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John Leech

THE FORTUNES

OF

HECTOR O'HALLORAN,

AND HIS MAN

MARK ANTHONY O'TOOLE.

BY

^{m.}
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"THE BIVOUCAC," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN LEECH.

"Faugh a Ballagh."

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

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THE FORTUNES
OF
HECTOR O'HALLORAN.

CHAPTER I.

A FIRST ANNIVERSARY

“Although you open force disdain,
Of secret guile beware!” JOHN LEYDEN.

It was a cold frosty evening in December, seventeen hundred and ninety-five, and the whole of the month had been unusually tempestuous. Throughout wide Britain, there are no shores on which the wind rages with wilder fury than upon those naked promontories which abut into the Atlantic, along the iron-bound coast of Donegal. Harbours are few and far between—the peasantry are a hardy and adventurous race—and the fishing grounds distant from the land. In the winter, snow-storms come suddenly on, and the sea rises with fearful rapidity. The boatmen are caught in the gale, and too frequently courage and skill struggle in vain,

“Contending with the fretful elements;”

and a calamitous loss of life robs many a family of its protectors, making the humble roof-tree desolate.

During the continuation of these fearful storms, this wild coast had not escaped its customary visitations. An island smack had foundered with all its crew; and farther to the northward, a transport, homeward-bound from Holland with sick and wounded soldiers, having been dismasted in the gale, was driven a wreck upon the coast. By the fearless intrepidity of some fishermen, the sinking vessel was carried through a fissure in the rocks into a sandy bay; and, by what appeared miraculous interposition, the lives of all on board were saved, even when hope was over.

On the second evening after this fortunate deliverance our story opens. Indeed, the epoch was memorable. That disastrous campaign which brought disgrace upon the British arms, had just terminated in the evacuation of the Low Countries, and the withdrawal to its own

shores of the *débris* of a splendid force, which, under luckless auspices, had left England buoyant with the assurance of success. Nor was a foreign failure the only circumstance which at this eventful period gave cause for apprehension. In England, the public mind was agitated, monetary confidence deeply shaken, and revolutionary principles were gaining ground; while in Ireland the peasantry united in lawless associations, and murder, with robbery of arms, intimated that some insurrectionary movement was at hand. In a word, everything was gloomy and discouraging abroad, and at home life and property had no security. With few exceptions the resident gentry had repaired for protection to garrisoned towns. Some however, with more spirit than discretion, determined to remain within their houses, and my father was of that number.

Yet there were few persons excepting its owner, who, even in peaceful times, would choose Knockloftie for an abiding place. It was an old and dreary-looking fabric,—one portion consisting of a dark square tower, the keep of a former stronghold of the O'Hallorans,—and the others, additions built at different periods, according to the wants or fancies of succeeding proprietors. The house was perched upon a cliff, which rose in sheer ascent two hundred feet above the beach beneath it. Although sheltered by some high grounds behind, still, as the building looked upon the ocean, it was necessarily exposed and cold; while dwarfed and sickly copse-wood—all that repeated efforts to grow timber could produce—instead of improving the general appearance of the place, gave a silent but striking evidence of its hopeless sterility.

To my father, however, Knockloftie had hereditary endearments. For five centuries his ancestors had been born and died there; and he clung with a family attachment to that ancient roof-tree, where the O'Hallorans, in better days, had exercised a boundless hospitality, which even yet was chronicled in the traditions of the neighbourhood.

But local associations apart, my father would have scorned to yield to the threatening appearances of the times, and leave his mansion in alarm. He was "every inch" a soldier; and in all relations between landlord and tenant, it was universally admitted that he was both liberal and kind. He had vainly endeavoured to rouse the spirit of the gentry, and induce them, by bold and united efforts, to crush the increasing disaffection; and at a recent county meeting, after delivering a stirring appeal, he concluded by a declaration, that, "while the old tower of Knockloftie had a roof, it never should want an arm to defend it,"—and he raised his own.

Although Colonel O'Halloran had failed to produce the reaction he desired, still the bold example he had given was not without effect. The government was appealed to for assistance, rewards were offered largely for the apprehension of the guilty, vigorous measures proposed and agreed to, and the dormant energies of the aristocracy seemed awakening. Of course, my father occupied a prominent place in the estimation of both the loyal and the disaffected. With the former he was considered the master-spirit, who was to direct them in this their hour of difficulty; while the latter set him down as the most

dangerous enemy they had to dread. In a moment, former kindness and consequent popularity vanished like a dream, the *delenda est* of Knockloftie was pronounced, and in the black list to guide the future murderer my father's name stood first.

Such was the state of the times, and such the local condition of the country in which the opening scene of this true history is laid. My first anniversary had come round ; and although the hospitable relations which had formerly existed among the gentry had been interrupted, still, on this occasion, there was a semblance of rejoicing in my father's house, though, sooth to say, it was after all a sickly effort at festivity.

In the great chamber of Knockloftie the lord of the mansion, with his lady and two guests, were seated. The apartment was a large, square, and ill-lit room, occupying the lower portion of the tower. Both floor and ceiling were framed of native oak, which time had nearly blackened, and the walls were half-concealed by portraits rudely executed. Many indications of the danger of the times were apparent in this ancient chamber. The windows were jealously secured, and everywhere weapons of all descriptions were seen. Two arm-racks, holding a dozen muskets each, were placed in either corner, while some silver sconces dependent from the cornice shed on the polished arms a flickering light. But the chamber was better illuminated ; for the huge hearth was heaped with bog-wood, and the ruddy flare this cheerful fire emitted reached the remotest extremity of the apartment, and half-dispelled its gloom.

As Scott would say, "the tables were drawn," and dinner had disappeared. My mother sat in an antique high-backed chair, busily employed in knitting shooting-stockings for her husband ; my father had extracted another cork ; the parson pronounced the wine unexceptionable ; and the priest, "good easy man," was stirring an obdurate piece of sugar, deposited in the bottom of his second tumbler. The clock upon the mantelpiece struck seven, and the butler, after replenishing a bent-basket with firewood, quitted the presence and closed the door. All these events had passed, and it is high time that the gentle reader should be formally introduced to the company.

The history of my parents must be intermixed. Lieutenant-Colonel Denis O'Halloran was now some thirty-one, but he looked older by a dozen years. He was a tall, athletic man, well formed and well set-up, with an air and bearing which did not require the attestation of an empty sleeve, to prove him "no carpet knight" and stamp him soldier. He entered the service a boy of sixteen—and at six-and-twenty, the women said he was the handsomest fellow in garrison. At twenty-seven, the old major having signified his intention to retire, my grandsire, *more Hibernico*, secured his son's promotion by parting with another town-land. At twenty-eight, Major O'Halloran further promoted himself, for he carried off the pretty brunette who was now demurely knitting stockings in the corner. Heaven forgive him !—my mother was boarder in a convent—and one blessed moonlight morning, when the nuns were dreaming of heaven, and the superior sleeping "fast as a watchman," with the assistance of a ladder and three grenadiers, Miss Emily Clifford was liberated from holy pupilage, and at Gretna Green she

became Mrs. O'Halloran, and that too, without taking the opinion of the parish as to whether there was just cause or impediment against the same.

My mother was the only daughter of a Catholic gentleman of large estate. He had however a son by a former marriage, fifteen years older. The boy grew up wild and extravagant—and at twenty-one had dissipated a handsome fortune. At last his angry parent totally discarded him, and to support his endless debaucheries, the unhappy youth resorted to discreditable means for obtaining the money he required. With some profligate companions he became involved in a transaction which rendered them obnoxious to the law, and in consequence, Edward Clifford left England secretly. Eighteen years had elapsed—none could say whether he was dead or living—but the general belief was, that he filled an early and dishonoured grave.

Mr. Clifford was a bigot in religion. All his hopes had long since centered in his daughter; and the great object of his life was to marry her to a person of his own persuasion, and a union was negotiated, and nearly concluded, between Emily and the son of a Catholic peer. In the meantime, her education had been entrusted to the sisterhood of a convent, alike celebrated for sanctity and strictness, where, as Mr. Clifford believed, his daughter would be equally secure against attempts upon her faith or her affections. What must have been his rage and astonishment when the news of her elopement was communicated! She who had been designed to wed a peer—whose loved society he had relinquished, that her religious opinions might be confirmed by spiritual instruction—she was lost to him for ever; united by an indissoluble tie to the son of a distressed gentleman—and worse still, to the professor of a creed from which Mr. Clifford fearfully recoiled, as a system founded in heresy and error.

After a sufficient time had been allowed to permit the first burst of parental displeasure to exhaust itself, letters were written to Mr. Clifford by the offenders, to deprecate his anger and solicit pardon and forgiveness; but they came back with unbroken seals, while other circumstances concurred to convince my parent that, for a time at least, the old gentleman's anger was implacable. Rich in mutual regard, they sought and found consolation in reciprocated affections—and soon after there was promise of another tie, that should bind their hearts together even more closely than before.

Short was the season when their course of love ran smooth. An order of readiness arrived unexpectedly from the war office—the destination of the regiment was France—and in another week a rout was received for Deal.

A separation was now inevitable—and when my mother most required a husband's gentle attentions, the order to divide them had arrived. But the rector of her father's parish had heard of the intended embarkation, and hastened to offer the home my mother needed. Thus, cheered by "the good man's counsels," and nursed tenderly by his excellent wife, my mother gave birth, in four months afterwards to a son—I made an *entrée* on the world,—and commenced, as the reader may probably admit hereafter, an adventurous career.

The young soldier's history in the meantime, is shortly told. Lord Moira, despairing of effecting any good by the intended descent on Brittany, changed the direction of his force, landed at Ostend, and finally joined the Duke of York at Mechlin. In my father's regiment the lieutenant-colonel had become sick, and the senior major retired—consequently the command had devolved upon himself—and could any thing have reconciled the severance of young love, it would have been the early prospect of military distinction.

Major O'Halloran proved that fortune had not vainly offered him her favours. His regiment was brigaded with the rear-guard, and on every occasion the battalion was admirably commanded. The service of retiring constantly in front of a victorious army is most discouraging, but still that disheartening duty was performed with a spirit deserving better fortune. At last the Duke of York was recalled, and for a time his successor, Count Walmoden, assumed the offensive. An attack on the Republicans at Tuyl had partial success, and my father heading the grenadier company, carried the town by assault. With that exploit his military career was prematurely closed—his left arm was fractured by a grape shot, amputated afterwards, and he returned to England invalided.

The rest is briefly told. He found himself a father, and his own sire had paid the debt of nature. His health was shaken by fatigue, his wound healed slowly, and after some consideration, he retired from the army upon half pay, obtaining a colonel's rank and pension, and fixed his residence in his native country, taking possession of an ancient house, and what proved afterwards an unquiet home.

The guests who on the anniversary of my birth had honoured Knockloftie with their presence, were different both in character and appearance. The priest was a strong-built, good-humoured, under-sized man, of jovial habits and easy disposition, careless how matters went, and consequently, ill-adapted to repress the turbulence of a disobedient flock, who would have required the religious coercion of a sterner monitor. As confessor to the establishment, Father Dominic Kelly made Knockloftie his abiding place. He was of gentle blood himself, and preferred being domiciled in the house of a gentleman, to a wandering life among the rude dwellings of a lawless community. Hence Father Dominic was by no means popular—and his influence over a wild and rebellious people was far less extensive than that which is generally possessed by the Irish priesthood.

The other churchman formed a singular contrast to the burly priest. He was a small, attenuated, intelligent-looking personage, possessing natural courage and a restless and irascible disposition. A fellow of the university, he had retired upon a college living—and having obtained, unhappily for himself, a commission of the peace, he exercised his powers with greater zeal than discretion; in short, he had made himself so obnoxious to the peasantry that his life was not worth a pin's fee. Like Colonel O'Halloran, he too was doomed to death, and in the *black list* his name was second to that of my father. A few nights before, his glebe-house had been burnt to the ground; and, having escaped assassination by a miracle, he found that protection at

Knockloftie, which, from a more timid proprietor, might have been sought and asked in vain.

But there were others besides Doctor Hamilton, who during this reign of terror had been obliged to abandon their own homes, and elsewhere seek a shelter. Several of the poorer farmers had given testimony in recent prosecutions which led to the conviction of an assassin, on whom the extreme penalty of the law had been justly executed. This in the eyes of his guilty companions was a crime beyond the pale of mercy, and the unfortunate men were accordingly denounced. They fled for protection to Knockloftie—there, they were now residing—and, as if the measure of my father's offendings was not already full, the daring act of interposing between a lawless confederacy and its victims had heaped it even to an overflow. No wonder therefore, that the full fury of rebel vengeance was to be turned against himself and all whom his roof-tree covered.

"Well, William," said my mother, as she renewed a conversation which had been accidentally interrupted, "when you were struck down—"

"My foster brother sprang from the ranks, threw away his musket, lifted me lightly as even with this lone arm I would lift you, and carried me—"

"In safety from the danger?"

"No, no, love—we had to pass through a cross fire of musketry—a ball struck him, and when he fell dead—I was in his arms."

"Would," said my mother with a sigh, "that our Hector had a foster brother!"

"Would that he had! and one so faithful and devoted!"—my father drew his hand across his eyes—"this is too womanly, but—"

As he was speaking, the mastiff chained in a kennel beside the hall door began to growl, and the priest rose and peeped cautiously through a shot-hole in the shutters, to ascertain what might have disturbed the dog. Nothing to cause alarm was visible—and the churchman returned to the table, observing, that the night froze keenly.

My mother had dropped her knitting on the carpet.—"What a horrid state of things," observed the lady, as she picked the worsted from the floor, "that a growl from Cæsar sets my heart beating for an hour, and a knock after dark terrifies me almost to death!"

"Thou a soldier's wife, and play the coward!" exclaimed my father. "Fear nothing, Emily; the old tower from roof to basement is secured—there is not a cranny that would admit the cat that I have not under a flanking fire—the lower windows save one are built up—I have retrenched the hall with a barricade, nailed up the back door, and the front one is enfiladed by that embrasure,"—and he pointed to a window in an angle of the room, at either side of which a blunderbuss was standing ready for instant use. "Would that for one night thou and the baby were safe within the convent walls! then let the scoundrels come! By Heaven! next morning there should be more shirts* upon the lawn than were ever spread upon the bleaching ground, and the coroner should have occupation, not by single files, but by the cart-load."

* The *Defenders* wore shirts over their clothes at night, and hence were also called *White-boys*.

While my father spoke, the whole scene was passing in his "mind's-eye," and *Defenders* were dropping by the dozen. His face lighted up, and springing from the chair he waved his solitary arm, strode across the chamber, and looked with conscious pride at all his military preparations. My mother grew pale as death, and turning her eyes up she fervently ejaculated, "God forbid!" and crossed herself devoutly. The priest performed a similar ceremony, and uttered a sincere "Amen!"

"Pshaw!" said my father, as he passed his arm round my mother's waist and kissed her tenderly; "do not alarm yourself. This house is strong; nothing but treachery could force it."

"Beware of that," said the parson; "for that I feared and proved I was betrayed by the villain who ate my bread, and saved providentially by the babbling folly of an idiot."

"Indeed!" said my mother, with an inquiring glance, as she laid her knitting down.

"The tale is briefly told," said Doctor Hamilton. "For some time past I suspected that my servants were disaffected. I watched them closely, and circumstances convinced me that my fears were true. I had business in the next town; my tithe agent dared not venture out of doors, and it was imperatively necessary that I should see him. By a lane, the distance between the glebe-house and the village was only four miles—all I wanted done would occupy but a few minutes—and I took, as I supposed, effectual means to enable me to accomplish the object I had in view, and return home even before my absence was known in my treacherous household. At dusk I despatched my servant with a letter to the curate, and when he was out of sight I saddled a fast horse, quitted the stable by a back door, and rode off at speed for the village. I was unexpectedly delayed—but as a precaution against danger, returned by another and longer road.

Night had set in; I passed through the last hamlet at a sharp trot, and, but a mile from home, pulled up at a steep hill that leads directly to the bridge. A lad who was running in an opposite direction stopped when he observed me coming, and I recognised him at once to be an idiot boy who occasionally visited the glebe-house, where he always received meat or money by my orders. As I came closer he began dancing and gabbling in a sing-song tune, "Ha, ha! Hamilton, ha, ha! somebody will get his fairin. There's Dick Brady and the smith behind the hedge, and Jack Coyne, and Patsy Gallagher, and twenty more besides, only I don't know them with their white shirts and black faces. Ha, ha! ha, ha! somebody to-night will get his fairin!" He repeated this rhyme, and kept dancing for a few moments with idiot glee, and then, under a sudden impulse, ran off towards the hamlet which I had but just passed through."

Again an angry growling was heard from the mastiff's kennel, and the priest looked a second time through the shot-hole. The night was clear and star-lit, but nothing was visible from the window. Father Dominic resumed his seat, and Doctor Hamilton thus continued: "My danger was imminent, and my resolution must be prompt. I dismounted, turned my horse loose, and as I had expected, he

galloped off directly towards his stable. I sprang into the next field, and lay down under cover of the hedge, to consider what was the best direction that I should take to escape the blood-hounds, who doubtlessly would be soon upon my trail.

"I had not been above a minute in concealment when footsteps were heard approaching rapidly from the hridge. Two men came on at speed, and one had outstripped the other. 'Stop!' cried the hindmost, 'what a devil of a hurry you are in! I can't keep up with you.'

"'I want to be in at the death,' returned the well-known voice of my villain servant; 'I would not miss it for a ten-pound note. He thought to give me the slip—put me on a wrong scent, and sent me with a letter. He asked me a question about bridling a horse, and that betrayed his secret. I knew there was something in the wind—doubled back upon the house after he thought me clear away—saw him go off through the back lane in a canter, and—' Two shots were heard in quick succession. 'He's down, by ——,' he exclaimed, with savage exultation. 'Run Murtaugh! they'll be into the house in no time. I know where the money is. Run—the devil's luck to you!' and off both ruffians started.

"The rest you know. Speedily a glare of red light was seen, and a burning house—my own—guided my flight, for I took the opposite direction. I know not whether I was pursued—but, if I was the villains were unsuccessful. At midnight I reached this place of refuge, and here, for a time at least, I am safe."

"What boundless treachery!" exclaimed my father, as the parson ended the narrative of his escape. "We may set an open enemy at defiance, but who can guard against secret villainy? By Heaven! a dark suspicion at this moment flashes across my mind. Have you noticed the servant who waits at table?"

"I have—and as a disciple of Lavater I denounce him; he never looks you fairly in the face."

"And yet the only vulnerable point in the garrison is at that fellow's mercy. When I closed up every aperture besides, Hackett remonstrated so strongly, and pleaded the inconvenience it would cause should I build up the window of his pantry, that I consented to leave it open, merely adding a second shutter for security. It is but small—a man however could creep through it—but to-morrow the mason shall brick it up."

"It may be fancy," said my mother, "but Hackett's manner appears lately to have undergone a change. There is at times a freedom in his language that borders upon insolence; but hush! here comes the nurse."

The door opened as she spoke, and I was added to the company. My mother placed me on her knee,—the parson proposed my health,—Father Dominic added a supplication, that "God would make me a better man than my father, and, above all things, keep me out of convents,"—and the latter responded an amen. Every glass was emptied to the bottom—the host rang for more wine and the priest replenished his tumbler. It was a moment of hilarity, joyous and brief. Suddenly

*Cæsar gave the alarm—not as before, in under growls, but in the “full-mouthed diapason” of a bark audible a mile off. The greyhound and the terrier sprang up and answered,—I cried, frightened by the “loud alarm,”—the nursemaid caught me from my mother, and hurried from the room,—while my father, exclaiming “a true challenge, by Heaven!” leaped from his chair, and placed himself before the wicket that looked upon the lawn.

A minute—an anxious minute, elapsed.

“I hear,” said the Doctor, “the footsteps of a mob, as they tread upon the frozen gravel.”

“Hush!” replied my father, as he turned his ear attentively in the direction whence the noise proceeded; “that is not the movement of a mob—they step too well together. Soldiers on march, for a hundred!”

At the Colonel’s observation, my mother, who had nearly fainted, gradually recovered courage, and left the apartment for the nursery to re-establish mine,—my father remained at his post, to ascertain what the party were, who at this late hour approached his fortilage,—while Father Dominic ejaculating a pious “Heaven stand between us and evil!” turned down his tumbler to the bottom. Well, it was only his third one, after all.

CHAPTER II.

THE PLOT THICKENS.

Now Christie’s Will peep’d from the tower,
And out at the shot-hole keeked he,—
And, “Ever unlucky,” quo’ he, “is the hour,
When a woman comes to speer for me.”

Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.

IN a short time “the heavy tread of marching men” ceased, as a party of ten or twelve soldiers halted immediately in front of my father’s barricade.

“Stand! who goes there?” was demanded from the loop-hole.

“A friend,” replied a voice, redolent of the richness of the Shannon.

“Advance, friend, and give the countersign,” returned my father, whose phraseology, from military habitude, still retained the parlance of the camp.

“Countersign!” responded the leader of the belated wayfarers; “devil a countersign have I but one. If my ould Colonel’s above the sod, he’s spakin to me now fair and asy from the windy.”

“Who are you?” demanded my father.

“Oh! by Jakers, you’ll hardly mind me, Colonel;—Private Phil Brady of ‘number eight’ when you had the regiment; but now, glory be to God and good conduct, lance-sergeant in ‘number five.’”

“What is your party, Brady?”

“Upon my conscience, Colonel, a quare one, enough; tin invalids, a dyin woman, and a fine man-child.”

“Unclose the door, Father Dominic!”

The priest lifted a heavy key from the side-board, and proceeded to give admission to the travellers, when Hackett, who had been hitherto an anxious listener, ventured a remonstrance. “Why not,” said he, “give them meat and whisky before the door? Every room was already crowded with idle people, whom nobody would have harmed, had they remained where they ought,—at home. If the house was to be turned into an hospital for sick trampers and their trulls, why every servant would quit a place liker a jail than a gentleman’s.”

Colonel O’Halloran preserved an ominous tranquillity; and Hackett, mistaking the cause, became more insolent as his speech proceeded without interruption. But the storm burst at last.

“Villain!” said my father in a voice which induced the chief butler to recede some paces backwards,—“dare you, a menial, prescribe to me, your master, who shall be received and who rejected? Tell me that a comrade shall be turned from my door, and recommend that the weary soldier be ejected from the house of him under whom he has fought and bled! Off—we part to-morrow. The roof of Knockloftie shall never cover for a second night a sneaking scoundrel who has neither welcome for a brave man nor pity for a helpless woman;—show in the sergeant!”

Without venturing to reply, Hackett shrank from the presence of his angry master; and in another minute sergeant Philip Brady made his military salaam, and, with a capacious bundle in his arms, stood full front before his former commander.

“Phil!” said the Colonel, as he examined the soldier’s outer man, “if I judge rightly, thou like myself art but lightly indebted to the Low Countries;” and my father held up an empty sleeve.

“Feaks! and ye may say that, Colonel,” replied the sergeant. “All that I have gained in Holland—barrin the stripes—is a slashed cheek, a threadbare jacket, and a fine child.”

“Your kit, however, seems extensive, Phil; that which you carry looks to be a well-filled bundle.”

“It’s only the child, your honor; the night was cold, the mother wake, so I wrapped the baby in this ould coat, and for its father’s sake kept it, the cratur, as snug as could be.”

“It’s not your own, then?”

“Divil a wife or child has Philip Brady,” returned the honest sergeant. “Ye may remember corporal O’Toole,—he was one of the finest men in the grenadiers, when your honor had the company.”

“Perfectly; a better or braver soldier was not in the regiment. What became of him?”

“He died at sea, God rest his sowl! on the second day after we left Ostend. He was badly wounded when put on board, poor fellow! and we were all, men and women, bundled into the transport like so many hounds, short of water and provisions, and in the hurry they forgot the surgeon too. Well, his wound mortified: ‘I’m off, Phil;’ says he; ‘you’ll not forget the poor wife, for my sake, and may God

look down upon the orphan! Give me your hand upon it, Phil, says he, and he squeezed mine with all his feeble strength. When I came down again, his wife was hanging over the dead body. They coaxed her away to see the child; and when she returned to have some comfort in crying over the corpse, it was already overboard with two others, who had dropped off the hooks that evening. From that hour Toole's wife (we called him Toole for shortness) has pined away, and the life was barely in her when your honor, may God reward ye! let us in."

"Why were you so late upon the road?" inquired the Colonel; "in the present state of things soldiers are no favourites, and the chances are considerable, had you proceeded farther, that you would have been waylaid and abused."

"Feaks! and I believe your honor. We were delayed partly by accident, and partly through design. Our car broke down, the horse lost a shoe, and the rest of the party pushed forward, laving us at a forge to get the cart mended, and the baste shod. The smith—devil's luck to him, the ruffin!—kept us three hours, I think on purpose, and then they directed us astray. So when I found the night falling, and the poor woman all but dead, as I heard there was a gentleman's not far off, I heads the party here on chance, little dreaming, the Lord knows, that I had the luck of thousands and was coming to my ould Colonel's, and no other."

My father was a man of prompt action and few words. The bell was rung, the soldiers sent to the kitchen to refresh themselves, the child committed to the care of a female domestic, and carried to the apartment whither its dying mother had been previously removed. There, my mother and the woman-kind of the establishment used every means which simple skill suggested; but already the decree had gone forth, and within an hour after the arrival of the party the crisis came, the widow of the dead soldier was at rest, and her babe an orphan.

"The struggle was brief," said the priest, as he re-entered the room, from which he had been so hastily summoned

'By a dying woman to pray.'

May God receive her in mercy! She went off so gently, that though we were all about the bed, no one could tell the moment when she departed. My lady is crying over her as if she were a sister, and the baby sleeping soundly in Sibby Connor's arms, as if it were still resting on that bosom which had been designed by God to be its pillow and support."

My father, as was his wont when any thing particularly excited him, sprang from his chair, and strode thrice across the chamber.—"Tell me not," he exclaimed, "that there is not an especial providence over every thing—ay, from the sparrow to the soldier's child. That orphan has been sent to me,—mine it is,—mine it shall be. Pass the wine, Doctor. Here comes *madame*."

My mother timidly approached the side of her husband's chair, and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

“Denis,” she said, “will you be very angry with me?”

“Angry, love!” replied my father, reproachfully.

“You never were angry with me yet. But—but—I have done something, upon which I should have previously obtained your sanction, love.”

“What was it, Emily?”

“I promised,” said my mother, “the dying woman, that her helpless child should find in you and me protectors. Hector’s nurse has taken the orphan,—and shall he not be our own boy’s foster-brother?”

“You did, my dear, precisely what I had determined to have done myself.”

“Before the sufferer’s voice failed totally,” continued the lady, “she said that the child was still unchristened, and prayed that rite might be performed when convenient.”

“There will be no difficulty in complying with her request,” replied my father; “there are now two learned Thebans in Knockloftie. To which of the professors does the poor baby belong?”

“His parents were Roman Catholics,” said my mother.

“Then, Father Dominic, a cast of your office will be necessary. Ring for Sergeant Brady—and then parade the child.”

In a few moments the non-commissioned officer and the soldier’s orphan were introduced.

“What name shall I give him?” said the priest.

“His father’s,” rejoined the Colonel.

“That was Marc,” observed the sergeant.

“What’s in a name?” said Dr. Hamilton.

“More than one would suppose, Doctor,” replied my father. “Our red-headed adjutant married a Bath heiress almost at sight, for after but a two hours’ siege she surrendered at discretion, declaring that it was utterly impossible to hold out against a lover whose appellatives were Julius Cæsar.”

“Then add Antony to his patronymic, and your *protégé* will prove irresistible.”

“Marc Antony be it then,” replied the priest; and in five minutes the ceremony was complete. The sergeant retired to finish his supper below stairs, and the orphan was returned to the nursery, named after that amorous Roman, who “for a queen of fifty” gave up a world.

The clock struck eleven.—My mother retired for the night, and the priest had been called out to prescribe for a sick soldier,—for his reverence united leechcraft to divinity, and thus was doubly useful. My father and Dr. Hamilton were consequently left alone, and both for some minutes had been communing with their own thoughts—my father broke the silence.

“I know not wherefore,” said he, “but something whispers me that this night is fated to be an important one in the history of the old house. I’m not inclined for sleep, and I feel a sort of restlessness, as if the day’s events had not yet closed.”

“It is the mental reaction which follows some unusual excitement,” replied the divine.

"It may be so," returned my father. "On with more wood. We'll order a light supper, and borrow an hour from the night."

The Doctor threw some billets on the fire, while my father filled his glass, and transferred the wine duly to the churchman.

"Did you remark the opposition which Hackett made when I gave orders to admit the soldiers?"

"I watched him attentively," replied the Doctor. "His lips grew pale, his brows lowered, and with great difficulty he suppressed a burst of angry feelings which seemed almost too strong to be controlled. Be assured, my dear Colonel, that man is dangerous. If he be not traitor, I wrong him sorely."

"Hush!" said my father, "the dog is growling. What! more late visitors? This is indeed a busy night; and again honest Cæsar proves himself a worthy sentinel. Wherever treachery may lurk, there's none within his kennel, Doctor."

The Colonel reconnoitred from his embrasure, but there was nothing to excite alarm. The moon had risen, and the sky, spangled with frost-stars, was bright and clear. Cæsar, advanced to the full length of his chain, was patted upon the head by a person closely wrapped up, who spoke to him with the admitted familiarity of an old acquaintance. To the Colonel's demand of name and business, a female voice replied, "I beg your honour's pardon, it's me, Mary Halligan. My mother-in-law won't put over the night. She wants to see his reverence in private, and sent me with some lines* to the priest. None of the boys would venture to the Castle after dark, for fear of Cæsar and your honour."

"Well, Mary, late as it is, we'll allow you in. Will you, Hamilton, unlock the door, and let us have the lady *here*—for *entre nous*, she belongs to a faithless family."

The peasant now in waiting at the hall-door was decidedly the handsomest woman in the parish. For time immemorial her fathers had been servants in Knockloftie, and she an occasional inmate of the house. Her brother, educated by my grandfather, had discharged the double duty of schoolmaster and driver—the latter, in plain English, meaning the factotum of an Irish gentleman of small estate. In this department, Halligan had been found dishonest, was disgracefully turned off, joined lawless men, obtained among them a bad pre-eminence, and now, under the double ban of murder and sedition, was skulking in the hills with a reward of fifty pounds offered for his apprehension. After her brother's disgrace, Mary had seldom visited the mansion of her former master—and, as report said, she was affianced to one of the most troublesome and disaffected scoundrels in the barony.

Mary Halligan, and much against her own inclination, was inducted by the churchman into my father's presence. "It was too much trouble to his honour," she muttered; "Mr. Hackett the butler would do all she wanted, and give the lines to Father Dominic."

"Mary," said my father, as he handed her a glass of wine, "you tremble. Has anything alarmed you?"

"It is very, very cold, your honour, out of doors."

* The term "lines" is generally used by the Irish peasantry instead of "letter."

“Cold it is, certainly, and Father Dominic will have a dreary ride. Where is the letter for him?”

Mary Halligan’s colour went and came, for my father’s searching eye was turned upon her, and that added to her confusion. She fumbled in her bosom—pulled out one paper,—a second fell upon the carpet—one she caught up—the other she hastily delivered—and the latter, was the wrong one.

My father carelessly looked over it, while Mary Halligan scrutinized his face with deep attention. As he read it—she became pale as death, and seemed hanging in fearful expectation upon the first words that Colonel O’Halloran would utter.

“Ha!” said my father carelessly, “so the old woman’s bad it seems. She wants, I suppose, to make her will—leave you an heiress, Mary,—and Father Dominic will assist her. Well, the priest will be here directly. Come, Mary, ‘for auld lang syne’ we’ll have a glass. What has become of your brother, the schoolmaster?”

“May God forgive the liars! They slandered him, and turned your honour again him. He would die for a dog belonging to Knockloftie,—and if he didn’t, the bigger villain he!”

“And the young miller, Mary? people say you are about to marry him. Is he slandered, too?”

“God sees he is,” was the response.

“Any nightly meetings at the chapel, Mary?” said the Colonel.

The girl changed colour again: “None, your honour—not one. Thanks be to God! the bad people have left the parish.”

“When did you see your brother? To-night?” said the Colonel sharply.

“To-night!” returned the girl, in tones which indicated deep confusion.

“I am jesting, Mary. Where is he now?”

“In Connaught, your honour, with a cousin of my mother’s.”

“There let him remain, Mary. There, he will be safe until things become more quiet. But, Mary, the times are not as they were five years ago, when you and I used to meet by moonlight near the *bouilliee*.* Pshaw! don’t blush;—it was only to gather bilberries, and exchange kisses for new ribbons. Did you come here alone?—no lover—no comrade—none to bear you company?”

“I put my trust in God,” said the girl, “and then, Colonel, you know I was safe.”

“Just as we used to do in Glencullen. Ah, Mary, would that all young women had your prudence and religion, and poor Father Dominic would not be broken-hearted as he is, in fulminating vengeance against broken vows and repairing damaged reputations.”

Notwithstanding my father’s *badinage* Mary Halligan seemed ill at ease.

“Plase you honour, I would wish to be going,” she said, “and as Father Dominic is not in the way, I would like to say a word or two to Mr. Hackett.”

* The mountain hivouac of the peasant girls, where during the summer months they attend to the cattle which are then driven to the hills.

"Ay, certainly; but, Mary, will you not stop, and see your mistress? Doctor, I must trespass on you to ask my wife to come down."

The parson left the room, and speedily returned with my mother.

"This, Emily, is an old acquaintance. Not a word, Mary, about bilberries or the bouillee. Bring her to the nursery, my love—and," he added in a suppressed voice, "be sure you keep her there."

When the door closed, my father handed the letter he had received from the peasant-girl to the parson, and as the latter read it he became red and pale alternately.

"Good Heaven!" he exclaimed, "how could you with this murderous missive in your hand talk lightly with its bearer, and jest with that fiend in woman's form, who brought an order that doomed to death or outrage all that your roof-tree covers?"

"Because," replied my father coolly, "it furnished me with a glorious counterstroke. I threw my eye but hastily over it—read me that precious document!"

The appearance of the paper was remarkable. At the top, a scull and cross-bones were rudely stamped, and though the handwriting was tolerable, the sentences were ungrammatical, and many of the words misspelt. The letter ran thus:—

"DEAR PAT.

"I made two attempts to send you information, but your d——d master, like bad fortune, was always in the way; my sister Mary will strive to hand you this. To-night our fate must be decided, for Luke Byrn, Cooney, and your brother are betrayed, and at sunrise to-morrow, if there be a living man in Knockloftie, they're all dead men; the witnesses are to be removed to Donegal, and if they once reach it, Cooney will split, and you and I are certain of the gallows. *At one o'clock* I'll be with you; lave the window open, and I'll show the boys the way in, as I know the house, and the smith has keys that will open the yard gate. Once when four or five of us gets in, we'll open the hall door for the remainder; you can finish the master easily when he hears the first alarm and rushes from his room; the rest will be child's play, and then *no quarter*. The black seal is to this paper; mind, Hackett, you're to watch the Colonel's door, and I'll be first man through the window. No more at present, from your friend and commander,

"JAMES HALLIGAN."

"But here's a postscript," and the parson turned the paper.

"When the job's over we'll have a roaring night. As, captain, you know the Colonel's lady—'" He paused.

"Read on!" said my father.

"No, no,—mere ribald nonsense," returned the churchman.

Colonel O'Halloran snatched the letter from his hand, and in one glance his eye passed over the portion of the paper which had been previously overlooked. To the *exposé* of Halligan's murderous intentions my father had listened with cold and contemptuous indifference; but when he read the postscript, a terrible change came over his countenance, and succeeded its previous expression of calm defiance. The eye flashed, the brow contracted, and springing from his chair the

Colonel paced the room, muttering something between his clenched teeth which was but partially overheard. The outbreak of his passion was however as momentary as it had been strong,—and in a minute he resumed his seat, and calmly addressed the Doctor.

“We have,” said my father as he looked at the clock on the mantel, “an hour and twenty minutes to put our loose in order, and a tenth portion of the time would be sufficient. You shall be aide-de-camp, Hamilton,—and to Father Dominic we’ll entrust the management of the women, and make his reverence keep matters quiet and administer ghostly consolation until the squall blows over. Mr. Hackett must be secured, but Heaven forbid the honest hangman should be anticipated! Cut down that bell-rope—now pull the other one—and then sit down and fill, Doctor,—ay, fill high, Confusion to all traitors! and here comes a most superlative scoundrel.”

The butler had promptly answered the summons of the bell. “Bring slippers,” said the Colonel, and the order was obeyed. Kneeling he removed his master’s boots, placed the slippers on his feet, and was about to rise, when to his astonishment my father’s powerful arm prevented it, and in a minute more he was bound hand and foot, and flung upon the floor in perfect helplessness, with an intimation “deep not loud” that the first movement he attempted of limb or tongue would prove a certain passport to eternity.

Without hurry or alarm the effective strength of my father’s garrison was speedily assembled in the great parlour, and sixteen men were found fit for duty in Knockloftie—a number more than sufficient for its defence. To all, arms and cartridges were delivered,—and every musket was carefully loaded to ensure a certain and effective fire when the moment of action should arrive. My father’s orders were brief, clear, and easily comprehended—and as every spot of vantage had been occupied, every window that looked upon the front or back approaches had one or more marksmen assigned for its defence according to its local importance. The lights were blinded, the strictest silence was enjoined, and not a trigger was to be drawn until my father gave the signal. Never was a small garrison better prepared or more determined; the soldiers, under a belief that they had been specially betrayed, and that they would have been assailed if their route had been continued, were burning to be revenged upon their intended murderers; while those who had found shelter from their enemies in Knockloftie, already doomed men, knew also that they were the chief objects of attack, and that no alternative remained to them but to defeat it or to perish. Thus circumstanced, Knockloftie had little to fear from open force. True, treachery or surprise might possibly have succeeded. Against the former, if there were faith in a stout bell-rope and a parson’s knot, the old house for the present was secure; and from the latter, the *mal adresse* of Miss Halligan had effectually preserved the garrison.

When all his preparations were completed, my father ascended to the upper story of the tower to satisfy himself that his wife and infant were in safety. On opening the door the chamber presented a sad and striking scene. On one bed, the corpse of the soldier’s widow was “laid out,” attired in the simple habiliments of the grave used by the

Irish peasantry ; and in another, two children were sleeping side by side, unconscious that murder and rapine were abroad, and that guilty steps were moving to this their abode of peace. My mother, bending over both, was murmuring a prayer for their deliverance, while, by the feeble light of a waxen taper, the priest, in a low and monotonous voice, was reading an office for the dead. One other person was there—a worthless woman. Mary Halligan sat before the fire ; she neither spoke nor moved, but with her eyes fixed upon the dying embers, in full conviction that her treachery was suspected or discovered, she quailed before my father's glance, and, while he remained in the apartment, never ventured to look up.

The Colonel's visit was short : he whispered in his wife's ear assurances of safety, and affectionately kissed her and the infant ; then turning a withering glance upon his former mistress, he left the chamber and joined the men below.

The clock chimed three-quarters—no sound was heard that possibly could cause alarm, nor was there a growl from the kennel of the dog—and yet the murderers were at hand unchallenged. No wonder—Hector was in the agonies of death—Curses light upon the traitress ! Mary Halligan, while she patted his honest head, had poisoned him !

CHAPTER III.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

“ All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep—”

* * * * *

“ Alas ! that those who lov'd the most,
Forget they ever lov'd at all.”—BYRON.

As the chimes died away, my father took a pistol from the table, placed another in his breast, and beckoned the soldier whom he had previously selected to attend him.

“ Honest Philip,” said he, addressing the non-commissioned officer, “ keep the lads cool, and wait till you hear my signal. You may expect a rush in front—don't let that alarm you, the door will defy every effort to break it down. Aim steadily—one well-directed shot is worth a dozen random ones. I shall have the honour of receiving Mr. Hackett's friends at the pantry-window, and leave them, I trust, no reason to complain that their reception was not warm enough. Should that scoundrel move,” and he pointed to the prostrate menial—

“ It will be his last movement in this world,” returned Sergeant Brady. “ I'll pin him with a bayonet to the floor.”

“ Has the pantry-window been secured ?” inquired the divine.

“ If it has,” replied my father, “ bolt and bar shall be withdrawn, and the aperture stand invitingly open.”

“ What !” said Doctor Hamilton, “ to give entrance to a band of murderers ?”

“No!” returned my father with stern composure, “to stop it with the carcase of their leader. And now, my lads, be steady—a golden guinea for every white-shirt on the lawn at sun-rise!”

So saying, the Colonel quitted the apartment, and, accompanied by the attendant, proceeded to the post of danger.

Leaving the soldier in the passage as a support, my father entered the pantry, unclosed the shutters, and placed himself beside the open casement. For a determined man, the post was excellently adapted. Himself concealed in darkness, all without was visible—for the moon had risen, and although the lofty tower flung its deep shadow across the lower buildings over which it domineered, there was still a narrow alley of light spanning the court-yard, on which each passing object could not fail to be revealed clearly to him who watched within. The time, the circumstances, all, to “coming events” gave an imposing effect. Violence was abroad—and all within prepared for desperate resistance.

Five minutes—long, long, minutes—passed. Another interval,—and another followed; not a light twinkled in the castle—not a sound fell upon the ear. Suddenly, a key grated in the lock—a door opened in the court-yard; a man appeared—he stopped—listened—advanced—hesitated—retired again—and then spoke in soft whispers to some others. There was a pause. Once more the stranger issued from the doorway, crossed the moonlit vista, and stopped before the pantry-window. He passed his arm through the aperture—drew back again, and muttered with evident satisfaction,—“All is right! the window’s open!”

Four—six—eight—ten—twelve!—all issued into moonlight, and grouped themselves around the casement. The leader spoke in smothered tones:—

“Hackett! Pat!—hush! no reply. All’s right; he’s at the Colonel’s door. Hackett!”—another pause—“’Tis safe, and Mary has succeeded. I told you I would show you in; and now for vengeance!”

Ay! and vengeance that was to be so easily obtained; for Knock-loffie appeared buried in the deep repose which ever attends a false security. The leader turned, “No quarter, boys,” jumped into the open casement, and added, “Mercy to none!”

The words and action were simultaneous. Halligan had passed his head already through the aperture, when a voice, like an echo, responded in deeper tones “Mercy to none!”—A pistol exploded—and the robber chief dropped heavily from the window, a dead man!

To all, the assailants and the assailed, that fatal shot proved the signal. The expected assault was made upon the front, the more daring of the party rushing on with sledge-hammers to try and force an entrance—but not a stroke fell upon the door. From every aperture a withering cross-fire was opened. It was returned by a random volley, which splintered the windows, but inflicted no loss upon those within, who were already carefully protected. In the rear of the building, a still bloodier repulse attended the night attack:—while their leader reconnoitred, the ruffian group behind had been covered by a dozen muskets, and within a few moments after the robber’s fall, half his companions formed a lifeless heap upon the pavement.

When my father rushed up stairs, the struggle in front was over. Dead and dying men were extended before the door—and in the clear moonlight those who escaped the fire from the house, were seen flying in wild disorder. As in lawless efforts generally, numbers had only produced embarrassment, and rendered failure more fatal.

One glance satisfied my father that the attempt had been fearfully repulsed; and he hastened to the sad but safe asylum, where those most dear to him had been placed for their security. My mother and the children had been already removed by the priest and servants to their respective chambers—and Colonel O'Halloran, with a dead and living woman, was left in possession of the melancholy apartment.

Mary Halligan was seated as when my father had quitted the room; her eyes were fixed upon the wood-fire—a minute passed—and not a word was uttered. My father laid his hand upon her shoulder, "Mary!" said he, "treachery! and from you!"

"And wherefore not?" exclaimed the peasant girl, as she sprang upon her feet, and holdly returned his glance. "Why should not the deceived in turn become deceivers?"

"Wretched woman! even had I wronged you, would you wreak vengeance on those who never wished you evil?"

The girl sighed heavily.

"There was a time, Mary, when you would not have betrayed the doomed one to the destroyer, and that victim—me."

Mary Halligan was deeply affected; she sobbed, and tears, like rain-drops, fell fast upon the floor.

"And could a few brief years change that once gentle nature, and so fearfully? Would nothing satisfy revenge, but death for me—insult for my wife?"

"Death—insult!" she repeated. "Neither was intended."

"Read—'tis the paper you gave me by mistake."

Mary Halligan cast her eyes upon the scroll; her lips and cheeks grew pale; her hand shook violently; the paper dropped upon the floor; and turning her eyes upwards, she exclaimed, "As I was unconscious that such villany was designed, so may Heaven grant me pardon!"

"What brought you here, then?"

"To save my uncle from the gallows. They told me that witnesses who must convict him and others were sheltered in this house; and that could they but be carried off and concealed until after the assizes, then the prisoners' lives were safe. They stated that they only wanted the arms deposited in Knockloftie;—that they would swear you to quit the country—and thus intimidate those who had followed your example and ventured to remain. Before I consented to carry the letter which my brother wished to have conveyed to Hackett, he swore upon the chapel-altar where the party had collected, that not one hair of your head should suffer injury. May God forgive him!"

"To that prayer, Mary, I add a sincere amen! He is gone to his account—a perjurer!"

"Gone to his account!" exclaimed the girl. "Is he dead? Who killed him?"

“He fell by the hand of one whom he would have more than murdered!”

“Then am I now indeed alone upon the world!” A long and harrowing silence followed. “Denis,” she said, “I dare not curse, and cannot bless you. Four short years have passed. How bitterly have all things changed?”

“Stop, Mary! From my soul, I pity and believe you. You tell me that you did not know the purport of this night attack!”

“God knows, I did not. You wrecked my happiness; but still I would not—could not subdue feelings now best forgotten. Forgotten, said I?—never!”

Mary Halligan had spoken to my father in her native tongue; and those who are intimate with that portion of the kingdom where the Celtic language is still retained, will remember with what poetic imagery, the Irish peasantry at times detail their mingled story of grief and joy, wrong and suffering.

Mary was one of those on whom nature stamps the grace which art idly or imperfectly can simulate. Her voice had all

“The sweetness of the mountain-tongue;”

and more affecting still, all that it uttered seemed to come directly from the heart.

“I loved you, Denis—ay, loved in all the madness with which woman loves. The peasant girl never dreamed that birth and rank had divided us immeasurably. She never thought that she should be wooed and won, and cast aside for others. She knew nothing of the world. Those, for whom Heaven had designed her, sought her, and sued, and were rejected. You came. Six years had changed us—the child had become a girl—the boy had become a man. There was joy and merriment at Knockloftie—I was your chosen partner in the dance—and you would leave your dogs upon the moor, to steal to the boulliee, and sit for hours beside me. Is it to be wondered at that I loved with the ardour of a first passion—and the undoubting confidence of woman? While no sound was heard above the rushing waterfall, you plucked heath and wild-flowers from the bank, placed them in my hair, and swore you would be constant. Fool that I was! I believed you,—hid them in my bosom,—and before they faded, I found myself deserted and betrayed.” She paused,—her agitation was fearful; but a flood of tears relieved it, and she thus continued:—“You went to another land,—the sea rolled between us,—and were you forgotten? Oh, no! In fancy, I saw you still upon the moor—in sleep, I sate beside you on the heather—your name was mingled in my prayers—and when one was offered for my own sins, three were poured warm from the heart, to implore a blessing on the absent one. Well, well; the dream is over,—the spell is broken,—and in this world you and I shall never meet again. Farewell, Colonel. There were two beings between whom this heart once was shared. I look my last upon the living one—and, too soon, I shall have looked my last upon the dead. I dare not press that hand—there’s blood upon it; and—oh, God! that blood—a brother’s!”

The priest, who had witnessed the termination of this painful interview, led Mary Halligan from the room. Her brother's body, with those of the other lawless men who had fallen or been wounded in the night affray, were already by my father's orders removed to an adjacent village. Presently, the sky was overcast, the moon withdrew her light, and a heavy snow shower fell for miles around, covering the surface of the ground; and when morning dawned no traces of a recent affray were seen, and not a blood-stain was visible. One melancholy memorial of foul treachery alone remained:—hidden by a sward of snow, poor Cæsar lay before his empty kennel; and, true to the last, even in the agonies of death he had howled a bold defiance at his enemies.

"Emily," said my father, when breakfast was removed, "I need not tell you that a soldier's wife must always hold herself in readiness to move. Until better times arrive, you and the boy must leave this unquiet mansion. Nay, start not, love! I shall be your companion. That fading cheek and heavy eye bear silent evidence that cannot be mistaken. There is not in this old tower a single stone that I do not regard with veneration; but were this gloomy pile a palace, and you unhappy, it should be abandoned. I have already sent a requisition for an escort, and do you get all you wish to be removed in marching order. To society,—to myself,—I owed a duty; that duty is discharged. A tenderer claim remains. Can I forget, dear Emily, that for me you gave up the convent's quiet?—that for me title and wealth were thrown away?—that for me even the stronger ties of kindred were dissolved? Can I forget that though a gentle spirit like yours trembles at a life of danger, and recoils from scenes of bloodshed, still not a murmur passed your lips?—not a remonstrance urged upon me your apprehensions? Enough;—a soldier's pride would prompt me to remain where we are,—while a husband's affections demand that my wife and child should be placed in full security. The struggle is ended, and pride must yield to love."

Before the last word was spoken, a happy wife was shedding tears of joy upon her husband's bosom. Instant preparations were made; such valuables as were portable were packed up; Knockloftie for a time formally abandoned; and ere another week elapsed, my mother, my foster-brother and myself found ourselves in perfect safety—and for some months succeeding became residents of the metropolis.

My first anniversary formed a remarkable epoch in the story of our house; and as many subsequent adventures in my humble history were referable to that event, I shall briefly narrate the more immediate consequences that resulted. Mary Halligan quitted the country, as it was believed, to reside with some relatives in the west. Hackett received sentence of death, but the extreme penalty of the law was commuted into transportation. Sergeant Brady retired on a pension, and became henchman to my father. Mr. Hamilton, after Knockloftie was deserted, with a fatal imprudence still continued in the neighbourhood. A few weeks afterwards, the house where he resided was forced by a numerous banditti, the unfortunate clergyman dragged from his

concealment, carried to the door, and slaughtered under circumstances of fearful barbarity.*

Time passed,—months slipped away,—and my mother's birth-day returned. That morning, a letter containing a bank-note for five hundred pounds was received. It was addressed to the lady—with a brief intimation in an unknown hand, that a similar gift should be annually presented. Another brief period passed, and another letter came. It brought but sorry news. Knockloftie was burned to the ground;—not a fragment that was combustible remained;—and what was once “a merrie hall” now frowned upon the ocean in black and ruined loneliness.

As my father read the letter, a change came over his face, and revealed to the inquiring eyes then bent upon it, that evil tidings had arrived.

“Denis,” said my mother, “what is wrong?”

“Nothing, love, but that Knockloftie—”

“What of it? Go on.”

“Is, with all that it contained, a heap of ashes!”

“Good Heaven!”—and my mother crossed herself,—“are we not ruined, Denis?”

“No, no, love; not exactly ruined. I had the vanity to call my abiding place ‘a castle.’ Well, we must change the name; and surely ‘cottage’ will sound as sweetly.”

“Pshaw!” said the lady, “is that all?”

“Why—I can spare a horse or two,—part with a dozen dogs,—and then, my love, we will require the fewer servants.”

“And the carriage,—what need of it?” exclaimed the lady.

“Well, well; possibly if things come to the worst, it too might be dispensed with.”

“And then my jewels, Denis!”—and my mother's eyes brightened with delight—“ay, those useless baubles. I have heard that they are precious! They shall be sold, and—”

“Never—by Heaven!” exclaimed my father, as he spurned the chair over the carpet, and strode across the room. In another minute his calmness had returned, and my mother was sitting on his knee, smiling away with woman's tact every recollection of annoyance; and propounding with the sweetest philosophy upon earth, visionary plans for future happiness.

Again the postman's knock was heard, and another letter was presented. My father flung it unopened on the table. “Curse the particulars!” he exclaimed, “what matters it whether the old roof-tree fell by carelessness or villany?”

My mother impressed a consolatory kiss upon her husband's cheek.

“Read it, love,” said he. “You and I have no secrets, Emily.”

The lady broke the seal, and looked at the signature.

“Who is Constantine Mac-Donough?” she inquired.

“A very singular old man; a distant relation of my mother. Many years ago, my father and he quarrelled at an election. They fought in half an hour,—left the ground after three shots had been dis-

* Historically true.

charged,—and both refused a reconciliation. What was the cause of quarrel, I never could discover from my father; indeed, I question whether the worthy man himself even knew what it was distinctly; and with Mr. Mac Donough, of course, I never had even any acquaintance. He lives a bachelor, and report states, that he is very wealthy and very eccentric.”

“Lived! my love; the old man’s dead.”

“Dead!” exclaimed my father.

“And has left you heir to all his property?”

The Colonel sprang from his chair—his solitary arm encircled my mother’s waist, as he pressed her passionately to his heart.

“Emily,” said he, “when the sad tidings arrived this morning that we were houseless, I felt only for the boy and thee. Well, before the same sun went down, dove-like you came, the harbinger of happiness. The ‘barren heritage’ I quitted with regret, will be amply replaced by the rich lands of Killucan; and, once more, a peaceful home—such as we had in England, love—is ours. Never despond, Emily—and even in his darkest hour let an Irishman trust to the lady of the wheel—for I verily believe, if there be a spot on earth for which the blind baggage has a particular fancy, blessed Saint Patrick! that island is your own.”

CHAPTER IV.

MY ENTRÉE ON THE WORLD.

“My father bless’d me fervently,
 Yet did not much complain;
 But sorely will my mother sigh
 Till I come back again.”—CHILDE HAROLD.

THE residence and domain so opportunely bequeathed to Colonel O’Halloran, formed a striking contrast to his ancient home. Like the domicile of Justice Shallow, every thing about Knockloftie might have been described as “barren all,” with the qualification of “marry, good air,” while Killucan was situated in an inland county remarkable for its fertility. The house was a large and commodious building, almost concealed by trees, the growth of at least a century; the parks were rich and well laid down; comfort was within the dwelling,—plenty without it; and as they say in Connaught, no man “came into a snugger sitting down” than my worthy father.

Here ten years of boyhood passed away; and here at the feet of that gifted Gamaliel, father Dominic, my foster-brother and myself were indoctrinated. The priest had borne the departure of my parents with all the resignation a Christian man could muster; but as he declared afterwards, the destruction of Knockloftie fairly broke his heart. When his patron unexpectedly succeeded to a goodly inheritance, it

is difficult to decide whether to the churchman or the commander, this fortunate event caused the greater satisfaction. At the first summons, father Dominic abandoned his wild charge, and resumed the official duties in our establishment;—said mass for my mother, confessed the maids, aided and assisted the Colonel in the diurnal demolition of three bottles of antiquated port, and endeavoured into the bargain, to knock Latin into me, and “the fear of God,” as he called it, into the heart of my foster-brother. How far either attempt proved successful, it is not for me to say. As to myself, Dominic occasionally declared that I should try the temper of a saint; and as to Marc Antony, he rather hoped than expected that he might not “spoil a market;” meaning thereby, that the aforesaid Marc Antony would be hanged.

But, alas! from the pupilage of that worthy churchman, Marc and I were fated to be delivered. Father Dominic caught fever at the bedside of a sick tenant; and to the universal regret of the whole household, he went the way which all, priest and levite, are doomed to go. At the time, his loss was severely felt, and after-experience did not tend to lessen it. Father Grady, who in spiritual matters became his successor, was ill fitted to step into poor Dominic’s shoes. He was a low-born, illiterate, intermeddling priest, of forbidding exterior and repulsive manners. His *gaucheries* disgusted my mother, and my father fired at his vulgar arrogance. Except professionally, the visits of the priest became infrequent; and when the maids returned from confession with a route made out for the Reek,* they would call to memory the gentle penances of father Dominic,—offer a tear as a tribute to his memory,—and murmur a “Heaven be merciful to his soul.” The first consequence of the death of Father Dominic was my being transmitted to the school of Enniskillen, while my foster-brother finished his education under the instruction of the village pedagogue. As to the latter, a more unpromising disciple never figured on a slate; but, to give the devil his due, Marc Antony was even as his enemies allowed, the best boxer of his inches in the parish.

How quickly years roll on! Six passed rapidly away.—I grew fast—manhood came on apace—every day the thrall of school-discipline became more irksome, and made me long to be emancipated. I had indeed sprung up with marvellous rapidity, and I looked with impatience to the moment when I should make my entrée on the world. Nor was I kept much longer in suspense, for a mandate from my father unexpectedly arrived, commanding my return to Kilcullen, and acquainting me that I had been gazetted to a second lieutenancy in the Twenty-first fusileers. With a joyous heart I took leave of my companions; exchanged forgiveness with the ushers; flung boyhood to the winds; and, ignorant of the world as an infant, at eighteen years, deemed myself in pride of heart a man.

It was singular enough that the day of my return also proved to be the anniversary of my birth; and of this I was duly apprized by Sergeant Brady, as he unclosed the gate to let me in. Having returned the honest squeeze with which the non-commissioned officer

* A lofty mountain in the west of Ireland, where Roman Catholic penances are performed.

bade me welcome, I gave my horse to one of the eternal hangers-on whom I overtook lounging slowly home from the village tobacco-shop, and passed through a sort of pleasure-ground that led directly to the house. Turning the hedge, I came suddenly on Susan, my mother's maid. She was spreading caps and muslins on the bushes—and, never before, did her eyes look so black, or her cheeks half so rosy. She uttered a faint scream.

“Holy Virgin! Master Hector, is it you?”

“Arrah, Susan, my beauty, to be sure it is.” And with Hibernian affection we flew into each other's arms—and down went the basket with my mother's finery. I never reckoned the kisses I inflicted on the Abigail; but, poor soul, to do her justice, she bore them patiently. “Go, Hector, dear,” she muttered-poutingly, “there are holes in the hedge, and some one might tell the mistress.” Then, as if the recent contact of our lips had for the first time exhibited its sinful impropriety, she crossed herself like a true catholic, and continued, as I moved away, “Blessed Mary! had the priest seen us, I were undone. Lord! but he's grown! Hark! I hear a foot. Hurry in, Master Hector. Your mother is dying to see you; and dinner has been waiting half an hour.”

My reception by my parents was as warm as it was characteristic. Both were in the drawing-room when I entered it; and in a moment I was locked in my mother's arms. “How handsome!” said she, as tears rolled down her cheeks. “Alas! that he should be devoted to that horrible profession, Denis, and that his name should some fatal day be recorded in that list of bloodshed which always damps the joy of victory;” and she pointed to the official account of a Peninsular battle which had that morning reached Kilcullen.

My father's was a very different reception. Moulded of sterner stuff, he eyed me as a crimp sergeant scrutinizes a doubtful recruit; then shaking me by the hand, he proceeded regularly with his examination.

“By the Lord! a finer lad never tapped a cartouch-box. Five feet eleven and a quarter at eighteen! He'll be size enough for the Lifeguards in a twelvemonth. Zounds! what is the woman snivelling about? Is it because her son comes home figure for a flanker, instead of growing a sneaking, shambling, round-shouldered, flat-footed, fish-eater, that the devil couldn't drill? But here comes the summons to dinner.”

When the cloth had been removed, and my mother had retired, the Colonel reverted to the first grand movement in my life, on which he descanted most learnedly; and, a little military pedantry apart, his advice and opinions were sound and soldierly. He reprobated play—gave serious warnings against debt—discouraged gallantry, and inculcated the necessity of duelling. He lamented, in the course of his harangue, the loss of my ancient preceptor Father Dominic; to himself, he stated, that the loss was irreparable—he could not, unfortunately, drink the left hand against the right, nor uncork a bottle without being bothered by a d—d servant. He complained that he felt a twinge in his infirm shoulder—well, that was rheumatism; he had also an obnubilation in his eyes—but that was bile; it could not be what

he drank :—by the way, he had two bottles of Page's best in.—He should go to bed—exhorted me to be up at cock-crow—gave me some parting admonitions—an order on a Dublin tailor for an outfit—a bundle of country bank-notes—his blessing into the bargain—shook my hand—and, with the assistance of Sergeant Brady, toddled off to his apartment.

The Commander was scarcely gone, when Susan's black eye peered into the room cautiously, to ascertain that all was quiet.

“Hist ! Master Hector ! Is the Colonel gone to bed ?”

“He's safe for the night, my fair Susan. The house is all our own. Come in—shut the door, for I want to confess you”—

“And finish the godly exercise you commenced in the flower-garden ! No, no, Master Hector ; no more of that. Come, your mother wants to see you alone—I'll light you to her dressing-room.”

I attended the *demoiselle* immediately, and was inducted to her lady's chamber. When the door opened I found her seated at a work-table, with a book of religious exercises and a huge rosary before her. Bursting into tears, she clasped me to her bosom, and muttered in an under voice, “Sit down, Hector—many months have elapsed since we met, and many more may probably pass over before we meet again. And so they have destined you for that horrible profession—and you are going to-morrow ?”

“Yes, madam, by peep of day.”

“Well, Hector, will you in one thing oblige me, and grant your mother a request ?”

“Undoubtedly, madam.”

She placed a purse in my hand—and taking from the leaves of her Missal a small silken bag, opened my shirt collar, and bonnd it round my neck. I smiled at the ceremony, and submitted. It was, of course, some charm or reliquary ; and though the one-armed commander would have laughed, at what he would have considered on my part a symptom of apostasy, I thought it was no crime to carry an inch or two of silk upon my person, when my compliance would render happy a mother who loved me so tenderly.

“Hector,” said she, after investing me with this important amulet, “promise, for my sake, that you will wear it night and day ; and, until misfortune overtakes, and all other hope fails—which Heaven grant may never happen !—that you will not unclothe the cover, or read the writing of the Gospel.”*

I gave the pledge she required ; took an affectionate leave ; and, lighted by Susan, returned to the parlour.

Lobbies, like flower-knots, are dangerous places for adieux ! Poor Susan was faintly remonstrating against a second kiss, when a third actor popped upon the stage unexpectedly, and terminated at once the contest. The intruder was my foster-brother. All parties evinced annoyance ; Marc Antony looked very silly, and the *demoiselle*, bounding up the stairs, leaned over the balustrades, and spoke a hurried farewell.

* Gospels are worn in Ireland as a protection against diseases and “*diablerie*.”

"Heaven bless you, Master Hector—mind your poor mother's parting words, and all prosperity attend you." Then, turning a wrathful look at the "fosterer,"* she continued, "Don't mind what that false villain says. Ah, you wicked wretch! are you not afraid the roof will fall?" and, shaking her clenched hand at him, vanished.

What could have roused the anger of the dark-eyed Abigail was to me a puzzle: I entered the parlour, and the crest-fallen fosterer followed, and closed the door.

"Why, Marc, what's the matter? Your old friend, Susan, seems in but indifferent temper with you."

Mr. O'Toole fiddled with his hat, picked the wool off by pinches, and appeared woefully confused.

"Did you want me, Marc? or was it Susan you were looking for?"

"I just wanted to speak to you," said my foster-brother, "for fear I should miss you in the morning."

"Well, Marc, here I am."

"I'm going, Master Hector, to try my fortune either in England, or the North."

"What! and quit my father's service? Think well of this, Marc."

"Why, troth, I can't hold the place, and all on account of an accident."

"Indeed! what happened you?"

Marc picked the hat anew. "I'm in the middle of trouble, and the sooner I'm off, the better."

"Broken heads or broken vows; or, probably, a mixture of both?"

"Devil a head I broke since the fair of Carrick, and the Carneys brought it on themselves; and in honesty I'm at every man's defiance," returned the fosterer.

"Then what would you do in England, may I ask?"

"What would I do in England?" he repeated, like an echo. "Can't I do anything?—shear, mow, wisp a horse, whip hounds, jump two-and-twenty feet, throw stone and sledge—and take my own part in fair and pattern?"

"Friend Marc, most of these accomplishments would only secure you a lodging in the cage, or a settlement in the stocks. But, in a word, what brings you away?"

"Just Biddy O'Dwyer, the dairymaid—the devil's luck attend her!"

"Phew! Go on, Marc."

"She wants me to marry her!"

"And, I suppose, has pressing reasons for making the request?"

"The devil a reason, only she took me to a cake."†

"I comprehend the rest."

"Feaks! it was all her own fault—she would keep dancing to the last. The night was dark, and we were hearty.† I lost my way—and she her character."

* Anglicè, foster-brother.

† Cakes are nightly assemblies common in the west of Ireland, and holden for the purposes of dancing, drinking, and courting. In returning from these festive meetings, ladies' reputations and gentlemen's skulls are occasionally severely damaged.

‡ Anglicè, nearly drunk.

“ Well! and why not repair the damage, Marc?”

“ Is it me! and she four years older? By this book”—and he kissed his hat religiously—“for all the ladies and priests that ever wore cap or vestment, I would not marry ye, Kitty O’Dwyer!”

“ Well, Marc, you are upon this point the best judge.”

“ There’s no use in concealing anything, and you, my foster-brother, Master Hector. Kitty’s a great Catholic, and a Carmelite to boot—and my lady and Father Grady will fairly banish me the country, when they hear that it was through me she got the blast.”

“ Rebel, Marc! Refuse, point-blank. Hold out manfully—and neither priest, nor bishop, can make you marry, if you don’t like it.”

“ And then I’ll be made a world’s wonder of!” and Marc Antony groaned at the very thought. “ Called out in the chapel—cursed from the altar—huddled off to Ball—trotted up Croagh Patrick—ay, and as Father Grady will stick to Kitty like a burr, I may be despatched to Lough Dharg* with gravel in my shoes.”

“ Bad enough, Marc. And pray what is to be done?”

“ The devil a choice have I left,” said the fosterer, with a groan, “ good, bad, nor indifferent, but list or turn Protestant.”

“ Awkward alternatives.”

Marc smiled. “ And would I not have an elegant life of it afterwards in the servants’-hall? Sorra two men in the house that I can’t lick; but what could I do with the women? No, no, Master Hector!—I’ll list.”

“ Think of it, Marc.”

“ I have thought of it already. The priest and my lady will hear all in the morning, and, faith, I’ll give them leg-bail in the meantime. Are you not going to Dublin, Master Hector?”

“ I am.”

“ Then, by the blessin’ of God, there will be two of us there soon.”

“ Marc, have you any money?”

“ Not a rap—but plenty for the taking it. I never go to Boyle upon a message, but there are half-a-dozen crimps at my heels; and every recruiting party that passes by, eyes me as if I had the cockade already mounted.”

“ If you are determined, Marc, I shall say nothing more; but before you choose your regiment, let me know, and probably the Colonel may stand your friend.”

“ That I will, Master Hector. But, Holy Virgin, what an uproar the house will be in when they miss me in the morning! The priest roaring here—my lady sending there—Kitty singing wirrestrue† in the dairy—and the ould Colonel delighted at the rookawn, and shouting Devil mend her!”

I laughed heartily at Marc’s fanciful description of a scene, which his absence would so certainly occasion.

“ I must be off,” continued the fosterer, “ and mind, Master Hector, we’ll meet when you least expect it.”

I slipped a bank-note into the fosterer’s hands—Marc disappeared—

* A holy lake in the north of Ireland. † “ Och wirrestrue,” an Irish lamentation.

and I sought my pillow. Where Mr. O'Toole bestowed himself, I know not—but it was an eventful night for both. I, about to make my first start upon the stage of life, and honest Marc Antony flying from a choice of evils—matrimony or penance.

A lovelier morning never broke than that on which I took my departure from Kilcullen. It was late in September. The hoar-frost curled gently upwards, yielding to the earliest sunbeams, as I rode from the stable-yard. Every thing was exciting to the spirits: the blackbird whistled in the copse, the partridge was calling from the stubble, the sheep-bells tinkled merrily, and all seemed happy and rejoicing.

Never did a lighter-bosomed gentleman quit his father's house. Here was I, a holder of the king's commission, master of the best fencer in Roscommon, one hundred pounds in my pocket, a case of pistols at my saddle-bow; while, with a loose arm and a stout heart, I found myself jogging fairly on, though "half the world were sleeping."

I rode quickly forward: miles vanished, and at four o'clock I had left my home thirty miles behind. With my future route I was unacquainted; but it ran through a wild barony, bleak though beautiful enough, interspersed with hills and valleys, and thickly studded with lakes and rivulets. The road was grass-grown and disused; but, being shorter and practicable to horsemen, I followed it rather than ride a few miles round. To dine and feed my horse, I halted at a public-house where four roads met; and, after an hour's rest, commenced my journey anew, to gain the mountain-village, where, as my host apprized me, I was to sojourn for the night.

The lonely inn appeared that day to have no lack of customers. During my brief stay travellers stopped repeatedly, or drank spirits at the door and hurried on. They generally rode in companies of some half-dozen, were mounted upon country horses, and, from having a couple of kegs suspended across the croup, their calling was no mystery. Illicit distillation in this wild district was then extensively carried on,—and men engaged in this demoralizing traffic, like those who stopped at this house of entertainment, were constantly traversing the mountain-road, smuggling the prohibited liquor, or returning for a fresh supply.

One party, consisting of three persons of rather a superior class, remained for dinner. They addressed their conversation occasionally to me, and evinced great curiosity to find out the place of my destination, and the reason that I preferred the mountain-road to that usually taken by ordinary travellers. I felt no disposition to be communicative on these points, and the strangers were far from satisfied with my replies. When my mare was brought to the door, my holsters did not escape their observation; and as I rode away, I overheard the tallest of the three exclaim, "By Heaven! I'll bet five pounds that's the —"

I could not hear the remainder of the remark. The occurrence was not agreeable, however, with ten miles of a desolate ride before me. I had other besides personal cares. In my life I never had possessed

one-fourth the sum I carried; and the pocket, rather than the person, alarmed me. I thought the matter over. I saw no fire-arms with the strangers, and of course I was fairly a match for three. My mare was fast; and I determined quietly to surmount a long and gradual rise, make play down the falling ground, and then bid pursuit defiance.

Ignorance of the locality rendered my last design abortive. Half way up the hill, a path but little used, if one could judge from its unfrequent hoof-marks, branched from the main road. I hesitated which to take; but of two bad paths, I chose the better, and followed the more-beaten route.

I rode a mile, topped the acclivity, and followed a path skirting a highland lake and traversing a long and heathy level. Anxiously I looked back, but not a traveller was visible. My fears vanished—and I smiled to think how very nervous the possession of property makes a man.

The scene before me was wild and picturesque. A long ravine skirted by a mountain-stream, that occasionally crossed the road through half-ruined bridges, descended between two lofty hills which completely shut out the setting sun. At the bottom of this romantic pass, a lake of considerable extent, interspersed with numerous islands, received the rivulets that hurried down the valley. In front, the sun was setting gloriously, and flung across the gorge of the ravine a curtain of burning gold which rested on the waters of the lake below. It was, indeed, a splendid landscape—and tradition added to its interest.

On an eminence that overlooked the road and pass, the ruins of a square building were visible, now so much dilapidated, that it was impossible to determine whether it had been originally designed for the purposes of religion or of defence. In the centre of a green patch, scarcely a pistol-shot from the dismantled tower, the scathed stem of a solitary oak was standing. As it was, it would never have arrested the traveller's eye, had not a huge cairn of stones beneath it intimated that this lonely tree had witnessed some scenes of bloodshed. I pulled up my horse and viewed the cairn and ruin with attention, for my curiosity was excited, and chance enabled me to gratify it. An elderly, wild-looking, half-clad peasant was loitering on the road-side, attending a score or two of sheep. Abandoning his charge, he joined me willingly; and in very excellent Irish replied to my questions, and communicated the traditional story of the place.

“What was that building, friend; and what does yonder cairn commemorate?”

“The story's long,” replied the peasant.

“And so is the mountain-road. Was it death by accident or treachery?”

The peasant paused a moment, and then drily answered, “There was no accident in the business, though three men perished; one was murdered and two were hanged.”

“Do you know the particulars?”

“It would be strange if I did not. I was born in these hills.”

“Indeed!”

"Ay, and my fathers before. We have been for centuries herdsmen in these mountains. I have never been thirty miles from the spot where we stand; and every rock, and rill, and hillock, are familiar from early childhood, for on them my eyes first opened."

"What was the building?"

"A barrack, for soldiers to protect travellers from plunder."

"And the cairn—"

"Proves that their protection was sometimes unavailing."

"Could not an armed force restrain vagabonds from plundering?"

"Wherefore, it is hard to say," returned the herdsman. "Are you going to B—— to-morrow?"

"I am."

"You are in haste thither?"

"I must be there by noon."

"The special commission sits there the following day. They say it will go hard with the men who killed the gauger?"

"'Tis said so; and if the circumstances attendant on the murder be such as are generally believed, they will deserve their fate."

The peasant eyed me sharply, and then, with assumed indifference, observed,

"The devil is painted always blacker than he is; and something may still come out in the prisoners' favour. I fear, poor fellows, that they will be prosecuted hard."

"That you may be certain of."

"Well," continued my companion, "no doubt Bradley's death was sudden. But could it be otherwise? Many an aching heart he caused, and the curse of ruined men and houseless children pursued him."

As he spoke, we crossed a small hillock, where the mountain-path, which had diverged to the right, once more united itself to the main road. The lake extended itself for more than a mile on one side; and on the other a swamp, impassable alike to man and horse, stretched for a considerable distance between the rugged causeway and the bases of the contiguous high grounds. A deep stream winding through the centre of the morass and creeping lazily beneath a ruined bridge, lost itself in the blue waters of the lake. It was fortunate that my new acquaintance was beside me, or I should have been puzzled where to cross the stream; but, on inquiry, he told me there was a ford, and offered to point it out. For half an hour we jogged on sociably together, chatting on a subject which seemed to occupy my companion's every thought,—the approaching trial of the murderers. From time to time I observed, however, that he looked anxiously behind him; and suddenly a distant sound like that of coming horsemen made me turn my head. It was not fancy—three persons showed themselves above the ridge; they were the strangers I had encountered at the inn, and from the pace at which they rode, I had no doubt but they were in pursuit of me.

Indeed, from the first moment they discovered me, their object was perfectly apparent. One of them pointed me out; and, considering the rugged path they had to traverse, they increased their pace to a rapidity that appeared surprising.

Nor was I insensible to coming danger. What was to be done, and how were they to be avoided? Before me, a broken bridge; behind, a pressing enemy; and escape cut off. I could observe, from numerous hoof-marks in the bog, the place where the river was fordable. My mare was fresh, and willingly obeyed a call. I started forward at a rattling pace, and once across the water, had little doubt of effecting an escape.

Whatever were the herdsman's original intentions towards me—whether his designs were “wicked or charitable”—the appearance of the strangers made him at once a foe. The instant I spurred my mare, he caught up a stone and flung it with such precision, that it knocked my hat off, but, fortunately, only grazed my head. Then applying his finger to his lips, he uttered a wild and piercing whistle, which echoed through the rocks behind, and was repeated among the distant mountains. The signal was answered promptly. A dozen men, who had been resting in a hollow out of sight, suddenly sprang up; some rushed to the ford—others occupied the road—and all seemed ready and determined to bar my farther progress.

I had brief time for consideration. To try the ford, guarded as it was, were idle; and to take the bridge, was to select as awkward a leap as ever proved the proverbial courage of a Roscommon rider. The latter only afforded any chance of escape; for I should inevitably be knocked upon the head at the ford, while floundering through the river. Accordingly, I nerved myself for the effort—took my mare in hand;—she was the sweetest fencer that ever carried an Irish gentleman!—the spur was answered by a rush at speed,—the bridge cleared at stroke—and we landed in sporting style, a full length beyond the chasm.

So far “the work went bravely on.” Although vigorously attacked by several assailants, blows from sticks and stones failed in unhorsing me, and I nearly succeeded in running the gauntlet safely. Two of these brigands were still to be passed, and I charged them at a slashing gallop. They retreated to either side, and avoided the threatened collision; but as I came thundering past, a rope dexterously thrown over the horse's head, caught me across the chest, and threw me from the saddle on the road with stunning violence. Before I could recover, I was seized, tied hand and foot, a sack thrown over me; lifted on a horse, and an intimation given, that on the slightest effort at outcry or escape, I should be consigned to the deep, *sans cérémonie*. The better portion of valour is discretion—and I determined to keep quiet—for however loose in keeping ordinary pledges these excellent persons might be, when a drowning match was in the case, I felt assured that they would redeem their promise to the letter.

CHAPTER V.

I AM MISTAKEN FOR A GAUGER—IN IRELAND, A GREAT MISTAKE.

“It was a wild and strange retreat
As ere was trod by outlaws' feet.”—SCOTT.

As I had no ambition to make a Turkish exit, and cause a vacancy in the Twenty-first Fusileers, to use a bull, “even before it was filled,” I submitted with Christian fortitude, and held my peace accordingly. Unresisted, the captors bore me across a shingly beach; for I heard the loose stones rattle as their hurried steps displaced them. In a few minutes they reached a boat, and bundled me in with scanty ceremony, as “honest Jack” was ejected into Datchet Mead. Directly, several men jumped across the thwart—the keel grated on the gravel—the oars fell rapidly on the water—and away we went, Heaven knew whither!

On leaving the beach, my captors appeared to consider a longer silence unnecessary; for they laughed and jested with each other, although what seemed marvellous good fun to them, was death to me.

“Good night, Tom,”—said a pleasant gentleman from the shore,—“God bless the venture! sure it's the first ye carried of the kind!”

“Don't,” observed a second, “make mistakes; men are not malt; and be sure ye don't give the contents of yonder sack a steeping.”

“I have done worse however, before now,” returned a rough voice beside me, “and on my poor conscience, I think a few stones in the bottom of the bag would make all right, and save both time and trouble.”

Supposing it no harm to share a conversation in which I was so essentially concerned, I muttered an indistinct dissent.

“What's that he's mumbling about?” inquired a person in the boat's bow.

“And what's that to you?” was politely responded by my next neighbour, as he applied knuckles, hard as ebony, to my ribs, I presume to enforce his admonition. “*Badda-hurst*,* or I'll slip you across the gunnel before you have time to bless yourself. Pull, will ye? Hurry to the island; for before this time I should have been half way to Carrick Beg, instead of ferrying blackguard gaugers to Innisteagles.”

Ferrying blackguard gaugers! What did the fellow mean? It was a singular observation, and I ventured to remark it.

“What—muttering again!” replied the voice. “Can you swim, friend?”

I managed to answer, that “I had never tried it, tied neck and heels together.”

* Hold your tongue.

“Then by ——,” rejoined my agreeable companion, with a second application of his fist, “if you open your lips before we part company, over you go!”

There was no mistaking him. We were on a deep lake, and I had a determined gentleman to deal with; so I resolved accordingly to remain still as a mouse, and preserve a dignified silence.

I suspect that my decision was a wise one. From broken observations which I overheard, I soon found that the voyage was about to terminate. I felt in mortal tribulation. Suspense, however, was quickly ended. The keel grated on the sand—strange voices welcomed my guard of honour, and told that my island was not, “like Crusoe’s,” uninhabited. The sack being lifted out and laid upon the sward, a parting glass was emptied to my better health amidst uproarious peals of merriment. Presently, the parties bade each other good night; and those who had brought me re-embarked, rowed merrily away, and left me in a pleasant uncertainty on a very important point, and that was whether I should be sunk or smothered.

And yet, from the jocular demeanour of the islanders and the immediate departure of my abductors, I felt half assured that no truculent design upon my life was meditated after all. This was consolatory, certainly; although an interrupted journey,—imprisonment in a sack,—a lost mare, and a despoiled portmanteau,—all these were bad enough. Short space for sombre communings was allowed. Two pair of lusty arms lifted me from the ground, bore me through a narrow and difficult pass, placed me on my legs, and untied the bag, when down dropped the canvass,—and when I could see distinctly, a strange scene presented itself.

I had felt a glow of increasing heat, and could perceive a stream of light strengthen gradually as we penetrated the thick brush-wood. At first, dazzled by the blaze, objects were more like a confused vision than reality; but presently my eyes became accustomed to the glare, and I found myself surrounded by several huge fires, at which nearly a score of men were busily engaged in illicit distillation. In my mountain walks, I had frequently discovered in some secluded valley a smuggler engaged in this lawless vocation; but the hovel and apparatus were so slightly constructed and so easily removed, that at the first intimation of danger the still was carried off, the fire extinguished, the sheeling torn down, and nothing left but a heap of sods and rubbish to console the gauger on his arrival, by proving that his information had been most correct, and the distillers far too watchful. But here, every thing was constructed on a permanent and extensive scale, which evinced a perfect feeling of security, or the determination, at all risks, of continuing this lawless and demoralizing trade. On furnaces of solid masonry three large stills were working,—numerous wooden vessels were filled with potale,—and sacks of malt and barley, kegs containing spirits, and an abundant supply of peat-fuel, everywhere met the eye. Contiguous to the fires, sundry hovels were erected; the walls of turf, and roofs of heather—designed, it would appear, for the accommodation of a number of swine and their proprietors; and both, in point of comfort, seemed to be on a precise

equality. The brute and the biped were indeed happily associated; for the ragged clothes, haggard looks, bleared eyes, and that half-drunken stupidity, which an endless tasting of ardent spirits always produces, showed, as they flitted back and forward in the red and lurid atmosphere, a group of beings that might be safely classed as low even in the lowest grade of civilized society.

My supporters left me, and retired to a cabin apart from the other hovels; while I underwent a careless examination by some swart figures, who occasionally passed me bearing turf to the furnaces. Relieved from a most annoying species of restraint, I felt little apprehension for the future, although the cause for which I had been kidnapped remained as much a mystery as ever. In a few minutes, a man tapped me on the shoulder, and bade me "follow and fear nothing." I obeyed. He led me to the retired hut whither my quondam friends had gone before; and there I found them quite at their ease, refreshing themselves most liberally after their successful exertions in my arrest and deportation.

It was a rude, but not uncomfortable hovel; cribs and sleeping-places occupying one end, and a fire of charred turf blazing in the other. In the centre stood a rough bench, on which were spread plates of the coarsest delft, an earthen greybeard containing undiluted whisky, a jug of water, and a couple of horn drinking cups; while a tallow candle, stuck in an iron trivet, lighted this uninviting board.

Other objects, and of a very different description, met the eye. In a remote corner of the cabin a score of rusted firelocks were loosely piled; and, on the couples of the rafters, sundry fishing-rods and gaffs, a draft-net, and an eel-spear, were deposited. All indicated a lawless community and wild existence; while a forbidding-looking hag, broiling steaks upon the coals,—which operation a rough and bridled lurcher was contemplating with fixed attention,—completed a strange, but interesting picture of savage life.

"Are you hungry?" inquired one of my abductors, with tolerable civility.

"Not particularly," I replied; "confinement in a sack does not generally improve the appetite."

"Were you hurt by the fall?"

"Not much; although I fancy it would have been to you a matter of small consideration whether I broke my neck or scratched my finger."

"Why, then," responded the second ruffian; "upon my soul, I should have regretted it; for, to give the devil his due, you took the brook and bridge in sporting style. She's a sweet mare, that. There was a day I could have ridden her to fortune. I began life, sir, a whipper to Lord Longford."

"Then, friend, I must in candour tell you, that you have not changed for the better."

"I fear I have not"—and the fellow sighed heavily.

"But, may I inquire, wherefore I am deprived of liberty, after having been waylaid, robbed, and nearly murdered?"

The whipper shook his head, while his companion roughly desired

me to ask no impertinent questions; then, pointing to the table, on which the hag had placed a quantity of broiled mutton—apparently sufficient for a dozen persons instead of three—he added, in a more encouraging tone, “Take a seat, neighbour; there are few in our trade would treat a gauger so civilly.”

“What do you mean?” I exclaimed. “Fellow, *I am no gauger.*”

“And pray what do you call yourself?” he added, with a smile.

“An officer.”

“Well, it’s all the same—a gauger and a revenue officer are brothers’ children.”

“I am not in the revenue, but the army—I am a lieutenant in the Twenty-first Fusileers.”

“The devil you are!” ejaculated the whipper, with marked surprise.

“Pray, sir, are you not Mr. Parker?”

“No, my name is O’Halloran.”

“Of what family?” said the other ruffian.

“The family of Kilcullen.”

“Hell and furies!” exclaimed both together. “What is the meaning of all this? I fancy we are in the centre of a hobble. Are you, sir, son of Colonel O’Halloran?”

“I am.”

“How many arms has he?” asked the keeper, sharply.

“But one—the left he lost in Holland.”

“Where were you going to?”

“Dublin.”

“Your business there?”

“To join my regiment.”

“And why take the mountain road?”

“Simply, because it was the shortest.”

The quondam whipper gave a long and significant whistle; while his companion started up and left the hut abruptly, although the Leonora of the smugglers’ hovel called loudly after him, that “the steaks were cooling.”

He was but a brief space absent; and returned accompanied by an old grey-headed, blear-eyed, and besotted wretch, who instantly commenced a rigid scrutiny of my features. From the first moment, he expressed doubt and disappointment.

“What the devil!” said the ruffian who had brought him to examine me—“what are you shaking your head at, old boy?”

“Nothing; but you have bagged the wrong fox,” replied the stranger. “A nice job you have made of it, Murty Doolan!”

“Why, isn’t that Parker the gauger?”

“Parker, the devil!” rejoined the old man. “It’s as much Parker as it is my grandmother. Ye blind beggar, this chap has a straight eye, and Parker could squint through a bugle horn. He! he! he!” and he chuckled at his own wit; “wait till somebody hears it. Ah, this comes of not taking my advice—this comes of employing strangers.”

“Well,” said the whipper, “there’s no help for spilt milk. What’s to be done, Gaffer? Can’t we grab the right one yet?”

'Ay, like enough, after Sullivan is hanged; for nothing can save him now. What will ye do with this lad?' and he nodded carelessly at me. "Serve him, I suppose, as ye did ——" He paused and laughed, "He! he! he!"

"D—n ye, ye ould doting scoundrel—how dare ye mention that business?"

"Phew—how hot ye are, Murty? Well, I must hurry back, or Phaddeen, the fool, will run the still too close, and spoil the whisky with the faints, as he did the last brewing. A nice job! That's what I call taking the wrong sow by the ear. He! he! he!" and away the old man toddled to attend to his favourite employment.

"This is a cursed mistake," remarked the ruffian companion of the whipper; "and when the master hears it, all of us will come to trouble. Come, my friend, let's have some supper. Your seizure will cause more vexation than your neck is worth,—sit down;" and turning up a keg, he placed himself upon it, and attacked the broiled meat manfully. The whipper, following his example, settled himself upon an inverted cleave,* pointing out a stool, the seat of honour, for my especial use. Undecided, whether to accept their hospitality and sup in villanous company for once, or hold myself aloof and eschew all fellowship with such scoundrels, I wearied the politeness of the whipper, who, unable to resist temptation longer, assailed the steaks with vigour—when a voice from without caused my companions to spring from their seats as if the food were poisoned. Next moment, a strange personage whom I had not seen before, strode in, fixed an earnest and suspicious glance on me—then, turning to my captors, exclaimed in a voice of thunder,

"Villains! Who is this stranger?"

"The gauger, Parker," both muttered in a tremulous tone.

"Ah, ye precious scoundrels! Off with ye! Take that woman away!"—and waving his hand, my guard of honour vanished at his bidding, attended by the alarmed cook, and leaving the unknown and myself *tête-à-tête* together.

Spurning the basket into the corner, which the whipper had respectfully abdicated on his entrance, the unknown walked to the fire with an air that bespoke authority, and which seemed to say, "This island's mine." To form any opinion of his face or figure was impossible; a loose-made frieze wrapping-coat concealed the one, while a high collar and slouched hat masked the other effectually. I could observe, however, that in height he was above the middle size, and that his eyes were dark and penetrating. Promptly he commenced a conversation; and his address was haughty, curt, and unceremonious.

"Pray, sir, *who are you?*"

"A stranger, brought here against his will; and wherefore—you, sir, can best tell."

"Pray," continued the unknown, "inform me under what circumstances you have been arrested?"

"And do you require any information on that subject?"

* The Irish name for a turf-basket.

"If I did not, I need not have asked you to detail them. Be quick, sir; it will save me time, and probably do you some service."

I simply narrated the recent occurrences, from my meeting with the strangers at the lonely inn, until I had been enlarged upon the island. At different parts of my detail the muffled stranger exhibited symptoms of displeasure, and once or twice I could hear his teeth grind, as if he struggled to suppress a burst of passion.

"Well, sir," said he, as I ended the narrative of my captivity, "you are a young soldier, it would appear; and this is an excellent earnest of the troublesome profession you have chosen. But, jesting apart, you have received much ill-usage, and been stupidly and unnecessarily deprived of liberty and effects. Both shall be restored; and all the satisfaction which circumstances will admit of, shall be offered in atonement for an unintentional aggression.

He drew a whistle from his bosom; and its shrill summons was promptly answered by a smart, active lad, dressed in a sailor's jacket and trowsers.

"Man the boat, and give the signal." The sailor disappeared, and the unknown again addressed himself to me.

"Will you accompany me, and trust for your night's entertainment to my good offices—or, would you rather remain and share that inviting-looking supper which by my visit, I fear, has not been much improved?"

I smiled, and assured him I had not the least ambition to cultivate a farther intimacy with those worthy gentlemen who had already taken too much trouble on my account.

"Come along, then—the boat is ready," he said, as a piercing whistle was heard from the shore. "Follow me, closely; the path, though short, is difficult even in daylight to a stranger."

Entering the copse and pushing through thick underwood, we reached a sandy beach, where a gig, with four rowers seated on the thwarts, was waiting. I was ceremoniously handed in and accommodated with a boat cloak; while the unknown took the yoke-ropes of the rudder, and desired the men to "give way." The crew "flung from their oars the spray," and broke the water with a regular stroke, which showed them to be practised pullers. Away we shot across the lake,—and, to my infinite satisfaction, left "the lonely isle," which, even under an assurance that it possessed another Calypso, I should not have been tempted to revisit.

The night was dark and still, but through the haze the outline of the shore was seen ahead. I looked towards the island we were leaving; but, excepting a feeble glow of red still visible upon the dusky sky, there was nothing to betray its secret, or intimate that this solitary place had been chosen for "lawless intent."

We neared the shore, and entered a narrow inlet that penetrated, as it seemed, by an opening in the hill side, into a wood of full-grown forest timber. Gradually the passage became more confined, until the oars had scarcely space to pull between the banks, while branches of oak and beech uniting above our heads, gave an additional darkness to the evening. In a few moments we reached its termination,—a small

natural basin with a jetty of rough masonry. The steersman ran the boat alongside, landed on the wharf, and desired me to follow. I willingly obeyed, and the unknown led the way in silence, until we were beyond the hearing of the boatmen, when, suddenly stopping, he thus addressed me :

“I am not a resident here—this country is not my own, but although I cannot offer you hospitality myself, I shall yet manage to obtain it. Scarcely a gun-shot distance from this place there stands a solitary mansion-house, embosomed in this oak wood. That road will conduct you to it. Go, knock at the door, and ask for Mr. Hartley. Tell him simply that you are a stranger,—that you need food and lodging,—and, if I be not deceived, you will have little occasion to urge the request a second time. Of what has occurred, say little ; of what may occur, say less. I shall have your mare attended to, and your property recovered and restored ; ay, were its value ten times greater. We may meet under more agreeable circumstances than we did this evening. Farewell. Stay—one word more. You will probably be introduced to a lady at Mr. Hartley’s, some two or three years younger than yourself. She is an only daughter, educated in retirement, unacquainted with the world, and her existence, beyond the inmates of yonder mansion, actually unknown. Gentlemen of the sword, deal, I am told, extensively in gallantry. If this be so, reserve yours ; for Mr. Hartley, as I have heard, wishes that his daughter shall continue ‘ of worldly things in happy ignorance ;’ and any pointed attention on your part to his ward, would prove any thing but acceptable. You understand me ?”

“ Indeed I do ; and believe me, my good Mentor, that your friend’s fair daughter has little to fear from one who has had death in expectancy for two hours.”

“ So much the better,” said the stranger. “ Proceed ; and you have but to tell your wants at the house, and have them attended to. You will however require a guide, for probably Mr. Hartley’s dogs might annoy you.”

He whistled ; and the same boatman again obeyed the signal. To him he gave orders to attend me ; bade me good night ; and turned into an opening in the copse, leaving me with my guide, and with the pleasant necessity of presenting myself to Mr. Hartley,—an unexpected, an unbidden, and, not improbably, an unwelcome guest.

CHAPTER VI.

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

Miranda.—"Be of comfort;
My father's of a better nature, sir,
Than he appears by speech."—THE TEMPEST.

As we proceeded, I endeavoured to lead my companion into conversation, and glean from him some information touching the place and the personage we were about to honour with a midnight visit. At first, Andy Beg*—for so the other boatmen named him—affected ignorance of Mr. Hartley's general history; and said that all he knew "for certain" was, that he had been a great traveller, and bought, a few years ago, a large mountain property, whose extent and revenues bore most ridiculous proportions;—the one exceeding some square miles, the other not amounting in value to the rental of an English farm. He added, that "he had plenty of money, few acquaintances, lived entirely to himself, kept a very good house, and kept every body out of it." In short, the total of my intelligence was small and not encouraging. Mr. Hartley being wealthy and inhospitable, having—

"One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well"—

the reception of a stranger like myself, making an unceremonious call after sunset, seemed indeed rather a questionable matter. But it was necessary to make an attempt to gain admission; for, assuredly, any thing was better than to be cooped up on that infernal island.

As we issued from the wooded avenue, the moon had risen above the trees, and showed us a solitary building standing in the centre of an open glade, and surrounded by a rustic paling. A terrier promptly gave the alarm, and dogs of divers sizes and descriptions joined in the challenge. But Andy appeared to be an old acquaintance; they ceased barking when his voice was recognised, and permitted us to pass through a wicket in the enclosure, and enter a gravelled walk that approached the dreaded mansion.

"Now, sir, you require me no longer; and I have particular business to transact before morning. Knock and fear nothing. The dogs will not annoy you." So saying, Andy passed through the wicket, and left me to myself.

I stood for a minute to gain time for recollection, and examine the appearance of the building. There was nothing remarkable in the exterior, and all within the house appeared dark and silent; at least, the

* *Anaëta*, Little Andy

lattice windows were so jealously blinded, that it was impossible to discover aught of the interior. I took courage—advanced to the door, and tapped modestly like one rather dubious of admission. Again, I repeated the knock, and a slight bustle within told that the summons was heard. Presently a chain was removed, bolts were withdrawn, and an old man dressed in plain blue livery stood in the doorway, and civilly inquired my business. My tale was briefly told. The servant bowed, and left me in the hall, while he went to apprise his master that a late visitor had arrived. Returning directly, he requested me to follow him—and leading the way down a long passage, conducted me to a well-lighted chamber, and announced that Mr. Hartley would wait upon me immediately.

Here I was, in military parlance, safe within the body of the place, and all the approaches carried without opposition. So far the work went bravely on; and, like a prudent soldier, I occupied the interval of expectation in examining the interior, to enable me if possible to form some idea of the quality of the inmates.

The room, though small, exhibited good taste and considerable elegance. The furniture and hangings were designed with great simplicity, but formed evidently of costly materials. A harp and guitar, numerous music-books, and several cases filled with well-bound volumes, bespoke the refinement of the owner. But the pictures were still more striking; they were generally oil paintings, and framed magnificently; and with these the walls were completely covered from the ceiling to the very base.

The mantel-piece was still more remarkable. It was crowded with what are termed articles of *vertu*, being curious carvings in ivory and porcelain, of great value. There were also some oriental toys in silver filagree, shell snuff-boxes of unequalled beauty, and others of massive gold. But what fixed my attention at once, was a cabinet picture of small size, that rested on the centre of the slab—and which, even to an unpractised eye, appeared in its style and execution a *chef-d'œuvre*.

The painting represented a young man, dressed in the fanciful costume of an Eastern rover, holding a midnight interview with a beautiful girl, who wore the habit of a *religieuse*. Moonlight, a seashore, a monastic building half-hidden by trees of tropic growth, with a vessel in the distance, formed the scene. One arm of the corsair clasped the nun; while the other pointed to the ship, whose canvas, hanging loosely, indicated a readiness for sailing—and the rover's action seemed as if he was "whispering her fears away," and urging the novice to accompany him. The character of both figures was admirably marked. In the rover's handsome features there was much to admire, and more to fear. The expression was that of high courage, mingled with a haughty recklessness, that might either be caused by personal indifference to danger or a disregard of suffering in others. But in the beautiful *religieuse* there was a confiding love so gentle, so fixed, so unsuspecting, that one dwelt with pleasure on a face, where every best property of woman seemed combined.

The dresses of the twain were even more dissimilar than the character of the features. His costume was a tight jacket and expansive

trowsers, belted with an Indian sash, which, while it displayed the symmetry of a faultless figure, permitted the wearer to put forth his strength with graceful freedom. Had his wild profession been doubtful, the Albanian cap, ornamented pistols, sabre and poniard, would have betrayed his calling. His beautiful companion wore the dress of the Ursulines; the back-turned hood displayed the sweetest face imaginable, while the hand that rested on the rover's arm, as if to stay his departure, might have formed a study for Canova.

The picture fascinated me; all was forgotten while I gazed upon it. I looked again. Despite the darkening influence of sun and storm, a thick moustache, and foreign costume, the corsair's aspect was decidedly British. It was a fair skin embrowned by climate, with which a wild and martial carriage and hair of raven blackness accorded well.

Wrapped in silent admiration—now gazing on “the bold brigand”—now enraptured with the sweet gentleness of the confiding girl, who seemed ready to abandon “home and heaven” for “her wild love,” I did not hear the door open until the host was almost standing at my side. Addressing me in a voice of peculiar sweetness, he bade me a warm welcome, apologized for not receiving me in the hall; and then telling me that supper was in readiness, he led me with excellent tact into a general conversation.

We talked on indifferent subjects for a few minutes, while gradually my self-possession returned. Although described by the unknown as stern and suspicious, and by Andy as misanthropic and unamiable, my host seemed kind and hospitable to a marvel. Just then the door opened again, a girl of remarkable beauty glided in, and Mr. Hartley led her forward. “This, sir,” said he, “is my daughter; and this gentleman, Isidora, is our guest.” We both cast down our eyes; she in maiden timidity colouring to the very brow, and I—I shame to own it—blushing like a country orator addressing “the unwashed” for the first time. I muttered a confused apology for an intrusion at that late hour, said something about bad roads, a lame horse, and Heaven knows what beside, to which she gave a gentle acceptance. I raised my eyes. By heaven! there stood the corsair's mistress! ay, there in youthful loveliness—and the host,—all his bland expression gone, as, steadily regarding us, he looked with scornful indifference beneath his coal-black brows (but that his years doubled the corsair's in the painting,)—his haughty curl of lip and eyebrow would have half persuaded me that he had himself been a rover of the sea.

At this moment, and luckily for me (for I was “regularly bothered,”) the blue-coated servitor announced supper. I presented my arm to Miss Hartley, and through a side door we entered the eating room. By a singular self-command, the host's features had regained their previous expression of urbanity; his manner was courteous, his welcome encouraging, and he seemed the very opposite of Andy Beg's description, when he called him repulsive and inhospitable.

Nothing could surpass the neatness of the apartment. In all its arrangements simplicity had been regarded; yet still there was an evidence of luxury and wealth in the quantity and massive fashion of

the plate, which seemed better suited to the mansion of a noble than the retreat of a recluse.

Never did intruder time his visit more opportunely, if the excellence of a supper were the proof. The meal passed over agreeably, though in point of performance the actors differed. Miss Hartley ate little, her father turned out an indifferent trencher-man; but, faith, I made up for this double deficiency, as the skeleton that left the table of what came there, a goodly wild-duck, proved. No wonder; since I dined at the lonely inn, if varied exercise could produce a healthy appetite, mine should have been in top condition. But hunger has its limit,—mine was at last appeased; supper removed, wine and fruit were placed upon the table, and old blue-coat disappeared, leaving me perfectly satisfied with my quarters, and much more so with my company.

The host having filled his glass, pushed the decanters across the table.

“Come, sir, drink; you will own that Port wine sound, and this Madeira has circumnavigated the world; but I recommend the Burgundy. Probably, as it seems the custom of the country, you are not a wine-drinker after supper, should you therefore prefer them, you will find cognac and hollands on the buffet.”

Egad, the more I saw of it, the more I admired the establishment. Burgundy and Madeira that had circumnavigated the world—these formed very gentlemanly tipples to sport under a racketty old roof, to a self-invited visitor, who had dropped in, like a priest collecting corn, with a “God save all here.” Nor did I neglect the invitation. The bottle passed freely, previous restraint wore away, and some allusion of Mr. Hartley’s to a military life, led me by degrees into a private history of my own, until

“I ran it through, even from my boyish days
To the very moment when he bade me tell it.”

I afterwards recollected that some of Mr. Hartley’s questions could only have been asked by a person to whom the earlier history of my parents was intimately known, but I did not notice it at the moment.

Charmed at the urbanity of my host, and flattered that my young Desdemona expressed an interest in my fortunes, and

“Gave me for my pains a world of smiles,”

I became momentarily more intimate and at ease; deciding that the unknown and his boatman, Andy Beg, were little better than libellers, when they insinuated aught against the suavity of temper and sociability of my excellent host.

Isidora had risen to leave the room, and something in her look or attitude recalled the fascinating picture of the corsair’s mistress to my memory.

“How like!” I muttered, loud enough to awake the attention of her father. “I would be sworn that picture on the mantel-piece of the drawing-room was painted for this young lady,—ay, and bating some twenty years, the gallant rover looks your very image, sir.”

Never was a more unlucky guess hazarded by a blundering Irishman! Had lightning struck the building, or a grenade dropped hissing through the ceiling, the effect could not have caused so fierce an explosion as that which followed this infelicitous discovery. In a moment a lurid glare flashed underneath the host's contracted brows; while Isidora, pale as marble, leaned against the buffet for support. Persuaded that I had committed some villanous impertinence, I sprang forward to assist her; but, with extraordinary strength, her father pushed me like a child aside, led his daughter from the room, closed the door, and left me in undisturbed possession, to commune with my own thoughts, and congratulate myself on the brilliant effect that my first essay as a connoisseur in painting had produced.

After a short, but to me most painful, interval of suspense, Mr. Hartley returned. His rage had subsided; every trace of its first violence had disappeared; but his features wore an expression of stern rebuke, that made me far more uncomfortable than if personal violence were threatened for my offending. He leaned his back against the sideboard, and after regarding me for a minute with a fixed look, thus commenced:—

“Young man, you have wantonly annoyed those who were anxious to show you kindness; and, by a most unhappy and impertinent allusion to what concerned *you* nothing, you have in *me* roused feelings, which I wish suppressed for ever, and recalled to my daughter's memory an event that can only bring with it painful recollections.”

I listened patiently thus far; but, unable to restrain my feelings, interrupted the expostulation, while my look and manner evinced that my contrition was sincere.

“By Heaven, Mr. Hartley, my offence was wholly unintentional! While waiting for you in the drawing-room, by mere accident I noticed this unlucky picture. Had I fancied that a secret connexion existed between that painting and any event of your past life, I should have scorned to cast an eye upon it, as much as I would to pry into yonder open letter that lies upon the mantel-piece. I only saw in it, what I considered a beautiful creation of the fancy; some imaginary scene—”

Suddenly my host interrupted me.—“Creation of the fancy! No, no, boy; all sad—sad reality! Oh, Heaven, that the scene were indeed imaginary!”—and, apparently overcome with some fearful recollection, he turned his face towards the fire, and I could observe a convulsive shudder creep over him as he writhed in silent agony. I was dreadfully mortified at the misery which my folly had occasioned, and determined at once to quit a house in which my visit had proved so mischievous. I went forward, and took Mr. Hartley's hand.

“Can you pardon a stupid impertinence of mine, which has unhappily recalled afflicting recollections? When I am gone, excuse my imprudence to your daughter, and assure her how sincerely I repent my folly. And now, farewell, sir,—I feel myself an unwelcome visitor, and will relieve you of my presence.”

I made a movement towards the door; but my host waved his hand as if to detain me—

“Stop,” said he; “it is nearly midnight, and the first place where you could obtain a lodging is ten miles distant.”

“I have walked twenty before now,” I replied, “to shoot a dozen snipes.”

“The road is bad and difficult to find,” rejoined Mr. Hartley.

“I can rouse a peasant on the way side, and he will guide me.”

“It is dangerous, besides,” added he; “a murder was committed there but lately.”

“No matter,” I returned; “I have little indeed to lose.”

“You put your trust in honest Juvenal,” said he, with a faint smile. “‘*Cantabit vacuus*’—it is a good adage; no security better against robbery than an empty pocket. But they may knock you on the head, and discover when too late—that you are not a ganger;” and he gave me a side look, to see what effect the allusion had.

“Faith, sir,” I returned, “I trust that that mistake shall not occur a second time, although to it I owe the pleasure of your acquaintance.”

“Indeed?” said Mr. Hartley, with real or simulated surprise.

“It is true, sir,” I replied.

“Well, then, sit down and tell me the adventure. Come, my dear boy,” he added, in tones so soft, so kind, that I was amazed at the sudden transition from anger to urbanity; “all is over and forgotten. I will make your peace with Isidora in the morning, and your penalty shall be—a short lecture and another bottle. You are young—your foot has only touched the threshold of the stage of life—at your age one sees only the sun-streak in the sky, but never looks for the cloud-bank that lies behind it. What you to-night intended in idle compliment, exploded a hidden mine that all but wrecked our friendship in its very opening. Be advised by one who knows the world, or ought to know it: restrain curiosity in all that concerns another; and know men well, before you pry into their secrets. At the conclusion of this lecture my host took a flask of Burgundy from the sideboard, extracted the cork, and down we sate *tête-à-tête* again; and, at his desire, I narrated my evening encounter with the smugglers.

“Upon my honour,” he observed, as I ended, “a perilous adventure; and, faith, the scoundrels gave you coarse usage. I know the scene of your flight; a rough road to gallop over, and the broken bridge, too—did your horse carry you across that ugly chasm?”

“Took it in stroke, and never touched it with a toe. But for the villains with the rope, I should have had the race hollow.”

“Ay—these, ‘misbegotten knaves,’ as Jack Falstaff would call them, they ended the affair effectually. Egad—the rope was an excellent contrivance to dismount a cavalier. But you must have had a severe fall? Are you bruised?—are you injured?”

“Not much, I fancy—although I do feel sore and stiff about the back and shoulders.”

“It must be examined. I shall be leech for the nonce; and I am not a bad surgeon. Come, let us finish the flask, and then I will show you to a chamber.”

The time-piece on the chimney-piece chimed three quarters, the wine disappeared, I rose to retire; when my host took up a chamber-lamp

and led the way. Proceeding along a narrow gallery, we entered an apartment at its extremity. Mr. Hartley lighted the candles. "These are your quarters," said he. "Here make yourself at home, and I will return in a few minutes and pronounce upon your bruises."

Nothing could surpass the neatness of my dormitory. The curtains and bed furniture were chintz, with drawers, cabinets, and wardrobes, all of Indian workmanship. A glorious fire of bog-deal was blazing in the grate, and on the table I remarked a dressing-case, with every thing requisite even for the toilet of a man of fashion—while a morning gown, slippers, and change of linen, were in process of airing for my service. But other objects caught my eye. Over the chimney-piece hung a curious collection of fire-arms; and beside them, some splendid sabres were suspended. Some were of foreign shape, and richly ornamented with gold and silver mounting; others, made by English artists, were distinguished from the rest by their exquisite finish and simplicity, while not a few bore semblance of great antiquity, and seemed retained rather as objects of curiosity than use.

On his return, Mr. Hartley found me admiring his armoury; but I neither hazarded a remark nor dared to ask a question. The lesson I had recently received would last me for awhile; and had a ghost and goule been sitting in the corner, *tête-à-tête*, I should have scarcely ventured to inquire "What the devil brought them there?"

"There are some handsome weapons in that collection?" said the host.

"They appear most valuable," I replied. "I am not a judge of foreign arms; but I see some English guns of beautiful workmanship."

Mr. Hartley passed these lightly by; but taking down a sabre and pistols, he examined them with marked attention. The latter he replaced, but retained the sabre in his hand.

"Is that sword a valuable one?" My host started. I felt my face flush. Had I again committed mischief? But Mr. Hartley, on this score, relieved me speedily.

"You ask me is this sabre valuable? It is *invaluable*. The blade is of the purest Damascene. Observe its beautiful tracery; and its temper is so exquisite, that, without indenting its own edge to the extent of a pin's point, I could have once shorn that bar of iron in twain,"—and he pointed to the grate. A knock was heard at the door. "It is Dominique—Come in."

As he spoke, a new and very remarkable personage presented himself. He was a negro of uncommon height; and if his shape could be relied on, of herculean strength. His limbs, though too heavy to be graceful, were finely moulded; his shoulders square, his breast ample. He wore a light jacket and loose trowsers, and was provided with a china basin, some phials, and a napkin.

"Now," said Mr. Hartley, "for our operations. Dominique, assist this gentleman, remove his coat, and bare his shoulders."

The negro obeyed, and I submitted to examination.

"Upon my word, you have made little ado about what might have been a serious injury. Your back and arms are extensively contused,

the whole surface is bruised, and the skin discoloured. Come, we shall take a little blood, and then embrocate the parts affected."

I felt inclined to demur against submitting to phlebotomy, but mine was no common doctor. The negro bound my arm, produced a lancet, opened a vein with great adroitness, while his master overlooked the operation, until he thought that I had lost a sufficiency of blood. After a copious depletion, Dominique lubricated my back with some oily substance; and, having ascertained that all was correctly done, he assisted me to bed; while his master bade me a friendly good night, quitted the room, and both left me "alone in my glory."

What a "whirligig world" we live in! I was but one day fairly flown upon it, and what a medley of adventure had it not produced! In the morning, starting full of "gay hope," and for the first time master of myself; in the evening, captive of a gang of ruffians, who, in drunken barbarity, would have consigned me to the bottom of the lake, with less compunction than that with which a school-boy drowns a kitten. At night, inmate of a strange mansion, doubtfully received, half rejected afterwards, and now domesticated, as if I had been undoubted heir to every barren hill in view. All this was passing strange; and, lost "in wild conjecture," and unable to read riddles, I betook myself quietly to sleep.

If there be faith in strong exercise, a deep potation, and bruised bones, I ought to have slept soundly,—and so I did; dreaming nevertheless of nuns and corsairs, smugglers and sacks, wild ducks, burgundy, bloodletting, and Heaven knows what besides, until a gentle touch upon the shoulder dispelled these troublous visions, and showed, by the misty light of a dull October morning, the well-remembered features of my kind and mysterious host, standing at my bedside.

"Have you rested well?" said the deep voice of Mr. Hartley, in the gracious tones it could occasionally assume.

"I have slept most soundly; and find myself so far recovered from bruise and battery, that I could"—

"Run anew the gauntlet as a gauger, and take the broken bridge, in stroke," added mine host, with a smile. "Well, we shall not put you to the test to-day; you must keep quiet; at least, so says Dominique, your leech. Do you wish to read? you will find books. Would you write? there are materials in the drawing-room. Would you shoot—swim—sail? Here are all facilities. Your mare is in my stable, your cloak-case honestly restored; and, as the stranger avowed who brought them hither, the steed uninjured and your effects untouched. I have received important letters, which for a few hours oblige me to leave home. Before supper you may count upon my return."

I thanked him warmly for the kind manner in which he pressed my further stay, but hinted that the time was limited within which I must report myself at head-quarters.

"Yes, yes," said he, "I know you must be in Dublin on the 24th; but this is only the 20th. I will send you off to-morrow,—sounder in bones, and safer in property, than when you honoured me with a visit. 'Tis scarcely six o'clock. Sleep till Dominique appears. Addio! One

word more,—'tis cautionary,—we were introduced but yesterday ; to-day makes or mars our friendship !”

Before I could reply, he glided from the chamber, closed the door softly, and left me to sleep or wake, just as I pleased.

I felt little inclination to court the “drowsy influence” of my pillow ; for the stranger’s parting words, like every thing about him, were a mystery. Accordingly, I rose, threw aside the curtains, and let as much light in as an overcast morning would admit through a lattice dimmed with mist and rain.

It was yet but seven, and some time must elapse before the family would be afoot. Out of doors, all looked cold and comfortless, and I was obliged to betake myself to bed again, and there await patiently the advent of my sable physician.

Sleep I could not ; my brain was in a whirl, as the events of yesterday crossed my mind in fast succession ; all, or any, being sufficiently exciting to stamp the day adventurous to a novice like myself, just started on the world. But one engrossing recollection obliterated all the rest, and the picture and supper-scene occupied my thoughts exclusively.

As I pondered on the singular resemblance between the figures in the painting and those of Isidora and “mine host,” my eyes involuntarily rested on the arms which hung above the mantel-piece. The sabre and pistols rivetted my attention. They were the very identical weapons with which the corsair in the picture was accoutred ! Hartley’s eulogy upon the sword, and the boast of his former prowess, confirmed the belief, that though a “worthy Thane” at present, there was a period when his calling was but indifferent, and himself, “if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked.” Just then I heard a gentle tap, and Dominique made his appearance to ascertain how far I had benefited by his leech-craft, and if necessary, to assist me at my toilet.

“Your master, Dominique, went early abroad to-day.”

“Yes, sir. He had business at some short distance from the house, but he will not delay long. How much better your wounds look than could have been expected from their appearance last night !” and the negro embrocated my bruises again. “Pray, do you know, sir, any of the persons who assailed you on the road ?”

“Not I, in faith. From what I can collect, I was mistaken for another.”

“It was a bad blunder for you ; but, all considered, you have escaped wonderfully. It was very doubtful whether you could have left your room this morning ; and Miss Isidora begs to know whether you will have breakfast in your chamber, or venture to the parlour.”

“To the parlour, certainly.” Up I sprang, dressed rapidly, and following the sable functionary to the end of the corridor ; he pointed to the drawing-room door, bowed, left me, and I entered.

The room was still untenanted, and, to all appearance, precisely as I had left it the preceding night. Reckless of the confusion it had already caused, I determined to satisfy my curiosity again, and take a second peep at the mysterious picture. From the doorway the massive

frame was visible, for my eyes had turned involuntarily to the place where my thoughts had already wandered. I walked on and stood before the painting. 'Twas passing strange; there was the frame, but both lady and corsair had vanished; and the parting scene of love had changed to one of vengeance. How opposite the subject, too—Blue Beard about to shorten Fatima by the head, for being over curious, like myself, in a strange house and on a first visit. Was this pointed as a hint to me? Faith, it looked very like it, but, before I could determine whether the painting was designed to convey this silent lesson, a light step behind announced the presence of Isidora. She had entered from the adjoining room unperceived, and came to tell me that breakfast waited.

All things considered, the meal passed over with less embarrassment than might have been expected from a *tête à tête* between two novices like us, who had parted in the unpromising manner we had done the night before. Although timid as one unacquainted with the world will naturally be when she is first addressed by a stranger, Isidora's was the diffidence of maiden modesty rather than *mauvais honte*; while I, appertaining to that numerous class intitled "bashful Irishmen," mustered my small stock of assurance, as I whispered to myself old Chapman's lines—

" Ah! errand sheep's-head, hast thou liv'd thus long,
And dar'st not look a woman in the face?"

Certain it is, that, after having duly ascertained that my mare and baggage had passed through the hands of the Philistines uninjured, I returned gallantly to the drawing-room. There I behaved as a soldier of promise should do; ending by proposing a walk to the fair hostess, which invitation on her part was gracefully accepted.

The day had improved considerably; and we strolled arm-in-arm to the brow of a small hill, which, rising boldly above the copse that encircled it, commanded a splendid view of a spacious lake, with woodlands in the foreground and mountains in the distance. This was a favourite spot, and frequently, as my companion told me, visited by herself and Mr. Hartley. We placed ourselves on a rustic bench under the shading of a fine old elm; and, while I could not but admire the romantic scenery that everywhere met the eye, I marvelled that one who had mingled in the world, and had ample means to do so—as all about his domicile inferred—should seclude the young beauty beside me in a wilderness, fitted for men only of lawless habits and broken fortunes.

"Do you not, at times, find this place solitary, Miss Hartley?" I asked, in a careless tone.

"It is retired, certainly; but I have been accustomed from my childhood to retirement," she replied.

"Yes, but one who has been in the world—"

"Would, no doubt, find this mansion disagreeable. I have been secluded from infancy."

"Indeed!"

"For fifteen years I never set my foot beyond the convent garden."

“Were you intended for a *religieuse*?”

“I believe not.”

“Why, then, seclude you from the world?”

“The cloister is surely the best asylum for those who need protection.”

“You lost your mother when young?”—

To judge by its effect on my fair companion, the allusion was particularly unfortunate. The cheek, “but feebly touched with red” just now, flushed, and told that I had committed a fresh indiscretion. By a sudden impulse I seized her hand:—

“Have I again offended? Alas, Miss Hartley, I am inexcusable! But, as it was perfectly unintentional, may I once more entreat forgiveness?”

“For what?” exclaimed the deep voice of my host, as, to our mutual astonishment and dismay, he stepped from the thicket. In confusion, I dropped his daughter’s hand.

“Pray, young sir, what may be the offending which required such earnest supplication to be pardoned?”

“An impertinent question,” I replied.

“Repeat it,” he continued, as he fixed his eye steadily on mine.

“I inquired whether Miss Hartley had not been designed to take the veil, that for so long a period of her life she had lived the inmate of a convent.”

“It was a silly and a harmless question,” he answered drily. “Know you not that it is customary in catholic countries to entrust the daughters of the noblest families to religious communities for instruction? Well, Isidora, the pardon may be granted: for it is, possibly, the last offending he shall perpetrate or you forgive. Come, my girl, dinner has been ordered two hours earlier than usual, to enable Mr. O’Halloran to proceed this evening on his route. This may sound inhospitable, sir, but it is necessary. Isidora, let us look upon that lake, and these mountains: we look upon them for the last time!”

I started. What did all this mean? I looked at Mr. Hartley, but his face wore the same expression it always did; and if on the tablet of memory the past and present were fast careering, the volume was sealed to me. Dinner was served: it was a hurried and unsocial meal; and when the cloth was lifted, Isidora left the room.

“Drink, sir,” said the host—“time flies; and in half an hour *you* will be on the road, and *I* preparing for a longer journey. Those pistols on the table are yours. Fearing lest they had suffered by the night air, I had them discharged and cleaned.” He got up, took the weapons, and examined them critically. “From the cypher, I presume them to have been your father’s.” He sprang the ramrods—“Clean and effective,” he said. “In travelling, there are two things I never delegate to another—my horse and my weapons. The first I see attended to before myself; and the second, I take especial care shall not be found wanting when required. You will find ammunition in that drawer, and I beg you to excuse me for five minutes.”

When he was gone, I reloaded my pistols—filled another glass of wine—wondered what the devil would come next—heard the door

open—looked round, and saw mine host leading his fair daughter in.

“Isidora,” he said, “comes to bid you farewell. I overheard you ask pardon for some imaginary offending, and she will confirm it. My love, give the gentleman that ring.”

In deep confusion, the blushing girl pulled a jewel from her finger.

“No—no, love—a diamond would be ill suited for the hand that in a brief space may be cold upon a battle-field. 'Twould be to gorge with treasure they could not estimate, the human vultures which follow to batten on kindred carrion. No love, that other: It is, Mr. O'Halloran, the trophy of an early adventure—a simple hoop of gold—pure as it comes from the mine. As a remembrance, rich as if it had issued from Golconda—and as a bauble valueless, and therefore the fitter for a soldier.”

Isidora placed the keepsake on my finger, and with my lips I pressed her trembling hand. Her father gave a signal—and she hastily left the room by one door, as the blue-coated attendant entered by another to say that “my horse was waiting.”

“I will attend you to the gate,” said my host; and we proceeded down the long corridor together. At the entrance I found my mare, full of life and fit for any thing. Blue-coat housed my pistols in the holsters, Mr. Hartley squeezed my hand, and I sprang into the saddle, muttering thanks, which mine host returned with something like a blessing. He turned towards the door—I rode round the angle of the court-yard. Casting my eyes back I took a last look at the house, and from an upper window a white arm waved its parting farewell. Who sent that mute addio?—who—but Isidora!

CHAPTER VII.

I JOIN THE TWENTY-FIRST.

“*Davy.*—Doth the man of war stay all night?

“*Shallow.*—Yes, Davy—I will use him well.”

SHAKESPEARE.

As I rode from Mr. Hartley's, I could scarcely persuade myself that the transactions of the last two days were aught but a coinage of the brain, and took the liberty of respectfully inquiring of myself whether I were actually *compos mentis*. As I looked around, I received on this point a mute affirmative. I was sitting in mine own saddle—bestrode the best mare that ever cleared a broken bridge—identified the holsters at my pommel—my cloak-bag was duly secured upon its pad—and, stronger proof, “a gay gold ring” glittered on my finger:

It was a sweet September evening, and for the first mile or two the scenery harmonized well with that hour "which poets love." But when the natural wood that encircled Mr. Hartley's domain was left behind, I found before me a large expanse of dull brown moorland, which must be traversed before I could reach the solitary house where I purposed to take up my quarters for the night. The inn was ten miles distant, and the gentle reader will please to hold in recollection, that these miles were Irish miles; therefore, had I been inclined to sentimentalize, there was neither time nor place for musing. I gave Miss Malone accordingly permission to step out; and as the sun made his parting bow from behind a mountain ridge, I pulled up at the Yellow Lion and received an honourable welcome.

Standing at the door, Andy Beg appeared as if he had been for some time in waiting. He held a letter in his hand, and had a gun-case under his arm. Having grinned what he intended to be a civil recognition, he took my pistols and cloak bag, and led the way into this mountain caravansera. If for me the fatted calf had not been killed, still preparations had been made for supper—for a Nora Crina sort of cook, in short petticoats and a gown curiously tucked up, crossed me in the passage with a brace of moor-fowls ready for the brander. Miss Malone was stabled as became her worth—and I duly inducted into a cheerful chamber, the "great one" of the Yellow Lion, and evidently reserved for honourable guests. Having seated myself before the fire, I broke the seal of the packet which Andy Beg had delivered, and found it to be a valedictory epistle from that mysterious personage, Mr. Hartley. The letter ran thus:—

"Our acquaintance has commenced under such singular circumstances that I trace in it the hand of destiny—for chance could not have thus brought us together, when to meet was every thing but impossible. In me, know one who influences your fortunes—one, who by a breath can confer or withhold what men erroneously consider the passport to human happiness—wealth! For the future, I shall watch your career, and every action of your life shall be under a rigid *surveillance*. Be prudent, and I promise you a goodly independence. Disappoint my hopes, and you never see me more. To suppose that youth will not err occasionally, would be to plead ignorance of what mankind is. But remember, for folly there is pardon—for vice none. May you pass the ordeal unscathed!

"No one is secure against the frowns of fortune; and it may be decreed that you shall not escape. Mark me, boy! When friends fall off, the future is overcast, and all around seems desperate, write freely—let nothing be held back—and even in that heavy hour I may step between you and your fate. The address I enclose will always find me.

"Farewell; Isidora sends a kind remembrance.

"Yours, as you conduct yourself,

"JOHN HARTLEY."

"P.S.—You admired a gun of Manton's; I beg you to accept it. You can safely forward it to Dublin by the stage coach which passes the inn to-morrow morning."

Another postscript was annexed: it commanded me to keep profoundly secret my recent escapade among the smugglers, as well as my subsequent introduction to this my most mysterious correspondent. To this strange epistle, I returned a dutiful reply; and having despatched Andy Beg with my letter, I supped—went to sleep—and dreamed till cockcrow of the strange *dramatis personæ* who had figured so prominently in my late adventures.

On the fourth evening I reached the metropolis in safety—reported myself next morning to the Colonel—obtained a barrack-room in George's-street—was introduced to my brother officers, and committed duly to be drilled. I mounted “the red-rag”—and satisfied myself by a sly inspection as I passed every hatter's shop, from the effigy of the great King William even unto Stephen's Green, that the jacket was accurate in its proportions, and conferred immortal honour upon the builder of the same.

Among some introductory letters, one had been given me by my father, addressed to a respectable merchant to whom he annually consigned his wool. His name was Pryme—he lived on one of the quays, was reputed to be very wealthy, and was a rigid quaker. When I called at his counting-house I found that he had been absent for a day or two, and was gone to the country on business; but from his son I received much civility and any information that I required. The young quaker was a little older than I, but in height and general appearance singularly like me. Indeed, we might have passed for twin brothers, had not the cut and colour of our garments announced that no relationship could exist between a flashy flanker and a sober youth, whose conversation and outer man told plainly that he had eschewed the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. According to my father's orders, Mr. Pryme was not only to supply me with good advice, but also to furnish me with money when required—and one fine evening the young quaker, after mess, visited my barrack-room, and then and there replenished a treasury which a military outfit had nearly exhausted.

Of course he was hospitably entertained. The bottle passed freely—some of the younger hands dropped in—the kettle was put in requisition—and it was decreed that whisky punch should complete what port wine had handsomely commenced already.

At eleven o'clock the party were regularly screwed, the quaker worse than any. We had indulged in divers drunken freaks; and not the least ridiculous was an interchange of clothes between me and Simon Pure. Our next proceeding was to seek adventure, and sally forth upon the town; I attired in a snuff-coloured single-breasted coat and broad-brimmed hat, and brother Samuel in full regimentals and a bearskin chaco.

Our career was short and brilliant. We managed to get up a row in Dame-street with a party of college men, bent on the same errand as ourselves. The watch interfered—we joined our quondam opponents in a treaty, offensive and defensive, to resist this impertinent intervention, and the fight for a short time was respectably maintained. But numbers succeeded. I was stretched *hors de combat*; sundry

belligerents (the quaker included) were captured and carried to the watch-house, while the remainder, reserving themselves for deeds of valour on a future day, levanted, and left us to our fate.

Either owing to the severity of the blow, or from the shock of the fall, after having saluted my mother earth I lay perfectly motionless; while, alarmed at this proof of prowess, instead of conveying me to durance vile, the guardians of the night, declaring me dead as Julius Cæsar, carried me into a neighbouring apothecary's, to ascertain whether that disciple of the healing god could minister to mortal wounds, and set defunct gentlemen safe upon their legs again. The doctor having wiped and mounted his spectacles, proceeded to what he believed would turn out a *post mortem* examination; for after a single glance, he started back and exclaimed—

“Why, ye villans—every sowl of ye will be hanged! Haven't ye murdered a quaker?”

“Not at all,” responded the commander of the faithful. “Sure it was the quaker that murdered us.”

“Have done, ye scoundrels! He's a man of peace.”

“Pace or war,” returned a watchman, “he's the hardest hitter betune this and Bully's acre, and that's a big word. He give me onc clip wid the left hand, and jist look at my eye, af ye plase. By this book,” and Charlie reverently held up his lantern, “I think it was the crown of my head that first titched the gravel. It was the clanest knock down I ivir got—and many's the floorer I've had in my time from thim college divils. Bad luck attind them night and day—the thieves!”

“Who is the gentleman?” inquired the apothecary.

“Arrah! sorra one of us knows,” was the reply.

“Search his pockets,” said the leech;—“some paper will probably tell.”

The quaker's coatee forthwith underwent a judicial investigation, and divers mercantile documents at once established the identity.

“Why,” said the apothecary, “he's son of Mr. Pryme, the rich merchant, a man whom every body respects. By my conscience, I have one comfort for ye. If any thing goes wrong with the boy here, every man Jack of ye is sure of Botany Bay—ay! and the devil a rap it will cost any of ye for the passage out.”

“Oh!—murder! murder!” ejaculated sundry voices.

“Whish't!” said the doctor, for I gave a twist upon the floor, and muttered—“Fill fair, and be d——d to you.”

“Holy Bridget!” ejaculated the chief of the charlies—“if ivir I met a quaker of his kind. He drinks like a fish, and swears like a trooper!”

“Ah! he's coming round again,” exclaimed the doctor. “See!—the colour's on his cheek. I tell you what you'll do. Call a chair, carry him home fair and asy; and, if ye can, smuggle him down the area steps, for the ould gentleman wouldn't be overpleased to see him. I'll drop the lad a line or two in the morning, and make all right for you.”

Instantly a charlie trotted off, and in a few minutes I was safely ensconced in a “leathern conveniency” now extinct, which at that time



John W. Brown

performed a double duty in transporting beauty to the ball-room, and drunkards to their cribs.

I was promptly conveyed to my destination; and, by some strange fatality, a new chief butler that very evening had succeeded the former "pantler" of Mr. Pryme. I was, of course, personally unknown to him; and having been discreetly slipped down the area steps, it was explained that "I was rather the worse of liquor, and had been mighty pugnacious into the bargain." The butler took me on his back; and without let or hindrance, I was carried to the chamber of the absent Samuel—stripped—put to bed,—promised a bowl of whey—and left in undisputed possession of the dormitory of the drunken quaker.

Two or three hours passed; and how the secret transpired I cannot guess. I was buried in profound sleep, when lights flashed across my eyes and awakened me. Through an opening in the curtains I saw three females beside the bed; and I also discovered that the apartment was a strange one.

Surprise or fear will sometimes remove the consequences of inebriety, and men become suddenly sober. I felt this singular effect. In a moment after I awoke, I was conscious that I had been lately a victim to "the rosy god;" and that I was now, in Irish parlance, "just in the very centre of a hobble." Dipping my face beneath the counterpane, I murmured in a growling voice—"The lights! the lights! my head, my head!"

"Ruth," said the elder female, "remove the candles. Samuel! my son, what meaneth this? Art thou fallen?"

"Yes," I groaned; "I had a heavy fall, indeed."

"Ah! Samuel—would that that groan were the groan of sin, and not of suffering; and that thy conscience rather than thy stomach were moved. Speak! How did the enemy overtake thee? Where did he enclose thee in his net?"

I dipped my head beneath the bed coverings, and, in a husky voice, muttered—"The barracks in George's-street."

"Mercy on us!—Ruth—Rachel. It is the large brick building in which abide godless men in scarlet. And how, Samuel, did the evil one achieve thy fall?"

"One said I was floored by a charlie, and another left it upon a clip from a blackthorn."

"No, no, Samuel; I ask the carnal means. Was it by that soul-destroying liquor, wine, or was it by worse?"

"Worse, worse," I mumbled in reply.

"Oh dear!" ejaculated Mrs. Pryme.

"Ah me!" responded the gentle Rachel.

"Alack, alack! continued the conscientious Ruth.

"Name the snare of the tempter."

"I'm too bashful," I grumbled.

"Nay, Samuel. Close thy ears, Ruth—avert thy head, Rachel; he would not have his shame revealed. Was it, Samuel, a dancing Herodias—or some Delilah, with bewitching looks?"

"No, no; worse, worse."

"Merey on us! Speak, and name the fatal cause."

"Punch—punch!—Whisky new—the kettle not boiled—and too much acid," came grumbling from below the blankets.

"How fearful is inebriety! Thy very voice, my son, is changed. But verily, as it is thy first offending, I will pardon it, and give thee the kiss of peace."

So saying, she popped her head through the curtains, and bestowed upon me the reconciliatory *accolade*. After thus sealing my pardon, the worthy gentlewoman sailed out of the apartment, accompanied by her handmaid Ruth.

I felt myself in a curious position,—located in a strange house, ensconced in a comfortable bed from which the right owner would presently eject me, and watched by a lovely girl of eighteen, on whose sweet countenance the very imprint of innocence was stamped. And what was I?—A regular impostor. Well, what was to be done? Should I admit my villany, and be bundled off direct to Newgate, under a charge of burglary, or some more felonious intentions? And to whom was this interesting confession to be made? The old dame?—no, faith—there no kiss of peace would ratify my pardon. The young one?—pshaw, the very idea that she had been seated beside the bed of a man in scarlet would annihilate Rachel on the spot. No doubt a discovery must ensue—but, like every thing a man dislikes, I determined to procrastinate it and trust to fortune.

"Samuel," said the sweetest voice imaginable, "does thy head ache? Let me apply this essence;" and passing her hand gently through the curtains, she bathed my temples with *eau-de-Cologne*. My arm was outside the coverlid,—she took my hand in hers and pressed it affectionately.

"How feverish!" she murmured. "But here comes Ruth, with something our mother sends, which will allay thy thirst."

The stiff-backed abigail deposited the liquid on a table.

"Come, Rachel, sleep will restore thy brother." Then addressing herself to me, "Farewell, friend Samuel,—may this be the last of thy foolishness:" and after this flattering admonition, she exited from the chamber, stiff as a ramrod.

"Farewell, dear brother,"—and Rachel again clasped my hand in hers,—"good night! I trust sincerely I shall find thee better in the morning."

"Stop!" I mumbled. "Rachel, dear,—dear Rachel!"

"What, my brother?"

"The—the—the kiss of peace!" I managed to stammer from beneath the bed coverings.

"Willingly, dear Samuel;" and lips, "full, rosy, ripe," were artlessly pressed to mine, while a prayer, pure from a guileless heart, implored pardon for the past, and a blessing for the future. The next moment the door was softly closed, and I "left alone in my glory."

Would it be credited that under such circumstances I had the audacity to sleep? But sleep I did—and when I slept, my head was on a peaceful pillow, and the kiss of innocence still fragrant on my lips.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE IN A WATCH-HOUSE

"I'll ne'er be drunk while I live again but in honest, civil, godly company, for this trick; if I be drunk, I'll be drunk with those that have the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves."

Merry Wives of Windsor.

READER,—will you make a clean breast and answer a simple question?—Were you ever regularly cribbed, and deposited for safe keeping in a watch-house? Don't confound places, and suppose for a moment, that I mean those *refugia peccatorum*, now-a-days called "station-houses." The two are no more alike, than the London Tavern is to a boiled-beef shop. If you reply to my inquiry in the negative, and art young, I can only say the mischief is irremediable—and for the best reason, because watch-houses have been defunct these twenty years. If, like myself, you are a gentleman of a certain age, and also plead ignorance—you have nothing left but to mourn over misspent time, and lament a misfortune, for which no one is blamable but yourself.

Many a jovial hour have I passed in St. Andrews—I don't mean the Scotch College so called, but the Dublin watch-house of pleasant memory; and I have also occasionally favoured with a visit other establishments of the same kind, where belated gentlemen were sure to find the door open without having the trouble of knocking twice:—but who, except "upon compulsion," would enter a modern bastille? The place is in everything an abomination, and so republican where-withal in its regulations, as to be fitted only for the reception of the *canaille*. There, captains and cabmen are placed upon a par. "Look to him, jailer," is the only order that is attended to; and whether you belong to swells West-end, or the swell-mob, matters not a brass button. The thing's similar all through, and you undergo the same process of purification. You are cooped up all night, thermometer in summer 110, in winter down to zero—and bundled before the Beak in the morning all "unkempt" and with "marvellous foul linen." Of course, you are not flat enough to give your real name. If you are a tradesman, why you wish to "come it genteel," and pass for the time being as Mr. Ferdinand Fitzsnooks. If, on the contrary, you happen to be a "top-sawyer," you descend from your "high estate," and—though "Baron or Squire, or Knight of the Shire,"—adopt "for the nonce," the simpler appellation of Smith, Brown, or Robinson. Well, in due course, you are favoured with a hearing—the charges are proven, and the Worthy Magistrate—he's always so termed in the Sunday papers—runs you up a bill as glibly as the waitress of an eating-house. *Imprimis*, you are scored down five shillings for being drunk—forty ditto, for assault and battery—as much more for jingling some Doctor's bell—and the tale ends in your five-pound flimsy having got a regular sickener. You fork the money out, and prepare directly to make your

exit ; but hold, you are not safe yet—wait for the parting admonition. Beaky having first premised that your name is neither Smith, Brown, nor Robinson, is sorry to assure you that he considers you a disgrace to your family and order—and, after a flattering panegyric upon his own nice sense of what is due to public justice, he concludes with a positive assurance, that if you ever renew your acquaintance with him, so far from standing “betwixt the wind and your nobility,” you shall have the benefit of a month’s exercise on the tread-mill, “and no mistake.”

And now comes Mr. Ferdinand Fitzsnooks. He stands forward—but how different is his bearing from that of the pseudo Mr. Smith, who has just jumped into a cab in waiting, with coronets emblazoned on the panels. He does not listen to the charges with inattention ; nor does he venture to meet the magistrate’s eye, as it occasionally is turned to that part of the court where he stands. He has been silly and noisy and riotous—but he has done no mischief. He is found guilty, and fined three pounds. The pale girl behind him—she with the infant in her arms—begins to sob, while Ferdinand appeals to the bench, and on the plea of a first offence, solicits a remission of the penalty. But Rhadamanthus is not sterner than his judge. Pshaw ! worthy sir, let him go ! he is but a drudge in a lawyer’s office—his master is strict—he will lose his situation, and what will that pale girl and her infant do ? No ; the upright magistrate is obdurate—and the slang of what “justice requires” is his only answer to the prisoner’s appeal. The jailer, a filthy, dogged, drunken, red-nosed brute, taps him on the shoulder and inquires, in pickpocket parlance, whether he can “stump the rowdy ?” A melancholy shake of the head tells his inability, and he is committed for—what ?—want of money—to the House of Correction for a fortnight. Worthy sir—pause before you send that silly young man to prison. Look at his wife—she is barely eighteen—young, pretty, and inexperienced. She has not a relative in London,—and steeped in poverty and surrounded with temptations, will you rob her for fourteen days of her protector, because he cannot command three sovereigns ? True, you fined Mr. Smith two pounds more, and also talked something about the tread-mill—but, for your very life, you would not have ventured to commit him. I could show you Mr. Smith’s name in the peerage—ay, and high up, too ; and he could have as easily given you a cheque upon his bankers for five thousand, as he handed you the penalty of five pounds. And this is law !—England, England ! you call yourself the land of freedom !

But what has all this to do with your story ? Reader,—I beg your pardon, and thank you for the hint.

The hatch of St. Andrew’s watch-house—a sort of outer-door, only breast-high, but furnished with a row of iron spikes which would bid defiance to Harlequin himself—was closed—and, a very unusual occurrence at that late hour, all within the house of durance was quiet. Peter Bradley, the captain of the hold, was seated on a wooden bench in his accustomed corner, with a little table before him, on which was awfully displayed the fatal book in which delinquencies were chronicled, flanked by a pewter vessel full charged with Sweetman’s XXX. Three guardians of the night, who formed the jail-guard, sate round the fire “drawing”

a comfortable *dudheine*, and casting, from time to time, a longing eye at the battered quart deposited beside the elbow of the commander. There were other occupants—for occasionally melancholy faces peeped through a grated wicket in the door, which separated the dungeon-keep from the guard-room,—and from their place of captivity looked anxiously at the great man seated in the corner, whose nod could loose or bind. Indeed the task of watch and ward was easy, for the prisoners were comprised in one solitary group, namely—a drunken sailor, a fiddler with one leg, and “a maid who loved the moon,” brought there for falling through a shop-window and making *smithereens* of divers panes of glass, for which, as, from a lack of the king's currency, they could make no proper compensation, they were safely incarcerated.

Peter Bradley nibbed his pen, laid down his spectacles, gave a heavy sigh, and then, as if to kill care, took a long and steady pull from the pewter. “Business,” said the commander, addressing himself to his myrmidons at the fire, “business is gone to the dogs. ’Tis twelve o’clock!” he continued, as the wooden time-piece above his head announced the “witching hour.” “Twelve o’clock! and not a sowl picked up but devils who couldn’t muster, if it saved them from the gallows, turnpike-money for a walking-stick. Out with them varmint in the black-hole, Barney Casey; what use in shuttin’ up craters without a *scultogue*,* and lumbrin’ the place wid people who can’t stand a pint of beer.”

Barney, obedient to the orders of his chief, made a general jail delivery. The nymph as she glided out, acknowledged the favour conferred by dropping a graceful curtsy as she passed “the seat of justice;” the fiddler as he hopped across the floor, dutifully ducked his head, and bade a “good night to his Honour;” but the sailor, reckless of the merciful interposition which had restored him to liberty, and freed him from all liability incurred for broken glass, consigned all and every in the watch-house to a climate much hotter than the West Indies, for which ungrateful and irreligious proceeding, he received a momentum in the door-way which enabled him, “in double quick,” to reach the opposite curb-stone. The hatch was thereupon safely locked, and Mr. Bradley again addressed his brother officials:—

“There’s more beside that’s vexin’ me, boys. I hear they are goin’ to overhaul us—and sorra a turn, good or bad, that happens through the night, but must be entered in black and white. Feaks! I thought myself yesterday, that something was in the wind, for the magistrates were as short with me as cat’s-hair; and that divil, Artur French, was nearly hobblin’ me fairly. ‘Who’s this Artur French?’ says Mr. Jones. ‘Ah, then,’ says I, ‘it’s himself. that’s a raal gentleman. Sure, wasn’t his father Ulick French, of French Hall, and his mother’—‘Don’t bother me about his mother,’ says he, mad as a hatter; ‘Who is he? what is he?’—‘A collegian, plase ye’r honour.’—‘Ay, and a promising disciple he is, if I may judge,’ says he, ‘by your watch-book. Why,

* “*Scultogue*, is a monetary phrase, used generally in the kingdom of Connaught. Its metallic value not being clearly ascertained, I have doubts whether it would be a legal tender.”—*Extract from an opinion of Mr. Richard Dunn, the eminent barrister.*

he's wid ye, Mr. Bradley, three times a week. The next time he pays you a visit, I beg you'll be good enough to introduce him to me."

"Troth; and ye won't," observed one of the guard of honour at the fire-place, as he leisurely recharged his *dudheine*; "he'll blarney ye, and git away wid the ould story of both ye'r mothers being Roscommon women."

"I wish the Lord would send in a dacent customer, any how, that could pay his way," said a second charlie: "if iver I was drier in my life!"

"Feaks!" observed the third, "and it's myself that has got a cobweb in my throat. But, whisht! boys—look out there! Who knows our luck yet?"

Up jumped one of the smokers, and craning his head over the hatch, communicated the gratifying intelligence that the patrol were coming up with divers delinquents in close custody. The charlies pocketed their pipes, Mr. Bradley mounted his spectacles, while the shuffling of feet, and an uproar of many voices talking and arguing at their highest pitch, joined to the maudlin singing of a noisy drunkard, announced the immediate approach of a detachment of a body whom poor Burns dreaded and denounced—

"That black banditti—the city guard."

"Here they come," said the charlie at the hatch: "one man in red, either dead or dead drunk—three shy-looking scamps behind him—and a regular swell in front. Blessed Bridget! is it him? Be the hole in my coat, that's yourself, Artur French, if ye'r ovir ground. May the divil welcome you, *astore!*"

"Then if it is," said the irritated commandant, "Artur French, you'll have a new acquaintance in the morning, before ten o'clock."

There was no mistake in the identity. A young man dressed in the extreme of fashion pushed through the watchmen with an air of authority, and hopping on the bench where Mr. Bradley had hitherto reposed his person in solitary dignity, seated himself, unbidden, beside this dreaded functionary, and—

"for no inviting did he wait,"

but seized the sacred pewter, and drained the contents to the very bottom.

"How thirsty," said he, "a shindy makes one! Not bad stuff that, Peter. But, governor, what's the matter?"—and Mr. French looked steadily in Mr. Bradley's face, which had assumed what was intended to pass for an expression of dignified displeasure. "If you're not as sour as a Seville orange to-night! Come, come, old chap, tip us your daddle—give us a grip of your bunch of fives!"

But Mr. Bradley held back his hand. "I tell ye what, Artur—don't be after vexin' me—I'm in bad temper to-night—and I'll stand no gammon."

"Stand your granny!" returned the young *roué*; "I'll tell ye what I'll stand—and that's more to the purpose. Broiled kidneys, black

cockles, a gallon of heavy wet, and as much punch as you can swim in. Off with ye to Nosey McKeown's,"—and crumpling up a pound note, he pitched it into a watchman's face,—“ See that all comes in hot ; and take care that his daughter Sibby brews the punch. Now, Peter, try and look pleasant. An't I better to you than a bad stepson ?”—and he punched the commander's ribs unceremoniously.

“ Arrah—Artur, have done, will ye ? What the divil druv ye here the night, good or bad ?” asked the commandant.

“ Well, I fancy you have named the gentleman that did it ”—

“ I say, what brought ye here ?”

“ Half a score of your scoundrels, Peter. I fell over that cursed fellow in the red jacket sleeping on the guard bed—and before I could get fairly on my pins, these villains had me fast.”

“ Well, there's nothing else for it—you must go before Mr. Jones.”

“ Mr. Jones may go to Bath ; but before Mr. Jones I won't go.”

“ I can't screen ye longer,” exclaimed the governor.

“ Screen me !” exclaimed the prisoner ; “ why what a pother you make about a little trifling civility.”

“ Trifling civility !” exclaimed the astonished constable : “ Oh, murder, murder ! there's nothing like ungratitude. Trifling civility ! Och, Artur French—I have done wid ye. When you were cotched in the garret, drinkin taa with Mr. Abbot's maid, who got ye off, Artur ? When the sawyer's arm was broke in the *rookawn* at Pie-corner, who got the tinker's wife to prove your alabay, and sware she met ye wid Kitty Flanigan, in Mud Island ? When—”

“ Arrah, stop man : what's the use of raking up old yarns ? Peter, I always said you were a decent cove—but they swear you're doting lately, and that you'll never stop till ye turn Methodist. Only for the tender regard I have for yourself, I would give up your shop altogether, and take my custom across the water to Mary's watchhouse. But I can't forget old friendship—the more so, when I remember that your mother and mine were both born in Roscommon.”

A horse-laugh was heard from the fire-place.

“ Arrah, have done wid your blarney,” said the commander, testily, “ and nivir mind my mother. What charge is again ye, the night ?”

“ Nothing—a mere trifle ; I was endeavouring to make peace,” returned Mr. French, with unblushing effrontery.

“ Mighty like a whale !” observed the commander, in a side whisper.

“ I charge him wid a felonious assault !” exclaimed a voice from behind the door.

“ Step forward, young man.” And the complainant placed himself in front of Mr. Bradley's table.

“ What's ye'r charge ?” inquired the judge. “ What have ye to say agin this respectable young gentleman, who was strivin' to bring about pace and harmony ?”

“ Pace and harmony !” exclaimed the complainant : “ he was the worst of the whole lot, barrin' the quaker. There wouldn't have been a blow, but for the two of them ; and the quaker—”

“ The quaker's not before this court,” said Mr. Bradley, with great dignity : and yet Mr. Bradley told a fib ; for the identical Quaker

was lying sound asleep upon the guard bed. "What charge do you make, young man?"

"Why that Mr. French, as you call him, split my ear with a black thorn."

"Oh! you villain!" exclaimed the accused. "Now, Peter, the fellow's on his oath. Peter, I leave it to you. On the nick of your sowl, as an honest man, don't I always fight with a sapling?"

"He does, in troth!" responded three charlies in a breath.

"Now, Peter, what do you say to that? Wouldn't that make a man's hair stand an end?"

"'Pon my conscience," observed Mr. Bradley, "I'm thunderstruck—young man, what's ye'r name?"

"Sniggs," said the complainant.

"What are ye?"

"A tailor, to trade," replied the accuser.

"Then, Sniggs," returned Mr. Bradley, "the laast I can do is to transport ye."

"Transport me!" exclaimed the astonished tailor: "Arrah, for what? Is it for having my ear split?"

"Hold your tongue; I see, though young, ye'r a hardened offender. Have ye no conscience, man? Oh, murder! to try and sware away the life of an innicint gentleman!—Is your mother livin'?"

"No," replied Mr. Sniggs, not exactly comprehending the drift of Mr. Bradley's examination.

"Have you sister, or brother?"

"Nather," returned the quondam accuser; but now, as it would appear, by some freak of fortune transmuted into the accused.

"Have ye no relashins, good nor bad, ye unfortunit divil?"

"I have," replied the artist, "a third cousin, a well-behaved girl she is, and greatly respected by her mistress, who's married to a tanner in the Liberty."

"Well," said Peter graciously, "on account of that well-behaved girl, your third cousin, I'll show mercy to you this time. Turn him out. Go home and repent, Sniggs: God forgive ye! that's all I have to say. Be off wid ye."

"Arrah, blur and nouns!" ejaculated the disappointed tailor, "and is that all the satisfaction I'm to get for having my ear slit like a swallow's tail?"

"Out with him, I say. Wait till I ketch ye here agen, Sniggs. Be this book," (and Peter flourished the empty pewter-pot) "that well-behaved girl, your third cousin that lives wid the tanner, won't get you off the second time. I wish the drink was come. I'm gratefully fatigued givin' good advice—it always laves me dry as a whistle. But what's to be done wid the chap in the corner?"

"There's no use spakin' to him now," returned a watchman; "he's blind drunk, and fast asleep into the bargain."

"Did he do much damage?"

"Not he," returned Mr. French; "poor divil! he couldn't stand, let alone strike. At the commencement of the row he was knocked down like a nine-pin, and I wonder he was not trodden to death."

Send him home, Peter ; 'pon my life, it's dangerous to keep him here."

"Are ye joking, Artur?"

"No, honour bright, Peter. Look at his buttons, one of ye. What's the number of his regiment?"

"The twenty-first."

"Away with him to George's-street."

"Arrah, and upon my conscience, ourselves ought to know the road purty well. God's blessin' attend the Kilkinny's! it was a pleasure to do bisnis wid them ;—four or five to be carried home, reglar, at two shillins a head, and no cobblin' about the money afterwards. The sergeant of the guard tallied them as they came in, and it was only to bring the score to the quarter-master, and down came the brads in the mornin'. But who's to pay for this chap?"

"I," said the wild collegian, as he tossed a piece of money to the speaker. "It's only what one gentleman should do for another, when he's too drunk to be able to do it for himself. But here comes supper. I wonder what became of the quaker. Ah, Peter! he *was* a tramp—and such a hitter! I'll respect a quaker while I live. Give me a pull of 'the heavy,' and let us have the cockles while they are hot."

While Mr. Bradley, with his young and amiable friend, proceeded to discuss their supper, a couple of watchmen lifted the unfortunate quaker off the guard-bed. The movement roused him; but it was soon evident that the late symposium was still uppermost in his brain.

"Come along," said the charlie; "step out like a man; we're bringin' you home."

The remark elicited a drunken effort to be melodious—and Mr Pryme sang, or strove to sing, "We won't go home till morning."

"The divil a here ye'll stay then," responded his supporters.

"Wine—more wine.—'Wine cures the gout,'" returned the quaker.

"If it does, sorra touch you'll have of the disorder for a month of Sundays. Come along wid him."

The quaker's head was still ringing with drunken madrigals, and he proceeded to chaunt "Old King Cole."

"Arrah, don't bother us wid King Cole; but try and put the feet aninder ye. We'll bring ye to George's-street."

"No, no;" muttered the Quaker; "I'll go home to the Merchants' Quay."

"Divil a sich an improper place ye'll go near. Haven't ye been enough on the *ran-tan* already the night?" and away they toddled towards the barracks, which destination was safely reached, and the body of the pseudo lieutenant delivered to the guard, with an intimation on the part of the watchmen, that on the morrow particular inquiries should be made touching the general health of the invalid.

"This must be the officer that joined last week," said the sergeant. "Go to his room and find his servant; and first put a knapsack under his head, and take his stock off. To do him justice, I never saw a more drunken gentleman."

When John Crawford was awakened, and had made a personal

inspection, to the utter surprise of the main guard, "pioneers and all," he repudiated the sleeping gentleman, and satisfactorily illustrated the old adage, that the cowl no more constitutes a monk, than a red jacket makes the soldier. Honest John's first care was to secure his master's uniform from further damage, which he contrived to effect by the substitution of a shooting jacket; and then, *nemine contradicente*, it was agreed, that drunken men should be permitted to sleep themselves sober; and that accordingly, the unhappy puritan should be left in undisturbed repose.

Morning dawned through the guard-room lattice before Samuel Pryme awoke. If there be a feeling more horrible than another, it is the return of reason to a drunken neophyte when he awakens after his first debauch. The quaker stared wildly round him; there were twenty men in the room—all strangers to him; some sleeping on the wooden bench on which he lay, and others sitting smoking by the fire. His head was giddy—his brain wandered—he was tortured with a burning thirst. Where was he? Suddenly his pale cheeks reddened with shame; he felt like a Hindu who has lost caste; and, burying his face between his hands, in a smothered voice that bespoke a consciousness of abasement, while tears fell fast, he faintly murmured, "Where am I?"

The sergeant laid aside a book which he had been reading in the window—and, though a rough soldier, he felt sincerely for the penitent.

"Don't take on so," said he. "Young folk will be giddy. Bless your heart—there's none of our gentlemen that arn't wildish now and then. I wish we could get you something to drink; but the canteen is closed. Would you like to go home? I dare not spare a man; but I'll send for Mr. O'Halloran's servant, and pass him through the gate." The quaker thanked him, but declined assistance; asked for and received a draught of water "cold from the pump," the sentry unclosed the wicket, and Samuel Pryme returned to his father's house, "a sadder, if not a wiser man," than when he quitted it the preceding evening.

The clock struck five. Peter Bradley was snoring on his guard-bed, and Mr. French taking his ease at an unpretending hostelry in Smock Alley, not generally known in the fashionable world, but patronized by the pleasant part of the community, and y'cleped "The Hole in the Wall." I felt as much at home in my dormitory as if I had been legal proprietor of it, while he, unhappy youth! reconnoitred the house from the outside, with all the suspicion of a man who meditates a burglary on the premises. In their respective chambers, Mrs. Pryme and her handmaiden had owned the influence of the drowsy god, and Rachel slumbered with as safe a conscience as if she had never kissed a fusileer. There is an old saw, gentle reader, which insinuates that it is prudent occasionally to allow "sleeping dogs to lie." We'll adopt it "for the nonce"—inquire what had befallen that *alter ego*, my foster-brother, and, with your gracious permission, follow through the next chapter, the fortunes of MARK ANTONY O'TOOLE.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COCK AND PUNCH-BOWL

“*Rosalind*. Here’s a young maid with travel much oppress’d
And faints for succour.”

“*Corin*. I pity her,
And wish for her sake, more than for my own,
My fortunes were more able to relieve her.”

AS YOU LIKE IT.

ALTHOUGH I departed from Kilcullen at cockcrow, Mark Antony O’Toole, having borrowed some hours from the night, had taken the road before me. Apprehensive of the desperate lengths to which deserted dairy-maids may be driven, the fosterer moved off without beat of drum; and the better to evade pursuit, had Kitty Dwyer attempted to recover the truant, and “*vi et armis*” repair her reputation by a sanatory visit to the altar, Mr. O’Toole prudently declined marching by the mail-coach road, and masked his retreat with an ability that puzzled the priest himself. But as it turned out, Mark Antony’s caution was unnecessary. Kitty bore her bereavement like a christian woman,—hinted that the sea held as good fish as ever had been taken yet,—and, from divers hymeneal overtures, blessed God that she had no grounds for despondency. Aiding and assisting sound philosophy with “rum and true religion,” she got over her disappointment—within a fortnight, the false one was forgotten—Miss Dwyer “open to an offer”—and ready to commit matrimony at sight.

Two days before his evasion from my father’s house, Mark Antony had privately despatched his kit by a Dublin carrier, and the few necessaries required for his journey were formed into a bundle of small dimensions, and suspended from the extremity of a well-trying shillelagh. Dressed in a smart morning suit that erstwhile had called me owner, the fosterer had more than once examined his outer man with evident satisfaction. His step was light, his breast without a care, and his pocket heavier than it had ever been before—he went on his way rejoicing—and when evening began to close, Mark Antony had placed five-and-twenty miles between him and that ill-requited fair one, whose only crime was loving “not wisely but too well.”

Half a century ago Irish engineers, in Yankee parlance, were “reg’lar go-a-heads.” Neither condescending to turn to the right or to the left, they crossed the country “as God had made it,” took the bull by the horns, and scorning to steal round a hill they boldly breasted it. The fosterer had been escalading one of these heights for the last hour, and, on topping its ridge, overtook two wayfarers of opposite sexes who had preceded him in the ascent, and were now resting after its achievement.

Like himself, the travellers were not incommoded with heavy baggage, for what appeared to be their united kit was even smaller than

his own, and was comprehended within the compass of a faded silk-handkerchief. The man was stout, undersized, and looked full thirty—the girl seemed scarcely nineteen—and from their dress and general appearance, the fosterer was sorely at a loss to decide to what grade of society the strangers appertained.

The male traveller's dingy black frock had once seen better days, and his buff vest and nankeen unmentionables would have been all the better for a visit to the laundress. His hat was of that order denominated "shocking bad;" while it seemed doubtful that his boots would bear him to the end of his journey, and if they did, it would be by an expiring effort with which their history must close. His complexion was sallow, his features large, his whiskers black and bushy. He looked a dirty Jew; and certainly, "take him for all in all," he was not the sort of person whom a gentleman would borrow money to entertain.

In every particular the girl was unlike her companion. She was pretty, tall, fair, and well formed. Her costume—a collection of faded finery—was tolerably clean; and, poverty apart, her air and address were those of one who had once moved in a different sphere, and, to judge by appearances, of one also, upon whom fortune had frowned severely.

On both sides some civilities were interchanged; and to an inquiry from the fosterer as to where entertainment and lodgings could be found, the man pointed out a solitary house at the distance of a mile, intimating that it was a carman's stage held by travellers in high estimation. It was moreover kept by a buxom widow, and denominated



THE COCK AND PUNCH-BOWL.

The ice once broken, the dark gentleman became very communicative.

"If you want good fare, prime whisky, and a sound snooze, the Cock's your place, sir. The landlady's a trump, parlour snug, and not a flea if you searched the beds for a fortnight. Come, my love," and he addressed his fair companion, who frowned an angry answer

to this term of endearment,—“you and I are for the same crib, and we'll give this gentleman our company.”

The stroller spoke with the volubility of an auctioneer, and thus continued :—

“This lady, sir, is my sister,—Miss Julia Montague. We are both professional,—known extensively in the dramatic world,—I, in the comic line—and Julia, in the musical. Bad spec at Granard—manager an ass,—played tragedy to please his swivel-eyed wife,—she Desdemona!—she be forked,—house didn't draw money to pay candles,—manager, calls himself Mortimer, right name Malowney, bolted with any blunt there was—left the company without a tanner, and obliged July and myself to travel here *tandem*,—one leg before the other. Better luck again,—we'll both be on the boards of Crow-street before Christmas—eh, July?”

When the Jew had named the connexion between himself and the wandering melodist, Mark Antony's incredulous stare was returned by a look of contempt directed by the lady at her companion, which disclaimed relationship altogether; and a trifling incident ended the attempt at imposition.

A knot of the handkerchief which secured the joint-stock property of the comedian and the *cantatrice* had slipped unperceived, and when the accident was discovered, portions of the wardrobe were seen upon the road a hundred yards in the rear. Mr. Montague started off to recover the missing valuables, and Julia and Mark Antony were thus for a brief space left together. The opportunity was not neglected. The girl, after a searching glance behind, suddenly addressed the fosterer.

“Stranger, beware!—you know not the scoundrel who has been speaking to you. He's all a lie,—a Jew, a sleight-of-hand man, a pick-pocket, and a pugilist. Avoid him, or he'll cheat you first, and bully you afterwards.” (A smile from Mark Antony intimated that on the latter score he was incredulous altogether.) “He followed me without my knowledge, and joined me on the road. Will you protect me to the next town? I would not trust myself another hour in that villain's company. But soft—he comes,”—and, with ready tact, she changed the conversation to some common-place occurrence as the Jew hurried up and joined them. A few minutes more brought them to the Cock and Punch-bowl, which proved to be a low and straggling edifice situated at the junction of four roads.

As Mark Antony had rapidly adopted the prejudices of his fair monitress, he now regarded the Israelite with feelings of aversion and contempt. To fear he was a stranger—and the very knowledge that the Jew was a regular prize-fighter, probably occasioned on his part a more unequivocal display of personal antipathy. On entering the hostlerie, Mr. O'Toole asked for and obtained a private apartment—ordered supper for the Prima Donna and himself—intimating plainly to the fat landlady, that notwithstanding his celebrity in the comic line, Mr. Montague was not to be a member of the mess—and that, accordingly, the Jew and himself must remain what they had hitherto been—strangers to each other.

It was now twilight. The girl, but not without some difficulty, had

recovered her bundle from the sleight-of-hand man, who, after several audacious attempts at a renewal of acquaintance, which on the part of the fosterer were as decidedly repulsed, was obliged to put up with a seat beside the kitchen fire, and there enjoy the tantalizing prospect of watching the progress of a supper at which his presence had been interdicted.

A noise outside attracted the fair vocalist and her protector to the window. It was a recruiting party *en route* to a neighbouring pattern, to pick up "food for powder." There, a festival was held, where fame spoke truly, love and penance, whisky and broken heads, were all so agreeably united, that the man who could not be happy at Cahirmore must be suited only for "stratagems and treasons," and a personage upon whom pleasure would be thrown away.

The charge of foot which halted at the Coek and Punchbowl consisted of a sergeant, whose waist the sash found difficulty to encompass—a brace of privates too dirty for the ranks, but who crimped inimitably—a boy, taller than his drum by the head—and a lean and sallow fifer who had counted forty summers; these with a couple of recruits completed this "gallant gathering." On the shoulders of the stonter, the sergeant's pack was strapped; while to the honourable keeping of the other, the commander's bilboa was entrusted—a weapon, whose unstained steel had never yet been "incarnadined" with human gore. The soldiers presently ensconced themselves in a room beneath—Mrs. O'Leary paraded the expected supper—Mark Antony and his fair friend seated themselves and commenced active operations, the fosterer eating as men eat who have walked thirty miles of Irish measurement, and the vocalist, as if to her, poor girl! for many a day a comfortable meal had been unknown.

In the mean time the rejected Israelite bade fair to sup with Duke Humphry. Admission to the state apartment was hopeless, for from thence he had been peremptorily excluded. In the kitchen, divers hints had been dropped that his absence would be preferable to his company; and as Jews don't list, the soldiers repudiated him altogether. Deeply incensed against the wandering actress for deserting him in this "his hour of need," and stung to the quick by the firmness and contempt with which Mark Antony repelled all advances towards intimacy, he secretly vowed vengeance against both. Luckily, a Hebrew's resources procured him an unexpected supply. Some countrymen, returning from market, stopped to refresh themselves by the way. The Jew amused them with his tricks, and in return *thimble-rigged* as many sixpences from the farmers, as enabled him to obtain a lodging in the Coek and Punchbowl for the night.

When supper was removed, and Mrs. O'Leary had produced the necessary materials for finishing an evening comfortably, at the pressing invitation of her guest she sat down with the youthful travellers. From the first, Mark Antony had found favour in the widow's sight, and a more extended acquaintance confirmed the early impression. Towards the girl Mrs. O'Leary evinced a kindly feeling, and proposed that as the house was crowded, the wayfarer should share her bed—an offer, by Miss Julia Montague, gratefully accepted.

The buxom widow was a fair specimen of an Irish hostess ; and had her eyes not been as dark as a blackberry and her complexion a gipsy brown, the old alliteration, "fat, fair, and forty," would have described her to a hair. Her comely countenance was rich with archness and *espieglerie*—and in Jack Falstaff's vein a lover might have safely wooed her—"You are merry, so am I. Ha, ha—then there's more sympathy!"

"In vino veritas." Hang that musty proverb! What's wine to whisky punch? That is, indeed, the opener of the human heart. Love may be eschewed—but who is proof against *poteeine*? A hot tumbler would undo the caution of a Jesuit, and make a Trappist speak out like a man. Mrs. O'Leary felt the genial influence of *mountain dew* agreeably diluted ; and in the brief colloquy that ensued, there were but few circumstances connected with the Cock and Punchbowl which remained a secret to the fosterer and his wandering friend.

"Mr. O'Toole—there's an O before your name, I b'lieve—you're kindly welcome. Here's ye'r health—and bad luck to ye if I wish it. As I told ye, Mr. O'Leary—Lord rest his sowl!—was an ailin' man, and might have been my father. Well, after the cold Christmas he went like snow off a ditch. The Lord sees he had the best of trate-ment in his last days, wid a grand wake and a ginteel funeral. I'm a lone woman three years come Patrick mass—and och! I have had my trouble. A woman's helpless, Mr. O'Toole, and that ye know. Well—blessed be God! I'm well to do—owe nobody a rap—and my carakter's at the defiance of the parish. But och! I'm lonely after all; and a pushin' woman like me requires a man's assistance. Not that I'm over anxious to get married; but if a young man, discreat and well-behaved, would—"

Here a furious knocking of pewter pots upon the tables underneath interrupted Mrs. O'Leary's narration, and she made a hasty exit to attend those turbulent customers, with an intimation however that she would return anon, and make a clean breast touching her hymeneal intentions, should "a young man, discreat and well-behaved," present himself.

It was quite evident from the hilarious revelry in the kitchen, that the company below had no sin of omission, as far as drinking went, to answer for. Indeed it was pretty apparent that they were set in for a regular carouse. The sergeant and his comrades prudently uniting mirth with business, had favoured the countrymen with their company, in the double hope of enjoying a potation, scot-free—and if luck were on their side, crimping a clod-hopper into the bargain. The antiquated fifer, on his "ear-piercing" instrument had executed "the Groves of Blarney," with a variety of flourishes which elicited a thunder of applause. As to the commander, he was affability itself—spoke of his "feats of broil," and recounted the numerous "battles, sieges, fortunes," through which he had passed, with a vividness of description that made the very hair of the listeners stand on end. Nothing could be more glowing than the narrative, albeit, it was apocryphal entirely ; for during his peaceful life, he, worthy man, had never witnessed a musket snapped in anger. At the request of a

gentleman, whose solitary stripe announced him to be still on the lowest step of the ladder of preferment, the sergeant obliged the company with a rigmarole effusion which he was pleased to call a song; and it is only necessary to say, that the poetry and performance were worthy of each other.

THE SERGEANT'S SONG.

Now, brave boys, we're bound for marchin'
Both to Portingale and Spain;
Drums are batin', colours flyin'—
And the divil a-back we'll come again;
So, Love, farewell!

The colonel cries, "Boys are ye ready?"
"We're at your back, both firm and steady;
Our pouches fild with balls and powther,
And a clane firelock on each shouter."
Love, farewell!

The mother cries, "Boys, do not wrong me;
Ye wouldn't take my daughter from me?
If ye do, I will torment yees,
And after death my ghost will haunt yees."
Love, farewell!

Och, Judy, dear! ye'r young and tender—
When I'm away, ye'll not surrender;
But hould out like an ancient Roman,
And I'll make you an honest woman.
Love, farewell!

Och, Judy! should I die in glory,
In the papers ye'll read my awful story
But I'm so bother'd by your charms,
I'd rather far die in your arms.
Och! Love, farewell!

Great was the applause which the sergeant's melody drew down, and, what was probably even more satisfactory to the honest gentleman, a loud demand arose for a fresh supply of "the raw material;" and the carouse was vigorously resumed. Left to themselves, the young travellers had talked over their meeting on the mountain, and spoke of their journey to the neighbouring town next day where their road-companionship was to terminate. The intended parting was not mentioned with indifference, for the poor girl sighed heavily, her face became sad, and her eyes filled fast. In a faction fight, where skulls were cracked like walnuts, Mark Antony was every inch a hero—but his heart was true Milesian, and a woman's sorrow rendered it soft as a turnip. He took the wanderer's hand affectionately, kissed away the tear that trickled down her cheek, and endeavoured to dispel her melancholy.

"Cheer up," he said; "you have happier days before you, and youth enough to wait for them. How can I serve you, Julia? I know an empty pocket makes a heavy heart—but we'll share to the last shilling—" and quick as lightning a green silk purse that I had

given to the fosterer the night we parted, was transferred from his pocket to the wanderer's hand. "Come, Julia," he continued, "will I bring you home?"

The poor girl shook her head, and gratefully returned the purse.

"Take half, at least," exclaimed Mark Antony; "there's only five pounds in notes, and three guineas and a half in gold. May'be it may carry ye to your friends—and if it won't—I'll list, and that will make up the difference."

"Friends!" said the girl, bitterly; "I have no friends: I lost my mother when an infant; and the cruel desertion of my father broke the old soldier's heart. Alas! I feel that I am left alone upon the earth, without one being who would care for me."

"A sister, by Heaven!" cried the fosterer. "Am I not also a soldier's orphan?"

"Why, ye thundering villain!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Leary, who had stolen softly up stairs, and caught the Jew with his ear at the key-hole, "Off wid ye, ye blackavised disciple. Bad luck attend ye, night an' day, you ugly thief! Off, I say—" and, suiting the action to the word, she bestowed a heavy buffet upon the countenance of the Israelite that made him in no way desirous of abiding another visitation from the widow's fist. "Well, dears!" said the jolly hostess as she bustled into the room: "may'be ye were courtin' a bit, as young people will at times—and think of that black-muzzled ruffin lis'ning to every word ye sed! I wish he was clane out of the house, for he has the gallows in his face."

"I wish, indeed," observed the girl, "that he was gone—I dread that man."

"Arrah!" returned the burly widow, "don't vex ye'rself about him: ye'r safe wid me—the devil a toe he'll venture to put near my room. Ye'r tired, *avourneein*; and come away to ye'r-bed: and if you, Mr. O'Toole, will jist step down and take an air of the fire below, I'll make ye a shake-down here as the house is crowded to the thatch."

Mark Antony accordingly bade his companion a good night, and descended to the kitchen, where, by a sort of common consent, the whole of the guests had united themselves for a general jollification. The whisky now seemed "uppermost," and most of the party were as it is termed in Ireland "the worse of liquor;" but the hilarity was as yet undisturbed,

"And all went merry as a marriage bell."

The worthy sergeant who, like Bardolph, was "white-livered and red-faced," with Pistol's qualification of having "a killing tongue and quiet sword," was evidently the lion of the evening; and being a romancer of the first magnitude, no man was better suited to fascinate a company who took delight in listening to deeds of arms. He was graciously pleased to reply to the inquiry of a recruit, who had expressed a strong curiosity touching the personal appearance of Napoleon le grand. Having bolted a dose of alcohol presented to him by a countryman, and deposited the pewter measure on the table, the commander thus modestly continued:—

“An’ so ye would like to know what Boney’s like? Well, the divil a man ye would meet in a day’s walk could tell you that same thing better. He has a regular gunpowder complexion, a look that would frighten a horse, and whiskers you could hang your hat upon. Father Abraham’s in the corner there—and ’pon my conscience, honest man, ye would be the better of a barber—are but a joke to them.” And he pointed to the Jew.

“And where did you see him?” inquired a countryman.

“Where did I see him? Where—but in Agypt,” returned the commander. “Before I was pris’ner five minutes, he sends an aidicamp hot-foot—well, up I comes—for there was no use, you know, resistin’. At first he looked red-pepper at me: ‘Corp’lar Mulrooney,’ says he—and how the dickens he med my name out, I nivir could larn—‘Mulrooney,’ says he, ‘for once in ye’r life, tell truth, and shame the divil.—How many thousand strong are ye?’ ‘Twenty-five thousand,’ says I, strivin’ to daeave him. ‘Bad luck to the liars!’ says he. ‘Amen,’ says I, just givin’ the word back to him. ‘Arrah—come,’ says he, ‘don’t be makin’ a Judy Fitzsummon’s mother of ye’rself, but tell the truth, Mulrooney, and I’ll make a man of ye: an’ if ye don’t’—sw’aring an oath that I now disremember, because it was in Frinch—‘I’ll blow the contents of this pistol thro’ your seull,’ pulling out one with a barrel like a blunderbuss. Well, I was rather seared; but, thinks I, there’s nothin’ like being bould. ‘Fire away,’ says I, ‘an’ put ye’r information in ye’r pocket afterwards; for it’s all ye’ll get from me.’ Bonypart looked bothered: ‘Be gogstay,’ says he, to the aidicamp, ‘that’s eliver of the corp’lar. Let him off,’ says he; ‘an’ if there’s a drain of spirits in the bottle, give it to him, the crature, for the day’s hot.’ Wid that, he pulls out a thirty-shillin’ note. ‘Divil blister the rap I have more, or ye should have it,’ says he, shakes me dacently by the han’, and sends me elane back. ‘Pon me soul! Boney’s not a bad man, after all.”

The sergeant’s interview with Napoleon had been listened to with great attention; and at the production of the pistol of blunderbuss calibre, the recruits actually turned pale. The Israelite alone exhibited symptoms of incredulity, but what could be expected from an unbeliever? As to Mark Antony, he laughed outright;—however, that was an effect which some of the bloodiest exploits of the gallant sergeant frequently produced upon his auditory, and accordingly, he, “good easy man,” passed it by unnoticed. The symposium promised to terminate in harmony and peace, alas! how delusory that promise proved!

CHAPTER X.

FRIENDS MUST PART

“*Hostess.*—Here’s a goodly tumult!—I’ll forswear keeping house, afore I’ll be in these tiritts and frights. So; murder, I warrant now—”
SHAKSPEARE.

“There’s a cry and a shout,
And a deuce of a rout,
And nobody seems to know what it ’s about.”
THOMAS INGOLDSBY.

To judge from external appearances, King George the Third, of blessed memory, never laid out money to less advantage, than when he induced private Ulic Flynn of the gallant twenty-seventh, ycleped the Enniskilleners, to undertake the defence of “his crown and dignity” for the modest consideration of twelve pounds bounty, and thirteence-halfpenny a day. Although the standard then was low, how the devil Mr. Flynn contrived to touch it, remained a mystery. Ulic was barely five feet one, his singular proportions had driven three sergeants to desperation, to “set him up” was declared to be an impossibility; he was moreover, too dirty for a pioneer, and to what military uses he might return, none could even guess.

But it was only for a season that his candle remained under a bushel. Certes, honest Ulic, *in propria persona*, was no hero; to bloodshed generally he had an invincible antipathy; and had “the imminent deadly breach” remained unmounted until Mr. Flynn made the essay, it would have been safe for ever. To a higher order of things his talents appertained; his crimping was magnificent, and the wariest bog-trotter who ever dispensed with shoes, had reason to look sharp if he foregathered with Ulic Flynn over a noggin of whisky, and was not made “food for powder” afterwards. While the sergeant was narrating his interview with Napoleon, Ulic continued in deep conference with the most intoxicated of the countrymen, and had the unhappy bumpkin known the truth, in the course of his life he had never been in such dangerous company before. On one flank, Mr. Flynn waited an opportunity to enlist him, and on the other, Mr. Montague, of comic celebrity, was experimentalizing on his side-pocket. Both were clever in their line, but, as the result proved, of the twain the Jew was the abler *artiste*.

More than one hint had been already given that the pleasantest company must part; and, as a speedy movement was at hand, Mr. Flynn redoubled his exertions to add to the defenders of the realm, and do the state some service.

“What a life we lead!” he whispered in the countryman’s ear: “Nothing to do from one end of the year to the other, but eat, drink,

sleep, and clean a musket!—lots of liberty!—go where you like, and—”

“Get crammed into the black-hole on your return, and be kept at pack-drill with a log upon your leg for a fortnight,” responded the Israelite with a grin.

Mr. Flyn directed a murderous side-look at the unbeliever, who appeared determined to render useless all his honourable efforts to uphold the glory of the land; but still the short gentleman continued to draw a pleasing and veracious picture of military life.

“Our colonel’s such a trump—a gentleman every inch. He dances with the sergeants’ wives, calls every man by his right name—Tom, Bill, or Jerry,—and his purse is always in his fingers. ‘Ulic,’ says he to me, as I passed him in the barrack yard last Friday, ‘go, drink my health, ye divil, and if you get glorious, why tell the adjutant that I bid ye do so,’ and with that he tosses me half-a-crown.”

“Lord! what a wopper!” ejaculated the Jew. “Why he’s the very terror of the regiment,—orders a man ‘a hundred’ for sneezing on parade, and flogs regularly twice a week to give the drummers exercise. Take my advice, young man; be off at once, or that ’ere chap will do ye brown.” So saying, he closed his left eye, rose, and returned to the fire, under the pretence of lighting his pipe; for having succeeded in drawing out the countryman’s money-bag while he gave him good advice, the Jew was anxious to move from the immediate vicinity of the prigged pocket, before the abstraction of its contents should be discovered. The fifer immediately took the vacant seat, Mr. Flyn became more eloquent than ever, but the unbeliever had done the mischief effectually—the bird was scared; and after announcing that he was “a widow’s son,” the bumpkin stoutly declared that “he would be shot at for nobody.”

The case seemed hopeless; but Mr. Flyn was not the person to despair. With affectionate ardour he seized the peasant’s hand, swore that from first sight he had loved him like a brother, and consequently that they must have a parting glass. He discovered, unfortunately, that he had no silver; but the sergeant had enough for all, and he would trouble him to ask him, the sergeant, for a shilling. The request was made and granted; the polite commander instantly produced the current coin, Ulic Flyn called for another pint, the fifer, underneath the table, slyly attached his own cockade to the dexter side of the *caubeine* of the “widow’s son,” while the lance corporal tapped him playfully on the shoulder, and hailed him for life a camarado.

Dark suspicions flashed across the peasant’s mind. What meant this wondrous civility? His eye caught that of the Jew—he remembered the admonition of the Israelite—and was he “done brown” already? Up he sprang, desired his companions to come away, and would have bade the company “a fair good-night,” had not a gentle detainer been laid on.

“Sit down, my boy,” exclaimed the commander. “Drink like a soldier to-night—and in the morning ye’ll have time enough to take lave of y’er relashins.”

“Take lave of my relashins!” returned the countryman, as he made

a desperate effort to reach the door—an intention on his part which was promptly prevented; for on one side he was pinioned by the fifer, on the other collared by Mr. Flynn, while the commander talked something about the articles of war, and hinted that mutiny was punishable with death. The countrymen seized the intended hero by one arm, the crimps held on as doggedly by the other; and as both parties pulled stoutly, it might have been supposed that they intended to partition the victim between them. Pushes were succeeded by blows,—the *mêlée* became general.—Mark Antony joined the soldiers, the Jew sided with the countrymen, four or five couples were actively engaged in the centre of the floor—and divers on both sides, who, either from want of room or inclination had abstained from a personal display, carried on a sort of guerilla warfare, and, acting *en tirailleur*, kept up a lively discharge of turfs and pewter measures, apparently with perfect indifference as to whether the sculls their missiles might invade should prove Tyrian or Trojan. While delivering a murderous blow at his opponent, a recruit, with a sweep of his cudgel, brought down a shelf on which sundry specimens of the fine arts had been deposited; and, in the very act of deprecating hostilities, the commander received an erratic visit from a three-legged stool, which destroyed his perpendicular and sent him flying through a cupboard. The boy, small as he was, did not escape—he was driven through his own drum-head; and that stirring instrument of war was silenced most effectually.

But battles have their limit—men cannot fight for ever,

“The hottest steed will soonest cool;—
The fiercest day with evening closes.”—

Irish rows end as quickly as they commence, and the *rookawn* in the Cock and Punch-bowl at last began to languish. Sundry who had already figured in the fray, now cried “hold! enough!”—and others who had saluted their mother earth still remained there recumbent, opining that under existing circumstances, this position was the safer. Two combatants however, still remained unsatisfied. They had sought each other in the conflict; and now, by a sort of general consent, the floor was abandoned by all the other belligerents, and like bulls in a china shop, the fosterer and the Israelite were left with the arena to themselves.

Both were influenced by a deep feeling of personal hostility. The Jew hated (as Jews only know how to hate) because he had been rivalled and rejected. The fosterer, more than half in love, abhorred the Israelite for imagining aught that was injurious against the *cantatrice* who had elected him her knight; and further, from a pre-knowledge of Mr. Montague’s pugilistic accomplishments, Mark Antony was dying for an opportunity to ascertain whether his own talents in that line had not been rather overrated, forgetting that in his own country no man is accounted above his value—he they pugilists or prophets.

But the men were matched unequally; and consequently, the conflict was soon ended. In years the Jew was stale, and in heart a very coward—while with length and activity, the fosterer was fresh as a four-year-old and bold as a tiger. The “master of fence” proved not worth

“a dish of stewed prunes;”—he turned out nothing but a cur, and the desperate onslaught of the fosterer at once demolished his defensive system. The *finale* was sudden: in a few seconds the unbeliever lay stretched upon the floor of the Cock and Punch-bowl, and, to all appearance, defunct as Julius Cæsar. Heaven help him! The chances against the circumcised sinner were desperate all through.

Mrs. O’Leary was making a radical change in her toilet when she heard the alarm, and before she was ready for battle, the battle was over. Down she sallied like a Bacchante. Alas! it was only to see a defeated Israelite on the floor, and witness a demolition of property, the value of which was, like pearls, above price.

“Oh, heavenly Antony!” she exclaimed, and clapped her hands wildly together, “if ivir I underwint such ruination since I was a girl. A man kilt in the house, and the image of my brother Dick that came from Philadelpy, all in smithereens!” and she picked up fragments of plaster of Paris which once had formed “a busto framed with every grace.” “There’s the Queen of Sheba on the broad of her back upon the floor, and the divil a morsel of the Prodigal Son left, good nor bad.” She cast her eyes doubtfully around her, “Holy Bridget!” she continued, “why the door of the clock-case is in two halves! Murder! murder!—was ivir a lone woman brought to sich desalashin, and all done while ye could say Jack Robison! Arrah! what set ye a fightin’, wid plenty of liquor, and ye singin’ like blackbirds when I left yc. May the widda’s curse fall on them, night and day, that caused the skrimmage!” Then turning to the fosterer, she inquired if he had been wounded in the affray, and with a marked anxiety Mrs. O’Leary investigated the outer man of Mark Antony. Perceiving, however, that he was personally undamaged, she continued her inquiries as to the origin of what she called *the ruckshin*, intending no doubt to amerce the offender heavily for the losses she had sustained. Manifest were the causes alleged; but all, and by common consent, laid the blame on Mr. Montague. He was a Jew, therefore no allegation against him could be too bad. He was dead, and consequently he could deny nothing. Accordingly, the downfall of the Queen of Sheba, the demolition of my brother Dick, and the destruction of the Prodigal Son, all and every were placed to the account of the defunct, and carried in the affirmative, *nemine contradicente*.

But Mr. Montague was not dead. Like greater men, finding that the current of popular opinion had turned against him, he decided that nothing professional could be effected by a longer sojourn at the Cock and Punch-bowl, and that the sooner he abdicated the better. Accordingly while a noisy reconciliation was being effected, Mr. Montague “cut his lucky,” the belligerents returned to the table,—in a deep “doch a durris” all animosity was extinguished, and the whole separated as a christian company should part, having in due course, and after the fashion of that pleasant country, drank, fought, committed murder, and sworn an eternal friendship afterwards.

Morning came, and the hostlerie of Mrs. O’Leary at cock-crow was in a bustle. The fosterer and his fair companion preparing for the road, and the sergeant, with his charge of foot, girding up their loins

to proceed to Cahirmore. All however seemed in melancholy mood ; some laying it upon love, while others left it upon liquor. Mark Antony was regularly bothered ; and the actress, poor girl, sadly cast down at the immediate prospect of parting from one, who had proved himself a kind and generous protector. Nor had the jolly hostess escaped a visitation of the heart. What, though for three years she had eschewed all overtures to revisit the temple of Hymen, and rejected more suitors than Penelope, still the widow was flesh and blood like other people ; and satisfied that in the person of Mark Antony O'Toole the cardinal virtues were united, she was ready for matrimony on demand, and prepared on the first summons to surrender the Cock and Punch-bowl—of course on honourable terms.

All these visitations were of the sentimental order ; but those sustained by the men of war were unhappily corporeal. It is true that the sergeant had a thick skull, but what chances have skulls with cupboards ? and in the recent collision the skull of the commander was damaged grievously ; the fifer's mouth was totally destroyed by a flush hit ; each of the recruits had been favoured with a black eye ; and, even to the diminutive drummer, none passed the ordeal unscathed.

Somebody, — I think Shenstone, — after insinuating that he had travelled "earth's dull round," declares that "the warmest welcome's in an inn." Well, that may be the case ; but the wayfarer cunningly passes over that brief but painful moment when the bell is gently touched, and a bill reluctantly requested with all the indifference a man in such circumstances can assume. That unlucky period had arrived. The sergeant inquired "what was to pay?" and the hostess responded, by producing a huge slate, and pointing to a long array of figures scored to the debit of the commander. At the sight of this, the countenance of the worthy man underwent a striking elongation ; and he who beneath the withering glance of the conqueror of Lodi had not blanched, became pale as a ghost while he gazed on the hieroglyphics of the lady of the Cock and Punch-bowl. The commander shook his head, and the shake was significant ; while the fifer stoutly affirmed that the whole of the nocturnal symposium had been charged against the protectors of the realm.

"Arrah, what balderdash !" exclaimed the hostess ; "don't ye see four and eightpence agin the Carneys, wid a cross upon it, because it's ped ? Mr. O'Toole goes free ; and there's fairly against ye all, two and fourpence for ating, and eleven and ninepence for the drink."

But the charge of foot, even from the drum-boy to the commander, persisted in protestations of ineredulity ; and Mrs. O'Leary, irritated that the accuracy of her reckoning should be doubted, gave indications of a "flare-up" which might have brought about another general engagement.

"Bad luck attend yes for a set of thieves ! Wasn't it enough for ye to tatter my consarn, without bilkin me of my bill ?"

In Ireland, questions are answered by interrogatories ; and if you ask the way to a place, the reply will probably be an inquiry as to whether you "met a donkey on the road, or noticed a blind woman with twins upon her back ?"

“Who tattered y’er consarn?” responded the sergeant.

“Who knocked the fire out of my eye wid a clod of turf as hard as a paving stone?” inquired a recruit.

“Who druv me thro’ the drum-head?” screamed the boy.

“Who split my lip?” demanded the fifer.

“Don’t be hothering me about y’er drums and y’er misfortins!” replied the hostess, cold to the losses thus sustained in person and property by her unhappy visitors; “but for once in y’er lives, be honest, and down wid the reckoning.”

The sergeant saw that it was idle to remonstrate, and he produced a one-pound note, called for a pint of whisky, received it and the change, bolted his “morning”—an example duly followed by all, even to the drummer; and, accompanied by his gallant following, wended his way in sadness and silence towards the Pattern of Cahirmore. For once, military pomp and pride were dispensed with,—the fife was mute, the drum beat no point of war, and the commander and his charge of foot stole off as modestly from the hostelrie, as if instead of being engaged over-night in pointing out the path of glory to the Carneys, they had picked pockets like the Jew, or robbed the widow’s hen-roost.

The parting between the men of war and the lady of the Cock and Punch-bowl was not accompanied with any ebullition of “sweet sorrow” upon either side, the commander hinting that it was his intention to transfer his patronage to the Cat and Bagpipes for the future; and the hostess declaring, that “the loss was small, and were he better they were welcome to him.” But a tenderer trial was at hand; and when Mark Antony and the fair cantatrice announced that they were about to take the road, the widow’s grief burst forth.

“Arrah, stay!” she said. “Rest yourselves for a day or two longer. Well, ye won’t. Put up y’er purse, *astore*. Is it for me to charge craters of y’er sort for a trifle of entertainment? Sorrow rap I’d take if ye stay’d here a twelvemonth. The world’s wide; and many a straggler finds it hard to get across it. Well, jewel! if you stick fast, as many a man has done before ye, turn back to the widow’s home, and here’s y’er *ceade fealteagh** waiting for ye. When ye want it, ye’ll find something in the basket,” and she placed a small one in the fosterer’s hand. “And now, as y’er for goin, may the Lord protect ye both!” Mrs. O’Leary wiped a tear away with the corner of her apron, kissed the pale girl affectionately, while the smack she gave Mark Antony might have been heard distinctly across the road. Next moment the wayfarers were over the hospitable threshold, and “the world was all before them where to choose.”

The sky was clear, the country had become picturesque, the birds sang merrily, the road was sprinkled by an early shower, and on a pleasanter morning a light-bosomed traveller never wended on his way. Alas!—

“The merry heart goes all the day,
But the sad one tires in a mile a;”

* *Anglicè—a warm welcome.*

and before half the journey was completed, the girl showed symptoms of fatigue.

"You are weary, Julia," said the fosterer; "sit down, *avourneecin*. In yonder corner there is a shady bank, and a stream too; ay, and with water blue and sparkling as your own soft eyes. Come, dearest."

The pale girl looked steadily and suspiciously at her companion; but one glance dispelled her fears. The face she scrutinized was honest; and without hesitation, she quitted the high road, and seated herself on a fallen tree in the sheltered glade to which Mark Antony had pointed. Well,—she might do so safely. In grain, the fosterer was a gentleman; and, for a queen's ransom, he would not have abused confidence placed in his honour, or have imagined aught that was evil against a woman whose helplessness called upon him for protection. He flung himself at her feet upon the sward, and opening the widow's basket, produced a chicken, some oaten cakes, and a *cruiskeeine* of native whisky. The fowl was speedily dismembered; the contents of the flask diluted with the clear cold water of the rivulet; and, with kindly warmth, her companion urged the wanderer to refresh herself. But, poor girl! her heart was full. She gently put aside the food presented to her; tears fell fast, and hiding her face between her hands, she seemed to give way to some secret sorrow, too deep, too poignant for concealment.

The fosterer, but in vain, endeavoured to cheer her sinking spirits. The *cruiskeeine* was laid down untasted; and while with youth's ardent eloquence, Mark Antony pointed to happiness in the distance, the deep sobs of his companion told that from her bosom that hope which cheers the darkest hour of life, was long departed.

"Come, come, Julia," he said, pressing her hand in his, "why *will* you be so down-hearted?"

The poor girl raised her eyes. She did not reply; but her look betrayed the agony of the heart, and its sad and silent expression had "the calmness of settled despair."

"And have you been very—very unfortunate, Julia?" pursued the fosterer.

The wanderer mournfully shook her head.

"And left home, and friends, and—"

"Father!" exclaimed the girl, wildly, with a maniac's suddenness.

"Were you decoyed away by a villain?"

"He who wrecked my peace is in the grave. May Heaven pardon him as sincerely as I wish it!"

Probably under the promise of marriage? said the fosterer, with the hesitation that a man feels who asks a question which possibly may cause pain or give offence.

"*The promise!*" exclaimed the girl, while her pale cheeks flushed, and her eye lightened as if repelling a derogatory insinuation. "No, no; it was indeed a sad reality, although the act was villanous;" and putting her hand into her bosom, she drew forth a wedding-ring, secured by a black ribbon. "There is the token that I was a lawful wife; and there, also, a memorial that I was a —" She paused.

"What?" exclaimed the fosterer.

“A worthless daughter. *Worthless!* worse far;—a parricide! Yes, yes; I murdered him. My misconduct broke his heart. My ingratitude quenched his broken spirit. I did not drug him to death; but I poisoned his happiness, and sent him to the grave. Am I not, then, a murderess?”

She flung herself wildly upon the fallen tree, and sobbed convulsively.

“Be calm;” said Mark Antony, pressing her hand; “I have given you pain; but Heaven knows I would not, if—”

“No, no,” exclaimed the girl, “you meant no harm; but where guilt abides, the conscience takes alarm. For a sad, sad, twelvemonth your’s is the only heart that has warmed to me; your’s the only ear to which I would confide my story. Hear me; and then say whether the crime or the retribution has been the greater. I am calm; but it seems to me a melancholy pleasure to disclose to a being who will sympathize, how much I have sinned, and how much I have suffered.”

She rose,—walked a few paces to a rock from which the mountain streamlet dropped into a basin which itself had formed; and having bathed her aching temples in the water, returned, and, to a most attentive listener, she thus detailed her history.

CHAPTER XI.

THE STORY OF THE WANDERING ACTRESS

“What will not woman, when she loves?—
 Yet lost, alas! who can restore her?
 She lifts the latch—the wicket moves—
 And now the world is all before her.”

ROGERS.

I was born in a village on the coast of Sussex. My father, after five-and-twenty years’ service, had retired from the army on a pension, with a small sum of money he had saved while acting in the West Indies as a quarter-master; and settling in his native village, he married the orphan daughter of a clergyman. The union was happy; and the evening of an adventurous life promised to wear quietly away. But, like all mortal expectations, my father’s dream of happiness proved unreal, for my mother died in giving birth to me, leaving another child behind her, a boy, two years older than myself. My parents were warmly attached to each other, and the old soldier felt his bereavement acutely; but he bore up against his visitation like a man, and endeavoured by a devoted attachment to the living, to show how fondly he regarded the memory of the dead.

Indeed, it was little wonder that in my brother and myself, the widower should centre his affections. No relative of my mother was

alive; and the only kinsman of my father was a half-brother, a dozen years older than himself; a man in every way unamiable.

Josiah Rawlings was the village lawyer; a being without a heart, or such a heart as is untouched by the widow's agony, unmoved by the orphan's tears. He was mean, sordid, and vindictive; had realized much wealth; but on that ill-acquired money, the bitter curses of many a ruined family were entailed.

Josiah's appearance was very remarkable. As far as respected height, he was tall enough for a grenadier, and in his fleshy proportions, light enough for a jockey. His hollow cheek and small grey eyes were in good keeping with his gaunt and bony figure; and at a look the stranger would set him down a knave, a miser, or a union of both.

Never were two persons more opposite in disposition than the brothers. The lawyer listened without emotion to a tale of sorrow—human suffering was a matter of indifference to him; while the soldier's heart was as open as his honest countenance, and his purse answered the appeal of poverty to the fullest extent of his means. Unrelieved, no beggar left his door; and when a comrade came that way, then indeed the fatted calf was killed,—for with him my father would have shared his last flask, ay, and his last shilling.

Years passed away. My sixteenth summer came. My father still remained a widower; and no home from which its chief comfort had been taken, could be happier than our cottage was. Time had softened the sorrow which my mother's death had caused; and while the old soldier often alluded to his loss, he blessed Heaven that my brother and myself had been spared to be the stay and comfort of life's winter. Alas! he little dreamed that by both he would be deserted; and under circumstances which would render his bereavement additionally distressing.

It was late in October. The few visitors who, during the bathing season, made the village a temporary abode, had taken their departure. The hamlet was left to its retirement—and our quiet course of life was unvaried, except by incidents of the humblest character. The soldier's kind and charitable disposition had long endeared him to the neighbourhood; and where he went, the prayer of the poor man followed. With the lawyer, avarice and years kept pace—"none cried, God bless him;" for on a simple community a more detested individual never was inflicted, than my evil relative, Josiah Rawlings.

I grew apace; men called me handsome—and young as I was, more than one suitor had told his tale of humble love. But my heart had never yet been touched; my breast was free from care; and with me, as yet, sorrow was only known by name.

My brother had just completed his eighteenth year; and a finer lad was never the pride and envy of a village. He was tall, handsome, and athletic. Among the prettiest girls, William was the object of rustic rivalry; and in every manly exercise, the men admitted him to be their superior. And then he was so good-natured and so fearless!—at one moment fondling some playful infant in his arms; at another, when the elements were in their wildest uproar, and the sea broke in

thunder on the beach, he would be seen launching the life-boat through a boiling surf, to save some drowning mariner, although to all but the daring spirits who accompanied him, the effort seemed to be equally perilous and unavailing.

Few days passed over without some acquaintance calling at the cottage; and all were welcome but one—our uncle. The lawyer's visits were unfrequent. He never came excepting when he was the bearer of some evil news, or the retailer of some country scandal. If an honest villager was struck with poverty, Josiah Rawlings narrated the misfortune, and always imputed what had occurred to some misconduct of the sufferer. If calumny breathed upon a woman's fame, the lawyer painted her offending in its blackest colours, and perverted facts to give the rumour confirmation. Whenever Josiah entered, the peace and quiet of our happy home were broken. On no one point could my father and my uncle agree. While they were together, the time was passed in captious argument; and their parting was frequently in anger.

One autumn evening the noise of a passing vehicle brought me to the window, and I saw a carriage pull up at the Rose and Crown. My uncle had been about to inflict one of his unwelcome visits on his brother; but he stopped in the street, peering after the post-chaise, until he saw the passenger alight and enter the inn. The commonest occurrences never failed to excite his curiosity; and in a village where a stranger was rarely seen, the arrival of one who travelled post, was indeed an event that caused a general sensation.

"I wonder who that chap is who put up at Jobson's. All I could make out was that he was wrapped up in a blue cloak, and wore a cap with a gold band and tassel. I wish I knew his name, and what his business is;" and the lawyer having settled himself upon a chair, took hold of the Geneva bottle, and proceeded to compound his punch. "You heard," he continued, "that the Hotham bank failed yesterday? Smith, the grocer, round the corner, had a hundred in their notes. He's ruined!—serve him right. What business had he to take them?"

"May Heaven comfort him, poor fellow!" ejaculated the quartermaster. "More is the pity that misfortune should light upon an honest and industrious man, with a young family to support, and his wife dying of consumption. From the bottom of my heart I pity him."

"That's a nice business of Patty Meadows's, too. I always foretold what would happen."

"It's a villanous fabrication!" exclaimed my father, passionately; "I don't believe a syllable of the story."

"All true," returned the lawyer, "all true. Last Saturday evening, George Gripe, my clerk, heard the squire's voice as he passed the garden; so he clapped his ear close to the fence, and—"

"I wish to Heaven it had been nailed against the paling," said the soldier; "the sneaking eaves-dropping scoundrel! Were I to catch him skulking about my house, I would break every rib in his carcase."

"Ay, and render yourself liable to an action. Gripp would get sweeping damages."

"Curse your damages!" returned the quarter-master. "Every body wonders that you employ a ruffian who swears black or white as bidden, and swallows oaths as he would bolt poached eggs."

"I keep him," said the lawyer, coolly, "because he's useful. What capital stuff that Hollands is? Docs Bill run it?"

"Run it! What—smuggle?"

"Ay, to be sure," returned my worthy uncle. "I hear he's the boldest boatman on the coast; and they tell me that he saved the ship-wrecked Dutchman, when all had given him up as lost."

"It is one thing," replied the soldier, proudly, "to rescue a drowning man;—to rob the revenue, another. My son is no smuggler, Josh; nor ever will be one."

"More fool he, then; there's money to be made that way, and nothing to be got by the other, but bruised bones and a drenched jacket."

"Nothing gotten!" exclaimed the honest quarter-master. "Is the grateful outbreking of the heart of her to whom my boy's gallantry has restored a husband—or the prayer of lisping childhood for him who saved a father,—are these nothing? What is money acquired by dishonesty, to these?"

The lawyer grinned sarcastically. "Tears and gratitude!" he repeated. "Will tears and gratitude pay rent?—will tears and gratitude pay taxes? You're a fool, Dick. I would rather have a five-pound note than the united prayers of the parish."

"I believe you," replied the soldier.

"And so you may," returned the miser. "But for your own folly you might have made a fortune, and be now as wealthy as myself."

"Heaven forbid I were, Josh! if by the same means."

"And wherefore?" inquired the lawyer, with a bitter smile.

"Why," said the soldier, coolly, "just because when Death tapped at the door, I should feel rather uncomfortable at the visit."

"Don't talk of Death; I hate to hear him mentioned."

"And I speak only of an old acquaintance. Like friends, we have often looked each other in the face. He passed me by; and when he calls in form—"

"Pshaw!" said the lawyer, "have done; I hate prosing over an unpleasant subject. What has your daring done for you? For one guinea you can show, I can count down a score."

"Yes," said the quarter-master, proudly, "mine are few in number, but they are worth yours, twice told."

"I should like to hear the reason," said my uncle.

"'Tis simple," returned my father. "On every coin I'm owner of, I can look full-front and say, 'Have I not earned you honestly?' But yours, Josh; if widows' sighs and orphans' tears alloyed the metal, d—n me,"—the quarter-master swore as they formerly swore in Flanders,—"nineteen out of every twenty you possess would be declared regular raps, and nailed to the counter."

"Pish!" said the lawyer, testily. "You have lived a fool, and will die a fool."

"I have lived," said the quarter-master, calmly, "an honest man; and I'll die a stout one, too. When the order comes, it shall be wil-

lingly obeyed. Mine, Josh, shall not be a felon's hardihood, but the humble dependency of one who believes that mercy is great, and faults will be forgiven. Now, Josh, were old bare-bones at your elbow"—

"Confound such nonsense!" cried the lawyer, pushing his unfinished glass away, and catching up his hat hastily. As he crossed the threshold, his murmurings were any thing but prayers; and when the door closed, peace seemed to return again, and all of us felt that "something wicked" had departed.

Next morning, my father went out according to his custom, and he was absent longer than usual. When he returned, it was announced that he had formed an acquaintance with the stranger, whose advent had not only roused my uncle's curiosity, but created a general sensation throughout the hamlet. My father informed us, that his young friend was a lieutenant in a light dragoon regiment; his name, Seymour; his connexions, noble; and, more important still, that he, the quarter-master, had asked him to dinner, and that the invitation was freely accepted.

At the appointed hour the stranger came. His appearance was very prepossessing,—his manners those of a man who had moved in good society;—and there was, besides, an easiness in his address that dispelled my timidity, and placed us on terms of intimacy at once. That evening, the foundation of an ill-omened attachment was laid. Seymour had established himself in the good opinions of my father and myself; and no one was better able to turn a favourable impression to advantage.

Breakfast had scarcely ended on the morrow, when my uncle dropped in. He was dying to be informed of every particular we had learned concerning the stranger; and, unluckily, our scanty stock of information was anything but satisfactory.

"Why, hang it!" said Josiah Rawlings, "have you given that chap dinner and drink, and made out nothing in return for the outlay, but that he calls himself Seymour, and says that he's a dragoon? I don't believe either story."

"You don't?"

"Not one syllable," said the lawyer.

"And why?" returned my father.

"Because," responded Josiah, "it's very easy to tell a lie; and sometimes, also, very convenient."

"Pshaw! nonsense," said the quarter-master.

"And wherefore," pursued the lawyer, "do you believe the fellow's what he says he is?"

"First, because his language and manners are those of a gentleman; and secondly, because he has the air and carriage of a soldier."

"I could come nearer to the mark," returned Josiah, with a grin.

"Could you? Well, then, what do *you* suppose the stranger is?"

The lawyer looked suspiciously around him; and then, in a lowered voice, slowly replied, "A highwayman."

My father burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ay, you may laugh," observed Josiah, "but I am not far astray, for all that. Bless you! trust nothing to appearances. I have known

a footpad pass current for a lord; and, for two reasons, I know I'm right about that chap at the Rose and Crown."

"And what may these reasons be?" asked the quarter-master.

"First," replied the lawyer, "he has plenty of money; and second, he has no marks upon his linen. It's stolen, you may depend upon it, and the initials carefully picked out."

"And how the devil can you know any thing regarding either the contents of his purse or his baggage?"

"Ha, ha! leave me to scent out things. I made George Gripp bribe the chambermaid. It cost me two pints of ale and a shilling; but she let the cat out of the bag. They'll try his portmanteau to-morrow morning, when he goes to the Cliffs. George thinks he has a key at home that will fit the lock exactly."

My father sprang from his chair.

"Josh," he exclaimed, "I have always despised, but never hated you till now. Is there no blush upon your cheek? Look, man, mine is burning! By Heaven! I'll mar your villany. The stranger shall know all; and if that caitiff ventures—"

When the lawyer noticed the unusual warmth of my father, he grew pale. "Softly, softly," he said, "you are so weak, Dick. You overdose one with that silliness which you call honesty. I was but half jesting. Why should I bother myself about the fellow? But—look to that young lady there!" and with a malignant side-glance at my father and myself, he shuffled through the door-way, muttering and cursing, as was his wont.

Whatever the stranger's secret might have been, it remained at that time undiscovered. In person, he received his letters at the post-office; and as the patent lock with which his portmanteau was secured resisted all attempts to open it, at the end of a fortnight, the chambermaid might have been a sadder but not a wiser woman.

Another year came round; I ripened into womanhood, and early promises of beauty were confirmed. The stranger appeared again, but his coming now was not so startling in effect as formerly. For six months after his departure, Josiah Rawlings had carefully perused the "Hue and Cry," but found that no highwayman answered the description. Now, mercifully abandoning his charge of felony, the lawyer opined that the stranger had merely bolted from his creditors. He might have also passed the interval in jail; if so, a change of air would be both useful and agreeable. And thus, Josiah accounted as he thought satisfactorily for Seymour's re-appearance.

Our intimacy was renewed. The flattering praises bestowed upon me as a girl, were changed into declarations of passionate attachment; and I returned his love.

It was the eventful period of my life—my brother was absent, and the quarter-master occupied generally with friends at home, or in the arrangement of some village differences. Hence the intimacy of Seymour and myself was unrestricted; and in a short time he obtained over my young affections a complete ascendancy. And yet our course of love, even from the beginning, did not run smooth. Our relative positions in society were far removed: I, the

daughter of an humble soldier—he, the younger son of a family old as the Conquest, and high and haughty even beyond what their ancient lineage would warrant. Could it be expected by me that they would approve of their kinsman's choice, and receive a relative with neither birth nor fortune to recommend her, and whose sole possession was a blameless reputation and an honest name? Seymour himself, undesignedly, betrayed a similar uneasiness, hinting that it might be advisable to break the matter by degrees, and cautiously prepare his family for the disclosure. To effect this important object, a secret marriage would be necessary. His interests must be dear to me as to himself. It was a proof of my confidence in him that circumstances demanded,—and one, if given, that would bind him to me for ever.

“What will not woman when she loves?” Would not a village girl, influenced by a first passion, listen favourably to a suitor's pleading, and consult the heart rather than the judgment? For me Seymour had forsaken rank and wealth, and perilled the displeasure of his family; and should I not, in return, sacrifice largely where his interests were involved? Love's sophistry was unanswerable. I gave a timid consent,—we were united in another parish; and so well had arrangements been made to ensure concealment, that, with the exception of one chosen friend, to all besides our marriage remained a secret.

Of this occurrence my father had not the most remote suspicion; and William's absence from home gave us facilities for frequent meetings that could not otherwise have happened. For a fortnight, Seymour continued a nominal lodger at the Rose and Crown,—but most of his time was passed in my society. At my father's table he had a constant place, while the honest quarter-master little dreamed that in his high-born guest he might have claimed a son-in-law.

The hour of sorrow was at hand. Letters,—most unwelcome ones,—were received. My husband seemed heavily depressed; and when urged to tell the cause of his uneasiness, mentioned that he had been suddenly recalled to join his regiment, and apprised me that the term of his absence was dependent upon some military movements; and consequently, that his return must be uncertain. This unexpected separation caused me the first real sorrow I had yet endured; and, alas! harbingered too faithfully, the misery and misfortunes which followed in quick succession.

Upon the head of my ill-starred parent, it was fated that the phial of wrath should be poured; and, sadder still, the first blow that smote him, came from the hand of one who would have laid down life to avert an hour of suffering from a father he loved so tenderly.

My brother returned; the quarter-master had shaken him by the hand,—I, pressed him to my heart,—and our cottage once more looked what it had ever been—the abiding place of peace and joy. As evening closed, William strolled to his favourite haunt, the cliffs; my father pulled in his easy chair, lighted his pipe, and settled himself in humble luxury beside a well-trimmed fire.

I retired to my own room. Mine were indeed melancholy musings. I recalled to memory how brief the period of my wedded happiness

had been, and sighed to think that in the story of a human life, bliss and misery should be so intimately blended. But I was young, and "gay hope by fancy fed" whispered that there was happiness in store. I rallied my spirits,—wiped every trace of sorrow from my cheek,—and, in another hour, was seated opposite my dear father, and plying my needle as demurely as if I had never listened to a light dragoon, nor given my hand and heart irrevocably away, and sealed that imprudence by a secret ceremony.

A footstep approached the cottage,—the latch was lifted,—and the slender figure of the lawyer filled the door-way.

"You are not busy, Dick?" croaked my uncle Josiah.

"Only with my pipe," replied my father.

"Then I'll sit down a little, and take a drop of your Geneva."

I rose,—handed my uncle a chair,—Josiah took off his hat, and seated himself. The lawyer having mixed his grog, I resumed my needle-work. Since Seymour had left, never had my heart felt lighter than it did that evening; but from the moment my dreaded uncle announced himself, a weight seemed pressing on my bosom; for every time he spoke, like a serpent's breath, Josiah's words seemed to wither the happiness of all who heard them.

"I wonder," said he, "where that fellow you were so fond of went to?"

"What fellow?" replied the quarter-master, drily.

"Why, Seymour, as he called himself."

"I can make you happy on that head. Lieutenant Seymour has gone to—Give me another light, Julia. Pipes now-a-days, are not what they used to be."

"But, where did Seymour go to?"

"Go to?" and the quarter-master gave a puff. "His regiment, I suppose."

"Whatever news his last letters brought, egad!" said Josiah, "it regularly upset him. Mrs. Manby told me privately, that he turned pale when he read them; and he must have been confoundedly astounded, for he left the change out of half-a-crown upon the counter. I wonder what it will turn out to be? I think it will be debt; but George Gripp sticks to his first opinion, and says he's sure it will prove felony."

I could not calmly listen while such villanous imputations were thrown out against the man I loved, but rose and left the room, and, retiring to my own apartment, I communed with my own sad thoughts, and asked myself whether Seymour could be aught but what my fancy pictured him. One moment's reflection established him firmly in my estimation; and every insinuation to his disadvantage faded from my memory.

I opened the casement, and looked pensively on the little flower garden beneath the window. How often had I watched impatiently where I stood now, until the trysting hour arrived, and my husband came stealing through the shrubbery to whisper in my delighted ear assurances of endless love! Suddenly a noise among the bushes startled me; a figure approached and stopped below the window; it

was my brother. In a low voice he told me to be silent, and next moment sprang into the apartment.

I remarked that his manner was hurried, and his face flushed, as if from some violent exertion.

"What has happened, William? Speak; are you ill? Has there been an accident?"

"I fear, Julia," he replied, "that I have committed myself by intermeddling in another's quarrel. But who could look on while three men were assailing one?"

"You alarm me, William; go on."

"I was rambling homewards from the cliffs; I heard three or four shots in the direction of the landing-place; and suspecting that smugglers were at work, I hastened off in another direction, lest any suspicion might attach itself to me. My anxiety to avoid it, however, brought on an unfortunate collision. I heard a noise approaching; loud and angry voices, oaths, and blows, and the clashing of cutlasses succeeded—and hastening on, at a turning of the path I ascertained the cause. The fight was most unequal, for three persons were attacking a solitary man. I joined the weak side, stretched two of our opponents on the ground, the third ran off, and for the first time, I found that the man I rescued was Frauk Brown. He wrung my hand; muttered his hurried thanks; and then bounded like a deer across the heath, and vanished in the Miller's coppice."

I kissed my brother ardently. "Well, William, English blood is warm—and who could look on and not assist a brave man when assailed by numbers? Would, however, that it had been some other; Red Frank is such a desperado—a branded man—a felon."

"Ay, girl, but was he not the first to jump into the life-boat after me, when we saved the drowning Dutchman? I owed him, devil as he is, a good turn for his gallantry. For rescuing him I care nothing; but I fear that blood was spilled already upon the beach. The pistol shots, and the desperate haste with which Red Frank escaped, lead me to dread that some previous violence had occurred. Who is below, Julia?"

"My father, and my uncle."

"Hark! I hear hasty footsteps; slip down, Julia, and probably you may hear if any accident has happened. I would not alarm my father unnecessarily until we know whether the affray was serious."

I obeyed my brother's wishes, and returned to the parlour. We heard men without; they seemed excited, spoke fast, and hurried rapidly along the street. Presently a knock was heard; I opened the door,—it was Gripp, my uncle's clerk. He had come here to seek his master, and one glance at the evil agent of the lawyer, told that he was the bearer of heavy news.

"Well, George," said Josiah, eagerly, "what's wrong?" The lawyer never asked, "what's right?"

"Nothing pertikler," returned my uncle's satellite; "only one man is murdered, and half a dozen nearly killed."

"When—where—how?" asked my uncle.

"Why, down at the Tinker's Cove; a row between smugglers and

revenue men. Red Frank shot Nat Davis through the heart—and he was all but taken, when a comrade floored two officers, and Frank gave leg-bail to the other.”

“Ha! that makes the other fellow an accessory after the fact; he'll hang, that's certain. Is he known?”

George Gripp answered with a wink; the wink was an affirmative one.

“What's his name? Will he be able to fee counsel, and employ a solicitor?” inquired the lawyer.

Gripp winked affirmatively.

“His name?”

“One very like your own,” was the reply.

My father started—“Speak, fellow, who was the murderer's comrade?”

“Your son,” returned the bailiff, coldly.

“My son? William Rawlings? 'tis false, by Heaven!”

“You may depend upon it, Dick,” observed my precious uncle, “that George Gripp is well-informed.”

My father drooped his head—I sprang from my chair and folded him in my arms.

“'Tis false! my father—believe *me*, the charge is false.”

“I wish it were,” replied Josiah, in a tone that showed his incredulity.

“Gracious Heaven!” murmured the poor quarter-master; “and is the son I loved so dearly, branded as accomplice to a murderer? Did my William consort with desperate men, and engage in lawless enterprise? I won't—I can't believe it.”

“You may depend upon it,” returned the lawyer's clerk; “I have it from the best authority.”

My father turned wildly to my uncle—“Josh! speak, man! have heart, for once, and say if what that scoundrel says may be credited. You shake your head; well, if the misfortune has occurred, what will be its worst consequences? Can you tell? even—”

“Tell?” returned the lawyer; “ay, and with as much certainty, as if the foreman of the jury had delivered a verdict ‘for self and fellows.’”

“Out with the worst, man,” gasped my father.

“They'll be hanged, that's safe,” responded the lawyer, with a decision that forbid all argument.

“Hanged! my William hanged! Hanged as a felon, and share an outlaw's fate, with one familiarized to crime, and grown grey in iniquity—Impossible!”

“I did not say,” said Josiah coolly, “that their sentences would be the same. Ned Frank will probably be gibbeted for example—but Bill may—”

The quarter-master buried his head within his hands, and murmured, “My son! my son!”

“My father!” responded a voice, and my brother clasped the old man in his arms.

A moment passed in silence.

“Is this foul story true, William?” said the quarter-master, and in tones which seemed to dread an answer to the inquiry.

"False as hell!" was boldly responded, and again the son was locked more closely in his father's arms.

"The tale is short. Accident brought me to the cliffs; I witnessed an unequal conflict—one man was assailed by three—and I joined him."

"Right—by Heaven!" and for the first time my father lifted his head proudly.

"I took the weaker side, and as it would appear, I undesignedly have rescued a criminal."

"If you can support that statement by evidence, I'll undertake," said the lawyer, "to get you off with transportation."

"Off with the Devil!" roared my father.

My brother smiled. "Well, uncle, you hold out a pleasant prospect, and after I have travelled at the public expense, I shall feel myself bound in gratitude to come back, improved in morals and manners, and tell you what I have seen; but after all, there will be no necessity to undertake the voyage. When the true history of this unfortunate affray is known, it will not be difficult to prove that I am blameless, and that I was neither engaged in unlawful enterprises, nor knew aught of the fatal consequences that followed. For a time, however, I will leave home, not from any fears upon my own account, but to avoid the painful duty of being called upon to criminate the guilty."

To all, my brother's determination seemed right. My kind-hearted parent approved the motives, and gave a ready consent. The lawyer observed, that it would afford ample time, should it be found advisable, to buy off the evidence; while George Gripp proved the value of a friend in need, by volunteering to swear an alibi himself,—an offer which elicited a warm eulogium from his virtuous patron.

In half-an-hour William came to my room to say farewell. He had made up some necessaries in a bundle, which he threw from the window to a friend, who was waiting for him in the garden.

"Julia," he said, taking me in his arms, and kissing me with ardent affection; "Julia, I must confide to you what would pain our dear father, were it told to him—mine will not be a temporary absence. No tears, Julia; be firm, and listen to a brother who loves you tenderly as I do. The hand of destiny beckons me on; for months I have been wretched; while every post bears tidings of some glorious deed, I, in the pride of youth, am dreaming life away; my days passed idling on the beach, or listening at some cottage fire-side to the gossip of the humble villagers. This evening as I stood upon the cliffs, I saw a noble frigate close in shore, with her head turned to the coast of France. The wind fell, not a breath ruffled her canvas, and as she lay motionless on the sea, I could almost look down upon her decks. Presently a boat was lowered, and it pulled directly for the cove a league eastward from our landing-place, to obtain fresh water at the spring. Before that boat returns, I shall have time to board the frigate. Hold, Julia; nothing can shake that resolution, and, therefore, listen to me attentively. When I am gone, *you* must be to our father all—for then you will be his only stay, his only comfort. You must watch his declining years, cheer him when he droops, smile with him when he's happy—

in illness, your task will be to smooth his pillow; in death, your hand must close his eyes. Come, Julia, no weeping. If it be fated that I fall, except you and the old man, few will weep for me. If I return, it will be 'with war's red honours on my crest,' to gladden my father's age, and find some one to whom I can safely entrust thy happiness, dear Julia — one, who can estimate the value of a woman, whose thoughts are pure and cloudless as the light of yonder blessed moon."

My conscience smote me bitterly as William again pressed me to his breast; I felt the burning blush of shame steal over my pale cheeks, as my heart whispered how much I had deceived that brother, who believed me incapable of artifice or concealment; and though the confession of my offence must be humiliating, I determined that it should be made. From him I might not only ask for pardon, but advice; and the words were almost upon my lips, when suddenly a voice from below was heard in under tones.

"William!" said the stranger, "the signal's given. See, that rocket bursting in the air! the boat's returning to the frigate."

"Then, there's not a moment to be lost."

"Stop! my brother," I exclaimed; "stop, for pity's sake. Oh! I have much, very much to tell you."

He caught me warmly to his bosom; kissed me again and again; whispered in my ear: "Look to our father, Julia—and wed not till I return, or till you hear I am no more." He said, sprang lightly from the window, bounded across the garden hedge, and in another minute, the sounds of receding footsteps died away, and all was night and silence.

From the hour when William departed, sorrow and misfortune seemed to choose our cottage for an abiding place. Letters through a private hand came from Seymour; but, alas! they brought no consolation with them. The affected indifference of the style, and the inconsistency of the statements, gave sad evidence that the writer was diseased in mind; or body, or in both. The fatal affray which had unluckily compromised my brother's character for a time, and occasioned the necessity for his concealment, was supposed to be sufficient cause for my being desponding and depressed; and my poor father, ignorant of impending misery, and unconscious of the trials that awaited him, vainly endeavoured to dispel my melancholy, and remove all fears upon account of William. As he had foretold himself, his innocence was completely established; and those who were bitterly exasperated against the real offenders, bore honourable testimony to the motives that had induced my brother to commit himself; and while they regretted that through his intervention a criminal had escaped, they admitted that his conduct had been that of a man, who, under mistaken views, performs a brave and generous action. No offence was imputed to him now, and wherefore should he stay away longer? But, I knew too well that many a long month must elapse before the wanderer would return.

It was a part of my evening's occupation to read the newspaper to my father: and a fortnight after William's departure, I was

engaged in my customary duty. An event had occurred in London to which public attention seemed to have been painfully directed, and the paper contained a long statement, headed, "Farther particulars of the forgeries and suicide committed by Captain Smith." The details thus given, stated that the unfortunate individual was the illegitimate offspring of a noble lord, whose name was mentioned. That early in life he had obtained a commission in the army,—had moved in the best circles,—indulged in fashionable follies,—and dissipated large sums of money, with which, from time to time, his father had supplied him. The earl died suddenly, leaving his natural son totally unprovided for; and he was thus thrown upon the world, with incurable habits of expense, and not a guinea to support them. His fall was consequently rapid. He sold his commission, spent its small produce in a short time, dropped step by step from the high position he once held,—and in fast succession became a gambler, a cheat, a forger, and a suicide! His delinquencies were detected. The officers of justice were already at the door of a mean lodging in which he had concealed himself, when the criminal contrived to get out of a back window and effect a temporary escape. But it was only to add crime to crime. His clothes, next morning, were found upon the bank of the river near Wandsworth, and beside them lay an empty phial, which it was ascertained had contained a deadly poison; and it was conjectured that the unfortunate suicide had swallowed the contents before he took the fatal plunge. It was, indeed, a melancholy story of profligate life; for, it was added, that an imposing person and fascinating address had been turned to a bad account; and that many a family had reason to curse the day on which the accomplished *roué* had been introduced to their acquaintance.

I could not tell wherefore, but as I read this miserable narrative, my blood chilled, my lips grew white, and I could scarcely reach its close. And yet, why should it affect me? Was it not an every-day event? the regular advance of crime—beginning with improvidence, and ending in ignominy and death. But still the story of the suicide seemed to haunt my memory; and sleeping or waking, the unknown criminal constantly was present.

It was the third evening after. My father had accepted a neighbour's invitation; and I, preferring solitude to a scene of rustic festivity, for which a heavy heart was badly suited, was left alone at home. As usual, I was sitting in the window of my own chamber,—that window from which I had watched a lover's coming, and witnessed a brother's departure; and lost in painful reveries, allowed hours to slip unnoticed. The moon had gone down; the night was unusually dark; and the stillness was unbroken. I heard the dry leaves rustle; was it the wind that moved them? I looked suspiciously abroad; a human figure was standing underneath, and a voice so hoarse and hollow that I could not recognise its tones, softly pronounced my name. I flung the casement open, and demanded, "who was there?"

"I, Julia; your lover, your husband," and Seymour in another minute held me nearly fainting in his arms.

"And was my voice forgotten, Julia?" he murmured, half reproachfully. "Well, I cannot wonder at it, for I have been ill, and am hoarse as a raven. How cold the night is!"

"Cold! Why, Edward, your hand is burning. Stay, I will bring lights, and get you some refreshment."

"No, no," he answered, hastily; "no lights, love; some curious eye might observe them. But I am thirsty; I could drink, drink deeply. Bring me some wine, Julia; no supper, love—I cannot eat, I am weary, very weary."

And was this Seymour? that hollow voice the same, to whose soft pleadings I had yielded a young heart, and renounced the sacred allegiance which a father claims and merits? That fevered hand, too,—was it the ardent glow which warms the husband when he hastens to the home of her he loves? Why this strange fancy for darkness and concealment? The coming and the conduct of Seymour were equally mysterious, and I dreaded to ask my husband the cause of this ominous and unexpected return.

But I was not left long in suspense,—Seymour half drained the flask;—and habits so temperate before, appeared to have undergone a rapid change; for he drank like a man whose shattered nerves require some powerful stimulus.

"Julia," he said, "you did not expect this visit?"

"Indeed, I did not."

"Nor when I left you did I anticipate that my return would be so sudden. Circumstances, which for a time must remain unexplained, have rendered it imperative that I should claim you, and our marriage no longer shall be secret."

"Heaven be praised!" I murmured.

"To-night, Julia, you shall go with me."

"To-night! impossible! My father's proud. He never would consent that his daughter should steal from her home."

"Your father? He shall know nothing of it. No, Julia, we must leave the cottage privately; and, for a brief season, duty to the parent must give place to the stronger claims of wedded love."

"Am I dreaming? Seymour,—what would you have me do? Desert my father heartlessly, and leave the good old man without humbling myself at his feet, and begging the pardon I require,—the forgiveness he would grant? Fly from this once happy home!—'Twould break my father's heart.—I'll never do it."

"Then, Julia, we part for ever."

"Part for ever! Seymour. Do I hear aright? Is this, indeed, your voice? and do *you* tell her who proved her love at the expense of filial duty, that she must either fly from her home like a guilty woman, or be deserted by the man who led her into error?"

Seymour perceived the threat of parting had produced a different effect to what he had expected, and at once he changed his tone to that of entreaty and persuasion; and, with admirable tact, appealed to my feelings and my love. He pleaded that the separation from my father would be but brief. I should return united to one whose position in society was far above my own. My parent's anger would be short-

lived, and his sorrow would be turned into joy. Where a woman's heart is advocate, her mind is easily convinced. I yielded a reluctant consent; and before we parted, it was arranged that in two hours I should be ready to accompany him, and quit a happy home to follow the fortunes of an unknown lover. I packed some clothes, and addressed an exculpatory letter to my father, breaking to him as gently as I could, the sad tidings that his daughter had deserted him. Many a tear blistered the paper while I wrote. He was in bed—possibly sleeping. I stole softly down to place the billet on his table—but he heard the door unclose, and inquired “if that were Julia?”

“Yes, my father; I come to say, Good night.”

The old man kissed me tenderly; and with unusual solemnity muttered as I left the room, “Child of my heart; may God for ever bless thee!” They were the last words I ever heard him speak.

What followed may be briefly told. At the appointed hour Seymour was waiting, and unperceived, we quitted the village in a vehicle he had procured. We travelled all night; and when morning was breaking, my husband discharged the cart, and we entered an obscure inn to obtain the rest and refreshment which to both were wanting. The morning light, feeble at first, grew stronger; and I nearly fainted, when for the first time I remarked the altered appearance of my husband. His light brown hair, once so sedulously attended to, was clipped short, and the very colour changed to raven blackness, and his skin was bronzed like that of a gipsy. Formerly, he dressed with simple elegance; but now his clothes were actually shabby, and put on with the marked indifference of a man who is reckless of appearances. He had no luggage with him—the few articles he possessed were tied up in a little bundle.

I felt assured that some terrible reverse had overtaken him; and in this sad hour recollected the evil auguries of my uncle Josiah. But my situation was hopeless. The last rash action was far beyond recall; and mustering a desperate resolution, I determined to bow to my destiny, and share the fate of my ill-starred husband. One thing I believed, that the worst was known, and we had descended fortune's ladder to the lowest step. I was wrong: the extent of my debasement remained still to be disclosed.

We appeared to wander over the country without any settled object; and provided the route led from the metropolis, my husband seemed indifferent whither our footsteps turned.

A fortnight passed, and we still continued to pursue what appeared to me would prove a sad and endless pilgrimage. One evening, after a fatiguing walk, we found ourselves settled in a road-side ale-house. Both required some rest, and we looked forward to a comfortable night, for the house was clean, and our reception had been civil. Alas! we had already experienced how much an inn's civility depends upon the appearance of those who claim admittance! Our resources were reduced to a few pounds; and my soiled dress and Seymour's care-worn countenance proclaimed our poverty at once, and by more than one landlord we had been unceremoniously rejected.

While supper was being prepared, Seymour stretched himself upon

a bench beneath a spreading elm which stood before the door, and I remained at a window of the room to which we had been introduced on our arrival. A newspaper was lying on the table. I took it up, and for a few minutes glanced carelessly across its columns. Suddenly, my attention was fearfully awakened, my eyes were fascinated to one spot,—a scorching fire shot through my brain,—I read the fatal paragraph a second time,—fainted,—and dropped upon the floor.

When I recovered I found myself in bed; Seymour was beside me; I looked wildly at him for a moment, and then, as if something horrible had blasted my sight, I buried my head beneath the coverings; Seymour knelt beside the bed, implored me to be calm, swore he would conceal nothing, owned he was a scoundrel, a betrayer—his life was at my disposal—and the sooner it was forfeited the better. After I had been carried to my room he had searched the paper, and read there that fatal paragraph which had disclosed to me the secret of his crime. Merciful Heaven! Smith, the supposed suicide, and my husband, were the same!

It might have been supposed, that now fully conscious of his infamy, I would have deserted him at once and left Seymour to his fate. In seducing me into a private marriage, he had practised a cruel imposition; and in persuading me, under false assurances, to quit my father's house and share his felon fortunes, his conduct had been base and savage beyond all pardon. Yet, some secret yearning of my heart, whispered that he should not be abandoned; and though Smith, the branded criminal, was before me, I could not forget how ardently I had once loved the gay and fascinating Seymour. I had sacrificed myself to him at the altar; my vow of duty and obedience was recorded, and I desperately resolved to share his fate—wretched as that fate must be.

The remainder of my sad history is but a detail of sorrow and misfortune. I dare not dwell upon it—if I did, my brain would madden. Before six months elapsed after my evasion from the village, news reached England that the frigate into which William had entered a volunteer, in the ardour of pursuit, had become embayed upon the coast of France, and, attacked at fearful advantage, she had been fought with desperate valour to the last, and had gone down with England's unconquered banner flying at her mast-head, and with the greater portion of her gallant crew. In the return of the killed, my brother's name was found.

Need I tell you that his brave boy's loss—his daughter's base desertion—were more than the old man could bear? They broke my father's heart; and a few months since—(she paused, gasped as if something choked her utterance, and then in a hollow whisper, added)—he died! *Who was his murderer?*

I must end these sickening disclosures. For a year, my outcast husband and myself wandered over the country, under the assumed name of Montague. We joined a company of strollers, and in our erratic course of life we crossed the sea. No criminal, I sincerely believe, felt deeper contrition for his manifold offendings than my felon husband. The sting of remorse struck him to the heart; he pined

away ; and cold, and wet, and hunger, completed what mental suffering had begun. He fell into a rapid consumption—and it was quite evident to me that he was hurrying to the only haven of repose reserved for him—the grave.

He died ; but death to the outcast was a boon. Faithful to the last, I remained until his parting sigh escaped. These hands closed his eyes ; and I saw him interred as a pauper in the most neglected corner of an obscure churehyard. Had he no mourner ? Yes ; he had *one*. I forgot his crimes, and all the misery he had wrought me ; and the outcast's deserted grave was sprinkled with the tears of the woman he had betrayed.

The fosterer was deeply affected. He pressed the poor mourner's hand, and strove to cheer and comfort her.

“ Julia ! ” he said, “ What do you intend to do ? Where do you purpose going ? May I protect you ? ”

She raised her eyes, and gave him a look of gratitude, but shook her head.

“ Are you returning home, Julia ? ”

“ I am indeed about to seek a home,” she replied, with a long deep sigh. “ It must be sought beside my father's grave ; and that once found, I'll die there ! Hush ! footsteps are approaching ; and now to resume a weary journey, and—a last one ! ”

She rose, went to the little basin, and dipping her hands in the cooling water, bathed her burning temples, and washed away the traces of her tears. Marc Antony in silence lifted the bundle, and the youthful travellers once more gained the high road, when two persons wayfaring like themselves, approached them.

CHAPTER XII.

A GENERAL DISCOVERY.

"I was ta'en for him, and he for me,
And thereupon these errors are arose."

SHAKSPERE.

WHILE Mark Antony and his companion are on the road, we must leave the man to take care of himself, and returning to the master, inquire whether in the interim any particular "ups and downs" had occurred in the fortunes of myself, Mr. Hector O'Halloran. I was left in bed—and where could a safer place be found wherein to deposit a light-headed young gentleman? But every body knows that general rules are not without exceptions—and, the circumstances considered, by which I had obtained possession of the quaker's dormitory, I feel assured that the gentle reader will wish me a safe deliverance from the same.

I will not enter into minute details of how the false positions of myself and Samuel Pryme were finally detected; but in the parlance of Tony Lumpkin's respectable friend, who never danced a bear to unfashionable music, will sum them up in "a concatenation accordingly," namely, the sleepy soliloquy of the chief butler of the worthy quaker.

Jack Costigan was one of those gifted individuals who sleep at pleasure. He had a light conscience and a heavy head; and if there was one mortal annoyance that he abominated above the rest, it was to have any portion of "nature's sweet restorative" abridged. Twice had his slumbers been invaded. He had let in one master dead drunk, and admitted the other, who had been belated. These were grievous visitations; but, like other misfortunes, they were over; and determined to make up, if possible, for broken sleep, Mr. Costigan once more sought his pillow, and for a season had been buried in "dreamless slumberings." Alas! this Elysian state of sweet forgetfulness was presently dispelled. In successive volleys, sand struck the casement sharply; and "every pause between," a *sotto voce* appeal fell sluggishly upon the sleeper's ear, requiring admission to the garrison.

Now this was more than flesh and blood could stand. To two masters, as we said before, the butler had given admission, and both were disposed of as christian men should be; and, as the fact is clearly understood in Ireland, and upon parliamentary authority too, that nothing can be in two places at once—barring a bird—it was quite clear

that neither of the Prymes could be at one and the same time in bed and in the street. Of course, the intruder must be a stranger : he was on the right side to run away, namely, the wrong side of the hall-door—and there let him remain. Having come to this discreet resolution, and consigned the unknown to the especial care of that personage more genteelly known as “the gentleman in black,” Mr. Costigan once more turned on his pillow, determined to all further appeals to play deaf adder, and sleep like a watchman during the little time now left him.

But the stranger would not be denied. A sharper volley rattled against the windows, and a voice came down the area, and softly but distinctly pronounced, “John Costigan, I pray thee to arise, and let me in—I am thy friend.”

“Arrah, then, feaks,” observed the butler with a desperate yawn, “that’s my own name, sure enough ; but to the devil I pitch such friendship, whoever ye are. I see that I’ll never stand the place ; for of all the dens I ever was in, for a racketty hole this quaker’s bates them hollow. Wasn’t I for three months second waiter at the “Free and asy” in Roscrea ; and when the Blazers would tatter the house once a fortnight, why a man could get a little sleep while the damage was repairin’ ; but here, there’s nothing but batteration. In tumbles the young chap blind drunk, and nearly breaks my back carryin’ him up stairs. Then in rowls the ould sinner, just off the ran-tan, wid a cock-and-bull story in his mouth about a broken coach, to blind that stiff-backed gentlewoman that owns him. Death and ’nages ! what a chate he is !—if one didn’t know his tricks, he might think butter wouldn’t melt in his mouth—he’s so fair spoken : the ould deceiver !”

Here a shower of sand interrupted Mr. Costigan’s soliloquy.

“Asy, bad luck to ye ! Do you mane to smash the glass, ye thief ? Wait till I git the brecches on, and maybe ye won’t git a fla in ye’r ear for disturbin’ an honest tradesman like myself.”

Having slipped on his nether garment, the butler unlocked the area door, as from that position he could hold safer converse, having the palisades between him and the intruder.

Never did an unhappy quaker find greater difficulty to establish his identity ; for Mr. Costigan was not an impartial judge, he having already fully determined to reject all evidence the claimant might adduce. But one doubt presented itself to the worthy butler—could the person he had carried up to bed have been a phantom ? Oh, no ; the burden was “too, too, solid flesh,”—a fact his aching back attested.

“Of a truth, friend Costigan,” said the youth, “I am thy master’s son.”

“Arrah, *na boclish !*” returned the incredulous pantler.

“Open the wicket,” pursued the suppliant ; “thy look is good-natured ; and wouldst thou expose me to my father’s anger ?”

“Arrah, none of ye’r soft solder with me,” responded Mr. Costigan. “Devil a toe you’ll put into the house, good nor bad. Be off wid ye ; give ye’r rags a gallop, or, be this book, I’ll charge ye on the watch.”

The loud tone in which the indigna^d butler repudiated the real

Simon Pure had reached his father's ears, and brought the *tête-à-tête* to a close. The window opened; and Mr. Pryme demanded, "What caused the noise beneath?"

"Nothing," returned Mr. Costigan; "only here's a rambler on the street, that, right or wrong, wants me to let him in, and swares he's a son of yours into the bargain."

"Who art thou, friend?" demanded the elder quaker.

"Thy erring son," returned a voice, choked with shame, and almost inaudible.

"What do I hear?—Thou, my son?"

"Impossible!" exclaimed a female voice; and Mrs. Pryme's night-cap came popping through another window. "Our son Samuel is long since a-bed."

Alas! one glance confirmed the identity of the applicant; and to Mr. Pryme the discovery was most painful—while it passed the understanding of Mr. Costigan altogether. Doubtfully, at the bidding of his master, the butler unclosed the door, while the old man descended to the hall to receive his erring child, and learn the particulars of an occurrence with which so much mystery seemed to be involved.

To the heart of a fond father, how irresistibly come the pleadings of a first offence! The word of pardon passed the old man's lips—the young offender was folded in his parent's arms—and it would be doubtful to determine, whether the happier of the twain was he who received, or he who had extended forgiveness.

All this was as it should be; but what the devil was to become of me? Indeed, my hour of retribution was at hand—for the reconciliation was scarcely completed, before it was intimated to Mr. Pryme, that an unknown guest had honoured the mansion with his company,—that he was at present sound asleep—that his reception had been affectionate—but it was not considered necessary to add, that he had received more decided tokens of regard, and been kissed by half the female portion of the establishment.

To ascertain who this mysterious visitor might be, Mr. Pryme proceeded at once to my apartment, accompanied by his henchman, Jack Costigan, who, to guard against danger or surprise, had provided himself with the kitchen poker. No ally could have been better affected than the butler; for, by future good service, he was anxious to redeem the error he had committed in rejecting an heir-apparent from his father's house, as unceremoniously as if he had been the tax-gatherer.

I laboured under the stupid inertion which succeeds a drunken debauch, and was buried in profound repose. Unheard and unchallenged, the quaker approached my bed, while the butler unclosed the window-shutters. The quaker touched my shoulder gently—and in a voice as calm as if he were addressing an honoured guest, inquired, "Friend, art thou sleeping?"

Fancying that I was wakened by my servant to attend morning drill, I irreverently responded,—

"Curse all parades! Tell Sergeant Skelton to go to Bath, and let the Adjutant go after him!"

“Swear not,” returned Mr. Pryme; “but say, how wilt thou excuse thyself?”—

“Oh!” I replied, still dreaming of drill and duty, “I’ll leave that to you: say I have a head-ache—a tooth-ache—or any ache you please. In short, tell any lie that will answer best!”

“Friend, thou dost neither comprehend my meaning, nor I thine;” replied the old gentleman.

At the moment, Mr. Costigan managed to unclosethe shutters;—a flood of sunshine streamed in, lightened the apartment suddenly, and at once dispelled my slumberings. I started, like a guilty thing, bolt upright in the bed, and encountered full front, the burly form of the honest quaker; while Mr. Costigan, poker in hand, remained some paces in the rear, ready to aid and support his master on the first indication of hostilities.

“My name is Obadiah Pryme—Friend, what is thine?”

The question was a regular choker. I was called on to become my own accuser, and stand before my father’s chosen representative, a self-convicted *roué*. Of the *finale* of my career, what goodly promise did its opening give! my first introduction to my guardian—a rascally invasion of his premises,—and, were I pressed to extenuate the offence, I could not, with Jack Falstaff, even plead that I had not “kissed the keeper’s daughter.”

Trifles hurry on great events,—and a recommendation from Mr. Costigan, that I should be sent direct to Newgate, roused my latent pride, and re-established courage, that was oozing fast from my finger-ends.

“Peace, John!” returned the quaker; “Thy name, friend?”

“Is one, Sir, not unknown to you!”

“Indeed!” said the old man, with some surprise.

“I am called Hector O’Halloran!”

“Protect us!” exclaimed Mr. Pryme, with hands and eyes upturned; “Wert thou then the companion of my erring boy, and partook in last night’s godless revelry?”

“He was not *my companion*,” I answered boldly; “but *I* his tempter. I led him to commit the folly that he did—and the blame of all should rest with me.”

The quaker gave me a benignant look, took my hand, and pressed it warmly—and next moment my pardon was pronounced.

“Hector O’Halloran,” he said, “thy candour redeems thy crime. He who so freely owns a fault will probably henceforward eschew the ways of foolishness. Sleep; the morning yet is young. I am thankful that the son of my ancient friend was fortunately brought to a home where he was placed in safety. Thou shalt be called ere breakfast-hour arrives.”

Once more the shutters were closed. The quaker departed, and I was left to marvel at the luck by which I had undeservedly escaped the pains and penalties of this my first delinquency.

I slumbered away two hours, dreaming of Charleys’ lanterns, poles, and stolen kisses, until my “man tapped at the door” with a carpet-bag containing a full equipment. Indeed, it was fortunate for me that Mr. Pryme had sent for my servant and a refit; for the former

habiliments in which I had masqueraded on the preceding evening now cut a sorry figure, as John examined them one by one. The coat was changed into a spencer; for, in the *melée*, body and skirts had parted company,—while that garment, politely termed unmentionable, exhibited so many compound fractures, that the tailor would have been a daring artist who would have undertaken the repairs. Having completed my toilet, my valet took his departure, just as the quaker's butler announced that the ladies were waiting for me in the parlour.

When the summons to the breakfast-table was delivered, I felt it a first draft upon the assurance of a bashful Irishman, and I would have freely sacrificed a month's pay, to have been permitted to slip off without any flourish of trumpets. It was bad enough to face my worthy mentor,—him, to whom especially both my morality and expenditure had been consigned. But it was the quaker's womankind whom I had most cause to dread—ladies swindled out of a kiss under false pretences,—how the deuce was I to encounter the chaste indignation, which the recollection of that felonious *acolade* would assuredly call forth? My foot stuek to the last step of the staircase, as if it had been glued there; and there I stood, in the comfortable position of a person who is ashamed to retreat, and afraid to go forward. The chief butler, however, brought matters to a crisis. Emerging from the lower regions by a back stair, he entered the breakfast-room, and I had the satisfaction to hear him announce, in a voice intended only to be audible to those within, that “the drunken gentleman was in the hall,” accompanied with a-running-commentary of, “What impudence some people have!”

The remark, under existing circumstances, was not an encouraging one; and it would have afforded me unspeakable delight to have seen Mr. Costigan under the bastinado. Yet nothing, indeed, but that quality which it was insinuated I possessed extensively, would bear me through; and, after invoking the powers of impudence, in I desperately ventured.

But to my offendings merey had been extended. Had I been an expected visitor, Mr. Pryme's reception could not have been kinder,—and his stiff helpmate inquired, “Had I rested well?” Rachael,—oh! how that plain peaked muslin, which vainly strove to hide a profusion of auburn hair, became her! She, sweet girl, bade me a timid good-morrow, and then, blushing to the very brows, dropped her dove-like eyes upon the table-cloth. All this was passing strange—strange that the felonious invasion of a quiet domicile at midnight should elicit no jobation—and, stranger still—the kiss of peace appeared to have totally escaped the memories of all parties save myself, implicated in the transaction!

Breakfast ended—the old lady withdrew—and Mr. Pryme asked me to walk with him to his counting-house. Requesting leave of absence for ten minutes to arrange some domestic matters before he should leave home, the quaker retired from the parlour, and Rachael and I were left to entertain each other as we best could.

For a short time our mutual position was embarrassing. I did not know exactly what to say; and the fair puritan maintained a solemn

silence, with her sparkling eyes fixed steadily upon the carpet. It was quite apparent that I was expected to lead off; and, after an awkward pause, the ice at last was broken.

“Miss Pryme”—I commenced.

“Friend,” returned the young lady, “I am not thus termed; I am simply called Rachael.”

“What a pretty name!” I replied, for want of something else to say.

“It was that of my grandmother,” returned the lady.

“Well—Rachael,” I continued, “I fear my late visit occasioned some confusion. Certainly the mistakes of last night were singular and ridiculous.”

“They were, indeed,” replied the pretty maiden, raising her eyes, which, for the first time, now encountered mine; and, by a mutual impulse, we both burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. Egad, we were thinking of the same thing; and the remembrance of that confounded kiss of peace had thus demolished the gravity of both.

“Rachael,” I said, catching one of the prettiest hands imaginable in mine, “I must confess my offence, and throw myself for pardon on your clemency.”

“I have nothing to forgive,” replied the fair one, demurely.

“To its fullest extent I own my crime. The temptation, dear Rachael, was too great to be withstood—but, as a proof of returning probity, I will restore what was fraudulently obtained.”

“Hector,” returned the blushing girl, while an arch smile ‘play’d round her lip and brighten’d her soft eye,’—“I admire thy honesty; but I have heard my father say, that it is generally better to put up with a loss, than seek restitution by doubtful means. Therefore, my friend, we had better leave matters as they are.”

“Heaven forbid,” I replied, “that I should abuse such generosity.”

“Hector, I am ready for thee now,” exclaimed the deep voice of Mr. Pryme.

“Farewell, dear Rachael; I have always heard that honesty was politic—but faith, I never thought till now that it was half so pleasant.”

“Friend Hector,” said the fair girl, with a look of rich *espèglerie*, as she hurried from the room, towards which the creaking of her father’s shoes announced that he was approaching,—“probity may be strained too far. For the future, content thyself with returning what thou owest, but add not interest to the debt that even a usurer would scruple to receive. Farewell. May thy honesty continue; for sudden conversions are always suspicious.”

She ran, laughing, from the apartment; and, in a few moments, Mr. Pryme summoned me to accompany him.

At his counting-house I found a packet which had arrived from my father by the morning’s post; and with surprise I found that it contained an order for my starting for London without delay. He had been privately apprised by a friend in the War-office, that an exchange might be effected with a lieutenant who was about to quit the Peninsula, from ill health. This would give me the full step; and I was directed to obtain a leave between returns—repair to town

at once—and deliver, personally, letters my father had enclosed to certain functionaries at the Horse Guards.

I promptly obeyed the order, the colonel granted my request, and Don Juan like, I parted with Mr. Pryme—

“ Bade my valet pack some things
According to direction, then received
A lecture and some money. * * * * *
A letter, too, he gave (I never read it)
Of good advice, and two or three of credit.”

Next morning I called at the quaker's house to say *adieu* in form, and found the ladies at home. I sate for a long half-hour ; but had I remained till doomsday, I fancy Mrs. Pryme would have knitted on. At last I took a ceremonious leave ; and—confound all stiff-backed gentlewomen who won't leave young people to themselves—Rachael and I parted without the kiss of peace.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARK ANTONY IN LOVE FIRST, AND IN TROUBLE AFTERWARDS.

“ Oh, Heaven! that such companions thou'dst unfold,
And put in every honest hand a whip,
To lash the rascal naked through the world.”

SHAKSPEARE.

FATE seemed determined that on the world's stage mine should be a hurried *entrée* ; and, when I had only caught a glimpse of passing life, that my bark should be launched at once upon the current of existence, to float or flounder as it could. Short as my career had been, it had not passed unmarked by incident. To fortune I was already indebted for more than one deliverance ; and believing them to be an earnest of future civilities on the lady's part, I resolved to take the world as it came, put my trust in the blind goddess of the wheel, and prove the proverbial good luck which mostly follows in the footsteps of an Irishman. Willingly, therefore, I obeyed my father's orders, and on the following evening quitted the Emerald Isle, on the pleasant and profitable pursuit of “ the bubble reputation.”

It had surprised me that, hitherto, no communication had reached me from Mark Antony O'Toole, touching the adventures which had befallen him since his disappearance from Kilcullen. There, his evasion, as my father mentioned in his letter, had occasioned a marvellous sensation. Miss Kitty O'Dwyer, as a mere matter of course, having been expected to commit suicide, or die broken-hearted within a fortnight. Neither event, however, as the fancy say, “ came off.” Kitty continued in rude health, and the fosterer's movements remained still wrapped in mystery. But, as it turned out, Mark Antony's career was singularly connected with my own—the same star appeared to rule our destinies—both were simultaneously leaving the land of the west, apparently at

the beck of fortune's finger ; and of the twain, which pursuit was the more crotchety would have been a question ; the fosterer, levanting for love, and I, for glory.

We left Mark Antony and his fair companion on the road, with the world before them, and some wayfarers, like themselves, in the rear. Whoever the travellers might prove to be who approached the dell where the fosterer and his friend had refreshed themselves, it was quite evident that the school where their philosophy had been acquired was of any order but the crying one. One manly voice trolled a jovial drinking song, to which two others occasionally bore a burden. As a sharp turning in the road, skirted with thick copsewood, masked the stranger's advance, their merry laugh and reckless gaiety told that Father Care was not of "the companie ;" and their calling and character might have been shrewdly guessed from passing conversation and snatches of song.

"I wonder, Pat," said one of the wayfarers, "to see you in such spirits after parting with Nelly Blake as if your heart was breaking. Neither of ye cared a button at leaving me watching for a long hour at the other side of the hedge like a poacher, for fear the old priest would come out and catch you philandering with his housekeeper. Lord, how you swore, and she—poor girl!—believed it ; but when you strove to cry and keep her company, oh!—that was all but the death of me."

"Well, Tom," returned the second, "if I broke down at the weeping, you will admit that I did not disgrace my calling, but swore like a trooper. You'll hardly believe how much that girl has bothered me. Hand me the cruiskeen. Remember, Tom, for love there's but one remedy,—and the beauty of it is, that for every symptom it proves a certain cure,—hear what the song says—

"If you ere love a maid who your passion derides,
 Drink enough, you'll find charms in a dozen besides,
 Drink more, and your victory then is complete,
 For you'll fancy you love every girl that you meet."

Hallo!—who have we here? Talking of love, they seem to be a couple of Cupid's own. Egad, a nice girl,—and if I could but list her companion! Lord, what shoulders he has for a pair of wings!"

In another minute the travellers were alongside the fosterer and his friend. A civil greeting passed ; and with that easy confidence with which natives of the Emerald Isle hold communication with each other, it was speedily ascertained that the route of the united party was the same, until it reached a road-side inn, where the strangers announced it to be their intention of halting for the night.

The dress and personal appearance of the wayfarers was remarkable : one wore the uniform of a militia-man ; another the dark clothing of a student ; but from the costume of the third, it was impossible to form any opinion of what his calling might be.

He was a tall and stout-made personage, apparently of middle age, with sandy hair and whiskers, partially intersprinkled with grey. His countenance was particularly good-humoured—and in his light blue

eyes there was an expression of drollery and acuteness. He wore a hare-skin cap, a dark-coloured shooting-jacket, short tights, and leather gaiters. He was provided with a goat-skin knapsack—two wiry terriers followed closely at his heels, and a *dhudeene* and oak-stick completed his appointments. The style also by which his comrades addressed him

added to the mystery of his profession: the soldier addressing him as '*ta Copteeine*,'* and the student merely calling him *Shemus Rhua*.†

If in the captain's *sobriquets* and outer man there was anything embarrassing, there was nothing about the soldier like concealment. The chevrons on his arm told his rank, and the pack upon his shoulder his regiment. After announcing that he was on the route to embark with a draught of volunteers for the Peninsula, he thus noticed his companions.

"This," he said, pointing to the student, "is the making of a priest; but if I can persuade him, he'll not give them any trouble in Maynooth. What a sin it would be to spoil a fellow cut out for a flanker; and on a shoulder intended to carry a grenade, to hang a surplice. Leave your breviary to your old uncle, and take *brown bess* in place of it. Spain's the place, Tom. Egad, how the old priest will stare when he finds out that I have whisked away his nephew."

"Faith," replied the student, "the only wonder is you did not whisk away his niece."

"No, no—Ellen and I must leave matters as they are until we return. Then, I'll marry your pretty cousin, Tom, and we'll share Father Dominick's purse honestly between us. What say ye, captain?"

"Why that you must put the old man under the turf first. He would not part with a dollar to make a colonel of ye."

"Well, priests cannot live for ever. But whither are you bound, honest Shemus? Are you on a medical excursion at present?"

"Is this gentleman a doctor?" inquired Mark Antony.

"He's a man of many trades," returned the sergeant, with a laugh. "With Humbert he was a captain; a doctor afterwards; poaches a little now and then; bleeds old women; ties flies; breaks dogs; cures children; kills rats; and, in a word, is generally accomplished. His titles are numerous as his tastes; and he still holds the same rank he had when he was out with the French in ninety-eight."

The captain smiled at the sergeant's description; and the travellers jested, laughed, and sang until they reached the public-house, where they were to separate from the fosterer and his companion.

While the soldier, the student, and the rat-catcher settled themselves in the kitchen, Mark Antony and the wandering girl retired to a private room. Both were heavily cast down, for in a brief space they were to part, and probably for ever.

"And is your resolution unchangeable, Julia?" said Mark Antony, as he clasped her hand.

The girl burst into tears, and faintly answered in the affirmative.

"Hear me, Julia," said the fosterer, "before you decide; and believe that every word that passes my lips comes directly from the heart. You say that you have no relations; no one to shelter and protect

* The Captain.

† Red James.

you ; none to love you. Julia, why then reject me ? Why should we not unite our fates and battle with the world as we can ? Alas ! I have nothing to offer you but a warm heart and a stout arm. I'll work for you—toil for you—fight for you. Will you not then let me love you, Julia ?”

God help the worthy fosterer ! With all his soul he was ready to commit matrimony on the moment ; and without the slightest knowledge of the means by which he might secure a living for himself, he would have freely undertaken the maintenance of another still more helpless.

“ Mark,” said the wanderer, for the first time calling him by that name, “ I value your kindness as I should ; and think not, in declining to accept your generous offers, that I am cold to your deserving. Far from it. If any happiness were reserved for me, I feel that it would be in uniting my wrecked and wretched fortunes to yours. Nay more ; had I enough for both, and that hereafter this blighted heart could ever love again, I would press you to accept my wealth and my affections ; for I might safely conclude that with him who offered a husband's protection to my wretchedness, under altered circumstances, I could not fail in being happy. But no ; I will not swamp your young fortunes with mine. My resolution is already formed—and we must part.”

Again the ardent Irishman pressed his suit upon the wanderer ; but, true to her determination, the fosterer's overtures were gratefully but firmly rejected.

“ We have yet,” she said with a sigh, “ three long long miles to travel. Oh ! how weary will they be !—for my heart grows heavier and heavier still !—Ha ! what mischief is abroad ? Look—yonder stands that ruffian Jew—and see, he points his finger to this window.”

“ Who and what *is* the scoundrel ?” inquired the fosterer.

“ I cannot tell,” returned the girl. “ He joined a strolling party, from which I separated ere I met you. They are sought by outcasts like him and me. Another vagabond who accompanied him, in a drunken quarrel, taxed the Jew with being familiarized to every crime, and added, that he was a returned convict. What his designs regarding me were I cannot tell. When I left the wandering company, he followed—but, thank Heaven ! you came—and if he meant me harm, your protection saved me.”

In the mean time, the Jew had disappeared, and Mark Antony endeavoured to persuade his companion that this second meeting was accidental. The girl shook her head. Steps ascended the stairs, the door was unceremoniously opened, and Mr. Montague entered the room, attended by two men, who announced themselves to be officers of justice.

The girl turned pale as death ; while the blood rushed to Mark Antony's brows, as he stepped boldly between his companion and the strangers.

“ Fear nothing, love !” exclaimed the fosterer. “ By heaven ! I'll murder the scoundrel on the spot, if he attempts to touch you with a finger.”

"I told you," remarked the Israelite, "what a desperate offender he was. That's the man that robbed me of my purse, and that 'ere woman, a pal of his, assisted."

"Infamous liar!" exclaimed the accused female; while Mark Antony caught up the poker, and prepared for rebutting the accusation with other proofs than argument. The constables called for assistance; the Jew retreated through the door; and the sergeant, the student, and the rat-catcher rushed up-stairs, followed by the host of idlers who are ever found loitering about the precincts of an Irish inn.

A scene of indescribable confusion succeeded. All asked questions, to which none would vouchsafe a reply. The Jew solemnly protested he had been robbed; the accused indignantly repelled the charge of felony; while the constables insisted that all concerned should immediately repair to the residence of a neighbouring magistrate, there to be dealt with as appertained to justice. The whole party accordingly set forth to undergo the ordeal of the law's inquiry. Mark Antony and his fair friend, under the especial patronage of their quondam road-companions—the sergeant, the student, and the rat-catcher; and the Israelite aided, counselled, and consoled by the village Dogberries, to whom, in the event of a conviction, the Jew had been, as Jews generally are, most liberal—in promise.

On reaching the domicile of the Justice, the *posse comitatus* halted in front of the hall door; for, as Mr. Blundel had just fabricated a fourth tumbler, and the water was of consistent heat, some time must elapse before the mixture could be conveniently disposed of. At last, the prisoners were summoned to the presence; and the accused, being duly arraigned, the complainant was invited to detail the wrongs he had received.

At his first interview with the fosterer, the Jew had endeavoured to sink as much of his slang as he could effect; but now his own character was to be supported, and his address to the seat of justice was in the peculiar parlance of his people.

"Vy, ye see, yer vorchip, that my name is Reuben Levi. I'm a jeweller by trade, and an honest man along of it. I comes to Hierland with some goods; sells vot I had at a loss to get home agin; and with five pound in paper, and three guineas and a half in goold, I was returnin to Dublin. If the money's mine; it's in a green silk purse, and no mistake."

The Jew paused; and a reference to Mark Antony's pocket confirmed the statement of Mr. Montague.

"Vell, yer vorchip—ye sees I tells nothin but vots true—I was joggin on by a lonely road, and who overtakes me but this young voman, and that 'ere chap in the welveteen fie-for-shames. I twigged them, yer vorchip, at once; for he's von of the swell mob, and she no better than she ought to be. Vell, they fastens themselves upon me for a while, until I sits down upon a ditch to rest myself, and ged rid on 'em. Vell, down she pops upon my knee and asks me for a trifle, while her pal comes behind, and draws me clean as a whistle. I tries to grip my purse, but—he's a milling cove, yer vorchip—and in he pops

his bunch of fives, darkens this here hye, and laves me flat upon my back. Off they goes like winky—and when I comes to myself, neither robber nor voman was to be seen.”

The easy audacity with which the Hebrew impostor detailed the particulars of the alleged robbery, actually paralyzed the accused. The sergeant looked confounded; the student shook his head; and the rat-catcher alone listened with incredulity, and preserved his faith unshaken. As to the worthy justice, no doubt of the fosterer's guilt remained upon his mind; and all that puzzled him was, whether he could safely convict the girl as an accomplice. The fatal order to issue the mittimus was on his lips, when the Israelite addressed himself to “the king's poor esquire,” and, as it appeared, it was mercifully in arrest of judgment.

“In speaking a few words to the worthy beak, I mean his vorchiphul honour, I hopes the vweakness of my caracter will be excused, vich vos in bein too tender-hearted from the werry cradel. I vould'nt jst wish to have the girl clapped under the screw, nor even that 'ere chap should be lagged for life, though he's fly to everything, from thimble-riggin to wilful murder. So, as the blunt's got, if yer honour will let the voman off, and only shop the cove as stole the purse for the trifle of a fortnight, I'll not insist on prosecution.”

While the unblushing Jew was delivering his humane appeal, the fosterer grew pale with rage, the girl red with indignation. There appeared nothing but “warder and fetters for the Graeme” as the justice was in the very act of affixing his sign-manual to the committal, when lo! a change came over the scene—the sound was heard of wheels stopped suddenly—and next moment, a young man, in a sailor's dress, sprang into the room, and exclaiming, “Julia, my lost one, have I found thee!”—folded the wanderer in his arms, and pressed her ardently to his heart. On the girl, the appearance of the stranger seemed to have produced emotions of greater violence; she uttered a wild shriek, fainted on the sailor's breast, and was borne by her new protector in a state of insensibility from the hall of justice.

At this unexpected *dénoûment* all present appeared to be astounded. The fosterer was lost in astonishment, and the magistrate equally surprised to see a person on whom he was about to deal according to law, summarily removed from his jurisdiction, and by a novel proceeding, by no means so formal and yet very like a *habeas corpus*.

While this grand *scena* was being enacted, a quieter, but not less interesting episode was in progress in the corner; but we must leave the reader in temporary suspense, as, with this occurrence, we intend to commence another chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TABLES TURNED—THE SAILOR'S STORY.

“As thou urgest justice, be assur'd
 Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desir'st.”
 SHAKSPERE.

PROVERBS may be musty matters; but take them generally, and how admirably do they establish facts! “Between the cup and lip slips are frequent;” and, as events turned out, Mr. Montague, of comic celebrity, was fated to point that moral.

Nothing could have been attended with more decisive success than the villany of the Jew. His boundless audacity had imposed upon a weak-headed country gentleman; and the information he had acquired at the Cock and Punch-bowl by listening at the wanderer's door, enabled him to describe the property, alleged to have been stolen, with an accuracy that induced the greater number of those who heard the charge, to believe the story of the robbery confirmed. The hour of revenge was come. The girl, deprived of her protector, and thrown loose upon the world, would once more be at his mercy; and the Jew's dark eyes brightened with fiendish delight. The man who had crossed his schemes, and treated him with contumely, would now be tenant of a prison; and the woman who had turned from him with contempt, and rejected his overtures with abhorrence, might soon be taught to feel that hatred often follows fast upon the steps of love.

But what appeared to the Jew to be the hour of his triumph, proved unexpectedly, that of retribution; for to mortal villany Providence assigns a limit.

The sudden appearance of the sailor, and the confusion it had occasioned, prevented the entrance of a second personage from being generally observed. Indeed, he slid so quietly into the room, that he seemed modestly endeavouring to avoid any particular attention. The stranger was a stout well-proportioned man, of middle height, and apparently of middle age; and from dress and appearance, it would have been impossible to guess to what order of the body politic he especially appertained. Except for a certain wide-awake expression of the face, he might have passed current for a mail-coachman, a publican, or a drover. Probably, to a horse-dealer he bore the closest affinity. He was dressed in a blue coat with gilt buttons, and extensive skirts and pockets. His vest was scarlet; his unmentionables drab kerseymere, to which jockey-boots were added. Round his neck a spotted silk handkerchief was knotted; and a white hat, with a remarkably broad brim, completed his costume.

Every eye had been directed upon the sailor and the companion of Mark Antony; but he of the scarlet vest seemed unmoved by a scene that had interested all besides. Indeed, he was a person on whom effect, such as Napoleon would term "theatrical," would have been absolutely thrown away. His feelings were impervious even to a fainting fit; and he had no more *sentiment* about him than an oyster. Gliding behind the backs of the spectators, he reached the spot whence Mr. Montague had delivered his address to the man of worship, and stooping to the Jew's ear, whispered something which possessed the charm of a spell. To the very lip, colour fled from the sallow countenance of the Israelite. He appeared as motionless as if he had been mesmerized; while by a sort of sleight-of-hand the red-vested operator united his wrists together, quickly as if it had been done by magic, next moment it was discovered that Mr. Montague was manacled. The stranger then handed a paper to the gentleman upon the bench, with a request that he would "back that warrant for the apprehension of the prisoner, Ikey Lazarus."

Of all the descendants of "the Shallows" Mr. Blundell looked the silliest. At last, however, he managed to comprehend that the Israelite was a returned convict, and added his signature to the order for the Jew's arrest. The court, "in most admired disorder," was broken up; the runner retiring with his captive; the sergeant and his companions to finish a computation from which they had been unexpectedly disturbed; and the fosterer to seek some tidings of his lost mistress, who, as he was informed, had been removed by the sailor in a carriage to the inn.

When consciousness returned, the poor wanderer found herself in the same apartment from which, not an hour since, she had been removed on a charge of felony. She unclosed her eyes. Was it an illusion? A look of love was bent upon her pallid countenance—and a long lost brother held her to his heart.

"William," she murmured.

"Dear, dear, Julia," returned the sailor, with a kiss.

"Am I waking?—are you *alive*, William?"

"Ay, girl," replied the sailor, "and sound and hearty as English oak itself."

"'Twas said you were dead—that you had been slain in battle. How came you here? how have you escaped?"

"The story's long, my sister. I'll tell it to you presently. Enough; the squall has now blown over; and, d——n it—we shall all be happy once more."

"No, no, no—I shall never know peace of mind. Would that I could be forgiven!" and tears rolled in fast succession down the poor wanderer's cheeks.

"Forgiven!" exclaimed the sailor. "For what, Julia?—For being swindled by the false story of a betrayer; and afterwards, with more than woman's love, clinging to the scoundrel who deceived you, until the grave closed upon his crimes."

"I have indeed," said the girl, with a sigh, "suffered for my offending. Oh, when I think of it, it almost maddens me! To have

deserted my poor father, broken the old man's heart, and by my misconduct brought him to the grave." She paused, for sobs choked her utterance.

"You didn't, God bless ye, break his heart," exclaimed the sailor. "Had you run off a dozen times, he wouldn't have mattered it a stranded rope-yarn. No, no, it was other disappointments that finished uncle Josh."

"Finished uncle Josh?" inquired the wanderer.

"Ay; he's gone to Davy's locker, and the village has been quiet ever since. Three clients compromised their suits within one term; that killed our uncle, and Josh never raised his head afterwards."

No, no, William—my father—my dear, dear, father—" she made a pause, and then, in a suppressed voice, added, "Is *he* not dead too?"

"Dead!" replied the sailor. "He must have died since morning. I left him at a town ten miles off, while I came in pursuit of you, in company with a Bow-street officer, who was on another track, but offered to assist in your recovery."

"Then," exclaimed the girl, with breathless haste, "the death I read in a torn newspaper—"

"Was that of our loving uncle. I suppose it was George Gripp that inserted the old boy's departure; for I believe the bailiff was the only being who regretted him."

"And shall I once more, William, see my dear, dear, father?" said the actress.

"Ay, Julia, and before you sleep, the old man's kiss shall welcome you, and his blessing seal your pardon."

To the hurried narrative of his sister, the warm-hearted sailor listened with the deepest interest. The sufferings she had undergone; the death of her betrayer; her deliverance from the Jew; the kindness of Mrs. O'Leary, and the generous protection of the fosterer, all had their excitement, and elicited from William Rawlings by turns an execration or a burst of gratitude. No, wonder, therefore, that when Mark Antony joined the wanderer and her new protector, his welcome was a warm one. And yet how mingled in life's history is pain and pleasure!—how soon is unexpected happiness dashed with some latent regret! The prospect of an immediate parting alloyed the triumph of success. Neither Mark Antony nor the quarter-master's daughter felt at ease; and a similar cause of disquietude pressed heavily upon the breast of both. Under different terms, the feeling was the same; the fosterer called it by the right name—love; the lady by the wrong one—gratitude. Had the hearts of both been analysed, the chymist would have had results perfectly the same.

"William," said the sailor's sister, "you have not yet told me by what strange fortunes, one believed to be dead so long, has been again restored to those who love him. Oh! how vividly does that fatal evening return to memory, when you left your sister and your home. Alas! William, had you but known how desperately I was circumstanced, you would not have deprived me of my brother and my adviser."

"That unregretted relative," replied the sailor, "now in the grave, occasioned the rash act I then committed. No shadow of blame could

have attached itself to me ; for with the unfortunate homicide which occurred that evening I was totally unconnected. My savage uncle, who should have allayed my fears, alarmed me by hinting at the disgrace of incarceration ; and, with the full conviction of innocence, I was weak enough to believe him. Hence, Julia, to evade an imaginary indignity, I madly left my home—and that at a moment, too, when my presence was most required. The adventures which befell me may interest you, my sister, and I shall briefly narrate them.

The Sailor's Story.

I need not tell you, Julia, that, with whatever apparent firmness I might have taken leave of you, to tear myself from a home, a parent, and a sister that I loved so fondly, was a trial which taxed my fortitude to its utmost extent. It is true, that I had been long weary of inaction, and longing after those scenes of wild excitement which war every day presents, and which to the ardent fancy of young minds are always so engrossing. Yet I hesitated to take the step ; for, in my pursuit of that phantom, glory, how many objects of affection must be abandoned ! The accidental embarrassment arising from the smuggling outrage of the evening confirmed me in a course already half resolved upon. I obeyed the impulse ; parted from you, love ; and at midnight found myself on board that gallant “thing of life,”—a British frigate.

Of her own noble class of vessels, the Harpy was among the finest ; and she had a picked crew, and dashing commander. Caesar O'Brien was an Irishman of humble family, and yet at the early age of twenty-four, he found himself a post-captain. But to no underhand interest was he indebted for his rapid preferment. His career had been gloriously distinguished ; he could look back upon it with honest pride, and claim every step he got on the score of professional deserving. Justly considered one of the ablest officers in the service, it was strange that upon his merits his own crew held a divided opinion. The younger portion declared him a man without a fault ; the older, however, discovered a failing in his character.—“The captain,” they complained, “*had too much fight in him.*” It was true, he had an Irishman's good luck ; but, in the long run, it would bring him into trouble.”

To you, Julia, the details of sea-life would have little interest. We were stationed off the coast of France ; and from our captain's daring character, he had been intrusted with a sort of roving commission, and allowed to employ the frigate almost as he pleased. During a six-months' cruise, nothing, for brilliancy or effect, could exceed the services he *had* rendered to his country. In every French harbour the Harpy's exploits were known and her captain's name associated with those of England's most daring and fortunate commanders.

From the moment I entered the frigate as a volunteer, I had been fortunate enough to become a favourite with Captain O'Brien. In a successful night-attack upon a battery and privateer, in which we

dismantled the one, and cut out the other, my conduct was honourably mentioned by the first lieutenant, and the captain's clerk having been killed on the occasion, I was promoted to fill the vacancy. In this confidential situation I acquitted myself with credit—and to the hour of his death, was treated by the warm-hearted Irishman more like an equal than an inferior.

The period of our cruise had expired, and an order came for the frigate to return to England and refit. At sunset, the vessel sent to relieve us was seen in the distance; and before dark, she had exchanged numbers with the Harpy. In all our gallant crew not one heavy heart could have been discovered. After a daring and successful cruise, next morning the frigate's head would be turned to the white-cliffed island from which, for nine months, we had been estranged; and all, from "the noblest captain in the British fleet" to the smallest ship-boy, felt the charm which attends a return to fatherland, and slept to dream of "England, home, and beauty."

Three hundred men rested that night in full security—and how few were fated to see another sunset! Morning dawned—the breeze was light; the ocean mists rose rapidly; gradually the sea view enlarged; and every eye turned in that direction where the ship, arrived from England, might be expected to present herself. At last, a sail was announced from the mast-head, and the Harpy's course was altered towards the stranger's. In half-an-hour, the ship in sight was proclaimed by the look-out men "a heavy frigate." The private signal was made—some minutes passed—the signal was unanswered—and every glass and eye were directed towards a ship now ascertained to be an enemy.

In a moment orders were given to crowd canvass on the frigate. The drum beat to quarters; the sails were accurately trimmed; and, as if she had determined to sustain her well-earned reputation to the last, the Harpy dashed through the water gallantly—and for every two knots the chase sailed, we went three.

When the frigate was under a cloud of sail, Captain O'Brien retired to his cabin to dress, leaving orders that the progress of the chase, from time to time, should be reported. As he passed me, he touched my arm and whispered me to follow him. I did so. The captain desired his servant to retire, put on his uniform, affixed a foreign order to his breast, and, having unlocked a drawer, he took from it a sealed packet, and thus addressed me.

"Rawlings," he said, "from the hour you entered this frigate, I have remarked your character and conduct. From the high opinion I formed of both, I selected you to fill a place of trust, and I am now about to give you what may be a last proof of confidence.

"I am the founder of my own fortune. My father was an humble curate, not 'passing rich on forty pounds a year,' but poor as a church-mouse, and my mother the daughter of a farmer. I was born in one of the remotest villages on the western coast of Ireland; and, except the advantages of education—the only boon my poor father could bestow—I had nothing to distinguish me in boyhood from the sons of the fishermen who inhabited our secluded hamlet.

Like them, the sea was the element I loved ; and, but for an accident, like them also, I should have lived and died upon that element unknown.

“ One evening, when I was about twelve years old, a message came from the only public-house the village boasted, to say that a sick stranger had arrived and was most anxious to see a clergyman. The summons was obeyed ; and my father was introduced to an elderly man, who seemed to be dangerously ill, and greatly exhausted by his journey. He announced himself a lieutenant of a man-of-war ; he had been for several years on the West-India station ; was now on leave of absence for bad health ; and was endeavouring to reach a town at a considerable distance from our hamlet, to try whether native air might not yet effect a cure. The exertion, however, had been too much for him ; and on arriving at the public-house, he found himself unable to proceed farther.

“ The parson was a kind-hearted being, and as hospitable as he was poor. The ale-house was noisy and uncomfortable, and he therefore pressed the stranger to take up his residence at our cottage, where, with quiet and care, it was probable that he might speedily come round again. My father’s invitation was accepted ; and in a few days the invalid was so far restored as to be enabled to resume his journey. He took his leave accordingly, gratefully acknowledging the kindness and attention of my parents, to which he attributed his recovery.

“ A year passed—the stranger was forgotten ; and our lonely villagers had no events to excite them beyond every-day occupations. They were removed from the cares and anxieties of busier life ; but, as events proved, they were not secure from its common calamities.

“ Typhus fever broke out in a neighbouring sea-port ; the crew of a fishing-boat caught the infection, and introduced the terrible disease into our crowded hamlet. Numbers became its victims ; and in the same week both my parents died, and I was left upon the world without any natural protector.

“ On the evening of my father’s funeral I was sent for to the public-house, and there, to my surprise, I found the stranger who had been my father’s guest a year before. The sick lieutenant had been restored to health, and was about to resume his professional duties. He had been appointed to a ship ; but before he left the kingdom, he made our village his line of route, that he might have an opportunity of thanking my parents once more for past kindnesses. He found those who succeeded him in the grave,—their only child an orphan, and without a relative who could afford him protection or a home.

“ A tear trickled down the cheek of the rough old sailor, as he listened to the story of my destitution.

“ ‘ And has he no friends, poor boy ? ’ inquired the lieutenant.

“ ‘ None,’ said the landlord, in reply. ‘ I believe he has not one relative who could give him a second meal, nor a friend who—’

“ ‘ False, by Heaven ! ’ exclaimed the tar. ‘ He *has* a friend who will divide his last guinea with him ; and from this hour, I am the orphan’s father ! ’

"I must be brief. Lieutenant Oakley stopped that evening in the village, and when he left it next morning I was his companion. He was a rough, but warm-hearted sailor of the old school; and, after a year's probation, he succeeded in having me rated on the books of a line-of-battle ship as midshipman. A few months afterwards, my protector was killed in a boat affair upon the coast of Spain—once more I was left upon the world—and at fifteen years of age I had to fight with fortune as I could.

"Rawlings, you know now the story of my early life. Without a being to guide my boyhood, I was flung on the wide ocean of existence. The sword has been my talisman, and I have hewn my own road to fame. My very destitution placed me in fortune's track. I had no gentle ties to bind me to the world: if I died, none would shed a tear: what, then, was life to me?—A nothing! I staked it with a gambler's recklessness, and I have earned for myself the name that birth denied me."

A noise on deck was heard. "Stay here," he said; "I will return immediately." After a few minutes, Captain O'Brien re-entered the cabin, his face beaming with delight, and its expression betokening the confidence of anticipated victory.

"The Harpy goes nobly through it!" he exclaimed. "Blow, sweet breeze! blow for another hour steadily—bring me alongside that splendid frigate—and then, Dame Fortune! thy spoiled child shall tax thee no further."

He paused; took two or three turns across the cabin, and then resumed the strain of former conversation.

"Time presses—and now, Rawlings, for another disclosure. Three years ago I returned to England,—'The happy deed that gilds my humble name' was done—I obtained promotion for the service—and wherever I appeared, flattering tokens of popular approbation were heaped on me with unmeasured liberality. Men cheered me as I passed, and—prouder honour—woman smiled upon the daring sailor. To the highest circles the curate's son was introduced: my passport, *à coup de sabre*, which finished a French captain, and enabled me to lay hands on the halliards of a frigate's ensign, before those of fifty stout boarders as myself. I met a woman: she was older than myself a year or two; noble by birth; and for beauty, if you sought England over—and that is beauty's home—you could not find her peer. She was followed and worshipped: the proudest claimed her smiles, and the noblest coronet was offered for her acceptance. Chance introduced me to her father; and I was a casual visitor at his house, with men distinguished for both high birth and unbounded wealth. Would it be credited that I was preferred by that proud lady to all who sought her hand? I—the ocean child—before a crowd of nobles—the humble sailor loved by the *fiancée* of a duke! 'Tis over;—she is another's now: and with the heart that fate forbade being united to mine, the mutual secret rests.

"You know enough to understand the service I require. If in the approaching conflict my brief career shall close, the story of my love must perish with me. In this sealed packet there are memorials,

that, living, I could not part with, and, in death, must be destroyed. It is leaded—and should I fall, consign it to the same element where I shall find a grave. Farewell! I feel a strange assurance, that with this day's events, whatever they may prove, my history is doomed to terminate. No matter! Where could it close more gloriously?"—

He said, and quitted the cabin for the deck; and when I had secured the sealed packet in my breast, I followed him.

The chase had now assumed an interest almost impossible to be imagined. Both frigates, in the parlance of the sea, were "staggering under a press of canvass;" and the goal for which each vessel strained was a small harbour, with a narrow entrance through the centre of a reef of rocks. There, the Frenchman expected to find his safety—and we endeavoured to cut him off from this his haven of inglorious refuge. We were still two gun-shots astern—the harbour not a league off—the wind began to fail—and as the Harpy sailed best with a stiff breeze, we lost the advantage we had formerly possessed in speed. Indeed, the Frenchman's escape seemed almost certain. He must gain the anchorage before we could bring him to close action; and, daring as our captain was, surely he would not venture into a roadstead on every side surrounded with heavy batteries, and approachable through a narrow opening in a reef of rocks?

Alas! Fortune may be tried too frequently—and even her chosen favourites will prove her at times capricious. Again, the breeze freshened, and the Harpy drew fast a-head. The vessels were now within cannon range—the chase-guns of both had opened—and at the third discharge from ours, the main-top-mast of the Frenchman came down. It is probable that fatal success induced our captain to take the step he did. Instead of bringing his frigate to the wind, he held his course, and desperately ran into a hostile harbour from which it was decreed we never should return.

The result of this rash act was brilliant as it proved disastrous. After a close engagement of forty minutes, the enemy's frigate was totally dismasted, and driven—a wreck—upon the rocks; and Captain O'Brien having completed her destruction, endeavoured to work the Harpy out.

For a time we suffered but trifling injury from the cross-fire of the batteries, and it was almost certain that we should weather the tail of the reef, and clear the entrance of the harbour. The frigate was in stays. "She'll do it easily," exclaimed the master; while Captain O'Brien, with a smile of exultation, whispered in my ear, "What think you, Rawlings, of the fortunes of the curate's son? Hold on the packet—my star has saved us!" Alas! his exultation was but short-lived. A thirty-two-pound shot struck us as he spoke: the foretop-mast went over the side—we missed stays, fell off to leeward, and settled on the reef, within musket-range of the heaviest battery.

The seas struck the vessel so fast and heavily that it was quite apparent she would speedily go to pieces. The captain fell mortally wounded. He turned a dying look to me: I understood its silent

order; and the packet which contained the memorials of his secret love was committed to the deep.

In a few minutes afterwards, the fate of all on board the Harpy was decided. A lofty swell came rolling in—the disabled frigate was lifted off the reef—she fell over into deep water, settled, and went down; and in her shattered hull, the dead, the dying, and the living found a common grave; for, with the exception of myself and six others, not another soul of that gallant crew escaped. We saved ourselves on floating portions of the wreck, to be picked up the same evening, and made prisoners.

What calamitous events had one brief day produced! On the preceding evening, how happily had I sought my hammock, home in my fancy, and you, Julia, in my dreams! How was all changed! frigate and crew buried together in the ocean deeps, and in the very moment of their triumph!—and the poor handful that survived, consigned to a captivity so hopeless, that to its duration no limit could be assigned!

We were marched into the interior, and secured in an old fortress, already over-crowded with squalid creatures, half-clad, half-starved, and to whom, generally, death would have been a deliverance—the only one, indeed, that they, poor wretches, could look to with any thing like certainty. At first, I thought I should have sunk into despair; but it is strange how soon men will accommodate themselves to misery. Gradually the cup of suffering lost a portion of its bitterness; and in the laugh, at first torturous to my ears, at last I could also join. “Let none despond, let none despair”—there is no mortal evil without its remedy. Before a month passed, the elasticity of my spirit returned—another current of thought occupied my mind—my very dreams were engrossed with projects of escape—and every bird that flitted across the prison walls seemed to invite me to become as free as it was.

The governor was a soldier of the republic, wounded and worn out, and for past services entrusted with the custody of the prisoners of war collected in the fortress. He was a strict disciplinarian; stern in enforcing obedience to the regulations of the place, but kind at heart, and easily conciliated. After my first despondency had abated, I endeavoured to resign myself to my fate; and by conforming to the rules which Captain St. Simon had laid down for due maintenance of order, I became rather a favourite with the commandant.

No one could question the bravery of Captain St. Simon; for, among other daring acts he had performed, he had married a woman thirty years younger than himself. The lady was very pretty, very gay, loved fêtes and dancing, and detested the dulness of the fortress. One child had blessed the marriage-bed of the commandant: she was a sweet girl of three years; and in her the affections of both parents seemed to centre. Indeed, they idolized the child; and none could know little Claudine and not love her.

To children I have been ever partial; and with the governor's I soon became a favourite. I never passed Claudine without a kiss. My attentions gratified the parents. Madame rewarded them with a smile, and the old republican, with long narratives of all that he had done at Lodi and Marengo.

Upon the unfortunates within the place, the effects of captivity were variously exhibited. Some bore confinement with apparent indifference, while others evinced a sullen despondency. One man struck me as being more miserable than any in the fortress besides; and the fixed melancholy visible in his air and countenance induced me to inquire who he was, and ask the cause of his being more wretched than the rest.

His name was Aylmer, and he was a captain of dragoons. In returning from the Peninsula, the merchantman in which he came home a passenger had been taken by a privateer; and, to render that accident the more distressing, the errand that brought him to England was to marry a beautiful girl, to whom for years he had been passionately attached. Hitherto, pecuniary considerations forbade the union; but by the death of a wealthy relative that obstacle was removed. What must have been his disappointment, when, almost in sight of the home of her he loved so ardently, fate marred his promised happiness, and dashed from the very lip the cup of bliss!

No wonder, then, that Aylmer bore this visitation with impatience. Months wore away; interest had been used to accomplish an exchange; and now a hope was held out that this much desired event would be speedily effected. Once more the captive smiled; the colour returned to his faded cheek, and his brow was no longer contracted. Alas for woman's faith! News came from England, that she whom he all but idolized had forgotten the being who loved so truly,—and—that she was married to another!

From that moment Aylmer never smiled. His heart was seared; his hopes of happiness were withered. He became a gloomy misanthrope; prowled through the dark passages of the prison by himself; rejected every overture at intimacy; and that which had once been a gentle heart, seemed to lose all sympathy with the human race, and become to all its species wolfish and immitigable.

There stood at one angle of the fortress an ancient tower of immense height, which, for many miles, overlooked the surrounding country. By a winding staircase the top of the building could be gained; the roof was flat, and encircled by a parapet not quite breast-high; and, as the view from the summit was varied and extensive, prisoners, who would go through the labour of ascending seven flights of granite stairs, amused a portion of monotonous captivity by gazing in listless idleness on scenes of busy life, which, to their state of thrall, presented a sad and sickening contrast. This tower was a favourite retreat of Captain Aylmer—and over the parapet of the roof he would lean alone for hours, muttering gloomily to himself, or communing with sad thoughts in silence.

Often, when Claudine was in my arms, I observed, that in passing us, the expression of Aylmer's eyes was absolutely malignant; and I marvelled that a face so innocently beautiful as that of the child of the commandant, did not, like David's harp, exert a gentle influence, and speak peace to the dark spirit of the captive. It was strange also, that, by some curious impulse, Claudine involuntarily recoiled from this melancholy man, and that while he continued in sight, she would cling closely to my bosom as if there she was seeking for protection.

It was the evening of a sultry day, and the hour was come when, by prison regulations, the *détenus* were expected to repair to their respective wards, and there be locked up for the night. On my way to the gallery where I slept, I had to cross an esplanade in front of the governor's house. Claudine noticed me from the window, and ran out to say "good night." I carried her a few paces in my arms, kissed the pretty child, set her down, and received from the fond mother a gracious nod of approbation. The drum ruffled, it was the signal for the prisoners to fall in for roll-call, and I hurried on. Suddenly a piercing shriek arrested me. I turned round; Madame St. Simon had uttered it, and one movement of her arm told the cause. Aylmer was running madly across the esplanade in the direction of the old tower, with Claudine struggling in his embrace.

I dashed after him at headlong speed. He sprang into the building and bounded up the stairs—Claudine's wild screams continued—and I heard her calling "William!" Although Aylmer had cleared one flight of steps before I entered, I overtook him as he jumped with his intended victim on the roof; seized him with one arm, and twisting my hand into his collar, half strangled him, and forced him to drop the child. Upon me the full fury of his rage was turned, and a deadly struggle commenced. In height and weight we were equally matched; but his maniac strength was superhuman. After a desperate conflict of a minute, both came heavily to the ground locked in each other's arms, the madman uppermost.

In turn, he attempted to choke me, and I as desperately resisted. Apparently, the phrenzy of his rage rendered him insensible to pain; for though I caught his hand within my teeth until they met, the maniac would not let go his murderous hold. My strength failed, I found myself fainting, another minute and his triumph would have been complete, but fortunately, an alarm had been given that brought assistance, and three of the gendarmes who formed the prison guard, rushed on the tower roof with drawn swords, tore Aylmer away, and endeavoured to secure him.

With a marvellous effort the madman shook his assailants off, and answered their order to surrender with a laugh of wild derision—"Ha! ha! ha!" he shouted, "you fancy that Aylmer will be a prisoner. Tell your commander, that if that sailor fellow had not marred my scheme of vengeance, his fair girl would have been what in another moment I shall be—a shattered mass of lifeless flesh—and now for the leap of liberty! Ha, ha!" he roared out convulsively, and, with a demon's laugh, before any could lay hands upon him, the maniac vaulted across the platform of the tower, and we heard, some twenty seconds afterwards, the dull sound his lifeless body made as it fell on the paved court below.

I had received some severe bruises in the deadly struggle with the unfortunate madman; and my throat and neck were blackened by the pressure of his knuckles. The gendarmes supported me to the governor's house, wine was given me, and the surgeons of the fortress were called in. From Madame, I received abundantly the ardent tokens of a woman's gratitude in tears and kisses, while

the old republican, her husband, held my hand in his, and, with the speechless eloquence of the eye, thanked me in the silence of a heart too full to give utterance to its feelings, for saving the treasure of his soul.

No wonder then, that with me the rigour of imprisonment was abated, and that I was now a captive but in name. At the governor's table a cover was laid for me, the old man treating me as he would have done a son; and Nina, as his wife was named, regarding me as a brother. Of course I felt the kindness evinced by both; and I might have been supposed to be the happiest captive in the fortress. Yet the yearning after home continued; and many a sigh told Nina and her husband, that notwithstanding their efforts to remove it, "a sickening void was aching in the breast."

"William," said the old republican, as he passed the wine-flask over, "Why have you been so dispirited of late? Is it within my power to make you happier? Have you any thing to ask for?"

I kept silence.

Nina's eyes filled—"Speak, William! speak without reserve."

A blackbird was hanging in his cage beside the open easement.

"What would that captive ask for," I replied, "could he but make known his wishes?"

"I understand you," said the governor; "and what you sigh after is almost the only boon beyond my power of granting. For liberty, the appeal must be made to the highest individual in the empire, and let me at once apprise you, that *there* you would find the ear of merey closed. You seem astonished—listen, and wonder then will cease.

"Our prison regulations are framed, in some degree, according to the system of our general police; and the character and career of those committed to my charge are carefully recorded. To the safe custody of those who have been daring and successful, my attention is especially directed; and while with a nameless man an exchange is effected without much difficulty, he, who if free, might prove a troublesome enemy, is rarely restored to liberty. Your frigate was the terror of our coast. Your captain bore a reputation second to none among the most daring and dangerous of your naval adventurers. You are noted in our prison record as having won your leader's favour, by assisting in some bold exploit that I do not recollect at present. Believe me, my dear boy, it would be hopeless to expect that you, and spirits like yourself, would be allowed an opportunity of harassing the coast of France a second time. I go to make my prison returns to-morrow. Would that I might venture the experiment of getting your name included in the next cartel with any prospect of success! Oh! no, no, it were idle—it were hopeless altogether."

That night when I retired to my cot, I felt the sad conviction that nothing but escape could ever effect my deliverance from the gloomy fortress, in which, it would appear that for life I was fated to remain immured.

The next morning passed in the dull monotony of confinement. I supped with Nina and her child. The commander was to be absent for two days, and when Claudine retired to bed, Madame St. Simon

and I were left together. Latterly I had observed a change in Nina's manner. There was not the same freedom that formerly had marked our intercourse, and, while kinder than ever, I fancied that her gaiety was assumed, and her spirits forced and unnatural. Since the evening of poor Aylmer's suicide, I had been transferred to a small chamber attached to the governor's dwelling, was exempted from attending roll-call, and left consequently with unrestrained liberty, to wander through the prison where I pleased. It struck eleven, the fortress was quiet, the guard set, and I rose, to leave Nina, and repair to my own chamber.

"Good night," I said, "my sister;" for by that name I had been permitted to address the lady of the governor.

"Stop—William," she replied, in evident embarrassment, "I wish to talk with you alone."

I sat down again beside her.

"I have remarked how ardently you are longing after freedom. St. Simon cannot honourably effect it; and a soldier's honour, William,"—

"Should be dearer far to him than life."

"I know you feel the sentiment, and I am convinced that it guides your acts, my brother."

"I hope so, Nina."

"And surely it should guide *mine*—a soldier's wife—a soldier's orphan. I never told you my short history, William."

"No, dear Nina."

"I am the daughter of a sous-lieutenant, who was killed in the Low Countries while I was yet a baby. Dying, he committed me to a comrade's care; and faithfully that comrade discharged what he considered a sacred duty. I was tenderly nursed when young, and when I was old enough, placed as a boarder in a convent. At fifteen, my benefactor's sister, with whom I had resided for the two preceding years, died suddenly. I was thus left, to a certain extent, without protection; and Captain St. Simon offered me the only one a man can give—the sacred one of husband. In our marriage, love could not have had aught to do. He was fifty; I, fifteen. He, for honourable motives had offered to make me his, and I, through gratitude, consented. Five years have passed. All the happiness which could be expected from a union so unequal in point of years, has been mine. If I said I were happy as a wife, I should say what was untrue. But am I not the consort of a brave old man, the mother of a child, in whom all my love is centered?"

"And with these objects of affection, Nina, you must be happy."

"I was," she answered, with a sigh.

"Was? Nina. Nay, nay, *you are*."

"No, William; strong in gratitude to my husband, I feel a woman's weakness in the heart, and love and duty by turns obtain its mastery. William, neither you nor I have yet seen two-and-twenty summers; and at that age, friendship is too close akin to love to be encouraged. My husband dare not assist you to escape—*I dare, and will*. Prudence tells us to separate; and the act that would sully the honest reputation

of the old soldier, is not dishonourable in his wife. Yes—it shall be done. I have already devised means for your deliverance, and when my plan is fully matured, you shall know all. Farewell. Let us not meet in future but in my husband's presence." She stooped her cheek to me, I kissed it, next moment she quitted the supper-room, and I returned to my chamber, to marvel how much strength and weakness, principle and passion, can be united in a woman's heart!

The following day the governor returned. I, as usual, took my place at the dinner-table, and Nina met me with smiles. She seemed perfectly at ease, I, also, exerted myself to be cheerful, and none would have suspected that secret love was lurking in the bosoms of us both.

"I would that you had witnessed the review," said the old soldier. "It was, indeed, a splendid spectacle. And the Emperor looked so delighted as the troops filed past! Well he might, a nobler or more perfect *corps d'armée* never was collected. Egad, the sight warmed this old blood again; and I think there's stuff in me for another campaign. Will you, William, take charge of Madame and Claudine?" said the commandant, laughingly. I made some indifferent reply—Nina's eye met mine—it seemed to say, the charge would have been a dangerous one.

We heard the inner gate of the fortress open, a horse's feet clattered along the pavement, and, in a short time, a *chasseur à cheval* presented himself, and delivered a despatch to the commandant.

The moment the seal was broken the old man's eye turned to me. "It is," he said, "an answer to the memorial I handed to the Emperor yesterday. I petitioned for your liberty, William; and stated, in as warm language as I could, the grounds on which I asked the favour. I know, even from the promptness of the reply, that my application has been rejected. Well, it is only what I was prepared for. Let us read the terms of the refusal. Ha! I know the handwriting; it is that of my old comrade, Duroc.

"*I am desired, by his Majesty the Emperor, to acknowledge the receipt of a petition from Captain St. Simon. Its prayer, that the English sailor, William Rawlings, shall be set at liberty, is hereby peremptorily rejected.*"

"I thought so," said the commandant with a sigh, as he let the paper fall upon the floor. A deep and painful silence succeeded, while Claudine picked the letter up and handed it to her mother.

"Read it, Nina—we know the worst."

The lady complied, taking up the perusal of the document at the point where her husband had stopped. "But from the moment this order comes to hand, give the gallant Englishman the enclosed bill, and let the preserver of the soldier's child receive freedom from the hand of her father." See! the initial of the great Napoleon is annexed,—and a note for five hundred francs! You are free, William. May Heaven's blessings light upon our gracious Emperor!" And Nina flung herself upon my breast. She wept—were her tears those of love or joy?

I must be brief, Julia. By the first cartel, I came back to England—repaired to our native village—heard, for the first time, the sad

tidings of your elopement—found my father living—my uncle dead—and learned that, for many months, the poor quarter-master had been in mourning, for his son. To the broken-hearted old man the news was cautiously communicated that he was not so desolate as he believed himself. One child was restored to him as from the dead, and tidings were heard of the wanderer. Instantly, we set out to seek the lost one, and, thank Heaven! our search has not been vain. Yes, Julia, our once happy cottage shall again be the home of peace; and ere the sun sets, a father's blessing shall seal the pardon of his returning child. And now, before we commence our journey, I have to compensate the officer for his trouble; and, indeed, without his assistance, I should have scarcely found you out. Was it not a strange fatality, that objects so different as those that brought the runner and myself from England, should have led us to the same point?

He said, and left the room. What occurred then and there between the fosterer and fair fugitive, may be readily imagined. Their troth was mutually interchanged; and, "resolved in future to do right," subject to a father's approbation, the lady consented at the expiration of a year to commit matrimony a second time, and share the fortunes of Mark Antony O'Toole.

As the travellers branched off by the roads which intersected each other in front of the little hostelry, their appearance, and the objects of their present pursuits, might be taken as a *tableau vivant* of what life is—of what man aims at. By one road, the sailor and his sister were hastening to restore comfort to an afflicted heart—by another, the Jew, in charge of the officer of justice, was being conveyed to that home of felony—a jail. The third road tended to scenes of glory; and thither the soldier was hastening after seducing the student to quit the cloister for the field. The fourth route the fosterer took at chance, and reckless whither it might lead to, there Mark Antony determined to recommence his wanderings; and "the captain" having discovered that there was another who, for a time at least, was bent on taking the world as it came, at once proposed to form a travelling copartnership.

The reader may find out hereafter, that had Mark Antony declined the offer of the rat-catcher, he might have pointed a moral, by "going further and faring worse." Indeed, it would have been well for me had I the good luck of falling into as honest company, and short as the succeeding chapter is, I think it will establish that fact.

CHAPTER XV.

LIFE IN LONDON.

“ A plague upon this London ! I shall have no luck in it.”

“ Your town’s a damned good-for-nothing town,
I wish I never had come into it.”

THE WEST INDIAN.

IN one of those half-forgotten modes of transport, a sailing packet, denominated the Eclipse, I departed from the Pigeon House, and with a fair and steady breeze landed at Holyhead, after a short passage of nine hours. In those days this feat was accounted respectable ; for in their transits from the emerald isle to the land of shopkeepers, it was no uncommon circumstance for ill-starred gentlemen to pass so many days and nights at sea, as to induce a belief that, in mistake, they had booked themselves in the Flying Dutchman, and consequently, had the pleasing prospect of sailing to eternity. I was still further fortunate in securing a seat in the London mail. In due time I reached the modern Babylon, transferred my person and effects from the White Horse Cellar to a Bond-street hotel, and there, for a limited period, established my household gods.

At this memorable epoch of my history, my first visit to the great metropolis, life in London was very different to what it is at present. Theatres were frequented by the upper classes, and Vauxhall was in all its glory. An English singer was then listened to ; it was not considered disreputable to keep a native servant ; and without loss of caste, a lady might submit her head to the curling irons of an *artiste*, who had been actually born and indoctrinated within sound of Bow bell. The clubs were few and exclusive. People resided in lodgings and hotels adapted to their ranks and pockets ; in their mode of life a gentlemanly consistency was maintained : and a man who in noontide was the occupant of an edifice, erected with the costly expense formerly bestowed upon a palace, would not, on an alarm of fire at midnight, have been unkennelled from the back attic of a stay-maker, tenanted for the moderate consideration of three shillings and sixpence, “ paid weekly and in advance.” Indeed, a sort of John Bull-ish principle pervaded society at large. If men staked large sums on questionable events, it was generally expected that they would pay, should their speculations prove unfortunate. The guards were frequently relieved to music not Rossini’s. Tailors who had never seen the Palais Royale, received instructions in bookkeeping from divers of the nobility ; and a bootmaker—tell it not in Gath—was considered absolutely fashion-

able, albeit the unhappy man was afflicted with the desperate patronymic of O'Shaughnessy.

Indeed, at this period of English history, when young and old France were about to retire before Lord Wellington, the tone of society was anti-continental. The aristocracy conversed in their native tongue; meats, as Heaven sent them, might be seen frequently at the table of a peer; and there was a vulgar prejudice against being poisoned, even though the *artiste* were warranted true *Parisien*. Saltations, happily unremembered, but bearing as it is believed, a distant affinity to the vulgar affair now termed *contre-danse*, were extensively perpetrated; and persons engaged in the same, instead of being elegantly paralytic, moved as if their limbs were controllable. Then, the refinement of the *valse* was undiscovered; and if a *cavalier* ventured to clasp a lady in his arms—Lombard-street to a China orange!—he would have been kicked by husband, father, or brother, out of the room incontinently.

Assisted by my father's letter, the great object of my journey was happily accomplished. Within three weeks the exchange I sought for was effected; and I was in due form gazetted to a lieutenancy in an old regiment cantoned for the winter on the Agueda.

At the time I visited the capital, the position a stranger held in society was generally estimated by the quarter he inhabited; and before I started from Dublin, I took counsel touching "the whereabouts" of a suitable abode. Mr. Pryme recommended some place with a "man's head," in a lane near Crutched Friars; while Captain Forester, a castle aid-de-camp, denounced the same, declaring it to be only a place fit for a bagman, and recommended Long's or Stevens's. Well! it was seventeen years since Mr. Pryme had been in town, and probably Crutched Friars was not as fashionable now as it might have been formerly. Captain Forester infested London every season, and consequently Captain Forester must be right. To Bond-street accordingly I drove. Alas, how blindly people speculate upon events! Had I driven to the "man's head" in Crutched Friars, I should have been safer by a hundred—"and no mistake."

The intervals between my visits to the Horse Guards were occupied in exploring the capital from Tyburn Turnpike to Tower Hill; and by singular good fortune, I formed an acquaintance with a gentleman to whom London and all its wonders were familiar. He kindly undertook to play bear-leader for "the nonce;" and under the guidance of Colonel Santonier, I traversed "the mighty mass of brick, and stone, and mortar," even from Dan to Beersheba.

The Colonel was an emigrant who, for political opinions, had been exiled from "la belle France." He was a royalist connected with half the nobility of the ancient regime, his address was good, his disposition plastic and companionable. He had seen the world extensively, and therefore was the better qualified to introduce a neophyte like me upon the stage of life. On quitting his native country he had been accompanied by his sister. She was young, pretty, and accomplished; and, as the Colonel declared, "the most artless being in the world." I never saw relatives more attached. They never met or parted with-

out a kiss; and yet, one thing struck me as remarkable, there was not the slightest family likeness between them.

Is it surprising that an acquaintance so valuable and agreeable, ripened into a friendship of such ardour that Damon and Pythias might have been jealous? Most of my time was spent in the society of the Colonel and his fair sister; and as I had jobbed a buggy, sometimes I drove my friend about town, or exhibited Mademoiselle Adelaide in Rotten Row. Santonier had few acquaintances, and when I had Madame by my side, I often remarked that very impudent looks were directed towards the lady. Once, too, when we were brought to a dead halt by the break-down of a coal-waggon, I heard a fashionable scoundrel observe to his companion as they passed—"Lord, Frank, what a flat that spoon is!" *Flat!—spoon!* Hang it,—neither term surely could apply to me!

I think, had it lasted only another week, our friendship would have been registered in heaven. We dined here and there, made short excursions out of town, our amicable arrangements were perfect—for Monsieur Santonier placed such implicit confidence in my honour and discretion, that Adelaide was considered in perfect security when with me. She, sweet girl, was so inartificial that she even owned she felt herself *minus* a heart,—and had I been consigned to the gallows, I verily believe the Colonel would have borne me company, and requested to be accommodated with another rope.

It was probably a delicate sensitiveness respecting Adelaide, which made Santonier so very particular as to those who should be admitted to his house. With one exception, I was an exclusive visitor; for in Jermyn-street I never met any person but a nice old gentleman with green spectacles and a bald head, called the Baron Francheti; and every night he added himself to the party. We had coffee, played cards, and Adelaide was my partner, although, sweet girl, I was literally her ruin. I held bad hands, introduced spades when I should lead diamonds, of course we always lost, Adelaide never murmured, but handed the money to the Baron without a reflection on my unskilful play. What could I do? Nothing but present an indemnity in the morning; and she graciously approved the taste of my selection, and condescended to accept the offering.

On the day I was gazetted, in company with some other aspirants for military glory, we dined together to celebrate our promotion, and, as became soldiers of promise, got drunk afterwards. Some managed to reach their hotels, some stopped short in divers watchhouses; while I, under the guidance of the star of love, headed my course instinctively to my lady's bower in Jermyn-street. As usual, the family party were at home. We played; for I remember something about overturning a lamp upon the card cloth. In a short time I dropped off the chair, was trundled home in a coach, put to bed, and remained in deep repose, until daylight and a thundering head-ache brought their pleasant reminiscences. I looked to the table: no property was there, except a couple of shillings and an empty note-case. Before I had gone to dinner, I changed my last fifty, and stocked my pocket-book with the produce. A pleasant position! Out of two

hundred pounds advanced me by the Quaker, not a sous left, and the hotel bill and half my appointments still unpaid!

I never had known a pecuniary difficulty before. What was to be done? In London, and without a guinea! Should I write to my father, and tell him that before I had been three months upon the world, I had despised his admonitions, contracted debts, and gambled away the means given me to discharge them? I had only to own the truth, and I should be immediately relieved—but to *me*, how bitter would be the humiliation—to *him*, how painful the disclosure! Hours passed: I cursed my folly; but still I could devise no plan to remedy it; and my brain was teeming with wild expedients, when a tap was heard at the door, and in glided my London Palinurus, the Colonel. In his look there was nothing consolatory, for the expression of his countenance was gloomy, as if he had been “performing” at a funeral. He sate down at my bed-side, took my hand in his, looked unutterable things, and then, in a broken voice, inquired tenderly after his “dear friend’s health.”

“My health, Colonel, is not affected, beyond a drunken head-ache; but on my conduct I cannot look back without self-reproach and shame.”

The brother of Adelaide shrugged his shoulders to his ears, and then delivered himself of a speech, which seemed intended rather to be exculpatory of himself, than consolatory to me. According to his account, I would play madly on, Adelaide in despair quitted the room, he remonstrated—all to no purpose; for the demon of play had entered into me, and play I would. I lost the contents of my pocket-book, and “the *lectle* note of hand to the Baron.”

“Note of hand to the Baron!” I exclaimed, springing bolt upright in the bed.

It was absolutely true; for a billet was brought me at the moment by the waiter, in which the nice old gentleman affectionately requested “to know how I had rested the preceding night, with a casual inquiry at what bank my note for £120 should be presented?”

For a time I could not believe the evidence of my eyes, but read the Baron’s billet again and again. At last, I began to fancy I had been duped. In a moment, a flood of light poured upon my mind, a thousand trifles were recollected, and my worst suspicions were confirmed.

The Colonel remarked a change of countenance that threatened an explosion, and, pleading a forgotten engagement, he took a hurried leave.

I rose, dressed, wrote twenty letters, and tore them; then ordered my gig, drove down two streets, and returned. I passed a miserable day—ate no dinner—drank brandy and water extensively; and retired to a private room, in a frame of mind which a demon might find pity for, to write letters. Write letters! Pshaw! merely blot paper.

Twilight fell—my brain was half on fire—I rejected candles—the gloom of evening was best suited for the bitter musings of a mind like mine. I gazed from the window, objects passed, but I saw none of them. I heard the door open—a figure stood beside me. I looked

carelessly up—it was Adelaide. In thought I was connecting her agency with the villany of her brother and the Baron—proofs against her appeared strong, and I had set her down a guilty thing. No wonder that I received her coldly; and my frigid civility seemed to wound her more than actual rudeness.

“You are changed,” said the Colonel’s sister: “had I visited you once, my reception would have been very different.”

“It might,” I said, coldly. “I did not then believe that the Colonel was a scoundrel, the Baron a rogue, and yourself—”

“What?” she inquired.

“Why—a very convenient associate.”

“I can remain here but a few minutes. The errand is urgent—the time short.” She took a small packet from her bosom, where it had been concealed, laid it on the table, and then proceeded. “To a certain extent, I admit your charges. The statement of your being plundered is correct, and the description of the plunderers is true; the Colonel was a fencing-master first, a cheat and thief afterwards. The Baron, I believe, a swindler from his cradle. Of me—ask not *what I was*—know what I am—a fallen woman—one who, in the common course of crime, has sunk by degrees, and at last, at twenty-one, become the confederate of thieves and ruffians. Oh Heaven! if women only knew what fearful penalties hang upon one lapse from virtue, how few would fall!”

She wept. The tears were irresistible.

“Adelaide,” I said, “you must forgive me. I have been severe—my losses have annoyed me. What is that parcel you desire me to take?”

“Your watch—I purloined it.”

“Good Heaven! impossible!”

“No, no, O’Halloran—it was only to secure it. Hear me—a few minutes, and we part for ever. I am a woman—a lost one—but still my heart is not altogether callous. I saw you—you were young and unsuspecting, and became an easy victim. I watched the course of spoliation—you imagined that I lost money, and generously made me a recompense. Am I forgiven?” she added. “And *must I leave thee?*”

“Not on my account, I trust,” responded a voice, deep as that of Lablache, at our elbow.

We started—Adelaide hurried from the room—I remained, so did the stranger—Mr. Hartley!

CHAPTER XVI.

A SECOND DELIVERANCE.

“*Stockwell*. So, so, you seem disordered, Mr. Belcour.

Belcour. Disordered, sir! Why did I ever quit the soil in
which I grew? ”

THE WEST INDIAN.

For a minute the father of Isidora and I preserved a dignified silence. The stern displeasure his countenance evinced was not encouraging, and I looked the silliest young gentleman imaginable. The *contretemps* of this evening visit was most provoking. I had never done the sentimental in my life but twice, and on both occasions Mr. Hartley had managed to drop in. Turning his dark and searching eye on mine, he drily inquired, “Whether it would be considered an impertinence on his part, if he asked who the lady might be whom he had very unintentionally put to flight?”

I mentioned her name, not forgetting to announce also the nobility of her descent; but had it been in direct line from Charlemagne or the Conqueror, it would not have propitiated Mr. Hartley, if one could form any opinion from the inauspicious “humph!” with which he received the intelligence.

“And, my good sir, how long have you known this interesting personage?” he continued.

“Since my arrival in London,” I replied.

“A marvellous short time to ripen friendship to such full maturity! And what event might have called forth that storm of sobs and kisses which I so unluckily interrupted?”

A contemptuous sneer accompanied the inquiry that stung my pride, and I answered warmly, that “I considered that he had neither authority nor interest to pry into matters with which he was wholly unconcerned.”

“No right, certainly,” he observed, “excepting that which former services may be fairly supposed to warrant.”

“Mr. Hartley,” I replied, “I freely admit that I am indebted to you for hospitality, and also for deliverance from a disagreeable, and possibly a dangerous restraint; but surely one who rigidly interdicts inquiry into aught connected with himself, should also respect the secrets of another.”

“I acknowledge the justice of your remark,” said my quondam host; “and the noble *demoiselle*, who hangs upon the neck of the acquaintance of a fortnight, discharging volleys of sighs, ‘hot as a furnace,’ shall remain incognita. You own yourself indebted to me for former obligations; you have now a power of returning them; and I come here to ask a favour.”

“It is granted, sir,” I replied, warmly, “even before ’tis known.”

“Stop, stop,” he returned; “it is a request that is too frequently refused.”

“Name it, sir.”

“It is the loan of money I solicit. The period brief; the repayment certain.”

I felt my face redden, and could not find words to answer.

“Before I name the sum that I would borrow,” pursued Mr. Hartley, without appearing to notice my confusion, “and as the loan must be regulated by the state of your own finances, let me inquire what money you brought to town. Men coming to London are generally well provided.”

What a question from a stranger! Surely I should resent it as impertinent. But no—the man appeared gifted with some influence that bent me to his will—and I muttered, that when I embarked for England my purse had contained two hundred pounds.

“Faith, not a bad supply. Could you with convenience spare me half?”

I groaned, and shook my head.

“Fifty, then?”

Another and a more desponding shake.

“Well, be it forty. No answer. Thirty—twenty—ten! No answer yet? Then is my request refused? So much for the lip-gratitude of Mr. Hector O’Halloran!”

I thought my brain would madden, as the humiliating position to which my folly had reduced me, was thus rudely exposed by this tormenting supplicant. I tried to speak—’twas useless; words would not come. Another minute passed—and Mr. Hartley’s eyes were turned on mine, as if he would have read the secret agony of spirit which his importunity had caused.

“Well,” continued he, “should I solicit five paltry pounds—would that small assistance be refused?”

The question was torturous. My voice at last found utterance. I raised my eyes, and looked full at Mr. Hartley. How well that look betrayed my secret sufferings—the bitterest a man can know—those of self-contempt and conscious humiliation!

“Had I hundreds, Mr. Hartley, they should be placed freely at your disposal, and I should feel too proud in having the power of convincing you that I have not forgotten kindnesses. I want the means—for on yonder table lies all the money I am master of.”

“What!” he exclaimed, “only a few shillings left of two hundred pounds?”

“’Tis true, by Heaven!”

“Then, sir, are you lower than the wretch who asks for alms upon the road-side. You are a pauper by vice; he a beggar through misfortune. Listen, boy, and learn how deep is your degradation. A man to whom you were indebted for good services seeks your assistance, and whatever might have been your wishes to render it, folly has placed the means beyond your reach; and, to a noble spirit, how painful is the inability of returning a former obligation! And for what

did you deprive yourself of the power of being generous? To lavish money upon knaves and gamblers—or, still more wretched infatuation, —to win the heartless smiles of beauty?”

He paused, as if to observe the effect of his reproof, and one glance attested its influence. In my agitated countenance the inward workings of the breast were visible; for I had never felt the agony of conscious shame and self-reproach till now. No wonder that under such feelings, this singular personage elicited step by step, every particular touching my connexion with Santonier and his confederates. There are times when men feel their positions so intolerable, that, with despairing recklessness, they court no concealment, but place their offendings in their worst light. Such feelings were mine; and, undeterred by the strongly-expressed scorn and displeasure of Mr. Hartley, I brought the confessions of my folly to a close.

“My words have pained you?—it is all the better,” continued my stern monitor, “as it affords reasonable ground for hoping that the error lies in the head, and not in the heart. Vice has no blush; and, when the cheek reddens at the recollection of past imprudence, it may be expected that future follies will be eschewed. But how could you have been plundered so unsuspectingly? I only marvel that the veriest novice ever loosed upon a vicious town, could not in one day’s acquaintance have detected the barefaced swindling of your noble friends.”

“You seem to know them?” I inquired.

“Yes; and for that profitable knowledge I own myself indebted to Mr. Hector O’Halloran.”

“To me, sir?” I exclaimed.

“Ay, sir, to you.—Have you forgotten my letter? and have I not apprised you that every action of your life is under the strictest *surveillance*? With all your movements, from the very night you entered London, I have been acquainted; and it is not wonderful that I should take some interest in ascertaining who were the intimate associates of a man, whose fortunes are to be made or marred by me.”

What a strange gentleman this Mr. Hartley was! He seemed to have selected me as a sort of shuttlecock wherewith to amuse himself at his own discretion, while with my future fortunes he modestly announced a determination, in Yankee parlance, to “go the whole hog.” Strange that I should passively submit to be thus painfully hectorred by a stranger; and, with every inclination, want moral courage to rebel! The man was a mystery—he appeared to have a perfect knowledge of my actions, added to the gift of ubiquity. Did I ask an impertinent question, or perpetrate a kiss, he was sure to be close at my elbow. Was it not devilish hard, that a man could not commit his fooleries—as Sir Lucius O’Trigger wished to fight—“in peace and quietness?” and, when he had lost his last guinea, that a gentleman should drop in, to deliver himself of an admonition first, and require the loan of a hundred afterwards? I had got myself into “a regular fix,”—and that seemed the signal for Mr. Hartley to appear at the moment when I wished him “five fathom under the Rialto.”

One thing was indisputable—I had been sadly fooled. Circumstances smooth down misfortunes; and I have heard that men, who would be

driven to desperation at being cheated by a thimble-rigger, feel it only an agreeable kind of sorrow in being swindled by a peer.—I wished to find out the real character of my plunderers; and it would be an unspeakable satisfaction to be certain that I had been “cleaned out” by the descendants of some “baron bold” who had tilted on the field of Agincourt, or at Pavia “lost every thing but honour.” Adelaide had described them as low-born swindlers, but she might be mistaken. Timidly, therefore, I hazarded the inquiry, whether “Mr. Hartley knew the exact circle of society which Santonier and his companions appertained to?”

“That question,” replied Mr. Hartley, “is a puzzler; for in every grade, from the highest to the lowest, you will find distinctions. The colonel’s birth may be as noble as he insinuates it to be. He was an *enfant trouvé*, and in time, the foundling rose to be a valet. In the Revolution, his master lost his head, and Santonier his place; he next became a professional gambler; “a master of fence” afterwards—and lastly, the *chevalier d’industrie* reached the climax of rascality, and acted as a double spy. The old gentleman, in green spectacles, has been all his life *attaché* to “a hell.” The lady’s history can only be learned at the Palais Royal—and I doubt whether it would repay the trouble of a research. Although the struggle may be painful, still it is best to prepare you for the trial. A warrant from the Alien Office has directed your amiable acquaintances to withdraw—and before to-morrow’s sun rises, the Santoniers will have departed. An hour since the Colonel and I had a satisfactory conversation. This money he requested me to deliver to you.” (Here Mr. Hartley gave me some bank notes.) “And, as to this security, it is now mine—and may I inquire, are you prepared to discharge it?”

I took the writing,—it was a promissory note bearing my signature, and covenanting to pay “one hundred and fifty pounds at sight!”

“Are you prepared to discharge this honourable engagement?” he demanded, with affected seriousness.

I shook my head.

“Then we may as well cancel it at once;” and as he spoke he tore the paper to pieces.

“Said I not well, when I told you, that on me the colour of your future life depended? Remember this second deliverance—one, to which a week’s imprisonment in the haunt of drunken outlaws were a mere nothing. But no more of this; we have other matters now to occupy us. I want you for an hour or two.”

He took his hat—desired me to follow him. I felt myself a mere puppet in his hands—bowed assent—and we left the hotel together.

And where was Isidora? The question was often on my lips; but my companion was a gentleman of such explosive temperament, that I dare not hazard the inquiry. He called a coach—I stepped in after him, obedient as a poodle—and, according to order, honest Jarvey rumbled his “leathern conveniency” to some caravanserai in the city, as much excluded from the Court Circular as Mr. Pryme’s favourite *hostelrie*—the house with “the man’s head” in Crutched Friars.

As we rolled along the streets Mr. Hartley’s manner assumed a

different tone, for he talked to me with the familiarity of old acquaintanceship, and never for a moment recurred to my recent peccadillos. We spoke of the engrossing subjects of the day, and on every topic he displayed that peculiar knowledge, which one who has been long intimate with mankind only can acquire. Keen and correct as his observations were, they seemed to be those of a man who had quarrelled with the world; and, inexperienced as I was, I set him down to be one whose past career had been unfortunate, or whose future prospects were gloomy and uncertain.

When we entered the hotel Mr. Hartley led the way to the apartments he occupied. They were situated at the extremity of a long corridor, and isolated from the other chambers of the inn. In an ante-room my old acquaintance Dominique was seated. Although his fanciful dress was discarded for a plain blue livery, I easily recognised my sable friend; and the negro's intelligent countenance brightened as he saw me, and offered a silent welcome. His master introduced me into a drawing-room, desired me to be seated, apologized for a short absence, and left me to myself.

How strange—during our long interview and drive, not a word of Isidora!—I had once asked simply if she were well, and he had replied in the affirmative so briefly, that it seemed to preclude any further inquiries touching his fair daughter. I examined the apartment—no tokens of female occupancy presented themselves—it was like the common-place chamber of every inn, and only remarkable for the numerous trunks and boxes it contained; and to judge from the extent of the baggage, the traveller to whom it appertained was preparing for a final flitting. The various packages had Mr. Hartley's name attached; and hence, I concluded that to Ireland he had bidden a long farewell. But brief space was permitted for solitary fancyings: the door opened,—my quondam host entered accompanied by a lady,—and one look told me that she was Isidora.

When I advanced and took her hand, she coloured to the brow, but still my reception was a kind one. Meeting under different circumstances, we both felt less embarrassment than when I had been first presented to her; and I thought I could perceive something in Mr. Hartley's manner, which appeared to give encouragement to our closer intimacy. Occasionally he alluded to my last escapade in dry sarcastic observations, only intelligible to ourselves; but his manner satisfied me, that however foolish I might have appeared, still I had not fallen in his estimation. Supper ended, Isidora withdrew; we parted with "a fair good night;" and Mr. Hartley and I were left alone.

My host looked at the door to see that it was closed, then filled his glass, and pushed the flask across to me.

"Hector," he commenced.

I started; for it was the first time he had ever addressed me without prefixing a formal *mister* to my name.

"I perceive," he continued, "that you are surprised to hear me speak to you with little ceremony. Did you but know the secret history of him who sits beside you, that wonder would be removed.

The time for that is yet to come ; and you must expect my confidence only as circumstances may require, and your own conduct shall deserve it. I told you that your fortunes were controlled by me ; and on that assurance you may place the firmest reliance. Listen, and you may learn much concerning your own family—more than you have yet known—and, afterwards, I will explain the reason that made me thus communicative.”

I bowed, and remained a silent listener.

“ You had an uncle. He was thrown upon the world unwisely when a boy, left to his own guidance, and subjected to more temptation than youth can conquer. Need I tell you, who have learned the lesson practically, how easily intimacies are formed, which, when unchecked, prove ruinous ? By the ill-judging liberality of his father, young Clifford obtained the means to follow the bent of his inclination. His temper was ardent—his passions strong—he had no friend to counsel—no Mentor to direct—his life became a whirlwind of dissipation—and with rapid strides he hurried to destruction. Too late, the film was removed from his parent’s eyes ; and unfortunately, the steps he took to stay that course of folly in his child, which himself had first encouraged, were injudicious. Money was suddenly withheld ; could the wild youth’s career be thus arrested ? No ; false villains surrounded him, who pointed out easy means by which a large supply was raised, only, when obtained, to be wasted upon knaves, or lavished with reckless prodigality on those whose beauty had been their bane. Oh ! woman—thou art a blessing or a curse—and as both, this withered heart has proved thee !”

Mr. Hartley sprang from his chair—strode across the room—stopped at the window—and then, as if he had subdued a violent outbreak of secret feeling, he resumed his seat and thus continued :

“ A vicious career soon finds its termination. The mode by which young Clifford had hitherto obtained supplies at last became unavailing, and criminal means were cautiously proposed by his villanous confederates. From these the youth recoiled with horror—his guardian angel had not yet deserted him ; and, like another prodigal, he half determined to fall at his father’s feet, and ask him to bless and pardon. That blessing was ready had he sought it—but the moment of penitence had passed. One, with an angel form and demon heart, had thrown her spells around him ; and all that remained of moral principle, she, the foul temptress, gradually extinguished. In a desperate emergency young Clifford committed forgery, affixing to securities of immense amount, his father’s name. In due time the criminal act was discovered, and to the agonized parent one alternative alone was left—to pay an enormous sum to the villains who had demoralized him, or denounce his child a felon, and consign him to a felon’s doom. He sacrificed the money. Did the mischief end there ? No ;—the misguided young man was now the victim of a gang of swindlers—the puppet of a cold-blooded courtesan. Deeper and deeper they involved him, and at last, when their own detection was impending, they made him a scape-goat to their safety, and denounced their dupe for crimes which they had themselves committed, and of which he, poor wretch, was guiltless.

The fallen have no friends ; and your uncle was obliged to evade the penalty which the law would have then exacted, by abandoning the country of his birth, to seek ignominious safety in a foreign land. There—he lived and died—a nameless fugitive. Heaven knows in what misery the remnant of his few and evil days were passed,—or, when the hour of deliverance came, under what fearful circumstances death claimed a willing victim.”

Mr. Hartley paused ; the story of my unfortunate relative had affected me, and I expressed strong sympathy for the offender.

“ Well,” continued he, “ it is probable that his punishment was greater than his crime ; but of that none but himself could tell. To proceed :—from the moment young Clifford quitted England, his father, by a mental exertion that almost appears incredible, seemed to forget that he had ever had a son, and centered all his hopes and his affections in the child still spared him ; and your mother became the object that he lived for. There, too, it was decreed that his hopes and plans should be disappointed. He had resolved to ally her nobly ; but his air-built castle was levelled to the earth. She eloped with a soldier of fortune ; and worse still, in the estimation of one so deeply bigoted to his own faith, the husband she had selected was a Protestant.

As he had banished from his heart the memory of a guilty son, so, also, he appears to have forgotten that a daughter, whose sole offence was love, has often sued for pardon, and sued in vain. Dead, apparently, to human passions, and wrapped in gloomy reveries of religion without any thing of its charities, he mistakes ascetic indifference for submission to that Will which rules the fate of mortals. In every thing he is directed by his confessor, and report affirms that he has bequeathed his fortune and estates to the uses of the Church of Rome. I have heard that you bear a striking likeness to your mother. Could you but meet this cold old man, possibly some spark of kindred love might still be latent in the heart, and in the living child, he might happily be forced to recollect the long-estranged mother. But to obtain that meeting is the difficulty. Surrounded by priests and spies, your very name, if known, would bar you from his presence. I have taken measures to ascertain what are the old man's habits, and how an interview might be accomplished. The experiment may fail—but still it is worth the trial.

“ Why have I enlarged on what you knew partially already ?—the fall of William Clifford. Only to show, by startling truths, that imprudence is too generally the path to crime ; and that your career, unless arrested as it was by me, might have ended fatally as your uncle's did.”

“ Never !” I exclaimed, passionately ; “ a fool I might be—a villain, never.”

“ And so thought young Clifford once—but no more of this. I feel convinced that your fancy for play and dangerous acquaintances is ended.”

“ Indeed, Mr. Hartley, I see my folly in its true colours.”

“ And now for bed,” he replied. “ You to your hotel, and I to my chamber. Let me see you early to-morrow. Should business have called me from home, you will find Isidora, and her sable genius, Dominique.”

“ You never travel far without your black attendant.” I remarked.

“ He never leaves us ; and for twenty years, amidst all its storm and sunshine, he has followed my fortunes with devoted fidelity. Next to that of my child, the greatest loss Heaven could inflict would be to take from me that faithful negro. He comes.—Show Mr. O’Halloran down stairs.—Once more, good night.” He shook me warmly by the hand. “ One word more, friend Hector,” he added with a smile ; “ you need not lose time in a visit to Jermyn-street—the birds have flown !”

It was past midnight, if you could believe the watchman ; and as I walked slowly westward, and thought on the events of the few last hours, I doubted their actual reality. The strange and quick succession in which they followed, seemed like the wanderings of a dream. A second time had I been delivered from a critical position by a person, two months ago a stranger—and yet one, who appeared to have dropped upon the earth, for the especial purpose of looking after me. I slept—many a vision passed “ in shadowy review.”—but one, more brilliant than the rest, was ever before “ my mind’s eye.”—Mr. Hartley, the genius of my good fortune, and Isidora, its bright reward.

I have said already, that the destinies of my foster-brother and myself were intimately united. Mark Antony left my father’s house to join me in Dublin—the hand of fate had interposed—and on this eventful night, while I reposed at Stevens’s, my *alter ego* was “ taking his rest” in a back attic, two pair up, in a ramification of the Seven Dials—a safe and agreeable domicile, to which his friend, the rat-catcher, had introduced him. A cheaper lodging might have been certainly obtained ; but this was quiet and select. From slates to cellar there were but seven families in the house—“ and the beauty of it was,” as Shemus Rhua remarked with triumphant satisfaction, ‘ every soul of them was Irish.’”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ROBBERY OF TIM MALEY.

“ My father, the deacon, wrought him his first hose. Odd, I’m thinking deacon Threeplye, the rape-spinner, will twist him his last cravat. Ay, ay, puir Robin is in a fair way o’ being hanged.”

ROB ROY.

AFTER the “ sweet sorrow” of parting with the *cantatrice*, the fosterer and his companion, as if striving to leave care behind, pushed forward vigorously on the road ; and at sunset, the steeple of the village where they had determined to remain for the night, was visible from the high ground they were crossing. Never were fellow-travellers

in more opposite moods ; Mark Antony, melancholy as "a lover's lute"—the ratcatcher,

"Brisk as a bee, light as a fairy."

And yet the matter might have been easily accounted for—the one had parted with a mistress—no wonder, therefore, that he, poor fellow, was sad enough ; the other was levanting from a wife—consequently he was merry, "and small blame to him," as they say in Ireland.

"Well, upon my conscience, Mark, *astore*,"* said Shemus Rhua, breaking a silence of five minutes, "ye're a pleasant companion this evening, if a man didn't care what he said."

The fosterer answered with a sigh.

"Why," continued the ratcatcher, "were you married, like myself, you couldn't be much more miserable. Arrah ! what the plague has come over ye, man ? Can't ye take things asy like me ? Hav'n't I left an affectionate wife behind ?—and ye see I bear it like a Christian. I was once in love myself, and, as the sergeant's song goes, found nothing for it but whisky. So, there's a bridge, and here's the cruiskeeine ; we'll sit down upon the wall for a while, take a drop to kill grief, and just inquire afterwards, where the devil we are going to."

As he spoke, the worthy captain unclosed his goat-skin knapsack—produced a flask and capacious drinking-cup, supplied the latter sparingly from the stream, completing it amply from the cruiskeeine—and after swallowing the larger moiety himself, he transferred "love's panacea" to his desponding comrade.

"That's the thing," exclaimed Shemus Rhua, as the fosterer emptied the horn ; "and now, Mr. O'Toole, will you tell me where I'm bound for ?"

"Upon my soul," returned the fosterer, "I don't know where I'm going to myself—nor do I care."

"There's two of us so," observed the captain.

"I think I'll head towards England," said the fosterer.

"Well," returned the captain, "I'll go there too."

"Push on to London afterwards, and try an Irishman's luck."

"Right," exclaimed the ratcatcher ; "and I'll stick to you like a bur."

"But what could you do there, copteeine ?"

"Ask me rather what could I not do ! Are there any brats, rats, pointers, or old women to be found ?"

"Enough of all, no doubt, Master Shemus."

"Then leave Shemus Rhua alone to make out life."

"Well, captain, if you will venture, we'll share the purse while it holds a shilling—and when the last is gone—why, it's only mounting the cockade."

"For a gentleman like me," returned the ratcatcher with a smile, "who had the honour to hold a commission, it would be beneath him to enlist ; but, *mona-sin-dhoul* ! wherever you go, Mark, I'll follow like your shadow."

* *Anglicè*—darling.

“Come along,” said the fosterer, “night is falling, and the road, they say, is unsafe after dark. They robbed the mail last week.”

“They’ll not rob us,” returned the ratcatcher. “Where hard blows and light purses are only to be got, people who understand their business, never trouble themselves with such customers.”

“Well, Shemus, you know best; for you’re foully belied, if there was a handier gentleman out in ninety-eight.”

“I never robbed, if robbing you can call it,” returned the captain, “but twice; and if every thing I did besides sate as light upon my conscience, the devil a knee I need crook to Father Ulic M‘Shane.”

“And who *did* you rob?” inquired the ratcatcher’s companion.

“A miser, and the king—God bless his majesty! I should have spared him—for he’s a dacent ould gentleman, or my head would have been on a spike at Castlebar!”*

“Well, Shemus, let us hear both exploits.”

“When I robbed the king, it was only taking saddle-bags from an honest tax-gatherer, whom I chanced to meet “accidentally on purpose” one winter’s evening at the deer-park wall of Cloghanteley—The man was drunk, the horse tired, and I took care of the silver—only that, forgetting the owner’s name, I never knew where to return it afterwards.”

“So much for the king,” observed the fosterer; “and now, gallant captain, for the miser.”

“I’ll tell ye that,” replied the ratcatcher.

The Robbery of Tim Maley.

“It was late in the winter, the year after the French,† and Christmas Eve, into the bargain. Well, there was to be a cake‡ at Croneeinbeg—and as I was then fond of a dance, I set out after dark for the village. Before I got half-way, who should I meet but Mary Connor. She was the natest girl within thirty miles, and had been only married a bare fortnight. I heard her sob as I came up, and when I bid her the time of the day, she couldn’t answer, the poor cratur, for the grief was fairly choking her. ‘Death an’ nouns,’ says I, ‘Mary darling, has any thing happened to yourself or the man that owns ye?’ ‘Nothing,’ says she, ‘copteeine avourneecine,§ only we’re both fairly ruined.’ ‘Ruined?’ said I. ‘Och hone! it’s God’s truth,’ says she—and between tears and sobs the poor girl managed to tell me her misfortune.

“‘Copteeine,’ says she, ‘ye know Tim Maley of Ramore?’ ‘Troth, and I do,’ says I, ‘and I know nothing good of the same lad—an infarnal ould skin-flint, who would rob his own father if he could. Whenever I want a sheep, I always give him the preference, and

* A disgusting penalty then attached to treason.

† In Connaught, for many years after Humbert’s descent upon the coast of Mayo, events were dated from that occurrence.

‡ At village dances, a *cake* is generally provided by the owner of the house, which the most liberal gallant purchases, and presents to his mistress.

§ “Captain darling.”

choose one that has his brand upon it.' 'May the Lord reward ye,' says she, 'for so doing.' Well, copteine, for two years he has been comin' about our place, and when the times got bad, and my father and my husband were druv for rent, they borrowed money at *gompeen** from the miser. Well, they thought to pay it, with and with,† but the crippawn‡ seized the cattle, and the grate snow kilt the sheep, and the devil a *scurrick* could they make up between them for the ould simmer, when their note fell due. Well, ye know that Pat and I were promised for two years, but as the world went hard against us, we were afeard to get married. On Monday come three weeks, we were sittin' round the fire, heavy-hearted enough, when the latch was lifted softly. I thought it was Pat, but who should it be but ould Maley. In he comes, coughing, with his "God save all here," and draws a stool to the fire. "Ye'r kindly welcome," says my father. "I hope so," says the miser, "for I am come for at laste a part of the money that you and Pat Grady, (manin' my husband,) are due me." My poor father turned palè as a cloth. "Mister Maley," says he, *mistering* the ould ruffin, to please him ye know; "you've heard of our loss—may the Lord look down upon us!" The miser gave a cough, "An' am I," says he, "to get nather less or more of what I lent ye?" My poor father gave a groan. "Mary," says the ould divil to me, "put the boult in the door, and come here and sit beside me." Well, copteine, my heart grew cold, an' I don't know why the fear came over me so, but I did what he desired me, and came and sate down, but with my father betune us. "Well," says he, "you're asking time, Phil Connor, an' maybe, I might give it to ye—ay, an' maybe I'll do more—for I'll make Mary my lawful wife, and forgive ye the debt along with it." The light left my eyes as he said so; and when my poor father looked over at me so heart-broken, I thought I would have dropped. "What do ye say to the offer?" said ould Maley. "Och hone!" says my father, "it's a grate honour ye do my little girl; but, Mister Maley, dear, ye'r too ould for her." The miser bit his lip; "An' do ye refuse me for a son-in-law?" says he, in a rage. "Let me just talk to the gentleman, father darlin'," says I, for I knew we were in the ould villain's power, and I thought that I might sofen him. My father left the cabin, ould Maley pulled in his stool, took me by the hand, and begun palaverin' me, thinkin' I would consint; "And now, Mary," says he, "what have ye to say? Take me, or lave me, as ye like it." "Mister Maley," I said, "maybe I may offend ye; but if I don't spake the truth, I'll be guilty before God. I love another dearly, and niver could like you; and think of the sin, and shame, and sorrow, it would cause, if I deserted him because he's poor, and married you because ye'r rich. Look out for some woman of your own years, for ye'll niver be happy with a girl." He hardly waited to the end, but jumped upon his legs, and swarin' he would lave us without a cloot,§ and beggar us root and branch, he flung out of the cabin like a madman.

* An Irish term for usurious interest.

† *Anglicè*—by instalments.

‡ A fatal disease to which the black cattle of mountain districts are frequently exposed.

§ *Anglicè*—a head of cattle.

“ ‘Well, copteeine, when Pat came afterwards, and heard the story, he cursed, and I cried, till, in sheer despair, we determined to marry at once—and, the Lord forgive us! we done it out of the face, and ran away next morning.

“ ‘Well, we thought that God would stand our friend, and that, bad as the ould miser was, sure he wouldn’t ruin, out and out, two poor cratur’s that had just got married; but a week showed that Maley—bad luck attend him!—was bent on our destruction. One night, and unknownst to us, every four-footed baste my father or my husband owned, was driven to the pound, and yesterday they were canted for anything they would bring. Poor Pat returned three hours ago almost broken-hearted, and all I had to offer my weary husband was a dry potatoe.’ Poor girl! she burst into a flood of tears, and every sob she gave, I laid it heavy on my soul, ather to right her, or revenge her.

“ ‘Well, copteeine,’ she went on, ‘every cloot was sould but one milch-cow that fell lame upon the road: I looked at my husband’s sorry dinner—and, for his sake, I determined to humble myself to that wicked ould man, and beg from him the lame cow. Off I set, unknownst to Pat, took the short cut across the fields, and in an hour reached Maley’s. He looked at me as I entered the cabin, and the grin of hell was on his face. Well, he spoke me fairly at first; “Come in, *astore*,” he said, ladin’ me into the inside room. Feaks, I thought he was going to be kind at last; but oeh! copteeine, it was only mockery he meant after all. “An’ so ye want the lame cow?” says he, beginnin’ the conversation. “Yis, Mister Maley,” says I, “if it’s agreeable to ye; I would ask it as a favour.” “Humph!” says he, pullin’ out a big key that was fastened to his waistecoat with a string, and opening a black oak chest that was standin’ at the foot of the bed. “Do you see that bag, Mary?” says he, pointin’ to a blue one. “I do, sir,” says I. “Well, in that I brought home the price of the cattle. Do ye see that other striped one?” says he. I told him that I did. “Well, that’s the interest of what I lent the squire,” and three or four other gentlemen he named. “Now, Mary Connor,” says he, shuttin’ down the lid and loekin’ the chest again, “if sixpence would save you from starvin’, and Pat Grady from a jail, be this book,” and he kissed the key, “I wouldn’t give it if you were on the gallows.” I rushed out from the ould villain’s sight. “Stop,” he cried, shoutin’ from the windy; “as soon as the lame cow can walk, she’ll go where the others went yesterday. There’s a cake, I hear, the night at Croneeinbeg.—You’ll be dancin’ there, I think—ye know the heel’s light, where the heart’s merry—isn’t it, Mary Connor?” and till I was out of hearin’, that fiend’s laugh pierced me to the soul.’

“ ‘Well, Mark, I had made up my mind, before the poor girl had done speakin.’ ‘Mary,’ says I ‘the ould monster shall tell truth for onee. Go home—dress yourself in your best—you’ll be my partner to-night at Croneeinbeg—ay, and, by Heaven! there sha’n’t be a lighter foot upon the floor, nor a merrier heart lavin’ the dance-house than your own, Mary Connor!’

“ ‘She stared—but I pressed her to do what I wished, and she promised it. I waited till she was out of sight, and then jogged quietly on towards the place were Maley lived.

“When I got within sight of the house, I thought it rather too early to pay a visit to the miser, and steppin’ into a quarry, sate down to let another hour pass. Maley knew me well; but as I had a crape in my pocket, I determined to disguise myself, pass for Johnny Gibbons,* and give him the credit of the job. Presently I heard footsteps on the road, and up came three men. They did not see me, but I heard them talkin’. One of them was Maley’s boy, and he was tellin’ his companions how nicely he had given his master the slip, and stole away without his knowin’ it. ‘If the cows brake loose,’ says he, the ‘divil a man-body’s about the place to tie them.’ Oh, ho! thought I to myself, sorrow a better evening I could have chosen to visit ye, Mister Maley. So when the boys were out of hearin’, I rose up, and reached the miser’s without meetin’ a living soul.

“I peeped quietly through the windy, an’ there was sittin’ the ould villin two-double over a few coals upon the hearth—for he begrudged himself a dacent fire—and two women were spinnin’ in the corner. A dog that came out of the barn knew me to be strange, and set up the bark.—‘What’s that Cusdhu’s† growlin’ at?’ said ould Maley, sharply—‘Go out, Brideeine, and see.’ I lifts the latch, and quietly steps in. ‘There’s no occasion, Mister Maley,’ says I. ‘It’s an ould friend who was passin’ the road, and dropped in to ask ye how ye were.’ The women gave a squall, and I thought the miser would have dropped out of the chair where he was sittin’. ‘Girls,’ says I, ‘I’ll stand no nonsense. Ye have heard of Johnny Gibbons, I suppose.’ Both dropt upon their knees, and Maley began to cross himself.—‘Up with ye,’ says I. ‘Go into that room, and if ather you brathe a whisper that would waken the cat, I’ll drive a ball thro’ ach o’ye.

“The divil a delay they made; but away they stole, and closed the door after them. Well, I laid the gun upon the dresser, drew a stool, an’ sits down fornent the miser. ‘Arrah, bad luck attend ye for an ould thief,’ says I; ‘hav’n’t ye the manners to ask a man who has come ten miles to see ye, whether he has a mouth or not?’ ‘Oh! Mister Gibbons, jewel, it was all a forget on my part. There’s a bottle of licker in the cupboard.’ ‘An’ the curse of Cromwell on ye!’ says I; ‘de ye think it’s me that’s goin’ to attend myself?—Brideeine—tell the ould woman to go to bed, an’ come out an’ wait upon your betters,—come out, I say—or maybe yeer waitin’ for me to fetch ye?’ Out she comes, shakin’ like a dog in a wet sack, brings the whisky, and fills a glass. ‘Now, light a dacent candle—keep your rush-light for other company—an’ be off with ye. Here’s yeer health, Mister Maley,’ says I; ‘the divil a better poteeine crossed my lips this twelvemonth. An’ now for bisnis. Step down to the room with me, if ye please.’ ‘Arrah,’ says he, ‘what de ye want there?’ I niver answered him, but took out a pistol carelessly from my coat pocket, opened the pan, shook the primin’, and looked at the flint. ‘Christ stan’ between us an’ harm! what are ye about?’ says he. ‘Nothing,’ says I; ‘only that I always see if

* A sanguinary scoundrel, hanged after the Irish rebellion, whose name is still a terror to the peasantry.

† *Cusdhu*, literally *blackfoot*, although many a white-footed cur is so called—the Irish peasantry considering that name a lucky one

the tools are in proper order before they'r wanted. Come along.' Well, he followed me like a spaniel—in ye goes to the room—and in a moment I spied the black oak chest. 'Where's the key of this?' says I. 'God sees it's lost since the fair of Ballyhain, and that's a fortnight come Saturday,' said the ould miser. 'Bad luck to the liars,' says I. 'Wouldn't it be a quare thing, now, if I could find it?' With that I gives his waistcoat a rug, and out drops the key danglin' to a bit of twine. The moment I put it in the chest, Maley roared 'Murder!' an' threw himself across the lid. I lifted him by the neck as ye would lift a cur—flung him on the bed—tied him hand an' foot with a hank of yarn—and stuffed an ould stockin' in his mouth. 'Lie quiet there,' says I. 'I'll not detain ye long; for all I want here is a blue bag, an' a striped one.' The ould divil struv to shout, but the stockin' smothered his voice, an' the noise he made was so droll, that I couldn't help laughin' till I was tired again. Well, sure enough there were the bags, just as Mary Connor had tould me. I put them in the pockets of my *cota more**—took another hank, tied Maley to the bed-post—bid him a tinder good night—desired the women on peril of their lives to lie still till mornin'—walked quietly out of the house, and locked the door after me.

"Well, off I goes straight to Croneeinbeg—steps into the dance-house, an' salutes the company with a 'God save all here.' Divil a merrier set ye iver looked at, but two—an' they were sittin' in the corner. It was poor Grady an' his wife—an', pon my soul! there was such sorrow on their pale faces, that an enemy would have pitied them. 'I want ye, Pat, says I.' Up he gets, an' we stept out together, and walked five or six perches from the house. 'Pat, what's the matter with ye, man?' 'Ohone, copteeine; ye know I'm ruined,' says he. I wouldn't mind it for myself, but—my poor Mary—an' he fairly began to cry. 'Arrah!' says I, 'have done, man. De ye remember the night before Garlick Sunday?' 'No,' says he. 'Then, Pat Grady, I do. Ye hid me, when the highlanmen had run me to a stan'-still—and, with an hundred pound upon my head, saved me when I thought none but God could deliver me from certain death. In that bag ye'll find some money—your debt to Maley is paid—and there's a trifle to begin the world with. Go off. Hide it 'till ye want it; burn the bag; an' now, you and I, Pat, have cleared scores; an' if ten pound will do it, the cake shall be Mary Connor's.' 'Oh! copteeine, jewel, let me but whisper to Mary our good luck;' and in the poor fellow run, to spake comfort to the prettiest girl in the province.

"In a few minutes I returned to the dance. I looked at Mary Connor. The rose had come back again to her cheek, and at her bright black eye ye could have lighted a dhudeeine. '*The floor!*' says I—and in a minute it was clear. I flung a dollar to the fiddler. 'Now, bad luck to ye, play yir best, an' up with—Apples for ladies :† and ladin' out Mary Connor, the divil a better jig was danced for a month of Sundays.

* *Cota more*—Anglicè, great coat.

† The name of a favourite *contredanse*, exceedingly fashionable in Connemara.

“ ‘Mary,’ says I, ‘as I pressed her hand at partin’, ‘didn’t I tell truth, my darlin’, when I said, that light as yir foot might be, the heart should be lighter still?’ The tears—but they were tears of joy—came stramin’ down her cheeks. I kissed them away—took up my gun—bid the company good night—and before morning dawned, or the ould miser was unbound, I was across the Killeries and into Connemara; an’ the best of it is, that, to this blessed day, that robbery is left on Johnny Gibbons. And now, Mark, I ask you, upon the nick of yir conscience, was there any harm in returnin’ the blue-bag to the right owner, and keepin’ the stripped one myself?’

“ Under such circumstances, Shemus Rhua,” replied the fosterer, “ I’m ready to turn robber when you like it. But here we are at the Four Alls; and, faith, I hope, like a singed cat, it will prove better than it looks.”

Indeed, in its external appearance, the village inn had nothing to excite the expectations of a traveller. The windows were mostly without glass; the earthen floor broken into ruts, all of which appeared recipients for dirty water; while the ceiling was blackened with soot, and the walls curtained with cobwebs. The landlord, looked a sot—his helpmate, the epitome of every thing unclean. The ratcatcher pronounced it “ a place not fit to lodge a dacent dog in;” while Mark Antony, remembering that hostelrie, where he had found “ the warmest welcome,” drew a mental contrast between both, and thought with a sigh upon his rejected innamorata—the lady of the Cock and Punchbowl.

TIMOTHY GROGAN.



CHAPTER XVIII.

CONFESSIONS OF THE RAT-CATCHER.

“There are certain ingredients to be mingled with matrimony, without which I may as likely change for the worse as the better.”
A BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE.

THE man might have been set down a lazy wayfarer indeed who would have sojourned a second day at that pleasant hostlerie, whose sign-board displayed the spirited representation we have copied. Mark Antony avowed that “he had never closed an eye;” while his companion admitted the enjoyment of a short, but not sweet season of forgetfulness, when, according to the confessions of the captain, the insect tribe had assailed his person with such ferocity, that, had they only combined their efforts, “and pulled one way, they must have dragged him into the floor.” No wonder, then, that the journey was resumed at cockcrow. England was the destination; and the route was accordingly directed towards a neighbouring seaport, from which a passage in a trading vessel to Liverpool might be obtained.

At that period—one short to look back to—the transit of the Channel was held to be a daring exploit; and, in Irish estimation, England was indeed, a land beyond the seas. Whether business or pleasure formed the inducement, the latter must be considerable, before a votary of St. Patrick would venture upon “realms unknown;” and great therefore was the fosterer’s satisfaction, in discovering that Shemus Rhua was an accomplished traveller, and also that, in earlier life, the gallant captain had visited “the great metropolis.”

“It’s now three-and-twenty years ago,” concluded the ratcatcher, with a sigh, “and, upon my conscience, to look back, Mark dear, it appears like yesterday.”

“And what brought you to England, Shemus?” said the fosterer.

“Why, I think,” replied the captain, “a gentleman who has directed me generally from the cradle. He keeps, they say, a warm house; and, though he’s the best friend they have, the clergy are eternally abusing him.”

“Well, by your own account, coptecine, your guide was none of the best. The errand, I hope, was better?”

“Neil an suggum,”* returned the ratcatcher, “I went to run away with an heiress.”

“Well done, captain.”

* *Paraphrased*—“We’ll not say much about that.”

“ Stop—I don't mean myself, but my master, and ye know, that's the same thing.”

“ Who was the heiress?”

“ Devil have them that knows! Any body that came in our way.”

“ And did you succeed?”

“ Succeed!” exclaimed the ratcatcher; “ Upon my soul, only we gave leg-bail, he would have been hanged, and I left for transportation.”

“ *He!*—who was he, Shemus?”

“ Why, who but my ould master's son, Dick Macnamara.”

“ And the expedition was unfortunate?”

“ Unfortunate! how could it be otherwise?” replied the captain. “ Of all the unlucky devils ever born under a cross-grained star, Dick Macnamara, you were the most unlucky!”

“ Is he dead?” said the fosterer.

“ Dead! to be sure he is,” replied the captain. “ He quarrelled with Savey Blake, at the winter fair of Athlone; and, as the morning was wet, they fought in the inn yard. What did the stupid fool his second do, but stick Dick into a corner! The rain was in his face; and at the first fire, Savey Blake, shot him like a woodcock. I was with him till he died. Indeed, I never knew him have luck but once.”

“ Indeed; and what was that?”

“ When he did marry, his wife ran away from him within a quarter.”

“ But your English expedition, Shemus. Arrah, man, there's where the shoe pinches; and I would like to know how ye got on.”

“ Got on!” exclaimed the ratcatcher. “ Be gogstay! from the very moment we left home, every thing went wrong with us. But, stop—isn't there a well that none but a sinful man would pass? Sit down, *avourneene*—there's a drop in the cruiskeein still, and when I take a cobweb out of my throat, I'll tell ye all the particulars of

The Matrimonial Adventures of Dick Macnamara.

It was the summer after the great election—and that was in the year ninety-one—and a fine evening it was. At that time, care was far from my heart, and I was taking a dance in the barn with Mary Regan, my lady's maid, when out comes Sir Thomas's own man to say that I was wanted in the parlour. “ Run, bad luck to ye,” says he, “ and I'll finish the jig for ye! Arrah, make haste, man! Some eternal villin has slipt a paper under the gate, and the ould master's fit to be tied. I never saw him so mad since he was chased home from Galway.” Away I goes; and when I got into the parlour, there I found Sir Thomas, God rest his soul! Father Pat Butler, the parish priest—and the driver, Izzy Blake.

Sir Thomas was sittin' in the big armed chair he always sate in. He wasn't to say much the worse for liker; but it was asy to persave that he had been lookin' at somebody that was drinkin'. The priest, och! what a head he had! was cool as a cowcumber, and only Izzy's

nose was a deeper purple than when he sate down, you wouldn't know he had a drop in. It was quite plain the party were in trouble; for, to smother grief, the ould master had slipped a second glass of poteeine into his tumbler just as I came in.

"Asy, Sir Thomas!—Drink asy!" said the priest. "The whisky's killin' ye by inches!"

"Arrah, balderdash! Pat Butler, won't ye let me take the colour of death off the water, man, and me threatened with the gout? It's the law that's fairly murderin' me. Bad luck attend all consarned with the same! At the blast of the mail horn my heart bates like a bird; for within the last two years I have got as many lattitats by post, as would paper the drawin'-room. Shemus Rhua," says he, turning to me,—“did ye see a black-lookin' thief about the place, when ye were hunting the young setters on the moor?”

"Arrah, Sir Thomas, if I did, don't ye think I would have been after askin' him what he was doin' there?"

"Sibby Byrn saw him thrust these d—d papers under the gate, and then cut over the bog as if the divil was at his heels. Well—small blame to him for runnin'—for, by all that's beautiful, if I had gripped him, he would have gone back to the villain that employs him, lighter by both lugs. Sit down, Shemus. Izzy Blake, fill the boy a glass." And then he began, poor ould gentleman, askin' me about the dogs; but before I could answer him, he gave a sigh. "Arrah," says he, "what need I be talkin' about dogs, when, after November next, the divil a four-footed baste will be left upon Killcrogher, good nor bad!"

"Something must be done immediately," said the priest. "If they foreclose the mortgage, and get a recaver on the estate, we're done for."

"If we could only raise five thousand to pay that cursed claim, we might stave off the other things till some good luck would turn up," said the driver.

Sir Thomas sighed. Troth, an enemy would have pitied him!

"Arrah, Izzy Blake—that day will never come! Don't talk of good luck, that's over with me," says he. "O Lord! to be baten by Peter Daly—and his grandmother before him, keepin' a huxtery in Loughrea—and then to be hunted home afterwards, like a tithe-proctor! It's enough to drive a man to drink, or make a quaker kick his own mother."

You see, Mark, (observed the captain, in explanation,) the ould master had stood for the county. Well, from the time he came into possession of the estate, of course, Sir Thomas was like his father, a Sunday man;* and as he couldn't meet the sheriff openly at the election, what the divil does he do, but he sits out in a boat, where he could hear how things were goin' on, and give orders to the tenants. The Lord sees, the cratures did all they could for a good master as he was. Didn't they kidnap the electors, tare down the booths, burn Peter Daly's talley-room teetotally,—and throw a jaunting car, with six voters, clane over the bridge—horse, driver, and all! And what more could they do? The money bate us in the long-run; and it was well

* In olden time, Irish gentlemen found it occasionally convenient to rest from their labours for six days, and only exhibit their persons on the seventh.

Sir Thomas wasn't taken into the bargain—for the bailiffs chased him to the very gates. No wonder then, poor ould gentleman, that the very name of the election put him always into a rage.

"Never mind," said the priest, striving to say something pleasant, and comfort the ould master; "it's a long lane that wants a turn—and luck will come at last. There's yer two sisters, Sir Thomas—the best catholics in Connemara, and ready to travel any moment that they're wanted—if the Lord would only mercifully take them to himself. Indeed, they're too good for this wicked world—and they would be far snugger in the next."

"Divil a chance there," says Sir Thomas; "they're the very counterpart of their mother—the Lord be good to her!—and she lived to ninety-seven."

"Are ye in the lottery the year?" asked the priest.

"Arrah, what matter whether I am or not?" said Sir Thomas. "Hav'n't I been in it since I was a boy, and niver won any thing beyond a blackguard twenty or two? Upon my conscience, I verily believe, if I had been bound to a hatter, people would be born without heads!"

Well, the divil a one could point out the likelihood of luck; and the poor ould gentleman seemed mightily disconsolate.

"Arrah," says I, "hould up, Sir Thomas—who knows but we'll get to the sunny side of the hedge yet? There's Master Dick—and if he would only marry an heiress—"

"Be dad," says the ould gentleman, "Father Pat, there's sense in that." The priest shook his head.

"And why shouldn't he?" says Sir Thomas.

"Because," returned the priest, "he's never out of one scrape till he's into another. And then he's so captious; if he was in heaven—where the Lord send him in proper time, if possible!—why, he would pick a quarrel with St. Peter."

"It's all a flow of spirit," says the ould man.

"It's a flow of spirits that causes it generally," says the priest; "but it's all your own fault, Sir Thomas, and I often tould ye so. Instead of lettin' him stick to his larnin', ye would have him brought up yer own way, ridin' three times a week to the Clonsallagh hounds, and shooting at chalked men on the barn door through the remainder."

"Arrah, be quiet," says the ould gentleman. "Though he's my son—at laste I have his mother's word for it—is there a nater horseman within the Shannon? Put Dick Macnamara on the pig-skin with any thing dacent anunder him, and I'll back him over a sportin' country for all I'm worth in the world."

"Ay," said the priest, in a side-whisper; "and if ye lost, the divil a much the winner would be the better."

"He's six feet in his stockings—sound as a bell—he'll throw any man of his inches in the province, and dance the *pater-o-pee** afterwards."

"Arrah," says the priest, "if there's no way of payin' the mortgage but by dancin' the *pater-o-pee*, out we bundle at November."

* A dance peculiar to Connemara.

“And why shouldn't he marry an heiress?” says the ould man.

“First,” says Father Butler, “because he has no luck; and second, because he has no larnin'. Wasn't I returnin' from a sick-call only yesterday, and as God's goodness would have it, didn't I meet my Lady French's messenger with a note?—‘Who's that from?’ says I. ‘Mr. Dick Macnamara,’ says he. Well, I had a misdoubtin' about it, and so I opens the note—and—*Mona-sin-dhiaoul!*—Lord forgive me for sayin' so!—if he hadn't spelt ‘compliments’ with a K!”

“And if he spelt it with two K's,” says the ould gentleman, “will that hinder him marryin' a woman if she wants a husband? I tell ye what, there's more sense in what Shemus Rhua says than any of ye seems to know. Wasn't the family as badly off when my grandfather—God rest his soul!—ran away with Miss Kelly?”

“And where will you get a Miss Kelly now-a-days? It's not out of every bush you'll kick a lady, lame of a leg, and twenty thousand down upon the nail!”

“What was she the worse for that?” says Sir Thomas. “Don't ye mind what my grandfather said to Lord Castletown the week after. ‘Didn't I,’ says my grandfather, ‘manage the matter well, my lord?’ ‘Ye did in troth, Ulic—and ye made a grate hit of it, if ye'r amiable lady was only right upon the pins.’ ‘Well, my lord,’ says he—‘what the divil matter if she is a wee bit lame? Does your lordship suppose, that men marry wives to run races with them?’”

Well, there's no use makin' a long story about it. At Killcrogher things couldn't be worse than they were; and, when we had finished a second bottle of poteeine, we all agreed that the divil a chance, good, bad, or indifferent, was left, but for Dick Macnamara to marry a wife with a fortune—and with or without a spavin—just as the Lord would direct it.

This was all mighty well, but where was the lady to be found? Of heiresses, there was no scarcity in Galway, if their own story was but true; but then their fortunes were so well secured, that nather principal nor interest could be got at.

“England's the place,” says the ould master. “Dick would get twenty thousand for the askin'.”

“And how is he to go there?” says the priest. “He must travel like a gentleman, or they wouldn't touch him with a tent pole—and where's the money for that?”

“Let Izzy drive the tenants.”

“Arrah, Sir Thomas! it's asy talkin'—the divil a pound I could drive out of them to save yer life. *Mona-sin-dhiaoul!* ye might as well expect blood from a turnip, or to borrow knee-buckles off a Hiellanman.”

Well, we were fairly nonplused for a time, but we got matters right afterwards. The ould ladies, the master's sisters, had a trifle by them, if any body could manage to get at it. Well, the priest put it to them, for the glory of God; and Sir Thomas, for the honour of the family. They came down at last, and, between them, for a hundred. Sir Thomas lent us his own pistols, and Izzy Blake passed his word in Galway for the clothes. By St. Patrick! we were in such

bad credit there, that over the whole town we wouldn't have got as much as would have made a surtout for a Lochryman.* On the strength of Izzy, however, we taught book-keeping to a tailor. His name, I mind, was Jerry Riley—and I fancy we're in his ledger to this day.

I'll never forget the mornin' we started. We set out at six o'clock, as we had to ride to Moylough to catch the Tuam mail. Every soul in Killerogher was astir, and waitin' at door or windy to see us off—some givin' their blessin', and others their good advice.

"Mind yer eye, Dick!" said the ould gentleman from the parlour.

"Don't take any thing but what's ready," cried the priest from the hall door.

"Remember you're of the Coolavins by the mother's side," called my lady from her bed-room; "so look to blood as well as suet, Dick."

"The money—the money," cried the priest.

"Dick, dear, ye're on book-oath to me!" whispered Mary Regan, as we passed her.

"Don't be quarrelling about trifles," said the priest.

"Nor let any body tramp upon your corn, for all that," cried Sir Thomas.

"The money—the money, Dick—and that's the last words of ye'r clargy," roared the priest.

"Don't miss mass, if you can," screamed the ould ladies from the lobby.

"*Ara-gud-neeish!*" † and father Butler signed his blessing after us as we rode away.

"Stop! stop!" roared the ould master. "Another word, and God keep ye, Dick! Always fight with ye'r back to the sun. Drink slow—don't mix ye'r licker, nor sit with ye'r back to the fire—and the devil won't put ye under the table!"

These were the last words we heard—the gatekeeper's wife flung an ould shoe after us for luck—and away we went to make our fortune.

When we reached Moylough, the coach was standin' before the door of the hotel, for the passengers had gone in to breakfast; and by the time we had taken the dust out of our throats with a throw at the counter, the company had come out again. Two or three of them roofed it like myself; and one lady, with blue feathers and a yalla pelisse, stepped inside. She was a clipper! and there was enough of her into the bargain. As Master Dick travelled like a raal gentleman, of course, he hopped in too.

Well, when we stopped to change horses, Dick and the lady were thick as inkle-wavers. "Shemus," says he, "bring out a glass of sherry, and a drop of water in the bottom of a tumbler, with a sketch of sperits through it." They drank genteely to each other, and away we rowled again. Indeed, at every stop the same order was repated.

* A diminutive sprite who inhabits lakes, and seems a species of the Scotch *Kelpie*.

† *Anglicè*—Money paid upon the nail.

The lady was comin' from the saa, and that made her dry, I suppose; and from the time he was a boy, Dick Macnamara had an unquenchable thirst upon him.

We reached Athlone in the evening, and stopped at the Red Lion. Dick handed out the lady with the yalla pelisse; and ye would have thought they would have shaken each other's hands off. Well, a maid-sarvant took her bandbox—Dick give her the arm—away they flourished together—and I stayed at the inn door to see the luggage safe off the coach.

Before long the young master returned.

"Shemus," says he, shuttin' the door behind him, "isn't Miss Callaghan a spanker?"

"'Pon my soul, she's a cliver girl, with fine action," says I.

"Bad luck to ye!" said he, "ye talk of her as ye would of a horse. But, Shemus, I thought as we were all alone, I would try if I could put my *comether* over her by the way of practice. Och! if she was only an heiress! When I kissed her at partin' in the hall, she tould me she could follow me over the world."

Well, after we had supped, Master Dick sends for me to come up stairs; and as it was too soon to go to bed, down we sate over a hot tumbler to settle what was to be done when we got to London. Ye see, we knew that in England there were heiresses *galore**—but the thing was, how the divil were we to find them?

Well, after we had been talkin' half an hour, in comes the waiter. "Is there one Mister Macnamara here?" says he.

"That's me," Dick answers.

"Mister Callaghan's after askin' for ye," says he.

"Parade him," says Dick.

So in steps an ould gentleman, clane shaved enough, but about the clothes, he had rather a shuck appearance. He bows, and Dick bows—and down sits the ould gentleman, an' draws over a tumbler.

"Ye had a pleasant journey of it, Mister Macnamara," says he, commencin' the conversation. "My daughter says that ye're the best of company. In troth, she spakes large of ye."

With that they drinks one another's health—an' from one thing they comes on to another. I had pulled my chair away to the corner, ye see, but Dick winked to me as much as to say, "Shemus, stay where ye are."

"An' so ye're goin' to better yourself with a wife?" says the ould fellow.

"There's no denyin' it," says Dick.

"Well, 'pon my conscience, it's the best thing ivir a young man did, for it keeps him out of harm's way. An' are ye for soon changin' ye'r state?"

"Divil a use tellin' lies among friends," says Dick. "The sooner the better."

"Feath—an' it has come rather sudden upon Sophy," says Mister Callaghan. "But, God's will be done! Her brother will be home in

* *Anglicè*—In plenty.

an hour. I wish there was only time to send for her mother to Roscrea."

"What's wanted with her mother?" says Dick.

"Nothin' partikler," says Mr. Callaghan, "only the ould lady would like to see her little girl married."

"An' when is she to be married?" inquired Dick.

"Why, as there seems to be a hurry," replies the ould fellow, "it may as well be done 'out of the face.'"

"An' if it wouldn't be an impertinent question," says Dick, "arrah! who's to be the happy man?"

"An' are ye jokiu'?" says ould Callaghan. "Arrah, who should it be, but yourself?"

"Myself?" says Dick. "Shemus," says he—"the divil an appearance of liker's on the ould man, what does he mane at all?"

"Of coorse," says I, "that ye're goin' to marry his daughter.

"Exactly," cried ould Callaghan.

"If she's not married till she marries me, she'll be single for a month of Sundays," says Dick.

Up jumps the ould fellow in a rage—and up jumps Dick Macnamara—and then such fendin' and provin', and such racketting through the room—till out rushed Mister Callaghan, swarin' he would be revenged before he slept.

When he slammed to the door, I turns round to Dick, to ask what it was all about?

"Arrah, the divil have them that knows," says he; "I just coorted a little bit with the girl as we were alone in the coach, by the way of bringin' my han' in before we got to England."

"Be my soul," says I, "ye've made a nate kettle of fish of it!—Arrah, Dick, *avourneene*—ar'n't ye in the centre of a hobble—coortin'g's one thing, and marryin' another—Wouldn't the priest be proud of ye to go back with Miss Callaghan under ye're arm?—and with about as much money as would pay turnpike for a walking stick."

Feaks, things looked but quare the more we considered them; so we thought we would order a chaise, push on to Moate, and lave Sophy Callaghan to her own amiable family, as she was too valuable for us. But, as matters turned up, we wer'n't allowed to set off as ay as we intendéd. Before the chaise could come round, we heard feet upon the stairs, and the door opens, and in comes five as loose lookin' lads as ye would meet in a day's walk. They were all fresh, as if they had been hard at the drinkin',—and they were bent on mischief,—for the second fellow had a twist in the eye, and a pistol-case under his arm.

"Mister Macnamara," says the first, "my name's Callaghan. There's no use for any rigmarole, as the light's goin' fast, so I just stepped in to ask you consarnin' your intentions towards my sister Sophy."

"The divil an intention have I, good or bad, about ye'r sister Sophy," replied Dick, as stiff as a churchwarden.

"Then ye can be at no loss to guess the consequence?"

"Feaks, an' I am," says Dick; "as I'm no conjuror."

"If ye don't marry her within an hour," says he, "I'll be after sayin' something disagreeable."

“I'll not keep ye in suspense half the time,” replied Dick.

“Then ye'll marry her?” says he.

“Yon were nivir more astray,” replied Dick, “since ye were born.”

“Then I'll trouble ye for satisfaction,” says he.

“With all my heart,” says Dick.

“What time in the mornin’,” said the other, “would fit ye'r convenienc?”

“We're rather in a hurry,” says Dick, pointin' to the post-chay that had come round, and on which the hostler was tyin' the traps, “to-night would be a great accommodation, if it was the same to you.”

“Ye ca'n't do better,” says one of the others, “than step up to the ball-room. There's good light still, and the room's long enough.”

Be gogstay! Dick Maenamara closed with the offer like a man. I was sent for the pistols, and the gentlemen called for a bottle of sherry. You see, in case of accident, it would come well before a jury that they drank each other's healths, and fought in perfect friendship, for that would benefit the survivor.

They slipped into the ball-room, and every body thought the thing was settled, they were so quiet and civil with each other as they went up stairs. The pistols were charged—“An' now,” says Callaghan, “for the last time, I ask ye, will ye have my sister Sophy?”

“Arrah, don't lose the light in talkin'—ye have my answer already,” says Dick Maenamara.

Well, they were placed in the corners of the room, and a man with a red nose asked, “if they were ready?” Both said, “Yes!” “Fire!” says he. Slap off went both pistols like the clapping of a hand, and down dropped Mr. Callaghan with a ball elane into his calf.—Well, every body ran to lift him, when, suddenly, the cry of murder was raised from the other end of the room, and out dashed a man in a shirt and scarlet night-cap, and a fat woman close at his heels, just as they had tumbled out of bed.

“Oh, Holy Moses!” says he. “Save our lives! Murder! Murder!”

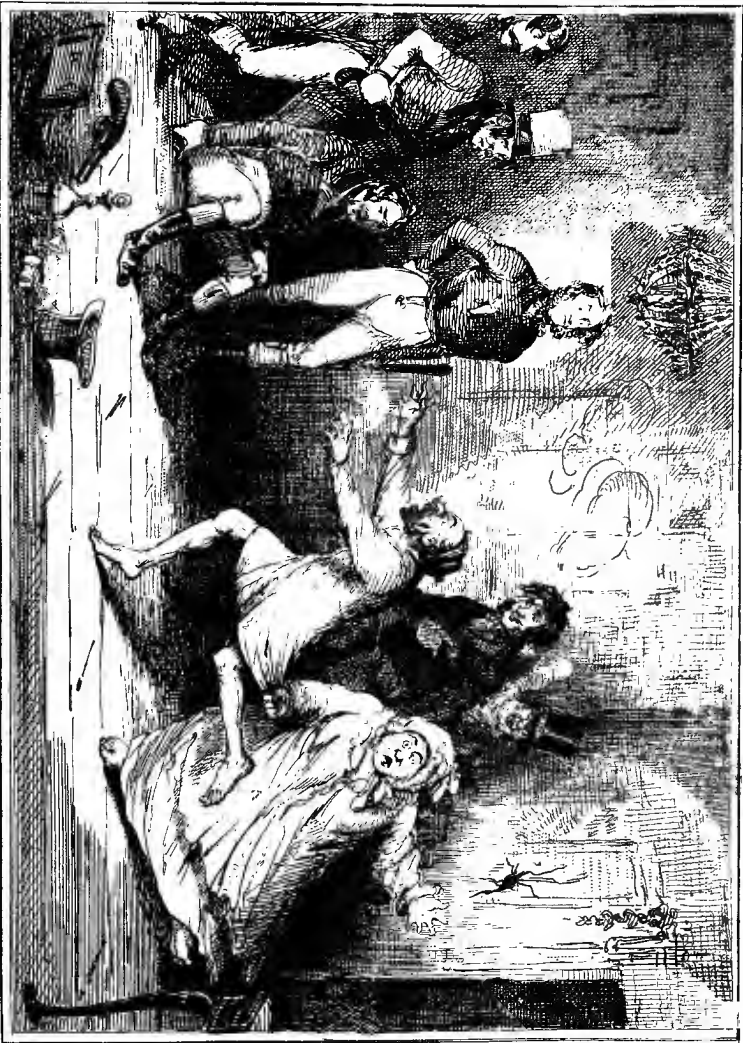
“What's wrong with ye, honest man?” says I.

“Give us time for repentence!” says she, droppin' on her knees. “We're dalers in soft goods, and obliged to tell lies in the way of bisnis.”

“For shame,” says I, “for a daacent young woman to come before company in that way!—Arrah, put the petticoat on ye at least.” Troth, it was no wonder the cratures were scared.—Ye see, there was a closet off the ball-room, divided with a wooden partition; and as the house was full, and the travellers tired, they stuek them into it for the night. Divil a one of us, in the hurry, thought of lookin' in; and when the man 'woke with the noise, and sate up to listen what the matter was, the fellow with the red nose cried “Fire!” and Callaghan's ball pops through the partition, and whips the tassel off the daler's night-cap.

Well, for fear of any fresh shindy, I got the luggage tied upon the shay, Dick shook hands with Callaghan, and sent his compliments to his sister Sophy,—and away we drove to Moate; and the next evening got safe to Dublin.

The Search Party



Of all the jobs ever a man undertook, the sorest was to look after Dick Macnamara. Ye might as well herd a basketful of black-beetles, as keep him in sight : and the two days we stopped in Dublin, though I watched him like a bailiff, he got into two fights—rid of thirty pounds—and snug into the watchhouse afterwards. 'Pon my soul, my heart was fairly broke with him. When we landed at Holyhead, and were fairly out of Irelan', says I to myself, " Maybe we may come some speed now ;" but *Mona-sin-dhiaoul!*—our troubles were only beginnin'.

Troth, at one time, I thought we would never have reached London at all : and as it was, we were three weeks upon the road. We never stopped for the night, but Dick discovered some divil to detain us. One while he would be in love with the mistress, and at another, dyin' about the maid—and all of them he swore upon the book to marry on his return. We came to England to look for one woman—an' if he had but kept his word, we would have gone back with one and twenty ; but as matters turned out, the divil a wife we brought home at all at all.

While he would be philandrin' at the inns, I was makin' inquiries for a lady that would fit us ; and though I heard tell of three as we came along, the divil an eye, let alone a finger, Dick Macnamara iver could get on ather of them—for we had always the worst of luck. The first we tried was the daughter of a squire, and as we were crossin' the fence to get into the pleasure-ground, that I heard she generally walked in, we were spied by a keeper on the watch, and taken for poachers he had chased before, and, only that his gun missed fire, we would have been murdered on the spot. We made an offer at a widdo', but Dick managed to slip into a steel trap, and nearly lost his leg. Another trial was at a ward of Chancery, and we were hardly in the domain, till we were handed over by her guardian to the beadles. They swore we were rogues and vagabonds, and clapt us into the stocks for the evening, and give us a free lodgin' the same night in a place they called the cage. At last we managed to get up to London, Dick with one skirt only to his coat, as he had lost the other in a skrimmage with a constable ; and a rap more than three guineas and a half, we hadn't between us to bless ourselves on ! Nobody could tell how the rest of the ould ladies' hundred went, but Dick Macnamara and the divil.

Well, the first thing we did was to look after our luggage, which we found ; and the next to inquire if there was a letter from Connemara at the post-office, and sure enough there was, and every soul in Killcrogher seemed to have had a hand in it. Sir Thomas said that he was as well pleased that Callaghan wasn't kilt ; but the shot grieved him, it was so low ; and he begged Dick in future, to take his man as near about the waistband of the breeches as he could. He said that the attorneys, bad luck to them ! were tormentin' him as usual ; and as he never opened a letter now, except he knew what it was about, he tould Dick when he wrote home, to put a cross upon the corner. Lady Mac, as we used to call her for shortness, wished to know when she was to expect her daughter-in-law. Mary Regan was afeard she couldn't stay much longer in her place—and the priest stuck to the ould tune of the *Ara-gud-neeish*. He tould Dick to be as quick as he could ; and if

there was like to be any delay, to send over a part of the fortune, as they were greatly shuck for money. Wer'n't we in a nate pickle—not worth five pound in the world, and the people at home expecting thousands by return of post!

Well, we had takin a lodgin' near the Seven Dials; it was chape, that was one reason; and one likes to get as near Christians as they can, and that was another. I walked out, not well knowin' what to do; and before I crossed the second street, who should I drop upon, promiseusly, but Bidy Hagan, with a basket on her arm. She had bin dairy-maid at Killcrogher, and ran off with a corplar that was recruitin' there ten years ago.

"Arrah, Bidy," says I, "is this you?"

"And who else should it be?" says she; "maybe ye would oblige us with your own name, young man?"

"Di ye remember Shemus McGreal?" says I.

"Is it Shemus, the whipper, at Killcrogher?" says she.

"The very same; and here he is."

With that she blessed herself—"Holy Moses!" says she, "but ye're grown! Arrah, step in, an' for ould times we'll have a flash of lightnin'."

In we turns into the sign of St. Patrick, and calls for half-a-pint. I tould her all the news, and all about what had brought us from the ould country over here.

"Ah, Shemus," says Bidy, "myself would travel ten mile to sarve a dog that was iver at Killcrogher—and ye have made no speed? Och, hone, an' more's the pity!"

So I ups and tells her the rason we were fairly batin'—all because we couldn't find out an heiress, good nor bad.

"Oh, saver of the bog!" says she, "if ye'es only had the luck to have fallen into company with Miss Figgins!"

"And who's Miss Figgins?" says I.

"She's the only child of ould Figgins of Puddin' Lane, the richest grocer in the city, an' that's a big word."

"Arrah, Brideeine, *avourneeine!*—is there any way we could come across her?"

"Arrah, the divil a one of me can tell," says she. "It's me that carries home the markittin', and the kitchen maid's a Cork woman, born in Cloonakitty—and we're as thick as mustard. Be the Lord!" says she, "but I'll bring ye together in the twinklin' of a bed-post, if ye'll just sit where ye are. Have an eye to the basket, for the house isn't ovir onist, if there ar'nt liars in the world;"—an' away cut Bidy Hagan.

She wasn't more than ten minutes, till back she comes with Oney Donovan. We called another half-pint, and drank to better acquaintance. "Oney," says she, "*astore!* tell us all about ould Figgins' daughter, if you please, for this gentleman's master has come ovir for a wife. The Lord speed him to get the same!"

"Och, then I'm sorry to say," says Oney, "they'll be no dalin' in our house, for Miss Sophiar's to be married a Friday mornin'."

"Oh, murder!" says I.

“A murder it is,” says she; “thirty thousan’ goin’ to a divil ye wouldn’t kick out of a petatay garden, because he’s rich as a Jew, and rides in a sheriff’s carrige.”

Wasn’t this too bad? The very woman that would have fitted us to a T!

Well, we were all sorely cast down at it; so we called another pint—and we couldn’t do less, as we were in trouble.

“Be gogstay!” says I, “couldn’t we run away with her? This is but Monday; and if the time’s short, we must only be the handier.”

Well, blood’s thicker than water! and Brideeine, Oney, and myself settled all before we parted. Ach of them was to be settled at Killcrogher for life—and, after a throw at the counter, we parted till next mornin’.

I lost half the evenin’ in makin’ out Dick Macnamara. He was the unluckiest member iver any body was consarned with. The time was short—every moment worth goold—and when he should have been in the way (I’ll not bid bad luck to him, as he’s dead), where the divil should I hoak him out, after tatterin’ over half the town, but in a back attic in a blind alley, where he was drinking taa wid a stay-maker?

Well, short as the time was, we got all ready for the marriage; and the devil a one of Miss Figgins’s dramed the trouble we were takin’ to get her settled. She was what they call a Methodist, and went regularly to chapel, and she thought she was to receive the blessin’ of the clargy on Friday morning at some church—and we thought it better to marry her on the Wednesday night before it, and save both ceremony and expense; and, only for himself, the stupid fool! Miss Figgins would have been Dick Macnamara’s wife, as sure as the hearth money.

We had no trouble in life to get plenty of help in St. Giles’—and Oney Donovan hid Dick Macnamara in a loft that looked into the grocer’s breakfast-parlour, from which he could see Miss Figgins, and make himself acquaint with her fatures and her clothes. All was fixed for watchin’ her from the chapel—and at the corner of a quiet street, through which she had to go to her own house, a chay, with a trusty driver, was to be ready to whip her off. Dick Macnamara was to be quietly sittin’ inside. When she was passin’, the boys were to lift her in, and away we were to drive like lightnin’ to a lonely house five mile out of town, where a couple-beggar was ready to tie the knot. Sorra nater planned thing could be—but the divil a plan was iver formed in this world, that Dick Macnamara wouldn’t make ducks and drakes of.

Well, now that every thing was fixed, we thought it would be better to write home, to keep all quiet in Killcrogher; and Dick took up the pen, though he would as soon have swallowed poison. In the letter, we tould Sir Thomas how we were gettin’ on since we came to London, and showed him that we were in a fair way, ather “to make a spoon or spoil a horn,” as they say in Connaught; and we begged him to keep his heart up, and the gates closed, till he heard from us again. We requested Father Pat to stick to the ould gentleman, and

not let him think upon the law but as little as he could. Dick sent his love to Mary Regan, and I my humble duty to the ladies. Sorra word we mentioned, good or bad, of our puttin' in an evenin' in the stocks. We also tould them a big lie, the Lord pardon us! and that was, that we heard mass reglar, although the devil a ather of us had listened to a single Ave, since we blessed ourselves the Sunday before we left home, in the chapel of Killcrogher. No wonder, in troth, that such a pair of hathens should have the worst of luck, for sure we desarved it.

Wednesday came, and all was ready for the venture. The women stuck to us like bricks; and Oney brought the news, that for sartin Miss Figgins would attend the chapel that evening, for there was a grate pracher to hould forth. At proper time, the postchay was in the street, and Dick skrulged up in the corner of it. Three fine strappin' boys from St. Giles's (all first-cousins of Biddy Donovan's) and myself, took our sate in the front windy of a porter-house, and Oney kept watch at the corner, to give us the word when her mistress would appear. Be gogstay! we had only called the second pint before Oney cuts by the windy, with the news that the flock were comin' out, and the woman we wanted would be with us in less than a pig's whisper; an' away she pelted home, to be safe in the house,—an' then ye know, of coorse, she would never be suspected.

Up jumps the boys: "Here's luck!" says I, turning down a cropper, in which they joined me. We then claps on our caubeens, and slips out of the door,—an' sure enough, at the bottom of the street we sees two ladies comin' forid. "Which is the woman?" says I to Dick, who was peepin' from the wee windy in the back of the shay. "Her in the blue bonnet," says he.

Egad, I was rather surprisid at the appearance of the woman that Diok Macnamara pointed out to us. To do her justice, she was good-lookin' enough—but, faith, she was no chicken—and nather in dress nor action what ye would expect from a reglar heiress, and, as Oney said, the biggest grocer in the city. I remembered that they said she was a Methodist—and, thinks I, maybe that's the rason she goes so plain.

Well, I gives the word to Biddy Donovan's cousins, in a whisper, and in Irish. Divil a handier boys iver assisted in a job of the kind,—they lifts her off the pavement in a twinklin'; and, before ye could say Jack Robinson, she was fairly sated beside Dick Macnamara, with a handkerchief stuck into her mouth, to keep down the squallin'!

Hoogh! off we starts—and I threw my eye over my shoulder as I was sittin' by the driver—Miss Figgins was kickin' like the divil—but as Dick had a fast hould of her, we didn't mind that.

"Whoop!" says Tony Braddigin—that was the postboy's name—"Isn't it eligint, Shemus, jewel?" says he. In troth, there never was anything better managed; for we heard afterwards that not a mortal saw anything that passed, but an ould Charley,—an' as the Carneys ran past him—they were, ye know, Biddy Donovan's cousins, by the mother's side—one of them gave him the fist; an', for a fortnight afterwards, he couldn't tell light from darkness.

"Well, by this time we were clear of the town, and it was nearly twilight. I turned round now that we were safe, to see how matters were gettin' on within, and if Dick was makin' love to her. Well, I put the question to him in Irish, and he answered in the same:—"De ye think," says he, "I'm not workin' for the best—but whenever, to make her asy, I tell her we'll marry out of the face, by Jakers! she kicks the harder."

"Sorra soul's within hearin'," says I—"so take the handkerchief out of her mouth and give her air—for maybe she's chokin'—and that's what makes her kick."

He did what I bid him—and, Lord! what a tongue she had when she got the use of it!—and not a word for ather of us but *thief* and *villain*. I disremember how she swore; but if she had been born in Connaught, the oaths couldn't have come asier.

"Ye eternal robbers!" says she, "what do ye want? I have no money about me, and I suppose I'm to be murdered!"

"We want nothing in the world," says Dick, "but to make ye an honest woman;" manin', of course, to marry her lawfully.

"Make me an honest woman!—why, ye common thieves, what do ye mane?"

Dick made a kind of a confused story of it, but she didn't wait to the end.

"Oh, murder! murder!" she called out—"Marry me! and get me transported?"

"Transported?" says Dick.

"To be sure I would," says she; "marryin' you, and my own lawful husband alive! Arrah, Sam Singlestich, dear!—little did I think, when I made taa for ye this evenin', that I would be bundled off by these villains!"

"And who's Mister Singlestich?" says I.

"Who? ye thief of the world! but my lawful husband! Oh, bad luck attend ye, night and day!—ye have the gallows in ye're face," says she, lookin' full at me, "and it's one comfort, if I live to escape, I'll hear the Judge tellin' ye'r fortune at the Ould Baily. Troth, and I'll go to see ye hanged, too, even if it eost me five shillins for an opposite windy."

"Arrah," says the postilion, turnin' sharp round at the word 'Ould Baily,' and 'being hanged,'—"what's all this about?"

"Honest woman," says I (for Dick seemed stupified)—"who the devil are ye?—Ar'n't ye Miss Figgins?"

"Miss?—yer mother!" says she;—"I'm the wife of a dacent tradesman, and the lawful mother of five children;—an' I'll show them again any within a mile of Huggin Lane."

"Oh," says the postboy, jumpin' out of the saddle—"by the powers of pewter! we're all dead men!" and, at one spring, he clears the fence, and cuts over hedge and ditch like a madman.

"And," says I to myself, "maybe I'm goin' to sit here and be hanged?"—and down I hops too. Dick Macnamara seemed to be of the same opinion, for he was on the road already. We takes the country out of the face, as if we were matched for a hundred—lavin' the tailor's wife and the two post-horses—the one to look after the other.

Every body that iver rode to a fox-hound, knows that it's the pace that kills; and, for two miles, Dick and I crossed the country neck and neck, takin' every thing *in stroke* as the Lord sent it. No wonder, when we came to a cross-road, that both were dead baten, and that Dick called out, for the love of God, to stop for a minute or two that we might get second wind for a fresh start. Down we sate upon the ditch; and when I got breath enough, I began to abuse Dick Maenamara like a pickpocket.

"Arrah," says I, "what sins have I committed, that I'm to be ruined through you? If iver the divil had a fast hould of a sinner, it's yourself, Dick! Was there iver a man so asily put in the ready way to make a fortune? Wasn't the lady med out—the rough work done—and sorra thing for you to do, but sit like a gentleman quietly in the chaise, pay yer lady some tender attention, and keep her mouth stuffed with a pocket-handkerchif. And how beautiful ye put your fut in it! Oh, Holy Joseph!—to run away with a tradesman's wife, and the mother of five childer into the bargain!"

He began mutterin' something about a mistake, and talked about blue bonnets and yalla ones.

"What are we to do?" says I, interruptin' him. "Arrah, have done wid yer balderdash an' yer bonnets;—havn't ye made a pretty *gommogue** of yerself? Where are we to head to? and how are we to chate the gallows? Blessed Bridget!—to be hanged in the flower of my youth, for runnin' away with the mother of a family!"

Before I had done spakin', we hears a carriage comin' up at splittin' speed. We ducked into the ditch to let it pass—and at one look I knew it to be the very chay we had brought with us on our unfortunite expedition. The horses had run off; and as they passed us at a gallop, we heard the tailor's wife shoutin' a thousand murders.

"Arrah! what's to be done at all at all," says I, as the carriage cantered on. "I haven't the ghost of a rap about me. What money have you, Dick?"

"Five or six shillins," says he, "to pay the turnpikes, and a light guinea for the marriage money."

"Ah, then, ye won't require it, Dick, *avourneeine*," says I. "Any little job in future ye want from the clargy, they'll trate ye to it for nothin'. It's a comfort when a man comes to the gallows, that he's provided with a priest."

But what need I bother ye with all the misfortune that kem over us? Half the time we lay out in barns, or under hay-stacks; for if we ventured into the parlour of a public-house, the divil a thing ye would hear talked of but the attempt upon the tailor's wife—with a reward of fifty pound for the intended murderers, and a description of their persons.

At last we were fairly worn out with hunger and fatigue, without a shoe to our feet, or a *scurrick* in our pockets, and nothing was left for us but to list. Accordingly, we joined the first party that we met, and the sergeant gave us plinty of entertainment, and two pound a

* *Anglicè*—an idiot.

man. We were to be attested the next mornin'; but as he didn't like our looks, he put us in the room where the corplar slept, and took care to lock the door carefully behind him. I guessed as much, and, feaks, I determined the divil another yard we would keep company, if I could help it; and maybe I didn't succeed? When we were locked in, I produces a bottle of rum, and the corplar—who was a drunken divil—and I finished it by moonlight, hand to fist. I lifts him into bed blind drunk; and when the house was quiet, I wakens Dick Macnamara, and we opened the windy fair and asy, and lowered ourselves by the blankets to the ground. We travelled night an' day—exchanged our clothes for stable-jackets—and at last, we had the luck to be taken into the yard of an inn, and there get employment as helpers—and when at Killcrogher they thought we were travellin' homeward in our own coach, it's most likely we were grazing the wheels of his chay for some travellin' bagman.

Well, Dick was wispin' a horse—and the only two things in this world he could do dacently was to warm one after a fox, and wisp him dry afterwards—when in comes one of a recruitin' party to ask some question about his officer. When he went away I says to Dick in Irish—

“The divil welcome the last visitor. Whenever I see a bunch of ribbons in a sodger's cap, I always get a start, and think that it's one of the lads we listed with, that's comin' to look after his own.”

“Feaks! an' I'm not overly asy in their company ather,” says Dick back to me—and him and I continues talkin' and laughin' at how stupid the corplar looked in the mornin', when he found an open windy and an empty bed.

“And so,” says a voice at our elbow, “ye gave his majesty leg-bail, boys!”

We gave a start, and looked round, and who was standin' close to us but a little dark-visaged gentleman, with a twist in the eyes that didn't improve him much—and by the whole look of him, the very last man you would meet in a day's walk, that ye would borrow money to spend in company with.

You may be sure that Dick and I were scared enough. “Egad,” thought I, “we are ketched at last, and this dark divil will split upon us—and then the first march will be to the black-hole for desarchin'; and the second, to the gallows, for the murder of a tailor's wife, only that we didn't kill her. Well, I struv to put it off as a joke, but the wee black fellow was too deep for it; and he spoke the best of Irish too.

“*Badershin!*” says he, with a wink of one of his quare eyes, “*Tig-gum tigue Tiggeeine!*”^{*} It won't do, boys, I'm not in the recruitin' line, so ye needn't be afeerd of me. But, as ye have been on the tramp, in the coorse of yer rambles did ye happen to hear anything about Sir Richard Macnamara?”

Be the powers of pewter! the question made us start.

* These terms being rendered into common English, mean—“Be quiet—you can't humbug me.”

“No, Sir,” says I; “but if you had inquired after ould Sir Thomas, I could have given ye a better answer.”

“What Sir Thomas?” says he.

“Why, what other, but Sir Thomas of Killcrogher?”

“Divil a such a man lives there,” says he.

“*Nabochish!*” says I; “maybe I wasn’t bred and born under him?”

“That may be true,” says he; “it’s Sir Richard I want to see. I wouldn’t give a *traneeine* to be in company with Sir Thomas.”

“Ah! then,” says I, “what wouldn’t I give to be cheek-be-jowl with the ould gentleman.”

“Divil have the liars!” says the wee fellow in return; “for if ye had y’er wish, ye would have a ton weight of lime and mortar on the top of ye.”

“Christ stan’ between us and evil!” says I, crossin’ myself. “You don’t mane that he’s dead?”

“Faith an’ if he’s not,” says the wee black fellow, “they have takin’ a great liberty with him, for they buried him in Killcrogher on Tuesday week—and I have been tatterin’ over half England in search of his son. Be the Lord!” says he, “ye might as well grip hould of a Banshee.* For all the tidings I could get of him was, that a ruffin, called *Shemus Rhua*, ran off with a tailor’s wife; and he, the villin, persuaded the good-natured young gentleman to follow him.”

Well, who should the little man be but a lawyer sent in pursuit of Diek; and, without delay, we set off for home; and, when we got there, said as little about England as we could. It was supposed that Sir Richard might have cleared Killcrogher if he had taken the right way; but he set up a pack of fox-hounds, and married a dashin’ lady because that she could ride to them to fortune. A few years settled the busnis—and what Sir Thomas had begun Sir Richard cliverly completed. The dogs were sent adrift, the horses canted by the sheriff, my lady boulded with a light dragoon, and, to finish all, one wet mornin’, poor Diek was brought home upon a door, dead as a herrin’. There’s not one stone standin’ on the oulder at Killcrogher; and of one of the ouldest and the best estates within the province, there’s not a sod of it now in possession of a man of the name of Macnamara.

* The Banshee is a spirit attached to old Irish families, who foretells deaths and other calamities by melancholy wailings before they occur. He is never seen.

CHAPTER XIX.

MY GRANDFATHER.

“ *Cor.* Sir, do you know me?
 Still, still far wide!
Phy. He's scarce awake—Let him alone awhile—
Lear. Where have I been?—where am I?—fair daylight?
 I am mightily abused—I should even die with pity,
 'To see another thus—I know not what to say.”

SHAKESPEARE.

WITH pleasant and profitable reminiscences of burglary and abduction, Shemus Rhua entertained the fosterer on the road, until the worthy twain accomplished their journey in perfect safety, and ensconced themselves, as we mentioned before, in that safe and salubrious section of the Modern Babylon, supposed to be under the immediate protection of St. Patrick, and the especial *surveillance* of the police, vulgarly ycleped the Seven Dials. There we shall leave them to recover from the fatigues incident to a migration, *au pied*, from “the far west,” until, like giants refreshed, they should find themselves ready for a fresh start upon the world, to try, as the rat-catcher philosophically remarked, “their fortunes—any how.”

I need scarcely say that I availed myself of Mr. Hartley's permission, and early in the forenoon presented myself at his hotel. As I had expected, he was from home; but Dominique conducted me to the presence of his young mistress; and, to judge from the kindness of my welcome, the visit was not disagreeable.

It was late when Mr. Hartley returned to dinner; and after the cloth had been removed, and Isidora had retired, he resumed a subject that he had casually mentioned to me before, namely, how far it would be prudent or possible to place myself in the presence of my grandfather, and try what impression my unexpected appearance might produce.

“I have made secret inquiries,” he said, “respecting Mr. Clifford's habits, to find out how an interview could be achieved, but I have failed in obtaining any information but what is vague and unsatisfactory; but, as Clifford Hall is only twenty miles from town, you shall run down, Hector, and try whether fortune may not do more for you than I can. The domain adjoins the village of ———. There you will find a rustic inn; and there, also, you may probably glean some information that may direct your course of action afterwards. Thither, at present, it would be imprudent in me to venture; but you are unknown, and consequently you may venture safely. You will find your grand-sire under the double thrall of his steward and his Confessor. I shall sketch both for you.

The former was born in the house, and reared and educated from

charitable motives by the old gentleman, from his having become an orphan while an infant. Gradually, he rose from dependency to affluence; in time he managed the old man's income; and report says, that he has secured a goodly fortune from the pilferings of the estate. It was whispered that he had secretly encouraged Mr. Clifford's discarded boy in his wild and profligate career; and that, by the suppression of letters and numerous acts of villany beside, he contrived to snap the last link of natural affection between an angry father and a guilty son. Certainly, in the hour of young Clifford's disgrace and destitution, he evinced the blackest ingratitude to one who, badly as he might have behaved to others, had showered favours on him when a boy, and trusted him afterwards with unlimited confidence. Such is Morley the steward; and now we will briefly sketch Daniels the confessor.

He is a Jesuit; born, I believe, in England, but educated abroad; a deep designing zealot—bigoted to his own faith, and intolerant to all besides. The great object of his existence is to aggrandize the order he belongs to; and by the exercise of monastic influence on a mind always superstitious, and now imbecile from age, he trusts to alienate from natural heirs the noble estates of that weak old man, to whom he has become a ghostly counsellor. In short, Morley and Daniels act with a unity of purpose, but different end: the one, to build a fortune for himself; the other, to gratify a monk's ambition, and raise himself to a commanding position in that order which he intends to aggrandize at the expense of your mother and yourself. You can easily understand that every obstacle will be placed in your way by individuals so deeply interested in preventing the old man from being reconciled to a child he once was so devotedly attached to; and whether you succeed or fail, matters cannot be more unpromising than they are. They say the fortunes of an Irishman carry him, at times, through difficulties which to other mortals would prove insuperable. Try yours, Hector—something may be gained—and, need I tell you?—nothing can be lost."

I followed Mr. Hartley's advice, and started next evening by a stage coach that passed the village he had named; and at dusk I alighted at a clean and comfortable public-house, intituled the Fox and Hounds.

The evening was sharp, and, as I had travelled outside, an introduction to a snug parlour and sparkling wood-fire was agreeable. I ordered supper and a bed; and, while the former was being prepared, considered in what manner, and by what means, I should endeavour to obtain an interview with Mr. Clifford. Mr. Hartley had recommended me to glean some intelligence from the landlord, should I find him inclined to be communicative; and, when the cloth had been removed and a correct assortment of fluids was placed upon the table, I desired "mine host" to be summoned to the presence.

When he appeared, I had no difficulty to ascertain at a glance that he had pursued in earlier life the honourable trade of arms, and, like myself, had been intended to supply "food for powder." He was a tall, hale, hearty-looking veteran, and stout for his years, albeit Father Time had silvered his head and stooped his shoulders. Still maintain-

ing that feeling of deference when in the presence of a superior, which military usage renders habitual, he drew himself up at the foot of the table, and respectfully inquired "what my honour wanted?"

"Nothing, my worthy host, but your company for half an hour. The evenings grow long, and I hate 'to drink one hand against the other,' as we say in Ireland. If I guess right, you have retired from a profession on which I have but entered recently."

"Yes, sir," returned he of the Fox and Hounds;—"I wore the king's livery for fifteen years; and, God bless him, now that I have done my work, he allows me two-and-eightpence a-day to enable me to drink his health in comfort."

"You seem, when you bade Brown-Bess good-bye, to have taken up comfortable quarters here, my friend."

"I am, thank God, not only comfortable, but in garrison I hope for life. When I returned home, I married the sergeant-major's widow. Well, we each had laid by a bit of money—put it together—took this house—and after being five years keeping the business going on, things have gone straight enough with us, and we are better by the half than when we entered it. I wish every worn-out soldier had as snug cantonments for old age."

"Have you served abroad?"

"I began in Holland with the Duke of York, and I finished in Spain with poor Sir John."

"What regiments did you serve in?"

"Never but in one, the old steady fifty—th. Under its honoured colours I stood my last field, at Corunna, and fought my first one at Malines."

"You were in the grenadiers; do you remember who commanded?"

"As stout a soldier as ever took a company into fire—Colonel O'Halloran."

"Then you fought under my father."

The retired soldier put down the glass he was lifting to his lips, and for a moment scanned my features eagerly.

"By Heaven!—the living image of the kindest and bravest officer under whom a soldier ever served! I am prouder, sir, in having you this night beneath my humble roof, than if you called a prince your father." And stretching forward his hand, the veteran grasped mine in his with an honest ardour that proved how deeply military attachment takes root, and how dearly the remembrance of "auld lang syne" is cherished in the soldier's memory. "And now," he said, "what is there in the Fox and Hounds which I can offer to my old colonel's son?"

"Nothing but what is already on the table; but possibly you could, in another matter, render me some assistance?"

"Name but the way in which John Williams can be serviceable."

"You know my relationship to Mr. Clifford?"

"Perfectly. I was with my gallant captain the night we stole his beautiful lady from the convent garden. Alas! many a time it has grieved me to the heart, to think that the old gentleman should remain so cold and unforgetting as he is; but he is poisoned against his child

by the priests and villains who surround him. How can I be useful? What do you intend to do?—Do you intend to call on the old man? If you do, I fear there are those about him who will prevent it. No one is allowed to see him but in the presence of that dark monk they call Father Daniels. The house is guarded like a gaol, and the gates are locked against the world.”

“I despair of obtaining an interview by open means,” I replied—“How shall I manage it by secret ones?”

“It will be all but impossible,” said the sergeant. “I will think over it to-night; and if a chance exist we’ll try it, hit or miss. But soft!—surely that voice which I hear in the kitchen is old George Smith the keeper’s? He is the only one of the old servants now remaining at the Hall; and, only that his master has a strong regard for him, and won’t listen to any stories to his disadvantage, he would have shared the fate of others, and been sent adrift as they were. Father Daniels hates him; and, faith, its cordially returned! The old keeper remembers your honour’s mother well, and many a time he speaks of her—and I’ll stake my pension, that he will befriend the son of her whom he still reverences in his heart.”

As he spoke, the sergeant rose and left the room.—Irishmen are all more or less superstitious; and I hailed it as a happy omen, that, in the very opening of my attempt, fate should have thrown across me an old comrade of my father. To succeed, I had scarce a hope; but, for every reason, I was ambitious to fail respectably. I was experimenting under the direction of one whose good opinion I was anxious to secure; and I determined that when I returned to town, I would at least satisfy Mr. Hartley that I had struck boldly, although the blow had failed.

In ten minutes the host returned, followed by an elderly man. The latter made me a dutiful obeisance; but when approaching the table, and the light fell strongly on my face, under a sudden impulse he caught my hand, pressed it to his lips, and seemed to be powerfully affected. The likeness to my mother at once established my identity; and in a few minutes, if by the agency of George Smith I could have been placed in that house to which I was natural heir, it would have been instantly effected. A half-hour’s conversation determined our course of operations, and I learned enough regarding my grandfather’s habits to convince me, that, with good luck, the interview I desired might be obtained.

It appeared that in good weather, there was a favourite seat in a sheltered corner of the park, to which Mr. Clifford generally repaired. There he would sometimes remain an hour, while the Confessor walked backwards and forwards reading the daily office which the rules of his order imposed. Occasionally, Mr. Clifford employed himself with some devotional book; and all intrusions on the part of servants were rigidly prohibited. From strangers none could be apprehended, as none were allowed to pass the gates.

In a thick clump immediately adjacent to the bench where Mr. Clifford rested, it was arranged that I should lie *perdu*, and if fortune offered the opportunity, I was to sally from my ambush, and

seize it. The keeper was to assist me to scale the wall, and point out the place where I could best conceal myself—and, to the blind goddess of the wheel, the rest was properly committed.

I know not wherefore, but that night I went to sleep with all the buoyancy of hope, although I had no reason to think that chances wild as mine could prove successful. In my dreams, however, results were fortunate—every obstacle was overcome—I was reconciled to Mr. Clifford; and, better still, united to Isidora.

After breakfast old George announced himself, and the weather was propitious. It was one of those fine autumnal mornings which promise a hot noon and a frosty evening. From an angle of the park wall, the lower bough of a large beech tree extended itself. It was not ten feet above the ground, and, by throwing a rope across, it required but small exertion to gain it; and that done, the entrance to the park was easy. Inside, the gamekeeper was to await my advent. The host furnished me with what is not generally an acceptable present; but the halter—for it was one—well nigh proved the ladder to my fortunes.

At the appointed time I made the attempt, and succeeded; and, stealing along the shrubbery, gained the clump, and took a safe position behind a thick holly, not six yards distant from the seat which the keeper pointed out as the one generally occupied by Mr. Clifford.

All proceeded as I expected and had hoped—and the mildness of the day induced the old gentleman to take his customary walk. He was attended by the Jesuit, on whose arm he leaned; and on reaching his resting-place, he received a book from the Confessor, and commenced reading a passage which the monk had pointed out. In a few minutes the churchman strolled some distance from the bench, and while I was considering the way in which I should present myself to the old man without occasioning alarm, to my unspeakable satisfaction, I observed a servant approach the Confessor hastily, and after a brief communication, they both walked away in the direction of the house.

I seized the golden opportunity, stole from my retreat, and placed myself in front of the old gentleman, and, so silently, that he remained with his eyes fixed upon the book for more than a minute afterwards. Presently he looked up—he stared at me with evident surprise—for it was a rare occurrence to find himself alone with a stranger—and in a low tone he asked me “if I wished to speak with him?”

I advanced another step, knelt at the old man's feet, and gently took his hand.

“What means this?—Who are you?” he muttered.

“A son, come hither to solicit pardon for a parent—your grandchild begs your blessing!”

“Ha! these are Ellen's features! Merciful God!—Do I rave, or dream? Speak, boy—your name?”

“O'Halloran.”

“Your business?—Quick!—quick!”

“Pardon for my mother.”

"Ellen, Ellen, Ellen!" he feebly muttered; and next moment he fainted in my arms.

I was dreadfully alarmed. I thought my sudden appearance had operated fatally, called loudly for assistance, and on looking around to see whether my summons had been heard, observed that the Jesuit, followed by several men, was running towards me rapidly. In another minute he was at our side; and never, in a human countenance, were anger and astonishment so mingled as in his.

"Remove your master!" he exclaimed to the servants. "Who are you, sir?" he continued, bending his shaggy brows over eyes of sinister expression, and directing their deadly glare at me. "*How dare you intrude where strangers are excluded?*"

"By right of kindred!" I thundered in return.

The monk's face blanched. "Remove your master instantly," he continued, "and eject this man—by force, if necessary!"

"Beware!" I said; "the man who tries it may count on broken bones!"

"Who are you?" the monk inquired, haughtily "Your name?—Your business?"

The men who accompanied him hesitated to obey his orders; and still the old man reclined with his head upon my breast, while my arm supported him. Certainly, of the priest's body-guard none were gentlemen who would volunteer a forlorn hope; and, astounded at the bold tone I used to one, who at Clifford Hall had exercised a despotic authority, they seemed any thing but anxious to bring matters to hostile conclusions. But when I announced my name and relationship to their master, they all receded, leaving the matter to be settled by the Jesuit and myself.

The Confessor, with admirable skill, at once changed his tactics, and adopted another course.

"Mr. O'Halloran, to use the mildest term it admits, your visit has been imprudent. Mark in the old man's illness the consequences of your rashness! Why did you not notice your intention? Could I have induced your grandsire to receive you, I would have done so willingly, and thus have prevented a shock that may prove—and I fear it will—fatal! For God's sake, be advised by me. Leave the park, and let your relative receive immediate attention. You see the first effect—would you, should he recover the first shock, expose him to a second? When he is well enough to write, I pledge my word, you shall receive an instant communication. If you persevere, death will inevitably ensue; and how, may I ask, will you, forewarned as you are, excuse the rashness, the madness, that occasioned it?"

The specious arguments of the Jesuit prevailed, and I acceded to his proposition. I could not tell the cause that overpowered my grandfather's feeble strength; nor could I even guess whether it were anger, or an outbreaking of revived affection. In my doubts, I agreed to the monk's proposal—saw the old man carried in a chair to the house—and quitted the domain, perfectly unconscious whether my visit had mitigated or confirmed his animosity.

In one brief hour that question was not to rest, and a letter,

addressed to me at the Fox and Hounds, apprised me that my grandfather considered my mother an *enfant perdu*, and that his displeasure was unmitigable!

* * * * *

In a remote apartment of Mr. Clifford's mansion, that evening, two men might have been discovered in earnest conversation; one had a countenance sallow, cunning, and repulsive; and a figure remarkable for its height and irregular proportions; the other was a middle-sized elderly man, with a certain air and intelligence that might stamp him a pawnbroker, money-dealer, thieves' attorney, or any other profession appertaining to the "wide-awake" school. Need I say the twain were the Confessor and house-steward of my grandfather? Both exhibited unequivocal appearances of anxiety and annoyance; and though there were wines upon the table, neither seemed inclined to use them.

"Was there ever any thing more unfortunate than this evening's occurrence?" exclaimed the Jesuit. "For months the old man has never been left a moment to himself; and one unguarded interval, what mischief has it not produced! Another interview—and all that you and I for years have laboured to effect is totally, hopelessly—undone!"

"It is too true," replied the steward.

"He'll never make a will now!"

"Have we not already made one for him?" said the steward.

The priest shook his head—"That deed, my friend, will never bear the light. We stand in a dangerous position; and had not the old man fainted, we were ruined. Even now the mischief is not abated—he talks of nothing but his daughter, and raves about the duty of forgiveness which a father should extend to an erring child. What is to be done?"

The steward mused for a minute—his brows contracted, and a dark expression passed across his face. "Father," he said, "the intruder must be removed."

The Jesuit looked at his companion, but spoke not. The look, however, said—"Would that it were done!"

"Money will effect it," said the steward.

The Jesuit continued silent, and then carelessly observed, "I would give a thousand pounds this cursed interview had not occurred!"

"Would you, holy father, give as much to prevent a second?" asked the steward.

The Jesuit nodded.

"Enough; I shall act promptly now. Hark! A knock at the door! Come in!"

It was a message from Mr. Clifford requiring that the Confessor should attend him instantly. Father Daniels rose.

"Stop," he said, "till I hear what the old man wants." And, so saying, he left the apartment.

He was not absent long; and when he entered the chamber, he held an open letter in his hand. Carefully closing the door, he thus addressed his confederate:

"Said I not right—Our position is all but desperate? What think ye was the old man's business?—To desire the son of his repudiated

daughter to return to-morrow; and to give directions, that I should write and order it to be so. Were that to happen, need I name the result?—all—all lost! Well, I obeyed, and wrote this letter”——

“As he dictated?—are you mad, holy father?” inquired the steward.

“Not exactly. ’Tis thus worded:—

“ ‘Rash Boy!

“ ‘Your mother’s misconduct wrung my heart, and your unwarrantable intrusion has nearly brought me to the grave. As you dread the malediction of an old man—desist!—*and for ever* avoid the presence of one who can never look but with abhorrence on the offspring of a guilty daughter.’

“ ’Tis signed—ay, and in his own handwriting too—

“ ‘JOHN CLIFFORD.’ ”

“Excellent! This will prevent another visit,” said the steward.

“You are too sanguine, my friend. The young man is daring;—he may make a second effort. If he succeed—if he gain a second time the sight of his grandfather, the tale is told. This fabricated letter may prevent the meeting for a while—but more effectual measures to secure mutual safety are indispensable.”

“I understand you, holy father,” returned the steward;—“money will be necessary.”

“Money shall not be wanting,” said the Confessor. “This note procrastinates, but does not avert the crisis.”

The steward nodded his head. “ ’Tis a breathing-time, that shall not be thrown away;—I’m off to London immediately.”

“Heaven speed thee!” said the monk; and the hand of God’s minister, imprecating a blessing, was laid upon a wretch’s head whose avowed embassy was—murder!

* * * * *

To my humble counsellors, the keeper and the sergeant, I communicated what we all considered the decided failure of my experiment. I resolved to return direct to town—and a place was booked accordingly in the stage. Another passenger accompanied me—and how different are the ends which influence men’s actions! I hurried back to town to bask in the smiles of my young and artless Isidora. The object of my *compagnon du voyage* was very opposite,—the gentleman was Mr. Morley; and his embassy—nothing but to accomplish my assassination.

CHAPTER XX.

A MEETING BETWEEN MEN OF BUSINESS.

“What a dickens is the man always whimpering about murder for? If business cannot be carried on without it, what would you have a gentleman to do?”

BEGGARS' OPERA.

THE scene has changed; and we must request the gentle reader to accompany us into a close dark alley, with no thoroughfare connecting it to the opener streets around, save two narrow and crooked passages scarcely three feet wide. The houses are high and old-fashioned, and front each other so closely, that from roof to roof an active man might spring. Their general appearance betokens fear or wretchedness; for, while some of the windows are so jealously blinded, as to prevent all chance of *espionage* from without, others are recklessly exposed to the eye of the passenger, as if it were intended to display the extent of the dirt and poverty within. The large brick dwelling at the bottom of the court is curiously situated. At either gable, it opens by a side door into one of the foul dark passages we have described; the front is to the court; and the back abuts upon one of those small and half-forgotten cemeteries, not larger than a modern drawing-room, which may still be seen, studding here and there the more ancient portions of that “mighty mass of wood, and brick, and mortar,” ycleped “the great metropolis.”

Within this dwelling, there was a semblance of opulence that formed a striking contrast to the squalid poverty that was perceptible in every other building around it. The rooms were crowded with ill-assorted furniture, and the walls covered with mirrors and pictures. On the tables and mantelpiece, clocks, china, and fancy-ornaments were incongruously heaped together; the whole looking liker a broker's store-room than the private dwelling of a man in trade. The place was a receptacle for stolen property—or in thieves' parlance, the house of “a fence.”

In a large apartment on the first floor the owner of this singular abiding-place was seated. He seemed a man of fifty, and his own appearance was as curious as the domicile he inhabited. To judge by the outline of his countenance, you would call him an Irishman, while its character and expression were decidedly that of a Jew. Indeed nothing could be less prepossessing than both; and the look of the man, taken altogether, was low, blackguard, and repulsive.

On the table beside which this ill-favoured gentleman was seated, there were lights, glasses, and decanters; a comfortable fire was

blazing in the hearth, and window-shutters, plated with iron, were carefully secured with bolt and bar.

Mr. Brown, for so the master of the house was named, seemed occupied with business of no common interest; and to a letter, which he held open in his hand, frequent references were made. His actions were those of a man placed in a situation of perilous uncertainty; for he frequently rose from his chair and paced the room, muttering to himself disjointed sentences, and again returning to the table, to re-peruse an epistle which evidently contained matter of deep moment to the reader. Suddenly he rang the bell, and its summons was answered by a personage of remarkable exterior.

He was a hunchback, and so curiously distorted, that he seemed to be constructed of nothing but legs and arms. From his appearance you would guess him to be fifteen, but his face told you that he was at least five years older; and on every line and feature of that sinister countenance cunning and knavery were imprinted.

“Frank,” said the master of the hunchback, “who brought Mr. Sloman’s letter?”

“The red-haired man from the City-road, who proved our last *alibi* at the Bailey,” was the reply.

“Humph!” returned Mr. Brown, again glancing his eyes over the letter, and favouring the hunchback with occasional extracts from its contents, — ‘Matter of deepest importance,’ — ‘not a moment to be lost,’ — ‘Be with you punctually,’ — ‘Come through the burial-ground at nine.’ Have you unlocked the wicket, Frank?”

“Not till I had your orders,” returned the attendant.

“Right, Frank; people can never be too guarded; but Sloman’s a safe hand, and we have done a good stroke of business together before now. It must be plate or jewels;—and yet I was talking to an old cracksman this very evening, and if there had been a smash last night of any consequence he would have been safe to know it and tell me. Unlock the wicket, Frank—and then slip over to the Fortune of War, and try if you can get any intelligence.”

The hunchback disappeared; and during his absence, Mr. Brown divided his attention pretty equally between the contents of Mr. Sloman’s epistle and those of the decanter at his elbow. In a quarter of an hour, the hunchback’s key was heard turning in the street-door lock,—and he presently announced, that, having made diligent inquiries from several professional gentlemen who were refreshing themselves in the back parlour of the Fortune of War, he was then and there assured, that nothing had been done the preceding evening but the usual theatrical business—with the exception of a silver coffee-pot, that had been abstracted from a west-end hotel.

Another quarter of an hour passed—a church-bell chimed—nine was sounded from the belfry; and, ere the clock ceased striking, steps were heard upon the stairs, and “the thing of legs and arms” announced “Mr. Sloman.”

The expected visitor was a large, corpulent, clumsy-looking nondescript, with a hooked nose, and light complexion, that rendered it impossible to decide whether he should be classed as Jew or Gentile.

At Mr. Brown's invitation he took a chair, filled a glass, ventured a remark touching the present state of the weather, and ended with an eulogy on the wine.

"It should be capital, for it comes directly from the cellar of a noble lord, who is considered to be as good a judge of port as any man in England,"—said Mr. Brown; "his head butler and I do business pretty extensively. He's always hard up, his woman is so desperately extravagant; for actresses are always expensive cattle, as you know. I have recommended him to take a rib; but he can't stand matrimony, he says,—at the west-end, it's reckoned so infernally vulgar."

"You got my letter," said Mr. Sloman, with a significant look.

Mr. Brown nodded assent.

"We're all alone?" inquired Mr. Sloman.

"Not a soul in the house, but Frank and the old housekeeper," was the reply.

"Well," rejoined the visitor, "let us go slap to business. We have done a little in our time, Mr. Brown, and I flatter myself to mutual satisfaction."

Mr. Brown smiled affirmatively.

"Every transaction between us," continued Mr. Sloman, "safe, honourable, and agreeable."

"The last stolen bills were devilish awkward to manage," observed Mr. Brown, "and things became so ticklish, that they were returned to the parties for three hundred. Not a rap more—no—upon my honour!"

"Nothing in the bill line," observed Mr. Sloman, "at present."

"Glad of it," returned Mr. Brown. "Is it a crack?—plate, jewels, or—"

"Quite another line—In a word, a thousand's offered—get the thing done, and we divide!"

Mr. Brown started. Two things occasioned this disturbance of constitutional self-possession; the first was the largeness of the consideration, and the second, an intimation that the business was in "a new line."

"Who are the parties, and what's the business?" was the inquiry.

"Of the one I know nothing; of the other, particulars are contained in this sealed paper. The party who communicates with me, forbade it to be opened until the thing was put in train."

"Well, how the devil," said Mr. Brown, "can I enter on a business that I know nothing of?"

"I only know generally," returned Mr. Sloman, "what it is."

"Go on," said Mr. Brown impatiently.

"There is a person in the way—he must be removed;" said Mr. Sloman in a whisper.

"Murdered, of course," observed the host.

"Upon my soul, Mr. Brown, I am quite surprised at the unprofessional nature of your remark. Do you see any thing particularly green about me, to lead you to suppose that I would make myself accessory before fact? I neither know the man, nor will know anything of the man; or what *is* to become of him, or what *will*

become of him. I got this sealed note, and that there *fimsy* as retaining fee ;” and he held up a sealed packet, and a bank note for a hundred pounds, both of which Mr. Brown took and examined most attentively.

“That’s sealed close enough,” he said, laying down the paper on the table ; “and that’s *genuine*,” he added, after submitting the bank note to an investigation before the candle, to ascertain the authenticity of the water-mark. “Is the five safe ?” he said, still playing with the hundred in his hand.

“I’ll freely deposit that hundred as security,” returned Mr. Sloman, “and now, in a word, is the thing in your line ? Will you do it ?”

“Do what ?” responded Mr. Brown, with a look of innocent surprise.

“My dear Brown,” returned Mr. Sloman, “what the devil use in dodging with a friend ?”

“It’s you that’s dodging,” replied the amiable host ; “pray may I read this paper ?”

“Read it, if you please, but tell me nothing of the contents.”

“You’re a deep-un, Slowey ;” and Mr. Brown again passed the bank note between the candle and his eye. “Undeniable !” he muttered, and next moment he retired to the corner of the apartment, at the special solicitation of Mr. Sloman ; and then having broken the seal of the packet, Brown read the writing, while Sloman, in perfect ignorance of its import, drew the decanter closer, and as cocknies say, “assisted” himself liberally to the contents.

When the worthy owner of the house had read the scroll, the effect upon him seemed astounding. His frame appeared convulsed, the lip whitened, and the hand that held the paper seemed scarcely able to retain it. He read it again and again, and then, crumpling it in his grasp, returned to the table, filled a glass of brandy, and drained it to the bottom ; an example faithfully followed by his excellent friend, Mr. Sloman.

“Well, Mr. B., what say you ?”

“This simply—the business shall be done.”

“To the satisfaction of the parties concerned ?” inquired Mr. Sloman.

“Yes ; or you may keep the four hundred.”

“He is to be disposed of, so that he shall give no farther trouble. Remember that, Mr. Brown.”

“The grave is the best security for that,” returned the host.

“Stop, stop ; don’t tell me any particulars. Only let the thing come off like a business transaction,—you understand me ?”

“Perfectly ;” responded Mr. Brown.

“And you undertake it ?”

“I do,—and in that understanding pocket this retainer ;” and Mr. Brown put the bank note into his breast-pocket. “Come, as matters are arranged, let us have another bottle.”

“No, no, no,—I must return to the person waiting your reply.—He will be impatient.”

“Who are the parties, Sloman ?—honour bright.”

“By heaven! I know no more of them than you do; nor, stranger still, does the agent who proposed the affair to me. Rest assured the thing is ably planned, and there are deep ones at the bottom of it.”

“Ay, and I promise you that it shall be as ably executed,” responded Mr. Brown.

“To a gentleman of your experience,” said Mr. Sloman, with a bow, “it would be impertinent to offer advice. The fewer number of people employed in the job, (remember, I know nothing of it,) why the less chance there is of splitting.”

“Mr. Brown assented by a nod.

“To an honest tradesman, like yourself, or a lawyer of character, like me, any thing to compromise us would be detrimental.”

A parting glass was drunk,—and the payment, its mode and certainty, all being carefully arranged, the excellent gentlemen separated with a warm shake of the hand, protestations of mutual esteem, and a God bless you! Mr. Sloman was emancipated by the church-yard door; the hunchback locked the grating; and Mr. Brown, having interdicted all visitors for the night, excepting the favoured few who had the private *entrée* of his domicile, sate down “alone in his glory.”

The step of the hunchback was heard no more, as he had dived into the lower regions which he inhabited. Mr. Brown looked suspiciously about him for a moment, and satisfied that he was in perfect loneliness and security, he burst into a passionate soliloquy, and strange, the language it was uttered in was in Irish!

“Who says that he who waits for vengeance will not sooner or later find a time? Ha! the hour at last is come, when that heart, proud man, which I cannot reach myself, shall bleed profusely through another's. Let me look back. I remember well the moment when the jury returned my conviction, and the judge, to strike terror into others, sentenced me to eternal banishment, and ordered me to be transported from the dock. My prosecutor stood leaning against the bench, and returned my glance of impotent revenge, with one of supercilious disdain, as a lion would look upon a cur. Thirteen long years I dragged out in slavery—and such slavery, to one, who like me, had known the comforts which appertains to a gentleman's dwelling! I escaped—reached England—fortune has smiled upon me, and I am wealthy—no matter how the money came—and none suspect me—none know me as a returned transport save one, and with her the secret's safe. I never can be detected here for, fortunately for me, it was believed I failed in my escape, and was drowned attempting it. Has wealth engrossed my thoughts—has money made me happy? No, no,—vengeance, vengeance, haunt my very dreams! But it was not to be obtained—I dared not venture near the man I hate—the attempt would have been too perilous—I should be known, and if discovered, without the power of inflicting injury, I should be myself the victim, and my ruin would gratify the man I loath. Heavens! can it be true, and is the hour of vengeance come at last? It is! it is! Denis O'Halloran, before a third night pass, the worm you despised and spurned in your hour of triumph, shall sting you to the soul! Now for the

means. That Hebrew barterer in blood, who has changed his name and calls himself a Christian—he gave a necessary caution. I'll follow it—the fewer employed in such a deed the better. Ha, I have it! The body-snatchers—ay—they are the men. I can manage it through Frank.—He was one of them, but the labour was too severe for him. That devil-boy has in that puny frame-work, the ferocity of a tiger, and the cunning of a fiend; he loves mischief for itself, and doats upon a deed of blood. Yes,—the resurrectionists are the men; and they so readily manage to rid themselves of the carrion afterwards. There are three of them—surely enough—all young men, and two of them were pugilists. He is described as tall, active, and powerful, and his father's son will not be wanting in the hour of danger;—but what is one man to three?—Hark! the street-bell rings—I expect nobody to night!—Hush, here comes the boy.

As he spoke the hunchback entered, and announced that “the gipsy” was passing, and wished to speak to Mr. Brown.

“Saints and angels! the very person that I want! Show her up. Ay—we need a decoy—in every mischief, woman can be usefully employed.”

The announced one entered Mr. Brown's great chamber, and addressed him with the familiarity of an old acquaintance.

“I leave town to-morrow,” she began—

“I doubt it,” was the reply.

“Why?” asked the gipsy, sharply.

“The reason you shall know presently. Mary,” he continued, “have you forgotten events that happened nineteen years ago?”

“Can they ever be forgotten, Hacket?—my own disgrace—my brother's murder.”

“And yet, Mary, you have not the reason to recollect them that I have. You were never banished.”

“Was I not worse than banished?” returned the gipsy. “See what my life has been since I was disgraced and driven from my native land—with one passing gleam of happiness, a scene of guilt, and crime, and misery. Once my wandering career was stayed; I was loved, and raised from poverty; I was sheltered, protected, educated. My wayward destiny had found a home at last; and the evening of a troubled life promised to end in peace and quiet. Accident in a moment robbed me of him on whom my future fate depended—and I was again cast upon the world, when I had experienced enough of happiness only to estimate its loss more acutely. Have not misery and suffering been my companions since? I have felt the indignity of a gaol; I have been the inmate of a madhouse; I am now a half-crazed wanderer. Homeless and friendless I'll live; and when the spirit passes, no holy lip shall breathe a prayer for the soul's repose of a nameless outcast, who probably will perish on a dung-hill.”

“And what would you give for vengeance on him whose fickle love caused you this misery and shame? Listen, Mary; before three suns go down in ocean, vengeance shall be ours!”

“How? speak, Hacket?”

“Denis O'Halloran shall be childless—through the son's heart I'll

reach the father's.—Attend!"—and Hacket rapidly detailed the outline of the foul conspiracy.

With lips apart, and eyes fixed intensely on the narrator's countenance, Mary Halligan listened in silence. Suddenly the street-bell rang once more, and Hacket was called away, leaving the gipsy alone.

"And so the son's to be slaughtered to break the father's heart," she muttered,—“and he thinks that I am savage as himself, and that I will aid him in his deed of blood. Alas! he little knows that woman's first love can never be obliterated. Five and twenty years have passed. I saw him recently; for the impulse was irresistible, and I crossed the sea to gratify the wish. Time had blanched his hair, the stoop of years had slightly bent his lofty carriage; and an empty sleeve told that he had been mutilated on the battle field. He passed me carelessly; but when I spoke, turned, as if the voice that fell upon his ear had been once familiar. He replied to me in kind accents, and gave me some silver as he walked away. Did I see him then as he was? Oh, no; I only saw the bold and handsome soldier, who, in the mountain glen, taught me first to love; and could I harm him because he trifled with a heart that never loved another; and, like an infant's toy, threw it from him when the newness of the gift was over? No; Denis O'Halloran, thy boy shall be preserved; or she whom you wooed, and won, and deserted, will perish in the effort. Ha! I hear the tiger's foot upon the stair; and now to deceive him.”

All that the scoundrel proposed, the gipsy warmly assented to—and I was placed under instant *espionage*. The thing of legs and arms, ycleped Frank, watched my outgoings from the hotel.—Hacket, through the hunchback's agency, settled with the resurrection men the price of my destruction—and all required, was a fitting opportunity to accomplish it.

Two modes presented themselves—secret murder or open violence. The first was infinitely preferable, had my habits been irregular, and that consequently I could have been seduced into some of the convenient slaughter-houses, with which the metropolis then abounded. Places there were enough; but the difficulty was, how should I be gotten there? Women were employed, but Isidora proved a counter-charm. Scented billets, couched in ardent language, reached me daily; but the assignations were disregarded. Could letters be credited upon ladies' hearts, I had done prodigious execution; but I acted like “a man of snow,” and out-josephed Joseph. To Mr. Hartley I even submitted these amatory effusions, and in his company I actually kept two or three appointments. It was observed, probably from some blinded window, that another person was in my company, and that no attempt could be made upon me with success; and like Hotspur's spirits “none did come, though we did call for them.” Unknown to each other, Hacket and I played a deep and desperate game, the stake was life, and—as the cards turned up—I won it.

Why that a regular Emerald like me, whose native soil is known to be favourable to the growth of gallantry as it is unfriendly to that of reptiles, should play deaf-adder to the call of beauty in the streets, the following chapter may possibly account for.

CHAPTER XXI.

MY TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

“ *Cæs.* Cæsar shall forth: the things that threatened me,
Ne'er looked but on my back; when they shall see
The face of Cæsar—they are vanished.”

* * * * *

“ *Ham.* Oh most pernicious woman!”

* * * * *

“*'3d Mur.* Tis he—

2d Mur. Stand to't.”

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN I met Isidora in her mountain home, her graceful person, aided by manners particularly *naïve* and gentle, had fascinated me, and taught me, for the first time, to feel the influence of love. Hers was the artless beauty that man never gazes on unmoved—the coldest heart would own its power—and mine at once admitted it. But when a closer intimacy banished the timidity which a secluded life and conventual education naturally produced—when she looked no longer on me as a stranger, expressed her opinions freely, and conversed without restraint—I found her gifted with intelligence beyond what so young a life could warrant, and a spirit, in ordinary events, mild, gentle, and endearing, but one, if necessity required, capable of that devoted fortitude, which so frequently, in pain and poverty, raises woman superior to misfortune, and distances immeasurably the boasted heroism of man. I was now, by the permission of Mr. Hartley, constantly in the presence of his daughter. At his table a cover was reserved for me, and I was an inmate of a neighbouring hotel. In the various places visited by strangers to the metropolis, I daily accompanied Isidora; for in concerns of deeper interest her father seemed entirely engaged. I sailed with her on the river—I rode with her in the parks. Is it then to be wondered at that boyish fancy ripened into a strong and endearing passion?—one that no secondary impression could afterwards efface, and which, like the star of hope, brightened the darkest hour of my career, and finally crowned success with that best benison of heaven—woman's love.

On the third evening after my unsuccessful attempt to effect a reconciliation with Mr. Clifford, we had strolled westward, and, returning through St. James's Park, sate down to rest upon a bench beside the Serpentine. In the story of my life it was a day never to be forgotten; for I had told Isidora what could not have been a secret, and, amid tears and blushes, she had owned that to her father she could give now only a divided heart. He who has loved at twenty, and excited a

kindred passion in the object of his regard, can only fancy what I felt. The world seemed strewn with roses—the sky without a cloud. Was not Isidora mine? and rich in woman's love, what else was to be wished for? Alas! how many trials were before me, ere that haven of happiness was won!

I mentioned before, Mr. Hartley's business was so engrossing, that from breakfast time we rarely saw him until he returned late to dinner. The evening was closing, and the chimes of St. Martin's steeple warned us that we should resume our walk. The bench on which we had been sitting was directly in front of a clump of trees; and on moving a pace or two, we perceived, for the first time, that a tall and singular looking woman was standing immediately beside us, although until we had risen the shrubs effectually concealed her. Her figure and attitude were graceful, and the outline of the countenance fine—with a complexion so dark, and eyes so brilliant, that they at once betrayed a gipsy origin. She was past the middle age—but when a girl, she no doubt possessed the beauty for which that singular race are so remarkable. She regarded me with fixed attention; her eyes glancing slightly at my fair companion, and then settling upon mine with a stealthy expression of inquiry. We attempted to pass her, but she raised her arm, and signed that we should remain.

"What do ye want, good woman?" I said, as I offered her some silver.

"Not money," was her reply, and she pushed back the hand I had extended. "I would speak with you, and speak with you alone."

"With me! You can have no business with a stranger"—

"With strangers I have none. With you I have important business," returned the gipsy.

"I am unknown to you, my friend." She smiled incredulously, and then peering sharply at my face, she measured me with a glance from head to foot.

"Yes, I could not be mistaken—the air, the height, the figure—all, all, are similar. The same firm step and haughty carriage; ay, and the eye and lip too are his; the rest, the softer features of his mother."

Isidora, startled at the wild attitude and address of the wanderer, clung closely to my arm for protection. The gipsy noticed it.

"Lady, from me you have nothing to dread. I may not be able to serve you, and who would injure you? Give me your hand. Nay, fear not."

"Pshaw!" said I, "we have no faith in fortune-telling;" and I smiled.

"That smile too is his father's. Come, lady, let me but look one moment."

I pressed Isidora to comply with the gipsy's request; and, with a smile, she presented her hand to the fortune-teller. The latter scanned the lines attentively, and then whispered something in my companion's ear, but in a voice so low, that to me it was perfectly inaudible. Its effect upon Isidora was striking. In a moment a burning blush suffused her cheeks, and eyes, turned before upon the

sybil in playful expectation, were instantly cast upon the ground. The wanderer smiled.

"Nay, lady," she said, "take not what I have told you as any proof of skill; a boy who saw half what I did unperceived would readily have guessed that secret. One look more. Your love will end prosperously; but the time is hidden from me. Trials and disappointments interfere, but prudence and patience will overcome them. May you be happy! It would be, in sooth, a pity if sorrow should dim so sweet an eye, or cloud a brow so beautiful. And now, to see what fate designs for you, sir."

The kindly tone of voice in which she conveyed her wishes for Isidora's happiness of course had its full influence on me, and I freely presented the hand she desired—but still a sceptic smile accompanied the offer, and showed that in palmistry I was an unbeliever. She affected not to notice it, but proceeded with her mystic examination.

"Well," I said, laughing, "what has fortune in reserve for me?"

"Much that I can see, and more that is wrapped in mystery."

"Proceed."

"I see present danger, followed by perilous adventure. The end, however, looks happy."

"The danger," I exclaimed; "whence and from whom?"

"The source I see; the time's uncertain."

"Pshaw! this is mere folly—some proof. Give me this, or I shall say your art is all speculation on the common results of life, and founded on chance of circumstances."

"Ask, and I'll answer you."

"My name?" I inquired.

"Hector O'Halloran."

"Well, I was not aware you knew me. That knowledge is easily acquired. My profession?"

"Your father's. Am I right?"

I bowed.

"What else do you require from me?" said the woman.

Isidora had turned pale; for the readiness with which each question had been answered, seemed to infer that the gipsy really possessed the intelligence she boasted.

"Come," I said, "one question more, and that if answered shall make me a true believer;—tell me my age!"

"Well—let me think a moment," she returned, and placing her open hand across her forehead, she seemed for a few moments to tax her memory, as if engaged in mental calculations.

"Ay, that was the year," she muttered; then, turning to me, she coolly answered, "On Thursday next you will be twenty."

She paused; and the surprise visible on my countenance announced to Isidora that the answer was correct.

"And now, one word before we part;" and she laid her hand upon my shoulder—"Hector O'Halloran, beware! or your twentieth birthday will be as bloody as your first.—Before we part, give me one promise."

"Name it," I replied.

"When I require you to meet me—when a writing with these marks attached to it, shall be placed within your hand"—and she gave me a scroll—"will you obey the order?"

I answered boldly in the affirmative.

"'Tis well. Though my summons come in storm, and darkness, and at midnight, as you value life, obey it. Though beauty smiles, and music charms, leave all when that mystic signature is presented."

Isidora and I turned our eyes on the scroll. It contained only a couple of initials—but annexed was a singular hieroglyphic, representing a heart perforated with a dagger. I smiled at the device, while Isidora became deadly pale. The wanderer saw the colour leave her cheek; and with a gentleness of voice and manner intended to remove alarm, she thus addressed my fair companion:—

"Lady, fear nothing; all will yet be well,—and by courage and caution danger shall be arrested. Go, and God bless you! Remember what I have said and you have promised. You have deadly enemies; but, Hector O'Halloran, you have one devoted friend. Ay, and humble as she is, trust to her; and if she do not save, she'll die in the attempt."

Ere the words were spoken, the gipsy had vanished behind the bushes, leaving Isidora and myself in marvellous astonishment at a scene equally unexpected and incomprehensible.

When we reached home, Mr. Hartley was waiting for us; and after dinner, when *tête-à-tête*, I recounted our adventure in the Park. He listened attentively to the detail, and asked me many questions, to which, however, I could give no satisfactory replies.

"I am at a loss," he said, "to fathom this singular affair. The woman could have no object in creating an unnecessary alarm, and yet her communication was so vague, that one cannot even guess what the danger is, or from what quarter it may be expected. Still her caution is not to be despised, and we must be upon our guard, until it pleases your swarthy friend to be more explicit than she has been. One course must be pursued. We must keep strangers at a distance, and look at all as enemies." He took the note I had received from Mr. Clifford on the evening after our interview, and read it carefully. "It is his signature indubitably," he murmured. "These well-remembered characters are not to be mistaken. Had he received you kindly—had he evinced the slightest symptom of abated displeasure when you addressed him—and did a hope remain that time could mitigate his callous feelings towards an erring child—I would, in that case, have suspected that in the monk you had that secret enemy of whom you have been warned to beware. But no—the Jesuit is secure; the dupe is all his own. He will be contented with rendering all future attempts to gain the old man's presence unavailing. That he can effect, and more would be unnecessary. To me, the occurrence is involved in mystery too deep to be even guessed at, and it seems one that time only can unravel."

Although to the amatory effusions which reached me by every post

I was cold as St. Senanus, when he was so barbarously virtuous as to warn a single lady off his premises at midnight, still to woman's fascination I was not altogether insensible. By singular accident, I had encountered a girl of extraordinary beauty in my walks; and though her demeanour was modest and retiring, I still fancied that I did not pass her by unnoticed. She was apparently under eighteen; and to the sweetest face imaginable, united a faultless figure. Her mourning dress was simple and becoming; and her general appearance indicated an humble respectability. To have insinuated aught against the constancy of my passion for Isidora, should be, as Lord Ogleby says, "by all the laws of love, death to the offender;" but still, when we passed each other in the street, I found myself involuntarily look round. Once, I imagined that the pretty incognita directed a furtive glance at me; and then, blushing at detection, she bent her eyes upon the ground, and walked hastily on, as if prohibiting any attempt on my part to address her, had such been my intention. But by a strange accident, the introduction that propriety forbade, chance effected.

My birth-day came. I thought upon the sybil's warning in the Park, and I confess that it was anything but an agreeable reminiscence. I was not afraid—for what had I to fear? It was "an air-drawn dagger" that impended; but still I was far from being quite at ease. The day was gloomy; a fog obscured the sun; the dull atmosphere would damp the lightest spirits; I felt its influence on mine; and when I reached St. Paul's, the gipsy's warning haunted my memory, and it seemed to announce emphatically a coming evil. Her words rang in my ear, and I thought I heard her again repeat, "Hector O'Halloran, beware! or your twentieth birth-day will be as bloody as your first." I mused upon the prophecy—"The ides of March were come." Well, the sybil said that courage and caution would overcome the threatening danger. Both should be exercised; and a few brief hours would fulfil or falsify the augury.

These sombre thoughts were suddenly interrupted, for directly before me, and scarcely distant a dozen yards, I recognised the graceful figure of the fair incognita, whom fortune, good or evil, appeared determined to throw across my path continually.

Should I address her as I passed? I wished to do so, but hesitated. Suddenly a man hurried rudely along, and pushing with violence against the pretty unknown, she staggered a few paces and would have fallen on the flagway, had I not sprang forward and caught her in my arms. The scoundrel who had done the mischief, dreading the consequences of his brutality, hastened away, and was speedily lost in the fog.

Fortunately, a tavern was immediately at hand. I supported her; obtained a private sitting-room, the assistance of the females of the house, and the incognita was speedily recovered. We were then left alone. I received her warmest acknowledgments for my kindness; and thus encouraged, I pressed my inquiries to learn who she was, and, with the timidity of a girl unaccustomed to hold converse with a stranger, by degrees I learned the fair one's history.

She was the orphan of a soldier. Her father, a lieutenant in the

line, had fallen at the assault of Badajos; her mother, years before was dead; and her only living relation, an aged aunt, who, from infirmities, was unable to leave the house. They enjoyed a trifling independence—one that required careful management to render it sufficient to meet moderate wants, and maintain a respectable position in society. Hence she accounted for the necessity imposed upon one so young of appearing frequently in public.

Over the simple story of a life, she threw a shadowing of romance that strongly interested me. In alluding to the narrowness of her means, my fair acquaintance mentioned circumstances which could not but engage my sympathy. Her aunt had fallen into the hands of a grinding solicitor, and been plundered accordingly; for how could an infirm old woman obtain redress, when opposed to a satellite of the law? Her father had demands upon the Government when he fell in his country's cause; but with no interest to support it, the claim was made and rejected. No wonder, then, that Irish chivalry at once prompted me to offer myself her champion, and I expressed a strong desire to visit her aged relative. With some hesitation, she acceded to the request, and named, for a reason I have forgotten, a late hour that evening for an interview.

Were I asked what had excited this curiosity regarding the history of a stranger, and with what objects I sought a closer acquaintance with the incognita, I could not answer the question. To Isidora my allegiance remained unshaken; and yet some secret impulse urged me to cultivate an intimacy, which prudence should have interdicted, and every bond of love forbade.

The day appeared interminable. It wore away at last; and the hour drew nigh when I was to meet my young incognita. I told Isidora of my morning adventure; but I suppressed the fact, that an evening interview was to follow it. I feared that Mr. Hartley, from the habitual suspicion with which he scrutinized every transaction of life that bore a questionable feature, would not approve of my becoming patron to a girl so pretty and unprotected as the soldier's orphan, and therefore I kept that intention to myself. Some business called him out—my mistress complained of head-ache, and retired—the clock struck nine—I rang for my cloak and stick—for of late I never went abroad after dark without a stout shillelah—and, as I was leaving the room, Dominique placed a sealed paper in my hand, which he said had been just left with the porter by a person who disappeared the moment it was delivered.

The billet was short; and the curious device attached to it, announced that it came from the gipsy. It ran thus:—

“Meet me on the right-hand side of Blackfriars Bridge, leading from the City, precisely at midnight. The crisis is at hand! I wish to prepare you for it! Fail not!”

I read the writing twice, and determined to arm myself well and obey the summons punctually. Mr. Hartley was from home. No doubt he would appear ere the hour of meeting arrived, and I waited his return for half an hour, but in vain. The evening wore heavily away—I thought of my appointment with the fair incognita—

there would be time enough to keep it, and it would fill up an hour agreeably. I left the hotel, and walked briskly towards the place where the soldier's orphan told me she would be in waiting.

I reached the "trysting place," and stopped before the entrance of a narrow lane, which the lofty houses on either side rendered still more gloomy. That mass of masonry, St. Paul's, flung its deep shadow over the space beneath it; and there I halted, looking towards the opening between the houses, from which I expected that my incognita would present herself. I was not kept long in waiting. A slight dark figure flitted past, and a soft voice asked, in well-remembered accents, "Is that you?" It was the soldier's daughter. She took my arm; and under her guidance, I entered the gloomy alley from which I had seen her issue.

But I must pause. Where was my foster brother? and how was that worthy personage employed? He, whose fortunes I have described as being so strangely united with mine—where was he now, when the crisis of my fate was coming? Stay, gentle reader. Leave me for a few minutes with the young lady—remember, the expedition was conducted on platonic principles—and let us inquire what befel Mark Antony O'Toole, and his excellent ally.

During the first week that Mark Antony and the rat-catcher favoured the modern Babylon with their company, no adventure of particular interest had fallen to the lot of either. As both these excellent personages enjoyed the perfect use of their limbs, their peregrinations were numerous, and every interesting object the metropolis contained, was visited from Tyburn to the Tower. In these agreeable excursions, as yet no opening to future fortune had been discovered. It is true, they had seen the world, and made sundry valuable acquaintances; and in return for *blue-ruin* and *heavy-wet*, received excellent advice, and also, a special invitation to attend the obsequies of a lamented gentlewoman, who had shuffled off this mortal coil in a back attic, two pair up, in Leg-lane. As this last token of respect to departed worth was to be strictly private and genteel, the sticks were taken from the visitors on the first landing-place as they arrived, and deposited in the ruins of a clock-case, by a man with a wooden leg, who attended funerals as chief mourner, and balls as master of ceremonies—and by this useful functionary Mark and his friend were ushered into the apartment, where all that was mortal of Mistress Ellinor Malone was lying in state.

The company were already assembled, amounting to some thirty of both sexes, all friends and relations of the deceased, and natives of the Emerald Isle—and nothing could be more imposing than the general effect which the chamber of death presented. Mistress Malone was laid out upon a bench, with a frilled cap upon her head, and a plate of snuff upon her bosom. On one side, stood a three-legged table supporting an unequal number of lights; and on the other, there was a goodly supply of gin, porter, and tobacco. Around the room the company were seated, each gentleman supporting a lady on his knee; and, to judge from appearances, a more united company had never been collected in St. Giles's.

Being the latest arrivals from "the ould country," the ratcatcher

and his young friend obtained particular attention—and on being presented by the single-legged gentleman, they were received, in person, by the disconsolate survivor.

“Mister Macgreal, ye'r kindly welcome—and the same, to you, Mister O'Toole—we'll brook ye'r name, for it's a good one! I'm in grate afflixshin, as you may parsave—but God's will be done;” and Mr. Malone crossed himself. “Patsey Doyle, fill the gintlemen a cropper ach—and put a drop in the bottom of a glass for myself, to drink to better acquaintance.”

The glasses being duly filled and emptied, Mr. Malone feelingly continued.

“Och, boys, af ye but knew my loss. There ye lie, Nelly! could as a crimpt cod; an when ye were sober—to be sure it was but seldom—the divil blister the better wife in St. Giles's—an that's a big word. Come, gintlemen, take a pinch out of respect for the dead—Lord rest her—amen!—and then draw a sate, an make yerselves agreeable. Patsey Doyle, there's a lemon-box in the corner—fix it, *avournene*, for the gintilmen—an now, Mistress Braddigen, may be yee'd obleege us wid a song.”

The lady, an agreeable exception to professional melodists who never sing when people want them, immediately complied with the request of Mr. Malone; and having, as a necessary preliminary, removed all bronchial obstructions with a *johnny* of “cream of the valley,” she executed with feeling and effect that beautiful ballad, intituled “The night before Larry was stretched”—and the well-merited plaudits of a delighted audience had just rewarded the exertions of the fair singer, when two fresh arrivals were added to the company.

The visitors were of the softer sex. One, was a stout gentlewoman of a certain age, whom he of the solitary leg announced as Mrs. Bunce—and the second, a very pretty young one, was also introduced as Mrs. Spicer. The fosterer and his friend, being the only gentlemen who could afford accommodation to the new comers, the master of ceremonies deposited the stout lady upon the knees of Shemus Rhua, while to Mark Antony, the honour “of bearing the weight” of Mrs. Spicer was entrusted.

The discernment evinced in the collection of the company would have been in itself a sufficient guarantee for its general respectability; and hence, the intercourse, on all sides, was easy and unreserved.

“'Pon my sowl! a ginteeler party I hav'nt been to these six months,” observed Mrs. Spicer to the fosterer, after she had turned down a *flast of max* to ‘a better acquaintance,’—“and Malone—Lord comfort him in sorra!—shows the best of respect to his desaste lady.—I hope there won't be any ruction the night, and that the wake will go off agreeable. The Connaught stockin'-man, who was bate at Phil Casey's ball a Friday night, died this evenin' in Guy's Hospital. He left his death, they say, on Phaybe Davis, for hitten him, wid the smoothin'-iron, when down.”

“I was rather afeard, Sally, dear,” observed Mrs. Bunce to Mrs. Spicer, “that cross ould file, yer husband, wouldn't let ye out the night.”

“And not a toe would I have got over the trashold ather,” returned Mrs. Spicer, “only something he heard druv him into the Minories, to ask after the carakter of a chap who came to lodge with us last Monday. By gogstay, if the ould ruffin comes home early, and finds me out—may be there won’t be a purty *too-roo* kicked up? Well, the divil may care—as Punch said when he missed mass!” Then, in a lower tone, she addressed herself to the fosterer.

“He’s so gallows jealous,” said the lady, “that one hasn’t the life of a dog. He, and his other wives”—(for it would appear that in the connubial line Mr. Spicer had dealt largely)—“were always murderin’ one another—ay, and before the beak every week, and sometimes twice too. Now, I have been married to him two months come Saturday, and sorra mark he could show agen me but one black eye—for I can bare a dale of provokashin—and that he brought upon himself too.” She then continued to remark, that Mr. Spicer’s temper was but indifferent, and when he had “the cross glass in” a saint wouldn’t stand him. He had also “a most aggravatin’ tongue,”—and that evening, in alluding to a former acquaintanceship which had existed between herself and a drummer in the Guards, he used terms of so little delicacy, that a mutual interchange of compliments resulted—Mrs. Spicer, receiving the contents of a pewter pint, which token of connubial endearment was as promptly acknowledged with the boot-jack, by which it appeared an upper tooth had been effectually removed without the assistance of a dentist—a loss, on Mr. Spicer’s part, ill to bear, as it was the only specimen of natural ivory he possessed.

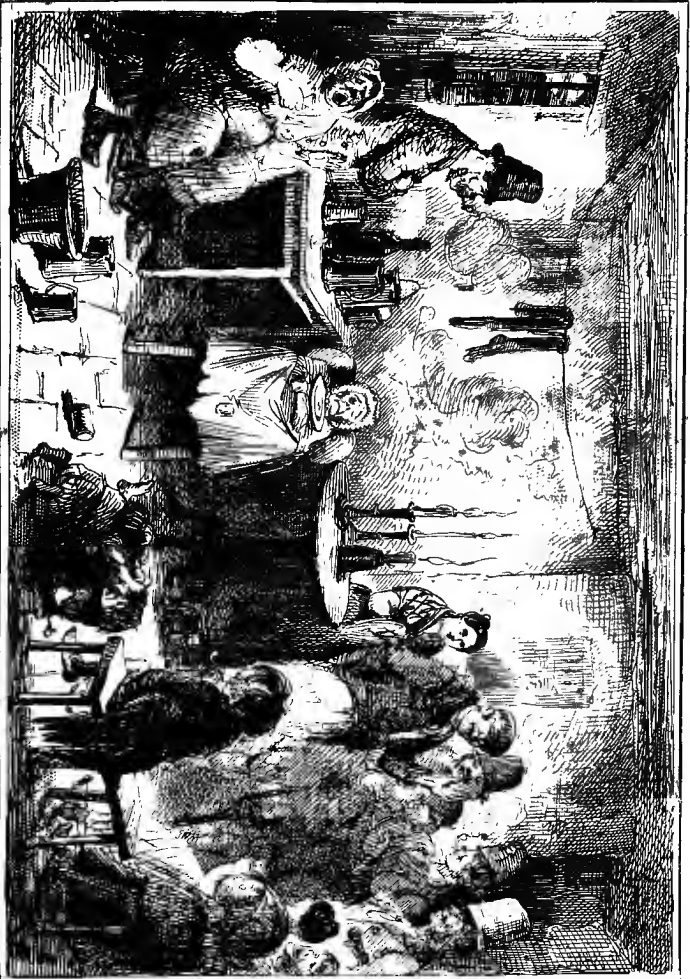
In such light and pleasing conversation an hour passed unheeded—for minutes winged with pleasure fly unnoticed. Harmony prevailed; and, by a philosophic effort, Mr. Malone forgot his loss, and at the request of the company, and assisted by a violin accompaniment of the gentleman with the wooden-leg, he chaunted “The Groves of Blarney.” It is right to observe that, in the selection of the song, an affectionate deference to the taste of the deceased was observed, the said “Groves” being an especial favourite of his departed companion. If ever wake proved pleasant, Mrs. Malone’s bade fair to be so. All were happy—Mrs. Bunce declared the ratcatcher an agreeable man—and the sooner that Mr. Spicer looked after his truant spouse the better—for, were the truth known, Mark Antony was making a wild inroad on a heart that hitherto, had not “loved wisely, but too well.”

“A change came o’er the spirit of the” night—the door unclosed—and a square-built man, with a grizzled head and most infelicitous aspect, was seen in the door-way, fixing a basilisk glance on “that fair frail one” who rested on the fosterer’s knee. An interjectional remark from Mrs. Spicer left the identity of the personage indubitable—as she observed, “That’s the ould divil, and no mistake—and maybe there won’t be a reglar shindy!”

Though the gentleman paused in the doorway, he lost no time in opening the conversation.

“So ye’r there, Sally Spicer!” and the remainder of the sentence was couched in language which the Court Journal would pronounce irregular.

Back



“And where else should I be, ye ould, batter'd-out apology for a Christian?”

“Come out o' that—tramp home—an may be ye wont catch it!”

“Can ye spare another tooth convaniently?” responded his rebellions helpmate.

“I'm waitin' for ye, Sal!” returned the elderly gentleman, with a mysterious crook of the finger.

“Ye may go to Bath,” replied the fair one, “and if that does'n't agree with your constitution, why go to ——” and she named a locality of much higher temperature.

“I say, Sall, ye vont ye go, vont ye?” and Mr. Spicer made an advance three steps nearer to the lemon box.

“Not the length of that nose of yours, and its the longest and ugliest in the room. If it would'n't be an impertinent question, Mr. Spicer, what did ye do wid ye'r other nine wives?—By gogstay—if all the neighbours say is true, Bluebeard was a gentleman to ye!”

* The remark was an unhappy one. A lady, whom Mr. Spicer in earlier life had honoured with his hand, had been found dead under suspicious circumstances, which rendered it a doubtful point to determine whether her sudden exit was attributable to gin or strangulation. In consequence, Mr. S. had to enter into a lengthened explanation at the Old Bailey; and “having the luck of thousands,” the jury gave him the benefit of a doubt, and finally left it upon gin. The allusion, therefore, touched rather a tender point, and hurried matters to a crisis.

Mr. Spicer sprang forward, and seized his lady by the arm—and Mark Antony, retaining the other, put in a decided remonstrance. In Scott's parlance—

“Few were the words, and stern, and high,
That mark'd the foemen's *jealous* hate;
For question fierce, and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.”

Mr. Spicer, discommoding himself of his coat and neckcloth, made a sporting offer to fight for five pounds, which Mr. O'Toole accepted, only making the consideration love, and not money—a proposition that was received with general applause.

To all official accounts of modern battles, “preliminary observations” are prefixed. In early life, Mr. Spicer had been professional—but, obtaining what he considered a safer line of business, he abandoned the ring, to repose himself under the shade of his own laurels. Blinded by the green monster, he reckoned a little too much upon his former science, forgetting the odds that youth and superior size had placed against him. Both parties had their backers.—“Now, old-un, mind your dodge!” exclaimed the supporters of Mr. Spicer—while the admirers of Mark Antony, recommending the “young-un to be awake,” added, “that the ould file was a deep dodger;” and intimated that it would be advisable to “look sharp to his left daddle, for that was his nasty one.” One other appeal—and a last one, came from the corner; “For the sake of Jasus, to keep the skrimmage as far from the

corps as they could." The admonition was the cry of wisdom, and it was disregarded accordingly.

A briefer conflict never disappointed a sporting assembly. The artful dodge, on which Mr. Spicer depended, failed; and in trying his left, he received a *per contra* favour that brought the battle to a close. A flush hit sent him into the corner with astonishing velocity; and in his rapid transit, he took with him not only the master of the ceremonies, but also, the mortal remains of Mistress Malone, and the whole apparatus on which the defunct lady had been extended.

At this appalling catastrophe, the outbreak of the chief mourner was responded to by "the cry of women." The single-legged professor declared his ruin complete, that instrument from which he discoursed such excellent music being "in *smithereens*," while it was exceedingly doubtful, whether that Mr. Spicer was not defunct as Mrs. Malone. When the first uproar had partially subsided, the corpse was lifted by the ladies—the polygamist raised by his friends and allies—and the fiddler allowed to regain his perpendicular as he best could—while the admirers of Mark Antony, after eulogizing his pluck, and paying a delicate compliment to his powers as "a punisher," hinted that it would be prudent to withdraw, that it might be ascertained if Mr. Spicer had been gathered to his fathers, or whether he was only "kilt, not killed;" and, finally, until the mortal remains of Mrs. Malone should be duly reported "*in statu quo ante bellum*," which, being translated, means "stretched genteelly as before the shindy had occurred."

To the ratcatcher the prudence of an immediate retreat was manifest; and while general attention was divided between "the dying and the dead," the fosterer and his friend quietly levanted, leaving, what a few minutes before had been an harmonious assemblage, in most admired disorder.

The rapidity with which Irish rows are commenced and concluded is proverbial. Under the directions of a sailor, the wreck was cleared; and Mr. Spicer, whose advent had brought on the battle and "crossed the obsequies, and true-love's rights," was declared to be still a living man; and being resuscitated by gin and neighbourly attention, he was once more committed to the care of his gentle helpmate. The dear departed one again received

"The latest favour at the hands
That, living, honoured her;"

and the wake being restored to pristine solemnity, the afflicted husband resumed his seat, vented his sorrows in soft melody, and again gratified the company with a song. What were the after-proceedings at Mr. Malone's evening party we are not prepared to say; but no doubt some notice touching the wind-up of the symposium, might be discovered by the curious in the police chronicles of the time.

On the following afternoon, the funeral of Mrs. Malone was correctly "performed;" and on the same evening on which I had made my *entrée* on the world, that lamented gentlewoman bade it a last adieu. The mourners separated at the grave-yard, each to return to his respective vocations; and the captain and the fosterer retired to the Fox and

Goose, to deliberate on affairs of paramount importance. The question was one of ways and means; and, as it would appear, the subject had not been considered until circumstances imperatively required that financial arrangements should be entered on.

"What the devil's to be done?" observed the ratcatcher. "We're down to thirty shillings between us—and a week's rent due to-morrow."

"I thought, before now," returned the fosterer, with a sigh, "that something would have turned up—but I'm afraid, copteeine, we settled in the wrong quarter of the town for any thing but love, drink, and fighting."

"Feaks," said the ratcatcher, "and I'm pretty nearly of the same opinion. Mark, jewel—what if we step over to the other side of the city—and may be we might hear of something that one could turn his hand to?"

"It's too late this evening," replied the fosterer.

"Not at all, Mark—it's scarcely gone eight."

"But Shemus, the truth is, I have a bit of an engagement."

"Where, and what to do?" inquired the ratcatcher, suspiciously

"Why," said the fosterer, "just as they sodded Mrs. Malone, a girl slipped this letter into my hand."

"What is it about?"

"Nothing, but an invitation to tea."

"Taa!" ejaculated the captain, horror-struck. "If ye take to taa-drinkin', Hector, *avourneeine*, its over with ye! What destroyed Dick Macknamara but these accursed taa-parties? May the devil smother the first inventer of the same!—And where are ye invited to?"

The fosterer, instead of answering the inquiry, presented the billet he had received in the grave-yard to the honest ratcatcher, who, with some difficulty having managed to decypher the writing, read the contents, which were as follow:—

"leg lane, thursday, six o'clock.

"dear Sir,—i was gratley Consarnt you shood get in Trubbil on my Account last Nite, and the Naybors alow ye Behavd lik a Reglar gentleman. Spicer's gon to the Sittay on bisnis that 'il keep him All evenin'—So if you Cood make it Convanient to slip in fair an asey About 8 o'clock, wee wood have a Cup of taa, an' sum Agreeabel couversashin. The Favir of yer Compnay will grateley Obleege,

"Yours to Comand,

"SARAH SPICER."

"P. S.—For the Seak of Geesus, don't let aney body no Nothin' at the Fox and Gose—they'r' Sure to split, an' no mistake. If Mister Magrale wood sit in the wee Windy next the Door of the Fox, and the divell druv Spicer hom, he'd be sure to see the oul screw Turnin' the corner, and have Time to give us the offis.

' My Pen is Bad, my ink is pale,
But my Hart too you will niver fail.'

"Your Lovin' friend, S.— S.—"

"n. b.—You'l Fine the door onley shut too—Push, an' it will Opin.

"Yours, as Before.

"Too Mister OTOOL, &c. &c. &c. &c."

“ You would not be mad enough to go,” said the captain, as he returned Mrs. Spicer’s flattering invitation.

“ And how can I get over it ?” inquired the fosterer.

“ Now mark my words—for you’re bent on it, I see,” continued Shemus Rhua—“ your taa-drinkin’ will end in trouble. They say here, that Spicer’s house is notorious for harbouring the most desperate characters in the Dials. If you’re caught—no fair play like the wake—but you’ll be set on by half a score, out and out, murdered, and no one to assist you. Mark, *astore*—stay where ye are !”

But, like his greater namesake, Mark Antony, led by Dan Cupid, seemed determined to run blindly to destruction ; and, disregarding the warnings of the ratcatcher, he resolved

“ To love again, and be again undone ”—

and accordingly departed for the domicile of Mr. Spicer.

Shemus Rhua, when left alone, ensconced himself in the casement described in the lady’s letter, as “ the wee windy next the door,” to take out-post duty for the evening, and secure the fosterer against surprise. Full of dark forebodings, he recalled to memory the divers misfortunes which had befallen his unlucky *protégée*, Dick Macnamara, and all were clearly attributable to his unfortunate predilection for drinking tea ; and therefore, that Mark Antony’s visit to Mrs. Spicer would prove disastrous, he fatally anticipated. Between every blast of the *dhudheene*, he turned a suspicious eye to the corner of the street from which danger might have been expected, and proved himself thus invaluable as a videt, as he had been prudent as a counsellor.

The door of Mr. Spicer’s mansion was exactly in the state that the lady had described it—and, yielding to his push, the fosterer found himself in the presence of the lady.

Aware that time was valuable, Mrs. Spicer, after mutual wishes of good health had been ratified by a glass of rum, proceeded at once to business. She hinted at the infelicity of her marriage—and expressed her determination to effect a divorce according to the forms of St. Giles, by which the tedious formalities of law are avoided, and no necessity exists for troubling the House of Peers. Of course, she must, as a prudent woman, provide herself with a future protector ; and, in brief terms, she confessed the secret of her love, and tendered her hand and fortune to the safe custody of Mr. O’Toole.

How much soever the fosterer might have been flattered into a temporary flirtation by the declared preference of a pretty woman, still, true to the *cantatrice* and plighted faith, he declined the offer. But Mrs. Spicer was not easily to be refused ; and considering that charms might do much, but money more, she added that inducement. Taking a key from her bosom, she proceeded to unlock a strong cupboard built into the wall of the apartment, and, from external appearances, formed for a place of security.

“ This,” she said, “ is the place the ould fellow keeps his cash in—and may be ye’ll be after askin’, how I came by the key ?—Feaks, an’ I’ll tell ye.—You see, Spicer used to get mixed when any of the lodgers

would stand the liker—and we had a cracksman over-head, and he was so smart a young man, and so obligin'! Well, I picks the ould rile's pocket, an' he blind drunk; and, before he woke again, Sam Parkins had fitted this one to the lock. Poor Sam!—he was a spicy cove—not like the dark sneaking body-snatcher that came after him. 'Gad, I'm half afeerd to go up the stairs at night, for fear I would tumble over a stiff-un in a sack, as I did last Tuesday comin' late from Con Halligin's house-warmin'." As she spoke, she applied the key, while the fosterer was lost between feelings of astonishment and disgust.

"Stop! What are you doing?" he exclaimed. But the deed was already done, and Mr. Spicer's treasury feloniously opened to inspection. From this depositary, his faithless spouse produced a small box; and on lifting the lid, the fosterer perceived that it contained a number of bank notes, with money in every variety of coinage, being the produce of that worthy gentleman's long and industrious life. The lady looked at her intended lover with a smile of triumph—

"You see, Mark dear, I won't go to you empty-handed."

"Whose property is that?" inquired the fosterer, suspiciously.

"Whose but the ould screw's," returned the lady. "Say but the word, and, Mark, every shilling shall be yours."

"What! would you rob? and rob your husband too?"

"Ay, and not leave the ould rogue a mag to bless himself upon," returned the unblushing offender.

"Let me out!" exclaimed the indignant fosterer. "By heaven! I should fear if I remained longer that the roof would fall!"

"Stay, Mark darline"—and Mrs. Spicer endeavoured to arrest the escape of her refractory admirer. "Where will you get one that loves you so tenderly, and that will bring you such a lump of money into the bargain as myself?"

"And how is that money to be gotten?" returned the fosterer, indignantly. "By the worst robbery of all—the plunder of a husband by the woman who should stick to him to the death!"

"Stay, just and hear me."

"Not another minute!" exclaimed Mark Antony. "Every moment I remain here, I feel as if I were giving encouragement to a thief."

It has been said, that "hell has no fury like a woman spurned;" and Mrs. Spicer proved that truth. Her colour fled—the glow of passion with which she had vainly urged the honest Irishman to share her ill-acquired wealth, changed to the ashy hue of hatred—and, springing suddenly forward, she placed her back against the door to bar the fosterer's egress. He took her arm, and firmly but quietly, repeated his determination to leave the house.

"Never!" she exclaimed, "unless you take *me* with you."

"Are you mad, woman?" returned the fosterer; "and would you keep me here until your husband returned, and discovered your villanous intentions against himself?"

At the moment, a strong force from without dislodged the lady from the door, and the voice of the ratcatcher continued,—“And, upon my soul! that may be done without much loss of time, as the honest

man and a couple of d—d ill-looking acquaintances, are coming round the corner.”

The announcement of Mr. Spicer's advent produced an instant and awful effect on the feelings and countenance of his amiable consort.

“Holy Antony!” she exclaimed; “we're all ruined and undone. Off with ye at once!” and she sprang forward to the window, and after a hurried glance down the street, added, in a voice of terror, “Lost! lost!—it's too late—and there will be murder! Ha! I have it—quick, quick!” and after locking Mr. Spicer's treasury, she rushed up stairs, followed by Mark Antony and his guardian genius, Shemus Rhua.

Mrs. Spicer stopped before a door on the first landing-place of the upper story, and unlocking it, introduced her visitors into a dark apartment, filled with lumber and old furniture; and having cautioned them to be silent, as every movement could be heard in the next room, she hastily retired, with an assurance that she would deliver them from captivity so soon as she “made the ould screw safe.”

“'Pon my conscience,” whispered the ratcatcher, “we're in a nate situation, Mark *astore*! What did I tell ye ye'r taa-drinkin' would bring us to? Cromwell's curse on the importer of the same herb, say I—for luck nor grace niver attended them that took to it! Here we are, as snug as if we were in Newgate, and that's pleasant.”

“Hush, Shemus,” returned the captain's companion; “they're come!” as the steps and voices of several men were heard ascending the lower stairs.

During this brief colloquy, the ratcatcher and his *élève* had each applied an eye to a fissure in the wood-work; while, ensconced in darkness, they saw distinctly afterwards all that passed within. The room and its occupants are easily described.

The former was a comfortless attic, with a blinded window, a truckle bed, and a few mean articles of furniture. In one corner, there were mattocks and shovels, with other implements of unusual formation, used by gentlemen in the resurrection line; while in another, there appeared a choice collection of jemmies, skeleton keys, and every tool employed in burglary; all bespeaking that the tenant of the room was a person of general acquirements, and equally an adept, whether taken as a cracksman or a body-snatcher.

The appearance of the twain was most remarkable. The elder was, a stout, ill-visaged, swarthy Hebrew, with voluminous whiskers, and a most repulsive face; the other, that thing of legs and arms, whom we have already introduced as the confidant of Mr. Brown.

“How devilish dark!” remarked the hunchback.

“The better at times for business,” returned a second voice. “Stop—there's a tinder-box on the table;” and the sparkle of flint on steel, was followed by the steadier glare proceeding from a lighted candle.

It was quite apparent that the caution to remain silent from Mrs. Spicer was necessary; for through the chinks in the crazy wood-work of a door which divided the apartments, the slightest sound was heard distinctly.

"We're full late, and the sooner we are off the better," returned the first speaker.

"We'll be time enough for some people, for all that. A man can't go without his tools, Master Frank; and just keep yourself quiet, and I'll be with you in a shake."

"Make haste, Josh. All's ready; and fortune has done more for us than I could expect."

"Well," said the Jew to the hunchback, "and how is the trick to be done?"

"Safely," replied the other. "Julia Travers has got him to meet her. Lord, what a girl it is!—There's not a decoy in London to be compared to her. He believes her to be a soldier's orphan—and she played her game so deep, and dressed so well too—I would have passed her myself in the street, and never suspected she was any thing but a regular respectable. Well, Jim and the smasher are waiting at the dark turn of the alley—we follow—and while the chap's attention is engaged in front, his back will be to you."

"I understand ye; and this shall settle matters."

The ruffian took from the implements of his villanous profession, a murderous weapon formed of whalebone and lead, and then producing a glass and bottle, the hunchback and he drank a glass to good-luck, extinguished the candle, and, locking the door of the apartment, descended the staircase, and closed the street door heavily.

Before the fosterer and his friend could express their mutual astonishment, the key was turned in the door of the closet where they had lain *perdue*, and Mrs. Spicer presented herself.

"Hush!" she said, "for the sake of Heaven!—My husband has gone for a minute to the Fox!—Hurry—or we're ruined!"

She took Mark Antony's hand—piloted him down stairs—the rat-catcher followed—and when both had gained the street, she shut the door suddenly, leaving her lover and his friend, as they say in Ireland, "on the right side to run away."

The rapidity with which Mrs. Spicer had effected their deliverance, enabled Mark Antony and his companion to reach the street so close upon the heels of the ruffians, that they saw them turn the corner. By a sort of mutual consent, they too took the same direction; and, keeping the scoundrels in sight, regulated their movements as they proceeded. As the clock struck ten, St. Paul's churchyard was at the same moment honoured with the presence of divers personages—to wit, myself and the *incognita*, the Jew and the hunchback—and, by a strange accident, the fosterer and Shemus Rhua. How singular—that my deliverance from certain death should have been effected through the agency of my foster brother!

While the parties paused for a few moments in the church-yard, the brief remarks that passed indicated the feelings and business of the triads.

"How imprudent this meeting must appear, sir! and how unguarded in a female to venture out at this unseasonable hour!" was whispered in the softest voice imaginable to some remark of mine, as I passed the arm of the *incognita* through mine.

“By Heaven, the thing is safe!” said the hunchbacked villain, in an under-tone, to his confederate. “See how blindly the poor flat runs into the snare, and follows the beck of the deepest dodger that ever betrayed a fool! Stick close; and mind your blow! Oh, that I had man’s strength!—there’s not in Britain one who loves a daring deed more dearly.—Would that the arm was equal to the heart!—How I shall delight to see that tall idiot, who would stare or smile at my deformity, grovelling on the earth, and wondering how he contrived to get his skull cracked, while he thought only of Julia’s charms, and fancied himself in full security.”

“Can ye see them, captain?” whispered the fosterer; “I can’t distinctly, the night’s so dark.”

“Many a darker one I have watched the soldiers pass me on the heather, after I was an outlaw,” replied the ratcatcher. “I see a man and woman. See, they turn to the right, under yonder drowsy-looking lamp; and there—those other two—one the dark scoundrel we overheard, and the cursed cripple he was talkin’ to. What are we to do, Mark?”

“Stick to the villains like a brace of blood-hounds,” replied the fosterer.

“I don’t half like it,” said the ratcatcher; “remember, Mark, how nearly I was being hanged about the tailor’s wife. “There’s sure to be murder; and, holy Mary! all this comes out of taa-drinkin’!”

Through dark and intricate turnings, the soldier’s daughter conducted me. I found the arm that was locked in mine tremble, and yet the night was far from cold. As we advanced, the lanes became darker and less frequented, and I could not avoid remarking, how dreary and deserted the immediate neighbourhood of my young friend’s residence appeared to be. She replied—the tone of voice was agitated. Was she ill? I asked the question, and gently put my arm round her for support. Suddenly, some terrible emotion convulsed her.

“No—no—no!” she exclaimed; “not for thousands will I do it! There’s guilt enough upon my soul already!”

“Come, Julia,” I said, not clearly hearing what she said; “I must get you assistance. Come on.”

“Not another step,” she murmured. “Return—quick, quick—away, away!”

She caught my hand convulsively, turned her lips to my ear, whispered in a deep, low voice, “Ten paces further, and *you are murdered!*” and bounding from my side, vanished in the darkness, leaving me the most confounded gentleman that ever followed that will-o’-the-wisp—a woman.

CHAPTER XXII.

: ESCAPE—BUT MR. SLOMAN MEETS WITH AN ACCIDENT.

"*Malcolm.* This murderous shaft that's shot,
Hath not yet lighted; and our safest way
Is, to avoid the aim."

* * * * *

"For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar."

SHAKESPEARE.

It was pitch dark, and the locality as much unknown as if I had been dropped into Kamschatka. What the devil was I to do? I threw my cloak off, rolled it round my left arm, and firmly grasped my sapling; then, commending myself to the especial protection of St. Patrick, I endeavoured to retrace my steps.

I blundered on for half a minute, a low rascally whistle immediately in my rear assuring me that I was in villanous society, from which the sooner I parted company the better. Moving a pace or two forward, my steps evidently attracted the attention of the scoundrels, for a low voice inquired, "Is that you—Josh?"

I never felt less inclination to be communicative, and silently continued my retreat. The suspicions of the cut-throats were confirmed. I heard a voice desire his comrade to "Come on;" adding, with an oath, "the bird's alarmed!"

It was idle attempting to steal a march upon an enemy already on the alert; and a dreadful conviction shot across my mind, that escape from assassination was hopeless. To be coldly butchered in the dark—to be hurried from the stage of life at the very moment of my entrance on it—and in the spring of manhood to fill a bloody grave, with every thing prospectively before me which renders human existence desirable—the thought was horrible. These feelings were but momentary, and other ideas filled my mind. To resist to the uttermost—to display, even in death, a tiger-like ferocity—this changed the current of my thoughts, and a soul-sinking despondency gave place to the terrible calmness which desperate circumstances produce. I quickened my pace—my steps fell heavily on the pavement—the murderers increased their speed—and both parties rushed forward in the dark; I at random, and they in the full expectancy of attaining their object, and gaining the recompense which was to be contingent on my destruction.

Acquainted with the locality of the dark lanes in which I found myself unfortunately involved, the scoundrels closed upon me fast, and at last I was regularly brought to bay.

"Back, villains!" I exclaimed.

"All's right—that's he—at him, Jim!" was responded.

In one thing the darkness favoured me. My sapling was unperceived; the ruffians closed fearlessly—and the first intimation that they had “caught a tartar” was by the bolder of the twain being sent to the ground with a crashing blow that shattered his jawbone, and rendered him *hors de combat*. His companion instantly fell back, and I was about to wheel round and continue my retreat, when a heavy blow from behind knocked off my hat, and a knife grazed my arm through the folds of the cloak that, fortunately for me, had formed its protection. Need I say that the fresh assailants were the bravo and hunchback? while, encouraged by their assistance, the scared ruffian resumed the offensive.

My chances of escape appeared utterly hopeless. The ruffians, by dividing my attention on either side, had enabled the hunchback to creep in and grasp my legs within his long and bony arms. Happily the knife dropped from his hold in his first attempt to stab me, and the night was too dark to enable him to pick it up again. I strove to shake him off, but the wretch clung to me with that virulent tenacity with which a reptile coils itself around its victim. In the attempt to free myself from the cripple, I struck my foot against a stone, stumbled, and, before I could recover my footing, a blow brought me to the ground, the assassins sprang in, and my fate seemed sealed.

That brief space of exquisite agony I shall never forget. Oh, God! how hard it is to die! and die, as I should, by felon hands, prostrate and powerless, murdered “in the dark,” without the satisfaction of even in an expiring effort “stinging the wretch that stung me.” That moment’s misery was ended. Steps were heard. I hallooed “Murder!” A voice, and, saints and angels! an Irish one, replied.

The hunchback then hastily cried, “Quick!—strike!—brain him!”

I caught the miscreant by the throat as the last word passed his lips—and next moment two figures flitted past my fading vision, as a blow fell upon my head, and laid me senseless.

Presently I awoke as from a dream. A man supported me; another put a cup of water to my lips; and a couple of crippled watchmen held their lanterns over us. I looked at my supporter; he was strange. My eye turned to his companion. In the dim light his features were not remembered—and yet the hand that held the water to my lips was my foster brother’s. By degrees consciousness returned.

“Where am I?” I muttered.

“Arrah, the Lord only knows!” responded the ratcatcher.

“Was I not attacked—stabbed—knocked down? Who were the assailants? Where are they?” I continued, as wandering recollections of the past flitted across my memory.

“Sorrah one of us knows who they were; but if you searched London through, you would’nt pick out an uglier couple. One was a spider-built divil without a back, and the other a black-muzzled thief of a Jew, with whiskers you could hang your hat on. They’re off—bad luck pursue them!—and among these twists and turnings, ye might as well look for a rat in a rabbit warren, as ferret them out, the ruffians of the world!”

I rose with slight assistance, but staggered like a drunken man,

and, preceded by the watchmen to give us light, walked slowly on, leaning on the arms of my deliverers. We reached a public-house at no great distance; and having committed me to the care of the landlord and Shemus Rhua—guided by a Charlie, Mark Antony set out to find a surgeon, perfectly unconscious who the stranger was, whom timely assistance had so miraculously preserved from murder.

He returned; the discovery was made; and need I describe what a meeting between persons attached by the tie of fosterage, under such circumstances, would be? I heard the detail of my deliverance. The surgeon dressed my wounds, and pronounced them merely flesh ones; for the knife had only razed the skin, and, in the dark, the blow intended as a *coup de grace*, had missed the head, struck against the kerb-stone, and fallen on the shoulder lightly. That I had been marked out for deliberate assassination, the gipsy's warning, the adventure in Mr. Spicer's house, and the discovery of a clasp-knife and *jemmy* dropped on the field of battle, sufficiently established. We received those trophies from the venerable conservator of the city's peace, paid him a fitting remuneration for the services of his lantern, and parted nearly at the same spot from which a woman's wiles had so recently seduced me—to wit, St. Paul's; I to return to my own inn by a hackney coach, and the ratcatcher and my foster brother to repair to the place from whence they came, with an arrangement to meet next morning—

“That we would all our pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels we had something heard,
But not intently.”

I drove to Mr. Hartley's residence. He was at home; and as Dominique had signified that I was anxious to speak with him before he retired for the night, he was waiting my return in the drawing-room. I found him leaning against the mantel-piece, buried in deep thought. His back was turned from me; and as I unclosed the door softly, for a few moments he was unconscious of my presence.

“Might he be trusted yet?” he muttered to himself. “I think so—for he loves her. Would it not be premature?” He raised his eyes—“Ha, Hector! returned! What means that patch across your forehead?”

“An attempt,” I answered, “has been made upon my life, and failed.”

“Indeed! Where—and by whom?” he asked eagerly.

Here was I again in trouble. To recount the evening's “moving accidents” without a formal introduction of the soldier's daughter, would, as a narrative, prove lame and inconclusive, as to enact Hamlet with the omission of the Prince of Denmark. I doubted whether Mr. Hartley would approve of my advocating the young lady's claims upon the government; and, from his starched notions respecting female propriety, it was most probable he would consider a nocturnal interview not exactly a regular procedure. I commenced accordingly, “in fear and terror,” as the lawyers say; told a confused story of meeting a girl in a fog; blundered at bringing her into a

avern; and totally broke down when we met in St. Paul's church-yard, on our way to the domicile of her respectable relative. As we proceeded in the dark, no doubt I stammered more.

"Come, Hector," said Mr. Hartley, "out with the whole truth; I hate half confidence."

On I went. With the acute auditor I had to deal with, it would be useless to attempt concealment; and he listened with deep interest, and, as I fancied, no trifling mixture of displeasure, until I brought my story to a close.

"You have had a marvellous deliverance, Mr. O'Halloran"—(He *mistered* me, and that looked squally)—"and you seem a man born to be the dupe of villains, through the agency of that worst of curses, a vicious woman. One would have thought that your recent escape from spoliation and disgrace by that amiable coterie in Jermyn Street, would have made you rather cautious in forming acquaintanceships with strangers, and believing every fabricated tale you heard. I am a candid man, and pardon me, while I give you a proof of my sincerity. I credit your tale, and totally disbelieve your motives. You could not be fool enough to remain for a second, in ignorance of the true character of this lady of the fog; for none but the profligate of her sex would accede to the request of a young gentleman of twenty-one, and, at first sight, grant him a nocturnal interview. This may seem impertinence in me, who, apparently, have no right or interest in inquiring into your love affairs—although I must confess, that in the selection of your female acquaintances you have not been particularly fortunate."

"However imprudent, or, indeed, improbable my conduct may appear, I assure you, sir, upon the unblemished honour of a gentleman, that my motives were precisely what I described them," I replied, with a firmness of voice and manner, that at once guaranteed my truth.

Mr. Hartley looked at me for a moment. He saw that his suspicions had hurt me; and, convinced of my sincerity, he held out his hand, which I accepted.

"Hector, I believe you, and acquit you of every thing but concealment. Did you know the deep interest I feel in all that concerns your character and future fortunes, you would forgive me in testing your motives and actions so rigidly as I do, and have done. No more of this at present. Where is that scrawl you received this evening from the woman whom you encountered with my daughter in the park? Your hand is feverish. Although you may not feel it at present, you could not have passed through the deadly struggle you have described uninjured. To bed, friend Hector; Dominique, a second time, shall look to your wounds, and I for once play gallant, and keep your appointment with the lady of the bridge. Hark! the clock chimes. Half-past eleven. The 'trysted hour' is twelve."

I assured Mr. Hartley that I neither required leechcraft nor repose, but was most willing he should bear me company. The negro was summoned; his master gave orders in a whisper; I filled a glass of wine and water; Mr. Hartley unlocked a mahogany

case, presented me with a brace of beautiful pistols, and put another brace into his own pockets; told me they were loaded; and next moment the sable functionary appeared with a dark lantern in one hand, and a bludgeon in the other. All we required was the companionship of the ratcatcher and Mark Antony, to enable us to take regularly to the road, and rob every coach within sound of Bow bell; at least, so said Mr. Hartley.

Were it possible, the night was darker than when I kept my assignation with the soldier's orphan. Three quarters chimed; and ere the hour of meeting struck, we were punctually at the place appointed.

The bridge was wrapped in fog; and the two or three lamps that still burned, flared such a dull and yellow light, as merely rendered "darkness visible." The night was raw and chilly, and, save a few passing citizens, "few and far between," the causeway of Blackfriars was deserted. It was an hour when none but the unfortunate are abroad; a night when only the houseless are encountered. All that was orderly were in-doors; and the elderly gentlemen, to whom watch and ward were entrusted, properly declined to exhibit a bad example of being found upon the streets, and ensconced themselves in comfortable corners of the night-houses most contiguous to their respective beats, leaving the dreary pavement to persons of indifferent reputation. No wonder, then, that we found ourselves in unmolested possession of the bridge. I took a position at that extremity which the gipsy's billet had pointed out; while Mr. Hartley and his attendant occupied the recess immediately opposite my post.

A quarter chimed—another—and another. At last, dull as a muffled drum, one heavy stroke boomed from the clock-tower of St. Paul's, and announced the first hour of morning.

"Hector," said Mr. Hartley, as he crossed the bridge, "it is useless to remain longer here. Your prophetic friend for once has broken her promise."

"'Tis false!" replied a voice within half-a-dozen paces—"she is here;" and a figure too much concealed for recognition flitted from the centre of the bridge, and boldly joined us.

* * * * *

Again the scene must change; and once more we shall carry the indulgent reader into the close alley where Mr. Brown's domicile was situated, and, at half-past eleven, introduce him to old acquaintances,—the worthy owner of the mansion, and Mr. Sloman, his respected friend.

They were seated at the table, with all the appurtenances that rendered their former interview so pleasant; but the present mood of the worthy couple was very different from the former one. The countenances of both betrayed anxiety and impatience. To plot is one thing—to perpetrate another; and a deed of blood propounded and agreed to on their first meeting, was now in course of execution. No wonder that the scoundrels felt ill at ease; not that either felt the slightest compunction for hurrying a fellow-creature into eternity; the failure of the attempt was what they dreaded, with a fear, if the deed were done, that some circumstances should attend it which ultimately

might compromise their safety. They drank, but the wine had no flavour; or if it had, it failed to call forth their approbation. They spoke but little; the sentences that passed were brief and in an under tone; and at the slightest noise without both started; each appearing impatient for intelligence, and yet half afraid to hear what the result had been.

"What the devil can delay them?" observed Mr. Brown. "The thing should have come off an hour ago."

"They may have failed," replied Mr. Sloman; "or have done it, and been detected; or—but, thank God, I know nothing of the matter."

"Fish! as much as I do," returned the owner of the mansion.

"How can you say so, Mr. Brown?" returned Mr. Sloman, angrily.

The host directed a meaning look at his visitor.

"Slowey, how soft you are! Well, don't fear; in England there's not a better hand at cracking a skull than Josh Levi; and at the knife—the creature's too weak for anything but light work—I'll back Frank for a hundred."

"Damn it, don't tell me particulars," exclaimed the lawyer. "I wish all was over; I safe in Mary Axe; and you with your four hundred snug in pocket."

"Is the cash right?" inquired Mr. Brown.

Mr. Sloman deigned no reply; but, producing a leather case from his side-pocket, he reckoned over nine bank notes.

"I don't know a nicer thing to look at, than a clean hundred-pound flimsey fresh from the Bank," observed Mr. Sloman, playfully.

Suddenly the street-bell rang, and a low and peculiar whistle followed the sound. Mr. Brown started.

"By Heaven! that's not Frank's signal," he exclaimed. "Something is wrong, or the hunchback would be the first to bring intelligence."

Another, and a louder ring, told the impatience of the midnight visitor; and Mr. Brown descended to the lower story to ascertain who it was that at this late hour required admission. The answers from without satisfied him that the stranger might be let in. The chains rattled; the bolts were drawn; again the door was carefully secured; and Mr. Brown returned to his state apartment, accompanied by a very repulsive-looking gentleman, namely, the swarthy Israelite, who earlier in the evening had been reconnoitred by the captain and his companion while lying *perdu* in Mr. Spicer's lumber-room.

The ruffian's face was flushed, one eye was swollen and discoloured; the collar was torn from his coat, and blood-stains were visible on his hands and linen. His whole appearance was that of a man recently engaged in some sanguinary affray.

A pause ensued. Mr. Brown filled a glass of brandy, which the Jew drained to the bottom.

"What news, Josh?" said the host, in an under tone. "Is the job done?"

"No mistake about it," returned the bravo.

"You had a tussle for it," remarked the host, as he threw a careless look over the outer man of the Jew, which gave ample indication that the affair he had been recently employed in, to him had proved no sinecure.

"I tell you what, Mr. Brown, I have been in the general line of business these fifteen year; lifted three stiff 'uns of a night; been shot at half-a-dozen times; got lagged; escaped transportation; and gone through as much rough work as any man in the trade; and in the course of my practice, I never had a tougher trial than to-night. Another drop of the brandy, if ye please."

"But is the thing right, Josh?" inquired Mr. Brown, who always came to business.

"Safe as a trivet! I'll tell you all."

"No, no—curse particulars!" exclaimed Mr. Sloman. "You may mention the thing in confidence to Mr. Brown. I know nothing of what you are alluding to, remember that."

"Well, no matter, Slowey; Josh and I will talk it over presently. But where is Frank? No harm done him, I hope. I wouldn't lose that hunchback for a hundred."

"Is he not here?" was the Jew's unsatisfactory reply.

"Here? No! We have expected him an hour ago," returned his master.

"Then I'm blowed if I know any thing of him."

"But out with it. Tell us how matters went," said Mr. Brown.

"Not in my presence," exclaimed Mr. Sloman, springing from his chair.

"Well, if you're so devilish leary, you may go into that there closet;" and he rose and opened a door, through which Mr. Sloman immediately retreated; "and Slowey," continued Mr. Brown, in a lower voice, "you'll find a slit in the door, and hear as much through it as will suit your purpose."

"I don't like that 'ere chap, he's so eternal cautious," observed the Jew to Mr. Brown, when he returned. "If men mean wots right—as they ought—why be afeard to talk on hisniss?"

"Hush!" returned the host, as he applied his finger to his nose; "and now about the job, old boy. Drink slow, Josh; a third glass will smother ye."

The Israelite replaced the brandy he was about to bolt, and then continued his narration, which, though delivered in a low voice, was perfectly audible in Mr. Sloman's concealment—the fissure in the wood having been cunningly constructed for the purposes of professional espionage.

"Well, ye see," said the bravo, commencing his murderous narration, "Frank and I—and he's a handy little creature for a thing of legs and arms—were true to time at St. Paul's; and there we spied our man reg'lar in tow with Julia. Away they goes together, and we follows close behind. When we comes to the place, the girl had mizzled, and Jim and 'the smasher' gone too soon to work; and, my eyes—if they hadn't cotched it heavy! At him we goes from behind; Frank with his gully, and I with this here *preserver*;" and the scoun-

drel exhibited the murderous implement he used. "I niver, nowhere, saw a chap more wide awake. He fought like a good-un; and he was so knowin', that it was almost impossible to draw him. At last Bill and I divides his attention, while Frank gripped him round the legs. He stumbled, fell, and the game was up; for I fetched him a blow across the skull that would have shattered a horse's head, and left him dead upon the kerb-stones. Before I could strike again—for one likes to make things safe, ye know, Mr. Brown—two chaps jumps in as if they had riz out of the paving-stones. 'The smasher' was grassed in a moment—and I knocked clean away. I niver got sich a nasty one in my life! I was all astray after it—and I know nothing more whatsomever, only lights came up, and fresh ones joined the others. I sneaked off as well as I could, reeling like a drunken man, and leaving our customer dead as a mackarel."

"You're sure he's done for?" inquired Mr. Brown.

"Done for!" and a second time the scoundrel produced his implement of murder. "Is there a skull in England that would require a second blow of that small article?"

"The man is safe enough, no doubt," returned Mr. Brown; "but what can have happened to Frank? Hark—by Heaven! he's at the door!—All's right!"

The signal was a curious imitation of angry cats, accompanied by a low sound upon the house-bell. Mr. Brown at once hurried down, and gave admission to his hunchbacked favourite, who followed him to the upper-chamber, accompanied by the ruffian called "the smasher."

To the joint inquiries of the Jew and Mr. Brown, the deformed one gave satisfactory replies. It appeared that in the act of falling, I had kicked the weak wretch from me with such violence as drove him across the narrow lane; and before he could gather himself up again, the fosterer and his friend achieved my rescue. Self-preservation was now the hunchback's care; and, crawling away unperceived in the confusion, he coiled himself in an obscure corner, from which, though concealed himself, all that passed subsequently was visible. Thence, he witnessed my recovery, and saw me, with slight assistance, leave the scene of the attempt upon my life. In several efforts to get off, the scoundrel had been nearly detected; and when he did succeed, he and his confederate were delayed by the removal of their disabled comrade; and hence, an hour elapsed before he could reach the dwelling of his worthy master.

"Where's Bill?" was Mr. Brown's first inquiry.

"Stretched with a broken jawbone in the Fortune of War," was the reply.

"It seems the job was any thing but an easy one. But it's done—and that's a satisfaction."

"It would have been," returned the hunchback, "if I had not dropped the gully."

"What the devil do ye mean?—Isn't he finished?"

"No more than you are," was the answer.

The Jew broke in with a coarse contradiction, and swore lustily that I was regularly defunct.

"Well, all I can say," continued the being of legs and arms, "that for a dead gentleman he spoke as plain as I do. He was a little groggy when he got up, but in a few minutes he walked away as steadily as I can."

"Damnation! Speak low—but all is overheard—and the reward is lost, I fear," muttered Mr. Brown.

"The worst of it is," continued the hunchback, "that my name is on the knife, and Bill has dropped his jemmy."

"Ay, and the least clue will send the Bow-street villains after us immediately."

"I won't remain another moment," exclaimed Mr. Sloman, hurrying from the closet, and catching up his hat.

"Stop, my dear friend; all may be yet put right. Frank, bring these gentlemen to the parlour. They will require a bit of bread and cheese after their exercise; and when I have spoken a few words to Mr. Sloman"——

"That an't my name!" exclaimed the alarmed lawyer, as the scoundrels left the room. "Damn it, Mr. Brown," he continued, "how can you be so stupid? I thought I was dealing with a safe man of business. What the devil do ye call men by their right names for?"

"It was an oversight," returned the host. "Don't mind, Slowey—all's safe here—and we'll do the job better the next time we get an opportunity. Do we touch upon account to-night?"

"Not a rap!" exclaimed Mr. Sloman, peevishly; "but won't you return the hundred?"

Mr. Brown answered only by a look, but that look was an expressive one. It said, or seemed to say, in the elegant parlance of the present time, "Don't you wish you may get it?"

"I want to be off," observed the lawyer, seeing that all chance of restitution was hopeless, "and I don't like to be stared at by those body-snatchers in the parlour. The scoundrels never forget a man; and, as I attend the Old Bailey professionally, they might remember me on their trial, and call upon me to speak to character."

"Stop, my dear friend, a minute where you are, and I'll do the business effectually. Do take a little brandy and water before you start. It's not to every body I give that Cognac;" and the host left Mr. Sloman to refresh himself before he should set out upon his return homewards.

The hunchback and his companions were seated at a table in the lower room, when Mr. Brown glided softly in. They had drunk freely, for the failure of the night seemed to have occasioned a general annoyance.

"By Heaven!" said the larger of the Jews, "I never, in the ring itself, received such punishment. And then the risk—and nothing for it. The attempt at murder is now a hanging matter. There's law for ye! Well, I suppose that chap Sloman will make us some amends, and come down handsome, as he should do, for our being regularly served out in trying to oblige him."

"You'll never find grace or gratitude in a lawyer," returned the hunchback.

“If he does not stump up, why I say he has no conscience,” observed “the smasher;” “but here is Mister Brown.”

“What are we to have for this night’s trouble?” inquired the stouter Jew.

“Sloman won’t stand a rap, because the thing’s a failure. I tried him hard; but he won’t bleed, nor come down with a single flimsey; and yet I’d give a hundred for what he has in the side-pocket of his coat; ay, and gain another by the bargain.”

“You would, would ye?” inquired “the smasher.”

“Ay, and drop a pony over and above. Come here, Frank;” and Mr. Brown retired with the hunchback, and left the ruffians to commune with themselves.

What passed between the owner of the mansion and his favourite is wrapt in mystery. The former returned to the apartment overhead, “to do the civil thing” to Mr. Sloman; the latter, to arrange some pressing business with his confederates in the parlour. In ten minutes Frank announced that “the gentlemen below” were gone; and Mr. Sloman, having expressed his satisfaction at the intelligence, buttoned his coat closely over the side-pocket where his note-case was deposited, put on his wrap-rascal, wound a shawl around his throat to secure it against the night air, was conducted to the churchyard door by the host, and respectfully lighted out by the hunchback.

“No failure, I hope, next time, Mr. Brown,” was the lawyer’s valediction.

“*It’s all made safe already.* God bless you, Mr. Sloman!”

And these excellent gentlemen parted with a hearty “Good night.” Frank closed the door, Mr. Brown returned to his great chamber, and Mr. Sloman hurried away in the direction of his own residence.

An unbuilt piece of ground, not a hundred yards from the small cemetery we have described as the place on which Mr. Brown’s house abutted, was early next morning the scene of public curiosity. There, a man had been discovered dead; his skull fractured by the blow of some blunt instrument, and his pockets rifled of every thing they had contained. Within an hour the body was duly recognised. The deceased was Mr. Sloman.

Who were the murderers? Gentle reader, I think you have a shrewd suspicion already. But “time tells many secrets,”—so says the Gaelic adage; and as none have doubted its accuracy, we’ll wait for further information on the subject.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SUNDRY OCCURRENCES NARRATED—MR. BROWN AND HIS FRIENDS IN TROUBLE.

“*Murderer.* Safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenched gashes on his head ;
The least a death to nature.”

* * * * *

“Yolk-fellows in arms,

Let us to France !”

SHAKSPEARE.

“ You are late, my friend,” I said, as the gipsy stopped beside me and Mr. Hartley.

“ I am too late to warn you against the attempt, but in good time to apprise you of the extent of the danger you have escaped, and implore you, as you value life, to profit by it,” was the reply.

“ You are then aware that I have been assailed, and providentially rescued ?”

“ I am.”

“ Did you witness the attempt upon my young friend’s life ?” asked Mr. Hartley.

“ No ; had I been near enough, the attempt would never have been made.”

“ Then you must have obtained a knowledge of it in a marvellously short time after the occurrence.”

“ I have,” replied the gipsy ; “ and, as time is precious, I shall at once tell the means by which I gained that information. I had received an intimation that certain agents would be employed, and, anxious to learn the plans that would be adopted, I repaired to a place where I was well aware the ruffians could be met with. Earlier it would have been useless to have sought them—crime and darkness are companions—and the boldest ruffian of the party dared not venture from his skulking-place in the broad light of day. I went and found them, not preparing for their murderous essay, but foiled in the attempt, and venting, in impotent execrations, their rage at disappointment. From one maimed wretch I heard the particulars of their night adventure, after his companions, leaving him to my charge, had gone to report their failure to the scoundrels who had employed them.”

“ And after the danger’s past, you come to congratulate my young friend on his deliverance ! Methinks, it would have been doing better service to have apprised him of his peril, and not entrusted his escape from the murderer’s knife to the accidental assistance rendered by some passing strangers.”

“ Had I not already cautioned him sufficiently ?” returned the gipsy. “ If he allowed himself to be made the dupe of an artful woman—one

with the semblance of purity and innocence veiling a heart that from infancy has been familiarized with crime—and whose beauty seems to be given so lavishly, only to render her a greater curse to the community—was I to blame? All that a woman's art could do was done. Were he the offspring of first love, his safety could not be dearer to a mother. Once more, Hector O'Halloran, I come to warn you. Danger is averted, but not passed; and I repeat my former admonition: regard every stranger who approaches you as an enemy!"

"But, woman, with the knowledge you possess, why not end this state of insecurity? Tell us whence danger is to come—denounce his assassins—and the laws of England are quite sufficient to protect my young friend from those who seek his life."

"To save is one thing, to betray another; and I would preserve his life, if possible, without compromising that of one whom I know to be his deadliest enemy. But of one thing rest assured—should no other means succeed—the guilty shall be sacrificed and the innocent preserved. Farewell. Trust implicitly in me. Early to-morrow expect to hear from me; and stir not from home until my letter shall be delivered."

She turned away; we heard her steps receding in the darkness. Presently the sounds became fainter until they died away, and we returned to our own hotel, very little wiser than when we left it.

"I cannot even fancy who our foemen are," said Mr. Hartley, as he leaned thoughtfully against the mantel-piece. "At times a vague suspicion crosses my mind. That monk, and his associate, who have enthralled your grandfather, and estranged the dotard from the child who should have been the solace of his age, they look no doubt upon you as a dangerous rival. But were their fears greater, and did they wish, even by violence, to rid themselves of one who might mar their schemes, still the villany would require some time ere it could be sufficiently matured for execution. The secret motives which actuate that mysterious woman are also impenetrable, but her fidelity is beyond a doubt. Well, Hector, we must needs be ever on the alert until time develops more than we know at present. And now, to bed."

We separated for the night; and never did the slumbers of a private gentleman prove less refreshing than mine. I dreamed eternally of every thing abominable. One time, the gipsy was sounding into my attentive ear her mystic warnings; the next, with smiles, sweet enough to bother any saint in the whole calendar, that demon-girl was beckoning me along dark and dreary passages,—and I mechanically following, although perfectly conscious that she lured me to the grave. No wonder that next morning I rose with an aching head; and then, for the first time, ascertained the extent of the injury I had sustained. It is true the hurts were superficial; but from the number of bruises my arms and back exhibited, many blows had fallen on both, although at the time they were unfelt by me.

I was the last personage to present myself at the breakfast table. I found Isidora there, pale and agitated; for Mr. Hartley had just acquainted her with my narrow escape from assassination. To do him justice, he omitted every particular of my having undertaken to arrange

Miss Julia Travers' claims upon the government; and, as good men "blush at the record of a virtuous act," I was delighted to find that my beneficent intentions regarding the soldier's orphan were silently passed over. When I took her hand in mine, I felt it tremble; and, from the manner of both, had Mr. Hartley been ignorant of our attachment before, that morning's meeting would have betrayed the secret to one far less discerning than he was.

As breakfast ended, the postman's knock was heard; and presently Dominique presented several letters to Mr. Hartley and myself. His appeared to be full of interest, from the attention with which he perused their contents; and mine, to me, were equally important. One was from my father, and it apprised me that he expected to get me placed on the staff of one of his old friends, a general officer, commanding a brigade of the army now advancing towards the Pyrenees; and the other, a formal notification of my appointment, with an order for my departure forthwith for the Peninsula, by a sloop-of-war, which was to sail on the third day from Portsmouth for Passages, laden with money and military stores.

While I was reading my despatches, Mr. Hartley rose suddenly and left the room, to reply to one of his that required an immediate answer. More unwelcome intelligence never met the eye of a soldier of fortune, than the unexpected order to leave England now appeared to me. How differently the route for the Peninsula would have been regarded a fortnight since! Involuntarily I raised my eyes—and they encountered those of my gentle mistress. She had perceived that the letters I had just received contained news of no ordinary interest. I rose, and seated myself beside her, and gradually announced that the hour of parting was at hand.

I need not describe the scene that followed. Those who have loved as we did, can guess it well; and fancy what the "cold in blood" could never know nor feel. Isidora's hand was locked in mine; and my flushed cheeks, and her tearful eyes, told too well, how agonizing the first severance of love is. Suddenly the door opened—Mr. Hartley entered—he paused a moment in surprise; and, while she was covered with blushes, and I astonished beyond the power of free agency, he advanced and stood before us.

"Soh!—what means this folly, may I ask?"

The tears flowed faster down his daughter's cheeks, while I, unconsciously, still held her hand in mine, and merely pointed to the letters that were lying on the table.

Mr. Hartley read them hastily, and, without evincing any mark of displeasure at the discovery he had made, he beckoned gently to his daughter, and next moment she was seated on her father's knee, her arms clasped fondly round his neck, and her head rested on his bosom.

"Isidora," he said, in that soft tone of voice with which he always addressed his favourite, "I have been already prepared for this discovery; and had I been unfriendly to the growth of an attachment which I have witnessed with satisfaction, I would have discouraged the unrestricted intimacy which has existed between you and my young friend, and which in youth is ever too dangerous to be permitted.

I think I have known the world too long, to have any doubt upon my mind respecting this gentleman's feelings towards you, my child; but, nevertheless, I will inquire of him whether I have correctly formed this opinion."

My reply was a florid declaration of youthful passion, whose ardour elicited from my gentle mistress a look which told me that my love was faithfully reciprocated.

"Well, I believe you, Hector. Circumstances have hurried matters on more rapidly than I had expected. I have watched you suspiciously; for he who would trust his earthly treasure to the keeping of another, will be guarded ere he parts with it. I am satisfied that all which I value will be safe. Continue to deserve it; and when events, now in slow progress, shall have come round, and prudence justifies the step, this hand, Hector,"—and he placed Isidora's in mine—"the dearest gift a father can bestow, is yours."

Young love is eloquent, and I warmly expressed my gratitude.

"An hour ago I considered that the time had not yet arrived, when you were entitled to demand my confidence," continued Mr. Hartley; "I have now given you the strongest pledge of my personal regard; and you have a claim upon my unlimited confidence, which shall be freely admitted. We dine at six; and afterwards you shall know some particulars of the story of a man, whose very existence none, save yourself and this loved child, suspect. Little did you imagine that, in the stern monitor who blamed your follies, a kinsman was cautioning an unschooled novice against those seductions of vicious society which so often wreck the happiness of youth. None could have taught the lesson better than himself. He had erred and paid the penalty—and a life of peril, suffering, and disappointment, has scarcely redeemed the obloquy and disgrace which his earlier indiscretions had brought upon a name, which, but for his offendings, should have been second to none in Britain. Hector O'Halloran, you stand in the presence of one, who, tempted, ruined, and rejected by all, became a castaway and an exile—I am Edward Clifford."

Was I dreaming—or was it a reality, that the man who had exercised such mysterious influence over my thoughts and actions, was closely united to me by the bond of blood—my mother's brother—my grandsire's heir—but, dearer tie than all—the father of Isidora! My brain was in a whirl, when Dominique unclosed the door to announce that two persons were below, and anxious to see me. I informed my uncle—for that relationship with him I shall claim for the future—that the strangers were my deliverers; and in a few minutes after Isidora had retired, my foster-brother and the honest ratcatcher were formally introduced.

Of the Irish relationship that existed between me and Mark Antony O'Toole my uncle was already apprised, and he received the fosterer accordingly as if he had been an old acquaintance; but, touching the private history of Shemus Rhua, we were both as yet in blissful ignorance. All we knew was, that in the hour of danger, he had proved himself a jewel above price; but that he had arrayed himself in arms against the house of Hanover, eased Tim Maley of his

purse, bled an old woman, or ferretted a rat, were interesting passages in the captain's life which we had yet to learn. Neither of my friends looked to the best advantage. The ratcatcher, in the *rookahn* of the preceding evening, had been favoured with a black eye—and the fosterer came out of action minus a skirt, with the addition of an awkward fracture in his unmentionables. Both had the appearance of gentlemen who had been recently in trouble, and from their "*shuck** look," had they presented themselves as bail, it is doubtful whether a fastidious justice of the peace would have accepted either, without instituting a slight inquiry into their "whereabouts" and general effects. I believe the meeting of last night was, on both sides, a fortunate occurrence. Never did man receive succour when he needed it more opportunely than I; while the fosterer and his friend had already experienced some difficulty in struggling against an exhausted treasury and wardrobe. A liberal present from Mr. Hartley (for that name must be for the present retained) placed the finances of the twain once more in a flourishing condition. I supplied the fosterer with an outfit for his outer man; the captain made a judicious selection from a fashionable emporium in the vicinity of Monmouth Street; and in a couple of hours, a happy change in both had been effected, and their persons were gay as their hearts.

The morning wore away. No tidings from the gipsy had arrived; and Mr. Hartley and myself had just come to a conclusion that something had changed her intention of sending me a dispatch, and that it was unnecessary to wait longer at home in expectation of the promised billet. The fosterer and captain had returned from their morning's excursion; and Mr. Hartley, having heard their adventure at Mr. Spicer's on the preceding evening, was considering the best method in which that information could be employed to discover who might be the conspirators against my life. He was listening a second time to a narrative of their imprisonment in the lumber-room, where Mark Antony had ensconced himself to avoid the ire of an elderly gentleman, who, like Mr. Spicer, had "not loved wisely, but too well," when the negro entered the drawing-room, and handed me a sealed letter, whose folding and address bore evident appearance of carelessness. I unclosed it hastily—the private mark annexed announcing that the gipsy was the writer. The contents were these:

"Well may it be said that the ways of Providence are inscrutable; for vengeance so sudden as to pass belief, has fallen on those who last night endeavoured to effect your destruction. Come to the Green Man immediately. There you will see those who employed, and those who undertook to murder you. Notice nothing which may occur; and appear to take no more interest in passing events, than any stranger in the room. Follow me when I leave the house, and let your friend accompany you. Fail not!"

"We shall punctually attend the lady's invitation," said Mr. Hartley, as he perused the scroll for the second time, "and we will also take that henchman of yours and his companion with us."

* *Anglicè*—shaken, or shabby.

Accordingly, these useful allies were dispatched, with proper directions to find the place appointed; and in half an hour, Mr. Hartley and I started in the same direction.

On arriving at our destination, we found the street was crowded, and intense anxiety was visible in the countenances of a very numerous collection of idle people, to whom every act of atrocity gives interest. Indeed, it had been found necessary to close the tavern doors against all, excepting those who might professionally or profitably claim a right of entrance. The appearance of my uncle and myself, however, secured admission, and we were conducted into a spacious club-room, which had been selected wherein to hold the necessary inquest on a murdered man. A crown, judiciously applied, obtained convenient seats immediately beside the defunct lawyer and the persons suspected of his murder; and the fosterer and his companion had standing room assigned them, behind the chairs with which we had been graciously accommodated.

That spacious room had witnessed many an hour of revelry. With the dance, the song, the laugh, and every outbreak of "tipsy jollity," its walls for years had been familiarized. The present was a different scene. It was an inquisition for "blood spilt" by man; and the victim and his slaughterers were placed in the immediate presence of each other.

The deceased remained in the same state as when he had been discovered in the morning, and even the position in which the body had been found was scrupulously preserved. No doubt existed as to the cause of death, for the skull was extensively fractured, and *post mortem* appearances evinced that unnecessary violence had been employed; for any of half-a-dozen injuries inflicted on their victim by the murderers would have proved mortal. The features were painfully distorted; and the passing agonies of the departed man had been severe. Not an article of value was found upon the corpse; the pockets were turned out, and showed that robbery had succeeded murder.

From the dead my eyes turned to the living. Five men were seated on a form, and behind each individual a man of peculiar appearance stood, whom Mr. Hartley told me in a whisper, belonged to a celebrated community long since extinct—Bow Street runners. On the persons who occupied the bench the gaze of all within the room was concentrated, and I examined them, from right to left, attentively.

The first was genteelly dressed, and his general appearance was superior to that of his companions. His exterior exhibited tokens of vulgar opulence; and watch, and brooch, and ring, all valuable, told that had he been criminal, the plea of poverty could not be used in extenuation.

Beside him a man was seated, whose dress was shabby and general appearance disgusting. His head was swathed in a bloody handkerchief; and it was announced that, in a murderous affray on the preceding night, his jaw-bone had been severely fractured.

The third was a blackguard of ordinary stamp; but the fourth and

fifth, Mark Antony and his companion at once recognised as old acquaintances.

"By the hole in my coat!" said the ratcatcher, in a whisper, "I would swear to that dacent couple in a thousand. That *critch** without any carcase, good nor bad, and the dark-muzzled scoundrel beside him—more betoken, I think it was himself, the murderin' thief, that giv me the black eye."

I looked at the scoundrels, with whose appearances the reader is already familiar. Gracious God! was I so nearly hurried from existence by the bludgeon of that truculent-looking Jew, or the knife of that contemptible hunchback? But my thoughts were speedily turned into another channel. The coroner took his place; the jury were empannelled; and the inquest formally commenced.

It would be unnecessary to trespass upon the reader's patience, and narrate in detail every particular attendant on a mercenary murder. The money intended to procure my death, by a singular accident, caused the assassination of the guilty wretch who had been the hired agent to effect it. In the remote place, and at the untimely hour when Sloman met a doom he merited too well, it was supposed that the foul deed would have been effected in full security. Guilt plots cunningly, but a higher influence mars the best-laid schemes. An outcast, without a roof to cover her, had crept for shelter into a dilapidated building, and, unseen and undiscovered, overheard the murderers arrange their plans. She saw them waylay the devoted wretch, knock him on the head, and afterwards, by the light of a dark-lantern, plunder the dead body. When they retired, she followed unperceived, and traced them into the dwelling of their employer. She acquainted the Bow Street myrmidons of the transaction; led them first, to the place where the murdered man was found, and afterwards, to the house where she knew the ruffians had been harboured.

It is a singular fact, that the most cautious villains rarely escape surprise. The hunchback, excited by the adventures of that busy night, had drunk more deeply than was his custom. His weakly constitution soon owned the effect of liquor; and, in his confusion, he left the street-door open, although, in drunken wisdom, he fancied that he had effectually secured it. By that neglect, the officers obtained an easy entrance—and the murderers were seized "red-handed," and in the very act of dividing the plunder of their late employer. The facts were already strong against the whole of the accused; but the hunchback's confession rendered the guilt of his confederates past a doubt. He became king's evidence; and the wounded bravo, whose fractured jaw had prevented him from sharing in the murder, corroborated the testimony of the thing of legs and arms. Mr. Brown, and "the ruffians twain," whom he had employed to cause a vacancy in the twenty—th, by ridding the world of me, were fully committed—as I heard afterwards on the Peninsula, in course of law, were tried, found guilty, and suffered a felon death.

We watched the proceedings at the inquest, which occupied several hours, with an interest that can be readily imagined. Although the

* *Anglicè*—a hunchback.

perpetration of a greater crime had thrown the attempt upon my life into the background, and steps were no longer required, either to secure my safety or bring to punishment those who had endangered it, still the cause of the assault upon me was so incomprehensible, that both my uncle and myself were anxious to trace the conspiracy to its source. Nothing during the inquiry transpired that in any way appeared to be connected with me; and, faithless to her promise, the gipsy had not attended. Although the room was crowded by a mob of the curious of either sex, had she been in the throng, from the singularity of her costume I should have easily recognised my mysterious acquaintance. The proceedings having ended, the jury were discharged, the prisoners removed, and the crowd dispersed rapidly.

“Come, Hector,” said Mr. Hartley, “the lady of the bridge, like others of her sex, is not always to be depended on. Where can that mysterious gentlewoman be?”

“At your elbow,” responded a voice.

We started, and looked round. A woman, respectably attired, but whose features were partially hidden by a close bonnet that seemed formed to conceal the face, was standing immediately beside us. Could this be that wild wanderer who had accosted me in the park, and met me on the bridge when all but the outcasts of society were at home? I had no time left for closer examination—she tapped me gently on the shoulder—and, in a low voice, desiring me to follow, she mingled in the crowd. Mr. Hartley and I quietly obeyed the signal; while Mark Antony and the ratecatcher joined the rabble in the street, who were waiting to offer some unenviable tokens of the estimation in which Mr. Brown and his associates were holden, before they took a final departure for durance vile.

We kept the gipsy well in sight, and observed her turning into another public-house at no great distance from the Green Man. We entered it, and were conducted by the barmaid to a back apartment, where we found the fair one seated.

The latter term is not used unadvisedly; for a finer woman, of a certain age, could not have been found in the metropolis. Nothing of her former wild and sybil-looking air remained—the eye had lost its keen and searching glance—the voice was softened—the very manner seemed altered with the dress; and when she laid aside her bonnet, Mr. Hartley and I freely admitted that the face disclosed to us had once been positively beautiful. When the door was shut, she turned her dark intelligent eyes on mine, and regarded me in silence for a minute.

“Yes!” she said; “how striking is the likeness between the son and sire! and what painful recollections does that singular resemblance bring back! ay, though twenty long years of exile have passed away! But no more of this. Mr. O’Halloran, you see before you one who can hardly say whether she should love or hate the name. Time chills the deadliest enmities; and even jealousy and blighted hopes will own its soothing influence; and I, who should look upon you as an enemy, felt in your recent hour of trial all the agonizing uncertainty a mother only knows, when the child of her first affections is exposed to peril. With my early story, and wayward fate, it would

be idle to detain you. None have passed through greater vicissitudes of fortune; none have sinned or suffered more than Mary Halligan!"

I started. "That name's familiar!—Were you the peasant girl—"

"Through whose mistake Knockloftie, and all within its walls, were saved from violence and murder; I am that person. Ay, fallen, as I may now appear, I was innocent, admired, wooed, won, and deserted! Pshaw!—'tis but a common tale in woman's history! No matter—'tis past—it seems a dream; but, O God, it is a fearful one! I have not, however, come here to speak about myself. I come to tender my poor services to the child—for, from the bottom of the heart of her he wronged, the father is forgiven! Wild as my career has been, used as I have been to startling occurrences, still, the events of the last few days appear to me rather the coinage of a distempered brain than actual realities. Never did Heaven's anger fall so suddenly and severely on the guilty; and never was the innocent so miraculously preserved. Strange, that the same day on which a life commenced, should have been twice chosen to end it by secret violence!—and stranger yet, that the same hand, which in infancy designed to crush you in the cradle, in the very hour of manhood, but for Heaven's mercy, would have consigned you to a bloody grave!"

"Who was the intended murderer?" we both eagerly demanded.

"He was one whose name is perfectly familiar to you. Did you ever hear the colonel speak of a person named Hacket?"

"A hundred times. He was the villain that would have betrayed the old castle and its inmates to a band of murderers. They assailed it on the first anniversary of my birth-night, and were bloodily repulsed. I often have heard my father execrate that scoundrel's treachery. Another perished by his hand—"

"Stop! name him not. There were in the world two beings whom I regarded with divided love. One perished. Would that it had been by any other hand. I have forgotten—no, that were impossible—but I strive to banish from memory all that occurred upon that fatal night."

"Then Hacket was the person who devised and attempted my murder?" I exclaimed.

"No—another sought your life. He was but the agent of that person."

"By whom, then, was the wretch employed?"

"Of that I am utterly uninformed; and, strange as it may appear, Hacket was left in equal ignorance. If any knew the secret, it was the murdered man—and with him it rests. Have *you* no suspicions? Have you crossed the path of love, or barred the road to wealth? Are there any whose interests you have thwarted? Are you an object of hatred or of fear?"

I shook my head; but Mr. Hartley replied to the inquiry.

"There are, Mary—and more than one, the dearest objects of whose hearts this youth will one day overturu, as the child throws down the card edifice in a moment, which has cost him a world of pains to build."

“Look *there*, Hector O'Halloran! *There* will your secret enemy be found.”

“Right, by heaven! You are on the sure track, my friend,” returned my uncle. “Where will deadlier feeling harbour than in the bosom of a monk, thwart but his ambition? or in that of a sordid scoundrel, who trembles for wealth acquired by knavery? Were you acquainted with recent occurrences in which our young friend has been connected, my life upon it, your conviction would be confirmed as to the quarter from which the danger came.”

“And am I not worthy of that confidence?” inquired the gipsy, in a tone that showed herself offended.

“Undoubtedly,” returned Mr. Hartley. “One day more, and I will give you ample proof of the dependence I place in your fidelity and discretion. That day I would devote to my young friend. It is the last he will pass in England for a time.”

“What! is he then leaving England?”

“He is ordered to the Peninsula, and sails on Thursday evening.”

“Heaven send him better luck than his father! God knows whether you and I shall ever meet again!” she said, addressing me. “May the best fortunes of a soldier be yours! Farewell! I saw your first and your twentieth, and may your next be a happier anniversary than either!”

She wrung my hand. I left the room, but Mr. Hartley remained, and a quarter of an hour passed before he joined me in the street. We walked to the hotel, and there the fosterer and his companion were in waiting.

“Mark, I am ordered off. What can I do for you before I leave England?” I said, addressing the former.

Mr. O'Toole merely answered with a sigh “hot as a furnace.”

“Where shall I find you on my return? and how will you dispose of yourself in the mean time?”

“Dispose of myself?” returned the fosterer, like an echo. “Why, am I not also, ready for the Peninsula? Arrah! what would they say at Kilcullen, if you went to the wars, Master Hector, and I remained at home? *Mona-sin-dioul*, if I went back, the very dogs would not acknowledge me. But, love apart, where can I put in a happier twelvemonth? Have I not listened, till my heart beat again, to the old colonel's talking to the priest about the time when he stormed that village in the Low Countries where he lost his arm. Often have I fancied that I saw him bursting through the streets at the head of his noble grenadiers, scattering the French column like a flock of sheep, while the shout of ‘Liberty’ was answered by a thundering ‘*Faugh a ballagh!*’ It would be cruel, Hector, to leave me behind you—I will be no hurden to you.”

He placed a little packet in my hand; and turning to the window, the poor fosterer sentimentalized in secret, while I perused a letter he had received after we had separated at the inquest. With the course of Mark Antony's love adventures, that gentle affair with Miss Biddy O'Dwyer excepted, I was altogether ignorant—and I felt interest in the fosterer's epistle. I read it accordingly; and, could woman rise in

the estimation of one who loved as I did, that artless letter would have raised her.

"You have followed me to England. In that you have violated our agreement; but my heart offers a ready apology for the offence. I told you that twelve months must pass before we met again; and in that resolution I am confirmed. My brother has wildly ventured to the coast of Spain, on secret service connected with some of the guerilla chiefs in Arragon; and, in the mean time, I am resident in the family of the village clergyman. Mark, I am happy, because I am once more respectable. Let me remain until the year elapses under this good man's dwelling—and then that wanderer whom you protected in her hour of destitution, will prove to you that she has not forgotten her deliverer.

"Do you remember, dear Mark, that when you rescued me from that villain Jew, you flung your purse into my lap, and pressed me to accept it? If that circumstance has escaped your memory, it lives, and will ever live, in mine. Use prudently the small sum enclosed; and when another supply is needed, remember that the desolate female whom you generously saved from more than death, has now the means, and wish to prove her gratitude."

The epistle contained sincere expressions of affection, and was subscribed "Julia."

"Why, Mark, what the deuce is all this about? and who is this lady, who forks out her fifty pounds, and subscribes herself "most affectionately yours?"

"I'll tell you again, Master Hector. But won't you let me go with you?"

"Faith, my dear Mark, I never intended that you should remain behind. Have we not been to each other as flint to steel from childhood? Where should I now be but for your rescue? When boys, our joys and sorrows were the same; and now, as men, Mark, upwards or downwards, our fortunes shall run together."

"I thought you wouldn't leave me," said the fosterer.

"And pray," inquired the ratcatcher, "what the devil is to become of me? You can volunteer, Mark, but I am too old; and were I younger, I wouldn't much like to 'list; for I fancy that the guerilla line would be more in my way of business. But let us all go together. Blessings on that nate-spoken elderly gentleman they call Mr. Hartley! He's short in the grain as cat's hair, but the heart and purse are open. Here I am, new rigged from head to foot—ay, and rich as a Jew—bad luck to the whole community of them, root and branch!" and the captain put his finger to the eye which had been damaged in the last night's contest. "It was that long-whiskered ruffin that giv me this token of regard. Well, all's settled, and we go together, any how."

It would have been useless to offer any objection to the determination of the gallant captain; and, after a consultation with my uncle, it was soon agreed that my fosterer should join one of the regiments of the brigade I was attached to, as a volunteer, and the ratcatcher enact *valet de chambre* during my absence.

Time pressed. Mr. O'Toole gratefully acknowledged, but returned the fifty pounds sent him by his mistress; swore fidelity and everlasting love anew; and by the munificence of Mr. Hartley, we all—to wit, the ratcatcher, the fosterer, and myself—were amply provided with that indispensable requisite for opening a campaign, properly designated “the sinews of war.” My future companions took their departure for the Seven Dials, to bid their loving countrymen, there dwelling, an affectionate farewell. An Irish parting is always accompanied by a heavy drink, as sorrow is proverbially dry. No doubt the symposium, like every other pleasant carouse, ended in a general engagement; for when the twain honoured me with a visit next morning, I remarked that the gallant captain had been accommodated with a second black eye, probably conferred upon him as a keepsake by one of his agreeable companions.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“*Blanch.* Now shall I see thy love; what motive may
Be stronger with thee than the name of wife?

“*Const.* That which upholdeth him that thee upholds,
His honour!”

* * * * *

——— “I know thee well;

But in thy fortunes am unlearn'd and strange.”

SHAKSPEARE.

I NEVER sate out a more melancholy dinner than that with Mr. Hartley and his daughter on the last evening of my sojourn in the metropolis. Mine honoured uncle was gloomy and abstracted. Isidora looked the very image of despair; and I felt any thing but martial satisfaction at the immediate certainty of having an early opportunity afforded of “fleshing my maiden sword.” Like the courage of Bob Acres, my military ardour was hourly evaporating from my finger-ends. A month since, the prospect of being shot at was a matter of indifference; but in that brief space my feelings had undergone a marvellous change. From childhood, I had listened to my father's stories as he “told how fields were won,” and caught the enthusiasm of a man, every inch a soldier. But then I knew not what it was to love—I had not felt the witchery that attends a first attachment—the confession of mutual passion as yet had not fallen on my ear, soft as angels' whispers to sleeping infancy. I had loved, and sued, and was accepted; and now this sweetest dream of life was to be broken; and from one dearer than all that earth contained, I was to be separated for a long period—perhaps for ever! I came rapidly

to the conclusion, that glory was well enough in its way; but still it was an awkward business to have to seek it at the other side of the Pyrenees; and, had it pleased Heaven to bring about a general pacification, I think that I would have borne the disappointment like a philosopher.

I took no formal leave of my gentle mistress, for that unnecessary infliction of pain Mr. Hartley very properly inhibited. Our parting, as she left the drawing-room for the night, was probably warmer than was customary. She little imagined that I was to start at cock-crow for embarkation; and, in the expectation of meeting me at breakfast, she sought her apartment to court the soft influence of the drowsy god in vain.

“Hector,” said Mr. Hartley, as he addressed me, “I regret that you are at this moment obliged to leave me; for something tells me that a crisis in our mutual fortunes is approaching. Were it any thing but the call of honour that takes you from England, I would at once ask you to forego it.”

“Believe me, my dear sir, never did a more unwelcome order come than that which I am about to obey! Could I but honourably decline it,”——

“Oh, no—that were impossible! Wellington has assumed the offensive, and every eye in Britain will watch the progress of his arms. A country’s call is sacred, and it must be obeyed. God knows, in periling your safety, and exposing you to the common chances of war, I make a sacrifice that few could estimate. There is one tie that binds me alone to life; and, save for that alone, the sooner a spirit, soured by misfortunes, and wearied of a world it despises and detests, were freed from this ‘mortal coil,’ the better. But were I in the grave, who would watch over the happiness of that being whom I idolize?—To one only would I entrust that holy charge. Need I name him?—Yourself!”

I gratefully thanked my uncle for the proof of confidence he had given, and he thus proceeded:

“As my life and actions must appear to you involved in mystery and concealment, it will not surprise you much when I tell you, that for years I have been intimately informed of every occurrence that happened in your father’s house. A stern necessity of secrecy obliged me to remain unknown and unsuspected. Had I been where I was supposed to be for twenty years—in the grave—I could not have been more removed from the knowledge of the world than I have been; and the reason I selected that wild and retired abode where you first found us, was to insure the incognito, which your interests and Isidora’s demanded; for, strange as it may appear, from earliest infancy, you were destined for each other.”

“You really astonish me, sir!”

“When you hear my story that surprise will cease. With my past life none were even partially acquainted but a beloved child and faithful servant. You shall know more of that dark and painful history than they ever did; and when you have heard all that I have suffered and endured, then say whether, but for one endearing tie, a life,

wretched and valueless as mine, would have been worth retaining for an hour. Fill, Hector—fill freely—many a day may pass before you and I shall meet again!”

I obeyed him. Rising from the table, he took a few turns across the apartment; it seemed an exertion to regain composure; it was successful. He resumed his seat, emptied his glass to the bottom, and thus commenced, what was to me a narrative of perilous adventure, but all-engrossing interest.

My Uncle's Story.

The career of vice is generally a simple history; a progressive advance from bad to worse, as the feelings deaden and the conscience becomes seared and callous, by degrees. My earlier follies might have been easily arrested by parental intervention, but Mr. Clifford was reserved and proud; his displeasure was evinced by frigid mannerism, and his reproofs conveyed in the cold terms of general disapprobation. He never reasoned to the understanding—never appealed to the heart. I listened to him as I would to a lecture; and I came away without the slightest impression having been made upon an ardent disposition, which under better management might have been awakened and reclaimed.

My ruin at last was consummated. I was discarded by my father; avoided by the good—deserted by the bad—and, finally, driven from the land, dishonoured and disgraced, where, by inheritance and birth, I should have held a proud position.

Months had passed since I had been alienated from an angry father. The means by which I had managed, for a time, to obtain the sums of money my extravagance demanded, had been overtaxed, and consequently, my resources were completely exhausted. The woman who lured me on to crime and ruin had heartlessly abandoned me, and those who had plundered me of hundreds refused me a shilling to buy bread! For a whole day I had not tasted food, and for two nights no roof had sheltered me—and without any definite object in my wanderings, I had turned my steps to the home from which I had been long since rejected. I was ashamed to let any who had known me in the palmy days of youth witness the degradation that crime had caused; and, after night-fall, avoiding the village, I stole unperceived through a broken paling, and, like a thief and not the heir, entered the grounds of Clifford Hall.

William Morley had been in boyhood my favourite companion. Although his birth was menial, I treated him, from regard, rather like an equal than an inferior. My purse was ever open to his wants; and my attachment gradually obtained for him the notice of my father. Step by step, he rose in Mr. Clifford's confidence, until he gained an influence over his easy master that none besides possessed. I fancied him a friend; and I had every reason to suppose him one, for his professions of regard were warm, and his assurances of gratitude unbounded. When the kindly relations between my parent and myself

were first disturbed, I trusted to Morley's good offices to extenuate my offendings, and soften down the displeasure of an angry father. He promised to exert his influence to the uttermost. I believed him; followed his advice; and acted as he counselled. Alas! I little dreamed that Morley was all the while a deadly enemy, and that he was sapping to the foundation any slight remains of parental affection, and alienating the father from the child. Why should he thus play me false? and wherefore wear the mask of friendship, and hate me in his heart? Unconsciously, I had provoked his deadliest animosity by crossing his path in love.

Morley was in heart a libertine; but he had sufficient cunning to conceal it from the world. A village beauty had been the object of his pursuit for months; and fascinated by her superior attractions, his secret attentions were incessant, and there was no reason to doubt but they would ultimately be rewarded by success. I returned, after a long absence, to the Hall. I heard of Mary Davis. A glowing description of her charms was given me. I saw her—report had only done common justice to her beauty—and I became her slave. My attentions flattered her pride—and the heir of Clifford Hall supplanted the son of a deceased menial. In a word, the weak girl eloped with me—deserted her peaceful home for a brief career of splendid profligacy; broke her poor mother's heart; drew down on me the lasting displeasure of my father; and rendered Morley my enemy for life. But of the consequence of my misconduct, I remained as yet in ignorance.

To obtain his revenge, Morley worked secretly and steadily. Every act of imprudence was artfully communicated to my father; while the treacherous scoundrel led his confiding master to believe that he was kindly, but unsuccessfully, endeavouring to hide from him the criminal proceedings of his child. My slightest failings, blazoned by false colouring, appeared enormities. My letters in explanation were suppressed; the breach between us became wider every day; Morley's demoniac ingenuity at last was crowned with full success; I was discarded—looked upon as one dead—consigned to poverty and degradation—and became a beggar and an outcast.

What was the villain's triumph, when, stealing through the shrubberies, I sought the well-remembered window of his apartment! Lights were burning, and there sat Morley. He had numerous papers and accounts before him; bank-notes and gold were spread over the table carelessly; and a bottle of wine was opened, from which, as I peeped in, he liberally helped himself. Heavens! how low had I fallen!—how abject did I feel myself! With me, indeed, the cup of misery was at the overflow. I dreaded to knock! I—the born-heir of all around, fearful to disturb the son of my father's menial! At last I mustered sufficient resolution to tap gently on the casement. The steward expected a different visitor. He seized his hat, hurried from the room, locked the door carefully, let himself out by a private entrance, of which he kept a key, and in another minute approached the evergreens to which I had retreated, and softly pronounced a woman's name.

“Morley!” I timidly replied.

“Ha!—a man’s voice!—Who’s there?” he demanded.

“An unfortunate—your old playfellow—he who once was your master’s son!” I answered.

“Heavens!” he exclaimed. “Is it possible! And have you *dared* to venture hither?”

“I once thought,” I replied dejectedly, “that none would question my right of entrance to this domain, which by birth and descent is, or should be, mine. I am indeed fallen!”

“What do ye want?” he demanded, as I fancied, in a haughty tone. “Why have you disturbed me at this unseasonable hour?”

“Dire necessity obliged me to come here. I am perishing; food has not crossed my lips since yesterday. I am without a home,—the humblest shelter would be acceptable.”

“I cannot offer you one. Were it known that I spoke to you, or gave you the slightest assistance, your father would discharge me.”

“Is his anger, then, so unmitigable?” I asked in a desponding voice.

“It is beyond the power of being appeased. Advisedly, he would not breathe the same atmosphere that you did; and the most welcome tidings he could receive, would be those that assured him that you were no more;” returned the steward.

“I am starving!—pennyless! By Heaven, I will crawl into these evergreens, and die in sight of that mansion which once was destined to be mine.”

Morley started at the declaration. “Pshaw!” said he, with an appearance of more feeling than before; “this is mere folly! Let me see—I dare not afford aught but temporary relief; and in doing so I risk the loss of Mr. Clifford’s favour, were the thing discovered. Stay; I will bring you some refreshment, and see whether I cannot do something to save you from actual starvation afterwards:” he then returned to the house, and in a few minutes reappeared with the remnant of the supper he had eaten, and a portion of the wine I noticed on the table. I ate ravenously—drank to the bottom of the flask—and then listened to the false scoundrel as he thus continued:—

“I have a relation in London, who perhaps might enable you to leave the country for a season. It is possible that time might soften your father’s animosity, were you removed beyond his notice; and the violence of his resentment might happily cool down. Here. It is a guinea, and some silver; ’twill carry you to London; and when you get to town, inquire at the Post Office, and you will find an anonymous letter to give you future directions how to act. To save myself from ruin, requires the greatest caution on my part. Push forward to the next village on the London road; and when you have reached the metropolis to-morrow, you will be fully instructed what to do. For Heaven’s sake, stay not another moment!—Steal secretly from the park, as you entered it; and all I can do for you shall be done.” He hastily left me, as if in fear; I heard him bar the private entrance, and observed him close the shutters of his chamber, while I, in a state of humiliation bordering on insensibility, obeyed the order, and, like a felon, stole out of that domain where, two years previously, my will was absolute.

I slept at a mean public-house; but what a luxury was a bed to me! and yet the lowliest servant on my father's establishment would have rejected what his fallen child gratefully received!

Next morning I put myself on the roof of a coach which in other days I had frequently driven. Neither guard nor coachman remembered me. Of course, the vulgar scoundrels had heard of my downfall. Well, they only imitated men of better birth! They forgot me when it was convenient

I entered London. It was the anniversary of a victory, and I remembered it well. Two years before, by a singular coincidence, I had driven in with my own four-in-hand—and as the slang went then, it was “the best appointed drag in England.” Mary Davis was on the box. Ah, two years had made a difference! I was a pauper on a stage-coach—Mary Davis, a wanderer on the streets! Vice, with her, poor girl, commenced in luxury, but to both it brought what it generally does—ruin and disgrace!

The paltry supply that Morley had given was half consumed by my journey; and I sought one of the humblest hostleries which London, in its infinity of accommodation, presents. The extent of my degradation had nearly stupified me; but next morning I went to the Post-office to inquire for the promised communication, scarcely caring whether it arrived or not. The steward, however, had been punctual; and the expected letter was delivered. It was brief—written in a disguised hand—and merely desired me to call at some rascally place in one of the worst localities of the oldest portion of the city.

I proceeded to find out the street, and with some difficulty succeeded. The person I inquired for was from home, but I was directed to a low public-house in the neighbourhood, and there I found him in company with several blackguard-looking personages. The room reeked with tobacco smoke; the table was splashed over with spilt liquors; the ceiling in many places had fallen in; and the contrivances to stop the broken casement, and exclude the air, were extraordinary. The man I sought took me to an inner closet, called for a stoup of gin, shut the door carefully, and then proceeded to business.

“You are the gentleman Mr. M. has recommended to me?” said the stranger.

“I am that unfortunate person.”

“And you want to leave the country for a while? Well, there's no great difficulty in doing that, if a person was not very particular about the way he travelled. It's only getting lagged, you know.”

“*Lagged!* I don't understand you.”

“Don't ye?” replied my new acquaintance. “Why I'm certain I speak plain English. I mean, if you did not mind transportation, why you could travel at the king's expense. But I see you're raw. Well, I'll try how far I can oblige the gentleman who takes an interest about ye. Let me see—I have some appointments to keep which will detain me all morning; but meet me at eight this evening in the Borough,” and on the back of an old tavern bill he scrawled, in villanous characters, the place and hour of meeting; told me to be punctual; drank the gin; desired me to pay for it; and conducting

me to the door, left me to wear the wretched day through in any way I pleased.

If I might form any opinion from personal appearance, Morley's friend was every thing but respectable. Well, he was the fitter acquaintance for an outcast like me. I had none better left; and at the appointed time I crossed over London Bridge, to seek the place where the interview with the stranger was to take place.

The house was found. I asked for Mr. Pileh, and was conducted into a private room. He was seated in the corner, with several companions round the table. They were gambling when I entered; but they put away the greasy cards, and then one by one dropped out, leaving Morley's friend and me together.

"I think I have arranged this matter to your satisfaction," said he, "and secured a comfortable passage for you to the States. The vessel will sail the beginning of next week, and you will have no time to lose in getting your outfit ready. I have been commissioned by a friend, who shall be nameless, but who you may possibly make a shrewd guess at, to give you what money you may require;" and, taking out a pocket-book, he handed me several bank notes. "You will excuse the liberty I take, in hinting that this money is intended to cover the necessary expenses attendant on a long voyage, and not to be idly wasted; and therefore I recommend you to secure it well, and use it prudently. What!" he exclaimed, as he perceived me about to put the notes into an outer pocket of my coat; "do you carry money so loosely on your person?—in London too, where you cannot enter a tavern or cross a street without encountering a plunderer? Come, my young friend, take a lesson from an old and leary cove like me. Keep but one flimsey out for present purposes, and secure the rest, as I do, in the neckcloth."

He put his hand across the table and undid my handkerchief, folded the bank notes carefully within it, and then returned it to me. One five-pound note he desired me to put into my purse. My purse!—many a day had passed since I had needed such a convenience. I pocketed the money, and the stranger took his leave, appointing, however, another meeting at the same hour and place to-morrow.

I remained after he was gone musing before the fire. I was astonished at Morley's unexpected generosity, and I secretly censured myself for having doubted the attachment of my old playfellow and friend. His bearing towards me on the night of my stolen visit to Clifford Hall was now perfectly accounted for. I thought it, at the moment, cold and heartless. I now perceived that it arose from a caution imposed by stern necessity; and the secrecy observed in the manner in which he had conveyed the liberal supply, now confirmed it. Even to the agent he employed I had been guilty of injustice. It is true, the man was neither prepossessing in appearance, nor polished in address; but the candid manner in which he exhorted me to be prudent, and the care with which he secured my money against accident, all proved a friendly interest in my welfare; and when I left the public-house, I admitted that I had slandered

mankind, in imagining that pity for misfortune was banished from human hearts.

As I quitted the Coach and Horses, I remarked a man drawn up in a corner of the gateway, and standing in a position that intimated he wished to escape my notice. He wore a white hat, and, from rather a remarkable coat, I easily recognised him to be one of the men I had disturbed at play, when I entered the back room in search of Mr. Pileh. Well, he might have some private reasons for concealment; and it was no affair in which I had any interest. I strolled onwards towards London Bridge, and happening to pass the shop of an outfitter, I stepped in to make some purchases for my voyage. The selection of different articles delayed me half an hour. Once I observed the man with the white hat pass the door; and again, I detected him peeping through the window. He was probably an idler; and I continued to purchase what I wanted in the shop. The articles were tied up; the account written and presented; I handed the shopman a five-pound note; he desired me to endorse it. I took the pen, and wrote a fictitious name, as I had determined to drop that on which I had brought so much obloquy and disgrace already. The man handed some change in silver, and I took up the parcel, and left the shop.

I had nearly reached the extremity of the bridge when I heard footsteps behind, and perceived several men running in the direction in which I was walking. They came up rapidly; and, in another minute, I was seized, pushed into a shop, and charged with felony. My identity was certain—the parcel confirmed it; and, to my horror, I heard the captors accuse me of passing a forged note. The charge astounded me; I could not speak, and my silence was mistaken for a tacit acknowledgment of guilt.

I turned my eyes in mute despair at the men who surrounded me. By Heaven! one of them was the white-hatted stranger, who had been playing at cards with Mr. Pileh! It was providential, he could corroborate the statement I commenced. He had seen me—was a friend of Mr. Pileh—his evidence would be invaluable. I told the manner in which the money was obtained. My statement elicited a laugh of derision from the hearers. I appealed to the gentleman in the white hat, but the gentleman in the white hat disclaimed all knowledge of me, and goodnaturedly added, that he fancied he had seen me once before, at a fair he mentioned, in company with a party of the swell mob. My pockets were searched. Nothing to criminate me further was found. I casually looked round, and saw “White-hat” wink at an officer, and point significantly to my handkerchief. It was instantly loosed and opened. My name was worked upon it in the dark hair of my faithless mistress; and five other notes were found; they were examined—and all of them pronounced forgeries!

For a minute, I felt as if my heart had ceased its pulsations, but, gradually, I became conscious of the position in which I was placed. None could doubt my guilt. Could any deny that I was a felon? I, with forged notes concealed upon my person, of which I had uttered one already under a fictitious name. The observations of the crowd

occasionally reached me. There was no difference of opinion as to my destiny—my career would close upon the scaffold!

Oh Heaven! if thoughtless youth could only fancy the agony of soul I felt, how many would be deterred from crime, and saved from ruin! To die!—to perish in the very opening of my manhood! And how die? Like a dog—stared at by a gaping crowd—pitied by some—laughed at by others—choked—hanged!

“Never, by Heavens!” I muttered to myself,—“Never shall a Clifford, no matter how fallen, die such a felon-death! The grave is open for me; what matters it whether it hide me now, or in a brief space after? Come, man thyself, Edward Clifford, for a last effort—and die!”

Nothing remained but to convey me before a magistrate for committal.

The crowd retired; the officers took me away in custody. My passive conduct throughout, led them to set me down a heartless wretch, with whom hope was at an end; and mine seemed

“The composure of settled despair,”

which enables the criminal to meet his doom in sullen apathy. How little they suspected the dark thoughts which then occupied my mind, or the deadly purpose which I meditated!

An old watchman held my collar in his feeble grasp, and two or three others surrounded me. The mob kept generally in advance of us, to enable them to frequently indulge their curiosity with a view of the criminal. Before we had moved a dozen paces, I made a sudden spring, shook off the man who held me, overturned another in my rear, and started off, at headlong speed, to gain the bridge which was immediately contiguous.

A wild outcry announced my escape; an instant pursuit succeeded. The mob were the only persons I had to fear; for the old men who watched the city then, wrapped in their great coats, and encumbered with poles and lanterns, were incapable of rapid movements. Several persons, however, kept me well in sight; they little knew that death, and not deliverance, was what I aimed at; and they raised a cry to warn the passengers who were approaching in the opposite direction. I saw several men draw themselves across the bridge to bar my farther progress. I stopped, leaped upon the balustrade—“Seize him!” cried a dozen voices—they were the last words I heard—I muttered one brief adjuration to Heaven to pardon the act I was about to commit, closed my eyes, sprang from the battlement, and the waters closed over me!”

Mr. Clifford paused. His usual stern composure was unequal to conquer the agitation which the terrible recollections of early imprudence had brought back. A short silence was unbroken, when suddenly the door unclosed, and the dark functionary presented himself, and handed me a letter of most unprepossessing appearance. He announced that the messenger would not leave without an answer—and ill-timed as the interruption was, my uncle signalled me to break the wafer. I obeyed, and communicated to him the contents of the following singular epistle:—

“ For Captain Hectur O’Haleran, esquire, or Mister Hartlay, if he’s out.

“ HONORED SIR,—

“ i am sorry too inform ye we are in Trubbel and at Present undir the Skrew in the Watchhouse they call Watlin Street, and all Contrarey to sense and Justis. We went into a dacint-lookin’ house, with a Woman without a head for the sign of it, and cald for half a pint, and sat down fair and asey at the fire, when in coms three Blakgards. Immadately they begins to rig us. ‘Morra, Pat,’ says one of them. ‘Devil a worse guess ye iver med, young man,’ says I. ‘Arrah!’ says he, ‘Does ye’r mother know you’r out?’ ‘What the blazes have ye to say to my mother?’ says I. ‘What a hole you could make in a saucepan of patatays the night she was married!’ says he; and then he goes on aggravatin’ us, and abusin’ the old country, swarin’ Saint Patrick wasn’t a reglar saint at all, and not fit to powder Saint Gorge’s wig, af he wore one. ‘Oh! by the groves of Blarney,’ says Mr. O’Toole, ‘the divil wouldn’t stand this!’ so he offs wid the coat, and offered to box the biggest of the lot for thirty shillins. Well, they agrees to it at wonse, and Mark and the big ‘un set-to. Sorra handier boy iver it was my luck to meet with! he made nothin’ of the chap—a couple of rounds settled his hash, and he gives in. Well, what does they do? insted of comin’ down with the battel money, they charges us on the watch, and we were bunddled off here, as if we were a pair of Pickpockets. We sends off to the Dials to say we were in trubbel, and before half an hour, there was the full of the street of dacent acquaintances. Some wanted to give bail, others offered to pull down the watchhouse; and an honest man, whose father came from Ballyhawnis, went off to knock up the Priest, and get him to write us a Karakter. The divil a one of the bailsmen the constable would touch with the tongs; and so here we remain, snug and warm in the Black hole, unless your honir will bee plased to get us off.

“ I Remain, till Death, your Obediaut Servint,

“ JAMES MCGRALE.”

“ Poscrip.—There’s a Poor woman here, the lord Pity her, callid Finigen. I forget her own name, but she has a Brother that lives under magor Blake, and her unkel was parish priest of Carintubber, a Man grately respected. I often heerd my father spake about him—as he cured the Fallin’ siknis with a charm, and plaid butifully on the Fiddel. Well, she’s in quod, the crater, for just Nothing at all. She had words with a vagabone that lives in the back Attick, and he insinevated, in the Presens of the hole lodgers, that she wasn’t aney better than she ought to be. ‘Misses Finigen,’ says he, ‘might I fatague ye for a squint at ye’r Marrige lines, if ye happen to have sich an article in ye’r pocket,’ which ye know was as much as sayin’, the Divil a certifikit she had at all. The crature couldn’t but resint it, and she took the fire out of the vagabone’s left eye wid a brass Candel-

stik she had in her fist—and that's all she's loked up for. Maybe your honir would Include her in the Bail—the lord sees it would be a Charatey.”

“ N. B.—I forgot to Say the Blakgards offered to make it up for ten shillins, half in drink, and half in money—but it's such an Impishin, that nather mark or Me would listin to it.”

“ P. S.—For the sake of the blessed Mother cum soon, or they'll have the Roof off the Watchhouse, and then We'll be Transportid for life. The more I see of this Unsivilized Country, the Better plased I am that we're lavin it.

“ No more at Presint from

“ Yours to Command,

“ J. McGRALE.”

“ Plase answir by Return of post—I mane by the boy wid the red hair that carries this. Remembir Mr. O'Toole and me to Mister hartlay and his Daughtir, onley we don't know her name. Also to mister domnik, the Black gentleman, whose as Civil and well manerd as a Christian, for all that he's so dusky in the skin.

“ J. M.”

“ In Heaven's name,” I exclaimed, when I finished the ratcatcher's epistle, “ what is to be done with these scoundrels ?”

“ Perhaps the better course to be pursued would be to leave them where they are, allow their excellent friends to pull down the watchhouse, and then the Government will provide for them in New Holland. But I suppose we must interfere for once in their behalf.”

The landlord of the hotel was summoned, and requested to effect the deliverance of the prisouers, a task that was easily performed. The door again was shut, and Mr. Clifford resumed his melancholy narrative.

CHAPTER XXV.

MY UNCLE'S STORY.

“ The waters heave around me ; and on high
 The winds lift up their voices. I depart
 Whither I know not ; but the hour's gone by
 When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad my eye.”
 BYRON.

I CANNOT describe the sensations I felt, momentary as they were, while descending from the balustrade of London Bridge ; but from the instant I struck the surface of the water, all recollection ceases. A considerable time elapsed before consciousness returned, and when it did, I found myself in the cabin of a Welsh coasting vessel, with a woman, her husband, and their son, (the owners and crew of the little schooner,) chafing my limbs, and using every simple means of resuscitation which their scanty resources could supply. Nothing could exceed the pleasure these true Samaritans evinced, when they perceived that their efforts had proved successful. They had no suspicion that he, the object of their care, had been hounded like a felon to do the desperate deed he had attempted ; but, from the occasional remarks I overheard, they set me down as some desponding wretch, who, from very weariness of living, had rashly ventured on that fearful remedy, hateful alike to God and man—self-murder.

When perfectly restored, they made a bed for me before the fire, administered some spirits with caution, left me to my repose, and I sank into a profound sleep, which continued until morning. When I awoke, I found that my kind preservers, overnight, had dried my wet clothes ; my breakfast was already prepared—and when I had eaten it, at my request they rowed me ashore in their small skiff, and landed me at Tower Stairs, with three shillings in my pocket, and not a friend upon the earth.

I entered a low tavern—a house of call for seamen—and seated myself in the most obscure corner of the dark and smoky tap-room. Several men were round the fire with pipes, and pewter measures, and to the latter they frequently applied ; while others were sleeping on the benches, like men after a debauch. They were evidently sailors, but they had not the free and honest look and bearing which generally distinguishes that careless and warm-hearted class of men. Their dark and weather-beaten faces were those of men habitually drunken, and indicated service in tropic climes—while, from their air and manner, you would pronounce them, at first sight, to be lawless men—bold and reckless ruffians.

“ I say, Bob, wasn't that job last night upon the bridge a funny one ?” said a swarthy fellow to an equally ill-looking companion.

The latter removed his pipe, knocked the ashes out upon the table, replenished it from a seal-skin pouch with fresh tobacco, and then leisurely replied :—

“ It was, Jim ; I have tipped them leg-bail in my time, but the chap last night gave them, what I calls, river security ;” and he laughed hoarsely at his own wit.

“ Well,” observed the first speaker, “ I likes a plucky cove ; he wouldn’t let them have the satisfaction of hanging him ; and that jump in the dark robbed them as planted him, of blood-money—ay, and sarved them right, I say.”

“ You may depend on it, Bob, he was a green ’un. No doubt a first offence ; otherwise he would have taken chance of flaws and failures at the Old Bailey ; for it was only scragging after all.”

“ Have they found the body yet, I wonder ? I’d like to know whether it was any of our pals, Jim ?”

“ He’s sure to float the ninth day—he won’t lie longer at the bottom. They won’t go to the trouble of draggin’ for him, will they, Bob ?”

“ They’ll drag to little purpose,” I muttered from the corner.

The fellows turned round and looked at me.

“ And what is there about that dead-un’s carcass that a creeper should not grip it ? Let me see—how was the tide ?—it was slack water at the time. I’ll bet a dollar he’s not lower down than Lime-house.”

“ I’ll wager twice the sum he’s not half so far,” I answered, with desperate composure.

“ And where do ye say he is ?” asked the fellow, with a stare.

“ Here !—in this room !—seated on this chair !—and talking to you at this moment !”

“ Well !” exclaimed the sailor, “ if that ain’t a rum confession. I never knew in my born days, a man that passed forged flimsies split upon himself before.”

“ Nor would I, had I done so—I am innocent.”

Both ruffians laughed.

“ I said the same thing myself once,” said the darker fellow of the twain, “ and I could not out of twelve men, good and true, get a single soul to believe the story.”

A couple of the sleepers wakened up. One of them stretched himself, yawned, and inquired, like a person still half asleep, “ What’s all that gammon about innocence, forged notes, and blood-money ?”

“ Why, Captain, this here cove is the chap who jumped off the bridge ; and as he’s innocent, I suppose he’ll go quietly to them he bolted from last night, and get hanged to prove it.”

“ More fool he,” observed the man whom they called captain. “ Had I taken that plan to convince the world of my honesty, I should have been, ten years ago, dangling among the scare-crows that ornament Dogs’ Island. Let’s hear your story, youngster ; you have told too little, or too much—enough to hang you twice over—so out with the remainder ; we’re men of honour ; though, if we swore it, the world would hardly credit it.”

I had no motive to court concealment ; to me, life and death were

equally indifferent. The former portion of my history I kept to myself, but freely narrated the villanous conspiracy of——, and his agents, to fix a charge of felony upon me first, and bring me to an ignominious end afterwards.

“I never heard of a plant better laid and executed,” said the captain, as I finished the detail of my last night’s adventures. “Never was man booked safer for the gallows; you had a close escape. Well, ‘touch and go’ is good pilotage, they say—I’ll tell you what to do. I sail for the coast of Guinea this evening; we’re short-handed; it’s a voyage that’s not much fancied, and I can’t persuade men enough to ship. They give a cowardly preference to low wages, and no fever; but you have no choice between that and hemp, you know. If it’s in you, Joe Barton is the man to make a sailor of you—What say ye?”

“That I embrace your offer cheerfully.”

Mr. Barton extended his hand, and, with the hold of a vice, grasped mine. Then pulling from his pea-coat pocket a canvass bag filled with dollars, he counted thirty down, and shoved them across the table.

“There’s two months’ wages in advance. It’s a toss-up that you’re dead in half the time. No matter; I will run the chance—go with Bob there—he’ll take you to a slop-seller, who’ll fit you out in no time. He’ll not refuse to join in a stoup afterwards. Don’t object; it may be the last either of you will take in England. Be on board, drunk or sober, at eight; and now be off, for I have some matters to attend to.”

I obeyed the mandate of my new commander, purchased some clothing fitted for the sultry climate I was about to visit, joined the vessel before the appointed hour, sailed at midnight, and bade a long—I prayed an eternal—*adien* to England.

We reached the Downs, having cleared the river safely; and there, I might add, that the good fortune of our voyage terminated. Could aught better be expected? No; the errand and the agents were infamous alike. We were bound to Africa to trade in human flesh, although, professedly, we had left England to bring home hard-woods, ivory, and gold-dust. But no honest trading was intended; we went out regularly prepared to perpetrate the worst cruelty that savage man can fancy when he contemplates deeds of crime—prey on the being that wore God’s image—violate every bond of nature, and sever the ties which common humanity holds dearest! Speak of the slave-dealer and the highwayman! Pshaw! compare them not.

When I said, that after we lost sight of the shores of England, our fortunes proved indifferent, the statement must be qualified. In the first object of the voyage we were successful, and carried, in comparative safety, a full cargo of slaves to their destination; that is, we managed to land *alive* two-thirds of the wretches we had kidnapped. We brought eternal misery with us, and left endless wretchedness behind. But already the vengeance of God was upon us—fever accompanied our accursed ship; and, one by one, the villain-crew which originally left England died off, and greater villains—were that possible—supplied the places of the departed.

The hour of retribution was at hand—the decree had gone forth—and vengeance was impending on the guilty. We returned to “the coast”—as that of Africa, in particular, was termed—shipped a full complement of slaves, and once more proceeded on our iniquitous voyage. During ten days we made good progress. The captain and his hellish crew, elated with apparent success, indulged in ruffian revelry. They drank, and danced, and sung; and while despair and death reigned in the crowded hold, the deck presented a saturnalia that fiends might have delighted to share.

But on the eleventh day that unhallowed revelry ended. The wind dropped suddenly—ominously. In one short hour not a ripple was seen upon the sea; and, far as the eye could range, a burning surface of bright blue water encircled us. The next sun—the next—and yet the next, rose and sank, and not a breeze was felt, and not a cat’s-paw crept over the distant ocean. Ten more passed; and still we drifted idly on the glassy surface, like some sea-bird reposing on the deep. Food failed us fast—that was bad; water rapidly diminished—that was worse. The hold became a pest-house. Contagion below produced an increase of fever above. The negroes died off by twenties; the crew, one after another, disappeared, till, of thirty-six seamen who left the Gambia, fourteen alone remained; while half of that small number were so debilitated that they could scarcely stand; and the few who still remained effective, were quite unequal to that disgusting duty, of disencumbering the waist of the human carrion which every hour accumulated. All hope to carry any portion of the accursed cargo to its destination was over. The dead putrefied; the living, maddened by thirst and hunger, had broken their chains, and, like rabid animals, could not be approached! One only course remained, and the ruffian-crew determined to batten down the hatches, fire brimstone underneath the slave-deck, destroy what life remained, and make the pest—a charnel-house!

Night was properly chosen for the execution of this diabolical act; and I saw the combustibles which were to effect it duly prepared. To witness this wholesale murder of two hundred victims was more than I could bear. I, who had ever revolted from the horrid vocation of a slave-dealer, fancied, that in all which had befallen us, I saw the vengeance of the Deity let loose on our accursed bark; and when at midnight I was placed at the wheel, and my villanous companions were occupied in murderous preparations, from the davits I lowered the only boat could swim, slipped over the ship’s counter unobserved, and paddled quietly away. In a few minutes I was called for—my evasion was detected—a dozen muskets were discharged after me at random; I heard bullets dip upon the water; but I plied my oars vigorously, and in a few minutes was out of range.

I paused, took breath, and looked around. The ship lay in shade, looming immensely; all else sea—sea—sea! I searched my pockets, and found two biscuits; but I was without water! Under a tropic sun, a thousand miles from land—no water! The very thought was enough to madden one; but, presently, other feelings banished that horrible conviction.

My eyes were turned towards the slaver. Before this, I knew that the infernal deed must have been consummated, and that, to protract the lives of some dozen guilty wretches, two hundred innocent victims had been immolated! A feeble gleam twinkled from the vessel; it faded into darkness; and a dull mass, shapeless and colourless, showed me the spot, where, upon the waveless ocean the felon-ship lay sleeping. I looked again. Suddenly, a blaze, as if some inflammable matter had been ignited, burst from the slaver and dispelled the darkness. The outline of the vessel became distinct; the flame waxed stronger still; every rope and sail was visible; and I could perceive figures on the deck, rush to and fro, as if in wild disorder. The glare grew redder yet—the ship was in a blaze from stem to stern—and in their nefarious attempt to suffocate their victims, the villains fired the vessel!

I turned the boat's head towards the burning ship; and after rowing a short distance back, rested on my oars. I knew that if I attempted to near the vessel, the skiff would be overcrowded, and all must perish. Shrieks, wild and maddening, like those of despairing men, were heard—every inch of canvas which had hung dangling from the yards, was wrapped in fire, and the loftiest spars were burning! It was a grand, but terrible spectacle; and I strained my eyes to gaze upon it until the red glare pained them. At once, a column of brilliant light mounted to the skies, followed by a heavy, dull, concussion, which came trembling over the water, and rocked my little skiff. A cloud of smoke succeeded. Suddenly the light vanished; darkness returned denser than before—night and stillness resumed their silent reign. The magazine had exploded—and the slaver was now buried in the depths of ocean!

In tropic climes, night is but a name, and morning broke immediately. I gazed over the ocean expanse, as the first glow of sunshine reddened its surface, bright and unruffled as a mirror, excepting one small spot ahead, which was covered with floating wreck. There, the slaver had gone down, and I looked fixedly in that direction. On a scathed beam, I fancied I could perceive a human form attached. I rowed to the place. To the half-burned portion of the wreck, a fine negro lad was holding with desperate tenacity; but he was nearly exhausted, and it was with much difficulty I could drag him into the boat. In a few minutes he was sufficiently recovered to know that I had rescued him from death, and with looks of mute intelligence he seemed to thank me for timely succour. I gave him a biscuit; he seized and ate it ravenously. No wonder, poor boy! for five long days, food had not passed his lips. With expressive signs he intimated that he would hereafter consider himself my slave; and by looks of encouragement, in return, I assured him of protection. It was a simple contract after all, and made under unusual circumstances; but it has lasted, and will last, for life. That negro youth was Dominique.

Before I had time to smile at the mockery of a forlorn wretch like myself, assuming a momentary superiority over another cast-away, saved mercilessly from an easier death to perish by the more dreadful agonies of thirst and hunger, a light air came stealing over

the glassy sea. I looked anxiously to windward. Far off, a breeze darkened the blue water, and in ten minutes we felt its influence, and our boat danced merrily on the tiny waves which curled the ocean far as sight could wander. I felt as if Heaven had been appeased, and vengeance satisfied; and hope once more replaced the dark despondency to which I had abandoned myself, as one whose doom was sealed.

Nor was that cheerful foreboding unfulfilled. Within an hour, and dead to windward, a speck appeared upon the edge of the horizon, and seemed, by slow degrees, to rise gradually from the ocean, until a goodly ship presented itself to the eye; and down she came before a leading breeze, with all the canvas set her spars could spread. We lay directly in her course. I hoisted a signal on an oar, and it was seen and answered—for presently the stranger took in sail, lowered a boat, sent it to our assistance, and "I and my man Friday," as worthy Robinson would say, were kindly received on board a vessel that proved to be a Portuguese trader, bound for the Brazils. My story was readily believed, namely, that our ship, an honest merchantman! had accidentally caught fire, and all except the negro and myself had perished. No doubt could be entertained of the correctness of this statement, for our deliverers had seen the blaze, and heard the explosion, when becalmed, at too great distance to render us relief.

I was landed safely in Rio Janeiro, and another epoch in an eventful life began. The history of seven years would require too much time to give it in detail—it must be confined to a brief summary. The owner of the vessel that had picked me up was a merchant of high respectability. The tale of my escape from a burning ship and ultimate starvation, had interest, and, pitying my destitution, he offered me a berth in a coasting vessel which belonged to him—I accepted it, and in a few months became its captain. I traded for him honestly and successfully, and rose by degrees rapidly in his estimation. Every year brought me fresh tokens of his confidence and esteem, until at last, I became a partner in his business. In every commercial adventure fortune befriended us; and when the old man died, and the affairs of his house were finally arranged, I, who had landed on the wharf of Rio without a second shirt, found myself a merchant of repute, and possessor of thirty thousand dollars. I must add, that I had assumed the name of Hartley, and that, during this season of good fortune, my faithful negro shared and enjoyed that period of treacherous sunshine.

And yet, during this prosperous career, I was secretly unhappy. Year after year, the English residents returned with the independence they had acquired, to die in the land which gave them birth. To me, as I bade them an eternal farewell, every departure caused fresh misery, and probed to the very quick a wound that none suspected was rankling in my breast. I had no country. What was father-land to me? I, a degraded outcast—stigmatized with crime, believed to be a felon and a suicide; and from the memory of whose existence, my very father, if living, would recoil. And yet the fancy of returning to England haunted me. I thought of it—dreamed of it—till at last, unable to combat the inclination, I determined, at every hazard, to

indulge the wish, and revisit the "land of my sires," were it but to die there.

I made the necessary preparations to effect my design—converted my property into specie—secured a passage for myself and faithful follower in a vessel bound for England, which, with several others, were to start under convoy of a sloop of war. We sailed on the appointed day; and, as I then believed, bade an eternal farewell to the shores of South America.

What was my motive for returning to a land where my name was a disgrace, and where he whose feelings towards the offendings of a child are lenient, a father—ay, a father—would repudiate me with contempt? It was to cleanse that name, stained as it was with youthful indiscretions, from the plague-spot that human villany had attached to it; and now with the command of the means by which justice in England can best be secured—money—wipe away the felon charge which had driven me undeservedly into exile and disgrace, and expose the guilty to the world—ay, though the last guinea of a fortune, which years of toil, and danger, and privations, had acquired, should be expended to attain the end.

For a week our little fleet progressed steadily across the ocean. Old merchantmen were then the dullest sailors imaginable; and with every inch of canvass we could spread, the sloop of war, with topsails on the cap, was frequently obliged to heave to and wait upon our lazy barque. Indeed, the vigilance of the convoy-ship was rendered necessary from the circumstance of a very suspicious vessel having been discovered for several successive mornings at sunrise, following in the wake of the fleet, and hauling off whenever she observed that she had been noticed.

On the sixth evening, the weather, which had hitherto been remarkably fine, threatened a change; and at midnight, the wind had considerably freshened. The security of the ship would have pointed out the prudence of making preparations for a gale, and putting the vessel under easy canvass; while, from the dulness of our sailing, and the certainty that a suspicious stranger was in our immediate vicinity, it was absolutely necessary that we should keep our place in the fleet, and avail ourselves of the man-of-war's protection. In this dilemma it was determined to trust to fortune, and "carry on." We had certainly, two dangerous alternatives to choose between—threatening weather, and an enemy's privateer. The latter fear was predominant; and although every minute skyey appearance became more alarming, we still kept a press of canvass on the vessel—and consequently, it was our fate to verify an old saw, in avoiding Scylla, to fall into Charybdis.

In the darkness, a squall struck us suddenly; and before every thing could be let fly, our three topmasts were over the side, and our worst apprehensions were about to be realized.

It was but a passing gale which had wrought us all this mischief; and when morning dawned, the weather had moderated into a light and steady breeze. The fleet was out of sight; and we were unable, from the weakness of the crew, to clear away at once the wreck of fallen spars

and sails that cumbered us. We were lying a log upon the water, while our more fortunate companions were bowling away before a wind directly in their favour. One sail only was in sight, and that was steering in the same direction with the convoy. For a time, from being dismasted, we were not discovered by the stranger. But suddenly he changed his course, hauled closely to the wind, and soon presented to our startled view, the same long, black, suspicious-looking brig, which for days before had occasioned a general uneasiness.

We had no chance of escape, even had our spars been standing; and in an hour the suspected vessel was within musquet range. No doubt of his country and calling remained. A French ensign was flying at his peak—his long dark hull showed eleven ports a side—his decks were crowded, and he looked a regular rover.

Had we a wish to resist, the means were wanting; and at the first hail, a boat was lowered, and our captain went on board. In return, two boats, filled with armed men, rowed to us from the privateer; the rovers mounted our decks, and the work of plunder commenced busily. I had no hope from the first, that my property could by any possibility escape detection; and a very few minutes put that question at rest. A foreign seaman, whom we had shipped at Rio, gave information to the prize-master; and I had the misery to see the acquisition of an enterprising life pass into the possession of the sea-robbers who had captured us.

From the disabled condition of the ship, all design of taking her into port was abandoned by our captors; but every thing that was portable, even to the sea-chests of the crew, was removed on board the brig. The whole day was consumed in stripping our luckless vessel; and when at nightfall the enemy left us lying still a wreck upon the ocean, I found myself in the same condition as when, seven years before, I had landed on the beach at Rio—without a second shirt, a second dollar, or a second friend. Of the latter, I possessed a faithful one—Dominique remained. He had resisted every inducement held out by the French captain to join the privateer. Poor faithful fellow! when the fickle goddess smiled, he had shared my fortune; and adversity had no other effect than to confirm his devoted attachment.

When the spoilers had taken their departure, nothing but lamentations were heard. The humblest mariner had lost his all, the wages he had already earned, or the little venture he was bringing home to England, in the honest hopes of realizing enough to render a wife or parent comfortable. There was but one of that ship's company preserved a sullen indifference; I, who had been stripped of more than all together, kept a moody silence, and uttered no complaint. All was gone at "one fell swoop"—the prospect of revisiting my native land—the hope of clearing my calumniated character from the unmerited obloquy which designing villains had heaped upon it—the means by which I expected to have effected it—of all, one luckless day had robbed me! The stupid calmness of despair tied my tongue, and gave to my countenance an unearthly composure, which many might have mistaken for philosophic resignation. But the bosom within was tortured—my sorrow was too great for language to convey; and,

thunderstruck with the sudden visitation I had undergone, I was debating whether it were not at once better to end an existence not to be endured, and—"unannealed and unforgiven," in defiance of his canon against self-murder,—venture desperately into the presence of an angry God.

These impious thoughts were mercifully terminated. I looked up, an eye was bent on mine. It was Dominique's; and the mute expression of that faithful negro spoke its deep sympathy for my misfortune, and intimated an eternal attachment. A sudden revulsion of intent succeeded the promptings of despair. I had lost wealth—but had I not a friend? A stern determination came over me to live and dare Fortune's worst; and when my dark follower placed silently a goblet in my hand, I drank the wine to the bottom, and swore no matter how darkly fate might frown, she should not crush my spirit.

"All's gone, Dominique. We have no errand now to England."

The negro answered with a groan.

"Shall we commence life anew, and again seek fortune in each other's company?"

The hand I stretched out the negro pressed to his lips respectfully; and with a meaning look, told me that we should sink or rise together.

The plunder of the ship was followed by a scene of drunken insubordination—for the bad example which the captain set, the crew had followed; and on the second evening we were still a wreck upon the water, our top-gear over the sides, and none in temper or condition to repair the damage we had sustained, and replace our lost spars with jurymasts. On the third morning the ship's company had become sufficiently sober to commence a work, that should have been long before effected—and I was sleeping in my cabin, worn out with the mental suffering I had undergone, when my slumbers were gently broken by my sable attendant, to acquaint me that another, and an equally dishonest looking vessel, was bearing down upon us fast, and barely a league to windward.

I hurried upon deck, and a glance confirmed Dominique's announcement. The stranger was a large topsail-schooner, with raking masts, a long black hull, and Spanish ensign floating from her gaff-end. Her sailing properties were admirable; and her whole appearance told that she was neither adapted for, nor employed in peaceful commerce. When she rounded to under our stern, I counted nine ports aside—a huge pivot gun was on a traverse between her masts, and her decks seemed full of men. She could not be mistaken for a moment; she was a rover, a slaver, or a privateer, and, probably, all by turns.

An old adage* says, that a traveller already disencumbered of his property, feels little uneasiness in presence of a highwayman; and certainly, to me the appearance of this rakish schooner was a matter of perfect indifference. I saw her back her topsail, and take a position that placed us "end-on," under the fire of her starboard guns. Immediately a boat was lowered, and twenty men pulled from her side and boarded us. This second visitation, and within eight-and-forty

* *Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.*

hours, caused but little sensation in the ship. All that was valuable was already gone; and the new comers must be men of uncommon industry and research, if they could discover much that was worth removal. Indeed, the style in which the Frenchman had cleared every thing away worth notice, could never be surpassed, and proved that in sea robbery his crew had attained perfection.

Sad was their disappointment, when our new captors found that they had fallen in with a mere bone from which the marrow had been carefully extracted. Still, however, there were some necessaries that might prove useful; and sails, cordage, water and provisions, were unceremoniously conveyed on board the schooner. Presently, a second boat pushed off from the rover's side; and it was notified that the captain, in person, was coming on board to ascertain how a prize so promising should prove so very unproductive.

"What a cursed misfortune," said he, in reply to the account his first officer gave him of our having been thoroughly plundered, and that only twenty hours before. "By Heaven, I am half inclined to make sail after the privateer, and make him divide or disgorge the booty."

"'Twere idle," said the lieutenant; "Heaven knows what course he's steering. And even if we overtook him, what certainty have we that he would not be able to hold his own with us? They say he carried twenty guns, and was chokeful of men. He'll dodge the convoy while he dare, and trust to accident for a second God-send. No, no—it was a cursed chance, no doubt—the luck was all John Crapo's—and no use crying over spilt milk, you know."

The reasoning of his lieutenant appeared to satisfy his superior, that the misfortune he had sustained in coming upon us after the Frenchman's visit was irretrievable, and, accordingly, he submitted to it like a christian man; but still he could not avoid making an occasional lament over what he termed "the blackest of bad luck."

"Thirty thousand dollars—hard silver—all one property—besides other most valuable plunder. Was ever ship so unfortunate! But who was the unlucky devil who lost the money? Did he drown himself at once, or is he still on board?"

The lieutenant pointed quietly to me; and the captain crossed the deck to the place where I was standing, with my arm leaning on the bulwark, as if nothing particular had occurred.

"So, Sir, I hear you have been cleaned out; and, as they tell me, to a tolerable tune?"

"I have," I answered; "can you put me in the way of recovering the loss?"

"I!" said the stranger in surprise; "how the devil should I?"

"Then, as I am already plucked to the last feather, your honest companions have nothing to deprive me of, and you can neither serve nor injure me. Is not that a comfort, captain?"

"Come, my good sir," replied the rover, "you need not be so snappish; though, 'pon my soul, the loss of thirty thousand dollars is nothing to joke about. But stop; have I ever seen that face before?"

"That question you can best resolve yourself," I answered; "yours

has been seen by me, I fancy, for the first time; and, let me add, worthy captain, I sincerely hope for the last one too."

"Indeed! would it be too much trouble to ask you to look at it a second time?"

I complied carelessly with the captain's wish, and examined the features and figure of this new intruder. The face was swarthy, sun-burnt, and had, what the Irish happily term, "a devil-may-care" expression. The person of the stranger was square and well-compact; his dress was composed of cotton and nanquin—textures best suited to the climate. In the silken sash which bound his waist, he had secured a watch, a dagger, and a brace of pistols; all apparently very valuable. He wore a jewel on his finger; diamond rings in either ear, and a gold-laced hat, fit for a vice-admiral, completed his showy and singular costume. He was a very young man, apparently not more than five-and-twenty.

"And pray, Mr. Jones, or Mr. Thompson, or by whatever name besides you called yourself in the *Fancy*, six years ago upon the coast, now that you have finished your survey, may I inquire if you can yet recollect an old companion?"

I started. He had mentioned the slaver's name correctly, and also the false appellation by which I was known on board that accursed vessel.

"I have heard of that slave-ship," I replied; "she foundered at sea, and none escaped but—"

"You and myself," responded the stranger carelessly.

"You labour under a mistake; she perished by fire, and none escaped—"

"But *you*; and how you managed it I don't know. As for me, I gave leg-bail in the *Gambia*. Come, Jones, Thompson, Robinson, or any thing you please to call yourself, fear nothing from me. I owe you a debt of gratitude. I shipped myself in that villanous slaver, a runaway-apprentice; and, when struck down by fever, and dying of thirst upon my passage out, the only hand in all that rascally ship's company, to whom I was indebted for a drink of water to slake my burning thirst, was your's; and now, seven years after, I survive to prove to you that kindness to a destitute boy has not been, and shall not be forgotten."

"It seems you know me," I replied; "and concealment would be idle. It is, indeed, too true that all on board the slaver perished, save that negro who attends me, and myself."

"Ay," said the rover; "but you may recollect that a boy was missing the night before you sailed. I was that lost one; and, from weariness of a miserable life, and disgust at the horrible duty imposed upon me, of attending to the slave-hold, every feeling had revolted. I bolted from the vessel; escaped a fate that none survived but you; passed through a thousand hair-breadth adventures; and now command the *Flambeau*—the sweetest schooner that ever spread canvass to a breeze. Come, I hear you have lost every thing again but life; try your luck once more with Captain Raleigh; and rest assured, that he who succoured the fevered boy, shall secure the friendship of the com-

mander of the Flambeau,—a craft by some called a privateer, and by others set down—may Heaven forgive them!—as nothing better than a pirate!”

I listened to the rover's invitation. There was much that would induce a man, circumstanced as I was, to accept it; I seemed a being marked out for misfortune—for whom no happiness was predestined, and one, for whom fate had reserved the phials of her wrath. Captain Raleigh marked my hesitation.

“Come,” said he, “time presses. You brought me, and for little advantage, I regret, out of my course this morning, and I must regain it speedily. You are, as far as I am concerned, a free agent. Come with me—you will be welcome; stay where you are—a hundred dollars are at your service, to begin the world anew, and the best wishes of the runaway apprentice you nursed on his passage to the Gambia. I'll rejoin you in five minutes—a time sufficiently long for a man to come to a decision, as well as if he dreamed over it for a twelvemonth.”

He turned, walked to another part of the vessel, and gave orders to his crew to man their boats, and prepare for returning to the schooner.

Dominique had been a silent, but a most attentive observer of my tête-à-tête with Captain Raleigh, and I beckoned him to approach.

“The hour for parting has arrived, Dominique, which, three days since, neither you nor I could have anticipated; but so fate wills it. A new and perilous career lies before me, the ocean surface must be my home, and its deeps shall furnish me a grave. England, the land of freedom, is your happier destination. Go, my tried and trusty friend; follow some one of brighter fortunes than him you leave; and may your future fate be what your attachment and fidelity to me so richly merit!”

The negro did not speak for a few moments—tears fell fast upon the deck—at last, he turned a look of mild inquiry upon my face, and, in a broken voice, asked “in what he had offended me.”

I was assuring my sable follower how truly I estimated his worth, and how deeply I felt the necessity that should deprive me of his services, when Captain Raleigh joined us. He held a bag of dollars in his hand. “Here—catch,” he cried, as he tossed the money to me. “And now, ‘to be or not to be, ay, that's the question.’ There's Shakespeare for you. Confound the bard of Avon; 'twas he that made a rover of me; and but for Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, I, Harry Jones, had never been Captain Raleigh, but probably, at this blessed hour, a thriving citizen on Ludgate Hill, slicing off lutestring for a dowager, or assuring some pretty girl how beautifully the last new ribbon harmonized with the colour of her hair. Heigh-ho! I might have been happier. Happier! pshaw! nonsense. Yard and shears are only fit for woman's hand; this is the tool for man's”—and he touched the hilt of his cutlass. “But what's the matter with your dark companion? Has he, too, lost some dollars by the accursed visit of the Frenchman?”

“I have lost more—far more,” replied the black, “the preserver of my life—the master whom for seven years I followed—my friend—

my benefactor—him have I lost. He tells me that I must leave him—leave one from whom I thought death alone should separate me.”

“And will you follow his fortunes, and take your chance on board the schooner?”

“Follow him!” exclaimed the negro; “oh, were that allowed, Dominique would be too happy.”

“Give me that honest fist of yours,” returned the rover. “No matter what the colour of the skin may be; the heart’s the thing for me. Well, you’ll take your chance, and seek new fortunes in the Flambeau?” he continued, addressing me.

“I have no other choice,” was my reply.

“Come, you have no luggage to remove, I fancy; John Crapo saved you that trouble. Jump in; the boat is ready.”

I followed this new director of my destiny; and the whale-boat quitted the vessel’s side, where, but three short days ago, I was owner of thirty thousand dollars, to commence a roving life—a career of criminal adventure—its close—at best an ocean grave—or, what was likelier far, the plank,* the yard-arm, or the gibbet.

I shall pass over an epoch of three years, the crowded history of which was more than enough to fill the story of a life. Would you know it? ask in every Spanish port, from Chili to Panama, what was the Flambeau, and who were her commanders? They will tell you, that that pirate barque, though for years resting in the caves of the Atlantic, still carries terror in her name. They will say, that Raleigh was daring, rash, and sanguinary; but that, with the audacious courage of the boldest buccaneer, Ramirez was merciful; and that the blood of innocence or old age had never stained his hand. Who Raleigh was you know; who Ramirez—you may fancy.

A year had passed since Raleigh had perished in a wild descent upon the Spanish Main; and Ramirez, his successor, had assumed a command for which his daring and good-fortune had qualified him pre-eminently. Much wealth had been acquired; and it was believed that the Rover Captain had transmitted large remittances, in specie and valuables, to Europe. In one of the secret inlets with which the Caribees abound, the Flambeau had been refitted, provisioned, and made ready for a fresh adventure. The crew were all on board, and nothing delayed the schooner’s sailing, but the unaccountable absence of her commander. A week before he had set out for a distant town, to meet a secret agent. The business was speedily transacted, and Ramirez had left the city he had visited, to rejoin the Rover’s crew. Day after day passed; the worst suspicions were entertained—it was believed that he had been assassinated; and a deep gloom spread over the whole of the lawless community, who justly regarded Ramirez as the ablest commander that ever trod a rover’s deck. Many conjectures were hazarded; three days elapsed, when a canoe paddled one evening on board the Flambeau, and delivered a letter addressed to the second in command, in the well-known hand-writing of the captain. In that epistle the mystery was cleared away; wonder succeeded apprehension; and wishes so often and so warmly breathed

* A piratical method of drowning.

by the rover's crew for the safety of their leader, were exchanged for imprecations on his head, and deadly vows of everlasting vengeance; and one, who was an hour before the idol of that lawless band, would have found in every individual who composed it, a willing executioner.

What could have caused this singular change of feeling?

In the letter addressed by Ramirez to his lieutenant, he stated that he had determined to abandon a roving life for ever, and assured him that every attempt to ascertain his motives, or discover his retreat, would be equally unavailing. The investment of valuable property on the general account of the predatory community had been faithfully executed. He promised that every secret connected with his late confederates should be buried in his grave—and the eternal silence of his black companion might be equally confided in. The letter concluded with the warmest wishes for their future welfare—with a strong entreaty that they should abandon a dangerous career, which, no matter how long fortune smiled upon it, must inevitably incur an ignominious termination.

Mr. Hartley paused, and took from his pocket a small sealed packet, carefully tied up.

“Hector,” said he, addressing me, “the remainder of my sad history would be as painful for me to narrate, as you to listen to. In these detached papers you will find my chequered and adventurous career faithfully outlined. At intervals, ‘few and far between,’ when I could look back upon the past with tolerable composure, these unconnected documents were written; and any portions of the tale which may not be sufficiently intelligible, your own fancy must fill up. I have not shrunk from being the chronicler of my own shame; but I have not nerve or courage to be the narrator of suffering so terrible, that reason was unseated, and Heaven alone, through gentle agencies, saved me from total despair. Save one—my child—no other eye has rested on these papers—none other will; for, when you restore them to-morrow, the record of crime and sorrow shall perish. Farewell! At dawn of day expect me. Sleep soundly, boy;—may never recollections of the past rob you of rest, as they will me!”

He shook my hand, bade me good night, and retired to his chamber; and I, burning with curiosity to learn all the particulars of a “strange eventful history,” broke the sealed packet, and read the following details:—

CHAPTER XXVI.

MY UNCLE'S STORY CONTINUED.

“ *Gent.*—Help!—help!—O, help!
Edgar. What kind of help?
Albany. Speak, man.
Edgar. What means that bloody knife?
Gent. 'Tis hot!—it smokes!—
 It came even from the heart of—
Albany. Who, man?—speak!
Gent. Your lady, sir—your lady!”

KING LEAR.

THE city of Quito was brilliantly illuminated; it was the anniversary of its patron saint, and, in honour of their holy founder, the convent and church of the Ursulines presented a spectacle of dazzling splendour. The latter was lighted with a thousand tapers, and the great altar was ornamented with all the monastic treasures which a devotee delights to view. Crucifixes and sacred vessels, in gold and silver, and of surpassing beauty, were liberally exhibited; while relics, in jewelled cabinets, were on this, the high festival of Saint Ursula, brought from their hallowed shrines, to delight the eyes and gladden the hearts of the faithful. A long array of dignified ecclesiastics, in gorgeous robes, filed in procession through the lofty aisles, while censors blazed, and the pealing organ thundered forth its “jubilate.” Within a large extent round the city, all that was noble, wealthy, or religious, on this her glorious anniversary, were assembled to do honour to their favourite saint,—while salvos of artillery from the ramparts, and the rolling fire of *feu de joie*, rose at times above the choral swell, adding to a religious pageant, the anomalous associations which a battle-field and “heady fight” would give. To complete the effect of this splendid spectacle, the proud, the brave, the beautiful, followed humbly in procession after monk and nun—the men bearing perfumed tapers of coloured wax—while the women strewed flowers as they moved along before the blessed relics of their sainted patroness.

Leaning against a pillar of the nave, two personages of very different appearance, viewed the procession with that interest it was so well calculated to excite. One, from his quiet air and sober dress, seemed a man engaged in some peaceful avocation; he might have been a notary, a doctor, or a trader. The other, a young, tall, and handsome cavalier, was richly attired in a fanciful costume; rapier and poignard were in an embroidered belt; rings of costly workmanship glittered on his fingers, and a jewel of exquisite brilliancy sparkled from the looping of his richly-plumed hat. As the procession moved slowly on, the gay stranger might have been overheard addressing his more sober companion, to inquire who the actors in the passing scene

might be ; and while he bent his head indifferently as every succeeding relic passed, and bishop and mitred abbot, one after another, defiled before him, the irreligious stranger never asked their names.

“ Yon stately man in the rich cope and alb is the holy prior of San Augustin ;—he exorcises devils——”

The gay foreigner impatiently interrupted his soberer companion. “ Hang the fat prior !—we have no devils to be exorcised.”

“ And see, yonder thin black priest—he is the canon of San Roque, —the best preacher that ever mounted pulpit.”

“ There leave him, my good friend,—I hate the drowsy race. Ha ! —Who is that noble-looking person in the green uniform faced with gold ?”

“ That is General Paez. Saints and angels !—here comes the archbishop of——”

“ Never mind the archbishop. Who is the silver-headed veteran with the hat and scarlet plume ?”

“ Oh, that is Admiral Cordova. But the Dominican who bears the banner——”

Again the irreligious foreigner broke in. “ Confound them both ! bearer and banner. Look, man !” —as another, and the fairest portion of the procession, walked slowly past the pillar, strewing flowers as they moved along. “ Ay,” said the stranger, “ that sylph-like girl, with blue eyes, is worth all the monks and cardinals who ever said an ave, or carried a blessed candle. But see !—mark you that lovely girl in silvered satin ?—she with the ebon locks, and downcast eyes. How beautiful is that air—the easy movement of her walk—the grace with which each flower drops from her hand ! I must not, dare not look.”

“ ’Twere better not,” remarked the soberer of the twain ; “ she is for the last time in worldly company : in another week she enters the convent of Saint Agatha, and she will be professed immediately.”

“ Professed !” exclaimed his companion,—“ what means that ? But see—the procession halts !” and at the moment, the beautiful *religieuse* stopped at the base of the very pillar against which the gay stranger had taken his position.

“ Who is that sweet girl ?” said the latter, impatiently.

The sudden halting of the long array caused the fair flower-bearer to look up, and her eyes encountered those of the stranger which were turned upon her in breathless admiration. The beautiful devotee coloured to the brows, and again her eyes dropped upon the tessellated pavement. It was probably from agitation that a small bouquet, composed of the most delicate flowers which a tropic clime produces, fell unconsciously from her hand, when, unperceived by any but the lovely *religieuse* and his own companion, the stranger picked it up, pressed it for a moment with ardour to his lips, and then carefully deposited the floral treasure in his bosom. Again the procession moved, the beauteous devotee exchanged a passing glance ; and if it were intended to reprove the boldness of the daring adventurer, or express sorrow at the loss of her fragrant bouquet, neither feeling was conveyed, for the look was the sweetest one imaginable.

"Now by every saint upon the calendar, and the list is longer than the muster-bill of a line-of-battle ship, it's all over with me—I'm lost—destroyed—undone. Who is that angel in woman's form? Speak!" exclaimed the stranger, passionately.

"The loveliest girl in Grenada," returned his companion.

"Pshaw! tell me not what I know already—but her name? her family? Come, out with all you know, man."

"It's a long story," replied the civilian.

"No matter," returned his friend, "tell me anything connected with that charming devotee, and I'll listen although the tale lasted to eternity."

"Captain," replied the other,—and he whispered the title by which he addressed him softly in his gay companion's ear,—"'ware love!—Cupid himself would find no welcome on board a vessel called the Flambeau."

"Out with the story!" exclaimed the stranger; "or I'll break through the procession, and ask it of the sweet girl herself."

"Well," said the civilian, with a smile, "to keep you clear of the Inquisition for an insult to a favourite saint like blessed Agatha, I will tell you all I know. Sit down upon this marble pediment, and we can speak without any one hearing us. Marked you the grey-headed commander, dressed in a blue uniform, with two crosses at his breast?"

"To be sure I did: the worn-out admiral who bore a candle in the crowd. Well, the taper is fitter than the sword for the hand of age to carry; no doubt, many a day since, the old gentleman has been laid up in ordinary."

"He would be anything but flattered could he but overhear our conversation," continued the companion of the gay stranger. "In ordinary! Not he, faith!—It is barely six months ago since he married the——"

"Widow of some gouty general," exclaimed the other, impatiently. "Pshaw!—no more of him."

"He married," responded the civilian, "no widow of a gouty general, but Inez de Romana."

"An antiquated virgin," said the stranger, with a smile; "of high family, holy life, and on the wrong side of sixty."

"Never did a man guess wider of the mark: she was one of the prettiest girls in the province, and on the right side of seventeen," observed the civilian.

"But what the devil does it interest me," exclaimed the stranger, "whether an old gentleman exhibits his dotage by committing matrimony, or any other similar absurdity? I don't want to know anything about his wife."

"But you wish me to favour you with full particulars touching his lovely daughter."

"His daughter!" said the stranger: "Is yonder peerless beauty indeed that old man's child?"

"His only child. She pays the penalty of an act of dotage, for the old fool's marriage consigns her to a convent."

“Monstrous!” ejaculated the stranger: “What! bury beauty like her’s within a living grave! By Heaven! I’ll escalade the convent walls myself, and liberate that lovely victim; ay, though I perished by the hands of the Inquisition for the sacrilege! But why, if the old man played the fool, should she, poor girl, be immured for it?”

“To gratify the selfish vanity of a weak old dupe. Inez was the orphan daughter of a poor knight of San Iago; and on her father’s death, without friends or fortune, she was destined to take the veil. Educated at the same convent with the heiress of the admiral, she came to visit her young companion before the vows should be pronounced, that would sever her for ever from society. The old man saw her, and, struck with her beauty, fancied that he loved. He told his tale of folly. Inez detested the seclusion which awaited her. A splendid home—a life of luxury—the name of wife—a lover!—coupled with a title, were offered and accepted. Inez is vain and ostentatious, and a sudden rise from humble orphanage, has almost turned her brain. She indulges in every extravagance, and the dotting admiral, they say, yields to every solicitation, no matter how expensive; and thus a fortune, sufficient to support the rank and establishment of a grandee, has been found inadequate to meet the profusion his silly marriage has entailed; and to gratify the extravagance of his youthful consort, the old dupe has determined that his only child shall be sacrificed, to enable him to meet the extravagant demands made upon his purse, by the capricious girl whom he has been weak enough to marry. And now, Captain Ramirez, you know as much as I do of every thing connected with the lovely *religieuse*.”

“By Heaven!” returned the stranger, passionately, “friend Sanchez, I will know more, or the fault shall not be mine. But see—the procession is about to move. Whither will these fat drones steer to now? Stand fast; they’ll pass again. I would not lose the chance of another angel-gance of yon dark eye, for this brilliant in my hat; and the water is the purest in Grenada.”

“And what would you give me, could I procure you an interview? Ay, captain, stare not so incredulously; an interview!—not exactly *tête-à-tête*; but in the presence only of a youthful step-dame, and myself, your very humble servant,” said the civilian, with a smile.

“Give!” exclaimed the stranger; “change your query, Signor Sanchez, and rather inquire, what would I not give. Pshaw! the thing’s impossible.”

“Would you wager one hundred dollars on the event?” inquired the Captain’s companion.

“No,” returned the stranger; “but I’ll bet you three to one, and in hundreds too.”

“Done,” was the brief reply.

“And *done*. The wager’s made. Prepare your money, Master Sanchez. Were it but for exciting false hopes, every dollar shall be exacted, whether they be begged, borrowed, or stolen. But, saints and angels! here she comes.”

Again the long array filed past in solemn march; and a less devout spectator could not have been discovered in the crowded assemblage

than Captain Ramirez. The archbishop of Moldivia glided on in stately dignity; and the stranger regarded the haughty prelate with as little veneration as the neophyte who waved a perfumed censer in his rear. On came the thin black canon of San Roque; and the ablest preacher in the province elicited no more notice. In fact, two objects engrossed the gallant captain's attention—one was the old admiral with the yellow taper; and the other that lovely devotee, his daughter.

She passed the pillar closely as before. To the stranger, the crowded procession contained a single object, and his ardent gaze sought that one only in the throng. She came; for a moment she raised her soft and speaking eyes,—they met those of the stranger. He took the flowers from his bosom—pressed them to his lips. The fair devotee observed the act; and the glance that answered it, would not induce a lover to despair.

“Now,” said Captain Ramirez, as the ceremony ended, and the numerous spectators issued from the church, “if ever man were fairly ruined, I am he. Friend Sanchez, how gladly would I tell thee out three hundred dollars!”

“Indeed!” said the civilian; “I'm happy to assure you, that that pleasure is reserved for to-morrow.”

“Would I dare think it so,” said the captain, with a sigh; “but how is it to be done? Are we to pick locks, scale walls, commit murder, or—”

“Heaven forbid!” returned Signor Sanchez; “we will effect it by no felonious means, or I shall agree to forego the benefit of the wager. Rest assured, that the entry into the admiral's domicile shall be peacefully achieved. Come, supper will be waiting; we will finish afterwards a flask or two to the health of the peerless Camilla; and, if by the hour of siesta to-morrow, I have not lightened your purse by three hundred pieces, why, worthy captain, then write Juan Sanchez down a very ass.”

Morning came. The gay stranger was early a-foot; for, were the truth told, the sweet *religieuse* had spoiled the captain's sleep. Presently his host joined him. The morning meal was discussed; and the stranger reminded Signor Sanchez that he had not forgotten the wager made on the preceding evening.

“I should be sorry if you had, noble captain, for it would be to me the loss of a sum in sterling silver, that we traders do not every day realize so easily.”

“Well, my friend, when is the trial to come off?” was the inquiry.

“The bet shall be speedily decided; and, in one hour hence, the pocket of one of us will be lighter than it is at present: I could give a shrewd guess, Captain Ramirez, which of them it will be.”

Half the time wore away, when the essay was to be made; and the stranger became momentarily more impatient.

“I fancy you may prepare,” said the civilian, “for your interview with Camilla.”

“What preparations are necessary?” inquired the stranger; “my hat and sword are on the table.”

“Where they shall peaceably await our return. You must adopt a more respectable appearance. Doff these gay trappings; and, for the occasion, pass as my assistant. There is a modest-looking dress at your service, in the next room; and when you have put it on, the box you are to carry will be ready.”

In a few minutes the change of costume was completed. Don Juan Sanchez set out for the admiral's residence, with a jewel-case under his arm, and Captain Ramirez, attired like a sober citizen's attendant, followed dutifully with another, largely stocked with artificial flowers, and divers other articles which interest the fair sex. They reached Don Manuel's residence, in the Plaza; and the moment Sanchez and his assistant presented themselves, they were freely admitted, and conducted to a waiting-room, until their arrival should be formally announced to the consort of the commander.

“Captain,” said the civilian, in a whisper, “how many dollars would you give to be off? Your wager's lost. Well, take tone from me, and I promise you a glorious opportunity. I am the bearer of an emerald necklace—the young wife will be sufficiently occupied in its examination: and could you not, in the interim, dispose of some of your wares to the old man's daughter?”

“Egad, I'll try. But, honest Sanchez, I fear I can manage the retail business but indifferently. I'm in the wholesale line, you know. Here comes the lady's page.”

A richly-dressed negro-boy summoned the civilian and his companion to the presence of Doña Inez. They found her in a magnificent apartment, resting in luxurious indolence upon a splendid couch, while the lovely devotee was arranging some beautiful flowers in a crystal vase, in another corner of the chamber. Sanchez bowed with deferential humility to the haughty beauty; a civility she scarcely returned; and then, advancing to the sofa, he presented a casket, with its brilliant contents, for the inspection of the lofty Doña.

In a moment the attention of the consort of the admiral was enthralled with the jewellery that this costly casket presented, and frequent exclamations of her admiration told how ardently she responded to the commendations of the merchant, as he pointed out the beauty of every gem.

“Pedro,” said the civilian, “show that box of thine to yonder lady. Flowers, merely, your excellenza; fit only for young ladies about to be professed.”

The companion of Juan Sanchez instantly obeyed the order of his superior; and, crossing the apartment, disclosed the treasures of his box.

“The flowers are pretty,” said the beautiful Camilla, with a sigh, “but I do not require any. They tell me there are enough in the garden of the convent. Heigh-ho!”

“That wreath, lady, is reckoned beautiful,”—and the companion of Juan Sanchez selected what he considered the most valuable of the collection. “Would you deign to accept—no, no, I mean, would you oblige me by buying it?”

The fair Camilla gracefully declined the purchase.

“Or that—or this one; any—all.” There never was a more importunate flower-dealer.

“My friend,” replied the lady, gently, “indeed there is nothing here that I require. You mistake me; I am destined for a life that forbids all mortal luxuries. Show these things—and, indeed, some of them are very beautiful—to yonder lady, my father’s—” she paused, the name was not a pleasant one to pronounce—“*she* will probably buy them. I do not need them; and if I did—but no—down, down, proud heart—” and she turned aside to hide a tear.

“Nay, lady, accept them; and, in return, repay me with your prayers.”

The intended novice waved her hand, and moved a step or two.

“Stay, lady; stay for one moment. I have a flower here, an empress could not purchase; let me, pray let me, show it you.”

“Indeed!” said the fair girl, as she turned round.

“It is too precious to entrust within this casket, and therefore I enshrine it here.”

As he spoke, the stranger took from his bosom a bunch of flowers, and placed them in Camilla’s hand. Instantly a burning blush rose to her very brows. A few rapid sentences fell from the stranger’s lips; a billet was placed softly in no unwilling hand; when the entrance of the admiral disturbed the course of love and traffic in which the civilian, and his excellent companion, were so busily engaged.

“I dare not ask him for so much money to-day,” said Doña Inez, in a whisper; “but promise me to keep the jewels until Friday, and then come here.”

The obsequious merchant gave the necessary pledge, and, followed by his attendant, he made an humble obeisance, and quitted the mansion of Don Manuel de Cordova.

Friday came. Again the visit was repeated: other brilliants had been added, in the interim, to the rich display that Juan Sanchez had previously exhibited; and the stranger’s flowers had been replaced with others of rarer kinds, and more exquisite fragrance. No wonder, therefore, that both collections were examined with an increased interest; and, in the wife and daughter of the admiral, that each found an ardent admirer. At the especial request of the former lady, the final selection of jewellery was postponed until the following Monday. Camilla was then to spend that her last day with the world; for the next day was to witness her private reception into the convent of Saint Agatha, to prepare herself for the formalities of an immediate profession.

Monday came, and the diamond-merchant presented himself punctually at Don Manuel’s door. He was alone, and his friend the flower-dealer no longer accompanied him. He knocked, but admission was refused; and the porter informed him, that his lady declined that day receiving any visitors. There was a strange confusion visible through the whole of the admiral’s establishment; and servants hurried to and fro, with an anxiety apparent in their looks, like that of men to whom some surprising occurrence had been recently made known. In a few hours, the cause of this commotion was whispered over the city, and created universal astonishment. The admiral’s fair daughter, Camilla, who in a few days was to have become the betrothed of Heaven, had,

on the preceding night, eloped from her father's mansion, and not a trace of the beautiful fugitive could be discovered. The day passed, and no tidings were heard of the lost one : and the most extensive inquiries produced but little information. It was ascertained that a fishing-canoe had observed a felucca cross the bar, and, at an unusual time of tide, stand out to sea—and a stranger, whose brilliant appearance occasioned a sensation in the city, had suddenly departed from the hotel where he lodged, accompanied by his black domestic. Months succeeded days—Camilla was never heard of ; and many and marvellous were the surmises as to the means and manner, by which the lovely daughter of Don Manuel de Cordova had been so mysteriously spirited away.

Three years slipped away. Don Manuel de Cordova was gathered to his fathers ; and after the briefest period of mourning, which a decent respect to the memory of one who had bequeathed her his whole fortune, would allow, the young relict had bestowed her widowed hand on a wild and dissipated grandee. Of the lost Camilla no tidings were ever heard, and her strange disappearance remained as much a mystery as it was on the morning after it occurred.

Another event had caused immense joy along the coast. A celebrated rover, which for years had infested the neighbouring seas, had been driven on shore and destroyed by an English cruiser. Indeed it was full time that the Flambeau's predatory career should be terminated. While she had continued under the command of a person who called himself Ramirez, her spoliations were restricted to what is considered allowable to vessels occupied in free trading, and no acts of violence had ever been permitted. But for some unknown cause that captain had mysteriously disappeared, and under his successor, the rover became a regular pirate ; and, from the extent of her depredations, her destruction became indispensable. In effecting this, most of her lawless crew had fallen, and the remainder were driven into the woods, where, as it was hoped and expected, they would be speedily arrested and brought to that justice which so long they had managed to evade.

In one of those sweet glades which are found occasionally in the pathless forests of the south, and show, amid the interminable extent of dank weeds and underwood by which they are environed, like an oasis in the desert, the summer residence of a wealthy planter had been erected. The front verandah of the building opened on a piece of open land, which stretched its green and velvet-looking surface gently downwards, until it rested on the bank of one of those deep inlets which debouch into the mighty rivers that intersect the southern portion of America ; while the rear of this romantic retreat was overhung by woods composed of the noblest trees the earth produces, and in every variety of tint and foliage. The house itself was of slight construction, and designed only for temporary habitation ; for, like other proprietors of opulence, the owner possessed a splendid mansion in a seaport some fifty leagues lower down the river ; a place better suited,

both from comfort and society, to form a permanent residence ; and his visits to this distant estate were merely for the purpose of superintending a numerous gang of negroes engaged in felling hard woods, and in enjoying the amusements of hunting and shooting, which boundless forests and prairies abundantly afforded. All in and about this rustic abode evidenced both wealth and taste, and presented every elegance and luxury that was adapted to a tropic climate.

It was a warm and lovely night ; the mosquito curtains were closed, and in a very elegant saloon the owner of this sporting-lodge and his family might have been discovered.

A sweeter scene of domestic repose could never have been selected by a painter than the group within exhibited. A man, stout, handsome, and in the flower of life, had his dark eyes fixed, with pride mingled with affection, upon a female younger than himself by at least a dozen years. Nothing could be lovelier than the beautiful countenance he looked upon, as hanging over a sleeping child that rested in her lap, a mother's looks of love were bent upon her slumbering treasure. Behind the lady's chair, a tall finely-proportioned negro was standing with a silver salver, on which were fruits and wine ; while a beautiful Chilleno girl waited at her mistress' side, to receive her sleeping charge. Presently the infant was committed to its nurse's arms. The negro placed his refreshments on the table, and, with the fair Chilleno, immediately quitted the apartment, leaving the planter and his lovely wife to the society of each other.

The lady rose and looked out from the lattice on the lawn, and as she crossed the chamber the grace of her figure was displayed. It boasted no longer the airy elegance of girlish symmetry : the flower was in its bloom—the form exhibited womanly maturity ; and it was apparent that her's was that endearing situation, which doubly claims a husband's tenderest care.

Evening had changed to midnight ; not a breath of wind rustled the leaves, or rippled the glassy surface of the river. All were asleep but the guilty ; and yet, at that lone hour, a group of men were circled round a fire beside a sandy cove, on which a boat was drawn ashore. They were all armed ; and while some were preparing supper, others kept a vigilant look out. They had the air and appearance of wild and desperate men ; and their conversation, maintained in that low tone which evinces suspicion, confirmed their lawless character.

"What an infernal accident," said one of the rovers, "to run her smack upon a sunken rock, and lose the vessel after boasting that he knew every creek and cove from Chiloe to Cape Francisco."

"He'll never lose another," observed a second scoundrel, coolly. "But Gaspard is over ready with his pistol. Before the schooner's copper had scraped the coral a second time, Diego was dead as a mackarel. Poor devil!—the skipper allowed no time for explanations."

"Ay, and the captain was right," observed a truculent ruffian, whose features were scarcely visible from the matted covering of coal-black hair, which hid them from chin to forehead. "I'm half sorry, too, that we lost the blundering fool—he didn't mean it after all. There's

but a handful of the old Flambeaus left, and one now-a-days can't trust to strangers."

"What a lucky craft that old Flambeau was," said the first speaker: "her equal for success, in Captain Ramirez' time, was never known. And then he kept all so nicely out of trouble; and though men grumbled at him now and then, why, in the long-run, he proved a wise-one. He valued no flag but one; and a yard of British bunting was a vessel's full security. If we met an English trader short of water, why he supplied it freely; were provisions wanted, he put us on short allowance, and divided to the last biscuit with the starving crew. Well, the first ship—French, Dutch, or Spaniard, Portuguese or Dane—we met with afterwards, he made up the loss—ay, and helped himself to a double quantity, because he had succoured the distressed. Well, the foreigner probably complained to the first broad pennant, when he reached a harbour, when in dropped a disabled ship to tell that in her distress she had got all she wanted from the Flambeau. Had the gallant Ramirez remained, the finest schooner that ever crossed the line would be as she used to be, breasting the waters like a sea-gull. See what fell out: Gaspard couldn't stand temptation, but must fall foul of a rich Jamaica-man,—and in a month a clipper sloop is dispatched to regularly run us down; and sticks to us like a bloodhound, until, like our namesake, we were regularly extinguished. Ah! poor Flambeau!"

"It's all true. We never knew the old captain's loss, till after we had got a new one; and many's the time Gaspard has heard that told him, when he didn't like it. But where has he wandered to? He's full an hour away."

"He's not lost, however; for see, he comes along the cove."

Of all that lawless company, assembled round a midnight fire, the new comer looked the greatest ruffian.

"How now," he said, assuming an air and tone of command, "is snpper ready yet? There's no great cooking required, Master Sambo," said he, addressing a mulatto who appeared to be the cook; "scanty fare at present, lads—fish, fish, fish! No matter; better luck again. Come, let's have it as it is. Step to the boat, Soto, and bring us that runlet of Hollands. Curses on that stupid scoundrel, who, with plenty of sea room and smooth water, lost a vessel so foolishly!"

"He paid for his mistake upon the spot: you're clear with him, captain," growled another ruffian.

"Ay, were he my brother, he should have fared no better. But, come, my lads, eat, drink, and bless the saints afterwards, for giving you the commander you have."

"I wish," said another rover, "we could rather persuade them to mend our fare a little. Nothing but river fish—one worse than another, and the best not fit for a nigger's banyan day. I fancy we'll fare still worse; the vessel gone, and not a chance of getting another! What the devil could have brought us here? Toiling at the oars for a hundred miles up a river, where nothing could be met with but timber rafting down the stream. Pish! a pretty way to lose a schooner. I say, what drove us here?"

"Silence!" said the captain; "and I'll tell you."

"I wish you would," returned the other, in a mutinous tone.

"Revenge!" was the stern reply; "revenge and plunder!"

"Revenge sounds well enough," returned the former speaker, "and plunder better still. But on whom have we any cause of vengeance, fifty leagues from ocean? Who are we to find here, among mango trees and cockatoos? And as to plunder, there's nothing to be picked up but drift wood; and there's a chance—a raft floating down the river, and only a brace of niggers guarding it!" and the fellow laughed in derision.

"Peace," roared the captain, sternly. "Pass the ruulet; and at its third round, I'll tell you why we came."

"Is Dutch courage required to-night, captain, that we must be drunk, or half-seas over, before you tell us what brought us here?"

"By Heaven! Juan, you will drive me further than I wish," and the captain laid his hand upon a pistol.

"Hold! hold!" exclaimed half-a-dozen voices; "no more of that to-night. No use in mincing matters; the schooner's sunk, and what are we to do?—keep here, and rob fishing canoes, as we did to-night, to furnish out a rascally existence? or seek the bush at once, and band ourselves with nigger runaways? Captain, it won't do."

"Hear me, men," exclaimed the captain, passionately. "'Tis true the vessel's gone: well, that's no fault of mine; but for the plan—revenge and plunder. Don't they sound well together?"

"Ay; let's hear it," said a rover.

"You all remember Ramirez?"

"Ay, ay," was generally responded.

"You thought him—"

An outbreak from the band prevented the captain from finishing the sentence.

"Ramirez," said the man whose face was ensconced in hair, "was the best commander that I—and I'm twelve years in the free trade—ever sailed under; ay, or ever will."

"In action, cool as a cucumber," rejoined a second.

"And," added a third, "in real danger, fierce as a wild cat; and with all his wits about him, too."

"Night nor day, I never saw him disguised in liquor," observed another, who was so particularly drunk, that he could barely articulate.

"You might trust him with uncounted gold—"

"And to his ship's company," added a sixth, winding up the eulogium, "he was true as needle to the north."

"Well, comrades," said the captain, moodily, "I'll allow that Ramirez was a good commander, an able seaman, stout leader, capital hand at a pinch, slept always with his starboard eye open; but he was—" and he paused.

"What?" cried a dozen voices.

"The falsest villain that ever betrayed a gallant crew!"

"No, no, no," was repeated by a dozen voices.

"I'll give you proof positive. He disappeared; but none of you could tell, or even guess, the wealth he carried with him. None suspected him; for all of you thought him a nonesuch. Well, what

was he all along? why, nothing more nor less than a hired spy. He gave the cruisers secret information of all that passed in every port we entered as free traders; and, in return, they never looked after him. Well, he got blown on the coast at last; and, when he could no longer carry on the game, he left the Flambeau to her fate. And how long after he had deserted ship and comrades was it before the British bull-dogs were let loose upon the sweetest schooner that ever swam the sea?"

"Ay, ay, captain," observed a rover, "that's all well enough; but recollect, that in the time of Captain Ramirez, men never walked the plank; nor did he, like a common ass, make free with English bunting, and put his hand upon the lion's mane. If a doubtful sail appeared in the gulph, why an English merchantman would run under the Flambeau's stern for protection; and, there's no use talking, Captain Ramirez stood so high with every skipper in these seas, that, d—n me, were he sentenced to be hanged, I think they'd hardly get men enough in a whole ship's company, to man the fall that sent him to the fore-yard. No, no; he never intentionally left the schooner. Poor dear soul!—he was murdered, and that's my opinion."

A dozen voices answered in a willing affirmative.

"Dolts and madmen!" shouted the captain; "he lives! ay, lives! Why stare ye thus, like fools?—Ay, lives in luxury and splendour; the richest planter in the province; the highest among the high; and all bought by what?—falsehood, and deep, deep treachery!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed the rovers.

"True, by the light of heaven!" returned the pirate chief. "He lives; ay, and is sleeping at his ease—wealth around him, and beauty in his arms—not half a league from the very spot I stand on."

"Captain Ramirez alive, and wealthy, and within cannon-shot?"

"If Captain Ramirez be not, there's one that will answer just as well, although he has dropped a former title, and taken the plainer one of Hartley."

"Come, captain, no riddles, if you please; we're plain seamen, and can only understand a plain story. If Ramirez is alive, and as you have described him, why, all you said against him must be true. Men neither come back from the grave, nor do they pick up doubloons in the woods, like hiccory nuts. If your tale be true, Ramirez is a traitor and a rogue; and, were there no other hand to do the job, I'd row a hundred leagues for the mere pleasure of cutting the throat of a scoundrel that sold us all."

"Juan, the right pluck is in thee still," returned Gaspard, with a smile of demoniac satisfaction. "What say ye all, lads?"

"Why, that he who wouldn't do as honest Juan says, has no manhood in him," responded a rover.

"Come, pass the good liquor round, and then for booty and revenge!"

From hand to hand the runlet passed, until the contents were drained to the very bottom. Maddened by ardent spirits, burning under the belief of having been betrayed, and excited by the hope of plunder, the ferocious band prepared for violence and bloodshed. Their arms were examined; the simple plan of attack explained by the

ruffian leader, who had already reconnoitred the dwelling of his intended victim; the boat was carefully drawn up, and hidden in the tall reeds which fringed the river's bank; water carried from the stream, and flung on the red embers of the fire; and, in Indian files, one after another, the ruffians took a narrow path cut through the tangled underwood, and followed their truculent commander.

Did no eye, save that which looks alike on innocence and guilt, observe them? Yes; the slave, whose canoe they had despoiled, directed by the fire, had traced the marauders, and, concealed in the thick brushwood, overheard their plans of murder. While making their final preparations, the negro glided through the coppice like a snake, and ran, at headlong speed, to alarm his devoted master. He reached the dwelling safely; but it was to alarm, and not to save!

The planter's country-house was wrapped in night and silence; the lights were extinguished, and the inmates buried in deep repose. From the lord to the serf, all felt the influence of that peaceful hour; and in the woods where he had toiled all day, the negro slept in his wigwam as soundly as his master; for, as the Indian adage goes, "The lightest heart has ever the heaviest eye-lid."

At that still hour, a dusky figure stole underneath the verandah of the planter's house, and sought a window in the rear. Twice, he tapped gently on the lattice; the third time, the sound was sharper—and it was heard and answered. To a person within, the negro communicated some intelligence, and the next moment a door was cautiously unclosed, and the late visitor admitted.

Whatever the tidings were, which this untimely messenger had brought, they seemed to have created an unusual sensation. From window to window lights flashed rapidly, and human figures flitted to and fro. But the alarm as speedily subsided; the lights disappeared; and darkness, denser apparently than before, returned; and the ominous silence that succeeded, rendered the recent hurry the more remarkable.

The interval of this singular repose was brief—it was but a treacherous calm. Armed men issued quietly from the cover of the woods, and, halting at a little distance from the sleeping house, they held a rapid consultation. Presently, dividing into two bodies, they approached the planter's dwelling. One moved stealthily to the front—the other as cautiously stole round the rear. The marauders calculated upon effecting a surprise, but the negro fisherman had warned the inmates of their danger; and on the first attempt to force an entrance, a double discharge from a lower-lattice stretched two of the assailants on the ground; while, in the rear, the attack proved equally disastrous.

It might have been expected, that, astounded at a sanguinary and unexpected repulse, the villains would have abandoned their design. But, desperate men, they brought with them desperate means, and, at the order of their leader, they flung lighted combustibles into the thatch which covered the edifice; and retiring for shelter behind the nearest trees, maintained a fusilade upon the house, and waited with demoniac patience the rapid progress of fire—their terrible auxiliary.

In a few minutes the roof was in a blaze, and the upper story, constructed entirely of wood-work, caught fire. Coolly the murderous ruffians watched the flames as they enveloped the edifice from front to rear; and assured of the result, they watched the crisis with fiendish pleasure.

It came:—all—above, below—the building was sheeted in fire. Suddenly, the negroes broke out from the blazing pile, and rushed towards the woods for safety. Two male slaves were instantly shot down—the others effected their escape.

“Now, lads, look sharp,” roared the demon leader of the gang; “the traitor will bolt immediately. No mercy for Ramirez!”

The words were scarcely uttered before a white man, only half-dressed, and bearing a female in his arms, sprang from the burning ruins, followed closely by a tall powerful negro, with a bundle grasped by his left arm, and a cutlass flaming in his right hand. The leader dashed past the trees where the murderers had taken their stand, at headlong speed, apparently as little embarrassed with the female form he carried, as if his burden were an infant. The negro kept directly in his master’s rear. A yell arose: half a dozen shots were discharged—but not a bullet found its mark.

“By Heaven! the villain will escape us!” roared the pirate-captain, rushing from his concealment in pursuit. Another of the gang had already crossed his path, but the fugitive discharged a pistol, and shot the assailant dead. The occurrence caused a moment’s delay. It was a fatal one: for Gaspard overtook his intended victim, and struck fiercely at him with a dagger. It missed the heart it aimed at, but found a sheath in the bosom of her whom the fugitive supported; and before a surer blow could be delivered, with one trenchant sweep the negro’s cutlass cleft the villain to the chin. The wood was gained—the fugitive believing that he held a living body in his arms! Alas! that precious burden was only a breathless corpse!

That was the last effort of the murderers. A gang of wood-cutters, alarmed by the blaze and firing, had hurried to their master’s domicile, while the murderous crew, eight in number, retreated to the woods; and for that time, darkness and a tangled copse concealed them.

They tell me that for an hour I gazed on the loved one in stupid indifference. I can believe it well: the blow was stunning. Not a slave ventured to approach me; for even their dull natures respected the bereavement this terrible calamity had brought on. Gradually Dominique placed himself before me, holding my infant in his right arm; for the left that clasped it when we broke from the burning pile, had been wounded by a random bullet.

“What would you, Dominique?” I inquired, in tones of deep despondency.

“Vengeance!” exclaimed the negro, in a voice of thunder. “Leave to woman’s hands the duties owing to the dead, and let us together hunt down the murderers. Vengeance! vengeance!”

The voice of my faithful follower changed at once the current of

my thoughts. I raised myself, looked proudly round, and called for food and wine. I ate bread—'twas a form; I drank wine—that was reality. I seized my rifle, dagger, pistols; Dominique armed the hardiest of my slaves; and, before the sun rose, we set out to visit blood for blood.

I was absent for three days and nights. I started warmly on the death-chase, and never was one more keenly followed up. I seemed insensible to fatigue—heat, hunger, thirst were disregarded. Of five-and-twenty vigorous axe-men, accustomed from infancy to forest-life, by the second evening eighteen were worn out, and unable to proceed; and yet I and Dominique—and he with a wounded arm—pursued the traces of the murderers with unabated ardour. I ate not, slept not, but drank brandy and shed blood. Seven of the eight had already perished; but that eighth one lived; and without that ruffian's life, my vengeance was incomplete. On we went once more, and the human hunt continued.

We found the wretch, at last, stretched beneath a tree—worn down, impassive, unresisting. I drew a pistol from my belt—looked at the doomed one for a moment. Three had fallen, resisting, by my hand: as many more by Dominique's.

"No," I said, as I replaced the weapon; "desire the slaves to string that felon up; thou and I, my friend, cannot stoop to be his executioners!"

I returned—witnessed the obsequies of my wife. That scene was too much for one already excited by maddening influences; my senses wandered—and memory deserts me.

A long, long gloomy epoch follows—ten years; long, long years! Mine was a melancholy state of being; for they neither could call me mad, nor yet pronounce me sane. My child was placed in a neighbouring convent: she grew—was happy; and became, as the nuns averred, the favourite *pensionnaire* of a dozen. I saw her seldom; for when I did, the striking likeness between her and her angel-mother for days unsettled reason. Meanwhile, worldly events went prosperously; and, Heaven knows, without the slightest wish to increase possessions already more than enough to defray every desire and want, still wealth flowed in upon me; and, in the list of rich Chilian proprietors, my name stood high.

There was one period of the year when my reason was invariably disturbed; the anniversary of Camilla's murder. The whole of the events attendant on that frightful tragedy came back to memory; and the scene was vivid to the imagination as if it were really being again enacted. All was before my eyes—darkness and fire; slaughter; the death chase; the funeral; and then insanity closed the fearful drama. The domestics were always prepared for this awful season; and Dominique remained with me like my shadow.

It chanced that a week before this sad anniversary, an English botanist passed a country-house, where I was for the time residing, and, stopping with me as a guest, he observed the gloom and depression of my manner. Having delicately inquired the cause, and made himself master of all the circumstances connected with the appalling visitation

which I expected in another week, he asked permission to remain. This was granted,—and, directing his attention to the peculiar symptoms of my disease, he at once pronounced it curable. This bold assertion startled my household, who, for ten years, had witnessed the annual return of my insanity, and always accompanied, as it was, with unabated violence. But he seemed confident; and I felt a secret assurance that, through the instrumentality of this man's skill, Heaven's mercy was about to be extended to me, and that blest gift, reason, would be eventually restored. I placed myself, and all upon my establishment, during the approaching period of my mental aberration, under the absolute direction of the stranger.

I was not deceived; and the result proved that I had calculated soundly on the ability and experience of my unknown visitor. Dreading that it might increase my excitement, the Chilleno doctors had inhibited the visits of my child. The Englishman adopted a different course: Isidora was sent for from the convent, and she "ministered to a mind diseased;" and the soft influence of filial love, like the melody of David's harp, effected a gentle cure, and soothed into tranquillity a spirit for so many years perturbed.

By the stranger's advice, I determined to quit the country, and return to my native land. I disposed of my estates, transmitted my fortune safely to England; and, with a dearer treasure far, my gentle Isidora, sailed for the island-home of freedom, and landed on my native shores, after having been a wanderer and alien for one-and-twenty years.

A long absence had rendered European manners strange; and, for a time, I felt myself unequal to the novel task which a return to England had imposed, that of mingling in society. For two years, Isidora and I wandered through every portion of the British islands, for the Continent was then closed against the traveller. Time, change of scene, and the constant presence of my darling child, effected a mental cure, and verified the assurances given me in South America by my able physician, that my recovery would be permanent. I wished at least to have the semblance of a home, although the very name recalled my past calamities; and, in order that I might fall back, when wearied with the world, on a retirement congenial to my fancy, I purchased that wild retreat in which our first acquaintance was so singularly formed. Thither, I have occasionally retired to enjoy solitude and my child's society. Ours, indeed, seemed stolen visits on the world,—and we both felt that calm pleasure only to be estimated by those who have lived for each other and alone, when, like wild birds to their nest, we sought and found the peaceful seclusion which our mountain home afforded.

Your visit, Hector, rekindled feelings long suppressed, and spurred me to exertions that, probably, under other circumstances, I should have wanted nerve to undertake. Strange as it may appear, for several years I watched your progress into manhood. The first impressions when we met were favourable; and a more extended acquaintance has corroborated them. For your sake, and for Isidora's, I have sacrificed my own yearnings after solitude, and come upon the stage

of life anew. My existence is unknown; my errand unsuspected. Should I succeed in my present objects, a noble inheritance shall be restored to the rightful heir; and should I fail, I have a consolation left, in feeling that I have fortune's gifts at my disposal, and amply sufficient, so far as wealth can confer peace and independence, to ensure both to my children. You mark the term—Can he to whom Isidora's happiness is to be confided be aught but a son to me?"

The record of an eventful life was ended; and I bound those documents together, the perusal of which had occasioned an intense but painful interest. It was long past midnight. At day-light it was necessary that I should be stirring; and I retired to bed, to snatch a few hours of repose.

I was still asleep when a gentle touch upon the shoulder dispelled my uneasy slumbers, and the faithful follower of my uncle's fortunes told me it was time to dress, and that the camarados of my intended voyage and campaigns were afoot, and waiting in the court-yard. Indeed, the ratcatcher's presence was intimated already—for in perfect indifference as to what might be the complexion of our future fortune, Shemus Rhua was croning an Irish ditty. I dressed by candle-light, descended to the eating-room, and there found "mine honoured uncle." Alas—Isidora was not there to say farewell. She slept, poor girl, little dreaming that we had already parted; and that many a month and stormy passage in a soldier's life must wear away, before I should be permitted to return and claim her plighted hand.

"Hector," said my uncle, with a sigh, as he received the papers he had entrusted to me, and immediately committed them to the fire, "you are now in full possession of every secret of my life. 'Tis done—the disclosure is made—and I have nothing either to communicate or conceal. No more of this; the clock chimes,—and our hour of parting hurries on. I am going to deprive you of a follower, provided you can dispense with the services of Captain Macgreal, and that he is willing to transfer his allegiance to me. Pray step down; and if the ratcatcher has no particular objection, let me have his valuable assistance till you return. 'Strange fortunes produce strange bedfellows,' a proverb says; and singular positions require as singular agents. Odd as it may appear, in the tangled web I shall have to unravel, I may be beholden for success to that wild woman who seems devoted to your interests, or this wandering personage, who appears equally attached, and willing to follow where you lead."

A brief communication with Shemus Rhua effected my uncle's wish; and the ratcatcher placed his services at the disposal of Mr. Hartley. Sooth to say, the captain's previous experience of a martial life had left no craving in his breast after "the bubble reputation."

Nothing could be more picturesque than the departure of the fleet from Portsmouth; and years afterwards, memory recalled the poet's description, and I could have imagined that Byron had been a fellow-passenger. The morning was brilliant. The signal gun was answered. All were immediately under way.

“ I ween, a full fair sight ;
 When the fresh breeze was fair as breeze can be,
 The white sail set, the gallant frigate tight,
 Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,
 The glorious main expanding o'er the bow,
 The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,
 The dullest sailor wearing bravely now,
 So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow.”

Shall I confess the truth? Never did an Irish cadet start for a scene of glory with less enthusiasm. In the retirement of my father's house, every newspaper that arrived had brought with it fresh details of British victory,—and I longed, like another Norval, “to follow to the field” any honest gentleman who would have taken the trouble to show me the shortest way of getting a quietus—miscalled, the road to glory. A few months had, however, wrought a marvellous alteration; and but for the shame of the thing, I verily believe, I should have exchanged with some Captain Bailey of the day, and, without requiring “the difference,” forsworn the trade of arms, excepting the bloodless duty appertaining to “country quarters.”

Now I was regularly committed. The dullest spirit would catch a noble impulse. The fields of Roliça, Busaco, and Salamanca rose in glorious recollection; another feeling succeeded the regret attendant on a first separation from the object of a first love; and, before the second sun went down, I should have scorned an ignoble return, until “with war's red honours on my crest,” I could have proudly claimed my affianced one. Speedily the true mercurial temperament of the Green island returned. I joined the reckless merriment of all around: we drank, and laughed, and sang. Nothing could be more prosperous than the voyage.

“ On, on the vessel flies; the land is gone,
 And winds are rude in Biscay's sleepless bay.
 Four days are sped, but with the fifth, anon,
 New shores descried make every bosom gay;
 And Cintra's mountain greets them on their way;
 And Tagus dashing onward to the deep,
 His fabled golden tribute bent to pay;
 And soon on board the Lusian pilots leap,
 And steer 'twixt fertile shores where yet few rustics reap.”

On the sixth evening we disembarked at Belem; and with my foster brother, Mark Antony O'Toole, I sprang from the frigate's launch, and, for the first time, set foot on that scene of British glory—the Peninsula.

CHAPTER XXVII.

* JOIN THE CANTONMENTS OF THE ALLIED ARMY—LIEUTENANT CROTTY'S INTERVIEW WITH LORD WELLINGTON.

" *Sir James.* Surely you exaggerate a little?

Papillon. Yes—yes, this interview will sink him.

Young Wilding. True to the letter, upon my honour."

* * * * *

Why he will tell you more lies in an hour than all the circulating libraries put together will publish in a year."

THE LIAR.

I HAD scarcely landed when I received the unwelcome intelligence that General —, to whose staff I had been appointed, had been wounded on the retreat from Burgos, and in consequence obliged to resign his command, and return to England invalided. I felt the disappointment severely—but as the corps that I had previously exchanged into was at Valencia, with the Anglo-Sicilian army there collected, much as I should have desired "to follow to the field" the victor of Salamanea, I determined to join my regiment without delay, and "flesh my maiden sword" the ensuing campaign, under the colours of the old and honourable Twenty-seventh. Ignorant of the route by which I could cross the country to the eastern coast of Spain, and anxious to see that gallant army under whose conquering banners I had anticipated a glorious opening to my career in arms, after a three days' sojourn in Lisbon, I left that city of filth and splendour in company with half a dozen officers *en route* to join their respective battalions—some, in return from leave—and others, like myself, to smell powder for the first time. A captain of an Irish regiment was of the party. He was a gay, honest-hearted, blundering countryman; and from the graphic sketches D'Arcy gave me on the road of all attached to the battalion I was about to join, from the junior Ensign of sixteen, to the old stiff-backed Colonel of sixty, I became so familiar with the corps, that I almost fancied at first sight I could have placed my hand on every head, and identified the individual—and, on the evening when we entered the encampment of the regiment, I felt perfectly at home, and entered the rude mess-room as much at ease, as if, after a temporary absence, I was merely returning to join some old acquaintances.

It was a memorable epoch in the military history of Britain, when, early in the second week of February, 1813, I found myself in the cantonments of the fourth division on the banks of the Agueda. Like all sublunary affairs, war has its season of repose; and those mighty masses of armed men, who but a few months before had stood in threatening array in presence of each other, were separated by mutual

consent to recover their losses and fatigues, and prepare for renewed exertions. Each had selected that portion of the country best adapted for obtaining supplies and reinforcements. The allied infantry were cantoned generally on the Agueda and Douro—with their cavalry in the valley of the Mondego, and round Moncorbo. One Spanish corps passed the winter in Galicia, a second in Estremadura, and a third garrisoned Ciudad Rodrigo. Of the French armies, the head quarters of the northern was at Valladolid; the southern at Toledo; and those of the centre, including King Joseph and his guards, were established at Segovia. In military circumstances, the rival armies found themselves, at the end of the preceding autumn, in a position similar to that of men who have fought a battle in which neither have come off conqueror. Both had sustained enormous losses without countervailing advantages; and each required its casualties to be replaced, and its discipline restored. At the opening of the campaign, fortune went as heavily against the enemy, as it did against the allies at the close. From the 18th of July, when the French passed the Douro, until they recrossed it on the 30th, their loss might have been set down at fifteen thousand men, and the allies at about a third of that number. While, from the time when Lord Wellington broke ground before Burgos, until he halted on the banks of the Huebra, in retreat, chiefly from drunkenness and military irregularity, eight thousand of the allies were rendered *hors de combat*.

No wonder therefore that to both armies, winter presented a seasonable period of repose, and that both willingly accepted it. Nearly one third of his army were in hospital, and hence Lord Wellington deemed that rest for it was indispensable. Nor could his opponents avail themselves of this weakness, and continue active operations, for the French supplies were insecure, and their bases of operation disturbed by Partida bands, which were every where swarming on their flanks and in their rear. Indeed each army dreaded that the other would resume hostilities; and when a report prevailed that Soult, who was upon the Upper Tormes, meditated an invasion of Portugal by the valley of the Tagus, and Wellington had, accordingly, removed the boat bridges at Almarez and Arzobispo, the French, equally afraid that the allies might cross the river, destroyed all means of passage at other points which the English general had overlooked as unnecessary.

Such was the military position of the allies in the field—one that, abroad, rendered the question of ulterior success an uncertainty; while at home, the failure before Burgos renewed loud expressions of discontent, which the brilliant opening of the late campaign had partially subdued. England was divided into two great sections; one party advocating the necessity of continuing the Spanish war, and another decrying it as a ruinous experiment. What Salamanca had effected in establishing the policy of maintaining the struggle on the Peninsula, the retreat to the Agueda had undone; and the balance of public opinion respecting the expediency of abandoning the contest in Spain was restored. “The ministerial party had expected far too much, and consequently their disappointment was proportionate: the opposition had raised the wolf-cry until the country had ceased to dread it;

and they caught desperately at what proved a last pretext, to reiterate their denunciations, and abuse him who conducted, and those who planned the war. Ministers were denounced for continuing the contest, and for starving it—Lord Wellington both for inactivity and for rashness—for doing too little and too much”—for wasting time at Madrid, and for attempting a siege with means so inadequate, that nothing but an enormous expenditure of blood could possibly obtain success.

But to the clamour of party and the calumny of faction, he, since happily surnamed “The Iron Duke,” turned an indifferent ear; and the same proud feeling that on the heights of Guinaldo had sustained him, when a less assured courage might have faltered, enabled him now to regard the malice of political opponents with contempt; and, perfectly undisturbed, to direct the energies of a master-mind to the completion of those great means by which alone a great end could be accomplished. Profiting by past experience, the internal economy of the army underwent a sweeping reformation. Abuses were sought for, detected, and removed—every hospital was cleared of men who feigned illness to evade duty—and from every depot idlers were driven back to the columns they had abandoned. Supplies came liberally from England, proving the illimitable resources of the island-home of freedom; and the great captain of the age was thus enabled to organize the most splendid force that ever took the field—one, so perfect in every arm, as to warrant its constructor, years afterwards, when the greater number of those gallant spirits who had composed it were sleeping in the grave, to make the proud and proven boast—that “with that army which had crossed the Pyrenees, he could do any thing and go any where.” No wonder that brilliant era of his life is still recalled in cherished remembrance by the old Peninsular; and as, deed after deed, he details the conquering career of that matchless host, with which he crossed the Agueda to halt only on the banks of the Garonne, he may raise his head with military pride, and exclaim, “Pars fui!”

Of two hundred thousand men under the direct command of Lord Wellington, the Anglo-Portuguese, amounting nearly to seventy-five thousand bayonets and sabres, were the flower. From the first moment of the Peninsular contest, the British infantry had established its superiority; and now the cavalry and artillery were superb. Every thing required for field service had been skilfully provided. A fine pontoon train accompanied the army, and ambulances were provided for the accommodation of the sick and wounded. Other means to increase his comforts were also afforded to the soldier; and, for the first time, tents were supplied for shelter in the field, while the cumbrous camp-kettle was replaced with others of smaller size, and lighter material, as better adapted for all the purposes of campaigning.

During the suspension of active operations on both sides, and while the French and Allied armies were quiet in their respective cantonments, that restless enemy, the Partida bands, were busily employed. Longa, in the vicinity of Burgos, was actively engaged in harassing

the marauding parties of the enemy, interrupting their communications, and surprising their detached posts; while Mina, in Arragon and Navarre, carried on a desultory warfare with equal success. Another less celebrated but not less active leader was "the Friar," (El Frayle,) who, with a numerous band admirably organized, kept Valencia in confusion. Indeed, the Guerillas had now become as formidable in numbers as they had ever been audacious in their mode of warfare. No longer confining their operations to the cutting off of foraging parties and the intercep-tion of convoys, they fell upon strong detachments, and almost invariably with success; until at last no courier could pass the roads, nor even a battalion of seven hundred men move from one garrison to another, without the protection of an escort. Such was the military attitude of Spain when I joined the fourth division.

In a dilapidated farm-house I found my future companions in arms seated at a comfortable dinner, although a stranger looking mess room was never occupied by gentlemen of the sword. It had been the grand apartment of the dwelling of a farm proprietor; the house was generally in ruins, but this wing had been judiciously selected for the *symposia* of the gallant Twentieth, inasmuch as the roof was nearly weather-fast. The table was a collection of old doors placed upon temporary supporters; and as every member of the body politic furnished his own conveniency of sitting at "the board," the especial method of accomodation depended on the ability or fancy of the individual. Some, in superior luxury, had deposited their persons on a camp-stool, while others were contented with a block of wood, a basket, or a broken arm chest. The table appointments were not unique, for every person found his own; and nothing was held in common property save the viands and the wine.

But a lighter-hearted community than the gallant Twentieth could not have been discovered. The hardships of the retreat to the Huebra were still in vivid recollection; and now, anticipating similar privations, but attended by more glorious results, the present was their only care; and over the head of the master of the revels the apposite motto "*Carpe diem!*" had been inscribed with a burnt cork. Heralded by my loving countryman, I was introduced in terms of commendation that brought the colour to my cheek. I received, consequently, a warm and soldierly reception; and before I retired to a shake-down offered me for the night in the tent of the junior major, I called every man by an abbreviated name—or, at least, as many of the batch as a memory, slightly obfuscated, could manage to remember.

"Upon my sowl!" observed a short and snub-nosed captain, with an accent redolent of "the far west," "that's dacent wine; and the divil that brings it should be encouraged.—Here's your health, O'Halloran; and in return you'll call me Philbin, if you plase;—and now that the owld colonel's gone, may I live to see you senior captain of the regiment, and then I know who'll command it,—and that's myself."

To this delicate and disinterested compliment, I replied in suitable terms.

"And what the devil keeps Peter Crotty?" inquired a second.

Ignorant of the occasion of his absence, I inquired the causes from my quondam friend, and learned that the absent gentleman had gone up to head-quarters with certain regimental returns; and that his reappearance had been eagerly expected, to ascertain what reliance might be placed in the rumoured intelligence that an earlier commencement of field operations might be looked for than the season could be supposed to warrant. Peter Crotty, however, did not appear; an hour passed—the said Peter was cursed and envied according to the mood of the individual; it being universally resolved, that he, Peter, had popped into some hospitable cantonment, and got drunk for the honour of the service.

"Lord! what a congregation of lies Peter will have to get rid of in the morning," said the captain of grenadiers.

"I beg your pardon—he'll deliver himself of the cargo in a shorter time—for that's his cough, for a hundred!" responded a light-bob.

The lieutenant's ear was correct; for in a few moments the denounced absentee modestly presented himself.

Had our meeting been in Kamschatka, I should have claimed Peter for a countryman at first sight. He was a stout, well-timbered fellow, of soldierly setting-up, and, as far as appearance went, perfectly content with himself, and at peace with all the world. To say that he was drunk, would not be true; to assert him sober, might have raised a controverted question: but leave it to the most charitable, and they would freely admit that Peter Crotty, in Connemara parlance, "had been looking at somebody drinking."

"Arrah, astore!" observed Mr. Philbin; "may the divil be your welcome! Here have we been waiting these six hours, expecting a little news—while you, no doubt, have visited every wine-house between our quarters and Frenada. By this book!" and Captain Philbin raised a horn drinking-vessel devoutly to his lips, "I've a mind to report you in the morning to Sir Lowry."

"Never listen to him, Peter," observed the grenadier; "you must be thirsty after your long ride.—Put that down your neck first, give us some fresh intelligence afterwards, and stick as close to the truth as you can conveniently." And he presented to the new-comer a non-descript tin vessel, filled to the brim with wine.

Peter Crotty had really been thirsty; for he turned down the cup to the very bottom.

"Arrah—what kept ye, Peter?" inquired the first speaker.

"What kept me?—Why, business, and Lord Wellington."

"Nonsense!"—

"It's true. Divil a one of me could get away, good nor bad?"

"Any thing wrong in the returns?" inquired the grenadier.

"Oh, sorra thing; for he gave us the height of applause."

"Did the aide-de-camp tell you so?" asked a listener.

"What aide-de-camp?—Don't I tell ye it was himself?" observed Lieutenant Crotty.

"Himself? Arrah—the divil an eye ye laid upon him, unless

ye happened to see him 'lighting off his horse," observed Captain Philbin.

Peter Crotty answered this remark by a look of silent contempt.

"He's in for it," whispered my next neighbour, softly. "I'll back him for a regular rigmarole of lies against any man in the Peninsula. But we must humour him.—Well, Peter, and was his lordship commonly civil?"

"A pleasanter-spoken man I never was in company with," was the reply.

"And he did seem pleased with our morning-state?—The aide-de-camp told you that?"

"Not at all; it was his lordship. 'Crotty,' says he—"

"Oh!" whispered my friend the major, "that's conclusive.—All's right when Peter uses the present personal."

"Ay! 'Crotty,' says he,"—observed another, "But you have had a long ride; so before you begin a longer story, take the cobwebs from your throat."

Again the tin cup was replenished—once more Peter Crotty refreshed himself; and then to a very attentive auditory he commenced the detail of a recent interview with the "great captain."

"Well, you see, I only got the returns from the orderly room at twelve; and as I had ten miles to ride, off the mule and myself jogged immediately. Nothing particular occurred on the road, barrin' I met Soames and Hamilton, and—"

"Oh, d—in Soames and Hamilton!" exclaimed two or three voices together.

"Well, we had a drop of wine, and on I pushed without delay,—except half an hour with the Eighty-eighth; and we had a sort of a lunch of an over-driven bullock, the rump-steak,—by-the-by, it was cut off the fore-part of the shoulder, and as hard as the divil's horn.—We had a throw of rum-and-water afterwards—"

"For *one*, read *three*," observed another of the audience....

"Well, I reached Frenada—rode up to the door—gave my mule to an orderly—stept into the ante-room, and handed in the returns—"

"And, as the evening was wet, I suppose they allowed you to sit down," said Captain Philbin.

Lieutenant Crotty turned a wrathful look upon the speaker; and then continued his narrative.

"The door was open, and every word that passed within I heard plainly."

"'Arrah! what's that?' said his lordship.

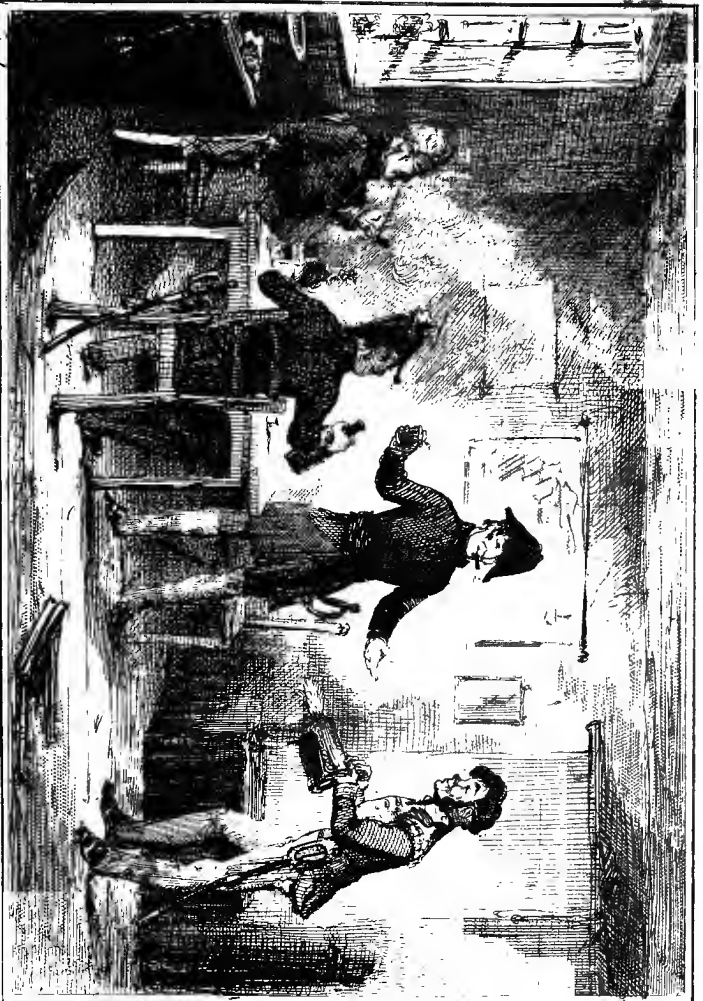
"'The morning-strength of the Twentieth, my lord,' replied the aide-de-camp.

"'Divil welcome the bearer!' says the general. 'Isn't it cruel hard, that a man can't have a little pace and quiet, without this eternal botheration? Tell the fellow to come to the door; and ask him who he is.'

"Be gogstay! I made bold to answer, 'It's me, Lieutenant Crotty—plase your lordship.'"

"'Crotty!—Crotty!' says he; 'Is it Peter Crotty, of the Twentieth?'"

Sealed



“ ‘The same, my lord,’ says I.

“ ‘Arrah, then,’ replies the general, ‘I wouldn’t for a thirty-shillin’-note ye had gone home, without my seeing ye. Peter, step in—and be off, and shut the door after ye,’ says he to the aide-de-camp; ‘I’m not at home, if any one inquires this evening. And now, Crotty dear, draw a camp-stool, and bring your heels to an anchor.—Ned,’ says he, for they called one another by their names; ‘hand Mr. Crotty a glass. And now, Peter, raise y’er elbow a trifle, and fill fair. Is there any news astir?’

“ ‘Nothing,’ says I, ‘unless your lordship has it.’

“ ‘Had ye anything to ate on the road?’ says he. ‘We could get ye a broiled bone in half a jiffy.’

“ ‘Too much trouble,’ says I, ‘my lord; I took a bit with the Eighty-eighth, as I was coming along.’

“ ‘Oh! bad luck to the same lads, Sir Thomas Picton,’ says he. ‘They’re makin’ an ould man of me, the thieves! The divil himself—Christ pardon us! wouldn’t keep them tolerably reg’lar.’

“ ‘He didn’t say ‘Christ pardon us!’ Peter.”

“ ‘He did,’ returned the narrator. ‘Do you think that he stopped to pick and choose his words in the company of friends?’

“ ‘Well, go on Peter.’

“ ‘All this time, Sir Thomas, and General Packenham, never said a word; but, like a priest after confessions, they lathered away at the drinking.’

“ ‘Did you hear lately from y’er family?’ says his lordship to me.

“ ‘Arrah! the devil a scrape I had from Ireland these nine months,’ says I.

“ ‘I see what y’er lookin’ at,’ says he, as he caught me throwin’ a sheep’s eye over at a card-table in the corner—‘are you for a rubber, Peter, to help us to put in the evening?’

“ ‘Feaks! my lord,’ says I, ‘I’d be afeard, as I’m rather out of practice.’

“ ‘Make it five an’ ten,’ says he; ‘y’er the divil at that, no doubt, as the boy said his mother was at the praying. Come, Ned,’ says he, ‘down with y’er dust, and we’ll cut for who’ll have Peter Crotty; and by my soul, up comes a red knave. ‘By the powers of pewter, Peter, ye’er my own!’ says my lord.

“ ‘Oh, then, y’er welcome to him, if he was better,’ says Sir Thomas. And he seemed cross at losing me.

“ ‘Well—my Lord desired Ned Packenham to make us a tumbler each—and down we sit;—myself as stiff as a new-made quarter-master, although, if God’s truth was told, I hadn’t a skurriek in my pocket to mark the game with.

“ ‘Here’s luck!’ says his lordship, finishin’ his tumbler at a pull. I forgot to mention, that Sir Thomas stuck to the sherry, and Ned Packenham helped himself to a sketch of brandy in the bottom of a glass, and took it nate, without water.

“ ‘Well, I cuts a black deuce, so the dale was mine; and up turns the ace of hearts afterwards. His lordship winked his left eye when he saw it. ‘Be the powers,’ says his lordship, ‘your mother must have

been in the yeomen, or she'd never have had such a son! Many a Sunday ye play'd cards upon a tombstone instead of goin' to mass; God forgive ye for the same, Peter!"

"Colonel Burn wants Lieutenant Crotty immediately," said a messenger from the door.

"Oh, holy Mary!—I forgot to report myself!—and, may be, I won't catch it from the ould lad?" exclaimed the partner of Lord Wellington, as he sprang from the barrel he was seated on, and bounded after the messenger in desperate alarm, while a roar of laughter accompanied his hurried exit. A *doch an durris*, for we were all Scotch and Irish intermixed, passed from hand to hand, for the departure of Lieutenant Crotty appeared to be the signal for a general dispersion; and I accompanied the hospitable friend who had offered me a sleeping corner in his tent.

Presently, the cantonments became quiet, and light after light disappeared. Within musket range, five thousand men were sleeping, and yet not a sound was heard but the measured step of "the relief" as it went its rounds, or the loud challenge of the sentry, answered by a whispered countersign. To me, this seemed the opening of a new epoch in my life. I now felt myself a soldier. The camp was to be my future home; and, stretched around me, lay the victors of many a field, with whom, side by side, I was to view, for the first time, the flash of "red artillery." My couch was fern, my pillow a bullock trunk; and, wrapped in my cloak, I sought the balmy visit of the drowsy god, but sought it vainly. A feverish excitement had banished sleep, and I could not but envy the profoundness of my companion's repose, whose heavy breathing, a minute after the brief petition of "God bless us!" had passed his lips, told how sound were his slumbers. I dozed at last—dreamed of siege and battle-field, while gentler thoughts floated at times among these martial visions, and love and war were singularly blended. Day dawned, a bugle sounded, the drums beat the *réveillée*, and instantly the camp, hitherto so silent, was all life and bustle, like an alarmed bee-hive, as the startled soldiery issued from tent and hovel. In a few minutes each regiment formed on its respective parade; and the fourth division was reported under arms, as a horseman, attended by an orderly dragoon, galloped along the front of the cantonment. On reaching the flank of the line, he reined up his horse and rode slowly past, directing an eagle glance at every regiment that composed the division. The drums rolled, arms were presented, and I had no difficulty in recognising in the plainly-dressed stranger, one who had already divided the attention of the world with the great Napoleon—the victor of Assaye—the hero of Salamanca—Lord Wellington!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A SPANISH INN—THE EMPECINADO—AND A SURPRISE.

“ True courage grows in proportion to the increase of danger.”

* * * * *

“ This arm shall make a corpse of him who hesitates when danger calls, or retreats when it presses.”—THE ROBBERS.

HAVING brought two or three letters of introduction to some veteran soldiers who served with my father in the Low Countries, the delivery of each ensured me a hospitable welcome at their respective cantonments. A month had nearly been consumed in rambling visits, when it was officially intimated, that as the armies were preparing for active operations, the presence of every officer would be expected at the head-quarters of his regiment. With deep regret I made all arrangements for a journey to Valencia; and having procured mules and a guide to secure the transport of the persons and property of my foster-brother and myself, I set out at dawn of day, on the 7th of March, to pass through Toledo and Cuenca, and reach the head-quarters of the Anglo-Sicilian army, to which my regiment was attached.

The route lay between the French outposts on one side, and a hilly country on the other, infested by Partida bands; and, sooth to say, it would have been difficult to decide on which hand lay the greater danger. From the French scouting-parties it would be desirable to preserve a respectful distance; and for Guerilla civility, we should be mainly indebted to the protection afforded by a British uniform.

As the head-quarters of the south were established at Toledo, the enemy's posts were extended over the country in front of that city, to keep open the communications, and enable their foragers to bring in any supplies they could obtain. Hence, these roads were rendered dangerous by the constant visits of French pickets and marauders; and, by the advice of our friend the muleteer, we leaned towards the mountains on our right, after we had crossed the Ibor by an unguarded ford below the Hospital del Obispo.

From the moment that we cleared the cantonments of the allies, our route assumed a dangerous character that gave it an additional interest. It ran through a debatable land, subject alike to flying visits from the allied cavalry, French scouting parties, and guerillas; while, here and there, a few disbanded men, of every country and calling, were occasionally encountered, who stopped the wayfarer, be he Trojan or Tyrian, with a lofty-minded impartiality worthy of the school and spirit of Jack

Sheppard, easing him of life and purse together, without any impertinent inquiry of, "Under which king, Bezonian?" In plain English, from robbers of high and low degree, the routes connecting Estremadura with Valencia were rendered almost impassable; and it was nearly a toss-up to the traveller, whether the person who called "Stand and deliver," was brigand, forager, or partida.

Though the roads were heavy and the rivers swollen, yet, as the weather was remarkably fine, for a few days the fosterer and I roughed it pretty comfortably. It was a new passage in the life of both—and full of youthful vigour, and eager for adventure, we got on gallantly.

On the fifth evening we reached a little hamlet pleasantly situated on the river Sedana. Here, the muleteer had several acquaintances, and the owner of the posada was his cousin. Our journey that day had been unusually long; and, therefore, the intelligence that a good supper and snug shake-down awaited us on our arrival at Villa Mora, was particularly gratifying. As we wound down the mountains, the sun set, the vesper-bell was heard, and the village lights sparkled through the haze of evening. We urged our mules forward to gain the halting-place, as the sky, for the last hour, had presented certain appearances, which the guide apprised us were always considered to be forerunners of a tempest.

We passed through the village street and alighted at the door of the posada, where we were hospitably received, and inducted to a large and lofty apartment, which answered the double purpose of kitchen and parlour. Fuel was added to the fire, and due preparations made for further entertainment. As the guide had predicted, the night became wild and wet; and, accounting ourselves to be most fortunate travellers in gaining our shelter before the storm burst, we took a position on a settle where we could enjoy the comfort of a blazing wood-fire; and, what was equally agreeable to hungry wayfarers, personally inspect culinary operations while supper was in progress.

An hour passed—the table was spread—and the muleteer, having stabled his long-eared charge, entered the kitchen, and seated himself at the foot of the board. The host deposited a huge leathern bottle in the centre of the table, which, as he avouched, contained wine of exquisite vintage, and the meal was about to commence, when a trampling of horses' feet was heard without, and the landlord rose hastily, and, with every appearance of alarm, peeped suspiciously from the casement.

"Three travellers," he exclaimed, "by San Marco. The Virgin be praised; I feared some of those French robbers had returned once more, and that we should be plundered by them for the hundredth time."

I rose and looked out, but it was too dark to discover who the late visitors might be. One seemed superior to the others; for he flung the bridle of his horse to a companion with an air of authority, and quitting the court-yard, entered the kitchen of the posada.

He was evidently a gentleman of little ceremony; for he stalked

direct to the fire—threw his sombrero carelessly to the attendant—desired the landlord to hang up his cloak to dry—unbuckled a belt, to which a long toledo was suspended—deposited a carbine and brace of pistols on a bench—and then took a seat at the head of the table, with as much indifference as if he had been the host himself.

When disencumbered of hat and cloak, the very singular air and figure of the stranger fastened my attention. His face would have puzzled Lavater—it was one that you could not look upon without a nameless feeling of suspicion and alarm, and yet, take each alone, and the features were positively handsome. Hair, eyes, moustache and beard, were black as the raven's wing; and the complexion, dark as a gypsy's. The face was well-proportioned—the teeth white and regular—I never looked on an eye more lustrous, searching, and intelligent; and the forehead was nobly expanded. But the *ensemble* was the worst. It bespoke a stern determination, close akin to ferocity; and betrayed a disposition, stern of purpose—ardent in regard—immitigable in vengeance.

The stranger's figure was athletic and commanding—sufficiently substantial for any feat of strength, and yet not too cumbrous in its proportions for light and active exercise. His under dress was plain. He wore a close green jacket and pantaloons, with tawny boots and a buff waist-belt, in which a weapon, like a highland dirk with a buck's-horn handle, was secured. Such was the exterior of our new companion.

While I examined the stranger with deep attention, a hurried look, on his part, round the table, appeared to satisfy his curiosity touching the company to whom he had introduced himself. His assumption of superiority was at once apparent; and, with the easiest manner imaginable, he usurped a regular dictatorship of the *venta*. Raising the drinking-vessel that stood beside his platter, he signalled the landlord to fill it from the goat-skin, and at one strong draught emptied it to the bottom, and indulged, afterwards, in observations more remarkable for candour than compliment, touching the cellars of the *posada*.

“Bah!” he exclaimed, contemptuously, “call ye that thin liquid, true *Carvallós*? Hast thou no conscience left thee, man? 'Tis well enough wherewithal to wash a supper down; but see, honest friend, that you find us something better for the evening. Ha!—this *podrida*'s passable; and these partridges seem tolerably roasted. On with more viands. Two friends of mine will presently be here. They have good appetites; have ridden twenty leagues, and fasted as many hours. Need I say more?”

Whoever the stranger was, his orders were not disregarded. The *maritornes* of the *venta* renewed her culinary labours; and the host voluntarily departed to see that the horses of the late guests had been properly accommodated, and make researches in his wine-stores, afterwards, to try whether a flask more congenial to the taste of the dark stranger might not be procurable. The latter, towards myself and foster-brother, evinced from the first, decided symptoms of civility; and among us three there appeared to be a friendly rivalry as to which of us should hold out longest at the *podrida*. Were the hostleries in the Peninsula frequently obnoxious to such visitors as we proved,

I verily believe that half the innkeepers in Spain would have been insolvent in a twelvemonth.

“Faith, gentlemen,” observed the stranger, “to judge by the performances of each other, we seem all in excellent health. No sauce for supper after all, like a twelve hours’ ride through the mountains. What, ho! Sir landlord! Wine—I say; and none of that valuable vintage you keep for muleteers and travelling friars, who pay their scores in aves and credos. What news, gentlemen?” he said, addressing us, “What is the English Lord about; and will he soon be on the move again?”

I assured him that on these points I was in blessed ignorance—told the simple tale of my journey to Valencia, and its causes—and, in return, asked his advice touching which route I should adopt, as the one most likely to be free from the French.

“You could not have made that inquiry from a better person,” he replied. “I know the mountain country indifferently well; and if you place yourself under my guidance, I shall ensure your safety to Cuenca. Thence, to Valencia, I shall be able to obtain a passport that the partidas will respect. Ha! I see my companions have scented supper in the stable. Sit down, José; thou and Velasquez have seen more than a single cork-tree since you heard the matin-bell.”

Following the example of their chief, the strangers deposited their mantles and sombreros on a bench. Both were well armed; and each placed his weapons immediately contiguous to his seat, like men who dread and guard against surprise.

I thought nothing could have exceeded our late attack upon mine host’s partridges and podrida. Pshaw!—as trenchermen, we could not hold a candle to the worthy twain, who now went to work as if they had been steadfastly resolved to clear out the posada of every edible it contained.

At last they, too, were forced to cry, “enough;” and we all united in a closer circle round the fire, while the wine-flask made a frequent circuit of the company. Dark and repulsive as the stranger’s countenance might be, as “sweetest nut has sourest rind,” he seemed at heart an excellent camarado. Indeed, we were no longer strangers. I spoke unreservedly—told him my objects and intentions—and, in return, obtained counsel and information. It struck me as being remarkable how very intimately the stranger seemed acquainted with the cantonments occupied by the allies, and the facility with which he named the strength and formation of every corps that occupied them. Touching the positions of the French armies, he was equally well informed—and, with the Spanish dispositions, perfectly familiar.

“Ho—ho!” he exclaimed, holding the empty flask between him and the lamp; “the bottle’s dry. More wine, there! Come, gentlemen,” he said, “I shall play host to-night. I felt it rather an uncertainty this morning, whether I should have found the posada tenanted by friends or enemies; but the doubt has been agreeably resolved.”

As he spoke, the landlord entered—placed a flask upon the table—and, having extracted the cork, was preparing to retire, when the

dark stranger motioned him to sit down; an invitation, which it appeared to me "mine host" would rather have declined than accepted.

"Fill thy horn," said the master of the revels; "I would ask a few questions. There are none present but those to whom a true Spaniard need never be afraid to unbosom himself. In that jacket lie honour and good faith." He pointed to my uniform. "And for my friends, I will be their security."

I never, in my life, saw a host less flattered with a guest's civility. He took a seat—filled a cup—drank our good health—and appeared excessively uncomfortable.

"Your name, my friend, is, I think, Gonsalvez—and I would ask some questions touching some of your acquaintances in Villa Moro. Speak out; and—" the stranger lowered his voice to a deep tone, that made me shudder—"what is more to the purpose, speak *truth!*"

The landlord winced—while my dark-visaged friend, in a careless voice, continued—

"You had occasional visits from the French cavalry during the winter. There was a squadron of the 5th chasseurs à cheval here for a month. Where did their commandant reside?"

"He quartered himself at the alcade's," returned the host.

"Did he ever visit the postmaster?" asked the stranger.

"Frequently," was the reply.

"What age is José de Toro?"

"Sixty—or more," returned the host.

"And what the age of his wife?"

"Younger by forty years," was the reply.

"Then Jose de Toro was a fool to marry as he did. Was Captain Hillaire particularly intimate with the lady?"

"They said—but, Lord! in a village they say many things that are not true—they said that the poor postmaster was almost jealous. After a little time the scandal wore away; and José de Toro and Captain Hillaire were the best friends imaginable."

"Base villain!" muttered the dark stranger, between his clenched teeth. "Well, my friend, if the alcade and postmaster found the society of the French so agreeable, how did the Cura feel?"

"He never could disguise his hatred; and for some days he was kept in close arrest, until the pretty wife of Jose Toro pleaded to the handsome captain for her old confessor, and obtained his liberty."

"Humph!" said the stranger.—"What is the nearest post that is at present occupied by the French cavalry?"

"The nearest!—praise to the Virgin!—I have heard from a traveller is at Arcanza—some half score leagues from Toro."

"'Tis well," muttered the stranger.—"Get me a trusty messenger; and mind that he be *trusty*—or—" he looked the rest, the landlord perfectly understanding it. Egad! I never saw anything more expressive; it was a look that conveyed more than any language could express. One of his companions rose, and looked from the casement.

"How soon," he said, "the storm has abated! The moon has risen; and a finer night to take a hurried march and surprise a sleeping out-post could not be found."

“I wish it were otherwise,” returned he who seemed the leader. “And yet ten leagues from a French picket, methinks, is tolerable security. Go, Velasquez,—and see that this packet be sent forward, safely and swiftly. For his messenger’s fidelity I hold the landlord accountable. Tell him that;—and whisper in his ear, that the guest he entertains to-night is——” His voice dropped, but a smile of sinister expression told the rest.

From a secret pocket the dark stranger drew out a splendid watch. “Past midnight. Come, gentlemen, one round more, and then for bed: we must all be astir by cock-crow.”

The bottle for the last time made its circuit. Velasquez returned after despatching the packet, accompanied by the host bearing a lamp. He conducted us to a long gallery, containing at least sleeping apartments for a dozen; but the only occupants that night were the strangers, the fosterer, and myself. Where the muleteer bestowed himself I knew not; but subsequent events sufficiently explained the reason why we were not favoured with his company.

No stronger proof of caution and insecurity could be required than the care with which each individual arranged his clothes and arms. Every weapon was placed in a position to be ready for the owner’s hand; while the business of the toilet was dispensed with altogether, as we all stretched ourselves on our woollen beds without undressing. The Spaniards crossed themselves devoutly; the fosterer repeated a short prayer; I cried “God bless us!” and in ten minutes all within the spacious chamber slept profoundly.

Several hours must have elapsed, and still my slumbers continued unbroken. Suddenly an uneasy dream disturbed me, and I started upright on the mattress. The lamp was burning gloomily; and the sleepers round the chamber were fast as watchmen. I listened—noises low and indistinct without excited my attention. The sounds were such as men make when they attempt to move unheard. I glided out of bed, and peeped cautiously from the lattice. By Heaven!—the court-yard was filled with dismounted dragoons, and one glance told me that they were enemies.

The elder Spaniard lay on the bed next to mine, and I laid my hand softly on his arm. In a moment his dark eyes were turned suspiciously on mine, as I stooped my head and whispered that we were betrayed. He heard the intelligence without any apparent emotion, slipped quietly from his couch, and looked for a moment on the court-yard. I heard him muttering to himself, “Ten—fifteen—twenty—forty in all: the odds are great, and we, too, cut off from the stables. Ha!—let me think—there’s but one hope—the gate first—the river afterwards—ay, there lies the only chance of our deliverance.”

Flitting from couch to couch, he awakened his sleeping companions. They seemed to be men accustomed to similar visitations, for not an exclamation escaped their lips, nor even by a word did they betray the least alarm. A finger, pointed towards the casement told its silent tale; and each, as he arose, peeped from the window on the moon-lit court-yard, and immediately comprehended the extent of his danger. In a minute every man was armed and ready for the coming struggle;

and we looked to the dark guerilla for orders, as soldiers to their leader.

“In a position like ours, safety consists in daring. No matter how great the disparity in numbers, we must not wait to be attacked; but push, at the sword's point, for the gate—reach the river if possible—spring boldly in, and trust to the Sedana for our freedom. One word more—if you can—escape;—but if the hour is come, fall sword in hand; and let the dying effort be vengeance on the oppressor. 'Tis time for action. Strike bravely, my friends: in every blow lies death or freedom. And now for the attempt: in five minutes the Empecinado will be a lifeless corpse, or free as the mountain eagle!”

“And are you that dreaded chief?” I inquired.

“I am indeed Juan Martin Diez: he whose dreaded by-name has carried terror with it to the boldest enemy of Spain; who lived the scourge of the oppressor, and will die, inflicting injury while his hand can hold a sword, and venting his last breath in curses upon those who would have enslaved him!”

We drew up silently behind the entrance of the posada; all the bolts save one were quietly withdrawn, and that one the Empecinado held. Presently a man approached, struck the door loudly, and in a haughty tone demanded instant admission. Never was order more promptly obeyed. The Spaniard removed the last fastening—the door was suddenly flung open; a discharge from the carbine of the Empecinado laid the nearest Frenchman dead upon the threshold where he stood; while bounding from his concealment like a tiger on his hunters, the guerilla chief sprang headlong among a group of the chasseurs, cutting down a trooper right and left, and shouting in a voice of thunder, “*Guerra al Cuchillo!*”

A sudden onslaught from desperate men is always formidable; and the enemy, never imagining that those whom they expected to surprise, would resist, still less attack, a numerous and well appointed detachment, were quite unprepared to oppose this unexpected irruption from the posada. The guerillas fought with the recklessness of men who feel that they must succeed or perish; while, as circumstances occasionally make heroes, the fosterer and I, considering that in a close and furious *mêlée* there is no respect for persons, imitated the example of our worthy confreres; and, as I was afterwards informed, made a very promising *débüt*. The affair was short and sanguinary. Before the French could recover from the surprise, nearly a dozen were killed, wounded, or beaten down; the gate was gained, and for escape, the chances were decidedly in our favour.

But, as it unfortunately turned out, a part only of the French detachment had entered the court-yard of the posada, while an equal number remained mounted outside the gate. The sudden uproar from within put the outliers on the *qui vive*, and consequently they were ready to receive us. Surprised, but nothing daunted, the Empecinado and his companions fought with desperate ferocity; and the French cry of “Down with the brigands!” was fiercely answered by the Spanish slogan, “War to the knife!”

The conflict now was hopeless; each of us was engaged with three

or four chasseurs, some mounted and some on foot. I had seen the commencement of the fray, but, as is the frequent fortune of war, I was not fated to witness its termination. A blow from the butt of a carbine stretched me upon mother earth—and when my senses returned, I found myself a prisoner, and in the same apartment of the Venta, where on the preceding night I had supped in perfect comfort and security.

I looked round—the room was filled with soldiers—and the only faces I could recall to memory, were the dark and sullen countenances of the two companions of the Empecinado, who were seated on a bench immediately in my front, closely hand-cuffed to each other. Both had received divers sword-cuts on the head; and their coal-black hair, matted with blood, added to a ferocious expression of the features, afforded a perfect picture of a captive brigand. Upon the wounded partidas, looks of deadly vengeance were directed by all who surrounded them. Many of the chasseurs had been wounded; and in the recent affair, five of their companions had fallen; and one, whom they all regarded, the second in command, and a young officer of great promise, had been stabbed to the heart by the Empecinado.

“Where am I? Where are my companions?” I muttered.

“Escaped!” returned one of the wounded guerillas, with savage exultation. “Escaped, my friend; to take ample vengeance for thee and me upon these murderers.”

“Silence! dog;” exclaimed a chasseur, striking the captive a sharp blow upon the shoulder with the flat of his sabre-blade.

I never witnessed such a look as the insulted, but impotent guerilla directed at the Frenchman. Could rage, and hatred, and revenge, be concentrated in a glance, that look expressed them all.

“Oh, that this hand were free,” he murmured; “and that it clutched the knife that never failed it yet; and then, robber—” He left the sentence incomplete; but none required further words to convey its purport.

A noise without, was heard. It was the “measured step of marching men;” and in a few minutes the *élite* companies of the 16th Voltigeurs, entered and piled arms in the court-yard. Whatever was the cause of this military movement, its scale seemed far too extensive for the mere purpose of arresting two or three individuals who had made themselves obnoxious to the invaders; and this suspicion was confirmed, when it was announced that Colonel La Coste, the chief of General Laval’s staff, had arrived in person, to direct the *promenade militaire*, as the Frenchman termed this midnight expedition.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE EXECUTION.

"*Charles.* Be not afraid of danger or of death; for over us presides a destiny, which cannot be controlled. We all hasten to the fatal day; die we must, whether upon a bed of down, the field of battle, or the scaffold; one of these must be our lot."

THE ROBBERS.

A FEW minutes elapsed, when a movement among the soldiers near the door attracted my attention, and Colonel La Coste, attended by several officers of inferior rank, entered the kitchen of the posada. The commander was a soldier of the republican school; a hale, stout, man of sixty; one who, like the best of the French officers, had risen by merit from the ranks, without family, descent, wealth, or education. The honest boast of La Coste was, that he had been the architect of his own fortunes, and had raised himself to distinction. The colonel was highly esteemed as a soldier; but, if the times when his career commenced are remembered, it may be readily supposed that La Coste was loose in his moral principles, cold to human suffering, and indifferent, provided the end were gained, as to the means that he employed in attaining it. The sternest hearts have generally some softer point that unites them to their fellow men, and the rude soldier's was no exception. That solitary place in his affections was occupied by the orphan of his sister; Henri le Fevre was the sole object of the love and ambition of the old republican—and, dead to others, the young lieutenant of chasseurs was dearer to that cold-hearted soldier than all the world beside. In the career of life, the most unpitying do not escape mortal visitations, which force the heart to feel. Henri had perished in the recent affair—and the misery that he himself had probably inflicted upon others, was about to fall on the head of one, whom sympathy for human suffering had never turned from a purpose which he conceived that duty pointed out.

When he entered the apartment, he appeared excited and out of temper, muttering to himself as he approached the fire, and then, turning short round, he drew himself up haughtily between the manacled guerillas and myself.

"So," he said, sarcastically, "Captain St. Pierre, methinks, to-night you have had but indifferent success. Five soldiers lost, the great brigand escaped, and these paltry scoundrels, fit only for hanging *in terrorem* at a market-place, the sole fruits of a bloody, and, as it

has turned out, a bootless expedition! How could this possibly occur?—a squadron of chasseurs, checked, defeated, by some half dozen—call them not soldiers—but banditti! Ay, Captain St. Pierre, *defeated!* Has not the only captive we aimed at escaped ye? Except as examples to the peasantry, these fellows are not worth the snapping of a flint—or value of a halter. Is not this failure—defeat?”

“Colonel La Coste,” returned the captain of chasseurs, “much of what you say is true. We counted with too great confidence upon surprise, and overlooked the danger that lies in desperation. It has, indeed, turned out a sorry *promenade*—little gained, and much, unfortunately, lost!”

“Where did the brigands escape to?—where did they seek shelter?—why were they not pursued?” continued Colonel La Coste, speaking with breathless rapidity.

“The Empecinado, with one companion, have fairly got away,” replied Captain St. Pierre; “the other three are in your presence.”

“The other three!” exclaimed Colonel La Coste, contemptuously—“Bah!—what matters the capture of these small scoundrels, when the greater bandits have escaped? Have they indeed got off? and how, in the devil’s name, did they effect it?”

“I would half believe, through the especial assistance of the black gentleman. To steel and lead they seemed impervious, or they never could have been proof against one hundred shots and sword-cuts. By Heaven! their escape appears miraculous! They gained the river, plunged into the swollen stream, and under a biting fire, while bullet after bullet struck the water before and behind, they reached the opposite bank unhurt, scrambled up the bank, and were instantly lost in the thick cover of yonder cork-wood.”

“Were they not followed, hunted, pursued? Is Henri after them?” inquired the colonel, with impatience; but the question was unanswered. “Speak, St. Pierre!—where is my nephew?—close on the brigands’ footsteps?”

The captain shook his head.

“What mean ye?” exclaimed the old republican; “Is he hurt, or wounded?”

“Worse—”

“Worse!—what, dead?”

“Dead!” was the suppressed reply.

“How?—when?—where? I know the worst;—go on, St. Pierre.”

“Colonel La Coste, my heart bleeds to tell the story. Henri, your adopted son, and our beloved companion, is, indeed, no more! The felon leader, who has escaped us for the present, singled your nephew out and stabbed him!”

“Great God!—Henri!—my son, my hope, my pride, fallen—and thus to fall! Die in the court-yard of an obscure posada, and perish ingloriously like a peasant in a drunken brawl—Henri! Henri!”

A long and melancholy pause succeeded.

“Where is my nephew?” exclaimed the old man, suddenly.

“Here,” returned Captain St. Pierre, and his voice faltered.

“Well, let me see thee, Henri, even though it be in death.”

When I had been removed into the posada, I was for some time insensible to everything that passed, and, unknown to me, the body of the young lieutenant had been carried in, deposited on a bench immediately beside me, and covered with a military cloak. Some of the chasseurs who stood between me and the dead officer, now moved aside, and others brought lights, while the covering should be removed, and the veteran "look his last" upon the only being whom he loved.

In *post mortem* experience I was a novice. Of course, like every Irish boy who made his *entrée* on the world five and forty years ago, I had seen a criminal hanged, and a gentleman shot occasionally. To do him justice, old Doctor Dozey, "our very learned and approved good master," was an indulgent and considerate divine; and as the school was in an assize town, where hanging-matches and affairs of honour came off frequently, we were always, on such occasions, favoured with a half-holiday, to enable us to have a sly peep at the proceedings. Although I had often been "in at the death," yet with the exception of Mr. Sloman, I had never seen the defunct after this mortal coil had been shuffled off; and hence the appearance of the countenance, where death had been violent, was new to me. I turned my eyes to the bench where the body of the Frenchman lay, and, for many a day afterwards, the dead man's face was painfully recollected.

I was told that the departed soldier had been considered particularly handsome, but looking at his countenance after death, I never could have imagined it. Its expression was that of one whose spirit had departed in intense agony, and every feature was distorted. I saw his companions shudder as they looked upon the corpse; and, after one hurried glance, the old colonel turned his eyes away, and signed to a chasseur to replace the cloak, which had been removed to permit him to view the body of his favourite nephew.

"Now for another duty," the old man muttered. "Place these prisoners before me!" and, drawing himself stiffly up with his back to the fire, he remained in gloomy meditation, while the guerillas and myself were conducted from our benches, and drawn up in front of a judge from whom, were the countenance an index of the heart, little mercy could be hoped for.

"Who are ye?" he said, addressing himself to me; "you wear an English uniform—stolen from the living, or stripped from the dead?—say which."

"Neither," I returned, boldly; "mine is the dress that my rank entitles me to wear—I am a British officer."

"And wherefore the companion of brigands? Why are you the confederate of these murderers?"

"I am not their companion," was the reply; "I knew not who or what they were. By accident I met them here last night."

"You knew them not, and yet you ate with them, drank with them, fought with them."

"I did."

"You shot a French chasseur, and cut down a second, as I am informed."

"It is true; these things I did in order to effect escape."

"Then, did you not meet these bandits here by previous appointment? Are you not a spy—ha?" exclaimed the colonel.

"No—this posada lay directly in my route, as I was bound for Valencia. Chance brought these men and myself together, and I knew nothing of their designs, their names, nor their occupations. On this head, my guide, the muleteer, will satisfy you."

At this period of the proceedings, Captain St. Pierre whispered something in the colonel's ear. It was a corroboration, on his part, that the statement I made was true. The colonel nodded, and thus continued:—

"My friend, St. Pierre, confirms your story. I have had the honour of meeting your countrymen in the field, and they have taught me to respect them. The English are stout and gallant soldiers; and at a soldier's hands are entitled to that honourable consideration which the brave give and receive from each other. But these brigands with whom you have unhappily associated,—these murdering, dastardly, Spaniards——"

"False, by the Virgin!" exclaimed the younger partida of the two: "No dastards, robber!—Look out in yonder court-yard—you'll see there a few mementos of a Spaniard's vengeance; and if you lift your cloak again, you will find, that though he departed somewhat hurriedly, the Empecinado did not forget to leave behind a token that will bring him occasionally to your remembrance."

"The Empecinado!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"Ay, Juan Diez!" was the answer.

"Hell and furies! Mount every man; cross the bridge, Captain St. Pierre; surround the cork wood—they may still be lurking there. I'll give you twenty voltigeurs. Carry them *en croupe*. They will beat the coverts that horsemen cannot enter. Bring back, dead or living, the enemy of the emperor—the murderer of Henri Lefevre!"

The guerillas laughed scornfully. "The cork-wood!—Will Juan Diez stay there to listen to the nightingales?" said the younger.

The order was instantly obeyed; the horses of the chasseurs re-saddled, and, with a dozen picked sharpshooters to scour such portions of the wood as might be impenetrable to the cavalry, Captain St. Pierre rode off to recover a reputation he considered tarnished by his recent failure; and, dead or living, bring back to his commander that dreaded chief, the Empecinado.

The preparations for this new expedition consumed nearly half an hour; the Spaniards sullenly resumed their seats; I sunk into sombre meditations; and in short, everybody, captives and captors, appeared superlatively unhappy. It was a relief when the door opened, and Colonel La Coste entered the kitchen of the posada, accompanied by a person who bore the appearance of a civic magistrate. Once more the Spaniards were placed before their judge; and the Alcade, for such the stranger proved, assented silently to all the French commandant decreed.

"I know not, nor ask your names—you are rebels to the king, and false to France and your country!"

"A lie! by the immortal Judge!" boldly returned the elder partida.

"True to Spain, ay, true to the last. Pshaw!—Abridge this mockery. We are doomed—we know it. Speak the sentence, and let the spirit, as it was ever, still be free!"

"You know all the circumstances of this case already," observed Colonel La Coste, addressing himself to the Alcade: "these men are traitors. What penalty should be exacted for treason and rebellion?"

The Spaniard looked confusedly around, turned his eyes aside, and then, in an under tone that scarcely reached the ear, he muttered, "Death!"

Low as the voice was in which the opinion was delivered, it fell upon the ready ear of the younger of the partidas.

"Death!" he exclaimed, "and doomed to that dread penalty by a countryman?—Countryman!—no, no,—the craven has no country. Live, Julian Lopez, live for a brief time; but let me add the terms on which that wretched existence of thine shall be continued. From the hand that tenders a petition, dread the knife. Reject the food offered thee—it will be drugged. Touch not the wine-cup—it will be poisoned. Well, though thou escape these, a more infamous fate will be reserved for thee: you will perish on a tree; none pitying, and all pouring out execrations as you go along. Some galley-slave will affix the felon-halter; and when the carrion is committed to mother earth, every true Spaniard as he passes the unholy spot that covers it, will strike his boot upon the clay, and mutter 'Curses on the ashes of the traitor!'"

"Stop!" cried the commandant. "Advance these criminals;—you guess your doom——"

"Guess?" asked the elder partida; "no, no—to guess would infer uncertainty. We know it well. Thou and I, Jose, shall die as many better patriots have died before us."

"You are friends of that dark brigand, whom you call the Empecinado?" observed the French commandant.

"It is indeed a proud distinction you confer, in calling us, friends of that bold enemy to French oppression."

"You share his confidence?" continued the colonel.

"Undoubtedly," returned the elder; "ay, and I believe as much as any living men."

"You knew his errand here, then?"

"Yes."

"Name it!"

Both the partidas laughed contemptuously

"You trifle with me, villains! But, by Heaven! I will no longer trifle with you. Cammaran," he said to a voltigeur, "get your men under arms; throw the gates of the court-yard open; admit the villagers, and prepare for an instant execution. Let twelve files load; we'll join you in five minutes."

The officer left the room, and the old soldier thus continued:—

"Time presses: are you prepared to die?" he said, addressing the condemned.

A proud glance from the condemned conveyed the guerillas' answer to the commandant.

“ Would you avert your fate ? ”

“ Willingly ! ” replied the elder of the two.

“ Wherefore ? and by what means ? ” said Colonel La Coste.

“ I'll tell you briefly, ” replied the elder : “ I am no soldier ; I was born on the banks of the Sedana, and inherited a farm my ancestors had tilled for centuries. We lived then in humble opulence. My father died ; I succeeded to his small possessions, married as suited my lowly rank, and was as happy as love and contentment can make an humble man. Twice I became a father : need I add that this fond tie bound me still closer to the partner of my home and heart ? Your armies overran the country ; but for a time the remoteness of our hamlet protected us. Where was the dwelling, however isolated, that at one time or other escaped the fearful visits of your marauders ? A foraging party entered our hamlet. They took what they would, and none resisted ; they ate, and drank, and plundered—none offered remonstrance or complaint. I was from home—and I tell the tale as it was told me afterwards. Within that solitary hamlet, there lived some of the fairest peasants in Toledo. The morning rose upon them in happy innocence—when it set they were ruined and dishonoured. Maid and matron alike were exposed to licentious brutality. My poor Inez told me the story of her wrongs, and made me swear eternal vengeance on the villain who had robbed her of her honour. He was the leader of the party, and that enabled me to trace him. Where he went, I followed—ay—followed close as a bloodhound on the trail. Night and day I dogged his steps. When he removed, no matter how distant were his quarters, there did J, his evil genius, appear. Nine months passed, and still I never could strike a certain blow—but he who waits for vengeance seldom waits in vain. The moment came at last, and in the public square of Salamanca I stabbed him to the heart. Vengeance was satisfied : and did I then return to my home ? I had no home—it was a ruin. My farm was wasted ; my cattle taken away ; I found my wife a maniac—for insult and cruelty had deprived her of reason. I sought my children—they were beggars, living on the bounty of the charitable. What could I do but swear vengeance anew, and band with those gallant spirits who were in arms against the oppressors of their country. Well, you ask me, would I live ? I answer, *yes*—not that life to me is worth the holding ; but for the sake of that poor maniac and her starving orphans—still would I live.”

While he told his simple story the recollection of his wrongs supported him ; but the allusion to the sad calamities which French barbarity had entailed upon his wretched family evidently affected him ; and I observed that the dark eye which lately flashed defiance was moistened with a tear.

“ Spaniard, what wouldst thou give for life ? ” demanded Colonel La Coste.

“ Aught that became an honest man, ” was the reply.

“ I will name the terms, and then say wilt thou accept them and be free ? ”

“ Speak ! ” said the guerilla.

"Thou knowest the Empecinado—thou art in his confidence—his haunts are known to thee;—couldst thou, if at liberty, find him out?"

"Were my foot free upon yonder mountain, I could within six hours hold Juan Diez by the hand," returned the condemned.

"Enough. A thousand Napoleons are on his head. Wilt thou place the enemy of France within my power?"

"Never!"

"Think—thy life hangs upon the answer: wilt thou win gold and freedom?" repeated the Frenchman.

"Never!—the word is spoken."

In a moment the younger Spaniard threw the arm that had remained unshackled around his comrade's neck.

"Velasquez," he said, "I doubted thee, and feared that thy courage might fail. Thou hast much to bind thee to life; but is a life of infamy like that false traitor's,"—and he pointed to the Alcade,— "is such worth holding?—No. But as thou hast addressed this our executioner, so too will I."

Colonel La Coste knitted his brows together, and the young guerilla thus continued:—

"I am indebted to you; I have escaped the insult offered to my companion, for you did not propose life to me at the expense of faith and honour. Velasquez has told you a sad history—now hear mine. I am a soldier's orphan—I have no kindred left; for when my only uncle, the good old canon of Seville died, I saw my last relative on earth committed to the grave. I was then a student, and, but for circumstances, would have been, most probably, a monk. You came, and war, and violence, and insult, followed in your footsteps. Day after day I heard the hateful tale of French oppression, until my blood became gall, and I burned to take vengeance on the invaders. The slow and cautious movements of regular warfare were unsuited to a spirit active and ardent as mine; I sought a daring leader, and found him in Juan Diez. For three years I have followed the Empecinado. Would you know more of me?—ask who I am? Mine is a title second only to my leader's—I am 'The Student,' Jose Martinez!"

He ceased, as he announced his name. La Coste, the moment that the words were uttered, signed to a chasseur, whispered some secret order, and then, turning to the guerillas, he coldly pronounced their doom.

"The time is short," he added; "have either of you aught to ask for?"

"I would wish," replied the elder Spaniard, "to spend a few minutes with a priest."

"The Curé shall be sent for," replied the French commandant; "and thou, young man—hast thou no request to make?"

"None from thee!" returned the Student, boldly. "Here! Landlord, fetch me a cup of wine!"

The order was obeyed: and holding the untasted horn in his hand, he thus continued:

"'Tis the last wine that I shall drink! Tell the Empecinado, also,

what was the last pledge that passed the lips of José Martinez!—‘Viva España!—Mueran los Franceses!’* And he emptied the cup to the bottom.

The Cura obeyed the summons of the French commandant, the manacles were removed from the wrists of the captives, and the priest retired to a corner of the kitchen, apart from all besides, to shrive the condemned offender. Scarcely ten minutes passed, before Velasquez rose from his knees, and, with a face that bespoke a perfect resignation to his fate, stepped back to the place where his fellow-sufferer, the Student, was standing, still holding the empty wine-cup in his hand. The Cura motioned Martinez to retire—he obeyed; the shrift was short, and, in five minutes, the Student rejoined his companion in misfortune.

“Are the prisoners ready?” said Colonel La Coste to the priest.

Both the partidas returned a steady—“Yes.”

The Frenchman waved his arm, and, with a voltigeur on either side, the condemned guerillas left the kitchen of the posada for the court-yard.

I followed in the crowd—in fact, I was not regarded as a prisoner. I mingled with the chasseurs, and, in the interest which the coming event occasioned, I seemed to be forgotten altogether. We entered the fatal enclosure—and although the villagers had been summoned to witness the execution, not a dozen of the peasantry were to be seen; and, on their affrighted countenances, horror and indignation were apparent.

In the centre of the court-yard, twenty voltigeurs were drawn up in double files, with ordered arms, and commanded by a lieutenant. A dead wall was directly opposite, at the distance of twelve paces; and thither the Spaniards were conducted by their escort.

Colonel La Coste took his stand on the right of the firing party, some half dozen paces from the subordinate officer that commanded it; and, on either side, the chasseurs and peasantry formed a line of lookers-on.

The Colonel advanced two steps, as the Cura kissed and blessed the sufferers for the last time.

“Wilt thou be free?—you know the terms,” he said, addressing the elder of the partidas.

“No!” was calmly answered.

“Enough!—your blood be on your own head, and not on mine.”

Turning to the second he thus continued:—

“Young man, pause—death is bitter! thou hast many a day of life and happiness before thee, if thou wilt but choose wisely.”

“I have chosen!” was the calm reply. “And now permit me an indulgence—a few last words. I see the faces of deadly enemies around me, and, on the bleached countenances of some dastard Spaniards, who stoop and kiss the foot that presses on their necks, I look in vain for sympathy; but the very walls around me will find a tongue, and the last message of ‘The Student’ will be correctly carried to his friend, the Empecinado. Tell him I died a true and faithful Spaniard. Tell him, that my friend and I were slaughtered in cold blood,

and that we expect at his hands ample and immediate vengeance! Proceed!—art thou ready, Velasquez?"

A silent inclination of the head was returned by his fellow-sufferer, to the Student. Colonel La Coste signalled to the officer, and the firing party shouldered arms. A dead silence prevailed, and, at the movement of the muskets, my heart beat wildly as a startled girl. Many of the French soldiery turned pale, and but a very few looked on the scene of death with indifference. The emotions of the peasants were now beyond concealment, and tears and prayers were freely given to the sufferers.

"Are you ready?" inquired the commandant.

The elder Spaniard bowed, while the Student boldly exclaimed, "Ready!"

Colonel La Coste nodded to the lieutenant; at a motion of his sword, the firing party came to the present, and the next moment the fatal word was given—a volley answered it—and Velasquez and his companion dropped dead on the pavement of the court-yard. Hastily, a cloth was thrown over the bleeding bodies, the court-yard was cleared, the soldiers were ordered to rest and refresh themselves, and I returned to the kitchen of the posada, at the same time a guest and prisoner; and, in the same apartment, and within twelve hours,—I supped with the departed, and breakfasted with their executioners—Such is the fortune of war!

CHAPTER XXX.

THE RESCUE.

"A kinsman is part of a man's body, but a foster-brother is a piece of his heart."

WAVERLEY.

THOSE who have been familiarized with warfare, know well, from personal experience, how callous it renders the heart to human suffering. To me these scenes were new—and to witness my fellow-men coolly hurried to eternity, without even the mockery of a trial, had occasioned a sensation too painful and powerful to be overcome. When, therefore, Colonel La Coste and his officers sate down to breakfast, I felt mine, indeed, to be a sorry appetite. The dead guerillas in the court-yard were still before my eyes, and men with whom, in the full pride of youth and health, I had taken my evening meal last night, were now "stark and stiff;" and my morning repast was to be shared with their executioners. I could not forget them; they rose to my imagination like Banquo's ghost, and completely marred my appetite.

Colonel La Coste, who in his own rough way had played the part of a kindly host, guessed the cause of my depression, and endeavoured to remove it. He had been three years a prisoner in England, and spoke our language tolerably.

"Come, my young friend," he said, "courage!—'Tis but the chance of war, and thy thralldom may be short. Think not that Frenchmen do not respect those to whom they are opposed; and while a stern necessity renders example indispensable, they know how to distinguish between the brigand and the soldier. Eat, and muster thy philosophy. When but a little older than thyself, I underwent a protracted captivity—Did I sink into despair? No, faith! A sous-lieutenant, without friends or money, I taxed my wits to make a stand against misfortune—ay, and I succeeded, too. There is in England many a tooth-pick case, the handywork of Colonel La Coste, to which tooth-picks and their cases, the said colonel has been often indebted for a dinner. Think not, that because I inflict just punishment upon brigands, I cannot pay due respect to a fellow-soldier in misfortune. Give me your parole—and, while with us, you shall be a captive but in name."

"I thank you, sir," I answered, "but when a hope of deliverance remains, I never will, by a solemn promise, rivet the chain that binds me. I know all chances of escape are desperate, and, without even having seen an army in the field, that I shall be transferred to the hopeless bondage of some inland fortress. I will give no parole, and if fortune favour me, I will be free, or ——"

"So—I understand you! Well, try your chances, and let me take care to mar them. Your parole ouce given, Mr. O'Halloran, no officer of this detachment should have been more at liberty than yourself; but as it is refused, you will excuse me in treating you as I should the commonest prisoner.—No matter, we understand each other perfectly. You have been candid, and I forewarned. Have I your parole while we continue here—here, in this posada?"

"Certainly."

"And you will not attempt escape?"

"No; even though my good friend, the Empecinado, beat up your quarters, my dear colonel."

"Well, to breakfast now. Durimel?" he said, turning to his aide-de-camp, "this gentleman is under no restraint; and while we remain in the village, the gates are open to him."

I bowed. "I am now upon parole, colonel—I feel flattered with this mark of confidence; and lest I might be run away with by these wild partidas, I shall avail myself of the protection of your voltigeurs, and confine myself within the enclosure of the posada."

Colonel La Coste appeared pleased at the frankness with which I addressed him, and nothing could surpass the civility of his officers. Perfectly acquainted with the accidental circumstances which introduced me to the Empecinado and involved me in the *mêlée* of the morning, I was complimented on my first essay; and more than one of the gallant Frenchmen, expressed a sincere regret that my effort at escape had not proved more successful. The colonel washed down his

breakfast with a hearty stoup, while, with the loquacity of an old soldier, he favoured us with military reminiscences.

“Would you believe it, Mr. O'Halloran, that your name is perfectly familiar to me? I am a soldier of the old school, and commenced my career at thirty. My first campaign was in the Low Countries, opposed to your present commander-in-chief, the Duke of York; and, at his retreat, I was in the advanced guard of the Republican army. On both sides, supplies were scanty, and as our discipline was not then particularly strict, men wandered here and there to make out a supper, if they could. Though in years a man, I was a raw soldier in experience; and one foggy evening I straggled from the outposts, and, at last, totally missed my way. The accursed dykes of that most beastly country confused me, and the further I went, the more I got confounded. I tumbled into two or three of their dirty canals, and escaped, half smothered, between mud and water, until, after an hour's wandering, I at last found myself within the British outposts and regularly at my wit's end.

“A light was burning from a casement; I crept on, evaded the sentry in front, and peeped through the window. Within, one man was seated, and the epaulets on his shoulder told me that he was a field officer. My case was hopeless. In a Dutch fog, within the lines of the enemy, the bridges guarded, the boors unfriendly—how, in the devil's name, had I a chance of escape!—and, adopting a desperate resolution, I determined to trust to the generosity of an enemy. I tapped lightly on the casement, and the English officer rose, and opened it. ‘Who's there?’ he asked. ‘A poor hungry devil that has lost his way!’ said I. He told me to proceed; and I honestly informed him that I had been four-and-twenty hours without food, and that, in seeking some, I had got out of my own lines, and into sundry canals—was half drowned, half frozen, and half starved—and, to sum the story up, regularly perplexed, and bedeviled. He laughed—told me to come in—gave me a draught of genuine Schiedam—pointed to a table, where the remnant of a capital supper was unremoved—and told me to eat heartily; ('gad, he had no occasion to repeat the invitation;) I did so—again drank heartily from the long-necked bottle, and then modestly inquired whether I was a prisoner, or not?

“‘Heaven forbid, *pauvre diable!*’ he answered with a laugh—‘No, no—Wert thou a spy—three dips in a Dutch canal, with the mercury below the freezing point, would be punishment enough. I have to-night the outpost duty—I'll pass you—and should you encounter some wandering Englishman, repay the debt!’ He then left the room; I followed—he saw me across a bridge where the outlying picket lay—and in an hour, I found myself once more with my regiment. Is it not singular that his name was similar to yours?—and that, three days afterwards, I met him in the streets of Tyle, bayonet to bayonet? The headlong charge of the British grenadiers overpowered us; but I heard, with unfeigned regret, that my gallant friend and host had been severely wounded, and lost an arm.

“Well, my son, when fortune turned against your countrymen, often and fervently I prayed, that should more misfortunes overtake Colonel

O'Halloran, some good chance might place him in the hands of his grateful enemy, Corporal La Coste.—Have you ever heard of such a person—a man of my own time of life, ay—old enough to be your father?"

"In the latter observation, my dear Colonel, you are perfectly correct, as the gentleman in question stands precisely in that relation to me. Well—it is strange enough, that you were indebted for a supper to the parent, and repaid it with a breakfast to the son!"

In a moment the old republican folded me in his arms.

"Welcome," he said, "son of a brave and generous enemy! May your career, my child, be as gallant but more fortunate than your father's; and may you return to your native land with a well-won reputation, to cheer the winter of the old man's age—I once hoped the same from thee, Henri!"

He looked for a moment to the corner of the chamber where the dead chasseur was laid—a tear trickled down his cheek—he brushed it hastily away—then rose and crossed over to the casement, to conceal emotions of a softer nature, which, in his stern estimate of a soldier's character, he considered unworthy of its dignity. In a few minutes he recovered his composure, and was ready to receive the report of Captain St. Pierre—who had just returned to the village, after an unsuccessful effort to discover the retreat of the dreaded guerilla.

The captain of the chasseurs announced the failure of the expedition in terms that showed how deeply its want of success had mortified him.

"We scoured the woods," he said; "we searched every hovel for a league around us; questioned every peasant that we met, and used threats and promises in vain: and we are back, Colonel La Coste—the men worn out, the horses wearied—and we could neither find a trace, nor glean the slightest intelligence of the murdering brigand, who, for this time, has unfortunately eluded detection."

Rest was absolutely necessary before the cavalry could resume their march; and, as a mountain-pass crowned the Toledo road at a league's distance from the village, and rendered the route particularly dangerous, it was determined that the party should remain at the posada for the night, and march at sun-rise. The dead chasseurs were honourably committed to the grave—the soldiers ordered to refresh themselves—the day passed over—night came—and, after every precaution had been taken to secure the party against surprise, I found myself once more in undisputed possession of the hard mattress on which I had rested the preceding night. War, like misfortune, introduces people to strange bed-fellows, and I never saw that adage so strikingly confirmed. Colonel La Coste slept on the Empecinado's bed. Where were the wild and swarthy partisans whom I had seen stretched on those couches now occupied by gaily-dressed chasseurs? Cold and lifeless in the court-yard;—all suffering at an end—life's fever over!

At dawn of day the trumpet sounded; and as I had never undressed, I quitted the crowded gallery to enjoy the morning air. I found the court-yard in strange confusion, and the spot where the dead guerillas lay, encircled by a number of the soldiery. I stepped forward; the

men made way for me ; and one of them pointed out a paper affixed to the Student's breast. It was a placard, couched in Spanish, the words being, "*Mueran los Franceses!*"

When the occurrence was reported to Colonel La Coste, nothing could exceed his rage at the insult, excepting his astonishment at the audacity of venturing on an attempt, that if discovered, involved the certain death of him who tried this dangerous experiment. All connected with the posada were subjected to a rigorous examination ; but nothing was elicited that could attach suspicion to any particular individual. I knew not wherefore, but the occurrence raised some hopes of a speedy deliverance ; and I felt a strong conviction that our march on Toledo would not be effected without interruption ; and the event proved that my conclusions were correct.

We marched at six o'clock ; and what a scene of melancholy loneliness the deserted posada must have presented after our departure ! The crowd of glittering soldiers gone—the only occupants, the affrighted inmates, and the dead guerillas. We rode slowly through the hamlet ; I, mounted on a horse that two days before had carried an enemy's chasseur. It might have been fancy—I thought the faces of the villagers had a sinister expression as they looked after the French soldiers, while in more than one hurried glance, I saw sympathy evinced for me.

When we cleared the village, Colonel La Coste rode up, and signalled that two chasseurs, who rode on either side of me with unslung carbines, should fall back.

"Mr. O'Halloran," he said, "your parole is ended—are you willing to renew it ? If so, ride in any part of the column you think fit, and consider yourself at perfect freedom."

"Colonel," I replied, "to do so would be to abandon my last hope of liberty. Treat me as a close prisoner ; I will not give the pledge you ask from me."

He looked at me suspiciously.

"Is there any secret understanding with the enemy ? Have you received any private information ? What hope of escape can you have ? The escort is strong—our soldiers vigilant."

"Still—hopeless as they may be, I will not throw chances away. I tell you honestly, Colonel La Coste, that I will use every means of effecting an escape—"

"Which I shall take precautions to render impracticable," he added. "I have a stern duty to perform ; and even though it cost mine ancient friend a son, La Coste shall not be wanting."

He waived his hand—the chasseurs resumed a place at either side—and one took my bridle in his hand. The commandant addressed them—

"Should this gentleman endeavour to get away, or should an attempt be made to rescue him that seems likely to succeed, shoot him on the spot. We lost one that we should have captured ; we must not lose another. Look first, to this gentleman's security ; and secondly, to his comfort. Impose no unnecessary restraint—but deliver him safely at Toledo, or, mark the consequences !—your lives shall be the forfeit

of his liberty," he said—spurred his horse forward, and took his place at the head of the column, which had now left Casa Mora in its rear.

The line of march ran through a country, wild, picturesque, and difficult. A sierra of steep ascent was immediately in our front—the summit crowned with broken crags—and the sides clothed thickly with ilex, cork, and olive trees. As we advanced, the woods grew thicker, and the road was surmounted by rocks on either hand. It seemed as if it had been originally a great water-course, which human labour had converted into a passage through the mountain. We approached the gorge of the pass with military caution. Videttes preceded the advanced guard; and, on either side, voltigeurs were thrown out in extended order, to feel the woods, and keep the flanks secure. Colonel La Coste, after making every disposition against surprise, joined the centre of the column, where I was riding with my friends the chasseurs, who had been so particularly entrusted with the pleasant duty of dispatching me on the first alarm. The Colonel ordered them to fall back once more; and, satisfied that we were secure from any molestation, he indulged again in fresh details of some of the many scenes and services which he had passed through during his adventurous career. Still, evidently he was not at ease; and as we entered the defile, he could not repress feelings of apprehension.

"What an infernal guerilla-pass it is!" he half spoke, half-muttered to himself: "The country and the men seem formed for each other, and designed for cut-throat warfare. And the manner the road winds, too,—you cannot see fifty yards in front for rocks and thickets. We're near the summit. Heaven be praised!—for, sooth to say, Mr. O'Halloran, this is not exactly the place where I should wish to have the honour of trying conclusions with your esteemed friend, the Empeinado."

The road made here a wide and sudden sweep, dipping into a hollow in the mountain-ridge. Right in front, a pinnacle of rock appeared to bar all farther passage, and the path was searped from its side. The hollow way on either side was bordered by thick underwood—and nothing could be more suspicious-looking than this wild and difficult gorge. Again Colonel La Coste rode forward to the front, to restore the order of the column, which had become crowded and disordered, from the narrowness and ruggedness of the path.

Before, however, the commandant could reach his advanced guard, a vidette galloped hastily back, and announced that the road in front was entirely blocked up with trees, formed into a strong abatis, impassable to cavalry. The chasseurs were halted, and the light infantry ordered forward to remove the barrier by which the further progress of the column had been thus arrested. Nearly at the same moment, the rear-guard were suddenly fired on from thickets on either side, while a number of partidas rushed from their previous concealments, and, in a few minutes, effectually closed up the narrow road which the detachment had already passed, by throwing trees and rocks across it. That the French party were completely surprised, was now but too apparent. The voltigeurs, in attempting to force the

abatis, had been shot down by dozens; and every knoll, or rock, which overlooked the pass, swarmed with guerillas, who commenced a murderous fire from their long-barrelled fowling-pieces, and that, too, upon the close-ranks of an enemy where every bullet told.

The old republican had ridden forward to encourage the voltigeurs to force the abatis, that the column might fight its way through the gorge in which it had been entangled—but he was shot through the heart, and dropped dead from his charger. The suddenness of the attack—the fall of their leader—the appearance of countless enemies on every side, completed the panic, and paralysed exertions which, under ordinary circumstances, the enemy would have made. To a stern demand to surrender, the voltigeurs replied by throwing down their arms, while the chasseurs hastily dismounted, and endeavoured to obtain protection behind their horses, from a constant and deadly fusilade. Some had endeavoured to escape through the underwood—and a few succeeded in the attempt—but the greater number were cut down; and presently resistance ceased.

The suddenness of the surprise—and the rapidity with which the affair had terminated in the destruction or capture of the French detachment, seemed magical.—No attempt had been made to carry the orders of Colonel La Coste into execution, and my danger was confined to the ordinary chances of receiving a flying bullet by mistake.—From the moment a shot was heard, my captors lost all heart, and appeared to consider their situation desperate: generally mercy was extended—and in a time inconceivably short, the prisoners were secured, and stripped of every thing that was deemed worthy of notice by the guerillas.

From the neat and uniform appointments of the French soldiers, the eye turned in surprise on the strange and motley appearance the guerilla band presented. Every individual was dressed and armed after his especial fancy. All were differently equipped; and had not sad realities presented themselves, the whole might have been imagined a military masquerade. The costumes of several countries were united in a single dress. The flaring scarlet and light blue jacket of an Estremaduran hussar—the shaco of a French chasseur—pistols and saddle of English manufacture—the long straight sword of the cuirassier—the brown Spanish sash, and leathern cartouch-box, with an Arragonese or Catalan escopeta, were not unfrequent equipments of the same brigand, as the French invariably entitled them.*

Although none of the captives escaped plunder, and many were cruelly insulted in the operation, it was singular that all the partidas treated me with respect, and left me unscathed in person or effects. Presently a buzz around me attracted my attention. A man was forcing a passage through the crowd, and the guerillas civilly made way for him. He was dressed and armed in the same wild and incongruous style which marked the costume of these irregular partisans; and he looked as much the brigand as if he had served a regular apprenticeship to the profession. Great, therefore, was my astonishment when I heard him

* Leith Hay.

pronounce my name; but greater still, when he seized both my hands in his, and half said, half sobbed—"Hector, *avourneine!*—Have I found my foster-brother once more?" It was, indeed, the lost Mark Antony; and, as far as one could judge by appearances, the fosterer had neither received damage in the late affray, nor in his morning swim over the Sedana.

"Holy Mary!" he exclaimed. "Is this yourself, Master Hector? Well, I never expected to see you alive; though that black gentleman, with the long name, strove all he could to give me comfort. May the Lord reward him for the same!—and upon my soul, for a perfect stranger, he showed the greatest affection for us both. After we were safe out of fire, and taking breath for a minute in the cork-wood, I asked him, fair and easy, what he thought had become of ye? 'Gad,' says he, 'I think its a toss-up between shooting and hanging. The chances are, that your master was finished in the affray but if he cseaped that, he is sure to be throttled in the morning. Don't be cast down,' says he, 'if they string up our absent friend. I'll hang twelve Frenchmen in his place, and you shall keep the reckon-^g.' It was very civil on the gentleman's part, but, ³faith, I was better pleased, an hour afterwards, when a goatherd brought us intelligence that you were safe and sound, and the other poor devils dead as a door-nail. But here he comes—a mighty pleasant sort of friend, but sorra worse enemy one would meet in a month of Sundays. Indeed, I have no reason to complain of him; a better comrade I never travelled with—I have lived like a fighting-cock since we came together; and as my clothes were made ribbons of in the skrimmage, here I am rigged out anew from top to toe."

As he spoke, the partida leader approached, wrung my hand ardently with his, and warmly congratulated me on my safe deliverance from French bondage, and in having escaped any material injury in our outbreak from the posada, and the more recent attack. Confiding the duty of removing the prisoners, horses, and plunder to Villa Toro, he requested me to walk with him to the head of the pass. As we proceeded along the scene of action—if such an affair might so be termed, where the loss was entirely on one side, and no resistance had been offered—I was struck with the strange alteration the appearance of the road had undergone. Ten minutes since it had been strewn with dead chasseurs and sharpshooters, dressed in their showy uniforms, and fully and effectively equipped. Not a soldier could be discovered now; but in their places numerous corpses might be seen stripped of every covering, and in a state of nudity, that almost rendered identity impossible. One body, however, I distinctly recognised:—the white hair, and stern expression of countenance, even after death, could not be mistaken:—the dead soldier was the old Republican—Colonel La Coste.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE TRIAL.

"Proceed to judgment; by my soul, I swear,
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me."

SHAKSPEARE.

I COULD not pass the still bleeding corpse of the old commander without gazing for a moment on the body, and expressing my sympathy aloud. The Empecinado directed a careless look at the fallen Frenchman.

"Yes," he said, "La Coste has fought his last battle; and he who would wish that the event were otherwise, would be indeed his enemy. I have one weak point of character, Mr. O'Halloran, and occasionally forget the man in the soldier. The Spaniard who struck for freedom had in La Coste a ruthless foe. By the orders of him and another, I have lost, as you know, two brave companions; and within an hour after 'the Student' breathed his last, the dying commands of my friend were carefully conveyed to me. Vengeance he demanded—vengeance I swore should be exacted—and I doomed his murderers accordingly. From my fixed purpose no earthly intervention could have saved the devoted commander—but the chances of war have averted an ignominious end. He died a soldier's death—I don't regret it; and the halter, designed for him, is reserved for some less fortunate camarado. No more—the morning has been a busy one. Come, we need refreshment. Follow me!"

He led the way through an opening in the *abatis* made by the removal of a tree, ascended the steep rock behind it, and when we gained the summit, we found there a guerilla *déjeuné* prepared. The scene and meal were wild alike. Substantial viands, a leathern bottle of capacious size filled with wine of superior excellence, a few rude platters, the rock our table, the sky, cloudless and blue, the canopy—while a rivulet, clear as crystal, trickled at our feet through the deep hollow of a mountain ravine, whose volume of water varied at seasons from a torrent to a thread. Above, the rugged pinnacles of the wild Sierra overhung the place we occupied—while below, the broken road wound through the underwood, which by turns revealed or hid it. The lower portion was crowded with the guerillas and their prisoners in march to Villa Moro, but the upper presented a less pleasing spectacle. It was thickly studded with the bodies of the slain—an hour ago "instinct with life," but now mutilated, cold, and naked.

(We found two chosen friends of Juan Diez waiting to share the morning meal. As the dark complexion of the guerilla leader had given the Empecinado his by-name, so also, the person or profession of his companions had obtained for each a *sobriquet*. One was a low-sized man, of extraordinary muscular proportions, who, from a distortion of his left hand, was termed El Manco, or "The Maimed." The other retained the title of his former calling; and although the missal had long since been abandoned for the sword, he still was designated "El Cura." Than the respective dresses and appearance of these partida chiefs, nothing could be more dissimilar. The "Maimed One" wore the simple costume of an Estremaduran peasant—while the rich uniform of a *chef-d'escadron* of Joseph's lancers of the guard, was adopted by the churchman, whose tall and martial figure seemed never intended for one, whose sphere of action should be confined to the drowsy duties of cell and cloister.

At the invitation of Juan Diez, we assumed a Roman attitude, and stretched ourselves upon the rock; the fosterer modestly falling back, as if he considered himself unworthy of breakfasting in such goodly presence. The Spaniard noticed his secession.

"What ho!" he exclaimed, with a smile,—“hast thou no appetite to-day?—or after sticking stoutly to a comrade in the fray, wouldst thou desert him afterwards at feasting time? 'Tis not the world's way in general—and men love to see the cork drawn, who hate the sparkle of a sabre. Sit thee down,” and he pointed to a place beside himself. Then turning to his companions, the Empecinado thus continued:—

“I told you, my friends, how narrowly I avoided the trap which French gold and Spanish treachery had baited for me. I planned and led a desperate effort at escape—and never was man more gallantly supported. This youth and I succeeded. 'Twas all mere accident. We kept our legs and gained the river. My brave friend here,” (I coloured at the compliment like a peony,) “and our murdered brethren, were beaten down and captured. It is marvellous how the whistle of a passing bullet accelerates one's speed—and faith, I never fancied I could run so fast. If my camarado here proved that in the fray he could use his arms stoutly, in flight nothing but a goatherd could keep him company. Fast as I ran, he still ran faster—and we fairly outstripped pursuit, save that of two rascally voltigeurs, who had thrown away their musquets, and thus lightened, were enabled to keep close at our heels. We neared the river—ten paces more would gain the bank—and then escape would be pretty certain. I turned my head to see what number of the enemy pursued us. A score came straggling after at various distances, and, fifty yards ahead of their companions, those two accursed sharpshooters led the chase. I wished the scoundrels namstrung; but, thanks to our Lady! the Sedana was at hand. Alas! it seemed fated that I should not reach its waters. An infernal vine-root crossed the path—it caught my foot—down I came; and, as I believed, my doom was sealed,—captivity first, and death afterwards. My young companion heard my fall; and checking his course, he boldly turned to assist me to escape, or share my fate if taken. With a blow he felled the leading voltigcur, and while the other hesitated to close

with two desperat^e men, I regained my feet, and in another moment I and my brave preserver were breasting the swollen stream, and five minutes found us in safety on its farther side. Yes, my stout comrade—but for thee, France would have been freed of one of her worst enemies, and Spain have lost a faithful son. Juan Diez owes thee a life—and the dearest wish of his heart is, that a time may come when he can repay thy gallant service.”

“On their own merits modest men are dumb,” and therefore, in the Empecinado's narrative of our outbreak from the posada, I omit that honourable mention was made of the superior style in which I finished a chasseur, and rendered a second member of the same distinguished corps *hors de combat*. But decidedly, Mark Antony was the lion of the morning. Before his high deserts, mine sank immeasurably—and from the gentleman with the maimed hand, and his pious *confrère*, El Cura, we both received flattering tokens of friendship and respect. As to me, there was not a French throat in the peninsula, were it only to be got at, that would not be slit at my solicitation; and had the fosterer made the request, the French detachment would have been decimated without a doubt, to prove the high place he held in the personal esteem of the Empecinado.

We despatched our breakfast, the guerillas prepared to move, called for their horses, and provided a couple for Mark Antony and me, which an hour before had carried different riders—namely, poor La Coste and his aid-de-camp. As we wound down the mountain-road, leading to Villa Moro, the Empecinado pointed out the thickets his followers had occupied, and dwelt with evident satisfaction on the plan and execution of his late successful surprise. And yet, like an unskilful engineer, the mine he had charged for the ruin of another, had nearly caused his own. The alcade and postmaster were false to their country, and in the pay of the invaders. They knew that a French scouting party had secretly advanced within two leagues of Villa Moro, on the night we arrived at the posada—and having gained imperfect information that a guerilla movement was contemplated, they suspected that the late visitors at the village inn were probably connected with the attempt, and despatched our muleteer, to apprise the French commandant that suspicious strangers were in the venta, where they could be easily apprehended.—Acting on this intelligence—correct enough so far as it extended—La Coste executed a rapid night march, which failed in its object, and terminated in disaster and defeat.

Before we reached the little town, the prisoners, with a numerous escort, had crossed the Sedana, directing their march upon the mountains which divide Murcia from Toledo. As we rode slowly down the streets, *Vivas* greeted us on every side—the women being the loudest in their acclamations. One circumstance I afterwards had cause to recollect. Nearly in the centre of the village, I observed a house of superior appearance, having a court yard in front, with a beech-tree of unusual size, whose spreading branches extended nearly over the whole area of the enclosure. The Empecinado turned a careless glance on the building and the tree.—“That beech will

answer"—he muttered—and without another observation, rode forward and entered the yard of the posada.

It was crowded with dismounted partidas, whose horses were picketed and feeding—and in my life I never saw more savage countenances than those which were half hidden and half seen beneath the shadow of their dark-plumed sombreros. In a remote corner, some dozen French voltigeurs, bound two and two, were drawn up. An ominous silence prevailed—in the pale faces of the prisoners, intense anxiety was marked—their guards only conversed in whispers—and it appeared that all were in expectation of some coming event, which seemed dependent on the arrival of the Empecinado.

From the living my eye turned to the direction where I had witnessed the execution of "the Student" and his friend.—The bodies, however, had been removed,—but the spot where they had fallen was readily discovered, for here and there, patches of cement had fallen on the ground, detached from the wall where the bullets of the firing party had struck the brick-work.—Juan Diez cast a gloomy look from the place his friends had met their death to that captive group, whose suspense as to their fate the presence of the dreaded chief would presently remove—and without uttering a word, he entered the well-remembered kitchen of the posada—the curate and El Manco following, and the fosterer and I with a few partidas bringing up the rear.

It appeared that this singular chamber was destined to present alternately images of life and death, and in quick succession the venta became the house of mourning and of feasting.—On the same table where I had supped with the Empecinado and La Coste, the bodies of the dead guerillas were laid out side by side, the village priest kneeling at their feet, and offering a mass for their souls' repose. Until the religious duty was performed, the partida leaders observed a respectful silence—but when the Cura rose up and departed, the Empecinado addressed his companions :—

"You have heard," he said, "the dying injunction of our lost comrade, when he confided to me the sacred duty of executing vengeance on those who murdered him. That hour is come, and ere high noon, blood shall be repaid with blood. To those without, their doom shall be speedily communicated ; and on the same spot, and by the same means by which our brethren perished, their slayers shall be slain. So much for retribution on the enemy. Another task is to be performed—greater criminals remain—and justice sternly demands her victims. Diego," he continued, pulling out his watch, and turning to one of the partidas, who seemed to follow his movements as an orderly, "Go out—apprise the condemned that in fifteen minutes they will be in eternity. The time is short—the priest must be the busier. Deliver this watch to Juan de Castro ; and when this hand stands there—he knows the rest—and then conduct the other prisoners hither."

He whom the Empecinado had addressed as Diego made no reply, but bowed, and left the kitchen. In a few minutes he returned, and we looked anxiously to the door to discover who the other criminals might be.

The first who presented himself, from dress and appearance, was

evidently a hidalgo, or Spanish gentleman. The second bore a lower stamp, and appertained to the middle order of society. The third, to our unbounded astonishment, was our quondam fellow-traveller, the muleteer. The arms of each prisoner were bound behind his back with a common halter, the end of which the partida, who conducted the criminal, held within his grasp.

On the countenances of the prisoners despair was plainly written; and if one ray of hope still remained unextinguished in their bosoms, the chilling address of Juan Diez would have quenched it.

In dead silence they were placed in a line, and at the foot of the table, where the bodies of "the Student" and his comrade were extended. Bending on the devoted wretches a scowl of indescribable ferocity, the Empecinado thus addressed them:—

"Spaniards—but in name—false to your God, faithless to your country!—have ye aught to say why a felon death should not be instantly awarded?"

The hopeless agony which the faces of the criminals thus addressed exhibited, shall never fade from my memory. Colourless—wordless—their white lips moved; but not a syllable was articulated but the single supplication, half lost, half heard, of "mercy!"

"Mercy!" returned their stern judge, "Mercy!"—and he laughed.—Oh! what a laugh it was!—"Mercy, and from *me!* Look round—gaze upon your victims—and then ask mercy from Juan Diez! But softly, we must be just. The mockery of a trial was extended to our comrades, and a similar act of justice shall be meted out to you. I shall be the accuser, and those shall be your judges;" and he pointed to El Manco and the Curate. "Yes, justice ye shall have; and I swear, by the decree only of these worthy gentlemen, life or death shall be determined!"

He placed his hand within his jacket, and then slowly pulling out several written documents, selected two or three, and then proceeded with his address.

"Answer me briefly—speak truth—for, remember, the first falsehood ensures the transfer of yonder halters from arm to neck. Jose de Toro," he continued, turning to the postmaster, "know'st thou this handwriting?"

The person questioned gave a hurried look at the well remembered characters, and, with the sickly hope that, leaning on a straw, still clings desperately to life, he at once determined to betray his guilty companion.

"Noble sir," he muttered, "that writing is the alcade's."

"Thou hearest," said the Empecinado, handing the fatal document to the Cura. "Honest Sancho, thou wert bearer of a letter, two nights ago, addressed to Captain St. Pierre. Wouldst thou know it, honest Sancho?" and the word *honest* hissed sarcastically between his teeth.

To the unfortunate muleteer, life was dear as to the postmaster. He took the fatal packet in his hand, looked at it attentively, and then replied, that he had indeed received it from Jose de Toro, under a promise of ten dollars for its safe delivery, which promise had been faithfully fulfilled.

“Ho! ho!” exclaimed the Empecinado, “said I not truly that thou wert *honest*? ’Tis marvellous what virtue lies in a yard or two of hemp. There, Cura, read that letter also, and then thou and El Manco will know what will be due to justice. What proves the alcade’s letter?”

“That the writer is a traitor, and in French pay,” was the brief reply.

“And what, the worthy postmaster’s?”

“That he is a sworn confederate.”

“And what, Cura, wouldst thou term the caitiff who advisedly was bearer of treacherous intelligence?”

“I would say that, in effecting the villany of others, he was on a par, in guilt, with the traitors who employed him.”

“And now, El Manco, be it thy duty to pronounce sentence on these offenders.”

The maimed one answered this appeal by directing a concentrated look of hatred and vengeance at the convicted. Neither the alcade or De Toro had power to speak a word; but the luckless muleteer cried lustily, and in the name of every saint, for mercy and forgiveness.

“Well,” said the partida chief, “’twere wrong to keep you in suspense, as one fate awaits ye. But we will justly apportion it according to your respective ranks.”

Here the muleteer, under fallacious expectations, broke in with a loud torrent of future loyalty and everlasting gratitude.

“Stay, fellow, keep thyself cool awhile,” said El Manco, drily. “Thou know’st the proverb, surely—‘Hallo not until ye clear the forest;’ and now listen to your sentences. With due consideration for thy rank, alcade, thou shalt ornament a topping branch of your own beech tree. The postmaster must needs content himself with a lower bough. And for thee, good fellow,” and he addressed himself to the trembling muleteer, “no matter to what limb they attach thy worthless carcase, provided thy feet clear the court-yard by a yard or two. Off with them—let them have *five* minutes; and, by San Jago, that will be longer by *four* than the knaves deserve!”

Never, on a shorter trial, were men condemned, nor sentence more savagely delivered. To a ruthless judge, appeal or remonstrance would have been equally unavailing; and they were removed from the posada to the tree in a sort of sullen and stupid unconsciousness. Their shrift was short—the last sad ceremony hurried over—and, as the fosterer afterwards observed, “they were hanged before they could find time to bless themselves!”

The passing scene was one that would dwell long upon the fancy.—One may view the dead with indifference—the trial’s over—the goal is past.—But who can look upon “a thing of life,” whose thread of existence a few short minutes will sever, without recoiling at the thought? So much had these sad reflections occupied my mind, that I forgot there were others besides those on whom I had just looked my last, who were standing on the confines of eternity. But these musings were interrupted. Without, a rolling volley was suddenly delivered. It knelled the doom of the luckless voltigeurs—and by a



similar impulse, Mark Antony and I sprang from the bench, and rushed forward to the casement which looked out upon the courtyard.

For a moment the smoke from the guerilla muskets partially obscured our view—but as it rose upwards, we saw the unhappy sufferers stretched in a line before the wall—dead, or rolling in the agonies of death. There was one singular exception;—an officer appeared to have escaped—for he stood upright and firmly on his feet, with his hand across his bosom. In military executions, some loaded muskets are always reserved to abridge the sufferings of the condemned, should the volley of the firing party fail to end existence. But the partidas were willing executioners—every piece had been discharged—and though the Frenchman boldly called on them to “fire!”—the order was not obeyed.

To rescue the gallant victim was my instant determination, and I appealed warmly to the Empecinado in his favour. The Spaniard shook his head—and the Cura and El Manco protested against any exercise of mercy. The guerillas commenced reloading—in a few brief moments the deed would be effected, and remonstrance of no avail—but a sudden impulse of generous ardour eventually proved successful. The fosterer bounded from the casement to the courtyard—sprang through the crowd, passed along the front of the firing party, clasped the condemned soldier in his arms, and swore in very excellent Irish, and by every saint he could remember at the time, that to reach the Frenchman's body, the bullets must pass first through his.

There was not a partida in that wild band who did not personally estimate Mark Antony as the saviour of their chief—but still the fosterer's was a dangerous and doubtful experiment. It was interposing between the tiger who has tasted blood, and the victim already underneath his paw. Dark looks were turned upon the preserved and the preserver—and muttered oaths were heard, like the distant growl which heralds the bursting of a thundercloud. The Empecinado, who witnessed the occurrence from the casement, however, lulled the coming storm—and in a voice that to be heard was to be obeyed, he commanded the surviving prisoner to be conducted to his presence; and next moment Lieutenant Cammaran entered the kitchen of the posada—on one side guarded by a guerilla—on the other supported by the honest fosterer, who still, for better security, encircled the Frenchman with his arm.

Scott says that “a kinsman is part of a man's body, but a foster-brother is a piece of his heart.” The truth of the remark never came so home to me before. In infancy, the same bosom had sustained us,—in childhood, our joys and sorrows were the same,—in youth, Mark Antony had followed my fortunes, and in manhood preserved my life. No wonder, that for him mine was indeed a brother's love. But I never felt so proud of our relationship, as when I saw the fosterer confront the guerilla chiefs, with his arm locked firmly round the poor French voltigeur.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE PARDONED VOLTIGEUR.

“ *Portia*.—It must not be ; there is no power in Venice
 Can alter a decree established ;
 ’Twill be recorded for a precedent ;
 And many an error, by the same example,
 Will rush into the state—it cannot be.”

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

I NEVER met a man who appeared to have made his mind up to die with more dignity and determination than Lieutenant Cammaran. He had already almost undergone the bitterness of death ; as yet his fate was an uncertainty—the sword continued suspended by a hair—and still the expression of his manly countenance was perfectly undisturbed, and neither lip nor eye-lid trembled. He planted his foot firmly on the floor, and, calmly and resolved, awaited a doubtful result—the turn of the die, on which life and death depended.

How he had escaped mortal injury seemed the miracle : two balls had passed through his chaco, his epaulette was divided by another, the jacket perforated by several, and yet not one bullet of a dozen aimed at him had even razed the skin ! In such a presence, and under such circumstances, to remain unmoved, required a powerful exercise of moral courage. Few there were, who bore the name of Frenchman, who would have coveted an interview with Juan Diez. El Manco, in desperate severity towards the invaders, bore even a more terrible reputation than the Empecinado ; and although the Cura was a learned and pious churchman, as it might have been presumed, still, from divers exploits ascribed to him, in which unbounded liberties had been taken with life and limb, there was not a follower of the intruder who would not have preferred an interview with the arch-enemy himself.

“ Thou hast been condemned to death,” said Juan Diez, addressing the prisoner.

“ I have,” replied the captive, steadily, “ and the only marvel is that the sentence has not been yet completed.”

“ Humph ! But for the thoughtless interference of this rash young man, that marvel would have been ended speedily,” returned the Empecinado. “ Hast thou aught to ask before ——” And he made a pause.

“ The experiment shall be tried more successfully,” said the Frenchman, coolly. “ Yes ; I have an orphan daughter ! My poor Pauline ! —thou hast no mother to protect thee—and in an hour thou wilt be

fatherless! I would send her all I have—my parting blessing; and, with your permission, write a brief letter, which this kind and gallant youth will, I have no doubt, endeavour to get safely conveyed to Paris."

"Mona sin diaoul!" exclaimed the fosterer, drawing the back of his hand across his eyes, "Miss Pauline shall get it, though I walked every inch of the road, and committed highway robbery for my expenses."

"Thy request is granted. Diego, bring my portefeuille hither."

"And make the letter short," continued El Manco, coldly; "I have some ten leagues to ride after thy execution; I'll wait until it's over, for I hate to leave a job half done."

"Gracious God!" I exclaimed; "surely this cannot be serious! Pause, Don Juan!—One so miraculously preserved—the very hand of Providence visible in his escape!—Would you slay him?—deliberately, coldly, slay him? No, no, I can't—I won't believe it. You are brave!—the brave are not assassins; and this would be an act of butchery! You would not sanction it. Did I conceive it possible that you would, by Heaven, the worst remembrance of my life would be, to think that you and I had ever fought side by side, and hand and heart together!"

The Spaniard coloured; but a sarcastic smile was the only reply he vouchsafed.

"I am too warm, Don Juan; like that of your own land, Irish blood is hot. . Forgive me if I have offended you." A gracious smile from the Empecinado was returned, and conveyed a gracious pardon. "Now let me ask a favour: make me in gratitude your debtor; I have a claim on you. From the surprise, three nights ago, I risked nothing but captivity; by the French I should have been honourably respected; and had I determined on escape, a fitter time and better opportunity would have been readily found to attempt it. With *you* circumstances were different, nay, desperate. With you 'twas but a choice of deaths—the sword or halter the alternative—while I had only to remain quiet, and not a hair of my head would have suffered injury. Did I fail you then?—Did my foster brother? No; we perilled all, fought by your side, and hewed out a path by which you escaped a death more certain, even than that which now awaits this unfortunate gentleman."

"Stop, Mr. O'Halloran," said Juan Diez, interrupting me. "All you have stated is correct; and the only difficulty in the case is to reconcile gratitude with duty. I see a course by which matters may be accommodated; and, from your interference on his behalf, I will save this Frenchman; that is, provided he accedes to terms. There are none here but those he may rely on. Listen, prisoner, and pause before you answer me." He took an open packet from his breast. "These papers, in cypher, were found carefully concealed upon the body of your late commander: you were his secretary, and know the key; give me the means of reading the contents, and thou art free as yonder bird." A pigeon passed the casement at the moment. "Hast thou not the key?"

"I have," returned the captive.

“Speak—disclose it—liberty is thine; and none shall ever know the means by which I obtained a knowledge of the secret.”

“First, may this tongue be palsied!” And the captive drew himself proudly up.

“To the court-yard, then!” returned the Empecinado. “No more, sir,” he said, perceiving I was about to urge anew my claims upon him for late service. “Have I your final answer to my proposal?” he continued, turning to the condemned.

“Fixed and final!” was the firm reply.

“And upon my conscience, as a true Catholic,” exclaimed the fosterer, “a dirtier proposal, Mister Empecinado, I never listened to!—you would have the honest lad here turn traitor, after hanging three dacent men of the same profession scarcely half an hour ago!—Arrah, have ye neither conscience nor decency, Don Juan?”

“What ho!” returned the Spaniard, “art thou, too, upon me?”

“Mr. Empecinado—and God sees I’m not quite certain whether I’m right or wrong in mistering you—but if it’s wrong, why leave it on my ignorance. We have been comrades for three days, and from the little I know of ye, I would go through fire and water to serve you; more by token, the coldest swim I ever had, I took in your company over that river the other morning. No matter about that—the glass of brandy we had from that friend of yours in the cork wood set all to rights afterwards. Well, as I was saying, ye spoke civilly of me not two hours ago forment these gentlemen—him with the crooked claw, and his reverence in the colonel’s jacket. Now all I ask you is a trifle. Honour bright, Don Juan! Don’t ye mind, after the swim, and over a glass of brandy-nate, you offered to hang a dozen Frenchmen as a mark of friendship to me and Master Hector there? It’s not much I want; only just let one neck alone. Do, Empecinado, *avour-neine!* Arrah, do, and take my blessing! Why, man, it would be murder, out and out, to harm him. Arrah, just look at the state ye have reduced him to!—you have drove two bullets through his cap; and as to his jacket—and may be the best the crature has in the world—it’s cut into so many ribbons, that, upon my conscience, a respectable scarecrow would be ashamed to wear it in a wheat-field on a Sunday. You know I’m the last man that would interfere in matters that don’t concern me.—Did I part my lips, good nor had, when ye sent the three gentlemen to the gallows a while ago?—and if you hanged raff of their kind out of the face—for as well as I could understand they were bailiffs or attorneys—sorra one of me would blame ye if ye strng them by the score. But this poor crature—let him go—and take Mark Antony’s blessing.”

Warm as was the fosterer’s appeal, it did not shake the stern resolution of the Empecinado; and a cold movement of his head negatived the supplication for mercy.

“And won’t ye, then, be after letting him off?” continued Mark Antony, warming into Hibernian eloquence, while his cheek flushed, and his dark eyes kindled. “Ye spoke a while ago about my doing you a civil turn—let this poor fellow free, and I’ll do ye twenty more, if you’ll only put me in the way. But if ye’re baste enough to murder

him — mona sin diaoul! — the next time you're in a skrimmage, and tumble over an ould tree, may the divil pick ye up for Mark Antony O'Toole. That's all I have to say—Tiggum thu?"*

The speaker paused. Most of the fosterer's address Juan Diez comprehended; and such portions of the speech as had been delivered in Irish, being expletive, were not very material. To the appeal, however, he turned a deaf ear, and directed, that after his letter had been written, the prisoner's sentence should be carried into immediate effect. I was about to remonstrate, but Mark Antony, having the ear of the Court, thus continued:—

"And is this your answer?" he exclaimed. "Ah, then, Empecinado, I have done with ye! Ay—and for all your fine speeches, I'm beginning to think you're no great shakes, after all; and as to your promises, they're very like what they call pig-shaving in Connaught—much noise and little wool. Come along, Hector, jewel! we won't remain to see this poor gentleman fairly murdered. God forgive the whole of ye! I put the sign of the cross betune us." And here the fosterer made a crucial flourish with his thumb in the direction of the guerilla chiefs. "I can only say, that if there are three gentlemen in Spain certain of a warm corner in the next world, I'm just at present taking a parting peep at them. Good morning to ye all. I'll be obliged if you'll send one of your understrappers to put us on the right road; and I hope, Mister Diez, that the next dacnt lad ye tatter out of bed at cock-crow, to drag into a *rookavn* first, and a river afterwards—why—that you'll trate him civiller than ye did me."

There are few who are proof against eloquence, natural or acquired; and on all it has power alike, whether it be exercised in the fish-market or the Four Courts. On some men it may have opposite effects; and the florid appeal that carries away the judgment of the one, will only alarm the suspicions of another; and thus, the same jury, that on the showing of Mr. Charles Phillips, values an abstracted lady at a thousand pounds, after a prosy address from Sergeant Roundabout, will estimate a similar loss only at a sixpence. Mark Antony had very awkward judges to address; like his greater namesake, "he was no orator," and possibly it was all the better for his client. We have some doubts, had Mr. Joseph Hume denounced the international illegality of despatching Lieutenant Cammaran of the 16th Voltigeurs, with the arithmetical precision with which, in the House of Commons, he would calculate the waste of human breath, that the brass band of the Guards inflicts on this distressed country,—we have doubts, we say, whether the Empecinado would have been a convert. Had the Liberator of Ireland blessed or banned for an hour by Shrewsbury clock, it would have been all the same to El Manco—and to the remonstrance of the Bench of Bishops, aided by a rescript from the Pope, the Cura would have irreverently played "deaf adder." And yet, with such unmanageable authorities to deal with, Mark Antony's eloquence prevailed.

"Stop!" cried Juan Diez, as the fosterer turned his back sullenly round, to wait while the condemned soldier conveyed to his orphan a

* *Anglice*, "Do ye understand?"

last farewell.—“Will nothing but this Frenchman’s life acquit the service that I owe thee?”

“Nothing,” returned Mark Antony.—“What other favour could ye grant me? Hav’n’t I the free use of my limbs, and ten dollars besides in my pocket?”

“Well—if it must be so—I will not let thee leave me in thy debt. Frenchman—thou art saved!”

“Then, Pauline, thou mayst yet receive from living lips, that blessing which a dying hand was tracing!” and springing from the bench, the *voltigeur* flung his arms around the fosterer, and pressed him to his bosom.

“Heaven forbid,” said Juan Diez, addressing Mark Antony—“that I had many creditors like thee! Well—no matter—have I now acquitted all claims upon me to the full?”

“No, *Empecinado*,” I returned—“I am as yet unpaid.”

“Go on, my friend.—What wouldst thou have me do?” said the Spaniard, graciously.

“Complete the favour—and add liberty to life.”

Juan Diez paused—looked at *El Manco* and the *Cura*.

“What shall I answer? I swore that nothing should avert his doom—and thought nothing could have shaken the resolution.”

“I *know* that nothing human should have shaken *mine*,” observed *El Manco*. “Life spared, liberty is a trifle—grant it, Juan Diez, if you please.”

“And I,” said the *Cura*, “will not object.—Great men have occasional weaknesses, and at times, I have found myself rather softer hearted than I should be. *Empecinado*, ’tis sinful to break an oath,—but Holy Church is merciful.—Hang me the first half dozen of these robbers who fall into your hands, and thou shalt have absolution; the penance—that thou shalt fast from flesh meat the first day when you cannot conveniently find it.”

At this merciful annunciation of the worthy clerk, Juan Diez laughed.

“I thank thee, *Cura*,” he replied; “but when I make my shrift, I will seek another confessor. Come, the morning passes, and ’tis time we were wending towards the mountains. Gentlemen,” he continued, turning to the fosterer and me, “our short companionship is about to terminate. If gallantry could attach me to brave men, and make me regret a separation, I should have abundant reason to grieve that I am about to lose ye; but, sooth to say, for our wild warfare you are not exactly fitted, and, like my excellent camarado, the *Cura*, you have a little too much softness at the heart. From intelligence I have received since we first met, I would advise you to abandon your original intention of crossing the mountains to Valencia. *Suchet*’s movements are suspicious—the roads are unsafe—crowded with *ladrones*—all desperate men, who would respect no passports, were they guaranteed by every authority in Spain. If you choose to persevere——”

“No, Don Juan,” I replied; “I will return to the allied cantonments. I have, in obedience to orders, endeavoured to reach my

regiment. I have failed; and, to say truth, I don't regret it. I shall resign my commission, if required, and serve under Lord Wellington a volunteer."

"Such being your intention, I would recommend that you return by the shortest and openest route. Should you touch upon a French outpost, this gentleman will protect you," and he pointed to Lieutenant Cammaran; "if you fall in with the allied cavalry, you will return the compliment; and should you tumble upon any friends of ours during the journey, you carry a passport that every partida on the peninsula will respect. Ho, Diego! bring me yonder writing-case. Fortunately, sir, you do not require it at present," and the Empecinado smiled as he addressed the reprieved one.

"Thanks to these noble Englishmen, I do not," returned the lieutenant.

"I beg your pardon," replied Mr. O'Toole; "I can't exactly tell what countryman I am, because I was born at sea."

"Wine!" cried the Empecinado. "Ho, landlord! stir thyself. Thou know'st my taste—none of that sorry stuff that would poison a Manolo. Let's have some fit for christian men. Remember, honest Gonsalvez, thou hast rarely such honourable guests. Here are three foreigners of distinction; and there a holy churchman. Of my friend here," and he pointed to El Manco, "I shall say nothing; and modesty forbids me speaking of myself. Come, let thy wine be good, or, by San Juan, we'll quit thy venta altogether."

With a low bow, the alarmed innkeeper hurried off. As he passed us, the expression of his countenance was ridiculously intelligent; and to the last sentence of the Empecinado, said, or seemed to say, "I wish to Heaven you would!"

The wine that the host produced no doubt was excellent, for its effect upon the company was marvellous. Juan Diez jested with the Curate; the Frenchman and fosterer conversed in broken English; occasionally El Manco vouchsafed a relaxation of the facial muscles, which he intended to represent a smile. All seemed happy but the innkeeper; and on his dull countenance terror and anxiety were imprinted. On him the lively sallies of his distinguished visitors were lost; and the only occurrence at which his sombre features lightened was when a guerilla entered the apartment, and announced that the horses were saddled in the yard.

While the party resumed their cloaks and weapons, the Empecinado beckoned to me, and I retired with him to a corner.

"Is there aught in which I can oblige you? Speak freely," he said.

I thanked him, and answered him in the negative.

"How is thy pocket lined, my child?" was his next question.

I assured him my purse was liberally supplied.

"I can spare thee a dozen pistoles," he added.

I acknowledged the kindness, but declined the offered subsidy.

He looked suspiciously around, and then took a packet from his bosom, and placed it in my hand, unseen.

"Conceal these papers, and deliver them carefully, with my duty to

Lord Wellington. They are written in cipher; but I know that he has a key that will unravel their contents. I feel assured that they contain important information, for I have learned through a channel where I never was deceived, that the expedition of La Coste was originally intended for no other purpose, than to enable him to communicate with another commandant to whom he was directed to transfer these papers safely. A movement of two strong detachments to secure the delivery of a letter is a sufficient guarantee, my friend, that the contents are momentous. Let us go. El Manco is impatient. Outside the village we part—thou, to the low country; I to the mountains.”

“Art thou hearing a confession in yonder corner, Empecinado?” inquired the monk.

“No, Cura, I would not usurp the functions of the church with one of its brightest ornaments immediately beside me. I was merely giving my young friend here a slight hint of what Juan Diez has experienced, and I’ll once more repeat it.” Then, turning to me, he added aloud, “’Tis an uncertain world, and many a brilliant opening in a young life has darkly closed. Should fortune frown, friends fall off, enemies prevail—in short, should thy young career be darkened as mine was suddenly, take thy chance with Juan Diez; and thou, my friend,” and the Spaniard addressed the fosterer, “thou, too, wilt any time be welcome; and, as we crossed the Sedana, we’ll swim or sink together.”

So saying, the guerilla pointed to the door. We took the hint, and passed on. There the worthy host stood, cap in hand, bowing us out, as it became customers of distinction. I would have stopped and demanded a reckoning, but Mark Antony was of opinion that such a proceeding might have been an offence in the sight of our patrons and protectors. Certainly, I saw no bill paid or delivered; and I have reason to believe that the guerilla leaders were of the school of ancient Pistol, and consequently gentlemen of too good taste to stoop to an inquiry into accounts. And yet proofs of disinterested regard were not wanting to Senhor Velasquez. I overheard the Empecinado, as he passed, impress on this favoured innkeeper the immediate necessity of replenishing his bins with better wine, and restoring his stable-loft, which needed repair sorely. In my presence certainly none of the circulating medium passed; and, to use fashionable parlance, I verily believe the unfortunate proprietor of the posada was regularly victimized by all and every.

We entered the court-yard; and, thank Heaven, for the last time. A score of guerillas, mounted and dismounted, were in waiting. Cammaran passed through with averted eyes; but I ventured a look at the well-remembered spot which, within eight-and-forty hours, had witnessed a double execution. The voltigeurs were lying as they fell; the bodies weltering in a pool of blood, or exhibiting, in other cases, no mark of violence whatever. One I passed by was a mere lad. His death must have been instantaneous—one fracture in the jacket was opposite the heart—the countenance was tranquil; and a smile played upon the lip. Could that be death? I knew it was, or I could have

fancied well that he was dreaming of absent friends, and calmly indulging in a siesta.

I was delighted when we cleared the court-yard. El Manco and the Cura were waiting for us—presently, Juan Diez rode up; and, followed by an escort of some score of cavalry, we, for the last time, passed along the street of Villa Moro.

I had witnessed enough of guerilla life to render it thoroughly disgusting. War at best is bad; but “war to the knife” is only tolerable for savages. All the romance of *partida* daring had passed away. I had seen it in its naked light, and found its real character—a ruthless, reckless disregard to every feeling which binds mankind by a common tie—by turns suffering without complaint, and inflicting without compunction. Such were my impressions as I slowly rode along the village street; and had they needed any confirmation, the scene reserved for me would have been quite enough.

On the huge beech tree I had already remarked in front of the house of the chief magistrate, three human bodies were suspended. The Empecinado's passing observation, and El Manco's sarcastic address while dooming the unhappy offenders, came back vividly to my recollection. The sentence had indeed been executed to the very letter, and alcade, postmaster, and muleteer, were hanging precisely as the “maimed one” had decreed it.

The worst feature of the savage picture remained—six wretched orphans who had witnessed the expiring agonies of their father were still screaming from the windows from which they had seen him die, and from fear, insensibility, or both, their immediate neighbours dared not, or did not, offer the slightest mark of sympathy under a bereavement that would have touched all but savage hearts. The fosterer turned pale; the Frenchman shuddered; the Empecinado regarded the dead men with a marble look.

“El Manco,” observed the Cura with a smile, “Jack Hangman has done thy bidding, and the alcade overtops his friends.”

“Ay,” returned the “maimed one;” “this ever be the fate of traitors! Would that every oak in Spain bore such acorns as yonder beech tree!”

I was sick, nauseated, disgusted. Death—death in every shape! and from the bottom of my heart, I blessed God that my acquaintance with my excellent friends was to determine so speedily. Until we cleared the village I preserved an unbroken silence; and when Juan Diez pointed to a place where our respective roads branched off at the distance of a furlong, my bosom felt as if it were lightened of a load, and, as Doctor Pangloss says, “I breathed again.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE GUERRILLA'S GIFT.

“ Bring forth the horse!—the horse was brought ;
In truth, he was a noble steed.”

MAZEPPA.

A FEW minutes' easy riding brought us to the spot where the roads diverged, and where it had been previously arranged that we should part company. We took leave of El Manco and the Cura; the fosterer and Frenchman turning their horses' heads in the direction of Toledo, while the *partidas* took the mountain route. Consequently, the Empecinado and I were left alone, the escort passing on, with the exception of a single horseman.

“ I know not wherefore, Mr. O'Halloran, but I feel more reluctance in saying the word 'farewell' than is my wont. The chances against our ever meeting in this world are enormous. Well, it matters not—'tis but a too frequent occurrence in life's history—the parting from those we esteem. Believe me, I shall ever look back on our brief acquaintance with pleasure, and wish you the best fortunes that attend a soldier—death or distinction. If I live, you will hear of the Empecinado. The tale may not be flattering; it may be of enemies destroyed, of villages laid in ashes. Men will speak of him as of a demon, and women cross themselves when they hear his name pronounced; and yet, Mr. O'Halloran, I was once such another as thyself. Mine, at thy own age, was the same ardent and disinterested courage, that at the *posada* risked life to save a stranger; and when the flush of blood had cooled, I would have recoiled, like thyself, from treading on a worm. And I was happy. I had a home on the sweet banks of the Huebra. I had a wife—a child. The Madonna's features at the altar, where we plighted our bridal vows, were not lovelier than Camilla's—the infant's on the holy Virgin's knees, not sweeter than my boy's. I lost both, Mr. O'Halloran—lost them—but *don't ask how!* In one brief day, Juan Diez's nature changed, and he became what he is, cold to the misery he inflicts on others, from the fearful remembrance of what he underwent himself. But enough; sometimes recall the Empecinado to thy recollection, and think on the inn of Villa Moro. Thou shalt have one token to bring me to thy memory—'tis this horse. He is a fitting gift; black as the rider he carried in safety through as great extremity—ay, even as that we encountered the first morning that we met.”

I thanked him warmly, but declined to accept the charger.

"Well, it would appear that in turn Juan Diez is to ask a favour and be refused," he remarked, with an appearance of disappointment.

"Not so, Empecinado. I am too grateful for the past to incur fresh obligations. Why, look but at the value of the animal! My foster brother, as we rode together, was observing, that he doubted whether there was a more beautiful charger in Spain."

"I question if there be; and yet I got him cheap enough. He cost me but a three hours' ride. To be sure, the night was dark, and the road the worst on the frontier. He was the favourite steed of one of Spain's worst enemies; and the pistols, which you will find loaded in the holsters, were a gift from Napoleon to his minion. On the borders of Portugal I cut off a small detachment, escorting plundered property for better security to Ciudad Rodrigo. Of these spoils, Junot was the chief proprietor. I divided them among my band, but kept this charger, partly from personal regard for the French marshal, and partly as a memento of my success."

Still I declined the Empecinado's present.

"Well, let us change the terms. If you will not receive, you shall purchase; for I am determined to get rid of him. Are you aware that I have increased my stud this morning by eighty-three? I think I can spare one. Come, will you accept or purchase?"

I smiled; and jestingly replied that a long price was beyond the means of a young subaltern.

"But we can afford *long credit*," said the Empecinado, in the same playful mood.

"Worse still, Don Juan. My father is an old soldier, and in his catalogue of military offendings, debt holds a prominent place."

"Pause, my friend, until you hear the terms of sale. To your companion, I owe a life. His shall be the horse. Settle the price with him, and to *him* transfer the value. But no more of this. The roads are sometimes puzzling to a stranger, and that follower of mine"—he pointed to the mounted guerilla—"will accompany you to the first town where mules and a guide are procurable. You may trust him implicitly; in everything he will direct you; he is true as steel, and could lead you blindfolded from one end of Toledo to the other."

He pressed my hand, sprang into the saddle of the troop-horse I had just vacated, and, with a kind adieu, cantered after his companions, who were now fully half a mile ahead, and, in a round trot, hurrying towards the highlands. A turn in the road speedily concealed him—and it was the last I ever saw of Juan Diez.

I soon overtook my fellow-travellers. On what subjects they had previously occupied themselves I cannot guess, but my advent caused the fosterer to be rather anxious to hurry what seemed an undecided monetary transaction to its close.

"Oh! the divil a *skurrick* they would leave ye—the thieves!" observed Mark Antony to Lieutenant Cammaran.

"*Skurreeke!*" repeated the Frenchman,—“what you mean by *skurreeke?*”

"Not a music," said the fosterer, in explanation.

"Music—music!" and Lieutenant Cammaran shrugged his shoulders.

"That is—not the king's picture in your pocket, to keep the devil out of it," continued Mark Antony.

"The devil in my pocket, and the king to keep him out—I do not understand at all," said the Frenchman, with a sigh.

"Oh," cried the fosterer, in despair, "it's all useless knocking sense into the head of a foreigner. What a loss it is the man does not speak Irish, and I'd make him comprehend me in a jiffy. I was just mentioning, that as these guerillas had cleaned him out, he would be all the better of five or six dollars till he got home, poor fellow. But why are ye riding the dark gentleman's horse? Lord, what a figure! If I ever get hanged for horse-stealing, it will be for borrowing such another. But where's that Mister Empecinado, as they call him?"

"Trotting as briskly to the mountains as a thick-winded French troop-horse will carry him," I replied.

"Do you mean the one you rode?"

"I mean it;—we have made an exchange."

"An exchange?" The fosterer gave a whistle. "So it was jockeying you were? Well, God sees I never suspected that Mister Diez was in the line, and fancied that he used halters on two-legged animals only. Did you stand a knock?—and what did he allow ye for the old trooper?"

"Nothing."

"Well, let me see if he's all right. You offered him *eighty*?—and you'll pay the money if anybody leaves you a fortune."

"Eighty!—Pshaw! Look again, Mark."

The fosterer made a circuit, and examined that horse which erstwhile had not borne "the weight of Antony," but the Duc d'Abrantes.

"Oh, upon my conscience, I'm fairly puzzled. He's up to fourteen stone with fox-hounds; and, unless he's a deceiver, he has *the go* in him. May be, ye promised a *hundred*?"

"A hundred! Why, Mark, I fancied you knew something of a horse—a *hundred*?"

"Stop for a minute. Mister Cammaran, would ye be so civil as to hold the bridle?" and down got the fosterer. "I'll just slip my hands over his hocks. Clean as a whistle! What's that, inside the off leg?—It's a lump of clay. Feaks, I thought it looked like a splint at first. Did you examine his wind?"

"Never asked a question about it," I observed, carelessly.

"Then ye'r done to a turn. Oh! Mister Empecinado, may the devil's luck attend ye! Spakin people fair and asy, and only waiting to walk into them afterwards! Did ye even get an engagement?"

"Not a line;—I took the horse on chance!"

"Feaks! and ye might as well, I fancy; for I suppose if he was a regular roarer" (here be it understood the horse and not the Empecinado was meant), "all the attorneys in Connaught couldn't find Mister Diez out, and serve him with a *latitat*."

"But what is the horse worth, Mark? Never mind *latitats* and attorneys."

"Worth? In Balinasloe he would fetch a hundred readily."

"Only a hundred?"

‘ Well, if he took the pound-wall kindly, ye might lay on thirty more. Did he gave you a dacent luck-penny?’

“ Not a farthing,” I replied.

“ Well, after all, the Spaniards are shabby divils in horse-dealing.”

“ Mr. O’Toole,” I said gravely,—“ without allusions to luck-pennies, pound-walls, splints or spavins,—what is this horse worth?”

Mark Antony scratched his head, an invariable remedy resorted to by an Irishman in a puzzle.

“ If he’s all right—feeds well—”

“ Come, come—take all for granted.”

“ Well,” said Mark Antony, “ he’s value for a hundred and fifty, or he’s the biggest thief on earth. But I know there’s not a wink on Mr. Diez, and he laid it on pretty heavy.”

“ Which, light or heavy, you ingrate, will be yours,” and I repeated the terms of the bargain.

The fosterer was confused.

“ Well, in faith, Master Hector, they’re the quarest people to deal with I ever met with. One while ye’r drinking with them fair and easy; the next jumping into a river to save ye’r life. Here, half-a-score of men are shot; there, another batch are hanged. The fellow that sleeps beside you to-night is dead as a mackarel the next morning. All—hanging and shooting—and you can nather make head nor tail of what it’s all about. That *critch** they call El Manco strings up the postmaster, I suppose, because he mislays a letter; and the Curate throttles the mule-driver for no other reason than that he delivered another safely. Troth, I’m right glad that we have parted company, although gratefully obliged to Mr. Diez for his civility. Indeed, I think he’s the best of the batch. El Manco has the gallows in his face; and if it wouldn’t be sinful to spake ill of the clergy, that father what-doye-call-him in the colonel’s coat, is one of the loosest-looking parish-priests I ever came across. But, come, let us jog on; the evening appears gloomy, and the Lord only knows where we are to put up to-night. If one could get into some quiet house for a wonder—not that I expect to sleep—for sorra thing I’ll drame of for a month of Sundays, but gallowses, guerillas, dead men, and every kind of divilry besides.”

Before Mark Antony had done speaking, the partida rode up, pointed to the dark appearance of the sky, and intimated that we had three leagues to ride before we should reach our intended quarters. We took the hint accordingly, and spurred forward in the hope of reaching our halting place before the rain came on.

We were disappointed. On the verge of the horizon, distant lightning began to scintillate like northern-lights; and, hardly audible, now and again the growl of a coming storm fell upon the ear. Momentarily the flashes became more vivid, the thunder became more distinct, large drops fell, and the guide declared that the tempest must burst immediately, and the first shelter we could reach would be a happy deliverance. There was a venta immediately beside us. It was

* *Anglicè*—“cripple.”

remote, ill-kept, and bore but an indifferent reputation. If we could put up with bad fare and other inconveniences, there we would find shelter. If, however, we would risk a drenching for more comfort, we must abide the storm, and push on. We held a brief consultation. Suddenly the sky appeared to open; a flash of blue lightning issued from the riven cloud—we felt its heat distinctly; a peal of thunder, such as I had never heard before, succeeded; and with one voice we cried out for the neighbouring venta. The guerilla turned instantly sharp off into a narrow and neglected road, diverging on the left from the main route. We followed on the spur, and just as the rain began to fall we galloped into the yard of an inn, which had been once an establishment of considerable extent.

Unpromising as it might appear, that evening it was eagerly desired. A furlong off we saw half-a-dozen horsemen spurring down the hill, and evidently bound for the same destination. As precedence belongs to the first comers, we were determined to secure that best point in law—possession; and while the guerilla and Mark Antony led the horses to the stable, the French voltigeur and I entered the house, occupied the best corners of a bad kitchen, and made immediate inquiries into the actual state of the larder and wine bins. Alas! neither question was replied to satisfactorily. All was answered in the past. On Tuesday, there had been a side of goat—three travelling merchants pronounced it excellent; on Wednesday, the same travellers finished a pig—the best the landlord had killed since St. Stephen's; on Thursday, there had been partridges; (Friday, being a meagre day, was omitted in the account;) on Saturday, pigeons and a podrida. Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, every thing was also excellent, and so varied that the host could not correctly enumerate the delicacies under which the table groaned. But, unluckily, to-day, and by a most calamitous fatality, nothing was to be had, good, bad or indifferent!

Before this miserable report had been concluded, a bustle in the yard announced the arrival of the wayfarers whom we had observed pricking down the hill; and while we were still listening to some wretched expedients which the landlord was proposing as an apology for a supper, two of the new comers made their *entrée*. They approached the fire, after having laid their wet riding cloaks aside; and the difference between the external appearances of the twain was so very ridiculous, that, by mutual impulse, Cammaran and I interchanged a smile.

One seemed an hidalgo of the Quixotic school—a thin, tall, shabby half-starved looking gentleman. His gait was stiff and lofty; and at first, the unhappy man seemed to labour under a delusion that we would resign a corner in his favour. Speedily that error of opinion was removed; and he ascertained, that upon us the imprint of his dignity was lost. He therefore contented himself with taking a place before the fire, demanding, in lordly tones, attendance, and more fuel,—“but none did come, though he did call for them.”

The other was a round, stumpy, well-fed, happy-looking little man, now touching close upon the grand climacteric. The world had evi-

dently gone well with him, to judge by what, in Ireland, they would term "a cozey-character" of countenance. He poked the fire, but complained not; talked of the wild evening, and blessed the saints he was under shelter; hoped, rather than expected, that we might obtain a supper; concluding with a Christian-like expression of resignation, that really would have done honour to a Turk. New appeals were in the interim made to the landlord. The hidalgo swaggered; well, as the fancy say, it was "no go." The voltigeur stormed—the answer invariably was, "I don't understand ye." The little man was responded to by a shrug; and all we could learn from him of the posada was, that the past had been a land of Goshen—the future bade fair to exceed it—but that the present was a dreary blank, which might be beneficially employed for the soul's health in the shape of mortification. As for me, I should have objected, in Falstaff's vein, to fast "upon compulsion," when the door opened, and in came our partida escort, the fosterer, and three of the most ferocious-looking scoundrels I ever laid an eye upon, "armed to the teeth."

"Why, how now," exclaimed one of them,—“nothing like supper yet?”

"Don't be in any hurry," said the little man; "Senhor!—there was one here, I think last Tuesday, and very excellent—roast pig, a podrida, and some partridges; and should you happen to pass this way within a fortnight, you'll come in for a leg of a very promising porker, provided they can only catch him in the beech-wood."

The strangers began to storm; the host appeared, reluctantly underwent a searching examination; and nothing transpired, but that there had been, and would be, entertainment. A most unsatisfactory discussion ensued. The hectoring of the ill-looking gentlemen, who had just joined us, had no effect; and as they say in England, that there is a certain "Duke Humphrey," who keeps a most inhospitable table, I began to fancy that he had another establishment in the peninsula, and that for our sins, we had unluckily stumbled on the house; but, glory to the Empecinado! I was again beholden to him for a supper.

Taking the host aside, the partida commenced a whispering conversation. What was the subject none could guess, but momentarily the argument waxed warmer. The guerilla gesticulated—the landlord drew up his shoulders to his ears. At last the horseman's countenance assumed a look of ferocity that threatened ruin to the venta and all appertaining to the same; and plunging his hand into his bosom, he suddenly produced—not a knife, as the host apprehended, to judge from the rapidity of his retreat—but a paper, of small dimensions, whose writing appeared to possess a cabalistic influence.

"Read!" cried the partida, furiously. "And if thou wouldst not have this old building reduced to ashes, and afterwards swing at thy own sign-post before eight and forty hours pass, lead these gentlemen to a fitting chamber, and prepare their supper incontinently. Dost thou hesitate, fellow?—Be it so—I will faithfully acquaint the Empecinado how willingly his orders were obeyed."

“By every saint in the calendar!” exclaimed the unhappy innkeeper, ‘you wrong me, sir. A dog sent hither by that most respected gentleman, would be more welcome than another man’s horse. I try to obey your orders. Oh! that we had but killed the pig this morning! But the will of Heaven be done!”

The effect of Juan Diez’ name upon the host was scarcely more potent than it appeared upon the guests generally. The hidalgo lost a moiety of his self-importance, the happy-looking little man became uncomfortable, the audacity of the spadon vanished, and every look in the company was turned deferentially towards me, the Frenchman; and the fosterer.

That this honest innkeeper had not held promise only to the ear, was forthwith evidenced. Culinary operations commenced, and the whole venta was immediately in an uproar. After despatching a sorry meal of black bread and goat’s-milk cheese, washed down with a glass or two of *aqua ardiente*, the ill-visaged travellers pleaded business, and took their departure, although the rain fell fast, and the next house of call was more than two leagues distant. Presently the host appeared, and, with a profound bow, announced that the chamber for our reception was in readiness. We rose and left the kitchen, and were conducted into a half-ruined sort of hall, to which, however, a tolerable wood fire and spread table gave a comfortable air. A leathern bottle was on the table, to which we immediately applied; and, with an assurance that all haste consistent with superior cookery should be employed in the preparation of an excellent supper, the host left us to ourselves.

“Not bad wine, by Saint Anthony!” exclaimed Lieutenant Cammaran.

“You have had some experience of Juan Diez as an enemy,” I replied; “now what think you of him as a friend?”

“Think of him?” said the voltigeur: “why, that I would rather travel Spain with his letter of introduction in my pocket, than even with an autograph of the Emperor’s. He is a most estimable gentleman, were it not for that infernal fancy he has of using hemp and gunpowder so liberally. No matter: as my neck’s safe, here’s your health, *Empecinado*.”

“But,” observed the fosterer, “did you remark the effect the first whisper of his name had upon the thieves who set out upon their travels for the evening? They’re regular highwaymen, for a hundred, —up to everything, from stripping a priest of his vestment, to stealing a pinafore from a child. By the Lord! I thought they would have choked themselves struggling with cheese that would have soled a shoe. But here’s the old fellow of the inn,—I hope to tell us something about supper.”

The host announced the welcome tidings that in a few minutes our repast should be paraded: and further added, that he was commissioned to inquire whether we would permit the two gentlemen who had remained in the kitchen, to join our company—and the host was ready, even upon oath, to guarantee their respectability. The lineage of the hidalgo was so ancient, that all traces of it were lost; and of the

doctor, Fame spake loudly, as a personage who could do anything but raise the dead. To this double application I returned a gracious reply ; and in five minutes a powerful odour of garlic and onions was felt in the direction of the kitchen, and the inkeeper re-entered with a huge tureen, heralding to our presence the descendant of Don Quixote, and his friend the short stout gentleman

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FARTHER ADVENTURES--MEMOIR OF THE VOLTIGEUT.

“ She turned her face unto the wall,
Her colour changed to pallid clay ;
Long ere the dews began to fall,
The flower of Ettrick lifeless lay.”

THE QUEEN'S WAKE.

NEVER was a Lord Mayor's dinner put on a table with more ceremony, than that with which our supper was served up ; and yet, the whole entertainment was embodied in one tureen. What its contents were, none, save those who designed and fabricated the medley, could even pretend to guess at. In an ocean of oleaginous liquid, a lean fowl was floating, surrounded by shapeless substances, which might possibly be either “ fish, flesh, or good salt herring.” It looked grease, and smelt garlic. The host, however, praised it excessively, and so would an Esquimaux ; but I am morally certain, it was the last thing, in the shape of a light supper, that either Paris or Abernethy would have recommended to a dyspeptic patient.

And yet it was marvellous how much the lean hidalgo and the little doctor, “ who all but raised the dead,” managed to consume, and seemed delighted with their fare. To me, it was an unspeakable relief when the abominable composition was totally removed ; and indeed, for an hour afterwards, the apartment was not endurable.

Early, the hidalgo and physician were summoned to their dormitory and withdrew ; and we agreed generally that it was a prudent step on the gentleman's part, the mess he had swallowed considered, to sleep with his doctor in the apartment.

From the general appearance of the establishment, we had no reason to expect that the sleeping department would be an exception to the rest, and consequently we were in no hurry to make the experiment. Some very wretched wine was exchanged for better, on a hint from the guerilla, that there was such a person as the Empecinado in existence. The Frenchman was exceedingly companionable ; the night was wet and stormy ; the partida heaped on wood, as if the host had

been proprietor of a forest; and we still sate on, regardless of sundry intimations from the innkeeper, that the clock of a neighbouring monastery had "gone twelve."

"And was this your first adventure, gentlemen?" inquired the voltigeur.

"Our first in Spain," I replied; "and certainly, in no smaller portion of human life could more unexpected incidents have been crowded, than into those which have just occurred."

"It is true," returned the Frenchman; "the opening of my military career was sufficiently eventful, but yours exceeds it far."

"May I ask where the scene lay?" I demanded of the lieutenant.

"It commenced," he replied, "under the most brilliant successes which ever intoxicated a conqueror—in Germany—only to witness the greatest reverses which ever overtook insatiable ambition. I served, gentlemen, in that accursed country, where the bones of three hundred thousand gallant men are blanching—that grave to the glory of France, that boundary to the ambition of Napoleon—Russia."

"And were you engaged in that luckless expedition?" I inquired.

"I was. Mine is but a brief history; and as you heard me, under peculiar circumstances, make allusions to my orphan child, I will, in a few words, tell you her father's story, and briefly detail the adventures of

The Voltigeur.

"Like most of the distinguished officers in our service—but do not, gentlemen, suppose for a moment that I include myself in the list—I am humbly born. My mother was the daughter of a vine-dresser—my father, ranger of a forest. You see that I lay no claim to ancestry—but the villagers assert that my parents were the handsomest and fondest couple in the commune. Their course of love and life was brief alike. My mother died in giving me birth—and three years afterwards my father was shot accidentally by a *chasseur*, while hunting in the forest of which he had the charge.

The grief felt and expressed by the Seigneur at this unfortunate occurrence was deep and lasting. At once he adopted me, and I became an inmate of the chateau. There I was brought up and educated; and having evinced an early taste for music, that talent was cultivated, and at eighteen I played on several instruments, and my singing was particularly admired.

The Seigneur had an only child, a daughter. He had been early left a widower; and naturally of retired habits and sombre disposition, he lived in comparative seclusion, dividing his time between two all-engrossing objects, the chase and his daughter's education. Pauline was now fourteen, and of very opposite temperament to her father—sprightly, spirited, and affectionate—every action was the effect of impulse. Poor Pauline! like many in the world, she acted first, and thought of it afterwards.

With the father and the child I was equally a favourite. To the

forest I accompanied the Seigneur, when he hunted ; and for Pauline, I dressed her flower-garden, sang *chanson d'amour*, and played in the evening on the flute. How long, in that remote domain, I might have continued to dream life thus away I know not. The great event in my history occurred—I was drawn in the conscription, and the guitar was exchanged for the musket.

For three years I followed the eagles of the Emperor. Battle after battle was won, and kingdom after kingdom submitted, and was partitioned or disposed of in whatever way was pleasing to the conqueror. Europe was almost at Napoleon's feet ; and, save to England alone—that indomitable enemy to his colossal strides towards the subjugation of a world—his voice was law. After the signature of the treaty of Tilsit, there came a short and deceitful calm. Many of the soldiery obtained leave to revisit that land a Frenchman loves so dearly. I was of the number ; and one sweet September evening, he who had left the chateau, half-huntsman half-troubadour, presented himself to the Seigneur and Pauline, a sous-lieutenant.

What a change three years had wrought upon us all ! The Seigneur had become grey as a badger. I left Pauline a girl—I found her a woman ; and the bud of beauty was now mature. On me the alteration was still more striking ; and in the countenance of the dark-browed soldier, bronzed by climate, and marked with a sword-scar, it would have been difficult to recall the laughing features of the youth, whose morn was passed idly in the chase, and his evening in singing love-ditties to the moon.

The poor Seigneur knew nothing of the world. The hunter boy was a safe companion for his daughter—the soldier a dangerous one. No suspicion crossed his mind. I again took up my residence in the chateau. Pauline was more than pretty ; the place was sadly remote ; we were both musical—youth, loveliness, and music ! Pshaw ! these cleared his way, and Love slipped in.

The Seigneur was rich—and on wealth he set great value. His lineage was old ; and nobody in Provence attached more importance to descent. He had began to fancy that it would soon be time to look for an alliance for his daughter ; and he occasionally made sly inquiries touching the ancestry and rent-rolls of his neighbours. Great, however, was our surprise, one afternoon, when he suddenly announced that he had nearly concluded a marriage treaty between Pauline and a wealthy proprietor. This information, at first astounding, only precipitated what would have more tardily occurred. We were married secretly, the next evening ; under other circumstances, we might have been dreaming of it for another fortnight.

It was fortunate for us that the Seigneur was proverbially slow in all his movements ; and his intended son-in-law equally cautious. Neither would stir an inch, excepting under the especial direction of his notary. All the time, the intimation simply that a hymeneal treaty was in progress being deemed quite enough to render Pauline a consenting party. The suitor was a fool, who considered every woman would feel honoured by being allied to him ; and the simple Seigneur could never comprehend, that any daughter should or could

do otherwise than what her father exactly pointed out." Poor man! while he was arranging matters to secure a son, he would have come nearer to the mark, had he been making preparations for the reception of a granddaughter.

Lost in lovers' dreams, Pauline and I saw day after day pass; and frequently, when we spoke of a discovery, which circumstances would render inevitable before long, we laughed and trembled at the effect it was likely to produce upon her father. It is true the event was somewhat distant; and as long as it were possible, the secret must be kept. But a more sudden blow was impending—it fell, and both were rendered miserable.

If ever man were drunk with fortune, it was Napoleon. He had reached the highest pinnacle of human fortune, that the wildest ambition could soar to; yet, blinded by prosperity so dazzling, he was dissatisfied,—and, forming the most romantic projects, like a desperate gambler, he risked all that he had gained—"weared his good genius, and provoked his fate." In a word, he first commenced an unjust and impolitic war here, in the peninsula, and followed that madness out by a still madder act—the invasion of Russia.

Although for more than a year, the hostile attitudes assumed by Napoleon and Alexander, showed mistrust on both sides, few suspected that the crisis should come so suddenly. The remoteness of the Seigneur's estate—the little intercourse he held with any who knew what was passing in the world, left us in blissful ignorance. And the first intimation I had, that I was about to enter on a bloody and disastrous campaign, was a peremptory command to set out for Dantzic at an hour's notice. The sudden order prevented Pauline and me from taking any steps to communicate the secret of our marriage; and at the moment when woman requires the greatest attention from a husband, I was obliged to abandon the home of my youth, and her whom I had sworn to cherish and protect.

Already the routes through Germany were crowded with enormous masses of fighting men. Never, in modern warfare, was such an army collected and set in motion. Conceive more than five hundred thousand combatants, of all arms—including sixty thousand horsemen, and twelve hundred pieces of artillery! The very enormity of the vast machine would have required a superhuman mind to direct it.

I need not dwell upon the campaign. On we went!—on—on—on! as if urged by an overruling fatality. The Russians prudently retired—that was called fear—the weather for a few days was moderate; and our leader madly fancied that the horrors of the icy north were fabulous. Oh! how fatally that fallacy of his turned out!

I pass the less interesting portion of this tragic campaign. The mind that conceived the monstrous undertaking, could not be sane. The haughty assumption of the Emperor struck many a thinking soldier as being incompatible with the statesman's prudence; and when assuming the mantle of prophecy, and in reply to a temperate appeal, exclaiming, "a fatality involves them; let their destinies be

fulfilled!" he rejected conciliatory advances, and flung the scabbard from the sword, more than Talleyrand pronounced, that Fortune and he had shaken hands and parted; and the sad results of that marvellous aggression upon Russia proved its truth.

A circumstance occurred, that looked like an evil augury; and, to the superstitious, foreboded evil results. Although the month was July, at Pilyony a rain storm nearly overwhelmed the men and horses of a whole division. Of the latter, several hundreds were lost; and at Lismori, a thunderbolt fell into the bivouac of the Old Guard, and destroyed several of our veteran soldiers.

But the decree was passed; and our leader pushed forward where the finger of destiny pointed. At Witepsk, the enemy presented themselves in order of battle, after retiring, in perfect order, and holding every inch of forest through which we passed. That they were intimidated, was a manifest absurdity; their skirmishers held the ground boldly and freely,—mingled with ours as they advanced. From the audacity with which they awaited our approach, and singled out individuals, we lost some valuable officers; and in the very centre of his escort, General Roussel was pistoled by a Russian dragoon. It was evident that policy, not fear, induced the enemy to recede. In a cavalry affair, the next morning, a regiment of chasseurs were charged, and heavily cut up by some squadrons of the Cossack Guard, and nothing but the immediate support of an infantry corps saved them from destruction. Napoleon was a looker-on, and directed the movement by which the regiment was rescued.

On the heights beyond the Louchesa, we observed the whole Russian army in position. A battle would be received, and we bivouacked, waiting for morning, to fall on. At day-break we were under arms. Where was the enemy we were to assail? On the preceding night, Barclay de Tolly had abandoned his position; and that, too, with so little precipitation, that the very route he took was doubtful;—neither dismounted guns, nor dead horses, pointing the line of his retreat. The youngest soldier, as he passed over a country ravaged and deserted, began to suspect the reason that a conflict had been declined. It was masterly policy; and the sacrifices it cost in the outset, were amply repaid in the end.

At this period of the advance, we suffered dreadfully from heat and scarcity of water. Many a *vieille moustache* asserted that an Egyptian sun was more endurable. Then, the weather would change suddenly,—rain fall in torrents,—and, from the difficulty of the roads, render marching almost impracticable. We thought our hardships severe enough. Little did we imagine those that remained in store!

Smolensko was fought—and, after a doubtful contest, the victory was gained.—Gained! When the city could no longer be defended, the Russians fired it, simultaneously, in an hundred quarters; and the fruits of a bloody conflict was a town laid in ashes by the very men who held it so desperately to the last!

On other points, the French arms were equally successful; and here it was believed that Napoleon would pause; organize Poland—hold Riga, Witepsk, and Smolensko,—and wait the return of spring. But,

having dictated terms to the conquered, even in the palaces they had occupied—regardless of desert roads and coming winter, without magazines or hospitals, and, leaving the Moldavian army in his rear, he determined to march direct upon “the sacred city.” It was said, that the prudent of those around him, remonstrated strongly against this act of madness ; but the Emperor’s resolution was not to be shaken.

On we went ; and the Russians, to cover Moscow, received battle on the heights of Borodino. With nearly equal numbers, two hundred and fifty thousand combatants were for twelve hours engaged in murderous conflict. Night ended it. The victors bivouacked on the ground they had gained at a sacrifice that shocks humanity—and the vanquished retired in perfect order, leaving the conquerors a field of battle. O God ! such a field as the morning of the 8th disclosed !—sixty thousand dead or dying men, interspersed with five-and-twenty thousand horses.

Well, the road to Moscow was open, but every step we advanced showed the madness of the proceeding. If we reached a town, we found it in a blaze ; if we met a village, it was totally deserted. Cattle were driven off ; provisions burned or buried ; the peasantry had risen *en masse* ; and every man’s hand was against us ; but still our infatuated leader persevered in his mad career, and recklessly pushed on.

It was fondly supposed, that Moscow once gained, our hardships would terminate, and a winter of repose reward the privations we had undergone. That hope was false ; Moscow, like the meanest village we had seen ruined, was also devoted to destruction. We entered it at noon ; few inhabitants had remained ; and none were seen in the deserted streets but a few felons who had left the jails, and some wretched outcasts of the other sex. Every dwelling, from the palace of the noble to the shop of the meanest artisan, was abandoned. The churches alone contained any living occupants, and they were the wounded only, or those whom age or infancy had rendered incapable of retiring with the remainder of its inhabitants from the doomed city.

Although an army was in the place, still it looked a splendid desert. Every soldier whom you met was loaded with costly plunder. It appeared a city of enchantment. Houses, splendidly furnished, invited the passer to go in ; and he might have freely traversed every sumptuous room which the building contained, and met with nothing living. It was, in truth, a fearful picture of deserted magnificence.

Suddenly, an alarm was heard. It was not caused either by secret surprise, nor an approaching enemy. At several points a dense smoke was visible ; flames broke out in different quarters of the city ; no water was to be procured, nor engines could be found ; and a fearful rumour began to prevail, that Moscow had been determinately fired.

It was too true. By an act of desperate devotion, every private feeling had yielded to public necessity—the most extraordinary national sacrifice which history records was decreed and executed—and “the sacred city” was laid in ashes, by the hands of those who regarded it with a holy veneration, approaching to idolatry.

To Napoleon the destruction of Moscow was a blow neither expected nor remediable. The stake, for which he played the wildest game, was at the same moment, won and lost. To reach the city of the Czars was the object for which he cast every prudential consideration to the winds—and what resulted? He dated a few despatches from the ruins of a city, to gain which two hundred thousand soldiers were to form the sad consideration.

The fire momentarily increased—the wind rose, blew in a fatal direction, and the flames spread fearfully. There were quarters which the raging element had not reached, but incendiaries fired the houses, and the whole city was speedily sheeted in one broad blaze, far too irresistible for human agency to arrest. Then followed violence and rapine. Those of the inhabitants who had not removed, secreted themselves in vaulted cellars, or the remoter portions of their houses, most likely to afford concealment; while others remained before shrine and altar, trusting to their sanctity for protection. From all, the angry element obliged those unfortunates to retire. They were forced into streets where bands of drunken soldiers mingled with galley-slaves and robbers, launched by sad accident as a curse upon the world again, and maddened now by intoxication. With all the excesses of plunder, they mingled the most degrading and horrible debauchery. “Neither nobility of blood, the innocence of youth, nor the tears of beauty, were respected. The licentiousness was cruel and boundless; but it was inevitable, in a savage war, in which sixteen different nations, opposite in their manners and their language, thought themselves at liberty to commit every crime.”

That night I never rested for a second. Though removed from the immediate vicinity of the conflagration, the lurid glare of the burning city penetrated the closet in which I sought repose, and female shrieks, and deeper cries of murder, fell loud and frequent on the ear. To add to the horror of the hellish scene, even animal sufferings were added. The watch-dogs, chained at the doors, had not been liberated; and as the flames reached them, their howlings were heart-rending.

God forbid that I should ever witness such a scene again! The next day came. The fire raged more furiously than ever, and murder and violence, and every villany, continued. I strove, if possible, to fly from human crime and suffering; and in the evening found myself clear of the walls of Moscow, in a suburb totally detached, and, to all appearance, entirely deserted.

Generally, the houses were mean, and had belonged to the humbler classes, who live in the environs of a city. Here and there, houses enclosed with gardens and high walls were interspersed; and, as I afterwards understood, were residences of wealthy merchants, who neither would incur the expense or affect the display which the occupancy of nobler mansions within the walls demanded. I looked back—the city was in a blaze—a sheet of fire and smoke, by turns, as the flames were fed or smouldered. The lonely suburb, whither I had wandered, was deserted, but not ravaged. Indeed, here the plunderer would have only wasted time, when within there was so much to repay the most boundless cupidity.

Accident directed me: I turned down a narrow passage; a lane led to a garden-gate; it was open, and the ruins of what had been a pretty country house were visible. The garden was destroyed—the shrubs and fruit-trees broken—many hoof-marks were apparent in the soft earth; and litter strewed the ground, and showed, that the evening before the Emperor entered Moscow, an advanced picket had made the chateau and grounds its bivouac. No living thing was visible; a dog-chain hung beside the door of the ruined mansion. Even that was a mute testimony of abandonment.

I was still looking at the deserted building, and fancying the happy home it might have been but a few days since, when a wild and piercing shriek was heard from the rear; and a young girl rushed from behind the house, followed by two Polish lancers, and both were infuriated with brandy. One seized her in his arms. I called on him to desist; but he held her with a firmer grasp, while his companion confronted me—and in a moment both sabres were unsheathed, and we commenced a deadly combat. Of the two, I was the better swordsman;—pressed the villain hard—and would have cut him down.—I heard a wild scream,—a blow from behind stunned me—a dreamy recollection followed of others fighting. The rest is blank.

I awoke—where was I? Candles burned at my bed-side; and an old man, and a girl, particularly handsome, sate at either side.

“Where am I?” was my first question. The girl replied, in tolerable French, and assured me I was in perfect safety, and all around me were friends. Gradually, my memory came back; and in the young female at my side, I recollected her whom I had protected.

It appeared, that in the affray I had with the lancers, I had been cut down by a treacherous blow from the comrade of the fellow I was engaged with. The cries of the girl, and the clashing of sabres, alarmed the family, who came to my assistance too late to save me from injury, but in time to revenge what they believed to be, my death. The villains were despatched without mercy—their bodies concealed till night, and then carried to a distance, and thrown into a sewer,—a necessary precaution, to prevent the suspicion that might arise should they have been discovered, and their deaths have occasioned inquiry.

“Where was I? I looked around, and saw that the apartment was vaulted, and lighted by a lamp. Everything was not only comfortable, but luxurious—and Polowna—for so the fair girl who nursed me was designated, at my request explained the mystery.

Her father and kinsmen were merchants: and when Napoleon menaced Russia with invasion, with more forethought than was generally exercised, they prepared against a visitation that, though not probable, was still within the range of possibility. Beneath their country house, cellars of spacious size had been originally constructed, with a secret entrance, wherein to deposit merchandise which the Russian laws declared contraband. Though long disused, in this season of insecurity they were prepared for a different purpose. When the field of Borodino proved unsuccessful, and Napoleon approached

the sacred city, Strenowitz, as the merchant was called, had everything valuable transferred from the chateau to the cellars ; and having laid in all necessaries for supplying his family and servants during their confinement, the dwelling was apparently deserted,—and even those who resided in his immediate neighbourhood, believed that he had followed the example of the wealthier Moscowites, and removed into the interior. The destruction of the chateau, by the picket who had occupied it, added to the security of the family ;—a ruined house held out no inducement to the plunderer ; and, excepting the evening Polowna was surprised by the marauders who had wounded me, and paid the penalty with death, the concealment of Strenowitz escaped any visitation from the enemy, during the period that Napoleon continued to occupy his dearly-bought conquest.

My recovery was tedious,—the scull had been slightly fractured ; and hence great care was necessary. Never was a soldier more tenderly attended to ; and had I heart to spare, it should have been offered to Polowna. To quit my concealment would have compromised the safety of my young preserver ; and, indeed, until after Napoleon abandoned Moscow, and commenced his calamitous retreat, I should not have been able to leave my couch.

Too late the Emperor found the terrible truth confirmed, to which he had hitherto obstinately refused credence. We could no longer remain in that ruined capital, which he had risked everything to obtain ; and Lauriston's mission to Kutusoff proved a failure. The 22d of October was the day of our deliverance. The young guard retired from the ruins of Moscow ; and, in an hour afterwards, a tremendous explosion announced that the last work of destruction was completed, and the Kremlin was no more.

The retreat of the invading army forms a frightful picture of retributive suffering. It shall be passed over ;—one fact will tell its fearful history.—Four hundred thousand splendid soldiers, at the opening of the campaign, passed the Neimen : on the 13th of December, which may be taken as the termination of the retreat, scarcely twenty thousand men recrossed that fatal stream.

For my own part, I had long since been reported dead ; and when my health was sufficiently restored, when the exertions of my excellent protectors obtained my liberty, and I rejoined the skeleton of my regiment, I was looked upon by the few survivors as one returned from the grave. But every league that brought me nearer to France seemed to remove a weight from my bosom, and my heart beat lighter. Pauline, in all her pride of beauty, was before my eyes—and in fancy, I was a father. I obtained leave to return home for the recovery of my health—and I hurried to that home where the smiles of my young bride would welcome me. Alas ! Pauline was in the grave, and a broken-hearted old man and helpless orphan, occupied a dwelling in all the gloom of bereavement, which once was the abode of loveliness and plighted faith. I listened to the sad narration half stupified with grief. Pauline had confessed her secret marriage, and had been forgiven. The hour of trial came ; and, at that dreaded moment, the intelligence of my supposed death was rashly communicated—and it

killed her! Enough; I bore the visitation like a man; and when an order came to join a battalion of my regiment in Spain, I willingly obeyed it. You know the rest; and, but for you, if the dead are united in another world—as my heart fondly tells me that they are—I would have been with thee, Pauvre!

He stopped; a tear trickled down his cheek; and, to divert the sadness of his thoughts, I proposed that we should retire for the night. The host lighted us to a dirty and comfortless apartment; and, without undressing, we threw ourselves on the outside of the bed-coverings, and, wrapped in our cloaks, were speedily asleep. We were still fast as watchmen, when the guerilla roused us. For all, he had agreeable intelligence. There was a post established lately by General Laval, but two leagues off, occupied by a party of French lancers.—that the voltigeur could join easily. A few miles, in an opposite direction, a squadron of Julian Sanchez light cavalry were cantoned; and once with them, the fosterer and I would be in safety. Accordingly, after an early breakfast, we took leave of each other, each to follow out his respective fortunes, and, not improbably, meet again—upon a field of battle.

One thing I must not forget: when summoned to the court-yard to mount our horses, we found the hidalgo and his friend, the little physician, settling accounts with the worthy host. On certain charges in the score, the parties held very opposite opinions. A long and bootless argument ensued; and, as disputants occasionally will part, the monetary transaction of the morning seemed to have raised neither in the estimation of the other.

In turn I advanced to the landlord, paraded my purse, and demanded in what I was indebted for great hospitality, excellent wine, and a supper.

“That would kill the devil!” was an addition of the fosterer’s.

With a profound bow, the host begged to leave the consideration entirely to myself, and forthwith I produced a guinea. I never saw joy so strikingly displayed: every line of the landlord’s face expanded—the lip curled graciously—the eye sparkled; when a change as suddenly came over it, and the countenance at once changed to the very picture of despair. What could have caused this change? I turned my head. Immediately behind me the partida guide was standing, his finger in a monitory position, while his dark eye told the rest.

“Not for worlds,” faltered the unhappy man, “would I accept one real for any poor service I could show a dog—I beg pardon, Senhor,—a gentleman, who has the honour of Don Juan Dicz’ acquaintance!”

The guerilla motioned us to ride on. I did not look back, but a groan reached me from the doorway of the venta, as if a heart had broken. There was no mistake about it—the landlord was the sufferer!

CHAPTER XXXV.

RETURN TO THE ALLIED ARMY—LETTERS FROM ENGLAND.

“ *King Henry.* How now! what news? Why com'st thou in such haste?”

KING HENRY VI.

“ *Juliet.* O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!”

ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE absolute authority exercised by the Partida leaders over the Spanish population, was apparent in the readiness with which their orders were obeyed—and of this, the independent style in which we had lived at free quarters for the last week, would have been a sufficient guarantee. Not contented with the demolition of his supper and the occupation of the state apartments, we found that “mine host” had been laid under farther requisitions, and obliged to remount the Frenchman and Mark Antony, whose horses were sent back by two villagers to the mountains. To a casual inquiry that I made touching the safe delivery of the animals, the guerilla, who accompanied us, replied with a stare expressive of surprise that a doubt should be entertained upon the subject; and then pointing significantly to his neck, he led us to clearly understand, that nothing insures punctuality and despatch like an occasional application of the halter.

In the course of an hour's ride we fell in with the party we expected, and our guide delivered us over to their safe keeping. That night we were entertained at the expense of an alcade, who loaded us with civilities, and would listen to no hint of ours touching remuneration in the morning. The extent of his hospitality, and the anxiety he evinced to anticipate our wants, drew forth from me a flattering eulogium. As I proceeded, the guerilla leader merely shrugged his shoulders—and then privately assured me, that this generous functionary was one of the greatest scoundrels in the province, and that he was more than suspected of intriguing with the French. “He fancies that he blinds us—no matter—we know him well—all I shall say, my friend, is—that for the horse you ride, I would not have my neck in the same insecurity.”

As he spoke, we gained the crest of a hill which commanded an extensive view of the flatter country that lay beneath, and from a small wood, at a league's distance in our front, we perceived the smoke of a

large fire curling upwards. The partida pointed to the spot, and told us that there a picket of light German cavalry was bivouaced, and therefore, that his escort was no longer necessary—then bade us a friendly farewell—and in half an hour the fosterer and I found ourselves once more within the allied outposts.

On announcing myself to the officer in command as the bearer of a private despatch for Lord Wellington, I was furnished with a fresh horse and the escort of a couple of dragoons—and leaving the Empecinado's present to the care of the fosterer, I immediately rode off to reach head-quarters at Frenada.

As I passed through the different cantonments, I fancied a general activity prevailed among the soldiers, which formed a striking contrast to the quiet and repose in which, a week before, I had left the allied camp. On the roads I had frequently encountered convoys moving in various directions, and the commissariat department seemed to be particularly on the alert. With an Irish officer, who was riding in the same direction, I entered into conversation for a few minutes, while I and my escort breathed our horses over a rough road that rendered a quicker movement dangerous; and from him I ascertained that the allied army was in perfect readiness, and it was the general opinion that "Lord Wellington had mischief in his head!" As he spoke, wheeling round a bending of the road, we came suddenly in sight of another that crossed it at right angles; and at a quarter of a mile's distance, observed a staff-officer, followed by an orderly dragoon, riding towards the point of junction at a pace which led me to infer that, like myself, he was the bearer of despatches. "Talk of the devil," exclaimed my loving countryman—"may the Lord forgive me for saying so!—but that's himself!" The hint was quite sufficient—I spurred my horse, cantered safely over as rugged a causeway as man could meet with—reached the cross-roads—and halted at the point of junction, before the allied commander gained it.

On perceiving me pull up, Lord Wellington reined his horse in, and a brief colloquy ensued.

"Your name?"

"O'Halloran."

"Whence come you?"

"From the Empecinado."

"Where is he?"

"Heaven only knows."

"Your business?"

"To deliver a French despatch."

"Are you aware of the contents?"

"No—we could not read it;" and I placed the packet in his hand.

At one rapid glance his eye ran over the secret characters—

"Ha! I have the key," he muttered; then placing the document in his coat pocket, he desired me to ride on, report myself at head quarters, wait there for further orders, gave his horse the reins—and thus ended an interview that had barely occupied a minute.

I remembered the marked politeness which he had lavished upon Peter Crotty, and marvelled that his lordship had not the civility to even bid

“good morning” to a gentleman, who had risked a broken neck to carry him a sheet-full of hieroglyphics.

I obeyed the order ; and intending to hold myself in readiness, in the event of his lordship requiring any further information respecting the singular manner in which the intercepted despatch had been obtained and confided to me, was seeking some place wherein I might deposit my person in the interim, when whom should I stumble on in the street, but the fortunate object of the Great Captain’s hospitality—Lieutenant Crotty !

“Arrah !—murder—is it you ?” was Peter’s opening inquiry.

I assured him of my identity.

“And who would have expected to meet ye here ?” continued Peter ; “and what the divil druv ye back ?”

“Why—I returned on an errand similar to your own on the morning of that auspicious day when I had the pleasure of first making your acquaintance.”

“And what was that ?” demanded Mr. Crotty—“for upon my conscience I forget it.”

“Nothing more, than to transact a little private business with Lord Wellington.”

“Have ye met him yet ?” inquired Peter.

“Merely on the road ; I expect, however, to be favoured with an evening interview.”

“Ah, then,” responded Mr. Crotty, “a pleasanter gentleman ye never met. I hadn’t time to finish my story ; for I remember that ould bothering divil of a Colonel called me off. Well—when I rose to come away, he, that’s Lord Wellington, says to me, ‘Arrah, Peter, won’t ye sit a little longer ?’ ‘Bad manners to me,’ says I, ‘but it’s more than I dare do.’ ‘What a pity ye’r in such hurry,’ says he, ‘I suppose, however, it can’t be helped at present ; but the next time ye come, Peter, put ye’r best breeches into your portmanteau, and stop with us as long as ye can.’”

“And is his lordship generally so hospitable and polite to every body that drops in with a message ?”

“Oh, then, upon my sowl! he’s not. And if I swore it on a bag full of bibles, there’s some of the divils here that wouldn’t believe me. For one, there’s Major Fitzmaurice—and, Holy Mary ! now that I mind it—hasn’t he a whole bundle of letters for you ! and he’s in the town too.—Well, I’m not bothered with letter-writin, and that’s a comfort. What would they have to tell me from home, but that rack rents would be their ruin—and what could I say in favour of this villanous country, where, if a man at times happens to have a dollar in his pocket, he couldn’t get a drop to wet his whistle, although it was dry as a lime-burner’s wig, because the people have neither change nor dacency. But—see—there’s the man I spoke about—and now, may the Lord bless ye, if it’s possible.” So saying, and pointing out Major Fitzmaurice, Peter bolted round a corner, as he termed it, “for a rason he had of his own.”

In Major Fitzmaurice, I easily recognised the kind personage who had shared his tent with me on my first appearance in cantonments.

Like Peter Crotty, he also expressed much surprise at seeing me again, when, as it might have been supposed, I was *en route* to Valencia.

"I have a packet of letters for you," he said; "and in hope that I might meet with somebody bound for the east of Spain, I have carried them in my pocket. How fortunate to have dropped upon you! I came in to dine with some friends on the staff who are quartered in Frenada; and, if you have no better engagement, you shall join them with me, and in the evening we will return to the old shop. There it stands as formerly—the same mattrass and bullock-trunk—and 'ceade millia fealteagh.' Talking of trunks—I saw Peter Crotty leave you. He has put a finish to his celebrated visit to Lord Wellington. Did he tell you of 'the portmantle,' as he calls it, and his 'best breeches' into the bargain?"

"All these important facts were faithfully narrated to me."

"Then come along—I'll give you your despatches when I find my great coat; and by the time you have perused them, dinner will be ready."

I found, on opening the packet, four letters addressed to me, and two to the fosterer. Mine were respectively written by my parents, my uncle, and my mistress—and, may Heaven forgive me! love left duty in the back-ground, and Isidora's was the first seal broken.

I could scarcely believe that the letter I perused was hers. Not a year since I met her a timid and retiring girl—she had never mingled with society—to her, man was strange—she blushed when addressed—and if she answered,

"back recoiled, she knew not why,
E'en at the sound herself had made."

But now, girlish apprehension had given place to woman's firmness, and with gentle but modest sincerity, she repeated her assurances of attachment, told me how much pain my absence caused, and urged me, "if I loved her," to return.

My lady mother, of course, claimed next precedence. Her letter was dated from London—for thither she had proceeded, as it appeared, accompanied by her honoured lord. It breathed the warmest wishes of maternal anxiety for my safety—hoped, as I was in a Catholic country, that I occasionally attended mass; hinted that my father became more intolerant, since the priest had cursed Mark Antony for his truant conduct to Bidy Toole—wondered what had brought them, meaning my father and herself, to England—and on this point, she seemed at a dead loss even to imagine what the object of their singular migration would prove to be. It had been suddenly occasioned by the receipt of a letter; and whether the poor dear Colouel was come over to speculate in the stocks, or raise a regiment—which latter might God forbid! the thing was equally mysterious. She had been introduced to a Mr. Hartley and his daughter—English Catholics, and the nicest people in the world. Would to Heaven, she continued, that, instead of following a horrible profession, in which body and soul were equally endangered, I would marry Miss Hartley—and, avoiding the dear

Colonel's example, settle down for life with the general complement of legs and arms. There was an extensive repetition of affectionate rigmarole in prayers and wishes ; but the gist lay, lady-like, in the Postscript.

“ Remember the gospel I bound round your neck. Preserve it—but open it only in extremity.”

Mr. Hartley's epistle was purely diplomatic, and couched in such general terms, that while they conveyed a meaning clearly, had the letter fallen into the hands of my grandfather's confessor, I question whether the Jesuit himself could have unravelled it. All, as he led me to understand, went prosperously. My parents were on the spot, and perfectly unconscious of the action of the drama. He, Mr. Hartley, wished me to return as quickly as I could with proper respect to character. He concluded with one comprehensive sentence—“ The cards play favourably—the crisis is at hand.”

Had I expected to glean any information from my father's despatch, I should have been grievously disappointed. He had come to London, as he admitted, “ the Lord knew why.” The mysterious present of 500*l.* had reached him in annual course, and the letter which enclosed it, conveyed a wish to visit the metropolis, that he deemed prudent to obey. To a Mr. Hartley, he had been especially recommended as a person deeply engaged in some secret proceedings, which might prove of important advantage to his family and himself. As yet, Mr. H. had not explained what these proceedings were ; but, as he had assured him, the Colonel, that I was cognisant of all, and that in a few days himself should be fully informed on the subject, he had, for delicate reasons, forbore to press an explanation. The rest of the letter was rambling and unimportant. It detailed the cursing of Mark Antony, and his own feud consequently, with the priest—a disquisition upon out-post duty—attack in close columns, and movements by echellons. It then proceeded to state, that as Mr. Hartley had assured him that my stay on the Peninsula would be short, and my speedy retirement from the army a certainty, he, the Colonel, would recommend me, as I had lost my staff appointment, to decline going to the east of Spain, retire from the Twenty-seventh, and continue with Lord Wellington's army as a volunteer. I should thus see more service and sharp fighting—in my case a great desideratum. Acting independently, I might have frequent opportunities of distinguishing myself, which otherwise would only come in regimental routine. Every one expected that the next would be a splendid campaign. For his own part, he had hoped to have slipped over for a few months when the army took the field, but the bare hint at the intention sent my mother into hysterics. Here was a parenthesis about “ weakness of women.” The whole concluded in his observing that, if I had luck, many opportunities might present themselves ; but breaches, field-works, and defended bridges, were especially recommended for me to try my hand upon. The Lord might even send “ a forlorn hope” in the way—that would be a happy chance—but then “ people must not be too sanguine.”

Indeed, more ingenious instructions for getting a man securely shot, were never penned by an affectionate parent. The means were so easy

and comprehensive, that I could have half persuaded myself that Mr. Clifford's steward and confessor had been of the number of counsellors whom the worthy Colonel had called in.

I had just completed the perusal of my varied correspondence, when my friend the Major called for me, and announced that dinner was waiting. I accompanied him to another apartment, where I found half a dozen gentlemen, whose "trade was war," congregated around a table less remarkable for correctness of appointment than solidity of fare. None give and receive a warmer welcome than soldiers upon service—I met a kind reception from all; and the meal and the evening passed pleasantly. There are few places where more singular characters are encountered than at a mess-table. We had one short gentleman, whose happiness consisted in the belief that he was always uncomfortable and superlatively wretched; and hence his conversation, from cock-crow to curfew, was an eternal *jeremiade* about dead mules and stolen bullock-trunks, tough beef and damp linen, with "all the ills that flesh is heir to." He had been wounded in one action, and in the next charged and overthrown by a drunken dragoon, who, in the *melée*, mistook him for a Frenchman. In short, from friends and enemies, in common, he had received abominable treatment; and latterly, had narrowly escaped being poisoned, by drinking wine from a store-cask, in which, after an undisturbed possession of a week, the mortal remains of a drowned drummer had been unexpectedly discovered. On this evening, he feelingly related a recent atrocity perpetrated by an Irish batman, who had burned the only boot in his possession, in which an angry corn could obtain repose. He ended the lament with the customary *finale* to all his grievances; namely, an individual inquiry of, "What the devil drove him to this infernal country at all?"

"I imagine, my dear Neville, the gentleman you name had an active agency in driving us all here—if men would only speak the truth," observed Major Fitzmaurice. "I fancy he was close at your elbow, Richards, before you quitted London."

"At my elbow, certainly," replied the hussar. "Had I kept that quiet, I should have been still doing duty at the Horse-guards."

"And may I inquire, my young friend, what might have formed the immediate inducement of your favouring us with a visit?" continued the Major, addressing a volunteer upon his right—"Did you shake the elbow—teach tradesmen book-keeping—shoot a friend who differed with you in opinion?—or—"

"None of these delinquencies have I committed. I am suffering for the sins of another," was the reply.

"What a pity!" said Fitzmaurice; "and your friend, the sinner, pays the penalty by proxy—very convenient for him but rather hard on you. Would you oblige us with particulars?"

"'Tis a short story," said the volunteer, with a smile;—"An accursed cousin of mine paid some delicate attentions to the wife of his next-door neighbour; and, unfortunately, I was acquainted with the proceedings. 'A d—d good-natured friend' informed the little doctor, that his lady and my kinsman were fitting him for a state of

beatitude, and 'the injured husband' commenced legal proceedings, to recover compensation for the loss he had sustained. Loss! To get rid of a regular virago, who lalopped him three days in the week, and made him miserable for the other four. Had the doctor possessed a spark of generosity, he would have given my wicked kinsman a service of plate, devil as he was! Well, though every body knew the truth, it was necessary to lug me in, as evidence, to prove it. 'If you appear,' said the defendant, 'you'll be my ruin, Tom;—' 'If you don't, I'm done brown,' said the doctor,—but to make all right, I'll get an *ne exeat regno*.' Here I was in a regular fix—between my cousin and the chancellor—the devil and the deep sea. I had no alternative but to bolt at once, and come here, hurry-scurry, like a sheep-stealer."

"Well, there is one thing certain,—the devil was at the bottom of your business. And pray, may I inquire why you, Sir, sought this *refugium peccatorum*?" said Fitzmaurice, to a pale gentleman nearly opposite.

The person addressed "looked unutterable things," and sighed profoundly.

"Ah—I see it. Nothing transportable,—not even suspicion of debt?"

The pallid gentleman shook his head.

"Then your sufferings are sentimental. Come—make a clean breast, and you'll sleep all the sounder."

"'Twas woman's falsehood," returned the "pale lover."

"Oh—indeed!"

"Yes—Julia, false as thou wert, this widowed heart shall never own another image than thine own."

"But who was Julia, and what did she do?" inquired the Major, with provoking insensibility.

"Who was she?" returned the desponding Lieutenant,—“that secret shall perish with me.”

"Well—no matter; but what the devil did she do? Had she a kick in her gallop?—or—"

"No," said the bereaved gentleman; "I loved, and wooed, and won her,—as I fondly fancied. I urged my suit, and pressed her to name the day that should seal our mutual happiness;—I would have wedded her—but, alas! she left me for another. That, Sir,—ay—that fatal visitation, made me the wanderer and the outcast that I am."

"Bless me," replied the Major, "how heavily you took it! Now, is it not funny enough, that an occurrence, opposite as the antipodes, actually bundled me into the Peninsula a second time?"

"Indeed! my dear Major," I replied.

"True, sir;—the case was desperate—and nothing but expatriation could have saved me from the bonds of Hymen. The lady would not be denied; and to escape connubial captivity, I levanted at an hour's notice."

"Were the inquiry not impertinent, nor one that would painfully recall the past and probe the breast too deeply, I should feel curious to learn the particulars," I observed.

“Faith, my dear fellow, I have been, as you properly suspect, the victim of a too sensitive heart, and have suffered accordingly. But here goes to make a clear confession, and give you the leading incidents of my amatory adventures. I omit, of course, skirmishes of love with *femmes de chambre*, dress-makers, gentlewomen wayfaring in stage-coaches, or encountered *gipsying* a mile or two from Islington or the Elephant,—appertaining to the *corps de ballet*, or met with at a conventicle in the afternoon—sheltering in July, under a portico, from a shower, or lost in November, in a fog. I shall pass over all diurnal notices in *The Times*, beginning with “Should this meet the eye,” and affairs transacted by the agency of twopenny postage. But why detain you? Fill, gentlemen—I fear you’ll find the story very long, and, what is worse, very melancholy and affecting.”

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONFESSIONS OF MAJOR FITZMAURICE.

“Say I love ‘many’—well, dear soul, I do ;
 But the bright object of my heart is ‘one :’
 I love a thousand flowers, of every hue,
 For all are beautiful, though similar none ;
 I love a thousand stars, for all are bright,
 And with their radiant beauty cheer the sight.
 I have, as thy sweet lips complain,
 On many a lip of ruby banqueted.”

THOMAS WADE.

I HAVE ever been romantic. At twelve I wrote poetry—for by that name my grandmother was pleased to designate my melodies—and at sixteen was regularly in love. In two years more, I left “England, home, and beauty,” “to seek the bubble reputation.” Need I say what agony that parting with the fair one caused? How convulsively Clara sobbed, and how awfully I swore in return, when I received from her hand a ringlet—hue, sunny—binding, violet-coloured silk—which was duly deposited over the fourth rib—left side—with a solemn adjuration, that there the said ringlet should abide and dwell until the heart it covered had ceased to beat, and the lungs adjacent should exercise their expiring functions, in murmuring warm but feeble prayers for the happiness of the donor.

At nineteen I carried the colours of the —th into action at Salamanca, but I lament to say, that the honour of carrying them *out* was reserved for another gentleman of the sword.

“There’s a d—d ill-looking tirailleux, covering me dead,” observed a brother ensign, to whom “the king’s banner” had been entrusted

"I'm devilish glad to hear it," I responded, "for I thought the scoundrel was levelling at myself."*

My supposition was, unfortunately, correct ; for before I had done speaking, a bullet broke the colour-staff, passed through the arm that held it, and took temporary possession of my person exactly opposite the spot, where the *gage d'amour* of my absent Clara had been deposited. I dropped—two rear-rank men picked me up instanter—and, though the action was particularly hot at the moment, they insisted on bearing me from the field. The anxiety which these worthy men expressed for the safety of their officer was astonishing, and I think they would have never halted until we had been out of range of the Cadiz mortar, had the same mortar been in battery at Salamanca.

"Where the devil are ye going with the lad?" exclaimed an eighty-eighth man, who was hobbling on as fast as a wounded leg would allow him, to try, as he termed it, to overtake his "darling Faugh-a-ballaghs."

"To obtain medical assistance," responded both my Samaritans.

"Then ye had better return," said the Ranger. "Devil a doctor's within a mile of you, except an assistant surgeon, who is lying under yon wall in mortal alarm."

My humane friends at once decided upon employing the gentleman lying under the wall, and I was accordingly committed to his care. "Faint the din of battle bray'd," and the doctor recovered his self-possession as the roll of musquetry became feebler and more distant—the ball was extracted—I was removed to the house of a gentleman immediately beside—confided to the tender mercies of any who would undertake them ; while my deliverers—the greatest cowards who had ever been inflicted on a fighting regiment—considering the plundering had commenced, set out to try what industry would acquire ; and, as I verily believe, the assistant surgeon "bore them company."

Upon my conscience, into a nicer family circle an Irish ensign never contrived to drop himself. The senhor was a steady, sober, respectable gentleman, who went regularly to mass, and never drank in the morning. His lady managed him, the farm, and the domain—rent of the latter not excessive—and the daughter—oh, murder ! three years have passed, and as yet I have never managed to forget Agatha's foot and ankle ! But then her eyes—St. Senanus could have never stood a second glance ; her teeth would have put a fox-hound's to the blush ; and, as the old song goes,—

"Her hair was as black as the devil."

Well, she nursed me—her mother offering at matins and vespers a prayer for my recovery and conversion, and her father spending the morning in asking after news, and putting the evening in, by giving me the result of his inquiries.

A fortnight passed—and as one wound healed, another opened. Agatha was ignorant of French, I innocent of Spanish. With the

* True anecdote.

exception of a monk or two in Salamanca, not a soul (out of the army) spoke Irish; and hence, poor girl! from a neglected education, we were rather puzzled to explain the rapid growth of mutual affection. In time we might have succeeded—but one fine morning in August, a field officer, accompanied by a staff surgeon, dropped into a neighbouring village where some sixty lazy vagabonds were malingering. Of course, they were all ordered to their regiments, and I, with a senior officer, desired to look after the scoundrels.

“Agatha!” I said, as I held her to my bosom the morning that I marched, “Agatha, would that I could remain in this sweet thralldom to eternity.—Curse that bogle! I wish to God the fellow had been shot through the lungs instead of the arm—Agatha!—”

Here sobs broke in—

“Pat, Pat. Do you really regret to leave me? and will you—”

“Return in a month, and make ye Mrs. Patrick Fitzmaurice.”

She flung herself upon my breast—placed a little billet in my hand—inquired how many days in England we reckoned for September; when a gruff voice exclaimed behind, “Mr. Fitzmaurice, Major Oldham is waiting to see the detachment march off, and if you’re not at his elbow in a pig’s whisper, why, he swore by the eternal frost! he’ll report you to the general to-morrow morning.”

“Agatha, my own Agatha!”

“Pat, my darling Pat!”

A long, last, kiss (vide the Corsair, for a particualar account of a kiss of this description) succeeded—“Fall in, men,” said the sergeant, and in another minute poor Agatha was on the sofa, and I in the street.

“Agatha!” I exclaimed, as I passed the window whence, “like Niobe, all tears,” she watched the detachment move off, “Agatha, on that festival you named, expect me.”

“And that’s Tib’s eve,”* said an incredulous scoundrel, who overheard the promise—The bugler played Paddy Carey—an angle of the street intervened.—It was the last I saw of Agatha.

When we halted for the night, I took the little packet from my breast and examined its contents. It contained a billet that professed eternal constancy, and a tress of glossy hair, black as the raven’s wing.

“Yes, Agatha, this memorial of our love shall rest beside that heart which is all thine own. But softly, Mr. Fitzmaurice! Is there not already a tenant in possession? Pshaw! Poor Clara! What fools boys are! Ha, ha, ha! and I *really* did fancy I was in love? One cannot help laughing at the recollection. Let me see—light brown—Well, the hair is pretty hair enough—but, shafts of Cupid! to compare brown with black!—the very thought is high treason in love’s ealendar. Still will I preserve a memorial of thee, my sweet *blonde*—and therefore, sunny ringlet, I’ll commit thee to—my writing desk!”

The transfer was effected, and the tress of glossy black promoted to the secret pocket of the jacket, in front of fourth rib—left side—*vice* light brown, “placed on the retired list.”

* * * * *

* An Irish festival, which is said to fall “neither before nor after Christmas.”

A year rolled over—the anniversary of my birth came round. It was a sweet October evening, and I stole out from the crowded hall of my father's mansion to meet my gentle Lucy. All around was so calm, so quiet, and so lovely, that the coldest heart would own its influence, and even a professed woman-hater, for once renounce his heresy, and "plead for pardon." And who was Lucy? The sweetest girl in Roscommon! Her father was the village curate, not "passing rich on forty pounds a year;" but half starved with a wife and six children upon a hundred. Lucy was the eldest child, and when I left England three years before, she had promised to grow up particularly handsome. I returned—we met by accident—for her father's circumstances were too humble, and his spirit too high, to allow him to maintain terms of intimacy with my family. It was in one of those sweet green lanes, bounded by hawthorn hedges and over-spread with apple trees, whose boughs bent under the load they bore, that I saw her for the first time after my return. If ever rustic beauty was calculated to ruin a man's peace, it was such as Lucy Delmer's. A lovelier face I never looked at—but it was its expression that did the mischief. The deep blue eye, that turned on the ground "from man's approval;" the cheek, which one whispered word reddened to the very brow; those lips, which Suckling poetized and Cupid might have sworn by—but why dwell on the loveliness of Lucy Delmer? I came, I saw—reversed the proverb—and was conquered.

The locality of my father's house was exceedingly remote, and so was the parsonage—and hence, though Lucy had numbered seventeen summers, the tale of love had never yet been heard. No wonder, then, that to my ardent suit her young heart was not indifferent. She did not tell me so—but, without much difficulty, I guessed the secret.

She was punctual to the hour.—The lane was made for lovers—so sweet—so unfrequented.

"Ten thousand thanks, my sweetest Lucy, I feared this lonely spot might have alarmed you, and made you change your resolutions."

"Oh no; with your protection, what had I to fear? But why were you so desirous to see me? I know there is a dinner party at the hall!"

"It is my birth-day, Lucy—and before my last one, we carried Badajoz, by assault. From a soldier I purchased this chain, and have kept it as a memorial of that eventful passage in my nameless history." I threw it round her neck: "And now, my sweet Lucy, the spoil of war becomes the bond of love."

"Dear Pat," said the blushing girl, in reply; "would that I had some token to offer in return;—I am poor——"

"Rich, beyond Potosi," I exclaimed; "ay, and throw El Dorado into the bargain. These nut-brown tresses would manacle Dan Cupid if he came on earth, and replace Berenice's in heaven afterwards. Give me one lock!"

"Hush—I hear footsteps.—Farewell, dear—*dear* Pat."

"Adieu—dearest, *dearest* Lucy."

We separated. A villanous whistle was perpetrated at a short distance. It was a herd-boy of my father's—and as he passed me in

the lane, I rewarded his melody with a thundering box, that changed "Nora Crina" into "a lament" that might have been heard a mile off.

That night, when I retired I found a letter on my table, and broke the seal. Lucy's fair hand had indited the billet—and within was enclosed a lock of "nut-brown" hair, which Mr. Truefit of the Burlington Arcade (I forget the number) would have knelt to and worshipped incontinently.

"Lucy—my loved Lucy!" I exclaimed; "little did I fancy, that from thee love's influence was to be learned for the first time.—*The first?*—Easy—Lieutenant Fitzmaurice, Saints and angels! 'tis the festival of the blessed Agatha—the very evening you promised, a year ago, to return to ——. Ah! Pat—Pat—What have you to say for yourself?"

What a special-pleader love makes man! In ten minutes, I had ascertained to my own perfect satisfaction, that in Agatha's case I had jumbled up gratitude with friendship, merely made a mistake, and called the mixture by a wrong name. It was quite certain that my feeling for Agatha was only brotherly after all—and that night the secret drawer of my writing-case contained a second treasure; for the jet-black tress was safely deposited beside the brown one.

This my third *liason* was short, but very ardent, while it lasted. Mr. Delmer discovered that we met—instituted inquiries—and learned the secret of our love. Well aware that an alliance with one whose only dower was innocence and beauty, would be objectionable to a family aristocratic in every feeling like mine, he delicately hinted the state of affairs to Sir Edward Fitzmaurice, and removed his daughter to the house of a distant relative. I had written for renewed leave of absence, as the original term had expired—and to my surprise received a refusal, point blank, from Colonel Markham, accompanied with a peremptory order to rejoin. The truth was, my loving father had written privately to the commander, and told him that I meditated matrimony with the daughter of a curate; and to that holy estate, the Colonel being an inveterate enemy, he readily became a consenting party to disturb our course of love.

For a week after I rejoined at Gort, I rejected invitations to tea, left the mess sober, and refused to be comforted. By night, Lucy's ringlet lay underneath my pillow—and by day, rested on a breast within which, as I religiously believed, the image of the loved one was enshrined to eternity. This extraordinary change on my part, excited a general inquiry—some opining that I had rats in the garret, and would require a gentle restraint and antiphlogistic regimen—while others asserted that I was about to turn Methodist, and were anxious to know whether I had attended field preachings, or been heard to swear since my return. Still my melancholy remained unabated, and I levanted before the third pint of wine—a proceeding in a corps of sharp drinkers, considered totally unregimental. Various were the surmises as to the ruinous results which this unhappy alteration in my habits must occasion. The assistant-surgeon suspected I might drop into a decline; and the red-nosed major added, that I would drop into Pandemonium afterwards.

At this period an event occurred that formed another epoch in my history. The captain of grenadiers, a pleasant gentleman, remarkable for taciturnity and an honesty of purpose that would warrant your drinking with him in the dark, in retiring from the mess-room to his lodgings in the town, with three bottles of Page's port under his belt and in christian charity with all men, forgetting that an open cellar lay directly in his route, popped in head foremost, and was found an hour afterwards by the relief, dead as Julius Cæsar. By this deplorable event I got the step and the company together.

The day after the accident, Captain O'Boyle came into my room to offer his congratulations. He lamented the loss the regiment had sustained. It would be many a day before the fellow of the departed could be found—a man who never bothered people with argument, confined himself to "yes and no," and would as soon forge a bill, as pass the bottle without filling honestly. However, the Lord's will be done! It would have been all the better if he had taken the senior major. He, Peter O'Boyle, would have got the step, and the removal of a toast-and-water man would have been a happy deliverance. "Now I think of it, Pat," he continued, "I had a long chat with Miss Maginnis about you, at that tea party with the French name, which her mother gave the night before Bob Purcel broke his neck. D——d dangerous to leave cellars open with a drinking regiment in town, and men obliged to stagger home after dinner to their cribs. Well, you must know that Flora Maginnis is "a regular clipper." You wouldn't match her in the province—takes a country side as the Lord has made it—never cranes a fence—thinks no more of four-feet, coped and dashed, than you would—sweet girl—no humbug about her—worst of it, no fortune—old Denis not worth a ghost—six hundred a-year—spends twelve. Well, as I was saying—'O'Boyle,' says she, 'what the devil sort of a spoon is that chap Fitzmaurice?'"

"Heavens and earth!" I mentally soliloquized, "what would my gentle Lucy say, to hear her beloved Pat denominated 'a devil of a spoon!'"

"'The fellow,' says she, 'can neither ride nor drink, I hear; what is he good for? I wish to God he had broke his neck instead of that poor dummy, Bob Purcell.'"

"Egad, Pat, I tock your part like a true friend, and stuck to you like a brick."

"'By my oath,' says I, 'Miss Flora, you were never more mistaken in your life. It would do your heart good to see him seated on the saddle. Why, he brought Marmaluke in, a beautiful second at Knockcroghary, and only he rode over a blind beggarman and broke his back, he'd have won the cup in a common canter. Then, as to head—I never saw him fairly on the carpet but twice. He'll take off his two bottles without trouble, and troop the guard after it, steady as the serjeant-major.'"

"'And where the devil does the fellow hide himself?' says she. 'Dick, ye'll deliver a friendly message for me. Tell him I'll run him one round of the course for a new bonnet, weight for age,—and say, if he does not trot out to mama's *souree*—ay—that's the name she

called it—next Sunday, I'll go myself to his cursed den, and draw him like a badger. If I don't, may I never get a husband !' There's no use refusing, Pat, for she swore, d—n her if she wouldn't."

"Oh, my gentle Lucy!" I ejaculated, "no oath would fall from thy sweet lips but the murmured vow of eternal constancy!"

"Eternal what?" responded Captain O'Boyle, who had but partially overheard my rhapsody—"If it's Lucy Dogherty ye mean, I wish ye had been at the brag-table with her last Monday evening, when Mrs. Middleton laid down three natural aces,—Lord—she swore like a trooper. But you'll go to the *soirée*, as they call 'tea and turn out' in this town, or Flora Maginnis will drop into your den, with a 'God save all here.' What will I say about a round of the course? Pon my sowl! it's worth yir while to lose a bonnet, just to see how beautifully she sticks upon the pig-skin—'ye'll come, won't ye, and I'll call for ye."

"I suppose I may as well go with a good grace," I replied—"your friend, Miss Flora, being a lady, 'not to be refused,' as 'the fancy, call it."

"That's right. Give us a glass of water, with a sketch of spirits thro' it. I wonder what the divil tempts me to eat broiled bacor in the morning!"

Captain O'Boyle's request being complied with, he bolted the diluted alcohol, and presently took himself off.

On the appointed night, he called and conducted me to the Sunday *soirée* of "Mother Maginnis," as the mama of Miss Flora was familiarly termed at the mess. Why this maternal appellation had been conferred upon the lady, I could never exactly learn—but by that *soubriquet* she had been known for half-a-score years successively to every marching regiment. We found the company already assembled. Some played brag, some played loo, but Captain O'Boyle led me direct to the piano, where, encircled by a crowd of red-coats, two ladies were playing a duet; and, on its termination, in due form he presented me to Miss Flora.

She was indubitably a fine animal—a handsome face, a splendid figure, and the most magnificent head of auburn hair imaginable. On Captain O'Boyle announcing me as "his friend, Captain Fitzmaurice," Miss Flora made a rapid inspection of my outer man from top to toe, and then, as if satisfied with the survey, she gave me a hand, white as alabaster, which I took respectfully in mine.

"How are you, Pat?—Isn't it *Pat* they call ye?" said the lady. "Why the devil don't ye shake my hand?—you take it as gingerly in yours, as if ye had hold of a hot poker. What do ye ride? Can you manage twelve stone without wasting, and on a ten-pound saddle?"

"What a question at first sight?" I mentally ejaculated. "Ah! Lucy, my absent love, were thou and I together, ours would be a softer theme than ten-pound saddles!"

"Will you play brag?" she continued.

I shook my head.

"So much the better. That old tabby, in black velvet, would cheat her father; and she, in the blue turban, rob a church. They play into

each other's hands—cheat first, divide afterwards; they would 'do you brown' to a moral in half an hour."

"Oh! Flora, Flora," exclaimed her companion, "how can you say such horrid things?"

"Because they're true," returned the young lady: then turning to me, she continued, "Come away into the corner, and we'll have a quiet hit. D'Arcy, go find the back-gammon table, settle the men, and snuff the candles; it's the only thing you're good for."

A sheep-faced young gentleman instantly obeyed the order; and Miss Flora Maginnis and I sate down *tête-a-tête*.

If ever there were two beings who differed from each other wide as the antipodes themselves, they were Flora aforesaid, and my absent mistress. I had endeavoured to imagine what "a clipper" was, according to the parlance of O'Boyle; but my fancy sketch fell infinitely short of the original. An hour glided pleasantly away; and when supper was announced, Miss Flora and I proceeded to the table, mutually pleased with each other.

I had written to Lucy immediately on my arrival at head quarters, and for several days awaited an answer to my epistle with all the impatience of a lover. At last, the long-expected letter came; and my heart throbbed wildly when I read the post-mark; I pressed the billet to my lips, muttered that quotation from Pope, which insinuates that letters were invented in heaven, and broke the seal. The "Dear Sir" commencement gave me a chill; and the conclusion, "Your's, sincerely," froze me to an icicle. Indeed, a colder composition never met a lover's eye. It expressed gratitude for my sentiments of affection; spoke of the barrier that family and fortune interposed between us—followed that blow up with a disquisition on prudence and "proper pride"—declined all continuation of correspondence as irregular—and concluded with a belief, on her part, that "it would be better for both that the past should be forgotten."

As I perused the letter, I found the colour waning on my cheek. Was this her constancy?—were these her sentiments? She who I thought had warmly reciprocated my love—she, whose whole heart I fancied mine for ever! Unconsciously my hand approached my breast; and ere I reached the cold conclusion of the letter, that ringlet, which a few minutes since a diamond would not have purchased, was torn from my bosom, and committed with that heartless billet which dispelled my dreams of love, to the secret drawer, where brown and black lay quietly reposing. Fool that I was! I never suspected that a proud poor father had dictated every line. The hand was Lucy's; but had I looked attentively at the paper, I would have discovered that it was blistered with her tears. Alas! that fact I never knew for years, and not until Lucy was another's!

Every body knows, that the best preparatory state of mind a man can find himself in for falling in love with the first woman that he meets, is immediately after he has been piqued by the falsehood or indifference of another. My introduction to Miss Maginnis was therefore effected in the very nick of time—she seemed a godsend direct from Cupid.—Romeo-like, I changed from Rosalind to Juliet—commenced

active operations against the heart of Flora, and fancied I could love her. We rode, and walked, and danced—ran one round over Breafoy course—I was beaten by a neck; and on the following Sunday, Flora annihilated the devotions of half the congregation, by appearing at church in a lancer-cap, obtained “per mail” from Dublin, and, even by her enemies, pronounced “a little love.”

In this state of affairs an event occurred that brought matters to a crisis. A day never passed in which notes were not interchanged between me and Flora; and one fine morning, her maid was ushered in, and proved the bearer of a billet. As I fortunately preserved our correspondence, I can favour you, gentlemen, with faithful transcripts.

“DEAR PAT,

“I hear you were drunk last night, and, in getting home found the street too narrow. What a humbug, to pass yourself upon people for a milk-sop! My aunt Packer will be married thirty years next Thursday; and as she annually recalls the memory of that misfortune, she gives, on the evening of that disastrous day, her customary hop. Will you drive me over? If you don’t, I’ll get across in the Parson’s rumble, and you may go to——” There was here a *hiatus* in the manuscript; but a fancy sketch of “a gentleman in black,” with his tail under his arm, enabled me to guess my destination. To this affectionate appeal I thus responded:—

“DEAR FLO.

“As you permit me to make a choice between ‘the place below’ and your aunt’s ball, I’ll choose the latter. Set me down your man. I’ll pick you up at eight, ‘and no mistake.’”

Punctual to the hour, I called on the appointed night. Flora was true as a clock, and deposited her person and effects safely in the dog-cart. My horses were fast steppers; and in an hour and sixteen minutes, we reached my aunt Packer’s. I am thus particular about *time*, for I backed myself against it, three to one—in kisses. Certainly I gave Flora sporting odds. She lost, as a gentlewoman should lose, came like a trump “to book,” and met her engagements honourably.

As we approached “my Aunt Packer’s” domicile, we found that “*more hibernico*” the parish had risen “*en masse*,” to have a peep at the festive throng. With some difficulty I took my drag pretty safely through the crowd, removing only one toe in the transit—and having deposited Miss Flora in the hall, while she “regulated her curls, and repaired damages” generally, I fought my way to the assistance of my servant, who was making vain but desperate efforts to obtain standing room for the cattle in certain ruinous buildings denominated stables, which were crammed with a pleasing variety of quadrupeds; but by bribing one car-driver, and bullying another, who had spilled me the night before into a wet ditch, I induced them to remove their prads to some place else, and thus make room for mine. This exploit having been achieved, I entered “the merrie hall,” to claim my

partner, who had intimated that she should await there my return, and honour me by making her grand *entré* on my arm.

She was ready for action when I reappeared ; and as we passed through the mob of "tinints' daughters," who choaked the hall and staircase, nothing could be more complimentary than the remarks—"That's Miss Flora herself," observed a redshank.*—"Isn't she the girl, after all?"

"And that's her sweetheart, I suppose, beside her.—Ogh ! but they'll make a cliver couple," rejoined a second.

"Is the match all settled?" inquired an elderly gentlewoman.

"It's all as one, and just as sure as if the priest had on the vestment," was the reply.

To me, of course, these remarks were particularly flattering ; but still to the matrimonial conclusion, I did not respond "Amen !"

On ascending to the state apartment we found the company formally collected ; and in the doorway observed a little man, very corpulent, and blessed with an efflorescent nose that would have brought eternal disgrace upon a water-drinker. He was dressed in a green coat with brass buttons, a speckled vest, and inexpressibles that once had been nankeen. I particularly noticed the tie of his white neckcloth. The bow was voluminous, and the muslin that encircled his throat affixed so loosely, that it was apparent the wearer had determined that his powers of deglutition should receive no interruption.

"That's Uncle Dick," observed my fair companion ; "no wonder that Aunty's so proud of her bargain."

"How'r ye, Flo?" said Mr. Packer.

"Morrow ! Dick," was the dutiful return.

"Who's that wid ye ? Mr. Fitzmaurice, I suppose."

"What a guess you made ! If you go on this way, you'll be tried for witchcraft at last," said Miss Flora.

"Mr. Fitzmaurice, ye'r welcome—glad to see ye in Ballymacragh. Fine night—but could drive over the bog. Maybe ye'd step down to the wee back parlour, and have a glass of naagus, or a drop of the other,—naked, or in company."

"A glass of naagus, or a drop of the other—naked or in company," responded Dick's affectionate niece, mimicking her respected relation like an echo ; "do you think Captain Fitzmaurice drove thirteen miles to drink hot *scalteeine*? One would suppose you kept a potheine house."

"But I wanted to introduce him to the naabors."

"The naabors !" returned the young lady, mimicking Uncle Dick to the life. "And a blessed lot the neighbours are ! Kelly, and Brophy, and Kinsella,—a parcel of savages, who only know when whisky's over-proof, and a bullock fit for market. But, Dick, why don't you take heart when you are in Athlone, and treat yourself to a new pair of fye-for-shames ? And look at his cravat !" so saying, she caught the ample bow, and whisked it round, until it met the spot

* *Redshank*—a term applied in the kingdom of Connaught to young ladies who dispense with shoes and stockings.

where the hangman would have placed it. "Now, be off, Dick; keep yourself and *naabors* out of my sight for the evening, and I'll settle sixpence a-day on you for life!"

I think our introduction to "my aunt" was about as affectionate and reverential; and I began to comprehend the meaning of the word "clipper." No matter; she was the finest animal in the collection; and what was it to me, if she denounced the scarlet turban of the lady hostess, and traced its importation to the same ship that, thirteen years before, had wafted Uncle Dick's unmentionables from China? We laughed at the company and ourselves, flirted, danced three sets before supper, two *ditto* after it,—passed every thing, next morning, on the road—and I popped her down at her papa's, at half-past seven—she to dream of marriage, and I of God knows what.

It was two o'clock before I toddled into the mess-room. Others had been nearly as late as I; for the little snub-nosed major and Captain O'Boyle were just concluding their breakfast, when I joined them, and ordered mine.

"Cursed nuisance country routs," growled the short commander;—"horse kicked by a vicious mule—kettle not boiled after supper—rheumatism left hip—and lost three rubbers at whist, and five pound ten at *lammy*."

"Egad! for my part, major, I was delighted with Mother Packer, and my Uncle Dick."

"Many true words said in jest; I'll bet five pound he's your uncle in a month—and no mistake."

"My uncle?" I returned, with a stare.

"Ay—double the bet, too;—d—d quick promotion yours—Captain, first week in the month—Benedict, two gazettes afterwards."

"Upon my soul, I do not comprehend you. Pray, my dear major, **what** are you driving at?"

"Driving at?—aye, last night's drive settled all. When do ye come to the scratch? All friends here;—no use in humbug."

"Why, what the devil do you mean?"

"Mean—get your neck into the halter—slow march up the aisle—she looks down, and you delighted—Parson reads "love, honour, and obey"—clerk cries "amen,"—kiss your bride—chariot and four—white favours—boys shout—door shuts, and away ye go! That's the time of day!"

"A graphic picture, major. But who are to be the *dramatis personæ*?"

"Who? yourself to be sure; aided and abetted by Flo Maginnis."

"I marry! My dear major, *when* have I been pronounced insane?"

"Insane—no—no—parson says it's an honourable estate—bound to take his word. But I wish to God you would get your worthy uncle to put a few slates upon the stable—horse running at the nose, this morning, as if he had the glanders—Air, excellent thing—but, d—n me, half the roof off, too much. I'll just toddle down to the post-office—coach by this time in"—and Major Belcher took himself off.

Of course, when he was gone, I requested Captain O'Boyle to tell

me what he had been hinting at ; and I had the agreeable satisfaction to learn that my immediate union with Miss Maginnis was pronounced certain. Aunt Packer, on being assured by him, the captain, that I was not a confirmed drunkard, as she had heard formerly, observed that "Flora had got out of bed with her right foot foremost, the morning that she met me ;" insinuating thereby, that Flora had been in luck ; and, after our departure, Mr. Packer, in a neat and complimentary speech, had proposed our health and happiness, with an offer, on his part, to bet five pounds that he would be a grand-uncle within the twelve month.—"But here's the serjeant, with the letters. Any news, Jones ?"

"Nothing," responded the serjeant, "but a draft of a captain, two subalterns, and sixty rank and file, for first battalion—off immediately—transports waiting at Cork."

This unexpected intelligence changed the current of our conversation. O'Boyle went out to ascertain what names were first upon the roaster—and I retired to my barrack-room, to inquire whether I was really on the eve of matrimony, or not.

I had been for above an hour in a state of dreamy confusion, when a light tap was heard at the door. I announced myself at home—and in came Sibby Callaghan.

"Ah ! pretty one—is it you ? Come here—give me a couple of kisses first, and then tell me how your mistress is."

"Be quiet, captain. Oh ! murder—if Miss Flora only knew it. Feaks—joking apart, it's a shame and scandal, and you going to be married in a week or two."

"Married ! Sibby.—Who the devil put that folly in your head ?"

"Oh, I know it all. Isn't Mr. Dominick, the master's brother, and Tom, and Peter Blake, and their sister Emily, and Julia Dwyer—they call her Julia, but her right name's Judy—ay, faith, and a dozen more blood relations—arn't they all written for ? But I must run down to Miss Ryan's, the milliner ; and maybe you'll have an answer for this note ready for me, at my return." And off went Sibby Callaghan.

In desperate trepidation I broke the fair one's billet, and an auburn ringlet, silky and glistening, fell from its envelope upon the table.

"DEAREST PAT,

"That lock of hair you turned around your finger when you stole a parting kiss, this morning—Will you for my sake keep it?"

"Curse upon parting kisses," I muttered.

"I have written to that beast Brophy, to whom my father gave some encouragement, to say that, like a dead heat, the match was off. Would you wish to see the letter, before I send it ?"

"Come up for coffee. We'll have a quiet chat—and, like a dear good boy, go to roost early.

"Thine,

"FLORA."

"Oh !—it's all over," I muttered. "Was ever man run into matrimony so ridiculously ? What's to be done ? Knock again,—come in."—And in slid Captain O'Boyle.

"What the devil's wrong with you?" was his opening address. "Have ye seen a ghost—or received a call from the sub-sheriff? or"—
 "Worse—worse," I responded, with a sigh. "I'll be married, whether I will or not. Nothing can save me."

"Oh—I expected it," returned the captain. "Then, of course, you'll leave the regiment, and poor Phipps has no chance of getting you to take his turn for the Peninsula?"

"No chance!" I exclaimed; "I'm ready in half an hour. Aye, that's an opening for escape. But stop; I must answer a note. There's cherry-brandy in the cupboard,—take a glass, O'Boyle, and hand me another, merely to keep you in countenance. So here goes—listen!

"DEAREST FLO,

"I shall ever treasure the dear ringlet you have given me, and, no matter where I am, shall look upon it as love's talisman."

"Stop!" exclaimed Captain O'Boyle,—“what the devil's a talisman?"

"Oh—hang it! no matter. It's I don't know what myself—but a word, very commonly introduced into tender correspondence.

"As to that beast Brophy, as you properly term him, I feel some delicacy in offering an opinion. Were I he, I should at once accept your proposition, and declare 'off by mutual consent.'

"If possible, I shall be with you for coffee, and attend to your advice religiously.

"Dear Flo,

"Always yours,

"PAT."

I had scarcely sealed my billet when love's messenger announced herself. The presence of Captain O'Boyle precluded any converse between me and the spider-brusher; and after receiving her despatch, Sibby Callaghan disappeared.

It was at once decided that I should levant that very evening, leaving the detachment to the care of the subalterns, whom it was arranged I should join in Cork. Captain O'Boyle discharged my accounts in town; my servant packed my traps; and I had stepped down to take a little air in the barrack-yard, when once more Sibby Callaghan presented herself. She placed a billet in my hand; I squeezed hers in return—whispered I would send an answer when evening parade was over—and broke the seal.

"MY DEAREST PAT,

"Have I misunderstood you? Then is my peace of mind gone for ever! Oh no—I won't believe it. You would not win a virgin heart, and throw it idly from you! Rest assured, idol of my soul! that there is no bliss in life comparable to wedded happiness.

"Yours, and yours only, "FLORA."

I wrote an immediate reply:—

"MY DEAREST FLO,

"I am certain your estimate of connubial felicity is correct ; but at present, you must excuse me from trying the experiment.

"Always and affectionately, "PAT."

"D—n it," said Captain O'Boyle, "you must be clean out of the town, before Flo gets that choker. The whole gang will be collected in the evening. But, Lord ! she wouldn't wait for any assistance, but beat up your quarters at once. There's only a serjeant's guard at the gate, and that would never keep her out."

What is valour to discretion ? Captain O'Boyle's were the words of wisdom, and I profited by them accordingly. A chaise and four were slyly introduced through the back entrance to the barrack—the gates closed for half an hour—and before Flora received my note, I had left Gort six miles behind, and set pursuit at defiance.

Would you believe it ? until I reached head-quarters here, I felt particularly uncomfortable. Conscience upbraided me ; and I fancied the probability of an ill-regulated but too ardent temperament like Flora's being forced into the commission of some desperate act ; and when I unclosed my secret depository, I looked at the auburn ringlet, and breathed a fervent prayer that Heaven would enable the poor girl to bear up against her visitation. As it resulted, I had "disquieted myself in vain ;"—for three weeks ago, I received a Roscommon Journal, with "P. O'B." written upon the corner of the envelope. I looked it over rapidly ; and one paragraph at once set my heart at rest.

"At Cloonflin church, by the Reverend Doctor Dowdell, Ignatius Brophy, Esquire, of Curnafin, to the elegant and accomplished Flora Maginnis, only daughter and heiress of Dennis Maginnis, of Ballybawn, County of Roscommon, and Ballynamudda, County of Mayo." It was regularly recorded who gave the bride away, and also the route they took to spend the honey-moon ; but I'll not be too particular.

As the gallant major ended, a servant entered and whispered in the president's ear.

"You are wanted," he said, turning to me. "You will be sure to find us here on your return."

I rose and left the room ; and outside, found an orderly waiting in the street, to say that Lord Wellington wished to see Lieutenant O'Halloran immediately.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MY INTERVIEW WITH LORD WELLINGTON—AND FURTHER PARTICULARS TOUCHING PETER CROTTY.

Falstaff. “Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me. The brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to vent any thing that tends to laughter, more than I invent, or is invented on me: I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men.”

KING HENRY IV.

ALTHOUGH the evening was well advanced, all within and without the quarters of the Commander-in-chief indicated a business-like activity, and gave a silent earnest that an important crisis was at hand. Three dragoons, the bearers of as many despatches, were riding off to their stables—while a couple of orderlies lounged backwards and forwards in front of the building; but excepting the sentries at the door, there was nothing about the residence of Lord Wellington that would distinguish it from the quarters of a general of brigade. On my name being announced, I was conducted into a large room on the ground floor, where at one table several non-commissioned officers were employed in transcribing official documents—and at another, two engineers were measuring distances on a large map, from which they were making, what appeared to me, a skeleton draft of the great features of the country. In a few minutes an aide-camp came in, and informed me that his lordship was now engaged, but that he would be happy to receive me presently—politely invited me to take a seat—and then left me to myself.

I never found an establishment that so little realized the glowing picture which Peter Crotty had so fancifully sketched. From his report, one would have imagined that head-quarters had been the selected home of social pleasure, with “Laughter holding both his sides,” and Bacchus aiding and assisting. I found it a very different concern; and had the domicile belonged to La Trappe, business could not have been carried on more quietly than it was. The serjeants seldom raised their heads from the table—the engineers conversed in whispers—and the place was as silent as the clerk’s office of a solicitor, with the head partner in bad temper in the room.

Still I fancied that there might be a secret symposium unapproached by the *profanum vulgus*, and to which none but the elect, with a favoured few like Peter Crotty, gained an entrance. Yet it was marvellous how

well they managed matters in the house. No sound of distant merriment fell upon the ear—no explosion followed “the jest which set the table in a roar.” The walls must be confoundedly thick, or the company singularly prudent—you could have heard a cat cross the floor—and yet not an outburst of “tipsey jollity” was audible.

While lost in vague surmises as to the causes which might have occasioned this strange alteration in his lordship's style of living since Peter Crotty had favoured him with a call, a servant opened the door, and requested Lieutenant O'Halloran to follow him. We crossed over to an opposite apartment—the attendant announced my name—and I found myself in the presence of him afterwards surnamed, the “Iron Duke.”

I never was more surprised than at the general appearance of my lord's “great chamber.” Neither bottle nor glass were to be seen—the cards eluded discovery—and I could detect nothing in “the sporting line” except one solitary chess-board. The apartment contained not one article that could have been dispensed with. The table was overspread with papers—and at one end, an aid-de-camp copied letters—at another, a private secretary wrote from the dictation of the Commander-in-chief.

“Sit down, Mr. O'Halloran,” said his lordship—“we have deciphered your despatch—and the information it contains is very valuable. May I inquire under what circumstances the packet fell into Juan Diez' hands?”

I briefly narrated the particulars.

“It is genuine, no doubt; indeed it bears the stamp; but documents have been occasionally fabricated, which have misled people who did not take pains to test their authenticity. You appear to have had a good deal of adventure during your *sejour* with the Empecinado. They say that Don Juan is an off-handed gentleman at times—hangs a man first, and makes inquiries afterwards—ha?—Is it so?”

“As far as I can judge, my lord,” I replied, “such is his general practice. I found him a very excellent friend; but he's the last man in Spain whom I should wish to make an enemy.”

I saw that his lordship was interested in the details of my recent adventures, which pictured strikingly the wild and ferocious style of war which the *partidas* carried on. Once or twice he was pleased to pay me a compliment; and he expressed unqualified satisfaction at Mark Antony's bold and successful intervention to save the condemned *voltigeur*. Half an hour slipped away, coffee was brought in, and I was about to take my leave, when, turning round, as if a thought had struck him suddenly, Lord Wellington observed—

“I had a comrade of your name,—whether now dead or living I know not. We served together in the Low Countries, and both commanded regiments during the retreat. At Tui he particularly distinguished himself”—

“And on the occasion,” I added, “lost an arm.”

“The same;—is he related to you?”

“He is my father,” I replied.

“Then, Mr. O’Halloran, you are the son of a good and gallant soldier. He retired from the service I presume?”

“Twenty years ago, my Lord. But he is still in heart the same. Were it not for my mother’s influence, I am persuaded that, one-armed as he is, he would have been with your lordship before now.”

“I wish he was,—and, maimed as he is, I will freely take him, and give in exchange half-a-dozen gentlemen of his own rank, and with the usual assortment of limbs.—I am pretty certain I should be a gainer by the bargain.”

Fearful of intruding upon his time, I bade Lord Wellington good-night,—received a courteous return—and hastened back to the company I had quitted, highly flattered with the reception I had met with, although neither offered a glass of wine, pressed to play cards, nor even desired, when I came again, “to bring my portmanteau.”

That night I returned with Major Fitzmaurice, and took up my old quarters in his tent; and as we smoked a cigar and discussed some brandy and water, I gave him an account of my interview at head quarters.

“Your reception, my dear O’Halloran,” said the major, “though not so friendly as Mr. Crotty’s, was still very flattering indeed. What a revolution his Lordship’s habits have undergone within one brief month! He seems to have booked himself against cards, and abandoned brandy and water altogether. It would also appear that, finding “villanous company would be the spoil of him,” he has exchanged his old acquaintances for a lot of less sporting characters. And yet how the world may be led astray. There are people who would persuade you that Picton never touched pasteboard in his life, and that Packenham would as soon take poison, as “brandy without.” Ah—Peter, Peter, thou hast no parallel,—the brain to fabricate such a lie—and the brass to enable thee to give it utterance! Well—we’ll put him on the gridiron to-morrow, and if he bears the scorching, why he deserves the first company that falls.”

Next morning, the fosterer and my charger arrived safely; and, with Major Fitzmaurice, I consumed the day in wandering over the cantonments. Unpractised as I was in military affairs, I could not but observe the striking contrast which the Peninsular regiments presented to that raw soldiery, whom I had been accustomed to look at, before I quitted England. Here, the unfaded uniformity of dress was wanting; not two jackets were of one shade; trowsers were patched with any colour the wearer could procure; and, provided his shoes were good, his appointments clean, and his musket in efficient order, the other externals of the soldier were but little regarded. But it was when under arms that the superiority of that unequalled army was observable. The ease with which it moved—the precision of every evolution—the facility with which a brigade manœuvred, correctly as it were a single regiment—while an air of confidence was traceable on every face, and the whole looked like men who had made the trial—established, and felt their superiority.

It was late when we returned; the dinner-drum had beat, and we found our rough but happy circle already united around the table.

Our homely fare was speedily discussed, and the evening carouse began. There is no society on earth like that collected in a mess-room, or one in which men unbend with such security, and where the tone or temper of every individual is imperatively required to accommodate its peculiarities to the occasion, and harmonize with all around. Hence, in military communities, badinage never becomes coarse, argument captious, nor language vulgar and offensive. On the present occasion, my unexpected return was warmly welcomed, and all seemed to take a brotherly interest in my recent deliverance.

"Upon my conscience," observed Peter Crotty, "ye had the luck of thousands, after all, Mr. O'Halloran. As to that fellow with the hard name, and black avized complexion, though he made ye a present of a stolen horse, in my mind, he's little better than a common highwayman. Did ye see my Lord last night?"

"Oh yes," I replied, carelessly.

"Was he in good humour?" said Peter.

"Excellent!" was the reply.

"And asked you to sit down?"

"He did—most civilly."

"Was there any drink going?"

"Nothing but coffee."

"Well, I wonder at it!" said Peter, with a shake of the head.

"Not at all. Probably his lordship had been a little too liberal the night before," observed the major.

"Any company wid his lordship?"

"None, Peter," responded the major. "An aid-de-camp told Mr. O'Halloran, that the card-parties had been postponed until your new breeches arrived from England."

"I heard another story," observed Captain Fenwick. "They say—God knows whether it be true or false—that Sir Thomas Picton got a bad dollar in change the night Crotty got drunk at head-quarters—and Peter being the only suspicious person in the room, they have, of course, left it at his door."

Mr. Crotty appeared a little fidgetty; but still continued to show fight.

"I regret to hear the last statement made by Captain Fenwick," returned Major Fitzmaurice.—"Any inconvenience arising from the non-arrival of Peter's inexpressibles, would have been but a private concern—but passing bad dollars is a more serious affair, compromising, as it does, the honour of an old and distinguished regiment. If the report be true, that Peter palmed off base money upon Sir Thomas Picton, why, he's nothing better than what the swell-mob call 'a smasher'—and the offence is additionally aggravated, because that, under a conviction he was playing with respectable men, Sir Thomas thought it unnecessary to ring the dollar on the table, as if he were in a silver hell.—But where are you going? I know you are on duty—but, hang it, Peter, you need not visit your guards this half-hour. Oh, Peter, I'm sorry to say, this evasion on your part looks very like guilt—and if you don't clear the matter up satisfactorily in the morning, I'll apply for a regimental inquiry."

“He’s off!” said a lieutenant of light infantry. “Of all Peter’s flights of fancy, that jollification at head-quarters will prove the most fatal.” Turning to me he continued:—

“Peter Crotty, Mr. O’Halloran, is one of the best men on earth; and all he requires is, to meet with a true believer. Don’t be alarmed at some of his revelations—he’s not so truculent as at times he represents himself. For example: he’s pleased to make frequent mention, when he has dipped into the second bottle or fourth tumbler, as the case may be, of having once pursued an unfortunate author on the banks of the Suir for a whole summer’s day, and despatched him with the thirteenth shot. Of course, on his own showing, you would write him down a determined murderer.—Not at all. I believe the most rascally scribbler that ever blotted paper, might live to four score, and Peter never volunteer to be his executioner. The fact is, that in the pleasant part of Tipperary which witnessed the nativity of our friend, it is customary, when a couple of *t*’s come together, to change the second into an *h*, and hence it was an *otter*, and not an *author*, that he put to death.”

“And I will bear testimony,” said Captain Fenwick, “to Peter’s gallantry. When I was knocked down at Rodrigo, and lay at the foot of the great breach, I saw honest Peter crown it—and with some dozen hair-brained devils, like himself, he fought on the summit, hand to hand. The French, when the lesser breach was carried, gave way—the town was won—and Peter, with a fortunate few, gained the streets without sustaining personal injury. Two days afterwards he visited me in hospital, bitterly lamenting the total loss of a skirt, which had been bodily removed by a bayonet thrust. ‘Bad luck to him for an unlucky thief!’ was Peter’s indignant observation. ‘He tattered the only jacket that I had; and though the tailor has been on the look-out ever since, the devil a skirt he can fall upon that will match it!’”

“Gentlemen,” observed the assistant-surgeon, “you have borne an honourable testimony to my excellent friend and countryman, Mr. Crotty, as a person of lively imagination, and a stout soldier besides. I beg to complete the merited eulogium, by assuring you that Peter is a good catholic into the bargain. Captain Fenwick noticed his conduct during the assault—and I accidentally witnessed his christian temperament, immediately before the division moved into the trenches on that glorious and bloody evening. With three others, Peter and I held a ruinous apartment of an old farm-house in joint tenancy, and my corner was divided from the rest, by a blanket suspended from a line. When the division was under arms, I discovered that I had left some instruments behind which might possibly be required, returned consequently, to the house, and while hunting for them behind the blanket, I heard Peter Crotty open the outer door and come in. He, too, was in search of something he had forgotten—and in a false assurance that he was perfectly alone, he commenced ‘thinking aloud,’ and I kept quiet.

“‘Holy Mary!’ he ejaculated, ‘you have the best interest in heaven, and that every body knows. If I had as good at the Horse

Guards, I would be a colonel in a fortnight. Oh, bad luck attend ye, Tim Doyle'—and he kept rummaging through an old bullock-trunk. 'There's no finding anything after ye, you drunken sweep! Well, blessed Virgin, this is likely to be a bloody night; and the Lord, of course, will take his dealing trick out of the regiment,—glory to him—nobody can complain of it. But, sweet Lady—all I wish is, that it won't be as it was at Badajoz, in funeral order, but just let him take them fairly as they stand. There's three field-officers with the regiment, and we can easily spare one of them;—a couple of captains, ye know, would never be missed out of the number—and as to the subalterns, why let him have his own way about them. Oh, murder! there go the taps. If I live to come back, Tim Doyle, I wouldn't be in your jacket for a new thirteen.* Again the drum ruffled—Peter shut down the trunk-lid, slammed the door after him, and hurried off to join his company—making his final exit in muttering a prayer to the Virgin, and an imprecation upon Tim Doyle."

Early next morning, I was agreeably surprised at receiving an order from Lord Wellington to attend him that afternoon. I rode over accordingly; and once more found myself in the presence of him who had been destined to restore the tarnished glory of the British arms, and after a brilliant career of conquest, terminate a doubtful struggle by a crowning victory. I found him immured in business—and yet the details of his bureau seemed to go on as orderly and methodically as the arrangements of a merchant's counting-house. On seeing me, he beckoned me to come forward.

"I think I have been able to meet your wishes, Mr. O'Halloran. Take this note to General R——. As yours is only to be a short sojourn, he has kindly offered to make room for you on his staff. No thanks;"—and waving his hand, the interview ended.

Delighted at my good fortune, I rode off to the head-quarters of the fourth division—presented my credentials—was introduced to one of the most gallant soldiers that ever commanded a brigade—and made the acquaintance of the best fellow upon earth—his aid-de-camp, Tom F——.

* *Anglice*—a shilling.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN—BATTLE OF VITTORIA.

King Henry. "Yet, God before, tell him we will come on,
 Though France himself, and such another neighbour,
 Stand in our way. * * * * *
 If we may pass, we will ; if we be hinder'd,
 We shall your tawny ground with your red blood
 Discolour." KING HENRY V.

MANY a summer has passed away since the spring of manhood saw me on the Agueda—and the sear of middle age finds me recalling the brief but brilliant reminiscences of that "crowded hour of glorious strife" which followed. Time has sprinkled my hair with "wisdom's silver"—the blood, which once the slightest impulse hurried from the heart, flows temperately—"wild youth's past"—and I now look back with painful pleasure to one brief era of a life, for which, could it be lived again, I would cheerfully forego years of calm and spiritless enjoyment.

Is not this an ungrateful declaration of thine, Mr. O'Halloran ? With every human blessing that can render existence happy, hast thou not been munificently gifted ? Thou hast never known the stringent pressure of necessity—thou hast not felt the withering agony of unrequited love—no false friend has abused thy confidence—no lovely woman "stooped to folly," and made thee blush for her inconstancy. Hast thou not a home ?—the pledge of holy love has lisp'd upon thy knee—the smiles of beauty which never beamed upon another, have brightened at thy presence. What wouldst thou more ? Upon my conscience, Mr. Hector O'Halloran, thou art a most unreasonable Irish gentleman.

I said, that I looked back upon this epoch of my life with "painful pleasure."—Well, that association of opposites he who has passed the meridian of existence can easily understand ; for in the story of a life, pain and pleasure are generally found close companions. The pulse quickens when Vittoria, Sauron, and San Sebastian pass in "shadowy review"—but the heart sickens when I recall the memory of him, at whose side I witnessed the enthusiastic heroism of that noble brigade, to whom he so often pointed out the path to victory. In long and cherished remembrance will that honoured name be held. To a lion's heart he united a woman's gentleness—the soldier followed him through love—his rivals admired and praised him. Why did he

not die in the blaze of battle, where the noblest soldiers upon earth contended for a doubtful victory?—Why did not his glorious spirit wing its flight “from cumbring clay,” in that wild mountain pass, in which it gained its immortality?—Why, on “red Waterloo” did he not find a fitting grave? Alas! it was otherwise appointed;—and one of the noblest soldiers whom Britain ever claimed, perished by an ignoble hand.*

The middle of May found the allies, in perfect unity of purpose and admirable efficiency, ready to open the campaign, and orders had been already transmitted to General Murray and the Spanish commanders on the eastern coast, to commence initial operations. Gradually, and in a manner not to occasion alarm in the French cantonments; the allied divisions were concentrated and advanced, and the supporting Spanish corps were put in march to co-operate. Bad weather, heavy rains, and an accident to the pontoon-train, delayed the opening of the campaign. It was but for a few days. On the 16th, Graham threw his infantry and artillery across the Douero; Hill moved forward to Bejar; and on the 22d, Lord Wellington marched with his right wing towards the Tormes; and the practicability of the noblest conception that ever a great military genius matured, was now to be proven. “A grand design, and grandly it was executed! For high in heart and strong of hand, Wellington’s veterans marched to the encounter; the glories of twelve victories played about their bayonets; and he, the leader, so proud and confident, that in passing the stream which marks the frontier of Spain, he rose in his stirrups, and waving his hand, cried out—‘Farewell, Portugal!’”†

To oppose the fiery movements of the allied general, the enemy should have been combined, and in readiness; but they were equally unprepared and unsuspecting that an advance would be attempted. Napoleon’s orders to concentrate on the Tormes, had been fatally neglected; and no preparation had yet commenced to evacuate the capital, if such a step should become necessary. Joseph was at issue with his generals; the latter on bad terms with each other; and, strange as it might appear, in a country laid open to unmerciful contributions, subordinate officers were acquiring wealth, while the king was without a guinea, and his major-general (Jourdan) actually subsisting upon credit. Every commander seemed to think and act for himself. Joseph issued orders, but none obeyed them—some general asserted that Lord Wellington would attempt to turn the French right;—others declaring that he would march direct on Madrid. One would have it that the north would be his field of operation,—another maintained that it would be the south, and in concert with Sir John Murray. All were referring to what might be the future, when the initial movements were already made; and Wellington was over the Esla, before it was known in the enemies’ cantonments that a division had been even put in march!

* It was said—I know not with what accuracy—that Major-General Ross was shot by a sneaking scoundrel ambushed in a tree.

† Napier.

None, save a military reader, can estimate this wonderful and successful operation. A part of Sir Thomas Graham's corps traversed a distance of more than two hundred miles, its route running through the *Tras as Montes*, the wildest district imaginable. Over a rugged surface—hitherto unknown to any save the shepherd or muleteer—forty thousand men, with artillery, and all the equipages of war, were passed and placed in safety on the further banks of a river unopposed—not a French general believing that even a cloud was collected, when the tempest had already burst !

Merely waiting one day at Toro, to unite his left with the Gallician army, and enable the rear of his own divisions to close up, the allied general pushed rapidly for the Carion, his own troops beautifully in hand, and either flank protected by Spanish regulars and *partidas*. Too late, Joseph Buonaparte felt the danger of his position ;—when the danger was discovered, it was irremediable ; for with the certain stride of victory Wellington marched forward. The *Pisuerga* and the *Arlanzan* were passed, to use the language of an historian. “easily as if they contained no water ;”—and Burgos, that once had foiled his efforts, perished by the same hands which formerly had held it so successfully.

Thus far Lord Wellington's rapid advance had been attended with splendid success ; but bolder operations, and followed by more brilliant results, remained behind. On the 13th, masked by his own cavalry, and a swarm of Spanish *partidas*, he suddenly marched by his left, to turn the sources of the *Ebro*, place his army between that river and the *Reynosa* mountains, and cut the enemy from the sea. It was a bold and judicious, but difficult and precarious, attempt ; and one from which a nervous commander would have recoiled. The line of march ran through a mountain country, whose features were singularly rugged. The valleys were deep ; gullies and ravines constantly presented themselves ; and the roads, narrow and broken, were unsuited for the transport of field equipage and artillery. Still Lord Wellington persevered ; and, nobly seconded by his gallant followers, every obstacle was overcome. When the ordinary means of moving forward the artillery were found impracticable, the guns were dismounted, and lowered or swayed over precipices which threatened to bar their farther progress. On went the Anglo-Portuguese divisions, in ceaseless march ; and, after six days of incessant exertion, the allied columns issued from their mountain routes, and entered the deep valley of *Vittoria*.

As yet I had never been fairly under fire ; our march from the *Esla* to the *Zadora* had been one of manœuvre, Lord Wellington turning every position with admirable skill ; and the slight collisions which occasionally resulted, occurring always between the light troops. One irregular but dashing affair, on the preceding day, had taken place unexpectedly, between a part of the light division and *Maranzin's* brigade, at the entrance of the valley of the *Boveda*, in which the French were severely handled, and narrowly escaped with the loss of their baggage, and five hundred men.

We reached *Espigo*, after a very long march, late in the evening of

the 18th; and early next morning, moved on to Bayas, in the hope of forcing that pass, and cutting off the armies of the south, and centre. But Reille had taken a strong position, with the army of Portugal, to cover their passage through the defile of La Puebla. We were directed to attack in front, while the light division turned their position. A brief affair ensued, during which the armies of the south and centre threaded the defile, and came into line behind the Zadora. That object gained, Reille fell back, and crossed the river, and we bivouacked for that night upon the Bayas.

It was apparent to all that a great and decisive battle was at hand; King Joseph, with his immense parks and ambulances, was still in front of Vittoria; and although two huge convoys were ready for France, and one had been already despatched, still the quantity of baggage that remained was enormous, and the number of carriages almost incredible. The whole of his miserable Court had followed the steps of the royal fugitive. Traitors to their country, they had no mercy to expect; and in flight alone, was safety. The immense quantity of military stores—the accumulated mass of private plunder, collected for years before, and now heaped together in the confusion of a hurried retreat—the encumbrance of a numerous body of nobles and civilians,—all these tended to render Joseph's position the more embarrassing. If he retreated without a battle, all must be lost. He vacillated—valuable time slipped away—and at last he determined to “stand the hazard of the die;” and accordingly, took a position in front of Vittoria.

On the evening of the 20th, we received intelligence that the French were resolved to accept battle the next day; and it was ascertained that they were busily engaged in fortifying the ground that Marshal Jourdan had selected. I was now on the eve of my first field; and a feeling of anxiety and restlessness kept me waking, while two or three veterans, who were huddled into the same tent, slept so soundly that I envied them. At day-break the camp was in a bustle. The third, fourth, seventh, and light divisions, which formed the infantry of the centre, got speedily under arms; and, accompanied by a powerful artillery, and the whole of the heavy cavalry, we crossed the ridges behind which we had pitched our tents, and over a rugged and difficult surface, moved stoutly and steadily towards the points marked for our separate attacks. We took a position in front of the bridge of Nanclares, covered from the enemy's fire by broken ground and underwood, and there awaited the movements of the third and seventh divisions, whom rougher ground and a greater distance had hitherto prevented from getting up.

About ten o'clock the action began, by General Hill seizing the village of Puebla, and Morillo attacking the heights that domineered it. A doubtful and protracted struggle for the possession of the latter ensued. The French supported Maranzin, who held it; and Sir Rowland detached Colonel Cadogan, with two battalions, to sustain the Spaniards. Fresh troops, from time to time, came into action; Villatte's division were drawn from the centre, to maintain the heights. Hill reinforced the assailants; the contest still was doubtful

but Sir Rowland ended it by crossing the Zadora, pushing through the defile of Puebla, and carrying the village of Subijana de Alava.

Three hours had passed; and amid the intervals of the fire at Subijana, a distant cannonade was faintly heard upon our left, and indicated that Graham was up, and coming into action. The light division had already crossed the bridge of Tres Puentes; one brigade of the third had forced that of Mendoza, and another, with the seventh division, forded the river, and attacked the French right, in front of Margarita. We were desired now to advance; and, passing the bridge of Nancuales, were followed by the heavy cavalry, who, forming on our right in squadrons, connected us with Sir Rowland's left.

Already, fearing that he should be turned on both flanks, Joseph had issued orders to retreat; and, covered by a cloud of skirmishers, and under a tremendous fire of fifty pieces of artillery, he retired his columns on Gomecha, where his reserve was posted. Now the battle was at his height; the third division carried the village of Arinez, the 52d stormed Margarita; and the 87th seized Hermandad. But the last struggle was yet to come. Reille still maintained himself on the Upper Zadora, and, with eighty pieces of artillery in full and rapid play, the wreck of the armies of the south and centre were enabled to fall back, and make their last stand, between the villages of Ali and Armantia.

For a moment the storm of artillery arrested the onward progress of the allies. The battle raged furiously; but the struggle was fated to be short. Cole ordered the fourth division to advance. On rushed its noble battalions, untamed by a terrible cannonade and a heavy and well-supported musketry. The heights on the left of those occupied by the French were carried, and the doubtful conflict ended in a total route.

Throughout the day I had been busily employed. I occasionally carried orders; and the steadiness with which my noble horse faced fire, attested the value of the Empecinado's present. I had procured at Frenada a very respectable animal, on which to mount Mark Antony; and, to do him justice, the fosterer seemed to follow like a shadow where I went. Just as we crowned the height, General R—— who was leading the column, beckoned to me, and I was directly at his side.

“Gallop back. Tell —— to launch the cavalry boldly—see!—the French infantry are mobbed, and running!”

I had half wheeled round to convey the order, when, suddenly, my gallant charger gave a convulsive shudder, and sank under me. I sprang from the saddle before he had time to roll over, and called on the fosterer to dismount—made one step to take his horse, and execute the order, when a sharp stroke smote me on the head. All around became confused—memory fled—and for a time I recollected nothing but indistinctly.

When I did recover, I found myself under a small knoll, which sheltered us from ranging shots: the fosterer on one side; a twentieth grenadier on the other; and my excellent and valued friend Peter Crotty, seated on a dead horse, *vis-à-vis*, and giving orders for my resuscitation.

Leeds



CHAPTER XXXIX.

SAN SEBASTIAN.

"But, hark! that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!"

CHILDE HAROLD.

To the buzz of voices round me I had been fully conscious for the last five minutes; but the first words I understood distinctly, was an earnest inquiry, on the part of Lieutenant Crotty, regarding the safety of what he termed "the stolen horse;" and great was his sorrow on learning that the charger was defunct.

"Blessed Bridget!" he exclaimed; "what a pity! Worth two hundred, if he was worth a taaster.* Well—it only shows that old sayin's true—What comes over the old lad's back, whisks away under his belly. But I would like to know what the divil killed the rider? I've groped him all over, and sorra scratch I can find upon him but this clip upon the head, and many a worse I've got often at a hurling match. As he's dead, however—"

"I am not dead, Peter!" I muttered.

"Then, upon my sowl I'm glad to hear it from such good authority!" returned Mr. Crotty. "Give him another taste out of the canteen! If there's life in a man, brandy's the thing to find it out. Here we are—safe and comfortable against every thing but shells;—I thought I heard the whiz of one of them a while ago—may the curse o' God light upon their inventor! You must know I have a mortal dread of them—and I'll tell ye why.—The day before Salamanca, when Marmont and my Lord were watching each other like two pickpockets, the column halted, to let the men cook dinner, if they had any to cook. Well—I had none,—so I set out on the ramble, to see if luck would stand my friend—and who should I find behind a big rock, and eating cold pork, but Pat Dogherty and Charley Blake, of the ould "rough and readies,"—the 13th. "Peter!" says Charley, "did ye get ye'r dinner yet?" "Divil a pick!" says I; "and, what's more, I wish somebody would tell me where it's to come from?" "Draw a chair," says he, jokin', "and take share of the pork." "Arrah, niver say it again," says I. So down I pops upon the grass, and, feaks, made a beautiful dinner of it. Well—out came the canteens, in coorse; and we begins drinkin'—when bang goes two or three guns from the hill opposite us, on which the French were marchin'. "What's that?"

* *Anglice*,—Tester, a sixpence.

says Charley. "Nothing," says Pat Dogherty, "only that thief Marmont is bent upon some roguery; and just wants, by kickin' up a row, to draw off the old lad's attention;"—manin, ye see, Lord Wellington. "Blessed be God! we're as safe here as if we were in Kilmainham Gaol," says I, looking up at the rock that was between us and the French. "If Marmont batters away till he rises the price of gunpowder, he'll do us no harm." Well, Pat Dogherty stepped round, to see what the firing was about—and Charley Blake had lifted the canteen:—"Here's the pope!" says he, taking a pull of the spirits; and giving the health of his reverence out o' compliment to me, because he thought I was a Catholic. As he said the words, down drops an eight-inch shell between us. "Murder!" says I, rowlin' myself down the hill, like a butter-firkin. "What's that?" says Charley, who was always a stupid divil, and never could bear to be interrupted in his drink. Och! before I could make him sensible, bang went the shell! and when Pat and I got up, we found Charley as dead as a mackarel; and dinner, drink, and Pat Dogherty's new cloak-case, blown regularly to the divil! No wonder I hate the whiz of them—Well, how do ye find yerself?"

"Oh—pretty well; but a confounded dizziness of the head annoys me."

"Well,—take another drop. Look round, Mark—isn't that the name ye answer to? Turn a man or two over, and you'll find a fresh canteen, for this one's empty."

Indeed, there was no great difficulty in obtaining a liberal supply; for the hollow that Peter Crotty had selected as uniting safety with comfort, was thickly studded with dead and dying men; and there was scarcely a corpse, particularly a Frenchman's, from which a canteen was not obtainable.

In the mean time, the roar of battle gradually subsided into a spattering fire of musketry, interspersed by the booming of heavy guns, as the horse artillery hung upon the French rear, and cannonaded the dense masses of broken soldiery who hurried off in the direction of Salvatierra. But, lightened of their arms, and covered by their cavalry who still showed a steady front, they reached Metauco, closely followed; there night ended the pursuit, and the victors and the vanquished claimed that season for repose which previous fatigue had rendered so desirable to both.

There is no defeat on record, in which a beaten army lost so much and lost so little, contradictory as the statement may appear. The whole *materiel* of war, the entire park of artillery, with stores, ammunition, trophies, treasure, and the most enormous collection of plunder that ever an invading army attempted to carry from the country it had for years despoiled, fell into the hands of the victors, or rather into those of the degraded wretches who followed them,—while in men the French loss scarcely exceeded that of the conquerors.

Before we had been an hour on the field, we were picked up, stowed away in a French calech, from which a *danseuse* on King Joseph's establishment had been ejected—and carried through the wreck of the enemy's plunder and military stores, into a city it had only

vacated at midday. Mr. Crotty's wound was not very important, as the ball had passed clean through the thigh, and the hemorrhage been stopped by a proper ligature. Mine was a more serious accident, and gave me considerable annoyance for several weeks after it occurred. It is true that I had much reason to be thankful, if I would only put faith in the report of my medical attendant; for he demonstrated, clear as an axiom, that had the ball struck me the eighteenth part of an inch in "fuller front," it would have popped through the "os frontis" to a moral, and I should have been then "past praying for."

Three weeks elapsed—the painful effects occasioned by the contusion gradually subsided, and within a month I was perfectly convalescent. As to Peter Crotty, his disabled member was speedily restored—and, at the end of a fortnight, he could have danced the *pater-o-pee*. One thing occasioned some surprise. Lord Wellington, in the excitement of his victory, forgot to make personal inquiries after his old partner's state of health,—and although his hospitality embraced the *élite* of his prisoners, and even the captured ladies were guests at his table during his brief sojourn at Vittoria, by some unaccountable oversight, a cover for Peter Crotty was forgotten—and if an invitation had been sent him for a quiet rubber at head quarters, unfortunately, it never reached its destination. Crotty, however, ascribed this apparent forgetfulness to its true cause—a press of business—and on one occasion, when we nearly ran against his lordship in the street, Peter bolted round the corner, feeling, very properly, that greetings in the market-place consumed valuable time, and between old friends were quite unnecessary.

The subsequent operations after the victory of the 21st of June, though not very important in themselves, proved the forerunners of great events. Soult came from Germany, by Napoleon's order, to assume the chief command and rally the beaten armies. Joseph Buonaparte's royal puppetism ended, and he retired into France—and Wellington followed up his victory by advancing to the Pyrenees, blockading Pampeluna, and regularly investing San Sebastian.

At Vittoria the mixed character of which an army is composed, was strikingly exhibited. Never, in the history of modern warfare, did defeat tempt the cupidity of the soldier with more extensive or more valuable booty,—and, to use the words of the historian, "the fighting troops marched upon gold and silver without stooping to pick it up." But to others, the display of wealth was too trying for their moral endurance to withstand—the onward step of victory was stayed for filthy plunder, and, to the eternal disgrace of the delinquents, it was known that some officers, forgetting caste and honour, shared in "the disgraceful gain." The evil consequences were so mischievous, as in some degree to paralyse the subsequent operations, and rob Vittoria of what would have otherwise been its grand results. The soldiers, instead of preparing food, and resting themselves after the battle, dispersed in the night to plunder, and were so fatigued, that when the rain came on next day, they were incapable of marching, and the allied army had more stragglers than the beaten one. Eighteen days

after the victory, twelve thousand five hundred men, chiefly British, were absent, most of them marauding in the mountains.*

No wonder, then, that the promptest means were used to thin the hospitals of the sick and wounded, and forward the convalescent to their regiments. Peter Crotty had been declared "ready for action;" and with some fifty privates and non-commissioned officers pronounced "food for gunpowder" again. I determined to keep him company,—and on the morning of the 18th of July, we quitted Vittoria, a month after we had entered it, and took the route to rejoin the fourth division in the Pyrenees. We reached Leyra on the 22d, and then learned that San Sebastian had been sufficiently battered to warrant an assault—and, as it was generally believed, the attempt would be made next day.

Here was a noble opening for young ambition. Within a sharp ride of a beleaguered city—and it, too, on the very point of being carried by assault! Why, my father was a very prophet—and the glorious contingency he had only regarded with the eye of hope, was absolutely thrown by fortune in my way. I was also a free agent—and while Peter Crotty, "a man under authority," of necessity, headed towards the mountains with "his charge of foot," I had only to turn to the sea—and if I pleased, gain laurels in the breach, or there get "a quietus." I consulted the fosterer—and he at once declared that it would not only be shameful but sinful, to let slip an opportunity of the kind. "for the Lord only knew when such luck would fall in our way again!"

Peter Crotty was taken into the number of our counsellors—and he confirmed Mark Antony's reasoning to the very letter—accompanied by a long jeremiade at being prohibited by duty from engaging in an agreeable excursion. He, Peter, would never forget Badajoz—Lord! what fun there was after it—he did not particularise the fun that was *at* it, nor detail the pleasant accompaniments of men being blown up by the company. He, Peter, had been wounded, and resided afterwards at a widow's house—a friendlier little woman he never met with,—she was better to him than a bad step-mother—they went regularly to mass—and he, Peter, was happy as the day was long. Indeed, he had great doubts about the propriety of marrying her at once—but her husband, not having "gone to glory," but to Mexico, although he had not written for six months, still the devil, meaning the husband aforesaid—might be alive after all.—"Oh! blessed Mary! what fun you'll have!" concluded Peter. "You may rob a church, murder a bishop, and bad luck to the inquiry, good nor bad, afterwards."

Pleasure thus unexpectedly presented, and accompanied with such brilliant advantages, was not to be declined; and as I had recovered my lost horse, and procured a stout mule for the fosterer, we took the road to glory—namely, the cross one running through Gozueta to San Sebastian.

The defeat at Vittoria rendered the maintenance of this ancient fortress an object of great importance to the French. Hitherto the place had been greatly neglected, and even a part of its artillery

* Wellington Despatches.

removed. Instant orders, however, were issued by Joseph Buonaparte to restore the works, replace the guns, and render it, as far as possible, defensible. A garrison under General Rey was hastily thrown in—and that of Gueteria, after blowing up that place, reinforced it—stores and provisions were sent by sea from France—whither, also, an enormous influx of Spanish and French refugees, who had sought safety in the city, were directed to repair—and with a brave garrison—and better still—a determined governor, San Sebastian prepared, by a vigorous and, as it was expected, a successful defence, to emulate those of Rodrigo, Badajoz, and Burgos, which had conferred so much honour on their respective commandants.

The investing army, amounting to about ten thousand men, was composed chiefly of the fifth division, and two Portuguese brigades,—General Graham commanded in chief—General Oswald *en second*—and Colonel Dickson directed the siege artillery, amounting to forty pieces of different descriptions, but all of heavy calibre.

On the night of the 10th, operations actively commenced. On the morning of the 17th, a strong outwork called San Bartolomeo, with the adjacent suburb of San Martin, were carried by assault—and on the 20th, the whole of the batteries commenced breaching at once, without having first ruined the defences—a departure from established practice which afterwards occasioned a galling failure, attended with a heavy loss of gallant men.

It was the evening of the 23d, when I and my foster brother topped a rising ground, which commanded a more immediate view of the beleaguered city, and the investing army which encompassed it. For fifteen miles the booming of heavy artillery gave us full assurance, that, if our intent was “up to the breach!” we were still in excellent time. The thunder of the British batteries seemed to redouble as we neared the fortress—and while the fire of the besieged was slack and feeble, compared with that of the assailants; the roar from the Chofre batteries was continuous—and the practice so beautiful and correct, that a new breach on the right of the main one, had been formed by that day's fire, and the wall for thirty yards exhibited a perfect ruin.

It was a sight which, suddenly presented to an eye inexperienced in the “circumstance of war,” would never fade from memory. The sun was nearly setting—but there was no lack of light to induce the besiegers to silence the fire of their guns. The mortar battery, erected the preceding day to destroy the defences, and ruin a stockade which insulated the high curtain on the land front, had set the houses in the immediate vicinity of the great breach in flames; and, as they spread rapidly, the safety of the town from that wild element appeared as much endangered, as from the impending outburst of human violence. Although in immediate expectation of the assault, this calamity did not abate the confidence of the gallant old man who commanded; but for a day, and under an erroneous belief that the burning houses would isolate the breach if carried, the fearful trial was postponed. All was ready to deliver the assault—the storming parties were in the trenches—but on the morning, the fire still raged with such

unconquered violence, that it was dreaded it would prove as formidable to the assailants, as it had been found embarrassing to the assailed—and consequently the storm was delayed, a circumstance, it was said, that abated the ardour of the troops, and tended much to produce the unfortunate failure which occurred next morning.

That awful pause—the day of the 24th, was not like the calm which precedes the tempest. The batteries on the Chofre sand-hills opened again, and a whirlwind of heavy shot enlarged the ruins at the breaches, and, as it was hoped, injured the defences materially. The fire of the garrison was nearly silenced—and while the means of aggression were evidently reduced, they laboured diligently to render those of resistance formidable and efficient. A cavalier that commanded the curtain was armed with field pieces—and every point, whether of the castle or the hill, which looked upon the breach or its approaches, was furnished with heavier artillery. The *fausse braye* beneath which the storming parties must advance, was lined with shells and other destructive missiles, to be rolled down upon the assailants as they advanced along its base—while every house within musket range was loop-holed, and the breach carefully retrenched; but even had it been crowned successfully, still a sheer descent of fifteen feet remained before the assailants could reach a street composed entirely of burning houses.

In war, there are wonderful accidents which lead frequently to failure or defeat—and from fortuitous circumstances, great results arise. In carrying a parallel across the Isthmus to reach the land defences, the working party broke through the water-course of a ruined aqueduct. An engineer boldly crept into the dark and narrow drain—explored it carefully—and at the end of two hundred and thirty yards, found himself separated from the counterscarp only by a door, and directly in face of the right demi-bastion of the horn-work. Here fortune had befriended the besiegers, and supplied them with an admirable mine. The engineers formed a globe of compression at the extremity, and loaded it with an enormous charge of powder—and though this dangerous operation was effected under the feet of the French sentries, none took alarm, and the work was silently and effectually completed.

The plan of attack was to assault the greater and lesser breaches together, when the spring of the mine, formed in the head of the aqueduct, should give the signal. It was expected that the explosion there would fill the ditch of the horn-work with rubbish—and in the confusion and surprise, the Portuguese might possibly escalate at that point, and effect a lodgement in the place. The Royals were directed against the great breach, supported by the ninth regiment—and the thirty-eighth were ordered to carry the smaller one. An *élite* detachment, formed of the three light companies of these regiments, attended by an engineer and ladder party, were designed to have escalated the high curtain, while the breaches were assaulted, and clear the enemy from it with the bayonet; and to this party, Mark Antony and I attached ourselves.

Soon after midnight, the storming parties with the columns of

attack entered the trenches—and within three hundred yards of the breaches, waited impatiently for sun-rise, when it had been arranged that the assault was to be given.

There is no use in concealing it—that interval of two hours was the most anxious passage of my history. I felt that, as if on the hazard of a die, life or death depended. Darkness and silence prevailed—the latter only broken by the thunder of the breaching batteries, which were kept in full play upon the breaches and defences. Many an anxious inquiry was made to know “how time went,”—many an eager look was cast eastward to watch for early dawn—but hundreds were fated never to witness the rising of another sun. While it was still dark, the globe of compression formed in the head of the aqueduct was fired. The storming parties rushed forward from the trenches—and the work of death began.

The explosion of the mine was unfortunately not heard at the Chofre batteries, and the guns, instead of ceasing, continued in full play upon the place. Hence, the assailants as they advanced, were scourged by a double fire, and suffered more from the grape of their own batteries than the enemy's cannonade. The narrow slip of ground by which the stormers approached the breaches, contracted between the river on one side, and the retaining wall of the horn-work on the other, was embarrassed with rocks and pools of water, and consequently, the movement of the column became disorderly. Under a withering fire, the breach was gained—up flew the leading officers—a few gallant soldiers followed—but the supports moved slowly—the troops came straggling to the breach—and instead of mounting to the assistance of the gallant few who had already crowned the ruins, the greater portion of the assailants stopped at the bottom, and interchanged musketry with the French who lined the ramparts, and kept up a deadly fusilade on the disordered mass below. The towers of Los Hornos and Mesquitas opened a heavy flanking fire; and from the St. Elmo and the Mirador, grape fell in torrents upon the broken column—the Castle threw shells with great precision—grenades were flung from the ramparts—a stream of fire issued from the loop-holed houses—while flames raging behind the breach, seemed to forbid approach, even had offensive means been unemployd.

Still though the men fell by fifties, their officers endeavoured to rally them and crown the breach anew; but every moment the chances of success became more desperate. The regiments got intermixed, and that terrible confusion of troops mobbed in a narrow space between the breach and the Urumea, became irretrievable. At that moment the remnant of our light companies pushed through the disordered column, and Campbell, its chivalrous leader, followed by a daring few, gained the summit. Mid-way up, my foster-brother fell—while I, with a dozen or two, a second time reached the rampart. We held it but a moment. Under the storm of musketry all went down; and there were but two or three standing, when a bullet stretched me beside those with whom “life had ended.”

It was the final effort; the remnant of the assailants hurried off, the regiments mobbed together, to seek shelter in the trenches; marking,

unhappily and too plainly, the lines of the advance and retreat with the bodies of the dead and dying. The French fire ceased; and although the British batteries opened with redoubled violence on the enemy's defences to cover the retirement of the shattered columns, several of the gallant defenders of the breach braved the storm, to remove the wounded within the town, and save them from the indiscriminating destruction which the British artillery poured alike on friend and foe.

For a minute I was unconscious of what was passing; and when memory returned, I was in the act of being turned over by a French soldier, who found, that from having fallen on my face, my present position was not exactly favourable for his intended operations. I looked wildly round; several men in blue uniforms were examining the fallen soldiers, who lay thickly on the summit of the breach as leaves in autumn. Different objects influenced the examination: some were seeking plunder—others, on a nobler errand, were separating the wounded from the dead, to remove the former out of fire, and obtain for them surgical assistance. As the grenadier rolled me over, an officer stepped forward and inquired if I were "living or dead?" The voice was perfectly familiar; with my cuff I wiped away the blood, which, trickling from my forehead, had partially prevented me from looking at the speaker before. "Is that Cammaran?" I muttered, as I caught a glance of his well-remembered features.

"Ha!" exclaimed the Frenchman,—“my name! Sacre!—who have we here? Raise his head, Antoine. By heaven!—the very man on earth I would shed my heart's blood to save!” Next moment he was kneeling at my side—and held me gently in his arms, until I was lifted by four soldiers from the ground, and removed carefully from the breach and out of the range of fire.

“Are you much hurt, my friend?” inquired the gallant Frenchman. “And where is your companion, my brave deliverer?”

“Alas!” I replied, “I fear that he is lost to me. He fell half way up the breach—and—”

“Ere my reply was given, Cammaran, after directing the party to bear me to a neighbouring church which the French had converted into an hospital, rushed to the breach again. Calling on a soldier to follow, he descended the ruins of the broken wall, and, among a heap of dead and dying, commenced looking for the object of his search. It was a daring, an almost desperate attempt; for, irritated at the failure of the storming parties, every gun in battery was madly turned against the breach and curtain, and showers of round and grape-shot splintered against the unbroken masonry, or knocked the rubbish wildly about, occasioning double danger to all within its reach. Undismayed, the gallant Frenchman persevered; and to his unfeigned delight, in a man who had raised himself upon one elbow and was gazing despondingly around, he recognised the person he risked so much danger to discover—his former camarado—the fosterer.

With the assistance of the grenadier who accompanied him, Mark Antony was carried safely from the breach; and in a few minutes after my wounds had been carefully dressed, I had the happiness to

find my foster brother placed on a mattress beside my own, and hear the French surgeon, on a hasty examination, announce to Captain Cammaran the gratifying intelligence, that Mark Antony was "not past praying for" yet, but, with moderate good luck, might still survive, to do "the state some service," and figure in another breach.

CHAPTER XL.

CAPTIVITY.

" Three hosts combine to offer sacrifice ;
 Their tongues prefer strange orisons on high ;
 Three gaudy standards flout the pale blue skies ;
 The shouts are France, Spain, Albion—Victory !"

CHILDE HAROLD.

DAY broke through the stained windows of the church ; and the cannonade, so fierce and incessant when I was being carried from the breach, died suddenly away and not a gun was heard. I inquired what might have caused this extraordinary silence, and learned from an hospital-assistant that an hour's truce had been agreed on between the besiegers and besieged, to permit the wounded to be succoured, and allow helpless wretches who would otherwise have been drowned by the rising of the Urumea, to be carried beyond the influence of the tide, and taken either to the trenches or the town. On this work of mercy Cammaran was absent ; and, as Mark Antony and myself were sufficiently recovered to converse, we began to make mutual inquiries touching our present position and future prospects.

" Upon my conscience," observed the fosterer, " now that we have made the experiment, I can't say that I can either discover the advantages your honoured father held out by letter, or the fun Mr. Crotty described by 'word of mouth,' as attendin' these same sieges and assaults. To my mind Vittoria was the thing ;—beautiful day-light ;—your enemy decently before ye—if a man dropped, his comrades stepped over him as if they were treading upon eggs, and he was removed to the rear with every civility, to find a full flask on every body he turned over, if he only had the luck to be settled in a decent neighbourhood. Here—if this be fun, may the Lord deliver us from such fun in future ! We are stuck down for two hours shivering in a ditch. Whiz ! goes a mine—'That's our mine, and the signal,' says one engineer—'The divil welcome the news !' says a second—and off we go blundering in the dark, the Lord knows where. ' Before we're

well in motion, bang goes another explosion! 'That's the enemy's,' says another—and not a doubt about that, for up go the forlorn hope, body and bones. 'Push on, lads,' cry the officers;—one falls over a d—d rock, another souses into a pool of water; on one side the French are firing like the divil—on the other, and I suppose, out of personal respect, our own batteries consider it a compliment to knock us over by the dozen. Well, we top the breach at last—and a beautiful prospect it is!—In front, a jump of twenty feet into a blazing house, or you'r shot down right and left, like crows in a wheatfield. Arrah!" said Mark Antony, "if your father wrote every day in the week, not forgettin' Sunday, the divil a such a night of pleasure will I put in if I can help it. But, Mister Hector, what do ye suppose they'll do with us?"

"Why, possibly, keep us here for half our lives, and send us into France to put in the remainder of them pleasantly."

"Ah, then, if they do," said the fosterer, "they'r cuter* than they think. By all that's beautiful!" and Mark flourished his sounder arm over the blanket,—“I'll be off in a fortnight.”

"No, not so soon," said a voice—laughingly; and Cammaran stepped from behind a wooden screen which had hidden him while approaching. At the same moment a salvo of artillery thundered from the Chofre battery—the guns of San Sebastian replied. The truce had expired—and the game of death had recommenced.

"So end civilities," said the Frenchman; "still it is comfortable to know, that the calls of humanity have been attended to. I have applied for what you call in England 'a billet'—that is, the commandant's permission to reside during your convalescence in a private house, instead of being exposed, as you would be otherwise, to the inconvenience of a crowded hospital. For this indulgence I have given my *parole*, and that leaves you at liberty to visit any part of the city within the *enceinte* of the place when you are able to walk abroad. I know that my good friend here, even if leg and arm were not *hors de combat* as they are, would scarcely run away, when that act would compromise my honour."

"Oh—by this book;" exclaimed the fosterer, raising himself upon his elbow—"we're fairly ruined, Hector *avourneeine!* Here we're regularly on the langle. Arrah—Mister Cammaran, dear, I know ye meant it for the best—but, why the divil did ye make a bargain of the kind? De ye think ye could get dacently out of it? Och—if we were only back in the country we were in, when we first became acquainted with that Empecinado, as they call him—it was no sayin' what luck might turn up still. This moment, going to be hanged—the next, drinking as if ye were at a priest's funeral. 'Turn him out to be shot,' was the order one minute—while, 'turn him for brandy and water,' was the next. One minute you wern't master of a *scultogue*—the next ye were riding in the saddle of a French marshal. Of all the inns I ever stopped at, I never met any where they pay scores as they do in Spain. You go to bed in peace and

* *Anglice*,—more cunning.

quietness, and you're bundled out before you're well asleep, to be told, that you must fight your way through a yard-full of hussars, and swim a river afterwards that would give a water-dog rheumatism for life. You stop at the next public house, and receive all manner of civility. Of course, you're expected to pay up. Not at all: one black look from an ill-visaged gentleman who accompanies you; and the account is rubbed off the slate in a jiffy. Excepting there was over much shooting and hanging—a pleasanter excursion I never would desire—but, may the Lord forgive us! we were not sufficiently thankful at the time."

"Well,—my dear friend;" said Captain Cammaran, with a smile. "My engagement is only binding while you are invalided. When perfectly recovered, my parole is easily recalled—and I have no doubt you will be very comfortable in La Mota. Plenty of fresh air—and free liberty to seek any corner you may fancy, as the least unlikely for a shell to drop upon. In the mean time, I recommend you to accept the billet I have obtained—and by the way, in the house of a Spaniard in worse odour with the old commandant than Don Francisco La Pablos, you could hardly have been established. But I have already ordered apartments to be prepared, and will see that every attention shall be paid to you. This place will be presently intolerable, and the sooner you remove to your new quarters all the better.

The last remark was unhappily correct. The church filled rapidly with the wounded. Every minute fresh sufferers were brought in—and the scene of butchery—merciful and necessary—which commenced, was to us, particularly disgusting. It was wonderful how differently men submitted to sad alternatives,—death or amputation. One, an officer of faultless symmetry, sternly rejected the advice of his kind attendants. "Nothing but the removal of the fractured limb can save you—you will die, otherwise;" said the French surgeon. "Well—be it so," returned the sufferer calmly, "death is preferable to deformity. Lose no time with me—you may be serviceable to my poor comrade." Immediately beside him, a young lad was stretched—I should say he was not nineteen—a fine, florid, healthy looking Englishman. His wound had been a severe contusion—and a passing observation of the French surgeons, announced that his was a hopeless case. And yet, death visited him in mercy. He appeared to undergo no pain—and in fancy, conversed with a "darling mother" and his "little sister," as he termed them—"babbled about green fields;" and expired with a smile upon his lips, under the firm belief that he had returned to the home he loved, and was re-united to those dear objects whom he idolized.

I never felt myself more relieved, than when a French fatigue-party came to remove me on a stretcher. Weak from loss of blood—dispirited at the painful recollection that I was now about to undergo imprisonment, to whose duration none could name the limit—every thing around was calculated to increase those feelings of despondency. The gloomy building seemed desecrated by the purposes it had been turned to—and where the faithful had worshipped, the penitent had

told the tale of sin and shame, and been forgiven—where love had been hallowed by holy rite, and supplications for the soul's weal of the departed had arisen—in that the temple of peace, war's horrid consequences were exhibited—and, in all the terrible variety which attends on death by violence, many a spirit was escaping from its mortal coil.

The house where I was about to take up my residence was situated close to the harbour, and, being at a distance from the breaches, was consequently, out of the fire of the besiegers. As we passed through the streets, I could not but remark the melancholy and deserted appearance that all around presented. The shops were unopened—the private dwellings jealously closed up—and the terrified inhabitants seemed not yet satisfied that the assault had failed, and danger was over for the present. When we reached the domicile of La Pablos, we found that our arrival had been duly announced. We were admitted into a narrow court-yard—and at the door of his mansion, the owner was waiting to receive us.

The appearance of my future host was not particularly prepossessing. Although stricken in years, his carriage was lofty and unbroken—and the expression of his countenance seemed that of a proud and daring spirit, obliged to bend for a time to circumstances, and stoop to a thralldom from which it secretly recoiled.

The Spaniard showed the way in—and I was placed on a comfortable bed, in an apartment very clean, but very plainly furnished. At the opposite side of the hall, a room had been provided for Mark Antony—for whose transit to these his new quarters, after I had been safely deposited, the stretcher and fatigue party were despatched.

“I will send you some linen—and that is more than many of our people could afford. In turn of duty, the escort of the convoy which marched for France on the 19th fell to my lot—and bitterly I lamented that I was not fated to witness the defeat, which we all considered as so certainly attendant on Lord Wellington's advance upon Vittoria. The thing seems incomprehensible—and even yet we regard the king's disaster almost as a dream. Well—let it pass—*c'est fortune de guerre*. The Emperor's lieutenant is in the Pyrences—and now, my Lord Wellington, look sharp!”

“Might not that cautionary hint, my dear Cammaran, be equally servicable to your friend, the Duke of Dalmatia?” I replied, with a smile.

“No—no. From secret intelligence which has reached the fortress, a very few days will end your leader's visionary prospects. What! enter France—carry the war over the frontier, and pollute the sacred soil! The thunderbolt is charged—and the hand is already present that will hurl it. But I must go. Duty will engage me the whole day, but in the evening I will visit you.”—Then turning to our host, Cammaran commended me and my companion to his especial attention. “Let nothing in this case be wanted, Senhor—you stand already not very favourably with the Governor. Adien, for a time, my friend”—and pressing my hand, the Frenchman took his departure.

I never saw a countenance on which scorn, hatred, and revenge,

seemed struggling for mastery, until I noticed that of Don Francisco. When the door of the court-yard closed, he poured forth a torrent of anathemas—then turning to me, his features instantly relaxed—and approaching my couch he took my hand in his.

“Stranger, you are welcome. The name of Englishman I respect—and the Spaniard is an ingrate who does not. If my manner in receiving you was not as warm as it might have been, ascribe it to the true cause—the pestilential presence of yonder foreigner. The sight of these insolent oppressors turns my blood to gall—their very language is discord to my ears—I hate them with all a Spaniard’s hatred. But why display impotent rage in words?—’Tis womanly—yet still, while the hand dares not strike a blow, the tongue finds some relief in venting the feelings of a surcharged breast—a maddened brain—in curses.”

I looked at La Pablos. His features were convulsed with passion. I had heard that many severities had been exercised by the French during the Peninsular conflict—and I concluded that Don Francisco had been one of the unhappy Spaniards who had suffered from the oppression of the invaders. The arrival of the fosterer, for that time, ended our conversation—the host quitting me to attend to this his second guest, and minister to the wants of Mark Antony.

Four days passed away—I had sufficiently recovered to be enabled to leave my room; and, leaning on the arm of a French soldier, who was daily in attendance on me by a special order from the Governor, I walked for a short distance every morning on the ramparts which overlooked the bay. My wound, though severe at the time that I received it, was one that healed rapidly—the bullet having slanted from the rib it struck against, and instead of taking what would have been otherwise a mortal direction, it inflicted a painful, but fortunately what proved a superficial injury. The fosterer was also convalescent—the ball had passed through his thigh without injuring the bone in its transit—his arm healed rapidly—and in a few days more the learned leach who attended us, announced that Mark Antony would be, as the fosterer termed it himself, “right upon his pins again.”

So far we had reason for self-gratulation—and as far as kindness from the host, and constant attentions on the part of Cammaran would go, we had no reason to complain of our captivity. But other circumstances allayed the satisfaction we should otherwise have felt—for every day the prospect of deliverance became more distant, and matters assumed a gloomier aspect.

Lord Wellington, on hearing of the miscarriage at San Sebastian, came down from the covering army to ascertain the causes of the failure, and, as it was reported, to adopt immediate means to remedy the disaster, and make himself master of the place. But, alas! our hopes that the speedy capture of the city would restore us to liberty again, ended on the morning of the 27th. Overnight, the batteries had been disarmed and the guns removed to Passages—the siege was turned into a blockade—and taking advantage of the confusion, the garrison sallied from the horn-work, surprised the soldiers in the trenches, and carried back more than two hundred prisoners. Ruelour also was busy on the wing. It was said that Soult had already taken the

offensive—that the allied forces in advance, had been attacked, defeated, and driven back—and an order, directing Sir Thomas Graham to march on the Bidassoa with all his disposable troops, confirmed the unwelcome news.

The intelligence that Napoleon's lieutenant had actually commenced operations to relieve Pampeluna and San Sebastian, and afterwards celebrate his master's birth-day in Vittoria, was perfectly correct. On the same morning and hour, while we had made our sanguinary and unsuccessful attempt upon the fortress, Soult commenced his daring operations, by driving in the pickets and scaling the pass of Alto-bisco. Although desperately outnumbered, the allies held their mountain position most obstinately—and for hours the combat raged with unabated fury, among wild and Alpine heights five thousand feet above the level of the sea. This protracted defence allowed time for others of the allied brigades to come, while a dense fog prevented the French marshal from executing the general attack he intended to have made with overwhelming numbers. Cole held his position with comparatively little loss—and when night came, finding his right turned at Orbaiceta, he cleverly retreated during the darkness, carrying ten thousand men safely through mountain passes, which rendered a regressive movement in the face of thirty thousand French bayonets a delicate and dangerous attempt. The position of Roncesvalles was consequently abandoned—and the first great effort from which Soult had expected far different results, left him with the allied brigades still like lions in the passes, and seven leagues of Alpine country interposed between him and Pampeluna, the grand object of his operations.

On the morning of the 26th, the French marshal resumed the offensive. A day of occasional combats and severe marching, while the English generals slowly and steadily fell back, produced no greater results than those attendant upon yesterday. Night came—and Soult, with altered convictions as to the probability of eventual success, waited for morning to try his fortunes in the field anew.

The third trial was certainly more propitious. The Aretesque and Maya passes were attacked in great force, and, aided by a partial surprise, the French were enabled to drive the pickets back upon their supports,—and eventually, but after the most desperate fighting, the allied position was won. Four Portuguese guns were captured—and the French, elevated by this success, pressed the reduced battalions, who still retired, but slowly and sullenly, blocking up each ridge or pass they defended with the bodies of the dead and dying. At six o'clock, completely worn out with fatigue, their numbers reduced to a third, their ammunition almost expended, the rocky heights of Atchiola were about to be abandoned—but at the moment, a brigade of the seventh division came opportunely up—the battle was sternly renewed, and the French forced to retire from the disputed mountain, and occupy the pass of Maya which they had won so dearly. In these sanguinary and protracted combats, Soult, with an expenditure of fifteen hundred men, gained a few miles of mountain and four disabled guns—a miserable trophy for such a waste of blood.

Nothing could surpass the triumph of the garrison when the intelligence of the marshal's advance was confirmed—and the affairs of these three days mountain warfare were grossly mistated. Roncesvalles and Linzoain were described as brilliant actions—glorious to the arms of France; while Maya was exaggerated into a crowning victory.

But the hours of Soult's temporary success were numbered. On his return from San Sebastian, Wellington heard of the French attack on the evening of the 27th, and hurrying forward to San Estevan, which he reached the morning of the 28th—there ascertained the true position of affairs. His plans were formed with his accustomed rapidity and decision—and he determined to concentrate in front of Pampeluna, and retreat by the valley of the Lanz.

In the meantime, the fortress profiting by the cessation of the investment, received ample supplies of stores and ammunition by sea from France, and in return transmitted back the sick and wounded, thus getting relieved of the most troublesome incumbrance with which a beleaguered city is incommoded. New defences were planned and executed—former damages repaired—the works were generally strengthened—the magazines stored with powder and provisions—and San Sebastian was, in this interval, rendered stronger than when the besiegers first broke ground.

All these events to me held out a melancholy prospect. It was already intimated that on the first favourable opportunity the prisoners would be forwarded to France—and in that case, captivity and the war would be coeval. A yearning after home momentarily increased. Isidora was ever present—and I cursed the hour that, for the bauble, fame, I had quitted the land of liberty and love. Mark Antony bore thralldom even more impatiently than I. He cursed France, Spain, and Portugal in a breath—read a letter from the rat-catcher once a day—and another, I fancy from the lady of his love, “every minute i' th' hour.”

“What the devil are we to do, Mark?” I inquired, after we had groaned in unison until both were weary of complaining.

“Do!” exclaimed the fosterer, “Give the thieves leg-bail, and ‘cut our lucky’ the first opportunity.”

There was wisdom in Mark Antony's advice, and I determined to follow it.

CHAPTER XLI.

BATTLES OF THE PYRENEES.

“ If I begin the battery once again,
I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur,
Till in her ashes she lie buried.”

KING HENRY V.

THE exultation of the French garrison at the reported victories which had crowned the efforts of Soult for the relief of Pampeluna was but a short-lived triumph—for an attempt vauntingly commenced, and certainly very gallantly carried out, had been signally defeated.

Picton, followed closely by Soult, had retreated through the valley of the Zuberi before day-break. On nearing Pampeluna, the English general found that the fourth division had already passed Villalba; the garrison of Pampeluna had sallied and spiked a battery—the blockading Spaniards were in terrible confusion—and every thing bore the appearance of disaster. With a stern hardihood, which formed the best point in Picton’s military character, he determined at once to turn and offer battle to the pursuers—and accordingly, formed in battle order upon the ridges of Miguel, Escova, and Christoval; thus masking the fortress he came to relieve from Soult’s view as he issued from the valley of the Zuberi.

The French marshal felt little doubt that the object of his previous efforts was now about to be realized. Within two leagues of Pampeluna he followed a retiring army, and in another hour would be in communication with that fortress. What, then, was his surprise, when on emerging from the valley, he found the third division and Morillo’s Spaniards in position on the bold and rocky chain rising in front of Huarte, and Cole more immediately advanced, in possession of the heights near Zabaldica which command the Huarte road? Hastily he adopted and executed a bold movement to form a line of battle; but, while that was in progress, another and a greater actor appeared suddenly upon the stage; and when he came, the tide of Soult’s fortune turned, and defeat followed in his footsteps.

On quitting the Bastan on the 27th, Lord Wellington learned at Ostiz, that Picton had retired on Pampeluna, and, riding at speed to Sauroren, he perceived Clausel’s divisions in full march, and with an eagle-glance discovered from the direction taken by the French columns, that the allied movement through the Lauz must certainly be intercepted. There was not a moment to be lost; an order was despatched that the troops should move bodily by the right towards

Oricain, a village nearly in the rear of the mountain position taken up by Sir Lowry Cole.

In issuing this hurried order, one of war's romantic incidents occurred. The despatch was written on the parapet of the bridge; and as the staff-officer who carried it, rode out of one extremity of the village, the French cavalry galloped in at the other; while the allied commander dashed quickly up the hill, and joined the allied troops who held it. His appearance was sudden, unexpected, and electrical. A Portuguese battalion raised an exulting cheer—the name of *Wellington!* passed from regiment to regiment, accompanied by a thundering huzza; while, by a strange coincidence, Soult was at the moment so immediately in front, that the rival commanders were pointed out distinctly to each other. The evening passed without any striking effort. Soult examined the allied position under the fire of his light troops—a thunder-storm ended the skirmish, and both sides determined on a trial of skill and strength to-morrow.

The 28th, a day ever memorable in peninsular history, found both sides prepared for action. Soult, intending to crush the left of the fourth division, and ignorant of the march of the sixth, made dispositions to enable him to attack Cole's left and front together, while Reille, at the same time, should carry the height held by the Spaniards and the British 40th. The former effort turned out a fatal experiment; and the blow intended to crush the allied brigade before it could be assisted met with a tremendous counter-stroke. "Striving to encompass the left of the allies, the French were themselves encompassed." Suddenly a Portuguese brigade appeared upon their right; the sixth division showed itself as unexpectedly in front; the fourth turned fiercely on their left; and, scourged at the same time by a front and flanking fire, the French columns were driven back, men falling fast on both sides; for the French fought desperately, but in vain.

The struggle for the mountain produced still bloodier combats. A hermita crowned the height, and the chapel was held by a regiment of Portuguese Cacadores. Against it a column issued from Sauroren, and, heedless of a sweeping fire that fell upon it with deadly violence, as in close order it steadily pushed up the hill, the ridge was crowned, and the Cacadores obliged to abandon the hermita. But Ross's brigade were at hand, and with a headlong charge the heights were cleared, and the chapel recovered with the bayonet. A second time the French rallied, advanced, and were repulsed—but other columns were coming into action. The right flank of Ross's brigade became exposed—for a Portuguese battalion gave way—a heavy column of the enemy pressed on, and the British regiments retired for a time, but was only to return more fiercely to the attack. "Charge succeeded charge, and each side yielded and recovered by turns." At that moment, Byng's brigade rapidly advanced; while two noble regiments of Anson's—the 27th and 48th—rushed from the centre, bore down everything before them, and the French were literally pushed down the heights by close and murderous fighting, which Wellington termed "bludgeon work." On the hill occupied by the 40th and Spaniards, Reille's attack had failed—for, although the regiment of El Pravia gave way, flanked by a Portuguese battalion, the 40th held its ground immovably. Four times

the French topped the height—four times they were pushed down by the bayonet; each charge heralded by a cheer, and each repulse bloodier than the preceding one; until, at last, strength and spirit equally exhausted, they refused to follow their officers and gave up the trial in despair.

The 29th passed quietly—both sides required rest—and to each some time was necessary to get their dispersed brigades again together. Not a shot was interchanged that day; but never did a more ominous tranquillity forerun the hurricane of war. It was now evident that all idea of re-entering Spain must be abandoned. The front displayed by Lord Wellington was not to be forced; and the French cavalry and artillery—only encumbrances in a mountain-country—were ordered to fall back and retire to the Bidassao. While waiting for D'Erlon to come up, Soult received intelligence which induced him to change his original plans, and he determined to throw himself between the allies and the valley of the Bastan, thus securing a close communication with the French frontier, and falling back on his reserves, while, by a bold and well-combined movement, he might fortunately effect one great object of his advance into the passes of the Pyrenees,—the relief of San Sebastian.

Although unhappily non-combatant, still the operations of the contending armies which, day after day were severely engaged, or placed in the immediate presence of each other, to us were of absorbing interest. The first reports that reached the fortress were sadly disheartening; but on the fourth morning, a striking alteration was visible on the countenance of our friend Cammaran, when he called to announce “tidings from the host.” His mercurial temperament, yesterday in the very ascendant of fever heat, had sank almost to zero, and it was very amusing to observe the ingenuity with which, while admitting stubborn facts, he still endeavoured to apply palliatives to his disappointment—

“Ah—sacre! what a country to operate in! Legs were of no use among those accursed Pyrenees,—men should have wings. What splendid combinations were those of the Emperor’s lieutenant! Only for broken roads, ruined bridges, infernal gullies, and inaccessible mountains, the Duc’s movement would have been a march of victory. He would have been at Vittoria on the 16th.”

“Pshaw!” I said, breaking in on the detail with a laugh—“He would never be contented to stop there. Why not push for Madrid at once?”

“Ah, you smile, my friend;” replied Cammaran, with a sigh. “But, peste! the d—d fogs confused the general movements. One division went astray—another was obliged to halt—columns marching over precipices could not keep time. Ah! those accidents saved my Lord Wellington; the delay enabled him to collect his scattered corps, and when the Marshal cleared those infernal valleys and defiles with scarcely half the *corps d’armée* disposable, there—Sacre Dieu! was your general in front of Pampeluna with all his divisions up and in position!”—

“And honest Jack Soult discovered that all his magnificent combi-

nations and previous success, had ended in his catching a Tartar!—Ah! Cammaran, I feel for you, my poor friend. But out with it at once—or I'll compassionately do it for you. The upshot is, you have got a confounded thrashing”—

“No—no—no;” exclaimed the Voltigeur. “The plan of operations is only changed—”

“And the Emperor's lieutenant has postponed the birth-day entertainment; and, in place of resting on the Zodorra, he will be over the Bidassao in a day or two. Well, I can feel for you. But custom reconciles people to contingencies; and latterly you have been so regularly beaten that it is a novelty no longer.”

The Voltigeur smiled, shrugged his shoulders, pleaded duty in excuse for a brief visit, and hurried away—I suspect to avoid my *badinage*, which, at the time, was anything but agreeable.

Indeed, judging from the scanty information I received, the deductions I had drawn of ulterior consequences proved correct. As yet the French Marshal had only witnessed the complete miscarriage of all he had designed and hoped for: but now, the penalty of the failure was about to be exacted.

In pursuance of his altered plans, on entering the valley of Ulzema, where he overtook D'Erlon, who had already reached it at the head of five divisions, and with a sixth (Martinic's) in his rear, the French Marshal instantly determined to crush the corps under Sir Rowland Hill posted on the ridge of Buenza. All was in his favour—the allies were scarcely half his strength, and the left of their position was vulnerable. The attack was fiercely made, as fiercely repulsed, and every effort against the allied flanks was unsuccessful. Finally, numbers enabled the French marshal to turn the position; but Hill steadily retired on Equaros, and there, joined by Campbell's Portuguese brigade and Morillo's Spaniards, he again boldly stood his ground and offered battle. But Soult declined an action—and, contented with having gained the Isurzun road, he determined to force his way to San Sebastian; but it was decreed that, like Pampeluna, the fortress on the Urumea should be abandoned to its fate.

Wellington had penetrated the designs of his able opponent, and, with characteristic decision, prepared to meet them with a counter-stroke. With him, to decide and execute were synonymous; and in the second conflict at Sauroren, the intended blow was heavily delivered. It will be enough to say that, in the conflicts which ensued, the French were completely beaten. On the allied side the loss of men was heavy in killed and wounded, amounting to eighteen hundred. On the French it was enormous—two divisions—those of Maucune and Couroux were almost destroyed—the general disorganization was complete—Foy cut off from the main body altogether—three thousand men were prisoners—and nearly as many more rendered *hors de combat*. It was not the severe losses he had sustained which alone embarrassed the French commander. The allies everywhere were gathering around him in strength—his troops were overmarched and dispirited—his position untenable—all idea of advancing on San Sebastian abandoned—and the only door open for retreat was to gain

the pass of Doña Maria, and by forced marches fall back on San Estevan. Accordingly, at midnight, his troops were put in motion to reach this dangerous defile, and thence, by ascending or descending the Bidassao, regain the French frontier. How painful this retrogressive movement must have been, may well be fancied. Now "the leader of a broken host," and smarting the more keenly from defeat, because he had too presumptuously affirmed a certainty of success, and assured his troops of victory.

Nothing could be more critical than Soult's position; and while Wellington supposed that he intended entering the Bastan by the pass of Villate, the French marshal was too close to Buenza to hazard a retreat by the valley of the Lanz. Indeed, his situation was so dangerous, that a less determined commander might have despaired. His only means of egress from these mountains was by a long and perilous defile leading to an Alpine bridge, and both were overlooked by towering precipices; while, from holding a shorter and easier line of march, the chances were considerable that Wellington would anticipate his movements, and reach Elizondo—Graham seize Yanzi before he could arrive there—Hill fall on his flanks and rear, if obliged, as he should be in these events, to take the route of Zagaramundi—and, in the end, even if he fought his way to Urdax, he might find that position preoccupied, and his retreat finally intercepted. Fortune averted the great calamity; but still safety was to be purchased at a heavy sacrifice.

As he had dreaded, Soult's rear-guard was overtaken near Lizasso—was attacked—defeated—and saved only by a fog which opportunely covered a hurried retreat. At Elizondo a large convoy with its guard was captured; but the crowning misfortune was impending, when, ignorant of Lord Wellington's proximity, Soult halted in the valley of San Estevan. Behind the ridges which overlook the town four allied divisions were halted—the seventh held the mountain of Doña Maria—the light, with a Spanish division, were in hasty march to seize the passes at Vera and Echallar.—Byng had reached Maya, and Hill was moving on Almandon. Every arrangement to enclose the retreating army was complete, and never, in military calculations, was the destruction of an enemy more certain, than that which awaited Soult. Unconscious of his danger, the French marshal gave no indications of alarm. With him there was no appearances to excite suspicion,—no watch-fire indicated the presence of an enemy—no scouting-party was seen upon the heights. Two hours more, and the fate of the Emperor's lieutenant would have been sealed, when one of those trifling incidents occurred, which in war will render the most studied and scientific efforts unavailing, and extricate from perilous results, those who have dared too much, but to whom despair is happily a stranger. Possibly, in the varied fortunes of a life "crowded with events," never did accident tax the Great Captain's philosophy more severely.

Unseen himself, Wellington with an eagle's glance watched from a height the progress of his combinations. The quarry in the valley rested in false security, even when the falcon on the rock was pluming his feathers and preparing for a fatal stoop. A few French horsemen

carelessly patrolled the hollow, and although a hundred eyes were turned upon them, they saw nothing which could betray the presence of an enemy or excite alarm. At that moment three plunderers crossed their path. They were seized, carried off; presently the alarm was beaten, and in a few minutes the French columns were under arms and in full retreat; and "Thus," to quote Napier's words, "the disobedience of these plundering knaves, unworthy of the name of soldiers, deprived our consummate commander of the most splendid success, and saved another from the most terrible disaster."

Although its total *déroute* was narrowly averted, no army suffered for a time more severely than the retiring columns of the French. Cumbered with baggage, embarrassed with the transport of the wounded, confined to a strait and difficult mountain-road, no wonder that the whole mass of fighting and disabled men were occasionally in terrible confusion. The light troops of the fourth division appeared upon their right flank, and, moving by a parallel line, maintained a teasing fusilade. The bridge leading to that of Yanzi was strongly occupied by a battalion of Spanish sharpshooters. D'Erlon, profiting by the inaction of Longa and Barcenas, forced the pass; but Reille was not so fortunate. The light division, by an unequalled exertion, crossed forty miles of mountain-country by one incessant march; and they had already crowned the summit of the precipice which overhangs the pass to Yanzi at the perilous moment when Reille's exhausted column was struggling through the "deep defile." Never was a worn-out enemy placed in a more terrible position. On one side, a deep river with rugged banks; on the other, an inaccessible precipice, topped by an enemy secure from everything but the uncertain effect of vertical fire. The scene which ensued was frightful. Disabled men were thrown down, deserted, and ridden over. The feeble return to the British musquetry produced no reaction. The bridge of Yanzi could not be forced; and night came opportunely, permitting the harassed column to escape by the road of Echallar, leaving, however, the wounded and the baggage to the victors.

The last struggle was at hand. Soult, with an indomitable courage which even in defeat established his military superiority, by powerful and personal exertions, rallied his broken troops, and once more formed in order of battle on the Puerto of Echallar, with Clausel's diminished corps in advance on a contiguous height. But that stand gave but a breathing-time. Two British divisions were already pushed on to re-occupy Roncesvalles and Aldudes—Byng was at Urdax, Hill on the Col de Maya—and the light, fourth, and seventh divisions in hand, and ready to fall on.

The affairs which followed were very singular, and mark the moral effect which success and disaster exercise upon the best soldiers in their turn. The light division was pointed on Santa Barbara to turn the right of the enemy, the fourth were desired to make a front attack by Echallar, and the seventh moved from Sumbilla to operate against Soult's left. Outmarching the supporting columns, Barnes's brigade boldly assailed the strong ridges occupied by Clausel's division; and, with a daring courage worthy of the good fortune which crowned it,

actually drove from its mountain-position a corps of four-fold numbers to his own. It is true that Clausel's troops had been beaten, overmarched, and dispirited. Already they had been thrice bloodily defeated; but that six thousand tried and gallant soldiers should be forced from a rugged height by a brigade not exceeding sixteen hundred bayonets, is an anomaly in war which seems difficult to resolve to common causes.

The last affair was that of Ivantelly. On that strong mountain the French rear-guard had taken its stand, and although evening had set in, the soldiers fasted two days, and a mist obscured the heights, the light troops mounted the rugged front and drove the enemy from that, the last ridge, which, in the course of nine days' operations, had been assailed or defended.

In the course of those sanguinary and continued combats, known by the general designation of the Battles of the Pyrenees, the Allies lost seven thousand *hors de combat*. The French casualties were infinitely greater; and a moderate estimate, framed from the most impartial statements, raises it to the fatal amount of fifteen thousand men.

It was with feelings of unqualified delight I listened to Cammaran's doleful admission that Soult was over the Bidassao, and the battering guns, which, under an alarm, had been embarked at Passages, had been again re-landed, and the siege was to commence again. Sufficient proof of this intention was quickly manifested, for the trenches were repaired, San Bartolomeo armed anew, and the convent of Antigua furnished with heavy guns to sweep the beach and bay, if necessary.

Whatever might have been the feelings of the governor and his garrison when the tidings of Soult's failure were confirmed, still, like gallant soldiers, they showed no lack of confidence in themselves, but redoubled their exertions to increase all the means within their power of defence, and repel the second assault as effectually as they had repulsed the former one. On the anniversary of the Emperor's birth, the inhabitants of the city and the troops who invested it, were apprised of the event by frequent salvos of artillery; and when night came, the castle exhibited a splendid illumination, surmounted by a brilliant legend, "*Vive Napoleon le grand!*" visible distinctly at the distance of a league.

On the 19th, the long-expected siege-train arrived from England, and on the 22nd, fifteen heavy guns were placed in battery. On the 23rd another train was landed. On the 25th all the batteries were armed and reported ready to commence their fire; and on the 26th fifty-seven pieces opened with a thundering crash, and in one unabated roar played on the devoted city, until darkness rendered the practice uncertain and ended this deafening cannonade.

The result of the siege was what might have been anticipated, when Wellington, with adequate means, had issued his order that the place should fall. On the morning of the 31st the assault was delivered, and after a long, bloody, and doubtful struggle, the fortress was carried.

Would that with the fall of that well-defended city the sad detail of "siege and slaughter" closed! "At Ciudad Rodrigo intoxication

and plunder had been the principal object; at Badajoz, lust and murder were joined to rapine and drunkenness; but at San Sebastian the direst, the most revolting cruelty was added to the catalogue of crimes.* Thank God! from witnessing that horrid scene, the fosterer and I were exempted. In accordance with Mark Antony's advice, I had determined to give General Rey "leg-bail;" and on the night of the 27th, Dame Fortune behaving towards us like a real gentlewoman, we contrived to get clear of San Sebastian before our friends the besiegers could manage to get in.

But that event, in this my hurried but "eventful history," requires another chapter.

CHAPTER XLII.

A NOCTURNAL ADVENTURE, AND PREPARATIONS FOR ESCAPE.

" *Arthur.* Mercy on me!
Methinks, nobody should be sad but I;
* * * * *
* * * By my Christendom,
So I were out of prison, and kept sheep,
I would be as merry as the day is long."
KING JOHN.

NEARLY a month had passed—a month of dreary captivity. It is true there was not a prisoner within the walls of San Sebastian who had less reason to complain, but still I felt myself a prisoner. Cammaran, as far as means allowed, anticipated every want. I was under no *surveillance*—the city was open to me—I wandered where I pleased—and every sentry I passed saluted me. The voltigeur was a general favourite,—the story of his deliverance had been told in the garrison, and even with more romance than had attended it; and every French soldier we passed pointed out the fosterer and myself as the preservers of a gallant comrade. If we met a group of officers, the moniteur, the cigar-case, or the snuff-box were hospitably presented to me; and could Mark Antony have drunk "pottle deep," he had only to turn into a French guard-house, and every flask it contained would have been placed at his disposal.

Such were my relations with the enemy; but the bearing of my host was sometimes hard to understand. It was professedly kind; but the manner was forced, and repulsive. His habits were retired—no overture to intimacy had been made—beyond the detached portion of his mansion where I had been located at the first, the rest of his domicile was to me a *terra incognita*. Of his establishment I had never seen but two—a particularly dark-visaged youth, with a cut-throat cast of countenance, and a woman of seventy who was deaf, or pretended to be deaf. Still, our wants were carefully attended to,

* Napier.

and at times Senhor Francisco asked after my health in a tone of voice that would lead a person to imagine the man was sincere in the inquiry.

"Upon my conscience," observed the fosterer, as he presented himself one morning at my bed-side, "I have a fancy this house isn't over good. If banshees played upon the fiddle, I would swear that I heard one these three last nights in the garden that we see behind the window of my room. Arrah—do you think the place was formerly a mad-house? Except Newgate—and, blessed be God, I can only spake of it from description, the devil a such a place for locks and bolts I was ever in before. Has the ould gentleman, do ye think, much money? Every window barred up like a watchhouse—but they would require, for all that, to be looked over, for I have managed to remove two of mine,—and if I live till to-night, I'll have a walk in the garden."

"No—no—Mark; that will never do. We must not intrude upon Don Francisco. He may have some secret to conceal."

"Troth! and ye'r right," returned the fosterer. "May be he has a private still at work, or does a little in the coining. But, faith, no matter—I'll have a peep to-night. But if he's forging notes, or making bad dollars, what can he want with the music?"

"Music!" I repeated.

"Yes; I hear a guitar every night, and two nights ago saw something very like a ghost—"

"Or rather very like your grandmother"—and I burst into a loud laugh.

"Oh—I knew you would make fun of me. Well—no matter. She was the height of Serjeant Antony, and he's six-feet-six without his shoes—and as white as your own shirt—not, in truth, that that's anything remarkable, for worse washerwomen than we meet with here you could hardly find if you were on the look-out for a fortnight. But there's no use in talking. There's a tall white woman parades the garden; and if I live till the old Don is fast asleep, I'll be through the window, if I break my neck."

I confess, that although I could not listen without a smile, to Mark Antony's description of the lady-like spectre that honoured the garden with her presence, and then and there discoursed "most eloquent music;" I felt, notwithstanding, a more than common curiosity on the subject,—and while I reprobated the fosterer's removal of the bars which obstructed his communication with the spot she haunted, as an act but slightly removed from burglary itself, still my scruples were easily overcome when he proposed that I should keep watch with him that night. The retreat was beaten in the fortress—supper-hour came—the host, as usual, presented himself, to make inquiry whether aught was wanted that had not been already provided—and then, after wishing us "Good night," we saw him secure his gate, and retire to that portion of his premises, from which, with all the jealous reserve observed in an Eastern harem, we had been, as we were pleased to call it, inhospitably excluded.

"Well," said Mark Antony, "I suppose the man intends to be civil, but he has the quarest way of showing it. Although it's his own wine we're drinking, the divil a drop he would ever take in company.

Give me that Empecinado, after all ! God forgive me ! I didn't value him at the time, as I should have done. What, though he had an off-hand way of shooting Frenchmen and hanging justices of the peace, the moment the job was over he was as pleasant a gentleman as ever stretched a boot under mahogany. But as to this dark-looking divil—why, we're here well on to a month, and he was never the person to say, 'Mister O'Toole, have ye a mouth upon ye?'

An hour passed—we finished a second flask of the surly Spaniard's montilano—and the fosterer proposed, that while we apparently retired for the night we should extinguish the lamps, and then commence our vigil.

It was accordingly done—and, gliding into Mark Antony's dormitory, we began our "watch and ward."

An unbroken stillness permitted the slightest sound to be heard distinctly ; and we therefore conversed in whispers. The contrast that night in San Sebastian presented to the day, was singularly imposing. The deafening roar of the allied batteries had ceased, and the city was wrapt in a calm but ominous tranquillity. Too distant from the breaches, we did not hear the working-parties, who sedulously employed the hours of darkness in erecting new defences, and restoring others which the daily fire of the besiegers had destroyed. Another hour passed—no guitar was heard—no sprite "wicked or charitable," flitted past the casement. We heard the reliefs go round—the sentries changed—and all again was silent.

"Ah—Mark !—Mark !" I whispered in the fosterer's ear—"The senhor's montilano has been uppermost in your brain, I fancy, on these same nights when this musical apparition was afoot. Are you sure that your imaginary guitar was anything but wind whistling through the window?"

"By all the crosses in a highlandman's kilt, the music I heard," returned the fosterer ; "but whether it was a guitar or a fiddle I'll not take on me to swear. Stop—hush !—Holy Mary ! If that's not music, the divil an ear has Mark Antony !"

The fosterer was right. It was the distant tinkle of a stringed instrument—and at times I fancied that I heard voices talking in suppressed tones, and in the direction of that part of the building which Senhor La Pablos had reserved so exclusively to himself.

"Now, Hector," said the fosterer, "maybe you'll call me drunk after this? What's to be done? 'Pon my conscience, I think Mister Pablos is anything but neighbourly, with his tea-party every evening, and not say to people who have done him the honour to take up their quarters in his house, 'Mr. O'Halloran, will you, and that young gentleman along with you, meaning myself, step over, in the family way, and take share of what we have?'"

"Why, then, upon my soul, I think it is, Mark !" was my reply.

"Then I may as well take the loose bars out?" said the fosterer, suiting the action to the word—and before I could put in a feeble remonstrance, he established an aperture in the casement, through which any one of slighter dimensions than a common-councilman could easily slip out.

"Hush !—the guitar again !"

“Ay—and by Saint Patrick! some company to listen to it!—Oh! the devil a one of me will remain longer without having a peep at the party, if I can.”—And as he spoke, the fosterer popped through the casement, and—I lament to make the confession—next moment I was after him.

We found ourselves in a small garden thickly planted with shrubs and fruit-trees, and encompassed by a lofty wall; several narrow walks intersected it, and the termination of one was bounded by a wing of the Spaniard's domicile. Through a chink in the shutters, a stream of light escaped; and thither the fosterer moved silently, I bringing up the rear.

There was no doubt that from this apartment the voices and the music had proceeded which we heard in the fosterer's dormitory. I peeped in. A party was grouped about a table covered with game, fruit, and wine—and a lamp, suspended from the centre of the ceiling, enabled us to examine the company.

Five men were seated round the board, which was also graced by the presence of two personages of the softer sex. I never saw a party collected at a supper table whose appearances and pursuits were evidently so opposite. A burly monk sat directly in front of the treacherous fissure in the window-shutter. He was of no ascetic order; but a Christian man, on whom good fare was not thrown away; and, even if the lamp went out by accident, one on whose honour you could place reliance, and drink with in the dark. Two others of the party wore the costume, and had the general air, of Spanish traders. The fourth was a man of wild and formidable exterior; his arms, his dress, his bearing, all betrayed that his was no peaceable profession—and Mark Antony hinted, in a whisper, “that if the Empecinado had a brother in the world the dark gentleman with the pistols was the person, and no mistake.” The fifth was an English seaman—at least his costume and carriage would infer it. He seemed a fine athletic man, and, though his back was turned to the casement, the fosterer observed in an under-tone, that the sailor would thrash the company collectively.

In years and appearance the females were still more dissimilar than the men. One well advanced in life was tall, slight, deeply pock marked, and generally forbidding. The other—she sate beside the priest—had scarcely numbered twenty summers, and on a lovelier face, a finer form, the eyes of two interloping Irishmen never peeped through a split in a window-shutter. “Och! murder!” ejaculated Mark Antony, *sotto voce*—“That's the Ghost—and isn't she a darling?”

One seat was unoccupied. To whom did it appertain? Our host, no doubt, and wherefore was he absent?

“What an ould troublesome thief he is!” whispered Mark Antony, pointing to the vacant chair. “Where the devil do ye think he's scouting to? when every body's asleep or better employed, as they are within. I only wish that we were of the company—Isn't it a comfort to see his reverence set such an elegant example? How beautifully he raises his elbow—that's what I call honour bright! No sky-lights, and he fills to the top every time the bottle passes him.”



... and Mark ... in an awkward, prominent

"Hush! I thought I heard something move behind us."

"Well, upon my soul, I fancied, myself, that I heard a rustle in the bushes," returned the fosterer—"If old surly is on the ramble, and drop upon us unawares, what a pretty figure we should cut!"

"Come, Mark, let us return to our old quarters; we risk the unpleasant consequences attendant on discovery, without any object to be found—"

"See—the sailor rises!—and the sooner we're off the better. May God bless that pretty face of her's—if I could not stop here all night to look at it; but, come along."

We retired as quietly as we had advanced—the fosterer leading the retreat. No sound occasioned alarm—no ghost of Patagonian proportions crossed our path. We reached the lattice through which we had invaded Don Francisco's garden. Mark Antony papped his head and shoulders through the aperture; but never did a man withdraw both more rapidly. A dark-visaged Spaniard pointed a pistol from within, while, without, a person immediately at our elbow, in a low, but peremptory voice, ordered us "to stand." The tones were perfectly familiar; indeed, there was no doubt touching the identity of the speaker, for Senhor La Pablos stepped from behind one of the thick shrubs.

"So, gentlemen," he commenced, while every word came hissing ironically from between his teeth—"Methought it was only Englishmen who were forced upon my unwilling hospitality. I was mistaken, it would seem, and appearances favoured the deception. I believed my house was occupied by men of honour; but I have harboured French spies, it would appear."

"Oh—stop—Mister Pablos, if you please," exclaimed the fosterer, "devil a bigger mistake ye ever made in yer life. Arrah—what puts that into yer head?"

"I judge men not by their assertions, but their acts," returned the Spaniard coldly—

"Senhor," I said, addressing the angry host, "you certainly have reason to question the motives of our midnight intrusion; but I declare, upon the honour of a British officer, it was entirely a silly trespass—one that I cannot justify, but one from which, towards you, no mischief was designed. Let it be overlooked, and I promise, that while we remain beneath your roof, we will confine ourselves to whatever portion of your premises it may be your pleasure to restrain us."

"Captain O'Halloran," returned the Spaniard, coldly, "whatever your intentions may have been, your conduct warrants me to draw very different conclusions than the motives you have been pleased to assign. The safety of myself—my family—those who are connected with me—all require me to guard against treachery. True, it has rarely come concealed beneath an English uniform—and, I am half persuaded, you harboured no evil against me and mine; but you came here under a suspicious introduction. I am a devoted man, and now completely in your power. You have seen too much—and yet too little. In one brief sentence I speak your doom—a stern necessity

compels me to be severe—cruel—if it please ye better. One course alone remains to be pursued; I must secure myself, my friends, my wife."

"That's her I took for the ghost," said the fosterer, apart—"and the devil a foot I would have put into the garden but for the same lady."

"Hush! Proceed, sir," I answered.

"Nothing can make us safe, but death or deportation. Walk with me, sirs. 'Twere idle to remonstrate here, or to refuse obedience to my order"—and, with the perfect confidence that he had made no statement which he could not effectually support, the Spaniard stalked on, and the fosterer and I followed.

"Well—Mr. O'Toole," I said, as, like two convicted culprits, we sullenly retraced our steps. "A pretty kettle of fish you have made of it!"

"Oh!"—groaned the fosterer—"the game's up. The curse of Cromwell light upon the country! Is'nt it hard that a man can't slip out of a window to take a little air without having his throat cut?"

As he spoke we reached the extremity of the garden. La Pablos unclosed a door. We entered the same chamber where, two or three minutes since, we had witnessed a scene of social comfort. There the remnant of the supper stood—but the company were gone, and their places had been filled by personages of a very different, and a very dangerous exterior.

It was hard to define their appearance. Their garb was that of mariners; in all besides, they looked banditti. My impression was not singular,—for the fosterer, in a whisper, declared that, "compared with these villains, the guerillas were regular gentlemen." All were armed—and I should say, there was not a member of this respectable community, who, like Friar Tuck, would hesitate on resorting to the "carnal weapon," were it needed.

Our trial was shorter, even, than a drum-head court martial. Senhor Francisco stated the offence, and then simply inquired what the safety of the commonwealth demanded. The twelve judges were never so unanimous. In the multitude of counsellors there was but one opinion—and that, though differently expressed, resolved itself into one pithy adage, namely—that "dead men tell no tales."

From the apparent character of those around me, I certainly considered that I should be defunct to a moral before morning; but Mark Antony boldly demurred to the sentence: and put forward the reasons why death and execution should be stayed; but as the fosterer's plea involved a confused story about ghosts and music, I question whether it would have carried an overwhelming conviction of our innocence to the dread tribunal before whom we stood. As it turned out, however, we were not on the verge of death, but, happily, on the eve of deliverance—and in a brief space, the colour of our fortunes changed.

While the senhor was listening, and with marked incredulity, to the fosterer's defence, a noise was heard without, and the personage who bore the appearance of an English seaman, but who, from his position

at the table had eluded our former *espionage*, burst suddenly into the apartment.

“What the devil is all this I hear about spies, and land-loupers?” he exclaimed. “Are these the chaps?—Egad—this here one,” and he pointed to me, “looks too honest to play traitor. But, what!—Do my eyes deceive me?—Why, dash my buttons—it can’t be possible—but it is—an old messmate by Heaven! What, Mark—am I so changed, that William Rawlings is forgotten?”

It was indeed the brother of the fosterer’s mistress; and the next moment, like Homer’s heroes, their hands were locked together, and the pleasure of an unexpected meeting, was expressed in sea parlance on the one part, and an eloquent admixture of English and Irish on the other, which must have been perfectly unintelligible to the auditory, as I could but partially comprehend it.

With the host, a brief conversation put matters in excellent train. As regarded felonious designs, we received an honourable acquittal; and better far, the welcome assurance was made, that before two suns rose, if luck were on our side, we should be clear of the fortress and free as the ocean-bird itself.

We returned to our own apartments, accompanied by William Rawlings. The senhor was full of mystery and business; and, I presume, the gentlemen of the spado school were equally engaged; and, consequently, from the sailor we learned the particulars not only of our host’s domestic relations, but, what was of more importance, the means and the probability of effecting an immediate escape.

Senhor La Pablos, it appeared, was a contrabandista, and did business on a most extensive scale. His principles were neither considered particularly nice, nor was he a patriot of the purest water; albeit, he hated the French with an intensity which Dr. Johnson himself would have admired. The senhor’s antipathy to the invaders, arose rather from private than from public considerations. He had acquired much wealth as honestly as smugglers generally do, and, year after year, the invading commanders laid him under heavy contributions, and obliged him to disgorge extensively. Senhor La Pablos had also been blessed with a very young and a very pretty help-mate; and on a short excursion to the frontier in the course of business, on his return he received the unwelcome intelligence that the lady of his love had levanted the second day after he had bidden her a tender, but as he, “good easy man,” believed, only a temporary adieu. He had replaced her loss as speedily as it could be effected—and as the successor of the lost one was equally fair, and might prove, “alas! for womankind” equally frail, he secluded her as much as possible from common gaze; and, certainly, he had never intended that we, during our brief sojourn in his hospitable mansion, should have been introduced to the family circle. “But now for more important matters,” said the sailor; “it would waste time to tell you by what course of events I got connected with these contrabandistas, and shut up for the last month in this confounded fortress. I think escape tolerably secure—but could we but command one hundred dollars, it were certain. These Spanish smugglers are cold,

calculating scoundrels—every movement is made for a mercenary object—but if they receive the consideration for their services, they are proverbially faithful, even to death itself, in a punctual performance of what they have undertaken.”

“How unfortunate!” I exclaimed. “Thrice the sum required is lying with my baggage outside, and all I am at present master of is this valueless ring, and a holy keepsake from my lady mother. Would your friends, Rawlings, deal in relics of marvellous value? for I doubt not that this I bear upon me is such.”

The sailor smiled.

“They are true Catholics, I have no doubt; but I fancy they would prefer plain silver after all.”

“Blessed Mary!” said the fosterer, “I wonder where the old lady got this charm,” for I had drawn my mother’s amulet from my bosom. “She told you,” he continued, “never to open it.”

“Oh, no, Mark, I was directed when necessity pressed me, to use a free discretion.”

“Why, then,” returned the fosterer, “we will never be in a greater mess, Mark. Open it, Hector, dear! Not that I believe in charms, although I remember an old man at home that would cure cows when they were fairly given over by the smith.”

“Well, Mark, your curiosity shall be gratified.” I opened the silken envelope, unfolded a sealed paper—no relic was there—but, what answered our present necessities far better—an English bank note for fifty pounds.

“Ah—long life to her ladyship:—wasn’t she considerate?” exclaimed Mark Antony. “Talk of relics—isn’t that a beautiful one!”

“But will it answer our purposes, Rawlings?” I inquired.

“Senhor La Pablos would tell you not; but you will see how soon he will discover more dollars than we require, and take his chance. But no time must be lost—’tis past midnight;—and within three hours we must succeed or fail. Get ready. When the time comes for the trial, minutes may crown or mar it,” he said—left us to ourselves:—and while the fosterer made up a change of linen, I sate down, and conveyed my parting adieus to my friend the voltigeur.

Rawlings was not long away. He returned, having completed every arrangement, as he said,—and the following night was named as that on which we should make the attempt that would ensure our liberty, or rivet our fetters if we failed. The fosterer and I retired, but not to sleep; and we were early afoot, and waiting for some more intelligence from the honest sailor regarding our nocturnal enterprise, when the captain of voltigeurs, as was his custom, dropped in to make his morning inquiries.

“Am I to congratulate or condole?” said Captain Cammaran, when he made his morning call. “You are pronounced fit for service by the surgeon; my *parole* consequently has expired—and no doubt you will be required in a day or two to interchange it for your own.”

“I won’t give it,” I returned.

“You are wrong, my friend,” replied the voltigeur: “nothing

can result from your refusal but personal annoyance. You will be sent into La Mota, and, I regret to say, there the prisoners are miserably inconvenienced. Think of it well, O'Halloran; escape from the fortress is nearly hopeless; why, then, add to the *désagremens* of captivity? Courage!—an application has already been made in your favour: why not, at least, wait patiently until an answer is returned by the minister of war?"

"My dear Cammaran," I replied, "the reasons why I should not be patient are manifold. In the first place, I am in love, and wish to return home; in the second place, I am sick of San Sebastian, and very weary of contemplating the surly features of my host Senhor La Pablos, agreeably diversified, it is true, with an occasional visit from an old Leonora, deaf as a door-post, and the attentions of an interesting male attendant, who, if he be not hanged within a twelvemonth, why I'll forswear physiognomy for ever."

"Oh! indeed, and you'll have no occasion," observed Mark Antony: "the gallows is written in his face, and, as they say in Connaught, —Master Pedro is sure 'to spoil a market.'"

"Bah! my good friend, I have a remedy for all," returned Cammaran; "one poison neutralizes another—you must find another mistress: and if you are tired of your quarters, why we can look out for others which may prove more agreeable."

I shook my head.

"Well—well—don't refuse rashly. Tell them you will consider it for a day or two—and trust to the soldier's best dependence,—you call it, happily, in English,—'the chapter of accidents.' Farewell!—I will call early to-morrow."

"And the birds will be flown," added the fosterer, as Cammaran closed the door and bade us, as we then believed, "a last good morrow."

I never felt so impatiently as on that last day when I remained a prisoner in San Sebastian. The sun went gloomily to the ocean, the sea began to rise and break upon the beach, and with the evening as it closed, the weather became worse, and a very skyey appearance heralded a coming storm. Darkness came—the lamps were lighted—the ill-favoured attendant laid supper on the table, uncorked a flask of wine, and, as he always did, vanished without making a remark.

"I never will have anything but a poor opinion of that Senhor Pablos," observed the fosterer; "he's an inhospitable divil, or on the last night he had the honour of entertaining two gentlemen, he would have had the common manners to have introduced them to his wife, and taken a *doch an durris* with them afterwards. No matter—here's luck!—and who knows where we'll drink the same toast to-morrow evening?"

"It were, indeed, difficult to say, Mark. But, hark!—footsteps are in the court-yard. 'Tis unusual. But, see!—the door opens. Is it possible? Why, Cammaran! This is a late hour for a visit."

"It is," said the voltigeur; "but I have a presentiment that you and I are about to part."

I felt the blood mount to my cheeks. Were then our plans known and our intended escape discovered?

“What mean ye, my friend?” I returned, assuming an air of indifference. “No, no,” I continued evasively. “Warmly as, through your kindness, I may have been recommended to the War-Minister’s consideration, I must not hope the application will prove successful.”

“You mistake me. It is another chance that probably may end our acquaintance. I am on duty to-night.”

“And so are we,” observed the fosterer, in Irish.

“The fact is, we are going to try a sortie. The general has most handsomely put the detachment under my command. If I succeed, I shall gain promotion—and if Fortune favour me, I’ll sweep your works extensively before I re-enter the fortress. Well, these things are not effected without broken heads—and I have come to have a paring glass with two friends I estimate so dearly.”

The occasion of the visit relieved me from desperate alarm. The Frenchman sate for an hour and then took his leave, to make the necessary arrangements for the intended sortie, which was ordered to commence at two o’clock.

Before the voltigeur had cleared the court-yard, Rawlings, attended by La Pablos, presented themselves by a private door which communicated with the garden. The sailor’s looks told that affairs went prosperously.

“All is ready for our attempt. The French sally before day-break—and in the noise and confusion on the land-side, we shall be enabled to lower ourselves from the curtain, and gain the beach. All depends upon ourselves—and for the fidelity of our associates, Senhor La Pablos holds himself responsible. You must shift your rigging, however—and here come your traps.”

The ill-visaged attendant brought me two suits of clothes of such anomalous cut and composition, as left it impossible to say for which element they had been especially intended. The host and sailor drank to the success of the expedition—the bell from the tower of San Sebastian beat twelve—the fosterer told each stroke—and then put up a pious supplication to Heaven, that this might be the last time he would ever count the same!

CHAPTER XLIII.

ESCAPE FROM SAN SEBASTIAN, AND RETURN TO ENGLAND.

"A sad miscalculation about distance
Made all their naval matters incorrect."

DON JUAN.

"She look'd as if she sate at Eden's door,
And griev'd for those who could return no more."

IBID.

THE fosterer and I lost no time in making a hasty toilet—and in five minutes our outer men had assumed as ruffianly an appearance as that of any *contrabandista* in Biscay. The tower clock of the cathedral struck two; and I remembered that Cammaran had mentioned that this would be the hour on which the garrison would sally. Excepting the hollow moaning of the wind, and the occasional drifting of the rain against the casements, all around was still; and, dark as the night was, I remained gazing at the court-yard expecting the appearance of Rawlings and his associates, with all the intensity of hope and fear which a man will feel, when on the eve of an attempt that will achieve his liberty at once, or rivet his chains more closely than before. All was quiet—no ghost appeared—no tinkle of "the light guitar" was audible—when, suddenly, a dull discharge was heard from La Mota, and a shell, bursting over the bay, "gave signal dread of dire debate," and announced that the sortie was being made.

Within ten minutes the din of war "disturbed the night's propriety." The guns of San Sebastian opened, the Chofre batteries thundered their reply, while a heavy fusilade on the isthmus, pointed to the place where the besieged and the besiegers were fiercely fighting; and where, for a doubtful result, death or distinction, Cammaran played the desperate game a soldier ventures. The fire went rolling forward, therefore, the French gained ground, and so far the surprise had been successful. At the moment a hand touched my shoulder—a voice whispered that "all was ready;" I turned—the speaker was William Rawlings.

Had I stood upon ceremony, and wished to bid *Senhor La Pablo*, and that comely dame, his lady, "a fair good night," neither of the parties allowed the opportunity; consequently, I descended at once to the court-yard, and there found two ill-favoured gentlemen in attendance, and, under their guidance, we proceeded to effect—or at least attempt—our deliverance.

The effort was admirably timed. The sally of the besiegers had been checked, repelled, repulsed; and the spattering fire which had hitherto rolled steadily forward across the suburb of *San Roman*, now rapidly receded, while, from the trenches, the fusilade became every moment more heavy and more sustained.

On quitting the court-yard of La Pablos, we made a sudden turning, entered a dark lane, and found two men in waiting. A few short sentences were interchanged in low whispers, and we proceeded under the guidance of one who seemed to have undertaken to pioneer the party. The firing every moment became more violent; and, as the scene of strife was on the land-side, the attention of the sentries stationed on the defences next the bay was misdirected. We gained the centre of a curtain connecting two bastions, unperceived; and, by means prepared already for effecting a descent, glided down the wall unchallenged, and reached the beach in safety.

So far "the work went bravely on;" but the most hazardous part of the feat was yet to be performed. Although my poor mother's secret treasure had been required by the *contrabandistas*—according to their story to pay for the hire of a *chasse-marée*, as Jack Falstaff kept "his charge of foot" in light marching order, properly considering that linen was to be found on every hedge, so, our naval contractors prudently declined "taking up a vessel" especially for our transport, when one might as easily be borrowed without troubling the proprietor to become a consenting party to the loan. This arrangement was made known to Rawlings and myself, for the first time, when we had actually reached the water; but the Biscayan assured us that nearly a dozen *chasse-marées* were anchored at a stone's cast from the shore, and beside us there was a small fishing-boat, ready for the launching; we had only to row quietly out, slip into the first vessel we could find, take a peaceable possession, if allowed, and if not, forcibly eject the owners for want of civility; "cut our lucky" and their cable by the same operation, and then stand boldly out to sea.

"Why, honest José," observed the sailor to the leader of the smugglers, "it appears that we are to pay for our deliverance first, and fight for it afterwards."

The person addressed returned an evasive answer.

"Well, no matter—it seems the business must be done," continued Rawlings, "and the sooner we go about it the better. Lend a hand, lads—Softly with the launch! we may be nearer our intended prize than we imagine. How fast the wind rises! Upon my soul, on a darker night or more unpromising weather, men never went on a cutting-out party."

In another minute the fisher's boat was in the water, and we embarked. It was one of those small skiffs in which women are frequently seen fishing on the eastern coast, and hence, we were crowded so closely as to render the least movement dangerous, the water reaching to the wash-streak of the boat. As the wind was dead off the beach we had no occasion to use our oars for any purpose but to direct our course, and out we went, drifting in the dark, and upon what the fosterer termed "the devil's expedition." "What," he remarked, "was swimming the Sedana to this? Everybody knew that a river had a bank; but here, the first land we would touch on might be Achil Head or Gibraltar—and he, Mark Antony, would be glad to know what was provided in the eating-and-drinking line for this voyage of discovery?"

But these speculations as to our final destination were speedily interrupted, for William Rawlings' practised eye had caught the dim outline of two or three small craft riding at anchor. Silence was rigidly enjoined, and the Englishman steered the skiff upon the centre *chasse-marée*, and desired us, in a whisper, to board the moment the boat's gunnel scraped the vessel's side.

It was quite evident that we were not to be so fortunate as to effect a capture by surprise. The heavy firing of the cannonade and musquetry, attendant on the sortie, had roused the crews, whom we heard distinctly conversing from deck to deck, as our boat neared their anchorage. Fortunately, from the extreme darkness, and the diminutive dimensions of the skiff, we were within an oar's length of the *chasse-marées* before we were discovered. To a hasty challenge, a contrabandista replied that we were friends—an assertion on his part, which subsequent experience proved much at variance with our proceedings.

The lowness of her deck allowed us to board the coaster without trouble, and a short, scuffling fight ensued which was over in a minute. Although more numerous by half, the surprise of this nightly visitation distracted the Frenchmen, and they made but a feeble stand. One was flung overboard by a smuggler, an example promptly imitated by the fosterer, who took the same liberty with the person of the skipper—while three or four took the water of their own accord. Rawlings cut the cable—the jib was instantly run up—the vessel canted with her head to sea—he fore lug was set next minute—and, before the astonished crews could persuade themselves that their consort was regularly carried off, we were beyond the reach of the few muskets which they managed to get hold of in the confusion.

A brief consultation followed our success; and it was agreed that we should stand right out to sea, to avoid meeting with any of the French privateers who were creeping along the coast occasionally, and also afford us a fair chance of falling in with one of our own cruisers.

When morning broke, we had gained an offing of nearly twenty miles. The fire of the Chofre batteries had recommenced with daylight; but a smoke-wreath, now and then, from the Castle and island of Sauta Clara, with a grumbling sound, like that of distant thunder, and only when a squall came off the land, were all that told us that, with the sun's appearance, the deadly struggle had commenced anew. Other cares were now presented. Had the *chasse marée* aught on board that a prudent soldier like Major Dalgetty, would declare by every war regulation absolutely necessary? The inquiry produced a painful disclosure. On board this ark of liberty, there were salt fish and fresh water for a day's consumption! I thought Mark Antony would have fainted when the heavy tidings were gently broke by the chief contrabandista, who should, per agreement, have been ship-agent and commissary together. The truth was, my poor mother having been inhibited from imposing penance and fast on me in right of certain marital engagements, had laid upon the unhappy fosterer an additional quantity of both—and if there were two things on earth to which

Mark Antony had an invincible antipathy, cold water was the one, and salt cod-fish was the other.

“Oh! we’re regularly murdered now;” ejaculated my foster brother. “Blessed Virgin! What the devil do ye call that dark gentleman who got the fifty-pound note? I would just like to ask him a civil question, if he intends sleeping quietly in his bed after nearly drowning us first, and starving us, as it appears he intends to do, afterwards. If we ever reach Ireland, by my oath, I’ll take an action against him, and”—

“Hist! You’ll have no occasion, if my sight be accurate;” replied the sailor. “The cloud is over her again. Keep the craft away—and ease the sheets a trifle. Right—by everything that’s lucky!—a man-o-war brig! No mistake about that; a man can read it in the cut of her topsails.”

The vessel which Rawlings had espied, in a short time was clearly visible. Under single-reefed topsails, jib, and spanker, she was close-hauled as her course required, while we flew down direct before the breeze. Santa Clara disappeared, “the wide, wide sea” was round us, the cruiser and ourselves the only occupants of ocean—and in an hour, we were safely deposited on board Her Majesty’s eighteen-gun brig, “the Growler.” The *chasse-marée* was turned adrift as worthless—and a promise made on the part of Captain Hardweather, that we should be accommodated with a passage home—the Growler being on her return to England—while our companions, captive, and contrabandista, Tyrian and Trojan, should be put on board the first coaster we fell in with—none of the parties having the slightest inclination to visit the island home of liberty, and take up their abode in a prison-ship.

Had Cupid exchanged with Eolus “for the nonce,” he could not have afforded to his votaries more favourable winds. The Growler liked a stiff breeze, and during the run home she had no reason to complain. The fourth evening we were reported to be in the chops of the channel, and on the sixth, were snug at anchor in Spithead. No difficulty was occasioned in the debarcation of our personal effects; and, if all military adventurers returned in the same condition from the field of glory, I suspect the trade of war would not be considered as affording a safe investment for the capital of a younger son. During the passage home, a change of linen was effected by a friendly loan, and every outward habiliment, from shoe to schako, when we landed, was borrowed property. By the kindness of the brig’s commander, I was introduced to a banker, through whose agency I raised the necessary supplies; and one brief day wrought on all a marvellous change for the better. The second evening, on looking in the pier glass of the hotel, I had some doubts touching my own identity—Mark Antony was of opinion that he should be scarcely recognized by his own dog—and William Rawlings had actually set two barmaids by the ears, and left an impression on the too tender hearts of both, which required a full fortnight to obliterate.

Our journey to town was common-place. The “whips” kept sober, and hence we had not the exciting incident of “a spill”—

Robbery being obsolete and utterly unfashionable even in the novels of these Beotian days, though we crossed "a blasted heath," none called "Stand and deliver!"—and the passengers, one and all, seemed so apathetic regarding life and property, that one would have thought such heroic personages as Dick Turpin and Jerry Abershaw had either not existed or that they were utterly forgotten.

Nearly three months had passed since letters reached me from England. The immediate advance of the army, the quick and constant series of events which followed it, my detention at Vittoria first, and my captivity afterwards, rendered it almost impossible that communications, addressed as they would be to the head-quarters of the fourth division, to which I had attached myself, should reach me during this short and adventurous passage in a life of "marvellous uncertainty" while it lasted. Brief as the season was that intervened since I had heard aught from those I was most interested about, how many "changes and chances" in that small circle might not have occurred? I envied the philosophy of the fosterer and his brother-in-law elect. Neither harboured a doubt that all "at home were well." At home!—What does not that simple phrase embody? For a time I took courage from the example; but, when we reached the White Horse Cellar, whence the fosterer, "with lover's haste," set out to claim a bride, and the sailor to embrace a parent and sister, to whom he seemed ardently attached—then, left alone, I felt all the dark forebodings of one who dreams of nought but happiness, and yet tremble lest fortune, in some capricious humour, may have already dashed the untasted cup away. Thanks to the gods! these sombre doubts were nothing but "idle phantasies."

If ever the director of "a leathern conveniency"—cabs, gentle reader, were then unknown—was put regularly to the pin of his collar to keep time with an impatient gentleman, the unhappy wight who drove me was that person. At last we reached the street—I jumped out—paid honest jarvey double—inasmuch as he averred that his "near-side un," a roarer before, was ruined for life by desperate driving—and "the outsider" would not be worth a bean for a fortnight. I knocked *piano* at the door—an old woman opened it—"Was Mr. Hartley at home?" She could not answer the question, for Mr. Hartley had not lived there these two months. Saints and angels! what misery! It was brief. A young lady-looking personage unclosed a parlour-door, and acquainted me that the arrival of some Irish relations had rendered it necessary for Mr. Hartley to take a larger house; that, for the benefit of country air, he had selected one some ten miles distant from the city,—adding, that the family were well, as a servant had called that morning with some message from the ladies. She gave me my uncle's address, and in half-an-hour I was speeding to Bromley Park, as fast as a light post-chaise would carry me.

Some seven miles from town, the last village was passed, and the remainder of the drive ran partly through shaded lanes, and partly over open commons. At a roadside hostelry, within a gunshot of my uncle's dwelling, I discharged my carriage, committed the light portmanteau which contained my wardrobe to the safe keeping of the

landlady, and set out, under proper directions, to find the place where love and duty alike urged me to proceed.

I easily discovered the abode of "my fair ladie." The exterior bore all the appearance of respectability; and, though the light was but indifferent, the entrance-lodge, palings, and close-clipped hedges, announced it to be a gentleman's retreat. The mansion stood upon a lawn not far removed from the highway; lights flared from the lower windows, probably those of the apartment where the family were collected, and, by a singular impulse, I determined to escalate the enclosure, and have a sly peep, *incog.* at those within.

I turned from the high road into a grassy lane which skirted the palings of a shrubbery—and tried them once or twice, but they were confoundedly high, and in excellent preservation. I pushed on—not a practicable breach to be discovered—and my uncle's mansion seemed as difficult of *entrée* as San Sebastian itself. Should I proceed, or abandon the attempt as hopeless? "Turn back!" said Common Sense,—"Go on!" and Adventure, joggled my elbow. I hesitated—a circumstance kicked the doubtful balance.

Within an open gateway to a field, I perceived a horse placed in the keeping of some low-sized personage evidently seeking concealment under the deep shelter of the hedge. I spoke; none answered. Why was this horse in waiting? It looked suspicious. Some felony was intended; burglary, or, more probably, exhumation. I strolled on a few yards farther—three or four railings had been recently sawn through, affording sufficient room to creep in by, and, without a second's consideration, in I went.

I crossed the soft green turf, and proceeded in a straight direction towards the mansion, guided by the lights which had first attracted my attention on the road. A clump of evergreens suddenly shut them from my view, and I paused to determine whether I should turn to the right or to the left. While still uncertain, I thought something moved within the trees—I listened—whispers fell upon my ear, and next moment two figures glided from the clump, and crossed into what appeared in the darkness to be a belt of young plantations, stretching along the lawn and reaching to the lane from which I had effected my entrance. Who might these men be? Poachers, in pursuit of game, or keepers, on the look-out to prevent their preserves from being spoliated. When I recollected the horse I had detected concealed beneath the hedge, I came to the first conclusion—the men, no doubt, were poachers; and the animal had been left in charge of some confederate, to enable them to carry up to town the produce of their night's marauding. In this belief, I proceeded cautiously to the hall, determined to apprise mine honoured uncle that knaves had "broke his park," and possibly, might "beat his keepers." But another scene, and one to me of deeper interest, drove hares, pheasants, and poachers from memory altogether.

When I cleared the clump of evergreens I found myself directly in front of the mansion, and as the windows reached nearly to the level of the lawn, the interior of the apartment was seen from without distinctly. All within bore the appearance of luxury and elegance.

The furniture, the plate, the paintings, the lights, were in perfect keeping with each other. In the panorama of life many such a scene may be discovered. It was evidently the dwelling-place of wealth—but not the abode of happiness.

Four persons occupied the chamber, and formed a striking group. The *partie carrée* consisted of two persons of either sex. On a sofa, a man past the meridian of life seemed in earnest conversation with a lady, who was still in the pride of matronly beauty; the expression of her face was that of settled melancholy; and it appeared that he who sate beside her was offering consolation—but in vain. The lady was my mother—the gentleman, her brother, and mine honoured uncle.

At the opposite side of the apartment the other twain were seated, and thither, after one hurried look at those upon the sofa, my gaze was turned and there remained. My father, with Isidora on his knee, encircled her waist with his solitary arm, while her head was resting on his bosom, and her hands clasped wildly round his neck.—Oh! what a change a few brief months had made! The sweet bud of promise I had first seen in its mountain solitude, had flowered into loveliness—and the woman, not the girl, was before me. Her face was turned towards the window, and as the lights fell upon it, every feature was distinct as if I stood beside her. Her's was not the calm sorrow of my mother—it was the wilder outbreak of the youthful heart, which vents its sufferings in sobs and tears; and while my uncle and his sister conversed in whispers, the voices of my father and my mistress were audible outside the window. I could have easily suspected the cause of all this grief, had I but looked upon the table and the floor. On the former lay an open post-bag, and several letters with broken and unbroken seals: on the latter, a newspaper was spread out at my father's foot, and, no doubt, the evil tidings it had contained occasioned the anguish and distress I witnessed.

“Oh! tell me not to hope,” exclaimed the fair girl, “I cannot—dare not.”

It was painful to listen to the reply. The voice endeavoured to assume a steadiness which its broken tones belied; and the feelings of the father and the soldier conflicted sadly, as the tongue held out false and feeble hopes, which the speaker's heart secretly believed to be illusory.

“Grieve not, my sweet girl,” said the veteran, “He is only returned ‘missing.’ No doubt Hector has been made prisoner, carried into the place, probably wounded—”

“Wounded!” exclaimed the listener, “No—no—no—Dead—dead—and I am for ever wretched”—and again the head of the fair sufferer sank on the bosom which had supported it before.

I cannot describe my feelings; my heart was bursting to announce my safety, and I only hesitated to know how it could be most safely done—a moment ended the doubt.

“Do not despair, Isidora—my *own, own* daughter.” The words came choakingly from his lips—the word *daughter* was too trying—the chances were that he was now childless—and he hastily turned

his head away. I saw a tear stealing down his cheek—and when the soldier's eye is moist, the heart, indeed, is full.

“Cheer up, my dearest Isidora, all may yet be well—Hector may live—”

I could not control the impulse—

“*He does live!*” burst from my lips involuntarily.

“Saints and angels!” exclaimed Mr. Clifford, springing from his chair, and flinging the casement open—“True! by every thing providential! Himself! Hector—and in safety!”

As he spoke, I jumped through the window. My lady-mother uttered an exclamation of joy, and sank back upon the cushions of the sofa. My mistress sprang from my father's knee, and fainted in my arms.

“And, of course, you re-deposited the young lady upon the place from whence she came, and flew dutifully to the assistance of your mamma, Mr. Hector O'Halloran?”

Mr. Reader, I never reply to impertinent questions; but, *entre nous*, I rather imagine that the resuscitation of the elder gentlewoman, was entirely committed to her husband and Mr. Clifford.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE CRISIS APPROACHES.

North. ————— “Every minute now
Should be the father of a stratagem;”

* * * * *

“Yea, this man's brow, like to a tittle-leaf,
Foretells the nature of a tragick volume.”

2d Part of HEN. IV.

A LETTER I had received on my return to the head-quarters of the fourth division, after my *séjour* with the Empecinado, had apprized me that events in which my future fortunes were involved, hurried rapidly to a crisis. My communications with England had then ceased; and, on my unexpected return home, I found I had opportunely arrived when my presence was most desirable, and the *dénouement* of the drama was at hand.

Without wearying the reader with the details of my uncle's proceedings, we will bring their results before him, up to the evening when at Bromley Hall I popped so unexpectedly through a window, and frightened two amiable ladies into fainting-fits.

It was the evening of a sultry day, the harvest had commenced, and, over a rich and picturesque expanse of country, far as the eye could range, the sickle was busily employed. On an elevation, in a domain of noble extent, a gentleman far advanced in years, was seated on a rustic bench, under the expansive shadow of an oak the growth of centuries. At times he looked at the busy and interesting scene

which the landscape all around presented—and then resumed the perusal of a newspaper. The domain was Clifford Park—the old English gentleman was my grandfather.

At the side of a copse, not many yards distant from the bench where the owner of the park was seated, another and a very different personage might have been discovered. She was a gipsy-woman of middle age, and seemed busily employed in gathering sticks wherewith to cook her supper. The old gentleman looked at her with some attention. For the last three evenings he had remarked her at the same hour and on the same spot. The regularity of her appearance had therefore excited some curiosity—and, beckoning her to come forward, he took his purse from his pocket, and presented her with some silver.

On receiving this munificent present, the gipsy curtsayed reverently to the ground—the old gentleman resumed his newspaper, and waved his hand as a signal she should retire; but she made a step closer to the bench, directed a speaking look at Mr. Clifford for a moment, then threw a suspicious glance around, and, in a low voice said, with some hesitation, “We are alone, sir,—Dare I speak to you?”

The old gentleman for a moment regarded the speaker with marked astonishment. The manner, rather than the words, was startling; but he nodded a mute assent.

“For many a week I have sought this opportunity; but you are so closely watched, that, hitherto, I dared not venture near you—I have tidings—”

“None, woman, that can interest me,” said the old man, with a melancholy sigh. “There is nothing in this life to give me pleasure, and little connected with it that could cause me pain. No tie binds me to the world—”

“And yet you have a double one—the dearest to ordinary hearts. Have you not a daughter and a grandchild?”

“Stop, woman,—who are you?”

“The humble instrument of Heaven, destined, I hope, to restore to the parent’s arms, a child alienated far too long—Ah! here comes you meddling priest! Would you even yet have the remnant of your days made happy, be here to-morrow evening—and, for your own sake, be silent.”

“I will;” said the old man impressively. The gipsy assumed her former attitude of deep humility, curtsayed to the ground again, resumed the bundle of sticks she had collected; and, as if she had not perceived him coming, turned into the direct path by which the confessor hastily advanced.

They met; the gipsy made her humble obeisance, which the priest returned by a searching glance. In the handsome features of the wanderer there was nothing to excite suspicion, and he simply asked “what was her business with Mr. Clifford?”

With a face beaming with delight at having received a large and unexpected gratuity, the gipsy unclosed her hand.

“See, reverend sir, what his noble honour has bestowed upon the poor wanderer!” and she pointed to the silver Mr. Clifford had just given. “It is many a long day since I was mistress of so much.

Reverend sir, you are not angry at my gleaning a few sticks? Believe me, poor Mary will do no injury to the trees. You look a kind-hearted gentleman. Heaven grant you long and happy days!"

What will not the mystic influence of beauty effect? The cold churchman looked at the supplicant for a moment—a soft black eye was eloquently turned on his, as, "with lips apart," disclosing teeth of pearly whiteness, the gipsy timidly awaited his reply.

"How lovely she must have been in woman's noon-day!" the confessor involuntarily muttered. "You have the permission, you ask. Take care it be not abused." Again the gipsy curtsied, and the churchman passed on—giving her, in return for an outbreak of ardent thanks, unbeliever as she was, his parting benediction!

* * * * *

Days passed—the weather continued beautiful, and the lord of Clifford Hall might have been seen on his favourite seat beneath the old oak tree every afternoon—generally, the confessor close at hand, and the gipsy gathering sticks in some of the copses at no great distance. Twice she contrived to convey a sealed packet to the old man unperceived; and, on the following evening, after he had perused their contents, she saw, with unspeakable delight, that what he had read was not displeasing. The letters were from his long lost son, cautiously worded to sound the old man's secret feeling, lay the ground-work of a disclosure, and prepare him for coming events.

It was on the third evening before I had so very unexpectedly presented myself at Bromley Hall, that, just as the light was failing, a man, evidently in an excited mood, paced slowly back and forwards in front of the ancient oak in Clifford Park, which we have already described as being a favourite spot with the owner of the domain. Besides the extended view over the surrounding country which this rising ground commanded from its crest, the front and back entrances to the park were visible—and towards both, the lonely visitor turned frequently an anxious look. At last, as if wearied with his solitary vigil, the confessor—for it was he—broke into a rambling soliloquy.

"It is strange what has delayed him—two long hours beyond the time he told me he should return! I can scarce believe that I am waking. He who for years has been the creature of my will—who thought as I dictated—who acted as I pointed out—who in my hands was but a mere automaton, whom I wound and directed as I pleased—that he should thus miraculously assume an independence, and break through the thrall that bound him.—By mine order, 'tis marvellous—'tis scarcely credible! That cursed interview with his grandson laid the foundation of the whole—and yet I fancied that I had remedied the mischief, and extinguished the yearnings of natural affection which the youth's sudden appearance rekindled in the old man's breast. But the last fortnight has crowned the mystery. Three long years—the old man never penned a letter. Were private communications to be made, I was summoned to indite them. Was business to be transacted, the steward was always the amanuensis. But now, he sits for hours alone—and writes, and transmits letters daily, and by the hand of one who hates my creed, and with whom I

dare not tamper. What can be done? Never was a game more critical—one false move, and all is lost. The tidings of the evening too, are ominous. His lawyer to be here to-morrow—his errand, strictly secret too. What augurs that but mischief? By every saint, I know not how to act. True, I have not let the harvest pass without gleaning plentifully—and, better still, I have secured the reward of many an anxious scheme. But to see the grand object of my ten years of toil and artifice slip from my grasp—even at the moment when the course of nature should have consummated the triumph of sound conceptions, ably and patiently carried out—Ha!—a horseman—'Tis he—I'll reach the hall before him."

While the steward rode hastily to the stables, the priest had reached the mansion and retired to his private apartments. There, he impatiently waited the return of his confederate—and, in a few minutes, the steward presented himself. If the confessor fancied that himself had startling tidings to communicate, one glance at the steward's agitated countenance, assured him that heavier news had yet to be unfolded.

"How now!" he muttered. "You seem disturbed. Has ought occurred to cause us more disquietude?"

"We stand upon the brink of ruin," was the reply.

"Go on—whence comes the threatened danger?" inquired the churchman.

"From the grave!" returned the steward.

"The grave?"

"Ay, holy father—well may you betray astonishment. One believed dead for five-and-twenty years not only lives, but actually resides within a few miles of where we stand."

"Whom mean ye?" said the priest.

"Edward Clifford!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed the churchman. "He died in misery and exile. 'Tis some impostor."

"It is the true man, by Heaven!"—"Think ye that one who hated him as I did—who was robbed of the object of his love—who swore eternal vengeance, kept the vow faithfully, and wrought the secret ruin of him who wronged him—think you, holy sir, that he could ever forget one, at the same time, the offender and the victim. No—no—ordinary injuries pass from the memory in time—but insulted love leaves a burning recollection in the heart, which death alone obliterates."

"By the holy saints!" exclaimed the confessor, "your tidings are astonishing."

"You have not heard the worst," continued the steward. "Give me some wine—for faith, my nerves are sorely shaken by the occurrences of this afternoon. Fill your glass, father, and listen to a tale, singular and wonderful as any which, even in the confessional, may have reached your ears."

"You know that the object of my ride to-day was to trace, if possible, the person with whom the old man holds his dangerous correspondence. Every inquiry failed—and I was returning a sadder, but not

a wiser man than when I left you, considering what channel I should next try to seek the information we require, when simple accident discovered the perilous position in which we stand—one that, in danger, infinitely surpasses any thing which our gloomiest apprehensions could have fancied.

“A short time since, a stranger, named Hartley, took Bromley Hall for a few months; and there he immediately removed his establishment. It was on a small scale, ’twas said, but in every respect that befitting a gentleman; and as Mr. Hartley was retired in his habits, and visited with no one in the neighbourhood, his arrival made no sensation in the country; he was scarcely known beyond his own domain, nor did any one inquire who he was, or whence he came.

“On my return this evening, after an unsuccessful mission, close to ‘the George’—a road-side house contiguous to Bromley Hall—my horse cast a shoe, and I stopped to have it replaced. While the smith was doing it, I strolled from the forge and sauntered down a shaded lane; within an open gate a fallen tree was lying, and as the evening was close, I turned in and sate down to rest myself upon its stem. Presently, at the other side of the paling, I heard footsteps move cautiously along. An opening in the fence enabled me to ascertain who the person was—and you may easily fancy my astonishment, when I recognised the gipsy woman, who, for the last three weeks, has been every day in Clifford Park under the pretence of gathering fire-wood. Although surprised for a moment at her appearance, I remembered that the wandering habits of her people throw them across one’s path in every direction where business calls; I rose to return to the forge and resume my ride, when suddenly the gipsy stopped, looked suspiciously around to see that no one had observed her, then drawing a key from her bosom she applied it to a wicket in the paling, and the next moment entered the grounds of Bromley Hall, and disappeared.

“Strange and mysterious fancies crossed my mind—I determined to watch her movements, but how was I to follow? I continued my researches along the park palings, and at last discovered an opening occasioned by the removal of several slabs, for what purpose I cannot pretend to guess.

“I found myself in a thick plantation, left all to chance, and blindly wandered on. Imagine my surprise when, not forty yards off, I suddenly perceived the gipsy in deep conversation with a stranger. They spoke in whispers, hence I could not overhear a word that passed; but I saw distinctly a letter pass from her hand to his, and the action of both during their brief conversation was marked and energetic. At last the interview was over, and both returned towards the wicket in the paling through which the gipsy had entered Bromley Park.

“The path wound through the plantation, and at not a yard’s distance from the spot where I had concealed myself, but fortunately a thick holly hid me effectually, and yet permitted me to observe the faces of the persons who approached. Almost within arm’s length the man paused suddenly—

“‘And is he so far prepared for the extraordinary revelations which

are about to be made?' he inquired in a low voice that thrilled through my very soul.

"He is"—returned this infernal agent. 'He knows that his grandson is recalled—that Hector's father is already in England—that his daughter is ready to fly to the bosom from which she has been so long estranged. Nay, more—I have darkly insinuated that many a wild youth, after years of wandering, has returned; and plainly hinted that a son lost to him so long might live—nay, *did live!*'

"Could I believe the evidences of my senses, holy father? Was it a dream? Oh! no, no—all was fatal reality.

"Mary," returned a voice, whose tones were unchanged as when I last heard them in this very room—"Mary, your services have made me for life your debtor, and to his humble but faithful ally, I trust, in a few days, Edward Clifford will prove his gratitude."

"Clifford—the exiled, the discarded, the dead! What! he returned—received—restored to life! Impossible!" exclaimed the confessor springing from his seat, and shivering to pieces on the table the wine glass which he had held untasted in his hand, while Morley recounted his strange adventure.

"True, by every thing sacred!" returned the steward.—"On they passed—I caught a glimpse of his well-remembered features,—years and climate had laid their heavy imprint on them, but in outline, they were those of my former play-fellow. The light and springy figure of the boy were gone—and a stout and compact form now stood before me, and just such as I remember Mr. Clifford's was some thirty years ago. Holy father, Edward Clifford is alive, and not seven miles from where we sit."

"I do not put faith in witchcraft," muttered the priest—"but this strange tale of yours would almost make me a believer. Well—we both, it would appear, are on the eve of ruin. I, in expectations which I conceived to be sure as certainty itself—and your acquisitions, my good friend, methinks are sadly jeopardized."

"Mine jeopardized!" exclaimed the steward—"More than that, reverend sir—I shall be ruined, beggared, and undone. It is not the blow itself, heavy as it is, but the suddenness of the stroke that annihilates me. Could I but have had the warning of a month—in that brief interval, I might have so arranged, that when I bent to the storm—as bend I must—I might have sought another country, possessor of ten thousand pounds; ay, and carried with me too the rents payable a fortnight hence. If ever calamity fell heavily on man, it has fallen upon me—and by such agency—the only beings upon earth whom I, at the same time, hated and injured most."

"Yes," observed the churchman, half in soliloquy and half addressing himself to his companion—"the mystery is cleared—and the old man's altered bearing is now sufficiently accounted for. Worse yet—the mischief is beyond all remedy. One duped so long and so completely, when once the mind is disabused, becomes ten-fold more suspicious than they who have never been deceived. Mr. Clifford is exactly that sort of character. His thoughts and acts are now as clearly revealed to me, as if I had listened to every communication made by

that artful woman, and read the secret letters he has written and received. For how long, did this returned prodigal mention to his female confederate, that these intended disclosures were to be delayed?"

"The phrase was vague," replied the steward. "In a few days"—ay, that was the term he used."

"A limited time, indeed, for action—but brief as it is, I will avail myself of the lull, and not await the bursting of the storm," observed the confessor.

"And will you leave *me* alone to face the coming tempest?" inquired the steward, with evident alarm and surprise. "Holy father—have I not ever been to you a faithful friend? Have I not acted as you directed? Have not my own interests been frequently sacrificed to yours? Has not your word with me been law—your advice implicitly followed—your plans zealously carried out? I was ever your ready and your willing agent—and now, in the hour of need and danger, will *you* desert me?"

A pause of a minute ensued.

"Morley," returned the confessor slowly—"I cannot see how my remaining here could serve you. You wish to delay events—to avert them would now be idle as to war against the elements. But how can breathing-time be gained? Mine own interests would make a short interval before discovery shall take place, as desirable as is respite to the criminal; but, by mine order—I cannot devise any plan that could promise even probable success. We stand upon a loaded mine—and who can say the moment when the engineer will fire the train?"

"Still, reverend sir, continued the steward—"have we not days to count upon—and what might not hours, were they but well-employed, accomplish?"

"Yes," returned the priest—"days certainly may be reckoned on—and, under ordinary circumstances, much might be effected in the mean-while. But in this case—one so hopeless and so desperate—when the very grave would seem to have given up its dead—and when—"

"The grave must receive the living in return. Ay, father, there is but one chance left,—Clifford dies—no alternative remains but death for him—or disgrace, and poverty, and banishment for me."

"No more of that," exclaimed the cautious churchman. "Pause ere you act—and weigh well the consequences. England, for such experiments, is a dangerous country. Remember your former attempt on young O'Halloran. What a disastrous failure! Four lives were sacrificed—while he, the destined victim, passed through the trial unharmed!" "Twere better, possibly, my friend, to yield to circumstances, and—"

"See myself impoverished and insulted. I am no favourite with the country,—they view me as an upstart—and often has that cutting truth been told me to my face. The tenants on these estates secretly dislike me. As matters stand, their bad feelings are not exhibited—but let the change come that we anticipate—then, like a cry of hounds, every voice will be united against me, and I must either skulk cowardly

away, or be hunted to the death, while the man I hate, have hated, and will while life remains detest, he will be received with acclamation, and trample on a fallen enemy whose neck is already in the very dust. No—no—though life be lost in the attempt, near as he fancies himself to this, his long estreated inheritance—he never shall be nearer. Father, I start instantly for London. We must act—ay, and act immediately.”

“Of these things I remain in ignorance,” returned the confessor. “But if you risk this perilous attempt—safety and success in every mortal venture, depend upon two simple qualities—prudence and promptness. These two, in human actions, are worth every cardinal virtue beside. Farewell—I too have cares which, for hours to come, will keep me watching.”

The confederates separated—each to carry out his own particular object. The confessor had only the future to regret—the past he had secured—and consequently, he had neither a necessity or a wish to join in Morley's dangerous experiments. With the steward, matters were altogether different. In rash confidence, all that he had cared for hitherto, was to accumulate—and hence, his ill-acquired wealth had been so clumsily invested, that time was absolutely necessary to enable him to regain possession of his property. That time could only be obtained by a fearful and perilous attempt. But no course besides remained—and Morley started that night for London.

* * * * *

The evening was wild and blustering—doors creaked—windows were unusually noisy for that season of the year—and those who had a fire-side, were too happy to find themselves at home. “The George” was entirely deserted; for the stragglers who had dropped in after sunset, alarmed at the threatening appearance of the weather, took a hurried refreshment, and pushed forward to gain their abiding places before the fury of the night should break. Three travellers, however, still remained. They had required and obtained an apartment for their especial use—and a fire having been lighted in the parlour of the hostlerie, the wayfarers there bestowed themselves.

One, who seemed to play the host, was a man of respectable appearance, and beyond the middle age. He might be a farmer, a lawyer, a trader—but it was clear he was not, in common parlance, a gentleman. The others were of a caste immeasurably inferior. One was tall, burly, and dark-visaged—the other, short, slightly-framed, and sandy-haired. The countenances of both were particularly repulsive—and a stranger would have found it hard to determine whether they were knaves, or ruffians, or both.

He who appeared “lord of the revels” seemed ill at ease. He rose from his chair—looked for a moment from the window—muttered something about “foul weather out of doors—” returned, sounded a hand-bell which had been placed beside him—ordered supper to be hastened, and brandy and water to be brought in, to fill the tedious interval.

The order was obeyed—“the maid of the inn” departed—the door was closed—and each of the company, by an involuntary impulse,

looked over his shoulder to ascertain that no eaves-dropper was near. He who played the host seemed in no mood for revelry, and merely sipped the glass before him—the lesser of the strangers also drank sparingly—but the tall ruffian turned down the tumbler considerably below its centre, pushed its diminished contents further on the board, and then leaning a pair of overgrown hands upon his knees, and bending forward until his head, by slow progression, had made a Turkish obeisance to the superior of the company, in slow and pointed terms he begged respectfully to inquire, “what business had brought himself and—” he merely pointed to his companion—“on such short notice to the country?”

“Business—and that, too, of consequence,” was the brief reply.

“All right,” returned the stouter ruffian. “Business is very well in its way—but I’d like to understand the nature of the job before I undertook it. Light work is well enough, but when it comes, Mr. Thingembob—for I don’t know y’er name—to what we call *heavy*, wot means, ye know, hemp or transportation—why then men must look about them, and ax a question or two before they takes on.”

To this judicious remark the smaller of the two assented by a gracious inclination of the head—while the question, so homely put, appeared to have disconcerted their respectable patron, for he did not answer for a minute, and then the reply was evasive. After passing a flattering encomium on the character of the late Mr. Sloman—whose irreparable loss was deeply to be regretted—he hinted that, in his line of business, there was now a blank. His unhappy death, and the equally unhappy consequences which followed, had left a dreary void. It was impossible to find a professional gentleman equally talented and trustworthy. Undoubtedly, men of high honour and strong nerve could be found—and therefore, rather than run risks, he, Mr. Jones, as he was pleased to call himself, would prefer doing business with principals, and having no humbug among friends.

What a strange epitome of life the scenes enacted at an inn would furnish! How dissimilar in rank, in object, in vocation, are those whom every apartment of this human halting-place receives in turn! The care-worn and the careless—the miser and the spendthrift. Opulence, with unassuming carriage—penury, vainly attempting to brazen out its wretchedness. A noble, in title old as the conquest, rests in this chamber to-day—to-morrow it will be tenanted by a bagman, who never heard that such a being as his grandfather had existence. This evening a bridal party occupy the inn. They dream of naught but happiness—theirs is a fancy world—their road of life is carpeted with roses—they leave next morning. Who, next in succession, fill the same apartment on the morrow?—a coroner’s inquest, to ascertain what caused the suicide of a village beauty, “who loved not wisely, but too well.”

While Mr. Jones and his friends were thus engaged in the large parlour upstairs, in a small back room behind the bar of “the George,” two other personages were comfortably located. One was the jolly hostess, whom nothing but “rum and true religion” could have upholden, seeing that, in the brief space of ten years, she had

been thrice a mourner. Finding, however, that in marital luck there is no faith "in odd numbers," she had judiciously concluded on risking the fortune of an even one; and, at the moment when Mr. Morley was bargaining with his amiable companions above stairs, the widow of "the George" was endeavouring to ascertain whether a matrimonial arrangement was likely to "come off" below.

"A mighty cold place these cross roads must be in the winter; and I don't wonder, Mrs. Tomkins, that you're uncommon lonely—and especially in the long nights. How short the days are gettin'!"

"Ah, Mister Magavarel—"

"Macgreal, if you please, Mrs. Tomkins."

"I beg your pardon," said the lady; "but, as I was saying, I'll never get over Christmas as I am. Though I look stout and hearty, I am but a timidious sort of woman after all;—a fight in the kitchen knocks me of a heap, and noises after night put me totally from sleeping afterwards."

"Ah! then I pity ye, Mrs. Tomkins," returned the suitor; "after sodding three dacent husbands, no wonder that a fourth would be in ye'r way, now that the could weather's comin' on. It was only yesterday I was sayin' to Mister Dominik, the black gentleman at the park, 'Dominik,' says I: 'What?' says he. 'If ever,' says I, 'I'd venture to go before the priest in company wid a woman, it's Mistress Tomkins, of the George, would be my choice.'"

"And isn't it strange, Mister Macgreal, that you never took a wife?"

"I was over bashful when a boy, and feaks! my modesty never quitted me afterwards," returned Shemas Rhua, looking as innocently in the smiling face of the landlady of the George, as if he had never crooked a knee before Father Peter Fogarty at the altar of hymen.

Shame on ye for a deceiver! If the honest woman who owns you in Connemara were but at your elbow, and overheard your insidious attempts upon the too-tender hearted Widow Tomkins, I would not be in your coat, Shemas Rhua, for all the rats and rabbits you'll kill this side of Christmas!

To what lengths Captain Macgreal might have urged his treacherous suit, it would be difficult to fancy, but the sudden entrance of Mrs. Tomkins's attendant, fortunately for her lady's peace of mind, interrupted the further oratory of the false ratcatcher. She delivered some trifling message.

"If ever," continued the maid of the inn, "murder was written in a mortal countenance, you may see it in the faces of two of the fellows above stairs. Lord! if they stop here to-night, I shall never close an eye!"

"Who are they?" inquired the ratcatcher.

"Heaven only knows," was the reply. "They came into the house about an hour ago, and from the appearance of their shoes, I should say they had walked some distance. They inquired for a Mr. Jones; and on being told there was no person here of the name, they called for some ale, and said they would sit down and wait for their friend's arrival. Presently the man they asked for arrived on horseback, dismounted, spoke to the others for some minutes, requested to have the use of a private room, and they retired together."

“ You may depend upon it, the errand that brought them here is not an honest one. Could you but see the suspicious looks they throw round them when I enter or leave the room !”

“ We'll soon know more of both themselves and the business that brought them here,” returned the buxom widow. “ You must know, Mister Macgreal, that a dark closet I keep for my private use, is divided from the large sitting room up stairs by a boarded partition, and there are cracks in the paper through which you can see what passes in the other room, and hear every word that's said. Many a stolen kiss I've witnessed there—and many a tale of love I've listened to. Follow me softly. But, Lord ! what was I going to do ? Venture myself in the dark, and with an Irish gentleman ! Oh ! I won't move a step, unless Susan comes along with us.”

“ Honour bright !” exclaimed the ratcatcher.

“ And you know there must be somebody left to mind the bar,” added the spider-brusher.

These observations were conclusive, and after an assurance of great discretion on the Captain's part, the lady agreed to venture herself alone, and even in the dark, with the bashful Irishman.

Without occasioning the slightest alarm to the guests, who occupied the “ great chamber” of the George, the ratcatcher and his fair companion ensconced themselves in the closet, and as it would appear, too, at a moment when the negotiation had assumed a business-looking character, and matters were drawing to a close.

“ We understand one another perfectly,” said Mr. Jones.

“ I must allow it,” replied the larger of the ruffians, “ that you have come straight-fore'd to the scratch, Mr. Jones ; and I hopes you vo'nt take it amiss, that we axed that part of the coal should be posted before we undertakes the job. Ye see, it's what we calls heavy work, —nothing like greasing a man's fist before he commences, it makes him go at the bisniss slap, because he knows that the rowdy will be stumped up when all's right afterwards. It's now late enough, so if you'll show us the way into the park, and point the right-un out, we'll make matters sure to-morrow night, and no mistake.”

“ I am satisfied you will acquit yourselves like men of spirit,” was the reply. “ Proceed down the lane that turns to the right, and when I discharge the reckoning, I'll mount my horse and follow. At the second gate—you will find it open—wait for me.”

“ The ruffians twain” rose and left the room, their employer called a bill, ordered his horse to the door, and quitted the hostlerie. The Captain prepared to follow him, and having kissed the landlady, a liberty for which he received a severe reproof, accompanied, however, by a general invitation to drop in as often as he could, “ the George” in a few minutes was totally deserted, and Mrs. Tomkins issued orders that her premises should be closed for the night, with a passing remark to her attendant, of “ what a nice man Mr. Hartley's keeper was.”

CHAPTER XLV.

Gloster.—"I was a pack-horse in his great affairs."

KING RICHARD III.

"Thou art in London—in that pleasant place
Where ev'ry kind of mischief's daily brewing."

DON JUAN.

A QUARTER of an hour elapsed before the confusion my sudden entrance into the drawing-room of Bromley Park occasioned the inmates, had entirely subsided. I ran briefly over the narrative of my capture and escape—accounted for the non-appearance of the fosterer—was assured, notwithstanding wounds and "durance vile," that I looked particularly healthy—and in due course returned, as in duty bound, a shower of compliment. The Colonel was particularly anxious to know why a lodgment was attempted on the breach, without battering down the defences; and in support of his opinion, made some extensive quotations from Vauban and Carnot. He also wished to inquire, why the false alarm upon the land-side, when the globe of compression was fired with such success, had not been turned, like the feint of the third division at Badajoz, into a real attack? Mr. Clifford asked the exact date to which my last advices from England had reached me, that he should take up his details therefrom. My mother was solicitous in ascertaining how often Mark Antony had attended mass; and was rather anxious to find out whether the fosterer had fasted upon Fridays, and figured frequently at confession. Poor Isadora's were whispered queries, and more readily and willingly replied to:—"Had I really thought of her?" and "Were the ladies of the Peninsula so handsome as they had been represented?" The answer to the first was an ardent affirmation, and to the second I gave a faithful assent—for the finest features of Isadora's beauty were decidedly Spanish.

The entrance of two former acquaintances, Dominique and my loving countryman, the ratcatcher, induced the ladies to withdraw, and retire to their respective apartments. From the faithful negro I received an ardent welcome; and the Captain was graciously pleased to express his satisfaction at my return. Indeed, the outer man of the latter was so changed for the better, that I might have passed him on the road and not recognised my former ally. The eccentric habiliments in which he had migrated from "the far-west," had given place to the smart costume of an English game-keeper; and as the Captain was a stout, careless-looking fellow, no wonder he had found favour in the widow's sight, and had been pronounced by that experienced lady, "a nice man."

After Dominique's congratulations, and Shemas Rhua's "ceade fealtagh" had been duly delivered, the latter, in sentences equally compounded of English and Irish, the ratcatcher announced himself to my uncle, as the bearer of important intelligence. He had been taking a turn round the park, he said, after night-fall, with the gun under his arm, on the look-out for poachers, and in the course of his rambles had dropped into "the George:" What occurred there he briefly detailed, with the omission of all love-passages between himself and the fair widow, and then he thus proceeded with his narrative:—

"I followed the sound of the horse's feet. When the rider reached the second gate in the lane, he dismounted, joined the other villains, and all three walked forward towards the broken palings, while I slipped quietly through the wicket, and, knowing my path well, was at the opening in the fence before they reached it. Only two of them came in, for the little fellow remained outside with the horse. They went along, trampling on broken boughs as they groped their road, while I kept the grass under my foot, and dodged them without being overheard. They made directly for the house—and when they turned by the clump of ever-greens, I ran round by the other side and hid behind a holly. I saw them steal to the window of this room, and look in for at least five minutes. They then fell back close to the bush that sheltered me.

"'You're certain you know the man?' says the dacent dressed fellow to the other thief.

"'To be sure I do,' was the answer—'he has a pair of arms, and the other cove but one.'

"'You see how easily it can be done. You can shoot him from the outside, and be safe on the high road before any body could give an alarm.'

"'The job's plain enough,' said the other.

"'And the moment it's done, mind that you be off at once to London—and for your lives don't stop to drink on the way. Attend to this—avoid public houses—and all trace of you is lost.'

"'And you'll be sure to meet us the day after?'

"'Sure as the sun will rise.'

"'And what time should we do the trick?'

"'As soon after dusk as you can manage it. Earlier would not be safe. Can you conceal your arms?'

"'Easily—I'll borrow a poacher's gun from an old pal of mine. It comes in pieces; the barrel unscrews in the middle, and you can carry it in the hare-pocket of a shooting jacket.'

"'Come.—You know the man and the place. Let us be off. I'm too late from home.'

"They returned through the plantation. As they approached the paling—I still hanging on their heels—I was sorely tempted to give them a barrel a piece before we parted; but I thought, as I had found out all they were after, that it was better to let them pass this time—and inform your honour of what was in the wind."

"You acted gallant Captain," replied Mr. Clifford, "with excellent

tact and judgment. I see clearly through the business. My existence and return are discovered—and the wretch, who caused my exile, would now consummate his villany by murder. It will only expedite the *denouement*—and with the failure of to-morrow night, Morley's career will close. Come, Hector, we must not forget that you require refreshment—and while you sup, I will acquaint you with events which have occurred during your absence from the country."

While my uncle was detailing the progress of his secret operations, I was giving him ocular proof that my appetite had not deteriorated by campaigning. But even supper and a long story has an end. The clock had struck the first hour of morning—we parted for the night—the Colonel, by no means satisfied that the assault on San Sebastian should have failed—Mr. Clifford, to mature his plans, and avail himself of the ratcatcher's information—and I, to seek my pillow with that blessed and heart-cheering assurance, that all I loved dearest on earth were slumbering beneath the same roof-tree.

From Bromley Park we will carry the reader for a brief interval away, and follow the fosterer and his companion to the native village of the latter. It was sunset on the succeeding evening, before the stage coach on whose roof the pair were seated, stopped at the cross roads at a mile's distance from Rawlings's home, and there deposited the travellers. Never did a couple of wayfarers cross a pathway more expeditiously. They had light kits and light purses—but they had what was better than any thing wealth could produce, lighter hearts—for from a fellow-passenger, William, to the inquiry, "Doth my father still live?" had received an assurance that the old man was well, and happy, and without a care, save what arose from anxiety regarding the safety of his absent son. Nor was the fosterer less gratified by the further tidings of the stranger. His mistress was looking better than she had ever done—at least, such was the village report—and but a week ago, it was whispered that she had declined the hand of the wealthiest farmer in the neighbourhood. The colour mounted to the lover's cheek. To hear that his mistress was fairer than before, was flattering to his pride—but to find her constancy unchangeable, was incense to the heart.

The lights were sparkling in the village casements before the travellers reached the termination of the pathway—and Rawlings with his companion passed through the garden by a private wicket, and unobserved, reached the rear of his father's cottage. The security and confidence ever felt in dwellings "far from town," were here apparent—for the window of the little parlour was neither protected by shutter or curtain from theft or curiosity; and while the retired soldier luxuriated with his pipe, his pretty daughter was engaged in plying her needle busily, in perfect unconsciousness that the eyes of a lover were gazing fondly on her from without.

"Heaven bless ye both!" ejaculated the warm-hearted sailor, "We must not appear too suddenly; come, we'll step over to the Lion, and send the landlady across to tell father and sister that the wanderers are returned."

William Rawlings was the pride of the village; every rustic coquette was flattered by his preference; and it was said that it was rather out of pique than love, that the miller's pretty daughter had listened to the suit of the jolly landlord of "the Lion." Certain it is, that her reception of the handsome sailor was much more ardent, than what he of the spigot would have approved, had he been a witness to the unexpected meeting.

"Why, William, art thee alive, man?"

"Alive, girl; ay, and likely to live. I need not ask thee for Julia and the old man—I had a peep at both through the parlour window. Step over, dear Betsey, and let them quietly know that here I am, sound as British oak, and an old comrade along with me."

"Lord! they will be so overjoyed," exclaimed the hostess, as she skipped across the street, and knocked at the old quarter-master's hall-door.

"Ah! Betsey, is it thou?" said the veteran, as he knocked the ashes from his pipe, and held his hand out to the visitor. "What news, my girl?—girl—no, no—I must call thee dame now."

"Look in my face," returned the pretty hostess, "canst thou not read good tidings there?"

"What mean ye, Betsey?" inquired the old man's daughter.

"Mean?—nothing but what I say; I am the bearer of the best news you have listened to for the last six months."

"Is it aught concerning my boy?" exclaimed the excited quarter-master.

"Yes—William is alive and well; and of that an old friend of his, who stopped just now at the Lion, will give you presently, a full assurance."

"Heaven, I thank thee!" said the old man, as he reverently raised his eyes, and poured the brief offering of gratitude warmly from a surcharged heart.

"Don't be surprised at—"

"His return!" exclaimed the other female. "Is he come home? Betsey—dear Betsey—end this suspense, and make us too, *too* happy."

"Certainly," said the fair hostess, "the sailor across the street is very like your brother."

"Oh! I will fly to him," exclaimed the old man's daughter, as she rushed towards the door—but in the passage her farther progress was arrested—a man clasped her in his lusty embrace, and covered her lips with kisses.

"William, dear William—"

"Julia—my darling sister."

"Said I not truly," observed the pretty hostess, "that I brought you joyous news?"

Next moment the wanderer was kneeling at his father's feet; and that night, had Britain been searched through, a happier family could not have been discovered.

"And now that I have a chance of getting a civil answer, may I ask who that handsome young soldier is? I hope he is going to stop at the Lion for awhile. It would be a pleasure to serve a good-looking

fellow like your friend, after being plagued waiting on frumpy farmers, and answering beer-drinking boors."

"Why, Mistress Betsey, that same well-featured youth is a trusty comrade of my own, and a sworn friend of a wild Irishman my sister is slightly acquainted with,—a gentleman called Mark Antony O'Toole."

The name seemed to have a magical effect. Julia's cheeks, in a moment, were dyed with blushes—a heavy sigh involuntarily escaped—a tear trembled in her eye—and a looker-on would have been dull indeed, who could not have read the secret of her love.

"Ah!" said the landlady archly, "no wonder Frank Robinson was rejected. So, Mistress Julia, and you would not confide in your old schoolfellow, and tell her you were over head and ears in love."

"He is to be our guest for a few days—longer, probably, if you will make yourself agreeable. Julia, are you not obliged to me, my fair sister, not only for bringing myself safely back, but also for coming home provided with a brother-in-law, if you will only let me recommend a husband to you.—Nay, dear Julia, no tears—I but jest, you know, and would not wound thy feelings for the world. I will go over for my friend—" He said, and left the room, accompanied by the pretty hostess. The old man resumed his pipe; and poor Julia ascended to her own apartment, to bless Heaven for the restoration of a brother—and weep, were the truth known, for the absence of one even still dearer to her heart.

Five minutes passed—the hall door opened—she heard the well-known voice of the wanderer inquire for her, and presently footsteps were heard upon the stairs.

"Julia—what moping here, and not down to offer a welcome to my friend! Well, I must fetch thee, girl!" and William Rawlings unclosed the door. She started—the stranger was beside him—and she turned a look of displeasure and surprise on the thoughtless mariner.

"Nay, don't look marlin-spikes at me, Julia. Here is the real offender."

One glance, and the secret was disclosed. With a face beaming with delight, and eyes more brilliant now,

"For having lost their light awhile,"

she sprang into the fosterer's arms. The vows of simple but ardent love were mutually interchanged anew—and that night the happiest family in Sussex would have been found circling the quarter-master's parlour fire.

* * * * *

The clock was striking two, when the steward, after leaving his horse in the stables of Clifford Park, walked hastily to the hall, and admitted himself by means of a private key, to the wing of the building occupied by the confessor and himself. On looking towards the chamber of the priest, as Morley approached the mansion, a thin stream of light escaped from an opening in the shutters, and told that the holy occupant had not yet retired to his pillow. The steward tapped gently at the churchman's door, which was opened by the occupant

himself. Within, the room was in manifest confusion—several trunks and boxes were being packed—the grate was filled with the remains of burnt papers—and it was quite evident that the confessor was making such preparations as foreboded an immediate departure.

“How now, Morley,—What news? Has aught occurred since noon?” inquired the churchman.

“I have determined to run the risk, and nothing now can change this resolution. The arrangements are completed. To-morrow night—”

“Nay,” said the confessor—“I neither wish, nor will know any thing of what is to happen to-morrow. It is enough for me to know what has occurred this afternoon.”

“Has any thing important taken place?” asked the steward.

“Yes—two persons arrived this evening. They sleep to-night in the house. One I know to be Mr. Clifford’s legal adviser. The other I fancy is to be the successor to yourself.”

“To me?” exclaimed Morley in astonishment. “No, no! holy father! That will not be so hastily decided as you imagine.”

“Well—a short time will settle the question. After the strangers had been closeted with the old man for an hour, I framed an excuse, and requested to speak to Mr. Clifford for a minute. An answer was returned that he was engaged particularly, and orders issued that none should intrude upon him. There is a change indeed. *I*, refused admittance, who for years was constant at his side even as a shadow. *I*, who hitherto dictated who should be received and who rejected! Saints and angels! I can scarcely believe the thing myself.”

The steward had listened with an expression of countenance, which evinced a sort of stupid incredulity. “Father, are we both awake?” he inquired with a sickly smile, that betrayed the inward workings of a bosom racked with disappointment and despair.

“Mine, Morley,” returned the confessor coldly, “are the acts of a man fully awake to coming events. No papers shall rise in judgment against me;” and he pointed to the fire-place—“and, as you may perceive, I am preparing for a long journey on sudden notice. Have you been in your room since your return? I fancy you will find there a document laid upon your table.”

The steward instantly retired—his absence was short, and he entered the priest’s apartment with an open letter in his hand.

“Even so”—and his white lips quivered as he spoke—“’Tis from the old man—brief, but to the purpose—I am rudely discharged, and—”

“Directed to give an account of your stewardship,” continued the priest; “which may not exactly be convenient. What do you purpose doing?”

“Avenge myself, holy father—leave Clifford Hall ‘a house of mourning’ and, through the son, strike the cold dotard to the heart. Yes, if ruin impends on me, I shall involve others in the vortex. This time to-morrow, the stern old man who turns me as contemptuously away as I would spurn a beggar from the gate, shall be, what

through life, and by my agency, ne nas been—childless.—Farewell !”

He said, and left the apartment.

* * * * *

It is asserted that excessive joy, like agonizing sorrow, equally drives sleep away. When I retired to my couch, happiness and hope reigned in my bosom—and yet my dreams were light, my slumbers sound. I was early astir—but others were earlier still—and when I entered the parlour, I found the family party already collected.

Like all other breakfasts, ours ended in due course; the ladies retired; and Mr. Clifford, the Colonel, and myself, adjourned to the lawn, and there held a walking consultation. In fact, with his customary decision, my uncle had already made his dispositions. The intended bravos were denounced to the police; and at the very moment we were talking matters over on the lawn, Mr. Morley's agents were in close custody in London.

It was necessary that another day should pass, before Mr. Clifford deemed it expedient to throw off his incognito. It wore away. At Bromley Park the inmates were variously employed:—my uncle, in carrying out his successful arrangements; my father, in ascertaining whether a false attack on the sea-face of Sau Sebastian might not have operated as an effective diversion; my mother, I suspect, in offering additional prayers to Heaven for my safe return; and Isidora and myself—but, pshaw! the communings of young hearts were never intended for revelation.—

* * * * *

Again the scene must change. At Clifford Hall the presence of two strangers was unusual; and, in that dull and sleepy establishment, that trifling event had occasioned some sensation. When morning advanced, the surprise of the household was considerably increased. The confessor had disappeared, having removed all his baggage, none knew where or how. The steward was also missing, but his apartments were in their customary state; and as he frequently left the hall for days together in course of duty, his absence occasioned no particular surprise. The churchman had departed for the continent two hours before the steward quitted Clifford Park, and, as it was fated, neither re-entered the domain gates after they had passed them.

It would appear, that when he found his former friend and counsellor had left him to his resources, all Morley's self-possession vanished, and his future actions seemed rather the results of sudden impulse than of deliberate forethought. Without any fixed object, he took the road to London; and that, too, by circuitous routes, which rendered the journey unnecessarily tedious. Although his general habits were temperate, he made frequent halts at road-side houses, and drank freely where he stopped. It was late when he reached the metropolis—and on his arrival in the Borough, he put up his horse at an obscure inn, took some refreshment, ordered a bed he never occupied; for, as it afterwards appeared, he spent the night rambling through the streets, or drinking in low houses only frequented by the vicious and the destitute. God knows what the wretched man's feel-

ings were! He then believed that a foul act was doing, or had been done; and it is hard to say, whether remorse for having caused the deed, or a savage exultation at its fancied accomplishment, had fevered his guilty soul, and, like another Cain, "murdered sleep," and when innocence reposes, made him a wretched wanderer.

Morning came, and at the appointed hour named to meet his myrmidons, the steward repaired to the place of rendezvous. He hastened on, as he believed, to learn the death of his victim; but it was only to hurry his own guilty career to its close. The wretched man, in thieves' parlance, was "regularly planted." The moment they found themselves in custody, the ruffians (both returned convicts) admitted their intended crime, and gave ample information by which their employer should be detected. It was arranged by the officers that Morley should be received by one of the ruffians, at the public-house where the meeting had been appointed—and, apparently blind to danger, the steward entered the tap and passed through into a back room, which had been notified to him as the place where his sanguinary associates would be found in waiting.

The room was squalid in appearance, ill-lighted, and in every respect a fitting place for villains to frequent. At a dark corner he perceived the larger ruffian at a table—and, what rather startled him at first, a stranger seated at his side. A brief conversation, however, explained the matter. "The other cove had shyed when it came to the point, and he had to call on a trusty pal, the gentleman wot sate beside him." Thoroughly deceived, Morley fell into the trap laid for him, without harbouring a suspicion—listened with manifest satisfaction to a fabricated detail of the imaginary assassination—handed to the murderer the price of blood—and was about to leave the room, when the confederate ruffian struck a heavy blow upon the table with a pewter measure—announced that he was a Bow-street runner, and Morley his prisoner. Then turning to the door, he repeated the signal a second time. It was answered—three officers came in.

Although astounded at the occurrence, the steward came to a sudden and desperate determination. The ruffian, hardened as he was, turned his eyes away in another direction from his victim—and, taking advantage of the momentary absence of the officer at the door, when summoning his fellows from below, Morley unperceived, took a small phial from his pocket, and swallowed the contents. He was instantly secured and searched—a large sum in money taken from his person—the handcuffs were being put on, which were to bind him for a time to the returned convict—the wretch who had betrayed him,—when suddenly, his look became fixed and glassy—his face livid—he reeled into the arms of an officer, and next moment, sank on the floor a corpse.

CONCLUSION.

All tragedies are finish'd by a death,
All comedies are ended by a marriage."

DON JUAN.

THE second week of October was beautiful. The woods were tinted with the varied hues which autumn interposes between "summer green," and "snow clad winter." The sun shone brightly—the birds sang—the bells rang out a merry peal—and a bridal, in long array, swept through the long avenue of Clifford Park, and approached the village church. The road was crowded with all the rustic population of the neighbourhood—and, while the men hurraed, the girls spread flowers along the churchyard path, when the young and beautiful bride left the carriage at the gate, and advanced to the portal of the sacred edifice. She reached the altar leaning on her lover's arm—and there, encouraged by the approving smiles of happy relatives and surrounded by a gaily dressed *cortège* of bridal attendants, interchanged her vows of constancy, and bestowed her plighted hand upon the youth who knelt beside her. The surpliced priest pronounced his benison, and closed the book—the holy ceremony was over—but an interesting scene remained. An aged man, on whose head the snows of eighty winters rested, had sate beside the altar in a chair, while the sacred rite was celebrated. When the churchman's blessing died away in the echo of the distant aisle, the old man signalled the young couple to approach him; they knelt at the feet of their venerable relation, who laid a hand upon either head, and with eyes devoutly up-turned, invoked Heaven's protection upon his darling children. The blesser was Mr. Clifford—the blessed ones, Isidora and myself.

* * * * *

A second time the sun had circled the earth, and the same season had returned. Again the village bells were rung, and the park of Clifford Hall was crowded with tenants and villagers—that day it was the scene of rejoicing and festivity—an heir was born to the ancient name—and the baptismal ceremony was being performed within the hall, in presence of a goodly assemblage. From the font, the infant was carried in the arms of his young and happy mother to an easy chair, where a venerable man was seated. She knelt and invoked his blessing; and, upon the heads of two generations the old

man's hands were laid, while his lips poured forth an ardent benediction.

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Again the year came round. It was later in the season, for withered leaves were spread thickly on the ground, a mute but striking type of life's decay. Slow and heavily the village bell was tolling—death was in Clifford Hall, and its owner was about to be carried to the tomb, where his forefathers were sleeping. Ripe for the grave—surrounded by those he loved—cheered by the consolations of religion, Mr. Clifford had calmly slumbered life away—his head pillowed on a daughter's bosom—his hand pressed gently within the grasp of a son, from whom for five-and-thirty years he had been alienated.

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The stranger who passes through the domain of Clifford Hall, will occasionally encounter a hale, stout, white-headed man, in leathers and gambroon, with a gun under his arm, and two Scotch terriers at his heels. That personage was once intitled Shemus Rhua—but years have spoiled the *sobriquet*. At the back gate there is a picturesque cottage, with a flower-garden attached, and filled with bee-hives. There a handsome old woman will present herself, attended by a village girl. She bears the appearance of a faithful servant, who has retired with every comfort. That old woman was once Ellen—or the gipsy, as you please.

In the immediate front of the Hall, two elderly personages may be daily noticed. One—stout, stooped, very gray, and very intelligent-looking—that is mine uncle. Another—spare, slight, and with a head erect as if he intended to throw Father Time off his shoulders, should he presume to invade them—his empty sleeve perfects the identity. Need I name my father?

One more group remains. A middle-aged gentleman, and a lady, rich in the beauty of middle life—a throng of children, that would throw Harriet Martineau into hysterics, gambol round them, while a handsome old gentlewoman, whom they term “grandmama,” superintends their movements. If you cannot guess who they are—why go up to the steward's house upon the hill—and Mr. O'Toole, or his pretty wife, will inform you.

THE END.

