Stephen's Green, doesn't it?"

"Mr. Paul Rooney!" said I.

"No, no, Monsieur de Roni, if you please," said he, again breaking out into a fit of laughing. "Lord help you, man! I've been christened since I came abroad. Let me present you to my friends." Here Paul poked a tall Cossack in the ribs to attract his attention, and then, pointing to me, said: "This is Captain Hinton; his name's a poser; a cross between chincough and a house-key. Eh, old fellow?"

A Tartar grin was the reply to this very intelligible speech, but a bumper of champagne made everything comprehensible between them. Mr. Rooney's hilarity soon showed me that he had not forgotten his native habits, and was steadily bent upon drinking glass for glass with his company, even though they only came in detachments; with Bashkir chiefs, Pomeranian barons, Rhine graafs, and Polish counts,

he seemed as intimate as though he had passed as much of his time in the Caucasus as the Four Courts, and was as familiar with the banks of the Don as ever he had been with those of the Dodder.

"And is it really our old friend Mrs. Paul who entertains this host of czars and princes?"

"Is it really only now that you've guessed it?" said O'Grady, as he carried me away with him through the saloon. "But I see Lady Charlotte is amongst her friends, and your cousin is dancing, so now let's make the most of our time. I say, Jack, your lady-mother scarcely supposes that her host is the same person she once called on for his bill. By Jove! what a discovery it would be to her! and the little girl she had such a horror of is now the *belle* of Paris. You remember Louisa Bellew, don't you? Seven thousand a year, my boy, and beauty worth double the money; but there she is, and how handsome!"

As he spoke, a lady passed us leaning on her partner's arm, her head turned slightly over her shoulder. I caught but one glance, and as I did so, the rushing torrent of blood that mounted to my face made my very brain grow dizzy. I knew not where I stood—I sprang forward to speak to her, and then became rooted to the ground. It was she, indeed—beautiful as ever I had seen her: her pale face wore the very look I had last seen the night I saved her from the flood.

"Did you observe her companion?" said O'Grady, who fortunately had not noticed my confusion. "It was De Vere. I knew he was here; and I suspect I see his plans."

"De Vere!" said I, starting. "De Vere with Miss Bellew! Are you certain?"

"Quite certain—I seldom mistake a face, and his I can't forget. But here's Guillemain. I'll join you in a moment."

So saying, O'Grady left my side, and I saw him take the arm of a small man in black, who was standing at the doorway. The rush of sensations that crowded on me as I stood there alone, made me forget the time, and I knew not that O'Grady had been above half an hour away when he again came to my side.

"How the plot thickens, Hinton," said he, in a low whisper. "Only think, the villain Burke has actually made the hand and fortune of that lovely girl the price of obtaining secret information from De Vere of the proceedings of the British Embassy. Guillemain did not confess this to me, but he spoke in such a way, that with my knowledge of all parties, I made out the clue."

"Burke! but what influence has he over her?"

"None over her, but much over the Rooneys, whom, independent of threats about exposing their real condition in life, he has persuaded that such a marriage for their ward secures them in fashionable society forever. This with Paul would do nothing; but Madame de Roni, as you know, sets a high price on such a treasure; besides, he is in possession of some family secret about her mother, which he uses as a means of intimidation to Paul, who would rather die than hurt Miss Bellew's feelings. Now, Jack, De Vere only wants intellect to be as great a scoundrel as Master Ulick; so we must rescue this poor girl, come what will."

"We must and we will," said I, with a tone of eagerness that made O'Grady start.

"Not a moment is to be lost," said he, after a brief pause. "I'll try what can be done with Guillemain."

An opening of the crowd as he spoke compelled us to fall back, and as we did so, I could perceive that an avenue was made along the room.

"One of the sovereigns," whispered O'Grady.

I leaned forward, and perceived two aides-de-camp in green uniform, who were retreating, step by step, slowly, before some persons farther back.

"The Emperor of Russia," whispered a voice near me; and the same instant I saw the tall and fine-looking figure of Alexander, his broad, massive forehead, and frank, manly face turning from side to side as he acknowledged the salutations of the room. On his arm he supported a lady, whose nodding plumes waved in concert with every inclination of the Czar himself. Curious to see what royal personage shared thus with him the homage of the assembly, I stooped to catch a glance—the lady turned—our eyes met—a slight flush colored her cheek, as she quickly moved her head away—it was Mrs. Paul Rooney herself! yes, she whom I had once seen with an effort to subdue her pride of station, when led into dinner by some Irish attorney-general or some going judge of assize, now leaned on the arm of an emperor, and divided with him the honors of the moment!

While O'Grady sought out his new friend, the Minister of Police, I went in search of my mother and Lady Julia, whom I found surrounded by a knot of their own acquaintances, actively engaged in sur-

mises as to the lady of the house—her rank, fortune, and pretensions. For some time I could not but feel amused at the absurd assertions of many of the party, who affected to know all about Madame de Roni and her secret mission to Paris.

"My dear John," said my mother in a whisper, "you must find out all about her. Your friend, the Colonel, is evidently in the secret. Pray, now, don't forget it. But really you seem in a dream. There's Beulwitz paying Julia all the attention imaginable the entire evening, and you have never gone near her. *A propos*, have you seen this ward of Madame de Roni? She is very pretty, and they speak of her as a very suitable person." (This phrase was a kind of cant with my mother and her set, which expressed in brief that a lady was enormously rich and a very desirable match for a man with nothing.) "I forget the name."

"Miss Bellew, perhaps," said I, trembling lest any recollection of ever having heard it before should cross her mind.

"Yes, that's the name: somehow it seems familiar to me. Do you know her yet? for my friend Lady Middleton knows every one, and will introduce you."

"Oh, I have the pleasure of being acquainted with her already," said I, turning away to hide my confusion.

"That's quite proper," said her ladyship, encouragingly. "But here she comes: I think you must introduce me, John."

As my mother spoke, Louisa Bellew came up, leaning on a lady's arm. A moment's hesitation on my part would have only augmented the embarrassment which increased at every instant; so I stepped forward and pronounced her name. No sooner had the words "Miss Bellew" escaped my lips, than she turned round, her large full eyes were fixed upon me doubtingly for a second, and her face grew deep scarlet, and then as suddenly pale again. She made an effort to speak but could not; a tottering weakness seemed to creep over her frame; and as she pressed her companion's arm closely I heard her mutter:

"Oh, pray move on!"

"Lady Charlotte Hinton—Miss Bellew," said the lady at her side, who had paid no attention whatever to Louisa Bellew's agitated manner.

My mother smiled in her sweetest manner; while Miss Bellew's acknowledgments were made with the most distant coolness.

"My son had deemed himself fortunate enough to be known to you," said Lady Charlotte.

Miss Bellew became pale as death; her very lips were bloodless, as with a voice tremulous with emotion, she replied,—

"We were acquainted once, madam—but—"

What was to be the remainder of the speech I know not; for as the crowd moved on she passed with it, leaving me like one whose senses were forsaking him one by one. I could only hear my mother say, "How very impertinent!" and then my brain became a chaos. A kind of wild, reckless feeling, the savage longing that in moments of dark passion stirs within a man for some act of cruelty, some deed of vengeance, ran through my breast. I had been spurned, despised, disowned by her of whom, through many a weary month, my heart alone was full. I hurried away from the spot, my brain on fire. I saw nothing. I heeded nothing of the bright looks and laughing faces that passed me; scornful pity and contempt for one so low as I was seemed to prevail in every face I looked at. A strange impulse to seek out Lord Dudley de Vere was uppermost in my mind; and as I turned on every side to find him, I felt my arm grasped tightly, and heard O'Grady's voice in my ear,—

"Be calm, Jack, for Heaven's sake! Your disturbed looks make every one stare at you."

He drew me along with him through the crowd, and at length reached a card-room, where, except the players, no one was present.

"Come, my dear boy, I saw what has annoyed you."

"You saw it!" said I, my eyeballs straining as I spoke.

"Yes, yes; and what signifies it? So very handsome a girl, and the expectation of a large fortune, must always have followers. But you know Lady Julia well enough—"

"Lady Julia!" repeated I, in amazement.

"Yes. I say you know her enough to believe that Beulwitz is not exactly the person—"

A burst of laughter at his mistake broke from me at the moment, so wild and discordant was it that O'Grady misconstrued its meaning, and went at some length to assure me that my cousin's affection for me was beyond my suspicion.

Stunned by my own overwhelming sorrow, I felt no inclination to undeceive him, and let him persist in his error without even a word of reply.

"Rouse yourself, Jack," said he, at length. "This depression is unworthy of

you, had you even cause for grief. There's many a heart heavier than your own, my boy, where the lip is smiling this minute."

There was a tone of deep affliction in the cadence of his voice as these words fell from him, and he turned away his head as he spoke. Then rallying in an instant, he added,—

"Do you know, our dear friend Mrs. Paul has scarcely ventured to acknowledge me to-night? and I feel a kind of devilish spirit of vengeance working within me in consequence. To cut *me!* I that trained her infant mind to greatness—that actually smuggled for her a contraband viceroy, and brought him alive into her dominions. What dire ingratitude! Come, what say you to champagne?"

He poured me out a large glassful as he spoke, and, filling his own, called out, laughing,—

"Here—I give you a toast. '*La Vendetta!*' Eh, Jack? Corsican vengeance on all who maltreat us!"

Glass after glass followed; and I felt my brain, instead of being excited, grow calmer, steadier; a firm and determined resolution usurped the flitting thoughts and wandering fancies of before.

"They're moving toward the supper-room," said O'Grady, who for some time past had talked away, without my paying any attention to what he said.

As we descended the stairs, I heard my mother's carriage announced, and could just see her and my cousin handed to it by some Austrian officers as we entered the supper-room.

The incessant crash and din of the enormous banqueting-room, its crowd and heat, its gorgeous table equipage and splendid guests, were scarce noticed by me as I followed O'Grady, half mechanically, toward the end of the room. For some time I remained stupidly unconscious of all around; and it was only after a very considerable time I descried that immediately in front of where we stood Mrs. Paul Rooney was seated—the Emperor of Russia on her right, the King of Prussia on her left hand; Schwartzenberg, Blucher, Talleyrand, Nesselrode, and many others equally distinguished, occupying places along the board. Her jocund laugh and merry voice indeed first attracted my attention.

"By Jove, she does it admirably!" said O'Grady, who for full five minutes had been most critically employed scrutinizing Mrs. Paul's manner. "Do you remark the tact with which she graduates her attentions to the Emperor and the King? And look at the hauteur of her bearing to old Blucher. But hush!—what's coming?"

A kind of suppressed murmur buzzed along the crowded room, which subsiding into a dead silence, the Emperor Alexander rose, and addressing the guests in a few but well-chosen words in English, informed them he had received permission from their amiable and captivating hostess to propose a toast, and he took the opportunity with unqualified delight to give the health of "the Prince Regent." A perfect thunder of applause acknowledged this piece of gracious courtesy, and a "Hip! hip! hurrah!" which astonished the foreigners, shook the very roof. While the deafening shouts rose on every side, Mrs. Paul wrote a line with her pencil hastily on her card, and turning round gave it to a Cossack aide-de-camp of the Emperor to deliver into Mr. Rooney's hands. Either from the excitement of the moment, or his imperfect acquaintance with English, the unlucky Cossack turned toward the first British officer near him for an explanation, who happened to be O'Grady.

"What does this mean?" said he, in French.

"Ah," said Phil, looking at it, "this is intended for that gentleman at the foot of the table. You see him yonder—he's laughing now. Come along, I'll pilot you toward him."

Suspecting that O'Grady's politeness had some deeper motive than mere civility, I leaned over his shoulder and asked the reason of it.

"Look here," said he, showing me the card as he spoke, on which was written the following words: "Make the band play 'God save the King;' the Emperor wishes it."

"Come with us, Jack," whispered O'Grady; "we had better keep near the door."

I followed them through the dense crowd, who were still cheering with all their might, and at last reached the end of the table, where Paul himself was amusing a select party of Tartar chiefs, Prussian colonels, Irish captains, and Hungarian nobles.

"Look here," said Phil, showing me the card, which in his passage down the room he had contrived to alter, by rubbing out the first part, and interpolating a passage of his own, making the whole run thus: "Sing the 'Cruiskeen lawn;' the Emperor wishes it."

I had scarcely time to thrust my handkerchief to my mouth, and prevent an out-

break of laughter, when I saw the Cossack officer present the card to Paul with a deep bow. Mr. Rooney read it—surveyed the bearer—read it again—rubbed his eyes—drew over a branch of wax candles to inspect it better, and then directing a look to the opposite extremity of the table, exchanged glances with his spouse, as if interrogating her intentions once more. A quick, sharp nod from Mrs. Paul decided the question thus tacitly asked; and Paul, clearing off a tumbler of sherry, muttered to himself, "What the devil put the 'Cruiskeen Lawn' into his Majesty's head, I can't think; but I suppose there's no refusing."

A very spirited tapping with the handle of his knife was now heard to mix with the other convivial sounds, and soon indeed to overtop them, as Paul, anxious to obey a royal behest, cleared his throat a couple of times, and called out, "I'll do the best I can, your majesty;" and at once struck up:

"Let the farmer praise his grounds,
Let the huntsman praise his hounds,
And talk of the deeds they have done;
But I more blest than they—"

Here Paul quavered, and at last the pent-up mirth of the whole room could endure no more, but burst forth into one continuous shout of laughter, in which kings, dukes, ambassadors, and field-marshals, joined as loudly as their neighbors. To hear the song was utterly impossible; and though from Mr. Paul's expanded cheeks and violent gesticulation it was evident that he was in full chant, nothing could be heard save the scream of laughing which shook the building—an emotion certainly not the less difficult to repress, as Mrs. Paul, shaking her hand at him with passionate energy, called out,—

"Oh, the baste!—he thinks he's on circuit this minnit!"

As for myself, half-choking, and with sore sides, I never recovered till I reached the street, when O'Grady dragged me along, saying, as he did so,—

"We must reach home at once. Nothing but a strong *alibi* will save my character for this in the morning."

CHAPTER LIX.

"FRASCATI."

I WAS not sorry when I heard the following morning that my mother would not appear before dinner-hour. I dreaded the chance of any allusion to Miss Bellew's name requiring explanation on my part; and the more so, as I myself was utterly lost in conjectures as to the reason of her singular reception of me.

Julia, too, appeared more out of spirits than usual. She pleaded fatigue; but I could see that something lay heavily on her mind. She conversed with evident effort, and seemed to have a difficulty in recalling her faculties to the ordinary topics of the day. A thought struck me that perhaps De Vere's conduct might have given cause for her depression; and gradually I drew the conversation to the mention of his name, when I soon became undeceived on this point.

She told me with perfect unconcern how my father had tracked out the whole line of his duplicity and calumny regarding me, and had followed the matter up by a representation to the duke at the head of the army, who immediately commanded his retirement from the Guards. Later on, his family influence had obtained his appointment as *attaché* to the embassy at Paris; but since their first rupture he had discontinued his visits, and now had ceased to be acknowledged by them when they met.

My cousin's melancholy not being, then, attributable to anything connected with De Vere, I set myself to work to ascertain whence it proceeded; and suddenly the thought struck me that perhaps my mother's surmise might have some foundation, and that Julia, feeling an affection for me, might have been hurt at my evident want of attention toward her since we met.

I have already begged my reader to distinguish such suspicions from the coxcombry of the lady-killer, who deems every girl he meets his victim. If I did for a moment imagine that my cousin liked me, I did so with a stronger sense of my own unworthiness to merit her love, than if I myself had sought her affection. I had felt her superiority to myself too early in life to outlive the memory of it as we grew older. The former feeling of dread which I entertained of Julia's sarcasm still lived within me; and I felt keenly that she who knew the weaknesses of the boy, was little likely to forget them in reflecting over the failures of the man; and thus, if she did care for me, I well knew that her affection must be checkered by too many doubts and uncertainties to give it that character of abiding love which alone could bring happiness.

I perceived clearly enough that she dis-

liked O'Grady. Was it, then, that being interested for me, she was grieved at my great intimacy with one she herself did not admire, and who evidently treated her with marked coldness and reserve?

Harassed with these suspicions, and annoyed that those I had hoped to see regard each other as friends avoided every opportunity of intimacy, I strolled forth to walk alone, my mind brooding over dark and disagreeable images, and my brain full of plans all based upon disappointed hopes and blighted expectations. To my mother's invitation to dinner for that day O'Grady had returned an apology—he was engaged to his friend M. Guillemain, with whom he was also to pass the morning; so that I was absolutely without a companion.

When first I issued from the Place Vendôme, I resolved at all hazards to wait on the Rooneys, and at once see Miss Bellew, and seek an explanation, if possible, for her manner toward me. As I hastened on toward the Chaussée, however, I began to reflect on the impropriety of such a course, after the evident refusal she had given to any renewal of acquaintance. "I did know Mr. Hinton," were the words she used—words which, considering all that had passed between us, never could have been spoken lightly or without reason. A hundred vague conjectures as to the different ways in which my character and motives might have been slandered to her occupied me as I sauntered along. De Vere and Burke were both my enemies, and I had little doubt that with them originated the calumny from which I now was suffering; and as I turned over in my thoughts all the former passages of our hatred, I felt how gladly they would embrace the opportunity of wounding me where the injury would prove the keenest.

Without knowing it, I had actually reached the street where the Rooneys lived, and was within a few paces of their house. Strange enough, the same scene I had so often smiled at before their house in Dublin was now enacting here; the great difference being that, instead of the lounging subs of marching regiments, the swaggering cornets of dragoons, the overdressed and under-bred crowds of would-be fashionables who then congregated before the windows or curveted beneath the balcony, were now the generals of every foreign service, field-marshals glittering with orders, powdered *diplomates*, cordoned political writers, *savants* from every country in Europe, and idlers whose *bons mots* and smart sayings were the delight of every dinner-table in the capital—all happy to have some neutral ground where the outposts of politics might be surveyed without compromise or danger, and where, amid the excellencies of the table and the pleasures of society, intrigues could be fathomed or invented, under the auspices of that excellent attorney's wife, who deemed herself meanwhile the great attraction of her courtly visitors and titled guests.

As I drew near the house, I scarcely ventured to look toward the balcony, in which a number of well-dressed persons were now standing chatting together. One voice I soon recognized, and its every accent cut my very heart as I listened. It was Lord Dudley de Vere, talking in his usual tone of loud assumption. I could hear the same vacant laugh which had so often offended me, and I actually dreaded lest some chance allusion to myself might reach me where I stood. There must be something intensely powerful in the influence of the human voice, when its very cadence alone can elevate to rapture or sting to madness. Who has not felt the ecstasy of some one brief word from "lips beloved," after long years of absence? And who has not experienced the tumultuous conflict of angry passions that rise unbidden at the mere sound of speaking from those we like not? My heart burned within me as I thought of her who doubtless was then among that gay throng, and for whose amusement those powers of his lordship's wit were in all likelihood called forth; and I turned away in anger and in sorrow.

As the day wore on, I could not face toward home. I felt I dare not meet the searching questions my mother was certain to ask me; nor could I endure the thought of mixing with a crowd of strangers, when my own spirits were hourly sinking. I dined alone in a small *café* in the Palais Royal, and sat moodily over my wine till past eleven o'clock. The stillness of the room startled me at length, and I looked up and found the tables deserted; a sleepy waiter lounged lazily on a bench, and the untrimmed candles and disordered look of everything indicated that no other guests were then expected.

"Where have they gone to?" said I, curious to know what so suddenly had taken the crowd away.

"To Frascati's, monsieur," said the waiter; "the *salon* is filling fast by this time."

A strange feeling of dislike to being alone had taken hold on me, and, having inquired the way to the Rue Richelieu from the servant, I issued forth.

What a contrast to the dark and gloomy streets of Paris, with their irregular pavement, was the brilliantly-lighted vestibule, with its marble pillars and spacious stair rising gracefully beyond it, which met my eyes as I entered Frascati's. Following in the crowd of persons who pressed their way along, I reached a long ante-chamber, where several servants in rich liveries received the hats and canes of the visitors who thronged eagerly forward, their merry voices and gay laughter resounding through the arched roof.

As the wide doors were thrown open noiselessly, I was quite unprepared for the splendor of the scene. Here were not only officers of rank in all the gala of their brilliant uniform, and civilians in full-dress shining in stars and decorations, but ladies also, with that perfection of toilette only known to Parisian women, the graceful figures scattered through the groups, or promenading slowly up and down, conversing in a low tone; while servants passed to and fro with champagne and fruit ices on massive silver salvers, their noiseless gesture and quiet demeanor in perfect keeping with the hushed and tranquil look of all around. As I drew closer to the table, I could mark that the stillness was even more remarkable; not a voice was heard but of the croupier of the table, as, with ceaseless monotony, he repeated,—"*Faites le jeu, messieurs!—Le jeu est fait. Noir perd—et couleur gagne. Rouge perd—et la couleur—;*" the rattle of the rake and the chink of the gold followed, a low, muttered "*Sacre!*" being the only sound that mingled with them. But I could mark that, although the etiquette of ruin demanded this unbroken silence, passion worked in every feature there. On one side was an old man, his filmy eyes shaded by his hand from the strong glare of wax lights, peering with eagerness, and tremulous from age and excitement as the cards fell from the banker's hands, his blanched lips muttering each word after the croupier, and his wasted cheek quivering as the chances inclined against him. Here was a bold and manly face, flushed and heated, whose bloodshot eye ranged quickly over the board, while every now and then some effort to seem calm and smile would cross the features, and in its working show the dreadful struggle that was maintained within. And then, again, a beautiful girl, her dark eyes dilated almost to a look of wild insanity, her lips parted, her cheek marked with patches of white and red, and her fair hands clenched, while her bosom heaved and fell as though some pent-up agony was eating her very heart.

At the end of the table was a vacant chair, beside which an officer in a Prussian uniform was standing, while before him was a small brass-clasped box. Curious to know what this meant, I turned to see to which of those about me I might venture to address a question, when suddenly my curiosity became satisfied without inquiry. A loud voice talking German with a rough accent—the heavy tramp of a cavalry boot, clanking with large spurs, announced the approach of some one who cared little for the conventional silence of the rooms; and as the crowd opened, I saw an old man in blue uniform, covered with stars, elbow his way toward the chair; his eyebrows of shaggy gray almost concealed his eyes as effectually as his heavy moustache did his mouth. He walked lame, and leaned on a stick, which, as he took his place in the chair, he placed unceremoniously on the table before him. The box, which was opened the moment he sat down, he now drew toward him, and plunging his hand into it, drew forth a handful of "Napoleons," which, without waiting to count, he threw on the table, uttering, in a thick, guttural voice, the one word "*Rouge.*" The impassive coldness of the croupier, as he pronounced his habitual exordium, seemed to move the old man's impatience, as he rattled his fingers hurriedly among the gold, and muttered some broken words of German between his teeth. The enormous sum he betted drew every eye toward his part of the table, of all which he seemed totally regardless, as he raked in his winnings, or frowned with a heavy lowering look as often as fortune turned against him. Marshal Blucher—for it was he—was an impassioned gambler, and needed not the excitement of the champagne, which he drank eagerly from time to time, to stimulate his passion for play.

As I turned from the *rouge et noir* table, I remarked that every now and then some person left the room by a small door, which, concealed by a mirror, had escaped my attention when I entered. On inquiry I found that this passage led to a secret part of the establishment, which only a certain set of players frequented, and where the tables were kept open during the entire day and night. Curious to see the interior of this den of greater iniquity, I presented myself at it, and on opening found myself in a narrow corridor, where a servant demanded my billet. Having informed him that I was merely there from motives of curiosity, I offered him a na-

poleon, which speedily satisfied his scruples. He conducted me to the end of the gallery, where, touching a spring the door opened, and I found myself in a room considerably smaller than the *salon*, and with the exception of being less brilliantly lighted, equally splendid in its decorations. Around on all sides were small partitions, like the cells in a London coffee-house, where tables were provided for parties to sup at. These were now unoccupied, the greater attraction of high play having drawn every one around the table, where the same monotonous sounds of the croupier's voice, the same patter of the cards, and the same clinking of the gold, continued unceasingly. The silence of the *salon* was as nothing to the stillness that reigned here. Not a voice save the banker's was ever heard—each better placed his money on the red or black square of the table without speaking—and the massive *rouleaux* were passed backwards and forwards with no other sound save the noise of the rake. I remarked, too, that the stakes seemed far heavier; crumpled rolls of *billets de banque* were often thrown down; and, from the muffled murmur of the banker, I could hear such sums as "seven thousand," "ten thousand francs," called out.

It was some time before I could approach near enough to see the play; at last I edged my way to the front, and obtained a place behind the croupier's chair, where a good view of the table was presented to me. The different nations, with their different costumes, tongues, and expressions, so strangely congregated, were a study that might have amused me for a long time, had not a chance word of English spoken close by me drawn off my attention. Immediately in front, but with their backs toward me, sat two persons, who seemed, as was often the habit, to play in concert. A large heap of gold and notes lay before them, and several cards marked with pinholes to chronicle the run of the game were scattered about. Unable to see their faces, I was struck by one singular but decisive mark of their difference in condition and rank—the hands of one were fair and delicate almost as a woman's—the blue veins circled clearly through them, and rings of great price and brilliancy glittered on the fingers; those of the other were coarse, brown-stained, and ill-cared for; the sinewy fingers and strong bony knuckles denoting one accustomed to laborious exertions. It was strange that two persons, evidently so wide apart in their walks of life, should be thus associated; and feeling a greater interest, from the chance phrase of English one of them had dropped, I watched them closely. By degrees I could mark that their difference in dress was no less conspicuous; for although the more humble was well, even fashionably attired, he had not the same distinctive marks which characterized his companion as a person of class and condition. While I looked, the pile of gold before them had gradually melted down to some few pieces; and as they bent down their heads over the cards, and concerted as to their play, it was clear that by their less frequent ventures they were becoming more cautious.

"No, no," said he who seemed the superior, "I'll not risk it."

"I say yes, yes," muttered the other, in a deeper voice; "the *rouge* can't go on forever; it has passed eleven times."

"I know," said the former, bitterly, "and I have lost seventeen thousand francs."

"*You* have lost!" retorted the other, savagely, but in the same low tone, "why not *we?* Am *I* for nothing in all this?"

"Come, come, Ulick, don't be in a passion."

The name and the tone of the speaker startled me; I leaned forward, my very head reeled as I looked. It was Lord Dudley de Vere and Ulick Burke. The rush of passionate excitement that ran through me for a minute or two, to be thus thrown beside the two only enemies I had ever had, unnerved me so far that I could not collect myself. To call them forth at once, and charge them with their baseness toward me, was my first rapid thought; to dare them openly and denounce them before that crowded assembly; but from this wild thrill of anger I was soon turned, as Burke's voice, elevated to a tone of passion, called out,—

"Hold! I am going to bet!"

The banker stopped—the cards still rested in his hands.

"I say, sir, I will do it," said Burke, turning to De Vere, whose cheek was now pale as death, and whose disordered and haggard air was increased by his having torn off his cravat and opened the collar of his shirt. "*I* say I will—do *you* gainsay me?" continued he, laying on the words an accent of such contemptuous insolence that even De Vere's eye fired at it. "*Vingt mille francs, noir,*" said Burke, placing his last *billet* on the table; and the words were scarce spoken, when the banker cried out,—

"Noir perd et passe."

A horrible curse broke from Burke as he fixed his staring eyeballs on the outspread cards, and counted over the numbers to himself.

"You see, Burke," said De Vere.

"Don't speak to me now, d—n you," said the other, with clenched teeth.

De Vere pushed back his chair, and rising, moved through the crowd toward an open window. Burke sat with his head buried between his hands for some seconds, and then, starting up at the banker's call, cried out, "*Dix mille, noir!*"

A kind of half-suppressed laugh ran round the table at seeing that he had no funds, while he still offered to bet. He threw his eyes upon the board; and then as quickly turned them on the players. One by one his dark look was bent on them, as if to search out some victim for his hate; but all were hushed. Many as reckless as himself were there—many as utterly ruined—but not one so lost to hope.

"Who laughed?" said he, in French, while the thick veins of his forehead stood out like cordage; and then, as none answered to his challenge, he rose slowly, still scowling with the malignity of a demon.

"May I have your seat, monsieur?" said a dapper little Frenchman, with a smile and a bow, as Burke moved away.

"Yes, take it," said he, as, lifting the strong chair with one hand, he dashed it upon the floor, smashing it to pieces with a crash that shook the room.

The crowd which made way for him to pass out, as speedily closed again around the table, where the work of ruin still went forward; not a passing glance was turned from the board to look after the beggared gambler.

The horrible indifference the players had shown to the sufferings of this wretched man so thoroughly disgusted me, that I could no longer bear even to look on the game; the passion of play had shown itself to me now in all its most repulsive form, and I turned with abhorrence from the table.

My mind agitated by a number of emotions, and my heart now swelling with triumphant vengeance, now filled with pity for the sake of him who had ruined my fortunes forever, I sat in one of the small boxes I have mentioned, which, dimly lighted, had not yet been sought by any of the players to sup in. A closely drawn curtain separated the little place I occupied from the adjoining one, where, from time to time, I heard the clink of glasses and the noise of champagne corks. At first I supposed that some other solitary individual had established himself there to enjoy his winnings, or brood over his losses; when at last I could hear the low muttering of voices, which ere long I recognized as belonging to Burke and De Vere.

Burke, who evidently, from his tone and manner, possessed the mastery over his companion, no longer employed the insulting accents I had witnessed at the table; on the contrary, he condescended to flatter—affected to be delighted with De Vere's wit and sharpness; and more than once insinuated that with such an associate he cared little what tricks fortune played them; or, to use his own phrase, "they were sure to come round."

De Vere's voice, which I could only hear at rare intervals, told that he had drunk deeply; and that, between wine and his losses, a kind of reckless desperation had seized him, which gave to his manner and words a semblance of boldness which his real character lacked completely.

When I knew that Burke and De Vere were the persons near me, I rose to leave the spot. The fear of playing the eavesdropper forbade my remaining; but as I stood up, the mention of my own name, uttered in a tone of vengeance by Burke, startled me, and I listened.

"Yes," said he, striking his hand upon the table, and confirming his assertion with a horrible oath—"yes; for him and through him my uncle left me a beggar. But already I have had my revenge; though it shan't end there."

"You don't mean to have him out again. Confound him, he's a devilish good shot—winged you already. Eh?"

Burke, unmindful of the interruption, continued:

"It was I that told my uncle how this fellow was the nephew of the man that seduced his own wife. I worked upon the old man so, that he left house and home, and wandered through the country till mental irritation, acting on a broken frame, became fever and then death."

"Died—eh? glorious nephew you are, by Jove! What next?"

"I'll tell you. I forged a letter in his handwriting to Louisa, written as if on his death-bed, commanding as his last prayer, that she should never see Hinton again; or, if by any accident they should meet, that she should not recognize him nor know him."

"Devilish clever, that. Egad, a better martingale than that you invented a while ago. I say, pass the wine—red fourteen times—wasn't it fourteen?—and if it had not been for your cursed obstinacy I'd

have backed the red. See, fifty naps.—one hundred—four—eight—sixteen—thirty-four—or six—which is it?—oh, confounded stupidity!"

"Come, come, Dudley, better luck another time. Louisa's eyes must have been too kindly bent on you, or you'd have been more fortunate."

"Eh? you think she likes me?—capital champagne that—I always thought she did from the first. That's what I call walking inside of Hinton. How he'll look—ha! ha! ha!"

"Yes, how he'll look," echoed Burke, endeavoring to join the laugh. "But now one thing is yet wanting."

"You mean those dispatches," replied De Vere, suddenly; "you always come back to that. Well, once for all, I say, no!"

"Just hear me, Dudley; nothing is easier—nothing incurs less risk?"

"Less risk! what do you mean? No risk for me to steal the papers of the embassy, and give them to you to hand over to that scoundrel at the head of the secret-police? Devilish green I may be, but not so green as that, Master Burke."

"Guillemain will give us forty thousand francs. Forty thousand! With half that and your luck, De Vere, we'll break every bank in Paris. I know you don't wish to marry Louisa."

"No; hang it, that's always the wind up. Keep that for the last throw—eh? There's heavy play there—see how silent they are."

"Ay; and with forty thousand francs we might join them," said Burke, as if musing; "and so safely it may be done."

"I say no!" replied De Vere, resolutely.

"What do you fear? is it me?"

"No, not you; I believe you are true enough—your own neck will be in the rope too; so you'll say nothing; but I won't do it—pass the champagne—there's something so devilish blackguard in stealing a man's papers."

Burke started, as if the tones of his companion's voice had stung him like an adder.

"Have you thought over your present condition?" said Burke, firmly. "You have not a guinea left—your debts in Paris alone, to my knowledge, are above forty thousand francs."

"I'll never pay a livre of them—damned swindlers and Jew money-lenders," was the cool reply.

"Might not some scrupulous moralist hint there was something blackguard in that?" said Burke, with slow and distinct articulation.

"What!" replied De Vere; "do you come here to tutor me—a low-bred horse-jockey—a spy? Take off your hands, sir, or I'll alarm the room; let loose my collar."

"Come, come, my lord, we're both in fault," said Burke, smothering his passion with a terrible effort: "we, of all men, must not quarrel. Play is to us the air we breathe, the light we live in. Give me your hand."

"Allow me to draw on my glove first," said De Vere, in a tone of incomparable insolence.

"Champagne here," said Burke to the waiter, as he passed; and for some minutes neither spoke.

The clock chimed a quarter to two, and Burke started to his feet.

"I must be going," said he, hastily; "I should have been at the Porte St. Martin by half-past one."

"Salute the Jacobite Club *de ma part*," said De Vere, with an insulting laugh, "and tell them to cut everybody's throat in Paris save old Lafitte's; he has promised to do a bill for me in the morning."

"You'll not need his kindness so soon," replied Burke, "if you are willing to take my advice—forty thousand francs—"

"Would he make it sixty, think you?"

"Sixty!" said Burke, with animation; "I'm not sure, but shall I say for sixty you'll do it?"

"No, I don't mean that; I was only anxious to know if those confounded rigmaroles I have to copy sometimes could possibly interest any one to that amount."

Burke tried to laugh, but the hollow chuckle sounded like the gulping of a smothering man.

"Laugh out," said De Vere, whose voice became more and more indistinct, as his courage became stronger; "that muttering is so devilish like a spy—a rascally low-bred—"

A heavy blow, a half-uttered cry followed, and De Vere, fell with a crash to the floor, his face and temples bathed with blood; while Burke, springing to the door, darted down stairs, and gained the street before pursuit was thought of. A few of the less interested about the table assisted me to raise the fallen man. from whose nose and mouth the blood flowed in torrents. He was perfectly senseless, and evinced scarcely a sign of life, as we carried him downstairs, and placed him in a carriage.

"Where to?" said the coachman, as I stood beside the door.

I hesitated for a second, and then said, "No. 4, Place Vendôme."

CHAPTER LX.

DISCLOSURES.

I HAVE more than once heard physicians remark the singular immunity a fool's skull seems to possess from the evil effects of injury, as if nature, when denying a governing faculty, had, in kind compensation, imparted a triple thickness to the head thus exposed. It is well known how, among the educated and thinking classes, many maladies are fatal, which are comparatively innocuous among those whose hands alone are called on to labor. A very ingenious theory might be spun from this fact, to the manifest self-gratulation of fox-hunters, sailors, gentlemen who assault the new police, tithe proctors, and others; for the present I have no further use for the remark, than as it bore upon the head-piece of Lord Dudley de Vere, whose admirable developments had received little or no damage from the rude assault of his companion. When he awoke the next morning, he was only aware that something unusual had occurred; and gradually, by "trying back" in his sensations, he remembered every particle that took place—had the clearest recollection of the "run upon red"—knew the number of bottles of champagne he had partaken of, and was only puzzled by one thing—what could possibly have suggested the courage with which he confronted Burke, and the hardihood that led him to insult him.

As to any awkwardness at being brought home to the house of the person he had himself so ill-treated, he never felt anything approaching to it; the extent of his reasoning on this point only went to his satisfaction, that "some one" took care of him, and that he was not left to lie on the floor of the *salon*.

This admirable philosophy of his served in a great measure to relieve me from the constraint I felt in presenting myself before him, and soon put me perfectly at my ease in our interview. After learning that, except some head-aching sensations, the only inconvenience he experienced was an unconquerable thirst, I touched slightly on the cause of his misfortune, when, what was my astonishment to discern that he not only did not entertain a particle of ill-will toward the man who had so brutally ill-treated him, but actually grew warm in his panegyric of Burke's consummate skill and address at play—such qualities, in his estimation, being well worthy to cover any small blemishes of villainy his character might suffer under.

"I say, don't you think Burke a devilish sharp fellow? he's up to everything, and so cool—so confoundedly cool; not last night though: no, by Jove! he lost temper completely. I shall be marked with that knock, eh? Damn me it was too bad; he must apologize for it. You know he was drunk, and somehow he was all wrong the whole evening; he wouldn't let me back the *rouge*, and such a run—you saw that, I suppose?"

I assented with a nod, for I still hesitated how far I should communicate to him my knowledge of Burke's villainy toward myself.

"By the bye, it's rather awkward my being here; you know your people have cut me. Don't you think I might get a cab to bring me over to the Rue D'Alger?"

There was something which touched me in the simplicity of this remark, and I proceeded to assure him that any former impressions of my friends would not be remembered against him at that moment.

"Oh, that I'm sure of. No one ever thinks it worth while to bear malice against a poor devil like me; but if I'd have backed the red—"

"Colonel O'Grady is in the drawing-room," said a servant in a low voice to me at this instant; and leaving Lord Dudley to speculate on the contingencies of his having "backed the red," I joined my friend, whom I had not seen on the previous day.

We were alone, and in ten minutes I explained to him the entire discovery I had fallen upon, concealing only my affection for Louisa Bellew, which I could not bring myself even to allude to.

"I see," said Phil, when I concluded—"I see you are half disposed to forgive De Vere all his rascality. Now, what a different estimate we take of men; perhaps—I can't say—it is because I am an Irishman—but I lean to the bold-faced villain Burke; the miserable, contemptible weakness of the one is far more intolerable to me than the ruffian effrontery of the other. Don't forget the lesson I gave you many a year ago: a fool is always a blackguard. Now, if that fellow could see his companion this minute, there is not a circumstance he has noticed here that he would not retail, if it bore to your disadvantage. Untouched by your kindness to him, he would sell you, ay, to the very man you saved him from. But, after all, what have we to do with him? Our first point is to rescue this poor girl's name from being ever mixed with his; anything further is, of course, out of the question. The

Rooneys are going back—I saw Paul this morning—'The Cruiskeen Lawn' has been their ruin—all the Irish officers who had taken Madame de Roni for an illustrious stranger have found out the true scent; and so many distinguished persons are involved in the ridicule of their parties, that the old *chef de police*, my friend, has sent them a private order to leave Paris in a week. Paul is in raptures at it—he has spent eighty thousand in two months—detests the place—is dying to be back in Dublin—and swears that, except one Cossack officer, he hasn't met a pleasant fellow since he came abroad."

"And Mrs. Paul?"

"Oh! the old story. I put Guillemain up to it, and he has hinted that the Empress of Russia has heard of the Czar's attentions—that there's the devil to pay in St. Petersburg—and that if she doesn't manage to steal out of Paris slyly, some confounded boyard or other will slip a sack over her head and carry her off to Tobolsk. Elizabeth and the Exiles has formed part of her reading, and Madame de Roni will dream every night of the knout till she reaches her dear native land. But now to business. I, too, have made my discoveries since we met. De Vere's high play has been a matter of surprise to all who know him. I have found out his secret—he plays with forged *billets de banque.*"

"And has the wretched fellow gone so far as this?"

"He doesn't know it—he believes that the money is the proceeds of bills he has given to Burke, who affects to get them discounted. See here—here are a handful of their notes—Guillemain knows all, and retains the secret as a hold over Burke, whose honesty to himself he already suspects. If he catch him tripping—"

"Then—"

"Why, then, the galleys for life. Such is the system—a villain with them is worthless if his life isn't at their disposal—Satan's bond completely—all, all. But show me De Vere's room, and leave me alone with him for half an hour. Let us then meet at my hotel, and concert future measures."

Having left O'Grady with De Vere, I walked out upon the Boulevards, my head full of the extraordinary facts so suddenly thronging one upon the other. A dash of hope, that for many a day had not visited me, was now mingled through all my meditations, and I began to think that there was yet a chance of happiness for me.

I had not gone many paces when an arm was thrust into mine, and a hearty chuckling laugh at the surprise rang in my ear. I turned—it was Mr. Paul Rooney, taking his morning's promenade of Paris, and now on his way home with an enormous bouquet for madame, which she had taught him to present to her each day on her appearing in the drawing-room.

"Ah, Captain! the very man I wanted. We haven't had a moment to ourselves since your arrival. You must come and take a bit of dinner with us to-day; thank heaven we've no company. I have a leg of pork, smuggled into the house as if it was a bale of goods from Alexandria. Nobody knows of it but myself and Tim."

"Tim! why, have you brought Tim to Paris?"

"Hush!" said he, in a low, cautious voice; "I'd be ruined entirely if madame was to find him out. Tim is dressed like a Tartar, and stands in the hall; and Mrs. Rooney believes that he never heard of a civil bill in his life. But here we are."

So saying, he opened a small wicket with a latch-key, and let me into a large and well-trimmed garden, across which we walked at a rapid pace; Paul speculating from the closed shutters of his wife's room that he needed not have hurried home so fast.

"She's not down yet—one o'clock, as I'm a sinner. Come along and sit down in the library; I'll join you presently."

Scarcely had Paul left the room when I began to think over the awkwardness of my position should I meet Miss Bellew; what course to follow under the circumstances I knew not; when just at the moment the door opened, and she entered. Not perceiving me, as I stood in a deep window recess, she drew a chair to the fire and sat down. I hardly ventured to breathe; I felt like one who had no right to obtrude himself there, and had become, as it were, a spy upon her. A long-drawn breath burst from me; she started up; I moved slightly forward, and stood before her. She leaned her hand upon the arm of the chair for support, her cheek grew deadly pale, and a tremulous quiver shook her lip.

"Mr. Hinton," she began; and then, as if the very sound of her voice had terrified her, she paused. "Mr. Hinton," resumed she, "I am sure—nay, I know—if you were aware of the reasons of my conduct toward you, you would not only acquit me of all blame, but spare me the pain of our ever meeting."

"I know them—I do know them," said I, passionately; "I have been slandered."

"No, you do not—cannot know what I mean," interrupted she. "It is a secret between my own heart and one who is now no more."

The last words fell from her one by one, while a single tear rolled from her eyelid, and trickled along her cheek.

"Yes, yes, Louisa, I do know it—I know all; a chance has told me how your dear father's name has been used to banish me forever from your sight—how a forgery of his hand-writing—"

"What! who could have told you what my father's last note contained?"

"He who wrote it confessed it in my hearing—Ulick Burke; nay, I can even repeat the words—" But as I spoke, a violent trembling seized her, her lips became bloodless, she tottered, and sank upon the chair. I had only time to spring forward and catch her in my arms, and her head fell heavily back, and dropped on my shoulder.

I cannot, if I would, repeat the words which, in all the warm eloquence of affection, I spoke. I could mark by her heightened color that the life's blood again coursed freely in her veins, and could see that she heard me. I told her how through every hardship and suffering, in all the sorrow of disappointed ambition, in the long hours of captivity, my heart had ever turned to her; and then, when we did meet, to see her changed!

"But you do not blame—you cannot blame me, if I believed—"

"No, if you tell me now that but for this falsehood you have not altered—that your heart is still as much my own as I once thought it."

A faint smile played on her lips as her eyes were turned upon me, while her voice muttered,—

"And do you still love me?"

I pressed her hand to my lips in rapture, when suddenly the door opened, and Paul Rooney rushed in.

"Another candidate for the leg of—Eh! what's this?" said he, as I rose and advanced to meet him; while Louisa, blushing deeply, buried her head in her hand, and then starting up, left the room.

"Captain, captain," said Paul, gravely, "what does this mean? Do you suppose that because there is some difference in our rank in life, that you are privileged to insult one who is under my protection? Is it because you are the guardsman and I the attorney, that you have dared to take a liberty here, which in your own walk you couldn't venture on?"

"My dear Mr. Rooney, you mistake me sadly."

"If I do not mistake you I'll put a hole in your body as sure as my name's Paul," was the quick reply.

"You do, then, and wrong me to boot. I have been long and ardently attached to Miss Bellew. From the hour I met her at your house, I loved her. It is the first time we have met since our long separation. I determined it should not be lost. I've asked her to be my wife."

"You have. And what does she say?"

"She has consented."

"Rum-ti-iddity, iddity," said Paul, snapping his fingers, and capering about the room like a man deranged. "Give me your hand, my buck. I'd rather draw the settlements, so help me, than I'd see the warrant to make me Master of the Rolls. Who'd say there isn't luck in a leg of pork? She's a darling girl; and beautiful as she is, her looks isn't the best of her—an angel as sure as I'm here. And look here,"—here he dropped his voice,—"seven thousand a year, that may be made nine. Hennessy's farm is out of lease in October, and the Cluangoff estate is let at ten shillings an acre. Hurroo! maybe I won't be drunk to-night; and bad luck to that Cossack, Tartar, Bohemian, or any other blackguard I'll let into the house this day or night. Sworn, my lord."

After some little discussion, it was arranged that if Louisa would give her consent to the arrangement, the marriage should take place before the Rooneys left Paris. Meanwhile, Paul agreed with me in keeping the whole matter a perfect secret from everybody, Mrs. Rooney herself included. Our arrangements were scarcely concluded, when O'Grady appeared. Having waited for me some time at his hotel, he had set out in search of me.

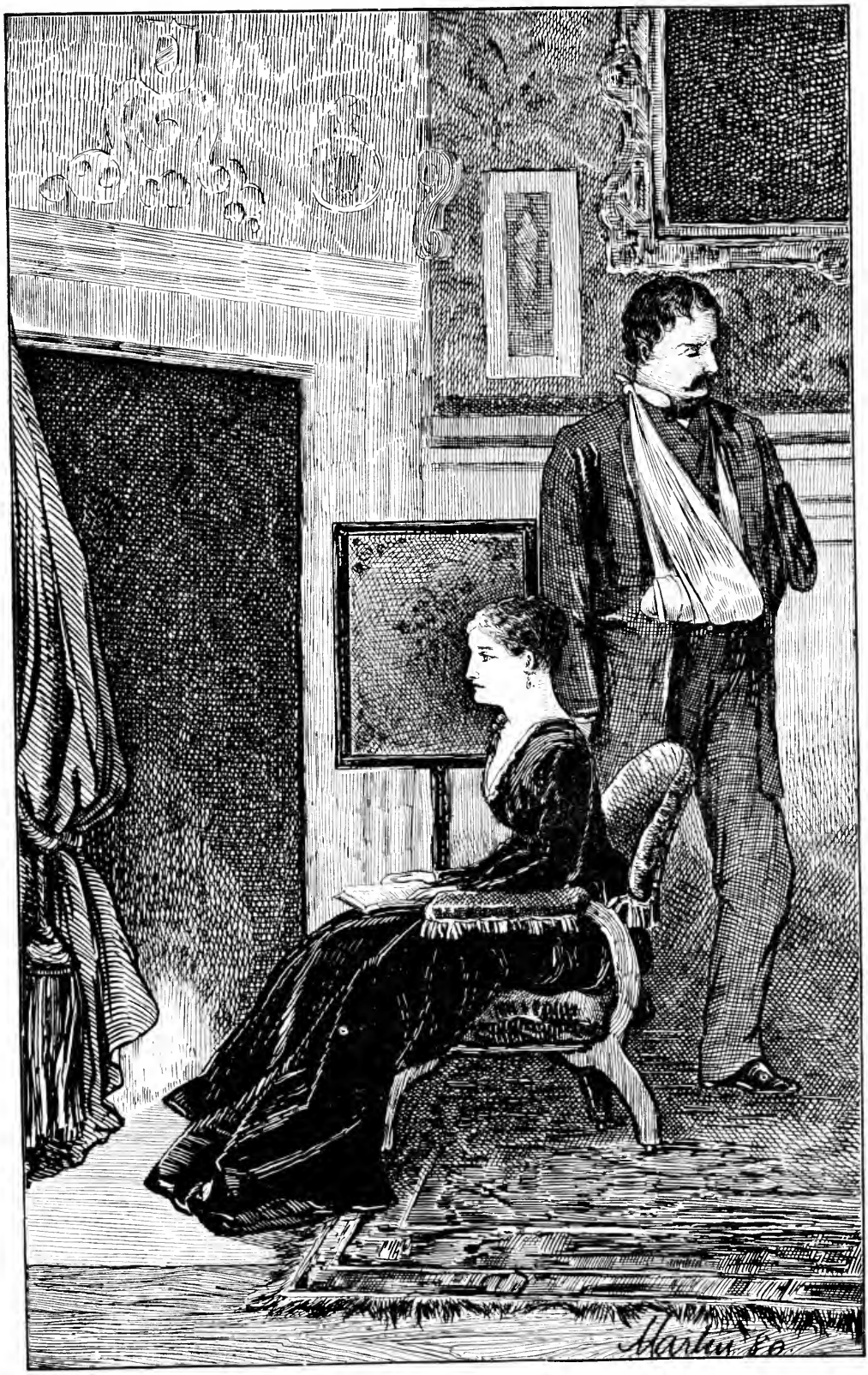
"I'm your man to-day, Paul," said he. "You got my note, I suppose?"

"All right," said Mr. Rooney, whose double secret of the marriage and the leg of pork seemed almost too much for him to bear.

"I suppose I may tell Phil?" said I, in a whisper.

"No one else," said Paul, as we left the house, and I took O'Grady's arm down the street.

"Well, I have frightened De Vere to some purpose," said O'Grady. "He has made a full confession about Burke, who was even a deeper villain than we supposed. What do you think, he has been the spy of the Bonapartist faction all this time, and selling old Guillemain as regularly as the



HE NODDED, AND, TURNING QUICKLY ROUND, LEFT THE ROOM. (P. 928.)

others. To indulge his passion for play, he received the pay of four different parties, whom he pitted against each other exactly as he saw proper. Consummate, clever scoundrel! he had to deal with men whose whole lives are passed in the very practice of every chicanery and deceit, and yet he has jockeyed them all. What a sad thing to think that abilities and knowledge of mankind should be prostituted to the lowest and most debasing uses, and that the sole tendency of talent should be to dishonor and disgrace its possessor! Some of his manufactured dispatches were masterpieces of cleverness."

"Well, where is he now? Still in Paris?"

"No. The moment he had so far forgotten himself as to strike De Vere, he forged a passport, and returned to London, carrying with him hosts of papers of the French authorities, which to our Foreign-office will be very acceptable. De Vere meanwhile feels quite at his ease. He was always afraid of his companion, yet can't forgive him his last indignity."

"No! A blow!"

"Not at all; you mistake—his regrets have a different origin. It is for not backing the *rouge* that he is inexorable toward him. Besides, he is under the impression that all these confessions he has been making establish for him a kind of moral insolvency act, by which he is to come forth irresponsible for the past, and quite ready to contract new debts for the future. At this moment his greatest point of doubt consists in whether he should marry your cousin, Lady Julia, or Miss Bellew; for, in his own phrase, 'he must do something that way to come round.'"

"Impudent scoundrel!"

"Fact, I assure you; and so easy, so unaffected, so free from embarrassment of any kind is he, that I am really quite a convert to this modern school of good manners, when associating with even such as Burke conveys no feeling of shame or discomfort. More than could be said some forty years ago, I fancy."

It was the hour of my mother's morning reception, and we found the drawing-room crowded with loungers and fashionable idlers, discussing the news of the day, and, above all, the *Roni fête*—the extraordinary finale to which gave rise to a hundred conjectures, some asserting that Monsieur de Roni's song was a violent pasquinade against the Emperor Alexander, others, equally well informed, alleging it was the concerted signal for a general massacre of the allies, which was to have begun at the same moment in the Rue Montmartre.

"She is a Bonapartist—a Légitimist—a Napolitaine—an Anversoise," contended one after another, my only fear being that some one would enlighten the party by saying she was the wife of an Irish attorney. All agreed, however, she was "*très mauvais ton*;" that her fête was, with all its magnificence, anything but select; her supper superb, but too crowded by half: and, in fact, that Madame Roni had enjoyed the pleasure of ruining herself to very little other purpose than that of being generally ridiculed and laughed at.

"And this niece, or ward, or whatever it is—who can tell anything of her?" said my mother.

"*Eh, pardieu!* she's very handsome," said Grammont, with a malicious smile.

"Perfect," said another, "quite perfect; but a little—a very little too graceful. Don't you think so."

"Why, what do you mean?" said Lady Charlotte, as her eyes sparkled with animation at the thought of a secret.

"Nothing," replied the last speaker, carelessly, "except that one always detects the *danseuse*. She was thinner when I saw her at Naples."

I whispered one word—but one—in his ear, and his face became purple with shame and confusion.

"Eh, what is it?" said my mother, eagerly. "John knows something of her too. John, dearest, let us hear it."

"I am in your ladyship's debt as regards one secret," said O'Grady, interrupting; "perhaps I may be permitted to pay it on this occasion. The lady in question is the daughter of an Irish baronet, the descendant of a family as old as any of those who now hear me. The baronet would have been a peer of the realm, had he consented to vote once—but once—with the minister, on a question where his conscience told him to oppose him; his refusal was repaid by neglect—others were promoted to rank and honors before him; but the frown of a minister could neither take away the esteem of his country, nor his own self-respect. He is now dead; but his daughter is the worthy inheriter of his virtues and his name—perhaps I might interest the present company as much in her favor by adding, she possesses something like eight thousand per annum."

"Two hundred thousand *livres de rente!*" said Grammont, smacking his lips with astonishment, and perfectly insensible to the tone of mockery in which O'Grady's last words were spoken.

"And you are sure of all this?" said my mother.

O'Grady bowed deeply, but without speaking, while his features assumed an expresssion of severe determination I had never witnessed before. I could not help remarking that, amid the dismay such an announcement created amid that gossiping and calumnious assembly, my cousin Julia's eyes shone with an added luster, and her whole face beamed with a look of proud and exalted beauty.

This was now the time to tell O'Grady my secret; and drawing him toward a window, I said,—

"Phil, I can wait no longer—you must hear it. I'm going to be married!"

The words had not left my lips, when O'Grady started back, his face pale like a corpse, and his whole frame trembling with eagerness. By a violent effort, however, he rallied; and as he clutched my arm with his fingers, he said,—

"I must be going! These good people have made me forget an appointment. Make my respectful homage to her ladyship—and the bride. I shall see you before I leave."

"Leave! Why, where are you thinking of going?"

"To India."

"To India!" said Julia, starting round as he spoke.

"To India!" said I in amazement.

He nodded, and, turning quickly round, left the room.

I hastened after him with all my speed, and dashing down-stairs, was making for the gate, when a shadow beside the doorway caught my eye. I stopped. It was O'Grady. He was leaning against the wall, his head buried in his hands. A horrible doubt shot through my heart—I dared not dwell upon it, but rushing toward him, I called him by his name. He turned quickly round, while a fierce, wild look glistened in his eyes.

"Not now, Hinton—not now!" said he, motioning me away with his hand; and then, as a cold shudder passed over him, he drew his hand across his face, and added, in a lower tone, "I never thought to have betrayed myself thus. Good-bye, my dear fellow, good-bye! It were better we shouldn't meet again."

"My dearest, best friend! I never dreamed that the brightest hour of my life was to throw this gloom over your heart."

"Yes, Jack," said he, in a voice low and broken, "from the first hour I saw her, I loved her. The cold manner she maintained toward me at your father's house—"

"In my father's house! What do you mean?"

"When in London, I speak of—when I joined first. Your cousin—"

"My cousin!"

"Yes, Lady Julia. Are you so impatient to call her wife, that you will not remember her as cousin?"

"Call her wife! my dear boy, you're raving. It's Louisa Bellew—"

"What! is it Miss Bellew you are to marry?"

"To be sure—"

But I could not finish the sentence; as he fell upon my shoulder, and his strong frame was convulsed with emotion. In an instant, however, I tore myself away; and calling out, "Wait for me, O'Grady!" rushed upstairs. I peeped hastily into the drawing-room, and then hurrying along a corridor, opened a door at the end. The blinds of the windows were down, and the room so dark that I could scarcely perceive if any one were there, had not my steps been guided by a low sob which I heard issue from the end of the sofa.

"Julia," said I, rushing forward—"Julia, my dearest cousin! this is no time to deceive ourselves: he loves you—loved you from the first hour he met you. Let me have but one word. Can he—dare he hope that you are not indifferent to him? Let him but see you—but speak to you. Believe me, you have bent a heart as proud and haughty as your own; and you will have broken it if you refuse him. There, dearest girl!—Thanks—my heart's thanks for that!"

The slightest pressure of her taper fingers sent a thrill through me, as I sprang up and dashed down the stairs. In an instant I had seized O'Grady's arm, and the next moment whispered in his ear,—

"You've won her!"

CHAPTER LXI.

NEW ARRIVALS.

Mr. Paul Rooney's secret was destined to be inviolable, as regarded his leg of pork; for Madame de Roni, either from chagrin or fatigue, did not leave her room the entire day; Miss Bellew declined joining us; and we sat down, a party of three, each wrapped up in his own happiness in a degree far too great to render us either social or conversational. It is true the wine circulated briskly, we nodded pleasantly now and then to each other; but all our efforts to talk led to so many blunders and cross answers, that we scarcely ven-

tured on more than a chance phrase, or a good-humored smile. There were certainly several barriers in the way of our complete happiness, in the innumerable prejudices of my lady-mother, who would be equally averse to O'Grady's project as to my own: but now was not the time to speculate on these; and we wrapped ourselves up in the glorious anticipation of our success, and cared little for such sources of opposition as might now arise. Meanwhile, Paul entered into a long and doubtless very accurate statement of the Bellew property, to which, I confess, I paid little attention, save when the name of Louisa occurred, which momentarily aroused me from my dreaminess. All the wily stratagems by which he had gained his points with Galway juries—all the cunning devices by which he had circumvented opposing lawyers, and obtained verdicts in almost hopeless cases, however I might have relished another time, I only now listened to without interest, or heard without understanding.

Toward ten o'clock I received more than one hint from O'Grady that we had promised to take tea at the Place Vendôme; while I myself was maneuvering to find out, if we were to adjourn for coffee, what prospect there might be of seeing Louisa Bellew in the drawing-room.

It was in that dusky twilight we sat, which somehow seems so suited to the quiet enjoyment of one's claret with a small and chosen party; where intimacy prevails sufficiently to make conversation more a thing of choice than necessity; where each man can follow out his own path in thought, and only let his neighbor have a peep here and there into his dreamings, where some vista opens, or some bold prospect stretches away. Next to the blazing fire of a winter's hearth, this is the pleasantest thing I know of. Thus was it, when the door opened, and a dusky outline of a figure appeared at the entrance.

"Is Master Phil here?" said a cranky voice there was no mistaking as Mr. Delany's.

"Yes, Corny. What's wrong?—anything new?"

"Where's the Captain?" said he, in the same tone.

"I'm here, Corny," said I.

"Well; there's them looking for you without," said he, "that'll maybe surprise you, pleasant as ye are now."

A detestable effort at a laugh here brought on a fit of coughing that lasted a couple of minutes.

"Who is it?" said I. "Where are they!"

A significant gesture with his thumb over his shoulder was the only reply to my question, while he barked out,—

"Don't you see me coughing the inside out o' me?"

I started up, and without attending to Paul's suggestion to bring my friends in, or O'Grady's advice to be cautious if it were Burke—hurried outside, where a servant of the house was in waiting to conduct me.

"Two gentlemen in the drawing-room, sir," said he, as he preceded me down the corridor.

The next instant the door opened, and I saw my father, accompanied by another person, who, being wrapped up in a traveling equipment, I could not recognize.

"My dear father!" said I, rushing toward him; when suddenly I stopped short, as I perceived that, instead of the affectionate welcome I looked for, he had crossed his hands behind his back, and fixed on me a look of stern displeasure.

"What does this mean?" said I, in amazement; "it was not thus I expected—"

"It was not thus I hoped to have received my son," said he, resolutely, "after a long and eventful separation. But this is too painful to endure longer. Answer me, and with the same truth I have always found in you—Is there a young lady in this house called Miss Bellew?"

"Yes, sir," said I, as a cold perspiration broke over me, and I could scarcely support myself.

"Did you make her acquaintance in Ireland?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you, at that time, use every effort to win her affections, and give her to understand that she had yours?"

"Yes, sir," said I, more faintly than before; for already some horrible doubt was creeping on my mind.

"And have you now, sir," continued he, in a voice elevated to a higher pitch—"have you now, sir, when a prospect of a richer alliance presents itself, dishonored yourself and my name by deserting the girl whose affections you have so gained?"

"No, sir—that is untrue."

"Stop, young man! I have one at hand this moment who may compel you to retract your words as shamefully as you have boldly said them. Do you know this gentleman?"

"Father Loftus!" said I, starting back in astonishment, as the good priest unfolded a huge comforter from his throat and stood forth.

"Yes, indeed—no other," said he, in a voice of great sadness; "and sorry I am to see you this way."

"You, surely, my dear friend," said I—"you cannot believe thus harshly of me?"

"If it wasn't for your handwriting, I'd not have believed the Pope of Rome," was his reply, as he wiped his eyes. "But there it is."

So saying, he handed to me, with trembling fingers, a letter, bearing the Paris postmark.

I tore it open, and found it was written in my own name, and addressed to Father Loftus, informing him of my deep regret that, having discovered the unhappy circumstance of her mother's conduct, I was obliged to relinquish all thoughts of an alliance with Miss Bellew's family, whose connection with my own had been so productive of heavy misfortune. This also contained an open note, to be handed by the priest to Miss Bellew, in which I was made formally to renounce her hand, for reasons in the possession of Father Loftus.

In a second the truth flashed across me from whom this plot proceeded; and, scarcely permitting myself time to read the letter through, I called out,—

"This is a forgery! I never wrote it—never saw it before!"

"What!" said my father, starting round, and fixing his eye on the priest.

"You never wrote it?" echoed Father Tom. "Do you say so? Is that your word as a gentleman?"

"It is," said I, firmly. "This day—this very day, I have asked Miss Bellew to be my wife, and she has consented."

Before my father could seize my hand, the good priest had thrown his arms round my neck, and given me an embrace a bear might have envied. The scene that followed I cannot describe. My poor father, quite overpowered, sat down upon a chair, holding my hand within his; while Father Tom bustled about the room, looking into all the glass and china ornaments for something to drink, as his mouth, he said, was "like a lime-burner's hat." The honest fellow, it appeared, on receiving the letters signed with my name, left his home the same night, and traveled with all speed to London, where he found my father just on the eve of leaving for Paris. Very little persuasion was necessary to induce him to continue his journey farther. On their arrival at Paris, they had gone to O'Grady's hotel, where securing Corny's services, they lost not a moment in tracking me out in the manner I have mentioned.

O'Grady's surprise was little inferior to my own, as I introduced General Hinton and Father Loftus; but as to Mr. Rooney, he actually believed the whole to be a dream, and even when candles were brought, and he had taken a patient survey of the priest, he was far from crediting that my parent was not performed by deputy, till my father's tact and manner convinced him of his mistake.

While the priest was recounting some circumstances of his journey, I took occasion to tell my father of O'Grady's intentions regarding Julia, which with all the warmth of his nature he at once responded to; and touching his glass gayly with Phil's, merely added, "With my best wishes." Poor O'Grady caught up the meaning at once, and grasped his hand with enthusiasm, while the tears started to his eyes.

It would lead me too far—and, perhaps, where the good-nature of my reader might not follow—were I to speak more of that happy evening. It is enough to say, that Father Loftus won every moment on my father, who also was delighted with the hearty raciness of honest Paul. Their stories of pleasantry and fun—so new to him—were poured forth with profusion; and a party, all the members of which were more disposed to like each other, and be pleased, never met together.

I myself, however, was not without my feeling of impatience to reach the drawing-room, which I took the first favorable opportunity of effecting; only then perceiving that O'Grady had anticipated me, having stolen away some time before.

CHAPTER LXII.

CONCLUSION.

It would be even more wearisome to my reader, than the fact was worrying to myself, were I to recount the steps by which my father communicated to Lady Charlotte the intended marriages, and finally obtained her consent to both. Fortunately, for some time previous she had been getting tired of Paris, and was soon brought to suppose that these little family arrangements were as much "got up" to afford her an agreeable surprise, and a healthful stimulant to her weak nerves, as for any other cause whatever. With Mrs. Rooney, on the other hand, there was considerable difficulty. The holy alliance she had contracted with the sovereigns, had suggested so much of grandeur to her expectations, that she dreamed of nothing but archdukes and counts of the Empire; and was at first quite inexorable at the bare idea of the *mésalliance* that awaited her ward. A chance decided what resisted every species

of argument. Corny Delany, who had been sent with a note to Mr. Rooney, happened to be waiting in the hall while Mrs. Rooney passed out to her carriage, escorted by the "Tartar" of whom we have already made mention. Mrs. Rooney was communicating her orders to her bearded attendant by a code of signals on her fingers, when Corny, who watched the proceeding with increasing impatience, exclaimed,—

"Arrah, can't you tell the man what you want! Sure, though you have him dressed like a wild baste, he doesn't forget English."

"It is a Tartar!" said Mrs. Rooney, with a contemptuous sneer at Corny, and a forbidding wave of her hand ordaining silence.

"A Tarther! Oh, blessed Timothy, there's a name for one that comes of dacent people. He's a county Carlow man, and well known he is in the same parts. Many a writ he served—eh, Tim?"

"Tim!" said Mrs. Rooney, in horror, as she beheld her wild-looking friend grin from ear to ear with a most fearful significance of what he heard.

"It wasn't my fault, ma'am, at all," said the Tartar, with a very Dublin accent in the words; "it was the master made me."

What further explanation Tim might have afforded, it is difficult to say, for Mrs. Rooney's nerves had received too severe and too sudden a shock. A horrible fear lest all the kingly and royal personages by whom she had been for some weeks surrounded might only turn out to be Carlow men, or something as unsubstantial, beset her; a dreadful unbelief of everything and everybody seized upon her, and, quite overcome, she fainted. O'Grady, who happened to come up at the instant, learned the whole secret at once, and with his wonted readiness resolved to profit by it. Mrs. Paul returned to the drawing-room, and ere half an hour was fully persuaded that as General Hinton was about to return to Ireland as commander of the forces, the alliance was, on the whole, not so deplorable as she had feared.

To reconcile so many conflicting interests, to conciliate so many totally opposite characters, was a work I should completely have failed in without O'Grady's assistance. He, however, entered upon it *con amore;* and under his auspices, not only did Lady Charlotte receive the visits of Father Tom Loftus, but Mr. Paul became actually a favorite with my cousin Julia; and finally, the grand catastrophe of the drama was accomplished, and my lady-mother proceeded in all state to wait on Mrs. Rooney herself, who, whatever her previous pretensions, was so awed by the condescension of her ladyship's manner, that she actually struck her colors at the first broadside.

Weddings are stupid things in reality, but on paper they are detestable. Not even the *Morning Post* can give them a touch of interest. I shall not, then, trouble my reader with any narrative of white satin and orange-flowers, bouquets, breakfasts, and Bishop Luscombe; neither shall I entertain him with the article in the French *Feuilleton*, as to which of the two brides was the more strictly beautiful, and which more lovely.

Having introduced my reader to certain acquaintances—some of them rather equivocal ones, I confess—I ought, perhaps, to add a word of their future fortunes.

Mr. Ulick Burke escaped to America, where, by the exercise of his abilities and natural sharpness, he accumulated a large fortune.

Of Lord Dudley de Vere I only know that he has lived long enough, if not to benefit by experience, to take advantage of Lord Brougham's change in the law of imprisonment for debt. I saw his name in a late number of *The Times*, with a charge of some fifteen thousand annexed to it, against which his available property was eleven pounds odd shillings.

Father Loftus sleeps in Murranakilty. No stone marks his resting-place; but not a peasant's foot, for many a mile round, has not pressed the little pathway that leads to his grave, to offer up a prayer for a good man and a friend to the poor.

Tipperary Joe is to be met on the Kilkenny road. His old red coat, now nearly russet color, is torn and ragged; the top-boots have given place to bare legs, as well tanned as their predecessors; but his merry voice and cheerful "Tally-ho!" are still as rich as of yore, and his heart, poor fellow, as light as ever it was.

Corny Delany is the amiable proprietor of a hotel in the neighborhood of Castlebar, where his habitual courtesy and amenity are as conspicuous as of yore. He has requested me to take this opportunity of recommending his establishment to the "Haythins and Turks" that yearly perform tours in his vicinity.

The Rooneys live, and are as hospitable as ever. I dare not venture to give their address, lest you should take advantage of the information.

O'Grady and his wife are now at Malta.

Jack Hinton and his, are, as they have every right to be,

Your very grateful and obedient servant.

Lever, Charles James,
1806-1872.
The works of Charles
Lever. --