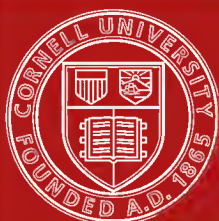


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No. 1585

CONFESSIONS
—OF—
CON CREGAN
Vol. I



BOSTON,
LITTLE BROWN and COMPANY

THE NOVELS OF CHARLES LEVER.

With an Introduction by Andrew Lang.

CONFESSIONS
OF
CONCREGAN,
THE IRISH GIL BLAS.

ILLUSTRATED BY "PHIZ."

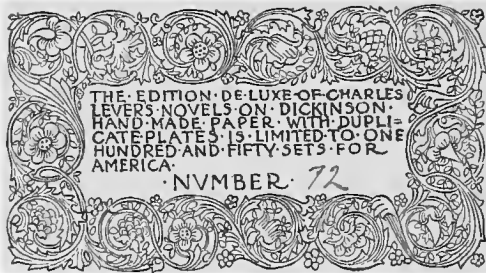
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

1894.

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University Press :
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.

P R E F A C E.

AN eminent apothecary of my acquaintance once told me that at each increase to his family, he added ten per cent to the price of his drugs, and as his quiver was full of daughters, Blackdraught, when I knew him, was a more costly cordial than Curaçoa.

To apply this to my own case, I may mention that I had a daughter born to me about the time this story dates from, and not having at my command the same resource as my friend the chemist, I adopted the alternative of writing another story, to be published contemporaneously with that now appearing, — “The Daltons;” and not to incur the reproach so natural in criticism — of over-writing myself — I took care that the work should come out without a name.

I am not sure that I made any attempt to disguise my style; I was conscious of scores of blemishes — I decline to call them mannerisms — that would betray me: but I believe I trusted most of all to the fact that I was making my monthly appearance to the world in another story, and with another publisher, and I had my hope that my small duplicity would thus escape undetected.

I was aware that there was a certain amount of peril in running an opposition coach on the line I had made in some degree my own; not to say that it might be questionable policy to glut the public with a kind of writing more remarkable for peculiarity than perfection.

I remember that excellent Irishman Bianconi, not the less Irish that he was born at Lucca, — which was simply a “bull,” — once telling me that to popularize a road on which few people were then travelling, and on which his daily two-horse car was accustomed to go its journey, with two or at most three passengers, the idea occurred to him that he would start an opposition conveyance, of course in perfect secrecy, and with every outward show of its being a genuine rival. He effected his object with such success that his own agents were completely taken in, and never wearied of reporting, for his gratification, all the shortcomings and disasters of the rival company.

At length, and when the struggle between the competitors was at its height, one of his drivers rushed frantically into his office one day, crying out, “Give a crown-piece to drink your honor’s health for what I done to-day.”

“What was it, Larry?”

“I killed the yallow mare of the opposition car; I passed her on the long hill, when she was blown, and I bruk her heart before she reached the top.”

“After this I gave up the opposition,” said my friend; “‘mocking was catching,’ as the old proverb says; and I thought that one might carry a joke a little too far.”

I had this experience before me, and I will not say it did not impress me. My puzzle was, however, in this wise: I imagined I did not care on which horse I stood to win; in other words, I persuaded myself that it was a matter of perfect indifference to me which book took best with the public, and whether the reader thought better of “The Daltons” or “Con Cregan,” that it could in no way concern me.

That I totally misunderstood myself, or misconceived the case before me, I am now quite ready to own. For one notice of "The Daltons" by the Press, there were at least three or four of "Con Cregan," and while the former was dismissed with a few polite and measured phrases, the latter was largely praised and freely quoted. Nor was this all. The critics discovered in "Con Cregan" a freshness and a vigor which were so sadly deficient in "The Daltons." It was, they averred, the work of a less practised writer, but of one whose humor was more subtle, and whose portraits, roughly sketched as they were, indicated a far higher power than the well-known author of "Harry Lorrequer."

The unknown — for there was no attempt to guess him — was pronounced not to be an imitator of Mr. Lever, though there were certain small points of resemblance; for he was clearly original in his conception of character, in his conduct of his story, and in his dialogues, and there were traits of knowledge of life in scenes and under conditions to which Mr. Lever could lay no claim. One critic, who had found out more features of resemblance between the two writers than his colleagues, uttered a friendly caution to Mr. Lever to look to his laurels, for there was a rival in the field possessing many of the characteristics by which he first won public favor, but a racy drollery in description and a quaintness in his humor all his own. It was the amusement of one of my children at the time to collect these sage comments and torment me with their judgments, and I remember a droll little note-book, in which they were pasted, and read aloud from time to time with no small amusement and laughter.

One or two of these I have even now before me:—

“Our new novelist has great stuff in him.” — *Bath Gazette*.

“‘Con Cregan’ — author unknown — begins promisingly; his first number is a decided hit.” — *Cambridge Chronicle*.

“The writer of ‘Con Cregan’ is a new hand, but we predict he will be a success.” — *Cambridge Advertiser*.

“A new tale, in a style with which Lever and his followers have made us acquainted.” — *Hampshire Advertiser*.

“This tale is from the pen of an able Irish writer. The dialogue is very smartly written, so much so — and we cannot pay the writer a more genuine compliment — that it bespeaks the author to be an Irishman, &c.” — *Somerset Gazette*.

“‘Con Cregan’ — by an unnamed author — is a new candidate for popularity,” &c. — *Northern Whig*, Belfast.

“The writer must be an Irishman.” — *Nottingham Gazette*.

“A new bark, launched by an unknown builder.” — *Cheltenham Chronicle*.

“That the author’s name is not disclosed will not affect the popularity of this work, — one of the most attractive,” &c. — *Oxford Journal*.

“This is a new tale by the pen of some able Irish writer, the first part of which is only published.” — *Ten Town Messenger*.

“Another new candidate for popular fame, and ‘Harry Lorrequer’ had better look to his laurels. There is a poacher in the manor in the person of the writer of ‘Con Cregan.’” — *Yorkshireman*.

“‘Con Cregan’ promises to become as great a fact as ‘Harry Lorrequer.’” — *People’s Journal*.

“The author of ‘Con Cregan,’ whoever he be, is no ordinary man.”

“Another daring author has entered the lists, and with every promise of success.” — *Exeter Post*.

It may sound very absurd to confess it, but I was excessively provoked at the superior success of the

unacknowledged book, and felt the rivalry to the full as painfully as though I had never written a line of it. Was it that I thought well of one story and very meanly of the other, and in consequence was angry at the want of concurrence of my critics? I suspect not. I rather imagine I felt hurt at discovering how little hold I had, in my acknowledged name, on a public with whom I fancied myself on such good terms; and it pained me to see with what little difficulty a new and a nameless man could push for the place I had believed to be my own.

“The Daltons” I always wrote, after my habit, in the morning; I never turned to “Con Cregan” until nigh midnight; and I can still remember the widely different feelings with which I addressed myself to the task I liked, and to a story which, in the absurd fashion I have mentioned, was associated with wounded self-love.

It is scarcely necessary for me to say that there was no plan whatever in this book. My notion was, that “Con Cregan,” once created, would not fail to find adventures. The vicissitudes of daily poverty would beget shifts and contrivances; with these successes would come ambition and daring. Meanwhile a growing knowledge of life would develop his character, and I should soon see whether he would win the silver spoon or spoil the horn. I ask pardon in the most humble manner for presuming for a moment to associate my hero with the great original of *Le Sage*.

But I used the word “Irish” adjectively, and with the same amount of qualification that one employs to a diamond, and indeed, as I have read it in a London paper, to a “Lord.”

An American officer, of whom I saw much at the

time, was my guide to the interior of Mexico; he had been originally in the Santa Fé expedition, was a man of most adventurous disposition, and a love of stirring incident and peril, that even broken-down health and a failing constitution could not subdue.

It was often very difficult for me to tear myself away from his Texan and Mexican experiences, his wild scenes of prairie life, or his sojourn amongst Indian tribes, and keep to the more commonplace events of my own story; nor could all my entreaties confine him to those descriptions of places and scenes which I needed for my own characters.

The saunter after tea-time, with this companion, generally along that little river that tumbles through the valley of the Bagno di Lucca, was the usual preparation for my night's work; and I came to it as intensely possessed by Mexico — dress, manner, and landscape — as though I had been drawing on the recollection of a former journey.

So completely separated in my mind were the two tales by the different parts of the day in which I wrote them, that no character of "The Daltons" ever crossed my mind after nightfall, nor was there a trace of "Con Cregan" in my head at my breakfast next morning.

None of the characters of this story have been taken from life. The one bit of reality in the whole is in the sketch of "Anticosti," where I myself suffered once a very small shipwreck, but of which I retain a very vivid recollection to this hour.

I have already owned that I bore a grudge to the story as I wrote it; nor have I outlived the memory of the chagrin it cost me, though it is many a year since I acknowledged that "Con Cregan" was by the author of "Harry Lorrequer."

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CONFESSIONS
— OF —
CON CREGAN
Vol. I



BOSTON,
LITTLE BROWN and COMPANY.



A PEEP AT MY FATHER.

WHEN we shall have become better acquainted, my worthy reader, there will be little necessity for my insisting upon a fact which, at this early stage of our intimacy, I deem it requisite to mention; namely, that my native modesty and bashfulness are only second to my veracity, and that while the latter quality in a manner compels me to lay an occasional stress upon my own goodness of heart, generosity, candor, and so forth, I have, notwithstanding, never introduced the subject without a pang, — such a pang as only a sensitive and diffident nature can suffer or comprehend. There now, not another word of preface or apology!

I was born in a little cabin on the borders of Meath and King's County. It stood on a small triangular bit of ground, beside a cross-road; and although the place was surveyed every ten years or so, they were never able to say to which county we belonged; there being just the same number of arguments for one side as for the other, — a circumstance,

many believed, that decided my father in his original choice of the residence; for while, under the "disputed boundary question," he paid no rates or county cess, he always made a point of voting at both county elections! This may seem to indicate that my parent was of a naturally acute habit; and indeed the way he became possessed of the bit of ground will confirm that impression.

There was nobody of the rank of gentry in the parish, nor even "squireen;" the richest being a farmer, a snug old fellow, one Henry M'Cabe, that had two sons, who were always fighting between themselves which was to have the old man's money,—Peter, the elder, doing everything to injure Mat, and Mat never backward in paying off the obligation. At last Mat, tired out in the struggle, resolved he would bear no more. He took leave of his father one night, and next day set off for Dublin, and 'listed in the "Bufs." Three weeks after, he sailed for India; and the old man, overwhelmed by grief, took to his bed, and never arose from it after.

Not that his death was any way sudden, for he lingered on for months long,—Peter always teasing him to make his will, and be revenged on "the dirty spalpeen" that disgraced the family, but old Harry as stoutly resisting, and declaring that whatever he owned should be fairly divided between them.

These disputes between them were well known in the neighborhood. Few of the country people passing the house at night but had overheard the old man's weak, reedy voice, and Peter's deep, hoarse one, in altercation. When at last—it was on a Sunday night—all was still and quiet in the house,—not a word, not a footstep, could be heard, no more than if it were uninhabited,—the neighbors looked knowingly at each other, and wondered if the old man was worse—if he was dead!

It was a little after midnight that a knock came to the door of our cabin. I heard it first, for I used to sleep in a little snug basket near the fire; but I did n't speak, for I was frightened. It was repeated still louder, and then came a cry, "Con Cregan! Con, I say, open the door! I want you." I knew the voice well; it was Peter M'Cabe's; but I pretended to be fast asleep, and snored loudly. At last my

father unbolted the door, and I heard him say, "Oh, Mr. Peter, what's the matter? Is the ould man worse?"

"Faix that's what he is, for he's dead!"

"Glory be his bed! when did it happen?"

"About an hour ago," said Peter, in a voice that even I from my corner could perceive was greatly agitated. "He died like an ould haythen, Con, and never made a will!"

"That's bad," says my father; for he was always a polite man, and said whatever was pleasing to the company.

"It is bad," said Peter; "but it would be worse if we could n't help it. Listen to me now, Corny, I want ye to help me in this business; and here's five guineas in goold, if ye do what I bid ye. You know that ye were always reckoned the image of my father, and before he took ill ye were mistaken for each other every day of the week."

"Anan!" said my father; for he was getting frightened at the notion, without well knowing why.

"Well, what I want is, for ye to come over to the house, and get into the bed."

"Not beside the corpse?" said my father, trembling.

"By no means, but by yourself; and you're to pretend to be my father, and that ye want to make yer will before ye die; and then I'll send for the neighbors, and Billy Scanlan the schoolmaster, and ye'll tell him what to write, laving all the farm and everything to me,—ye understand. And as the neighbors will see ye, and hear yer voice, it will never be believed but that it was himself that did it."

"The room must be very dark," says my father.

"To be sure it will, but have no fear! Nobody will dare to come nigh the bed; and ye'll only have to make a cross with yer pen under the name."

"And the priest?" said my father.

"My father quarrelled with him last week about the Easter dues, and Father Tom said he'd not give him the 'rites,' and that's lucky now! Come along now, quick, for we've no time to lose; it must be all finished before the day breaks."

My father did not lose much time at his toilet, for he just wrapped his big coat 'round him, and slipping on his brogues, left the house. I sat up in the basket and listened till they

were gone some minutes; and then, in a costume as light as my parent's, set out after them, to watch the course of the adventure. I thought to take a short cut, and be before them; but by bad luck I fell into a bog-hole, and only escaped being drowned by a chance. As it was, when I reached the house, the performance had already begun.

I think I see the whole scene this instant before my eyes, as I sat on a little window with one pane, and that a broken one, and surveyed the proceeding. It was a large room, at one end of which was a bed, and beside it a table, with physic-bottles, and spoons, and teacups; a little farther off was another table, at which sat Billy Scanlan, with all manner of writing materials before him. The country people sat two, sometimes three, deep round the walls, all intently eager and anxious for the coming event. Peter himself went from place to place, trying to smother his grief, and occasionally helping the company to whiskey, which was supplied with more than accustomed liberality.

All my consciousness of the deceit and trickery could not deprive the scene of a certain solemnity. The misty distance of the half-lighted room; the highly wrought expression of the country people's faces, never more intensely excited than at some moment of this kind; the low, deep-drawn breathings, unbroken save by a sigh or a sob,—the tribute of affectionate sorrow to some lost friend, whose memory was thus forcibly brought back; these, I repeat it, were all so real that, as I looked, a thrilling sense of awe stole over me, and I actually shook with fear.

A low, faint cough, from the dark corner where the bed stood, seemed to cause even a deeper stillness; and then, in a silence where the buzzing of a fly would have been heard, my father said, "Where's Billy Scanlan? I want to make my will!"

"He's here, father!" said Peter, taking Billy by the hand and leading him to the bedside.

"Write what I bid ye, Billy, and be quick; for I hav'n't a long time afore me here. I die a good Catholic, though Father O'Rafferty won't give me the 'rites'!"

A general chorus of muttered "Oh! musha, musha!" was now heard through the room; but whether in grief over the

sad fate of the dying man, or the unflinching severity of the priest, is hard to say.

“I die in peace with all my neighbors and all mankind!”

Another chorus of the company seemed to approve these charitable expressions.

“I bequeath unto my son Peter, — and never was there a better son, or a decenter boy! — have you that down? I bequeath unto my son Peter the whole of my two farms of Killimundoonery and Knocksheboora, with the fallow meadows behind Lynch’s house; the forge, and the right of turf on the Dooran bog. I give him, and much good may it do him, Lanty Cassarn’s acre, and the Luary field, with the limekiln; and that reminds me that my mouth is just as dry; let me taste what ye have in the jug.” Here the dying man took a very hearty pull, and seemed considerably refreshed by it. “Where was I, Billy Scanlan?” says he; “oh, I remember, at the limekiln; I leave him — that’s Peter, I mean — the two potato-gardens at Noonan’s Well; and it is the elegant fine crops grows there.”

“An’t you gettin’ wake, father, darlin’?” says Peter, who began to be afraid of my father’s loquaciousness; for, to say the truth, the punch got into his head, and he was greatly disposed to talk.

“I am, Peter, my son,” says he; “I am getting wake; just touch my lips again with the jug. Ah, Peter, Peter, you watered the drink!”

“No, indeed, father; but it’s the taste is leavin’ you,” says Peter; and again a low chorus of compassionate pity murmured through the cabin.

“Well, I’m nearly done now,” says my father; “there’s only one little plot of ground remaining; and I put it on you, Peter, — as ye wish to live a good man, and die with the same easy heart I do now, — that ye mind my last words to ye here. Are ye listening? Are the neighbors listening? Is Billy Scanlan listening?”

“Yes, sir. Yes, father. We’re all minding,” chorused the audience.

“Well, then, it’s my last will and testament, and may — Give me over the jug.” Here he took a long drink. “And may that blessed liquor be poison to me if I’m not as eager

about this as every other part of my will. I say, then, I bequeath the little plot at the cross-roads to poor Con Cregan; for he has a heavy charge, and is as honest and as hard-working a man as ever I knew. Be a friend to him, Peter, dear; never let him want while ye have it yourself; think of me on my death-bed whenever he asks ye for any trifle. Is it down, Billy Scanlan? the two acres at the cross to Con Cregan and his heirs in *secla seclorum*. Ah, blessed be the saints! but I feel my heart lighter after that," says he; "a good work makes an easy conscience. And now I'll drink all the company's good health, and many happy returns —"

What he was going to add, there's no saying; but Peter, who was now terribly frightened at the lively tone the sick man was assuming, hurried all the people away into another room, to let his father die in peace.

When they were all gone Peter slipped back to my father, who was putting on his brogues in a corner. "Con," says he, "ye did it all well; but sure that was a joke about the two acres at the cross."

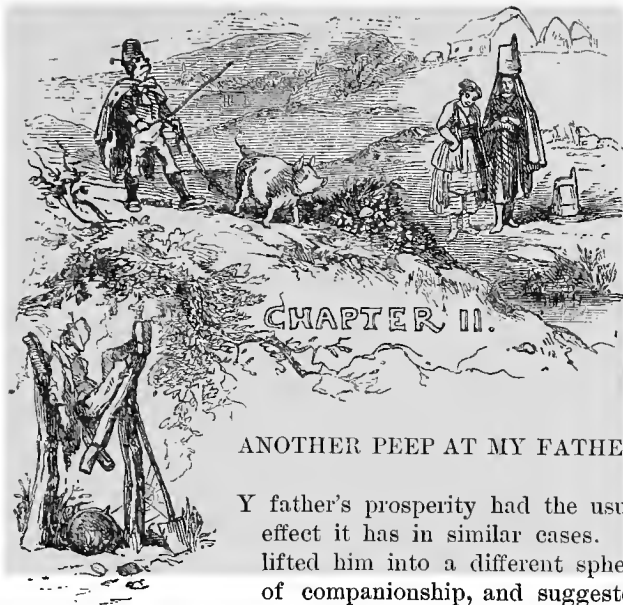
"Of course it was, Peter," says he; "sure it was all a joke, for the matter of that. Won't I make the neighbors laugh hearty to-morrow when I tell them all about it!"

"You wouldn't be mean enough to betray me?" says Peter, trembling with fright.

"Sure ye would n't be mean enough to go against yer father's dying words," says my father, — "the last sentence ever he spoke?" And here he gave a low, wicked laugh, that made myself shake with fear.

"Very well, Con!" says Peter, holding out his hand; "a bargain's a bargain; yer a deep fellow, that's all!" And so it ended; and my father slipped quietly home over the bog, mighty well satisfied with the legacy he left himself.

And thus we became the owners of the little spot known to this day as Con's Acre; of which, more hereafter.



ANOTHER PEEP AT MY FATHER.

Y father's prosperity had the usual effect it has in similar cases. It lifted him into a different sphere of companionship, and suggested new habits of life. No longer necessitated to labor daily for his bread, by a very slight exercise of industry he could cultivate his "potato-garden;" and every one who knows anything of Ireland well knows that the potato and its corollary, the pig, supply every want of an Irish cottier household.

Being thus at liberty to dispose of himself and his time, my parent was enabled to practise a long-desired and much-coveted mode of life; which was to frequent "sheebreens" and alehouses, and all similar places of resort, — not, indeed, for the gratification of any passion for drink, for my father only indulged when he was "treated," and never could bring himself to spend a farthing in liquor himself, but his great fondness for these places took its origin in his passion for talk. Never, indeed, lived there a man — from Lord Brougham himself downwards — who had a greater taste for gossip and loquaciousness than my father. It mattered little what the subject, he was always ready; and whether it

were a crim. con. in the newspapers, a seizure for rent, a marriage in high life, or a pig in the pound, — there he was, explaining away all difficult terms of law and jurisprudence; and many a difficulty that Tom Cafferty, the postmaster, had attempted in vain to solve was, by a kind of “writ of error,” removed to my father’s court for explanation and decision.

That he soon became a kind of authority in the neighboring town of Kilbeggan need not excite any surprise. It is men of precisely his kind, and with talents of an order very similar to his, that wield influence in the great cities of the earth. It is your talking, pushing, forward men, seeming always confident in what they say, never acknowledging an error nor confessing a defeat, who take the lead in life. With average ability, and ten times the average assurance, they reach the goal that bashful merit never even so much as gets within sight of.

His chief resort, however, was the Court of Quarter Sessions, where he sat from the first opening case to the last judgment, watching with an intense interest all the vacillating changes of the law’s uncertainty, which unquestionably were not in any way diminished by the singular individual who presided in that seat of justice. Simon Ball, or, as he was better known at the bar, Snow Ball, — an epithet he owed to his white head and eyebrows, — had qualified himself for the Bench by improving upon the proverbial attribute of justice. He was not only blind but deaf. For something like forty-five years he had walked the hall of the Four Courts with an empty bag, and a head scarcely more encumbered, when one morning — no one could guess why — the “Gazette” announced that the Lord Lieutenant had appointed him to the vacant chairmanship of Westmeath, — a promotion which had the effect of confounding all political animosity by its perfect unaccountableness.

It is a law of Nature that nothing ever goes to loss. Bad wine will make very tolerable vinegar; spoiled hay is converted into good manure; and so, a very middling lawyer often drops down into a very respectable judge. Had the gods but acknowledged Mr. Ball’s abilities some years earlier, doubtless he had been an exception to the theory.

They waited, however, so long that both sight and hearing were in abeyance when the promotion came. It seemed to rally him, however, this act of recognition, although late. It was a kind of corroboration of the self-estimate of a long life, and he prepared to show the world that he was very different from what they took him for. No men have the bump of self-esteem like lawyers; they live, and grow old, and die, always fancying that Holts, and Hales, and Mansfields are hid within the unostentatious exterior of their dusty garments; and that the wit that dazzles, and the pathos that thrills, are all rusting inside, just for want of a little of that cheering encouragement by which their contemporaries are clad in silk and walk in high places. Snow Ball was determined to show the world its error, and with a smart frock and green spectacles he took the field like a "fine old Irish barrister," with many a dry joke or sly sarcasm curled up in the wrinkles beside his mouth. However cheap a man may be held by his fellows in the "Hall," he is always sure of a compensation in the provinces. There the country gentlemen looked upon their chairman as a Blackstone, — not alone a storehouse of law, but a great appeal upon questions of general knowledge and information. I should scarcely have ventured upon what some of my readers may regard as a mere digression, if it were not that the gentleman and the peculiar nature of his infirmities had led to an intimate relation with my father. My parent's fondness for law, and all appertaining to it, had attached him to the little inn where Mr. Ball usually put up at each season of his visit; and gradually, by tendering little services, as fetching an umbrella when it rained, hastening for a book of reference if called for, searching out an important witness, and probably by a most frequent and respectful use of the title "my lord," instead of the humble "your worship," he succeeded in so ingratiating himself with the judge that, without exactly occupying any precise station, or having any regular employment, he became in some sort a recognized appendage, a kind of "unpaid attaché to the court" of Kilbeggan.

My father was one of those persons who usually ask only a "lift" from Fortune, and do not require to be continually

aided by her. From being the humble attendant on the judge, he soon succeeded to being his privy councillor; supplying a hundred little secret details of the neighborhood and its local failings, which usually gave Mr. Ball's decisions on the bench an air approaching inspiration, so full were they of a knowledge of individual life. As confidence ripened, my father was employed in reading out to the judge of an evening the various depositions of witnesses, the informations laid, and the affidavits sworn, — opportunities from which he did not neglect to derive the full advantage; for while he usually accompanied the written document with a running commentary of his own to Mr. Ball, he also contrived to let the suitor feel how great was his knowledge of the case, and what a powerful influence behind the scenes he wielded over the fortunes of the cause; insomuch that it became soon well known that he who had Con Cregan on his side was better off than with the whole Bench of country magistrates disposed to favor him.

My father's prudence did not desert him in these trying circumstances. Without any historical knowledge of the matter, he knew by a species of instinct that pride was the wreck of most men, and that, to wield real, substantial power, it is often necessary to assume a garb of apparent inefficiency and incapacity. To this end, the greater the influence he possessed, the humbler did he affect to be; disclaiming everything like power, he got credit for possessing a far greater share than he ever really enjoyed.

That the stream of justice did not run perfectly pure and clear, however, may not be a matter of surprise; for how many rocks, and shoals, and quicksands, are there in the channel! and certainly my father was a dangerous hand at the wheel. Litigation, it must be owned, lost much of its vacillation. The usual question about any case was, "What does Con say? Did Con Cregan tell ye ye 'll win?" That was decisive; none sceptical enough to ask for more!

At the feet of this Gamaliel I was brought up; nothing the more tenderly than a stepmother presided over the "home department." As I was a stout boy, of some thirteen or fourteen at this period of my father's life, and could read and write tolerably well, I was constantly employed in making

copies of various papers used at the Sessions. Were I psychologically inclined, I might pause here to inquire how far these peculiar studies had their influence in biasing the whole tenor of my very eventful life; what latent stores of artifice did I lay up from all these curious subtleties; how did I habituate my mind to weigh and balance probabilities, as evidence inclined to this side or that; above all, how gratified was I with the discovery that there existed a legal right and wrong, perfectly distinct from the moral ones, — a fact which served at once to open the path of life far wider and more amply before me.

I must, however, leave this investigation to the reader's acuteness, if he think it worth following out; nor would I now allude to it save as it affords me the opportunity, once for all, of explaining modes of thinking and acting which might seem, without some such clue, as unfitting and unseemly in one reared and brought up as I was.

Whether the new dignity of his station had disposed him to it or not, I cannot say; but my father became far more stern in his manner and exacting in his requirements as he rose in life. The practice of the law seemed to impart some feature of its own peremptory character to himself, as he issued his orders in our humble household with all the impressive solemnity of a writ, — indeed, aiding the effect by phrases taken from the awful vocabulary of justice.

If my stepmother objected to anything the answer was, usually, she might "traverse in prox" at the next Sessions; while to myself every order was in the style of a "mandamus." Not satisfied with the mere terrors of the Bench, he became so enamoured of the pursuit as to borrow some features of prison discipline for the conduct of our household; thus, for the slightest infractions of his severe code I was "put" upon No. 3 Penitentiary diet, — only reading potatoes *vice* bread.

There would seem to be something uncongenial to obedience in any form in the life of an Irish peasant; something doubtless in the smell of the turf. He seems to imbibe a taste for freedom by the very architecture of his dwelling, and the easy, unbuttoned liberty of his corduroys. Young as I was, I suppose the Celt was strong within me; and the

"Times" says, that will account for all delinquencies. I felt this powerfully; not the less, indeed, that my father almost invariably visited me with the penalty of the case then before the Court; so that while copying out at night the details of the prosecution, I had time to meditate over the coming sentence. It was, perhaps, fortunate for me that capital cases do not come under the jurisdiction of a "sitting barrister;" otherwise I verily believe I might have suffered the last penalty of the law from my parent's infatuation.

My sense of "equity" at last revolted. I perceived, that no matter who "sued," I was always "cast;" and I at length resolved on resistance. I remember well the night this resolution was formed; it was a cold and cheerless one of January. My father had given me a great mass of papers to copy, and a long article for the newspapers to write out, which the "Judge" was to embody in his address to the Bench. I never put pen to either, but sat with my head between my hands for twelve mortal hours, revolving every possible wickedness, and wondering whether in my ingenuity I could not invent some offences that no indictment could comprise. Day broke, and found me still unoccupied. I was just meditating whether I should avow my rebellion openly, and "plead" in mitigation, when my father came in.

My reader must excuse me if I do not dwell on what followed. It is enough to say that the nature of my injuries are unknown to the criminal statute, and that although my wounds and bruises are familiar to the prize-ring, they are ignored by all jurisprudence out of the slave states. Even my stepmother confessed that I was not fit to "pick out of the gutter;" and she proved her words by leaving me where I lay.

Revenge must be a very "human" passion; my taste for it came quite naturally. I had never read "Othello" nor "Zanga;" but I conceived a very clear and precise notion that I had a debt to pay, and pay it I would. Had the obligation been of a pecuniary character, and some "bankrupt commission" been in jurisdiction over it, I had doubtless been called upon to discharge it in a series of instalments proportional to my means of life; being a moral debt, however, I enjoyed the privilege of paying it at once, and in

full ; which I did thus : I had often remarked that my father arose at night and left the cabin, crossing a little garden behind the house to a little shed, where our pig and an ass lived in harmony together ; and here, by dint of patient observation, I discovered that his occupation lay in the thatch of the aforesaid shed, in which he seemed to conceal some object of value.

Thither I now repaired, some secret prompting suggesting that it might afford me the wished-for means of vengeance. My disappointment was indeed great that no compact roll of bank-notes, no thick woollen stocking close packed with guineas, or even crown-pieces, met my hand. A heavy bundle of papers and parchment was all I could find ; and these bore such an unhappy family resemblance to the cause of all my misfortunes that I was ready to tear them to pieces in very spite. A mere second's reflection suggested a better course. There was a certain attorney in Kilbeggan, one Morissy, my father's bitterest enemy ; indeed, my parent's influence in the Session court had almost ruined and left him without a client. The man of law and precedents in vain struggled against decisions which a secret and irresponsible adviser contrived beforehand, and Morissy's knowledge and experience were soon discovered to be valueless. It was a game in which skill went for nothing.

This gentleman's character at once pointed him out as the fitting agent of vengeance on my father, and by an hour after daybreak did I present myself before him in all the consciousness of my injured state.

Mr. Morissy's reception of me was not over gracious.

"Well, ye spawn of the devil," said he, as he turned about from a small fragment of looking-glass, before which he was shaving, "what brings ye here? Bad luck to ye; the sight of ye's made me cut myself."

"I'm come, sir, for a bit of advice, sir," said I, putting my hand to my hat in salutation.

"Assault and battery!" said he, with a grin on the side of his mouth where the soap had been shaved away.

"Yes, sir; an aggravated case," said I, using the phrase of the Sessions.

"Why don't ye apply to yer father? He's Crown lawyer

and Attorney-General; faith, he's more besides, — he's judge and jury too."

"And more than that in the present suit, sir," says I, following up his illustration; "he's the defendant here."

"What! is that his doing?"

"Yes, sir; his own hand and mark," said I, laughing.

"That's an ugly cut, and mighty near the eye! But sure, after all, you're his child."

"Very true, sir; it's only paternal correction; but I have something else!"

"What's that, Con my boy?" said he; for we were now grown very familiar.

"It is this, sir," said I; "this roll of papers that I found hid in the thatch, — a safe place my father used to make his strong-box."

"Let us see!" said Morissy, sitting down and opening the package. Many were old summonses discharged, notices to quit withdrawn, and so on; but at last he came to two papers pinned together, at sight of which he almost jumped from his chair. "Con," says he, "describe the place you found them in."

I went over all the discovery again.

"Did ye yourself see your father put in papers there?"

"I did, sir."

"On more than one occasion?"

"At least a dozen times, sir."

"Did ye ever remark any one else putting papers there?"

"Never, sir! none of the neighbors ever come through the garden."

"And it was always at night, and in secret, he used to repair there?"

"Always at night."

"That'll do, Con; that'll do, my son. You'll soon turn the tables on the old boy. You may go down to the kitchen and get your breakfast; be sure, however, that you don't leave the house to-day. Your father mustn't know where ye are till we're ready for him."

"Is it a strong case, sir?" said I.

"A very strong case — never a flaw in it."

"Is it more than a larceny, sir?" said I.

“It is better than that.”

“I’d rather it didn’t go too far,” said I, for I was beginning to feel afraid of what I had done.

“Leave that to me, Con,” said Mr. Morissy, “and go down to yer breakfast.”

I did as I was bid, and never stirred out of the house the whole day, nor for eight days after; when one morning Morissy bid me clean myself, and brush my hair, to come with him to the Court-house.

I guessed at once what was going to happen; and now, as my head was healed, and all my bruises cured, I’d very gladly have forgiven all the affair, and gone home again with my father; but it was too late. As Mr. Morissy said, with a grin, “The law is an elegant contrivance; a child’s finger can set it in motion, but a steam engine could not hold it back afterwards!”

The Court was very full that morning; there were five magistrates on the bench, and Mr. Ball in the middle of them. There were a great many farmers, too, for it was market-day; and numbers of the townspeople, who all knew my father, and were not sorry to see him “up.” Cregan *versus* Cregan stood third on the list of cases; and very little interest attached to the two that preceded it. At last it was called; and there I stood before the Bench, with five hundred pair of eyes all bent upon me; and two of them actually looking through my very brain, — for they were my father’s, as he stood at the opposite side of the table below the Bench.

The case was called an assault, and very soon terminated; for, by my own admission, it was clear that I deserved punishment; though probably not so severely as it had been inflicted. The judge delivered a very impressive lesson to my father and myself, about our respective duties, and dismissed the case with a reproof, the greater share of which fell to me. “You may go now, sir,” said he, winding up a fine peroration; “fear God and honor the king; respect your parents, and make your capitals smaller.”

“Before your worship dismisses the witness,” said Morissy, “I wish to put a few questions to him.”

“The case is disposed of; call the next,” said the judge, angrily.

“ I have a most important fact to disclose to your worship, — one which is of the highest importance to the due administration of justice, — one which, if suffered to lie in obscurity, will be a disgrace to the law, and a reproach to the learned Bench.”

“ Call the next case, crier,” said the judge. “ Sit down, Mr. Morissy.”

“ Your worship may commit me ; but I will be heard — ”

“ Tipstaff ! take that man into — ”

“ When you hear of a mandamus from the King’s Bench — when you know that a case of compounding a felony — ”

“ Come away, Mr. Morissy ; come quiet, sir ! ” said the police-sergeant.

“ What were ye saying of a mandamus ? ” said the judge, getting frightened at the dreaded word.

“ I was saying this, sir,” said Morissy, turning fiercely round ; “ that I am possessed of information which you refused to hear, and which will make the voice of the Chief Justice heard in this court, which now denies its ear to truth.”

“ Conduct yourself more becomingly, sir,” said one of the county magistrates, “ and open your case.”

Morissy, who was far more submissive to the gentry than to the chairman, at once replied in his blandest tone : —

“ Your worship, it is now more than a month since I appeared before you in the case of Noonan *versus* M’Quade and others, — an aggravated case of homicide ; I might go further, and apply to it the most awful term the vocabulary of justice contains ! Your worship will remember that on that very interesting and important case a document was missing, of such a character that the main feature of the case seemed actually to hang upon it. This was no less than the death-bed confession of Noonan, formally taken before a justice of the peace, Mr. Styles, and written with all the accurate regard to circumstances the law exacts. Mr. Styles, the magistrate who took the deposition, was killed by a fall from his horse the following week ; his clerk being ill, the individual who wrote the case was Con Cregan. Your worship may bear in mind that this man, when called to the witness box, denied all knowledge of this dying confession ; asserted

that what he took down in writing were simply some brief and unsatisfactory notes of the affray, all to the advantage of the M'Quades, and swore that Mr. Styles, who often alluded to the document as a confession, was entirely in error, the whole substance of it being unimportant and vague; some very illegible and ill-written notes corroborating which were produced in court as the papers in question.

"Noonan being dead, and Mr. Styles also, the whole case rested on the evidence of Cregan; and although, your worship, the man's character for veracity was not of that nature among the persons of his own neighborhood to —"

"Confine yourself to the case, sir," said the judge, "without introducing matter of mere common report."

"I am in a position to prove my assertion," said Morissy, triumphantly. "I hold here in my hand the abstracted documents, signed and sealed by Mr. Styles, and engrossed with every item of regularity. I have more: a memorandum purporting to be a copy of a receipt for eighteen pounds ten shillings, received by Cregan from Jos. M'Quade, the wages of this crime; and, if more were necessary, a promissory note from M'Quade for an additional sum of seven pounds, at six months' date. These are the papers which I am prepared to prove in court; this the evidence which a few minutes back I tendered in vain before you; and there," said he, turning with a vindictive solemnity to where my father was standing, pale, but collected, "there's the man who, distinguished by your worship's confidence, I now arraign for the suppression of this evidence, and the composition of a felony!"

If Mr. Morissy was not perfectly correct in his law, there was still quite enough to establish a charge of misdemeanor against my father; and he was accordingly committed for trial at the approaching assizes, while I was delivered over to the charge of a police-sergeant, to be in readiness when my testimony should be required.

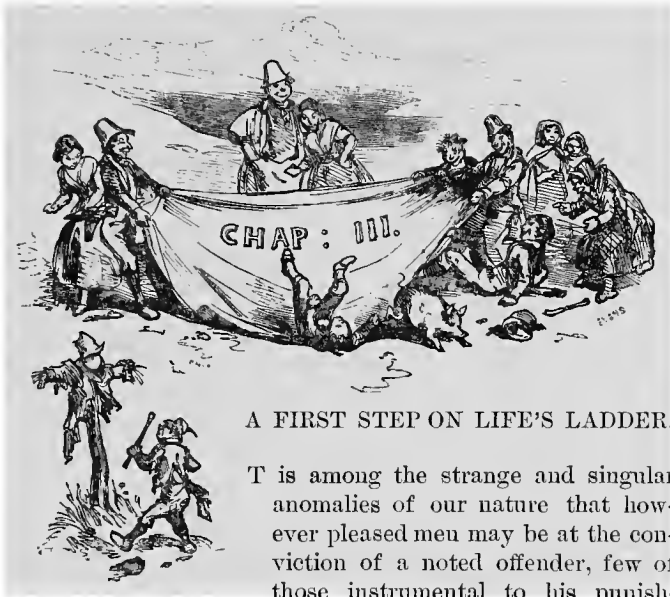
The downfall of a dynasty is sure to evoke severe recrimination against the late ruler; and now my parent, who but a few days past could have tilted the beam of justice at his mere pleasure, was overwhelmed with not merely abuse and attack, but several weighty accusations of crime were alleged

against him. Not only was it discovered that he interfered with the due course of justice, but that he was a prime actor in, and contriver of, many of the scenes of insurrectionary disturbance which for years back had filled the country with alarm and the jails with criminals.

For one of these cases, a night attack for arms, the evidence was so complete and unquestionable that the Crown prosecutor, disliking the exhibition of a son giving evidence against his parent, dispensed with my attendance altogether, and prosecuting the graver charge obtained a verdict of guilty.

The sentence was transportation for life, with a confiscation of all property to the Crown. Thus my first step in life was to exile my father, and leave myself a beggar, — a promising beginning, it must be owned!





A FIRST STEP ON LIFE'S LADDER.

It is among the strange and singular anomalies of our nature that however pleased men may be at the conviction of a noted offender, few of those instrumental to his punishment are held in honor and esteem. If all Kilbeggan rejoiced, as they did, at my father's downfall, a very considerable share of obloquy rested on me, — a species of judgment, I honestly confess, that I was not the least prepared for.

"There goes the little informer," said they, as I passed; "what did ye get for hanging —" a very admirable piece of Irish exaggeration — "for hanging yer father, Con?" said one.

"Could n't ye help yer stepmother to a say voyage?" shouted another.

"And then we'd be rid of yez all," chimed in a third.

"He's rich now," whined out an old beggar-man that often had eaten his potatoes at our fireside. "He's rich now, the chap is; he'll marry a lady!"

This was the hardest to bear of all the slights, for not alone had I lost all pretension to my father's property, but the raggedness of my clothes and the general misery of my appearance might have saved me from the reproach of what is so forcibly termed "blood-money."

“Come over to me this evening,” said Father Rush; and they were the only words of comfort I heard from any side. “Come over to me about six o’clock, Con, for I want to speak to you.”

They were long hours that intervened between that and six. I could not stay in the town, where every one I met had some sneer or scoff against me; I could not go home, I had none! and so I wandered out into the open country, taking my course towards a bleak common, about two miles off, where few, if any one, was like to be but myself.

This wild and dreary tract lay alongside of the main road to Athlone, and was traversed by several footpaths, by which the country people were accustomed to make “short cuts” to market, from one part of the road to another; for the way, passing through a bog, took many a winding turn as the ground necessitated.

There is a feeling of lonely desolation in wide far-stretching wastes that accords well with the purposeless vacuity of hopelessness; but, somehow or other, the very similitude between the scene without and the sense of desolation within, establishes a kind of companionship. Lear was speaking like a true philosopher when he uttered the words, “I like this rocking of the battlements.”

I had wandered some hours “here and there” upon the common; and it was now the decline of day when I saw at a little distance from me the figure of a young man whose dress and appearance bespoke condition, running along at a brisk pace, but evidently laboring under great fatigue.

The instant he saw me he halted, and cried out, “I say, my boy, is that Kilbeggan yonder, where I see the spire?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And where is the high-road to Athlone?”

“Yonder, sir, where the two trees are standing.”

“Have you seen the coach pass, — the mail for Athlone?”

“Yes, sir, she went through the town about half an hour ago.”

“Are ye certain, boy? are ye quite sure of this?” cried he, in a voice of great agitation.

“I am quite snre, sir; they always change horses at Moone’s public-house; and I saw them ‘draw up’ there more than half an hour since.”

“Is there no other coach passes this road for Dublin?”

“The night mail, sir, but she does not go to-night; this is Saturday.”

“What is to be done?” said the youth, in deep sorrow; and he seated himself on a stone as he spoke, and hid his face between his hands.

As he sat thus, I had time to mark him well, and scan every detail of his appearance.

Although tall and stoutly knit, he could not have been above sixteen, or at most seventeen, years of age; his dress, a kind of shooting-jacket, was made in a cut that affected fashion; and I observed on one finger of his very white hand a ring which, even to my uneducated eyes, bespoke considerable value.

He looked up at last, and his eyes were very red, and a certain trembling of the lips showed that he was much affected. “I suppose, my lad, I can find a chaise or a carriage of some kind in Kilbeggan?” said he; “for I have lost the mail. I had got out for a walk, and by the advice of a countryman taken this path over the bog, expecting, as he told me, it would cut off several miles of way. I suppose I must have mistaken him, for I have been running for above an hour, and am too late after all; but still, if I can find a chaise, I shall be in time yet.”

“They’re all gone, sir,” said I; “and sorry am I to have such tidings to tell. The Sessions broke up to-day, and they’re away with the lawyers to Kinnegad.”

“And how far is that from us?”

“Sixteen miles or more, by the road.”

“And how am I to get there?”

“Unless ye walk it—”

“Walk! impossible. I am dead beat already; besides, the time it would take would lose me all chance of reaching Dublin as I want.”

“Andy Smith has a horse, if he’d lend it; and there’s a short road by Hogan’s boren.”

“Where does this Smith live?” said he, stopping me impatiently.

“Not a half mile from here; you can see the house from this.”

“Come along, then, and show me the way, my boy,” said he; and the gleam of hope seemed to lend alacrity to his movements.

Away we set together, and as we went, it was arranged between us that if Andy would hire out his mare, I should accompany the rider as guide, and bring back the animal to its owner, while the traveller proceeded on his journey to town.

The negotiation was tedious enough; for, at first, Andy would n't appear at all; he thought it was a process-server was after him, — a suspicion probably suggested by my presence, as it was generally believed that a rag of my father's mantle had descended to me. It was only after a very cautious and careful scrutiny of the young traveller through a small glass eye — it was n't a window — in the mud wall that he would consent to come out. When he did so, he treated the proposal most indignantly. “Is it he hire out his baste? as if she was a dirty garraun of Betty Nowlan's of the head inn; he wondered who'd ask the like!” and so on.

The youth, deterred by this reception, would have abandoned the scheme at once; but I, better acquainted with such characters as Andy, and knowing that his difficulties were only items in the intended charge, higgled, and bargained, and bullied, and blarneyed by turns; and, after some five and forty minutes of alternate joking and abusing each other, it was at last agreed on that the “baste” was to be ceded for the sum of fifteen shillings, — “two and sixpence more if his honor was pleased with the way she carried him;” the turnpike and a feed of oats being also at the charge of the rider, as well as all repairs of shoes incurred by loss or otherwise. Then there came a supplemental clause as to the peculiar care of the animal. How “she was n't to be let drink too much at once, for she'd get the colic;” and if she needed shoeing, she was to have a “twitch” on her nose, or she'd kick the forge to “smithereens.” The same precaution to be taken if the saddle required fresh girthing; a hint was given, besides, not to touch her with the left heel, or she'd certainly kick the rider with the hind leg of the same side; and, as a last caution given, to be on our

guard at the cross-roads at Toomes-bridge, or she'd run away towards Croghan, where she once was turned out in foal. "Barring" these peculiarities, and certain smaller difficulties about mounting, "she was a lamb, and the sweetest-tempered crayture ever was haltered."

In the very midst of this panegyric upon the animal's good and noble qualities he flung open the door of a little shed, and exhibited her to our view. I verily believe, whatever the urgency of the youth's reason for proceeding, that his heart failed him at the sight of the steed; a second's reconsideration seemed to rally his courage, and he said, "No matter, it can't be helped; saddle her at once, and let us be off."

"That's easier said nor done," muttered Andy to himself, as he stood at the door, without venturing a step farther. "Con," said he, at last, in a species of coaxing tone I well knew boded peril, "Con, a cushla! get a hould of her by the head, that's a fine chap; make a spring at the forelock."

"Maybe she'd kick —"

"Sorra kick! get up there, now, and I'll be talking to you all the while."

This proposition, though doubtless meant as most encouraging, by no means reassured me.

"Come, come! I'll bridle the infernal beast," said the youth, losing all patience with both of us, and he sprung forward into the stable; but barely had he time to jump back, as the animal let fly with both hind legs together. Andy, well aware of what was coming, pulled us both back and shut to the door, against which the hoofs kept up one rattling din of kicks that shook the crazy edifice from roof to ground.

"Ye see what comes of startlin' her; the crayture's timid as a kid," said Andy, whose blanched cheek badly corroborated his assumed composure. "Ye may do what ye plaze, barrin' putting a bridle on her; she never took kindly to that!"

"But do ye intend me to ride her without one?" said the youth.

"By no manner of means, sir," said Andy, with a plau-

sible slowness on each word that gave him time to think of an expedient. "I would n't be guilty of the like; none that knows me would ever say it to me: I'm a poor man —"

"You're a devilish tiresome one," broke in the youth, suddenly; "here we have been above half an hour standing at the door, and none the nearer our departure than when we arrived."

"Christy Moore could bridle her, if he was here," said Andy; "but he's gone to Moate, and wou't be back till evening; may be that would do?"

A very impatient, and not very pious exclamation consigned Christy to an untimely fate. "Well, don't be angry, anyhow, sir," said Andy; "there's many a thing a body might think of, if they were n't startled. See, now, I have a way this minute; an elegant fine way, too."

"Well, what is it? Confound your long-winded speeches!"

"There, now, you're angry again! sure it's enough to give one quite a through-otherness, and not leave them time to reflect."

"Your plan, your plan!" said the young man, his lips trembling with anger and impatience.

"Here it is, then; let the 'gossoon,' meaning me, "get up on the roof and take off two or three of the screws, the sods of grass, till he can get through, and then steal down on the mare's back; when he's once on her, she'll never stir head nor foot, and he can slip the bridle over her quite asy."

"The boy might be killed; no, no, I'll not suffer that —"

"Wait, sir," cried I, interrupting, "it's not so hard, after all; once on her back, I defy her to throw me."

"Sure I know that well; sorra better rider in the Meath hunt than little Con," broke in Andy; backing me with a ready flattery he thought would deceive me.

It was not without reluctance that the youth consented to this forlorn hope, but he yielded at last; and so, with a bridle fastened round me like a scarf, I was hoisted on the roof by Andy, and, under a volley of encouraging expressions, exhorted to "go in and win."

"There! there, a cushla!" cried Andy, as he saw me performing the first act of the piece with a vigor he had

never calculated on; "'tis n't a coach and six ye want to drive through. Tear and ages! ye'll take the whole roof off." The truth was, I worked away with a malicious pleasure in the destruction of the old miser's roof; nor is it quite certain how far my zeal might have carried me, when suddenly one of the rafters — mere light poles of ash — gave way, and down I went, at first slowly, and then quicker, into a kind of funnel formed by the smashed timbers and the earthen sods. The crash, the din, and the dust appeared to have terrified the wicked beast below, for she stood trembling in one corner of the stable, and never moved a limb as I walked boldly up and passed the bridle over her head. This done, I had barely time to spring on her back, when the door was forced open by the young gentleman, whose fears for my fate had absorbed every other thought.

"Are you safe, my boy, quite safe?" he cried, making his way over the fallen rubbish.

"Oh! the devil fear him," cried Andy, in a perfect rage of passion; "I wish it was his bones was smashed, instead of the roof-sticks — see! — Och, murther, only look at this." And Andy stood amid the ruins, a most comical picture of affliction, in part real and in part assumed. Meanwhile the youth had advanced to my side, and, with many a kind and encouraging word, more than repaid me for all my danger.

"'Tis n't five pound will pay the damage," cried Andy, running up on his fingers a sum of imaginary arithmetic.

"Where 's the saddle, you old —" What the young man was about to add, I know not; but at a look from me he stopped short.

"Is it abusin' me you're for now, afther wrecking my house and destroying my premises?" cried Andy, whose temper was far from sweetened by the late catastrophe. "Sure what marcy my poor beast would get from the likes of ye! sorry step she'll go in yer company; pay the damages ye done, and be off."

Here was a new turn of affairs, and, judging from the irascibility of both parties, a most disastrous one; it demanded, indeed, all my skill, — all the practised dexterity of a mind trained, as mine had been by many a subtlety,

to effect a compromise, which I did thus: my patron being cast in the costs of all the damages to the amount of twenty shillings, and the original contract to be maintained in all its integrity.

The young man paid the money without speaking; but I had time to mark that the purse from which he drew it was far from weighty. "Are we free to go at last?" cried he, in a voice of suppressed wrath.

"Yes, yer honor; all's right," answered Andy, whose heart was mollified at the sight of money. "A pleasant journey, and safe to ye; take good care of the beast, don't ride her over the stones, and —"

The remainder of the exhortation was lost to us, as we set forth in a short jog-trot, I running alongside.

"When we are once below the hill, yonder," said I to my companion, "give her the whip, and make up for lost time."

"And how are you to keep up, my lad?" asked he, in some surprise.

I could scarcely avoid a laugh at the simplicity of the question; as if an Irish gossoon, with his foot on his native bog, would n't be an overmatch in a day's journey for the best hack that ever ambled! Away we went, sometimes joking over, sometimes abusing, the old miser Andy, of whom, for my fellow-traveller's amusement, I told various little traits and stories, at which he laughed with a zest quite new to me to witness. My desire to be entertaining then led me on to speak of my father and his many curious adventures, — the skill with which he could foment litigation, and the wily stratagems by which he sustained it afterwards. All the cunning devices of the process-server I narrated with a gusto that smacked of my early training: how, sometimes, my crafty parent would append a summons to the collar of a dog, and lie in wait till he saw the owner take it off and read it, and then, emerging from his concealment, cry out "sarved," and take to his heels; and again how he once succeeded in "serving" old Andy himself, by appearing as a beggar woman, and begging him to light a bit of paper to kindle her pipe. The moment, however, he took the bit of twisted paper, the assumed beggar-woman screamed out, "Andy, yer sarved: that's a process, my man!" The shock almost

took Andy's life; and there's not a beggar in the barony dares to come near him since.

"Your father must be well off, then, I suppose," said my companion.

"He was a few weeks ago, sir; but misfortune has come on us since that." I was ashamed to go on, and yet I felt that strange impulse so strong in the Irish peasant to narrate anything of a character which can interest by harrowing and exciting the feelings.

Very little pressing was needed to make me recount the whole story, down to the departure of my father with the other prisoners sentenced to transportation.

"And whither were you going when I met you this morning on the common?" said my fellow-traveller, in a voice of some interest.

"To seek my fortune, sir," was my brief answer; and either the words or the way they were uttered seemed to strike my companion, for he drew up short, and stared at me, repeating the phrase, "Seek your fortune!" "Just so," said I, warmed by an enthusiasm which then was beginning to kindle within me, and which for many a long year since, and in many a trying emergency, has cheered and sustained me. "Just so; the world is wide, and there's a path for every one, if they'd only look for it."

"But you saw what came of *my* taking a short cut, this morning," said my companion, laughing.

"And you'd have been time enough too, if you had been always thinking of what you were about, sir; but as you told me, you began a thinking and a dreaming of twenty things far away. Besides, who knows what good turn luck may take, just at the very moment when we seem to have least of it?"

"You're quite a philosopher, Con," said he, smiling.

"So Father Mahon used to say, sir," said I, proudly, and in reality highly flattered at the reiteration of the epithet.

Thus chatting, we journeyed along, lightening the way with talk, and making the hours seem to me the very pleasantest I had ever passed. At last we came in sight of the steeple of Kinnegad, which lay in the plain before us, about a mile distant.

The little town of Kinnegad was all astir as we entered it. The "up mail" had just come down, in the main street, sending all its passengers flying in various directions, — through shop-windows; into cow-houses and piggeries; some being proudly perched on the roof of a cabin, and others most ignobly seated on a dunghill; the most lamentable figure of all being an elderly gentleman, who, having cut a summerset through an apothecary's window, came forth cut by a hundred small vials, and bearing on his person unmistakable evidence of every odor, from tar-water to assafœtida. The conveyance itself lay, like the Ark after the Deluge, quietly reposing on one side; while animals male and female, "after their kind," issued from within. Limping and disconsolate figures were being assisted into the inn; and black eyes and smashed faces were as rife as in a country fair.

I was not slow in appropriating the calamity to a good purpose. "See, sir," I whispered to my companion, "you said, a while ago, that nobody had such bad luck as yourself; think what might have happened you, now, if you had n't missed the coach."

"True enough, Con," said he, "there is such a thing as being too late for bad as well as for good fortune; and I experience it now. But the next question is, how to get forward; for, of course, with a broken axle, the mail cannot proceed further."

The difficulty was soon got over. The halt and the maimed passengers, after loudly inveighing against all coach-proprietors, — the man that made, and the man that horsed, he that drove, and he that greased the wheels of all public conveyances, — demanded loudly to be forwarded to the end of their journey by various chaises and other vehicles of the town; I at the same time making use of my legal knowledge to suggest that while doing so, they acted under protest; that it was "without prejudice" to any future proceedings they might deem fit to adopt for compensatory damages. If some laughed heartily at the source from which the hint came, others said I was a "devilish shrewd chap," and insinuated something about a joint-stock subscription of sixpences for my benefit; but the motion was

apparently unseconded, and so, like many benefactors of my species, I had to apply to my conscience for my reward ; or, safer still, had to wait till I could pay myself.

My young companion, who now, in a few words, told me that he was a student at Trinity College and a "reader for honors," pulled out his purse to pay me. "Remember, my boy, the name of Henry Lyndsay ; I'm easily found, if you chance to come to Dublin, — not that I can be of much service to any one, but I shall not forget the service you rendered me this day. Here, take this, pay for the mare's feeding, and when she has rested —"

I would not suffer him to proceed further, but broke in :

"I'm not going back, sir ! I'll never turn my footsteps that way again ! Leave the mare in the inn ; Andy comes every Saturday here for the market, and will find her safe. As for me, I must 'seek my fortune ;' and when one has to search for anything, there's nothing like beginning early."

"You're a strange fellow, Con," said he, looking at me ; and I was shrewd enough to see that his features exhibited no small astonishment at my words. "And where do you intend to look for this same fortune you speak of?"

"No one place in particular, sir ! I read in an old book once, that good luck is like sunshine, and is not found in all climates at the same time ; so I intend to ramble about ; and when I breakfast on the sunny side of the apple, never stay to dine off the green one."

"And you are the kind of fellow to succeed !" said he, half to himself, and rather as though reflecting on my words than addressing me.

"So I intend, sir," replied I, confidently.

"Have you ever read 'Gil Blas,' Con?"

"I have it almost by heart, sir."

"That's it !" said he, laughing ; "I see whence you've got your taste for adventure. But remember, Con, Gil Blas lived in different times from ours, and in a very different land. He was, besides, a well-educated fellow, with no small share of good looks and good manners."

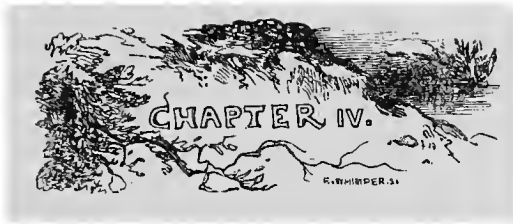
"As for age and country, sir," said I, boldly, "men and women are pretty much alike at all times, and in all places ; in the old book I told you of a while ago, I read that human

passions, like the features of the face, are only infinite varieties of the same few ingredients. Then, as to education and the rest, — what one man can pick up, so can another. The will is the great thing, and I feel it very strong in me. And now, to give a proof of it, I am determined to go up to Dublin, and with your honor too, and you'll see if I won't have my way."

"So you shall, Con!" replied he, laughing; "I'll take you on the top of the chaise; and although I cannot afford to keep a servant, you shall stay with me in College until chance, in which you have such implicit faith, shall provide better for you. Come, now, lead the mare into the stable, for I see my companions are packing up to be gone."

I was not slow in obeying the orders, and soon returned to assist my new master with his luggage. All was quickly settled; and a few minutes after saw me seated on a port-manteau on the roof on my way to Dublin.





“HOW I ENTERED COLLEGE, AND HOW I LEFT IT.”



It was still dark, on a drizzling morning in January, as we reached the Capital; the lamps shone faintly through the foggy, wet atmosphere; and the gloom was deepened as we entered the narrow streets at the west of the city. A few glimmering lights from five-stories high, showed where some early riser was awaking to his daily toil; while here and there, some rough-coated policeman

stood at the corner of a street to be rained on; except these, no sign of living thing appeared; and I own the whole aspect was a sad damper to the ardor of that enthusiasm which had often pictured the great metropolis as some gorgeous fairy-land.

The carriage stopped twice, to set down two of the travellers, in obscure dingy streets, and then I heard Mr. Lyndsay say, “To the College;” and on we went through a long labyrinth of narrow lanes and thoroughfares, which gradually widened out into more spacious streets, and at length arrived at a great building, whose massive gates

slowly opened to receive, and then solemnly closed after us. We now stood in a spacious quadrangle, silent and noiseless as a church at midnight.

Mr. Lyndsay hastily descended, and ordering me to carry in some of the baggage, I followed him into a large scantily furnished room, beyond which was a bedchamber, of like accommodation. "This is my home, Con," said he, with a melancholy attempt at a smile; "and here," said he, leading me to a small one-windowed room on the opposite side, "here is yours." A bed, of that humble kind called a stretcher, placed against one wall, and a large chest for holding coals against the other, a bottomless chair, and a shoe-brush with very scanty bristles, constituted the entire furniture.

It was some time after all the luggage was removed before Mr. Lyndsay could get rid of the postilion; like all poor men in a like predicament, he had to bargain and reason and remonstrate, submitting to many a mortification, and enduring many a sore pang, at the pitiless ribaldry which knows nothing so contemptible as poverty; at last, after various reflections on the presumption of people who travel and cannot afford it, on their vanity, self-conceit, and so forth, the fellow departed, with what my ears assured me was no contemptible share of my poor master's purse.

I was sitting alone in my den during this scene, not wishing by my presence to add anything to his mortification; and, now all was still and noiseless, I waited for some time expecting to be called, — to be told of some trifling service to execute, or, at least, to be spoken to; but no, not a sound, not a murmur, was to be heard.

My own thoughts were none of the brightest: the ceaseless rain that streamed against the little window, and shut out all prospect of what was without; the cold and cheerless chamber and the death-like silence were like lead upon my heart.

I had often, in my reveries at home, fancied that all who were lifted above the cottier in life must have neither care nor sorrow; that real want was unknown, save in their class; and that all afflictions of those more highly placed were of a character too trifling to be deemed serious; and now sud-

denly there came to me the thought, What if every one had his share of grief? I vow, the very suspicion thrilled through me, and I sat still, dwelling on the sad theme with deep intensity.

As I sat thus, a sigh, low, but distinct, came from the adjoining chamber. I suddenly remembered my young master, and crept noiselessly to the door; it stood ajar, and I could see in, and mark everything well. He was sitting at a table covered with books and writing materials; a single candle threw its yellow glare over the whole, and lit up with a sickly tint the travel-worn and tired features of the youth.

As I looked, he leaned his forehead down upon his arm, and seemed either overcome by sorrow or fatigue; when suddenly a deep-booming bell sent forth a solemn peal, and made the very chamber vibrate with its din. Lyndsay started at the sound; a kind of shudder, like a convulsive throe, shook his limbs; and sitting up on his seat, he pushed back the falling hair from his eyes, and again addressed himself to his book. The heavy tolling sounds seemed now no longer to distract, but rather to nerve him to greater efforts, for he read on with an intense persistence; turning from volume to volume, and repeatedly noting down on the paper as he read.

Of a sudden the bell ceased, and Lyndsay arose from the table and passed into the bedroom, from which he almost instantaneously reappeared, dressed in his cap and gown, — a new and curious costume in my eyes, but which at the time was invested with a deep, mysterious interest to me.

I retired silently now to my room, and saw him pass out into the wide court. I hastened to look out. Already some hundred others in similar costume were assembled there, and the buzz of voices and the sound of many feet were a pleasant relief to the desert-like silence of the court as I had seen it before. The change was, however, of a very brief duration; in less than a minute the whole assemblage moved off and entered a great building, whose heavy door closed on them with a deep bang, and all was still once more.

I now set myself to think by what small services I could render myself acceptable to my young master. I arranged the scanty furniture into a resemblance, faint enough, cer-

tainly, to comfort, and made a cheerful fire with the remnant of the roomy coal-box. This done, I proceeded to put his clothes in order, and actually astonished myself with the skill I seemed to possess in my new walk. An intense curiosity to know what was going on without led me frequently to the door which led into the court; but I profited little by this step. The only figures which met my eye were now and then some elderly personage clad in his academic robes, gravely wending towards the "Hall," and the far less imposing cries of some "college women," as the hags are called who officiate as the University housemaids.

It was at one of these visits that suddenly I heard the great door of the "Hall" burst open with a crash, and immediately down the steps poured the black tide of figures, talking and laughing in one multifarious din that seemed to fill the very air. Cautiously withdrawing, I closed the door, and retired; but scarcely had I reached my room, when young Lyndsay passed through to his own chamber: his cheek was flushed, and his eyes sparkled with animation, and his whole air and gesture indicated great excitement.

Having removed his cravat, and bathed his temples with cold water, he once more sat down before his books, and was soon so immersed in study as not to hear my footsteps as I entered.

I stood uncertain, and did not dare to interrupt him for some minutes; the very intensity of his application awed me. Indeed, I believe I should have retired without a word, had he not accidentally looked up and beheld me. "Eh! — what! — how is this?" cried he, endeavoring to recall his mind from the themes before him; "I had forgotten you, my poor boy, and you have had no breakfast."

"And you, sir?" said I, in reality more interested for him than myself.

"Take this, Con," said he, not heeding my remark, and giving me a piece of silver from his purse; "get yourself something to eat: to-morrow, or next day, we shall arrange these things better; for at this moment my head has its load of other cares."

"But will *you* not eat something?" said I; "*you* have not tasted food since we met."

"We are expected to breakfast with our tutor on the examination mornings, Con," said he; and then, not seeming to feel the inconsistency of his acts with his words, he again bent his head over the table, and lost all remembrance of either me or our conversation. I stole noiselessly away, and sallied forth to seek my breakfast where I could.

There were few loiterers in the court; a stray student hurrying past, or an old slipshod hag of hideous aspect and squalid misery, were all I beheld; but both classes bestowed most unequivocal signs of surprise at my country air and appearance, and to my question, where I could buy some bread and milk, answers the most cynical or evasive were returned. While I was yet endeavoring to obtain from one of the ancient maidens alluded to some information on the point, two young men, with velvet caps and velvet capes on their gowns, stopped to listen.

"I say, friend," cried one, seemingly the younger of the two, "when did *you* enter?"

"This morning," said I, taking the question literally.

"Do you hear that, Ward?" continued he to his companion. "What place did you take?"

"I was on the roof," replied I, supposing the quære bore allusion to the mode of my coming.

"Quite classical," said the elder, a tall, good-looking youth; "you came as did Cæsar into Gaul, '*summâ diligentia*,' on the top of the Diligence."

They both laughed heartily at a very threadbare college joke, and were about to move away, when the younger, turning round, said, "Have you matriculated?"

"No, sir, — what's that?"

"It's a little ceremony," interposed the elder, "necessary, and indeed indispensable, to every one coming to reside within these walls. You've heard of Napoleon, I dare say?"

"Bony, is it?" asked I, giving the more familiar title by which he was better known to my circle of acquaintance.

"Exactly," said he, "Bony. Now Bony used to call a first battle the baptism of Glory; so may we style, in a like way, Matriculation to be the baptism of Knowledge. You understand me, eh?"

“Not all out,” said I, “but partly.”

“We’ll illustrate by a diagram, then.”

“I say, Bob,” whispered the younger, “let us find out with whom he is;” then, turning to me, said, “Where do you live here?”

“Yonder,” said I, “where that lamp is.”

“Mr. Lyndsay’s chambers?”

“Yes, sir.”

“All right,” cried the younger; “we’ll show you the secret of matriculation.”

“Come along, my young friend,” said the elder, in the same pompous tone he had used at first, “let us teach you to drink of that Pierian spring which ‘*Labitur et labetur in omne volubile ævum.*’”

I believe it was the fluent use of the unknown tongue which at once allayed any mistrust I might have felt of my new acquaintances; however that may be, there was something so imposing in the high-sounding syllables that I yielded at once, and followed them into another and more remote quadrangle.

Here they stopped under a window, while one gave a loud whistle with his fingers to his lips; the sash was immediately thrown up, and a handsome, merry-looking face protruded. “Eh!—what!—Taylor and Ward,” cried he, “what’s going on?”

“Come down, Burton; here’s a youth for matriculation,” cried the younger.

“All right,” cried the other. “There are eight of us here at breakfast;” and disappearing from the window, he speedily descended to the court, followed by a number of others, who gravely saluted me with a deep bow, and solemnly welcomed me within the classic precincts of old Trinity.

“Domine—what’s his name?” said the young gentleman called Burton.

“Cregan, sir,” replied I, already flattered by the attentions I was receiving, — “Con Cregan, sir.”

“Well, Domine Cregan, come along with us, and never put faith in a junior sophister. You know what a junior sophister is, I trust?”



How Some. Materialized.

"No, sir."

"Tell him, Ward."

"A junior sophister, Mr. Cregan, is one who, being in 'Locke' all day, is very often locked out all night, and who observes the two rubrics of the statute '*de vigilantibus et lucentibus*,' by extinguishing both lamps and watchmen."

"Confound your pedantry!" broke in Burton; "a junior soph. is a man in his ninth examination."

"The terror of the porters," cried one.

"The Dean's milch cow," added another.

"A credit to his parents, but a debtor to his tailor," broke in a third.

"Seldom at Greek lecture, but no fellow commoner at the Currah," lisped out Taylor; and by this time we had reached a narrow lane, flanked on one side by a tall building of gloomy exterior, and on the other by an angle of the square.

"Here we are, Mr. Cregan; as the poet says, 'this is the place, the centre of the wood.'"

"Gentlemen sponsors, to your functions!" Scarce were the words out, when I was seized by above half a dozen pair of strong hands; my legs were suddenly jerked upwards, and, notwithstanding my attempts to resist, I was borne along for some yards at a brisk pace. I was already about to forbear my struggles, and suffer them to play their — as I deemed it — harmless joke in quiet, when straight in front of me I saw an enormous pump, at which, and by a double handle, Burton and another were working away like sailors on a wreck; throwing forth, above a yard off, a jet of water almost enough to turn a mill.

The whole plot now revealed itself to me at once, and I commenced a series of kickings and plungings that almost left me free. My enemies, however, were too many and too powerful; on they bore me, and in a perfect storm of blows, lunges, writhings, and boundings, they held me fast under the stream, which played away in a frothy current over my head, face, chest, and legs, — for, with a most laudable impartiality, they moved me from side to side till not a dry spot remained on my whole body.

I shouted, I yelled, I swore, and screamed for aid, but all

in vain; and my diabolical tormentors seemed to feel no touch of weariness in their inhuman pastime; while I, exhausted by my struggles and the continual rush of the falling water, almost ceased to resist; when suddenly a cry of "The Dean! the Dean!" was heard; my bearers let go their hold,—down I tumbled upon the flags, with barely consciousness enough to see the scampering crew flying in all directions, while a host of porters followed them in hot pursuit.

"Who are you, sir? What brought you here?" said a tall old gentleman I at once surmised to be the Dean.

"The devil himself, I believe!" replied I, rising with difficulty under the weight of my soaked garments.

"Turn him outside the gates, Hawkins!" said the Dean to a porter behind him. "Take care, too, he never re-enters them."

"I'll take good care of it, sir," said the fellow, as with one strong hand on my collar, and the closed fingers of the other administering gentle admonitions to the back of my head, he proceeded to march me before him through the square; revolving as I went thoughts which, certes, evinced not one sentiment of gratitude to the learned university.

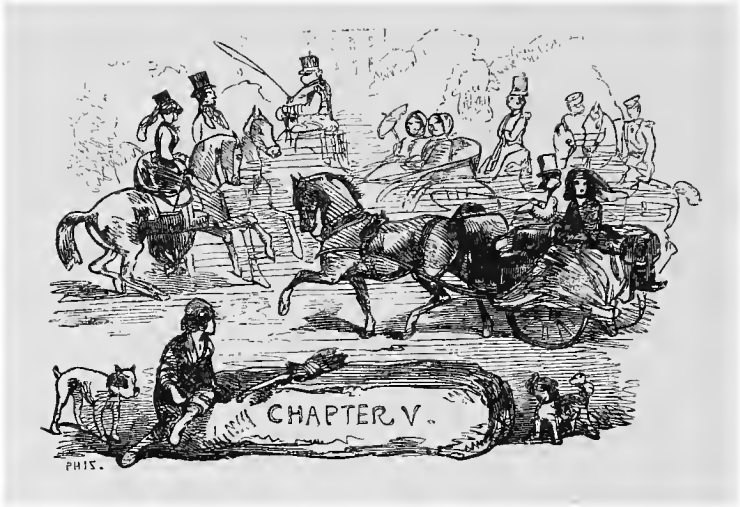
My college career was, therefore, more brief than brilliant, for I was "expelled" on the very same day that I "entered."

With the "world before me where to choose," I stepped out into the classic precincts of College Green, fully assured of one fact, that "Town" could scarcely treat me more harshly than "Gown." I felt, too, that I had passed through a kind of ordeal; that my ducking, like the ceremonies on crossing the line, was a kind of masonic ordinance, indispensable to my opening career; and that thus I had got successfully through one at least of my "trials."

A species of filial instinct suggested to me the propriety of seeing Newgate, where my father lay, awaiting the arrival of the convict ship that was to convey him to Van Diemen's Land; and thither I accordingly repaired, not to enter, but simply to gaze, with a very awestruck imagination, upon that double-barred cage of human ferocity and crime.

In itself the circumstance has nothing worthy of record, nor should I mention it, save that to the deep impression of that morning do I owe a certain shrinking horror of all great crime; that impression has been of incalculable benefit to me through life.

I strained my eyes to mark if, amid the faces closely pressed against the strong bars, I could recognize that of my parent, but in vain; there was a terrible sameness in their features, as if the individual had sunk in the criminal, that left all discrimination difficult; and so I turned away, satisfied that I had done a son's part most completely.



A PEEP AT "HIGH AND LOW COMPANY."

I HAVE often heard it observed that one has as little to do with the choice of his mode of life as with the name he receives at baptism. I rather incline to the opinion that this is true. My own very varied and somewhat dissimilar occupations were certainly far less the result of any preconceived plan or scheme than the mere "turn-up" of the rolling die of Fortune.

It was while revolving a species of fatalism in this wise, and calmly assuring myself that I was not born to be starved, that I strolled along Merrion Square on the same afternoon of my expulsion from Trinity and visit to Newgate.

There were brilliant equipages, cavaliers, and ladies on horseback; handsome houses, with balconies often thronged by attractive-looking occupants; and vast crowds of gayly dressed persons promenaded within the square itself, where a military band performed; in fact, there was more than enough to interest and amuse one of higher pretensions in the scale of pleasure than myself.

While I was thus gazing on this brilliant panorama of the outdoor life of a great city, and wondering and guessing what precise object thus brought people together, — for no feature of a market, or a fair, or any festive occupation solved the difficulty, — I was struck by a class of characters who seemed to play the subordinate parts of the drama, — a set of ragged, ill-fed, half-starved boys, who followed in crowds each new arrival on horseback, and eagerly sought permission to hold his horse when he dismounted; the contrast of these mangy looking attendants to the glossy coated and handsomely caparisoned steeds they led about being too remarkable to escape notice. Although a very fierce rivalry prevailed amongst them, they seemed a species of organized guild, who constituted a distinct walk in life, and indignantly resented the attempt of some two or three "voluntaries" who showed a wish to join the fraternity.

I sat against the rails of the square, studying with some curiosity little details of their etiquette, and their strange conventionalities. A regular corps of them stood in front of me, canvassing with all the eager volubility of their craft for the possession of a handsome thoroughbred pony, from which a young officer, in a cavalry undress, was about to dismount.

"I'm your own boy, Captain! I'm Tim, sir!" cried one, with a leer of most familiar intimacy.

"'Tis me towld ye about Miss O'Grady, sir," shouted another, preferring another and stronger claim.

"I'm the boy caught your mare the day ye was thrown, Captain!" insinuated a third, exhibiting a want of tact in the reminiscence that drew down many a scoff upon him from his fellows; for these ragged and starving curs had a most lively sense of the use of flattery.

"Off with you! — stand off!" said the young dragoon, in a threatening tone; "let that fellow take my mare;" and he pointed to me as I sat, a patient but unconcerned spectator of the scene. Had a medical consultation been suddenly set aside on the eve of a great surgical operation, and the "knife" committed to the unpractised hand of a new by-stander, the breach of etiquette and the surprise could scarce have been greater. The gang stared at me with most

undisguised contempt, and a perfect volley of abuse and irony followed me as I hastened to obey the summons.

It has been very often my fortune in life to take a position for which I neither had submitted to the usual probationary study, nor possessed the necessary acquirement; but I believe this my first step in the very humble walk of a "horse-boy" gave me more pain than ever did any subsequent one. The criticisms on my dress, my walk, my country look, my very shoes, — my critics wore none, — were all poignant and bitter; and I verily believe, such is the force of ridicule, I should have preferred the rags and squalor of the initiated, at that moment, to the warm gray frieze and blue worsted stockings of my country costume.

I listened attentively to the young officer's directions how I was to walk his mare, and where; and then, assuming a degree of indifference to sarcasm I was far from feeling, moved away from the spot in sombre dignity. The captain — the title is generic — was absent about an hour; and when he returned, seemed so well pleased with my strict obedience to his orders that he gave me a shilling, and desired me to be punctually at the same hour and the same place on the day following.

It was now dark; the lamplighter had begun his rounds, and I was just congratulating myself that I should escape my persecutors, when I saw them approaching in a body. In an instant I was surrounded, and assailed with a torrent of questions as to who I was, where I came from, what brought me there, and, lastly, and with more eagerness than all besides, — what did "the captain" give me? As I answered this query first, the others were not pressed; and it being voted that I should expend the money on the fraternity, by way of entrance-fee, or, as they termed it, "paying my footing," away we set in a body to a distant part of the town, remote from all its better and more spacious thoroughfares, and among a chaos of lanes and alleys called the "Liberties." If the title were conferred for the excessive and unlimited freedoms permitted to the inhabitants, it was no misnomer. On my very entrance into it I perceived the perfect free and easy which prevailed.

A dense tide of population thronged the close, confined

passages, mostly of hodmen, bricklayers' laborers, and scavengers, with old-clothesmen, beggars, and others whose rollicking air and daring look bespoke more hazardous modes of life.

My companions wended their way through the dense throng like practised travellers, often cutting off an angle by a dive through the two doors of a whiskey shop, and occasionally making a great short-cut by penetrating through a house and the court behind it, — little exploits in geography expiated by a volley of curses from the occupants, and sometimes an admonitory brickbat in addition.

The uniform good temper they exhibited; the easy freedom with which they submitted to the rather rough jocularities of the passers-by, — the usual salute being a smart slap on the crown of the head, administered by the handicraft tool of the individual, and this sometimes being an iron trowel or a slater's hammer, — could not but exalt them in my esteem as the most patient set of varlets I had ever sojourned with. To my question as to why we were going so far, and whither our journey tended, I got for answer the one short reply, — "We must go to 'ould Betty's."

Now, as I would willingly spare as much of this period's recital to my reader as I can, I will content myself with stating that "ould Betty," or Betty Cobbe, was an old lady who kept a species of ordinary for the unclaimed youth of Dublin. They were fed and educated at her seminary; the washing cost little, and they were certainly "done" for at the very smallest cost, and in the most remarkably brief space of time. If ever these faint memorials of a life should be read in a certain far-off land, more than one settler in the distant bush, more than one angler in the dull stream of Swan River, will confess how many of his first sharp notions of life and manners were imbibed from the training nurture of Mrs. Elizabeth Cobbe.

Betty's proceedings, for some years before I had the honor and felicity of her acquaintance, had attracted towards her the attention of the authorities.

The Colonial Secretary had possibly grown jealous; for she had been pushing emigration to Norfolk Island on a far wider scale than ever a cabinet dreamed of; and thus had

she acquired what, in the polite language of our neighbors, is phrased the "Surveillance of the Police,"—a watchful superintendence and anxious protectorate, for which, I grieve to say, she evinced the very reverse of gratitude. Betty had, in consequence, and in requirement with the spirit of the times—the most capricious spirit that ever vexed plain, old-fashioned mortals—reformed her establishment; and from having opened her doors, as before, to what, in the language of East Indian advertisements, are called "a few spirited young men," she had fallen down to that small fry who, in various disguises of vagrancy and vagabondage, infest the highways of a capital.

By these disciples she was revered and venerated; their devotion was the compensation for the world's neglect, and so she felt it. To train them up with a due regard to the faults and follies of their better-endowed neighbors was her aim and object, and to such teaching her knowledge of Dublin life and people largely contributed.

Her original walk had been minstrelsy; she was the famous ballad-singer of Drogheda Street, in the year of the rebellion of '98. She had been half a dozen times imprisoned, — some said that she had even visited "Beresford's riding-school," where the knout was in daily practice; but this is not so clear: certain it is, both her songs and sympathy had always been on the patriotic side. She was the terror of Protestant ascendancy for many a year long.

Like Homer, she sung her own verses; or, if they were made for her, the secret of the authorship was never divulged. For several years previous to the time I now speak of, she had abandoned the Muses, save on some special and striking occasions, when she would come before the world with some lyric, which, however, did little more than bear the name of its once famed composer.

So much for the past. Now to the present history of Betty Cobbe.

In a large unceilinged room, with a great fire blazing on the hearth, over which a huge pot of potatoes was boiling, sat Betty, in a straw chair. She was evidently very old, as her snow-white hair and lustreless eye bespoke; but the fire of a truculent, unyielding spirit still warmed her blood, and

the sharp, ringing voice told that she was decided to wrestle for existence to the last, and would never "give in" until fairly conquered.

Betty's chair was the only one in the chamber: the rest of the company disposed themselves classically in the recumbent posture, or sat, like primitive Christians, cross-legged. A long deal table, sparingly provided with wooden plates and a few spoons, occupied the middle of the room, and round the walls were several small bundles of straw, which I soon learned were the property of private individuals.

"Come along till I show ye to ould Betty," said one of the varlets to me, as he pushed his way through the crowded room; for already several other gangs had arrived, and were exchanging recognitions.

"She's in a sweet temper, this evening," whispered another, as we passed. "The Polis was here a while ago, and took up 'Danny White,' and threatened to break up the whole establishment."

"The devil a thing at all they'll lave us of our iustitushuns," said a bow-legged little blackguard, with the 'Evening Freeman' written round his hat; for he was an attaché of that journal.

"Ould Betty was crying all the evening," said the former speaker; by this time we had gained the side of the fire-place, where the old lady sat.

"Mother! mother, I say!" cried my guide, touching her elbow gently; then, stooping to her ear, he added, "Mother Betty!"

"Eh! Who's callin' me?" said the hag, with her hand aloft. "I'm here, my Lord, neither ashamed nor afeard to say my name."

"She's wanderin'," cried another; "she thinks she's in Coort."

"Betty Cobbe! I say. It's me!" said my introducer, once more.

The old woman turned fiercely round, and her dimmed and glassy eyes, bloodshot from excess and passion, seemed to flare up into an angry gleam as she said, "You dirty thief! Is it you that's turnin' informer agin me, — you that I took up out of yer mother's arms, in Green Street, when she fainted

at the cutting down of yer father? Your father," added she, "that murdered old Meredith!"

The boy, a hardened and bold-featured fellow, became lividly pale, but never spoke.

"Yes, my Lord," continued she, still following the theme of her own wild fancies, "it 's James Butterley's boy! Butterley that was hanged!" and she shook and rocked with a fiendish exultation at the exposure.

"Many of us does n't know what bekem of our fathers!" said a sly-looking, old-fashioned creature, whose height scarcely exceeded two feet, although evidently near manhood in point of age.

"Who was yours, Mickey?" cried another.

"Father Glynn, of Luke Street," growled out the imp, with a leer.

"And yours?" said another, dragging me forward, directly in front of Betty.

"Con Cregan, of Kilbeggan," said I, boldly.

"Success to ye, ma bouchal!" said the old hag; "and so you 're a son of Con the informer." She looked sternly at me for a few seconds, and then, in a slower and more deliberate tone, added, "I'm forty years, last Lady Day, living this way, and keepin' company with all sorts of thieves, and rogues, and blaguards, and worse, — ay, far worse besides; but may I never see Glory if an informer, or his brat, was under the roof afore!"

The steadfast decision of look and voice as she spoke seemed to impress the bystanders, who fell back and gazed at me with that kind of shrinking terror which honest people sometimes exhibit at the contact of a criminal.

During the pause of some seconds, while this endured, my sense of abject debasement was at the very lowest. To be the Pariah of such a society was indeed a most distinctive infamy.

"Are ye ashamed of yer father? Tell me that!" cried the hag, shaking me roughly by one shoulder.

"It is not here, and before the like of these," said I, looking round at the ragged, unwashed assemblage, "that I should feel shame! or if I did, it is to find myself among them!"

"That's my boy! that's my own spirited boy!" cried the old woman, dragging me towards her. "Faix, I seen the time we'd have made somethin' out of you. Howld yer tongues, ye vagabonds! the child's right, — yer a dirty mean crew! Them!" said she, pointing to me, "them was the kind of chaps I used to have, long ago; that was n't afeard of all the Beresfords, and Major Sirr, and the rest of them. Singing every night on Carlisle Bridge, 'The Wearin' of the Green,' or 'Tra-lal-la, the French is coming;' and when they wor big and grown men, ready and willing to turn out for ould Ireland. Can you read, avick?"

"Yes, and write," answered I, proudly.

"To be sure ye can," muttered she, half to herself; "is it an informer's child, — not know the first rules of his trade!"

"Tear and ages, mother!" cried out the decrepit imp called Mickey, "we're starvin' for the meat!"

"Sarve it up!" shouted the hag, with a voice of command; and she gave three knocks with her crutch on the corner of the table.

Never was command more promptly obeyed. A savory mess of that smoking compound called "Irish stew" was ladled out on the trenchers, and speedily disposed around the table, which at once was surrounded by the guests, — a place being made for myself by an admonitory stroke of Betty's crutch on the red head of a very hungry juvenile who had jostled me in his anxiety to get near the table.

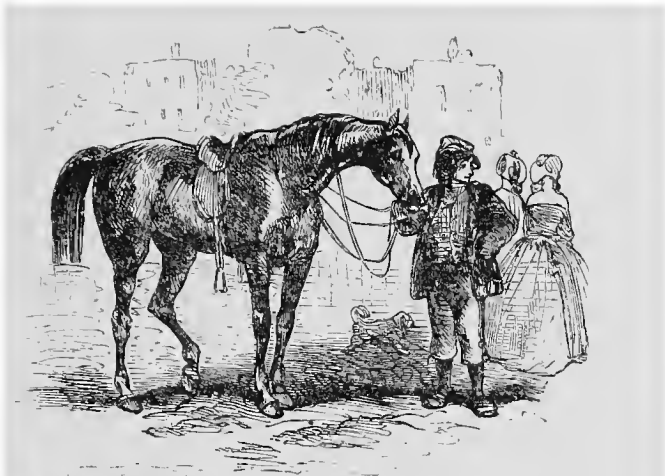
Our meal had scarcely drawn to its close when the plates were removed, and preparations made for a new party; nor had I time to ask the reason, when a noisy buzz of voices without announced the coming of a numerous throng. In an instant they entered; a number of girls, of every age, from mere child to womanhood, — a ragged, tattered, reckless-looking set of creatures, whose wild, high spirits not even direst poverty could subdue. While some exchanged greetings with their friends of the other sex, others advanced to talk to Betty, or stood to warm themselves around the fire, until their supper, a similar one to our own, was got ready. My curiosity as to whence they came in such a body was satisfied by learning that they were employed at

the "Mendicity Institution" during the day, and set free at nightfall to follow the bent of their own, not over well-regulated, tastes. These creatures were the ballad-singers of the city; and, sometimes alone, sometimes in company with one of the boys, they were wont to take their stand in some public thoroughfare, not only the character of the singer, but the poetry itself, taking the tone of the street; so that while some daring bit of town scandal caught the ears of College Green, a "bloody murder" or a "dying speech" formed the attraction of Thomas Street and the "Poddle."

Many years afterwards, in the checkered page of my existence, when I have sat at lordly tables and listened to the sharpened wit and polished raillery of the high-born and the gifted, my mind has often reverted to that beggar horde, and thought how readily the cutting jest was answered, how soon repartee followed attack — what quaint fancies, what droll conceits, passed through those brains, where one would have deemed there was no room for aught save brooding gnilt and sad repining.

As night closed in, the assembly broke up; some issued forth to their stations as ballad-singers; some, in pure vagabond spirit, to stroll about the streets; while others, of whom I was one, lay down upon the straw to sleep, without a dream, till daylight.





CHAPTER VI.

“VIEWS OF LIFE.”



WHEN I woke the next morning, it was a few minutes before I could thoroughly remember where I was and how I came there; my next thought was the grateful one, that if the calling was not a very exalted one, I had at least

secured a mode of living, and that my natural acuteness, and, better still, my fixed resolve within me “to get forward in the world,” would not permit me to pass my days in the ignoble craft of a “horse-boy.”

I found that the “walk,” like every other career, had certain guiding rules and principles by which it was regulated. Not only were certain parts of the town interdicted to certain gangs, but it was a recognized rule that when a particular boy was singled out habitually by any gentleman that no other should endeavor to supplant him. This was the less difficult as a perfect community of property

was the rule of the order; and all moneys were each night committed to the charge of "old Betty," with a scrupulous fidelity that would have shamed many a "joint-stock company."

The regular etiquette required that each youth should begin his career in the north side of the city, where the class of horsemen was of a less distinguished order, and the fees proportionably lower. Thence he was promoted to the Four Courts; from which, as the highest stage, he arrived at Merrion Square and its neighborhood. Here the visitors were either the young officers of the garrison, the Castle officials, or a wealthy class of country gentlemen, all of whom gave sixpences; while in the cold quarter of northern Dublin, penny-pieces were the only currency. If the public differed in these three places, so did the claims of the aspirant: a grave, quiet, almost sombre look being the grand qualification in the one, while an air of daring effrontery was the best recommendation in the other. For while the master in chancery or the "six clerk" would only commit his bobtailed pony to a discreet-faced varlet of grave exterior, the dashing aide-de-camp on his thoroughbred singled out the wild imp with roguish eye and flowing hair, that kept up with him from the barrack in a sharp canter, and actually dived under a carriage-pole and upset an apple-stall to be "up" in time to wait on him; and while yet breathless and blown, was ready with voluble tongue to give him the current news of the neighborhood, — who was in the Square, or out dining; who had arrived, or why they were absent. To do this task with dexterity and tact was the crowning feature of the craft, and in such hasty journalism some attained a high proficiency; seasoning their scandal with sly bits of drollery or quaint allusions to the current topics of the day. To succeed in this, it was necessary to know the leading characters of the town and the circumstances of their private history; and these I set myself to learn with the assiduity of a study. Never did a Bath Master of the Ceremonies devote himself more ardently to the investigation of the faults and foibles of his company; never did young lady, before coming out, more patiently pore over Debrett, than did I pursue my researches into

Dublin life and manners ; until at last, what between oral evidence and shrewd observation, I had a key to the secret mysteries of nearly every well-known house in the city.

None like me to explain why the father of the dashing family in Stephen's Green only appeared of a Sunday ; how the blinds of No. 18 were always drawn down at three o'clock ; and what meant the hackney-coach at the canal bridge every Thursday afternoon. From the gentleman that always wore a geranium leaf in his coat, to the lady who dropped her glove in the Square, I knew them all. Nor was it merely that I possessed the knowledge, but I made it to be felt. I did not hoard my wealth like a miser, but I came forth like a great capitalist to stimulate enterprise and encourage credit. Had I been a malicious spirit, there is no saying what amount of mischief I might have worked, what discoveries anticipated, what awkward meetings effected. I was, however, what the French call a “*bon diable*,” and most generously took the side of the poor sinner against the strong spirit of right. How many a poor subaltern had been put in arrest for wearing “*mufti*,” had I not been there to apprise him the town-major White was coming. How often have I saved a poor college-man from a heavy fine, who, with his name on the sick-list, was flirting in the “*Square*.” How have I hastened, at the risk of my neck, between crashing carriages and prancing horses, to announce to a fair lady lounging in her *britzka* that the “*Counsellor*,” her husband, was unexpectedly returning from court an hour earlier than his wont. I have rescued sons from fathers, daughters from mothers ; the pupil from his guardian, the debtor from his creditor, — in a word, was a kind of ragged guardian angel, who watched over the peccadilloes of the capital. My “*amour propre*” — if such an expression of such a quality may be conceded to one like me — was interested in the cause of all who did wrong. I was the Quixote of all deceivers.

With “*Con on the look-out*,” none feared surprise ; and while my shrewdness was known to be first-rate, my honesty was alike unimpeachable. It may readily be believed how, with acquirements and talents like these, I no longer pursued the humble walk of “*horse-holder* ;” indeed, I rarely touched

a bridle, or, if I did so, it was only to account for my presence in such localities as I might need an excuse to loiter in. I was at the head of my profession; and the ordinary salutation of the cavaliers, "Con, get me a fellow to hold this mare," showed that none presumed to expect the ignoble service at my own hands.

To some two or three of my early patrons, men who had noticed me in my obscurity, I would still condescend to yield this attention, — a degree of grateful acknowledgment on my part which they always rewarded most handsomely. Among these was the young officer whose pony I had held on the first night of my arrival. He was an Honorable Captain De Courcy, very well-looking, well-mannered, and very poor, — member of the Commander-in-Chief's staff, who eked out his life by the aid of his noble birth and his wits together.

At the time I speak of, his visits to Merrion Square were devoted to the cause of a certain Mrs. Mansergh, the young and beautiful wife of an old red-faced, foul-mouthed Queen's Counsel, at least forty years her senior. The scandal was, that her origin had been of the very humblest, and that, seen by accident on circuit, she had caught the fancy of the old lawyer, a well-known connoisseur in female beauty. However that might be, she was now about two years married, and already recognized as the reigning beauty of the viceregal court and the capital.

The circumstances of her history, — her low origin, her beauty, and the bold game she played, — all invested her with a great interest in my eyes. I used to flatter myself that there was a kind of similarity in at least our early fortunes; and I enlisted myself in her cause with an ardor that I could not explain to myself. How often, as she passed in her splendid barouche, — the best-appointed and handsomest equipage of the capital, — have I watched her as, wrapped in her Cashmere, she reclined in all the voluptuous indolence of her queenly state; glorying to think that *she*, — she, whose proud glance scarce noticed the obsequious throng that bowed with uncovered heads around her, — that she was perhaps not better nurtured than myself. Far from envious jealousy at her better fortune, I exulted in it; she was a kind of beacon set on a hill to guide and cheer me. I remember well, it was an actual triumph to me one

day, as the Viceroy, a gay and dashing nobleman, not over-scrupulous where the claim of beauty was present, stopped, with all his glittering staff, beside her carriage, and in playful raillery began to chide her for being absent from the last drawing-room. " We missed you sadly, Mrs. Mansergh," said he, smiling his most seductive smile. " Pray tell my friend Mansergh that he shows himself a most lukewarm supporter of the Government who denies us the fairest smiles of the capital."

" In truth, my Lord, he would not give me a new train, and I refused to wear the old one," said she, laughing.

" Downright disloyalty, upon my honor," said the Viceroy, with well got-up gravity.

" Don't you think so, my Lord?" rejoined she; " so I even told him that I'd represent the case to your Excellency, who, I'm sure, would not refuse a velvet robe to the wife, while you gave a silk gown to the husband."

" It will be the very proudest of my poor prerogatives," said he, bowing, while a flash of crimson lit up his pleased features. " Your favorite color is — "

" I should like to wear your Lordship's," said she, with a look the most finished coquette might envy, so admirably blended were trust and timid bashfulness.

What he replied I could not catch. There was a flattering courtesy, however, in his smile, and in the familiar motion of the hand with which he bade " good-bye," that were enough to show me that he, the haughty mirror of his sovereign, did not think it beneath him to bandy compliments and exchange soft looks with the once humble beauty. From that time out, my whole thoughts day and night were centred in her; and I have passed hours long, fancying all the possible fortunes for which destiny might intend her. It seemed to me as though she was piloting out the course for me in life, and that her success was the earnest of my own. Often, when a ball or a great reception was given by her, have I sat, cold, shivering, and hungry, opposite the house, watching with thrilling interest all the equipages as they came, and hearing the high and titled names called aloud by the servants, and thinking to myself, " Such are *her* associates *now*. These great and haughty personages are here to do honor to *her*, their lovely hostess; and *she*,

but a few years back, if report spoke truly, was scarcely better off than I was — I — myself.”

Only they who have a sanguine, hopeful temperament will be able to understand how the poor houseless, friendless boy — the very outcast of the world, the convict's child — could ever dare to indulge in such day-dreams of future greatness. But I had set the goal before my eyes; the intermediate steps to it I left to fortune. The noble bearing and polished graces of the high and wealthy, which to my humble associates seemed the actual birthright of the great, I perceived could all be acquired. There was no prescriptive claim in any class to the manners of high breeding; and why should not I, if fortune favored, be as good a gentleman as the best? In other particulars, all that I had observed showed me no wondrous dissimilarity of true feeling in the two classes. The gentleman, to be sure, did not swear like the common fellow; but on the racecourse or the betting-ground I had seen, to the full, as much deceit as ever I witnessed in my “own order.” There was faithlessness beneath Valenciennes lace and velvet as well as beneath brown stuff and check; and a spirit of backbiting, that we ragged folk knew nothing of, seemed a current pastime in better circles.

What, then, should debar me from that class? Not the manners, which I could feign, nor the vices, which I could feel. To be like them, was only to be of them, — such, at least, was then my conviction and my theory.

Any one who will take the pains to reflect on and analyze the mode of thinking I have here mentioned, will see how necessarily it tends rather to depress those above than to elevate those beneath. I did not purpose to myself any education in high and noble sentiments, but simply the performance of a part which I deemed easy to assume. The result soon began to tell. I felt a degree of contemptuous hatred for the very persons I had once revered as almost demigods. I no longer looked up to the “gentleman” as such by right divine, but by accident; and I fostered the feeling by the writings of every radical newspaper I could come at. All the levelling doctrines of socialism, all the plausibilities of equality, became as great truths to me; and I found a most ready aptitude in my mind to square the

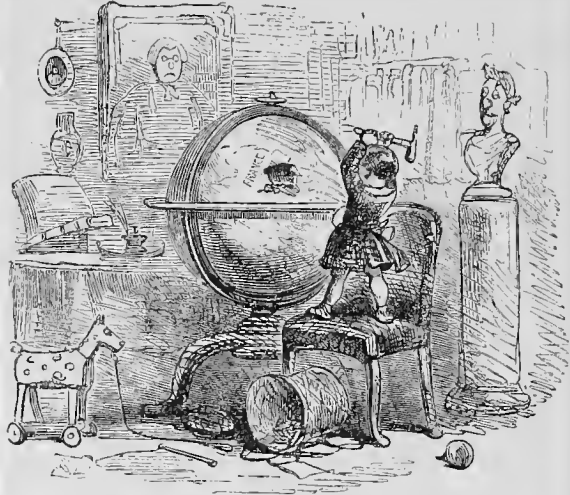
fruits of my personal observation to these pleasant theories. The one question recurred every morning as I arose, and remained unanswered each night as I lay down, “ Why should I hold a horse, and why should another man ride one?” I suppose the difficulty has puzzled wiser heads; indeed, since I mooted it to myself, it has caused some trouble in the world; nor, writing now as I do in the year of grace '48, do I suppose the question is yet answered.

I have dwelt perhaps too long on this exposition of my feelings; but as my subsequent life was one of far more action than reflection, the indulgent reader will pardon the prosiness, not simply as explaining the history which follows, but also as affording a small breathing-space in a career where there were few “ halts.”

I have said that I began to conceive a great grudge against all who were well off in life, and against none did I indulge this aversion more strongly than “ the captain,” my first patron, — almost my only one. Though he had always employed me, — and none ever approached him save myself, — he had never condescended to the slightest act of recognition beyond the tap on my head with his gold-mounted whip, and a significant nod where to lead his pony. No sign of his, no look, no gesture, ever confessed to the fact that I was a creature of his own species, that I had had a share in the great firm which, under the name of Adam and Co., has traded so long and industriously.

If I were sick, or cold, or hungry, it mattered not; my cheek might be sunk with want or care, my rags might drip with rain, or freeze with sleet, — he never noticed them; yet if the wind played too roughly with his Arab's mane, or the silky tasselled tail, he saw it at once. If her coat stirred with the chill breeze, he would pat and pet her. It was evident enough which had the better existence.

If these thoughts chafed and angered me at first, at least they served to animate and rouse my spirit. He who wants to rise in life must feel the sharp spur of a wrong, — there is nothing like it to give vigor and energy to his motions. When I came to this conclusion, I did not wait long to put the feeling into action; and it was thus — But a new chapter of my life deserves a new chapter of my history.



CHAPTER VII.

A BOLD STROKE FOR AN OPEN- ING IN THE WORLD.



S regular as the day itself did I wait at the corner of Merrion Square, at three o'clock, the arrival of Captain De Courcy, who came punctual to the instant; indeed, the clatter of the pony's hoofs as he cantered along always announced the striking of the Post-office clock. To dismount, and fling me the bridle, with a short nod of the head in the direction he wished me to walk the animal, was the extent of recognition ever vouchsafed me; and as I never ventured upon even a word with him, our intercourse was of the simplest possible kind. There was an impassive quietude about his pale cold features that awed me. I never saw him smile but once; it was when the mare seized me by the shoulder, and tore with her teeth a great piece of my ragged

coat away. Then, indeed, he did vouchsafe to give a faint, listless smile, as he said to his pampered nag, "Fie, fie! What a dirty feeder you are!"

Very little notice on his part, the merest act of recognition, a look, a monosyllable, would have been enough to satisfy me, — anything, in short, which might acknowledge that we were part of the same great chain, no matter how many links might lie between us.

I do not wish it to be inferred that I had any distinct right to such an acknowledgment, nor that any real advantage would have accrued to me from obtaining it, — far from that; very little consideration might have induced me to be contented with my station; and, if so, instead of writing these notes in a boudoir with silk hangings, and — but this is anticipating with a vengeance! And now to go back.

After three hours of a cold wait, on a rainy and dreary afternoon, the only solace to my hunger being the imaginative one of reflecting on the pleasure of those happy mortals who were sitting down to dinner in the various houses along the Square, and fancying to myself the blessed state of tranquillity it must impart to a man's nature to see a meal of appetizing excellence, from which no call of business, no demand of any kind could withdraw him. And what speculations did I indulge in as to the genial pleasantries that must abound, — the happy wit, the joyous ease of such gatherings when three or four carriages at a door would bespeak the company at such a dinner-party!

At last, out came my captain, with a haste and flurry of manner quite unusual. He did not, as was his constant custom, pass his hand along the mare's neck to feel her coat, nor did he mutter a single word of coaxing to her as he mounted. He flung himself with a jerk into the saddle, and, rapping my knuckles sharply with the gold knob of his whip, pettishly cried, "Let her go, sirrah!" and cantered away. I stood for some moments motionless, my mind in that strange state when the first thought of rebellion has entered, and the idea of reprisal has occurred. I was about to go away, when the drawing-room window, straight above me, was opened, and a lady stepped out upon the balcony. It was too dark to discern either her features or her dress;

but a certain instinct told me it was Mrs. Mansergh. "Are you Captain De Courey's boy?" said she, in a sweet and subdued voice. I replied in the affirmative, and she went on: "You know his quarters at the Royal Hospital? Well, go there at once, as speedily as you can, and give him this note." She hesitated for a second, as if uncertain what to say, and then added, "It is a note he dropped from his pocket by accident."

"I'll do it, ma'am," said I, catching the letter and the half-crown, which she had half inserted in the envelope to give it weight. "You may trust me perfectly." Before the words were well uttered, she had retired, the window was closed, the curtain drawn, and, except the letter and the coin in my fingers, nothing remained to show that the whole had not been a trick of my foolish brain.

My immediate impulse was to fulfil my mission; I even started off at full speed to do so. But as I turned the corner of the Square, the glare of a bright gas-lamp suggested the temptation of at least a look at my despatches; and what was my astonishment to find that on this note, which had been dropped by "accident" from the captain's pocket, the superscription was scarcely dry, — in the very act of catching, I had blotted the words! This, of course, was no affair of mine; but it evinced deception, — and deception at certain moments becomes a dangerous injury. There are times when the mind feels deceit to be an outrage. The stormy passions of the fury-driven mob, reckless and headstrong, show this; and the most terrible moment in all political convulsions is when the people feel, or even suspect, that they have been tricked. My frame of mind was exactly in that critical stage. A minute before, I was ready to yield any obedience, tender any service; and now, of a sudden, — without the slightest real cause, or from anything which could in the remotest way affect me, — I had become a rebel. Let the reader forgive the somewhat tedious analysis of a motive, since it comes from one who has long studied the science of moral chemistry, and made most of his experiments — as the rule directs — in "ignoble bodies."

My whole resolve was changed: I would not deliver the note. Not that I had any precise idea wherefore, or that I

had the least conception what other course I should adopt; I was a true disciple of revolt: I rebelled for very rebellion's sake.

Betty Cobbe's was more than usually brilliant on that evening. A race, which was to come off at Kingstown the next day, had attracted a numerous company, in the various walks of horse-boys, bill-carriers, and pickpockets, all of whom hoped to find a ready harvest on the morrow. The conversation was, therefore, entirely of a sporting character. Anecdotes of the turf and the ring went round, and in the many curious devices of roguery and fraud might be read the prevailing taste of that select company. Combinations were also formed to raise the rate of payment, and many ingenious suggestions thrown out about turning cattle loose, slacking girths, stealing curb-chains, and so on, from that antagonistic part of the public who preferred holding their horses themselves than intrusting them to the profession.

The race itself, too, engrossed a great share of interest; and a certain Fergusson was talked of with all the devotedness and affection of a dear friend. Nor, as I afterwards learned, was the admiration a merely blind one, as he was a most cunning adept in all the wily stratagems by which such men correct the wilful ways of Fortune.

How my companions chuckled over stories of "rotten ditches" that were left purposely to betray the unwary; swinging gates that would open at the least touch, and inevitably catch the horse that attempted to clear, if the hoof but grazed them; bog-holes, to swamp, and stone fences, to smash, — had their share of approval; but a drain dug eight feet deep, and that must certainly break the back of the horse, if not of the rider also, who made a "mistake" over it, seemed the triumph which carried away the suffrages of the whole assembly.

Now, although I had seen far more of real sport and horsemanship than the others, these narratives were for the most part new to me; and I listened with a high interest to every scheme and trick by which cunning can overreach and outmanœuvre simplicity. The admiration of adroit knavery is the first step on the road to fraud; and he who laughs heartily

at a clever trick, seldom suspects how he is "booking himself" for the same road. For my own part, neither were my principles so fixed, nor my education so careful, that I did not conceive a very high respect for the rogue, and a very contemptuous disdain for his victim.

Morning came, and a bright sunny one it was, with a keen frost and that kind of sharp air that invigorates and braces both mind and body. The crisp, clear outline of every tree and building seen against the deep blue sky; the sparkling river, with its clean bed of bright gravel; and the ruddy faces one meets, — are all of a nature to suggest pleasant and cheerful thoughts. Even we — we, with our frail fragments and chapped hands — felt it, and there was an alacrity of movement and a bounding step, a gay laugh and a merry voice, everywhere. All set out for Kingstown, in the neighborhood of which the race was to come off. I alone remained behind, resisting every entreaty of my companions to join them, — I cannot yet say why I did so. It was partly that long habit had made my attendance upon "the Captain" a duty; partly, perhaps, that some vague notion that the letter, of which I still kept possession, should be delivered by me at last.

The town was quite empty on that day, — not a carriage, nor a horseman to be seen. There were very few on foot, and the Square was deserted of all, save its nursery population. I never felt a more tedious morning. I had full time, as I loitered along all alone, to contrast my solitude with the enjoyment my companions were at that same moment pursuing.

True to the instant, Captain De Courcy cantered up, his face a thought graver and more stern than I had ever seen it before. As he dismounted, my hand, in holding his stirrup, soiled the brilliant polish of his lacquered boot; he perceived it, and rewarded my awkwardness with a smart cut of his whip. A minute before I had made up my mind to give him the note; now, torture itself would not have torn it from me.

I followed him with my eyes till he entered the house, — not over distinctly, it is true, for they were somewhat blinded by tears that would, in spite of me, come forth. The sensa-

tion was a most painful one; and I am heartily glad to confess I have seldom experienced a recurrence of it. Scarcely was the hall-door closed on him, when I remembered that he would soon hear of the note, which I had failed to deliver, and that, in all likelihood, a heavy punishment awaited me. My offence was a grave one: what was to be done? Turn the mare loose and fly, or patiently await my fate? Either were bad enough; the latter certainly the less advisable of the two. A third course soon suggested itself, doubtless inspired by that most mischief-working adage which says that one may be "as well hanged for the sheep as the lamb."

I therefore voted for the "larger animal;" and to satisfy myself that I was honest to my own convictions, I immediately proceeded to act upon them. I led the mare quietly along to the angle of the Square, and then, turning into the next street, I shortened the stirrups, mounted, and rode off.

"Set a beggar on horseback—" says the proverb; and although the consequence is only meant figuratively, I have a suspicion that it might bear a literal reading. I rode away, at first, at a trot, and then, striking into a brisk canter, I took the road to Kingstown, whither, even yet, some horsemen were hastening.

Every stride of the bounding animal elevated my spirits and nerved my courage. The foot-passengers, that plodded wearily along, I looked down upon as inferior; with the horsemen on either side I felt a kind of equality. How differently does one view life from the saddle and from the ground! The road became more thronged as I advanced, thicker crowds pressed eagerly forward, and numerous carriages obstructed the way. At another moment, perhaps, I should have attracted attention; but stranger sights were passing at every instant, and none troubled their heads about the "ragged urchin on the thoroughbred."

The crowd at last became so dense that horsemen were fain to desert the high road, and take short cuts wherever an open gate or an easily crossed fence opened the way. Following a group of well-mounted gentlemen, I cleared a low wall into a spacious grass field, over which we cantered;

and beyond this, by leaping an easy ditch, into another of the same kind, till at length we saw the vast crowds that blackened a hill in front, and, beneath them, could distinguish the fluttering flags that marked the course, and the large floating standard of the winning-post.

What a grand sight was that! For what is so imposing a spectacle as vast myriads of people stirred by one interest, and animated by one absorbing passion? Every one has nowadays seen something of the kind, therefore I shall not linger to tell of the impression it made upon my youthful senses. The first race had already come off; but the second, and the great event of the day, was yet to take place.

It was a steeplechase by "gentlemen riders" over a very severe line of country; several fences of most break-neck character having been added to the natural difficulties of the ground.

Mounted on my splendid barb, I rode boldly forward till I reached the field through which the first ditch ran, — a deep and wide trench, backed by a low rail, — a very formidable leap, and requiring both stride and strength to clear it.

"Some of 'em will tail off, when they sees that!" said an English groom, with a knowing wink; and the words were only out when, at a "slapping canter," the riders were seen coming down the gently sloping hill. Three rode nearly abreast; then came a single horseman; and, after him, an indiscriminate mass, whose bright and party-colored jackets glowed like a rainbow.

I watched them with a breathless interest; as they came nearer they widened the space between them, and each cast a rapid but stealthy glance at his neighbor. One — he rode a powerful black horse — took the lead, and, dashing at the leap, his horse rose too soon, and fell, chested against the opposite bank, the rider under him; the next swerved suddenly round and balked; the third did the same; so that the leading horseman was now he who rode alone at first. Quickening his speed as he came on, he seemed actually to fly; and when he did take the fence, it was like the bound of a cannon-shot, — up, and over at once! Of the rest,

some two or three followed well; others pulled short up; while the larger share, in various forms of accident and misfortune, might be seen either struggling in the brook, or endeavoring to rescue their horses from the danger of broken legs and backs.

I did not wait to watch them; my interest was in those who gallantly led onward, and who now, some four in number, rode almost abreast. Among these, my favorite was the sky-blue jacket who had led the way over the dyke; and him did I follow with straining eyes and palpitating heart. They were at this moment advancing towards a wall, — a high and strong one, and I thought, in the slackened pace and more gathered-up stride, I could read the caution a difficult leap enforced.

A brown jacket with white sleeves was the first to charge it; and after a tremendous scramble, in which the wall, the horse, and the rider were all tumbling together, he got over; but the animal went dead lame, and the rider, dismounting, led him off the ground.

Next came blue-jacket; and just at the very rise his mare balked, and, at the top of her speed, ran away along the side of the wall. A perfect roar of angry disappointment arose from the multitude, for she was the favorite of the country people, who were loudly indignant at this mischance.

“The race is sold!” cried one.

“Beatagh” — this was the rider — “pulled her round himself! the mare never was known to refuse a fence!”

“I say you’re both wrong!” cried a third, whose excited manner showed he was no indifferent spectator of the scene. “She never will take her first wall fairly; after that she goes like a bird!”

“What a confounded nuisance to think that no one will lead her over the fence! Is there not one here will show her the way?” said he, looking around.

“There’s the only fellow I see whose neck can afford it!” said another, pointing to me. “He, evidently, was never born to be killed in a steeplechase.”

“Devilish well mounted he is, too!” remarked some one else.

“Hallo, my smart boy!” said he who before alluded to

the mare as a bolter, "try your nag over that wall yonder, —go boldly. Let her have her head, and give her a sharp cut as she rises. Make way there, gentlemen! Let the boy have fair play, and I'll wager a five-pound note he does it! You shall have half the stakes too, if you win!" added he. These were the last words I heard; for the crowd, clearing in front, opened for me to advance, and without a moment's hesitation of any kind, I dashed my heels to the mare's flanks, and galloped forward. A loud shout, and a



perfect shower of whips on the mare's quarter from the bystanders, put all question of pulling up beyond the reach of possibility. In a minute more I was at the wall, and, ere I well knew, over it. A few seconds after, the blue-jacket was beside me. "Well done, my lad! You've earned twenty guineas if I win the race! Lead the way a bit, and let your mare choose her ground when she leaps." This was all he said; but such words of encouragement never fell on my ears before.

Before us were the others, now reduced to three in number, and evidently holding their stride and watching

each other, never for a moment suspecting that the most feared competitor was fast creeping up behind them. One fence separated us, and over this I led again, sitting my mare with all the composure of an old steeplechaser. "Out of the way, now!" cried my companion, "and let *me* at them!" and he tore past me at a tremendous pace, shouting out, as he went by the rest, "Come along, my lads! I'll show the way!"

And so he did! With all their efforts, and they were bold ones, they never overtook him afterwards. His mare took each fence flying, and as her speed was much greater than the others', she came in full half a minute in advance. The others arrived all together, crest fallen and disappointed, and, like all beaten men, receiving the most insulting comments from the mob, who are somewhat keen critics on misfortune. I came last, for I had dropped behind when I was ordered; but, unable to extricate my mare from the crowd, was compelled to ride the whole distance with the rest. If the losing horsemen were hooted and laughed at, *my* approach was a kind of triumphal entry. "There's the chap that led over the wall! That little fellow rode the best of them all!" "See that ragged boy on the small mare; he could beat the field this minute!"

"'Tis fifty guineas in goold ye ought to have, my chap!" said another, — a sentiment the unwashed on all sides seemed most heartily to subscribe to.

"Be my soul, I'd rather be lookin' at him than the gentlemen!" said a very tattered individual, with a coat like a transparency. These, and a hundred similar comments, fell like hail-drops around; and I believe that in my momentary triumph I actually forgot all the dangers and perils of my offence.

It is a great occasion for rejoicing among the men of rags and wretchedness when a member of their own order has achieved anything like fame. The assertion of their ability to enter the lists with "their betters" is the very pleasantest of all flatteries. It is, so to say, a kind of skirmish, before that great battle which, one day or other, remains to be fought between the two classes which divide mankind, — those who have, and those who have not.

I little suspected that I was, to use the cant so popular at present, "the representative of a GREAT PRINCIPLE" in my late success. I took all the praises bestowed, most literally, to myself, and shook hands with all the dirty and tattered mob, fully convinced that I was a very fine fellow.

"Mister Beatagh wants to see the boy that led him over the ditch," shouted out a huge, wide-shouldered, red-faced ruffian, as he shoved the crowd right and left to make way for the approach of the gentleman who had just won the race.

"Stand up bowld, avic!" whispered one in my ear, "and don't be ashamed to ax for your reward."

"Say ten guineas!" muttered another.

"No; but twenty!" growled out a third.

"And lashings of drink besides, for the present company!" suggested a big-headed cripple about two feet high.

"Are you the lad that took the fence before me?" cried out a smart-looking, red-whiskered young man, with a white surtout loosely thrown over his riding costume.

"Yes, sir," I replied, half modestly and half assured.

"Who are you, my boy, and where do you come from?"

"He's one of Betty Cobbe's chickens!" shouted out an old sayage-faced beggar-man, who was terribly indignant at the great misdirection of public sympathy; "and a nice clutch they are!"

"What is it to you, Dan, where the crayture gets his bread?" rejoined an old newsvender, who, in all likelihood, had once been a parlor boarder in the same seminary.

"Never mind *them*, but answer *me*, my lad!" said the gentleman. "If you are willing to take service, and can find any one to recommend you—"

"Sure, we'll all go bail for him—to any amount!" shouted out the little crippled fellow, from his "bowl;" and certainly a most joyous burst of laughter ran through the crowd at the sentiment.

"Maybe ye think I'm not a householder," rejoined the fellow, with a grin of assumed anger; "but have n't I my own sugar hogshead to live in, and devil receive the lodger in the same premises!"

“I see there’s no chance of our being able to settle anything here,” said the gentleman. “These good people think the matter more their own than ours; so meet to-morrow, my lad, at Dycer’s, at twelve o’clock, and bring me anything that can speak for your character.” As he said these few words he brushed the crowd to one side with his whip, and forcing his way, with the air of a man who would not be denied, left the place.

“And he’s laving the crayture without givin’ him a farden!” cried one of the mob, who suddely saw all the glorious fabric of a carouse and a drunken bout disappear like a mirage.

“Oh, the ’tarnal vagabone!” shouted another, more indignantly; “to desart the child that a-way, — and he that won the race for him!”

“Will yez see the little crayture wronged?” said another, who appeared by his pretentious manner to be a practised street orator. “Will yez lave the dissolute orphan —” he meant “desolate” — “to be chayted out of his pater money? Are yez men at all? or are yez dirty slaves of the bloody ’stokessy ‘that’s murderin’ ould Ireland’?”

“We’ll take charge of the orphan, and of you too, my smart fellow, if you don’t brush off pretty lively!” said a policeman, as, followed by two others, he pushed through the crowd with that cool determination that seems to be actually an instinct with them. Then, laying a strong hand on my collar, he went on: “How did you come by that mare, my lad?”

“She belongs to Captain De Courcy, of the Royal Hospital,” said I, doing my utmost to seem calm and collected.

“We know that already; what we want to hear is, what brought you here with her? It was n’t Captain De Courcy’s orders?”

“No, sir. I was told to hold her for him, and — and —”

“And so you rode off with her, — out with it, it saves time, my lad. Now, let me ask you another question: Have you any notion of the crime you have just committed? Do you know that it amounts to horse-stealing? And do you know what the penalty is for that offence?”

“No, sir; I know neither one nor the other,” said I, res-

olutely; "and, if I did, it does n't matter much. As well to live upon prison diet as to starve in the streets!"

"He's a bad 'un; I told ye that!" remarked another of the policemen. "Take him off, Grimes!" and so, amid a very general but subdued murmur of pity and condolence from the crowd, I was dragged away on one side, while the mare was led off on another.

It was a terrible tumble down, from being a hero to an embryo felon; from being cheered by the populace, to being collared by a policeman! As we went along towards Dublin on a jaunting-car, I was regaled by interesting narratives of others who had begun life like myself, and took an abrupt leave of it in a manner by no means too decorous. The peculiarity of anecdote which pertains to each profession was strongly marked in these officers of the law; and they appeared to have studied the dark side of human nature with eyes the keenest and most scrutinizing.

I wish I could even now forget the long and dreary hours of the night that ensued, as I lay, with some fifty others, in the jail of the station-house. The company was assuredly not select, nor their manners at all improved by the near approach of punishment. It seemed as if all the disguises of vice were thrown off at once, and that iniquity stood forth in its own true and glaring livery. I do not believe that the heart can ever experience a ruder shock than when an unfledged criminal first hears himself welcomed into the "Masonry" of guilt. To be claimed by such associates as a fellow-laborer, to be received as one of the brethren into the guild of vice, is really an awful blow to one's self-esteem and respect; to feel yourself inoculated with a disease whose fatal marks are to stamp you like this one or that, sends a shuddering terror through the heart, whose cold thrill is never, in a life-long afterwards, thoroughly eradicated.

There should be a quarantine for suspected guilt, as for suspected disease; and the mere doubt of rectitude should not expose any unfortunate creature to the chances of a terrible contagion! I do not affect by this to say that I was guiltless, — not in the least; but my crime should scarcely have classified me with the associates by whom I was surrounded. Nor was a night in such company the wisest

mode of restoring to the path of duty one who might possibly have only slightly deviated from the straight line.

When morning came I was marched off, with a strong phalanx of other misdoers, to the College Street office, where a magistrate presided whose bitterest calumniators could never accuse of any undue leanings towards mercy. By him I had the satisfaction of hearing a great variety of small offences decided with a railroad rapidity, only interrupted now and then by a whining lamentation over the "lenity of the legislature," that never awarded one tithe of the suitable penalty, and bewailing his own inability to do more for the criminal than send him to prison for two months with hard labor, and harder diet to sweeten it.

At last came my name; and as I heard it shouted aloud, it almost choked me with a nervous fulness in the throat. I felt as though I was the greatest criminal in the universe, and that the whole vast assemblage had no other object or aim there than to see me arraigned for my offence.

I was scarcely ordered to advance before I was desired to stand back again, the prosecutor, Captain De Courcy, not being in court. While a policeman was, therefore, despatched by the magistrate to request that he would have the kindness to appear, — for the captain was an honorable and an aide-de-camp, titles which the sitting justice knew well how to respect, — other cases were called and disposed of. It was nigh three o'clock when a great bustle in the outer court and a tremendous falling back of the dense crowd, accompanied by an ostentatious display of police zeal, heralded a group of officers, who, with jingling spurs and banging sabretaches, made their way to the bench, and took their seats beside the justice. Many were the courtesies interchanged between the magistrate and the captain: one averring that the delay was not in the slightest degree inconvenient; the other professing the greatest deference for the rules of court; neither bestowing a thought upon him most deeply concerned of all.

A very brief narrative, delivered by the captain with a most military abruptness, detailed my offence; and, although not exaggerated in the slightest degree, the occasional interruptions of the magistrate served very considerably to mag-

nify its guilt, — such as “Dear me! a favorite mare; a pure Arab; a present from your noble father, Lord Littlemore; infamous treatment; abominable case; abandoned young scoundrel!” and so on; closing with the accustomed peroration of regret that, as hanging was now done away with, he feared that the recorder could only award me a transportation for life!

“Have you anything to say, sirrah?” said he at last, turning towards me; “or would you rather reserve your observations for another time? as I shall certainly commit you for trial at the commission.”

“I have only to suggest,” said I, with an air of most insolent composure, “that you are probably mistaken in your law. The offence with which I stand charged amounts, at most, to the minor one of breach of trust.”

“What! have we got a lawyer in the dock?” said the magistrate, reddening with fear and anger together.

“I have enjoyed some opportunities of legal study, your worship,” said I, “and am happy to state that my opinion in the present instance will not discredit the assertion. The case stands thus: I am employed by the Honorable Captain De Courcy to perform a particular duty, which is of the distinct nature of a trust; that trust, whose importance I do not seek to extenuate in the slightest, I fail in. I will not plead the strong temptation of a race and a great spectacle. I will not allege, as perhaps I might, the example of my companions, then revelling in all the pleasures of the day. I will simply say that no one fact can be adduced to favor the suspicion of a meditated robbery; and that my conduct, so palpably open and public, rejects the least assumption of the kind, and at the utmost can establish nothing beyond what I am willing to plead guilty to, — a breach of trust.”

“Listen to the Attorney-General! By the hokey, it’s himself they’ve in the dock!” said one.

“That’s the chap can give them chapter and varse!” cried another.

“Silence there! Keep silence in the court!” said the justice, now really warm with passion. “I’d have you to know, sirrah,” said he, addressing me, “that your pettifog-

ging shrewdness is anything but favorable to you in the unfortunate position in which you stand. I shall commit you for trial, and would advise you — it is the only piece of advice I'll trouble you with — to charge some more skilful advocate with your defence, and not intrust it to the knavish flippancy of conceit and chicanery."

"I mean to have counsel, your worship," said I, resolutely; for my blood was up, and I would have argued with the twelve judges. "I mean to have one of the first and most eminent at the bar for my defence. Mr. Mansergh, of Merrion Square, will not refuse my brief when he sees the fee I can offer him."

A regular roar of laughter filled the court; the impudence of my speech, and my thus introducing the name of one of the very first men at the bar, as likely to concern himself for such a miserable case and object, was too much for any gravity; and when the magistrate turned to comment upon my unparalleled assurance and impertinence to Captain De Courcy, he discovered that the honorable captain had left his place.

Such was the fact! The dashing aide-de-camp was at that moment standing in earnest converse with myself beside the dock.

"May I speak with this boy in another room, your worship?" said he, addressing the court.

"Certainly, Captain De Courcy! Sergeant Biles, show Captain De Courcy into my robing-room."

The honorable captain did not regain his composure immediately on finding himself alone with me; on the contrary, his agitation was such that he made two or three efforts before he could utter the few words with which he first addressed me.

"What did you mean by saying that Mr. Mansergh would defend you? and what was the fee you alluded to?" were the words.

"Just what I said, sir," said I, with the steady assurance a confidence of victory gives. "I thought it was better to have able counsel; and as I know I have the means of recompensing him, the opportunity was lucky."

"You don't pretend that you could afford to engage one

like him, my lad?" said he, affecting, but very poorly, an air of easy composure. "What could you give him?"

"A note, sir; and although it never issued from the Bank, one not without value!"

The captain became deadly pale; he made one step towards the door, and in a low voice of ill-restrained anger said, "I'll have you searched, sirrah! If anything belonging to me is found upon you —"

"No fear, sir," said I, composedly; "I have taken precautions against that; the note is safe!"

He threw himself upon a chair, and stared at me steadily for some minutes without a word. There we were, each scanning the other, and inwardly calculating how to win the game we were playing.

"Well," said he, at last; "what are your terms? You see I give in."

"And so best," said I; "it saves time. I ask very little from your honor, — nothing more, in fact, than to have this charge dismissed. I don't mean to wear rags all my life, and consort with vagabonds, and so I dislike to have it said hereafter that I was ever arraigned or committed for an offence like this. You must tell the justice that it was some blunder or mistake of your orders to me; some accidental circumstance or other, — I don't much care what, or how; nor will he, if the explanation comes from *you*! This done, I'll place the note in your hand within half an hour, and we need never see much more of each other."

"But who is to secure me that you keep your promise?"

"You must trust to me," said I, carelessly; "I have no bail to give."

"Why not return now, with the policeman, for the note, before I speak to the justice?"

"Then who is to go bail for *you*?" said I, smiling.

"You are a cool fellow, by Jove!" cried he, at the steady impudence which I maintained in the discussion.

"I had need be," replied I, in a voice very different from the feigned hardihood of my assumed part. "The boy who has neither a home nor a friend in the world has little else to rely on, save the cold recklessness of what may befall him!"

I saw a curl of contempt upon the captain's lip at the energy of this speech; for now, when, for the first time between us, a single genuine sentiment broke from me, he deemed it "cant."

"Well!" cried he, "as you wish; I'll speak to the justice, and you shall be free."

He left the room as he spoke, but in a few moments re-entered it, saying, "All is right! You are discharged! Now for *your* share of the bargain."



"Where will your honor be in half an hour?"

"At the Club, Foster Place."

"Then I'll be there with the note," said I.

He nodded, and walked out. I watched him as he went; but he neither spoke to a policeman, nor did he turn his head round to see what became of me. There was something in this that actually awed me. It was a trait so unlike anything I had ever seen in others that I at once perceived it was "the gentleman's" spirit, enabling him to feel confi-

dence even in a poor ragged street wanderer as I was. The lesson was not lost on me. My life has been mainly an imitative one, and I have more than once seen the inestimable value of "trusting."

No sooner was I at large than I speeded to Betty's, and was back again long before the half-hour expired. I had to wait till near five, however, before he appeared; so sure was he of my keeping my word that he never troubled himself about me. "Ha!" said he, as he saw me, "long here?"

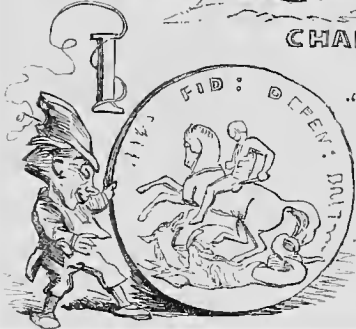
"Yes, sir, about an hour;" and I handed him the note as I spoke.

He thrust it carelessly into his sabretache, and, pulling out a crown piece, chucked it towards me, saying, "Good-bye, friend; if they don't hang you, you'll make some noise in the world yet."

"I mean it, sir," said I, with a familiar nod; and so, genteelly touching my cap in salute, I walked away.



CHAPTER VIII.



"A QUIET CHOP" AT
"KILLEEN'S," AND A
GLANCE AT A NEW
CHARACTER.

LOOKED very wistfully
at my broad crown
piece as it lay with its
honest, platter face in

the palm of my hand, and felt, by the stirring sensations it excited within me, some inklings of his feelings who possesses hundreds of thousands of them. Then there arose in my mind the grave question how it was to be spent; and such a strange connection is there between what economists call supply and demand, that, in place of being, as I esteemed myself a few minutes back, "passing rich," I at once perceived that I was exceeding poor, since to effect any important change in my condition, five shillings was a most inadequate sum. It would not buy me more than a pair of shoes; and what use in repairing the foundation of the edifice, when the roof was in ruin? — not to speak of

my other garments, to get into which, each morning, by the same apertures as before, was a feat that might have puzzled a harlequin.

I next bethought me of giving an entertainment to my brethren at Betty's; but, after all, they had shown little sympathy with me in my late misfortune, and seemed rather pleased to be rid of a dangerous professional rival. This, and a lurking desire to leave the fraternity, decided me against this plan.

Then came the thought of entertaining myself, giving myself a species of congratulatory dinner on my escape; and, in fact, commemorating the event by anticipating the most fashionable mode now in use.

I canvassed the notion with all the skill and fairness I could summon, starting the various objections against it, and answering them with what seemed to myself a most judicial impartiality.

"Who does a man usually entertain," said I, "but his intimate friends?" Those whose agreeability is pleasing to him, or whose acquaintance is valuable from their station and influence. Now, with whom had I such an unrestrained and cordial intercourse as myself? Whose society never wearied, whose companionship always interested me? My own! And who, of all the persons I had ever met with, conceived a sincere and heartfelt desire for my welfare, preferring it to all others? "Con Cregan, it is you," said I, enthusiastically. "In you my confidence is complete. I believe you incapable of ever forgetting me. Come, then, and let us pledge our friendship over a flowing bowl."

Where, too, was the next doubt? With a crown to spend, I was not going to descend to some subterranean den among coalheavers, newsvenders, and umbrella-hawkers. But how was I to gain access to a better-class ordinary, — that was the difficulty, — who would admit the street-runner, in his rags, into even a brief intimacy with his silver forks and spoons? And it was precisely to an entertainment on such a scale as a good tavern could supply that I aspired. It was to test my own feelings under a new stimulant, — just as I have often since seen grave people experiment upon themselves with laughing-gas and magnetism and the fumes of ether.

"It may be too much for you, Con," said I, as I went along; "there's no knowing what effect it may have on your nerves."

"Remember that your system is not attuned to such variations. Your vagaries may prove extravagant, and the too sudden elevation may disturb your naturally correct judgment." Against these doubts I pleaded the necessity of not being ungrateful to myself, not refusing a very proper acknowledgment of my own skill and astuteness; and, lastly, I suggested a glancing kind of hope that, like those famed heroes who dated their great fortune to having gone to sleep beneath the shadow of some charmed tree, or near the ripple of a magic fountain, that I, too, should arise from this banquet with some brilliant view of life, and see the path to success, bright and clear before me, through the hazy mists of fancy.

As I reasoned thus, I passed various ordinaries, stopping with a kind of instinct at each, to gaze at the luscious rounds of beef so daintily tricked out with sprigs of parsley; the appetizing cold sirloins, so beautifully stratified with fat and lean; with hams that might tempt a rabbi; not to speak of certain provocative little paragraphs about "Ox-tail and Gravy ready at all hours." "Queer world it is," said I; "and there are passing at every instant, by tens and twenties, men and women and children, famishing and hungry, who see all these things separated from them by a pane of window-glass; and yet they only gather their rags more closely together, clench their thin lips tighter, and move on. Not that alone; but here am I, with means to buy what I want, and yet I must not venture to cross that threshold, as though my rags should be an insult to their broadcloth." "Move on, youngster," quoth a policeman at this moment, and thus put an end to my soliloquy.

Wearied with rambling, and almost despairing of myself, I was about to cross Carlisle Bridge, when the blazing effulgence of a great ruby-colored lamplight attracted my attention, over which, in bright letters, ran the words, "Killeen's Tavern and Chop House," and beneath: "Steak, potatoes, and a pint of stout, one shilling and fourpence." Armed with a bold thought, I turned and approached the house.

Two or three waiters, in white aprons, were standing at the door, and showed little inclination to make way for me as I advanced.

"Well," cried one, "who are you? Nobody sent for you."

"Tramp, my smart fellow," said the other; "this an't your shop."

"Is n't this Killeen's?" said I, stoutly.

"Just so," said the first, a little surprised at my coolness.

"Well, then, a young gentleman from the college sent me to order dinner for him at once, and pay for it at the same time."

"What will he have?"

"Soup, and a steak, with a pint of port," said I; just the kind of dinner I had often heard the old half-pay officers talking of at the door of the Club in Foster Place.

"What hour did he say?"

"This instant. He's coming down; and as he starts by the mail at seven, he told me to have it on the table when he came."

"All right; four-and-six," said the waiter, holding out his hand for the money.

I gave him my crown piece; and as he fumbled for the shilling I insinuated myself quietly into the hall.

"There's your change, boy," said the waiter; "you need n't stop."

"Will you be so good, sir," said I, "to write 'paid' on a slip of paper for me, just to show the gentleman?"

"Of course," said he, taken possibly by the flattering civility of my address; and he stepped into the bar, and soon reappeared with a small scrap of paper, with these words: "Dinner and a pint of port, 4s. 6d. — paid."

"I'm to wait for him here, sir," said I, most obsequiously.

"Very well, so you can," replied he, passing on to the coffee-room.

I peeped through the glass door, and saw that in one of the little boxes into which the place was divided, a table was just spread, and a soup-tureen and a decanter placed on it. "This," thought I, "is for me;" for all the other boxes

were already occupied, and a great buzz of voices and clashing of plates and knives going on together.

"Serve the steak, sir," said I, stepping into the room and addressing the head-waiter, who, with a curse to me to "get out of that," passed on to order the dish; while I, with an adroit flank movement, dived into the box, and, imitating some of the company, spread my napkin like a breastplate across me. By a great piece of fortune the stall was the darkest in the room, so that when seated in a corner, with an open newspaper before me, I could, for a time at least, hope to escape detection.

"Anything else, sir?" cried a waiter, as he uncovered the soup, and deposited the dish of smoking beef-steak.

"Nothing," responded I, with a voice of most imposing sternness, and manfully holding up the newspaper between us.

The first three or four mouthfuls I ate with a faint heart; the fear of discovery, exposure, and expulsion almost choked me. A glass of port rallied, a second one cheered, and a third emboldened me, and I proceeded to my steak in a spirit of true ease and enjoyment. The port was most insidious; place it wherever I would on the table, it invariably stole over beside me, and, in spite of me, as it were, the decanter would stand at my elbow. I suppose it must be in reality a very gentlemanlike tippie; the tone of sturdy self-reliance, the vigorous air of command, the sense of absolutism it inspires, smack of Toryism; and as I sipped, I felt myself rising above the low prejudices I once indulged in against rank and wealth, and insensibly comprehending the beauty of that system which divides and classifies mankind.

The very air of the place, the loud, overbearing talk, the haughty summons to the waiter, the imperious demand for this or that requisite of the table, all conspired to impress me with the pleasant sensation imparted to him who possesses money. Among the various things called for on every side, I remarked that mustard seemed in the very highest request. Every one ate of it; none seemed to have enough of it. There was a perpetual cry, "Mustard! I say, waiter, bring me the mustard;" while one very choleric old gentleman, in a drab surtout and a red nose, absolutely

seemed bursting with indignation as he said, "You don't expect me to eat a steak without mustard, sir?" — a rebuke at which the waiter grew actually purple.

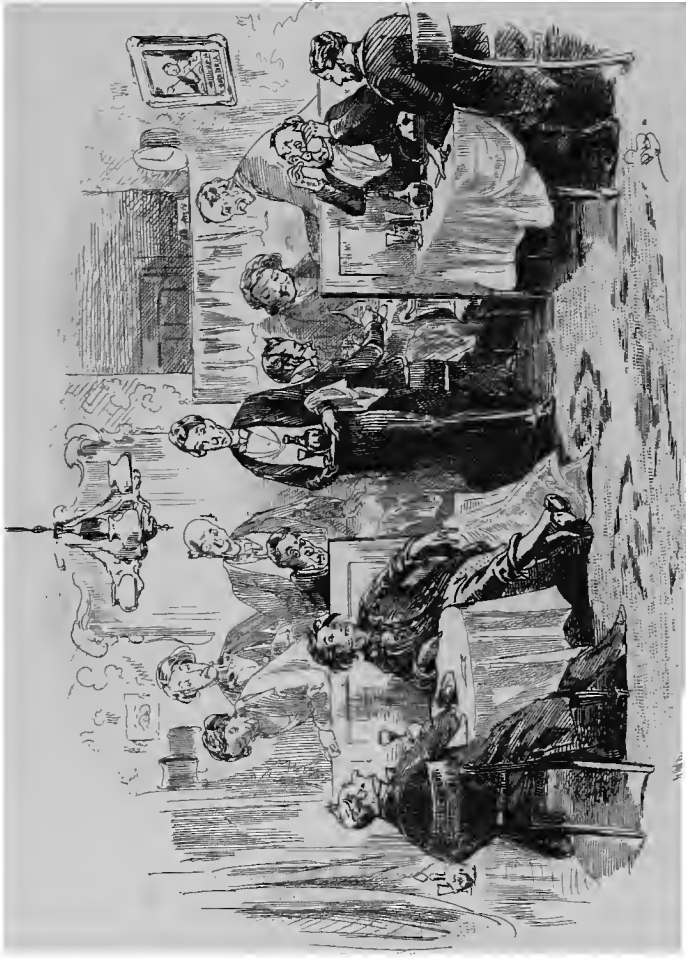
Now, this was the very thing I had myself been doing, — actually eating "a steak without mustard!" What a mistake, and for one who believed himself to be in every respect conforming to the choicest usages of high life! What was to be done? The steak had disappeared; no matter, it was never too late to learn, and so I cried out, "Waiter, the mustard here!" in a voice that almost electrified the whole room.

I had scarcely concealed myself beneath my curtain, — "The Times," — when the mustard was set down before me, with a humble apology for forgetfulness. I waited till he withdrew, and then helping myself to the unknown delicacy, proceeded to eat it, as the phrase is, "neat." In my eagerness, I swallowed two or three mouthfuls before I felt its effects; and then a sensation of burning and choking seized upon me. My tongue seemed to swell to thrice its size; my eyes felt as if they would drop out of my head; while a tingling sensation, like "frying," in my nostrils, almost drove me mad; so that after three or four seconds of silent agony, during which I experienced about ten years of torture, unable to endure more, I screamed out that "I was poisoned," and, with wide-open mouth and staring eyes, ran down the coffee-room.

Never was seen such an uproar! Had an animal from a wild-beast menagerie appeared among the company, the consternation could scarce be greater; and in the mingled laughter and execrations might be traced the different moods of those who resented my intrusion. "Who is this fellow? How did he get in? What brought him here? What's the matter with him?" poured in on all sides, — difficulties the head-waiter thought it better to deal with by a speedy expulsion than by any lengthened explanation.

"Get a policeman, Bob!" said he to the next in command; and the order was given loud enough to be heard by me.

"What the devil threw him amongst us?" said a testy-looking man in green spectacles.



A good shop at Holloway.

“I came to dine, sir,” said I; “to have my steak and my pint of wine, as I hoped, in comfort, and as one might have it in a respectable tavern.”

A jolly burst of laughter stopped me, and I was obliged to wait for its subsidence to continue.

“Well, sir! I paid for my dinner—”

“Is that true, Sam?” said a shrewd-looking man to the waiter.

“Quite true, sir! he paid four-and-sixpence, saying that the dinner was for a College gentleman.”

“I have been in College,” said I, coolly; “but no matter, the thing is simple enough: I am here in a house of public entertainment, the proprietors of which have accepted my money for a specific purpose; and putting aside the question whether they can refuse admission to any well-conducted individual (see Barnes *versus* MacTivell, in the 8th volume Term Reports; and Hobbes against Blinkerton, Soaker, and others, in the Appendix), I contend that my presence here is founded upon contract.”

Another and still louder roar of mirth again stopped me, and before I could resume, the company had gathered round me, in evident delight at my legal knowledge; and in particular, he of the spectacles, who was a well-known attorney of the Court of Conscience.

“That fellow’s a gem!” said he. “Hang me if he’s not equal to Bleatem! Sam, take care what you do; he’s the chap to have his action against you! I say, my man, come and sit down here, and let us have a little chat together.”

“Most willingly, sir,” responded I. “Waiter, bring my wine over to this table.” This was the signal for another shout, of which I did not deign to take the slightest notice.

“I’ll wager a hundred oysters,” exclaimed one of the party, among whom I now seated myself, “that I have seen him before! Tell me, my lad, didn’t you ride over the course yesterday, and cut out the work for Mr. Beatagh?”

I bowed an assent. “Who the devil is he?” cried two or three together; and my appearance and manner did not check the audible expression of this sentiment.

“A few words will suffice, gentlemen,” said I, “on that head. My father was an estated gentleman, of small, but

unincumbered fortune, which he lost by an unfortunate speculation; he accordingly went abroad —”

“To Norfolk Island!” suggested one, with a wink.

“Exactly,” responded I, “a Colonial appointment; leaving me, like Norval, not exactly on the Grampian Hills, but in a worse place, in the middle of the bog of Allen; my sole dependence being in certain legal studies I had once made, and a natural taste for getting forward in life; which, with a most enthusiastic appreciation of good company,” — here I bowed politely all round, — “are, I flatter myself, my chief characteristics.”

After a little, but most good-humored, quizzing about my present occupation and future prospects, they, with far more politeness than might be expected, turned the conversation upon other matters, and kindly permitted me to throw in from time to time my observations, — remarks which I could see, from their novelty, at least, seemed often to surprise them.

At length the hour of separating arrived, and I arose to bid the company good-night, which I performed with a very fair imitation of that quiet ease I had often studied in the young guardsmen about town.

“What do you bet that he has neither home to shelter him, nor bed to sleep on, this night?” whispered one to his neighbor.

“What are you writing there, Cox?” said another, to the keen-eyed man, who was pencilling something on a card.

“There, that’s my address, my boy, — 12, Stafford Street: Jeremiah Cox. Come to me about ten to-morrow.”

Another, while he was speaking, made an effort to slip a half-crown into my hand, — a measure I felt it becoming to decline with a prompt, but courteous, refusal. Indeed, I had so identified myself with the part I was performing that I flung down my only sixpence on the table for the waiter, and, with a last salutation to the honorable company, walked out. I have a perfect memory of every circumstance of the evening, and I recollect that my swaggering exit was as free from any semblance of concern or care as though a carriage waited for me outside to convey me to a luxurious home!

It has often been a fancy of mine through life to pass

the entire of a summer night out of door; to wander either through the moonlit roads of some picturesque country, or in the still more solitary streets of a great city. I have always felt on these occasions as though one were "stealing a march" upon the sleeping world, — gaining so many more hours of thought and reflection, which the busy conflict of life renders so often difficult.

The hours of the night seem to typify so many stages of existence, — only reversing the natural order of age, and making the period of deep reflection precede the era of sanguine hope; for if the solemn closing in of the darkness suggests musing, so do the rosy tints and fresh air of breaking day inspire the warm hopefulness of youth. If "the daylight sinking" invites the secret communing of the heart, "the dawning of morn" glows with energetic purpose and bold endeavor.

To come back to myself. I left the tavern without a thought whither I should turn my steps. It was a calm night, with a starry sky and a mild, genial air, so that to pass the hours until morning without shelter was no great privation. One only resolve I had formed, — never to go back to Betty's. I felt that I had sojourned over long in such companionship; it was now time some other, and more upward, path should open before me.

Following the course of the Liffey, I soon reached the quay called the North Wall, and at last arrived at the bluff extremity which looks out upon the opening of the river into the Bay of Dublin. The great expanse was in deep shadow, but so calm the sea that the two lighthouses were reflected in long columns of light in the tranquil water. The only sound audible was the low, monotonous plash of the sea against the wall, or the grating noise of a chain cable, as the vessel it held surged slowly with the tide. The sounds had something plaintive in them, that soon imparted a tone of sadness to my mind; but it was a melancholy not unpleasing; and I sat down upon a rude block of stone, weaving strange fancies of myself and my future.

As I sat thus, my ear, grown more acute by habit, detected the light clank of a chain, and something like a low thumping sound in the water beneath me; and on peering down, I

discovered the form of a small boat, fastened to a ring in the wall, and which from time to time grated against the strong masonry. There it lay, with a pair of light oars run under the thwarts, and its helm flapping to and fro, inert and purposeless, like myself! So at least I fancied it; and soon began conceiving a strange parallel between it and me. I was suddenly startled from these musings by the sound of feet rapidly approaching.

I listened, and could hear a man coming towards me at full speed. I sat down beneath the shadow of the wall, and he passed me unnoticed, and then, springing up on the parapet, he gave a loud, shrill whistle, waiting a few seconds as if for the reply. He was silent, and then repeated it; but still in vain, — no answer came. “Blast them!” muttered he, “the scoundrels will not show a light!” A third time did he whistle; but though the sounds might be heard a mile off, neither sight nor sound ever responded to them. “And that rascal, too, to have left the boat at such a moment!” Just as he uttered these words, he sprang down from the wall, and caught sight of me, as I lay, affecting sleep, coiled up beneath it.

With a rude kick of his foot on my side he aroused me, saying, “D—n the fellow! is this a time for sleeping? I told you to keep a sharp look-out for me here! What! who are you?” cried he, as I stood upright before him.

“A poor boy, sir, that has no roof to shelter him,” said I, plaintively.

He bent his head and listened; and then, with a horrible curse, exclaimed, “Here they are! here they come! Can you pull an oar, my lad?”

“I can sir,” answered I.

“Well, jump down into the punt there, and row her round the point to the stairs. Be quick! down with you! I have cut my hand, and cannot help you. There, that’s it, my lad! catch the ring; swing yourself a little more to the right; her gunwale is just beneath your foot; all right now! well done! Be alive now! give way, give way!” And thus encouraging me, he walked along the parapet above me, and in a few minutes stood fast, calling out, but in a lower and more cautious voice, “There! close in, now a strong pull —

that's it!" and then, hastily descending a narrow flight of steps, he sprang into the boat, and seated himself in the stern. "Hush! be still!" cried he; "do not stir! they'll never see us under the shadow of the wall!"

As he spoke, two dark figures mounted the wall, straight above our heads, and stood for some seconds as it were peering into the distance.

"I'll swear I saw him take this way," cried one, in a deep low voice.

"If he were the Devil himself, he could not escape us here," said the other, with an accent of vindictive passion.

"And he is the Devil," said the former speaker.

"Pooh, nonsense, man! any fellow who can win at dice, or has a steady finger with a pistol, is a marvel for you. Curses on him! he has given us the slip somehow."

"I'd not wonder, Harry, if he has taken the water; he swims like a duck!"

"He could not have sprung from a height like that without a splash, and we were close enough upon his heels to hear it; flash off some powder in a piece of paper: it is dark as pitch here."

While the men above were preparing their light, I heard a slight stir in the stern of the boat. I turned my head, and saw my companion coolly fitting a cap on his pistol; he was doing it with difficulty, as he was obliged to hold the pistol between his knees, while he adjusted the cap with his left hand; the right hand he carried in the breast of his coat. Nothing could be more calm and collected than his every movement, up to the instant when, having cocked the weapon, he lay back in the boat, so as to have a full stare at the two dark figures above us.

At last, the fuse was ready, and, being lighted, it was held for a few seconds in the hand, and then thrown into the air. The red and lurid glare flashed full upon two savage-looking faces, straight above our heads, and for an instant showed their figures with all the distinctness of noonday. I saw them both, as if by a common impulse, lean over the parapet and peer down into the dark water below, and I could have almost sworn that we were discovered; my companion evidently thought so too, for he raised his pistol steadily, and

took a long and careful aim. What a moment was that for me, expecting at every instant to hear the report, and then the heavy fall of the dead man into the water! My throat was full to bursting. The bit of burning paper of the fuse had fallen on my companion's pistol-hand; but though it must have scorched him, he never stirred, nor even brushed it off. I thought that by its faint flicker, also, we might have been seen. But no, it was plain they had not perceived us; and it was with a delight I cannot describe that I saw one and then the other descend from the wall, while I heard the words, "There's the second time above five hundred pounds has slipped from us. D—n the fellow! but if I hang for him, I'll do it yet!"

"Well, you've spoiled his hand for hazard for a while, anyhow, Harry!" said the other. "I think you must have taken his fingers clean off!"

"The knife was like a razor," replied the other, with a laugh; "but he struck it out of my hand with a blow above the wrist; and, I can tell you, I'd as soon get the kick of a horse as a short stroke of the same closed fist."

They continued to converse as they moved away, but their words only reached me in broken, unconnected sentences. From all I could glean, however, I was in company with one of enormous personal strength and a most reckless intrepidity. At last, all was still; not a sound to be heard on any side; and my companion, leaning forward, said, "Come, my lad, pull me out a short distance into the offing; we shall soon see a light to guide us!"

In calm, still water I could row well. I had been boat-boy to the priest at all his autumn fishing excursions on the Westmeath lakes, so that I acquitted myself creditably, urged on, I am free to confess, by a very profound fear of the large figure who loomed so mysteriously in the stern. For a time we proceeded in deep silence, when at last he said, "What vessel do you belong to, hoy?"

"I was never at sea, sir," replied I.

"Not a sailor! How comes it, then, you can row so well?"

"I learned to row in fresh water, sir."

"What are you? How came you to be here to-night?"

“By merest chance, sir. I had no money to pay for a bed. I have neither home nor friends. I have lived, by holding horses, and running errands, in the streets.”

“Picking pockets occasionally, I suppose, too, when regular business was dull!”

“Never!” said I, indignantly.

“Don’t be shocked, my fine fellow,” said he, jeeringly; “better men than ever you’ll be have done a little that way. I have made some lighter this evening myself, for the matter of that!”

This confession, if very frank, was not very reassuring; and so I made no answer, but rowed away with all my might.

“Well!” said he, after a pause, “luck has befriended me twice to-night; and sending you to sleep under that wall was not the worst turn of the two. Ship your oars there, boy, and let us see if you are as handy a surgeon as you are a sailor! Try and bind up these wounded fingers of mine, for they begin to smart with the cold night air.”

“Wait an instant,” cried he; — “we are safe now, so you may light this lantern;” and he took from his pocket a small and most elegantly fashioned lantern, which he immediately lighted.

I own it was with a most intense curiosity I waited for the light to scan the features of my singular companion; nor was my satisfaction inconsiderable when, instead of the terrific-looking fellow — half bravo, half pirate — I expected, I perceived before me a man of apparently thirty-one or two, with large but handsome features and gentlemanly appearance. He had an immense beard and moustache, which united at either side of the mouth; but this, ferocious enough to one unaccustomed to it, could not take off the quiet regularity and good-humor of his manly features. He wore a large-brimmed slouched felt hat that shaded his brows, and he seemed to be dressed with some care, beneath the rough exterior of a common pilot-coat, — at least, he wore silk stockings and shoes, as if in evening-dress. These particulars I had time to note, while he unwound from his crippled hand the strips of a silk handkerchief which, stiffened and clotted with blood, bespoke a deep and severe wound.

If the operation were often painful even to torture, he never winced, or permitted the slightest expression of suffering to escape him. At last the undressing was completed, and a fearful gash appeared, separating the four fingers almost entirely from the hand. The keenness of the cut showed that the weapon must have been, as the fellow averred, sharp as a razor. Perhaps the copious loss of blood had exhausted the vessels, or the tension of the bandage had closed them; for there was little bleeding, and I soon succeeded, with the aid of his cravat, in making a tolerable dressing of the wound, and by filling up the palm of the hand as I had once seen done by a country surgeon in a somewhat similar case. The pain was relieved by the gentle support afforded.

“Why, you are a most accomplished vagrant!” said he, laughing, as he watched the artistic steps of my proceeding. “What’s your name?—I mean, what do you go by at present? for of course a fellow like you has a score of aliases.”

“I have had only one name up to this,” said I, — “Con Cregan.”

“Con Cregan! sharp and shrewd enough it sounds too!” said he. “And what line of life do you mean to follow, Master Con? for I suspect you have not been without some speculations on the subject.”

“I have thought of various things, sir; but how is a poor boy like me to get a chance? I feel as if I could pick up a little of most trades; but I have no money, nor any friends.”

“Money — friends!” exclaimed he, with a burst of bitterness quite unlike his previous careless humor. “Well, my good fellow, I had both one and the other, — more than most people are supposed to have of either; and what have they brought me to?” He held up his maimed and blood-clotted hand as he spoke this with a withering scorn in every accent.

“No, my boy; trust one who knows something of life, — the lighter you start, the easier your journey! He that sets his heart on it, can always make money; and friends, as they are called by courtesy, are still more easily acquired.”

This was the first time I had ever heard any one speak of the game of life as such; and I cannot say what intense pleasure the theme afforded me. I am certain I never stopped to consider whether his views were right or not, whether the shrewd results of a keen observer, or the prejudices of a disappointed man. It was the subject, the matter discussed, delighted me.

My companion appeared to feel that he had a willing listener, and went freely on, canvassing the various roads to success, and with a certain air of confidence in all he said that to me seemed quite oracular. "What a fellow am I," said he at last, "to discourse in this strain to a street urchin whose highest ambition is to outrun his ragged competitors, and be first 'in,' for the sixpence of some cantering cornet! Pull ahead, lad, there's the light at last; and hang me if they're not two miles out."

The contemptuous tone of the last few words effectually repressed any desire I might have had for further colloquy; and I rowed away in silence, putting forth all my strength and skill, so that the light skiff darted rapidly and steadily through the water.



CHAPTER IX

SIR DUDLEY BROUGHTON.

STEADILY, and with all the vigor I could command, I pulled towards the light. My companion sat quietly watching the stars, and apparently following out some chain of thought to himself; at last he said, "There, boy, breathe a bit; there's no need to blow yourself; we're all safe long since; the 'Firefly' is right ahead of us, and not far off either. Have you never heard of the yacht?"

"Never, sir."

"Nor of its owner, Sir Dudley Broughton?"

"No, sir, I never heard the name."

"Well, come," cried he, laughing, "that is consolatory. I'm not half so great a reprobate as I thought myself! I did not believe till now that there was an urchin of your stamp living who could not have furnished at least some anecdotes for a memoir of me! Well, my lad, yonder,

where you see the blue light at the peak, is the 'Firefly,' and here, where I sit, is Sir Dudley Broughton. Ten minutes more will put us alongside, so, if you're not tired, pull away."

"No, Sir Dudley," said I, for I was well versed in the popular tact of catching up a name quickly, "I am able to row twice as far."

"And now, Master Con," said he, "we are going to part. Are you too young a disciple of your craft for a glass of grog; or are you a follower of that new-fangled notion of pale-faced politicians, who like bad coffee and reason better than whiskey and fun?"

"I'll take nothing to drink, Sir Dudley," said I. "I have dined and drunk well to-day, and I'll not venture further."

"As you please; only I say you're wrong not to victual the ship whenever you stand in-shore. No matter; put your hand into this vest pocket, — you'll find some shillings there: take them, whatever they be. You'll row the boat back with one of my people; and all I have to say is, if you do speak of me, as no doubt you will and must, don't say anything about these smashed fingers; I suppose they'll get right one of these days, and I'd rather there was no gossip about them."

"I'll never speak of it — I —"

"There, now, that's enough; no swearing, or I know you'll break your promise. Back water a little; pull the starboard oar, — so; here we are alongside."

Sir Dudley had scarce done speaking when a hoarse voice from the yacht challenged us. This was replied to by a terrific volley of imprecations on the stupidity of not sooner showing the light, amid which Sir Dudley ascended the side and stood upon the deck. "Where's Halkett?" cried he, imperiously. "Here, sir," replied a short, thick-set man, with a sailor-like shuffle in his walk. "Send one of the men back with the gig, and land that boy. Tell the fellow, too, he's not to fetch Waters aboard, if he meets him: the scoundrel went off and left me to my fate this evening; and it might have been no pleasant one, if I had not found that lad yonder."

“We have all Sam Waters’ kit on board, Sir Dudley,” said Halkett; “shall we send it ashore?”

“No. Tell him I’ll leave it at Demerara for him; and he may catch the yellow fever in looking after it,” said he, laughing.

While listening to this short dialogue I had contrived to approach a light which gleamed from the cabin window, and then took the opportunity to count over my wealth, amounting, as I supposed, to some seven or eight shillings. Guess my surprise to see that the pieces were all bright yellow gold, — eight shining sovereigns!

I had but that instant made the discovery, when the sailor who was to put me on shore jumped into the boat and seated himself.

“Wait one instant,” cried I. “Sir Dudley — Sir Dudley Broughton!”

“Well, what’s the matter?” said he, leaning over the side.

“This money you gave me — ”

“Not enough, of course! I ought to have known that,” said he, scornfully. “Give the whelp a couple of half-crowns, Halkett, and send him adrift.”

“You’re wrong, sir,” cried I, with passionate eagerness; “they are gold pieces, — sovereigns.”

“The devil they are!” cried he, laughing; “the better luck yours. Why did n’t you hold your tongue about it?”

“You bid me take some shillings, sir,” answered I.

“How d—d honest you must be! Do you hear that, Halkett? The fellow had scruples about taking his prize-money! Never mind, boy, I must pay for my blunder, — you may keep them now.”

“I have pride, too,” cried I; “and hang me if I touch them.”

He stared at me, without speaking, for a few minutes, and then said, in a low, flat voice, “Come on deck, lad.” I obeyed; and he took a lighted lantern from the binnacle, and held it up close to my face, and then moved it so that he made a careful examination of my whole figure.

“I’d give a crown to know who was your father,” said he, dryly.

“Con Cregan, of Kilbeggan, sir.”

“Oh, of course, I know all that. Come, now, what say you to try a bit of life afloat? Will you stay here?”

“Will you take me, sir?” cried I, in ecstasy.

“Halkett, rig him out,” said he, shortly. “Nip the anchor with the ebb, and keep your course down channel.” With this he descended the cabin stairs and disappeared, while I, at a signal from Halkett, stepped down the ladder into the steerage. In the mean while it will not be deemed digressionary if I devote a few words to the singular character into whose society I was now thrown, inasmuch as to convey any candid narrative of my own career I must speak of those who, without influencing the main current of my life, yet certainly gave some impulse and direction to its first meanderings.

Sir Dudley Broughton was the only son of a wealthy baronet, who, not from affection or overkindness, but out of downright indolent indifference, permitted him, first as an Eton boy, and afterwards as a gentleman commoner of Christ Church, to indulge in every dissipation that suited his fancy. An unlimited indulgence, a free command of whatever money he asked for, added to a temper constitutionally headstrong and impetuous, soon developed what might have been expected from the combination. He led a life of wild insubordination at school, and was expelled from Oxford. With faculties above rather than beneath mediocrity, and a certain aptitude for acquiring the knowledge most in request in society, he had the reputation of being one who, if he had not unhappily so addicted himself to dissipation, would have made a favorable figure in the world. After trying in vain to interest himself in the pursuits of a country life, of which the sporting was the only thing he found attractive, he joined a well-known light cavalry regiment, celebrated for numbering among its officers more fast men than any other corps in the service. His father, dying about the same time, left him in possession of a large fortune, which, with all his extravagance, was but slightly encumbered. This fact, coupled with his well-known reputation, made him popular with his brother officers, most of whom, having run through nearly all they possessed, saw with pleasure a new Cæsus arrive

in the regiment. Such a man as Broughton was just wanted. One had a charger to get off; another wanted a purchaser for his four-in-hand drag. The senior captain was skilful at billiards; and every one played "lansquenet" and hazard.

Besides various schemes against his purse, the colonel had a still more serious one against his person. He had a daughter, a handsome, fashionable-looking girl, with all the manners of society, and a great deal of that tact only to be acquired in the very best foreign society. That she was no longer in the fresh bloom of youth, nor with a reputation quite spotless, were matters well known in the regiment; but as she was still eminently handsome, and "the Count Radchoffsky" had been recalled by the emperor from the embassy of which he was secretary, Lydia Delmar was likely, in the opinions of keen-judging parties, to make a good hit with "some young fellow who did n't know town." Broughton was exactly the man Colonel Delmar wanted, — good family, a fine fortune, and the very temper a clever woman usually contrives to rule with absolute sway.

There would be, unfortunately, no novelty in recording the steps by which such a man is ruined. He did everything that men do who are bent upon testing Fortune to the utmost. He lent large sums to his "friends;" he lost larger ones to them. When he did win, none ever paid him, except by a good-humored jest upon his credit at Coutts's. "What the devil do *you* want with money, Sir Dudley?" was an appeal he could never reply to. He ran horses at Ascot, and got "squeezed;" he played at "Crocky's," and fared no better; but he was the favorite of the corps. "We could never get on without Dudley," was a common remark; and it satisfied him that, with all his extravagance, he had made an investment in the hearts at least of his comrades. A few months longer of this "fast" career would, in all likelihood, have ruined him. He broke his leg by a fall in a steeplechase, and was thus driven, by sheer necessity, to lay up, and keep quiet for a season. Now came Colonel Delmar's opportunity; the moment the news reached Coventry, he set off with his daughter to Leamington. With the steeplechasing, hazard-playing,

betting, drinking, yachting, driving Sir Dudley, there was no chance of even time for their plans; but with a sick man on the sofa, bored by his inactivity, hipped for want of his usual resources, the game was open. The Colonel's visit, too, had such an air of true kindness!

Broughton had left quarters without leave; but instead of reprimands, arrests, and Heaven knows what besides, there was Colonel Delmar, the fine old fellow, shaking his finger in moek rebuke, and saying, "Ah, Dudley, my boy, I came down to give you a rare scolding; but this sad business has saved you!" And Lydia also, against whom he had ever felt a dislike, — that prejudice your boisterous and noisy kind of men ever feel to clever women, whose sarcasms they know themselves exposed to, — why, she was gentle good-nature and easy sisterlike kindness itself! She did not, as the phrase goes, "nurse him," but she seldom left the room where he lay. She read aloud, selecting with a marvellous instinct the very kind of books he fancied, — novels, tales of every-day life, things of whose truthfulness he could form some judgment; and sketches wherein the author's views were about on a level with his own. She would sit at the window, too, and amuse him with descriptions of the people passing in the street; such smart shrewd pictures were they of watering-place folks and habits, Dudley never tired of them! She was unsurpassed for the style with which she could dress up an anecdote or a bit of gossip; and if it verged upon the free, her French education taught her the nice perception of the narrow line that separates "libertinage" from indelicacy.

So far from feeling impatient at his confinement to a sofa, therefore, Broughton affected distrust in his renovated limb for a full fortnight after the doctor had pronounced him cured. At last he was able to drive out, and soon afterwards to take exercise on horseback, Lydia Delmar and her father occasionally accompanying him.

People will talk at Leamington, as they do at other places; and so the gossips said that the rich — for he was still so reputed in the world — the "rich" Sir Dudley Broughton was going to marry Miss Delmar.

Gossip is half-brother to that all-powerful director called

“Public Opinion;” so that when Sir Dudley heard, some half-dozen times every day, what it was reputed he would do, he began to feel that he ought to do it.

Accordingly, they were married; the world — at least the Leamington section of that large body — criticising the match precisely as it struck the interests and prejudices of the class they belonged to.

Fathers and mothers agreed in thinking that Colonel Delmar was a shrewd old soldier, and had made an “excellent hit.” Young ladies pronounced Liddy — for a girl who had been out eight years — decidedly lucky. Lounging men at club doors looked knowingly at each other as they joked together in half sentences, “No affair of mine; but I did not think Broughton would have been caught so easily.” “Yes, by Jove!” cried another, with a jockey-like style of dress, “he’d not have made so great a mistake on the ‘Oaks’ as to run an aged nag for a two-year old!”

“I wonder he never heard of that Russian fellow!” said a third.

“Oh, yes!” sighed out a dandy, with an affected drawl; “poor dear Liddy did indeed catch a ‘Tartar’!”

Remarks such as these were the pleasant sallies the event provoked; but so it is in higher and greater things in life! At the launch of a line-of-battle ship, the veriest vagrant in rags fancies he can predict for her defeat and shipwreck!

The Broughtons were now the great people of the London season, at least to a certain “fast” set, who loved dinners at the Clarendon, high play, and other concomitant pleasures. *Her* equipages were the most perfect; *her* diamonds the most splendid; while *his* dinners were as much reputed by one class, as *her* toilet by another.

Loans at ruinous interest; sales of property for a tithe of its value; bills renewed at a rate that would have swamped Rothschild; purchases made at prices proportionate to the risk of non-payment; reckless waste everywhere; robbing solicitors, cheating tradesmen, and dishonest servants! But why swell the list, or take trouble to show how the ruin came? If one bad leak will cause a shipwreck, how is the craft to mount the waves with every plank riven asunder?

If among the patriarchs who lend at usury, Broughton's credit was beginning to ebb, in the clubs at the West End, in the betting-ring, at Crockford's, and at Tattersall's, he was in all the splendor of his former fame. Anderson would trust him with half his stable. Howell and James would send him the epergne they had designed for a czar. And so he lived. With rocks and breakers ahead, he only "carried on" the faster and the freer.



Not that he knew, indeed, the extent, or anything approaching the extent, to which his fortune was wrecked. All that he could surmise on the subject was founded on the increased difficulty he found in raising money, — a circumstance his pliant solicitor invariably explained by that happy phrase, the "tightness of the money market." This completely satisfied Sir Dudley, who, far from attributing it to his own almost exhausted resources, laid all the blame upon some trickery of foreign statesmen, some confounded disturbance in Ireland, something that the Foreign Secretary

had done, or would not do; and that thus the money folk would not trust a guinea out of their fingers. In fact, it was quite clear that to political intrigue and cabinet scheming all Sir Dudley's difficulties might fairly be traced!

It was just at this time that the Count Radchoffsky arrived once more in London in charge of a special mission, no longer the mere secretary of embassy, driving about in his quiet cab, but an envoy extraordinary, with cordons and crosses innumerable. He was exactly the kind of man for Broughton's "set," so that he soon made his acquaintance, and was presented by him to Lady Broughton as a most agreeable fellow, and something very distinguished in his own country.

She received him admirably: remembered to have met him, she thought, at Lord Edenbury's; but he corrected her by saying it was at the Duke of Clifton's, — a difference of testimony at which Broughton laughed heartily, saying, in his usual rough way, "Well, it is pretty clear you did n't make much impression on each other."

The Russian noble was a stranger to the turf. In the details of arranging the approaching race, in apportioning the weights and ages and distances, Broughton passed his whole mornings for a month, sorely puzzled at times by the apathy of his Northern friend, who actually never obtruded an opinion, or expressed a wish for information on the subject.

Sir Dudley's book was a very heavy one too. What "he stood to win" was a profound secret; but knowing men said that if he lost, it would be such a "squeeze" as had not been known at Newmarket since the Duke of York's day.

Such an event, however, seemed not to enter into his own calculations; and so confident was he of success that he could not help sharing his good fortune with his friend Radchoffsky, and giving him something in his own book. The count professed himself everlastingly grateful, but confessed that he knew nothing of racing matters, and that, above all, his Majesty the Emperor would be excessively annoyed if a representative of his in any way interfered with the race; in fact, the honor of the Czar would be tarnished by such a

proceeding. Against such reasonings there could be no opposition; and Broughton only took to himself all the benefits he had destined for his friend.

At last the eventful day came; and although Sir Dudley had arranged that Lady Broughton should accompany him to the course, she was taken with some kind of nervous attack that prevented her leaving her bed. Her husband was provoked at this ill-timed illness, for he was still vain of her appearance in public; but knowing that he could do nothing for hysterics, he sent for Doctor Barham, and then with all speed he started for the race.

Among the friends who were to go along with him, the count had promised to make one; but despatches — that admirable excuse of diplomatists, from the great secretary to the humblest unpaid attaché — despatches had just arrived; and if he could manage to get through his business early enough, “he’d certainly follow.”

Scarcely had Sir Dudley reached the ground when a carriage drove up to the stand, and a gentleman descended in all haste. It was Mr. Taperton, his solicitor, — his trusty man of loans and discounts for many a day, “Eh, Tappy!” cried Broughton, “come to sport a fifty on the filly?”

“Walk a little this way, Sir Dudley,” said he, gravely; and his voice soon convinced the hearer that something serious was in the wind.

“What’s the matter, man? You look as if Cardinal was dead lame.”

“Sir Dudley, you must start from this at once. Holdsworth has taken proceedings on the bills; Lord Corthern has foreclosed; the whole body of the creditors are up; and you’ll be arrested before you leave the field!”

If the threat had conveyed the ignominious penalty of felony, Broughton could not have looked more indignant. “Arrested! You don’t mean that we cannot raise enough to pay these rascals?”

“Your outstanding bills are above twenty thousand, sir.”

“And if they be; do you tell me that with my estate — ”

“My dear Sir Dudley, how much of it is unencumbered? What single portion, save the few hundreds a year of Lady

Broughton's jointure, is not sunk under mortgage? But this is no time for discussion; get into the chaise with me; we'll reach London in time for the mail; to-morrow you can be in Boulogne, and then we shall have time at least for an arrangement."

"The race is just coming off! how can I leave? I'm a steward; besides, I have a tremendous book. Do you know how many thousands I stand to win here?"

"To lose, you mean," said the solicitor. "You're sold!" The words were whispered so low as to be almost inaudible; but Broughton actually staggered as he heard them.

"Sold! how? what? Impossible, man! Who could sell me?"

"Only one man, perhaps, but he has done it! Is it true you have backed Calliope?"

"Yes!" said he, staring wildly.

"She was found hamstrung this morning in the stable, then," said Taperton; "if you want to hear further particulars, you must ask your friend the Count Radchoffsky!"

"The scoundrel! the black-hearted villain! I see it all!" cried Broughton. "Come, Taperton, let us start! I'll go with you; by Jove, you have found a way to make me eager for the road!"

The lawyer read in the bloodshot eye and flushed face the passion for vengeance that was boiling within him, but he never spoke as they moved on and entered the carriage.

It was full three hours before the expected time of his return, when the chaise in which they travelled drew up at the Clarendon, and Broughton, half wild with rage, dashed upstairs to the suite of splendid rooms he occupied.

"Oh, dear, Sir Dudley," cried the maid, as she saw him hastening along the corridor, "oh, I'm sure, sir, how you'll alarm my lady if she sees you so flurried!"

"Stand out of the way, woman!" said he, roughly, endeavoring to push her to one side, for she had actually placed herself between him and the door of the drawing-room.

"Surely, sir, you'll not terrify my lady! Surely, Sir Dudley —"

Despite her cries, for they had now become such, Broughton pushed her rudely from the spot, and entered the room.

Great was his astonishment to find Lady Broughton, whom he had left so ill, not only up, but dressed as if for the promenade; her face was flushed, and her eye restless and feverish; and her whole manner exhibited the highest degree of excitement.

Broughton threw down his hat upon the table, and then, returning to the door, locked and bolted it.

“Good Heavens, Dudley!” exclaimed she, in a voice of terror, “what has happened?”

“Everything!” said he; “utter ruin! The whole crew of creditors are in full chase after me, and in a few hours we shall be stripped of all we possess.”

She drew a long full breath as she listened; and had her husband been in a mood to mark it, he might have seen how lightly his terrible tidings affected her.

“I must fly! Taperton — he’s in the carriage below — says France, at least for some weeks, till we can make some compromise or other; but I have one debt that must be acquitted before I leave.”

There was a terrible significance in the words, and she was sick to the heart as she asked, “What, and to whom?”

“Radchoffsky!” cried he, savagely; “that scoundrel whom I trusted like a brother!”

Lady Broughton fell back, and for a moment her motionless limbs and pallid features seemed like fainting; but with a tremendous effort rallying herself, she said, “Go on!”

“He betrayed me, — told every circumstance of my book! And the mare I had backed for more than thirty thousand is dying this instant; so that I am not only ruined, but dishonored!”

She sat with wide staring eyes and half-open lips while he spoke, nor did she seem, in the fearful confusion of her fear, to understand fully all he said.

“Have I not spoken plainly?” said he, angrily. “Don’t you comprehend me when I say that to-morrow I shall be branded as a defaulter at the settling? But enough of this. Tell Millar to get a portmanteau ready for me. I’ll start this evening; the interval is short enough for all I have to do.” As he spoke, he hastened to his bedroom, and, providing

himself with a case containing his duelling-pistols, he hurried downstairs, ordering the postilion to drive to the Russian Embassy.

The carriage was scarce driven from the door when Lady Broughton, taking a key from her pocket, opened a small door which led from the drawing-room into her dressing-room, from which the count walked forth, — his calm features unruffled and easy as though no emotion had ever stirred them.

“ You heard what Broughton said ? ” whispered she, in an accent of faltering agitation.

“ *Oui, parbleu*, every word of it ! ” replied he, laughing gently. “ The people of the house might almost have heard him.”

“ And is it true ? ” asked she, while a cold sickness crept over her, and her mouth was shaken convulsively.

“ I believe so,” said he, calmly.

“ Oh, Alexis, do not say so ! ” cried she, in an agony of grief ; “ or, least of all, in such a voice as that.”

He shrugged his shoulders ; and then, after a moment’s pause, said, “ I confess myself quite unprepared for this show of affection, madame — ”

“ Not so, Alexis. It is for *you* I am concerned ; for your honor as a gentleman ; for your fair fame among men — ”

“ Pardon, madame, if I interrupt you ; but the defence of my honor must be left to myself — ”

“ If I had but thought this of you — ”

“ It is never too late for repentance, madame. I should be sorry to think I could deceive you.”

“ Oh, it is too late, far too late ! ” cried she, bursting into tears. “ Let us go ! I must never see him again ! I would not live over that last half-hour again to save me from a death of torture ! ”

“ Allow me, then,” said he, taking her shawl and draping it on her shoulders. “ The carriage is ready ; ” and with these words, spoken with perfect calm, he presented his arm and led her from the room.

To return to Sir Dudley. On arriving at the Russian Embassy, he could learn nothing of the whereabouts of him he sought ; a young secretary, however, with whom he had

some intimacy, drawing him to one side, whispered, "Wait here a moment; I have a strange revelation to make you, — but in confidence, remember, for it must not get abroad." The story was this: Count Radchoffsky had been, on his recall from the Embassy, detected in some Polish intrigue, and ordered to absent himself from the capital and preserve a life of strict retirement, under police "surveillance;" from this, he had managed to escape and reach England, with forged credentials of Envoy Extraordinary; the mission being an invention of his own, to gain currency in the world and obtain for him loans of large sums from various houses in the "City." "As he knows," continued Broughton's informant, "from his former experience, the day of our courier's expected arrival, he has up to this lived fearlessly and openly; but the despatch having reached us through the French cabinet sooner than he expected, his plot is revealed. The great difficulty is to avoid all publicity; for we must have no magisterial interference, no newspaper or police notoriety; all must be done quietly, and he must be shipped off to Russia without a rumor of the affair getting abroad."

Broughton heard all this with the dogged satisfaction of a man who did not well know whether to be pleased or otherwise that an object of personal vengeance had been withdrawn from him.

But not accustomed to dwell long on any subject where the main interest of his own line of action was wanting, he drove home to his hotel to hasten the preparations for his departure. On his arrival at the Clarendon, a certain bustle and movement in the hall and on the stairs attracted his attention, and before he could inquire the cause, a half whisper, "There he is; that's Sir Dudley!" made him turn round; the same instant a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and a man said, "I arrest you, Sir Dudley Broughton, at the suit of Messrs. Worrit and Sneare, Lombard Street."

"Be calm; don't make any resistance," whispered Taper-ton in his ear; "come upstairs." They passed on, and entered the drawing-room, where everything appeared in disorder. As for Broughton, he was bewildered and stupefied by all he had gone through, and sat in a chair staring vacantly at the groups around him, evidently unable, through

the haze of his disordered faculties, to see clearly how, and in what, he was interested in the affair.

"Where's my lady?" whispered Taperton to the valet, who stood almost as spell-bound as his master.

"Gone, sir; she's gone," said the man, in a faint voice.

"Gone where, scoundrel?" said Sir Dudley, jumping up and seizing him by the throat with both hands, while he roared out the words with a savage vehemence that startled all the room.

"Gone away, Sir Dudley," said the half-choking man; "I saw her drive off in a chaise and pair with Count Radchoffsky."

Broughton let go his hold, and fell heavily upon his face to the ground. A surgeon was called in, who at once perceived that the attack was one of apoplexy. For that night and part of the next day his recovery was almost hopeless; for, though repeatedly bled, he gave no signs of returning animation, but lay heaving, at intervals, long, heavy sighs, and respiring with an effort that seemed to shake the strong frame in convulsions.

Youth and bold remedies, however, favored him, and on the third morning he awoke, weak and weary, like one who had just reached convalescence after a long and terrible fever. His features, his gestures, his very voice, were all altered; there was a debility about him — mental and physical — that seemed like premature decay; and they who knew the bold, high-spirited man of a few days before could never have recognized him in the simple-looking, vacant, and purposeless invalid who sat there, to all seeming, neither noticing nor caring what happened around him. It is true, indeed, few essayed the comparison. Of those who visited him, the greater number were creditors curious to speculate on his recovery; there were a couple of reporters, too, for gossiping newspapers desirous of coining a paragraph to amuse the town; but no friends, — not a man of those who dined, and drank, and drove, and played with him. In fact his fate was soon forgotten even in the very circles of which he had been the centre; nor did his name ever meet mention, save in some stale report of a bankruptcy examination, or a meeting of creditors to arrange for the liquidation of his debts.

The wasteful, heedless extravagance of his mode of living was urged even to vindictiveness by his creditors, so that for three years he remained a prisoner in the Fleet; and it was only when they saw he had no feeling of either shame or regret at his imprisonment that an arrangement was at last agreed to, and he was liberated, — set free to mix in a world in which he had not one tie to bind, or one interest to attach him!

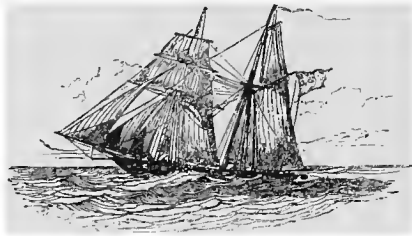
From that hour forth none ever knew how far his memory retained the circumstances of his past life; he never certainly mentioned them to any of those with whom he formed companionship, nor did he renew acquaintance with one among his former friends. By great exertions on the part of his lawyers, almost a thousand a year was secured to him from the wreck of his great fortune, — the proceeds of a small estate that had belonged to his mother.

On this income he lived some time in total seclusion, when, to the astonishment of all, he was again seen about town, in company with men of the most equivocal character, — noted gamblers at hells, “Legs of Newmarket,” and others to whom report attributed bolder and more daring feats of iniquity. While it was a debated point among certain fashionables of the clubs how far he was to be recognized by them, he saved them all the difficulty, by passing his most intimate friends without a bow or the slightest sign of recognition. A stern, repulsive frown never left his features; and he whose frank, light-hearted buoyancy had been a proverb, was grave and silent, rarely admitting anything like an intimacy, and avoiding whatever could be called a friendship.

After a while he was missed from his accustomed haunts, and it was said that he had purchased a yacht and amused himself by sea excursions. Then there came a rumor of his being in the Carlist insurrection in Spain, — some said with a high command; and afterwards he was seen in a French voltigeur regiment serving in Africa. From all these varied accidents of life he came back to London, frequenting, as before, the same play resorts, and betting sums whose amount often trenched upon the limits of the bank. If, in his early life, he was a constant loser, now he invariably

won; and he was actually the terror of hell-keepers, whose superstitious fears of certain "lucky ones" are a well-known portion of their creed.

As for himself, he seemed to take a kind of fiendish sport in following up this new turn of fortune. It was like a Nemesis on those who had worked his ruin. One man in particular, a well-known Jew money-lender of great wealth, he pursued with all the vindictive perseverance of revenge. He tracked him from London to Brighton, to Cheltenham, to Leamington, to Newmarket, to Goodwood; he followed him to Paris, to Brussels; wherever in any city the man opened a table for play, there was Broughton sure to be found.



At last, by way of eluding all pursuit, the Jew went over to Ireland, — a country where of all others fewest resources for his traffic presented themselves; and here again, despite change of name and every precaution of secrecy, Broughton traced him out; and, on the night when I first met him, he was on his return from a hell on the Quays where he had broken the bank and arisen a winner of above two thousand pounds.

The peculiar circumstances of that night's adventure are easily told. He was followed from the play table by two men, witnesses of his good fortune, who saw that he carried the entire sum on his person; and from his manner, — a feint I found he often assumed, — they believed him to be drunk. A row was accordingly organized at the closing of the play, the lights were extinguished, and a terrible scene of tumult and outrage ensued, whose sole object was to rob Broughton of his winnings.

After a desperate struggle, in which he received the wound I have mentioned, he escaped by leaping from a window into the street, — a feat too daring for his assailants to imitate. The remainder is already known; and I have only again to ask my reader's indulgent pardon for this long episode, without which, however, I felt I could not have asked his companionship on board the "Firefly."

trace in his features all the terrible traits of the creatures he tended. The wide, distended nostrils, the bleared and blood-shot eyes, the large, full-lipped mouth, drawn back by the strong muscles at its angles, and the great swollen vessels of the forehead, were developed in him, as in the wild beasts. He imitated the animals, too, in all his gestures, which were sudden and abrupt; the very way he ate, tearing his food and rending it in fragments, like a prey, showed the type he followed. His dress was handsome, almost gorgeous; a white tunic of thin muslin reached to the knees, over which he wore a scarlet cloth jacket, open, and without sleeves: this was curiously slashed and laced, by a wonderful tissue of gold thread so delicately traceried as to bear the most minute examination; a belt of burnished gold, like a succession of clasps, supported a small scimitar, whose scabbard of ivory and gold was of exquisite workmanship, the top of the handle being formed by a single emerald of purest color; his legs were bare, save at the ankles, where two rings of massive gold encircled them; on his feet he wore a kind of embroidered slippers, curiously studded with precious stones. A white turban of muslin, delicately sprigged with gold, covered his head, looped in front by another large emerald, which glared and sparkled like an eye in the centre of his forehead.

This was his gala costume; but his every-day one resembled it in everything, save the actual value of the material. Such was El Jarasch, who was to be my companion and my messmate, — a fact which seemed to afford small satisfaction to either of us.

Nothing could less resemble his splendor than the simplicity of my costume. Halkett, when ordered to "rig me out," not knowing what precise place I was to occupy on board, proceeded to dress me from the kit of the sailor we had left behind in Dublin; and although, by rolling up the sleeves of my jacket, and performing the same office for the legs of my trousers, my hands and feet could be rendered available to me, no such ready method could prevent the clothes bagging around me in every absurd superfluity, and making me appear more like a stunted monster than a human

being. Beside my splendidly costumed companion I made, indeed, but a sorry figure, nor was it long dubious that he himself thought so; the look of savage contempt he first bestowed on me, and then the gaze of ineffable pleasure he accorded to himself afterwards, having a wide interval between them. Neither did it improve my condition, in his eyes, that I could lay claim to no distinct duty on board. While I was ruminating on this fact, the morning after I joined the yacht, we were standing under easy sail, with a bright sky and a calm sea, the southeastern coast of Ireland on our lee; the heaving swell of the blue water, the fluttering bunting from gaff and peak, the joyous bounding motion, were all new and inspiriting sensations, and I was congratulating myself on the change a few hours had wrought in my fortune, when Halkett came to tell me that Sir Dudley wanted to speak with me in his cabin. He was lounging on a little sofa when I entered, in a loose kind of dressing-gown, and before him stood the materials of his yet untasted breakfast. The first effect of my appearance was a burst of laughter; and although there is nothing I have ever loved better to hear than a hearty laugh, his was not of a kind to inspire any very pleasant or mirthful sensations. It was a short, husky, barking noise, with derision and mockery in every cadence of it.

“What the devil have we here? Why, boy, you’d disgrace a stone lighter at Sheerness. Who rigged you in that fashion?”

“Mr. Halkett, sir.”

“Halkett, if you please; I know no ‘misters’ among my crew. Well, this must be looked to; but Halkett might have known better than to send you here in such a guise.”

I made no answer; and, apparently, for some minutes, he forgot all about me, and busied himself in a large chart which covered the table. At last he looked up; and then, after a second or two spent in recalling me to his recollection, said, “Oh, you’re the lad I took up last night; very true. I wanted to speak with you. What can you do, besides what I have seen; for I trust surgery is an art we shall seldom find use for, — can you cook?”

I was ashamed to say that I could boil potatoes and fry rashers, which were all my culinary gifts, and so I replied that “I could not.”

“Have you never been in any service, or any kind of employment?”

“Never, sir.”

“Always a vagabond?”

“Always, sir.”

“Well, certes, I have the luck of it!” said he, with one of his low laughs. “It is, perhaps, all the better. Come, my boy, it does not seem quite clear to me what we can make of you; we have no time, nor, indeed, any patience, for making sailors of striplings,—we always prefer the ready-made article; but you must pick up what you can, keep your watches when on board, and when we go ashore anywhere, you shall be my scout; therefore don’t throw away your old rags, but be ready to resume them when wanted,—you hear?”

“Yes, sir.”

“So far! Now, the next thing is,—and it is right you should know it,—though I keep a yacht for my pleasure and amusement, I sometimes indulge myself in a little smuggling,—which is also a pleasure and amusement; and, therefore, my people are liable, if detected, to be sentenced to a smart term of imprisonment,—not that this has yet happened to any of them, but it may, you know; so it is only fair to warn you.”

“I’ll take my chance with the rest, sir.”

“Well said, boy! There are other little ventures, too, I sometimes make; but you’d not understand them, so we need not refer to them. Now, as to the third point,—discipline. So long as you are on board, I expect obedience in everything; that you agree with your messmates, and never tell a lie. On shore, you may cut each other’s throats to your heart’s content. Remember, then; the lesson is easy enough: if you quarrel with your comrades, I’ll flog you; if you ever deceive me by an untruth, I’ll blow your brains out!” ¶The voice in which he spoke these last few words grew harsher and louder, and at the end it became almost a shout of angry denunciation.

“For your private governance, I may say, you’ll find it wise to be good friends with Halkett, and, if you can, with Jarasch. Go now; I’ve nothing more to say.”

I was about to retire, when he called me back.

“Stay! you’ve said nothing to me, nor have I to you, about your wages.”

“I want none, sir. It is enough for me if I am provided in all money could buy for me.”

“No deceit, sir! No trickery with *me!*” cried he, fiercely, and he glared savagely at me.

“It is not deceit, nor trick either,” said I, boldly; “but I see, sir, it is not likely you’ll ever trust one whom you saw in the humble condition you found me. Land me, then, at the first port you put in to. Leave me to follow out my fortune my own way.”

“What if I take you at your word,” said he, “and leave you among the red Moors, on the coast of Barbary?”

I hung my head in shame and dismay.

“Ay, or dropped you with the Tongo chiefs, who’d grill you for breakfast?”

“But we are nigh England now, sir.”

“We shall not long be so,” cried he, joyfully. “If this breeze last, you’ll see Cape Clear by sunrise, and not look on it again at sunset. There, away with you! Tell Halkett I desire that you should be mustered with the rest of the fellows, learn the use of a cutlass, and to load a pistol without blowing your fingers off.”

He motioned me now to leave, and I withdrew, if I must own it, only partially pleased with my new servitude. One word here to explain my conduct, which perhaps in the eyes of some, may appear inconsistent or improbable. It may be deemed strange and incomprehensible why I, poor, friendless, and low-born, should have been indifferent, even to the refusal of all wages. The fact is this: I had set out upon my “life pilgrimage” with a most firm conviction that one day or other, sooner or later, I should be a “gentleman;” that I should mix on terms of equality with the best and the highest, not a trace or a clew to my former condition being in any respect discoverable. Now, with this one paramount object before me, all my endeavors were gradually to con-

form, so far as might be, all my modes of thought and action to that sphere wherein yet I should move; to learn, one by one, the usages of gentle blood, so that, when my hour came I should step into my position ready suited to all its requirements and equal to all its demands. If this explanation does not make clear the reasons of my generosity, and my other motives of honorable conduct, I am sorry for it, for I have none other to offer.

I have said that I retired from my interview with Sir Dudley not at all satisfied with the result. Indeed, as I pondered over it, I could not help feeling that gentlemen must dislike any traits of high and honorable motives in persons of my own station, as though they were assuming the air of their betters. What could rags have in common with generous impulses; how could poverty and hunger ever consort with high sentiments or noble aspirations? They forgive us, thought I, when we mimic their dress and pantomime their demeanor, because we only make *ourselves* ridiculous by the imitation; but when we would assume the features that regulate their own social intercourse, they hate us, as though we sullied with our impure touch the virtues of a higher class of beings.

The more I thought over this subject, the more strongly was I satisfied that I was correct in my judgment; and, sooth to say, the less did I respect that condition in life which could deem any man too poor to be high-minded.

Sir Dudley's anticipations were all correct. The following evening at sunset the great headlands of the south of Ireland were seen, at first clear, and at last like hazy fogbanks; while our light vessel scudded along, her prow pointing to where the sun had just set behind the horizon; and then did I learn that we were bound for North America.

Our voyage for some weeks was undistinguished by any feature of unusual character. The weather was uniformly fine; steady breezes from the northeast, with a clear sky and a calm sea, followed us as we went, so that, in the pleasant monotony of our lives, one day exactly resembled another. It will, therefore, suffice if, in a few words, I tell how the hours were passed. Sir Dudley came on deck after breakfast, when I spread out a large white bear's skin for him to

lie upon; reclined on which, and with a huge meerschaum of great beauty in his hand, he smoked, and watched the lions at play. These gambols were always amusing, and never failed to assemble all the crew to witness them. Jarasch, dressed in a light woollen tunic, with legs, arms, and neck bare, led them forth by a chain; and, after presenting them to Sir Dudley, from whose hands they usually received a small piece of sugar, they were then set at liberty, — a privilege they soon availed themselves of, setting off at full speed around the deck, sometimes one in pursuit of the other, sometimes by different ways, crossing and recrossing each other; now with a bold spring, now with cat-like stealthiness, creeping slowly past. The exercise, far from fatiguing, seemed only to excite them more and more, since all this time they were in search of the food which Jarasch, with a cunning all his own, knew how, each day, to conceal in some new fashion. Baffled and irritated by delay, the eyes grew red and lustrous, the tails stiffened, and were either carried high over the back or extended straight backwards; they contracted their necks too, till the muscles were gathered up in thick massive folds, and then their great heads seemed actually fastened on the fore part of the trunk. When their rage had been sufficiently whetted by delay, Jarasch would bring forth the mess in a large “grog tub,” covered with a massive lid, on which seating himself, and armed with a short stout bludgeon, he used to keep the beasts at bay. This, which was the most exciting part of the spectacle, presented every possible variety of combat. Sometimes he could hold them in check for nigh half-an-hour, sometimes the struggle would scarce last five minutes. Now, he would, by a successful stroke, so intimidate one of his assailants that he could devote all his energies against the other. Now, by a simultaneous attack, the savage creatures would spring upon and overthrow him, and then, with all the semblance of ungovernable passion, they would drag him some distance along the deck, mouthing him with frothy lips, and striking him about the head with their huge paws, from which they would not desist till some of the sailors, uncovering the mess, would tempt them off by the savor of the food. Although, in general, these games

passed off with little other damage than a torn tunic or a bruise more or less severe, at others Jarasch would be so sorely mauled as to be carried off insensible; nor would he again be seen for the remainder of the day. That the combat was not quite devoid of peril was clear, by the fact that several of the sailors were always armed, some with staves, others with cutlasses, since, in the event of a bite, and blood flowing, nothing but immediate and prompt aid could save the boy from being devoured. This he knew well, and the exercises were always discontinued whenever the slightest cut, or even a scratch, existed in any part of his person. Each day seemed to heighten the excitement of these exhibitions; for, as Jarasch became more skilful in his defence, so did the whelps in the mode of attack; besides that, their growth advanced with incredible rapidity, and soon threatened to make the amusement no longer practicable. This display over, Sir Dudley played at chess with Halkett, while I, seated behind him, read aloud some book, — usually one of voyages and travels. In the afternoon he went below, and studied works in some foreign language of which he appeared most eager to acquire a knowledge, and I was then ordered to copy out into a book various extracts of different routes in all parts of the world: sometimes, the mode of crossing a Syrian desert; now the shortest and safest way through the wild regions on the shores of the Adriatic. At one time the theme would be the steppes of Tartary or the snowy plains of the Ukraine; at another, the dangerous passes of the Cordilleras or the hunting-grounds of the Mandans. What delightful hours were these to me; how full of the very highest interest! The wildest adventures were here united with narratives of real events and people, presenting human life in aspects the strangest and most varied. How different from my old clerkship with my father, with the interminable string of bastard and broken law Latin! I believe that in all my after-life, fortunate as it has been in so many respects, I have never passed hours more happy than these were.

In recompense for my secretarial functions, I was free of the middle watch; so that, instead of turning into my berth at sundown to snatch some sleep before midnight, I could

lounge about at will, — sometimes dropping into the steerage to listen to some seaman's "yarn" of storm and shipwreck, but far oftener, book in hand, taking a lesson in French from the old cook, for which I paid him in being "aide-de-cuisine;" or, with more hardy industry, assisting our fat German mate to polish up his Regensburg pistols, by which I made some progress in that tongue of harsh and mysterious gutturals.

Through all these occupations the thought never left me, — what could be the object of Sir Dudley's continued voyaging? No feature of pleasure was certainly associated with it; as little could it be attributed to the practice of smuggling, — the very seas he had longest cruised in forbade that notion. It must be, thought I, that other reason to which he so darkly alluded on the day he called me to his cabin; and what could that be? Never was ingenuity more tortured than mine by this ever-recurring question; since it is needless to tell the reader I was not then, nor indeed for a very long time afterwards, acquainted with those particulars of his history I have already jotted down. This intense curiosity of mine would doubtless have worn itself out at last, but for a slight circumstance occurring to keep it still alive within me. The little state-room in which I used to write lay at one side of the cabin, from which it was entered, — no other means of getting to it existing; a heavy silk curtain supplied the place of a door between the two; and this, when four o'clock came, and my day's work was finished, was let down till the following morning, when it was drawn aside, that Sir Dudley, from time to time, might see, and, if needful, speak with me. Now, one day, when we had been about three weeks at sea, the weather being intensely hot and sultry, Sir Dudley had fallen asleep in his cabin while I sat writing away vigorously within. Suddenly, I heard a shout on deck: "The whales! a shoal of whales ahead!" and immediately the sudden scuffling of feet, and the heavy hum of voices, proclaimed the animation and interest the sight created. I strained myself to peep through the little one-paned window beside me, but all I could see was the great blue heaving ocean as, in majestic swell, it rolled along. Still the noise continued; and, by the number and

tone of the speakers, I could detect that all the crew were on deck, — every one, in fact, save myself. What a disappointment! full as my mind was of every monster of land and water, burning to observe some of the wonderful things I had read so much about, and now destined actually to be denied a sight on which my comrades were then gazing! I could endure the thought no longer; and although my task was each morning allotted to me, and carefully examined the next day by Sir Dudley, I stepped lightly out on tiptoe, and letting fall the curtain so that if he awoke I should not be missed, I stole up the "companion," and reached the deck.

What a sight was there! the whole sea around us was in motion with the great monsters, who, in pursuit of a shoal of herrings, darted at speed through the blue water, — spouting, blowing, and tossing in all the wildest confusion; here, every eye was bent on a calm still spot in the water, where a whale had "sounded," that is, gone down quite straight into the depths of the sea; here, another was seen scarcely covered by the water, his monstrous head and back alternately dipping below or emerging above it; harpoons and tackle were sought out, firearms loaded, and every preparation for attack and capture made, but none dared to venture without orders, nor was any hardy enough to awake him and ask for them. Perhaps the very expectaney on our part increased the interest, for certainly the excitement of the scene was intense, — so much so that I actually forgot all about my task, and, without a thought of consequences, was hanging eagerly over the taffrail in full enjoyment of the wild scene, when the tinkle of the captain's bell startled me, and, to my horror, I remembered it was now his dinner hour, and that, for the rest of the day, no opportunity would offer of my reaching the state-room to finish my writing.

I was so terrified that I lost all interest in the spectacle, whereof, up to that time, my mind was full. It was my first delinquency, and had all the poignancy of a first fault. The severity I had seen practised on others for even slight infractions of duty was all before me, and I actually debated with myself whether it would not be better to jump overboard at once than meet the anger of Sir Dudley. With any

one else, perhaps, I should have bethought me of some cunning lie to account for my absence; but he had warned me about trying to deceive him, and I well knew he could be as good as his word. I had no courage to tell any of the sailors my fault, and ask their advice; indeed, I anticipated what would be the result: some brutal jest over my misfortune, some coarse allusion to the fate they had often told me portended me, since "no youngster had ever gone from land to land with Sir Dudley without tasting his hemp fritters." I sat down, therefore, beside the bowsprit, where none should see me, to commune alone with my grief, and, if I could, to summon up courage to meet my fate.

Night had closed in some time, and all was tranquil on board, when I saw Halkett, as was his custom, going aft to the cabin, where he always remained for an hour or more each evening. It was just then, I know not how the notion occurred, but it struck me that if I could lower myself over the side, I might be able to creep through the little window into the state-room, and carry away the paper to finish it before morning. I lost little time in setting about my plot; and having made fast a rope to one of the clews, I lowered myself fearlessly over the gunwale, and pushing open the little sash, which was unfastened, I soon managed to insert my head and shoulders, and, without any difficulty dragging my body slowly after, entered the state-room. So long as the danger of the enterprise and its difficulty lasted, so long my courage was high and my heart fearless; but when I sat down in the little dark room, scarcely venturing to breathe, lest I should be overheard, almost afraid to touch the papers on the table, lest their rustling noise should betray me, how was this terror increased when I actually heard the voices of Sir Dudley and Halkett as plainly as though I were in the cabin beside them!

"And so, Halkett," said Sir Dudley, "you think this expedition will be as fruitless as the others?"

"I do, sir," said the other, in a low, dogged tone.

"And yet you were the very man who encouraged me to make it!"

"And what of that? Of two things, I thought it more likely that he should be the leader of a band to a regiment

in Canada than be a Faquino on the Mole of Genoa. A fellow like him could scarcely fall so low as that.”

“He shall fall lower, by Heaven, if I live!” said Sir Dudley, in a voice rendered guttural with deep passion.

“Take care you fall not with him, sir,” said Halkett, in a tone of warning.

“And if I should, — for what else have I lived these three last years? In that pursuit have I perilled health and life, satisfied to lose both if I but succeed at last.”

“And how do you mean to proceed? For, assuredly, if he be attached to the regiment at Kingstown, he’ll hear of you, from some source or other. You remember when we all but had him at Torlosk, and yet he heard of our coming before we got two posts from Warsaw; and again, at ‘Forli,’ we had scarce dropped anchor off Rimini when he was up and away.”

“I’ll go more secretly to work this time, Halkett; hitherto I have been slow to think the fellow a coward. It is so hard to believe anything so base as a man bereft of every trait of virtue: now I see clearly that he is so. I’ll track him, not to offer him the chances of a duel, but to hunt him down as I would a wild beast. I’ll proceed up the river in the disguise of an itinerant merchant, — one of those pedler fellows of which this land is full, — taking the Irish dog along with me.”

“Of whom, remember, you know nothing, sir,” interposed Halkett.

“Nor need to know,” said he, impatient at the interruption. “Let him play me false, let me only suspect that he means it, and my reckoning with him will be short. I have watched him closely of late, and I see the fellow’s curiosity is excited about us: he is evidently on the alert to learn something of our object in this voyage; but the day he gains the knowledge, Tom, will be his last to enjoy it. It is a cheap process if we are at sea, — a dark night and an eighteen-pound shot! If on shore, I’ll readily find some one to take the trouble off my hands.”

It may be imagined with what a sensation of terror I heard these words, feeling that my actual position at the moment would have decided my fate, if discovered; and

yet, with all this, I could not stir, nor make an effort to leave the spot; a fascination to hear the remainder of the conversation had thoroughly bound me as by a spell; and in breathless anxiety I listened, as Sir Dudley resumed:

“You, with Heckenstein and the Greek, must follow, ready to assist me when I need your aid; for my plan is this: I mean to entice the fellow, on pretence of a pleasure excursion, a few miles from the town, into the bush, there to bind him hand and foot, and convey him, by the forest tracks, to the second ‘portage,’ where the batteaux are stationed, by one of which — these Canadian fellows are easily bribed — we shall drop down to Montreal. There the yacht shall be in waiting all ready for sea. Even without a wind, three days will bring us off the Island of Orleans, and as many more, if we be but fortunate, to the Gulf. The very worst that can happen is discovery and detection; and if that ensue, I’ll blow his brains out.”

“And if we succeed in carrying him off, Sir Dudley, what then?”

“I have not made up my mind, Halkett, what I’ll do. I’ve thought of a hundred schemes of vengeance; but, confound it, I must be content with one only, though fifty deaths would not satisfy my hate.”

“I’d put a bullet through his skull, or swing him from the yardarm, and make an end of it,” said Halkett, roughly.

“Not I, faith! He shall live; and, if I can have my will, a long life too. His own government would take charge of him at ‘Irkntsk,’ for that matter, at the quicksilver mines; and they say the diseased bones, from the absorption of that poison, is a terrible punishment. But I have a better notion still. Do you remember that low island off the east shore of the Niger, where the negro fellows live in log huts, threshing the water all day to keep the caymans from the rice-grounds?”

“The devil!” exclaimed Halkett; “you’ll not put him there?”

“I have thought of it very often,” said Sir Dudley, calmly. “He’d see his doom before him every day, and dream of it each night too. One cannot easily forget that

horrid swamp, alive and moving with those reptiles! It was nigh two months ere I could fall asleep at night without starting up in terror at the thought of them." Sir Dudley arose as he said this, and walked the cabin with impatient steps; sometimes as he passed his arm would graze the curtain and shake its folds, and then my heart leaped to my mouth in very terror. At last, with an effort that I felt as the last chance of life, I secured the papers in my bosom, and, standing up on the seat, crept through the window, and, after a second's delay to adjust the rope, clambered up the side, and gained the deck unobserved. It could not have been real fatigue, for there was little or no exertion in the feat; but yet such was my state of exhaustion that I crept over to the boat that was fastened midships, and, lying down in her, on a coil of cable, slept soundly till morning. If my boyish experiences had familiarized my mind with schemes of vengeance as terrible as ever fiction fabricated, I had yet to learn that "gentlemen" cherished such feelings; and I own the discovery gave me a tremendous shock. That some awful debt of injury was on Sir Dudley's mind was clear enough, and that I was to be, in some capacity or other, an aid to him in acquitting it, was a fact I was more convinced of than pleased at. Neither did I fancy his notions of summary justice, — perhaps it was my legal education had prejudiced me in favor of more formal proceedings; but I saw with a most constitutional horror the function of justice, jury, and executioner in the hands of one single individual.

So impressed was I with these thoughts that had I not been on the high seas, I should inevitably have run for it. Alas, however, the banks of Newfoundland — which, after all I had heard mentioned on our voyage, I imagined to be grassy slopes glittering with daisies, and yellow with daffodils — are but sand heaps some two hundred fathoms down in "the ocean blue;" and all one ever knows of them is the small geological specimens brought up on the tallowed end of the deep-sea lead. Escape, therefore, was for the present out of the question; but the steady determination to attempt it was spared me by a circumstance that occurred about a week later.

After some days of calm, common enough in these latitudes, a slight but steady breeze set in from the northeast, which bore us up the Gulf with easy sail till we came in sight of the long, low island of Anticosti, which, like some gigantic monster, raises its dark, misshapen beach above the water. Not the slightest trace of foliage or verdure to give it a semblance to the aspect of land. Two dreary-looking log-houses, about eighteen miles apart, remind one that a refuge for the shipwrecked is deemed necessary in this dangerous channel; but, except these, not a trace exists to show that the foot of man had trod that dreary spot.

The cook's galley is sure to have its share of horrors when a ship "lies to" near this gloomy shore; scarcely a crew exists where some one belonging to it has not had a messmate wrecked there; and then, the dreadful narratives of starvation, and strife, and murders, were too fearful to dwell on. Among the horrors recorded on every hand all agreed in speaking of a terrible character who had never quitted the island for upwards of forty years. He was a sailor who had committed a murder under circumstances of great atrocity, and dared not revisit the mainland, for fear of the penalty of his guilt. Few had ever seen him; for years back, indeed, he had not been met with at all, and rumor said that he was dead. Still, no trace of his body could be found, and some inclined to the opinion that he might at last have made his escape.

He was a negro, and was described as possessing the strength of three or four men; and although the proverbial exaggeration of sailors might, and very probably did, color these narratives, the sad fate of more than one party who had set out to capture him, gave the stories a terrible air of truth. The fear of him was such that although very liberal terms had been offered to induce men to take up their abode in the island to succor the crews of wrecked vessels, none could be found to accept the post; and even at the period when I visited these seas, and after a long lapse of years since the Black Boatswain had been seen, no one would venture.

The story went that his ghost still waudered there, and

that at night, when the storm was high, and the waves of the Gulf sent the spray over that low and dreary island, his cries could be heard, calling aloud to "shorten sail," to "brace round the yards, close the hatchways," mingled with blasphemies that made the very hair stand on end.

If the reader, armed with the triple mail of incredulity, so snugly ensconced in his easy-chair, before a sea-coal fire, can afford to scoff at such perils, not so did I, as I sat in a corner of the galley, gathering with greedy ears the horrors that fell on every side, and now and then stealing out to cast a glance over the bulwarks at the long low bank of sand, which seemed more like an exhalation from the water than a solid mass of rock and shingle.

I have said that a feeling of rivalry existed between the Moorish boy, El Jarasch, and myself; and although I endured the scoffs and sneers at first with a humility my own humble garb and anomalous position enforced, I soon began to feel more confidence in myself, and that species of assurance a becoming dress seems somehow to inspire; for I was now attired like the rest of the crew, and wore the name of the yacht in gold letters on my cap, as well as on the breast of my waistcoat.

The hatred of El Jarasch increased with every day, and mutual scoffs and gibes were the only intercourse between us. More than once, Halkett, who had always befriended me, warned me of the boy, and said that his Moorish blood was sure to make his vengeance felt; but I only laughed at his caution, and avowed myself ready to confront him when and however he pleased. Generosity was little wasted on either side, so that when one day, in a fierce encounter with the lions, El Jarasch received a fall which broke one of his ribs, and was carried in a state of insensibility to his berth, I neither pitied him nor regretted his misfortune. I affected even to say that his own cowardice had rendered the creatures more daring, and that had he preserved a bolder front the mischance would have never occurred. These vauntings of mine, coupled with an avowed willingness to take his place, came to Sir Dudley's ears on the third evening after the accident, and he immediately sent for me to his cabin.

“Is it true, sirrah,” said he, in a harsh, unpleasant voice, “that you have been jesting about Jarasch, and saying that you were ready to take charge of the whelps in his stead?”

“It is,” said I, answering both questions together.

“You shall do so to-morrow, then,” replied he, solemnly; “take care that you can do something as well as boast!” and with this he motioned me to leave the cabin.

I at once repaired to the steerage to report my interview to the men, who were all more friendly with me than with the “Moor.” Many were the counsels I received about how I should conduct myself the next morning; some asserting that, as it was my first time, I could not be too gentle with the animals, avoiding the slightest risk of hurting them, and even suffering their rough play without any effort to check it. Others, on the contrary, advised me at once to seek the mastery over the beasts, and by two or three severe lessons to teach them caution, if not respect. This counsel, I own, chimed in with my own notions, and also better accorded with what, after my late vauntings, I felt to be my duty.

It was altogether a very anxious night with me, not exactly through fear, because I knew, as the men were always ready with their arms loaded, life could not be perilled, and I did not dread the infliction of a mere sprain or fracture; but I felt it was an ordeal wherein my fame was at stake. Were I to acquit myself well, there would be an end forever of those insulting airs of superiority the Moorish boy had assumed towards me. Whereas if I failed, I must consent to bear his taunts and sarcasms without a murmur.

In one point only the advice of all the crew agreed, which was, that the female cub, much larger and more ferocious than the male, should more particularly demand my watchfulness. “If she scratch you, boy, mind that you desist,” said an old Danish sailor, who had been long on the African coast. This caution was re-echoed by all; and, resolving to follow its dictates, I “turned in” to my hammock, to dream of combats and battles till morning.

I was early astir, — waking with a sudden start. I had been dreaming of a lion-hunt, and fancied I heard the deep-mouthed roaring of the beasts in a jungle; and, true enough, a low, monotonous howl came from the place where the

animals lay, for it was now the fourth morning of their being confined without having been once at liberty.

I had just completed my dressing, — the costume was simply a short pair of loose trousers, hands, arms, and feet bare, and a small Fez cap on my head, — when Halkett came down to me to say that he had been speaking to Sir Dudley about the matter, and that as I had never yet accustomed myself to the whelps, it was better that I should not begin the acquaintance after they had been four days in durance. “At the same time,” added Halkett, “he gives you the choice; you can venture if you please.”

“I’ve made up my mind,” said I. “I’m sure I’m able for anything the black fellow can do.”

“My advice to you, boy,” said he, “is to leave them alone. Those Moorish chaps are the creatures’ countrymen, and have almost the same kind of natures, — they are stealthy, treacherous, and cruel. They never trust anything, man or beast!”

“No matter,” said I. “I’m as strong as he is, and my courage is not less.”

“If you will have it so, I have nothing to say, — indeed, I promised Sir Dudley I’d give you no advice one way or other; so now get the staff from Jarasch, and come on deck.”

The staff was a short thick truncheon of oak, tipped with brass at each end, and the only weapon ever used by the boy in his encounters.

“So you’re going to take my place!” said the black fellow, while his dark eyes were lighted up like coals of fire, and his white teeth glanced between his purple lips. “Don’t hurt my poor pet cubs; be gentle with them.”

“Where’s the staff?” said I, not liking the tone in which he spoke, or well knowing if he affected earnest or jest.

“There it is,” said he; “but your white hands will be enough without that. You’ll not need the weapon the coward used!” and as he spoke, a kind of shuddering convulsion shook his frame from head to foot.

“Come, come,” said I, stretching out my hand, “I ought not to have called you a coward, Jarasch, — that you are not! I ask you to forgive me; will you?”

He never spoke, but nestled lower down in the hammock, so that I could not even see his face.

“There, they’re calling me already. I must be off! Let us shake hands and be friends this time at least. When you’re well and up, we can fight it out about something else!”

“Kiss me, then,” said he; and though I had no fancy for the embrace, or the tone it was asked in, I leaned over the hammock, and while he placed one arm round my neck, and drew me towards him, I kissed his forehead, and he mine, in true Moorish fashion; and not sorry to have made my peace with my only enemy, I stepped up the ladder with a light heart and a firm courage.

I little knew what need I had for both! When Jarasch had put his arm around my neck, I did not know that he had inserted his hand beneath the collar of my shirt, and drawn a long streak of blood from his own vein across my back between my shoulders. When I arrived on deck, it was to receive the congratulations of the crew, who were all struck with my muscular arms and legs, and who unanimously pronounced that I was far fitter to exercise the whelps than was the Moor.

Sir Dudley said nothing. A short nod greeted me as I came towards him, and then he waved me back with his hand, — a motion which, having something contemptuous in it, pained me acutely at the moment. I had not much time, however, to indulge such feelings. The whelps were already on deck, and springing madly at the wooden bars of their cage for liberty. Eager as themselves, I hastened to unbolt the door and set them free.

No sooner were they at large than they set off down one side of the deck and up the other, careering at full speed, clearing with a bound whatever stood in their way; and when by any chance meeting each other, stopping for an instant to stare with glaring eyes and swelling nostrils; and then, either passing stealthily and warily past, or one would crouch while the other cleared him at a spring, and so off again. In all this I had no part to play. I could neither call them back, like Jarasch, whose voice they knew, nor had I his dexterity in catching them as they went, and

throwing all manner of gambols over and upon them, as he did.

I felt this poignantly, the more as I saw, or thought I saw, Sir Dudley's eyes upon me more than once, with an expression of disdainful pity. At last, the great tub which contained the creatures' food was wheeled forward; and no sooner had the men retired than the quick-scented animals were on the spot, — so rapidly, indeed, that I had barely time to seat myself, cross-legged, on the lid, when they approached, and with stately step walked round the vessel, staring as it were in surprise at the new figure who disputed their meal with them.

At last, the male placed one paw on the lid, and with the other tapped me twice or thrice on the shoulder with the kind of gentle, pattering blow a cat will sometimes use with a mouse. It was a sort of mild admonition to "leave that," nothing of hostility whatever being announced.

I replied by imitating the gesture, so far as a half-closed fist would permit, and struck him on the side of the head. He looked grave at this treatment, and, slowly descending from his place, he lay down about a yard off. Meanwhile the female, who had been smelling and sniffing round and round the tub, made an effort to lift the lid with her head, and, failing, began to strike it in sharp, short blows with her paw; the excitement of her face, and the sturdy position of her hind legs, showing that her temper was chafed at the delay. To increase her rage, I pushed the lid a few inches back; and as the savory steam arose, the creature grew more eager, and at last attracted the other to the spot.

It was quite clear that hunger was the passion uppermost with them, and that they had not yet connected me with the cause of their disappointment; for they labored by twenty devices to insert a paw or to smash the lid, but never noticed me in the least. Wearied of my failures to induce them to play, and angry at the indifference they manifested to me, I sprang from the lid, and, lifting it from the tub, flung it back. In an instant they had each their heads in the mess; the female had even her great paw in the midst of the tub, and was eating away with that low, gurgling growl peculiar to the wild beast.

Dashing right between them, I seized one by the throat with both hands, and hurled him back upon the deck. A shout of "Bravo!" burst from the crew at the boldness of the feat, and with a bound the fellow made at me. I dropped suddenly on one knee as he came, and struck him with the staff on the fore legs. Had he been shot, he could not have fallen more rapidly; down he went, like a dead mass, on the deck. To spring on his back and hold him fast down was the work of a second, while I belabored him about the head with my fists.

The stunning effect of his first fall gave me the victory for a moment, but he soon rallied, and attacked me boldly. It was now a fair fight; for if I sometimes succeeded in making him shake his huge head or drop his paw with pain, more than once he staggered me with a blow which, had it been only quickly followed, would soon have decided the struggle. At last, after a scuffle in which he had nearly vanquished me, he made a leap at my throat. I put in a blow of such power with the staff on the forehead that he gave a loud roar of pain, and, with drooping tail, slunk to hide away himself beneath a boat.

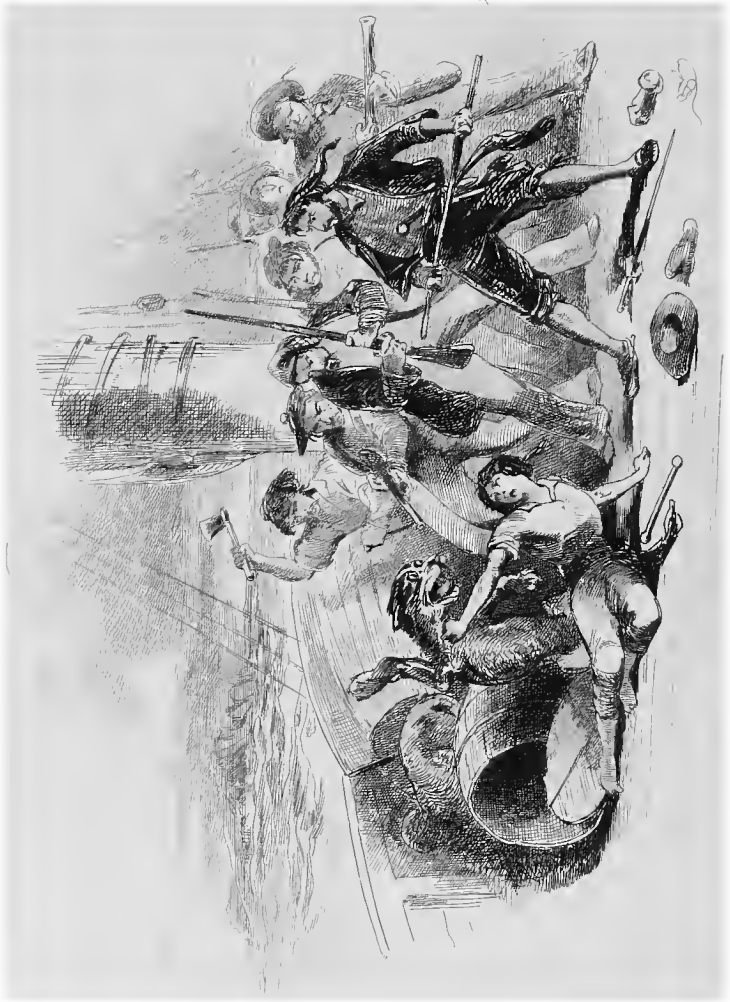
Up to this moment the female had never stirred from the mess of food, but continued eating and snarling as though every mouthful was a battle. Scarcely, however, had the roar of the other cub been heard than she lifted her head, and, slowly turning round, stared at me with an expression which, even now, my dreams will recall.

I had not yet recovered from the exhaustion of my late encounter, and was half sitting, half kneeling on the deck, as the whelp stood glowering at me, with every vein in her vast forehead swollen, and her large, red eyes seeming to dilate as she looked. The attitude of the creature must have been striking, for the crew cheered with a heartiness that showed how much they admired her.

So long as I sat unmoved she never stirred; but when I prepared to arise, she gave one bound, and, striking me with her head, hurled me back upon the deck: her own impulse had carried her clean over me, and when she returned, I was already up, on my knees, and better prepared to receive her. Again she tried the same manœuvre; but this time I leaped



A. Brough. Whymata.



A. Gough Wynne

to my feet, and, springing on one side, struck her a heavy blow on the top of the head. Twice or thrice the same attack, with the same result, followed; and at each blow a gallant cheer from the men gave me fresh courage.

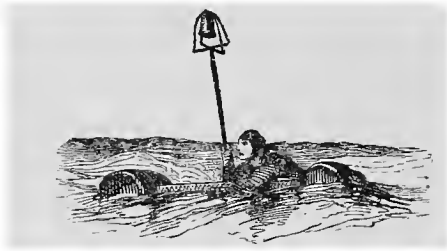
The beast was now excited to a dreadful degree; but her very passion favored me, for her assaults were wilder and less circumspect than at first. At length, just as I was again making the side leap by which I had escaped, my foot slipped, and I fell. I was scarcely down ere she was upon me, not, as before, to strike with her paws, but with a rude shock she threw herself across me, as if to crush me by her weight; while her huge head and terrific mouth, frothy and steaming, lay within a few inches of my face.

Halkett and two others advanced to my rescue; but I bade them go back and leave me to myself, for I was only wearied, not conquered. For some minutes we lay thus; when at length, having recovered strength once more, I grasped the whelp's throat with both hands, and then by a tremendous effort threw her back, and rolled myself uppermost. She soon shook herself free, however, and turned upon me: I was now on my knees, and with the staff I dealt her a fierce blow on the leg. A terrific howl followed, and she closed with me in full fury. Seizing my shirt, she tore it away from my breast, and with her paw upon the fragment, ripped it in a hundred pieces. I endeavored to catch her by the throat once more, but failed, and rolled over on my face, and in doing so, disclosed the bloody streak between my shoulders; she saw it, and at the same instant sprang on me. I felt her teeth as they met in my neck, while her terrible cry, the most appalling ears ever heard, rang through my brain.

"Save him! Save him! She's killing him!" were now heard on every side; but none dared to fire for fear of wounding me, and the terrible rage of the animal deterred all from approaching her. The struggle was now a life-and-death one; and alternately falling and rolling, we fought—I cannot tell how, for the blood blinded me as it came from a wound in my forehead; and I only felt one firm purpose in my heart: "If I fall, she shall not survive me." Several of the sailors came near enough to strike her with

their cutlasses; but these wounds only increased her rage, and I cried to them to desist.

“Shoot her! put a bullet through her!” cried Halkett. “Let none dare to shoot her!” cried Sir Dudley, loudly. I just heard these words, as, after a fierce struggle, in which she had seized me by the shoulder, I fell against the bulwark. With a last effort I staggered to my knees, flung open the gangway, and then, with an exertion that to myself seemed my very last on earth, I seized her by the throat and hurled her backwards into the sea. On hands and knees I leaned forward to see her as the rapid Gulf-stream, hurrying onward to the ocean, bore her away; and then, as my sight grew fainter, I fell back upon the deck, and believed I was dying.





"MEANS AND MEDITATIONS."

T was the second evening after my lion adventure, and I was stretched in my hammock in a low, half-torpid state, not a limb nor a joint in all my body that had not its own peculiar pain; while a sharp wound in my neck, and another still deeper one in the fleshy part of my shoulder, had just begun that process called "union," — one which, I am bound to say, however satisfactory in result, is often very painful in its progress. The slightest change of position gave me intolerable anguish, as I lay, with closed eyes and crossed hands, not a bad resemblance of those stone saints one sees upon old tombstones.

My faculties were clear and acute, so that, having abundant leisure for the occupation, I had nothing better to do than take a brief retrospect of my late life. Such reviews are rarely satisfactory, or rather, one rarely thinks of making them when the "score of the past" is in our favor. Up to this moment it was clear I had gained little but experience; I had started light, and I had acquired nothing, save a somewhat worse opinion of the world and a greater degree of confidence in myself. I had but one way of balancing my account with Fortune, which was by asking myself, "Would I undo the past, if in my power? Would I wish once more to be back in my 'father's mud edifice,' now digging a drain, now drawing an indictment, — a kind of pastoral pettifogger, with one foot in a potato furrow, and the other in petty sessions?" I stoutly said, "No!" a thousand times "no!" to this question.

I could not ask myself as to my preference for a university career, for my college life had concluded abruptly, in spite of me; but still, during my town experiences I saw enough to leave me no regrets at having quitted the muses. The life of a "skip," as the Trinity men have it, — *vice* gyp., for the Greek word signifying a "vulture," — is only removed by a thin sheet of silver paper from that of a cabin boy in a collier; copious pummelling and short prog being the first two articles of your warrant; while in some respects the marine has a natural advantage over him on shore. A skip is invariably expected to invent lies "at discretion" for his master's benefit, and is always thrashed when they are either discovered or turn out adverse. On this point his education is perfectly "Spartan;" but, unhappily too, he is expected to be a perfect mirror of truth on all other occasions. This is somewhat hard, inasmuch as it is only in a man's graduate course that he learns to defend a paradox, and support by good reasons what he knows to be false.

Again, a "skip" never receives clothes, but is flogged at least once a week for disorders in his dress, and for general untidiness of appearance; this, too, is hard, since he has as little intercourse with soap as he has with conic sections.

Thirdly, a good skip invariably obtains credit for his master at “Foles’s” chop-house; while, in his own proper capacity, he would not get trust for a cheese-paring.

Fourthly, a skip is supposed to be born a valet, as some are born poets, — to have an instinctive aptitude for all the details of things he has never seen or heard of before; so that when he applies Warren’s patent to French leather boots, polishes silver with a Bath brick, blows the fire with a quarto, and cuts candles with a razor, he finds it passing strange that he should be “had up” for punishment. To be fat without food, to be warm without fire, to be wakeful without sleep, to be clad without clothes, to be known as a vagabond, and to pass current for unblemished honesty, to be praised as a liar, and then thrashed for lying, — is too much to expect at fifteen years of age.

Lastly, as to Betty’s I had no regrets. The occupation of horse-boy, like the profession of physick, has no “avenir.” The utmost the most aspiring can promise to himself is to hold more horses than his neighbors, as the Doctor’s success is to order more “senna.” There is nothing beyond these; no higher path opens to him who feels the necessity for an “upward course.” It is a ladder with but one round to it! No, no; I was right to “sell out” there.

My steeplechase might have led to something, — that is, I might have become a jockey; but then, again, one’s light weight, like a “contralto” voice, is sure to vanish after a year or two; and then, from the heyday of popularity, you sink down into a bad groom or a fourth-rate tenor, just as if, after reaching a silk gown at the bar, a man had to begin life again as crier in the Exchequer! Besides, in all these various walks I should have had the worst of all “trammels,” a patron. Now, if any resolve had thoroughly fixed itself in my mind, it was this: never to have a patron, never to be bound to any man who, because he had once set you on your legs, should regulate the pace you were to walk through a long life. To do this, one should be born without a particle of manhood’s spirit, — absolutely without volition; otherwise you go through life a living lie, talking sentiments that are not yours, and wearing a livery in your heart as well as on your back!

Why do we hear such tirades about the ingratitude of men, who, being once assisted by others, — their inferiors in everything save gold, — soar above the low routine of toadyism, and rise into personal independence? Let us remember that the contract was never a fair one, and that a whole life's degradation is a heavy sum to pay for a dinner with his Grace, or a cup of tea with her Highness. "My Lord," I am aware, thinks differently; and it is one of the very pleasant delusions of his high station to fancy that little folk are dependent upon him, — what consequence they obtain among their fellows by his recognition in public, or by his most careless nod in the street. But "my Lord" does not know that this is a paper currency that represents no capital, that it is not convertible at will, and is never a legal tender; and consequently, as a requital for actual *bonâ fide* services, is about as honest a payment as a flash note.

It was no breach of my principle that I accepted Sir Dudley's offer. Our acquaintance began by my rendering him a service; and I was as free to leave him that hour, and, I own, as ready to do so, if occasion permitted, as he could be to get rid of me; and it was not long before the occasion presented itself for exercising these views.

As I lay thus, ruminating on my past fortunes, Halkett descended the steerage-ladder, followed by Felborg, the Dane; and, approaching my hammock, held a light to my face for a few seconds. "Still asleep?" said Halkett. "Poor boy! he has never awoke since I dressed his wound this morning. I'm sure it's better; so let us leave him so."

"Ay, ay," said the Dane, "let him sleep; bad tidings come soon enough, without one's being awoke to hear them. But do you think he'll do it?" added he, with lower and more anxious tone.

"He has said so; and I never knew him fail in his promise when it was a cruel one."

"Have you no influence over him, Halkett? Could you not speak for the boy?"

"I have done all I could, — more than perhaps it was safe to do. I told him I could n't answer for the men, if he were to shoot him on board; and he replied to me short, 'I'll

take the fellow ashore with me alone; neither you nor they have any right to question what you are not to witness.’”

“Well, when I get back to Elsinore, it’s to a prison and heavy irons I shall go for life, that’s certain; but I’d face it all rather than live the life we’ve done now for twenty months past.”

“Hush! speak low!” said the other. “I suppose others are weary of it as well as you. Many a man has to live a bad life just because he started badly.”

“I’m sorry for the boy!” sighed the Dane; “he was a bold and fearless fellow.”

“I am sorry for him too. It was an evil day for him when he joined us. Well, well, what would he have become if he had lived a year or two on board!”

“He has no father nor mother,” said the Dane, “that’s something. I lost mine, too, when I was nine years old; and it made me the reckless devil I became ever after. I was n’t sixteen when the crew of the ‘Tre-Kroner’ mutinied, and I led the party that cut down the first lieutenant. It was a moon-light night, just as it might be now, in the middle watch, and Lieutenant Eldenstrom was sitting aft, near the wheel, humming a tune. I walked aft, with my cutlass in one hand, and a pistol in the other; but just as I stepped up the quarter-deck my foot slipped, and the cutlass fell with a clank on the deck.

“‘What’s that?’ cried the lieutenant.

“‘Felborg, sir, mate of the watch,’ said I, standing fast where I was. ‘It’s shoaling fast ahead, sir.’

“‘D—n!’ said he, ‘what a coast!’

“‘Could n’t you say a bit of something better than that?’ said I, getting nearer to him slowly.

“‘What do you mean?’ said he, jumping up angrily; but he was scarce on his legs when he was down again at his full length on the plank, with a bullet through his brain, never to move again!”

“There, there, avast with that tale; you’ve told it to me every night that my heart was heavy this twelvemonth past. But I’ve hit on a way to save the lad, — will you help me?”

“Ay, if my help does n't bring bad luck on him; it always has on every one I befriended since — since —”

“Never mind that. There's no risk here, nor much room for luck, good or bad.” He paused a second or two, then added, —

“I'm thinking we can't do better than shove him ashore on the island yonder.”

“On Anticosti!” said Felborg, with a shudder.

“Ay, why not? There's always a store of biscuit and fresh water in the log-houses, and the cruisers touch there every six or seven weeks to take people off. He has but to hoist the flag to show he's there.”

“There's no one there now,” said the Dane.

“No. I saw the flag-staff bare yesterday; but what does that matter? A few days or a few weeks alone are better than what's in store for him here.”

“I don't think so. No! Beym alla Deyvelm! I'd stand the bullet at three paces, but I'd not meet that negro chap alone.”

“Oh, he's dead and gone this many a year,” said Halkett. “When the ‘Rodney’ transport was wrecked there, two years last fall, they searched the island from end to end, and could n't find a trace of him. They were seven weeks there, and it's pretty clear if he were alive —”

“Ay, just so, — if he were alive!”

“Nonsense, man! You don't believe those yarns they get up to frighten the boys in the cook's galley?”

“It's scarce mercy, to my reckoning,” said Felborg, “to take the lad from a quick and short fate, and leave him yonder; but if you need my help, you shall have it.”

“That's enough,” said Halkett; “go on deck, and look after the boat. None of our fellows will betray us; and in the morning we'll tell Sir Dudley that he threw himself overboard in the night, in a fit of frenzy. He'll care little whether it's true or false.”

“I say, Con — Con, my lad,” said Halkett, as soon as the other had mounted the ladder. “Wake up, my boy; I've something to tell you.”

“I know it,” said I, wishing to spare time, which I thought might be precious; “I've been dreaming all about it.”

“Poor fellow, his mind is wandering,” muttered Halkett to himself. “Come, my lad, try and put on your clothes, — here’s your jacket;” and with that he lifted me from my hammock, and began to help me to dress.

“I was dreaming, Halkett,” said I, “that Sir Dudley sent me adrift in the punt, and fired at me with the swivel, but that you rowed out and saved me.”

“That’s just it!” said Halkett, with an energy that showed how the supposed dream imposed upon him.

“You put me ashore on Anticosti, Halkett,” said I; “but was n’t that cruel! — the Black Boatswain is there.”

“Never fear the Black Boatswain, my lad, he’s dead years ago; and it strikes me you’ll steer a course in life where old wives’ tales never laid down the soundings.”

“I can always be brave when I want it, Halkett,” said I, letting out a bit of my peculiar philosophy; but I saw he did n’t understand my speech, and I went on with my dressing in silence.

Halkett meanwhile continued to give me advice about the island, and the log-houses, and the signal-ensign; in fact, about all that could possibly concern my safety and speedy escape, concluding with a warning to me, never to divulge that anything but a mere accident had been the occasion of my being cast away. “This for your own sake and for mine too, Con,” said he; “for one day or other he,” — he pointed to the after-cabin, — “he’d know it, and then it would fare badly with some of us.”

“Why not come too, Halkett?” said I; “this life is as hateful to you as to myself.”

“Hush, boy; no more of that,” said he, with a degree of emotion which I had never witnessed in him before. “Make yourself warm and snug, for you must n’t take any spare clothes, or you’d be suspected by whoever takes you off the island; here’s my brandy-flask and a tinder-box; that’s a small bag of biscuit, — for you’ll take six or seven hours to reach the log-house, — and here is a pistol, with some powder and ball. Come along, now, or shall I carry you up the ladder?”

“No, I’m able enough now,” said I, making an effort to seem free from pain while I stepped up on deck.

I was not prepared for the affectionate leave-taking which met me here; each of the crew shook my hand twice or thrice over, and there was not one did not press upon me some little gift in token of remembrance.

At last the boat was lowered, and Halkett and three others, descending noiselessly, motioned to me to follow. I stepped boldly over the side, and, waving a last good-bye to those above, sat down in the stern to steer, as I was directed.

It was a calm night, with nothing of a sea, save that rolling heave ever present in the Gulf-stream; and now the men stretched to their oars, and we darted swiftly on, not a word breaking the deep stillness.

Although the island lay within six miles, we could see nothing of it against the sky, for the highest point is little more than twelve feet above the water-level.

I have said that nothing was spoken as we rowed along over the dark and swelling water; but this silence did not impress me till I saw ahead of us the long low outline of the dreary island shutting out the horizon; then a sensation of sickening despair came over me. Was I to linger out a few short hours of life on that melancholy spot, and die at last exhausted and broken-hearted? "Was this to be the end of the brilliant dream I had so often revelled in?" "Ah, Con!" said I, "to play the game of life, a man must have capital to stand its losses, — its ruins of evil fortune; but you are ruined with one bad deal!"

"Run her in here, in this creek!" cried Halkett to the men; and the boat glided into a little bay of still water under the lee of the land, and then, after about twenty minutes' stout rowing, her keel grated on the rugged, shingly shore of Anticosti.

"We cannot land you dry-shod, Con," said Halkett; "it shoals for some distance here."

"No matter," said I, trying to affect an easy, jocular air, my choking throat and swelling heart made far from easy; "for me to think of wet feet would be like the felon at the drop blowing the froth off the porter because it was unwholesome!"

"I've better hopes of you than that comes to, lad!" said he; "but good-bye! good-bye!" He shook my hand

with a grasp like a vice, and sat down with his back towards me; the others took a kind farewell of me; and then, shouldering my little bag of biscuit, I pressed my cap down over my eyes, and stepped into the surf. It was scarcely more than over mid-leg, but the clay-like, spongy bottom made it tiresome walking. I had only gone a few hundred yards, when a loud cheer struck me; I turned: it was the boat's crew, giving me a parting salute. I tried to answer it, but my voice failed me; the next moment they had turned the point, and I saw them no more!

I now plodded wearily on, and in about half an hour reached the land; and whether from weariness, or some strange instinct of security on touching shore, I know not, but I threw myself heavily down upon the shingly stones, and slept soundly, — ay, and dreamed too! dreamed of fair lands far away, such as I have often read of in books of travels, where bright flowers and delicious fruits were growing, and where birds and insects of gaudiest colors floated past with a sweet murmuring song that made the air tremble.

Who has not read “Robinson Crusoe;” and who has not imagined himself combating with some of the difficulties of his fortune, and pictured to his mind what his conduct might have been under this or that emergency?

No speculations are pleasanter, when indulged at our own fireside, in an easy-chair, after having solaced our “material” nature by a good dinner, and satisfied the “moral” man by the “City Article,” which assures us that the Three per Cents are rising, and that Consols for the Account are in a very prosperous state. Then, indeed, if our thoughts by any accident stray to the shipwrecked sailor, they are blended with a wholesome philanthropy, born of good digestion and fair worldly prospects; we assure ourselves that we should have made precisely the same exertions that he did, and comported ourselves in all the varied walks of carpenter, tailor, hosier, sail-maker, and boat-builder exactly like him. The chances are, too, that if accidentally out of temper with our neighbors, we cordially acknowledge that the retirement was not the worst feature in his history; and if provoked by John Thomas, the footman, we are ready to

swear that there was more gratitude in Friday's little black finger than in the whole body corporate of flunkeys, from Richmond to Blackwall.

While these very laudable sentiments are easy enough in the circumstances I have mentioned, they are marvellously difficult to practise at the touch of stern reality. At least I found them so, as I set out to seek the "Refuge" on Anticosti. It was just daybreak as, somewhat stiffened with a sleep on the cold beach, and sore from my recent bruises, I began my march. "Nor'-west and by west" was Halkett's vague direction to me; but as I had no compass, I was left to the guidance of the rising sun for the cardinal points. Not a path nor track of any kind was to be seen; indeed, the surface could scarcely have borne traces of footsteps, for it was one uniform mass of slaty shingle, with here and there the backbone of a fish, and scattered fragments of seaweed, washed up by the storms, on this low bleak shore. I cannot fancy desolation more perfect than this dreary spot, slightly undulating, but never sufficient to lose sight of the sea; not a particle of shelter to be found; not a rock, nor even a stone large enough to sit upon when weary. Of vegetation, no trace could be met with; even a patch of moss or a lichen would have been a blessing to see; but there were neither. At last, as I journeyed on, I wandered beyond the sound of the sea as it broke upon the low strand, and then the silence became actually appalling. But a few moments back, and the loud booming of the breakers stunned the ear; and now, as I stopped to listen, I could hear my own heart as in full, thick beat it smote against my ribs. I could not dismiss the impression that such a stillness, thus terrible, would prevail on the day of judgment, when, after the graves had given up their millions of dead, and the agonizing cry for mercy had died away, then, as in a moment of dread suspense, the air would be motionless, not a leaf to stir, not a wing to cleave it. Such possession of me did this notion take that I fell upon my knees and sobbed aloud, while, with trembling and uplifted hands, I prayed that I too might be pardoned.

So powerful is the influence of a devotional feeling, no matter how associated with error, how alloyed by the dross

of superstition, that I, who but an instant back could scarcely drag my wearied limbs along for very despair, became of a sudden trustful and courageous. Life seemed no longer the worthless thing it did a few minutes before; on the contrary, I was ready to dare anything to preserve it; and so, with renewed vigor I again set forward.

At each little swell of the ground, I gazed eagerly about me, hoping to see the log-hut, but in vain; nothing but the same wearisome monotony met my view. The sun was now high, and I could easily see that I was following out the direction Halkett gave me, and which I continued to repeat over and over to myself as I went along. This and watching my shadow—the only one that touched the earth—were my occupations. It may seem absurd, even to downright folly; but when from any change in the direction of my course the shadow did not fall in front of me, where I could mark it, my spirits fell, and my heavy heart grew heavier.

When, however, it did precede me, I was never wearied watching how it dived down the little slopes, and rose again on the opposite bank, bending with each swell of the ground. Even this was companionship,—its very motion smacked of life.

At length I came upon a little pool of rain-water, and, although far from clear, it reflected the bright blue sky and white clouds so temptingly that I sat down beside it to make my breakfast. As I sat thus, Hope was again with me, and I fancied how—in some long distant time, when favored by fortune, and possessed of every worldly gift, with rank, and riches, and honor—I should remember the hour when, a poor, friendless outcast, I ate my lonely meal on Anticosti. I fancied even, how friends would listen almost incredulously to the tale, and with what traits of pity or of praise they would follow me in my story.

I felt I was not doomed to die in that dreary land, that my own courage would sustain me; and, thus armed, I again set out.

Although I walked from daybreak to late evening, it was only a short time before darkness closed in that I saw a bulky mass straight before me, which I knew must be the

log-house. I could scarcely drag my legs along a few moments before; but now I broke into a run, and with many a stumble, and more than one fall, — for I never turned my eyes from the hut, — I at last reached a little cleared spot of ground, in the midst of which stood the “Refuge-house.”

What a moment of joy was that as, unable to move farther, I sat down upon a little bench in front of the hut! All sense of my loneliness, all memory of my desolation, was lost in an instant. There was my home; how strange a word for that sad-looking hut of pine-logs, in a lone island, uninhabited! No matter, it would be my shelter and my refuge till better days came round; and with that stout resolve I entered the great roomy apartment, which in the settling gloom of night seemed immense.

Striking a light, I proceeded to take a survey of my territory, which I rejoiced to see contained a great metal stove and an abundant supply of bed-clothing, — precautions required by the frequency of ships being ice-bound in these latitudes. There were several casks of biscuits, some flour, a large chest of maize, besides three large tanks of water, supplied by the rain. A few bags of salt and some scattered objects of clothing completed the catalogue, which, if not very luxurious, contained nearly everything of absolute necessity.

I lighted a good fire in the stove, less because I felt cold, for it was still autumn, than for the companionship of the bright blaze and the crackling wood. This done, I proceeded to make myself a bed on one of the platforms, arranged like bed-places round the walls, and of which I saw the upper ones seemed to have a preference in the opinion of my predecessors, since, in these, the greater part of the bed-clothing was to be found, — a choice I could easily detect the reason of, in the troops of rats which walked to and fro, with a most contemptuous indifference to my presence; some of them standing near me while I made my bed, and looking, as doubtless they felt, considerably surprised at the nature of my operations. Promising myself to open a spirited campaign against them on the morrow, I trimmed and lighted a large lamp, which from its position had defied their attempt on the oil it still contained; and then, a biscuit in hand, betook myself to bed, watching with an interest not, I own,

altogether pleasant, the gambols of these primitive natives of Anticosti.

From my earliest years I had an antipathy to rats, — so great that it mastered all the instincts of my courage. I feared them with a fear I should not have felt in presence of a wild beast, and I was confident that had I been attacked vigorously by even a single rat, the natural disgust would have rendered me unable to cope with him. When very young, I remembered hearing the story of an officer who, desirous of visiting the vaults under St. Patrick’s Church, in Dublin, descended into them under the escort of the sexton. By some chance they separated from each other, and the sexton, after in vain seeking and calling for his companion for several hours, concluded that he had already returned to the upper air; and so he returned also, locking and barring the heavy door, as was his wont. The following day the officer’s friends, alarmed at his absence, proceeded to make search for him through the city, and at last, learning that he had visited the cathedral, went thither, and even examined the vaults, when what was their horror to discover a portion of the brass ornament of his shako and a broken sword in the midst of several hundreds of rats, dead and dying, — the terrible remains of a combat that must have lasted for hours. This story, for the truth of which some persons yet living will vouch, I heard when a mere child; and perhaps to its influence may I date a species of terror that has always been too much for either my reason or my courage.

If I slept, then, it was more owing to my utter weariness and exhaustion than to that languid frame of mind; and although too tired to dream, my first waking thought was how to commence hostilities against the rats. As to any personal hand-to-hand action, I need scarcely say I declined engaging in such; and, my supply of gunpowder being scanty, the method I hit upon was to make a species of grenade, by inserting a quantity of powder with a sufficiency of broken glass into a bottle, leaving an aperture through the cork for a fuse; then, having smeared the outside of the bottle plentifully with oil, of which I discovered a supply in bladders suspended from the ceiling, I retired to my berth, with

the other extremity of the fuse in my hand, ready to ignite when the moment came.

I had not long to wait; my enemies, bold from long impunity, came fearlessly forward, and surrounded the bottle in myriads; it became a scene like an election row, to witness their tumbling and rolling over each other. Nor could I bring myself to cut short the festivity, till I began to entertain fears for the safety of the bottle, which already seemed to be loosened from its bed of clay. Then at last I applied a match to my cord, and almost before I could cover my head with the blanket, the flask exploded, with a crash and a cry that showed me its success. The battle-field was truly a terrible sight, for the wounded were far more numerous than the dead, and I, shame to say, had neither courage nor humanity to finish their sufferings, but lay still, while their companions dragged them away in various stages of suffering.

I at first supposed that this was an exploit that could only succeed but once, and that the well-known sagacity of the creatures would have made them avoid so costly a temptation. Nothing of the kind; they were perfect Scythians in their love of oil; and as often as I repeated my experiment, they were ready to try their fortunes. Or perhaps they had some of the gambler's element in their nature, and each felt that he might win where others lost.

I had made Halkett a promise that for a couple of days, at least, I would not hoist the signal-flag, lest any accident should induce Sir Dudley to suspect my place of refuge, so that I was completely reduced to my campaign against the rats for occupation and amusement. So far as I could discover, the little island, traverse it how I would, never varied, the same rise and swell of surface, clad with loose stone, lay on every side; and so depressing had this mournful uniformity become to me that I rarely ventured out of the hut, or, when I did, it was to sit upon the little bench outside the door, from which a sea view extended over the wide waters of the Gulf.

To sit here and try to decipher the names cut into the wood was my constant occupation. What histories, too, did

I weave of those who carved these letters ; and how did they fix themselves in my mind, each name suggesting an identity, till I felt as if I had known them intimately. Some seemed the precious work of weeks ; and it was easy to see that after the letters were cut, the sculptor had gone on embellishing and ornamenting his work for very lack of labor. Others, again, were mere initials, and one was a half-finished name, leaving me to the perpetual doubt whether he had been rescued from his captivity, or died ere it was completed.

Between my hours spent here and the little duties of my household, with usually three or four explosions against my rats, the day went over, — I will not say rapidly, but pass it did ; and each night brought me nearer to the time when I should hoist my signal, and hope — ay, that was the great supporter through all — hope for rescue.

It was now the third night of my being on the island, and I sat at my fire trying to invent some new mode for the destruction of my enemies, for my last charge of powder had been expended. I had nothing remaining, save the loading in my pistol. It was true that I had succeeded to a great extent ; the creatures no longer appeared with their former air of assurance, nor in large bodies. Their army was evidently disorganized ; they no longer took the field in battalions, but in scattered guerilla parties, without discipline or courage. Even had my ammunition lasted, it is more than doubtful that my tactics would have continued to have the same success ; they had begun to dread the bottle, like a reformed drunkard. Often have I seen them approach within a few feet of it, and wait patiently till some younger and more adventurous spirit would venture nearer, and then, at the slightest stir, — the least rustling of my bed-clothes, — away they went in full career. It was evident that the secret, like most great mysteries of the same kind, had had its day. This was consolatory, too, as I had no longer the means of continuing my siege operations ; while the caution and reserve of the enemy suggested a system of defence of the simplest, but most effectual kind, which was, to place a certain number of bottles at different parts of the hut, the very sight of which inspired terror ;

and if followed by any noise, was certain to secure me, for some time at least, from all molestation.

Shall I tell the reader how this stratagem first occurred to me? It was simply thus: In one of the early but unrecorded years of my history, I used to act as driver to the Moate and Kilbeggan caravan, — not, indeed, as the recognized coachee of that very rickety and most precarious conveyance, but as a kind of “deputy assistant” to the paid official, who, having a wife at Kilbeggan, usually found some excuse for stopping at Clara, and sending me forward with the passengers, — a proceeding, I am bound to own, not over consistent with humanity to “man or beast.” Many were the misadventures of that luckless conveyance, and the public were loud in their denunciations of it; but as nobody knew the proprietors, nor did the most searching scrutiny detect the existence of a “way-bill,” the complaints were uttered to the wind, and I was at full liberty “to do my stage” in three hours, or one half the time, as I fancied.

The passengers at length learned this valuable fact, and found that greasing my palm was a sure method of oiling the wheels. All complaints gradually subsided; in fact, the dumb animals were the only ones who had any right to make them. I drove them at a very brisk pace, — a thriving trade; the caravan became popular, and my fame rose as the horses’ condition declined. At last the secret was discovered; and instead of my imposing whip of four yards and a half of whipcord, they reduced me to a stunted bit of stick, with a little drooping lash that would n’t reach the tail of my one leader. My receipts fell off from that hour; in fact, instead of praises and sixpences, I now got nothing but curses and hard names; and at one hill, near “Horse-leap,” which I used in my prosperous days to “go at” in a slashing canter, amid a shower of encomiums, I was now obliged to stagger slowly up, with four-and-twenty small farmers, and maybe a priest, in full cry at my sulkiness, laziness, incivility, and other good gifts; and all this, ay, and more, for lack of a bit of whipcord.

I have been told that very great people will stoop to low alliances when hard pressed; even cabinet ministers, I

believe, have now and then acknowledged very dubious allies. Let not Con Cregan, then, be reproached if he called in the help of a little bare-footed boy who used to beg on the hill of Horse-leap, and who, at the sound of the approaching caravan, sallied forth with a long branch of an ash-tree, and belabored the team into some faint resemblance to a canter. Through this auxiliary I recovered in part my long-lost popularity, and was likely to be again reinstated in public favor, when my assistant caught the measles, and I was once more reduced to my own efforts.

In this emergency I had nothing for it but a stratagem; and so, as the conveyance arrived at the foot of the hill, and the horses, dropping their heads, were gradually subsiding into the little shuffling amble that precedes a slow walk, I used to scream out at the top of my voice all my accustomed exhortations to the boy. “Ah, hit him again, Tommy,—into him, boy,—under the traces, my lad!—give him enough of it!—welt him well. Ha! there!” exclamations that, from old associations, always stimulated the wretched beasts into a canter; and under the impression of this salutary terror, we used to reach the top almost as speedily as in the old days of the penal code.

The same device now aided me against the rats of Anticosti; and if any one will say to what end this narrative of an encounter so insignificant, my answer is, that whether in the St. Lawrence or in St. Stephen’s, rats are far more formidable than their size or strength would seem to imply; and whether they nibble your rags or your reputation, their success is invariably the same.

Four days had now elapsed, and I concluded that the yacht must ere this have been miles on her voyage up the river. The next morning, then, I should venture to hoist the signal, and thus apprise the passing ships that one deserted and forlorn creature, at least, still lingered on the miserable island.

I sat at my fire till a late hour. I was lower in spirits than usual. I had watched the Gulf from sunrise to sunset, and without seeing one sail upon its surface. A light breeze was blowing from the northward, and on this I supposed many of the outward vessels would be borne along; but not

one appeared. From time to time a fleeting cloud, resting for a moment on the horizon, would assume the semblance of a ship; but at length I grew accustomed to these deceptions, and suffered little or no disappointment when a second glance at the spot failed to detect them.

Once or twice the thought crossed my mind that I might never leave the island, that winter might close in, and the Gulf be frozen before I could make my escape; and I actually shuddered at the very notion of a fate so terrible. I cowered nearer to the fire as the flame subsided, and was sitting with my hands outstretched over the blaze, when the sudden crash of one of the bottles behind startled me. Were the rats already regaining courage in anticipation of the time when I could no longer resist them? With this idea, I turned my head round. The flame threw a long ray of light upon the floor as I moved, and in the midst of this I beheld, at a distance of about three yards off, a large black head, with two immense and bloodshot eyes glaring fixedly at me. It seemed to rise out of the earth, above which it rose scarcely more than a foot in height.

Paralyzed by terror, I could not stir, I could scarcely breathe, as with a slow and nodding motion the large black face came nearer; and now I could see that it was a man — a negro, — who on hands and knees was slowly creeping towards me. Overwhelmed by fear as I was, I noted the features as marked by age and worn by want; they resembled those of a wild beast rather than of a human creature. More from the force of a mere mechanical impulse than with any notion of defence, for which my terror totally incapacitated me, I had drawn my pistol from my bosom, and held it pointed towards him. “No fire! — no fire!” cried the creature, in a low, faint voice; and at the same time, while resting on one hand, he held up with the other a long bright knife in an attitude of menace.

“No nearer, then!” screamed I, as I fell back beside the stove, and still kept my eyes fixed upon him whom now I knew to be the Black Boatswain; and thus we remained, each watching the other, while the fire flickered and threw its fitful glare over the gloomy space around us. As we were thus, I saw, or I thought I saw, the negro stealthily

drawing up his legs, as if for a spring, and in my terror I believe I should have pulled the trigger, when suddenly the knife dropped from his hand, and pointing with his finger to his dry, cracked lips, he said, “A boire,” — water.

The look of earnest, almost passionate entreaty of the poor creature’s face, the expression of want and misery, struggling with a faint hope, as he uttered these words, routed all fears for myself; and filling a cup from the tank with water, I emptied the last remaining drops of my brandy-flask into it, and held it to his mouth.



He swallowed it greedily; and then, clasping my wrist with his gannt and bony fingers, held me fast for a few seconds while he recovered his breath; at last, with an effort that seemed almost convulsive, he said some words in Spanish which I could not understand. I shook my head to show him my ignorance of the language, and then, fixing his eye full upon me, he said, “Alone, here? boy alone?”

Understanding that this referred to myself, I answered at once that I was alone, and had been deserted by my companions.

“Bad men, white men!” cried he, gnashing his teeth savagely; while again he pointed to his lips, and muttered, “Water!” I endeavored to free myself from his grasp to fill the cup once more; but he held me firmly, and showed by a sign that he wished me to assist him to reach the tank. I accordingly stooped down to help him, and now perceived that he could do little more than drag his legs forward and support himself on the knees; being either wholly or in part paralyzed from his hips downwards. “Ah, foco!” cried he, twice or thrice, and then changed to the word “Feu!” “Le feu!” on which his gaze was fixed with a horrid earnestness.

It was not without labor and much exertion that I succeeded in dragging him near the embers of the fire; but having done so, I quickly replenished the dying flame, and, fanning it with my hat, soon succeeded in making a cheerful blaze once more. “Buono! goot! goot!” said he, several times, as he held his shrivelled and wasted fingers almost into the fire.

“Are you hungry?” said I, bending down to make myself heard.

He nodded twice.

“Can you eat biscuit? I have nothing else,” said I; for I half feared that the hard, dry food would be impracticable for his almost toothless jaws.

He said something about “Guisado,” once or twice; and at last made a sign that I understood to mean that the biscuit might be softened in water for him. And with that I placed a pot of water on the fire, and soon saw by the expression of his eye that I had divined his meaning.

As I continued to blow the fire, and occasionally examined the water to see if it boiled, I could mark that the negro's eyes never once quitted me, but, with a restless activity, followed me wherever I went, or whatever I did; and although from his age, and the dreadful infirmity he labored under, I felt I should prove his equal in any struggle, I own that I cast many a sidelong look towards him, lest he should take

me by surprise. That he was the notorious Black Boatswain of whom I had heard so much, I had no doubt whatever; and I felt not a little vain of my own courage and presence of mind as I saw myself so possessed and collected in such company.

"Give! give!" cried he, impatiently, as I examined the mess of steeping biscuit, and for which he seemed ravenously eager; and at length I removed it from the fire, and placed it before him. Such voracity as his I never witnessed, save in the case of Sir Dudley's lions; he crammed the food with both hands into his mouth, and devoured it with all the savage earnestness of a wild beast. Twice was I obliged to replenish the mess; and each time did it vanish with the same despatch.

He now lay back on one arm, and, half closing his eyes, appeared as if he was going asleep; but at the least stir or movement on my part, I saw that his wild, red-streaked eyes followed me at once.

Halkett had given me a little bag of tobacco at parting, saying that although I was no smoker, I should soon learn to become one in my solitude. This I now produced, and offered him a handful.

The dark features were immediately lighted up with an almost frantic expression of pleasure, as he clutched the precious weed; and tearing off a fragment of the paper, he rolled it into the shape of a cigarette.

"No smoke?" asked he, as I sat watching his preparations.

I shook my head. "Ah!" cried he, laying down the tobacco before him. "Tehoka, here," said he, pointing to it.

"I don't understand," said I; "what is Tehoka?"

"Bad! bad!" said he, shaking both hands; "weed make negro so——, so——," and he opened his mouth wide, and dropped his arms heavily backwards, to represent sickness, or perhaps death.

"No, no," said I; "this is good, a friend gave it to me."

"Smoke," said he, pushing it over towards me; and I saw now that my abstaining had excited his suspicions.

"If you like, I will smoke," said I, setting to work to manufacture a cigar like his own.

He sat eying me all the while; and when I proceeded to fill it with tobacco, he leaned over to see that I did not attempt any sleight of hand to deceive him.

“Will that do?” said I, showing him the little paper tube.

“Smoke,” said he, gravely.

It was only after watching me for several minutes that he took courage to venture himself; and even then he scrutinized the tobacco as keenly as though it demanded all his acuteness to prevent stratagem. At length he did begin; and certainly never did anything seem to effect a more powerful and more immediate influence. The fiery, restless eyes grew heavy and dull; the wide-distended nostrils ceased to dilate with their former convulsive motion. His cheek, seamed with privation and passion, lay flaccid and at rest, and a look of lethargic ease stole over all the features one by one, till at last the head fell forward on his chest, his arm slipped softly from beneath him, and he rolled heavily back, — sunk in the deepest sleep.

I soon abandoned my tobacco now, which had already begun to produce a feeling of giddiness and confusion very unfavorable to cool determination, — sensations which did not subside so readily as I could have wished; for as I sat gazing on my swarthy companion, fancies the wildest and most absurd associated themselves with the strange reality. The terrible tales I once listened to about the “Black Boat-swain” came to mingle with the present. The only remnant of right reason left prompted me to keep up my fire; a certain terror of being alone and in the dark with the negro predominating over every other thought.

By the bright blaze, which soon arose, I could now mark the enormous figure, which, in all the abandonment of heavy slumber, lay outstretched before me. Although it was evident he was very old, the gigantic limbs showed what immense strength he must have possessed; while in the several white cicatrices that marked his flesh, I could reckon a great number of wounds, some of them of fearful extent. The only covering he wore was a piece of sailcloth wrapped round his body; over this he had a blanket, through a round hole in which his head issued, like as in a Mexican poncho, leaving his sinewy limbs perfectly naked. A bit of ragged,

worn bunting — part, as it seemed, of an old union-jack — was bound round his head, and, in its showy colors, served to enhance the stern expression of his harsh features.

As my senses became clearer, I began to imagine how it happened that he came to the hut, since in all the narratives I had heard of him, the greatest doubt existed that he was still living, so effectually did he manage his concealment. At last, and by dint of much thought, I hit upon what I suspected to be the real solution of the difficulty, which was, that he was accustomed to venture hither whenever the signal-flag was not hoisted; and as I had not done so, that he was under the belief that he was the only living man on the island.

That he must have contrived his hiding-place with great success was clear enough; for whether the allegations against him were true or false, they were so universally believed by sailors that if he had been discovered they would unquestionably have carried him off to Quebec. It was now in *my* power "to do the state this service;" and I began to canvass with myself all the reasons for and against it. If, on the one hand, it reminded me of the old legends I used to read about striplings that led captive huge giants or fierce dragons, on the other, I felt it would be a species of treachery to one who had eaten bread from my hands. Besides, to what end — even supposing him guilty to any extent — to what end bring him now to justice, when a few days, or hours, perhaps, would close a life whose suffering was manifest enough? And, lastly, was I so certain of escape myself that I already plotted carrying away a prisoner with me? The last reflection saved me the trouble of thinking much more on the others; and so I fell a pondering over myself and my destitution.

Not long was I permitted to indulge in such reveries; for the negro now began to dream, and talk aloud with a rapidity of utterance and vehemence very different from the monosyllabic efforts he had favored me with. As the language was Spanish, I could catch nothing of his meaning; but I could see that some fearful reminiscence was agitating his mind, by the working of his fingers and the violent contortions of his face.

In the struggle of his paroxysm — for it was really little less — he tore open the coarse rag of canvas that he wore, and I could perceive something fastened round his neck by a piece of spun-yarn. At first I thought it one of those charms that seamen are so fond of carrying about them, — amulets against Heaven knows what kind of dangers: but, on stooping down, I perceived it was an old leather pocket-book which once had been red, but by time and dirt was almost black.

More than once he clutched this in his hand, with a wild energy, as if it was his heart's treasure; and then the great drops of sweat would start out upon his forehead, and his parted lips would quiver with agony. In one of these struggles he tore the book from the cord, and, opening it, seemed to seek for something among its contents. The rapidity of the movement, and the seeming collectedness of every gesture, made me believe that he was awake; but I soon saw that his great and staring eyeballs were not turned to the spot, but were fixed on vacancy.

His motions were now more and more hurried; at one time his fingers would turn over the papers in the pocket-book, at another he would grope with his hand along the ground, and pat the earth down with his palm, as if, having buried something in the earth, he would conceal every trace of it from discovery; and at these moments the Spanish word *oro*, gold, would escape him in a half-sigh; and this and the word "Guajaquilla" were the only ones I could catch; but my mind retained both for many a day after.

At last he crushed the papers hurriedly together and closed the pocket-book; but in doing so, a single slip of paper fell to the ground. I leaned over, and caught it; and by the light of the fire I read the following lines, which were in print, and apparently cut from the column of a newspaper: —

ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD.

Any one will be entitled to the above reward who may detect or give such information as may lead to the detection of Menelaus Crick, a negro slave, aged forty-eight; he stands six feet two high; broad chest and shoulders, the right higher than the left; has

marks of the lash on back, and two cutlass scars on the face ; the great toe of the left foot is wanting, and he walks occasionally with difficulty, from a gunshot wound in the spine.

As he is a fellow of resolute character and great strength, all persons are hereby warned not to attempt his capture, save in sufficient numbers. He was last seen at San Luis, and is supposed to have gone in the direction of Guajaquilla, where it is said he worked once as a gold-washer.

Address : The Office of the “Picayune” — Letter — T. G — B —. New Orleans.

There were a few words in Spanish scrawled on the back.

“Here is the man !” said I, looking down on the sleeping figure ; “who would have thought a thousand dollars could be made of him ?” Not, indeed, that I speculated on such an unholy gain. No, the very offer enlisted my sympathies in favor of the poor wretch ; besides, how many years ago must that advertisement have appeared ? He was forty-eight at that time, and now his age might be nigh eighty. My curiosity became intense to see the contents of the pocket-book, from which I could fancy abundant materials to eke out the negro’s history. I am afraid that nothing but the terror of discovery prevented my stealing it. I even planned how it might be done without awaking him ; but the long bright knife which glistened in the strap of his blanket admonished me to prudence, and I abstained.

My fire waxed fainter as the dawn drew nigh, and as I was afraid of sleep coming over me, I stepped noiselessly from the hut, and gained the open air. My first occupation was to hoist the signal ; and as it rose into the air, I watched its massive folds unfurling, with a throb of hope that gave me new courage. The standard was very lofty, and stood upon a mound of earth ; and as the flag itself was large, I had every reason to think it could not escape notice. Scarcely, indeed, had I made fast the halyard than I beheld on the very verge of the horizon what seemed to be a vessel. The moment of sunrise, like that of sunset, is peculiarly favorable to distinct vision ; and as the pink line of dawn sheeted over the sea, the dark object stood out clear and sharp ; but the next moment the glare of brighter day covered sky and water together, and I could no longer see the ship.

In my anxiety to try and catch sight of it from another spot, I hastened down to the shore ; but already a rosy tint was spread over the wide sea, and nothing was discernible except the heaving waves and the streaked sky above them.

I sat upon a rock straining my eyes, but to no purpose : and at last the cold raw air pierced through me, and I remembered that I had left my jacket in the hut. But for this, indeed, I would not have returned to it, — for, without absolute fear of the negro, his repulsive features and scowling look made his companionship far from pleasurable. His suspicion of me, too, might have led him to some act of violence ; and therefore I determined, if I were even to seek shelter in the Refuge-house at the other end of the island, I would not go back to this one.

It was some time before I could summon courage to venture back again ; and even when I had reached the door, it was not without a struggle with myself that I dared to enter. The daylight was now streaming in, across the lounge and dreary chamber, and, encouraged by this, I stepped across the threshold. My first glance was towards the stove, where I had left him lying asleep. The fire had burned out, and the negro was gone ! With cautious steps, and many a prying glance around, I ventured forward, my heart thumping with a fear I cannot explain, — since his very presence had not caused such terror ; but nowhere was he to be found, — not a trace of him remained. Indeed, were it not for the scrap of printed paper, which I had carefully preserved, I should have believed the whole events of the night to be the mere fancies of a dream.

Twice was I obliged to take it from my pocket and read it over, to assure myself that I was not pursuing some hallucination of sleep ; and if I felt convinced that the events were real, and had actually happened, I will frankly own that the reality inspired me with a sense of fear which no memory of a mere vision could have inspired.

Daylight is a bold companion, however, and where night would make the heart beat fast and the cheek pale, the sun will give a strong pulse and a ruddy face. This I could not help feeling, as I acknowledged to myself that had it been

yet dark, I had rather have perished with cold than sought for my jacket within the hut.

At last, grown bolder, I had even courage to seek for the negro on every side. I examined the berths along the walls; I searched the recesses beside the biscuit-casks; I removed planks and turned over sails; but without success. The difficulty with which he moved made this seem doubly strange, and satisfied me that his place of concealment could not be far off, — nay, possibly, at that very moment he might be actually watching me, and waiting for a favorable instant to pounce upon me. This dread increased as my search continued to be fruitless; so that I abandoned the pursuit, assured that I had done everything that could have been asked either of my courage or humanity; nor was I sorry to assure myself that I had done enough.

My interest in the subject was soon superseded by one nearer to my heart; for as I left the hut I beheld, about four miles off, a large three-masted vessel bearing up the Gulf, with all her canvas spread. Forgetting the distance, and everything save my longing to be free, I ascended a little eminence, and shouted with all my might, waving my handkerchief back and forward above my head. I cannot describe the transport of delight I felt, at perceiving that a flag was hoisted to the main peak, and soon after lowered, — a recognition of the signal which floated above me. I even cried aloud with joy; and then, in the eagerness of my ecstasy, I set off along the shore, seeking out the best place for a boat to run in.

Never did a ship appear so glorious an object to my eyes; her spars seemed more taper, her sails more snowy, her bearing prouder, than ever a vessel owned before; and when at length I could distinguish the figures of men in the rigging, my heart actually leaped to my mouth with delight.

At last she backed her topsail, and now I saw shooting out from beneath her tall sides a light pinnace, that skimmed the water like a sea-bird. As if they saw me, they headed exactly towards where I stood, and ran the craft into a little bay just at my feet. A crew of four sailors and coxswain now jumped ashore, and advanced towards me.

“Are there many of you?” said the coxswain, gruffly,

and as though nothing were a commoner occurrence in life than to rescue a poor forlorn fellow-creature from an uninhabited rock.

"I am alone, sir," said I, almost bursting into tears, for mingled joy and disappointment; for I was, I own it, disappointed at the want of sympathy for my lone condition.

"What ship did you belong to, boy?" asked he, as shortly as before.

"A yacht, sir, — the 'Firefly.'"

"Ah, that's it; so they shoved you ashore here. That's what comes of sailing with gentlemen, as they call 'em."

"No, sir; we landed — a few of us — during a calm —"

"Ay, ay," he broke in, "I know all that, — the old story; you landed to shoot rabbits, and somehow you got separated from the others; the wind sprung up meantime; the yacht fired a gun to come off — eh, is n't that it! Come, my lad, no gammon with *me*. You're some infernal young scamp that was 'had up' for punishment, and they either put you ashore here for the rats, or you jumped overboard yourself, and floated hither on a spare henceop. But never mind, — we'll give you a run to Quebec; jump in."

I followed the order with alacrity, and soon found myself on board the "Hampden" transport, which was conveying the —th Regiment of Foot to Canada.

"No one but this here boy, sir," said the cowswain; shoving me before him towards the skipper, who, amidst a crowd of officers in undress, sat smoking on the after-deck.

A very significant grunt seemed to imply that the vessel's way was lost for very slight cause.

"He says as how he belonged to a yacht, sir," resumed the cowswain.

"Whose yacht, boy?" asked one of the officers.

"Sir Dudley Broughton's, sir; the 'Firefly,'" said I.

"Broughton! Broughton!" said an old, shrewd-looking man, in a foraging-cap; "don't you know all about him? But, to be sure, he was before *your* day;" and then, changing his discourse to French, — with which language, thanks to my kind old friend Father Rush, I was sufficiently acquainted to understand what was said, — he added, "Sir Dudley was in the Life Guards once; his wife eloped with

a Russian or a Polish Count, — I forget which, — and he became deranged in consequence. Were you long with Sir Dudley, boy?” asked he, addressing me in English.

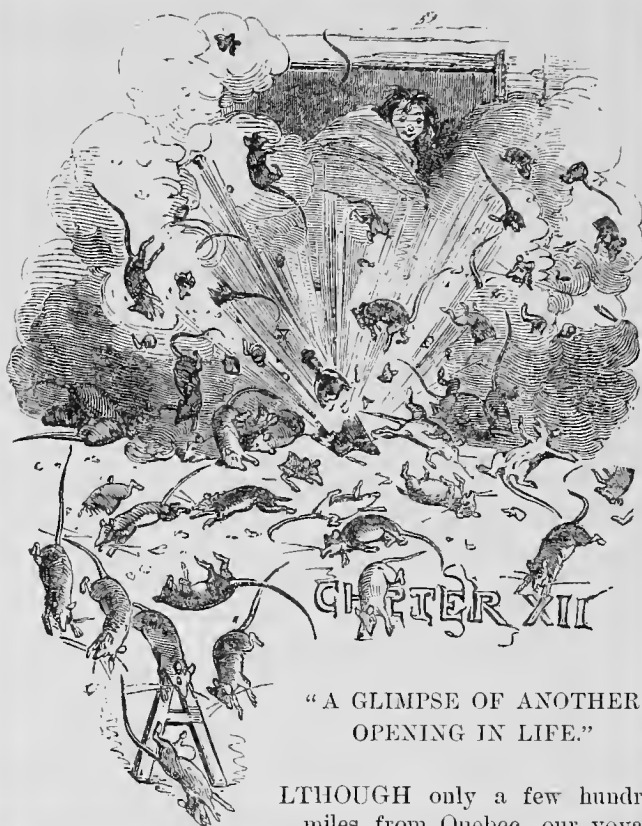
“Not quite two months, sir.”

“Not a bad spell with such a master,” resumed he, in French, “if the stories they tell of him be true. How did you happen to be left on Anticosti?”

“No use in asking, Captain!” broke in the skipper. “You never get a word of truth from chaps like that; go for’ard, boy.”

And with this brief direction I was dismissed. All my fancied heroism — all my anticipated glory — vanishing at once; the only thought my privations excited being that I was a young scamp, who, if he told truth, would confess that all his sufferings and misfortunes had been but too well merited.

This was another lesson to me in life, and one which perhaps I could not have acquired more thoroughly than by a few days on Anticosti.



CHAPTER XII
“A GLIMPSE OF ANOTHER
OPENING IN LIFE.”

ALTHOUGH only a few hundred miles from Quebec, our voyage still continued for several days; the “Hampden” like all transport-ships, was only “great in a calm,” and the Gulf-stream being powerful enough to retard far better sailers.

To those who, like myself, were not pressed for time, or had no very pleasing vista opening to them on shore, the voyage was far from disagreeable. As the channel narrowed, the tall mountains of Vermont came into view, and gradually the villages on the shore could be detected, — small, dark clusters, in the midst of what appeared interminable pine forests. Here and there less pleasant sights presented themselves, in the shape of dismayed hulks, being the remains of

vessels which had got fastened in the ice of the early “fall,” and were deserted by the crews.

On the whole, it was novelty, and novelty alone, lent any charm to the picture; for the shores of the Gulf, until you come within two days’ journey of Quebec, are sadly discouraging and dreary. The Log-house is itself a mournful object; and when seen standing alone in some small clearing, with blackened stumps studding the space, through which two or three figures are seen to move, is inexpressibly sad-looking and solitary.

Now and then we would pass some little town, with a humble imitation of a harbor for shipping, and a quay; and in the midst a standard, with a flag, would denote that some Government official resided there, — the reward, doubtless, of some gallant deed, some bold achievement afloat; for I heard that they were chiefly lieutenants in the navy, who, having more intimacy with French grape and canister than with “First Lords,” were fain to spend the remnant of their days in these gloomiest of exiles.

The absence of all signs of life and movement in the picture cannot fail to depress the spectator. No team of oxen draws the loaded wagon along; not a plough is seen. There are no gatherings of people in the open places of the towns; no cattle can be descried on the hills. The settlements appear like the chance resting-places of men travelling through the dark forests, and not their homes for life. At times a single figure would be seen on some high cliff above the sea, standing motionless, and, to all seeming, watching the ship. I cannot say how deeply such a sight always affected me; and I could not help fancying him some lone emigrant, following with beating heart the track he was never again to travel.

Apparently, these things made a deeper impression on me than upon most others on board. As for the soldiers, they were occupied with getting their arms and equipments in order, to make a respectable appearance on landing. It was one eternal scene of soap and pipeclay all day long; and creatures barely able to crawl, from sea-sickness and debility, were obliged to scour and polish away as if the glory of England depended upon the show the gallant —th would

make, the day we should set foot on shore. The skipper, too, was bent on making an equally imposing show to the landsmen; his weather topmasts were stowed away, and in their place were hoisted some light and taper spars, not exactly in accordance with the lubberly hull beneath. Pitch and white paint were in great requisition too; and every day saw some half-dozen of the crew suspended over the side, either scraping or painting for the very life. Many a shirt dangled from the boom, and more than one low-crowned hat received a fresh coat of glistening varnish; all were intent on the approaching landing, even to the group of lounging officers on the poop, who had begun to reduce their beards and whiskers to a more "regulation" standard, and who usually passed the morning inspecting epaulettes and sword-knots, shakos, gorgets, and such like, with the importance of men who felt what havoc among the fair Canadians they were soon about to inflict.

My services were in request among this section of the passengers, since I had become an expert hand at cleaning arms and equipments with Sir Dudley; besides that, not wearing his Majesty's cloth, the officers were at liberty to talk to me with a freedom they could not have used with their men. They were all more or less curious to hear about Sir Dudley, of whom, without transgressing Halkett's caution, I was able to relate some amusing particulars. As my hearers invariably made their comments on my narratives in French, I was often amused to hear them record their opinions of myself, expressed with perfect candor in my own presence. The senior officer was a Captain Pike, an old, keen-eyed, pock-marked man, with a nose as thin as a sheet of parchment. He seemed to read me like a book; at least, so far as I knew, his opinions perfectly divined my true character.

"Our friend Con," he would say, "is an uncommonly shrewd varlet, but he is only telling us some of the truth; he sees that he is entertaining enough, and won't produce 'Lafitte' so long as we enjoy his 'Ordinaire.'"

"Now, what will become of such a fellow as that?" asked another. "Heaven knows! such rascals turn out consummate scoundrels, or rise to positions of eminence. Never was

there a more complete lottery than the life of a young rogue like that.”

“I can’t fancy,” drawled out a young subaltern, “how an ignorant cur, without education, manners, and means, can ever rise to anything.”

“Who can say whether he has not all these?” said the captain, quietly. “Trust me, Carrington, you’d cut a much poorer figure in *his* place than would he in *yours*.”

The ensign gave a haughty laugh, and the captain resumed: “I said it were not impossible that he had each of the three requisites you spoke of, and I repeat it. He may, without possessing learning, have picked up that kind of rudimentary knowledge that keenness and zeal improve on every day; and as for tact and address, such fellows possess both as a birthright. I have a plan in my head for the youngster; but you must all pledge yourselves to secrecy, or I’ll not venture upon it.”

Here a very general chorus of promises and “on honors” broke forth; after the subsidence of which, Captain Pike continued, still, however, in French; and although being far from a proficient in that tongue, I was able to follow the tenor of his discourse, and divine its meaning, particularly as from time to time some of the listeners would propound a question or two in English, by the aid of which I invariably contrived to keep up with the “argument.”

“You know, lads,” said the captain, “that our old friend Mrs. Davis, who keeps the boarding-house in the Upper Town, has been always worrying us to bring her out what she calls a first-rate man-servant from England; by which she means a creature capable of subsisting on quarter rations, and who, too far from home to turn restive, must put up with any wages. The very fact that he came out special, she well knows, will be a puff for the ‘Establishment’ among the Canadian Members of Parliament and the small fry of officials who dine at the house; and as to qualifications, who will dare question the ‘London footman’?”

“Pooh, pooh!” broke in Carrington; “that fellow don’t look like a London footman.”

“Who says he does?” retorted the captain. “Who ever said brass buttons and blue beads were gold and turquoise?”

But they pass for the same in villages not fifty miles from where we are sailing. Mother Davis was wife of a skipper in the timber trade who died harbor-master here; she is not a very likely person to be critical about a butler or footman's accomplishments."

"By Jove," cried another, "Pike is all right! Go on with your plan."

"My plan is this: we'll dress up our friend Con, here, give him a few lessons about waiting at table, delivering a message, and so forth, furnish him with a jolly set of characters, and start him on the road of life with Mother Davis."

A merry roar of approving laughter broke forth from the party at this brief summary of Captain Pike's intentions; and indeed it was not without great difficulty I avoided joining in it.

"He looks so devilish young!" said Carrington; "he can't be fifteen."

"Possibly not fourteen," said Pike; "but we'll shave his head and give him a wig. I'll answer for the 'make up;' and as I have had some experience of private theatricals, rely on 't he'll pass muster."

"How will you dress him, Pike?"

"In livery, — a full suit of snuff-brown, lined with yellow; I'll devote a large cloak I have to the purpose, and we'll set the tailor at work to-day."

"Is he to have shorts?"

"Of course; some of you must 'stand' silk stockings for him, for we shall have to turn him out with a good kit."

A very generous burst of promises here broke in, about shirts, vests, cravats, gloves, and other wearables, which, I own it, gave the whole contrivance a far brighter coloring in my eyes than when it offered to be a mere lark.

"Will the rogue consent, think you?" asked Carrington.

"Will he prefer a bed and a dinner to nothing to eat and a siesta under the planks on the quays of Quebec?" asked Pike, contemptuously. "Look at the fellow! watch his keen eyes and his humorous mouth when he's speaking to you, and say if he would n't do the thing for the fun of it? Not but a right clever chap like him will see something besides a joke in the whole contrivance."

"I foresee he'll break down at the first go off," said Carrington, who through all the controversy seemed impressed with the very humblest opinion of my merits.

"I foresee exactly the reverse," said Pike. "I've seldom met a more acute youngster, nor one readier to take up your meaning; and if the varlet does n't get spoilt by education, but simply follows out the bent of his own shrewd intelligence, he'll do well yet."

"You rate him more highly than I do," said Carrington, again.

"Not impossible either; we take our soundings with very dissimilar lead-lines," said Pike, scoffingly. "My opinion is formed by hearing the boy's own observations about character and life when he was speaking of Broughton; but if you were ten times as right about him, and I twice as many times in the wrong, he'll do for what I intend him."

The others expressed their full concurrence in the captain's view of the matter, voted me a phoenix of all young vagabonds, and their brother-officer Carrington a downright ass, — both being my own private sentiments to the letter.

And now for an honest avowal! It was the flattery of my natural acuteness — the captain's panegyric on my aptitude and smartness — that won me over to a concurrence in the scheme; for, at heart, I neither liked the notion of "service," nor the prospect of the abstemious living he had so pointedly alluded to. Still, to justify the favorable impression he had conceived of me, and also with some half hope that I should see "life" — the ruling passion of my mind — under a new aspect, I resolved to accept the proposition so soon as it should be made to me; nor had I long to wait that moment.

"Con, my lad," said the captain, "you may leave that belt there; come aft here, — I want to speak to you. What are your plans when you reach Quebec? Do you mean to look after your old master, Sir Dudley, again?"

"No, sir; I have had enough of salt water for a time, — I'll keep my feet on dry land now."

"But what line of life do you propose to follow?"

I hesitated for the answer, and was silent.

"I mean," resumed he, "is it your intention to become a

farm-servant with some of the emigrant families, or will you seek for employment in the town?"

"Or would you like to enlist, my lad?" broke in another.

"No, thank you, sir; promotion is slow from the ranks, and I've a notion one ought to move 'up,' as they move 'on,' in life."

"Listen to the varlet now," said Pike, in French; "the fellow's as cool with us as if we were exactly his equals, and no more. I'll tell you what it is, lads," added he, seriously, "when such rogues journey the road of life singly, they raise *themselves* to station and eminence; but when they herd together in masses, these are the fellows who pull *others* down, and effect the most disastrous social revolutions. — So you'll not be a soldier, Con?" added he, resuming the vernacular; "well, what are your ideas as to the civil service?"

"Anything to begin with, sir."

"Quite right, lad, — well said; a fair start is all you ask?"

"Why, sir, I carry no weight, either in the shape of goods or character; and if a light equipment gives speed, I've a chance to be placed well."

The captain gave a side-glance at the others as though to say, "Was I correct in my opinion of this fellow?" and then went on: "I have a thought in my head for you, Con: there is a lady of my acquaintance at Quebec wants a servant; now, if you could pick up some notion of the duties, I've no doubt you'd learn the remainder rapidly."

"I used to wait on Sir Dudley, sir, and am therefore not entirely ignorant."

"Very true; and as these gentlemen and myself will put you into training while the voyage lasts, I hope you'll do us credit in the end."

"Much will depend on my mistress, sir," said I, determining to profit by what I had overheard, but yet not use the knowledge rashly or unadvisedly. "Should she not be very exacting and very particular, but have a little patience with me, accepting zeal for skill, I've no doubt, sir, I'll not discredit your recommendation."

"That's the very point I'm coming to, Con," said the captain, lowering his voice to a most confidential tone.

"The true state of the case is this:" — and here he entered upon an explanation which I need not trouble the reader by recapitulating, since it merely went the length I have already related, save that he added, in conclusion, this important piece of information: —

"Your golden rule, in every difficulty, will then be, to assure Mrs. Davis that you always did so, whatever it may be, when you were living with Lord George, or Sir Charles, or the Bishop of Drone. You understand me, eh?"

"I think so, sir," said I, brightening up, and at the same time stealing an illustration from my old legal practices. "In Mrs. Davis's court there are no precedents."

"Exactly, Con; hit the nail on the very head, my boy!"

"It will not be a very difficult game, sir, if the guests are like the mistress."

"So they are, for the most part; now and then you'll have a military and naval officer at table, and you'll be obliged to look out sharp, and not let them detect you; but with the skippers of merchantmen, dockyard people, store-keepers, male and female, I fancy you can hold your own."

"Why, sir, I hope they'll be satisfied with the qualification that contented my former titled masters," said I, with a knowing twinkle of the eye he seemed to relish prodigiously, and an assumed tone of voice that suited well the part I was to play.

"Come down below, now, and we'll write your characters for you;" and so he beckoned the others to accompany him to the cabin, whither I followed them.

An animated debate ensued as to the number and nature of the certificates I ought to possess, some being of opinion that I should have those of every kind and degree; others alleging that my age forbade the likelihood of my having served in more than two or three situations.

"What say you to this, lads?" said Pike, reading from a rough and much-corrected draft before him: —

The bearer, Cornelius Cregan, has lived in my service ten months as a page; he is scrupulously honest, active, and intelligent, well acquainted with the duties of his station, and competent to discharge them in the first families. I now dismiss him at his own request.

CECILIA MENDLESHAW.

“Gad! I’d rather make him start as what they call in his own country a ‘Tay-boy,’” said Carrington, — “one of those bits of tarnished gold-lace and gaiters seen about the outskirts of Dublin.”

“Your honor is right, sir,” said I, glad to show myself above any absurd vanity on the score of my early beginning; “a ‘Tay-boy’ on the Rathmines road, able to drive a jaunting-car and wait at table.”

“That’s the mark, I believe,” said Pike. “Suppose, then, we say: ‘Con Cregan has served me twelve months, waited at table, and taken care of a horse and car.’”

“Ah, sir!” said I, “sure an Irish gentleman with a ‘Tay-boy’ would be finer spoken than that. It would be: ‘I certify that Cornelius Cregan, who served in my establishment as under-butler, and occasionally assisting the coachman, is a most respectable servant, well-mannered and respectful, having always lived in high situations, and with the most distinguished individuals.’”

“Ah, that’s it,” broke in Carrington; “‘understands lamps, and is perfectly competent to make jellies, soups, and preserves.’”

“Confound it, man! you’re making him a cook.”

“By Jove, so I was! It’s so hard to remember what the fellow is.”

“I think we may leave it to himself,” said Pike; “he seems to have a very good notion of what is necessary. So, Master Con, write your own biography, my lad, and we’ll give it all the needful currency of handwriting and seal.”

“It’s a pity you’re a Papist,” said another, “or you could have such a recommendation from a ‘serious family’ I know of in Surrey.”

“Never mind,” rejoined the captain; “one signed ‘P. O. Dowdum, Bishop of Toronia,’ will do even better in the Lower Province.”

“Exactly, sir; and, as I used to serve mass once, I can ‘come out strong’ about my early training with ‘his Grace’!”

“Very well,” said Pike; “tell the tailor to take your measure for the livery, and you’ll wait on us to-day at table.” With this order I was dismissed, to con over my fictitious and speculate on my true “character.”



AS viewed from Diamond Harbor, a more striking city than Quebec is seldom seen. The great rock rising above the lower town, and crowned with its batteries, all bristling with guns, seemed to my eyes the very realization of impregnability. I looked from the ship that lay tranquilly on the water below, and whose decks were thronged with blue jackets, to the Highlander who paced his short path as sentry, some hundred feet high upon the wall of the fortress; and I thought to myself, with such defenders as these, that standard yonder need never carry any other banner.

The whole view is panoramic. The bending of the river shuts out the channel by which you have made your approach, giving the semblance of a lake, on whose surface vessels of every nation lie at anchor, some with the sails hung out to dry, gracefully drooping from the taper spars; others refitting again for sea, and loading the huge pine-trunks, moored as vast rafts to the stern. There were people everywhere; all was motion, life, and activity. Jolly-boats with twenty oars, man-of-war gigs bounding rapidly past them with eight; canoes skimming by without a ripple, and seemingly without impulse, till you caught sight of the lounging figure who lay at full length in the stern, and whose red features were scarce distinguishable from the copper-colored bark of his boat. Some moved upon the rafts, and even on single trunks of trees, as, separated from the mass, they floated down on the swift current, boat-hook in hand, to catch at the first object chance might offer them. The quays, and the streets leading down to them were all thronged; and as you cast your eye upwards, here and there above the tall roofs might be seen the winding flight of stairs that lead to the upper town, alike dark with the moving tide of men. On every embrasure and gallery, on every terrace and platform, it was the same. Never did I behold such a human tide!

Now, there was something amazingly inspiriting in all this, particularly when coming from the solitude and monotony of a long voyage. The very voices that ye-hoed, the hoarse challenge of the sentinels on the rock, the busy hum of the town, made delicious music to my ear; and I could have stood and leaned over the bulwark for hours to gaze at the scene. I own no higher interest invested the picture, for I was ignorant of Wolfe; I had never heard of Montcalm; the plains of "Abra'm" were to me but grassy slopes, and "nothing more." It was the life and stir; the tide of that human ocean on which I longed myself to be a swimmer, — these were what charmed me. Nor was the deck of the old "Hampden" inactive all the while, although seldom attracting much of my notice. Soldiers were mustering, knapsacks packing, rolls calling, belts buffing, and coats brushing on all sides; men grumbling; sergeants cursing; officers swearing; half-dressed invalids popping up their heads out of hatch-

ways, answering to wrong names, and doctors ordering them down again with many an anathema; soldiers in the way of sailors, and sailors always hauling at something that interfered with the inspection-drill: every one in the wrong place, and each cursing his neighbor for stupidity.

At last the shore-boats boarded us, as if our confusion wanted anything to increase it. Red-faced harbor-masters shook hands with the skipper and pilot, and disappeared into the "round-house" to discuss grog and the late gales. Officers from the garrison came out to welcome their friends, for it was the second battalion we had on board of a regiment whose first had been some years in Canada; and then what a rush of inquiries were exchanged. "How's the Duke?" "All quiet in England?" "No signs of war in Europe?" "Are the 8th come home?" "Where's Forbes?" "Has Davern sold out?"—with a mass of such small interests as engage men who live in coteries.

Then there were emissaries for newspapers, eagerly hunting for spicy rumors not found in the last journals; waiters of hotels, porters, boatmen, guides, Indians with moccasins to sell, and a hundred other functionaries bespeaking custom and patronage; and, although often driven over the side most ignominiously at one moment, certain to reappear the next at the opposite gangway.

How order could ever be established in this floating Babel, I knew not; and yet at last all got into train somehow.

First one large boat crammed with men, who sat even on the gunwales, moved slowly away; then another and another followed; a lubberly thing, half lighter, half jolly-boat, was soon loaded with baggage, amid which some soldiers' wives and a scattering population of babies were seen; till by degrees the deck was cleared, and none remained of all that vast multitude, save the "mate" and the "watch," who proceeded to get things "ship-shape,"—pretty much in the same good-tempered spirit servants are accustomed to put the drawing-rooms to rights, after an entertainment which has kept them up till daylight, and allows of no time for sleep. Till then I had not the slightest conception of what a voyage ended meant, and that when the anchor dropped from the bow, a scene of bustle ensued, to which nothing at

sea bore any proportion. Now, I had no friends; no one came to welcome *me*, — none asked for *my* name. The officers, even the captain, in the excitement of arriving, had forgotten all about me; so that when the mate put the question to me, “why I did n’t go ashore?” I had no other answer to give him than the honest one, “that I had nothing to do when I got there.” “I suppose you know how to gain a livin’ one way or t’other, my lad?” said he, with a very disparaging glance out of the corner of his eye.

“I am ashamed to say, sir, that I do not.”

“Well, I never see’d Picaroons starve, — that’s a comfort you have; but as we don’t mean to mess you here, you’d better get your kit on deck, and prepare to go ashore.”

Now, the kit alluded to was the chest of clothes given to me by the captain, which, being bestowed for a particular purpose, and with an object now seemingly abandoned or forgotten, I began to feel scruples as to my having any claim to. Like an actor whose engagement had been for one part, I did not think myself warranted in carrying away the wardrobe of my character; besides, who should tell how the captain might resent such conduct on my side? I might be treated as a thief, — I, Con Cregan, who had registered a solemn vow in my own heart to be a “gentleman”! Such an indignity should not be entertained, even in thought. Yet was it very hard for one in possession of such an admirable wardrobe to want a dinner; for one so luxuriously apparelled on the outside, to be so lamentably unprovided within. From the solution of this knotty question I was most fortunately preserved by the arrival of a corporal of the —th, who came with an order from Captain Pike that I should at once repair to his quarters in the Upper Town.

Not being perhaps in his captain’s confidence, nor having any very clear notion of my precise station in life, — for I was dressed in an old cloak and a foraging-cap, — the corporal delivered his message to me with a military salute, and a certain air of deference very grateful to my feelings.

“Have you a boat alongside, Corporal?” said I, as I lounged listlessly on the binnacle.

“Yes, sir; a pair of oars, — will that do?”

“Yes, that will do,” replied I, negligently. “See my traps safe on board, and tell me when all’s ready.”

The corporal saluted once more, and went to give the necessary directions; meanwhile the mate, who had been a most amazed spectator of the scene, came over and stood right opposite me, with an expression of the most ludicrous doubt and hesitation. It was just at that moment that, in drawing the cloak round me, I discovered in a pocket of it an old cigar-case. I took it out with the most easy *nonchalance*, and, leisurely striking a light, began smoking away, and not bestowing even a glance at my neighbor.

Astonishment had so completely gotten the better of the man that he could not utter a word; and I perceived that he had to look over the side, where the boat lay, to assure himself that the whole was reality.

“All right, sir,” said the corporal, carrying his hand to his cap.

I arose languidly from my recumbent position, and followed the soldier to the gangway; then, turning slowly around, I surveyed the mate from head to foot, with a glance of mild but contemptuous pity, while I said, “In your station, my good man, the lesson is perhaps not called for, since you may rarely be called on to exercise it; but I would wish to observe that you will save yourself much humiliation and considerable contempt by not taking people for what they seem by externals.” With this grave admonition, delivered in a half-theatrical tone of voice, I draped my “toga” so as to hide any imperfection of my interior costume, and descended majestically into the boat.

When we reached the barrack, which was in the Upper Town, the captain was at mess, but had left orders that I should have my dinner, and be ready at his quarters, in my full livery, in the evening.

I dined, very much to my satisfaction, on some of the “débri” of the mess, and, under the auspices of the captain’s servant, arrayed myself in my new finery, which, I am free to confess, presented what artists would call “a flashy bit of color;” being far more in the style of Horace Vernct than Van Dyke. Had the choice been given me, I own I should have preferred wooing Fortune in more sombre

habiliments; but this was a mere minor consideration, and so I felt as I found myself standing alone in the captain's sitting-room, and endeavoring to accustom myself to my own very showy identity, as reflected in a large cheval glass, which exhibited me down to the very buckles of my shoes.

I will not affirm it positively, but only throw it out as a hint, that the major part of a decanter of sherry, which I discussed at dinner, aided in lifting me above the paltry consideration of mere appearance, and made me feel what I have often heard ragged vagabonds in the streets denominate "the dignity of a man." By degrees, too, I not only grew reconciled to the gaudy costume, but began — strange accommodation of feeling — actually to enjoy its distinctive character.

"There are young gentlemen, Con," said I, in soliloquy, "many are there who would look absurd merry-andrews if dressed in this fashion. There are fellows to whom this kind of thing would be a sore test! These bright tints would play the very devil with their complexion, — not to mention that every one's legs could n't afford such publicity! But Con, my friend, you have a natural aptitude for every shade of color, and for every station and condition. Courage, my boy! although in the rear rank at present, you'll march in the van yet. Nature has been gracious with you, Mr. Cregan!" said I, warming with the subject, while, with my hands deep down in my coat-pockets, I walked backward and forward before the glass, stealing sidelong glances at myself as I passed; "there are fellows who, born in your station, would have died in it, without a bit more influence over their fate in this life than a Poldoody oyster; they'd vegetate to the end of existence, and slip out of the world as a fellow shirks out of a shebeeu-house when he has n't tu' pence for another 'dandy' of punch. Not so with you, Con Cregan! You have hydrogen in you, — you have the buoyant element that soars above the vulgar herd. These are not the partial sentiments of a dear friend, Con, they are the current opinions of the world about you. How soon the 'Captain' saw what stuff you were made of! How long was old Pike in detecting the latent powers of your intellect?" What a shout of laughter followed these words!

It came from half-a-dozen officers, who, having entered the room during my apostrophe, had concealed themselves behind a screen to listen to the peroration.



They now rushed out in a body, and, throwing themselves into chairs and upon sofas, laughed till the very room rang with the clamor, the captain himself joining in the emotion with all his heart. As for me, however self-satisfied but one moment back, I was humbled to the very earth now; the vauntings by which I had been soothing my vanity were suddenly turned into scoffs and sneers at my self-conceit, and I actually looked to see if I could not leap out of the window, and never be seen by one of the party again. The

window, however, was barred, the door was unapproachable, there was a fire in the grate; and so, as escape was denied me, I at once abandoned a plan which I saw unfeasible, and, with a quickness to which I owe much in life, immediately adopted an opposite tactic. Assuming a deferential position, I drew back towards the wall, to be laughed at as long as the honorable company should fancy it.

"So, Mr. Cregan," cried one, drying his eyes with his handkerchief, "modesty is one of those invaluable gifts with which nature has favored you?"

"I sincerely trust it may be no bar to your advancement," said another.

"Rather cruel," added a third, "to be balked for such a mere trifle."

"I say, Pike," added another, "I rather envy you the insinuated flattery of your discrimination. It would seem that you detected the precious metal here at once."

"What country do you come from, boy?" said a hard-featured old officer who had laughed less than the others.

"How can you ask, Chudleigh?" said another. "There 's only one land rears that plant."

"There 's a weed very like it in Scotland, M'Aldine," said the captain, with a grin which the last speaker did not half relish.

"You're Hivish, ain't you?" said a very boyish-looking ensign, with sore eyes.

"Yes, sir."

"Very much so, I fancy," said he, laughing as though he had been very droll.

"I always heard your countrymen had wings; what has become of them?"

"I believe we used to have, sir; but the English plucked us," said I, with a look of assumed simplicity.

"And what is all that about the Blarney stone?" said another; "is n't there some story or other about it?"

"It's a stone they kiss in *my* country, sir, to give us a smooth tongue."

"I don't see the great use of that," rejoined he, with a stupid look.

“It’s mighty useful at times, sir,” said I, with a half glance towards Captain Pike.

“You’re too much, gentlemen, far too much for my poor friend Con,” said the captain; “you forget that he’s only a poor Irish lad. Come, now, let us rather think of starting him in the world, with something to keep the devil out of his pocket.” And, with this kind suggestion, he chucked a dollar into his cap, and then commenced a begging tour of the room, which, I am ready to confess, showed the company to be far more generous than they were witty.

“Here, Master Con,” said he, as he poured the contents into my two hands, “here is wherewithal to pay your footing at Mrs. Davis’s. As a traveller from the old country, you’ll be expected to entertain the servants’ hall, — do it liberally; there’s nothing like a bold push at the first go off.”

“I know it, sir; my father used to say that the gentleman always won his election who made most freeholders drunk the first day of the poll.”

“Your father was a man of keen observation, Con.”

“And is, sir, still, with your leave, if kangaroo meat has n’t disagreed with him, and left me to sustain the honors of the house.”

“Oh, that’s it, Con, is it?” said Captain Pike, with a sly glance.

“Yes, sir, that’s it,” said I, replying more to his look than his words.

“Here’s the letter for Mrs. Davis: you’ll present it early to-morrow; be discreet, keep your own counsel, and I’ve no doubt you’ll do well.”

“I’d be an ungrateful vagabond if I made your honor out a false prophet,” said I; and, bowing respectfully to the company, I withdrew.

“What a wonderful principle of equilibrium exists between one’s heart and one’s pocket!” thought I as I went downstairs. “I never felt the former so light as now that the latter is heavy.”

I wandered out into the town, somewhat puzzled how to dispose of myself for the evening. Had I been performing the part of a “walking gentleman,” I fancied I could have easily hit upon some appropriate and becoming pastime. A

theatre, — there was one in the “Lower Town,” — and a tavern afterwards, would have filled the interval before it was time to go to bed. “Time to go to bed!” — strange phrase, born of a thousand and one conventionalities. For some, that time comes when the sun has set, and with its last beams of rosy light reminds labor of the coming morrow. To some, it is the hour when wearied faculties can do no more, when tired intellect falters “by the way,” and cannot keep the “line of march.” To others, it comes with dawning light, and when roses and rouge look ghastly; and to others, again, whose “deeds are evil,” it is the glare of noonday.

Now, as for me, I was neither wearied by toil nor pleasure; no sense of past fatigue, no anticipation of coming exertion, invited slumber, — nay, I was actually more wakeful than I had been during the entire evening, and I felt a most impulsive desire for a little social enjoyment, — that kind of intercourse with strangers which I always remarked had the effect of eliciting my own conversational qualities to a degree that astonished even myself.

In search of some house of entertainment, some public resort, I paced all the streets of the Upper Town, but to no purpose. Occasionally, lights in a drawing-room, and the sound of a piano, would tell where some small evening party was assembled; or now and then, from a lower story, a joyous roar of laughter, or the merry chorus of a drinking-song, would bespeak some after-dinner convivialities; but to mingle in scenes like these, I felt that I had yet a long road to travel, — ay, to pass muster in the very humblest of those circles, what a deal had I to learn! How much humility, how much confidence; what deference, and what self-reliance; what mingled gravity and levity; what shades and gradations of color, so nicely balanced and proportioned, too, that, unresolved by the prism, they show no preponderating tint, — make up that pellucid property men call “tact!” Ay, Con, that is your rarest gift of all, — only acquire that, and you may dispense with ancestry, and kindred, and even wealth itself; since he who has “tact” participates in all these advantages, “*among his friends.*”

As I mused thus, I had reached the "Lower Town," and found myself opposite the door of a tavern, over which a brilliant lamp illuminated the sign of "The British Grenadier," — a species of canteen in high favor with sergeants and quartermasters of the garrison. I entered boldly, and with the intention of behaving generously to myself; but scarcely had I passed the threshold than I heard a sharp voice utter in a half-whisper, "Dang me if he an't in livery!"

I did not wait for more. My "tact" assured me that even there I was not admissible; so I strolled out again, muttering to myself, "When a man has neither friend nor supper, and the hour is past midnight, the chances are it is 'time to go to bed;'" and with this sage reflection, I wended my way towards a humble lodging-house on the quay, over which, on landing, I read the words, "The Emigrant's Home."



CHAPTER XIV.

HOW I "FELL IN" AND "OUT" WITH "THE WIDOW DAVIS."

FOR the sake of conciseness in this veracious history, I prefer making the reader acquainted at once with facts and individuals, not by the slow process in which the knowledge of them was acquired by myself, but in all the plenitude which intimate acquaintance now supplies; and although this may not seem to accord with the bit-by-bit and day-by-day narrative of a life, it saves a world of time, some patience, and mayhap some skipping too. Under this plea, I have already introduced Sir Dudley Broughton to the reader; and now, with permission, mean to present Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. Davis, relict of Thomas John Davis, was a character so associated with Quebec that to speak of that city without her would be like writing an account of Newfoundland and never alluding to the article "cod-fish." For a great num-

ber of years her house had been the rendezvous of everything houseless, from the newly come "married" officer to the flash commercial traveller from the States; from the agent of an unknown land company to the "skipper" of a rank pretentious enough to dine at a boarding-house. The establishment — as she loved to style it — combined all the free-and-easy air of domesticity with the enjoyment of society. It was an "acted newspaper," where paragraphs, military and naval, social, scandalous, and commercial, were fabricated with a speed no "compositor" could have kept up with. Here the newly arrived subaltern heard all the pipe-clay gossip, not of the garrison, but of the Province; here the bagman made contracts and took orders; here the "French Deputy" picked up what he called afterwards in the Chamber "l'opinion publique;" and here the men of pine-logs and white deal imbibed what they fervently believed to be the habits and manners of the "English aristocracy." "To invest the establishment with this character," to make it go forth to the world as the mirror of high and fashionable life, had been the passion of Mrs. D.'s existence. Never did monarch labor for the safeguard that might fence and hedge round his dynasty more zealously; never did minister strive for the guarantees that should insure the continuance of his system. It was the moving purpose of her life; in it she had invested all her activity, both of mind and body; and as she looked back to the barbarism from which her generous devotion had rescued hundreds, she might well be pardoned if a ray of self-glorification lighted up her face. "When I think of Quebec when T. J." — her familiar mode of alluding to the defunct Thomas John — "and myself first beheld it," would she say, "and see it now, I believe I may be proud." The social habits were indeed at a low ebb. The skippers — and there were few other strangers — had a manifest contempt for the use of the fork at dinner, and performed a kind of sword-exercise while eating, of the most fearful kind. Napkins were always misconstrued, — the prevailing impression being that they were pocket-handkerchiefs. No man had any vested interest in his own wine-glass; while thirsty souls even dispensed with such luxuries, and drank from the bottle itself.

Then sea-usages had carried themselves into shore life. The company were continually getting up to look out of windows, watching the vessels that passed, remarking on the state of the tide, and then, resuming their places with a muttering over the "half ebb," and that the wind was "northing-by-west," looked for change. All the conversation smacked of salt-water; every allusion had an odor of tar and seaweed about it.

Poor Mrs. Davis! How was she to civilize these savages; how invest their lives with any interest above timber? They would not listen to the polite news of "Government House;" they would not vouchsafe the least attention to the interesting paragraphs she recited as table-talk, — how the Prince of Hohenhumbughousen had arrived at Windsor on a visit to Majesty, nor how Royalty walked in "The Slopes," or sat for its picture.

Of the "Duke of Northumberland," they only knew a troopship of the name, and even that had been water-logged! The "Wellington" traded to Mirimachi, and the "Robert Peel" was a barque belonging to Newfoundland, and employed in general traffic, and not believed very seaworthy.

Some may make the ungracious remark that she might have spared herself this task of humanizing; that she could have left these "ligneous Christians," these creatures of tar and turpentine, where she found them. The same observation will apply equally to Cooke, to Franklin, to Brooke of Borneo, and a hundred other civilizers: so Mrs. D. felt it, and so she labored to make T. J. feel it; but he would n't. The ungrateful old bear saw the ordinary grow daily thinner; he perceived that Banquo might have seated himself at any part of the table, and he actually upbraided his wife with the fact. Every day he announced some new defection from the list of their old supporters. Now it was old Ben Croseseley, of the "Lively Biddy," that would n't stand being ordered to shake out his canvas — that is, to spread his napkin — when he was taking in sea store; then it was Tom Galket grew indignant at not being permitted to beat "to quarters" with his knuckles at every pause in the dinner. Some were put out by being obliged to sit with their legs

under the table, being long habituated to dine at a cask with a plank on it, and of course keeping their limbs "stowed away" under the seat; and one, an old and much-respected river pilot, was carried away insensible from table, on hearing that grog was not a recognized table beverage throughout the British dominions.

The banishment of lobsouse and sea-pie, pork, with its concomitant cataplasm of peas, and other similar delicacies from the bill of fare, completed the defection; and at last none remained of the "once goodlie company," save an old attenuated Guernsey skipper too much in debt to leave, but who attributed his fealty to the preference he entertained for "les usages de la bonne société et la charmante Mde. Davis." T. J. could never hold up his head again; he moped about the docks and quays, like the restless spirit of some Ancient Mariner. Every one pitied him; and he grew so accustomed to condolence — so dependent, in fact, on commiseration — that he spent his days in rowing from one ship to the other in the harbor, drinking grog with the skippers, till, by dint of pure sympathy, he slipped quietly into his grave, after something like a two years' attack of delirium tremens.

The same week that saw T. J. descend to the tomb saw his widow ascend to the "Upper Town," — the more congenial locality for aspirations like hers. If no eulogistic inscription marked *his* resting-place, a very showy brass plate adorned *hers*. From that hour she was emancipated; it seemed, indeed, as if she had turned a corner in life, and at once emerged from gloom and darkness into sunshine. It chanced that the barracks were at that very moment undergoing repair, and several officers were glad to find, at a convenient distance, the comforts and accommodations which a plausible advertisement in the "Quebec Messenger" assured them were to be obtained for one pound one shilling weekly.

There are people who tell you that we live in a heartless, selfish, grabbing, grasping age, where each preys upon his neighbor, and where gain is the spirit of every contract; and yet, in what period of the world was maternal tenderness, the comforts of a home, the watchful anxieties of parental love, to be had so cheaply? Who ever heard of

bachelors being admitted into families, where music and the arts formed the evening's recreation, in the Middle Ages? Does Herodotus inform us that "young and attractive ladies would take charge of a widower's household, and superintend the care of his family"? Not a bit of it! On this point, at least, the wisdom of our ancestors has no chance with us. There is not a wish of the heart, there is not a yearning of the affections, that a three-and-sixpenny advertisement in the "Times" will not evoke a remedy for. You can make love, or a book, or a speech, by deputy; for every relative you lose, there are fifty kind-hearted creatures to supply the place; and not only may you travel over half the globe without more personal exertion than it costs you to go to bed, but you can be measured either for a wife or a suit of clothes without ever seeing the lady or the tailor.

The "Hotel Davis," so said the newspaper, "was situated in the most airy and healthful locality of the Upper Town." No one ever rung the bell of the hall-door from the first of October to May, but would acknowledge the truth of the first epithet. "The society, for admission to which the most particular references are required, embraces all that is intellectual, high-bred, and refined. The table, where preside the 'feast of reason and the flow of soul,' combines the elegance and delicacy of the French, with the less sophisticated succulence of English cookery. Intellectual resources, — the humanizing influences of song and poetry, — the varied pleasures of cultivated and kindred spirits, which have won for this establishment the epithet of the Davisian Acropolis, continue to make it the chosen retreat of gentlemen connected with civil and military pursuits, who are lodged and boarded for one guinea weekly.

"Receptions every Thursday. Balls, during the winter, on the first Monday of each month."

Such was one among many — I select it as the shortest — announcements of this cheap Elysium; and now, two words about Mrs. D. herself. She was a poor, thin, shrivelled-up little woman, with a rugged, broken-up face, whose profile looked like a jagged saw. Next to elegance of manner, her passion was personal appearance, — by which she meant the adventitious aid of false hair, rouge, and cosmetics; and

these she employed with such ever-varying ingenuity that her complexion changed daily from classic pallor to Spanish richness, while the angle of incidence of her eyebrows took in everything, from forty-five degrees to the horizontal. Her style was "sylph," and so she was gauzy and floating in all her drapery. A black veil to the back of her head, a filmy, gossamer kind of scarf across her shoulders, assisted this deception, and when she crossed the room, gave her the air of a clothes'-line in a high wind.

Black mittens, over fingers glowing in all the splendor of imitation rings, and a locket, about the size of a cheese-plate, containing the hair—some said the scalp—of the late T. J., completed a costume which Mrs. D. herself believed Parisian, but to which no revolution, democratic or social, could reduce a Frenchwoman.

She borrowed her language as well as her costume from the "Grande Nation," and with this comfortable reflection, that she was not likely to be asked to restore the loan. Her French was about as incongruous as her dress; but Quebec, fortunately, was not Paris, and she drove her coach-and-six through "Adelow," with a hardihood that outstripped, if it did not defy, criticism.

By the military and naval people she was deemed the best "fun" going; her pretension, her affectation, her shrewdness, and her simplicity, her religious homage to fashion, her unmerciful tyranny towards what she thought vulgarity, made her the subject of many a joke and much amusement. The other classes, the more regular *habitués* of the "house," thought she was a princess in disguise; they revered her opinions as oracles, and only wondered how the court-end could spare one so evidently formed to be the glass of fashion.

If I have been too prolix in my sketch, kind reader, attribute it to the true cause, — my anxiety to serve those who are good enough to place themselves under my guidance. Mrs. D. still lives; the establishment still survives; at five o'clock each day — ay, this very day, I have no doubt — her table is crowded by "the rank and fashion" of the Quebec world; and the chances are, if you yourself, worthy reader, should visit that city, that you may be glad to give your blank days to the fare of Madam Davis.

It was ten o'clock in the forenoon as I arrived at her door, and sent in Captain Pike's letter, announcing my arrival. I found Mrs. D. in what she called her own room, — a little den of about eleven feet square, shelved all round, and showing an array of jars and preserve-pots that was most imposing, — the offerings of skippers from the West India Islands and Madeira, who paid a kind of black-mail in preserved ginger, guavas, yams, pepper-pots, chili, and potted crabs that would have given liver complaints to half the Province.

Mrs. D. was standing on a step-ladder, arranging her treasures by the aid of a negro boy of about twelve years old, as I entered; and not feeling that I was of consequence sufficient to require a more formal audience, she took a steady and patient observation of me, and then resumed her labors. The little window, about six feet from the ground, threw a fine Rembrandt light upon me as I stood in my showy habiliments, endeavoring, by an imposing attitude, to exhibit myself to the best advantage.

"Forty-seven; Guava jelly, Sambo! — where is forty-seven?"

"Me no see him," said Sambo; "missus eat him up, perhaps."

"Monsonze! you filthy creature; look for it, sirrah!" So saying, Mrs. Davis applied her double eye-glass to her eyes, and again surveyed me for some seconds.

"You are the" — she hesitated — "the young person my friend Pike brought out, I believe?"

"Yes, my lady," said I, bowing profoundly.

"What's your name? The captain has not written it clearly."

"Cregan, my lady, — Con Cregan."

"Con — Con," repeated she twice or thrice; "what does Con mean?"

"It's the short for Cornelius, my lady."

"Ah, the abbreviation for Cornelius! And where have you lived, Cornelius?"

"My last place, my lady, was Sir Miles O'Ryan's, of Roaring Water."

"What are you doing, you wretch? Take your filthy fingers out of that pot this instant!" screamed she, suddenly.

"Me taste him, an' he be dam hot!" cried the nigger, dancing from one foot to the other, as his mouth was on fire from tasting capsicum pods.

I thought of my own mustard experience, and then, turning a glance of ineffable contempt upon my black friend, said, "Those creatures, my lady, are so ignorant, they really do not know the nature of the commonest condiments."

"Very true, Cornelius. I would wish, however, to observe to you that although my family are all persons of rank, I have no title myself, — that is to say," added she, with a pleasing smile, "I do not assume it here; therefore, until we return to England, you need n't address me as ladyship."

"No, my lady, — I beg your ladyship's pardon for forgetting; but as I have always lived in high families, I've got the habit, my lady, of saying, 'my lady.'"

"I am Madam, plain Madam Davis. There, I knew you'd do it, you nasty little beast, your odious black creature!" This sudden apostrophe was evoked by the nigger endeavoring to balance a jam-pot on his thumb, while he spun it round with the other hand, — an exploit that ended in a smash of the jar, and a squash of the jam all over my silk stockings.

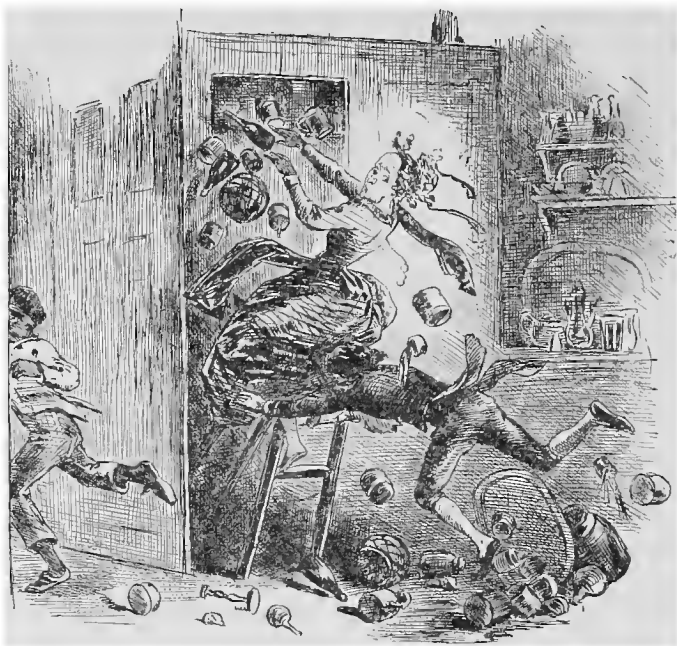
"It's of no consequence, my lady; I shall change them when I dress for dinner," said I, with consummate ease.

"The jam is lost, however. Will you kindly beat him about the head with that candlestick beside you?"

I seized the implement, as if in most choleric mood. But my black was not to be caught so easily; and with a dive between my legs he bolted for the door, whilst I was pitched forward against the step-ladder, head foremost. In my terror, I threw out my hands to save myself, and caught — not the ladder, but Madam Davis's legs; and down we went together, with a small avalanche of brown jars and preserve-pots clattering over us.

As I had gone headforemost, my head through the ladder, and as Mrs. Davis had fallen on the top of me, — her head being reversed, — there we lay, like herrings in a barrel, till her swoon had passed away. At last she did rally; and, gathering herself up, sat against the wall, a most rueful picture of bruises and disorder, while I, emerging from

between the steps of the ladder, began to examine whether it were marmalade or my brains that I felt coming down my cheek.



“You’ll never mention this shocking event, Cornelius,” said she, trying to adjust her wig, which now faced over the left shoulder.

“Never, my lady. Am I to consider myself engaged?”

“Yes, on the terms of Captain Pike’s note, — ten pounds; no wine nor tea-money, no passage-fare out, no livery, no —” I was afraid she was going to add, “No prog;” but she grew faint, and merely said, “Bring me a glass of water.”

“I’ll put you in charge of the lamps and plate to-morrow,” said she, recovering.

“Very well, madam,” said I, aloud; while to myself I muttered, “They might easily be in better hands.”

"You 'll wait at table to-day."

"Yes, my lady — madam, I mean."

"Soup always goes first to Mrs. Trussford, — black velvet, and very fat; then to the lady in blue spectacles; afterwards Miss Moriarty. Ah, I'm too weak for giving directions; I'm in what they call 'un état de feuilleton;'" and with these words Mrs. Davis retired, leaving me to the contemplation of the battle-field and my own bruises.

My next care was to present myself below stairs; and although some may smile at the avowal, I had far more misgivings about how I should pass muster with the underlings than with the head of the department. Is the reader aware that it was a farrier of the Emperor Alexander's guard who first predicted the destruction of the "grand army" in Russia? A French horseshoe was shown to him, as a curiosity; and he immediately exclaimed, "What! not yet frost-roughed? These fellows don't know the climate; the snows begin to-morrow!" So is it: ignorance and pretension are infallibly discovered by "routine" people; they look to details, and they at once detect him who mistakes or overlooks them.

Resolving, at all events, to make my "Old World" habits stand my part in every difficulty, and to sneer down everything I did not understand, I put on a bold face, and descended to the lower regions.

Great people, "Ministers" and Secretaries for the "Home" and "Foreign," little know how great their privilege is that in taking office they are spared all unpleasant meetings with their predecessors. At least, I conclude such to be the case, and that my Lord Palmerston, "stepping in," does not come abruptly upon Lord Aberdeen "going out," nor does an angry altercation arise between him who arrives to stay and he who is packing his portmanteau to be off. I say that I opine as much, and that both the entrance and the departure are conducted with due etiquette and propriety; in fact, that Lord A. has called his cab and slipped away before Lord P. has begun to "take up" the "spoons," — not a bad metaphor, by the way, for an entrance into the Foreign Office.

No such decorous reserve presides over the change of a domestic ministry. The whole warfare of opposition is con-

densed into one angry moment, and the rival parties are brought face to face in the most ungracious fashion

Now, my system in life was that so well and popularly known by the name of M. Guizot, "la paix à tout prix;" and I take pride to myself in thinking that I have carried it out with more success. With a firm resolve, therefore, that no temptation should induce me to deviate from a pacific policy, I entered the kitchen, where the "lower house" was then "in committee," — the "cook in the chair"!

"Here he com, now!" said Blackie; and the assembly grew hushed as I entered.

"Ay, here he comes!" said I, re-echoing the speech; "and let us see if we shall not be merry comrades."

The address was a happy one; and that evening closed upon me in the very pinnacle of popularity.

I have hesitated for some time whether I should not ask of my reader to enroll himself for a short space as a member of "the establishment," or even to sojourn one day beneath a roof where so many originals were congregated; to witness the very table itself, set out with its artificial fruits and flowers, its pine-apples in wax, and its peaches of paper, — all the appliances by which Mrs. D., in her ardent zeal, hoped to propagate refinement and abstemiousness; high-breeding and low diet being, in her esteem, inseparably united. To see the company, the poor old faded and crushed flowers of mock gentility, — widows and unmarried daughters of tax-collectors long "gathered;" polite storekeepers, and apothecaries to the "Forces," cultivating the Graces at the cost of their appetites, and descending, in costumes of twenty years back, in the pleasing delusion of being "dressed" for dinner; while here and there some unhappy skipper, undergoing a course of refinement, looked like a bear in a "ballet," ashamed of his awkwardness, and even still more ashamed of the company wherein he found himself; and, lastly, some old Seigneur of the Lower Province, — a poor, wasted, wrinkled creature, covered with hair-powder and snuff, but yet, strangely enough, preserving some "taste of his once quality," and not altogether destitute of the graces of the land he sprung from; — curious and incongruous elements to make up society, and worthy of the presidency of that greater incongruity who ruled them.

Condemned to eat food they did not relish, and discuss themes they did not comprehend, — what a noble zeal was theirs! What sacrifices did they not make to the genius of "gentility"! If they would sneer at a hash, Mrs. D.'s magic wand charmed it into a "ragout;" when they almost sneezed at the sour wine, Mrs. D. called for another glass of "La Rose." "Rabbits," they were assured, were the daily diet of the Duke of Devonshire, and Lady Laddington ate kid every day at dinner. In the same way, potatoes were vulgar things, but "pommes de terre à la maître d'hôtel" were a delicacy for royalty.

To support these delusions of diet, I was everlastingly referred to. "Cregan," would she say, — placing her glass to her eye, and fixing on some dish, every portion of which her own dainty fingers had compounded, — "Cregan, what is that?"

"Poulet à la George Quatre, madame!" — she always permitted me to improvise the nomenclature, — "the receipt came from the Bishop of Beldoff's cook."

"Ah, prepared with olives, I believe?"

"Exactly, madame," would I say, presenting the dish, whose success was at once assured.

If a wry face or an unhappy contortion of the mouth from any guest announced disappointment, Mrs. D. at once appealed to me for the explanation. "What is it, Cregan? — Mrs. Blotter, I fear you don't like that 'plat'?"

"The truffles were rather old, madame;" or, "the anchovies were too fresh;" or, "there was too little caviar;" or something of the kind, I would unhesitatingly aver: for my head was stocked with a strong catalogue from an old French cookery-book which I used to study each morning. The more abstruse my explanation, the more certain of its being indorsed by the company, — only too happy to be supposed capable of detecting the subtle deficiency; all but the old French Deputy, who on such occasions would give a little shake of his narrow head, and mutter to himself, "Ah, il est mutin, ce gaillard-là!"

Under the influence of great names, they would have eaten a stewed mummy from the Pyramids. What the Marquis of Ashdown or the Earl of Brockmore invariably ordered,

could not without risk be despised by these "small boys" of refinement. It is true, they often mourned in secret over the altered taste of the old country, which preferred kick-shaws and trumpery to its hallowed ribs and sirloins; but, like the folk who sit at the Opera while they long for the Haymarket, and who listen to Jenny Lind while their hearts are with Mrs. Keeley, they "took out" in fashion what they lost in amusement, — a very English habit, by the way. To be sure, and to their honor be it spoken, they wished the Queen would be pleased to fancy legs of mutton and loins of veal, just as some others are eager for royalty to enjoy the national drama; but they innocently forgot, the while, that "they" might have the sirloin, and "the others" Shakspeare, even without majesty partaking of either, and that a roast goose and Falstaff can be relished even without such august precedent. Dear, good souls they were, never deviating from that fine old sturdy spirit of independence which makes us feel ourselves a match for the whole world in arms, as we read the "Times" and hum "Rule Britannia."

All this devout homage of a class with whom they had nothing in common, and with which they could never come into contact, produced in me a very strange result; and in place of being ready to smile at the imitators, I began to conceive a stupendous idea of the natural greatness of those who could so impress the ranks beneath them. "Con," said I to myself, "that is the class in life would suit you perfectly. There is no trade like that of a gentleman. He who does nothing is always ready for everything; the little shifts and straits of a handicraft or a profession narrow and confine the natural expansiveness of the intellect, which, like a tide over a flat shore, should swell and spread itself out, free and without effort. See to this, Master Con; take care that you don't sit down contented with a low round on the ladder of life, but strive ever upwards; depend on it, the view is best from the top, even if it only enable you to look down on your competitors."

These imaginings, as might be easily imagined, led me to form a very depreciating estimate of my lords and masters of the "establishment." Not only their little foibles and weaknesses, their small pretensions and their petty attempts

at fine life, were all palpable to my eyes, but their humble fortunes and narrow means to support such assumption were equally so; and there is nothing which a vulgar mind — I *was* vulgar at that period — so unhesitatingly seizes on for sarcasm as the endeavor of a poor man to "do the fine gentleman."

If no man is a hero to his valet, he who has no valet is never a hero at all, — is nobody. I conceived, then, the most insulting contempt for the company, on whom I practised a hundred petty devices of annoyance. I would drop gravy on a fine satin dress, in which the wearer only made her appearance at festivals, or stain with sauce the "russia ducks" destined to figure through half a week. Sometimes, by an adroit change of decanters during dinner, I would produce a scene of almost irremediable confusion, when the owner of sherry would find himself taking toast-and-water, he of the last beverage having improved the time and finished the racier liquid. Such reciprocities, although strictly in accordance with "free-trade," invariably led to very warm discussions, that lasted through the remainder of the evening.

Then I removed plates ere the eater was satisfied, and that with an air of such imposing resolve as to silence remonstrance. When a stingy guest passed up his decanter to a friend, in a moment of enthusiastic munificence, I never suffered it to return till it was emptied; while to the elderly ladies I measured out the wine like laudauum. Every now and then, too, I would forget to hand the dish to some one or other of the company, and affect only to discover my error as the last spoonful was disappearing.

Nor did my liberties end here. I was constantly introducing innovations in the order of dinner, that produced most ludicrous scenes of discomfiture, — now insisting on the use of a fork, now of a spoon, under circumstances where no adroitness could compensate for the implement; and one day I actually went so far as to introduce soap with the finger-glasses, averring that "it was always done at Devonshire House on grand occasions." I thought I should have betrayed myself as I saw the efforts of the party to perform their parts with suitable dignity; all I could do was to restrain a burst of open laughter.

So long as I prosecuted my reforms on the actual staff of the establishment, all went well. Now and then, it is true, I used to overhear in French, of which they believed me to be ignorant, rather sharp comments on the "free-and-easy tone of my manners; how careless I had become," and so on, — complaints, however, sure to be met by some assurance that "my manners were quite London;" that what I did was the type of fashionable servitude, — apologies made less to screen me than to exalt those who invented them, as thoroughly conversant with high life in England.

At last, partly from being careless of consequences, for I was getting very weary of this kind of life, — the great amusement of which used to be repeating my performances for the ear of Captain Pike, and he was now removed with his regiment to Kingstown, — and partly wishing for some incidents, of what kind I cared not, that might break the monotony of my existence, I contrived one day to stretch my prerogative too far, or, in the phrase of the Gulf, I "harpooned a bottle-nose," — the periphrasis for making a gross mistake.

I had been some years at Mrs. Davis's, — in fact, I felt and thought myself a man, — when the last ball of the season was announced, — an entertainment at which usually a more crowded assemblage used to congregate than at any of the previous ones.

It was the choice occasion for the *habitués* of the house to invite their grand friends; for Mrs. D. was accustomed to put forth all her strength, and the arrangements were made on a scale of magnificence that invariably occasioned a petty famine for the fortnight beforehand. Soup never appeared, that there might be "bouillon" for the dancers; every one was on a short allowance of milk, eggs, and sugar; meat became almost a tradition; even candles waned and went out, in waiting for the auspicious night when they should blaze like noonday. Nor did the company fail to participate in these preparatory schoolings. What frightful heads in curl-papers would appear at breakfast and dinner! What buttoned-up coats and black cravats refuse all investigation on the score of linen! What mysterious cookings of cosmetics at midnight, with petty thefts of lard and thick cream! What washings of kid gloves, that when washed would never

go on again! What inventions of French-polish that refused all persuasions to dry, but continued to stick to and paint everything it came in contact with! Then there were high dresses cut down, like frigates razeeed; frock-coats reduced to dress ones; mock lace and false jewelry were at a premium; and all the little patchwork devices of ribbons, bows, and carnations, gimp, gauze, and geraniums, were put into requisition, — petty acts of deception that each saw through in her neighbor, but firmly believed were undetectable in herself.

Then what caballings about the invited; what scrutiny into rank and station, — "what set they were in," and whom did they visit; with little Star-chamber inquisitions as to character, all breaches of which, it is but fair to state, were most charitably deemed remediable if the party had any pretension to social position; for not only the saint in crape was twice a saint in lawn, but the satin sinner was pardonable where the "washing silk" would have been found guilty without a "recommendation."

Then there was eternal tuning of the pianoforte, which most perversely insisted on not suiting voices that might have sung duets with a peacock. Quadrilles were practised in empty rooms; and Miss Timmock was actually seen trying to teach Blotter to waltz, — a proceeding, I rejoice to say, that the moral feeling of the household at once suppressed. And then, what a scene of decoration went forward in all the apartments! As in certain benevolent families, whatever is uneatable is always given to the poor, so here, all the artificial flowers unavailable for the toilet were generously bestowed to festoon along the walls, to conceal tin sconces, and to wreathe round rickety chandeliers. Contrivance — that most belauded phenomenon in Nature's craft — was everywhere. If necessity be the mother of invention, poor gentility is the "stepmother." Never were made greater efforts, or greater sacrifices incurred, to make Mrs. D. appear like a West-end leader of fashion, and to make the establishment itself seem a Holderness House.

As for me, I was the type of a stage servant, — one of those creatures who hand round coffee in the "School for Scandal." My silk stockings were embroidered with silver,

and my showy coat displayed a bouquet that might have filled a vase.

In addition to these personal graces, I had long been head of my department; all the other officials, from the negro knife-cleaner upwards, besides all those begged, borrowed, and, I believe I might add, stolen domestics of other families, being placed under my orders.

Among the many functions committed to me, the drilling of these gentry stood first in difficulty, not only because they were rebellious under control, but because I had actually to invent "the discipline during parade." One golden rule, however, I had adopted, and never suffered myself to deviate from, viz., to do nothing as it had been done before, — a maxim which relieved me from all the consequences of inexperience. Traditions are fatal things for a radical reformer; and I remembered having heard it remarked how Napoleon himself first sacrificed his dignity by attempting an imitation of the monarchy. By this one precept I ruled and squared all my conduct.

The most refractory of my subordinates was a jackanapes about my own age, who, having once waited on the "young gentlemen" in the cock-pit of a man-of-war, fancied he had acquired very extended views of life. Among other traits of his fashionable experience, he remembered that at a *déjeuner* given by the officers at Cadiz once, the company, who breakfasted in the gun-room, had all left their hats and cloaks in the midshipman's berth, receiving each a small piece of card with a number on it, and a similar one being attached to the property, — a process so universal now in our theatres and assemblies that I ask pardon for particularly describing it; but it was a novelty at the time I speak of, and had all the merits of a new discovery.

Smush — this was my deputy's name — had been so struck with the admirable success of the arrangement that he had actually preserved the pieces of card, and now produced them, black and ragged, from the recesses of his trunk.

"Mr. Cregan" — such was the respectful title by which I was now always addressed — "Mr. Cregan can tell us," said he, "if this is not the custom at great balls in London."

"It used to be so, formerly," said I, with an air of most consummate coolness, as I sat in an arm-chair, regaling myself with a cigar; "the practice you allude to, Smush, did prevail, I admit. But our fashionable laws change; one day it is all ultra-refinement and Sybarite luxury, — the next, they affect a degree of mock simplicity in their manners: anything for novelty! Now, for instance, eating fish with the fingers —"

"Do they, indeed, go so far?"

"Do they! ay, and fifty things worse. At a race-dinner the same silver cup goes round the table, drunk out of by every one. I have seen strange things in my time."

"That you must, Mr. Cregan."

"Latterly," said I, warming with my subject, and seeing my auditory ready to believe anything, "they began the same system with the soup, and always passed the tureen round, each tasting it as it went. This was an innovation of the Duke of Struttenham's; but I don't fancy it will last."

"And how do they manage about the hats, Mr. Cregan?"

"The last thing, in that way, was what I saw at Lord Mudbrooke's, at Richmond, where, not to hamper the guests with these foolish bits of card, which they were always losing, the servant in waiting chalked a number on the hat or coat, or whatever it might be, and then marked the same on the gentleman's back!"

Had it not been for the imposing gravity of my manner, the absurdity of this suggestion had been at once apparent; but I spoke like an oracle, and I impressed my words with the simple gravity of a commonplace truth.

"If you wish to do the very newest thing, Smush, that's the latest, — quite a fresh touch; and, I'll venture to say, perfectly unknown here. It saves a world of trouble to all parties; and as you brush it off before they leave, it is always another claim for the parting *douceur*!"

"I'll do it," said Smush, eagerly; "they cannot be angry —"

"Angry! angry at what is done with the very first people in London!" said I, affecting horror at the bare thought. The train was now laid; I had only to wait for its explosion.

At first, I did this with eager impatience for the result; then, as the time drew near, with somewhat of anxiety; and, at last, with downright fear of the consequences. Yet to revoke the order, to confess that I was only hoaxing on so solemn a subject, would have been the downfall of my ascendancy forever. What was to be done?

I could imagine but one escape from the difficulty, which was to provide myself with a clothes-brush, and, as my station was at the drawing-room door, to erase the numerals before their wearers entered. In this way I should escape the forfeiture of my credit, and the risk of maintaining it.

I would willingly recall some of the strange incidents of that great occasion, but my mind can only dwell upon one, as, brush in hand, I asked permission to remove some accidental dust, — a leave most graciously accorded, and ascribed to my town-bred habits of attention. At last — it was high midnight, and for above an hour the company had received no accession to its ranks; quadrilles had succeeded quadrilles, and the business of the scene went swimmingly on, — all the time-honored events of similar assemblages happening with that rigid regularity which, if evening-parties were managed by steam, and regulated by a fly-wheel, could not proceed with more ordinary routine. “Heads of houses” with bald scalps led out simpering young boarding-school misses, and danced with a noble show of agility, to refute any latent suspicion of coming age. There were the usual number of very old people, who vowed the dancing was only a shuffling walk, not the merry movement they had practised half a century ago; and there were lack-a-daisical young gentlemen, with waistcoats variegated as a hearth-rug, and magnificent breast-pins like miniature pokers, who lounged and lolled about, as though youth were the most embarrassing and wearying infliction mortality was heir to.

There were, besides, all the varieties of the class young lady, as seen in every land where muslin is sold, and white shoes are manufactured. There was the slight young lady, who floated about with her gauzy dress daintily pinched in two; then there was the short and dumpling young lady, who danced with a duck in her gait; and there were a large proportion of the flouncing, flaunting kind, who took the

figures of the quadrille by storm, and went at the "right and left" as if they were escaping from a fire; and there was Mrs. Davis herself, in a spangled toque and red shoes, pottering about from place to place, with a terrible eagerness to be agreeable and fashionable at the same time.

It was, I have said, nigh midnight as I stood at the half-open door, watching the animated and amusing scene within, when Mrs. Davis, catching sight of me, and doubtless for the purpose of displaying my specious livery, ordered me to open a window, or close a shutter, or something of like importance. I had scarcely performed the service, when a kind of half titter through the room made me look round, and, to my unspeakable horror, I beheld, in the centre of the room, Town-Major McCan, the most passionate little man in Quebec, making his obeisances to Mrs. Davis, while a circle around were, with handkerchiefs to their mouths, stifling, as they best could, a burst of laughter; since exactly between his shoulders, in marks of about four inches long, stood the numerals "158," a great flourish underneath proclaiming that the roll had probably concluded, and that this was the "last man."

Of the major, tradition had already consecrated one exploit; he had once kicked an impertinent tradesman down the great flight of iron stairs which leads from the Upper Town to Diamond Harbor, — a feat, to appreciate which, it is necessary to bear in mind that the stair in question is almost perpendicular, and contains six hundred and forty-eight steps! My very back ached by anticipation as I thought of it; and as I retreated towards the door, it was in a kind of shuffle, feeling like one who had been well thrashed.

"A large party, Mrs. D.; a very brilliant and crowded assembly," said the major, pulling out his bushy whiskers, and looking importantly around. "Now what number have you here?"

"I cannot even guess, Major; but we have had very few apologies. Could you approximate to our numbers this evening, Mr. Cox?" said she, addressing a spiteful-looking old man who sat eying the company through an opera-glass.

“I have counted one hundred and thirty-four, madam; but the major makes them more numerous still!”

“How do you mean, Cox?” said he, getting fiery red.

“If you’ll look in that glass yonder, which is opposite the mirror, you’ll soon see!” wheezed out the old man, maliciously. I did not wait for more; with one spring I descended the first flight; another brought me to the hall; but not before a terrible shout of laughter apprised me that all was discovered. I had just time to open the clock-case and step into it, as Major McCan came thundering downstairs, with his coat on his arm.

A shrill yell from Sambo now told me that one culprit at least was “up” for punishment. “Tell the truth, you d—d piece of carved ebony! who did this?”

“Not me, Massa! not me, Massa! Smush did him!”

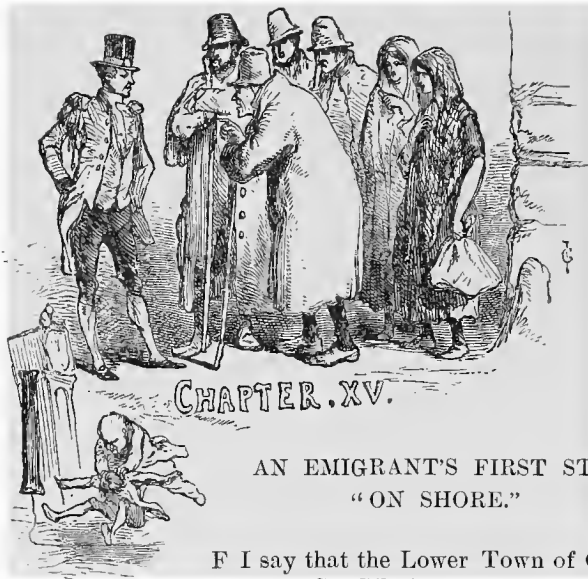
Smush was at this instant emerging from the back parlor with a tray of colored fluids for the dancers. With one vigorous kick the major sent the whole flying; and ere the terrified servitor knew what the assault portended, a strong grasp caught him by the throat, and ran him up bang! against the clock-case. Oh, what a terrible moment was that for me! I heard the very gurgling rattle in his throat, like choking, and felt as if when he ceased to breathe that I should expire with him.

“You confess it! you own it, then, you infernal rascal!” said the major, almost hoarse with rage.

“Oh, forgive me, sir! oh, forgive me! It was Mr. Cregan, sir, the butler, who told me! Oh dear, I’m—” What, he could n’t finish; for the major, in relinquishing his grasp, flung him backwards, and he fell against the stairs.

“So it was Mr. — Cregan, — the — butler, — was it?” said the major, with an emphasis on each word as though he had bitten the syllables. “Well! as sure as my name is Tony McCan, Mr. Cregan shall pay for this! Turn about is fair play; you have marked *me*, and may I be drummer to the Cape Fencibles if I don’t mark *you*!” and with this denunciation, uttered in a tone, every accent of which vouched for truth, he took a hat — the first next to him — and issued from the house.

Shivering with terror, — and not without cause, — I waited till Smush had, with Sambo's aid, carried downstairs the broken fragments; and then, the coast being clear, I stepped from my hiding-place, and opening the hall-door, fled, — ay, ran as fast as my legs could carry me. I crossed the grass terrace in front of the barrack, not heeding the hoarse "Who goes there?" of the sentry; and then, dashing along the battery-wall, hastened down the stairs that lead in successive flights to the filthy "Lower Town," in whose dingy recesses I well knew that crime or shame could soon find a sanctuary.



CHAPTER .XV.

AN EMIGRANT'S FIRST STEP "ON SHORE."

IF I say that the Lower Town of Quebec is the St. Giles's of the metropolis, I convey but a very faint notion indeed of that terrible locality. I have seen life in some of its least attractive situations. I am not ignorant of the Liberties of Dublin and the Claddagh of Galway; I have passed more time than I care to mention in the Isle St. Louis of Paris; while the Leopoldstadt of Vienna and the Ghetto of Rome are tolerably familiar to me; but still, for wickedness in its most unwashed state, I give palm to the Lower Town of Quebec.

The population, originally French, became gradually intermixed with emigrants, most of whom came from Ireland, and who, having expended the little means they could scrape together for the voyage, firmly believing that, once landed in America, gold was a "chimera" not worth troubling one's head about, they were unable to go farther, and either became laborers in the city, or, as the market grew speedily overstocked, sunk down into a state of pauperism, the very counterpart of that they had left on the other side of the

ocean. Their turbulence, their drunkenness, the reckless violence of all their habits, at first shocked and then terrified the poor timid Canadians, — of all people the most submissive and yielding, — so that very soon, feeling how impossible it was to maintain co-partnership with such associates, they left the neighborhood, and abandoned the field to the new race. Intermarriages had, however, taken place to a great extent; from which, and the daily intercourse with the natives, a species of language came to be spoken which was currently called French, but which might, certainly with equal propriety, be called Cherokee. Of course this new tongue modified itself with the exigencies of those who spoke it; and as the French ingredient declined, the Milesian preponderated, till at length it became far more Irish than French.

Nothing assists barbarism like a dialect adapted to its own wants. Slang is infinitely more conducive to the propagation of vice than is generally believed; it is the "paper currency" of iniquity, and each man issues as much as he likes. If I wanted an evidence of this fact, I should "call up" the place I am speaking of, where the very jargon at once defied civilization and ignored the "schoolmaster." The authorities, either regarding the task as too hopeless, or too dangerous, or too troublesome, seemed to slur over the existence of this infamous locality. It is not impossible that they saw with some satisfaction that wickedness had selected its only peculiar and appropriate territory, and that they had left this den of vice, as Yankee farmers are accustomed to leave a spot of tall grass to attract the snakes, by way of preventing them scattering and spreading over a larger surface.

As each emigrant ship arrived, hosts of these idlers of the Lower Town beset the newly landed strangers, and by their voice and accent imposed upon the poor wanderers. The very tones of the old country were a magic the new-comers could not withstand, after weeks of voyaging that seemed like years of travel. Whatever reminded them of the country they had quitted, ay, — strange inconsistency of the human heart! — of the land they had left for very hopelessness, [touched their hearts, and moved them to the very tenderest emotions. To trade on this susceptibility became a recognized livelihood; so that the quays were crowded with

idle vagabonds who sought out the prey with as much skill as a West-end waiter displays in detecting the rank of a new arrival.

This filthy locality, too, contained all the lodging-houses resorted to by the emigrants, who were easily persuaded to follow their "countryman" wherever he might lead. Here were spent the days — sometimes, unhappily, the weeks — before they could fix upon the part of the country to which they should bend their steps; and here, but too often, were wasted in excess and debauchery the little hoards that had cost years to accumulate, till farther progress became impossible; and the stranger who landed but a few weeks back full of strong hope, sunk down into the degraded condition of those who had been his ruin, — the old story, the dupe become blackleg.

It were well if deceit and falsehood, if heartless treachery and calculating baseness, were all that went forward here. But not so; crimes of every character were rife also, and not an inhabitant of the city, with money or character, would have, for any consideration, put foot within this district after nightfall. The very cries that broke upon the stillness of the night were often heard in the Upper Town; and whenever a shriek of agony arose, or the heartrending cry for help, prudent citizens would close the window, and say, "It is some of the Irish in the Lower Town," — a comprehensive statement that needed no commentary.

Towards this pleasant locality I now hastened, with a kind of instinctive sense that I had some claims on the sanctuary. It chanced that an emigrant ship which had arrived that evening was just disembarking its passengers; mingling with the throng of which, I entered the filthy and narrow lanes of this Alsatia. The new arrivals were all Irish, and, as usual, were heralded by parties of the resident population, eagerly canvassing them for this or that lodging-house. Had not my own troubles been enough for me, I should have felt interested in the strange contrast between the simple peasant first stepping on a foreign shore, and the shrewd roguery of him who proposed guidance, and who doubtless had himself once been as unsuspecting and artless as those he now cajoled and endeavored to dupe.

I soon saw that single individuals were accounted of little consequence; the claim of the various lodging-houses was as family hotels, perhaps; so that I mixed myself up with a group of some eight or ten, whose voices sounded pleasant, for, in the dark, I had no other indication to suggest a preference.

I was not long in establishing a footing, so far as talking went, with one of this party, — an old, very old man, whose greatest anxiety was to know, first, if “there was any Ingins where we were going,” and, secondly, if I had ever heard of his grandson, Dan Cullinane. The first doubt I solved for him frankly and freely, that an Indian would n’t dare to show his nose where we were walking; and as to the second, I hesitated, promising to refer to “my tablets” when I came to the light, for I thought the name was familiar to me.

“He was a shoemaker by trade,” said the old man, “and a better never left Ireland; he was ’prentice to ould Finucane in Ennis, and might have done well, if he had n’t the turn for Americay.”

“But he’ll do better here, rely upon it,” said I, inviting some further disclosures; “I’m certain he’s not disappointed with having come out.”

“No, indeed; glory be to God! he’s doing finely; and ’t was that persuaded my son Joe to sell the little place and come here; and a wonderful long way it is!”

After expending a few generalities on sea voyages in general, with a cursory glance at naval architecture, from Noah’s “square” stern, down to the modern “round” innovation, we again returned to Dan, for whom I already conceived a strong interest.

“And is it far to New Orleans from this?” said the old man, who, I perceived, was struck by the air of sagacity in my discourse.

“New Orleans! why that’s in the States, a thousand miles away!”

“Oh, murther, murther!” cried the old fellow, wringing his hands; “and ain’t we in the States?”

“No,” said I; “this is Canada.”

“Joe, Joe!” cried he, pulling his son by the collar, “listen to this, acushla. Oh, murther, murther! we’re kilt and destroyed intirely!”

“What is it, father?” said a tall, powerfully built man, who spoke in a low but resolute voice; “what ails you?”

“Tell him, darlint, tell him!” said the old man, not able to utter his griefs.

“It seems,” said I, “that you believed yourselves in the States; now, this is not so. This is British America, — Lower Canada.”

“Is n’t it ‘Quaybec’?” said he, standing full in front of me.

“It is Quebec; but still, that is Canada.”

“And it’s ten thousand miles from Dan!” said the old fellow, whose cries were almost suffocating him.

“Whisht, father, and let me talk,” said the son; “do you know New Orleans?”

“Perfectly, — every street of it,” said I, with an effrontery the darkness aided considerably.

“And how far is’t from here?”

“Something like thirteen or fourteen hundred miles, at a rough guess.”

“Oh, th’ eternal villain! if I had him by the neck!” cried Joe, as he struck the ground a blow with his blackthorn which certainly would not have improved the human face divine; “he towld me they were a few miles asunder, — an easy day’s walk!”

“Who said so?” asked I.

“The chap on Eden Quay, in Dublin, where we took our passage.”

“Don’t be down-hearted, anyway,” said I; “distance is nothing here: we think no more of a hundred miles than you do in Ireland of a walk before breakfast. If it’s any comfort to you, I’m going the same way myself.” This very consolatory assurance, which I learned then for the first time also, did not appear to give the full confidence I expected, for Joe made no answer, but, with head dropped and clasped hands, continued to mutter some words in Irish that, so far as sound went, had not the “clink” of blessings.

"He knows Dan," said the old man to his son, in a whisper which, low as it was, my quick ears detected.

"What does he know about him?" exclaimed the son, savagely; for the memory of one deception was too strong upon him to make him lightly credulous.

"I knew a very smart young man, — a very promising young fellow indeed, — at New Orleans," said I, "of the name you speak of, — Dan Cullinane."

"What part of Ireland did he come from?" asked Joe.

"The man I mean was from Clare, somewhere in the neighborhood of Ennis."

"That's it!" said the old man.

"Whisht!" said the son, whose caution was not so easily satisfied; and, turning to me, added, "What was he by trade?"

"He was a shoemaker, and an excellent one, — indeed, I've no hesitation in saying, one of the best in New Orleans."

"What was the street he lived in?"

Here was a puzzler; for, as my reader knows, I was at the end of my information, and had not the slightest knowledge of New Orleans or its localities. The little scrap of newspaper I had picked up on Anticosti was the only thing having any reference to that city I ever possessed in my life. But, true to my theory to let nothing go to loss, I remembered this now, and, with an easy confidence, said, "I cannot recall the street, but it is just as you turn out of the street where the 'Picayune' newspaper-office stands."

"Right! — all right, by the father of Moses!" cried Joe, stretching out a brawny hand, and shaking mine with the cordiality of friendship. Then, stepping forward to where the rest of the party were walking, with two most loquacious guides, he said, "Molly! here's a boy knows Dan! Bidly! come here, and hear about Dan!"

Two young girls, in long cloth cloaks, turned hastily round, and drew near, as they exclaimed in a breath, "Oh, tell us about Dan, sir!"

"'Tis betther wait till we're in a house," said the old man, who was, however greedy for news, not a little desirous of a fire and something to eat. "Sure, you'll come with us, and

take yer share of what's going," said he to me, — an invitation which, ere I could reply to, was reiterated by the whole party.

"Do you know where we're going here?" asked Joe of me, as we continued our way through mazes of gloomy lanes that grew gradually less and less frequented.

"No," said I, in a whisper, "but 't is best be on our guard here: we are in a bad neighborhood."

"Well, there's three boys there," said he, pointing to his sons, who walked in front, "that will pay for all they get. Will you ax the fellows how far we're to go yet, for they don't mind *me*."

"Are we near this same lodging-house?" said I, bluntly, to the guides, and using French, to show that I was no unfledged arrival from beyond the seas.

"Ahi!" cried one, "a gaillard from the battery."

"Where from, à la gueule de loup, young mounsier?" said the other, familiarly catching me by the lapel of my coat.

"Because I am not afraid of his teeth," said I, with an easy effrontery my heart gave a flat lie to.

"Vrai?" said he, with a laugh of horrible meaning.

"Vrai!" repeated I, with a sinking courage, but a very bold voice.

"I wish we were in better company," whispered I to Joe; "what directions did you give these fellows?"

"To show us the best lodging-house for the night, and that we'd pay well for it."

"Ah!" thought I, "that explains something."

"Here we are, mounseers," said one, as, stopping at the door of a two-storied house, he knocked with his knuckles on the panel.

"Nous fillons, slick, en suite, here," said the other, holding out his hand.

"They are going!" whispered I; "they want to be paid, and we are well rid of them."

"It would be manners to wait and see if they'll let us in," said Joe, who did not fancy this summary departure, while he fumbled in his pocket for a suitable coin.

"Vite! — quick! — sharp time!" cried one of the fellows,

who, as the sound of voices was heard from within, seemed impatient to be off; and so, snatching rather than taking the shilling which still lingered in Joe's reluctant fingers, he wheeled about and fled, followed rapidly by the other.

"Qui va!" cried a sharp voice from within, as I knocked for the second time on the door-panel with a stone.

"Friends," said I; "we want a lodging and something to eat."

The door was at once opened, and, by the light of a lantern, we saw the figure of an old woman, whose eyes, bleared and bloodshot, glared at us fixedly.

"'T is a lodgen' yez want?" said she, in an accent that showed her to be Irish. "And who brought yez here?"

"Two young fellows we met on the quay," said Joe; "one called the other 'Tony.'"

"Ay, indeed!" muttered the hag; "I was sure of it: his own son! his own son!"

These words she repeated in a tone of profound sorrow, and for a time seemed quite unmindful of our presence.

"Are we to get in at all?" said the old man, in an accent of impatience.

"What a hurry yer in; and maybe 't is wishing yerself out again ye'd be, after ye wor in!"

"I think we'd better try somewhere else," whispered Joe to me; "I don't like the look of this place." Before I could reply to this, a loud yell burst forth from the end of the street, accompanied by the tramp of many people, who seemed to move in a kind of regulated step.

"Here they are! Here they come!" cried the old woman; "step in quick, or ye'll be too late!" and she dragged the young girls forward by the cloak into the hall; we followed without further question. Then, placing the lantern on the floor, she drew a heavy chain across the door, and dropped her cloak over the light, saying in a low, tremulous voice, "Them's the 'Tapageers!'"

The crowd now came closer, and we perceived that they were singing in chorus a song, of which the air, at least, was Irish.

The barbarous rhyme of one rude verse, as they sung it in passing, still lingers in my memory:—

"No bloody agint here we see,
 Ready to rack, distrain, and saze us;
 Whate'er we ax, we have it free,
 And take at hand, whatever plaze us.
 Tow, row, row,
 Will yez show me, now,
 The polis that 'll dare to face us!"

"There they go! 'tis well ye wor safe!" said the old hag, as the sounds died away, and all became silent in the street without.

"Who or what are they?" said I, my curiosity being stimulated by fear.

"Them 's the 'Tapageers'! The chaps that never spared man or woman in their rounds. 'T is bad enough, the place is; but they make it far worse!"

"Can we stop here for the night?" said Joe, growing impatient at the colloquy.

"And what for wud ye stop here?" asked the crone, as she held up the lantern the better to see him who made the demand.

"We want our supper, and a place to sleep," said the old man; "and we're able and willin' to pay for both."

"'T is a nice place ye kem for either!" said she; and she leaned back against the wall and laughed with a fiend-like malice that made my blood chill.

"Then I suppose we must go somewhere else," said Joe. "Come, boys; 't is no use losing our time here!"

"God speed you!" said she, preparing to undo the chain that fastened the door. "Ye have bould hearts, any way! There they go! d' ye hear them?" This was said in a half-whisper, as the wild yells of the "Tapageers" arose without; and soon after, the noise and tumnlt of a scuffle, — at least we could hear the crashing of sticks, and the shouting of a fray; from which, too, piercing cries for help burst forth.

"What are ye doin'? Are ye mad? Are ye out of your sinses?" cried the hag, as Joe endeavored to wrest open the chain, the secret of which he did not understand.

"They're murdering some one without there!" said he. "Let me free, or I'll kick down your old door this minute!"

"Kick away, honey!" said the hag; "as strong men as yourself tried that a'ready; and—d'ye hear?—it's done now; it's *over!*" These terrible words were in allusion to a low kind of sobbing sound, which grew fainter and fainter, and then ceased altogether.

"They're taking the body away," whispered she, after a pause of death-like stillness.

"Where to?" said I, half breathless with terror.

"To the river! the stream runs fast, and the corpse will be down below Goose Island, — ay, in the Gulf, 'fore morning!"

The two young girls, unable longer to control their feelings, here burst out a crying; and the old man, pulling out a rosary, turned to the wall and began his prayers.

"'Tis a bloody place; glory be to God!" said Joe, at last, with a sigh, and clasped his hands before him, like one unable to decide on what course to follow.

I saw, now, that all were so paralyzed by fear that it devolved upon me to act for the rest; so, summoning my best courage, I said, "Will you allow us to stay here for the night, since we are strangers, and do not know where to seek shelter?" She shook her head, not so much with the air of refusing my request as to convey that I had asked for something scarce worth the granting.

"We only want a shelter for the night —"

"And a bit to eat," broke in the old man, turning round from his prayers. "Sanctificatur in sec'la, — if it was only a bit of belly bacon, and — Tower of Ivory, purtect us — with a pot of praties, and — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John —"

"Is he a friar?" said the hag to me, eagerly; "does he belong to an 'ordher'?"

"No," said I; "he's only a good Catholic."

She wrung her hands, as if in disappointment; and then, taking up the lantern once more, said, "Come along! I'll show yez where ye can stay."

We followed, I leading the others, up a narrow and rickety stair, between two walls streaming with damp and patched with mould. When she reached the landing she searched for a moment for a key, which having found, she opened the door of a long low room, whose only furniture

was a deal table and a few chairs ; a candle stuck in a bottle, and some drinking-vessels of tin, were on the table, and a piece of newspaper containing some tobacco.

"There," said she, lighting the candle, "you may stay here; 't is all I'm able to do for yez, is to give ye shelter."

"And nothing to eat?" ejaculated the old man, sorrowfully.

"Hav' n't you a few potatoes?" said Joe.

"I did n't taste food since yesterday morning," said the hag; "and that's what's to keep life in me to-morrow!" and as she spoke, she held out a fragment of blackened sea-biscuit such as Russian sailors call "rusk."

"Well, by coorse, there's no use in talking," said Joe, who always seemed the first to see his way clearly. "'T is worse for the girls, for *we* can take a draw of the pipe. Lucky for us we have it!"

Meanwhile, the two girls had taken off their cloaks, and were busy gathering some loose sticks together, to make a fire, — a piece of practical wisdom I at once leant all aid to.

The hag, apparently moved by the ready compliance to make the best of matters, went out, and returned with some more wood, — fragments of ship-timber, — which she offered us, saying, "'T is all I can give yez. Good night to yez all!"

"Well, father," said Joe, as soon as he had lighted his pipe, and taken a seat by the fire, "ye wor tired enough of the ship, but I think ye wish yerself back again there, now."

"I wish more nor that," said the old man, querulously; "I wish I never seen the same ship; nor ever left ould Ireland!"

This sentiment threw a gloom over the whole party, by awakening, not only memories of home and that far-away land, but also by the confession of a sense of disappointment which each was only able to struggle against while unavowed. The sorrow made them silent, and at last sleepy. At first, the three "boys," great fellows of six feet high, stretched themselves full-length on the floor, and snored away in concert; then the two girls, one with

her head on the other's lap, fell off; while the old man, sitting directly in front of the fire, nodded backwards and forwards, waking up, every half hour or so, to light his pipe; which done, he immediately fell off into a doze once more, leaving Joe and myself alone, waking and watchful.





CHAPTER . XVI .

A NIGHT IN THE "LOWER TOWN."

OE'S eyes were bent upon me, as I sat directly opposite him, with a fixedness that I could easily see was occasioned by my showy costume; his glances ranged from my buckled shoes to my white cravat, adorned with a splendid brooch of mock amethyst; nay, I almost fancied once that he was counting the silver clocks on my silk stockings! It was a look of most undisguised astonishment, — such a look as one bestows upon some new and singular animal, of whose habits and instincts we are lost in conjecture.

Now, I was "York too," — that is to say, I was Irish as well as himself; and I well knew that there was no rank nor condition of man for which the peasant in Ireland conceives the same low estimate as the "Livery Servant." The class is associated in his mind with chicanery, impudence, falsehood, theft, and a score of similar good properties; not to add that, being occasionally, in great families, a native of England, the Saxon element is united to the other "bitters" of the potion.

Scarcely a "tenant" could be found that would not rather face a mastiff than a footman, — such is the proverbial dislike to these human lilies who neither toil nor spin. Now, I have said I knew this well: I had been reared in the knowl-

edge and practice of this and many similar antipathies, so that I at once took counsel with myself what I should do to escape from the reproach of a mark so indelibly stamped upon me by externals. "La famille Cullinane" suited *me* admirably; they were precisely the kind of people *I* wanted; my care, therefore, was that they should reciprocate the want, and be utterly helpless without *me*. Thus reflecting, I could not help saying to myself, how gladly would I have parted with all these gauds for a homely, ay, or even a ragged, suit of native frieze. I remembered the cock on the dunghill who would have given his diamond for one single grain of corn; and I felt that "Æsop" was a grand political economist.

From these and similar mental meanderings I was brought back by Joe, who, after emptying the ashes from his pipe, said, and with a peculiarly dry voice, "Ye'r in a service, young man?"

Now, although the words are few, and the speaker did not intend that his manner should have given them any particular significance, yet the tone, the cautious slowness of the enunciation, coupled with the stern, steady stare at my "bravery," made them tingle on my ears, and send the blood rushing to my cheeks with shame. It was like a sharp prick of the spur; and so it turned out.

"In a service!" said I, with a look of offended dignity. "No, I flatter myself not that low yet. What could have made you suppose so? Oh, I see!" — here I burst out into a very well-assumed laugh. "That is excellent, to be sure! ha, ha, ha! so it was these" — and I stretched forth my embroidered shins — "it was these deceived you! And a very natural mistake, too. No, my worthy friend, — not but, indeed, I might envy many in that same ignoble position." I said this with a sudden change of voice, as though overcast by some sad recollection.

"'T was indeed your dress," said Joe, with a modest deference in his manner, meant to be a full apology for his late blunder. "Maybe 't is the fashion here."

"No, Cullinane," said I, using a freedom which should open the way to our relative future standing; "no, not even that." Here I heaved a heavy sigh, and became silent. My

companion, abashed by his mistake, said nothing; and so we sat, without interchanging a word, for full five minutes.

“I have had a struggle with myself, Cullinane,” said I, at last, “and I have conquered. Ay, I have gained the day in a hard-fought battle against my sense of shame. I will be frank with you, therefore. In this dress I appeared to-night on the boards of the Quebec theatre.”

“A play actor!” exclaimed Joe, with a face very far from expressing any high sense of the histrionic art.

“Not exactly,” said I, “only a would-be one. I am a gentleman by birth, family, and fortune; but taking it into my head, in a foolish hour, that I should like the excitement of an actor’s life, I fled from home, quitted friends, relatives, affluence, and ease, to follow a strolling company. At another time I may relate to you all the disguises I assumed to escape detection. Immense sums were offered for my apprehension — why do I say *were*? — ay, Cullinane, are offered. I will not deceive you. It is in your power this instant, by surrendering me to my family, to earn five thousand dollars!”

“Do ye think I’d be —”

“No, I do not. In proof of my confidence in you, hear my story. We travelled through the States at first by unfrequented routes till we reached the North, when, gaining courage, I ventured to take a high range of characters, and, I will own it, with success. At last we came to Canada, in which country, although the reward had not been announced, my father had acquainted all the principal people with my flight, entreating them to do their utmost to dissuade me from a career so far below my rank and future prospects. Among others, he wrote to an old friend and schoolfellow, the Governor-General, requesting his aid in this affair. I was always able, from other sources, to learn every step that was taken with this object; so that I not only knew this, but actually possessed a copy of my father’s letter to Lord Poynder, wherein this passage occurred: ‘Above all things, my dear Poynder, no publicity, no exposure! Remember the position Cornelius will one day hold, and let him not be ashamed when he may meet you in after-life. If the silly boy can be induced, by his own sense of dignity, to abandon

this unworthy pursuit, so much the better; but coercion would, I fear, give faint hope of eradicating the evil.' Now, as I perceived that no actual force was to be employed against me, I did not hesitate to appear in the part for which the bills announced me. Have you ever read Shakespeare?"

"No, sir," said Joe, respectfully.

"Well, no matter. I was to appear as Hamlet, — this is the dress of that character, — little suspecting, indeed, how the applause I was accustomed to receive was to be changed. To be brief. In the very centre of the dress-circle was the Governor himself; he came with his whole staff, but without any previous intimation. No sooner had I made my entrance on the scene, — scarcely had I begun that magnificent soliloquy, 'Show me the thief that stole my fame,' — when his Excellency commenced hissing! Now, when the Governor-General hisses, all the staff hiss; then the President of the Council and all his colleagues hiss; then come the bishop and the inferior clergy, with the judges and the Attorney-General, and so on; then all the loyal population of the house joined in, with the exception of a few in the galleries that hated the British connection, and who cried out, 'Three cheers for Con Cregan and the independence of Canada!' In this way went on the first act; groans and yells and cat-calls overtopping all I tried to say, and screams for the manager to come out issuing from every part of the house. At last out he did come. This for a while made matters worse; so many directions were given, questions asked, and demands made that it was clearly impossible to hear any one voice; and there stood the manager, swinging his arms about like an insane telegraph, now running to the stage-box at one side, then crossing over to the other, to maintain a little private conversation by signs, till the sense of the house spoke out by accidentally catching a glimpse of me in the side-scenes.

"'Is it your pleasure, my lords, ladies, and gentlemen, that this actor should not appear again before you?'"

"'Yes — yes. No — no — no,' were shouted from hundreds of voices.

"'What am I to understand?'" said he, bowing, with

his arms crossed submissively before him. ‘I submit myself to your orders. If Mr. Cregan does not meet your approbation —’

“ ‘Throw him into the dock! — break his neck! — set him adrift on a log down the Gulf-stream! — chip him up for bark! — burn him for charcoal!’ — and twenty other like humane proposals burst forth together; and so, not waiting to see how far the manager’s politeness would carry him, I fled from the theatre. Yes, Cullinane, I fled with shame and disgust from that fickle public, who applaud with ecstasy to-day that they may condemn with infamy to-morrow. Nor was I deceived by the vain egotism of supposing that *I* was the object of their ungenerous anger. Alas! my friend, the evil lay deeper, — it was my Irish name and family they sought to insult! The old grudge that they bear us at home, they carry over the seas with them. How plain it is: they never can forgive our superiority. It is this they seek revenge upon wherever they find us.”

I own that in giving this peculiar turn to my narrative I was led by perceiving that my listener had begun to show a most lamentable want of sympathy for myself and my sufferings; so I was driven to try what a little patriotism might do in arousing his feelings; and I was right. Some of Cullinane’s connections had been Terrys, — or Blackfeet, or Whitefeet, or some one or other of these pleasant fraternities who study ball-practice, with a landlord for the bull’s-eye. He at once caught up the spirit of my remarks, and even quoted some eloquent passages of Mr. O’Connell about the width of our shoulders and the calves of our legs, and other like personal advantages, incontestably showing as they do that we never were made to be subject to the Saxon. It was the law of the land, however, which had his heartiest abhorrence. This, like nine-tenths of his own class in Ireland, he regarded as a systematic means of oppression, invented by the rich to give them the tyrannical dominion over the poor. Nor is the belief to be wondered at, considering how cognizant the peasant often is of all the schemes and wiles by which a conviction is compassed; nay, the very adroitness of a legal defence in criminal cases, — the feints, the quips, the stratagems, — instead of suggesting admiration for those barriers

by which the life and liberty of a subject are protected, only engendered a stronger conviction of the roguish character of that ordeal where craft and subtlety could do so much.

It was at the close of a very long diatribe over Irish law and lawyers that Cullinane, whose confidence increased each moment, said, with a sigh, "Ay! they wor n't so 'cute in ould times, when my poor grandfather was tried, as they are now, or maybe he 'd have had betther luck."

"What happened to him?" said I.

"He was hanged, acushla!" said he, knocking the ashes out of his pipe as leisurely as might be, and then mumbling a scrap of a prayer below his breath.

"For what?" asked I, in some agitation; but he did n't hear me, being sunk in his own reflections, so that I was forced to repeat my question.

"Ye never heerd of one Mr. Shinane, of the Grove?" said he, after a pause. "Of coorse ye did n't, — 't is many years ago now; but he was well known oncet, and owned a great part of Ennistymore, and a hard man he was. But no matter for that, — he was a strong, full man, with rosy cheeks and stout built, and sorra a lease in the country had not his life in it! — a thing he liked well, for he used to say, 'It'll be the ruin of ye all, if any one shoots me!' Well, my grandfather — rest his sowl in glory! — was his driver, and used to manage everything on the property for him; and considerin' what a hard thing it is, he was well liked by the country round, — all but by one man, Maurice Cafferty by name. I never seed him, for it was all 'fore I was born; but the name is in my mind as if I knew him well, — I used to hear it every night of my life when I was a child!

"There was a dispute about Cafferty's houldin', and my grandfather was for turnin' him out, for he was a bad tenant; but Mr. Shinane was afeerd of him, and said, 'Leave him quiet, Mat,' says he; 'he's a troublesome chap, and we'll get rid of him in our own good time; but don't drive him to extremities: I told him to come up to the cottage, this mornin': come with me there, and we'll talk to him.' Now, the cottage was a little place about two miles off, in the woods, where the master used to dine sometimes in summer, when they were chipping bark; but nobody lived there.

“It was remarked by many that morning, as they went along, that my grandfather and Mr. Shinane were in high words all the time, — at least, so the people working in the fields thought, and even the childer that was picking bark said that they were talking as if they were very angry with each other.

“This was about eleven o’clock, and at the same time Cafferty, who was selling a pig in Ennistymore, said to the butcher, ‘Be quick, and tell me what you’ll give, for I must go home and clean myself, as I’m to speak to the master to-day about my lease.’ Well, at a little before twelve Cafferty came through the wood, and asked the people had they seen Mr. Shinane pass by, for that he towld him to meet him at the cottage; and the workmen said yes, and more by token that he was quarrellin’ with Mat Cullinane. ‘I’m sorry for that,’ says Cafferty, ‘for I wanted him to be in a good humor, and long life to him!’ The words was n’t well out, but what would they see but my grandfather running towards them, at the top of his speed, screeching out like mad, ‘The master’s murdered! the master’s kilt dead!’ Away they all went to the cottage, and there upon the floor was the dead body, with an axe buried deep in the skull, — so deep that only the thick part of the iron was outside. That was the dreadful sight! and, sure enough, after looking at the corpse, every eye was turned on my grandfather, who was leaning on the dresser, pale and trembling, and his hands and knees all covered with blood. ‘How did it happen, Mat?’ said three or four together; but Cafferty muttered, ‘It’s better ask nothing about it; it’s not likely *he’ll* tell us the truth!’

“The same night my grandfather was arrested on suspicion and brought to Ennis, where he was lodged in jail; and although there was no witness agin’ him, nor anything more than I towld ye, — the high words between them, the axe being my grandfather’s, the blood on his clothes and hands, and his dreadful confusion when the people came up, — all these went so hard against him, and particularly as the judge said it was good to make an example, that he was condemned; and so it was he was hanged on the next Saturday in front of the jail!”

"But what defence did he make; what account did he give of the circumstance?"

"All he could tell was, that he was standing beside the master at the table, talking quietly, when he heard a shout and a yell in the wood, and he said, 'They're stealing the bark out there; they'll not leave us a hundredweight of it yet!' and out he rushed into the copse. The shouting grew louder, and he thought it was some of the men cryin' for help, and so he never stopped running till he came where they were at work felling trees. 'What's the matter?' says he, to the men, as he came up panting and breathless; 'where was the screeching?'

"'We heerd nothing,' says the men.

"'Ye heerd nothing! did n't ye hear yells and shouting this minute?'

"'Sorra bit,' says the men, looking strangely at each other, for my grandfather was agitated, and trembling, between anger and a kind of fear; just as he said afterwards, 'as if there was something dreadful going to happen him!' 'Them was terrible cries, anyway!' says my grandfather; and with that he turned back to the cottage, and it was then that he found the master lying dead on his face, and the axe in his skull. He tried to lift him up, or turn him over on his back, and that was the way he bloodied his hands and all the front of his clothes. That was all he had to say, and to swear before the sight of Heaven that he did n't do it!

"No matter! they hanged him for it! Ay, and I have an ould newspaper in my trunk this minit, where there's a great discourse about the wickedness of a crayture going out of the world wid a lie on his last breath!"

"And you think he was innocent?" said I.

"Sure, we know it! sure, the priest said to my father, — 'Take courage,' says he, 'your father is n't in a bad place. If he's in purgatory,' says he, 'he's not over the broken bridge, where the murderers does be, but in the meadows, where the stream is shallow, and stepping-stones in it! and every stone costs ten masses — sorra more!' God help us! but blood is a dreadful thing!" And with this reflection, uttered in a voice of fervent feeling, the hardy peasant laid

down his pipe ; and I could see, by his muttering lips and clasped hands, that he was offering up a prayer for the soul's rest of his unhappy kinsman.

"And what became of Cafferty?" said I, as he finished his devotions.

"T was never rightly known ; for, after he gave evidence on the trial, the people did n't like him, and he left the place ; some say he went to his mother's relations down in Kerry !"

The deep-drawn breathings of the sleepers around us ; the unbroken stillness of the night ; the fast-expiring embers, which only flickered at intervals, — contributed their aid to make the story more deeply affecting ; and I sat pondering over it, and canvassing within my mind all the probabilities of the condemned man's guilt or innocence ; nor, I must own it, were all my convictions on the side of the narrator's belief ; but even that very doubt heightened the interest considerably. As for Cullinane, his thoughts were evidently less with the incidents of the characters as they lived, than with that long pilgrimage of expiation, in which his imagination pictured his poor relative still a wanderer beyond the grave.

The fire now barely flickered, throwing from time to time little jets of light upon the sleeping figures around us, and then leaving all in dark indistinctness. My companion also, crouching down, hid his face within his hands, and either slept or was lost in deep thought, and I alone of all the party was left awake, my mind dwelling on the tale I had just heard, with a degree of interest to which the place and the hour strongly contributed.

I had been for some time thus, when the sound of feet moving heavily overhead attracted my attention ; they were like the sluggish footsteps of age, but passing to and fro with what seemed haste and eagerness. I could hear a voice, too, which even in its indistinctness I recognized as that of the old woman ; and once or twice fancied I could detect another, whose accents sounded like pain and suffering. The shuffling footsteps still continued, and I heard the old crazy sash of the window open, and after an interval shut again, while I distinctly could catch the old hag's voice say-

ing, "It's all dark without; there's no use 'trying'!" a low whining sound followed; and then I heard the old woman slowly descending the stairs, and, by the motion of her hand along the wall, I conjectured that she had no light.

She stopped as she came to the door, and seemed to listen to the long-drawn breathing of the sleepers; and then she pushed open the door and entered. With a strange dread of what this might mean, I still resolved to let the event take its course; and, feigning deepest sleep, I lay back against the wall and watched her well.

Guiding herself along by the wall, she advanced slowly, halting every second or third step to listen, — a strange precaution, since her own asthmatic breathing was enough to mask all other sounds. At last she neared the grate; and then her thin and cord-like fingers passed from the wall, to rest upon my head. It was with a kind of thrill I felt them; for I perceived by the touch that she did not know on what her hand was placed. She knelt down now, close beside me, and, stooping over, stirred the embers with her fingers till she discovered some faint resemblance to fire, amid the dark ashes. To brighten this into flame, she blew upon it for several minutes, and, even taking the live embers in her hands, tried in every way to kindle them.

With a patience that seemed untirable, she continued at this for a long time; now selecting from the hearth some new material to work upon, and now abandoning it for another; till, when I had almost grown drowsy in watching this monotonous process, a thin bright light sprang up, and I saw that she had lighted a little piece of candle that she held in her hand. I think even now I have her before me, as, crouched down upon her knees, and sheltering the candle from the current air of the room, she took a stealthy, but searching, glance at the figures, who, in every attitude of weariness, were sleeping heavily around.

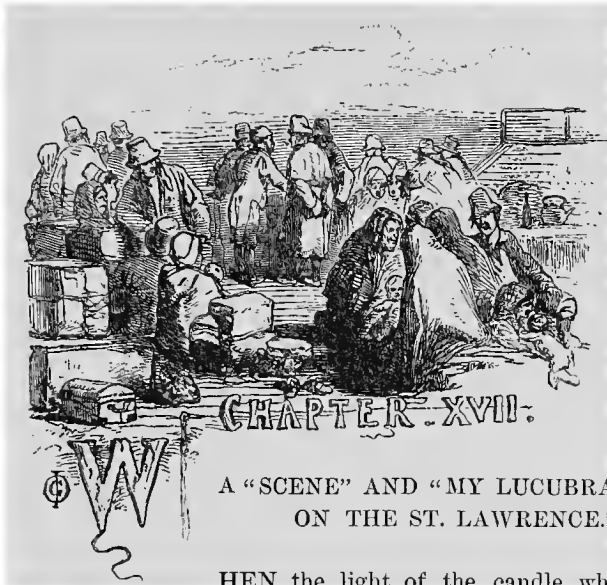
It was not without a great effort that she regained her feet, for she was very old and infirm; and now she retraced her steps cautiously as she came, — stooping at intervals to listen, and then resuming her way as before. I watched her till she passed out; and then, as I heard her first heavy

footstep on the stair, I slipped off my shoes and followed her.

My mind throughout the whole of that night had been kept in a state of tension that invariably has the effect of magnifying the significance of every, even the very commonest, occurrences. It resembles that peculiar condition in certain maladies when the senses become preternaturally acute; in such moments the reason is never satisfied with drawing only *from* inferences for any fact before it; it seeks for more, and in the effort becomes lost in the mazes of mere fancy. I will own that as, with stealthy step and noiseless gesture, I followed that old hag, there was a kind of ecstasy in my terror which no mere sense of pleasure could convey. The light seemed to show ghastly shapes, as she passed, on the green and mouldy walls, and her head, with its masses of long and straggling gray hair, nodded in shadow like some unearthly spectre.

As she came nigh the top, I heard a weak and whining cry, something too deep for the voice of infancy, but seeming too faint for manhood. "Ay, ay," croaked the hag, harshly, "I'm coming, I'm coming!" and as she said this, she pushed open a door and entered a room, which, by the passing gleam of light as she went, I perceived lay next to the roof, for the rafters and the tiles were both visible, as there was no ceiling.

I held my breath as I slowly stole along, and then, reaching the door as it lay half ajar, I crouched down and peeped in.



CHAPTER XVII.
A "SCENE" AND "MY LUCUBRATIONS
ON THE ST. LAWRENCE."

WHEN the light of the candle which the old woman carried had somewhat dissipated the darkness, I could see the whole interior of the room; and certainly, well habituated as I had been from my earliest years to such sights, poverty like this I never had seen before! Not a chair nor table was there; a few broken utensils for cooking, such as are usually thrown away as useless among rubbish, stood upon the cold hearth. A few potatoes on one broken dish, and a little meat on another, were the only things like food. It was not for some minutes that I perceived in the corner a miserable bed of straw confined within a plank, supported by two rough stones; nor was it till I had looked long and closely that I saw that the figure of a man lay extended on the bed, his stiffened and outstretched limbs resembling those of a corpse. Towards this the old woman now tottered with slow steps, and, setting the small piece of candle upright in a saucer, she approached the bed. "There it is, now; look at it, and make yer mind aisy," said she, placing it on the floor beside the bed, in such a position that he could see it.

The sick man turned his face round, and as his eyes met the light, there came over his whole features a wondrous change. Livid and clammy with the death-sweat, the rigid muscles relaxed, and in the staring eyeballs and the parted lips there seemed a perfect paroxysm of emotion. "Is that it? — are ye sure that 's it?" cried he, in a voice to which the momentary excitement imparted strength.

"To be sure I am; I seen Father Ned bless it himself, and sprinkle it too!" said she.

"Oh, the heavenly —" He stopped, and in a lower voice added, "Say it for me, Molly! — say it for me, Molly! I can't say it myself."

"Keep your eyes on the blessed candle!" said the hag, peevishly; "'t is a quarter dollar it cost me."

"Would n't he come, Molly? — did he say he would n't come?"

"Father Ned! arrah, 't is likely he'd come here at night, with the Tapageers on their rounds, and nothing to give him when he kem!"

"Not to hear my last words! — not to take my confession!" cried he, in a kind of shriek. "Oh, 't is the black list of sins I have to own to!"

"Whisht, whisht!" cried the hag. "'T is many a year ago now; maybe it 's all forgot."

"No, it's not," cried the dying man, with a wild energy he did not seem to have strength for. "When you wor away, Molly, he was here, standing beside the bed."

The old hag laughed with a horrid sardonic laugh.

"Don't — don't, for the love of — ah — I can't say — I can't say it," cried he; and the voice died away in the effort.

"What did he say to ye when he kem?" said she, in a scoffing tone.

"He never spoke a word, but he pressed back the cloth that was on his head, and I saw the deep cut in it, down to the very face!"

"Well, I am sure it had time to heal before this time," said the woman, with a tone of mockery that at last became palpable to the dying man.

"Where 's Dan, Molly, — did he never come back since?"

"Sorra bit; he said he'd go out of the house, and never come back to it. You frightened the boy with the terrible things you say in your ravings."

"Oh, murther — murther! My own flesh and blood desart me!"

"Then why won't you be reasonable, — why won't you hould your peace about what happened long ago?"

"Because I can't," said he, with a peevish eagerness.

"Because I'm going where it's all known a'ready."

"Faix, and I would n't be remindin' them, anyway!" said the hag, whose sarcastic impiety added fresh tortures to the dying sinner.

"I wanted to tell Father Ned all; I wanted to have masses for him that's gone, — the man that suffered instead of me! Oh, dear! — Oh, dear! — and nobody will come to me."

"If ye cry that loud, I'll leave you too," said the hag. "They know already 'tis the spotted fever ye have, and the Tapageers would burn the house under ye, if I was to go."

"Don't go, Molly, — don't leave me," he cried, with heart-rending anguish. "Bring the blessed candle nearer; I don't see it well."

"You'll see less of it soon; 'tis nigh out," said she, snuffing the wick with her fingers.

The dying man now stretched out his fleshless fingers towards the light, and I could see by his lips that he was praying. "They're calling me now," cried he, "Molly," — and his voice of a sudden grew strong and full, — "don't ye hear them? There it is again, — Maurice Cafferty, Maurice Cafferty, yer wantin'."

"Lie down and be at peace," said she, rudely pushing him back on the bed.

"The blessed candle, where's the blessed candle?" shrieked he.

"'Tis out," said the hag; and as she spoke, the wick fell into the saucer, and all was dark.

A wild and fearful cry broke from the sick man and re-echoed through the silent house; and ere it died away I had crept stealthily back to my place beside my companions.

“Did ye hear anything, or was I dreamin’?” said Joe to me; “I thought I heard the most dreadful scream, — like a man drownin’.”

“It was a dream, perhaps,” said I, shuddering at the thought of what I had just witnessed, while I listened with terrible anxiety for any sound overhead; but none came; and so passed the long hours till day-dawn.

Without revealing to my companion the terrible scene I had been witness to, I told him that we were in the same house with a fearful malady, — an announcement I well knew had greater terror for none than an Irish peasant. He at once decided on departing; and, although day was barely breaking, he awoke the others, and a low whispering conversation ensued, in which I felt, or imagined, at least, that I was an interested party. At last Joe, turning towards me, said, “And you, sir, what do you mean to do!”

“The very question,” said I, “that I cannot answer. If I were to follow my inclination, I’d turn homeward; if I must yield to necessity, I’ll call upon the Governor-General, and remain with him till I hear from my friends.”

There was a pause; a moment of deliberation seemed to fall upon the bystanders, which at length was broken by the old man saying, “Well, good luck be with you; any way, ’t is the best thing you could do!”

I saw that I had overshot my bolt, and with difficulty concealed my annoyance at my own failure. My irritation was, I conclude, sufficiently apparent, for Joe quickly said, “We’re very sorry to part with you; but if we could be of any use before we go —”

“Which way do you travel?” said I, carelessly.

“That’s the puzzle, for we don’t know the country. ’T is New Orleans we’d like to go to first.”

“Nothing easier,” said I. “Take the steamer to Montreal, cross over into the States, down Lake Champlain to Whitehall, over to Albany, and then twenty hours down the Hudson brings you to New York.”

“You know the way well!” said Joe, with an undisguised admiration for my geography, which, I need not tell the reader, was all acquired from books and maps.

“I should think so,” said I, “seeing that I might travel it blindfold!”

"Is it dangerous? Are there Injians?" said the old man, whose mind seemed very alive to the perils of red men.

"There are some tribes on the way," said I; "but the white fellows you meet with are worse than the red ones, — such rogues, and assassins too!"

"The saints presarve us! How will we ever do it?"

"Look out for some smart fellow who knows the way and thoroughly understands the people, and who can speak French fluently, for the first part of the journey, and who is up to all the Yankee roguery, for the second. Give him full power to guide and direct your expedition, and you'll have both a safe journey and a pleasant one."

"Ay, and where will we get him?" cried one.

"And what would he be askiu' for his trouble?" said another; while Joe, with an assenting nod, reiterated both questions, and seemed to expect that answer from me.

"It ought to be easy enough in such a city as this," said I, negligently. "Are you acquainted with Forbes and Gudgeon? They are my bankers. They could, I am sure, find out your man at once."

"Ah, sir, we know nobody at all!" exclaimed Joe, in an accent of such humility that I actually felt shocked at my own duplicity.

"By Jove!" said I, as though a sudden thought had struck me, "very little would make me go with you myself." A regular burst of joy from the whole party here interrupted me. "Yes, I'm quite in earnest," said I, with a dignified air. "This place will be excessively distasteful to me henceforth. I have placed myself in what is called a false position here, and 't were far better to escape from it at once."

"That would be the making of us, all out, if ye could come, Mr. Cregan!" said Joe.

"Let me interrupt you one moment," said I. "If I should accompany you on this journey, there is one condition only upon which I would consent to it."

"Whatever you like; only say it," said he, over whom I had established a species of magnetic influence.

"It is this, then," said I, "that you treat me on terms of perfect equality, — forget my birth and rank in life; regard

me exactly as one of yourselves. Let me be no longer anything but 'Con Cregan.'"

"That's mighty handsome, entirely!" said the old man, — a sentiment concurred in by the whole family in chorus.

"Remember, then," said I, "no more 'Mr. Cregan.' I am 'Con' — nothing more!"

Joe looked unutterable delight at the condescension.

"Secondly, I should not wish to go back to my lodgings here, after what has occurred; so I'll write a few lines to have my trunks forwarded to Montreal, until which time I'll ask of you to procure me a change of costume, for I cannot bear to be seen in this absurd dress by daylight."

"To be sure; whatever you please!" said Joe, overjoyed at the projected arrangement.

After some further discussion on the subject, I inquired where their luggage was stored, and learned that it lay at the Montreal Steamer Wharf, where it had been deposited the preceding day; and by a bill of the packets, which Joe produced, I saw that she was to sail that very morning, at eight o'clock. There was then no time to lose; so I advised my companions to move silently and noiselessly from the house, and to follow me. With an implicit reliance on every direction I uttered, they stole carefully down the stairs and issued into the street, which was now perfectly deserted.

Although in total ignorance of the locality, I stepped out confidently; and first making for the Harbor, as a "point of departure," I at last reached the "New Wharf," as the station of the river steamers was called. With an air of the most consummate effrontery, I entered the office to bargain for our passage; and although the clerks were not sparing of their ridicule both on my pretensions and my costume, as the conversation was carried on in French, my companions stared in wonder at my fluency, and in silent ecstasy at the good fortune that had thrown them into such guidance.

It was a busy morning for me; since besides getting their luggage on board and procuring them a hearty breakfast, I had also to arrange about my own costume, of which I now felt really ashamed at every step.

At length we got under way, and steamed stoutly against the fast-flowing St. Lawrence; our decks crowded with a

multifarious and motley crew of emigrants, all bound for various places in the Upper Province, but with as pleasant an ignorance of where they were going, what it was like, and how far off, as the most devoted fatalist could have wished for. A few, and they were the shrewd exceptions, remembered the name of the city in whose neighborhood they were about to settle; many more could only say, negatively, that it was n't Lachine, nor it was n't Trois Rivières; some were only capable of affirming that it was "beyant Montreal," or "higher up than Kingston;" and, lastly, a "few bright spirits" were going, "wid the help o' God, where Dan was," or "Peter." They were not down-hearted, nor anxious, nor fretful for all this; far from it. It seemed as if the world before them, in all the attractions of its novelty, suggested hope. They had left a land so full of wretchedness that no change could well be worse; so they sat in pleasant little knots and groups upon the deck "discoorsin'." Ay, just so, — "discoorsin'"! Sassenach that you are, I hear you muttering, "What is that?" Well, I'll tell you. "Discoorsin'" is not talking, nor chaffing, nor mere conversing. It is not the *causerie* of the French, nor the *conversazione* of Italy, nor is it the *Gespräch's Unterhaltung* of plodding old Germany; but it is an admirable *mélange* of all together. It is a grand *olla podrida*, where all things, political, religious, agricultural, and educational, are discussed with such admirable keeping, such uniformity in the tone of sentiment and expression, that it would be difficult to detect a change in the subject-matter, from the quiet monotony of its handling. The Pope; the praties; Molly Somebody's pig and the Priest's pony; Dan O'Connell's last instalment of hope; the price of oats; the late assizes; laments over the past, — the blessed days when there was little law and no police; when masses were cheap, and mutton to be had for stealing it, — such were the themes in vogue. And though generally one speaker "held the floor," there was a running chorus of "Sure enough!" "Devil fear ye!" "An' why not?" kept up, that made every hearer a sleeping partner in the eloquence. Dissent or contradiction was a thing unheard of; they were all subjects upon which each felt precisely alike.

No man's experience pointed to anything save rainy seasons and wet potatoes, cheap bacon and high county cess. Life had its one phase of monotonous want, only broken in upon by the momentary orgie of an election, or the excitement of a county town on the Saturday of an execution.

And so it was. Like the nor'easter that followed them over the seas, came all the memories of what they had left behind. They had little care for even a passing look at the new and strange objects around them. The giant cedar-trees along the banks, — the immense rafts, like floating islands, hurrying past on the foaming current, with myriads of figures moving on them, — the endless forests of dark pines, the quaint log-houses, unlike those farther north, and with more pretension to architectural design, — and now and then a Canadian "bateau" shooting past like a sword-fish, its red-capped crew saluting the steamer with a wild cheer that would wake the echoes many a mile away: if they looked at these, it was easy to see that they noted them but indifferently; their hearts were far away. Ay, in spite of misery, and hardship, and famine, and flood, they were away in the wilds of Erris, in the bleak plains of Donegal, or the lovely glens of Connemara.

It has often struck me that our rulers should have perpetuated the names of Irish localities in the New World. One must have experienced the feeling himself to know the charm of this simple association. The hourly recurring name that speaks so familiarly of home, is a powerful antidote to the sense of banishment. Well, here I am, prosing about emigrants, and their regrets, and wants, and hopes, and wishes, and forgetting the while the worthy little group who, with a hot "net" of potatoes (for in this fashion each mess is allowed to boil its quota), and a very savory cut of ham, awaited my presence in the steerage; they were good and kindly souls every one of them. The old grandfather was a fine prosy old grumbler about the year '98 and the terrible doings of the "Orangemen." Joe was a stout-hearted, frank fellow that only wanted fair play in the world to make his path steadily onward. The sons were, in Irish parlance, "good boys," and the girls fine-tempered and good-natured, — as ninety-nine out of the hundred are in the land they come from.

Now, shall I forfeit some of my kind reader's consideration if I say that, with all these excellences, and many others besides, they became soon inexpressibly tiresome to me. There was not a theme they spoke on that I had not already by heart. Irish grievances, in all their moods and tenses, had been always "stock pieces" in my father's cabin, and I am bound to acknowledge that the elder Cregan had a sagacity of perception, a shrewdness of discrimination, and an aptitude of expression not to be found every day. Listening to the Cullinanes after him was like hearing the butler commenting in the servants' hall over the debate one had listened to in "the House." It was a strange, queer sensation that I felt coming over me as we travelled along day by day together, and I can even now remember the shriek of ecstasy that escaped me one morning when I had hit upon the true analysis of my feelings, and, jumping up, I exclaimed, "Con, you *are* progressing, my boy; you 'll be a gentleman yet; you have learned to be '*bored*' *already*!" From that hour I cultivated "my Cullinanes" as people take a course of a Spa, where, nauseous and distasteful at the time, one fancies he is to store up Heaven knows how many years of future health and vigor.

In a former chapter of these Confessions I have told the reader the singular sensations I experienced when first under the influence of port wine: how a kind of transfusion, as it were, of Conservative principles, a respect for order, a love of decorum, a sleepy indisposition to see anything like confusion going on about me, — all feelings which, I take it, are eminently gentleman-like. Well, this fastidious weariness of the Cullinanes was evidently the "second round of the ladder." "It is a grand thing to be able to look down upon any one!" I do not mean this in any invidious or unworthy sense; not for the sake of depreciating others, but purely for the sake of one's own self-esteem. I would but convey that the secret conviction of superiority is amazingly exhilarating. To "hold your stride" beside an intellect that you can pass when you like, and yet merely accompany to what is called "make a race," is rare fun; to see the other using every effort of whip and spur, bustling, shaking, and lifting, while you, well down in your saddle, never put the rowel to

the flank of your fancy, — this is indeed glorious sport! In return for this, however, there is an intolerable degree of lassitude in the daily association of people who are satisfied to talk forever of the same things in the same terms.

The incidents of our journey were few and uninteresting. At Montreal I received a very civil note from Mrs. Davis, accompanying my trunk and my purse. In the few lines I had written to her from the packet-office, I said that my performance of a servant's character in her establishment had been undertaken for a wager, which I had just won; that I begged of her, in consequence, to devote the wages owing to me to any charitable office she should think fit, and kindly to forward my effects to Montreal, together with a certificate, under her hand, that my real rank and station had never been detected during my stay in her house: this document being necessary to convince my friend Captain Pike that I had fulfilled the conditions of our bet.

Mrs. Davis's reply was a gem. "She had heard or read of Conacre, but did n't suspect we were the Cregans of that place. She did not know how she could ever forgive herself for having subjected me to menial duties. She had indeed been struck — as who had not? — with certain traits of my manner and address." In fact, poor Mrs. D., what with the material for gossip suggested by the story, the surprise, and the saving of the wages — for I suspect that, like the Duke in Junius, her charity ended where it is proverbially said to begin, at home, — was in a perfect paroxysm of delight with me, herself, and the whole human race.

To me, this was a precious document; it was a patent of gentility at once. It was a passport which, if not issued by authority, had at least the "visa" of one witness to my rank, and I was not the stuff to require many credentials.

Before we had decided on what day we should leave Montreal, a kind of small mutiny began to show itself among our party. The old man, grown sick of travelling, and seeing the America of his hopes as far off as ever, became restive, and refused to move farther. The sons had made acquaintances on board the steamer, who assured them that "about the lakes" — a very vague geography — land was to be had for asking. Peggy and Susan had picked up sweethearts,

and wanted to journey westward; and poor Joe, pulled in these various directions, gave himself up to a little interregnum of drink, hoping that rum might decide what reason failed in.

As for me, I saw that my own influence would depend upon my making myself a partisan; and, too proud for this, I determined to leave them. I possessed some thirty dollars, a good kit, but, better than either, the most unbounded confidence in myself, and a firm conviction that the world was an instrument I should learn to play upon, one day or other. There was no use in undeceiving them as to my real rank and station. One of the pleasantest incidents of their lives would be, in all probability, their having travelled in companionship with a gentleman; and so, remembering the story of the poor alderman who never got over having learned that “Robinson Crusoe” was a fiction, I left them this solace unalloyed, and after a most cordial leave-taking, and having written down my father’s address at New Orleans, I shook hands with the men twice over, kissed the girls ditto, and stepped on board the “Kingston” steamer, — for no other reason that I know, except that she was the first to leave the wharf that morning.

I have said that I possessed something like thirty dollars: an advantageous sale of a part of my wardrobe to a young gentleman about to reside at Queenstown as a waiter, “realized” me as much more; and with this sum I resolved upon making a short tour of Canada and the States, in order to pick up a few notions and increase my store of experiences, ere I adopted any fixed career.

We laugh at the old gentleman in the play who, on hearing that his son has no want of money, immediately offers him ten pistoles, but who obstinately leaves him to starve when he discovers that he is without funds. We laugh at this, and we deem it absurd and extravagant; but it is precisely what we see the world do in like circumstances. All its generosity is reserved for all those who do not require assistance; all its denials for those in need. “My Lord” refuses half-a-dozen dinners, while the poor devil author only knows the tune of “Roast Beef.” These reflections forced themselves upon me by observing that as I travelled

along, apparently in no want of means, a hundred offers were made me by my fellow-travellers of situations and places: one would have enlisted me as his partner in a very lucrative piece of peripateticism, — viz., knife-grinding; a vocation for which, after a few efforts on board the steamer, Nature would seem to have destined me, for I was assured I even picked up the sharp-knowing cock of the eye required to examine the edge, and the style of my pedal-action drew down rounds of applause: still, I did not like it. The endless tramp upon a step which slipped from beneath you seemed to emblemize a career that led to nothing; while an unpleasant association with what I had heard of a treadmill completed my distaste for it.

Another opened to me the more ambitious prospect of a shopman at his “store,” near Rochester, and even showed me, by way of temptation, some of the brilliant wares over whose fortunes I should preside. There were gingham, and taffetas, and cottons of every hue and pattern. But no, I felt this was not my walk either; and so I muttered to myself: “No, Con! if you meddle with muslin, wait till it’s fashioned into a petticoat.”

My next proposition came from a barber; and really if I did not take to the pole and basin, I own I was flattered at his praises of my skill. He pronounced my brush-hand as something bold and masterly as Rubens’, — while my steel manipulation was more brilliant than bloodless.

Then there was a Jew spectacle-maker, a hawker of pamphlets, an Indian moccasin merchant, and twenty other of various walks, — all of whom seemed to opine that *their* craft, whatever it might be, was exactly the very line adapted to my faculties. Once only was I really tempted: it was by the editor of the Kingston newspaper, “The Ontario Herald,” who offered to take me into his office, and in time induct me into the gentle pastime of paragraph-writing. I did, I own, feel a strong inclination for that free and independent kind of criticism, which, although issuing from a garret, and by the light of a “dip,” does not scruple to remind royalty how to comport itself, and gives kings and kaisers smart lessons in good-breeding. For a time, my mind dwelt on all these delights with ardor; but I soon felt that he who *acts* life

has an incomparable advantage over him who merely *writes* it, and that even a poor performer is better, when the world is his stage, than the best critic.

"I'll wait," thought I, — nothing within, no suggestive push from conscience, urged me to follow any of these roads; and so I journeyed away from Kingston to Fort George, thence to Niagara, where I amused myself agreeably for a week, sitting all day long upon the Table Rock, and watching the Falls in a dreamy kind of self-consciousness, brought on by the din, the crash, the spray, the floating surf, and that vibration of the air on every side, which all conspire to make up a sensation that ever after associates with the memory of that scene, and leaves any effort to describe it so difficult.

From this I wandered into the States by Schenectady, Utica, and Albany, down the Hudson to New York, thence — but why recite mere names? It was after about three months' travelling, during which my wardrobe shared a fate not dissimilar to Æsop's bread-basket, that I found myself at New Orleans. Coming even from the varied and strange panorama that so many weeks of continual travelling present, I was struck by the appearance of New Orleans. Do not be afraid, worthy reader; you're not "in" for any description of localities. I'll neither inflict you with a land view nor a sea view. In my company you'll never hear a word about the measurement of a cathedral, or the number of feet in height of a steeple. My care and my business are with men and women. They are to me the real objects of travel. The checkered board of human life is the map whose geography I love to study, and my thoughts are far more with the stream that flows from the heart, than with the grandest river that ever sought the sea. When I said I was struck with New Orleans, it was then with the air of its population. Never did I behold such a mass of bold, daring, reckless fellows as swaggered on every side. The fiery Frenchman, the determined-looking Yankee, the dark-browed Spaniard, the Camanche and the half-caste, the Mulatto, the Texan, the Negro, the Cuban, and the Creole, were all here, and all seemed picked specimens of their race.

The least acute of observers could not fail to see that it

was a land where a quick eye, a steady foot, and a strong hand were requisites of every-day life. The personal encounters that in other cities are left altogether to the very lowest class of inhabitants, were here in frequent use among every grade and rank. Every one went armed; the scenes which so often occurred, showed the precaution a needful one.

The wide-awake look of the Yankee was sleepy indifference when contrasted with the intense keenness of aspect that met you here at every step, and you felt at once that you were in company where all your faculties would be few enough for self-protection. This, my first impression of the people, each day's experience served to confirm. Whatever little veils of shame and delicacy men throw over their sharp practices elsewhere, here, I am free to confess, they despised such hypocrisy. It was a free trade in wickedness. In *their* game of life "cheating was fair." Now, this in nowise suited me nor my plans. I soon saw that all the finer traits of my own astuteness would be submerged in the great ocean of coarse roguery around me, and I soon resolved upon taking my departure.

The how and the whereto — two very important items in the resolve — were yet to be solved, and I was trotting along Cliff Street one day, when my eyes rested suddenly upon the great board, with large letters on it, "Office of the 'Picayune.'" I repeated the word over and over a couple of times, and then remembered it was the journal in which the reward for the Black Boatswain had been offered.

There was little enough, Heaven knows, in this to give me any interest in the paper; but the total isolation in which I found myself, without one to speak to or converse with, made me feel that even the "Picayune" was an acquaintance; and so I drew near the window where a considerable number of persons were reading the last number of the paper, which, in a laudable spirit of generosity, was exposed within the glass to public gaze.

Mingling with these, but not near enough to read for myself, I could hear the topics that were discussed, among which a row at the Congress, a duel with revolvers, a steam explosion on the Mississippi, and a few smart instances of Lynch-law figured.

"What's that in the 'Yune print?" said a great raw-boned fellow, with a cigar like a small walking-cane in the corner of his mouth.

"It's a Texan go," said another; "sha' n't catch me at that trick."

"Well, I don't know," drawled out a sleek-haired man, with a very Yankee drawl; "I see Roarin' Peter, our judge up at New Small-pox, take a tarnation deal of booty out of that location."

"Where had he been?" asked the tall fellow.

"At Guaygualla, — over the frontier."

"There *is* a bit to be done about there," said the other, and, wrapping his mantle about him, lounged off.

"Guaynguala!" repeated I; and, retiring a little from the crowd, I took from my pocket the little newspaper paragraph of the negro, and read the name which had sounded so familiarly to my ears.

I endeavored once more to approach the window, but the crowd had already increased considerably; and I had nothing for it but to go in and buy the paper, which now had taken a strong hold upon me.

Cheap as was the paper, it cost me that day's dinner; and it was with a very great anxiety to test the value of my sacrifice that I hastened to the little miserable den which I had hired as my sleeping-place.

Once within, I fastened the door, and, spreading out the journal on my bed, proceeded to search for the Texan paragraph. It was headed in capitals, and easily found. It ran thus: —

"WANTED — A few downright, go-ahead ones, to join an excursion into the One-Star Republic, — the object being to push a way down South, and open a new trade-line for home doings. Applicants to address the Office of the paper, and rally at Galveston, with rifle, pistols, ammunition, horse, pack, and a bowie, on Tuesday, the 8th instant."

I'm sure I knew that paragraph off by heart before bedtime, but just as I have seen a stupid man commit a proposition in Euclid to memory, — without ever being able to work it. I was totally at a loss what to make of the meaning of the expedition. It was, to say the least, somewhat myster-

rious; and the whole being addressed to "go-ahead ones," who were to come with rifles and bowie-knives, showed that they were not likely to be missionaries. There was one wonderful clause about it, — it smacked of adventure. There was a roving wildness in the very thought which pleased me, and I straightway opened a consultation with myself how I could compass the object. My stock of money had dwindled down to four dollars; and although I still possessed some of the best articles of my wardrobe, the greater portion had been long since disposed of.

Alas! the more I thought over it, the more hopeless did my hope of journey appear, — I made every imaginable good bargain in my fancy; I disposed of old waistcoats and gaiters as if they had been the honored vestments of heroes and sages; I knocked down my shoes at prices that old Frederick's boots would n't have fetched; and yet, with all this, I fell far short of a sum sufficient to purchase my equipment, — in fact, I saw that if I compassed the "bowie-knife," it would be the full extent of my powers. I dwelt upon this theme so long that I grew fevered and excited: I got to believe that here was a great career opening before me, to which one petty, miserable obstacle opposed itself. I was like a man deterred from undertaking an immense journey, by the trouble of crossing a rivulet.

In this frame of mind I went to bed, but only to rove over my rude fancies, and, in a state between sleep and waking, to imagine that some tiny hand held me back, and prevented me ascending a path on which Fortune kept waving her hand for me to follow. When day broke, I found myself sitting at my window, with the newspaper in my hands, — though how I came there, or how long I had spent in that attitude, I cannot say; I only know that my limbs were excessively cold, and my temples hot, and that while my hands were benumbed and swollen, my heart beat faster and fuller than I had ever felt it before.

"Now for the 'Picayune,'" said I, starting from my chair; "though I never may make the journey, at least I'll ask the road."



CHAPTER XVIII.

"THE ORDINARY OF ALL NATIONS."

MAKING my way with difficulty through the crowd which filled the hall of the house, and which consisted of purchasers, newsvenders, reporters, printers' devils, and others interested in the "Picayune," all eagerly discussing the news of the day, I reached a small back office, where, having knocked timidly twice, I was desired to enter.

A man seated at a coarse deal table was cutting out paragraphs from various newspapers, which, as he threw them at either side of him, were eagerly caught up by two or three ragged urchins who were in waiting behind him. He looked up at me as I entered, and roughly asked what I wanted.

"I have seen an advertisement in your paper, headed, 'Expedition to Texas' —"

"Upstairs, — No. 3, — two-pair back," said he, and went on with his labor.

I hesitated, hoping he might add something; but seeing that he had said all he intended or was likely to say, I slowly withdrew.

"Upstairs, then, — No. 3, — two-pair back," said I to myself, and mounted, with the very vaguest notions of what

business I had when I got there. There was no difficulty in finding the place; many others were hastening towards it at the same time; and, in company with some half-dozen very ill-favored and meanly clad fellows, I entered a large room, where about forty men were assembled, who stood in knots or groups, talking in low and confidential tones together.

"Is there a committee to-day?" asked one of those who came in with me.

"Business is over," said another.

"And is the lottery drawn?"

"Ay, every ticket, except one or two."

"Who's won Butcher's mare?"

"Tell us that if you can," said a huge fellow, with a red worsted comforter round his throat; "that's exactly what we want to know."

"Well, I'm whipped if it ain't among those numbers," said a pale man with one eye, "and I'll give fifty dollars for one of 'em."

"You would, would you?" said another, jeering. "Lord, how soft you've grown! Why, she's worth five hundred dollars, that 'ere beast!"

"Butcher gave a mustang and two hundred and seventy for her," cried another.

"Well, she broke his neck, for all that," growled out he of the red neckcloth; "you'll see that some chap will win her that don't want a beast, and she'll be sold for a trifle."

"And there's a free passage to Galveston, grub and liquor, in the same ticket," said another, — "an almighty sight of luck for one man!"

"It ain't me, anyhow," said red cravat; and then, with a tremendous oath, added: "I've been a pntter in at these Texas lotteries for four years, and never won anything but a blessed rosary."

"What became of it, Dick?" said another, laughing.

"The beads fitted my rifle-bore, and I fired 'em away when lead was scarce."

Various discussions followed about luck and lotteries, with anecdotes of all kinds respecting fortunate winners; then came stories of Texan expeditions in former times, which I began to perceive were little else than speculations of a gam-

bling kind, rarely intended to go farther than the quay of New Orleans.

On the present occasion, however, it would seem a real expedition had been planned. Some had already sailed, others were to follow the very day after the lottery, and only waited to learn who was the fortunate winner of Butcher's mare, at that time waiting at Galveston for an owner.

I waited a long time, in hope of acquiring something like an insight into the scope of the enterprise, but in vain; indeed, it was easy to see that, of the company, not a single one, in all likelihood, intended to join the expedition. When I left the "Picayune," therefore, I was but little wiser than when I entered it; and yet somehow the whole scheme had taken a fast hold on my imagination, which readily filled in the details of what I was ignorant. The course of reading in which I had indulged on board Sir Dudley's yacht was doubtless the reason of this. My mind had laid up so many texts for adventurous fancies that on the slightest pretext I could call up any quantity of enterprise and vicissitude.

A hundred times I asked myself if it were likely that any of these Texan adventurers would accept of my services to wait upon them. I was not ignorant of horses, a tolerably fair groom, could cook a little, — that much I had learned on board the yacht; besides, wherever my qualifications failed, I had a ready witted ingenuity that supplied the place almost as well as the "real article."

"Ah!" thought I, "who knows how many are passing at this moment whose very hearts would leap with joy to find such a fellow as I am, 'accustomed to in-door and out, wages no object, and no objection to travel!'" Possessed with this notion, I could not help fancying that in every look that met mine as I went, I could read something like an inquiry, a searching glance that seemed to say, "Bless me! ain't that Con? As I live, there 's Con Cregan! What a rare piece of fortune to chance upon him at this juncture!"

I own it did require a vivid and warm imagination so to interpret the expressions which met my eyes at every moment, seeing that the part of the town into which I had wandered was that adjoining to the docks, — a filthy, gloomy quarter, chiefly resorted to by Jew slop-sellers, ship-chandlers,

and such like, with here and there a sailors' ordinary, usually kept by a negro or half-breed.

I had eaten nothing that day, and it was now late in the afternoon, so that it was with a very strong interest I peeped occasionally into the little dens, where, under a paper lantern with the inscription, "All for Twelve Cents," sat a company, usually of sailors and watermen, whose fare harmonized most unpleasantly with their features.

The combat between a man's taste and his exchequer is never less agreeable than when it concerns a dinner. To feel that you have a soul for turtle and truffles, and yet must descend to mashed potatoes and herrings; to know that a palate capable of appreciating a *salmi des perdreaux* must be condemned to the indignity of stock fish, — what an indignity is that! The whole man revolts at it! You feel, besides, that such a meal is unrelieved by those suggestive excursions of fancy which a well-served table abounds in. In the one case you eat like the beast of the field, — it is a question of supporting nature, and no more; in the other, there is a poetry interwoven that elevates and exalts. With what discursive freedom does the imagination range from the little plate of oysters that preludes your soup, to pearl fishery and the coral reefs, "with moonlight sleeping on the breaking surf!" And then your soup, be it turtle or mulligatawny, how associated is it with the West Indies or the East, bearing on its aromatic vapor thousands of speculative reflections about sugar and slavery, pepper-pots, straw hats, pickaninnies, and the Bishop of Barbadoes; or the still grander themes of elephants, emeralds, and the Indus, with rajahs, tigers, punkahs, and the Punjaub!

And so you proceed, dreamily following out in fancy the hints each course supplies, and roving with your cutlets to the "cattle upon a thousand hills," or dallying with the dessert to the orange-groves of Zaute or Sicily.

I do love all this. The bouquet of my Bordeaux brings back the Rhone, as the dry muscat of my Johannisberg pictures the vine-clad cliffs of the Vaterland, with a long diminuendo train of thought about Metternich and the Holy Alliance — the unlucky treaty of '15 — Vienna — Madame Schrader — and Castelli.

And how pleasantly and nationally does one come back with the port to our “ancient ally, Portugal,” with a mind-painted panorama of Torres Vedras and the Donro, — with Black Horse Square and the Tagus, — “the Duke” ever and anon flitting across the scene, and making each glass you carry to your lips a heartfelt “long life to him!”

Alas and alas! such prandial delights were not for me; I must dine for twelve cents, or, by accepting the brilliant entertainment announced yonder, price half-a-dollar, keep Lent the rest of the week.

The temptation to which I allude ran thus: —

Ladies and Gentlemen’s Grand Ordinary of all Nations

At 5 o’clock precisely.

Thumbo-rig — Mint julep — and a Ball.

—
The “Half-dollar.”
—

Monsieur Palamede de Rosanne directs the Ceremonies.

If there was a small phrase in the aforesaid not perfectly intelligible, it seemed, upon the principle of the well-known adage, only to heighten the inducement. The “Thumbo-rig” above might mean either a new potation or a new dance. Still, conceding this unknown territory, there was quite sufficient in the remainder of the advertisement to prove a strong temptation. The house, too, had a pretentious air about it that promised well. There was a large bow-window, displaying a perfect landscape of rounds and sirloins, with a tasteful drapery of sausages overhead; while a fragrant odor of rum, onions, fresh crabs, cheese, salt cod, and preserved ginger made the very air ambrosial.

As I stood and sniffed, my resolution staggered under the assaults made on eye, nose, and palate, a very smartly-dressed female figure crossed the way, holding up her dress full an inch or so higher than even the mud required, and with a jaunty air displayed a pair of very pink stockings on very well-turned legs. I believe — I’m not sure, but I fear — the pink stockings completed what the pickled beef began. I entered. Having paid my money at the bar, and given up

my hat and greatcoat, I was ushered by a black waiter, dressed in a striped jacket and trousers, as if he had been ruled with red ink, into a large room, where a very numerous company of both sexes were assembled, some seated, some standing, but all talking away with buzz and confusion that showed perfect intimacy to be the order of the day. The men, it was easy to see, were chiefly in the "shipping interest." There was a strong majority of mates and small skippers, whose varied tongues ranged from Spanish and Portuguese to Dutch and Danish; French, English and Russian were also heard in the *mêlée*, showing that the Grand Ordinary had a world-made repute. The ladies were mostly young, very condescending in their manners, somewhat overdressed, and for the most part French.

As I knew no one, I waited patiently to be directed where I should sit, and was at last shown to a place between a very fat lady of creole tint — another dip would have made her black — and a little brisk man, whom I soon heard was Monsieur Palamede himself.

The dinner was good, the conversation easiest of the easy, taking in all, from matters commercial to social, — the whole seasoned with the greatest good-humor and no small share of smartness. Personal adventures by land and sea, — many of the latter recounted by men who made no scruple of confessing that they "dealt in ebony," — the slave-trade. Little incidents of life, that told much for the candor of the recounter, were heard on all sides, until at length I really felt ashamed of my own deficiency in not having even contributed an anecdote for the benefit of the company. This preyed upon me the more as I saw myself surrounded by persons who really, if their own unimpeachable evidence was to be credited, began the world in ways and shapes the most singular and uncommon. Not a man or woman of the party that had not slipped into existence in some droll, quaint fashion of their own, so that positively, and for the first time, I really grew ashamed to think that I belonged to "decent people" who had not compromised me in the slightest degree. "Voilà un jeune homme qui ne dit pas un mot!" said a pretty-looking woman, with fair brown hair and a very liquid pair of blue eyes. The speech was

addressed to me, and the whole table at once turned their glances towards me.

"Ay, very true," said a short, stout little skipper, with an unmistakable slash from a cutlass across his nose; "a sharp-looking fellow like that has a story if he will only tell it."

"And you may see," cried another, "that we are above petty prejudices here; roguery only lies heavy on the conscience that conceals it." The speaker was a tall, sallow man, with singularly intelligent features; he had been a Jesuit tutor in the family of an Italian noble, and after consigning his patron to the Inquisition, had been himself banished from Rome.

Pressing entreaties and rough commands, half imperious instances and very seductive glances, all were directed towards me, with the object of extorting some traits of my life, and more particularly of that part of it which concerned my birth and parentage. If the example of the company invited the most unqualified candor, I cannot say that it overcame certain scruples I felt about revealing my humble origin. I was precisely in that anomalous position in life when such avowals are most painful. Without ambition, the confession had not cost me any sacrifice; while, on the other hand, I had not attained that eminence which has a proud boastfulness in saying, "Yes, I, such as you see me now, — great, titled, wealthy, and powerful, — I was the son of a newsvender or a lamplighter." Such avowals, highly lauded as they are by the world, especially when made by archbishops or chancellors, or other great folk, at public dinners, are, to my thinking, about as vainglorious bits of poor human nature as the most cynical could wish to witness. They are the mere victories of vanity over self-esteem. Now, I had no objection that the world should think me a young gentleman of the very easiest notions of right and wrong, with a conscience as elastic as gutta-percha, picking my way across life's stream on the stepping-stones made by other men's skulls, — being, as the phrase has it, a very loose fish indeed; but I insisted on their believing that I was well-born. Every one has his weakness, — this was Con Cregan's; and as these isolated fissures in

strong character are nearly allied with strength, so was it with me: had I not had this frailty, I had never cherished so intensely the passion to become a gentleman. This is all digressionary; but I'll not ask pardon of my dear reader for all that. If he be reading in his snug, well-cushioned chair, with every appliance of ease about him, he'll not throw down these "Confessions" for a bit of prozing that invites the sleep that is already hovering round him. If he has taken me up in the few minutes before dinner, he'll not regret the bit of meditation which does not involve him in a story. If he be spelling me out in a mail-train, he'll be grateful for the "skipping" place, which leaves him time to look out and see the ingenious preparations that are making by the "down" or the "up" train to run into and smash the unhappy convoy of which he forms a part.

"Come, my young lad, out with it. Let us hear a bit about the worthy people who took the sin of launching you into the wide ocean. You must have had owners one time or other." This was said by a hearty looking old man, with hair white as snow, and an enormous pair of eyebrows to match.

"Willingly, sir," said I, with an air of the easiest confidence; "I should be but too proud if anything in a history humble as mine is could amuse this honorable company. But the truth is, a life so devoid of interest would be only a tax upon its patience to listen to; and as to my birth, I can give little, indeed no, information. The earliest record of my existence that I possess is from the age of two days and three hours."

"That will do, — do admirably!" chorused the party, who laughed heartily at the gravity with which I spoke, and which to them seemed an earnest of my extreme simplicity. "We shall be quite satisfied with that," cried they again.

"Well, then, gentlemen, thanking you for the indulgence with which you consent to overlook my want of accuracy, I proceed. At the tender age I have mentioned, I was won in a raffle!"

"Won in a raffle! won in a raffle!" screamed one after the other; and amid shouts of laughter the phrase continued to be echoed from end to end of the table. "That beats



Can you see extraordinary amount of burlesque in the "Wednesday."

you hollow, Giles!” “By Jove, how scarce babies must be in the part you come from, if people take tickets for em!” Such were some of the commentaries that broke out amidst the mirth.

“I move,” said a dapper little Frenchman who had been a barber and a National Guard once, “I move that the honorable deputy make a statement to the Chamber respecting the interesting fact to which he has alluded.”

The motion was carried by acclamation, and I was accordingly induced to ascend the tribune, — a kind of rude pulpit that was brought specially into the room, and stationed at the side of the president’s chair; the comments on my personal appearance, age, air, and probable rank, which were made all the while, evidencing the most candid spirit one can well imagine.

“A right-down slick and shrewd ‘un, darn me if he ain’t!”

“A very wide awake young gemman,” quoth number two.

“Il a de ‘beaux yeux,’ celui-là,” — this was a lady’s remark.

“Set that young ‘un among the girls ‘down east,’ and he’ll mow ‘em down like grass.”

“A Londoner, — swell-mobbish a bit, I take it.”

“Not at all, he a’nt; he’s a bank clerk or a post-office fellow bolted with a lot of tin.”

“Der ist ein echter Schelm,” growled out an old Dantzie skipper; “I kenn him vehr wohl, — steal your wash wid a leetle scheer, — scissars you call him, ha! ha!”

“Ladies and gentlemen,” said I, assuming a pose of the most dignified importance, “before entering upon the circumstance to which you have so graciously attached a little interest, let me assure you — not that the fact can or ought to have any weight with this distinguished company — that I have no claim upon your sympathy with regard to any of the pleas whispered around me. I am neither thief, pick-pocket, runaway postman, burglar, nor highwayman. If I be, as you are pleased to say, ‘wide awake,’ I believe it is only a common precaution, considering the company I find myself in; and if I really could lay claim to the flattering praise of a fair lady on the left, it would be merely from

accidentally reflecting her own bright glances. I present myself, then, with much diffidence before you, for the simple reason that I come in a character somewhat strange in these parts, — I am a gentleman!”

The ineffable impertinence of this address succeeded to a miracle. Some laughed, some applauded, a few muttered an unintelligible discontent; but the majority of the men and all the women were with me, and I saw that audacity had gained the day. Ay, and so will it ninety-nine times out of the hundred in everything through life! The strategic axiom, that no fortress is impregnable, is a valuable worldly lesson, and one ought never to forget that a storming-party rarely fails.

“The circumstance to which I alluded a few minutes back — I dare not presume to call it a story — occurred thus :

“There was a large and brilliant party assembled to pass the Christmas at the Duke of Y — ’s; you will understand my reserve. The company included many of the first persons in fashionable life, and a Royal Duke to boot, a great friend of her Grace, and, some said, an old admirer of one of her sisters, who — so went the rumor — showed the strength of her attachment to his Royal Highness by never having accepted any of the brilliant offers of marriage made her. She was remarkably beautiful, and although a little past the first bloom of youth, in full possession of her charms at the time I speak of. Old Lord E — was one of the guests; and I am sure many of the distinguished company to whom I now address myself will not need any more particular description of the man they must have met a hundred times every London season, well known, indeed, as he is, with his light-blue coat and his buckskin tights, his wide beaver hat, and his queue; his eccentricities, his wealth, and his great avarice are themes all London is acquainted with.” I paused.

A buzz of acknowledgment and recognition followed, and I resumed : —

“Lord E —, you are aware, was a great musical amateur; he was the leader of everything of that kind about town, and whenever he could prevail upon himself to open his house in Carlton Terrace, it was always to Lablache, and

Rubini, and Marini, and the rest of them. Well, it was just at the period of this Christmas visit — over which I may remark, *en passant*, Lady Blanche's indisposition cast a shade of gloom — that, in making some alteration in the mansion, they discovered in a concealed press in the wall a mahogany case, on opening which were found the moth and worm eaten remains of a violin. A parchment document enclosed in a little scroll of brass, and which had escaped the ravages of time, explained that this was the instrument of the celebrated Giacomo Battista Pizzichetoni, the greatest violinist that ever lived, — the composer of 'Il Diavolo e la sua Moglia' and the 'Balla di Paradiso,' and many other great works, with which you are all familiar."

The company chorused assent, and I continued: "The party had somehow not gone off well; the accustomed spirit and animation of the scene were wanting. Perhaps Lady Blanche's illness had some share in this; in any case, every one seemed low and out of sorts, and the pleasant people talked of taking leave, when his Royal Highness proposed, by way of doing something, that they should have a raffle for this wonderful fiddle, of which, though only seen by the host and another, every one was talking.

"Even this much of stir was hailed with enthusiasm, the secrecy and mystery increasing the interest to a high degree. The tickets were two guineas each; and Lord E —, dying to possess 'a real Pizzichetoni,' took twenty of them. The number was limited to a hundred; but such was the judicious management of those who directed the proceedings that the shares were at a 'high premium' on the day of drawing, his Royal Highness actually buying up several at five guineas apiece. The excitement, too, was immense; encyclopædias were ransacked for histories of the violin, and its great professors and proficient. The 'Conversations Lexicon' opened of itself at the letter P., and Pizzichetoni's name turned up in every corner and on every theme, fifty times a day. What a time I have heard that was! nothing talked of but bow-action, shifting, bridging, double fingering, and the like, from morning to night. Lord E — became, in consequence of this run about a favorite subject, a personage of more than ordinary importance; instead of being deemed,

what he was commonly called at the clubs, the Great 'Borasus,' he was listened to with interest and attention; and, in fact, from the extent of his knowledge of the subject, and his acquaintance with every detail of its history, each felt that to his Lordship ought by right to fall the fortunate ticket.

"So did it, in fact, turn out. After much vacillation, with the last two numbers remained the final decision. One belonged to the Royal Duke, the other to Lord E ——. 'You shall have a hundred guineas for your chance, E ——,' said the Duke; 'what say you?'

"'Your Royal Highness's wish is a command,' said he, bowing and blushing; 'but were it otherwise, and to any other than your Royal Highness, I should as certainly say nay.'

"'Then "nay" must be the answer to me also; I cannot accept of such a sacrifice: and, after all, you are much more worthy of such a treasure than I am, — I really only meant it for a present to Mori.'

"'A present, your Royal Highness!' cried he, horrified; 'I would n't give such a jewel to anything short of St. Cecilia, — the violin, you are aware, was her instrument.'

"'Now, then, for our fortunes!' cried the Duke, as he drew forth his ticket. 'I believe I'm the lucky one: this is number 2000.'

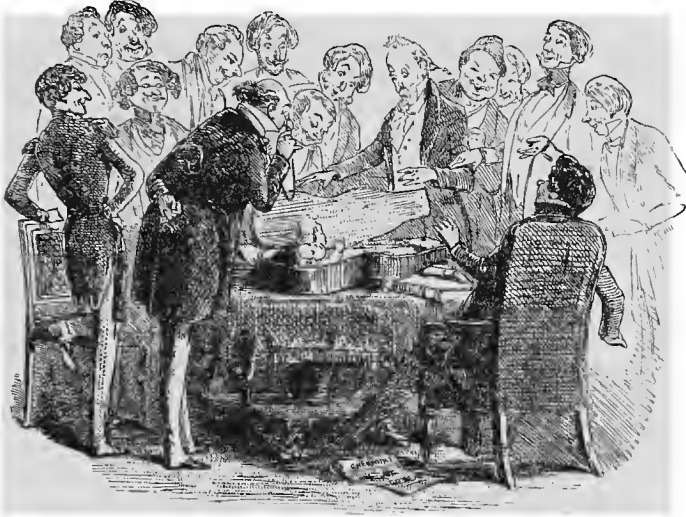
"'Two thousand and one!' exclaimed Lord E ——, holding up his, and, in an ecstasy of triumph, sat down to recover himself.

"'Here is the key, my Lord,' said one of the party, advancing towards him.

"He sprang up, and thrust it into the lock; in his agitation he shook the box, and a slight, soft cadence, like a faint cry, was heard.

"'The soul of music hovers o'er it still,' he exclaimed theatrically, and, flinging back the lid, discovered — Me! Yes, ladies and gentlemen, in a very smart white robe, with very tasty embroidery, and a lace cap which I am assured was pure Valenciennes, there I lay! I am not aware whether my infantine movements were peculiarly seductive or not; but I have been told that I went through my gamut at a key that even overtopped the laughter around me.

“‘A very bad jest — a *mauvaise plaisanterie* of the worst taste, I must say,’ said Lord E — turning away, and leaving the room.



“I never rightly knew how the matter was afterwards made up, but certainly it was by his lordship’s directions, and at his charge, that I was nursed, reared, and educated. My expenses at Eton and Oxford, as well as the cost of my commission, came from him; and it was only a few days ago, on learning his death, that I also learned the termination of my good fortune in life. He bequeathed me what he styled my ‘family mansion,’ — the fiddle-case; thus repaying by this cruel jest the practical joke passed upon himself so many years before.”

“What name did they give you, sir?”

“I was called after the celebrated violinist of Cremona who lived in the seventh century, who was named Cornelius Crejanus, or, as some spell, Creganus; and, in compliance with modern usages, they anglicized me into Con Cregan.”

"I have the honor to propose Con Cregan's health," said the president; "and may he see many happy years ere he next goes to sleep in a wooden box!"

This very gratifying toast was drunk with the most flattering acclamations, and I descended from the tribune the "man of the evening."

If some of the company who put credence in my story did not hesitate to ascribe a strong interest in me to the Royal Duke himself, others, who put less faith in my narrative, thought less of my parentage, and more of myself; so that what I lost on one hand, I gained on the other.

There was a discretion, a certain shadowy prudery about certain portions of my story, of which I have not attempted to convey any notion here, but which I saw had "told" with the fair part of my audience, who, possibly not over rigid in many of their opinions, were well pleased with the delicate reserve in which I shrouded my direct allusion to my parentage. A rough, red-whiskered skipper, indeed, seemed disposed to pour a broadside into this mystery, by asking "If his Royal Highness never took any notice of me?" but the refined taste of the company concurred in the diplomatic refusal to answer a question of which the "hon. gentleman on the straw chair" had given "no notice."

The pleasures of the table, — a very luscious bowl of the liquid which bore the mysterious epithet of "Thumbo-rig," and which was a concoction of the genus punch, spiced, sugared, and iced to a degree that concealed its awful tendency to anti-Mathewism; bright eyes that were no churls of their glances; merry converse; and that wondrous "magnetism of the board" which we call good fellowship, — made the time pass rapidly. Toasts and sentiments of every fashion went round, and we were political, literary, arbitrary, amatory, sentimental, and satiric by turns. They were pleasant varlets! and in their very diversity of humors there was that clash and collision of mind and metal that tell more effectively than the best packed party of choice wits who ever sat and watched each other.

Then, there was a jolly jumbling up of bad English, bad Dutch, bad French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, that would drive a sober listener clean mad. Stories begun in

one tongue merged into another; and so into a third; while explanations, mistakes, and corrections ran alongside of the narrative, often far more amusing than the story to which they were attached. Personalities, too, abounded, but with a most unqualified good temper; and, on the whole, I never beheld a merrier set.

M. Palamede alone did not relish the scene. He himself was nobody at such a moment, and he longed for the ball-room and the dance; and it was only after repeated summonses of his bell that we at last arose and entered the saloon, where we found him standing, fiddle in hand, while, rapping smartly a couple of times with his bow, he called out, —

“Places! places! Monsieur le Duc de Gubbins, to your place. Ladies, I beg attention. Madame la Marquise, dans la bonne société on ne donne jamais un soufflet.”

“Ah, here’s old Rosin again!” cried several of the party, who, with all this familiarity, appeared to view him with no small respect.

“Shall I find you a partner, Monsieur de Congreganne?” said he to me.

“Thanks,” said I; “but, with your permission, I’ll not dance just yet.”

“As you please, it is but a contre-danse,” said he shrugging his shoulders, while he moved away to arrange the figures.

I had not perceived before that a kind of orchestra, consisting of two fiddles, a flute, and a tambourine, was stationed in a long gallery over the door by which we entered; Monsieur Palamede being, however, director, not alone of the music, but of the entire entertainment. The band now struck up a well-known English country-dance, and away went the couples, flying down the room to the merry measure; Monsieur de Rosanne arranging the figures, beating the time, preserving order, and restraining irregularities, with the energy of one possessed.

“Ah, Monsieur le Capitaine de Cocks, c’en est trop. Mademoiselle de Spicer, pas si haut! de arms graceful! Ladies, no keep your hands under your — what ye call him — jupe — apron — ha! ha! Black man — negro — no talk so loud when you make punch!”

“Chassez — balancez ! *La grace !* Madame la Marquise, *la grace !*” Then, as he passed me, he muttered with a voice guttural from anger, “*Quel supplice !*”

As I continued to gaze on the scene, I could not help being struck with the extreme diversity of look and expression ; for while there were some faces on which iniquity had laid its indelible stamp, there were others singularly pleasing, and some actually beautiful. Among the men, the same character prevailed throughout, — a rude, coarse good-humor, — the sailor-type everywhere ; but a few seemed persons of a higher class, and on these a life of vice and debauchery had produced the most marked change, and you could still see, amid the traces of nights of riot and abandonment, the remnant of finer features, the expression they had worn before their “fall.” If I was surprised at the good looks of many of the women, still more was I by a gracefulness of carriage and an air of deportment that seemed as much out of place as they were unsuited to such companionship. One young fellow appeared to be a general favorite with the company. He was tall, well-made, and had that indescribably rakish character about his very gesture that is rarely a bad indication of the possessor’s mode of life. I had no difficulty in learning his name, for every one called him by it at each instant, and “Fred Falkoner” was heard on all sides. It was he who selected the music for the dance ; his partner, for the time being, was the belle of the room, and he lounged about supreme. Nor was his title a bad one, — he was the great entertainer of the whole assembly. The refreshments were almost entirely of his ordering, and the clink of his dollars might be heard keeping merry time with the strains of the violins. I watched him with some interest ; I thought I could see that, in descending to such companionship, there was a secret combat between his self-respect and a strange passion for seeing life in low places, which, when added to the flattery such a man invariably obtains from his inferiors, is a dangerous and subtle temptation. The more I studied him, the stronger grew this conviction, — nay, at times, the expression of scorn upon his handsome features was legible even to the least remarking. It was while I still continued to watch him that he passed me, with a dark, Spanish-looking

girl upon his arm, when he turned round suddenly, and, staring at me fixedly a few seconds, said, “We met once before, to-day.”

“I am not aware of it,” said I, doubtingly.

“Yes, yes. I never forget a face, least of all when it resembles yours. I saw you this morning at the ‘Picayune.’”

“True, I was there.”

“What a precious set of rascals those fellows were! You supposed that they were going to join the expedition. Not a bit of it. Some were gamblers; the greater number thieves and pickpockets. I know them all; and, indeed, I was going to warn you about them, for I saw you were a stranger, but I lost sight of you in the crowd. But there’s the music. Will you have a partner?”

“With all my heart,” said I, glad to encourage our further acquaintance.

“You speak Spanish?”

“Not a word.”

“Well, no matter. If you did, you should have mine here. But what say you to Mademoiselle Héloïse, yonder?—a bit faded or so; but I remember her second ‘Balarina’ at the Havana, only two years back.”

I made the suitable acknowledgment; and the next moment saw me whirling away in a waltz, at least in such an approximation to that measure as my Quebec experience suggested, with a very highly rouged and black-eyebrowed “danseuse.” My French was better than my dancing; and so Mademoiselle Héloïse was satisfied to accept my arm, while we paraded the room, discussing the company after the most approved fashion.

The French have a proverb, “Bête comme une danseuse;” and I must say that my fair friend did not prove an exception. Her whole idea of life was limited to what takes place in rehearsal of a morning, or on the night of representation. She recounted to me her history from the time she had been a “Rat,”—such is the technical term at the Grand Opera of Paris,—flying through the air on a wire, or sitting perilously perched upon a pasteboard cloud. Thence she had advanced to the state of Fairy Queen, or some winged messenger of those celestials who wear muslin trousers with

gold stars, and always stand in the "fifth position." Passing through the grade of Swiss peasant, Turkish slave, and Neapolitan market-girl, she had at last arrived at the legitimate drama of "legs," yecept "ballet d'action;" and although neither her beauty nor abilities had been sufficient to achieve celebrity in Paris, she was accounted a Taglioni in the "provinces," and deemed worthy of exportation to the colonies.

"Non contingit cuique adire Corinthum!" we cannot all have our "loges" at the "Grand Opéra;" and happy for us it is so, or what would become of the pleasure we derive from third, fourth, and fifth rate performances elsewhere? True, indeed, if truffles were a necessary of life, there would be a vast amount of inconvenience and suffering. Now, Mademoiselle Héloïse, whose pirouettes were no more minded in Paris, nor singled out for peculiar favor, than one of the lamps in the row of footlights, was a kind of small idol in the Havana. She had the good fortune to live in an age when the heels take precedence of the head, and she shared in the enthusiasm by which certain people in our day would bring back the heathen mythology for the benefit of the corps de ballet.

Alas for fame! in the very climax of her glory she grew fat! Now, flesh to a danseuse is like cowardice to a soldier, or shame to a lawyer, — it is the irreconcilable quality. The gauzy natures who float to soft music must not sup. Every outlet costs an "entrechat"! Hard and terrible condition of existence, and proving how difficult and self-denying a thing it is to be an angel, even in this world!

So much for Mademoiselle Héloïse; and if the reader be weary of her, so was I.

"You'll have to treat her to a supper," whispered Falkoner, as he passed me.

"I've not a cent in my purse," said I, thinking it better to tell the truth than incur the reproach of stinginess.

"Never mind, take mine," said he, as he dropped a very weighty purse into my coat-pocket, and moved away before I could make any answer.

Perhaps the greatest flattery an individual can receive is to win some acknowledgment of confidence from an utter

stranger. To know that by the chance intercourse of a few minutes you have so impressed another, who never saw you before, that he is impelled at once to befriend you, your self-esteem, so pleasantly gratified, immediately re-acts upon the cause, and you are at a loss whether most to applaud your own good gifts, or the ready wittedness of him who appreciated them so instantaneously.

I was still hesitating, revolving, doubtless, the pleasant sense of flattery aforesaid, when Falkoner came flying past with his partner. "Order supper for four," cried he, as he whizzed by.

"What does he say, mon cher Comte?" said my partner.

I translated his command, and found that the notion pleased her vastly.

The dining-room by this time had been metamorphosed into a kind of coffee-room, with small supper-tables, at which parties were already assembling; and here we now took our places, to con over the bill of fare, and discuss scalloped oysters, cold lobster, devilled haddock, and other like delicacies.

Falkoner soon joined us, and we sat down, the merriest knot in the room. I must have been brilliant! I feel it so, this hour; a kind of warm glow rushes to my cheeks as I think over that evening, and how the guests from the different parts of the room drew gradually nearer and nearer to listen to the converse at our table, and hear the smart things that came pattering down like hail! What pressing invitations came pouring in upon me! The great Mastodon himself could not have eaten a tithe of the breakfasts to which I was asked, nor would the grog-tub of a seventy-four contain all the rum-and-water I was proffered by skippers lying "in dock."

Falkoner, however, pleased me more than the rest. There was something in his cordiality that did not seem like a passing fancy; and I could not help feeling that however corrupted and run to waste by dissipation, there was good stuff about him. He interested me, too, on another score: he had formerly made one of a Texan excursion that had penetrated even to the Rio del Norte, and his escapes and adventures amused me highly. The ladies, I believe, at

last found us very ungalant cavaliers; for they arose, and left us talking over prairie life and the wild habits of the chase, till day began to shine through the windows.

“The ‘Christobal’ sails to-morrow,” said he, “for Galveston; but even she, smart sailer that she is, will scarce arrive in time to catch these fellows. Here we are at the fifth of the month: the eighth was to be the start; then that, supposing you to reach Galveston by the seventh, gives you no time to get your kit ready, look after arms, and buy a nag. What say you, then, if we make a party of our own, — charter one of these small craft? — a hundred dollars or so will do it. We can then take our time to pick up good cattle, look out for a couple of mules for our baggage, and a spare mustang or so, if a horse should knock up.”

I concurred at once; the plan was fascination itself. Adventure, liberty, novelty, enterprise, and a dash of danger to heighten all! Falkoner talked of dollars as if they macadamized the road to St. Louis; and I, glowing with punch and pride together, spoke of the expense as a mere trifle. To this hour, I cannot say whether I had really mystified myself into the notion that I possessed ample means, or was merely indulging the passing pleasure of a delightful vision. So was it, however; I smiled at the cheapness of everything, could scarcely fancy such a thing as a Mexican pony for eighty dollars, and laughed — actually laughed — at the price of the rifle, when all my worldly substance, at the moment, would not have purchased copper caps for it.

“Don’t go too expensively to work, Cregau,” cried he, “and, above all, bring no European servant. A Mexican fellow — or, better still, a half-breed — is the thing for the prairies. You have to forget your Old World habits, and rough it.”

“So I can,” said I, laughing good-humoredly; “I’m in a capital mind for a bit of sharp work too. Just before I left the 90th, we made a forced march from St. John’s through the forest country, and I feel up to anything.”

“You’ll not like the cattle at first, I’m afraid,” said he. “They have that racking action the Yankees are fond of. There is a capital mare at Galveston, if we could get her. These fellows will snap her up, most likely.”

"Butcher's mare," said I, hazarding a guess.

"Ah, you've been looking after her already," said he, surprised. "Well, to tell you the truth, that was one of my objects in coming here to-night. I heard that some of these skipper fellows had got the winning ticket: I paid twenty dollars to the office-clerk to see the number, and determined to buy it up. Here it is. Can you read these figures? for, hang me if the punch, or the heat, or the dancing, has not made me quite dizzy."

"Let me see: Number 438," said I, repeating it a couple of times over.

"Yes, that is it. If I could have chanced on it, I'd have run down to-morrow by the 'Christobal.' She lies about a mile out, and will weigh with the ebb, at eight o'clock. That mare — she killed Butcher by a down leap over a rock, but never scratched herself — is worth at least a thousand dollars."

"I offered eight hundred for her on mere character," said I, sitting back, and sipping my liquid with a most profound quietude.

Falkoner was evidently surprised with this announcement; but more so from the rakish indifference it betrayed about money, than as bespeaking me rich and affluent.

And thus we chatted away till the black waiter made his appearance to open the windows and prepare for the work of the day.

"Where are you stopping?" said Falkoner, as we arose from the table.

"At Condor House," said I, boldly giving the name of a very flash hotel. "But it's too noisy; I don't like it."

"Nor do I. It's confoundedly expensive, too. I wish you would come to Herrick's; it is not quite so stylish, perhaps, but I think the cookery is better, and you'd not pay five dollars a bottle for Madeira, and eight for Champagne."

"That *is* smart," said I. "They've not let me have my bill yet; but I fancied they were costly folk."

"Well, come and dine with me at Herrick's to-morrow, and decide for yourself."

"Why not try the Condor with me?" said I.

“Another day, with all my heart; but I have a friend to-morrow, so come and meet him at six o’clock.”

I agreed; and then we chatted on about London and town folks in a way that, even with all I had drunk, amazed me for the cool impudence in which I indulged.

“You knew De Courcy, of course,” said he, after a long run of mutual friends had been disposed of.

“Jack?” cried I, — “Jack De Courcy, of the Coldstreams, — yes, I think I did. Jack and I were like brothers. The last steeplechase I rode in Ireland was for poor Jack De Courcy: a little chestnut mare with a good deal of the Arab about her.”

“I remember her well, — an active devil, but she could n’t go for more than half a mile.”

“Well, I managed to screw a race out of her.”

“You must tell me all about that to-morrow; for I find my unfortunate head is like a bell with the vibration of the last stroke of the hammer on it. Don’t forget, — to-morrow, sharp six. You’ll meet nobody but Broughton.”

“Dudley, — Sir Dudley Broughton?”

“The same. You know him, then, already? Poor fellow! he’s terribly cut up; but he’ll be glad to see an old friend. Have you been much together?”

“A great deal. I made a cruise with him in his yacht, the ‘Firefly.’”

“What a rare piece of fortune to have met you!” cried Falkoner, as he shook my hand once more. And so, with the most fervent assurances of meeting on the morrow, we parted, — he, to saunter slowly towards his hotel; and I, to stand in the middle of the street, and, as I wiped the perspiration from my brow, to ask myself, had I gone clean mad.

I was so overwhelmed by the shock of my own impudence that I stood where Falkoner left me, for full five minutes, motionless and spell-bound. To have boasted of my intimacy with Captain De Courcy, although the Atlantic rolled between us, was bad enough, in all conscience; but to have talked of Sir Dudley — the haughty, insolent, overbearing Sir Dudley Broughton — as “my old friend,” was something that actually appalled me. How could my vain boastfulness

have so far got the better of my natural keenness; how could my silly self-sufficiency have carried me so far? "Ah," thought I, "it was not the real Con Cregan who spoke such ineffable folly; these were the outpourings of that diabolical 'Thumbo-rig.'"

While, therefore, I entered into a bond with myself to eschew that insidious compound in future, I also adopted the far more imminent and important resolve, to run away from New Orleans. Another sun must not set upon me in that city, come what might. With a shudder, I called to mind Sir Dudley's own avowal of his passion as a hater, and I could not venture to confront such danger.

I accordingly hastened to my miserable lodging, and, packing up my few clothes, now reduced to the compass of a bundle in a handkerchief, I paid my bill, and, on a minute calculation of various pieces of strange coinage, found myself the possessor of four dollars and a quarter, — a small sum, and something less than a cent for every ten miles I was removed from my native land. What meant the term "country," after all, to such as me? He has a country who possesses property in it, whose interests tie him to the soil, where his name is known and his presence recognized; but what country belongs to him where no resting-place is found for his weary feet, whose home is an inn, whose friends are the fellow-travellers with whom he has journeyed? The ties of country, like those of kindred, are superstitions, — high and holy ones sometimes, but still superstitions. Believe in them if you can, and so much the better for you; but in some hour the conviction will come that man is of every land.

Thus pondering, I trudged along at a smart pace, my bundle on a stick over my shoulder, never noticing the road, and only following the way because it seemed to lead out of the city. It was a gorgeous morning; the sun glittered on the bright roofs, and lit up the gay terraces of the houses, where creepers of every tint and foliage were tastefully entwined and festooned, as these people knew so well to dispose. Servants were opening windows, displaying handsomely-furnished rooms, replete with every luxury, as I passed; busy housemaids were brushing, and sweeping, and

polishing; and shining niggers were beating carpets and shaking hearthrugs, while others were raking the gravel before the doors, or watering the rich magnolias and cactuses that stood sentinel beneath the windows. Carriages, too, were washing, and high-bred horses standing out to be groomed, — all signs of wealth and of the luxuries of the rich men, whose close-drawn curtains portended sleep. “Ay,” thought I, “there are hundreds here, whose weightiest evil would be that they awoke an hour earlier than their wont; that their favorite Arab had stood on a sharp stone; that some rude branch had scratched the rich varnish on their chariot: while I wander along, alone and friendless, my worldly substance a few dollars.” This disparity of condition of course occurs to the mind of every poor man; but it only is a canker to him who has had a glimpse, be it ever so fleeting, of a life of luxury and ease. For this reason, the servant-class will always be a great source of danger to our present social condition; seeing the weakness, the folly, and sometimes the worse than folly of those they serve, viewing, from a near point, the interior lives of those who, seen from afar, are reckoned great and illustrious, — they lose the prestige of respect for the distinguishing qualities of station, and only yield it to the outward symbols, — the wealth and riches. What Socialists are our butlers; what Democrats our footmen; what Red Republicans are our cooks; what a Leveller is the gardener! For all your “yellow plush,” you are Sans-culottes, every man of you.

Now, I deem it a high testimony to my powers of judgment that I never entertained these views. On the contrary, I always upheld the doctrine that society, like a broken thigh-bone, did best on an “inclined plane,” and I repudiated equality with the scorn a man six feet high would feel were he told that the human standard was to be four and a half. The only grudge I did feel towards the fortunate man of wealth was that I should lose so many brilliant years of life in acquiring — for acquire it I would — what I would far rather employ in dispensing. A guinea at twenty is worth a hundred at thirty, a thousand at forty, a million at sixty, — that’s the geometrical mean of life. Glorious youth, that only needs “debentures” to be divine!

My head became clearer and my brain more unclouded as I walked along in the free air of the morning, and I felt that with a cigar I should both compose my vagrant fancies, and cheat myself out of the necessity of a breakfast. Excellent weed! that can make dulness imaginative, and imagination plodding; that renders stupid men companionable to clever ones, and gives a meek air of thought to the very flattest insipidity!

I searched my pocket for the little case that contained my Manillas, but in vain; I tried another, — like result. How was it? I always carried it in my great-coat: had I been robbed? I could not help laughing at the thought, it sounded so ineffably comic. I essayed again, alas! with no better success. Could I have placed it in the breast-pocket? What! there is no breast-pocket! How is this, Con? Has Thumborig its influence over you yet? I passed my hand across my brow, and tried to remember if the breast-pocket had only been a tradition of another coat, or what had become of it. Pockets do not close from being empty, like county banks, nor do they dry up, like wells, from disuse.

"No, no; there certainly was once one here." As I said this, what was my amazement to find that the pocket for which I had been searching had changed sides, and gone from left to right! "Oh, this is too bad!" thought I; "with a little more punch, I could have fancied that I had put my coat on wrong-sided. Here is a mystery!" said I, "and now, to solve it patiently;" and so I sat me down by the wayside, and, laying my bundle on the ground, began to reflect.

Reflection, I soon found, was of no use. Habit — the instinct of custom — showed me that my pocket had always been to the left; my right hand sought the spot with an almost mechanical impulse, whereas my left wandered about like a man in search of his newly-taken lodging. As I came to this puzzling fact, my fingers, deeply immersed in the pocket, came in contact with a small leather case. I drew it forth; it was not mine, — I had never seen it before! I opened it; there was nothing within but a small piece of card, with the words, "Full Share Ticket," on top, and, underneath, the figures, "438."

From the card, my eyes reverted to the coat itself; and now I saw, with a surprise I cannot convey, that it was not my own coat, but another man's, I was wearing. The negro at the ordinary had assisted me to put it on. It was the only one, indeed, remaining, as I came away, and some other had carried off mine. So far, it was a fair exchange, of which I was not in any way accountable, seeing that I performed a mere passive part; taking—and even that unwillingly—what was left me. Certain threadbare symptoms about the cuffs, and a missing button or two, also showed me that I was no gainer by the barter. Was it worth while to go back? Were the chances of recovering my own equal to the risk of being myself discovered? I thought not. It was decidedly a shabby investment, and, now that I examined it more closely, a very miserable substitute for my own. I was vexed at the occurrence, and could not help reflecting, in very severe terms, upon the breach of honor such an act displayed. “Lie down with dogs, Master Con,” says the adage, “and see if you don't get up with fleas!” “Such company as you passed the evening with were assuredly not above a piece of roguery like this.” Falkoner it could not be; and I own that I was glad to know that, since he was much taller than me; nor could I remember one who was near enough my own size to make me suppose him the culprit; and so I ended by attributing the knavery to the negro, who probably had kept this ancient vestment for a moment of substitution.

It may be inferred, from the difficulty of solution in the case of this very simple occurrence, that my faculties were not pre-eminently clear and lucid, and that the vapor of the Thumbo-rig still hung heavily over me; such, I am bound to own, was the fact. Every event of the previous night was as shadowy and imperfect as might be. It was only during the last half-hour of my conversation with Falkoner that I was completely conscious of all said and done around me. Previous to this, my mind had established a kind of Provisional Government over my rebellious ideas, and, like most such bodies, its edicts had little force, for they were based on but a weak prestige.

Now then came a question of this strange-looking piece

of card, with the numbers on which, by some wonderful process, I seemed to myself perfectly familiar, — nay, I felt that they were, from some hidden cause, recorded facts in my memory. All I could remember of the night before threw little light upon the matter, and I wondered on, striving to pierce the dull mist of uncertainty that enveloped all my thoughts; by this time, I had reached the bank of the river, and could perceive, about half a mile off, down the stream, a tall-masted smack getting ready for sea, — her blue-peter fluttered at the mast-head, and the pleasant "ye-ho!" of the sailors kept time with the capstan-bars as they heaved at the anchor. The wind was a nor'-wester, and beat with impatient gusts the loose canvas that hung ready to be shaken out, while the stream rushed rapidly along her sides.

"Would I were to sail in you, wherever your voyage tended!" was my exclamation; and I sat down to watch the preparations, which the loud commands of the skipper seemed to hasten and press forward. So occupied was I with the stir and bustle on board the craft, where everything was done with a lightning speed, that I did not remark a boat's crew who sat leaning on their oars beside the wall of the stream; and it was only when an accidental sound of their voices struck me that I saw them.

"That's a signal to come away, Ben!" said one of the men. "He'll not wait no longer!"

"And why should he lose a tide for any land-lugger of them all? It's not every day, besides, we get a nor'-wester like this!"

"Well, what d'ye mean to do?" asked the former speaker.

"Give him ten minutes more, Ben," cried another. "Let's have a chance of a dollar apiece, anyhow!"

"There goes a shot!" said the man called Ben, as he pointed to the smack, from whose bow-port the smoke was lazily issuing. "I'll not stay here any longer; shove her away, lads!"



CHAPTER XIX.

“ON BOARD OF THE
‘CHRISTOBAL.’”

WITHOUT further delay, the men prepared to obey the summons. The boat's chain was cast off, and, as she swung out from the wall, I could see a small standard at her stern, carrying a little white flag, which, as the breeze wafted towards me, showed the enigmatical numbers 438.

I sprang to my legs and uttered a cry of surprise.

“Well, what is it, master?” said Ben, looking up, and probably expecting to see me take a header into the muddy stream.

“That's the number!” cried I, not knowing what I said.

“That's the very number!”

“Very true, master, so it is, but you ha'n't got the counterpart, I guess!”

“Yes, but I have, though!” said I, producing the ticket from the pocket-book.

“Why, darn me if that a'n't himself!” cried the men; and they sung out three hearty cheers at the discovery.

“Were you there long, old fellow?” said Ben.

“About half an hour,” said I.

“Tarnation! and why did ye keep us a-waitin’? did n’t you see the tide was on the ebb, and that Christy was making signals every five minutes or so?”

“I was waiting — waiting —”

“Waiting for what? I’d like to know.”

“Waiting for my baggage,” said I, taking a long breath.

“An’ it ain’t come yet?”

“No; I’m afraid they missed the road.”

“Be that as it may, master, I’ll not stay longer. Come along without your kit, or stay behind with it, whichever you please.”

“Hang the traps!” said I, affecting a bold carelessness; “I’ve a few things there I left out loose, that will do. When shall we be there?” This was a leading question, for I did not yet know whither we were bound.

“At Galveston? Well, to-morrow evening or by night-fall, I guess, if the wind hold. Sit down there and make yourself snug; there’s always a little splash of a sea in this river. And now, lads, pull away, — all together!”

A second shot from the smack announced that her anchor was tripped, and we saw her now lurch over as her foresail filled.

The men pulled vigorously, and in about twenty minutes I stood upon the deck of the “Christobal,” making sundry excuses to her skipper for being late, and assuring him, on the faith of a gentleman, that I had utterly forgotten all about my voyage till the last moment.

“They only sent me the number from the office late last night,” said he, “and told me to look out for the gemman about the docks. But I war n’t goin’ to do that, I said. He’s got a passage and grub to Galveston, — as good as ere a gemman can de-sire; he’s won a nag they says is worth seven or eight hundred dollars, with furniture and arms for the new expedition; and I take it them things is worth a-looking arter, — so darn me blue if I gives myself no trouble about ’em.”

These scattered hints were all I wanted. The sea-breeze had restored me to my wonted clearness, and I now saw that “438” meant that I had won a free passage to Texas, a

horse and a rifle when I got there; so far, the "exchange of coats" was "with a difference." It was with an unspeakable satisfaction that I learned I was the only passenger on board the "Christobal." The other "gentlemen" of the expedition had either already set out or abandoned the project, so that I had not to undergo any unpleasant scrutiny into my past life, or any impertinent inquiry regarding my future.

Old Kit Turrel, the skipper, did not play the grand inquisitor on me. His life had been for the most part passed in making the voyage to and from New Orleans and Galveston, where he had doubtless seen sufficient of character to have satisfied a glutton in eccentricity. There was not a runaway rogue or abandoned vagabond that had left the coast for years back, with whose history he was not familiar. You had but to give him a name, and out came the catalogue of his misdeeds on the instant.

These revelations had a prodigious interest for me. They opened the book of human adventure at the very chapter I wanted. It was putting a keen edge upon the razor to give *me* the "last fashions in knavery," — not to speak of the greater advantage of learning the success attendant on each, since "Kit" could tell precisely how it fared with every one who had passed through his hands.

He enlightened me also as to these Texan expeditions, which, to use his own phrase, had never been anything better than "almighty swindles," planted to catch young flats from the north country, the Southern being all too "crank" to be done.

"And is there no expedition in reality?" said I, with all the horror of a man who had been seduced from home, and family, and friends, under false pretences.

"There do be a dash now and then into the Camanche trail when buffaloes are plenty, or to bring down a stray buck or so. Mayhap, too, they cut off an Injian fellow or two, if he lingers too late in the fall; and then they come back with wonderful stories of storming villages, and destroying war-parties, and the rest of it; but we knows better. Most of 'em 'ere chaps are more used to picklocks than rifles, and can handle a 'jemmy' better than a 'bowie-knife.'"

"And in the present case, what kind of fellows are they?"

He rolled a tobacco quid from side to side of his mouth, and seemed to hesitate whether he would speak out.

"There is no danger with me, Captain; I am an Englishman, a perfect stranger here, and have never seen or heard of a man amongst them."

"I see *that*," said he; "and your friends must be rank green 'uns to let you go and join this trail, —that's a fact."

"But what are they?"

"Well, they call 'emselves horse-dealers; but above Austin there, and along by Bexar, they call 'em horse-stealers!" and he laughed heartily at the excessive drollery of the remark.

"And where do they trade with their cattle?"

"They sells 'em here, or up in the States away north sometimes; but they picks up the critters along the Chehuhua Line, or down by Agnaverde, or San Pueblo. I've known 'em to go to Mexico too. When they don't get scalped, they've rather good fun of it; but they squable a bit now and then among 'emselves; and so there's a Texan proverb that 'buffalo-meat in spring is as rare as a mustang merchant with two eyes!'"

"What does that mean?"

"They gouge a bit down there, they do, — that's a fact. I've known two or three join the Redmen, and say Injians was better living with, than them 'ere."

"I own your picture is not flattering."

"Yes, but it be, though! You don't know them chaps; but I know 'em, — ay, for nigh forty year. I'm a-livin' on this 'ere passage, and I've seen 'em all. I knew Bowlin Sam, I did!" From the manner this was said, I saw that Bowlin Sam was a celebrity, to be ignorant of whom was to confess one's self an utter savage.

"To be sure, I was only a child at the time; but I saw him come aboard with the negro fellow that he followed up the Red River trail. They were two of the biggest fellows you could see. Sam stood six feet six-an'-a-quarter; the Black was six feet four, — but he had a stoop in his shoulders. Sam tracked him for two years; and many's the

dodge they had between 'em. But Sam took him at last, and he brought him all the way from Guajaqualle here, bound with his hands behind him, and a log of iron-wood in his mouth; for he could tear like a jaguar.

“They were both on 'em ugly men, — Sam very ugly! Sam could untwist the strongest links of an iron boat-chain, and t' other fellow could bite a man-rope clean in two with his teeth. 'The Black' eat nothing from the time they took him; and when they put him into the shore-boat, in the river, he was so weak they had to lift him like a child. Well, out they rowed into the middle of the stream, where the water is roughest among the 'snags,' and many a whirlpool dashing around 'atween the bows of the 'sawyers.' That's the spot you're sure to see one of these young sharks, — for the big chaps knows better than to look for their wittals in dangerous places, — while the water is black, at times, with alligators. Well, as I was sayin', out they rowed; and just as they comes to this part of the stream, the black fellow gives a spring, and drives both his heavy ironed feet bang through the flooring-plank of the boat. It was past bailin'; they were half swamped before they could ship their oars; the minute after, they were all struggling in the river together. There were three besides the nigger; but he was the only one ever touched land again. He was an Antigua chap, that same nigger; and they knows sharks and caymans as we does dog-fish: but, for all that, he was all bloody, and had lost part of one foot, when he got ashore.”

“Why had he been captured? What had he done?”

“What had n't he done! That same black murdered more men as any six in these parts; he it was burned down Che-coat's mill up at Brandy Cove, with all the people fastened up within. Then he run away to the 'washings' at Guajaqualle, where he killed Colonel Rixon, as was over the 'Placer.' He cut him in two with a bowie-knife, and never a one guessed how it happened, as the jagnars had carried off two or three people from the 'washins'; but the nigger got drunk one night, and began a-cuttin' down the young hemlock-trees, and sayin', 'That's the way I mowed down Buckra' Georgy,' — his name was George Rixon. Then he

bolted, and was never seen more. Ah, he was a down-hard 'un, that fellow Crick!"

"Crick, — Menelaus Crick!" said I, almost springing up with amazement as I spoke.

"Just so. You've heard enough of him 'fore now, I guess."

The skipper went on to talk about the negro's early exploits, and the fearful life of crime which he had always pursued; but I heard little of what he said. The remembrance of the man himself, bowed down with years and suffering, was before me; and I thought how terribly murder is expiated, even in those cases where the guilty man is believed to have escaped. So is it; the dock, the dungeon, and the gallows can be mercies in comparison with the self-torment of eternal fear, the terror of companionship, or the awful hell of solitude! The scene at Anticosti and the terrific night in the Lower Town of Quebec rose both together to my mind, and so absorbed my thoughts that the old skipper, seeing my inattention, and believing that I was weary and inclined for sleep, left me for the deck; and I lay still, pondering over these sad themes.

At last I roused myself and went on deck. The city had long since disappeared from view, and even the low land at the mouth of the river had faded in the distance; while, instead of the yellow, polluted flood of the Mississippi, the blue waves, shining and sparkling, danced merrily past, or broke in foam-sheets at the bow. The white sails were bent like boards, firm and immovable before the breeze, and the swift vessel darted her way onward as proudly as though her freight were something prouder and better than a poor adventurer, without one in the wide world who cared whether he won or lost the game with Fortune.

My spirits rose every mile we left New Orleans behind us; I felt, besides, that to bring my skill to such a market was but to carry "coals to Newcastle;" nor, from the skipper's account, did Texas offer a much more favorable field. However, it smacked of adventure; the very name had a charm for me; and I thought I should far rather confront actual danger than live a life of petty schemes and small expedients. But what a strange crucible is the human heart! here

was I, placed in a situation to which an incident had elevated me, — of a kind which a more scrupulous sense of honor would have made some shudder at, — fancying, ay, and persuading myself too, that, in the main, I possessed very admirable sentiments and most laudable ambitions; that the occasional little straits to which I was reduced were only so many practical jokes played on me by “Fate,” which took, doubtless, a high delight in the ingenuity by which I always fell on my feet, — while I felt certain that, were I only fairly treated, a more upright, honorable, straightforward young gentleman never lived than I should prove!

“Let Dame Fortune only deal me trumps,” said I, “and I’ll promise never ‘to look into my neighbor’s hand.’” Gentle reader, you smile at my humility; well, then, it’s clear you are neither a secretary of state nor a railway director, — that’s all.

We dropped anchor off Galveston just as the sun was setting; and the evening being calm, and the reflection of the houses and steeples in the water sharp and defined, the scene was sufficiently striking. The city itself was more important as to size and wealth than I had anticipated, and the office of the “Texan Expedition,” held at the “Moon,” a great coffee-house on the Quay, impressed me most favorably with the respectability and pretensions of my “Co-expeditionaries.” Old Kit presented me to the secretary — a very knavish-looking fellow in spectacles of black gauze — as the winner of the great prize, which, to my excessive mortification, I learned was at Houston, about eighty miles farther up the Bay.

I apologized for my careless dress by stating that my baggage had been unfortunately left behind at New Orleans, and that in my haste I had been obliged to come on board with actually nothing but the few dollars I had in my pocket.

“That’s a misfortune easily repaired, sir,” said the gauze-eyed secretary; “you can have your ‘credit’ cashed here just as liberally as at any town in the country.”

“I have no doubt of that,” responded I, somewhat tartly, for I did not fancy this allusion to banks and bankers; “but all my papers are in my portmanteau.”

“Provoking, certainly,” said he, taking a long pinch of snuff, — “ain’t it, Kit?”

But Kit only scratched his nose, and looked puzzled.

“Are your bankers Vicars and Bull, sir?”

“No,” said I, “my credits are all on a Northern house; but I fancy my name is tolerably well known. You’ve heard of the Cregans, I suppose.”

“Cregan — Cregan,” repeated he a couple of times; then, opening a huge ledger at the letter C, ran his eye down a long column. “Crabtree — Crossley — Croxam — Crebell — Creffet — Cregmore. It is not Cregmore, sir?”

“No, Cregan is the name.”

“Ah, well, there’s no Cregan. There was a Cregmore was ‘lynched’ here, I see by the mark in the book, and we have a small trunk waiting to be claimed, belonging to him.”

“That ain’t the fellow as purtended to be winner of the wagon team that was lotteried here a twelvemonth since, is it?” said Kit.

“Yes, but it is, though. He made out he had the ticket all right and straight, when up comes one Colonel Jabus Harper, and showed the real thing; and the chaps took it up hotly, and they lynched Cregmore that evening.”

“Yes, sir, that’s a fact,” quoth Kit.

“What was the penalty?” asked I, with a most imposing indifference.

“They hanged him up at Hall’s Court yonder. I ain’t sure if he ben’t hanging there still.”

“And this packet,” said I, for the theme was excessively distasteful, “when does she sail?”

“She starts to-night at twelve, — first cabin, two dollars; steerage, one-twenty.”

“Thank you,” said I, touching my hat with the condescending air one occasionally employs to humiliate an inferior, by its mingled pride and courtesy; and I turned into the street.

“You ain’t a-going to Hall’s Court, are you?” said Kit, overtaking me.

“Of course not,” responded I, indignantly. “Such sights are anything but pleasurable.”

“He ain’t all right, that ‘un,” said Gauze-eyes, as old Kit re-entered the office, and I stepped back to listen.

"Well, I don't know," muttered the other; "I'm a-thinking it be doubtful, sir. He ha'n't got much clink with him, that's a fact."

"I have half a mind to send Chico up in the boat to-night, just to dodge him a bit."

"Well, ye might do it," yawned the other; "but Chico is such an almighty willain that he'll make him out a rogue or a swindler, at all events."

"Chico *is* smart, *that* I do confess," said the other, with a grin.

"And he do look so uncommon like a vagabond, too; Chico, I don't like him."

"He can look like anything he pleases, Chico can. I've seen him pass for a Pawnee, and no one ever disciver it."

"He's a rank coward, for all that," rejoined the skipper; "and he can put no disguise upon *that*."

The sound of feet, indicative of leaving, made me hasten from the spot, but in a mood far from comfortable. With the fate of my ingenious predecessor in "Hall's Court" before me, and the small possibility of escaping the shrewd investigations of "Chico," I really knew not what course to follow. The more I reflected, however, the less choice was there at my disposal; the bold line, as generally happens, being not a whit more dangerous than the timid path, since, were I to abandon my prize, and not proceed to Houston, the inevitable Chico would only be the more certain to discover me.

My mind was made up; and, stepping into a shop, I expended two of my four dollars in the purchase of a "revolver," — second-hand, but an excellent weapon, and true as gold. A few cents supplied me with some balls and powder; and, thus provided, I took my way towards the wharf where the steamer lay, already making some indicative signs of readiness.

I took a steerage passage; and, not knowing where or how to dispose of myself in the interval before starting, I clambered into a boat on deck, and, with my bundle for a pillow, fell into a pleasant doze. It was not so much sleep as a semi-waking state that merely dulled and dimmed impressions, — a frame of mind I have often found very

favorable to thought. One is often enabled to examine a question in this wise, as they look at the sun through a smoked glass, and observe the glittering object without being blinded by its brilliancy. I suppose the time I passed in this manner was as near an approach to low spirits as I am capable of feeling; for of regular downright depression, I know as little as did Nelson of fear.

I bethought me seriously of the "scrape" in which I found myself, and reflected with considerable misgivings upon the summary principles of justice in vogue around me; and yet the knavery was not of my own seeking. Like Falstaff's honor, it was "thrust upon me." I was innocent of all plot or device. "*Le diable qui se mêle en tout*"—never was there a truer saying—would have it that I should exchange coats with another, and that this confounded ticket should be the compensation for worn seams and absent buttons.

I have no doubt, thought I, but that "Honesty is the best policy," pretty much upon the same principle that even a dead calm is better than a hurricane. But to him who desires "progress," on whose heart the word "ONWARD" is written, the calm is lethargy, while the storm may prove propitious. I then tried to persuade myself that even this adventure could not turn out ill,—not that I could by any ingenuity devise how it should prove otherwise; but I knew that Fortune is as skilful as she is kind, and so I left the whole charge to her.

Is it my fault, I exclaimed, that I am not rich, and well-born, and great? Show me any one who would have enjoyed such privileges more. Is it my fault that, being poor, ignoble, and lowly in condition, I have tastes and aspirations at war with my situation? These ought rather to be stimulants to exertion than caprices of Fortune. I like the theory better, too; and is it not hard to be condemned for the devices I am reduced to employ to combat such natural evils? If the prisoner severs his fetters with an old nail, it is because he does not possess the luxury of a file or a "cold chisel." As for me, the employment of small and insignificant means is highly distasteful; instead of following the lone mountain-path on foot, I'd drive "life's high road" four-in-hand, if I could.

The furious rush of the escape-steam, the quick coming and going of feet, the heavy banging of luggage on the deck, and all the other unmistakable signs of approaching departure, aroused me, as I lay patiently contemplating the bustle of leave-taking, hand-shaking, and embracing, in which I had no share. A lantern at the gangway lit up each face that passed, and I strained my eyes to mark one, the only one in whom I was interested. As I knew not whether the ingenious Chico were young, old, short, slim, fat, or six-foot, — whether brown or fair, smooth-faced or bearded, — my observations were necessarily universal, and I was compelled to let none escape me.

At first, each passenger appeared to be “him;” and then, after a few minutes, I gave up the hope of detection. There were fellows whose exterior might mean anything, — large, loose-coated figures, with leather overalls and riding-whips, many of them with pistols at their girdles, and one or two wearing swords, parading the deck on every side. It needed not the accompaniment of horse-gear, saddles, holsters, halters, and cavessous to show that they belonged to a fraternity which, in every land of the Old World or the New, has a prescriptive claim to knavery. Although all of them were natives of the United States, neither in their dark-brown complexions, deep mustaches and whiskers, and strange gestures, was there any trace of that land which we persist in deeming so purely Anglo-Saxon. The prairie and the hunting-ground, the life of bivouac and the habit of danger, had imparted its character to their looks; and there was, besides, that air of swagger and braggadocio so essentially the type of your trafficker in horse-flesh.

If my attention had not been turned to another subject, I would willingly have studied a little the sayings and doings of this peculiar class, seeing that it might yet be my lot to form one of “the brotherhood;” but my thoughts were too deeply interested in discovering “Chico,” whose presence in the same ship with me actually weighed on my mind like the terror of a phantom.

“Can this be him?” was the question which arose to my heart as figure after figure passed me near where I lay; but the careless, indolent look of the passenger as regularly nega-

tived the suspicion. We were now under way, steaming along in still water with all the tremendous power of our high-pressure engines, which shook the vessel as though they would rend its strong framework asunder. The night was beautifully calm and mild, and, although without a moon, the sky sparkled with a thousand stars, many of which were of size and brilliancy to throw long columns of light across the bay.

The throb of the great sea monster as she cleared her way through the water, was the only sound heard in the stillness: for although few had "gone below," the groups seated about the deck either smoked in silence, or talked in low, indistinct tones.

I lay gazing at the heavens, and wondering within myself which of those glittering orbs above me was gracious enough to preside over the life and adventures of Con Cregan. "Some dim, indistinct little spangle it must be," thought I, — "some forgotten planet of small reputation, I've no doubt it is. I should n't wonder if it were that little sly-looking fellow that winks at me from the edge of yonder cloud, and seems to say, 'Lie still, Con, — keep close, my lad; there's danger near.'" As I half-muttered this to myself, a dark object intervened between me and the sky, a large black disk, shutting out completely the brilliant fretwork on which I had been gazing. As I looked again, I saw it was the huge broad-brimmed hat of a Padre, — one of those felted coal-scuttles which make the most venerable faces grotesque and ridiculous.

Lying down in the bottom of the boat, I was able to take a deliberate survey of the priest's features, while he could barely detect the dark outline of *my* figure. He was thick and swarthy, with jet-black eyes and a long-pointed chin. There was something Spanish in the face, and yet more of the Indian; at least, the projecting cheek-bones and the gaunt, hollow cheeks favored that suspicion.

From the length of time he stood peering at me, I could perceive that it was not a passing impulse, but that his curiosity was considerable. This impression was scarcely conceived ere proved, as, taking a small lantern from the binnacle, he approached the boat, and held it over me.

Affecting a heavy slumber, I snored loudly, and lay perfectly still, while he examined my face, bending over me as I lay, and marking each detail of my dress and appearance.

As if turning in my sleep, I contrived to alter my position in such a manner that, covering my face with my arm, I could watch the Padre.

“Came on board alone, said you?” asked he of a little dirty urchin of a cabin-boy, at his side.

“Yes, Father; about two hours before we left the harbor.”

“No luggage of any kind?”

“A bundle, Father; that under his head, and nothing more.”

“Did he speak to you, or ask any questions?”

“Only at what time we should reach Houston, and if the ‘White Hart’ was near the Quay?”

“And then he lay down in the boat here?”

“Just so; I saw no more of him after.”

“That will do,” said the Padre, handing the lantern to the boy.

That will do! thought I also. Master Chico, if you know *me*, I know *you* as well!

The game was now begun between us, — at least, so I felt it. I lay watching my adversary, who slowly paced backwards and forwards, stopping now and then to peep into the boat, and doubtless conning over in his own mind his plan of attack.

We were to land some passengers and take in some wood at a little place called Fork Island; and here I was half determined within myself that my voyage should end. That “Chico” had discovered me, was clear, the Padre could be no other than him; and that he would inevitably hunt me down at Austin was no less evident. Now, discovery and “lynching” were but links of the same chain; and I had no fancy to figure as “No. 2” in Hall’s Court!

The silence on the deck soon showed that most of the passengers had gone below, and, so far as I could see in the uncertain light, “Chico” with them. I arose, therefore, from my hard couch to take a little exercise, which my cramped limbs stood in need of. A light drizzling rain had begun to fall, which made the deck slippery and uncomfort-

able, and so I took my stand at the door of the cook's galley, into which two or three of the crew had sought refuge.

As the rain fell the fog thickened, so that, standing close in to shore, the skipper slackened our speed, till at last we barely moved through the water. Not aware of the reason, I asked one of the sailors for an explanation.

"It's the dirty weather, I reckon," said he, sulky at being questioned.

"Impatient, I suppose, to get the journey over, my young friend?" said a low, silky voice, which at once reminded me of that I had already heard when I lay in the boat. I turned, and it was the Padre, who, with an umbrella over him, was standing beside me.

"I'm not much of a sailor, Father," replied I, saluting him respectfully as I spoke.

"More accustomed to the saddle than the poop-deck?" said he, smiling blandly.

I nodded assent, and he went on with some passing generalities about sea and land life, — mere skirmishing, as I saw, to invite conversation.

Partly weariness, partly a sense of discomfort at the persecution of this man's presence, made me sigh heavily. I had not perceived it myself, but he remarked it immediately, and said, —

"You are depressed in spirit, my son; something is weighing on your heart!"

I looked up at him, and, guided possibly by my suspicion of his real character, I saw, or thought I saw, a twinkling glitter of his dark eye, as though he was approaching the theme on which he was bent.

"Yes, Father," replied I, with a voice of well-feigned emotion, "my heart is indeed heavy; but" — here I assumed a more daring tone — "I must not despond, for all that!"

I walked away as I spoke, and, retiring, sat down near the wheel, as if to meditate. I judged that the Padre would soon follow me; nor was I wrong: I was not many minutes seated ere he stood at my side.

"I see," said he, in a mild voice, — "I see, from the respect of your manner, that you are one of our own

people, — a good son of the Church. What is your native country?”

“Ireland, Father,” said I, with a sigh.

“A blessed land indeed!” said he, benignly; “happy in its peaceful inhabitants, — simple-minded and industrious!”

I assented, like a good patriot, but not without misgivings that he might have been just as happy in another selection of our good gifts.

“I have known many of your countrymen,” resumed he, “and they all impressed me with the same esteem. All alike frugal, temperate, and tranquilly disposed.”

“Just so, sir; and the cruelty is, nobody gives them credit for it!”

“Ah, my son, there you are in error. The Old World may be, and indeed I have heard that it is, ungenerous; but its prejudices cannot cross the ocean. Here we estimate men, not by *our* prejudices, but by *their* merits. Here we recognize the Irishman as Nature has made him, — docile, confiding, and single-hearted; slow to anger, and ever ready to control his passions!”

“That’s exactly his portrait, Father!” said I, enthusiastically. “Without a double of any kind, — a creature that does not know a wile or a stratagem!”

The priest seemed so captivated by my patriotism and my generous warmth that he sat down beside me, and we continued to make Ireland still our theme, each vying with the other who could say most in praise of that country.

It was at the close of a somewhat long disquisition upon the comparative merits of Ireland and the Garden of Eden, — in which, I am bound to say, the balance inclined to the former, — that the Padre, as if struck by a sudden thought, remarked, —

“You are the very first of your nation I ever met in a frame of mind disposed to melancholy! I have just been running over, to myself, all the Irishmen I ever knew, and I cannot recall one that had a particle of gloom or sorrow about him.”

“Nor had I, Father,” said I, with emotion; “nor did I know what sorrow was, till three days back! I was light-hearted and happy; the world went well with me, and I was

content with the world. I will not trouble you with my story; enough when I say that I came abroad to indulge a taste for adventure and enterprise, and that the New World has not disappointed my expectations. If I spent money a little too freely, an odd grumble or so from 'the governor' was the darkest cloud that shaded my horizon. An only son, perhaps I pushed that prerogative somewhat too far; but our estate is unencumbered, and my father's habits are the reverse of extravagant, — for a man of his class, I might call them downright rustic in simplicity. Alas! why do I think of these things? I have done with them forever."

"Nay, nay, you must not give way thus. It is very unlikely that one young as you are can have any real guilt upon his conscience."

"Not yet, Father," said I, with a shudder, — "not yet; but who can tell how it may be with me to-morrow or next day? What a different answer should I have to give your question then!"

"This is some fancy, — some trick of a warm and ill-regulated imagination, my son."

"It is the language my heart pours from my lips," said I, grasping his hand as if with irrepressible emotion. "I have a heavy crime here — here!" and I struck my breast violently; "and if it be as yet unaccomplished, the shadow of the guilt is on me already."

"Sit still, my son, sit still, and listen to me," said he, restraining me, as I was about to rise. "To whom can you reveal these mysterious terrors more fittingly than to me? Be candid; tell me what weighs upon your heart. It may be that a mere word of mine can give you courage and calm."

"That cannot be," said I, firmly; "you speak in kindness, but you know not what you promise. I am under a vow, Father, — I am under a vow."

"Well, my son, there are many vows meritorious. There are vows of penitence, and of chastity, and of abstinence —"

"Mine is none of these," said I, with a low, guttural utterance, as if I was biting each word I spoke.

"Vows of chastisement —"

“Not that, not that either!” cried I; then, dropping my voice to a low whisper, I said, “I have sworn a solemn oath to commit a murder! I know the full guilt of what is before me, I see all the consequences, both here and hereafter; but my word is pledged, — I have taken the oath with every ceremony that can give it solemnity; and — I’ll go through with it!”

“There is a mystery in all this,” said the Padre; “you must recount the circumstances of this singular pledge, ere I can give you either comfort or counsel.”

“I look for neither, — I hope for neither!” said I, wringing my hands; “but you shall hear my story, — you are the last to whom I can ever reveal it! I arrived at New Orleans about a fortnight ago, on a yacht cruise with a friend of mine, of whose name, at least, you may have heard, — Sir Dudley Broughton.”

“The owner of a handsome schooner, the ‘Firefly,’” said the Padre, with an animation on the subject not quite in keeping with his costume.

“The same; you are, then, acquainted with him?”

“Oh, no; I was accidentally standing on the wharf when his yacht came up the river at New Orleans.”

“You did n’t remark a young man on the poop in a foraging-cap, with a gold band round it?”

“I cannot say I did.”

“He carried a key-bugle in his hand.”

“I did not perceive him.”

“That was me; how different was I then! Well, well, I’ll hasten on. We arrived at New Orleans, not quite determined whither next we should bend our steps; and hearing by mere accident of this Texan expedition, we took it into our heads we would join it. On inquiring about the matter, we found that a lottery was in progress, the prizes of which were various portions of equipment, horses, mules, baggage, negroes, and so on. For this — just out of caprice — we took several tickets; but as, from one cause or other, the drawing was delayed, we lingered on, going each day to the office, and there making acquaintance with a number of fellows interested in the expedition, but whose manner and style, I need scarcely say, were not good recommendations

to intimacy. Broughton, however, always liked that kind of thing; low company, with him, had always the charm of an amusement that he could resign whenever he fancied. Now, as he grew more intimate with these fellows, he obtained admission into a kind of club they held in an obscure part of the town, and thither we generally repaired every evening, when too late for any more correct society. They were all, or at least they affected to be, interested in Texan expeditions; and the conversation never took any other turn than what concerned these objects; and if at first our Old World notions were shocked at their indifference to life, — the reckless disregard of honor and good faith they evinced, — we came by degrees to feel that the moral code of the Prairies permitted many things which were never sanctioned in more cultivated latitudes.

“Broughton entered into all this with a most extraordinary interest. Nothing seemed too wild, too abandoned, and too outrageous for his notions; and, I shame to say it, he soon made me a convert to his opinions. His constant speech was, ‘Be as virtuous as you please, my dear fellow, among ladies and gentlemen; but pray fight Choctaws, Pawnees, and half-breeds with their own weapons, which are either a trick or a tomahawk.’ I never liked the theory; but partly from daily iteration, partly from a yielding pliancy of disposition, and in great measure from being shamed into it, I gave way, and joined him in all the pledges he gave, to go through with anything the expedition exacted. I must be brief; that light yonder is on Fork Island, where we stop to take in wood; and ere we reach it, I must make up my mind to one course or other.

“As the time for the starting of the expedition drew nigh, the various plans and schemes became the theme of nightly discussion; and we heard of nothing but guides and trails, where grass was to be found for the cattle, and where water could be had, with significant hints about certain places and people who were known or believed to be inimical to these excursions. Thus, on the map, were marked certain villages which might be put under contribution, and certain log-houses which should be made to pay a heavy impost: here, it was a convent to be mulcted; and there, a store or a mill

to be burned! In fact, the expedition seemed to have as many vengeancees to fulfil as hopes of gain to gratify; for each had a friend who was maltreated, or robbed, or murdered, and whose fate or fortunes required an expiation. — But I weary you, Padre, with all this?”

“Not at all, my son; I recognize perfectly the accuracy of your account. I have heard a good deal about these people.”

“There was one individual, however, so universally detested that you would suppose he must have been a kind of devil incarnate to have incurred such general hate. Every one had a grudge against him, and, in fact, there was a kind of struggle who should be allotted to wreak on him the common vengeance of the company. It was at last decided that his fate should be lotteried, and that whoever won the first prize — this mare of which you may have heard — should also win the right to finish this wretched man. I gained this infamous distinction; and here am I, on my way to claim my prize and commit a murder! Ay, I may as well employ the true word, — it is nothing less than a murder! I have not even the poor excuse of revenge. I cannot pretend that he ever injured me, — nay, I have not even seen him; I never heard of his name till two days ago; nor, even now, could I succeed in finding him out, if I were not provided with certain clews at Houston, and certain guides by whose aid I am to track him. My oath is pledged: I swore it solemnly that, if the lot fell upon me, I’d do the deed, and do it I will; yet, I am equally resolved never to survive it.” — Here I produced my revolver. — “If this barrel be for the unlucky Chico, this other is for myself!”

“What name did you say?” cried he, with a faltering voice, while his hand, as he laid it on my arm, shook like ague.

“Chico, the wretch is called,” I said, fixing a cap on my pistol.

“And why call him a wretch, my son? Has he ever injured you? How do you know that he is not some poor, kindly hearted creature, the father of five children, one of them a baby, perhaps? How can you tell the difficulties by which he gains his living, and the hazard to which he exposes

his life in doing so? And is it to injure such a man you will go down to your own grave an assassin?”

“I’ll do it,” said I, doggedly; “I’ll keep my oath.”

“Such an oath never bound any man; it is a snare of Satan.”

“So it may, — I’ll keep it,” said I, beating the deck with my foot, with the dogged determination of one not to be turned from his purpose.

“Kill in cold blood a man you never saw before?”

“Just so; I am not going to think of *him*, when I set so little store by myself; I only wish the fellow were here now, and I’d show you whether I’d falter or not.”

“Poor Chico, — I could weep for him!” said he, blubbering.

“Keep your pity for *me*,” said I, — “I, that am bound by this terrible oath, and must either stamp myself a coward or a murderer. As for Chico, I believe a more worthless wretch never existed, — a poor, mean-spirited creature, whose trade is to be a spy, and by whose cursed machinations many a fine fellow has been ruined.”

“You are all wrong, sir,” said the Padre, warmly. “I know the man myself; he is an amiable, kind-hearted being, that never harmed any one.”

“He’s the fellow to die, then!” said I, roughly.

“He has a small family, unprovided for.”

“They have the inheritance of his virtues,” said I, scoffingly.

“Can you have the heart for such cruelty?” cried he, almost sobbing.

“Come with me when I land at Houston, and see, — that’s all!” said I. “A few minutes back, I was hesitating whether I would not land at this island and abandon my purpose. The weakness is now over; I feel a kind of fiendish spirit growing up within me already; I cannot think of the fellow without a sense of loathing and hatred!”

“Lie down, my son, and compose yourself for an hour or two; sleep and rest will calm your agitated brain, and you will then listen to my counsels with profit: your present excitement overmasters your reason, and my words would be of no effect.”

“I know it — I feel it here, across my temples — that it

is a kind of paroxysm; but I never close my eyes that I do not fancy I see the fellow, now in one shape, now in another, for he can assume a thousand disguises; while in my ears his accursed name is always ringing."

"I pity you from my heart!" said the other; and certainly a sadder expression I never saw in any human face before. "But go down below; go down, I beseech you."

"I have only taken a deck-passage," said I, doggedly; "I determined that I would see no one, speak to no one."

"Nor need you, my son," said he, coaxingly. "They are all sound asleep in the after-cabin; take *my* berth, — I do not want it; I am always better upon deck."

"If you will have it so," said I, yielding; "but, for your life, not a word of what I have said to you! Do not deceive yourself by any false idea of humanity. Were you to shoot me where I stand, you could not save *him*, — *his* doom is spoken. If *I* fail, there is Broughton, and, after him, a score of others, sworn to do the work."

"Lie down and calm yourself," said he, leading me to the companion-ladder; "we must speak of this to-morrow."

I squeezed his hand, and slowly descended to the cabin. At first the thought occurred to me that he might give the alarm and have me seized; but then this would expose him so palpably to my recognition, should I chance to escape, it was unlikely he would do so. The stillness on deck showed me I was correct in this latter estimate, and so I turned into his comfortable berth, and, while I drew the counterpane over me, thought I had made a capital exchange for the hard ribs of the "long-boat."

If my stratagem had succeeded in impressing my friend Chico with a most lively fear, it did not leave my own mind at perfect tranquillity. I knew that he must be a fellow of infinite resources, and that the game between us, in all likelihood, had but commenced. In circumstances of difficulty, I have constantly made a practice of changing places with my antagonist, fancying myself in *his* position, and asking myself how I should act? This taking the "adversary's hand" is admirable practice in the game of life; it suggests an immense range of combinations, and improves one's play prodigiously.

I now began to myself a little exercise after this fashion;

but what between previous fatigue, the warmth of the cabin, and the luxury of a real bed, Chico and I changed places so often, in my brain, that confusion ensued, then came weariness, and, at last, sound sleep, — so sound that I was only awoke by the steward as he popped his greasy head into the berth and said, "I say, master, here we are, standing close in: had n't you better get up?"

I did as he advised; and, as I rubbed the sleep from my eyes, said, "Where's the Padre, steward? — what's become of him?"

"He was took ill last night, and stopped at Fork Island; he'll go back with us to-morrow to Galveston."

"You know him, I suppose?" said I, looking at the fellow with a shrewd intelligence that he knew how to construe.

"Well," cried he, scratching his head, "well, mayhap I do guess a bit who he is."

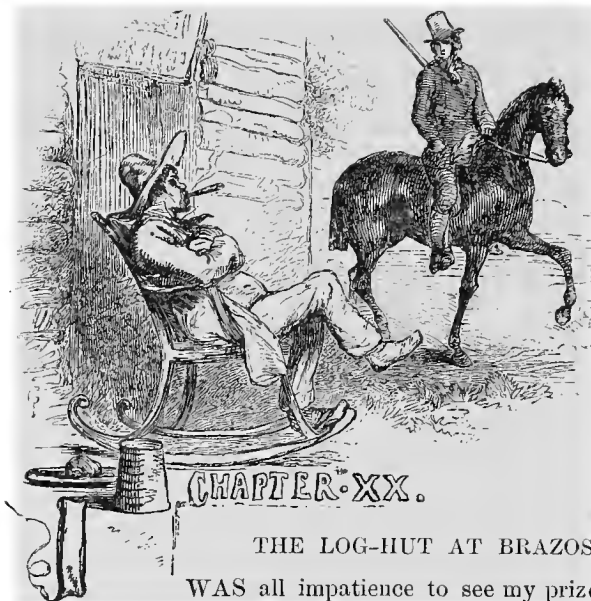
"So do I, steward; and when we meet again, he'll know *me*," said I, with a look of such imposing sternness that I saw the fellow was recording it. "You may tell him so, steward. I'll wait for him here till I catch him; and if he escape both myself and my friend Broughton, — Broughton; don't forget the name, — he is deeper than I give him credit for."

As I was about to leave the cabin, I caught sight of the corner of a red handkerchief peeping out beneath the pillow of the berth. I drew it forth, and found it was Chico's travelling kit, which he preferred abandoning to the risk of again meeting me. It contained a small black skull-cap such as priests wear, a Romish missal, a string of beads, with a few common articles of dress, and eight dollars in silver.

"The spoils of victory," quoth I, embodying the whole in my own bundle: "the enemy's baggage and the military chest captured."

"Which is the White Hart?" said I, as I came on deck, now crowded with shore folk, porters, and waiters.

"This way, sir, — follow me," said a smart fellow in a waiter's dress; and I handed him my bundle and stepped on shore.



THE LOG-HUT AT BRAZOS.

WAS all impatience to see my prize; and scarcely had I entered the inn than I passed out into the stable-yard, now crowded with many of those equestrian-looking figures I had seen on board the steamer.

“Butcher’s mare here still, Georgie?” said a huge fellow, with high boots of red-brown leather, and a sheepskin capote belted round him with a red sash.

“Yes, Master Seth, there she stands. You’ll be getting a bargain of her, one of these days.”

“If I had her up at Austin next week for the fair, she’d bring a few hundred dollars.”

“You’d never think of selling a beast like that at Austin, Seth?” said a bystander.

“Why not? Do you fancy I’ll bring her into the States, and see her claimed in every town of the Union? Why, man, she’s been stolen once a month, that mare has, since she was a two-year-old. I knew an old general up in the Maine frontier had her last year; and he rid her away from a ‘stump meeting’ in Vermont, in change of his own mule, —

blind, — and never know'd the differ till he was nigh home. I sold her twice, myself, in one week. Scott of Muckleburg stained her off fore-leg white, and sold her back, as a new one, to the fellow who returned her for lameness; and she can pretend lameness, she can."

A roar of very unbelieving laughter followed this sally, but Seth resumed, —

"Well, I'll lay fifty dollars with any gentleman here that she comes out of the stable dead lame, or all sound, just as I bid her."

Nobody seemed to fancy this wager; and Seth, satisfied with having established his veracity, went on, —

"You've but to touch the coronet of the off-foot with the point of your bowie, — a mere touch, not draw blood, — and see if she won't come out limping on the toe, all as one as a dead breakdown in the coffin joint; rub her a bit then with your hand, — she's all right again! It was Wrecksley of Ohio taught her the trick; he used to lame her that way, and buy her in, wherever he found her."

"Who's won her this time?" cried another.

"I have, gentlemen," said I, slapping my boot with my cane, and affecting a very knowing air as I spoke. The company turned round and surveyed me some seconds in deep silence.

"You an't a-goin' to ride her, young 'un?" said one, half contemptuously.

"No, he an't; the gent's williu' to sell her," chimed in another.

"He's goin' to ax me three hundred dollars," said a third, "an' I an't a-goin' to gi' him no more than two hundred."

"You are all wrong, every man of you," said Seth. "He's bringing her to England, a present for the Queen, for her own ridin'."

"And I beg to say, gentlemen, that none of you have hit upon the right track yet; nor do I think it necessary to correct you more fully. But as you appear to take an interest in my concerns, I may mention that I shall want a hack for my servant's riding, — a short-legged, square-jointed thing, clever to go, and a good feeder, not much above four-

teen hands in height, or four hundred dollars in price. If you chance upon this — ”

“ I know your mark.”

“ My roan, with the wall-eye. You don't mind a wall-eye? ”

“ No, no! my black pony mare 's the thing the gent 's a lookin' for.”

“ I say it 's nothing like it,” broke in Seth. “ He 's a-wantin' a half-bred mustang, with a down-east cross, — a critter to go through fire and water; liftin' the fore-legs like a high-pressure piston, and with a jerk of the 'stifle' like the recoil of a brass eight-pounder. An't I near the mark? ”

“ Not very wide of it,” said I, nodding encouragingly.

“ She 's at Austin now. You an't a-goin' there? ”

“ Yes,” said I; “ I shall be in Austin next week.”

“ Well, never you make a deal till you see my black pony,” cried one.

“ Nor the roan cob,” shouted another.

“ He 'd better see 'em 'fore he sees Split-the-wind, then, or he 'd not look at 'em arter,” said Seth. “ You 've only to ask for Seth Chiseller, and they 'll look me up.”

“ You an't a-goin' to let us see Butcher's mare afore we go? ” said one to the ostler.

“ I an't, because I have n't got the key. She 's a double-locked, and the cap 'n never gives it to no one, but comes a-feedin' time himself, to give her corn.”

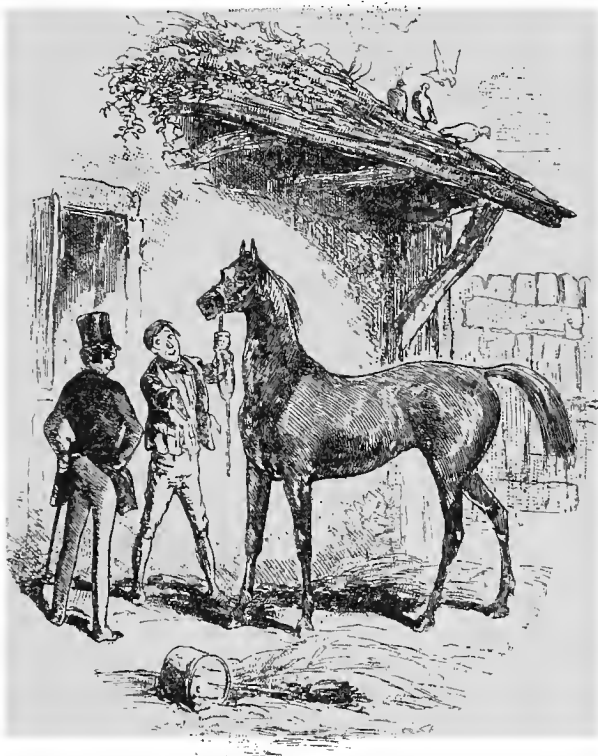
After a few muttered remarks on this caution, the horse-dealers sauntered out of the yard, leaving me musing over what I had heard, and wondering if this excessive care of the landlord boded any suspicion regarding the winner of the prize.

“ Jist draw that bolt across the gate, there, will ye,” said the ostler, while he produced a huge key from his pocket. “ I know 'em well, them gents. A man must have fourteen eyes in his head, and have 'em baek and front too, that shows 'em a horse beast! Darn me coarse! if they can't gi' 'un a blood spavin in a squirt of tobacco! Let's see your tiolet, young master, and I'll show you Charcoal, — that's her name.”

“Here it is,” said I, “signed by the agent at Galveston, all right and regular.”

“The cap’n must see to that. I only want to know that ye have the number. Yes, that’s it; now stand a bit on one side. Ye’ll see her when she comes out.”

He entered the stable as he spoke, and soon re-appeared, leading a tall mare, fully sixteen hands high, and black as jet; a single white star on her forehead, and a dash of white across the tail, being the only marks on her. She was bursting with condition, and both in symmetry and action a splendid creature.



“An’t she a streak of lightnin’, and no mistake?” said he, gazing on her with rapture. “An’t she glibber to move nor a wag of a comet’s tail, when he’s taking a lark round the moon? There’s hocks! there’s pasterns! Show me a gal with ankles like ’em, and look at her, here! An’t she a-made for sittin’ on?”

I entered into all his raptures. She was faultless in every point, — save, perhaps, that in looking at you she would throw her eye backwards, and show a little bit too much of the white. I remarked this to the ostler.

“The only fault she has,” said he, shaking his head; “she mistrusts a body always, and so she’s eternally a lookin’ back, and a gatherin’ up her quarters, and a holdin’ of her tail tight in; but for that, she’s a downright reg’lar beauty, and for stride and bottom there ain’t her equal nowhere.”

“Her late master was unlucky, I’ve heard,” said I, insinuatingly.

“He was so far unlucky that he couldn’t sit his beast over a torrent and a down leap. He would hold her in, and she won’t bear it at a spring, and so she flung him before she took the leap; and when *she* lit, ’t other side, with her head high and her hind legs under her, *he* was a sittin’ with his ’n under his arm, and his neck bruck, — that was the way o’ it. See now, master, if ever ye do want a great streak out of her, leave the head free a bit, press her wi’ your calves, and give a right down reg’lar halloo, — ha! like a Mexican chap; then she’ll do it!”

The ostler found me a willing listener, either when dwelling on the animal’s perfections, or suggesting hints for her future management; and when at last both these themes were tolerably exhausted, he proceeded to show me the horse-gear of saddle, and bridle, and halter, and holsters, all handsomely finished in Mexican taste, and studded with brass nails in various gay devices. At last he produced the rifle, — a regular Kentucky one, of Colt’s making, — and what he considered a still greater prize, a bell-mouthed thing half horse-pistol, half blunderbuss, which he called “a almighty fine ‘Harper’s Ferry tool,’ that would throw thirty bullets through an oak panel two inches thick.”

It was evident that he looked upon the whole equipment as worthy of the most exalted possession, and he gazed on me as one whose lot was indeed to be envied.

"Seth and the others leave this to-morrow a'ternoon," said he; "but if ye be a-goin' to Austin, where the 'Spedeshin' puts up, take my advice, and get away before 'em. You've a fine road, — no trouble to find the way; your beast will carry you forty, fifty, if you want it, sixty, miles between sunrise and 'down;' and you'll be snug over the journey before they reach Killian's Mill, the half-way. An' if ye want to know why I say so, it's just because that's too good a beast to tempt a trumper wi', and them's all trampers!"

I gave the ostler a dollar for all his information and civility, and re-entered the inn to have my supper. The cap'n had already returned home, and after verifying my ticket, took my receipt for the mare, which I gave in all form, writing my name, "Con Cregan," as though it were to a check for a thousand pounds.

I supped comfortably, and then walked out to the stable to see Charcoal. "Get her corn; you'll see if she don't eat it in less than winkin'," said the ostler; "and if she wor my beast, she'd never taste another feed till she had her nose in the manger at Croft's Gulley."

"And where is Croft's Gulley?"

"It's the bottoms after you pass the larch wood; the road dips a bit, and is heavy there, and it's a good baitin' place, just eighteen miles from here."

"On the road to Austin?"

He nodded. "Ye see," he said, "the moon's a risin'; there's no one out this time. Ye know what I said afore."

"I'll take the advice, then. Get the traps ready; I'll pack the saddle-bags and set out."

If any one had asked me why I was in such haste to reach Austin, my answer would have been, "To join the expedition;" and if interrogated, "With what object then?" I should have been utterly dumbfounded. Little as I knew of its intentions, they must all have been above the range of my ability and means to participate in. True, I had a horse and a rifle; but there was the end of my worldly

possessions, not to say that my title, even to these, admitted of litigation. A kind of vague notion possessed me that, once up with the expedition, I should find my place "somewhere," — a very Irish idea of a responsible situation. I trusted to the "making myself generally useful" category for employment, and to a ready-wittedness never cramped nor restrained by the petty prejudices of a conscience.

The love of enterprise and adventure is conspicuous among the springs of action in Irish life, occasionally developing a Wellesley or a Captain Rock. Peninsular glories and predial outrage have just the same one origin, — a love of distinction, and a craving desire for the enjoyment of that most fascinating of all excitements, — whatever perils life.

Without this element, pleasure soon palls; without the cracked skulls and fractured "femurs," fox-hunting would be mere galloping; a review might vie with a battle, if they fire blank cartridge in both! Who'd climb the Peter Bot, or cross the "petit mulets" of Mont Blanc, if it were not that a false step or a totter would send him down a thousand fathoms into the deep gorge below. This playing hide-and-peek with Death seems to have a great charm, and is very possibly the attraction some folks feel in playing invalid, and passing their lives amid black draughts and blue lotions!

I shrewdly suspect this luxury of tempting peril distinguishes man from the whole of the other animal creation; and if we were to examine it a little, we should see that it opens the way to many of his highest aspirings and most noble enterprises. Now, let not the gentle reader ask, "Does Mr. Cregan include horse-stealing in the list of these heroic darings?" Believe me, he does not; he rather regarded the act of appropriation in the present case in the light some noble lords did when voting away church property, — "a hard necessity, but preferable to being mulct oneself!" With many a thought like this, I rode out into the now silent town, and took my way towards Austin.

It is a strange thing to find oneself in a foreign land, thousands of miles from home, alone, and at night; the sense of isolation is almost overwhelming. So long as daylight

lasts, the stir of the busy world and the business of life ward off these thoughts, — the novelty of the scene even combats them; but when night has closed in, and we see above us the stars that we have known in other lands, the self-same moon by whose light we wandered years ago, and then look around and mark the features of a new world, with objects which tell of another hemisphere; and then think that we are there alone, without tie or link to all around us, the sensation is thrilling in its intensity.

Every one of us — the least imaginative, even — will associate the strangeness of a foreign scene with something of that adventure of which he has read in his childhood; and we people vacancy, as we go, with images to suit the spot in our own country. The little pathway along the river side suggests the lovers' walk at sunset as surely as the dark grove speaks of a woodman's hut or a gypsy camp. But abroad, the scene evokes different dwellers: the Sierra suggests the brigand; the thick jungle, the jaguar or the rattlesnake; the heavy plash in the muddy river is the sound of the cayman; and the dull roar, like wind within a cavern, is the cry of the hungry lion. The presence around us of objects of which we have read long ago, but never expected to see, is highly exciting; it is like taking our place among the characters of a story, and investing us with an interest to ourselves, as the hero of some unwrought history.

This is the most fascinating of all castle-building, since we have a spot for an edifice, — a territory actually given to us.

I thought long upon this theme, and wondered to what I was yet destined, — whether to some condition of real eminence, or to move on among that vulgar herd who are the spectators of life, but never its conspicuous actors. I really believe this ignoble course was more distasteful to me from its flatness and insipidity than from its mere humility. It seemed so devoid of all interest, so tame and so monotonous, I would have chosen peril and vicissitude any day in preference. About midnight I reached Croft's Gulley, where, after knocking for some time, a very sulky old negro admitted me into a stable while I baited my mare. The house was shut up for the night; and even had I sought refreshment, I could not have obtained it.

After a brief halt, I again resumed the road, which led through a close pine forest, and, however much praised, was anything but a good surface to travel on. Charcoal, however, made light of such difficulties, and picked her steps over holes and stumps with the caution of a trapper, detecting with a rare instinct the safe ground, and never venturing on spots where any difficulty or danger existed. I left her to herself, and it was curious to see that whenever a short interval of better footway intervened, she would, as if to "make play," as the jockeys call it, strike out in a long swinging canter, "pulling up" to the walk the moment the uneven surface admonished her to caution.

As day broke, the road improved so that I was able to push along at a better pace, and by breakfast-time I found myself at a low, poor-looking log-house called "Brazos." A picture representing Texas as a young child receiving some admirable counsel from a very matronly lady with thirteen stars on her petticoat, flaunted over the door, with the motto, "Filial Affection, and Candy Flip at all hours."

A large, dull-eyed man, in a flannel pea-jacket and loose trousers to match, was seated in a rocking-chair at the door, smoking an enormous cigar, a little charmed circle of exhortation seeming to defend him from the assaults of the vulgar. A huge can of cider stood beside him, and a piece of Indian corn bread. He eyed me with the coolest unconcern as I dismounted, nor did he show the slightest sign of welcome.

"This is an inn, I believe, friend?" said I, saluting him.

"I take it to be a hotel," said he, in a voice very like a yawn.

"And the landlord, where is he?"

"Where he ought to be, — at his own door, a smokin' his own rearin'."

"Is there an ostler to be found? I want to refresh my horse, and get some breakfast for myself too."

"There an't none."

"No help?"

"Never was."

"That's singular, I fancy."

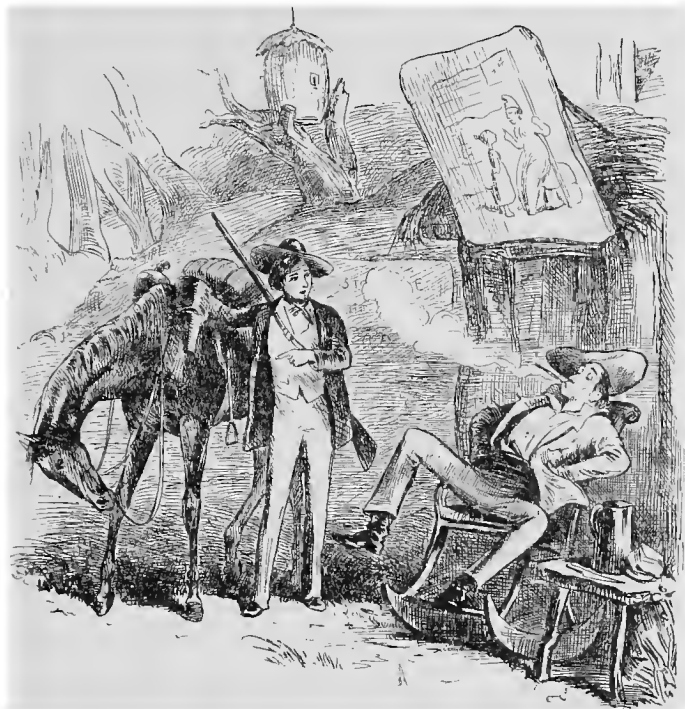
"No, it an't."

“Why, what do travellers do with their cattle, then?”

“There bean’t none.”

“No cattle?”

“No travellers.”



“No travellers! and this the high road between two considerable towns!”

“It an’t.”

“Why, surely this is the road to Austin?”

“It an’t.”

“Then this is not Brazos?”

“It be Upper Brazos.”

“There are two of them, then; and the other, I suppose, is on the Anstin road?”

He nodded.

“What a piece of business!” sighed I; “and how far have I come astray?”

“A good bit.”

“A mile or two?”

“Twenty.”

“Will you be kind enough to be a little more communicative, and just say where this road leads to; if I can join the Austin road without turning back again; and where?”

Had I propounded any one of these queries, it is just possible I might have had an answer; but, in my zeal, I outwitted myself. I drew my check for too large an amount, and consequently was refused payment altogether.

“Well,” said I, after a long and vain wait for an answer, “what am I to do with my horse? There is a stable, I hope?”

“There an’t,” said he, with a grunt.

“So that I can’t bait my beast?”

“No!”

“Bad enough! Can I have something to eat myself, — a cup of coffee — ?”

A rude burst of laughter stopped me, and the flannel man actually shook with the drollery of his own thoughts. “It bean’t Astor House, I reckon!” said he, wiping his eyes.

“Not very like it, certainly,” said I, smiling.

“What o’ that? Who says it ought to be like it?” said he, and his fishy eyes flared up, and his yellow cheeks grew orange with anger. “I an’t very like old Hickory, I s’pose! and maybe I don’t want to be! I’m a free Texan! I an’t a nigger nor a blue-nose! I an’t one of your old country slaves, that black King George’s boots, and ask leave to pay his taxes! I an’t.”

“And I,” said I, assuming an imitation of his tone, for experiment’s sake, “I am no lazy, rocking-chair, whittling, tobacco-chewing Texan! but a traveller, able and willing to pay for his accommodation, and who will have it, too!”

“Will ye? Will ye, then?” cried he, springing up with an agility I could not have believed possible; while, rushing into the hut, he reappeared with a long Kentucky rifle, and a bayonet a-top of it. “Ye han’t long to seek yer man, if

ye want a flash of powder! Come out into the bush and 'see it out,' I say!"

The tone of this challenge was too insulting not to call for at least the semblance of acceptance; and so, fastening my mare to a huge staple beside the door, I unslung my rifle, and cried, "Come along, my friend; I'm quite ready for you!"

Nothing daunted at my apparent willingness, he threw back the hammer of his lock, and said, "Hark ye, young un! You can't give me a cap or two? Mine are *considerable* rusty!"

The request was rather singular, but its oddity was its success; and so, opening a small case in the stock of my rifle, I gave him some.

"Ah, them 's real chaps, — the true 'tin jackets,' as we used to say at St. Louis!" cried he, his tongue seeming wonderfully loosened by the theme. "Now, lad, let 's see if one of your bullets fit this bore; she's a heavy one, and carries twenty to the pound; and I've nothing in her now but some loose chips of iron for the bears."

Loose chips of iron for the bears! thought I; did ever mortal hear such a barbarian! "You don't fancy, friend, I came here to supply you with lead and powder, to be used upon myself, too! I supposed, when you asked me to come out into the bush, that you had everything a gentleman ought to have for such a purpose."

"Well, I never seed the like of that!" exclaimed he, striking the ground with the butt end of his piece. "If we don't stand at four guns' length —"

"We 'll do no such thing, friend," said I, shouldering my piece, and advancing towards him. "I never meant to offend *you*; nor have you any object in wounding, mayhap killing, *me*. Let me have something to eat; I'll pay for it freely, and go my ways."

"What on airth is it, eh?" said he, looking puzzled. "Why, that's one of Colt's rifles! you'd have picked me down at two hundred yards, sure as my name is Gabriel."

"I know it," said I, coolly; "and how much the better or the happier should I have been, had I done so?" I watched the fellow's pasty countenance as though I could read what passed in the muddy bottom of his mind.

“If it were not for something of this kind,” added I, sorrowfully, “I should not be here to-day. You know New Orleans?” He nodded. “Well, perhaps you know Ebenezer York?”

“The senator?”

“The same!” I made the pantomime of presenting a pistol, and then of a man falling. “Just so. His brothers have taken up the pursuit, and so I came down into this quarter till the smoke cleared off!”

“He was a plumper at a hundred and twenty yards. I seen him double up Gideon Millis, of Ohio.”

“Ah, I could recount many a thing of the kind to you,” said I, leading the way towards the hut, “but my throat is so dry, and I feel so confoundedly weary just now —”

“That’s cider,” said he, pointing to the crock.

I did n’t wait for a more formal invitation, but carried it to my lips, and so held it for full a couple of minutes.

“Ye *wor* drouthy, — that’s a fact!” said he, peering into the low watermark of the vessel.

“You hav’ n’t got any more bread?” said I, appropriating his own.

“If I had n’t, ye’d not have got that so easy, lad!” said he, with a grin.

“And now for my mare; you see she’s a good one —”

“Good as if she belonged to a richer master!” said he, with a peculiar leer of the eye. “I know her well! knowed her a foal! Ah, Charry, Miss! do you forget the way to take off your saddle with your teeth?” and he patted the creature with a nearer approach to kindness than I believed he was capable of.

I will not dwell upon the little arts I employed to conciliate my friend Gabriel, nor stop to say how I managed to procure some Indian corn-meal for my horse, and the addition of a very tough piece of dried beef to my own meagre breakfast. I conclude the reader will be as eager to escape from his society as I was myself; nor had I ever thrown him into such unprofitable acquaintanceship, were there other means of explaining how first I wandered from the right path, and by what persuasions I was influenced in not returning to it.

If Gabriel's history was not very entertaining, it was at least short, so far as its catastrophe went. He was a Kentucky "bouuty man," who had taken into his head to fight a duel with a companion with whom he was returning from New York. He killed his antagonist, buried him, and was wending his way homeward with the watch and other property of the deceased, to restore to his friends, when he was arrested at Little Rock, and conveyed to jail. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death, but made his escape the night before the execution was to have taken place. His adventures from the Arkansas River till the time he found himself in Texas were exciting in a high degree, and, even with his own telling, not devoid of deep interest. Since his location in the One-star Republic, he had tried various things, but all had failed with him. His family, who followed him, died off by the dreadful intermittents of the bush, leaving him alone to doze through the remainder of existence between the half-consciousness of his fall and the stupid insensibility of debauch. There was but one theme could stir the dark embers of his nature; and when he had quitted *that*, the interest of life seemed to have passed away, and he relapsed into his dreamy indifference to both present and future.

How he contrived to eke out subsistence was difficult to conceive. To the tavern he had been almost the only customer, and in succession consumed the little stores his poor wife had managed to accumulate. He appeared to feel a kind of semi-consciousness that if "bears did not fall in his way" during the winter, it might go hard with him; and he pointed to four mounds of earth behind the log-hut, and said that "the biggest would soon be alongside of 'em."

As the heat of midday was too great to proceed in, I learned from him thus much of his own story, and some particulars of the road to Bexar, whither I had now resolved on proceeding, since, according to his opinion, that afforded me a far better chance of coming up with the expedition than by following their steps to Austin.

"Had you come a few hours earlier to-day," said he, "you could have joined company with a Friar who is traveling to Bexar; but you'll easily overtake him, as he travels with a little wagon and a sick woman. They are making a

pilgrimage to the saints there for her health. They have two lazy mules and a half-breed driver that won't work miracles on the roads, whatever the Virgin may after! You'll soon come up with them, if Charry's like what she used to be."

This intelligence was far from displeasing to me. I longed for some companionship; and that of a Friar, if not very promising as to amusement, had at least the merit of safety, — no small charm in such a land as I then sojourned in. I learned besides that he was an Irishman who had come out as a missionary among the Choctaws, and that he was well versed in prairie life; that he spoke many of the Indian dialects, and knew the various trails of these pathless wilds like any trapper of them all.

Such a fellow-traveller would be indeed a prize; and as I saddled my mare to follow him, I felt lighter at heart than I had done for a long time previous. "And his name?" said I.

"It is half-Mexican by this. They call him Fra Miguel up at Bexar."

"Now then for Fra Miguel!" cried I, springing into my saddle; and with a frank "Good-bye," took the road to Bexar.

I rode along with a light heart, my way leading through a forest of tall beech and alder trees, whose stems were encircled by the twining tendrils of the "Liana," which oftentimes spanned the space overhead, and tempered the noonday sun by its delicious shade. Birds of gay plumage and strange note hopped from branch to branch, while hares and rabbits sat boldly on the grassy road, and scarcely cared to move at my approach. The crimson-winged bustard, the swallow-tailed woodpecker, with his snowy breast, and that most beautiful of all, the lazuli finch, whose color would shame the blue waters of the Adriatic, chirped and fluttered on every side. The wild squirrel, too, swung by his tail, and jerked himself from bough to bough, in all the confidence of unmolested liberty; while even the deer, timid without danger, stood and gazed at me as I went, doubtless congratulating themselves that they were not born to be beasts of burden.

There was so much novelty to me in all around that the monotonous character of the scene never wearied; for, although as far as human companionship was concerned, nothing could be more utterly solitary and desolate, yet the abundance of animal life, the bright tints of plumage, and the strange concert of sound, afforded an unceasing interest.

Occasionally I came upon the charred fragments of fire-wood, with other signs indicative of a bivouac, showing where some hunting-party had halted; but these, with a chance wheel-track, were all the evidence that travellers had ever passed that way. The instincts of the human heart are, after all, linked to companionship, and although it was but a few hours since I had parted with "mine host" of Brazos, I began to conceive a most anxious desire for the society of a fellow-traveller. I had pushed Charcoal for some time, in the hope of overtaking the Friar; but not only without success, but even without coming upon any recent tracks that should show where the party passed. I could not have mistaken the road, since there was but one through the forest; and at last I became uneasy lest I should not reach some place of shelter for the night, and obtain refreshment for myself and my horse. From the time that these thoughts crossed my mind, all relish for the scene and its strange associations departed. A scarlet jay might have perched upon my saddle-bow unmolested; a "whip-poor-will" might have chanted her note from my hat or my holsters unminded; the antlered stags did indeed graze me as they went, without my once remembering that I was the owner of one of "Colt's" "sharp bores," so intent I had grown upon the topic of personal safety. What if I had gone astray? What if I fell in with the Choctaws, who often came within a few miles of Austin? What if Charcoal fell lame, or even tired? What if— But why enumerate all the suspicions that, when chased away on one side, invariably came back on the other? There was not an incident, from a sprained ankle to actual starvation, that I did not rehearse; and, like that respected authority who spent his days speculating what he should do "if he met a white bear," I threw myself into so many critical situations and embarrassing

conjectures that my head ached with overtaxed ingenuity to escape from them.

Æsop's fables have much to answer for. The attributing the gift of speech to animals, by way of characterizing their generic qualities, takes a wondrous hold upon the mind; and as for me, I held "imaginary conversations" with everything that flew or bounded past. From the green lizard that scaled the shining cork-trees, to the lazy toad that flopped heavily into the water, I had a word for all, — ay, and thought they answered me, too.

Some, I fancied, chirped pleasantly and merrily, as though to say, "Go it, Con, my hearty; Charry has stride and wind for many a mile yet!" Some, with a wild scream, would seem to utter a cry of surprise at the pace, as if saying, "Ruffle my feathers if Con's not in a hurry!" An old owl, with a horseshoe wig, looked shocked at my impetuosity, and shook his wise head in grave rebuke; while a fat asthmatic frog nearly choked with emotion as I hurled the small pebbles into his bath of duck-weed. How strange would life be, reduced to such companionship! thought I. Would one gradually sink down to the level of this animal existence, such as it appears now, or would one elevate the inferior animal to some equality of intelligence?

The solitude which a short time previous had suggested — I know not now many! — bright imaginings, presented now the one sad, unvarying reflection, — desolation; and it had almost become a doubtful point whether I should not at once turn my horse's head and make for Upper Brazos and its gruff host of the log-house, rather than brave a night "al fresco" in the forest. It was just at the moment that this question became mooted in my mind that I perceived the faint track of a wheel on the short grass of the pathway. I dismounted and examined it closely, and soon discovered its counterpart on the other side of the road; and with a little further search I could detect the footmarks of two horses, evidently unshod.

Inspired with fresh courage by these signs, I spurred Charry to a sharper stride, and for above two hours rode on, each turning of the road suggesting the hope of coming up with the Friar, who evidently journeyed at a brisker pace

than I had anticipated. The sailor's adage says that "A stern chase is a long chase;" and so it is, whether it be on land or sea, — whether the pursuit be to overtake a flying Frenchman or Fortune!

The sun had sunk beneath the tops of the tall trees, and only streamed through, in chance lines of light, upon the road, when suddenly I found myself upon the verge of an abrupt descent, at the bottom of which ran a narrow but rapid river. These great fissures, by which the mountain streams descend to join the larger rivers, are very common in Texas and throughout the region which borders on the Rocky Mountains, and form one of the greatest impediments to travelling in these tracts.

As I gazed upon the steep descent, to have scrambled down which, even on foot, would have been dangerous and difficult enough, I remembered that I had passed, about half an hour before, a spot where the road "forked" off into two separate directions, and at once resumed my march to this place, where I had the satisfaction of perceiving that the grass was yet rising under the recent passage of a wagon. A short and sharp canter down a gentle slope brought me once more in sight of the stream and of what was far nearer to my hopes, the long looked-for party with the Friar.

The scene I now beheld was sufficiently striking for a picture. About fifty feet beneath where I stood, and on the bank of a boiling, foaming torrent, was a wagon, drawn by two large horses; a covering of canvas formed an awning overhead, and curtains of the same material closed the sides. A large, powerful-looking Mexican stood beating the stream with a great pole, while the Friar, with his robes tucked up so as to display a pair of enormous naked legs, assisted in this singular act of flagellation, from time to time addressing a hasty prayer to a small image which I perceived he had hung up against the canvas covering. The noise of the rushing water and the crashing sound of the sticks prevented my hearing the voices, which were most volubly exerted all the while, and which, by accustoming myself to the din, I at last perceived were used in exhorting the horses to courage. The animals, however, gave no token of returning confidence, nor showed the slightest inclination to

advance. On the contrary, whenever led forward a pace or two, they invariably sprang back with a bound that threatened to smash their tackle or upset the wagon; nor was it without much caressing and encouragement that they would stand quiet again. Meanwhile, the Friar's exertions were redoubled at every moment, and both his prayers and his thrashings became more animated. Indeed, it was curious to watch with what agility his bulky figure alternated from the work of beating the water to gesticulating before "the Virgin." Now, as I looked, a small corner of the canvas curtain was moved aside, and a hand appeared, which, even without the large straw fan it carried, might have been pronounced a female one. This, however, was speedily withdrawn on some observation from the Friar, and the curtain was closed rigidly as before.

All my conjectures as to this singular proceeding being in vain, I resolved to join the party, towards whom I perceived the road led by a slightly circuitous descent.

Cautiously wending my way down this slope, which grew steeper as I advanced, I had scarcely reached the river side when I was perceived by the party. Both the Friar and his follower ceased their performance on the instant, and cast their eyes upwards to the road with a glance that showed they were on "the look-out" for others. They even changed their position, to have a better view of the path, and seemed as if unable to persuade themselves that I could be alone. To my salutation, which I made by courteously removing my hat and bowing low, they offered no return, and looked — as I really believe they were — far too much surprised at my sudden appearance to afford me any signs of welcome. As I came nearer, I could see that the Friar made the circuit of the wagon, and, as if casually, examined the curtains; and then, satisfied "that all was right," took his station by the head of his beasts, and waited for my approach.

"Good day, Señor Caballero," said the Friar, in Spanish, while the Mexican looked at the lock of his long-barrelled rifle, and retired a couple of paces, with a gesture of guarded caution.

"Good evening, rather, Father," said I, in English. "I have ridden hard to come up with you, for the last twenty miles."

“From the States?” said the Friar, approaching me, but with no peculiar evidences of pleasure at hearing his native language.

“From your own country, Fra Miguel,” said I, boldly — “an Irishman.”

“And how are you travelling here?” said he, still preserving his previous air of caution and reserve.

“A mistake of the road!” said I, confidently; for already I had invented my last biographical sketch. “I was on the way to Austin, whither I had despatched my servants and baggage, when accidentally taking the turn to Upper Brazos instead of the lower one, I found myself some twenty miles off my track before I knew of it. I should have turned back when I discovered my error, but that I heard that a Friar, a countryman, too, had just set out towards Bexar. This intelligence at once determined me to continue my way, which I rejoice to find has been so far successful.”

To judge from the “Padre’s” face, the pleasure did not appear reciprocal. He looked at me and the wagon alternately, and then he cast his eyes towards the Mexican, who, understanding nothing of English, was evidently holding himself ready for any measures of a hostile character.

“Going to Austin,” at last said the Friar. “You are a merchant, then?”

“No,” said I, smiling superciliously; “I am a mere traveller for pleasure, my object being to make a tour of the prairies, and by some of the Mexican cities, before my return to Europe.”

“Heaven guide and protect you,” said he, fervently, with a wave of his hand like leave-taking. “This is not a land to wander in after nightfall. You are well mounted, and a good rider; push on, then, my son, and you’ll reach Bexar before the moon sets.”

“If that be your road, Father,” said I, “as speed is no object with me, I’d rather join company with you than proceed alone.”

“Ahem!” said he, looking confused, “I am going to Bexar, it is true, *Señhor*; but my journey is of the slowest: the wagon is heavy, and a sick companion whom it contains cannot travel fast. Go, then, ‘*con Dios!*’ and we may meet again at our journey’s end.”

“My mare has got quite enough of it,” said I, my desire to remain with him being trebled by his exertions to get rid of me. “When I overtook you, I was determining to dismount and spare my beast; so that *your* pace will not in the least inconvenience me.”

The Padre, instead of replying to me, addressed some words to the Mexican in Spanish, which, whatever they were, the other only answered by a sharp slap of his palm on the stock of his rifle, and a very significant glance at his girdle, where a large bowie-knife glittered in all the freedom of its unsheathed splendor. As if not noticing this pantomime, I drew forth my “Harper’s Ferry pistol” from the holster, and examined the priming, — a little bit of display I had the satisfaction to perceive was not thrown away on either the Friar or the layman. At a word from the former, however, the latter began once again his operations with the pole, the Friar resuming his place beside the cattle as if totally forgetful of my presence there.

“May I ask the object of this proceeding, Father?” said I, “which, unless it be a ‘devotional exercise,’ is perfectly unaccountable to me.”

The Padre looked at me without speaking; but the sly drollery of his eye showed that he would have had no objection to bandy a jest with me, were the time and place more fitting. “I perceive,” said he, at length, “that you have not journeyed in this land, or you would have known that at this season the streams abound with caymans and alligators, and that when the cattle have been once attacked by them, they have no courage to cross a river after. Their instinct, however, teaches them that beating the waters insures safety, and many a Mexican horse will not go knee-deep without this ceremony being performed.”

“I see that your cattle are unusually tired in the present case,” said I, “for you have been nigh half an hour here, to my own knowledge.”

“Look at that black mare’s fore-leg, and you’ll see why,” said he, pointing to a deep gash, which laid bare the white tendons for some inches in length, while a deep pool of blood flowed around the animal’s hoof.

A cry from the Mexican here broke in upon our colloquy, as, throwing down his pole, he seized his rifle, and dropped upon one knee in the attitude of defence.

“What is it, Sancho?” cried the Friar.

A few words of guttural followed, and the Padre said it was a large alligator that had just carried off a chiguire — a wild pig — under the water with him. This stream is a tributary of the Colloredo, along the banks of which these creatures’ eggs are found in thousands!

My blood ran cold at the horrid thought of being attacked by such animals, and I readily volunteered my assistance at the single-stick exercise of my companion.

The Friar accepted my offer without much graciousness, but rather as that of an unwelcome guest who could not be easily got rid of.

