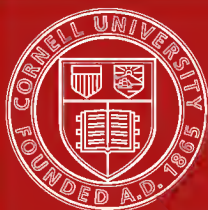


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Mr. O'Rourke sups in a state!

THE NOVELS OF CHARLES LEVER.

With an Introduction by Andrew Lang.

LUTTRELL OF ARRAN.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

PAUL GOSSLETT'S CONFESSIONS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY PHIZ.

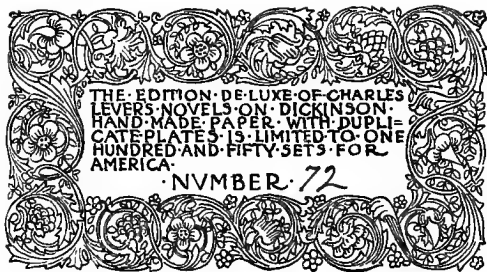
IN TWO VOLUMES.

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Mr. P. Rivers sups in state.

LUTTRELL OF ARRAN.

CHAPTER I.

A SUDDEN REVERSE.

“YOU see it is as well I acted with more forethought, and did not send for our Irish friend,” said Grenfell, as he sat at breakfast with Ladarelle. “We shall probably not want him.”

“I suspect not,” said the other; “the last news of her was unfavorable.”

Grenfell stole a look at the speaker, and, quick as the glance was, it bespoke a mingled aversion and contempt. The men who have arrived at middle age, either to form a poor opinion of their fellows or to feign it, — it is hard exactly to say which, — feel a sort of detestation for younger men who entertain the same sentiments. Whether it be that to have reached that cynicism has cost years of patient study and endurance, and that they are indignant at the pretension that would assume to have acquired the knowledge without the labor, or that, and this more probable, they do not fully trust their own heartlessness, — whatever the cause, I can answer for the effect; and that cold, ungenial man now looked upon his younger companion with a sense of little less than disgust.

“So that her death would not shock you?” said Grenfell, as he stirred his tea, without looking up.

“I don’t exactly say that. She’s a fine girl, young, and very good-looking.”

“Beautiful.”

“Well, beautiful, if you like, though I’ll show scores just as handsome, any day, in Rotten Row. But the question is, Does she, or does she not, stand between me and a fine estate? You yourself thought that opinion of Palmer’s went against me.”

“No doubt of it. Palmer concurs with the Attorney-General; indeed, he seems astonished that any other view was ever taken, as he says, ‘No provision of a will can override the law.’”

“Which means, that the old cove may marry; and his heir, if he have one, may inherit the property?”

“Just so.”

“And then, in the face of that, you ask me if her life is of such consequence to me?”

“No; I asked if her death would shock you?”

“I don’t well know what you mean by being shocked! If there was a suspicion abroad that I had poisoned her, to get her out of the way, then, perhaps, I might be shocked.”

“Shocked at the imputation, not the consequences?”

“I can’t split hairs; I never could. If you want subtle distinctions and fine-drawn differences, you must try elsewhere. What I want to say is simply this: I have no ill-will to the girl; I wish no harm to her; but I’d rather she was n’t *there*.”

“By *there*, you mean alive?”

“Well, if there was no other alternative, — yes, I do mean that. I’m certain old Wardle would never look out for another, and the great probability is, he’d not trouble us much longer; and, as Tom Scott says, by ‘nobbling’ one horse you get rid of the whole stable. You look greatly disgusted; are you horrified at my wickedness, Grenfell?”

“No,” said he, slowly. “I have met a fair number of young fellows like you, and who fancied that to know life they must begin at the lowest of it; the great misfortune was that they never emerged from it after.”

“That’s severe, I take it,” said Ladarelle, as he lighted a cigarette and began to smoke.

“Feigning virtue will never make a saint,” said Grenfell, rising from the table; “but mock wickedness will always

end by making a man a rascal!" He left the room as he spoke, and sauntered out to the lawn; and now Ladarelle began to commune with himself, — what notice he ought to take, if any, of these words. Were they to be considered as a moral sentiment of general application, or were they addressed specially to himself? The context favored this latter supposition; but then he uttered them as a great truth; he had a trick of that sort of "preaching," and the moment the word "preaching" crossed him, his anger was dispelled, for who minded preaching? Who was ever the better or the worse for it? Who ever deemed its denunciations personal?

The entrance of his man, Mr. Fisk, cut short his reflections, for he had sent him over to Dalradern, with his compliments, to ask after Mademoiselle O'Hara.

"Sir Within's respects, sir, the young lady is better; passed a good night, and seems much refreshed."

"Here's news, Grenfell," cried Ladarelle, opening the window, and calling out to Grenfell, — "here's news; she has had a good night, and is better."

Grenfell, however, had just received his letters from the post, and was already too deeply engrossed by one of them to mind him.

"I say, come here, and listen to the bulletin," cried Ladarelle, again; but Grenfell, without deigning the slightest notice to his words, thrust his letters into his pocket and walked hastily away.

The letter he had opened was from Vyner, and even in the first few lines had so far engaged his interest that, to read it undisturbed, he set out to gain a little summer-house on a small island, — a spot to which Ladarelle could not follow, as there was but one boat on the lake.

Having reached his sanctuary, he took forth the epistle, which, from Vyner, was an unusually long one, and began to read. It is not necessary that I should ask the reader's attention to the whole of it. It opened by an apology for not having written before: —

"I am ashamed to think, my dear Grenfell, how many of your questions remain unanswered; but as the Cardinal's private secretary wrote to express the grief his Eminence felt at being obliged to die

instead of dine out, so I must ask your patience for not replying to you, as I was occupied in being ruined. It is a big word, George, but not too big for the fact. When I gave up politics, for want of something to do, I took up speculation. A very clever rascal — I only found out the rascality later — with whom I made acquaintance at Genoa, induced me to make some railroad ventures, which all turned out successes. From these he led me on to others of a larger kind in Sardinia, and ultimately in Morocco. A great London banking firm was associated with the enterprise, which, of course, gave the air of stability to the operations, and as there was nothing unfair, — nothing gambling in the scheme, — nothing, in fact, that passed the limits of legitimate commercial enterprise, at the same time that there was everything to interest and amuse, I entered into it with all that ardor for which more than once your prudent temperament has rebuked me. I have no patience to go over the story; besides that the catastrophe tells it all. The original tempter — his name is Gennet — has fled, the great bankers have failed, and I am — I have ascertained — engaged to the full amount of all I have in the world, — that is, nothing remains to us but my wife's settlement to live on. A great blow this; I am staggering under it still. It was precisely the sort of misfortune I had thought myself exempt from, because I never cared much about money-getting; I was richer than I really needed to be; but, as the Spanish proverb says, 'The devil never goes out to fish with only one sort of bait in his boat.' I imagined I was going to be a great philanthropist. If I was to get lead from the Moors, I was to give them civilization, culture, Heaven knows what cravings after good things here and hereafter. Don't laugh, George; I give you my word of honor I believed it. Mr. Ridley Gennet was a great artist, and from the hour he waved his wand over me, I never really awoke 'till I was beggared.' Now, I do believe that you yourself, with all the craft you boast of, would not have come scathless out of his hands. These fellows are consummately clever, and in nothing more than in the quick reading of the characters they are placed in contact with. You can answer for it that I never was a gambler. I have played, it is true; but with no zest, no passion for play. That man, however, knew more of me than I did of myself; he detected a sort of combative spirit in my nature, which gives results very much like the love of play. It prompts to a rash self-confidence and a dogged resolution not to be beaten, — no matter how heavy the odds against one. I say, he saw this, and he determined to make use of it. There was a time at which, at the loss of about twenty-eight or thirty thousand pounds, I might have freed myself of every liability; and, indeed, I was more than half inclined to do it; but the devil, in this fellow's shape, hinted something about being poor-spirited and craven-hearted; said

something about men who bore reverses ill, and only spread canvas when the wind was all astern; and that, in fact, the people who carried the day in life were exactly those who never would accept defeat. All he said met a ready concurrence from my own heart, and in I went after my thirty thousand, which soon became eighty. Even then I might have escaped — a heavy loser, of course, but not crushed — but he persuaded me that the concern was the finest enterprise in Europe, if emancipated from the influence of two powerful shareholders, — men who, since they had joined us, had gone deeply into other speculations, whose prospects would be severely damaged by our success. One of these was La Marque, the Parisian banker, and a great promoter of the ‘Crédit Mobilier;’ the other an English contractor, whose name I may mention one of these days. They were, he said, to be bought out, and then I should stand the representative of four-sixths of the whole scheme. It reads like infatuation now that I go calmly over it; but I acceded. I commissioned Gennet to treat with these gentlemen, and gave him blank bills for the sums. For a while all seemed to go on admirably. La Marque himself wrote to me; he owned that his other engagements had not left him at liberty to develop the resources of our company to their full extent, and confessed that there were certain changes in the management that must lead to great advantage. With, however, what I thought at the time a most scrupulous honor — though I have come to regard it differently — he hinted to me that while Mr. G.’s position in the ‘world of affairs’ was above all reproach, the fact of his conducting a transaction with blank acceptances was totally irregular and unbusiness-like; and he begged that I would give him a regular assurance, in a form which he enclosed, that I authenticated G.’s position, and held myself responsible, not merely commercially, but as a man of honor, for such engagements as he should contract in my name. I made a few trifling alterations in the wording of this document, and sent it back with my signature. On the third day after, the London firm smashed, and on the evening that brought the news, G. bolted, and has not since been heard of.

“Since then, every post from England tells me of the steps at which my ruin advances. M’Kinlay, overwhelmed, I think, by the calamity, acts with less than his usual skill and cleverness, and continues to insist that I must repudiate my pledge to La Marque, whom he calls a confederate of G.’s; and, indeed, declares that if we could but secure that fellow’s person, we should save a large remnant of the property. These are *his* views, they are not *mine*. I cannot consent to remedy my folly at the cost of my character; and though I have agreed to the despatch of detectives to hunt Gennet, I will not, by any act, dishonor my signature.

“It is at this stage we are now arrived. Whether I am to be drowned by six inches over my head, or six fathoms, is not, I opine, a matter of much consequence. Lady Vyner knows it all, and bears it — as I knew she would — nobly. Her sister, too, has shown a fine spirit. Of course, we have kept so much as we can of the calamity from Mrs. Courtenay; but she is more cast down than any of us. As for Ada, she sustains us all. I declare I never knew her before; and if it were not that the misfortune is to outlive me, I’d say it was worth being ruined to discover the boundless wealth of that dear girl’s heart.

“I could fill pages with little traits of her thoughtful affection, evincing a nature, too, that actually seemed to need an opportunity to show it was made for higher and better things than to float along in an existence of indulgence.

“You are impatient to hear how practical we can be. Well, you shall. We have given up our grand palazzo, and retired to a little place about twenty miles off, near Chiavari, where we found a small house to suit us. We have sent off all the servants but three. I doubt if we shall keep old Morris; but it would break his heart to discharge him with the others. I have despatched my horses to be sold at Turin. The yacht is already disposed of. Not had this in four days, besides writing about a hundred and fifty letters, and giving solemn audience to Mr. Pengrove, of the detective force, come out specially to get from me a detailed description of G.’s person, size, dress, accent, and manner. I vow, till I had the happiness of this gentleman’s acquaintance, I never knew by how many traits a human creature could stamp his identity; and the way in which he pushed his inquiries, as to matters utterly beyond the realms of all the disguises in use, perfectly amazed me.

“It was not, perhaps, a very acute question of mine, but it dropped from me half unawares. I asked whether he thought G. had fled to America or Australia? He replied, ‘No, sir; he never had any dealings in those parts. When men bolt, they always follow out some previously formed train of circumstances; he’ll be somewhere on the African coast, — I mean to try Tunis first.’

“You know now, my dear George, more than I really meant to inflict on you of our sad story; but I was, in a measure, forced into some details. First of all, one’s friends ought to be in a position to contradict false rumors, and I take it I shall have my share of them; and secondly, you may be disturbed in your present tenure, for the Cottage as well as the Castle goes to the creditors.

“There is, however, a small business matter in which I must have more than your advice, — I want your assistance. You may remember that when, on our Irish tour — ”

There comes here a sudden stop in the epistle, but, in a hurried and tremulous hand, it was continued in this wise:

“Another great misfortune! Poor Luttrell’s boy is drowned. My wife has just brought me the news. A despatch boat of the Italian navy has picked up at sea an English sailor on a spar, the last of the crew of the American barque ‘Squash’ commanded by a Captain Dodge. They were attacked by pirates when becalmed off the Riff coast, and the Yankee, rather than surrender, blew up the ship. This man remembers nothing beyond his having leaped overboard when he saw the captain make for the magazine. He was, indeed, insensible when picked up, and even yet his mind wanders at times. So far as his memory would serve he has given the names of the crew, and Luttrell’s was amongst them. He said, too, that he saw Luttrell leaning against the tiller-wheel, with his arms folded, and looking quite calm, a moment or two before he jumped over. The Italian steamer returned to the place and cruised for an entire day, in the hope of saving some others; but none were met with, and there is no doubt now that all have perished. I thought only an hour ago that there were few in the world as unfortunate as myself; but what is my loss compared to poor Luttrell’s? If I could possibly leave home now, it would be to go over to Ireland and see him. What is to be done? Can you suggest how the tidings could be best broken to him? Would you undertake the charge yourself? If not, M’Kinlay must do it, though, for every reason, I prefer you. I know, my dear Grenfell, that you shrink from painful tasks; but it is *my* load that you will bear on this occasion, and it will strengthen you to remember that you are helping a friend in his great hour of need.

“If you are not able to go, and if M’Kinlay should also be unable, forward the enclosed note to Luttrell.

* * * * *

“I have just seen Martin the sailor. He has told us much about young Luttrell, who seems to have been actually beloved on board the ship; his courage, his daring, his coolness, and his unfailing high spirits made him the idol of the crew; and this fellow declares that if Luttrell’s advice had been listened to, the ship might have been saved; but the American lost his head; and, swearing that the pirates should never have a timber of her, rushed below with a port-fire, and blew her up.

“I am ashamed to send off all the selfish details that fill the first part of this letter. In the presence of such a calamity as poor Luttrell’s, *my* sorrows are unworthy and contemptible; but who knows when I could have the time or the temper to go over my dreary story again? and so you shall have it as it is.

“I am not able to read over again what I have written, so that I am not sure whether I have answered all your questions. You will, I am sure, however, forgive me much at such a season; for, though I had screwed up my courage to meet my own disasters, I had no reserve of pluck to sustain me against this sad blow of Luttrell’s.

“Do not refuse me, George, this service; believe me, the poor fellow is worthy of all the kindness you can show him. More than ever do I feel the wrong that we have done him, since every misfortune of his life has sprung from it.

“I must finish to catch the post. I enclose you a copy of the deposition of the seaman made before the consul at Genoa, and an extract from the log of ‘St. Genaro,’ the despatch-boat. If you do go, — indeed, in any case, — write to me at once, and believe me, meanwhile,

“Your faithful friend,

“GERVAIS VYNER.

“A hearty letter from Lord B. has just come. He says he has just heard of my smash, and offers me my choice of something at home or in the colonies. Time enough to think of this; for the present, we shall have to live on about what my guardian allowed me at Christchurch. Address, La Boschetta, Chiavari.”

With much attention, Grenfell read this letter to the end, and then re-read it, pondering over certain parts as he went. He was certainly grieved as much as he could well be for any misfortune not his own. He liked Vyner as well as it was in his nature to like any one; not, indeed, for his fine and generous qualities, his manliness, and his rectitude, — he liked him, simply, because Vyner had always stood by *him*. Vyner had sustained him in a set which but for such backing would not have accepted him. Every real step he had made in life had been through Vyner’s assistance; and he well knew that Vyner’s fall would extend its influence to himself.

Then came other thoughts: “He should have to leave the Cottage, where he had hoped to have remained for the cock-shooting at least, perhaps a little longer; for this same Welsh life was a great economy. He was living for ‘half nothing;’ no rent, no servants to pay; horses, a fine garden, a capital cellar, all at his disposal. What, in the name of all foolishness, could make a man with double what he

could spend, go and squander the whole in rotten speculations? He says he did not want to be richer! What *did* he want, then? How can men tell such lies to their own hearts? Of course, he intended to be a Rothschild. It was some cursed thirsting after enormous wealth, — wealth that was to be expressed by figures on paper, — not felt, not enjoyed, not lived up to; *that* was the whole sum and substance of the temptation. Why not have the honesty to say so? As for Luttrell, I only wonder how he can think of *him* at such a time. I imagine if I were to awake some fine morning to hear I was a beggar, I should take all the other calamities of the world with a marvellous philosophy. It's a bore to be drowned, particularly if there was no necessity for it; but the young fellow had the worst of it; and, after all, I don't see that he had a great deal to live for. The island that formed his patrimony would certainly never have seduced *me* into any inordinate desire to prolong existence. Perhaps I must go there. It is a great annoyance. I hate the journey, and I hate the duty; but to refuse would, in all probability, offend Vyner. It is just the time men are unreasonably thin-skinned, fancying that all the world has turned its back on them, because they have sent off their French cook. Vulgar nonsense! Perhaps Vyner would not take that view; but his women would, I'm certain!"

Now, Mr. Grenfell knew nothing whatever of "the women" in question, and that was the precise reason that he included them in his spiteful censure.

"And then to fancy that his money-seeking was philanthropy! Was there ever delusion like it? Your virtuous people have such a habit of self-esteem; they actually believe the thing must be right, because they do it."

Grumbling sorely over that "Irish journey," he sauntered back to the house, in the porch of which Ladarelle was standing, with an open letter in his hand.

"I say," cried he, "here's a go! The house of Fletcher and Davis, one of the oldest in London, smashed!"

"I know it," said Grenfell, dryly.

"Then you know, perhaps, how your friend, Sir Gervais Vyner, has let them in for nigh a quarter of a million?"

“I know more; for I know that *you* know nothing of the matter; but, to turn to something that concerns ourselves. I must start by the mail-train to-night for Holyhead.”

“Which means, that I must evacuate my quarters. I must say, you give your tenants short notice to quit.”

“Stay, by all means. All I have to say is, that I cannot keep you company. Rickards will take excellent care of you till I come back.”

“Which will be — ”

“I can’t name the day; but I hope it will be an early one.”

“A mysterious journey, — eh?”

“No; but one which it is not at all necessary to take an opinion upon.”

“By the way, you wrote the letter to that Irish fellow the other evening, — what did you do with it?”

“It is on the writing-table.”

“And I suppose I may make use of it if I need it?”

“Yes; it’s a matter that other things have driven out of my head; but the letter is yours, if you wish.”

“And you will stand by me, I hope, if I get into a scrape?”

“Don’t count on me. I’m a capricious fellow; and whenever a thing does not come off at once, I never can vouch for the spirit in which I may resume it.”

“That’s hearty, at all events!”

“No; but it is unmistakable. — Rickards, hurry the cook, if he will let you, and order the carriage for eight o’clock.”

“And posters for me at Dalradern at the same hour,” said Ladarelle. “Grog is worth a score of such fellows!” muttered he below his breath, as he strolled to his room. “Grog would never strike out a plan, and leave a man in the lurch afterwards.”

When they met at dinner, Grenfell took care that the conversation should be as general as possible, never by a chance alluding to any subject of personal interest to either of them; and as the clock struck eight, and he heard the tramp of the horses on the gravel, he arose and said, —

“Don’t forget to say all sorts of things to Sir Within for

me, and to mademoiselle, too, when she is visible. Good-bye, and 'bonne chance'!"

"Good-bye! I wish I could have had a few words with you before you started. I wish you would have told me something more definite about the plan. I wish—" What he continued to wish is not on record; for once more Grenfell uttered his good-bye, and the next moment he was gone.

CHAPTER II.

THE DARK TIDINGS.

It was a dull, lowering October day, sky and sea alike lead-colored, when the boat that bore Grenfell rounded the southern point of Arran, and opened a view of the island in all its extent. His first visit there had not left any favorable impressions of the place, though then he saw it in sunshine, warm-tinted and softened; now all was hard, bleak, and cold, and the ruined Abbey stood out amongst the leafless trees, like the ghost of a civilization long dead and buried.

"There he is himself, sir," said the steersman to Grenfell, as he pointed to a lone rock on the extreme point of a promontory. "You'd think he was paid for sitting there, to watch all the vessels that go north about to America. He can see every craft, big and little, from Belmullet to Craig's Creek."

"And does he stay there in bad weather?"

"I never missed him any day I came by, no matter how hard it blew."

"It's a dreary lookout."

"Indeed, it is, your honor! more by token, when a man has a comfortable house and a good fire to sit at, as Mr. Luttrell has, if he liked it."

"Perhaps he thinks it less lonely to sit there than to mope over his hearth by himself. He lives all alone, I believe?"

"He does, sir; and it's what he likes best. I took a party of gentlemen over from Westport last summer; they wanted to see the curiosities of the place, and look at the old Abbey, and they sent me up with a civil message, to say what they came for and who they were, — one of them was a lord, — and what d'ye think, sir? instead of being glad to see the

face of a Christian, and having a bit of chat over what was doing beyond there, he says to me, 'Barny Moore,' says he, 'you want to make a trade,' says he, 'of showing me like a wild baste; but I know your landlord, Mr. Creagh, and as sure as my name 's John Luttrell,' says he, 'I'll have you turned out of your holding; so just take your friends and yourself off the way you came!' And when I told the gentlemen, they took it mighty good-humored, and only said, 'After all, if a man comes so far as this for quietness, it's rather hard if he would n't get it;' and we went off that night. I am tellin' your honor this," added he, in a low confidential tone, "because if he asks you what boat you came in, you would say it was Tom M'Caffray's, — that man there in the bow, — he's from Kilrush, and a stranger; for I would n't put it past John Luttrell to do me harm, if I crossed him."

"But is he not certain to see you?"

"No, sir; not if I don't put myself in his way. Look now, sir; look, he's off already!"

"Off! where to?"

"To the Abbey, sir, to bar himself in. He saw that the yawl was coming in to anchor, and he'll not look back now till he's safe in his own four walls."

"But I want to speak with him; is it likely he'll refuse to see me?"

"Just as like as not. May I never! But he's running, he's so afeared we'll be on shore before he gets in."

At no time had Grenfell been much in love with his mission; he was still less pleased with it as he stepped on the shingly shore, and turned to make his way over a pathless waste to the Abbey. He walked slowly along, conning over to himself what he had got to do, and how he should do it. "At all events," thought he, "the more boorish and uncivil the man may be, the less demand will be made on me for courtesy. If he be rude, I can be concise; nor need I have any hesitation in showing him that I never volunteered for this expedition, and only came because Vyner begged me to come."

He had seen no one since he left the boat, and even now, as he arrived close to the house, no living thing appeared.

He walked round on one side. It was the side of the old aisle, and there was no door to be found. He turned to the other, and found his progress interrupted by a low hedge, looking over which he fancied he saw an entrance. He stepped, therefore, over the enclosure; but, by the noise of the smashing twigs, a dog was aroused, a wild wolfish-looking animal, that rushed fiercely at him with a yelping bark. Grenfell stood fast, and prepared to defend himself with a strong stick, when, suddenly, a harsh voice cried out, "Morrah! come back, Morrah! Don't strike the dog, sir, or he'll tear you to pieces!" And then a tall, thin man, much stooped in the shoulders, and miserably dressed, came forward, and motioned the dog to retire.

"Is he savage?" said Grenfell.

"Not savage enough to keep off intruders, it seems," was the uncourteous reply. "Is your business with me, sir?"

"If I speak to Mr. Luttrell, it is."

"My name is Luttrell."

"Mine is Grenfell; but I may be better known as the friend of your old friend, Sir Gervais Vyner."

"Grenfell, — Grenfell! to be sure. I know the name; we all know it," said Luttrell, with a sort of sneer. "Is Vyner come, — is he with you?"

"No, sir," said Grenfell, smarting under the sting of what he felt to be an insult. "It is because he could not come that he asked me to see you."

Luttrell made no reply, but stood waiting for the other to continue.

"I have come on a gloomy errand, Mr. Luttrell, and wish you would prepare yourself to hear very, very sad news."

"What do you call prepare?" cried Luttrell, in a voice almost a shriek. "I know of nothing that prepares a man for misfortune except its frequency," muttered he, in a low tone. "What is it? Is it of Harry, — of my boy?"

Grenfell nodded.

"Wait," said Luttrell, pressing his hand over his brow. "Let me go in. No, sir; I can walk without help." He grasped the door-post as he spoke, and, stumbling onward, clutching the different objects as he went, gained a chair

and sank into it. "Tell me now," said he, in a faint whisper.

"Be calm, Mr. Luttrell," said Grenfell, gently. "I have no need to say, take courage."

Luttrell stared vacantly at him, his lips parted, and his whole expression that of one who was stunned and overcome. "Go on," said he, in a hoarse whisper, — "go on."

"Compose yourself first," said Grenfell.

"Is Harry — is he dead?"

Grenfell made a faint motion of his head.

"There — leave me — let me be alone!" said Luttrell, pointing to the door; and his words were spoken in a stern and imperative tone.

Grenfell waited for a few seconds, and then withdrew noiselessly, and strolled out into the open air.

"A dreary mission and a drearier spot!" said he, as he sauntered along, turning his eyes from the mountain, half hid in mist, to the lowering sea. "One would imagine that he who lived here must have little love of life, or little care how others fared in it." After walking about a mile he sat down on a rock and began to consider what further remained for him to do. To pass an entire day in such a place was more than he could endure; and perhaps, more than Luttrell himself would wish. Vyner's letter and its enclosures would convey all the sorrowful details of the calamity; and, doubtless, Luttrell was a man who would not expose his grief, but give free course to it in secret.

He resolved, therefore, that he would go back to the Abbey, and, with a few lines from himself, enclose these papers to Luttrell, stating that he would not leave the island, which it was his intention to have done that night, if Luttrell desired to see him again, and at the same time adding that he possessed no other information but such as these documents afforded. This he did, to avoid, if it could be, another interview. In a word, he wanted to finish all that he had to do as speedily as might be, and yet omit nothing that decorum required. He knew how Vyner would question and cross-question him, besides; and he desired that as he had taken the trouble to come, he should appear to have acquitted himself creditably.

“The room is ready for your honor,” said Molly, as Grenfell appeared again at the door; “and the master said that your honor would order dinner whenever you liked, and excuse himself to-day, by rayson he was n’t well.”

“Thank you,” said Grenfell; “I will step in and write a few words to your master, and you will bring me the answer here.”

Half a dozen lines sufficed for all he had to say, and, enclosing the other documents, he sat down to await the reply.

In less time than he expected, the door opened. Luttrell himself appeared. Wretched and careworn as he seemed before, a dozen years of suffering could scarcely have made more impress on him than that last hour: clammy sweat covered his brow and cheeks, and his white lips trembled unceasingly; but in nothing was the change greater than in his eye. All its proud defiance was gone; the fierce energy had passed away, and its look was now one of weariness and exhaustion. He sat down in front of Grenfell, and for a minute or so did not speak. At last he said, —

“You will wish to get back — to get away from this dreary place; do not remain on *my* account. Tell Vyner I will try and go over to him. He ‘s in Wales, is n’t he?”

“No; he is in Italy.”

“In Italy! I cannot go so far,” said he, with a deep sigh.

“I was not willing to obtrude other sorrows in the midst of your own heavier one; but you will hear the news in a day or two, perhaps, that our poor friend Vyner has lost everything he had in the world.”

“Is his daughter dead?” gasped out Luttrell, eagerly.

“No; I spoke of his fortune: his whole estate is gone.”

“That is sad, very sad,” sighed Luttrell; “but not the saddest! One may be poor and hope; one may be sick, almost to the last, and hope; one may be bereft of friends, and yet think that better days will come; but to be childless — to be robbed of that which was to have treasured your memory when you passed away, and think lovingly on you years after you were dust, — this is the great, the great

affliction!" As he spoke, the large tears rolled down his face, and his lank cheeks trembled. "None will know this better than Vyner," said he, after a pause.

"You do him no more than justice; he thought little of his own misfortune in presence of yours."

"It was like him."

"May I read you his own words?"

"No; it is enough that I know his heart. Go back, and say I thank him. It was thoughtful of him at such a time to remember me; few but himself could have done it!" He paused for a few seconds, and then in a stronger, fuller voice continued: "Tell him to send this sailor to me; he may live here, if he will. At all events, he shall not want, wherever he goes. Vyner will ask you how I bore this blow, sir. I trust to you to say the strict truth, that I bore it well. Is that not so?" Grenfell bowed his head slightly. "Bore it," continued Luttrell, "as a man may, who now can defy Fortune, and say, 'See, you have laid your heaviest load on me, and I do not even stagger under it!' Remember, sir, that you tell Vyner that. That I listened to the darkest news a man can hear, and never so much as winced. There is no fever in that hand, sir; touch it!"

"I had rather that you would not make this effort, Mr. Luttrell. I had far rather tell my friend that your grief was taking the course that nature meant for it."

"Sir!" said Luttrell, haughtily, "it is not to-day that misfortune and I have made acquaintance. Sorrow has sat at my hearthstone — my one companion — for many a year! I knew no other guest, and had any other come, I would not have known how to receive him! Look around you and say, is it to such a place as this a man comes if the world has gone well with him?"

"It is not yet too late —"

"Yes, it is, sir; far too late," broke in Luttrell, impatiently. "I know my own nature better than you ever knew it. Forgive me, if I am rude. Misery has robbed me of all, — even the manners of a gentleman. It would be only a mockery to offer you such hospitality as I have here; but if, before leaving, you would eat something —"

Grenfell made some hurried excuses; he had eaten on

board the boat, — he was not hungry, — and he was impatient to get back in time for the morning mail.

“Of course, no one could wish to tarry here,” said Luttrell. “Tell Vyner I will try and write to him, if not soon, when I can. Good-bye, sir! You have been very kind to me, and I thank you.”

Grenfell shook his cold hand and turned away, more moved, perhaps, than if he had witnessed a greater show of sorrow. Scarcely, however, had he closed the door after him, than a dull heavy sound startled him. He opened the door softly, and saw that Luttrell had fallen on the ground, and with his hands over his face lay sobbing in all the bitterness of intense grief. Grenfell retired noiselessly and unseen. It was a sorrow that none should witness; and, worldling as he was, he felt it. He stopped twice on his way down to the shore, uncertain whether he ought not to go back, and try to comfort that desolate man. But how comfort him? How speak of hope to one who mocked all hope, and actually seemed to cling to his misery?

“They cry out against the worldling, and rail at his egotism, and the rest of it,” muttered he; “but the selfishness that withdraws from all contact with others is a hundred times worse! Had that man lived in town, and had his club to stroll down to, the morning papers would have shown him that he was not more unlucky than his fellows, and that a large proportion of his acquaintances carried crape on their hats, whether they had sorrow in their hearts or not.”

It was with a mind relieved that he reached Holyhead the next day, and set out for the Cottage. Vyner had begged him to secure certain papers and letters of his that were there; and for this purpose he turned off on his way to town to visit Dinasllyn for the last time.

“The young gentleman went away the night you left, sir,” said Riekards, without being questioned; “but he came over this morning to ask if you had returned.”

“What news of the young lady who was so ill at Dalraderen?”

“Out of danger, sir. The London doctor was the saving of her life, sir; he has ordered her to the sea-side as soon

as she is fit to move, and Sir Within sent off Carter yesterday to Milford Haven, to take the handsomest house he can find there, and never think of the cost."

"Rich men can do these things, Rickards!"

"Yes, sir. Sir Within and my master haven't to ask what's the price when an article strikes their fancy."

Greenfell looked to see if the remark was intended to explode a mine, or a mere chance shot. The stolid face of the butler reassured him in an instant, and he said, "I shall want candles in the library, and you will call me to-morrow early, — say seven."

When Grenfell had covered the library table with papers and parchments innumerable, title-deeds of centuries old, and grants from the Crown to Vyner's ancestors in different reigns, he could not restrain a passionate invective against the man who had, out of mere levity, forfeited a noble fortune.

Contemptible as young Ladarelle was, — mean, low-lived, and vulgar, — the fellow's ambition to be rich, the desire to have the power that wealth confers, raised him in Grenfell's esteem above "that weak-minded enthusiast" — so he called him — who must needs beggar himself because he had nothing to do.

He emptied drawer after drawer, burning, as Vyner had bade him, rolls of letters, parliamentary papers, and such-like, till, in tossing over heaps of rubbish, he came upon a piece of stout cardboard and on turning it about saw the sketch Vyner had made of the Irish peasant child in Donegal. Who was it so like? Surely he knew that expression, the peculiar look of the eyes, sad and thoughtful, and yet defiant? He went over in his mind one after another of those town-bred beauties he had met in the season, when suddenly he exclaimed, "What a fool I have been all this time! It is the girl at Dalradern, the 'ward,'" — here he laughed in derision, — "the 'ward' of Sir Within Wardle. Ay, and she knew *me*, too, I could swear. All her evasive answers about Ireland show it." He turned hastily to Vyner's letter, and surmised that it was to this very point he was coming, when the news of young Luttrell's death was brought him. "What can be her position now, and how came she beneath

that old man's roof? With what craft and what boldness she played her game! The girl who has head enough for that has cleverness to know that I am not a man to be despised. She should have made me her friend at once. Who could counsel her so well, or tell her the shoals and quicksands before her? She ought to have done this, and she shall too. I will go over to-morrow to Dalradern; I will take her this sketch; we shall see if it will not be a bond of friendship between us."

When, true to the pledge he had made with himself, he went over to Dalradern the next morning, it was to discover that Sir Within and his ward had taken their departure two hours before. The servants were busily engaged in dismantling the rooms, and preparing to close the Castle against all visitors.

To his inquiries, ingenious enough, he could get no satisfactory answer as to the direction they had gone, or to what time their absence might be protracted; and Grenfell, disappointed and baffled, returned to the Cottage to pass his last evening, ere he quitted it forever.

CHAPTER III.

THE SANDS AT SUNSET.

TOWARDS the close of a day in the late autumn, when the declining sun was throwing a long column of golden light over the sea, a little group was gathered on the shore at Ostend,— the last, it seemed, of all the summer visitors who had repaired there for the season. The group consisted of a young girl, whose attitude, as she lay reclined in a bath-chair, bespoke extreme debility, and an old man who stood at her side, directing her attention, as his gestures indicated, to different objects in the landscape.

Two servants in livery, and a somewhat demurely dressed maid, stood at a little distance off, in deferential attendance on the others.

Greatly changed, indeed, paler and thinner, with dark circles round the eyes, and a faint hectic spot on each cheek, Kate O'Hara looked even more beautiful than ever; the extreme delicacy of every lineament, the faultless regularity of outline, were as conspicuous now as before was that brightness which she derived from expression. If her eyes had no longer their look of haughty and defiant meaning, they seemed to have acquired a greater depth of color and an expression of intense softness, and her lips, so ready once to curl into mockery at a moment, now appeared as if they faintly stirred with a smile, as some fancy crossed her.

She was dressed in deep mourning, which heightened still more the statue-like character of her features. What a contrast to this placid loveliness was the careworn, feverish look of the old man at her side! Sir Within had aged by years within a few weeks, and in the anxious expression of

his face, and his quick, uneasy glances around him, might be read the fretful conflict of hope and fear within him.

While he continued to speak, and describe the features of the scene before them, though she smiled at times, or assented by a slight gesture of the head, her mind was wandering — far, far away — to other thoughts and other places, and her fingers played feverishly with a letter which she opened and closed up again time after time.

“I am afraid, *ma mie*,” said he, with a tone of half reproach, “that your letter there has usurped all your interest, and my eloquence as cicerone gone quite for nothing.”

“No, Gardy, I heard you with much pleasure. What did you say that rock was called?”

“That rock, *mademoiselle*,” said he, dryly, “is a wreck, and I was vain enough to have believed that my narrative of the incident had moved you.”

“I am so weak, Gardy, so very weak,” said she, plaintively, as she laid her hand on the back of his, “that I follow anything with difficulty.”

“My sweet child, how cruel of me to forget it! Are we lingering too long on these sands?”

“Oh, no; let us stay here some time longer. I want to see the sun go down; it is so long since I saw a sunset.”

He drew her shawl around her carefully, and sheltered her with his umbrella against the scarcely breathing wind.

“How kind you are, how good,” said she, softly; and then, with a playful lightness, added, “how courtier-like too!”

“Why courtier-like, *ma mie*?” said he.

“Is it not like a courtier,” said she, “to treat a peasant-girl as if she were a princess? You would not even ask me when I saw my last sunset, lest I should have to tell you that it was as I stood barefooted on the beach, the tangled seaweed dripping over me.”

“How can you like to pain me by talking of these things?”

“But we must talk of them, Gardy. You know we think of them; and this letter, — this letter,” said she, tapping it with her finger impatiently, “must be answered one day.”

“And there is but one answer to give, Kate,” said he,



The Friends at Sun set



... 'undo ad ...

sharply. "I will not consent. He who now assumes the uncle —"

"He *is* my uncle, sir," said she, haughtily. "It is scarcely generous to deny me whatever good blood I can lay claim to."

"My child, my dear child, if you but knew how I love whatever loves you, you would not have uttered this reproach."

"My mother's sister's husband is surely my uncle," said she, coldly, and not heeding his protestation. "I never heard that a *mésalliance* could cancel the ties of kindred."

"None ever said so, Kate."

"You said as much, sir; you said, 'assumes the uncle'!"

"I meant in a different sense, my dear child. I meant that he wanted to impose an authority which mere relationship would not give him."

"Read his letter again, sir, — pray read it."

"No, my child; it has given me too much pain already."

"I think you are not just to him, Gardy," said she, caressingly. "May I read it to you? Well, a part of it?"

"Once more, no, Kate. His argument is, that as he is now childless he has the right to claim your love and affection, to replace what he has lost; that, as your nearest of kin, you cannot refuse him; and that, if you do, — mark the insinuation, — the reasons will be, perhaps, based on considerations apart from all affection."

"I think he had the right to say that," said she, firmly.

"There was one thing, however, he had no right to say," said the old man, haughtily; "that to continue to reside under my roof was to challenge the opinion of a world never slow to be censorious."

"And there, again, I think he was not wrong."

"Then you love me no longer, Kate!" said he, with intense emotion.

"Not love you, — not love you! Then, what do I love? Is it nothing to know that every happiness I have I owe to you, — that all the enjoyment of a life more bright than a fairy tale comes from you; that from your generous indulgence I have learned to think mere existence something like ecstasy, and awake each day as to a *fête*?"

“Say on, dearest, say on; your words thrill through me like a gentle music.”

“He does not offer me these; but he says, ‘Come to what you shall call your home, and never blush to say so.’”

“It is too insolent!”

“He says, ‘As my daughter by adoption, you shall bear my name.’ I am to be a Luttrell, — Kate Luttrell, of Arran!”

“And for this poor name you would barter all my love, all my affection, all my hope?”

“It is a great and noble name, sir! There were Lords of Arran called Luttrell in the thirteenth century!”

“You have told me of them,” said he, peevishly.

“Too proud and too haughty to accept titles, sir.”

“I have a name that the first in the land would not scorn,” said he, in a voice of blended pride and anger; “and my fortune is certainly the equal of a barren rock in the Atlantic.”

“You are not my uncle, sir,” said she, softly.

“No, Kate; but —” He stopped, the color fled from his cheek, and he seemed unable to continue. “Has any tender love for you equalled mine?”

“Stop there!” said she, fiercely; “my favor is not put up to auction, and to fall to the highest bidder. When you have said that my uncle is poor, you have said all that can be laid to his charge.” She closed her eyes, and, seeming to speak to herself, murmured: “The poorer, the more need has he of affection.”

“I see it all, — all!” said he, bitterly. “You wish to leave me.”

She made no answer, but sat staring vacantly over the sea.

“Better to say so, my child; better to own that this life has ceased to give you pleasure. But if you told me, Kate, that you would like to travel, to see other countries, to mix with the world, and partake of the enjoyments —”

“How, — as what?” said she, impatiently. “It was but a few months ago you received some strangers at your house, and have you forgotten how they treated me? And do you believe, sir, that the world will have more reserve than the

guests under your roof? Who is she? is not answered so easily as one may think. It would take blood to wash out the stain of 'What is she?'

The old man walked rapidly up and down; he wiped the drops that stood on his brow, and muttered uneasily to himself: "And why not? To whom have I to render an account? Who shall dare to question me? Am I to be turned from my path by a sneer and a sarcasm? Is the ribald gossiping of a club to be of more weight with me than my whole happiness?"

She watched the conflict, and saw every struggle that shook him; she could even mark the vacillating fortunes of the fight, — when he conquered, and when he fell back, discomfited and beaten.

"Tell me, Kate," said he, at last, as he approached her, "is there any condition you can propose by which I may secure myself against desertion?"

"There would be no desertion, Gardy. You could come and see me in my new home. I would do my utmost to hide its poverty. Who knows if my ingenious devices might not amuse you? My uncle, too, might permit me, — no, perhaps not that —" said she, stopping, in some confusion.

"What is it he would n't permit, Kate?"

"I don't know; I was talking to myself, I believe, and I feel weary and feverish too. Gardy, let us not speak more of this now; it oppresses me. And see! there goes down the sun, and I have not enjoyed all its gorgeous color over the waters."

"I wish you would tell me what Mr. Luttrell might not permit."

"He'd not permit me to stay out on the seashore till the evening dew had fallen," said she, laughing. "Tell them to take me back."

"Yes, darling, we have lingered here too long. It was my fault."

And now the little procession moved slowly across the sands towards the town; passing through small mean-looking streets, they gained the place where their hotel stood. Groups of idlers were about, — townfolk and a few strangers, — who made way for them to pass. Some respectfully

enough, — the show of rank suffices, at times, to exact this, — others, more venturesome, stared at the beautiful girl, and then looked at the worn and feeble figure who walked beside her. That they were English was plain enough, and was taken as a reason to comment on them without reserve.

Sir Within turned looks of anger and defiance around him; he gave them to understand that he could overhear their insolence, and he sought with his eye through the crowd to see one — even one — sufficiently like a gentleman to hold him responsible for the impertinence.

“Neither wife nor daughter, I’ll wager a ‘cent-sous’ piece,” said one, as they passed under the arched doorway.

Sir Within stepped back, when Kate said suddenly, “I mean to walk upstairs; give me your arm, sir;” and as they moved slowly on, she whispered, “How can it be helped, Gardy?” and then, with a laugh, added, “It is a maxim of your own, that it is the unmannerly people take care of the public morals.”

It was a subtle flattery to quote himself, which Sir Within thoroughly appreciated; and as he took leave of her at the door of her room, he was almost calm again.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INSULT.

WHEN Kate had gained her room she locked the door, and, throwing off her shawl and bonnet, sat down before the glass; her hair fell heavily down, in the rude carelessness with which she flung her bonnet from her, and now, with a faint tinge of color in her cheek, — the flush of a passing excitement, — she looked very beautiful.

“So,” said she, smiling at her image, “it is the old story, ‘Qu’en dira le Monde?’ The dear old man was very, very fond. He admired me very much; I pleased him — I amused him — I made his life somewhat brighter than he would have found it rambling amongst his Titians and Peruginos; but, with all that, he could n’t face the terrible question, What will the world say? *Ma foi*, Mademoiselle Kate, the confession is not flattering to you! Most people would call me very inexpert that I had not made that grand old place my own before this. I had the field all to myself, — no rivalry, no interference, — and certainly it was a great opportunity. Perhaps I was too much occupied in enjoying my happiness; perhaps I took no note of time; and perhaps, if I ever thought at all, I thought I could wind the game whenever I liked, and now I awake to discover that there is something that he fears more than he loves me; and that the dear old dowager world, that shakes down reputations with a nod and blasts pretensions with a stare, will declare a strict blockade against the distinguished Sir Within Wardle and that girl — lucky if they do not say, ‘that creature’ — he married. Ought he not to have had a spirit above this? Ought he not to have been able to say, ‘I am rich enough to buy this bauble, and if the wearing it gives me pleasure I can forget your sarcasms? I like the

life she can throw around me; which of you all could give such color to my existence?' He might have said this, but he did not. He heard me talk of a new home and a new name, and he would not offer me his own. He saw, and felt bitterly, too, how my position compromised me. I took care he should see it, but no thought of separation crossed him; or, if it did, stronger than all was the dread query, 'Qu'en dira le Monde?'

"There are things one cannot believe possible till they have happened; and even then some strange uncertainty pervades the mind that they have not been read aright. This is one of them. No one could have persuaded me this morning that this prize was not mine whenever I cared to claim it. What a fall to my pride! How little must I feel myself, that, after all these years of subtle flattery, I might as well have been with the Vyners, — living with creatures of my own nature, — giving affection and getting it, — cultivating the heart in the rich soil of hopes and fears and loves and trials and not wearing a mask till it had stiffened into my very features. And he refused me, — yes, refused me; for there was no maiden bashfulness in the terms of my offer. I said, I go back to be the niece, or I stay to be the wife; and his reply was, 'Qu'en dira le Monde?' I suppose he was right, — I am sure he was; but I hate him for it, — how I hate him!" She arose and walked the room with long and measured steps for a while in silence, and then burst out: "What would I not give to be revenged for this? Some vengeance there are he would feel bitterly. Should he meet me in the world, — the great world, for instance, — the wife of some one, his equal, see me courted and *fêted* and flattered; hear of me at all times and all places, and learn that this 'Monde' — that is his god — had adopted me amongst his spoiled children, I think I know the dark despair that would gather around him as he muttered to himself, 'And she might have been mine, — she had been mine for the asking, — she offered herself;' ay, he might say so, if he wished to add insult to my memory; 'and I only replied, "The world would not bear it!"' How I hate him! How I hate him! If I cannot be revenged as I wish, I will be revenged as I can. I shall leave him, — go

at once. He has passed his last of those blissful days, as he loves to call them; and he shall awake to see his life in all the weariness of desertion. Not a look, not a sound; not a laugh, not a song to cheer him. With every spot full of memories of me, he shall be haunted by a happiness that,



will never return to him. I know that in his misery he will ask me to forgive the past and be his wife; and if the alternative were to be the wretchedness I sprang from, I'd go back to it!

“I do not know — in all likelihood I shall never know — what this heart of mine could feel of love; but I know its

power of hatred, and so shall Sir Within, though it may cost me dear to buy it.

“Your repentance may come as early as you please, it shall avail you nothing. It may be even now; I almost thought I heard his foot on the stair; and I know not whether I would not rather it came now, or after months of heart suffering and sorrow. I was slighted; he weighed the beauty that he admired, and the love he thought he had gained, against the mockeries of some score of people whose very faces he has forgotten, and ‘*Qu’en dira le Monde?*’ had more power over him than all my tenderness, all my wit, and all my beauty.

“Is it not strange that, with all his boasted keenness to read people’s natures, he should know so little of mine? To think that I could stand there and see the struggle between his pride of station and what he would call his ‘*passion,*’ — that I could tamely wait and see how I was weighed in the balance and found wanting, — that I could bear all this unmoved, and then return to my daily life without an attempt to resent it?

“It is true, till this letter came from my uncle, there was no pressure upon him. None in the wide world was more friendless than myself. His life might have gone on as heretofore, and if a thought of me or of my fate invaded, he might have dismissed it with the excuse that he could mention me in his will; he could have bequeathed me enough to make me a desirable match for the land-steward or the gardener!

“How I bless my uncle Luttrell for his remembrance of me! It is like a reprieve arriving when the victim was on the scaffold. He shall see with what gladness I accept his offer. If the conditions had been ten times as hard, I would not quarrel with one of them. Now, then, to answer him; and that done, Sir Within, you run no danger of that scandal-loving world you dread so much! For if you came with the offer of all your fortune at my feet, I’d spurn you!”

She opened her writing-desk, and sat down before it. She then took out Luttrell’s letter, and read it carefully over. “I must take care that my answer be as calm and as unimpassioned as his own note. He makes no protestation of

affection; neither shall I. He says nothing of any pleasure that he anticipates from my companionship, — I will be as guarded as himself.” She paused for a moment or two, and then wrote:—

“MY DEAR UNCLE, — Though your letter found me weak and low after a severe illness, its purport has given me strength to answer you at once. I accept.

“It would be agreeable to me if I could close this letter with these words, and not impose any further thought of myself upon you; but it is better, perhaps, if I tell you now and forever that you may discharge your mind of all fears as to what you call the sacrifices I shall have to make. I hope to show you that all the indulgences in which I have lived make no part of my real nature. You have one boon to confer on me worth all that wealth and splendor could offer, — your name. By making me a Luttrell, you fill the full measure of my ambition.

“For whatever share of your confidence and affection you may vouchsafe me, I will try to be worthy; but I will not importune for either, but patiently endeavor to deserve them. My life has not hitherto taught many lessons of utility. I hope duty will be a better teacher than self-indulgence. Lastly, have no fears that my presence under your roof will draw closer around you the ties and the claims of those humble people with whom I am connected. I know as little of them as you do. They certainly fill no place in my affection; nor have I the pretence to think I have any share in theirs. One old man alone have I any recollection of, — my mother’s father, — and if I may judge by the past, he will continue to be more influenced by what tends to my advantage than what might minister to the indulgence of his own pride. He neither came to see me at Sir Gervais Vyner’s nor Dalradern; and though I have written to him once or twice, he never sought to impose himself as a burden upon me. Of course, it will be for you to say if this correspondence should be discontinued.

“You will see in these pledges, that I give in all frankness, how much it will be my ambition to be worthy of the noble name you allow me to bear.

“There is no necessity to remit me any money. I have ample means to pay for my journey; and as there are circumstances which I can tell you of more easily than I can write, requiring that I should leave this at once, I will do so immediately after posting the present letter. I will go direct to the hotel you speak of at Holyhead, and remain there till your messenger arrives to meet me.

“You distress me, my dear uncle, when you suggest that I should

mention any articles that I might require to be added to your household for my comfort or convenience. Do not forget, I beg, that I was not born to these luxuries, and that they only attach to me as the accidents of a station which I relinquish with delight, when I know that it gives me the right to sign myself,

“Your loving niece,

“KATE LUTTRELL.”

CHAPTER V.

THE FLIGHT.

THE day was just breaking as Kate, carrying a small bundle in her hand, issued noiselessly from the deep porch of the hotel, and hastened to the pier.

The steamboat was about to start, and she was the last to reach the deck, as the vessel moved off. It was a raw and gusty morning, and the passengers had all sought shelter below, so that she was free to seek a spot to herself, unmolested and unobserved.

As she turned her farewell look at the sands, where she had walked on the evening before, she could not believe that one night — one short night — had merely filled the interval. Why, it seemed as if half a lifetime had been crowded into the space. Within those few hours how much had happened! A grand dream of ambition scattered to the winds, — a dream that for many a day had filled her whole thoughts, working its way into every crevice of her mind, and so coloring all her fancies that she had not even a caprice untinged by it. To be the mistress of that old feudal castle; to own its vast halls and its tall towers; to gaze on the deep-bosomed woods that stretched for miles away, and feel that they were her own! To know that at last she had gained a station and a position that none dared dispute; “for,” as she would say, “the world may say its worst of that old man’s folly; they may ridicule and deride him. Of me they can but say that I played boldly, and won the great stake I played for.” And now the game was over, and she had lost! What a reverse was this! “Yesterday surrounded with wealth, cared for, courted, my slightest wish consulted, how fair the prospect looked! And now, alone, and more friendless than the meanest around me! And was

the fault mine? How hard to tell! Was it that I gave him too much of my confidence, or too little? Was my mistake to let him dwell too much on the ways and opinions of that great world that he loved so well? Should I not have tried rather to disparage than exalt it? And should I not have sought to inspire him with a desire for a quiet, tranquil existence, — such a life as he might have dreamed to lead in those deep old woods around his home? ‘To the last,’ cried she, to herself, — “to the last, I never could believe that he would consent to lose me! Perhaps he never thought it would come to this; perhaps he fancied that I could not face that wretchedness from which I came; perhaps he might have thought that I myself was not one to relinquish so good a game, and rise from the table at the first reverse. But what a reverse! To be so near the winning-post and yet lose the race! And how will he bear it? Will he sink under the blow, or will that old pride of blood of which he boasts so much come to his aid and carry him through it? How I wish — oh, what would I not give to see him, as he tears open my last letter, and sees all his presents returned to him! Ah, if he could but feel with what a pang I parted with them; if he but knew the tears the leave-taking cost me; if he but saw me as I took off that necklace I was never to wear again, feeling like one who was laying down her beauty to go forth into the world without a charm, — he might, perchance, hope to win me back again. And would that be possible? My heart says no. My heart tells me that before I can think of a fortune to achieve, there is an insult to avenge. He slighted me, — yes, he slighted me! There was a price too high for all my love, and he let me see it. There was his fault, — he let me see it! It was my dream for many a year to show the humble folk from whom I came what my ambition and my capacity could make me; and I thought of myself as the proud mistress of Dalradern without a pang for all the misery the victory would cost me. Now the victory has escaped me, and I go back, so far as my own efforts are concerned, defeated! What next, — ay, what next?”

As the day wore on, every incident of her ordinary life rose before her. Nine o'clock. It was the hour the car-

riage came to take her to her bath. She bethought her of all the obsequious attention of her maid, that quiet watchfulness of cunning service, the mindful observance that supplies a want and yet obtrudes no thought of it. The very bustle of her arrival at the bathing-place had its own flattery. The eager attention, the zealous anxiety of the servants, that showed how in her presence all others were for the time forgotten. She knew well — is beauty ever deficient in the knowledge? — that many came each morning only to catch a glimpse of her. Her practised eye had taught her, even as she passed, to note what amount of tribute each rendered to her loveliness; and she could mark the wondering veneration here, the almost rapturous gaze of this one, and not unfrequently the jealous depreciation of that other.

Eleven o'clock. She was at breakfast with Sir Within, and he was asking her for all the little events of the morning. And what were these? A bantering narrative of her own triumphs, — how well she had looked; how tastefully she was dressed; how spitefully the women had criticised the lovely hat she swam in, and which she gave to some poor girl as she came out of the water, — a trifle that had cost some “louis” a few days before.

It was noon, — the hour the mail arrived from Brussels, — and Sir Within would come to present her with the rich bouquet of rare flowers despatched each morning from the capital. It was a piece of homage he delighted to pay, and she was wont to accept it with a queen-like condescension. “What a strange life of dreary indulgence, of enjoyments multiplied too fast to taste, of luxuries so lavished as almost to be a burden; and how unreal it was all!” So thought she, as they drew near the tall chalk cliffs of the English coast, and the deck grew crowded with those who were eagerly impatient to quit their prison-house.

For the first time for a long while did she find herself unnoticed and unattended to; none of that watchful, obsequious attention that used to track her steps was there. Now people hurried hither and thither, collecting their scattered effects, and preparing to land. Not one to care for her, who only yesterday was waited on like royalty!

"Is this your trunk, miss?" asked a porter.

"No, this is mine," said she, pointing to a bundle.

"Shall I carry it for you, my dear?" said a vulgar-looking and over-dressed young fellow, who had put his glass in his eye to stare at her.

She muttered but one word, but that it was enough seemed clear, as his companion said, "I declare I think you deserved it!"

"It has begun already," said she to herself, as she walked slowly along towards the town. "The bitter conflict with the world, of which I have only heard hitherto, I now must face. By this time he knows it; he knows that he is desolate, and that he shall never see me more. All the misery is not, therefore, mine; nor is mine the greater. I have youth and can hope; he cannot hope; he can but grieve on to the last. Well, let him go to that world he loves so dearly, and ask it to console him. It will say by its thousand tongues, 'You have done well, Sir Within. Why should you have allied yourself with a low-born peasant-girl? How could her beauty have reconciled you to her want of refinement, her ignorance, her coarse breeding?' Ah, what an answer could his heart give, if he but dared to utter it; for he could tell them I was their equal in all their vaunted captivations! Will he have the courage to do this? Or will he seek comfort in the falsehood that belies me?"

In thoughts like these, ever revolving around herself and her altered fortunes, she journeyed on, and by the third day arrived at Holyhead. The rendezvous was given at a small inn outside the town, called "The Kid," and directions for her reception had been already forwarded there. Two days elapsed before her uncle's messenger arrived, — two days that seemed to extend to as many years! How did her ever-active mind go over in that space all her past life, from the cruel sorrows of her early days, to the pampered existence she had led at Dalradern? She fancied what she might have been, if she had never left her lowly station, but grown up amongst the hardships and privations of her humble condition. She canvassed in her mind the way in which she might have either conformed to that life, or struggled against it. "I cannot believe," said she, with a saucy

laugh, as she stood and looked at herself in the glass, "that these arms were meant to carry sea-wrack, or that these feet were fashioned to clamber shoeless up the rocks! And yet if destiny had fixed me there, how should I have escaped? I cannot tell, any more than I can tell what is yet before me! And what a fascination there is in this uncertainty! What a wondrous influence has the unknown! How eventful does the slightest action become when it may lead to that which can determine a life's fortune! Even now, how much is in my power! I might go back, throw myself at that old man's feet, and tell him that it was in vain I tried it, — I could not leave him. I might kneel there till he raised me, and when he did so, I should be his wife, a titled lady, and mistress of that grand old castle! Could I do this? No: no more than I could go and beg the Vyners to have pity on me and take me back; that my heart clung to the happiness I had learned to feel amongst them; and that I would rather serve them as a menial than live away from them. Better to die than this. And what will this life at Arran be? This uncle, too, I dread him; and yet I long to see him. I want to hear him call me by his own name, and acknowledge me as a Luttrell. Oh, if he had but done this before — before I had travelled this weary road of deception and falsehood! Who knows? Who knows?"

"Are you the young lady, miss, that 's expecting an elderly gentleman?" said the housemaid, entering hastily.

"Where from? How did he come?" cried Kate, eagerly; for her first thought was, it might be Sir Within.

"He came by the Irish packet, miss."

"Yes, that is quite right. If he asks for Miss Luttrell, you may say I am ready to see him."

In a minute or two after she had given this order, the girl again opened the door, saying, —

"Mr. Coles, miss;" and introduced a florid, fussy-looking little man, with a manner compounded of courtesy and command.

"You may leave the room, young woman," said he to the maid; and then approaching Kate, added, "I have the honor to speak to Miss Luttrell?"

She bowed a quiet assent, and he went on: —

“I ’m chief managing clerk of Cane and Co., Miss Luttrell, from whom I received instructions to wait on you here, and accompany you to Westport, where Mr. John Luttrell will have a boat ready for you.”

He delivered this speech with a something half peremptory, as though he either suspected some amount of resistance to his authority, or imagined that his credentials might be questioned.

“Have you no letter for me, sir?” asked she, calmly.

“There was a letter from Mr. Luttrell to Mr. George Cane, Miss Luttrell, explaining why he was not himself able to come over and meet you.”

“Was he ill, sir?”

“No, not exactly ill, Miss Luttrell, though he is never what one can call well.”

“I am astonished he did not write to me,” said she, in a low, thoughtful tone.

“He is not much given to writing, Miss Luttrell, at any time, and of late we have rarely heard of him beyond a line or two. Indeed, with respect to my present journey, all he says is, ‘Send some one in your confidence over to Holyhead by the first packet, to inquire for Miss Luttrell, or Miss O’Hara, — she may be known by either name, — and conduct her to Eldridge’s Hotel, Westport. The young lady is to be treated with all consideration.’ These are his words, miss, and I hope to follow them.”

“It is very kind,” said she, slowly, and half to herself.

“It’s a Frenchified sort of phrase, ‘all consideration,’ but I take its meaning to be, with every deference to your wishes, — how you would like to travel, and where to stop. Mr. George, however, told me to add, ‘If Miss Luttrell desires to make any purchases, or requires anything in town, she is to have full liberty to obtain it.’ He did not mention to what amount, but, of course, he intended the exercise of a certain discretion.”

“I want nothing, sir.”

“That is what Mrs. Coles remarked to me: If the young lady only saw the place she was going to, she’d not think of shopping.”

Kate made no answer.

“Not but, as Mrs. Coles observed, some good substantial winter clothing — that capital stuff they make now for Lower Canada — would be an excellent thing to take. You are aware, miss, it is a perpetual winter there?”

A short nod, that might mean anything, was all her reply.

“And above all, Miss Luttrell,” continued he, unabashed by her cold manner, — “above all, a few books! Mr. L., from what I hear, has none that would suit a young lady’s reading. His studies, it seems, are of an antiquarian order; some say — of course people *will* say so — he dips a little into magic and the black art.” Perhaps, after all, it was the study most appropriate to the place.

“I suppose it is a lonesome spot?” said she, with a faint sigh, and not well heeding what she said.

“Desolate is the name for it, — desolate and deserted! I only know it by the map; but I declare to you, I’d not pass a week on it to own the fee simple.”

“And yet I am going there of my own free will, sir,” said she, with a strangely meaning smile.

“That’s exactly what puzzles Mrs. C. and myself,” said he, bluntly; “and, indeed, my wife went so far as to say, ‘Has the dear young creature nobody to tell her what the place is like? Has she no friend to warn her against the life she is going to?’”

“Tell her from me, sir, that I know it all. I saw it when I was a child, and my memory is a tenacious one. And tell her, too, that, bleak and dreary as it is, I look forward to it with a longing desire, as an escape from a world of which, even the very little I have seen, has not enamored me. And now, sir, enough of me and my fortunes; let us talk of the road. Whenever you are sufficiently rested to begin your journey, you will find me ready.”

“You’ll stop probably a day in Dublin?”

“Not an hour, sir, if I can get on. Can we leave this to-night?”

“Yes; I have ordered the carriages to take us to the pier at nine, and a cart for your luggage.”

“My luggage is there, sir,” said she, pointing to the bundle, and smiling at the astonishment his face betrayed;

“and when you tell your wife that, sir, she will, perhaps, see I am better fitted for Arran than she suspected.”

Albeit the daily life of Mr. Coles gave little scope to the faculty, he was by nature of an inquiring disposition, not to add that he well knew to what a rigid cross-examination he would be subjected on his return to his wife, not merely as to the look, manner, and mien of the young lady, but as to what account she gave of herself, where she came from, and, more important still, why she came.

It was his fancy, too, to imagine that he was especially adroit in extracting confidences; a belief, be it observed, very generally held by people whose palpable and pushing curiosity invariably revolts a stranger, and disposes him to extreme reserve.

As they walked the deck of the steamer together, then, with a calm sea and a stilly night, he deemed the moment favorable to open his investigations.

“Ah, yes!” said he, as though addressing some interlocutor within his own bosom — “ah, yes! she will indeed feel it a terrible contrast. None of the pleasures, none of the habits of her former life; none of the joys of the family, and none of the endearments of a home!”

“Of whom were you speaking, sir?” asked she, with a faint smile.

“Dear me! dear me! what a man I am! That’s a habit my wife has being trying to break me of these fifteen years, Miss Luttrell; as she says, ‘Coles, take care that you never commit a murder, or you’re sure to tell it to the first person you meet.’ And so is it when anything occurs to engage my deepest interest, my strongest sympathy; it’s no use, — do what I will, out it will come in spite of me.”

“And I, sir,” said she, with a slow and measured utterance, “am exactly the reverse. I no more think of speaking my thoughts aloud than I should dream of imparting my family secrets, if I had any, to the first stranger whose impertinent curiosity might dispose him to penetrate them.”

“Indeed!” cried he, reddening with shame.

“Quite true, I assure you, sir; and now I will wish you a good night, for it grows chilly here.”

CHAPTER VI.

ON ARRAN.

KATE was awoke from a deep sleep by the noise of the boat coming to anchor. She started up, and looked around her, unable for several seconds to recall where she was. Behind the little landlocked bay the tall mountains rose, wild and fanciful on every side; the dark sky studded with stars above, and the still darker sea beneath, still and waveless; and then the shore, where lights moved rapidly hither and thither,—making up a picture strangely interesting to one to whom that lone rock was to be a home, that dreary spot in the wild ocean her whole world.

There were a great many people on the shore awaiting her partly out of curiosity, in part out of respect; and Molly Ryan had come down to say that his honor was not well enough to meet her, but he hoped in the morning he would be able. “You’re to be the same as himself here, he says; and every word you say is to be minded as if it was his own.”

“I almost think I remember you; your face, and your voice too, seem to me as though I knew them before.”

“So you may, miss. You saw me here at the mistress’s wake, but don’t let on to the master, for he does n’t like that any of us should think you was ever here afore. This is the path here, miss; it’s a rough bit for your tender feet.”

“Have we much farther to go, Molly? I am rather tired to-day.”

“No, miss; a few minutes more will bring us to the Abbey; but sure we’d send for a chair and carry you —”

“No, no; on no account. It is only to-night I feel fatigued. My uncle’s illness is nothing serious, I hope?”

“Tis more grief than sickness, miss. It’s sorrow is killin’ him. Any onc that saw him last year would n’t know him now; his hair is white as snow, and his voice is weak as a child’s. Here we are now, — here’s the gate. It is n’t much of a garden, nobody minds it; and yonder, where you see the light, that’s his honor’s room, beside the big tower there, and you are to have the two rooms that my mistress lived in.” And, still speaking, she led the way through a low arched passage into a small clean-looking chamber, within which lay another with a neatly arranged bed, and a few attempts at comfortable furniture. “We did our best, miss, Sam and myself,” said Molly; “but we had n’t much time, for we only knew you was coming on Tuesday night.”

“It is all very nice and clean, Molly. Your name is Molly, is n’t it?”

“Yes, miss,” said she, courtesying, and deeply gratified.

“I want nothing better!” said Kate, as she sat down on the bed, and took off her bonnet.

“If you don’t need me now, miss, I’ll go and bring you your tea; it’s all ready in the kitchen.”

“Very well, Molly; leave it for me in the outer room, and I’ll take it when I am inclined.”

Molly saw that she desired to be alone, and withdrew without a word; and Kate, now free of all restraint, buried her face in the pillow and wept bitterly. Never, till the very spot was before her, — till the dark shadows of the rugged rocks crossed her path, and the wild solitude of the dreary island appealed to her, by the poor appearance of the people, their savage looks, and their destitution, — never till then had she fully realized to her mind all the force of the step she had taken. “What have I done? What have I done?” sobbed she, hysterically, over and over. “Why have I left all that makes life an ecstasy to come and drag out an existence of misery and gloom? Is this the fruit of all my ambition? Is this the prize for which I have left myself without one affection or one sentiment, sacrificing all to that station I had set before me as a goal? I’ll not bear it. I’ll not endure it. Time enough to come here when my hopes are bankrupt, and my fortune shipwrecked. I have youth — and, better, I have beauty. Shall I stay here till a blight

has fallen on both? Why, the very misery I came from as a child was less dreary and desolate than this! There was at least companionship there! There was sympathy, for there was fellow-suffering. But here! what is there here, but a tomb in which life is to waste out, and the creature feel himself the corpse before he dies?" She started up and looked around her, turning her eyes from one object to the other in the room. "And it is for this splendor, for all this costly magnificence, I am to surrender the love of those humble people who, after all, loved me for myself! It was of *me* they thought, for me they prayed, for my success they implored the saints; and it is for this" — and she gazed contemptuously on the lowly decorations of the chamber — "I am to give them up forever, and refuse even to see them! The proud old Sir Within never proposed so hard a bargain! He did not dare to tell me I should deny my own. To be sure," cried she, with a scornful laugh, "I was forgetting a material part of the price. I am a Luttrell, — Kate Luttrell of Arran, — and I shall be one day, perhaps, mistress of this grand ancestral seat, the Abbey of St. Finbar! Would that I could share the grandeur with them at once, and lie down there in that old aisle, as dreamless as my noble kinsfolk!"

In alternate bursts of sorrow over the past, and scornful ridicule of the present, she passed the greater part of the night; and at last, exhausted and weary with the conflict, she leaned her head on the side of her bed, and, kneeling as she was, fell off to sleep. When she awoke, it was bright day; the sea-breeze playing softly through a honeysuckle that covered the open window, filled the room with a pleasant perfume, and cooled her heated brow. She looked out on the scarcely ruffled bay, and saw the fishing-boats standing out to sea, while on the shore all were busy launching or stowing away tackle; the very children aiding where they could, carrying down baskets, or such small gear as their strength could master. It was life, and movement, and cheerfulness too, — for so the voices sounded in the thin morning air, — not a tone of complaint, not one utterance that indicated discontent, and the very cheer which accompanied the sliding craft as she rushed down to the sea seemed to come from

hearts that were above repining. The scene was better to her than all her self-arguings. There they were, the very class she sprang from; the men and women like her own nearest kindred; the very children recalling the days when she played barefooted on the beach, and chased the retiring waves back into the sea. They were there, toiling ever on, no hope of any day of better fortune, no thought of any other rest than the last long sleep of all, and why should *she* complain? That late life of luxury and splendor was not without its drawbacks. The incessant watchfulness it exacted, lest in some unguarded moment she should forget the part she was playing, — and part it was, — the ever-present need of that insidious flattery by which she maintained her influence over Sir Within, and, above all, the dread of her humble origin being discovered, and becoming the table-talk of the servants'-hall. These were a heavy price to pay for a life of luxurious indulgence.

“Here, at least,” cried she, “I shall be real. I am the niece and the adopted daughter of the lord of the soil; none can gainsay or deny me; a Luttrell of Arran, I can assert myself against the world; poverty is only an infliction when side by side with affluence; we are the great and the rich here. Let me only forget the past, and this life can be enjoyable enough. I used to fancy, long ago, as I walked the garden alone at Dinasllyn, that no condition of life would ever find me unprepared to meet it. Here is a case to prove my theory; and now to be an Arran islander.”

As she said this, she began to arrange her room, and place the different articles in it more to her own taste. Her care was to make her little chamber as comfortable as she could. She was rather an adept in this sort of achievement, — at least she thought she could impart to a room a character distinctly her own, giving it its *cachet* of homeliness or comfort or elegance or simplicity, as she wished it. The noise of her preparations brought Molly to her aid, and she despatched the amazed countrywoman to bring her an armful of the purple heath that covered the mountain near, and as many wild-flowers as she could find.

“To-morrow, Molly,” said she, “I will go in search of them myself, but to-day I must put things to rights here.

Now, Molly," said she, as they both were busied in filling two large jugs with the best flowers they could find, "remember that I'm an old maid."

"Lawk, miss, indeed you arn't!"

"Well, never mind, I mean to be just as particular, just as severe as one; and remember that wherever I put a table, a chest of drawers, or even a cup with a flower in it, you must never displace it. No matter how careless I may seem, leave everything here as you find it."

"That's the master's own way, miss; his honor would go mad if I touched a book he was readin'."

It was a very pleasant flattery that the poor woman thus unconsciously insinuated; nor could anything have been more in time, for Kate was longing to identify herself with the Luttrells, to be one of them in their ways and their very prejudices.

Scarcely had Molly left the room than a light tap came to the door, and a weak voice asked, —

"May I come in?"

Kate hastened to open it; but she was anticipated, and her uncle slowly entered, and stood before her.

"My dear, dear uncle," cried she, taking his hand, and pressing it to her lips.

He pressed her in his arms, and kissed her forehead twice, and then, with a hand on either shoulder, held her for a moment at arm's length, while he looked at her. Hers was not a nature to flinch under such a scrutiny, and yet she blushed at last under the steadiness of his gaze.

"Let us sit down," said he, at length; and he handed her to a seat with much courtesy. "Had I seen you, Miss Luttrell —"

"Oh, sir, say Kate, — call me Kate," cried she, eagerly.

"Had I seen you before, Kate," continued he, — and there was a touch of feeling as he spoke the name, — "I do not think I could have dared to ask you to come here!"

"Oh, dear uncle! have I so disappointed you?"

"You have amazed me, Kate. I was not prepared to see you as you are. I speak not of your beauty, my child; I was prepared for that. It is your air, your bearing, that look, that reminds me of long, long ago. It is years since

I saw a lady, my dear Kate, and the sight of you has brought up memories I had believed were dead and buried."

"Then I do not displease you, uncle?"

"I am angry with myself, child. I should never have brought you to this barbarism."

"You have given me a home, sir," said she, fondly; but he only sighed, and she went on, — "a home and a name!"

"A name! Yes," said he, proudly; "a name that well befits you, but a home, — how unworthy of you! What ignorance in me not to know that you would be like this!" And again he gazed at her with intense admiration. "But see, my child, to what this life of grovelling monotony conduces. Because I had not seen you and heard your voice, I could not picture to my poor besotted mind that, besides beauty, you should have that gracefulness the world deems higher than even beauty. Nay, Kate, I am no flatterer; and, moreover, I will not speak of this again."

"I will try to make you satisfied that you did well to send for me, sir," said she, meekly; and her heart felt almost bursting with delight at the words of praise she had just heard.

"How did you induce them to part with you?" asked he, calmly.

"I gave no choice in the matter, sir. I showed your letter to Sir Within Wardle, and he would not hear of my leaving. I tried to discuss the matter, and he only grew impatient. I hinted at what your letter had vaguely insinuated, — a certain awkwardness in my position, — and this made him downright angry. We parted, and I went to my room. Once alone, I took counsel with myself. The result was that I wrote that letter which you received; and I came away the same morning I wrote it."

"Alone?"

"Yes, sir, alone."

"And without a leave-taking?"

"Even so, sir. It was the only way in which I could have come, and I had made up my mind to it."

"There was something of the Luttrell there!" said he, turning his eyes full upon her features, which now had

caught an expression of calm and resolute meaning. "You well become the name, Kate!"

"It shall be my endeavor, sir."

"And yet," added he, after a pause, "you were very happy there. Tell me the sort of life you used to lead."

"One day will serve for all, uncle; they were exactly alike. My mornings were all my own. If my masters came, I studied, or I dismissed them, as I pleased; if I felt indisposed to read, I sang; if I did not like music, I drew; if I did not care for drawing landscape, I caricatured my master, and made a doggerel poem on his indignation. In a word, I trifled over the day till luncheon. After that I rode in the woods, — alone if I could, sometimes with Sir Within; often I had time to do both. Then came dressing, — a long affair, — for I was expected to be fine enough for company each day, though we saw no one. After that, most wearisome of all the day, came dinner, — two hours and a half, — services of which we never ate; wines we did not care to drink, but all repeated regularly; a solemn mock banquet, my guardian — so I called him — loved immensely, and would have prolonged, if he but knew how, till midnight. Evening brought our one guest, a French abbé, with whom I sang or played chess till I could engage Sir Within and himself in a discussion about Mirabeau or St. Just, when I would slip away and be free. Then, if the night were moonlit, I would drive out in the park, or have a row on the lake; if dark, I would have the conservatory lighted, set the fountains a-playing, and drive the gardener distracted by 'awakening' all his drowsy plants. In a word, I could do what I pleased, and I pleased to do whatever struck me at the moment. I ordered all that I liked from town, — books, dress, objects of art, prints, — and was just as weary of them all before I saw them as after they had palled upon me. It was a life of intense indulgence, and I'm not sure, if one could but fight off occasional *ennui*, that it was n't the happiest thing could be made of existence, for it was very dreamy withal, very full of innumerable futures, all rose-colored, all beautiful."

"And what are you to make of this?" asked Luttrell, almost sternly, as he moved his arm around to indicate the

new realm about her. "Here there is no luxury, no wealth, none of the refinement that comes of wealth, not one of the resources that fill the time of cultivated leisure; all is hardship, privation, self-denial. Go abroad, too, beyond the walls of this poor old ruin, and it will be to witness misery and destitution greater still."

"I am going to try if I shall not like the real conflict better than the mock combat," said she, calmly.

"What a change will be your life here, my poor child, — what a change! Let it not, however, be worse than it need be. So far as this poor place will permit, be your own mistress, — live in your own fashion; keep your own hours; come to me only when you like, never from any sense of duty. I am too inured to solitude to want companionship, though I can be grateful when it is offered me. I have a few books; some of them may interest you. My pursuits, too, — what once were my pursuits!" said he, with a sigh, — "might amuse you. At all events," added he, rising, "try — try if you can bear it; it need not be your prison if you cannot."

He again kissed her forehead, and, motioning a good-bye with his hand, moved slowly away.

"Perhaps I shall acquit myself better than he thinks," said she to herself. "Perhaps — who knows if I may not find some place or thing to interest me here? It is very grand 'savagery;' and if one wanted to test their powers of defying the world in every shape, this is the spot. What is this you have brought me to eat, Molly?"

"It's a bit of fried skate, miss, and I'm sorry it's no better, but the potatoes is beautiful."

"Then let me have them, and some milk. No milk, — is that so?"

"There's only one cow, miss, on the island, and she's only milked in the evening; but St. Finbar's Well is the finest water ever was tasted."

"To your good health, then, and St. Finbar's!" said she, lifting a goblet to her lips. "You are right, Molly; it is ice-cold and delicious!" And now, as she began her meal, she went on inquiring which of the men about the place would be most likely as a gardener, what things could be got to grow, on which side came the worst winds, and where any

shelter could be found. "Perhaps I shall have to take to fishing, Molly," said she, laughing; "for something I must do."

"You could make the nets, anyhow, miss," said Molly, in admiration of the white and graceful hands, and thinking what ought to be their most congenial labor.

"I can row a boat well, Molly," said Kate, proudly.

"Whatever you 'd do, you 'd do it well, God bless you!" cried the other; for in that hearty delight in beauty, so natural to the Irish peasant nature, she imagined her to be perfection, and the honest creature turned, ere she left the room, to give her a look of admiration little short of rapture.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STRANGER AT THE WELL.

BEFORE a couple of weeks passed over, Kate had contrived to divide her days so regularly, to establish for herself a certain routine of little duties, that the time slipped by — as time ever will do in monotony — unfelt. The season was the autumn, and the wild hills and mountains were gorgeous in all the brilliant colors of the ever-varied heaths. In the little clefts and valleys, too, where shelter favored, foxgloves and purple mallows grew with a rare luxuriance, while on every side was met the arbutus, its crimson berries hanging in festoons over rock and crag. The sudden unexpected sight of the sea, penetrating by many a fissure, as it were, between the mountains, gave unceasing interest to the wild landscape, and over the pathless moors that she strayed, not a living thing to be seen, was the sense of being the first wayfarer who had ever trod these wastes.

As Kate wandered whole days alone, over and over again came the doubt across her, which was it — the brilliant past, with all its splendor and luxury, or the solitary present — was the dream? Surely they could not both be real. Was the bygone a fancy built out of some gorgeous fragments of things read, heard, or imagined, or was this — this actual scene around her — a vision that was to move past, and leave her to awake to all her former splendor?

Great as the revulsion was to her former life, it was in nothing greater than in the difference between her uncle's cold, sad, distant manner; for so, after the first meeting, had it become, and the ever-watchful anxiety, the courteous attention to her slightest wish, of Sir Within.

She never ceased canvassing with herself how he had borne her desertion, — whether he had sunk under it into a hopeless despondency, or called upon his pride to sustain him above

any show of indignation. Reading it as the world must read it, there never was such ingratitude; but then the world could never know the provocation, nor ever know by what personal sacrifice she had avenged the slight passed upon her. "My story," said she, "can never be told; his he may tell how it suits him."

At moments, a sort of romantic exaltation and a sense of freedom would make her believe that she had done well to exchange the splendid bondage of the past for the untrammelled liberty of the present; and then, at other times, the terrible contrast would so overcome her that she would sit and cry as if her heart was breaking.

"Would my 'old Gardy' pity or exult over me if he saw me now? What would he, who would not suffer me to tread on an uncarpeted step, say if he saw me alone, and poorly clad, clambering up these rugged cliffs, to reach some point where for an instant I may forget myself? Surely he would not triumph over my fall!

"Such a life as this is meant to expiate great crimes. Men are sent to wild and desolate islands in the ocean, to wear out days of hopeless misery, because they have warred against their fellows. But what have I done? whom have I injured? Others had friends to love and to guide them; I had none. The very worst that can be alleged against me is that I was rash and headstrong, — too prone to resent; and what has it cost me!

"My uncle said, indeed, this need not be my prison if I could not endure its privations. But what did that mean, — what alternative did he point to? Was it that I was to go lower still, and fall back upon all the wretchedness I sprang from? That, never! The barren glory of calling myself a Luttrell may be a sorry price for forfeited luxury and splendor; but I have it, and I will hold it. I am a Luttrell now, and one day, perhaps, these dreary hills shall own me their mistress."

In some such thoughts as these, crossed and re-crossed by regrets and half-shadowed hopes, she was returning one night to the Abbey, when Molly met her. There was such evident anxiety and eagerness in the woman's face that Kate quickly asked her, —

“What is it? What has happened?”

“Nothing, miss; nothing at all. ’T is only a man is come. He’s down at the Holy Well, and wants to speak to you.”

“Who is he? What is he?”

“I never seen him before, miss; but he comes from beyant there,” — she motioned towards the mainland of Ireland, — “and says that you know him well.”

“Have you told my uncle of him?”

“No, miss, for the man said I was to tell no living soul but yourself, and to tell you quick, too, for he was in a hurry, and wanted to get away with the evening’s tide, and his boat was more than a mile off.”

“Molly Ryan,” said the girl, calmly, almost sternly, “you heard the orders that my uncle gave. You heard him tell me that I was not to see, nor speak to, nor hold any intercourse with any of those belonging to my mother’s family. Is this man one of them?”

“No, miss. ’T is what I asked him. ’T is the very first question I put to him. And he said, ‘I’m no more to them than you are, Mrs. Ryan,’ says he; ‘and what’s more,’ says he, ‘if it’s any comfort to you to know it, I don’t even come from this part of Ireland; so you may make yourself easy about that,’ says he. I was puttin’ more questions to him, and he stopped me, and said, ‘You’re just wasting precious time,’ says he; ‘and if she comes back and finds it too late,’ — he meant yourself, miss, — ‘she won’t forgive you in a hurry for what you’ve done, for I can’t come here again.’”

“You are sure and certain that he was not one of those I spoke of?”

“I know them all well, miss, — barrin’ the three that was transported, — and he’s not any of them I ever saw before.”

“But he might exactly be one of those who *was* transported, and certainly, if I knew that, I’d not see him.”

“He swore to me he was n’t, miss; and what’s more, he said that what he came about was n’t his own business at all, but concerned *you*. That’s his whistle now, — he gave one awhile ago, — and he said, ‘When I give three,’ says

he, 'I'm gone; for I'll not lose the tide, whether she comes or not.'"

"Go back to the house, Molly. I'll go down and speak to him."



"Would n't you let me follow you, miss, to be near, in case of anything?"

"No, Molly. I'm no coward; and I know, besides, that no man who meant harm to me would ever come over here to attempt it."

"At any rate, he 'd never go back again," said the woman, fiercely. "Don't be long, miss, or I'll be uneasy."

Kate now turned aside, and hastened down a little steep path which led to the Holy Well. The well itself was a sort of shrine built over a little spring, and shaded by a clump of dwindled oak-trees, — almost the only ones in the island. As Kate drew nigh, she saw a man walking up and down beneath the trees, with the quick, short step that implied impatience. It was her gift never to forget a face, and in one glance she recognized one she had not seen for years, — O'Rorke of Vinegar Hill.

"I thought you 'd never come," cried he, as she descended the steps that led down to the well. "I have been waiting here about an hour!"

He held out his hand to shake hands with her, but she drew back, and, crossing her shawl in front of her, showed that she declined this greeting.

"Are you too proud to shake hands with me?" asked he, insolently.

"Whatever you have to say to me can be said just as well without."

"What if I would n't say it, then, Kitty O'Hara? What if I was to go back the way I came, and leave you to rue the day you insulted me? Do you know, young woman, that it was n't on my own account I came here, — that it was to serve others?"

"They chose a bad messenger if they thought you 'd be a welcome one."

"May I never see glory if I'm not tempted to turn away and leave you without telling one word I came for. Where's John Luttrell? for I think I'll tell it to himself."

"My uncle is at the Abbey, if you want him."

"Your uncle!" said he, jeeringly. "Why was n't he your uncle when you were up at Cush-ma-Creena, without a shoe to your foot, or enough rags to cover you well? You were bare up to this, when I saw you last." And he put his hand to his knee.

"It was a national costume," said she, with a quiet laugh, "and a patriot like Mr. O'Rorke should not find fault with it."

“Begorra, it was your own self said that! and it was a lie they tould when they said you were altered!” And almost as if by magic, the fellow’s ill temper gave way, and he laughed heartily. “Listen to me, now, Miss O’Hara, or Miss Luttrell, or whatever you call yourself.”

“My name is Luttrell,” said she, calmly.

“Well, Luttrell, then; it’s the same to me. As I told you already, I came here more on *your* account than my own; and here’s what brought me. You know that lodge, or cottage, or whatever they call it, that Vyner built up here in the glen? Well, there’s creditors of his now wanting to get possession of it.”

“Creditors of Sir Gervais Vyner? Impossible!”

“Possible, or impossible, it’s true, that I can vouch for, for I saw the bailiffs that came down with the notices. At any rate, your old grandfather thought that after Vyner himself *he* had the best right to the house and the bit of land, for Vyner told him one day that he’d settle it on you for a marriage portion, and there was others by wheu he said it; so your grandfather went up and told Tom Crowe, the attorney, how it was, and Tom said, ‘Keep it open, Malone,’ says he, — ‘keep it open till we see what’s to be done in it. Don’t let the other creditors get a hold of the place till I get an opinion for you.’ And on that, old Peter goes back and gets a few boys together, and they go down to the glen just in time to see the sub-sheriff, Barty Lambert, riding up the lawn, with six or eight men after him. The minute Lambert saw your grandfather, he cried out, ‘Here’s Peter, “the Smasher;” save yourselves, boys!’ And he rode his horse at a wall, jumped it, and made off as hard as he could. Two of the others followed, but the rest stood their ground. Old Peter then stepped out, and ordered them to lay down their arms, and give up the writ, and whatever papers they had. Some were for this, and some against; and Peter, wanting to finish the business at once, stepped up to Joe Maher, the sub-sheriff’s man, and said: ‘Joe,’ says he, ‘I made you ate a process once before, wax and all, and maybe I’d have to do the same now. Give it up this minute, or —’ Just then Maher drew out a pistol; but before he could level it, old Peter was in on him, and

they grappled each other, and a terrible struggle it was, for the others never interfered, but left them to fight it out fair! At last the pistol went off, and the ball passed through old Peter's cheek; but if it did, it did n't prevent him getting over Joe's breast as he fell, and beating his head against the ground, till he rolled over him himself out of weakness and fatigue; and when Peter came to himself, — Maher did n't, for he was dead!"

"Dead!" exclaimed she, — "murdered!"

"Not a bit murdered, but killed fair! Anyhow, the others ran away, and old Peter, as soon as he was able, made off, too, and got into the mountains, and now the police is after him, and a reward of fifty pounds offered for him, as if he was a wild beast. British law and justice, my darling; the beautiful code of laws that was made to civilize Ireland four centuries ago, and has n't done much to talk about up to this!"

"This is a very dreadful story," said she, after some time of silence. "And what is to become of this poor old man?"

"That depends on you, Miss Kate — Luttrell," added he, after a brief struggle with himself.

"On *me*? How can it depend upon *me*?"

"Here's how it is, then. If they catch Peter, what between the character he has already, and what's known of his sons, they'll make short work of it. He'll 'swing' as sure as you are there this minute. So there's nothing for it but to get him away to America by any of the ships coming round from the north, and it would be easy enough for him to get on board; but what's not so easy, Miss Kate, is to pay his passage. He has n't one shilling in the world. The boys got together last night, and all they could make up was eleven and fourpence; there it is, and a pawn ticket for an old pistol that nobody would give half a crown for —"

"But what can I do?" broke she in, passionately. "What can I do?"

"Help him with a few pounds. Give it or lend it; but let him have enough to make his escape, and not go to the 'drop' for want of a little help."

"There's not one belonging to him poorer than me,"

began she. "Why do you shake your head? Do you disbelieve me?"

"I do; that's just it."

"Shall I swear it, — shall I take my oath to you, that except the trifle that remains to me of what I had to pay my journey here, I have not one farthing in the world?"

"Then what's the fine story of the great castle where you were living, and the grand clothes and the jewels you used to wear? Do you mean to tell me that you left them all behind, when you came away?"

"It is true. I did so."

"And came off with nothing?"

She nodded, and he stared at her, partly in astonishment, and partly with some show of admiration; for, even to his nature, this conduct of hers displayed a degree of character that might be capable of great sacrifices.

"And so," said he, after a pause, "you can do nothing for him?"

"What can I do?" asked she, almost imploringly.

"I'll tell you," said he, calmly. "Go up to John Luttrell, and say, 'My grandfather is hiding from the police; they have a warrant out against him, and if he's taken he's sure to be condemned; and we know what mercy a Malone will meet at the assizes of Donegal.' Tell him — it's just the one thing he'll care for — that it would n't be pleasant for him to be summoned as a witness to character, and have to declare in open court that he married the prisoner's daughter. Say a ten-pound note, or even five, is a cheap price to pay for escaping all this disgrace and shame; and tell him, besides, when old Peter goes, you've seen the last of the family. He'll think a good deal of that, I promise you —"

"Stop," said she, boldly. "You know nothing of the temper of the man you talk of; but it is enough that I tell you he has got no money. Listen to me, O'Rorke. It was but yesterday he sent off a little ornament his wife used to wear to have it sold, to pay a county rate they were threatening to distrain for —"

"Where did you get all your law?" said he, jeeringly; but, not heeding the gibe, she went on, —

"I would have offered him the few shillings I had, but I was ashamed and afraid."

"How much is it?"

"A little more than two pounds. You shall have it; but remember, I can do no more. I have nothing I could sell, — not a ring, nor a brooch, — not even a pin."

"It's better than nothing," muttered he, surlily, below his breath. "Let me have it."

"It's up at the Abbey. Wait, and I'll fetch it. I'll not be an instant." And before he could answer she was gone. In less time than seemed possible she was back again, breathless and agitated. "Here it is," said she, placing the money in his hand. "If you should see him, tell him how grieved I am to be of such little service to him, and give him this silk handkerchief; tell him I used to wear it round my neck, and that I sent a kiss to him in it, — poor fellow! I almost wish I was with him," muttered she, as she turned away her head, for the hot tears filled her eyes; she felt weak and sick.

"I'm afraid this will do little good," said O'Rorke, looking at the money in his open palm.

"And yet I can do no more!" said she, with deep sorrow.

"Would n't you venture to tell your uncle how it is? Sure he might see that the disgrace, if this old man is caught and brought to trial, will spread to himself?"

"I dare not, — I will not," said she, firmly.

"Then I suppose the story is true, though old Peter would n't believe it, that John Luttrell made you sign a paper never to see nor speak to one of your own again?"

"I signed no paper, sir, nor ever was asked to sign any. What pledges I have given my uncle are not to be discussed with you."

"Well, you don't deny it, that's clear."

"Have you anything more that you wish to say to me?" asked she, controlling every show of temper.

"No; not a word," said he, turning to go away. "Only, if I see old Peter, — it's not unlike that I may, — he'll be asking me how tall you are, and how you're looking. Will you just come out from under the shade of that tree and let me have a fair look at you?"

Kate took off her bonnet and threw her shawl from her, and stood forward with an air as composed and assured as might be.

“Shall I tell you what I’ll say to him?” said O’Rorke, with an impudent half grin on his face.

“You need not, sir. It has no interest whatever for me. Good-bye!” She took up her shawl as she spoke, and walked slowly away.

O’Rorke looked after her; the mocking expression of his features changed to a look of almost hatred, and he muttered some angry words between his teeth. “I read you right, Miss Katty, when you were n’t much higher than my knee. I read you right! You may have plenty in love with you, but, by my conscience, you’ll never have Tim O’Rorke.”

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW KATE WAS TASKED.

FOR several days after this scene, Kate thought of nothing but her old grandfather, whether he still wandered an out-cast through the wild mountains of Donegal, or had succeeded in making his escape to America. At moments her anxieties became so intense, from fears lest she herself might prove blamable if his escape could not be effected, that she was almost resolved to go to her uncle and reveal all to him. Luttrell's manner had, however, been unusually cold and reserved for some time back, and she had not courage to take this step. Indeed, whole days would now pass with nothing but a mere greeting between them, and at length one entire day went over without her seeing him at all. It was said that he was very busy, had received a number of letters by the post, and was engaged a great part of the night in answering them. On the morning that followed this day, Kate was preparing the little basket in which she carried her luncheon with her to the hills, when she meditated a longer excursion than usual, when her uncle entered hastily, and with evident signs of agitation in his face.

"I have had disagreeable tidings, Kate," said he, with a forced calm of manner and voice. "I would have kept them from you if I could, but it is not possible. Some weeks ago there was a resistance to the sheriff by a party of country people, led on by that old man — no stranger to such conflicts — Malone. There was a fight, and a man, the sheriff's bailiff, was killed. There was no doubt who killed him. It was Malone. He made his escape, however, into West Donegal, waiting, as it was supposed, till, by some ship passing, — north about, — he could reach

America. The police, however, got possession of his plan, secured a revenue-cutter, and, lying in wait, arrested him in the very act of getting on board. Another struggle ensued here, and Malone fought with such desperation, that one of the men is badly wounded, and another drowned; for the small boat was upset in the conflict, and it is said that, had not Malone's arm been broken by a pistol-shot, he might yet have escaped by swimming around the ship, which was in full trim to have made sail when he should get on board. They captured him, however, and he is now in jail; he will be tried at the next assizes, and of his fate there can be no doubt."

"Condemned?" said she, in a low voice.

"Yes," he continued, "that he must be executed is also clear. The very name he bears is an indictment against him. The fellow, however, is full of the impression that everything he has done was in self-defence; he maintains that he merely resisted a personal attack, and he has the madness, in the face of all the convictions that have befallen his family, to declare that he belongs to a most irreproachable set of people, long known and respected in this neighborhood, and he has the daring effrontery — here in my hand is the letter that conveys it — to require that I should come forward to vouch for his character and acknowledge the relationship between us. Nor is this all," added he, in a voice husky with passion; "he demands, — it is no prayer, no entreaty, — he demands from me a sum sufficient to defray the costs of his defence. He asserts that though he himself is ready to take his chance, and, if need be, brave the worst the law can do to him, it might not suit Luttrell of Arran to sit under a two hours' cross-examination, and have his whole life laid bare for the amusement of the world. You cannot, without knowing the man, believe how seriously these threats are uttered, he is the most recklessly daring fellow I ever knew, and I can well conceive what questions he will suggest to his counsel to put to me if I once appear on the table. To-night I am to give my answer. The man he sends over here to receive it is the most offensive messenger he could have found had he searched Europe from one end to the other. He is a fellow named O'Rorke, who

once before placed me in a position almost similar to what I am now threatened with, and drove me to seek the shelter of this desolate spot. On that occasion, however, I escaped the indignity of personal exposure, and of that open shame that rise now before me. The demand is precise and clear. Twenty pounds down, fifty on the day before the trial comes on, and my name to a bill for fifty more if the jury bring in a verdict of not guilty. For this he pledges himself — these are his words — ‘never to be any longer a charge to me nor mine.’ I am well aware that the letter I hold here is not his own, for he cannot write; but I can trace through certain expressions — and, above all, certain repetitions — phrases inserted at his instance.”

“Am I spoken of, sir? Does he allude to me at all?”

“Never; not once. Indeed, he even says, ‘I hope that whatever you decide to do in this business will be your honor’s own mind and nobody else’s, for I write this in confidence between man and man, and only want Yes or No between us.’”

“And what will you do, sir? Have you come to any resolve?”

“Yes, I have made up my mind as to what is to be done immediately. I have examined my agent’s accounts, and I find that by the eighth of next month I shall have to my credit about seventy pounds. The assizes are fixed for the twelfth. I will give an order for half of this sum at once. Cane will pay it, I have no doubt, when he sees my necessity. I will also engage to pay the remainder on the eighth, the day I shall receive it; but on one condition, Kate, — only one condition; which is, that no matter what course the defence may take, I am not to be summoned as a witness. No one knows better than Malone himself how valueless would any testimony of mine be to him; he knows, besides, what detriment it would be to him if I should be cross-examined; the man’s character will not bear sifting, and he is insane to provoke it. If, however, he should persist — and such is the fellow’s nature that it is likely he will — in his own plan, we must leave this.”

“Leave this! And for where, sir?”

“How can I tell? I only know that I mean to save myself

from this shame at any cost. A few days would carry us over to Holland or to France. In either of these I should be safe. I have written to my agent, and consented to all his conditions as to the sale of a certain small estate I possess in Mayo. We must seek out a new banishment, Kate. You will say it can scarcely be drearier than the old one; but you don't know, you could not know, how sorrow endears a spot, and ties it to the heart of him who lives only to mourn! These rugged cliffs, these pathless moors, these barren hills, and sea-lashed promontories, have been my friends for years,—the only friends who have never changed to me. Let me now, however, think only of the present. This man is to be here to-night. It is more than likely he will be able to answer me at once, and declare whether Malone will accept my conditions."

"What think you, uncle, if I were to speak with him? Might it not be possible I could make some terms which you would n't have patience to treat about?"

"I thought of that, too, Kate, but the man is one of a class you have not met for many a year. It is not that he is not a gentleman, but he is not a peasant. You cannot appeal to him on the claim of honor, and as little on the plea of generosity. He is a cold, harsh, unfeeling fellow, distrustful and false. How could you deal with such a man?"

"A woman will always deal better with a man like this than a fellow-man, if only from the fact that he will be less on his guard before her, and more disposed to think little of her intelligence. Let me try it, uncle."

"You have half persuaded me; but still, Kate, what terms could you propose that I cannot offer myself?"

"True, sir; but I could press them in a way that your pride might not stoop to, and so let me try."

He paused to consider, and she went on, —

"Yes, dear uncle, trust the whole of this negotiation to me; it will be a task far too painful for you. Let me speak to him. Remember that the links that bind me to the class he belongs to have only been loosened a year or two back. I have a closer view of such men's natures than you could ever have, and in recognizing this he will be franker with me."

“If you really think —”

“I think and I know it, uncle.”

“Take this, then, Kate,” said he, handing her his purse. “It is all the ready money I have. It may help you to deal with him, Kate. I have told you everything. Do the best you can for us.” These words he muttered as if to himself, and then turned away and left the room.

Kate spread the money on the table before her, and sat down, supporting her head between her hands, and gazing steadfastly at the pieces. “To think,” said she, bitterly, — “to think that a few more or a few less of these shall tilt the scale of our fortune, and decide not alone whether we be happy or wretched, but whether we hold a high head in life or stand in a felon’s dock! And what scores of them have I not squandered in foolish wastefulness! — sums that any one of them now might rescue this poor old man from a dreadful fate, and set him at liberty. Has not my whole life been just as spendthrift, — have I not wasted every gift I possessed, and ended just where I begun?”

“The master sent me,” cried Molly, entering, “to say that there’s a boat comin’ in now, and, maybe, one you know would be aboard of her.”

“Very well, Molly. If a stranger should land and ask for his honor or myself, show him in here.”

CHAPTER IX.

HOW THE TASK TRIED HER.

KATE dressed herself with more than usual care, — simply, indeed, but with a degree of attention to becomingness that was truly remarkable. Twice did she alter the arrangement of her hair, and more than once did she try what colored ribbon would best suit the style she had chosen. A man might have passed, without notice, the little details by which she heightened the charms that were natural to her, but a woman would quickly have detected small traits of coquetry in the loose falling curls that fell upon her neck, and the open sleeve that displayed her finely turned arm; nor would the sprig of dark purple heath she wore in her bosom have escaped the critical eye, well knowing how its sombre coloring “brought out” the transparent brilliancy of the fair skin beneath it.

She had but completed her studied but simple toilet, when Molly ushered into the room, “The strange man, miss, that wants to see the master.”

“And that is only to see the mistress, I’m told,” added Mr. O’Rorke, as he seated himself, and laid his hat on the floor beside him. It was then that Kate entered; and as the fellow arose to greet her, his looks of admiring wonder sufficiently told what success had waited on her efforts.

“My uncle is not well enough to see you,” said she, as she sat down, “but he has told me everything that he would say, and I have ventured to assure him that as you and I are somewhat old friends, we should soon come to an understanding together; the more as we can have but the same wish in the object before us.”

“May I never! but you’re grown an elegant woman,” cried O’Rorke. “’T is n’t out of flattery I say it, but I don’t think there’s your equal in Dublin.”

"I'm very proud of your approval," said she, with a faint smile, but with the most perfect composure.

"And it's honest, — all honest," added he. "It is n't as if you was made up with paint, and false hair, and fine lace, and stiff silk. There you are, as simple as the turnpike man's daughter, and, by the harp of old Ireland, I'll back you against any beauty in St. James's this day."

"My dear Mr. O'Rorke, it's not quite fair to turn my head in this fashion. Don't forget that these are the sort of things I'm not accustomed to hear in this place."

"By my conscience, then, you'll hear them in many another place before you die. Listen to me now, Miss Luttrell. It's a shame and a scandal to them that could help it that you're not at the court of France this day. I'm talking good sense when I say you'd make a sensation there such as they never knew since that old blackguard Louis the Fourteenth gathered all the beauties in the world round him instead of pictures and statues. More by token, he was n't wrong; flesh and blood beats white marble and canvas easily."

"I suspect I see what sort of a king Mr. O'Rorke would have been!" said she, archly.

"Liberty, first of all, darling," said he, recalled by the personal appeal to the stock theme of his life; "'t is the birthright of the man as he steps on his native earth; 't is the first whisper of the human heart, whether in the frozen regions of eternal snow, or the sun-scorched plains of the tropics. 'T is for sacred liberty our fathers fought for seven centuries, and we'll fight for seven more.

'Erin go Bragh is a nation's cry,
'T is millions that sing it in chorus,
And to that tune, before we die,
We'll chase the Saxon before us.'

"Oh dear! oh dear!" cried he, wiping his brow. "Why did you set me off so? I took an oath on Saturday last that I'd think of nothing but old Peter till the trial was over, and here I am talking of Erin's woes just as if I was at Burgh Quay, and O'Connell in the chair."

"Let us talk of Peter, then. I am longing to hear of him."

“It’s a short story. They caught him at sea, in an open boat; he was making for a brig bound for Newfoundland. They caught him, but they had a fight for it, and they got the worst of it too. Old Peter was n’t a man to be taken with his arms crossed. But it was all the worse, for Tom Crowe says the last business will go harder with him than the first, and Tom says what’s true. They’d rather hang Peter Malone than any other ten men in the West of Ireland. This is the fifth time they’ve had him in the dock; but to be sure he had a fine bar the last trial. He had Daniel O’Connell and Dick Sheil.”

“And who will defend him now?” asked she, eagerly.

“That’s what your uncle Luttrell must answer, Miss Kate; he is the only one who can reply to that question.”

“Listen to me now attentively, and I will explain to you my uncle’s position; a very few words will suffice, and you are not a man to require more than are necessary. He has by great effort and at heavy sacrifice got a small sum of money —”

“What do you call a small sum?” broke he in. “Is it a hundred?”

“No; not fifty!”

A long whistle was O’Rorke’s reply, as he arose and took up his hat.

“You had better hear me out,” said she, calmly. “This sum I have here, — it is thirty-five pounds; he empowers me to place it in your hands to-day, with the promise of as much more the day before the assizes open.”

“And why not at once? Why not now?”

“You shall hear. He desires and demands, in return for this aid, that he be not summoned as a witness on the trial. To call him would be a needless exposure, — a mere valueless cruelty.”

“It would not,” cried the other, fiercely. “It’s not at this time of day any one has to know the effect of putting a gentleman in the witness-box, when it is a poor laboring man is in the dock. Let John Luttrell come into court, and after sitting beside the Chief Baron on the Bench, get up on the table and take his oath that he has known Peter Malone, the prisoner, for more than twenty years, as a hard-working,

quiet, decent man, trying to bring up his family respectably, and, indeed, with such a desire to better their condition in life, that he, John Luttrell of Arran, was not ashamed to make one of that same Peter Malone's daughters his wife, so well brought up, so well educated were they — ”

“ Stop! this cannot be. I tell you it is impossible.”

“ And why is it impossible? It is true what I am saying? Was Peter Malone's daughter John Hamilton Luttrell's wife or not? There's the whole question. And what sort of a man or gentleman is he that is ashamed to own his wife?”

“ Do not speak so loud; and now listen to me. My uncle, for his own good reasons, will not face the exposure of a public trial and the insolence of the Crown lawyers, who would not hesitate to rake up long-buried accusations against him, and revive sorrows which even in their decay embitter his life. He will not endure this, and he is right.”

“ Right to deny a man his chance of life!”

“ You know well — none better — how little my uncle's testimony could serve this poor man. His case is too serious for that.”

“ I won't go over that again,” said he, impatiently. “ I have n't any time to throw away in arguments. If you put the whole seventy pounds down on the table, it would n't do! No, it would not. It will take thirty, to begin with, to get Billy Sloane out of the country, and he it is the Crown relies on for the first charge; he saw old Peter strike the bailiff first. M'Nulty is the cheapest of the 'silk gowns,' and he won't come under fifty, and a retainer of ten more. The 'Westport Star' wants ten pounds to put in the article threatening the jury, if they don't bring in a verdict of 'Not Guilty,' because, as Mr. Potter says, 'Word it as carefully as you like, it's a contempt of court, and may send me for a year to jail.' Make money of that, Miss Kitty. Thirty and fifty is eighty, and ten more, ninety, and ten to the newspaper is a hundred; and after that there is the cost to Tom Crowe, and the expenses of the case, not to speak of the daily livin' in the jail, that's something terrible. There's not a pint of sperits does n't cost three shillings!”

“ But if we have no more? — if we have given every farthing we can raise?”

“T is a nice confession for an estated gentleman, for the man that writes himself Luttrell of Arran, that, to save his father, or father-in-law, from the death of a felon, he could only scrape together seventy pounds!”

“You have only to look around you, and see how we are living, to see that it is the truth.”

“Many a miser that won’t give himself bread passes the night counting over his guineas.”

“He is no miser, sir,” said she, indignantly, for all her self-control failed her at this point. “If he were not a generous gentleman, he would never have made the proposal I have now told you of.”

“Tell the generous gentleman, then, to keep his money, young *lady* ;” and he laid a sarcastic emphasis on the word. “Tell him I’ll not touch a shilling of it. And I’ll tell you more that you may tell him; say that he’ll want it all to buy himself a new suit of clothes to make a decent appearance when he’s summoned to come forward at the trial.”

“You’d no more dare to utter this insolence to his face than you’d brave the anger of his people here when they heard he was insulted; and take my word for it, Tim O’Rorke, I’m only hesitating this moment whether I’ll not tell them.”

As she spoke, she flung wide the window, and looked out upon the shore beneath, where some thirty wild islanders were listlessly lounging and waiting for the tide to ebb.

O’Rorke grew lividly pale at a threat so significant. If there was anything that had a greater terror for him than another, it was a popular vengeance.

“Well, sir, do you like the prospect from this window?” asked she. “Come here, and tell me if it is not interesting.”

“It’s wild enough, if you mean that,” said he, with a forced effort to seem calm.

“Tim O’Rorke,” said she, laying her hand on his arm, and looking at him with an expression of kindly meaning, “it is not in their trouble that friends should fall out. I know what affection you have for my poor old grandfather —”

“So, then, you own him?” cried he, scoffingly.

“When did I disown him?”

“Maybe not; but it’s the first time since I entered this room that you called him by that name.”

She flushed up; but after a moment, repressing her anger, she said, —

“Let us think only of him whose life is in peril. What do you advise? — what do you wish?”

“I have no more to say, Miss Kate. I have told you what the defence will cost, I have told you that we have nobody to look to but yourselves, and *you* have just told me that it’s a broken reed we’re leaning on, and now I don’t think there’s much more to be said by either of us.”

She leaned her forehead against the wall and seemed deeply lost in thought.

“I must n’t lose the tide, any way,” said he, taking up his hat and stick, and laying them on the table. “I may as well put old Peter out of pain, for anxiety is the greatest of all pain, and tell him that John Luttrell won’t help him.”

“Not will not, — say that he cannot help him!”

“T is little difference it makes whether it’s the will or the way is wanting when a drowning man cries out, and nobody gives him a hand. And yet,” added he, “it will be hard to persuade old Peter that his daughter’s husband could be so cold-hearted. I’m thinking you ought to write a line or two with your own hand, and saying that it was no fault of mine that I did n’t bring better news back with me.”

She made him no answer, and after a pause he went on, —

“There’s his money, miss, — give it back to him; much good may it do him. He has the comfort of thinking that if he did n’t get a fortune with his wife, her relations never cost him much, either.” He moved away towards the door. “Good-bye, Miss Kate. Tell your uncle that Peter’s case is the third on the list, and he’ll be time enough if he leaves home on the 9th, — that will be Tuesday week.”

She turned hastily round, and overtook him as he laid his hand on the lock of the door.

“One word, — only one word more, O’Rorke!” cried she, impassionedly. “I have told you faithfully what my uncle

charged me with. I swear to you, before Heaven, I do not know of any help he can offer except this. Now, if there is any way that you can think of to serve this poor old man, say so, and I swear to you again, if it depends on me, I'll do it!"

"Would it be too late to write to Vyner?" asked he, half doggedly.

"Utterly. He is in Italy. Besides, my uncle tells me he is in some great trouble himself about money."

"What of that other — I forget his name — where you were living last?"

"Sir Within Wardle? Impossible! — impossible!"

"And why?"

"I cannot tell you. But I may say this, that I'd rather beg in the street than I'd stoop to ask him."

"Is n't he rich?"

"Immensely rich."

"And he is generous and free of his money, you always said?"

"I never heard of one more so."

"There's the two things we want, — money, and the man that will give it. Sit down there, and write these lines to him: 'My grandfather is to be tried this assizes on a charge of wilful murder. I have no money to pay for his defence. Will you help me?'"

"Oh, no, no! I could not! — I could not!" cried she, covering her face with both her hands.

"Why, it's only this minute you were ready to swear to me that you'd do anything in the world to save him, and now that I've hit on this, you cry out, 'No — no!' as if I was proposing something to shame and disgrace you."

"Shame and disgrace, indeed!" burst she out, as a sickly color came over her, and she looked like one recovering after a fainting-fit.

"Well, I'm no judge of these things," muttered he; "but I'd like to know what it is that would be harder to feel than the sight of an old man of eighty-two going to the gallows!"

She gave a sharp cry, and held her head with both hands, as if some sudden sharp pang shot through her.

“Do not — do not, Tim O’Rorke! I can’t bear it!” she screamed out, in a voice of wild, harsh meaning.

“I’ll never ask you again,” said he, slowly; “but maybe the day will come when you’ll be sorry that I did not! Good-bye.”

She made no answer, but sat with her face hid in her hands, and turned towards the wall.

“Good-bye, Miss Kate,” repeated he once more; and opening the door slowly, he went out, and closed it after him.

She never stirred nor raised her head, till, by a rustling sound of the branches at the window, she was startled and looked up. It was O’Rorke, who was leaning on the sill of the window, and looking in.

“Would you give me a scrap of something you were wearing — a bit of ribbon, or the like, I know you are not fond of cutting off your hair — to give the old man? He’d rather have it than a crown jewel — ”

“Take this!” cried she, snatching up a scissors, and cutting off the long and silky lock that fell in a curl upon her neck; and turning to the table, she folded it neatly in a piece of paper. She took up her pen, too, but the thought that he could not read deterred her; for what she would have written she could not bear that other eyes than his own should trace, and she sat thinking for some minutes, when suddenly, through what train of thought impelled it is not easy to say, she cried out, “Yes, I will do it! Come back — wait a moment — or, better still, leave me to myself an instant, and I shall be ready.”

He left the window, and she sat down at the table. Without a moment’s hesitation or reflection she wrote thus: —

“ST. FINBAR’S, ARRAN.

“SIR, — I make no attempt to deprecate your anger, or palliate the wrong I have done you. My offence is one that only a free pardon could cover, and I do not dare to entreat for this. It is for something more, and less than forgiveness, I have now to ask you.

“My grandfather, a man of eighty, is in jail, about to be tried on a charge of felony; he declares his innocence, but having no means to pay counsel, despairs of establishing the fact. My uncle cannot help him; will you?

“When I think of the time that I had not to speak a wish till I saw it gratified, I sicken over the ingratitude which drives me to approach you as a suppliant, while I promise never again to address you.

“The bearer of the present note will take charge of your answer, should you deign to reply to your unhappy, because unworthy,

“KATE LUTTRELL.”

“Are you ready with the letter?” asked O’Rorke, as he leaned his arms on the window-sill and looked into the room.

“Yes,” said she, folding and addressing it. “You will set out immediately, and deliver this into the hands of Sir Within Wardle, at Dalradern Castle. It is about fourteen miles from Wrexham. Mind! into his own hands, for I am not sure how or by whom he may now be surrounded. As little can I guess what sort of a reply he may give; he may reject my entreaty; he may even refuse to answer it. He would have every right to do either. Let it be your care to note him closely as he reads my letter, and mark what effect it produces. I shall question you, when you come back, on the minutest details of your meeting, — of all that he says, of his manner, of his looks; whether he speaks of me, and how. You know well — few better — how to acquit yourself in such a scene, and be sure that you address your sharpest wits to it. If he be ill and cannot write, tell him that he may trust you with a verbal answer. *I* have not said so in my note, but *you* may, and he will believe you; he reads men quickly, and he will see that you are in my confidence. If he asks you about me and my life here, answer freely whatever your own judgment prompts; he may question you about the place I live in; tell him what it is like.”

“Don’t give me any more directions, if you don’t want me to forget some of them; only tell me one thing. If he asks me as to what amount might be required for the defence, am I to say the highest figure or the lowest?”

“You are to adhere to the strict truth, O’Rorke, and for this reason, if for no other, that you will be in the presence of a man well accustomed to deal with craftier men than yourself, and that all your attempts at deception would go for nothing.”

“And if he says, ‘Why don’t Mr. Luttrell come forward to help one of his own near relations?’”

“He will not ask this.”

“And why would n’t he?”

“Because he is a gentleman, sir.”

“Oh, that’s the reason,” said O’Rorke, sneeringly. “Well, I think by this time I know as much about him as I am likely to do till I see him, so I’ll be going.”

“Have you any money for this journey?”

“Of course I have n’t. I suppose I’ll need five pounds to come and go.”

“Take ten,” said she, pushing the notes towards him.

“I will try and settle matters with my uncle later.”

“By St. Peter! you ought to have been born a lady with a fine estate,” cried he, rapturously. “You have a grand way of doing things, anyhow!”

She smiled at the flattery; it was not at all displeasing to her, and she held out her hand at him as she said, “Good-bye.”

“You’ll see me here by Saturday next, if I’m alive.”

“May it be with good news,” said she, waving a good-bye.

“My love to old grandfather.” Scarcely was the last word uttered, when Luttrell opened the door stealthily, and peeped in.

“How long this interview has lasted, Kate!” said he; “what have you done?”

“You must wait till next Saturday, uncle, for my answer, and I hope it will content you.”

“Why not tell me now?”

“Because I could not tell you enough, sir.”

“I am not wont to be treated as a child whose fortunes are to be in the keeping of others!” said he, sternly. “When Saturday comes, it may be to hear that which I cannot approve of, — which I will not accept.”

“Yes, sir, you will,” said she, calmly. “You charged me to do my best; and when I shall have done so, you will not discredit me.”

CHAPTER X.

MR. O'RORKE ABROAD.

ALBEIT Mr. O'Rorke had no partiality for the Saxon, he did not dislike his English tour. It was an occasion for much enjoyment in the present, with a prospect of considerable expatiation over in the future. He travelled — and it is a mode which occasionally enhances the enjoyment of travel — at another's expense; and he indulged in many little luxuries not known to his daily life.

It was toward the close of a glorious day, mellow in all the richness of autumn, that he first caught sight of the great massive towers and battlemented walls of Dalradern Castle. The setting sun had just fallen on the windows, and the vast frontage was illuminated with a golden glory that relieved the stern severity of the heavy masonry, and gave warmth and color to its cold and stately feudalism.

“And she left this for that rock, — that miserable rock in the ocean,” cried he. “What could possess her to do it? She was no fool, that was clear enough. It was no fool could have made herself what she was; and what else but folly could make any one exchange that princely place for the wild and dreary desolation of Arran? There's more in this than one sees on the surface,” thought O'Rorke. “It's not in human nature to believe that she did not enjoy the grand life such a house must supply, — the very aspect of it suggested everything that wealth could compass, and it could not be that she did not attach herself to its enjoyments. No; there must have been a reason, or something that she thought was a reason, for it. Ay, and that same reason, whatever it was, must have been the source of her great unwillingness to address Sir Within. She left him in anger, that's plain enough; and about what could it be? Had she

wearied him? Had her temper or her caprice or her extravagance tired out his patience? Was it that the self-indulgence of the spoiled child had at last revolted the very spirit that had spoiled her? or was it" — and, to O'Rorke's thinking, this seemed not improbable — "Sir Within had made her some proposals, not merely offensive to her dignity, but an outrage to her ambition? If I know you, Miss Katty," said he, aloud, "you never lived in that grand house without dreaming of the time you'd be the mistress of it. And what made you give up the game? That's what I'd like to know, and it's what I'll try to find out before I leave this."

As he drew near the Castle, the stately grandeur of the place impressed him still more. Never had he seen such magnificent timber, — never before had he witnessed that marvellous order and propriety which give even to a vast park all the elegance of a garden. The clumps of flowery shrubs, in spots that few would probably ever visit, — rare trees in out-of-the-way places, — seemed to show what immense resources existed where so much that was valuable could be squandered uncared for.

One of the keepers, by whom he was accompanied from the gate-lodge, discoursed to him freely as they went along, telling of the hundreds of acres enclosed within the demesne, the extensive gardens and pleasure-grounds, to keep which in order required quite a regiment of laborers, "and all," as the man added, "for an old man that sits all day at a window, and only comes out of an evening to take the air on a terrace. Never sees any one, nor goes anywhere; and won't even dine with his young relation, Mr. Ladarelle, who is down here for the shooting."

O'Rorke skirmished, cautiously of course, to ascertain whether the man could tell him anything of Kate; but he found that he had only lately entered the service, and never heard of her. He had heard, however, that Sir Within was greatly changed of late; some heavy blow, of what sort he knew not, had befallen him, and he now neither rode out nor drove, did not care to enter the garden, and, in fact, seemed weary of his life, and indifferent to everything.

"There he is now on the terrace, taking his evening walk.

I must n't go any farther with you; but when you pass the two large oaks yonder, you'll see the great entrance; ring the bell, and some one will come to you."

O'Rorke went on his way, but had not gone far when he was overtaken by a servant in livery, who, bareheaded and almost breathless from running, demanded angrily, "What he was doing there?"

"I have a letter for your master that I wish to deliver at once," replied he, firmly.

"Give it here, and wait for your answer round there by the stables."

"No such thing, my smart fellow; I am to deliver my letter into your master's hand, and I will give it to no other."

"You're more likely, then, to take it back with you," said the other, jeeringly, and turned away.

"Tell your master that my letter comes from Ireland," cried O'Rorke after him, "and that it is one won't brook delay." But whether the fellow heard him or not, he could not say.

In less time, however, than he believed it possible for the man to have given his message, came a demure-looking man in black from the Castle, who beckoned him to come forward.

"Are you the bearer of a letter from Ireland?" asked he.

"Yes. It is to be given to Sir Within Wardle's own hand."

"Come along with me, then."

O'Rorke was too much excited by the thought of the presence he was about to stand in, to note more than generally the spacious hall and the immense marble stairs that led from it. The lofty corridor, whose windows of stained glass threw a rose-colored glow over walls and pavement, together with the rich perfume of flowers, made his head feel confused and addled.

As the servant ushered him on the terrace, he whispered, "Go forward," and then retired. O'Rorke advanced to where Sir Within was now seated, one arm leaning on the table beside him.

"You said you came from Ireland," asked he, in a weak voice; "is it from Arran?"

"It is, sir."

"Thank Heaven!" muttered he to himself. "Give me your letter. Go down yonder," — and he pointed to the extreme end of the terrace, — "I shall call you when I want you."

When O'Rorke reached the end of the terrace, he turned a cautious, furtive look towards the old man, who still sat with the unopened letter in his hand, and did not move. At last he broke the seal; but such seemed the agitation of his feelings that he could scarcely read it, for he twice laid it on the table and hid his face between his hands. Suddenly he looked up and beckoned O'Rorke towards him, and said, —

"Tell me, my good man, do you know the contents of this letter?"

"I know what it is about, sir."

"Were you with her when she wrote it?"

"I was."

"Was it of her own will, — at the suggestion of her own thoughts? I mean, did she write this willingly and without a struggle?"

"That she did n't! She wrote it just because that without it her old grandfather would n't have even a chance for his life! She wrote it, crying bitterly all the time, and sobbing as if her heart was breaking."

The old man turned away his head, but with his hand motioned to the other to cease speaking. Either O'Rorke, however, did not understand the gesture, or he unheeded it. He went on, —

"'I'd rather,' says she, 'see my right hand cut off than see it write these lines,' says she."

"There! there!" burst in Sir Within, "that will do, — that is enough, — say no more of this!"

But O'Rorke, intent on finding out what had been the relations between them, and why they had been severed, in spite of all admonition, continued, —

"'Sure, Miss Kate,' says I, 'it is not one that was once so kind and so generous to you will see you in trouble for a

trifle like this.' For, of course, it would be a trifle to your honor!"

"And yet she felt it a humiliation to ask me?" said he, despondingly.

"She did, indeed! 'For,' says she, 'he may refuse me.'"

"No, no; she never thought that; she knew me better than to believe it."

"Well, indeed, sir, it was what I thought myself, and I said in my own mind, 'It's more ashamed she is than afeard.'"

"Ashamed of what?" cried Sir Within, passionately. "What has shame to do with it?"

The subtle peasant saw through what a channel the misconception came, and, still bent on tracing out the mysterious tie between them, said, —

"After all, sir, for a young lady, and a handsome one too, to ask a great favor of a gentleman not belonging to her, kith or kin, is a thing that bad tongues would make the worst of if they got hold of it."

Sir Within's sallow cheek flushed up, and in a broken voice he said, —

"Bad tongues are only tyrants to those who cannot brave them. Miss Kate Luttrell is not of their number. You shall soon see if these same bad tongues have any terrors for me."

"I'm a poor man, but I was n't so always," said O'Rorke, "and I know well that it was slander and lying crushed *me*."

The diversion was intended to have awakened some curiosity as to his former condition, but Sir Within was perfectly indifferent on the subject. All the interest the messenger had in *his* eyes came from the fact that he came from *her*, that he had seen *her*, and was near her when she wrote.

"This island, — I only know it by the map," said Sir Within, trying to talk in an easy, unconcerned strain, — "it's very poor, I believe?"

"You might say wretched, and be nearer the mark."

"Is it celebrated for sport? Is the shooting or the fishing the great attraction?"

“There’s no shooting, nor any fishing but the deep-sea fishery; and more men are lost in that than there are fortunes made of it.”

“And what could have induced Mr. Luttrell to take up his abode in such a spot?”

“The same thing that sends men off to America and Australia and New Zealand; the same thing that makes a man eat black bread when he can’t get white; the same thing that — But what’s the use of telling you about the symptoms, when you never so much as heard of the disease?”

“Miss Luttrell’s life must be a very lonely one,” said Sir Within, with every effort to talk in a tone of unconcern.

“’T is the wonder of wonders how she bears it. I asked the woman that lives with them how she passed her time, and what she did; and she said, ‘She takes up everything for a week or ten days, and goes at it as if her life depended on it.’ One time it was gathering plants, and sprigs of heath, and moss, and the like, — even seaweed she’d bring home, — going after them up crags and cliffs that a goat could n’t climb. Then she’d give up that and take to gardening, and work all day long; then it was making fishing-nets; then it was keeping a school, and teaching the fishermen’s children; she even tried to teach them to sing, till a sudden thought struck her that they ought to have a lifeboat on the island, and she set to writing to all the people that she could think of to send a plan of one, meaning, I suppose,” — There he grinned, — “to make it herself afterwards.”

Sir Within listened eagerly to all this, and then asked, —

“And her uncle, — does he aid her in these projects?”

“He! It’s little he troubles himself about her. Why, it’s often three days that they don’t even meet. They never take their meals together. It’s a wonder of kindness from him the day that he’ll tap the window of her room with his knuckles and say ‘Good morning;’ and when she’d get up to open the window to answer him, he’d be gone.”

“How desolate, how dreary!” muttered the old man. “Does this wearisome life prey upon her? Is she altered in appearance, — thinner or paler?”



Free occupations



"I'll tell you how she looks, and there's not a man in Ireland understands a woman's face better than him before you; and here's what it means, in three words. It means scorn for a world that could let the like of her wither and waste on that lonely rock; for it's not alone beauty she has, but she has grace and elegance, and a way of charming about her that's more than beauty, and there's a something in her voice, — what it is I don't know, but it goes on thrilling into you after she has done speaking, till you just feel that a spell was working in you and making you a slave."

"And *you* have felt this?" said the old man, as though involuntarily demanding an avowal that would have set the seal of confirmation on her magic.

And the cunning Celt felt all the force of the sarcasm, while it did not suit his purpose to confess it. And yet it needed great self-control to suppress his rising anger, and keep him from declaring that, in a matter of sentiment, or on a question of female captivation, he, Tim O'Rorke, patriot, martyr, and Paddy as he was, yielded to no man.

"Would you kindly ring that bell beside you, Mr. — Mr. —"

"O'Rorke, sir."

"Mr. O'Rorke, I am diffident about my pronunciation of Irish names," added the old diplomatist, cautiously veiling the sin of his forgetfulness. A servant speedily appeared, and Sir Within ordered him to take every care for "this gentleman's accommodation." "I shall be able to prepare my reply to this letter to-night, Mr. O'Rorke, and you will be free to leave this at any hour that may suit you in the morning."

O'Rorke retired from the presence, well satisfied with himself, and with the way he had acquitted himself.

"Would you like to have the papers, sir, or would you prefer seeing the gallery, while supper is getting ready?" asked the obsequious servant.

"I'll take a look at your pictures. I have a few myself," said Mr. O'Rorke; which was perfectly true, though they were not in the first taste as objects of art, being certain colored prints of Hempenstall, the walking gallows, the cap-

ture of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and a few similar subjects from the year '98, in which, certes, the countenances bestowed on the Royalists essentially distinguished them in the most crowded *mêlées* from all honest patriots.

Leaving Mr. O'Rorke, then, to examine, at his leisure, Sir Within's varied treasures, we make no excuse to our reader for not recording the criticism he passed upon them.

CHAPTER XI.

TWO OF A TRADE.

WHETHER an uneasy consciousness that he might not be able to display a proper spirit of connoisseurship before that bland, soft-spoken domestic who accompanied him through the picture-gallery, and who, doubtless, had enjoyed various opportunities of imbibing critical notions on art, disposed Mr. O'Rorke, — or whether he deemed that his own enjoyment of the splendor would be higher if unwitnessed, is not given to us to pronounce; but so it was, that he dismissed his guide very soon, and declared that he preferred to ramble about quite alone. The well-trained servant bowed and withdrew, and Mr. O'Rorke was left to revel at will amidst the magnificence of Dalradern.

There were art treasures there to have fixed the attention and captivated the gaze of more cultivated admirers; but these attracted less of his notice than the splendid furniture, the inlaid tables, the richly incrustated cabinets, the gorgeously gilded "consoles," which, as he surveyed, he appraised, till he actually lost himself in the arithmetic of his valuation. Nor was this mere unprofitable speculation; far from it. Mr. O'Rorke was a most practical individual, and the point to which his calculation led him was this: How much depletion will all this plethora admit of? What amount of money may be a fair sum to extract from a man of such boundless wealth? "I'd have let him off for a hundred pounds," said he to himself, "as I came up the avenue, and I would n't take three now, to give him a receipt in full!" In the true spirit of a brigand, he estimated that his prisoner's ransom should be assessed by the measure of his fortune.

Wandering on from room to room, still amazed at the extent and splendor he surveyed, he opened the door, and

suddenly found himself in a large room brilliantly lighted, and with a table copiously covered with fruit and wine. As he stood, astonished at the sight, a voice cried out, "Holloa, who 's that? What do you want?" And though O'Rorke would willingly have retreated, he was so much embarrassed by his intrusion that he could not move.

"Who the — are you?" cried out the voice again. And now O'Rorke perceived that a young man was half sitting, half lying in the recess of a very deep chair beside the fire, with his legs resting on another chair. "I say," cried he, again, "what brings you here?" And as it was young Ladarelle that spoke, the reader may possibly imagine that the tone was not over-conciliatory.

Retreat was now out of the question; not to say that Mr. O'Rorke had regained his self-possession, and was once more assured and collected. Advancing, therefore, till he came in front of the other, he made his apologies for the accident of his intrusion, and explained how he happened to be there.

"And where 's the letter you say you brought?" broke in Ladarelle, hurriedly.

"I gave it to Sir Within Wardle; he has it now."

"Where did it come from? Who wrote it?"

"It came from Ireland, and from a part of Ireland that maybe you never heard of."

"And the writer, — who was he?"

"That 's no business of *mine*," said O'Rorke; but he contrived to give the words the significance that would mean, "Nor of *yours*, either."

"I think I can guess without your help, my worthy friend; and I have suspected it would come to this for many a day. What relation are you to her?"

"Your honor must explain yourself better, if you want a clear answer," replied he, in some confusion.

"Don't fence with me, my fine fellow. I'm more than your match at that game. I see the whole thing with half an eye. She wants to come back!"

As he said the last words, he sat up straight in the chair, and darted a searching, stern look at the other.

"Faix, this is all riddles to *me*," said O'Rorke, folding

his hands, and looking his very utmost to seem like one puzzled and confused.

“What a — fool you are,” cried Ladarelle, passionately, “not to see that you may as well tell me now, what, before two hours are over, I shall know for nothing; out with it. What was in the letter?”

“How can I tell what’s in a sealed letter?” said O’Rorke, sulkily, for he was not very patient under this mode of interrogation.

“You know who wrote it, at all events?”

“I’ll tell you what I know!” said O’Rorke, resolutely. “That I’ll not answer any more questions, and that I’ll leave this room now.”

As he turned towards the door, Ladarelle sprang up and said, “You mistake me, my good fellow, if you think I want all this for nothing. If you knew a little more of me, you’d see I was a pleasanter fellow to deal with than my old relation yonder. What is your name?”

“My name,” said he, with a sort of dogged pride, — “*my* name is O’Rorke.”

“Timothy O’Rorke? Ain’t I right?”

“You are, indeed, however you knew it.”

“You shall soon see. I have had a letter for you in my writing-desk for many a long day. ‘Timothy O’Rorke, Vinegar Hill, Cush — something or other, Ireland.’”

“And who wrote it, sir?” said O’Rorke, approaching him, and speaking in a low, anxious voice.

“I’ll be more frank with you than you are with me. I’ll give you the letter, O’Rorke.”

“But tell me who wrote it?”

“One who was your well-wisher, and who told me I might trust you.”

There was never a more puzzling reply than this; for Mr. O’Rorke well knew that there were few who thought well of him, and fewer who trusted him.

“Sit down. Take a glass of wine. Drink this.” And as he spoke, he filled a large goblet with sherry.

O’Rorke drained it, and looked happier.

“Take another,” said Ladarelle, as he filled it out; and O’Rorke complied, smacking his lips with satisfaction as he finished.

“When you have read the letter I’ll give you this evening, O’Rorke, you’ll see that we are two men who will readily understand each other. My friend Grenfell said — ”

“Was it Mr. Grenfell wrote it?” broke in O’Rorke.

“It was. You remember him, then? He was afraid you might have forgotten his name.”

“That’s what I never did yet.”

“All right, then. What he said was, ‘Show O’Rorke that you mean to deal liberally with him. Let him see that you don’t want to drive a hard bargain, and he’ll stand by you like a man.’ ”

“When he said that, he knew me well.”

“He said that you were a fine-hearted, plucky fellow, who had not the success he deserved in life.”

“And he said true; and he might have said that others made a stepping-stone of me, and left me to my fate when they passed over me!”

The door opened at this moment, and the bland butler announced that the “gentleman’s supper was served.”

“Come in here, Mr. O’Rorke, when you have finished, and I’ll give you a cigar. I want to hear more about the snipe-shooting,” said Ladarelle, carelessly; and, without noticing the other’s leave-takings, he returned to his easy-chair and his musings.

“I wonder which of the two is best to deal with,” muttered O’Rorke to himself, and on this text he speculated as he ate his meal. It was a very grand moment of his existence, certainly; he was served on silver, fed by a French cook, and waited on by two servants, — one being the black-coated gentleman, whose duty seemed to be in anticipating Mr. O’Rorke’s desires for food or drink, and whose marvellous instincts were never mistaken. “Port, always port,” said he, holding up his glass. “It is the wine that I generally drink at home.”

“This is fourteen, sir; and considered very good,” said the butler, obsequiously; for, humble as the guest appeared, his master’s orders were to treat him with every deference and attention.

“Fourteen or fifteen, I don’t care which,” said O’Rorke, not aware to what the date referred; “but the wine pleases me, and I’ll have another bottle of it.”

He prolonged his beatitude till midnight, and though Mr. Fisk came twice to suggest that Mr. Ladarelle would like to see him, O'Rorke's answer was, each time, "The day for business, the evening for relaxation. Them's my sentiments, young man."

At last a more peremptory message arrived, that Mr. Ladarelle wanted him at once; and O'Rorke, with a promptitude that astonished the messenger, arose, and, cooling his brow and bathing his temples with a wet napkin, seemed in an instant to restore himself to his habitual calm.

"Where is he?" asked he.

"In his dressing-room. I'll show you the way," said Fisk. "I don't think you'll find him in a pleasant humor, though. You've tried his patience a bit."

"Not so easy to get speech of you, Mr. O'Rorke," said Ladarelle, when they were alone. "This is about the third or fourth time I have sent to say I wanted you."

"The port, sir, the port! It was impossible to leave it. Indeed, I don't know how I tore myself away at last."

"It will be your own fault if you have n't a bin of it in your cellar at home."

"How so?"

"I mean that as this old place and all belonging to it must one day be mine, it will be no very difficult matter to me to recompense the man who has done me a service."

"And are you the heir, sir?" asked O'Rorke, for the first time his voice indicating a tone of deference.

"Yes, it all comes to me; but my old relative is bent on trying my patience. What would you say his age was?"

"He's not far off eighty."

"He wants six or seven years of it. Indeed, until the other day, he did not look seventy. He broke down all at once."

"That's the way they all do," said O'Rorke, sententiously.

"Yes; but now and then they make a rally, Master O'Rorke, and that's what I don't fancy. Do you understand me?"

In the piercing look that accompanied these words there seemed no common significance; and O'Rorke, drawing

closer to the speaker, dropped his voice to a mere whisper, and said, "Do you want to get rid of him?"

"I'd be much obliged to him if he would die," said the other, with a laugh.

"Of course, — of course that's what I mean," said O'Rorke, who now began to suspect he was going too fast.

"I'll be frank with you, O'Rorke, because I want you; but, first of all, there's the letter I had for you;" and he pitched the document across the table.

O'Rorke drew the candle towards him, and perused the paper slowly and carefully.

"Well!" said Ladarelle, when he had finished, — "well! what do you say to that?"

"I say two things to it," said O'Rorke, calmly. "The first is, what am I to do? and the second is, what am I to get for it?"

"What you are to do is this: you are to serve my interest, and help me in every way in your power."

"Am I to break the law?" burst in O'Rorke.

"No; at least, no very serious breach."

"Nothing against that old man up there?" And he made a strange and significant gesture, implying violence.

"No, no, nothing of the kind. You don't think me such a fool as to risk a halter out of mere impatience. I'll run neither you nor myself into such danger as that. When I said you were to serve me, it was in such ways as a man may help another by zeal, activity, ready-wittedness, and now and then, perhaps, throwing overboard a few scruples, and proving his friendship by straining his conscience."

"Well, I won't haggle about that. My conscience is a mighty polite conscience, and never drops in on me without an invitation!"

"The man I want, — the very man. Grenfell told me you were," said Ladarelle, taking his hand, and shaking it cordially. "Now let me see if you can be as frank with *me* as I have been with you, O'Rorke. What was this letter that you brought here this evening? Was it from *her*?"

"It was."

"From herself, — by her own hand?"

“By her own hand!”

“Are you perfectly sure of that?”

“I saw her write it.”

Ladarelle took a turn up and down the room after this without speaking. At last he broke out, —

“And this is the high spirit and the pride they’ve been cramming me with! This is the girl they affected to say would die of hunger rather than ask forgiveness!”

“And they knew her well that said it. It’s just what she’d do!”

“How can you say that now? Here she is begging to be taken back again!”

“Who says so?”

“Was not that the meaning of the letter?”

“It was not, — the devil a bit of it! I know well what was in it, though I did n’t read it. It was to ask Sir Within Wardle to send her some money to pay for the defence of her grandfather, that’s to be tried for murder next Tuesday week. It nearly broke her heart to stoop to it, but I made her do it. She called it a shame and a disgrace; and the tears ran down her face; and, by my soul, it’s not a trifle would make the same young lady cry!”

“After all, the intention is to open a way to come back here?”

“I don’t believe it.”

“I suspect, Master O’Rorke, this is rather a pleasanter place to live in than the Arran Islands.”

“So it is; there’s no doubt of that! But she is young, and thinks more about her pride than her profit; not to say that she comes of a stock that’s as haughty in their own wild way as ever a peer in the land.”

“There never was a better bait to catch that old man there than this same pride. She has just hit upon the key to move him. What did he say when he read the letter?”

“He could n’t speak for a while, but kept wiping his eyes and trembling all over.”

“And then?”

“And then he said, ‘Stop here to-night, Mr. O’Rorke, and I’ll have your answer ready for you in the morning.’”

“And shall I tell you what it will be? It will be to im-

plore her to come back here. She can have her own terms now; and she may be My Lady."

"Do you mean his wife?"

"I do."

O'Rorke gave a long whistle, and stood a perfect picture of amazement and wonder.

"That *was* playing for a big stake! May I never! if I thought she was bowld enough for that."

"That she was. And how she missed it, to this hour I never knew. But whatever happened between them was one evening, on the strand at a seaside place, abroad. That much I learned from her maid, who was in my pay; and it must have been serious, for she left the house that night, and never returned; and, what is more, never wrote one line to him till this letter that you carried here yesterday."

So astounded was O'Rorke by what he heard, that for some minutes he scarcely followed what Ladarelle was saying.

"So that," continued Ladarelle, "it may not be impossible that he had the hardihood to make her some such proposal."

"Do you mean without marriage?" broke in O'Rorke, suddenly catching the clew. "Do you mean that?"

The other nodded.

"No, by all that's holy!" cried O'Rorke. "That he never did! You might trick her, you might cheat her, — and it would n't be so easy to do it, either, — but take my word for it, the man that would insult her, and get off free, is n't yet born!"

"What could she do, except go off?" said Ladarelle, scoffingly.

"That's not the stuff they're made of where she comes from, young man."

And in his eagerness he for a moment forgot all respect and deference; nor did the other seem to resent the liberty, for he only smiled as he heard it, and then said, —

"All I have been telling you now is merely to prepare you for what I want you to do; and mind, if you stand by me faithfully and well, your fortune is made. I ask no

man's help without being ready and willing to pay for it, — to pay handsomely too! Is that intelligible?"

"Quite intelligible."

"Now, the short and long of the story is this: if this old fool were to marry that girl, he could encumber my estate — for it is mine — with a jointure, and I have no fancy to pay some twelve or fifteen hundred a year — perhaps more — to Biddy somebody, and have, besides, a lawsuit for plate or pictures or china or jewels that she claimed as matter of gift, — and all this, that an old worn-out rake should end his life with an act of absurdity!"

"And he could leave her fifteen hundred a year forever," muttered O'Rorke, thoughtfully.

"Nothing of the kind. For her life only; and even that, I believe, we might break by law, — at least, Palmer says so."

All this Ladarelle said hastily, for he half suspected he had made a grievous blunder in pointing out the wealth to which she would succeed as Sir Within's widow.

"I see — I see!" muttered O'Rorke, thoughtfully; which simply meant that there was a great deal to be said for each side of the question.

"What are you thinking of?" said Ladarelle at last, losing patience at his prolonged silence.

"I'm just wondering to myself if she ever knew how near she was to being My Lady."

"How near, or how far off, you mean!"

"No, I don't! I just mean what I said, — how near. You don't know her as well as I do, that's clear!" Another long pause followed these words, and each followed out his own train of thought. At length, Ladarelle, not at all satisfied, as it seemed, with his own diplomacy, said half impatiently: "My friend Grenfell said, if there was any one who would understand how to deal with this matter, you were the man; and it was with that view he gave me the letter you have just read."

"Oh! there's many a way to deal with it," said O'Rorke, who was not insensible to the flattery. "That is to say, if she was anything else but the girl she is, there would be no trouble at all in it."

“You want me to believe that she is something very uncommon, and that she knows the world, like a woman of fashion.”

“I know nothing about women of fashion, but I never saw man or woman yet was ’cuter than Katty O’Hara, or Luttrell, as she calls herself now.”

“She did not play her cards here so cunningly, that’s plain,” said Ladarelle, with a sneer.

“Maybe I can guess why.”

“What is your guess, then?”

“Something happened that wounded her pride! If anything did *that*, she’d forget herself and her advantage—aye, her very life—and she’d think of nothing but being revenged. That’s the blood that’s in her!”

“So that her pride is her weak point?”

“You have it now. That’s it. I think she’d rather have died than write that letter the other morning; and if the answer is n’t what she expects, I don’t think she’ll get over it! Without,” added he, quickly, “it would drive her to some vengeance or other, if she was to see the way to any.”

“I begin to understand her,” said Ladarelle, thoughtfully.

“The devil a bit of you! And if you were to think of it for twenty years, you would n’t understand her! She beats *me*, and I don’t suspect that *you* do.”

This was one of those thrusts it was very hard to bear without wincing, but Ladarelle turned away, and concealed the pain he felt.

“It is evident, then, Mr. O’Rorke, that you don’t feel yourself her match?”

“I did n’t say that; but it would be no disgrace if I *did* say it,” was the cautious answer.

“Mr. Grenfell assured me that with a man like yourself to aid me, I need not be afraid of any difficulty. Do you feel as if he said too much for you, or has he promised more than you like to fulfil? You see, by what I have told you, that I should be very sorry to see that girl here again, or know that she was likely to regain any part of her old influence over my relative. Now, though her present letter does not touch either of these points, it opens a correspondence; don’t you perceive that?”

“Go on,” said O’Rorke, half sulkily, for a sort of doubt was creeping over him that possibly his services ought to be retained by the other party.

“And if they once begin writing letters, and if she only be as ready with her pen as you say she is with her tongue, there’s nothing to prevent her being back here this day week, on any terms she pleases.”

“Faix, and there are worse places! May I never! if I’d wonder that she’d like to be mistress of it.”

For the second time had Ladarelle blundered in his negotiation, and he was vexed and angry as he perceived it.

“That’s not all so plain and easy, Mr. O’Rorke, as you imagine. When old men make fools of themselves, the law occasionally takes them at their word, and pronounces them insane. So long as Sir Within’s eccentricities were harmless, we bore them, but I’ll not promise our patience for serious injury.”

If O’Rorke was not convinced by this threat, he was sufficiently staggered by it to become more thoughtful, and at last he said, —

“And what is it you’d propose to do?”

“I’d rather put that question to *you*,” said Ladarelle, softly. “You have the case before you; what’s your remedy?”

“If she was any other girl, I’d say give her a couple of hundred pounds, and get her married and out of the way.”

“And why not do so here?”

“Because it would be no use; that’s the why.”

“Is she not a peasant? Are not all belonging to her people in the very humblest station, and not blessed with the best possible reputations?”

“They’re poor enough, if that’s what you mean; and they’re the very sort of men that would make mighty short work of *you*, if you were to harm one belonging to them.”

“I promise you faithfully I’ll not go to reside in the neighborhood,” said Ladarelle, with a laugh.

“I’ve known them track a man to America before now.”

“Come, come, Mr. O’Rorke, your countrymen may be as

like Red Indians as you please, but they have no terrors for *me*."

"So much the better; but I've seen just as big men as yourself afraid of them."

The quiet coolness of this speech sent a far stronger sense of fear through the other's heart than any words of menace could have done, and it required a great effort on his part to seem collected.

"You say she cannot be bought over, O'Rorke; now, what other line is open to us?"

O'Rorke made no reply, but seemed lost in thought.

"What if she were to believe that Sir Within would n't receive her letter, or read it, and sent back a cold, unfeeling answer?" Still no answer passed his lips. "If," continued Ladarelle, "you were to return and say you had failed, what would she do then? She'd never write to him again, I suppose?"

"Never, that you may depend upon, but it would n't be so easy to make her believe it."

"That might be managed. First of all, tell me how she would take the tidings."

"I don't know. I could not even guess."

"At all events, she'd not write to him again?"

"For that I'll answer. I believe I could take my oath on it."

"Now, then, the game is easy enough," said Ladarelle, with a more assured tone. "You are to have Sir Within's answer to-morrow. When you get it, set out for Wrexham, where I'll meet you. We'll open it and read it. If it be a simple acceptance of her note, and a mere compliance with her request, I'll re-seal with his crest, and you shall take it on to her; but if, as I suspect, the old man will make an effort to renew their former relations, and throw out any bait to induce her to come back here —"

"Well, what then?" asked O'Rorke, after waiting a few seconds for the other to continue.

"In that case we must lay our heads together, O'Rorke, and see what's best to be done."

"And the old man that's in jail, and that's to be tried on the 19th, what's to be done about him?"

“ I ’ll think of that.”

“ He has n’t a great chance anyway, but if there’s no defence it’s all up with him.”

“ I ’ll think of that.”

“ Then there’s myself,” said O’Rorke, drawing his figure up to his full height, as though the subject was one that entailed no painful modesty. “ What about *me* ? ”

“ I have thought of that already. Put that in your pocket for the present,” — and he pressed a note into his hand, — “ and when to-morrow comes you shall name your own conditions. Only stand by me to the end, — mind that.”

O’Rorke opened the bank-note leisurely, and muttered the word “ Twenty ; ” and certainly nothing in the accent showed enthusiastic gratitude.

“ I can give you an order on my banker to-morrow,” said Ladarelle, hurriedly, “ but I am rather low in cash here, just now ; and I repeat it, — your own terms, O’Rorke, your own terms.”

“ I suppose so,” was the dry rejoinder.

“ It’s not everybody would make you the same proposal.”

“ It’s not everybody has so much need of me as you have.”

Ladarelle tried to laugh as he wished him good-night ; but the attempt was a poor one, and all he could say as they parted, was, —

“ Wrexham, — the Boar’s Head, — the inn on the left hand as you enter the town. I’ll be on the look-out for you myself.”

O’Rorke nodded and withdrew.

“ Vulgar scoundrel ! I wish I had never spoken to him ! ” said Ladarelle, as soon as the door closed. “ This is all Grenfell’s doing ; he has just shoved me into the hands of a fellow that will only serve me till he finds a higher bidder. What a fool I have been to open myself to him ; and he sees it well ! And as for the ready-wittedness and expediency, I wonder where they are ! Why, the rascal had not a single suggestion to offer ; he kept on harping about the difficulties, and never a word did he drop as to how to meet them.”

And, with a hearty malediction on him, Ladarelle concluded his meditation, and went off to sleep.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BOAR'S HEAD.

LADARELLE stood at a window of the Boar's Head which commanded a view of the road into the town, and waited, watch in hand, for O'Rorke's coming. The morning passed, and noon, and it was late in the day when a wearied horse, over-driven and steaming, drew up at the door, and the long-looked-for traveller alighted.

Though burning with impatience to learn his news, Ladarelle saw the necessity of concealing his anxiety, and, opening his writing-desk, he affected to be deeply engaged writing when, conducted by a waiter, O'Rorke appeared.

A single glance as he passed the threshold told Ladarelle that his tidings were important. Already the fellow's swagger declared it, and in the easy confidence with which he sat down, and in the careless way he rather threw than laid his hat on the table, might be seen that he felt himself "master of the situation."

"You are later than I expected," said Ladarelle, carelessly.

"I did n't leave the place till after twelve. He made me go over the gardens, and the forcing-houses, and after that the stables, till at one time I thought I'd not get away till to-morrow."

"And what do you think of it all?"

"Grand! — grand! It's the finest place I ever saw, and well kept up too. There's eight men in the garden, and the head gardener told me he might have as many more, if he wanted them."

"The horses are over-fed; they are like prize oxen."

"They're fat, to be sure; but it's fine to see them standing there, with their glossy skins, and their names over

them, and their tails hanging down like tassels, and no more call for them to work than if they were lords themselves."

"I'll make a grand clearance of all that rubbish one day. I'll have none of those German elephants, I promise you, when I come to the property."

"He is n't going to make room for you yet awhile, he says," said O'Rorke, with a grin.

"What do you mean?"

"If what he said to me this morning is to be relied on, he means to marry."

"And have a family, perhaps?" added Ladarelle, with a laugh.

"He said nothing about that; he talked like a man that hoped to see many years, and happy ones."

"No one ever lived the longer for wishing it, or else we heirs-expectant would have a bad time of it. But this is not the question. What answer did he give you?"

"There it is."

And, as he spoke, he drew from his breast-pocket a large square-shaped letter, massively sealed, and after showing the address, "Miss Luttrell," on the cover, he replaced it in his pocket.

"Do you know what 's in it?" asked Ladarelle, sharply.

"Only that there 's money, that 's all; for he said to me, 'Any banker will cash it.'"

Ladarelle took a couple of turns of the room without speaking; then, coming directly in front of the other, he said, —

"Now, then, Mr. O'Rorke, which horse do you back? Where do you stand to win? I mean, are you going to serve Sir Within or me?"

"He is the bird iu the hand, any way!" said O'Rorke, with a grin of malicious meaning.

"Well, if you think so, I have no more to say, only that as shrewd a man as you are might see that an old fellow on the verge of the grave is not likely to be as lasting a friend as a man like myself. In other words, which life would you prefer in your lease?"

O'Rorke made no answer, but seemed sunk in thought.

"I'll put the case before you in three words. You might

help this girl in her plans, — you might aid her so far that she could come back here, and remain either as this old man's wife or mistress, — I don't know that there would be much difference, in fact, as the law stands, between the two, — but how long would you be a welcome visitor here after that? You speculate on being able to come and go, and stay here just as you please; you'd like to have this place as a home you could come to whenever you pleased, and be treated not merely with respect and attention, but with cordiality. Now, I just ask you, from what you have yourself told me of this girl, is that what you would expect when she was the mistress? Is she so stanch to her own people that she would be true to *you*?"

For some minutes O'Rorke made no answer, and then, leaning both arms on the table before him, he said, in a slow, measured voice, "What do you offer me yourself?"

"I said last night, and I repeat it now, make your own terms."

O'Rorke shook his head, and was silent.

"I am willing," resumed Ladarelle, "to make you my land-steward, give you a house and a plot of ground rent free, and pay you eighty pounds a year. I'll make it a hundred if I see you stand well to me!"

"I've got some debts," muttered O'Rorke, in a low voice.

"What do they amount to?"

"Oh, they're heavy enough; but I could settle them for a couple of hundreds."

"I'll pay them, then."

"And, after that, I'd rather go abroad. I'd like to go and settle in Australia."

"How much money would that require?"

"I want to set up a newspaper, and I could n't do it under two thousand pounds."

"That's a big sum, Master O'Rorke."

"The devil a much the old man at the Castle there would think of it, if it helped him to what he wanted."

"I mean, it's a big sum to raise at a moment, but I don't say it would be impossible."

"Will you give it, then? That's the short way to put it. Will you give it?"

"First, let me ask for what am I to give it? Is it that you will stand by me in this business to the very end, doing whatever I ask you, flinching at nothing, and taking every risk equally with myself?"

"And no risk that you don't share yourself?"

"None!"

"It's worth thinking about, anyhow," said O'Rorke, as he arose and paced the room, with his hands deep in his pockets; "that is, if the money is paid down, — down on the nail, — for I won't take a bill, mind."

"I'm afraid, O'Rorke, your experiences in life have not taught you to be very confiding."

"I'll tell you what they've taught me; they've taught me that wherever there's money in anything, a man ought not to trust his own mother."

In a few hurried words, Ladarelle explained that till he came to his estate, all his dealings for ready money were of the most ruinous kind; that to raise two thousand would cost him, eventually, nearly four; and, as he phrased it, "I'd rather see the difference in the pocket of an honest fellow who stood to me, than a rascally Jew who rogued me."

"I'll give you a post obit on Sir Within's estate for three thousand, and so far as a hundred pounds goes to pay your voyage, you shall not want it."

O'Rorke did not, at first, like the terms. Whenever he ventured his chances in life, things had turned out ill; all his lottery tickets were blanks, and he shook his head doubtfully, and made no reply.

"Five o'clock already! I must be going," said Ladarelle, suddenly looking at his watch.

"That's a fine watch!" said O'Rorke, as he gazed at the richly embossed crest on the case.

"If having my arms on the back is no objection to you, O'Rorke, take it. I make you a present of it."

O'Rorke peered into his face with an inquisitiveness so full of unbelief as almost to be laughable; but the expression changed to a look of delight as Ladarelle took the chain from off his neck and handed the whole to him.

"May I never!" cried O'Rorke, "if I won't be your

equal. There's the letter!" And he drew forth Sir Within's despatch, and placed it in his hands.

Concealing all the delight he felt at this unlooked-for success, Ladarelle retired to the window to read the letter; nor did he at once break the seal. Some scruple — there were not many left him — did still linger amidst the wreck of his nature, and he felt that what he was about to do was a step lower in baseness than he had hitherto encountered. "After all," muttered he, "if I hesitate about this, how am I to meet what is before me?" And so he broke the seal and tore open the envelope. "The old fool! the infatuated old fool!" broke from him, in an accent of bitter scorn, as he ran his eye over the three lines which a trembling hand had traced. "I knew it would come to this. I said so all along. Here's an order to pay Miss Luttrell or bearer two hundred pounds!" said he, turning to O'Rorke. "We must not cash this, or we should get into a precious scrape."

"And what's in the letter?" asked O'Rorke, carelessly.

"Nothing beyond his readiness to be of use, and all that. He writes with difficulty, he says, and that's not hard to believe, — an infernal scrawl it is, — and he promises to send a long letter by the post to-morrow. By the way, how do they get the letters at Arran?"

"They send for them once a week to the mainland; on Saturdays, if I remember aright."

"We must arrest this correspondence, then, or we shall be discovered at once. How can we obtain her letters?"

"Easy enough. I know the boy that comes for them, and he can't read, though he can tell the number of letters that he should have. I'll have one ready to substitute for any that should be to her address."

"Well thought of. I see, O'Rorke, you *are* the man I wanted; now listen to me attentively, and hear my plan. I must return to the Castle, and pretend that I have pressing business in town. Instead of taking the London mail, however, I shall proceed to Holyhead, where you must wait for me at the inn, the Watkins' Arms. I hope to be there to-morrow morning early, but it may be evening before I can arrive. Wait, at all events, for my coming."

“Remember that I promised to be back in Arran, with the answer to her letter, by Saturday.”

“So you shall. It is fully as important for *me* that you should keep your word.”

“Does he want her back again?” said O’Rorke, not fully satisfied that he had not seen Sir Within’s note.

“No, not exactly; at least, it is evasive, and very short. It is simply to this purport: ‘I conclude you have made a mistake by leaving me, and think you might have humility enough to acknowledge it; meanwhile, I send you a check for two hundred. I shall write to-morrow more fully.’”

O’Rorke was thoroughly aware, by the stammering confusion of the other’s manner, that these were not the terms of the note; but it was a matter which interested him very little, and he let it pass unchallenged. His calculation — and he had given a whole night to it — was, briefly, this: “If I serve Sir Within, I may possibly be well and handsomely rewarded, but I shall obtain no power of pressure upon him; under no circumstances can I extort from him one shilling beyond what he may be disposed to give me. If, on the other hand, I stand by Ladarelle, his whole character is in my hands. He is too unscrupulous not to compromise himself, and though his accomplice, I shall do everything in such a way that one day, if I need it, I may appear to have been his dupe. And such a position as this can be the source of untold money.”

Nor was it a small inducement to him to think that the side he adopted was adverse to Kate. Why he disliked her he knew not; that is, he would not have been well able to say why. Perhaps he might not readily have admitted the fact, though he well knew that to see her great and prosperous and high-placed, a winner in that great lottery of life where he had failed so egregiously, would be to him the most intense misery, and he would have done much to prevent it.

Along with these thoughts were others, speculating on Ladarelle himself, and whom he was sorely puzzled whether to regard more as a knave or fool, or an equal mixture of the two. “He ’ll soon see that whatever he does he must n’t try to cheat Tim O’Rorke,” muttered he; “and when he gets that far, I ’ll not trouble myself more about his education.”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NIGHT AT SEA.

THE Saturday — the eventful day on which Kate was to have her answer from Sir Within — came at last. It was a dark, lowering morning, and though there was scarcely an air of wind, the sea rolled heavily in, and broke in great showers of spray over the rocks, sure sign that a storm was raging at a distance.

From an early hour she had been down to the shore to watch if any boat could be seen; but not a sail could be descried, and the fishermen told her that though the wind had a faint sound in it, there were few Westport men would like to venture out in such a sea.

“If you cannot see a boat before noon, Tim Hennesy,” said she to one of the boatmen, “you’ll have to man the yawl, for I mean to go over myself.”

“It will be a hard beat against the wind, miss,” said the man. “It will take you an hour to get out of the bay here.”

“I suppose we shall reach Westport before morning?”

“It will be no bad job if we get in by this time to-morrow.”

She turned angrily away; she hated opposition in every shape, and even the semblance of anything like discouragement chafed and irritated her.

“No sign of your messenger?” said Luttrell, from the window of the tower, whither he had gone to have a look out over the sea.

“It is early yet, sir. If they came out on the ebb, we should not see them for at least another hour.”

He made no answer, but closed the window and withdrew.

“Get me a loaf of bread, Molly, and some hard eggs and a bottle of milk,” said Kate, as she entered the house.

"And sure, miss, it's not off to the mountains you'll be going such a day as this. It will be a downpour of rain before evening, and you have a bad cough on you already."

"You must lend me your cloak, too, Molly," said she, not heeding the remonstrance; "it's much warmer than my own."

"Ain't I proud that it would be on your back, the Heavens bless and protect you! But where are you going that you want a cloak?"

"Go and ask my uncle if I may speak to him."

Molly went, and came back at once to say that Mr. Luttrell was in his room below, and she might come there when she pleased.

"I am thinking of going over to Westport, sir," said Kate, as she passed the threshold. "My impatience is fevering me, and I want to do something."

"Listen to the sea, young woman; it is no day to go out, and those drifting clouds tell that it will be worse by and by."

"All the better if it blows a little; it will take me off thinking of other cares."

"I'll not hear of it, — there!"

And he waved his hand as though to dismiss her; but she never moved, but stood calm and collected where she was.

"You remember, sir, to-day is Saturday, and very little time is now left us for preparation. By going over to the mainland, I shall meet O'Rorke, and save his journey here and back again; and the chances are that, seeing the day rough, he'd not like to leave Westport this morning."

"I have told you my mind; that is enough," said he, with an impatient gesture; but she stood still, and never quitted the spot. "I don't suppose you have heard me, Miss Luttrell," said he, with a tone of suppressed passion.

"Yes, sir, I have heard you, but you have not heard *me*. My poor old grandfather's case is imminent; whatever measures are to be taken for his defence cannot be deferred much longer. If the plan I adopted should turn out a failure, I must think of another, and that quickly."

"What is this old peasant to me?" broke out Luttrell,

fiercely. "Is this low-lived family to persecute me to my last day? You must not leave me — you shall not — I am not to be deserted for the sake of a felon! — I'll not hear of it! — Go! Leave me!"

She moved gently towards him, and laid her hand on the back of his chair.

"Dear uncle," said she, in a low, soft voice, "it would grieve you sorely if aught befell this poor old man, — aught, I mean, that we could have prevented. Let me go and see if I cannot be of some use to him."

"Go? — go where? — do you mean to the jail?"

"Yes, sir, I mean to see him."

"The very thing I have forbidden. The express compact by which you came here was, no intercourse with this — this — family; and now that the contact has become a stain and a disgrace, now is the moment you take to draw closer to them."

"I want to show I am worthy to be a Luttrell, sir. It was their boast that they never deserted their wounded."

"They never linked their fortunes to felons and murderers, young woman. I will hear no more of this."

"I hope to be back here by to-morrow night, uncle," said she, softly; and she bent down her head over him till the long silky curls of her golden hair grazed his temple.

He brushed them rudely back, and in a stern tone said, —

"To such as leave this against my consent there is no road back. Do you hear me?"

"I do," said she, faintly.

"Do you understand me?"

"Yes."

"Enough, then. Leave me now, and let me have peace."

"Uncle, dear uncle," she began; but he stopped her at once.

"None of this, — none of this with me, young woman. You are free to make your choice; you are my adopted daughter, or you are the grandchild of a man whose claim to be notorious will soon dispute with ours. It is an easy thing to make up your mind upon."

"I have done so already, sir."

"Very well, so much the better. Leave me now. I wish to be alone."

"Let me say good-bye, sir; let me kiss your hand, and say, for the last time, how grateful I am for all your past kindness."

He never spoke, but continued to stare at her with an expression of wonderment and surprise.

"Would you leave me, then? — would you leave me, Kate?" muttered he, at last.

"No, sir, if the door be not closed against me, — never!"

"None but yourself can close that door against you."

"Dear, kind uncle, only hear me. It may be that I have failed in the scheme I planned; it may be that some other road must be found to help this poor, forlorn, friendless old man. Let me, at least, see him; let me give him what comfort a few kind words can give; let him know that he has sympathy in his hour of sadness."

"Sympathy with the felon, sympathy with the murderer, I have none. I feel shame — bitter, bitter shame — that I cannot disclaim him, — disavow him. My own miserable rashness and folly brought me to this; but when I descended to their poverty, I did not descend to their crimes."

"Well," said she, haughtily, "I have no such excuses to shelter me. I am of them by blood, as I am in heart. I'll not desert him."

"May your choice be fortunate," said he, with mockery; "but remember, young woman, that when once you pass under the lintel of the jail, you forfeit every right to enter here again. It is but fair that you know it."

"I know it, sir; good-bye." She stooped to take his hand; but he drew it rudely from her, and she raised the skirt of his coat to her lips and kissed it.

"Remember, young woman, if the time comes that you shall tell of this desertion of me, — this cold, unfeeling desertion, — take care you tell the truth. No harping on Luttrell pride or Luttrell sternness; no pretending that it was the man of birth could not accept companionship of misery with the plebeian; but the simple fact that when the hour of a decided allegiance came, you stood by the criminal

and abandoned the gentleman. There is the simple fact; deny it if you dare!"

"There is not one will dare to question me, sir, and your caution is unneeded."

"Your present conduct is no guarantee for future prudence."

"Dear uncle —" she began; but he stopped her hastily, and said, —

"It is useless to recall our relationship when you have dissolved its ties."

"Oh, sir, do not cast me off because I am unhappy."

"Here is your home, Kate," said he, coldly. "Whenever you leave it, it is of your own free will, not of mine. Go now, if you wish; but, remember, you go at your peril."

She darted a fierce look at him as he uttered the last word, as though it had pierced her like a dart, and for a moment she seemed as if her temper could no longer be kept under; but with an effort she conquered, and, simply saying, "I accept the peril, sir," she turned and left the room.

She gave her orders to the crew of the launch to get ready at once, and sent down to the boat her little basket; and then, while Molly Ryan was absent, she packed her trunk with whatever she possessed, and prepared to leave Arran, if it might be, forever. Her tears ran fast as she bent over her task, and they relieved her overwrought mind; for she was racked and torn by a conflict — a hard conflict — in which different hopes and fears and ambitions warred and struggled for the mastery.

"Here is the hour of destitution, — the long-dreaded hour come at last, and it finds me less prepared to brave it than I thought for. By this time to-morrow the sun will not shine on one more friendless than myself. I used to fancy with what courage I could meet this fall, and even dare it. Where is all my bravery now?"

"'T is blowin' harder, Miss Kate; and Tim Hennesy says it's only the beginnin' of it, and that he's not easy at all about taking you out in such weather."

"Tell Tim Hennesy that if I hear any more of his fears I'll not take *him*. Let them carry that trunk down, Molly;

I shall be away some days, and those things there are for you."

"Sure, ain't you coming back, miss?" cried the woman, whose cheeks became ashy pale with terror.

"I have told you I am going for a few days; and, Molly,



till I *do* come, be more attentive than ever to my uncle; he may miss me, and he is not well just now, and be sure you look to him. Keep the key, too, of this room of mine, unless my uncle asks for it."

"Oh, you're not coming back to us, — you'll never come back!" cried the poor creature, in an agony of sorrow. And she fell at Kate's feet, and grasped her dress, as though to detain her.

"There, there, this is all childishness, Molly. You will displease me if you go on so. Was that thunder I heard?"

As she asked, a knock came to the door; and the captain of the boat's crew, Tim Hennesy, put in his head. "If you are bent on goin', miss, the tide is on the turn, and there 's no time to lose."

"You're a hard man to ask her, Tim Hennesy," said the woman, rising, and speaking with a fiery vehemence. "You're a hard man, after losing your own brother at sea, to take her out in weather like this."

Kate gave a hurried look over the room, and then, as if not trusting her control over her feelings, she went quietly out, and hastened down to the shore.

There was, indeed, no time to be lost, and all the efforts of the sailors were barely enough to save the small boat that lay next the pier from being crushed against the rocks with each breaking wave.

"Get on board, miss; now 's the moment!" cried one of the men; and, just as he spoke, she made a bold spring and lighted safely in the stern.

The strong arms strained to the oars, and in a few seconds they were on board the yawl. The last few turns of the capstan were needed to raise the anchor, and now the jib was set to "pay her head round;" and amidst a perfect shower of spray, as the craft swung "about," the mainsail was hoisted, and they were away.

"What's the signal flying from the tower for?" said one of the sailors; and he pointed to a strip of dark-colored bunting that now floated from the flagstaff.

"That's his honor's way of bidding us good-bye," said Hennesy. "I've never seen it these twelve years."

"How can we answer it, Tim?" said Kate, eagerly.

"We'll show him his own colors, miss," said the man; and, knotting the Luttrell flag on the halyard, he hoisted it in a moment. "Ay, he sees it now. Down comes his own ensign now to tell us that we're answered."

"Was it to say good-bye, or was it to recall her?—was it a last greeting of love and affection, or was it a word of scorn?" Such were Kate's musings as the craft heaved and

worked in the strong sea, while the waves broke on the bow, and scattered great sheets of water over them.

"I wish there was a dry spot to shelter you, miss," said Tim, as he saw the poor girl shivering and dripping from head to foot. "But it's worse now than farther out; the squalls are stronger here under the land."

"Ay; but we'll have a heavier sea outside," said another, who would willingly have seen her change her mind even now, and return to the island.

"It's a fine wind for America, if that was where we were going," said a third, laughingly.

Kate smiled; she had almost said, "It matters little to me where;" but she caught herself, and was silent. Hour after hour went over, and they seemed — to her, at least — to have made no way whatever, for there rose the great mountain peaks; the well-known cliffs of Arran frowned down dark and sullen, just as when they had left the harbor. She could count, one by one, the lights along the bay, and knew each cabin they belonged to; and there, high up, shone out a lonely star from the tower of St. Finbar, bringing back to her mind the solitary watcher who sat to sorrow over her desertion. The night at last fell; but the wind increased, and so rough was the sea that she was forced to take shelter in the bottom of the boat, where they made shift to cover her with a coarse canopy of tarpaulin.

Like some dreadful dream drawn out to the length of years, the hours of that night went over. The howling storm, the thundering crash of the sea, and at times a quivering motion in the craft, as though her timbers were about to part, and, more even than these, the wild voices of the men, obliged to shout that they might be heard amongst the din, made up a mass of horrors that appalled her. Sometimes the danger seemed imminent; for to the loud words and cries of the men a sudden silence would succeed, while floods of water would pour over the sides, and threaten them with instant drowning. The agony she pictured to herself of a last struggle for life was more terrible far than her fear of death; and yet through all these came the thought: "Might it not be better thus? Should I not have left to the few who knew me dearer, fonder memories than my life, if

I am yet to live, will bequeath?" Worn out by these anxieties, and exhausted too, she fell into a deep sleep, — so deep that all the warring noises of the storm never awoke her; nor was she conscious that a new morning had dawned, and a bright noon followed it, as the launch entered the bay of Westport, and beat up for the harbor.

When Hennesy awoke her, to say that they were close in to shore, she neither could collect herself nor answer him; benumbed with cold and wet, she could barely muster strength to arise and sit down in the stern-sheets.

"That's the spire of the town, miss, under the hill there."

"It was a wild night, Tim?" said she, inquiringly.

"I have seen as rough a sea, but I never was out in a stronger gale."

"Mind that you tell my uncle so when you get back; and be sure to say that I bore it well."

"Why would n't I? The sorrow a word ever crossed your lips. No man ever was braver."

"That's true," muttered the others.

"Get me a piece of bread out of that basket, Tim; and don't forget to tell my uncle how I ate, and ate heartily."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE JAIL PARLOR.

At the time of which our story treats, the old jails of Ireland were very unlike those edifices which modern humanity has erected to be the safeguards of prisoners. They were small, confined, generally ruinous in condition, and always ill ventilated and dirty. So limited was the space, that all classification of crime was impossible; and, worse still, the untried prisoners were confined, indiscriminately, along with those whom the law had already sentenced, and who only awaited the hour of execution.

The extent of favor shown to those who were waiting for trial consisted in the privilege of seeing their legal advisers, or their friends, in a small cell used for such colloquies, and to which they succeeded by rotation, and for half an hour at a time. They whose means were unequal to the cost of a legal defence, or whose friends took little trouble in their behalf, were occasionally not unwilling to sell this privilege to their luckier companions, and a gill of whiskey or a few ounces of tobacco were gladly accepted in lieu of a right that would have been profitless to claim.

As the day for trial grew nearer, the price of this privilege rose considerably. There were so many things the prisoner wanted to hear or to tell, secrets he had kept for weeks long locked close in his breast, would now find vent; details that he had determined should go with him to the grave, he could no longer abstain from communicating. The agonies of feverish expectation, the sleepless nights — or worse, far worse, those dreamful ones — would have begun to tell upon the strongest and boldest; and spirits that a few weeks back would have seemed to defy every terror,

now became fidgety and fretful, eager to hear what men said without, and how the newspapers talked of them.

While the assizes were distant, the prisoners gave themselves up, so far as their position permitted, to the habits and ways of their ordinary lives. Some brooded, some bullied, some looked steeped in a sort of stupid indifference, not caring for anything, or minding anything; others gave way to a jollity which, whether real or feigned, affected those around, and disposed them to scenes of riot and uproar. When, however, the time for trial drew nigh, all these signs merged into one pervading sentiment of intense anxiety, and nothing was said, nothing heard, but questions as to who were to be the judges, — a point to which immense importance was attached, some supposed tendency to mercy or severity being ascribed to each in turn; and the characters of the Crown lawyers were discussed with a shrewdness that indicated how far less the debaters thought of the law itself than of the traits and tempers of those who were to administer it.

From the day that old Malone entered the jail, his ascendancy was at once acknowledged. It was not merely that in the old man's character there were those features of steadfast determination and unswerving courage which the Irish of every class place at the top of all virtues, but he was, so to say, a sort of patriarchal law-breaker; he had twice stood in the dock under charge for the greatest of crimes, and five times had he braved the risk of transportation. If ever there seemed a charmed life, it was his. And though the Crown prosecutors were wont to regard him as one whose successive escapes were a sort of reflection on their skill, the juries who tried him could not divest themselves of a sympathy for the hardy old fellow, who, never daunted by danger, no sooner issued from one scrape than he was ready to involve himself in another.

Peter Malone was not only the hero of the jail, he was the law adviser. Around him they gathered to tell their several cases, and consult him as to their likely issue. It was not merely that he was quick in detecting where a flaw or breakdown of evidence might be looked for, but he knew — and it was wonderful how well — the sort of testimony that

would tell with a jury, and the class of witness which it would be advisable to produce, or to withhold, according to the character of the judge that presided. It would have, doubtless, been very damaging to this ascendancy of his if it got abroad that he himself, while distributing his counsels to this man, and his warnings to that, should be unprotected and undefended; and so the brave old fellow, locking up his sorrows in his own heart, never betrayed his friendlessness. On the contrary, he scrupulously maintained his privilege to "the Parlor," as it was called, and would, when his turn came, stalk away to the little cell, to sit down in his solitude, and think, with a swelling heart, over his comfortless fortune.

The turnkey alone knew his secret, and kept it loyally. Malone had been in his hands many times, and always conducted himself well, so that whenever the time came round for old Peter's visit to the Parlor, Mr. Meekins would call out from the door in an audible and imposing voice, "Here's Counsellor Fitzgibbon," or "Serjeant Taate," or some other equally well-known leader at the bar, "wants to speak to Peter Malone;" and poor old Peter would get up from his seat, and smooth his hair, and adjust his neckcloth, and walk proudly away to hide his misery in the half-darkened cell, and rock himself to and fro in all the sorrow of his friendless and deserted fortune.

Terrible as the mockery was, it sustained him; for though the straw will not support the drowning man, it will feed his hope even in death, and smooth the last agony of the heart, whose sharpest pang is desertion.

When, therefore, Mr. Meekins, instead of the usual pompous announcement, simply called out, "Peter Malone, to the Parlor," without any intimation of a learned visitor awaiting him, the old man heard the words in amazement, and not without fear. Had his friend betrayed him? Had he divulged the little fraud, and exposed him to his fellows? Or had he, — and this most probable, — had he, as the real day of reckoning drew nigh, revolted at a deception which a few hours must unveil, and which, even to the heart that encouraged it, bore its own cruel punishment? "He knows that I'm only giving myself false hopes," muttered

the old fellow, as, with sunken head and downcast eyes, he moved slowly away.

As the door of the little cell clanked behind him, the turn-key with scrupulous tenacity bolting the small portal on the outside as rigorously as though it were the last protection of the criminal, Peter sat down on a small stool, and buried his face between his hands. Never before had his fate seemed so dark and gloomy. The little fiction he loved to maintain withdrawn, all the intensity of his loneliness stood before him at once. "I may as well say it at once," muttered he, "when I go back, that Peter Malone has no friend in the wide world, not a man to speak a word for him, but must stand up in the dock and say, 'No counsel, my lord.'" As if the bitter moment of the humiliation had arrived, the old fellow rocked to and fro in his agony, and groaned bitterly.

What was that which broke the stillness? Was it a sigh, and then a sob? Was his mind wandering? Was the misery too much for his reason? He rubbed his eyes and looked up.

"Merciful Mother! Blessed Virgin! is it yourself is come to comfort me?" cried he, as he dropped on his knees, while the tears streamed down his hard and wrinkled cheeks. "Oh, Holy Mother! Tower of Ivory! do I see you there, or is my ould eyes deceivin' me?"

The heart-wrung prayer was addressed to a figure on which the solitary pane of a small window high up in the wall threw a ray of sunlight, so that the braided hair glowed like burnished gold, and the pale cheeks caught a slightly warm tint, less like life than like a beautiful picture.

"Don't you know me, grandfather? Don't you know your own dear Katey?" said she, moving slowly forward; and then, kneeling down in front of him, clasped him in her arms.

It was more than he could bear, and he heaved a heavy sigh, and rolled back against the wall.

It was long before he rallied, — old age stands so near the last threshold, there is but little space to recover breath in; and when he did rally, he could not be sure that his mind was not astray, or that his sight was not deceiving him.

"Tell me something of long ago, darlin'! tell me something, that I'll know you are my own."

“ Shall I tell you of the day I found the penny in the well, and you told me it was for good luck, and never to lose it? Do you remember, grandfather, how you bored a hole in it, and I used to wear it around my neck with a string?”

“ I do, I do,” cried he, as the tears came faster and faster; “ and you lost it, after all, — did n’t you lose it?”

“ Yes; but, grandfather, I shall find others, and golden ones too.”

“ Tell me more about them times, or I won’t believe you,” cried he, half peevishly.

“ I’ll talk to you all the evening about them; I remember them all, dear old granddaddy.”

“ That’s the word I wanted; that’s it, my darlin’! the light of my ould eyes!” And he fell on her neck and sobbed aloud.

In his ecstasy and delight to weave the long past into the present, he forgot to ask her how she came there, and by what fortune she had remembered him. It was the old life in the mountains that filled his whole being,— the wild cliffs and solitary lakes, dear to him by the thought of her who never left him, trotting beside him as he went, or cowering at his knee as he sat over the turf fire. So immersed was he in these memories, that though she talked on he heard nothing; he would look at her, and smile, and say, “ God bless her,” and then go back again to his own dreamy thoughts.

“ I’m thinking we’ll have to cut the oats, green as it is, Kitty,” said he, after a long pause. “ It’s late in the year now, and there’ll be no fine days.”

She could not speak, but her lips trembled, and her heart felt as if it would burst.

“ There’s a lamb astray these two days,” muttered he. “ I hope the eagles has n’t got it; but I heard one screeching last night. Light the fire, any way, darlin’, for it’s cowl’d here.”

With what art and patience and gentle forbearance did she labor to bring those erring faculties back, and fix them on the great reality that portended! It was long, indeed, before she succeeded. The old man loved to revel in the bygone life, wherein, with all its hardships, his fierce nature enjoyed such independence; and every now and then,

after she had, as she hoped, centred his thoughts upon the approaching trial, he would break out into some wild triumph over an act of lawless daring, some insolent defiance he had hurled at the minions who were afraid to come and look for him in his mountain home.

At last she did manage to get him to speak of his present condition, and to give a narrative — it was none of the clearest — of his encounter with the sheriff's people. He made no attempt to screen himself, nor did he even pretend that he had not been the aggressor; but he insisted, and he believed too, that he was perfectly justified in all he had done. His notion was that he was simply defending what was his own. The scrupulous regard the law observes towards him who is in possession is not unfrequently translated by the impetuous intelligence of the Irish peasant into a *bond fide* and undeniable right. Malone reasoned in this way, and with this addition: "It's just as good for me to die in a fair fight as be starved and ruined."

How hard was Kate's task, to eke out means for a defence from such materials as this! Indeed, no indictment that ever was drawn could be more condemnatory than the man's own admissions. Still, she persisted in sifting the whole story over and over, till she had at least such a knowledge of the details as would enable her to confer with a lawyer and obtain his opinion.

"And who is to defend me, darlin'?" asked he, in the cheerful tone of a heart perfectly at ease.

"We have not fixed upon that yet. We are not quite sure," murmured she, as her racked brain beat and throbbed with intense thinking.

"I'd like to have Mr. O'Connell, Kate," said he, proudly. "It would warm my ould heart to hear how he'd give it to them, the scoundrels! that would turn a poor man out of his own, and send him to sleep under a ditch. There's not his like in all Ireland to lash a landlord. It's there he's at home."

"I must be going now, grandaddy."

"Going, acushla! And will you leave me?"

"I must, there's no help for it; they would n't let me stay here."

“Begorra!” cried he, wildly, “I forgot I was in jail! May I never! if I didn’t think I was at home again, and that we were only waiting for the boys to have our supper!”

“My poor old granddaddy,” said she, stooping and kissing his forehead, “I’ll come back to-morrow, and stay a long time with you. I have a great deal to say to you that I can’t think of to-day. Here’s a little basket, with something to eat, and some tobacco too; the jailer gave me leave to bring it in. And you’ll drink my health to-night, granddaddy, won’t you?”

“My darlin’, — my own darlin’, that I will! And where did you come from now, — was it from England?”

“No, granddaddy. It was a long way off, but not from England.”

“And who are you living with? Is it with that ould man in Wales?”

“No, not with him. I’ll tell you all to-morrow.”

“They tell me he’s mighty rich.”

She evidently had not heard his words, for she stood pressing her temples with both hands, as if endeavoring to repress some severe pain.

“It’s your head’s aching, you darlin’!” said he, compassionately.

“Head and heart!” muttered she, drearily. “Good-bye, my dear old granddaddy, — good-bye!” And, not able to control her emotion, she turned her face away.

“You’ll have to call out through that gratin’ before they’ll open the door,” said he, half sulkily. “You’d think we was all sentenced and condimned, the way they lock us up here! But I hear him coming now. You’ll let her in to see me to-morrow, Mr. Meekins, won’t you?” said he, in an imploring tone. “She’s my daughter’s child, and nearly the last of us now.”

“By my conscience, she’s a fine creature!” said the turnkey, as she moved past. “It’s mighty seldom the likes of her is seen in such a place as this!”

When Kate gained the street, the rain was falling heavily; and as she stood uncertain which way to turn, for the town was strange to her, O’Rorke came up.

“Have n’t you as much as an umbrella, Miss Kate,” said he, “or a cloak, in this dreadful weather?”

“I was not thinking of either. Which way do we go towards the inn?”

“I’d advise you to take shelter in a shop here, miss; the shower is too heavy to last long.”

“I have no time for this; I want to catch the post, and I believe it leaves at six o’clock.”

“You’ll be drowned with this rain,” muttered he. “But come along. I’ll show you the way.”

As they went, neither spoke; indeed, the noise of the plashing rain, and the sharp gusts of the sweeping wind, would have made it almost impossible to converse, and they plodded onward through the dreary and deserted streets, for even the poorest had now sought shelter. The inn was at the very end of a long straggling street, and, when they reached it, they were completely soaked through with rain.

“You have ordered a room for me here, you said?” asked Kate, as they entered.

“Yes, it’s all ready, and your dinner too, whenever you like to eat it. — This is the young lady, ma’am,” continued he, addressing the landlady, “that’s coming to stop here; she’s wet through, and I hope you’ll take care of her, that she does n’t catch cold.”

“Will you show me my room?” asked Kate, quietly. But the landlady never moved, but stood scrutinizing her with an eye the very reverse of kindly.

“She’s asking you where’s her room,” broke in O’Rorke.

“I hear her, and I think this is n’t the house for her.”

“How do you mean? — what are you saying?” cried he, angrily.

“She’ll be better and more at home at Tom M’Cafferty’s; that’s what I mean,” said she, sturdily.

“But I took a room here.”

“And you’ll not get it,” rejoined she, setting her arms akimbo; “and if you want to know why, maybe you’d hear it, and hear more than you like.”

“Come away, — come away; let us find out this other place, wherever it be,” said Kate, hurriedly.

“The other place is down there, where you see the red

sign," said the landlady, half pushing her, as she spoke, into the street.

Shivering with cold, and wet through, Kate reached the little "shebeen," or carrier's inn, where, however, they received her with kindness and civility, the woman giving up to her her own room, and doing her very best to wait on her and assist her. As the trunk had been forgotten at the inn, however, Kate had to wait till O'Rorke fetched it, and as Mr. O'Rorke took her opportunity of the visit to enter on a very strong discussion with the landlady for her insolent refusal to admit them, it was nigh an hour before he got back again.

By this time, what with the effects of cold and wet, and what with the intense anxieties of the morning, Kate's head began to ache violently, and frequent shiverings gave warning of the approach of fever. Her impatience, too, to be in time for the post became extreme. She wanted to write to her uncle; she was confident that, by a frank open statement of what she had done and said and seen, she could deprecate his anger. The few words in which she could describe her old grandfather's condition would, she felt certain, move her uncle to thoughts of forgiveness. "Is he coming? — can you see him with my trunk? — why does he delay?" cried she, at every instant. "No, no, don't talk to me of change of clothes; there is something else to be thought of first. What can it be that keeps him so long? Surely it is only a few steps away. At last! — at last!" exclaimed she, as she heard O'Rorke's voice in the passage. "There — there, do not delay me any longer. Give me that desk; I don't want the other. It is my desk, my writing-desk, I want. Leave me now, my good woman, — leave me now to myself."

"But your shoes, miss; let me just take off your shoes. It will kill you to sit that way, dripping and wet through."

"I tell you I will not be dictated to!" cried she, wildly, for her face was now crimson with excitement, and her brain burning. "By what right do you come here into my room, and order me to do this or that? Do you know to whom you speak? I am a Luttrell of Arran. Ask him — that man below — if I am not speaking the truth. Is it not

honor enough for your poor house that a Luttrell should stop here, but that you must command me, as if I were your servant? There — there, don't cry; I did not mean to be unkind! Oh! if you but knew how my poor head is aching, and what a heavy, heavy load I'm carrying here!" And she pressed her hand to her heart. And, with this, she fell upon her bed, and sobbed long and bitterly. At last she arose, and, assuring the hostess that after she had written a few lines she would do all that she asked her, she persuaded the kind-hearted woman to leave her, and sat down to the table to write. What she wrote, how she wrote, she knew not; but the words followed fast, and page after page lay before her as the clock struck six. "What!" cried she, opening her door, "is it too late for the post? I hear it striking six!"

"I'll take it over myself to the office," said O'Rorke, "and by paying a trifle more they'll take it in."

"Oh, do! Lose no time, and I'll bless you for it!" said she, as she gave him the letter.

"Come up here and sit with me," said Kate to the woman of the house; and the honest creature gladly complied. "What a nice little place you have here!" said Kate, speaking with intense rapidity. "It is all so clean and so neat, and you seem so happy in it. Ain't you very happy?"

"Indeed, miss, I have no reason to be anything else."

"Yes; I knew it, — I knew it!" broke in Kate, rapidly. "It is the striving to be something above their reach makes people unhappy. You never asked nor wished for better than this?"

"Never, miss. Indeed, it's better than ever I thought to be. I was the daughter of a poor laborin'-man up at Belmullet, when my husband took me."

"What a dreary place Belmullet is! I saw it once," said Kate, half speaking to herself.

"Ah! you don't know how poor it is, miss! The like of *you* could never know what lives the people lead in them poor places with only the fishin' to look to, God help them! And when it's too rough to go to sea, as it often is for weeks long, there they are with nothing but one meal a day of wet potatoes, and nothing but water to drink."

“And *you* think I know nothing about all that!” cried Kate, wildly, — “nothing of the rain pouring down through the wet thatch, — nothing of the turf too wet to burn, and only smouldering and smoking, till it is better to creep under the boat that lies keel uppermost on the beach than stay in the wretched hovel, — nothing of the poor mother, with fever in one corner, and the child with small-pox in the other, — nothing of the two or three strong men huddled together under the lee of the house, debating whether it would n’t be better to go out to sea at any risk, and meet the worst that could happen, than sit down there to die of starvation?”

“In the name of the Blessed Virgin, miss, who towld you all about that?”

“Oh that I never knew worse! Oh that I had never left it!” burst out Kate, as, kneeling down, she buried her head in the bed, and sobbed as if her heart were breaking.

The poor woman did her very best to console and comfort her; but Kate was unconscious of all her kindness, and only continued to mutter unceasingly to herself, till at last, worn out and exhausted, she leaned her head on the other’s shoulder and fell off into a sort of disturbed sleep, broken by incessant starts.

CHAPTER XV.

IN CONCLAVE.

WHEN O'Rorke left Kate, it was not the direction of the post-office that he took; he went straight to the head inn of the town, on the doorsteps of which he stationed himself, anxiously watching for the arrival of another traveller. Nor had he long to wait, for as the town clock struck the half-hour, a chaise and pair galloped up to the door, and young Ladarelle cried out from the window, "The last seven miles in forty-six minutes! What do you say to that? Is dinner ready?" asked he, as he descended.

"Everything 's ready, sir," said O'Rorke, obsequiously, as, pushing the landlord aside, he assumed the office of showing the way upstairs himself.

"Tell Morse to unpack some of that sherry," said Ladarelle; and then laughingly added, "Order your own tap, Master O'Rorke, for I'm not going to throw away Dalradern wine upon *you*."

O'Rorke laughed too, — perhaps not as genially, but he could afford to relish such a small joke even against himself, — not to say that it conveyed an assurance he was well pleased with, that Ladarelle meant him to dine along with himself.

As the dinner was served, Ladarelle talked away about everything. It was his first visit to Ireland, and though it amused him, he said he hoped his last also. Everything was absurd, laughable, and poverty-stricken to his eyes; that is to say, pauperism was so apparent on all sides, the whole business of life seemed to be carried on by make-shifts.

The patriot O'Rorke had need of much forbearance as he listened to the unfeeling comments and ignorant inferences

of the "Saxon." He heard him, however, without one word of disclaimer, and with a little grin on his face, that if Ladarelle had been an Irishman, and had one drop of Irish blood in his body, he would not have accepted as any evidence of pleasure or satisfaction.

"Order whatever you mean to have," said Ladarelle, as the meal was concluded, "and don't let us have that fellow coming into the room every moment."

O'Rorke made his provision accordingly, and having secured a kettle, in case it should be his caprice to make punch, he bolted the door and resumed his place.

"There's your letter!" said Ladarelle, throwing a coarse-looking scrawl, sealed with green wax, on the table; "and I'll be shot if I understand one line of it!"

"And why not?" asked the other, angrily. "Is it the writing's so bad?"

"No; the writing can be made out. I don't complain of that. It's your blessed style that floors me! Now, for instance, what does this mean? — 'Impelled by the exuberant indignation that in the Celtic heart rises to the height of the grandest sacrifices, whether on the altars —'"

O'Rorke snatched the letter from his hand, crushed it into a ball, and threw it into the fire. "You'll not have it to laugh at another time," cried he, sternly, and with a stare so full of defiance that Ladarelle looked at him for some seconds in amazement, without speaking.

"My good friend," said he, at last, with a calm, measured voice, "it is something new to me to meet conduct like this."

"Not a bit newer or stranger than for *me* to be laughed at. Bigger and stronger fellows than you never tried that game with me."

"I certainly never suspected you would take it so ill. I thought if any one knew what a joke meant, it was an Irishman."

"And so he does; none better. The mistake was, you thought an Englishman knew how to make one."

"Let there be an end of this," said Ladarelle, haughtily. "If I had kept you in your proper place, you would never have forgotten yourself!" And as he spoke, he flung his

cigar into the fire, and arose and walked up and down the room.

O'Rorke hung his head for a moment, and then, in a tone of almost abject contrition, said, "I ask your pardon, sir. It was just as you say; my head was turned by good treatment."

If Ladarelle had been a physiognomist, he would not have liked the expression of the other's face, the hue of utter sickness in the cheek, while the eyes flashed with a fiery energy; but he noted none of these, and merely said, as he resumed his place, —

"Don't let it happen again, that's all. Tell me now what occurred when you got back to Westport, for the only thing I know is that you met her there the morning you arrived."

"I'll tell it in three words. She was on the quay, just come after a severe night at sea, when I was trying to make a bargain with a fisherman to take me over to the island. I did n't see her till her hand was on my arm and her lips close to my ear, as she whispered, —

"'What news have you for me?'

"'Bad news,' says I; 'the sorrow worse.'

"She staggered back, and sat down on the stock of an anchor that was there, and drew the tail of her cloak over her face, and that's the way she remained for about a quarter of an hour.

"'Tell it to me now, Mr. O'Rorke,' said she; 'and as you hope to see glory, tell me the truth, and nothing more.'

"'It's little I have to tell,' says I, sitting down beside her. 'The ould man was out on a terrace when I gave him your letter. He took it this way, turning it all round, and then, looking up at me, he says: "I know this handwriting," says he, "and I think I know what's inside of it, but you may tell her it's too late." He then muttered something about a sea-bathing place abroad that I could n't catch, and he went on: "She did n't know when she was well —"

"'No, no, that he never said!' says she, bursting in, — 'that he never said!'

"'Not in them words,' says I, 'certainly not; but it came to the same, for he said she used to be as happy here as the days was long!'

“ ‘True; it was all true,’ said she to herself. ‘Go on.’

“ ‘ “Go back,” says he, “and say that sorry as I was at first, I’m getting over it now, and it would n’t be better for either of us to hold any more correspondence.” And with that he gave me the letter back, sealed as it was.’ ”

“What made you say that?” cried Ladarelle.

“Because I knew she’d never ask for it; or if she did, I’d say, ‘I had it in my trunk at home.’ The first thing was to get her to believe me, at any cost.”

“Is *that* her way?” asked the other, thoughtfully.

“That’s her way. She’s not given to have suspicions, you can see that. If you talk to her straight ahead, and never break down in what you say, she’ll look at you openly, and believe it all; but if ever she sees you stop, or look confused, or if she catches you taking a sly look at her under the eyes, you’re done — done entirely! The devil a lawyer from this to Dublin would put you through such a cross-examination; and I defy the cleverest fellow that ever sat in the witness-box to baffle her. And she begins quite regular, — quiet, soft, and smooth as a cat.”

“What do I care for all this? She may be as shrewd as she pleases this day fortnight, Master O’Rorke. Let us only have the balls our own, and we’ll win the game before she gets a hazard.”

This illustration from the billiard-table was not fully intelligible to O’Rorke, but he saw its drift, and he assented.

“Where was I? Oh, I remember. ‘He gave me the letter back,’ says I, ‘and told the servants to see I had my supper, and everything I wanted.’

“ ‘He did this with his hand, as much as to say, “You may go away;” but I made as if I did n’t understand him, and I waited till the servant left the place, and then I drew near him, and said, —

“ ‘ “I think,” says I, “it would be better your honor read the letter, anyhow. Maybe there’s something in it that you don’t suspect.”

“ ‘ “Who are you,” says he, “that’s teaching *me* manners?”

“ ‘I did n’t say them was his words, but something that meant the same.

““I know every line that’s in it. I know far better than you — ay, or than she suspects — the game she would play.””

“She gave a little cry, as if something stung her. Indeed, I asked her, What was it hurt her? But she never answered me, but stood up straight, and, with a hand up this way, she said something to herself, as if she was making a vow or taking an oath. After that, it was n’t much she minded one word I said, and lucky for me it was, for I was coming to the hard part of my story — about your honor; how you heard from the servants that I was in the house, and sent for me to your own room, and asked me hundreds of questions about her. Where she was, and who with, and what she wrote about, and then how angry you grew with your uncle — I called him your uncle, I don’t know why — and how you said he was an unfeeling old savage, that it was the same way he treated yourself, pampering you one day, turning you out of doors the next. ‘And at last,’ says I — ‘I could n’t keep it in any longer — I up and told him what I came about, and that your letter was asking a trifle of money to defend your grandfather for his life.’

“Sorrow matter what I said, she never listened to me. I told her you swore that her grandfather should have the first lawyer in the land, and that you ’d come over yourself to the assizes. I told her how you put twenty pounds into my hand, and said, ‘Tim,’ — no, not Tim, — ‘Mr. O’Rorke, there’s a few pounds to begin. Go back and tell Miss Kate she has a better and truer friend than the one she lost; one that never forgot the first evening he seen her, and would give his heart’s blood to save her.’

“She gave a little smile, — it was almost a laugh once, — and I thought she was pleased at what I was telling her. Not a bit of it. It was something about the ould man was in her mind, and something that did n’t mean any good to him, either, for she said, ‘He shall rue it yet.’ And after that, though I talked for an hour, she never minded me no more than them fire-irons! At last she clutched my arm in her fingers, and said, —

“‘Do you know that my uncle declares I am never to go back again? I came away against his will, and he swore

that if I crossed the threshold to come here, I should never re-cross it again. Do you know,' says she, 'I have no home nor friend now in the whole world, and I don't know what's to become of me?'

"I tried to comfort her, and say that your honor would never see her in any distress; but she was n't minding me, and only went on saying something about being back again; but whether it meant at the Castle, or over in Arran, or, as I once thought, back as a child, when she used to play in the caves along the seashore, I could n't say; but she cried bitterly, and for the whole day never tasted bit or sup. We stopped at a small house outside the town, and I told them it was a young creature that lost her mother; and the next day she looked so ill and wasted, I was getting afraid she was going to have a fever; but she said she was strong enough, and asked me to bring her on here to the jail, for she wanted to see her grandfather.

"It was only this morning, however, I got the order from the sub-sheriff; and, indeed, he would n't have given it but that he seen her out of the window, for, in all her distress, and with her clothes wet and draggled, she's as beautiful a creature as ever walked."

"Why not marry her yourself, O'Rorke? By Jove, you're head and ears in love already. I'll make you a handsome settlement, on my oath I will."

"There's two small objections, sir. First, there's another Mrs. O'Rorke, though I'm not quite sure where, at the present sitting; and even if there was n't, she would n't have me."

"I don't see that; and if it be only the bigamy you're afraid of, go off to Australia or America, and your first wife will never trace you."

O'Rorke shook his head, and to strengthen his determination, perhaps, he mixed himself a strong tumbler of punch.

"And where are we now?" asked Ladarelle.

O'Rorke, perhaps, did not fully understand the question, for he looked at him inquiringly.

"I ask you where are we now? Don't you understand me?"

"We're pretty much where we were yesterday; that is,

we're waiting to know what's to be done for the ould man in the jail, and what your honor intends to do about" — he hesitated and stammered, and at last said, — "about the other business."

"Well, it's the other business, as you neatly call it, Mr. O'Rorke, that interests me at present. Sir Within has written twice to Mr. Luttrell since you left the Castle. One of his letters I stopped before it reached the office; the other, I suppose, has come to hand."

"No fault of mine if it has, sir," broke in O'Rorke, hastily, for he saw the displeasure in the other's look. "I was twice at the office at Westport, and there was n't a line there for Mr. Luttrell. Did you read the other letter, sir?" added he, eagerly, after a moment's silence.

"I know what's in it," muttered Ladarelle, in confusion, for he was not quite inured to the baseness he had sunk to.

"And what is it, sir?"

"Just what I expected; that besotted old fool wants to marry her. He tells Mr. Luttrell, and tells it fairly enough, how the estate is settled, and he offers the largest settlement the entail will permit of; but he forgets to add that the same day he takes out his license to marry we'll move for a commission of lunacy. I have been eight weeks there lately, and not idle, I promise you. I have got plenty of evidence against him. How he goes into the room she occupied at the Castle, and has all her rings and bracelets laid out on the toilet-table, and candles lighted, as if she was coming to dress for dinner, and makes her maid wait there, telling her Madame is out on horseback, or she is in the garden, she'll be in presently. One day, too, he made us wait dinner for her till eight o'clock; and when at last the real state of the case broke on him, he had to get up and go to his room; and Holmes, his man, told me that he sobbed the whole night through, like a child."

"And you think that all them will prove him mad?" asked O'Rorke, with a jeering laugh.

"Why not? If a man cannot understand that a person who has not been under his roof for six or eight months, and is some hundred miles away, may want candles in her

dressing-room, and may come down any minute to dinner in that very house — ”

“Oddity — eccentricity — want of memory — nothing more! There’s never a jury in England would call a man mad for all that.”

“You are a great lawyer, Mr. O’Rorke, but it is right to say you differ here from the Attorney-General.”

“No great harm in that same, — when he’s in the wrong.”

“I might, possibly, be rash enough to question your knowledge of law, but, certainly, I’ll never dispute your modesty.”

“My modesty is like any other part of me, and I did n’t make myself; but I’ll stick to this, — that ould man is not mad, and nobody could make him out mad.”

“Mr. Grenfell will not agree with you in that. He was over at the Castle the night I came away, and he saw the gardener carrying up three immense nosegays of flowers, for it was her birthday, it seemed, however any one knew it, and Sir Within had ordered the band from Wrexham, to play under her window at nightfall; and, as Mr. Grenfell said, ‘That old gent’s brain seems about as soft as his heart!’ Not bad, was it? — his brain as soft as his heart!”

“He’s no more mad than I am, and I don’t care who says the contrary.”

“Perhaps you speculate on being called as a witness to his sanity?” said Ladarelle, with a sneer.

“I do not, sir; but if I was, I’d be a mighty troublesome one to the other side.”

“What the deuce led us into this foolish discussion? As if it signified one rush to me whether he was to be thought the wisest sage or the greatest fool in Christendom. What I want, and what I am determined on, is that we are not to be dragged into Chancery, and made town talk of, because a cunning minx has turned an old rake’s head. I’d be hunted by a set of hungry rascals of creditors to-morrow if the old man were to marry. There’s not one of them that would n’t believe that my chance of the estate was all ‘up.’”

“There’s sense in *that*; there is reason in what you say now,” said O’Rorke.

“And that’s not the worst of it, either,” continued Lada-

relle, who, like all weak men, accepted any flattery, even at the expense of the object he sought; "but my governor would soon know how deep I am, and he'd cast me adrift. Not a pleasant prospect, Master O'Rorke, to a fellow who ought to succeed to about twelve thousand a year."

"Could he do it by law?"

"Some say one thing, some another; but this I know, that if my creditors get hold of me now, as the fox said, there would be very little running left in me when they'd done with me. But here's the short and the long of it. We must not let Sir Within marry, that's the first thing; and the second is, there would be no objection to any plan that will give him such a shock — he's just ready for a shock — that he would n't recover from, do you see it now?"

"I see it all, only I don't see how it's to be done."

"I wonder what you are here for, then?" asked the other, angrily. "I took you into my pay, thinking I had a fellow with expedients at his fingers' ends; and, except to see you make objections and discover obstacles, I'll be hanged if I know what you're good for."

"Go on, sir, go on," said O'Rorke, with a malicious grin.

"In one word, what do you propose?" said Ladarelle, sternly.

"Here's what I propose, then," said O'Rorke, pushing the glasses and decanters from him, and planting his arms on the table in a sturdy fashion, — "I propose, first of all, that you'll see Mr. Crowe, the attorney, and give him instructions to defend Malone, and get him the best bar on the circuit. She'll insist upon that, that's the first thing. The second is, that you come down to where she is, and tell her that when you heard of her trouble that you started off to help her and stand by her. I don't mean to say it will be an easy thing to get her to believe it, or even after she believes it to take advantage of it, for she is prouder than you think. Well, toss your head if you like, but you don't know her, nor them she comes from; but if you know how to make her think that by what she'll do she'll spite the ould man that insulted her, if you could just persuade her that there was n't another way in life so sure to break his heart, I think she'd comply, and agree to marry you."

“Upon my soul, the condescension overcomes me! You think — you actually think — she’d consent to be the wife of a man in such a position as mine!”

“Well, as I said awhile ago, it would n’t be easy.”

“You don’t seem to know, my good friend, that you are immensely impertinent!”

“I do not,” was the reply, and he gave it calmly and slowly. At the same instant a knock came to the door, and the waiter motioned to O’Rorke that a woman wanted to speak to him outside. “I’m wanted for a few minutes, sir, down at the place she’s stopping. The woman says she’s very ill, and wandering in her mind. I’ll be back presently.”

“Well, don’t delay too long. I’m between two minds already whether I’ll not go back and give up the whole business.”

CHAPTER XVI.

STILL CONSPIRING.

"SHE'S worse, sir," whispered the woman, as she crossed the threshold of her door, and exchanged a word with her daughter.

"Biddy says she's clean out of her mind now, — listen to that! The Lord have mercy on us!"

It was a wild scream rang through the house, followed by a burst of fearful laughter.

"Ask her if she'll see me," said O'Rorke, in a low voice.

"That's O'Rorke's voice!" Kate cried out from the top of the stairs. "Let him come up. I want to see him. Come up!" She leaned over the railing of the stairs as she spoke, and even O'Rorke was horror-struck at the ashy paleness of her face, and a fearful brilliancy that shone in her eyes. "It's a very humble place, Mr. O'Rorke, I am obliged to receive you in," said she, with a strange smile, as he entered; "but I have only just arrived here, you see I have not even changed my dress; pray sit down, if you can find a chair; all is in disorder here — and, would you believe it?" — here her manner became suddenly earnest, and her voice dropped to a whisper, — "would you believe it? my maid has never come to me, never asked me if I wanted her since I came. It's getting dark, too, and must be late."

"Listen to me, now, Miss Kate," said he, with a touch almost of pity in his voice; "listen to me. You're not well, you're tired and exhausted, so I'll send the woman of the house to you; and get to bed, and I'll find out a doctor to order you something."

"Yes, I should like to see a doctor! that kind person I saw before, Sir Henry something, — what was it? You will see it in the Court Guide, — he attends the Queen."

"To be sure, to be sure, we'll have the man that attends the Queen!" said he, giving his concurrence to what he imagined to be the fancy of an erring brain.

"And if he should ask why I am here," added she, in a whisper, "make out some sort of excuse, but don't mention my grandfather; these fashionable physicians are such snobs, they cannot abide visiting any but great folk. Is n't it true?"

"Yes, dear, it is true," said he, still humoring her.

"The fact is," said she, in a low, confiding voice, "I may confess it to you, but the fact is, I don't well know why I am here myself! I suppose Sir Within knows, — perhaps my uncle may." And in her vague, meaningless look might now be seen how purposeless and unguided were all her speculations. "There, go now, and send my maid to me. Tell Coles, as you pass down, he may put up the horses. I'll not ride this evening. Do you know, I feel, — it is a silly fancy, I suppose, — but I feel ill; not actually ill so much as odd."

He cast one glance, not without compassion, on her, and went out.

"There's a young woman above stairs mighty like 'in' for a fever," said he to the hostess. "Get a doctor to see her as soon as you can, and I'll be back soon to hear what he says."

While the woman of the house, with all that kindness which attaches to her class and nation, busied herself in cares for Kate, O'Rorke hastily made his way back to the inn.

"What is it? What called you away?" asked Ladarelle, as he entered the room.

"She's out of her mind! that's what it is," said O'Rorke, as he sat down, doggedly, and filled out a bumper of sherry to rally his courage. "What with anxiety and fatigue and fretting, she could n't bear up any more; and there she is, struck down by fever and raving."

"Poor thing!" said Ladarelle; but there was no pity in

the tone, not a shade of feeling in his countenance; he said the words merely that he might say something.

"Yes, indeed! Ye may well say 'Poor thing!'" chimed in O'Rorke! "it would n't be easy to find a poorer!"

"Do you suspect the thing is serious?" said Ladarelle, with a deep interest in his manner. "Do you think her life's in danger?"

"I do."

"Do you, really?" And now, through the anxiety in which he spoke, there pierced a trait of a most triumphant satisfaction; so palpable was it, that O'Rorke laid down the glass he had half raised to his lips, and stared at the speaker. "Don't mistake, — don't misunderstand me!" blurted out Ladarelle, in confusion. "I wish the poor girl no ill. Why should I?"

"At any rate, you think it would be a good thing for *you!*" said O'Rorke, sternly.

"Well, I must own I don't think it would be a bad one; that is, I mean it would relieve me of a deal of anxiety, and save me no end of trouble."

"Just so!" said O'Rorke, who, leaning his head on his hand, addressed his thoughts to the very serious question of how all these things would affect himself. Nor did it take him long to see that from the hour Ladarelle ceased to need him, all their ties were broken, and that the fashionable young gentleman who now sat at table with him in all familiarity would not deem him fit company for his valet.

"This is the fifth time, Master O'Rorke, you have repeated the words, 'Just so!' Will you tell me what they refer to? What is it that is 'just so'?"

"I was thinking of something," said O'Rorke.

"And what was it? Let us have the benefit of your profound reflections."

"Well, then, my profound reflections was telling me that if this girl was to die, your honor would n't be very long about cutting my acquaintance, and that, maybe, this is the last time I'd have the pleasure of saying, 'Will you pass me the wine?'"

"What are you drinking? This is Madeira," said Lada-

relle, as he pushed the decanter towards him, and affecting to mistake his meaning.

"No, sir; I'm drinking port wine," was the curt reply, for he saw the evasion, and resented it.

"As to that other matter, — I mean as to 'cutting you,' O'Rorke, — I don't see it, — don't see it at all!"

"How do you mean, 'you don't see it'?"

"I mean it is not necessary."

"Is n't it likely?"

"No; certainly not."

"Is n't it possible, then?"

"Everything is possible in this world of debts and difficulties, but no gentleman ever thinks of throwing off the man that has stood to him in his hour of need. Is that enough?"

O'Rorke made no answer; and in the attitude of deep thought he assumed, and in his intense look of reflection, it was pretty plain that he did not deem the explanation all-sufficient. "Here's how it is, sir!" burst he out, suddenly. "If this girl dies, you won't want me; and if you won't *want* me, it's very unlikely the pleasure of my society will make you come after me; so that I'd like to understand how it's to be between us."

"I must say, my worthy friend, everything I have seen of you goes very far to refute the popular notion abroad about Irish improvidence; for a man so careful of himself under every contingency — one who looked to his own interests in all aspects and with all casualties — I never met before."

"Well, sir, you meet him now. He is here before you; and what do you say to him?" said O'Rorke, with a cool audacity that was actually startling.

It was, very probably, fortunate for both of them, so far as their present good relations were concerned, that an interruption took place to their colloquy in the shape of a sharp knock at the door. It was a person wanted to see Mr. O'Rorke.

"Mr. O'Rorke's in request to-night," said Ladarelle, mockingly, as the other left the room.

"Are you the friend of that young lady, sir, that's down at M'Cafferty's?"

"Yes, I'm her friend," was the dry answer.

"Then I've come to tell you she's going fast into a fever, — a brain fever too."

"That's bad!" muttered O'Rorke, below his breath.

"One ought to know something about her, — whence she came, and how she came. There are symptoms that ought to be traced to their causes, for she raves away about people and things the most opposite and unlike —"

"Are you able to cure her? — that's the question," said O'Rorke.

"No doctor could ever promise that much yet."

"I thought as much," said O'Rorke, with an insolent toss of his head.

"I am willing to do my best," said the doctor, not noticing the offensive gesture; "and if you want other advice, there's Dr. Rogan of Westport can be had easy enough."

"Send for him, then, and hold a consultation; her life is of consequence, mind that!"

"I may as well tell you that Dr. Rogan will require to know what may lead him to a history of her case, and he won't treat her if there's to be any mystery about it."

O'Rorke's eyes flashed, as if an insolent answer was on his lips, and then, as quickly controlling himself, said, "Go and have your consultation, and then come back here to me; but mind you ask for me, — Mr. O'Rorke, — and don't speak to any one else than myself."

The doctor took his leave; and O'Rorke, instead of returning to the room, slowly descended the stairs and strolled out into the street.

It was night; there were few about; and he had ample opportunity for a quiet communc with himself, and that species of "audit" in which a man strikes the balance of all that may be *pro* or *contra* in any line of action. He knew well he was on dangerous ground with Ladarelle. It needed not an intelligence sharp as his own to show that a deep mistrust existed between them, and that each only waited for an opportunity to shake himself free of the other. "If I was to go over to the old man and tell him the whole plot, I wonder how it would be?" muttered he to himself. "I wonder would he trust me? and, if he was to trust me, how would he pay me? that's the question, — how would he pay

me?" The quick tread of feet behind him made him turn at this moment. It was the waiter of the inn coming to tell him that the post had just brought two letters to the gentleman he had dined with, and he wished to see him at once.

"Shut the door; turn the key in it," said Ladarelle, as O'Rorke entered. "Here's something has just come by the mail. I knew you'd blunder about those letters," added he, angrily; "one has reached Luttrell already, and, for aught I know, another may have come to hand since this was written. There, there, what's the use of your excuses. You promised me the thing should be done, and it was not done. It does not signify a brass farthing to me to know why. You're very vain of your Irish craft and readiness, and yet, I tell you, if I had intrusted this to my fellow Fisk, cockney as he is, I'd not have been disappointed."

"Very like," said O'Rorke, sullenly. "He's more used to dirty work than I am."

Ladarelle had just begun to run his eyes over one of the letters when he heard these words, and the paper shook in his hand with passion, and the color came and went in his face; but he still affected to read on, and never took his gaze from the letter. At last he said, in a shaken voice, which all his efforts could not render calm, "This is a few lines from Fisk, enclosing a letter from Luttrell for Sir Within. Fisk secured it before it reached its destination."

To this insinuated rebuke O'Rorke made no rejoinder, and, after a pause, the other continued: "Fisk says little, but it is all to the purpose. He has reduced every day to a few lines in journal fashion, so that I know what goes on at Dalradern as if I were there myself."

O'Rorke kept an unbroken silence, and Ladarelle went on: "The day you left the Castle, Sir Within wrote to Calvert and Mills, his solicitors, and despatched, by post, a mass of documents and parchments. The next day he wrote to Mr. Luttrell of Arran, posting the letter himself as he drove through Wrexham."

"That letter was the one I stopped at Westport," broke in O'Rorke.

"I suppose it was. Fisk writes: 'The servants all remarked a wonderful change had come over Sir W.; he gave orders through the house as if he expected company, and seemed in such spirits as he had not been for months. Next morning very anxious for the post to come in, and greatly disappointed at not seeing some letter he expected. The late post brought a letter from Mills to say he would be down by the morning's mail; that the matter presented no difficulty whatever, and was exactly as Sir Within represented it.' Fisk managed to read this and re-seal it before it got to hand; that's what I call a smart scoundrel!"

"So he is, — every inch of one!" was O'Rorke's rejoinder.

"Here he continues," said Ladarelle: "'Thursday, — No letter, nor any tidings of Mills. Sir Within greatly agitated. Post horses ordered for Chester, and countermanded. All sorts of contradictory commands given during the day. The upholsterers have arrived from town, but told not to take down the hangings, nor do anything till to-morrow. Mr. Grenfell called, but not admitted; a message sent after him to ask him to dinner to-morrow; he comes. Friday, — arrived at Wrexham. As the mail came in, saw Mr. Mills order horses for Dalradern; waited for the post delivery, and secured the enclosed. No time for more, as the Irish mail leaves in an hour.'

"Now for Luttrell. Let's see his side in the correspondence," said Ladarelle, breaking the seal; "though, perhaps, I know it as well as if I read it."

"You do not," said the other, sturdily.

"What do you mean by 'I do not'?"

"I suspect I know what you're thinking of; and it's just this, — that John Luttrell is out of himself with joy because that old fool's in love with his niece."

"He might well be what you call out of himself with joy if he thought she was to be mistress of Dalradern."

"It's much you know him," said O'Rorke, with an insolent mockery in his voice and look. "A Luttrell of Arran would n't think a prince of the blood too good for one belonging to him. Laugh away, laugh away; it's safe to do it here, for John Luttrell's on the island beyond."

"You are about the most —"

“The most what? Say it out. Surely you ain’t afraid to finish your sentence, sir!”

“I find it very hard, Mr. O’Rorke, to conduct an affair to its end in conjunction with one who never omits an occasion to say, or, at least, insinuate a rudeness.”

“Devil a bit of insinuation about *me*. Whatever I have to say, I say it out, in the first words that come to me; and I’m generally pretty intelligible too. And now, if it’s the same thing to you, what was it you were going to call me? I was the most, — something or other, — what was it?”

“I’ll tell you what *I* am,” said Ladarelle, with a bitter grin, — “about the most patient man that ever breathed.”

Neither spoke for some time; and then Ladarelle opened the letter he still held in his hand, and began to read it.

“Well,” cried he, “of all the writing I ever encountered, this is the most illegible; and not merely that, but there are words erased, and words omitted, and sentences left unfinished, or finished with a dash of the pen.”

“Are you going to read it out?” asked O’Rorke; and in his voice there rang something almost like a command, for the man’s native insolence grew stronger at every new conflict, and with the impression — well or ill founded — that the other was afraid of him.

“I’ll try what I can do,” said Ladarelle, repressing his irritation. “It is dated St. Finbar’s, 16th.

“SIR, — I know nothing of your letter of the 12th instant. If I ever received, I have forgotten and mislaid it. I answered yours of the 9th, and hoped I had done with this correspondence. I have seen your name in the newspapers, and have been’ — have been, I suppose it is — ‘accustomed’ — yes, accustomed — ‘to look on you as a person in high employ, and worthy of the’ — here the word is left out — ‘who employed him. If, however, you be, as you state, in your’ — this may be a nine or seven, I suppose it is seven — ‘in your seventy-fourth year, your proposal to a girl of twenty is little short of —’ Another lapse; I wish we had his word, it was evidently no compliment. ‘That is, however, more your question than mine. Such follies as these ask for no comment; they usually — And well it is it should be so.

“Fortune, however, befriends you, more than your own foresight. It is your good luck rescues you from this — She has left

this—gone away—deserted *me*, as she once deserted *you*, and would in all likelihood when sorry insolent airs of your connections to resent unpardonable. Without you are as bereft as myself, you must surely have relations, of whom choice and certainly more suitable than one whose age and decrepitude might in pity and compassion sentiment.

“But she is gone! Warning is, therefore, needless. You cannot if you would this folly. She is gone—and on a bed of sickness, to which the only hope and that speedily.

“If by such hurt you.’”

Line after line had been here erased and re-written, but all illegibly; nor was it till after long puzzling and exploring, the last words could be made out to be,—

“All further interchange of letters is a task beyond my strength. It is all said when I write, She is gone, no more to—nor would I now—A few hours more—I pray not days.

“Faithful servant,

“J. H. LUTTRELL.’

“It’s clear *he*’ll have no more correspondence,” said Ladarelle, with a half-triumphant manner, as he closed the letter.

“And the other? What will the other do?”

“Do you mean Sir Within?”

“Yes.”

“It’s not easy to say. It seems plain we’re not to expect anything very sensible from him. He is determined to make a fool of himself, and it only remains to see how he is to do it.”

“And how do you think it will be?” In spite of himself, O’Rorke threw into his question that amount of eagerness that showed how much interest he felt in the matter. Ladarelle was quick enough to see this, and turned his eyes full upon him, and thus they stood for uigh half a minute, each steadfastly staring at the other. “Well! do you see anything very wonderful in my face that you look so hard at me?” asked O’Rorke.

“I do.”

“And what is it, if I might make so bowld?”

“I see a man who doubts how far he ’ll go on the road he was paid to travel, — that ’s what I see!”

“And do you know why?” rejoined O’Rorke, defiantly. “Do you know why?”

“No.”

“Then I’ll tell you! It ’s because the man that was to show me the way has n’t the courage to do it! There ’s the whole of it. You brought me over here telling me one thing, and now you ’re bent on another! and to-morrow, if anything cheaper turns up, you ’ll be for *that*. Is it likely that I’d risk myself far with a man that does n’t know his mind, or trust his own courage?”

“I suppose I understand my own affairs best!”

“Well! that ’s what I think about *mine*, too.”

Ladarelle took an impatient turn or two up and down the room before he spoke, and it was easy to see that he was exerting himself to the very utmost to be calm. “If this girl’s flight from Arran has served us in one way, her illness has just done us as much harm in another, — I mean, of course, if she should not die; because my venerable relation is just as much determined to marry her as ever he was. Are you attending to me?”

“To every word, sir,” said O’Rorke, obsequiously; and, indeed, it was strangely like magnetism the effect produced upon him, when Ladarelle assumed the tone and manner of a superior.

“I want to have done with the business, then, at once,” continued Ladarelle. “Find out from the doctor — and find it out accurately — what are her chances of life. If she is likely to live, learn how soon she could be removed from this, and whither to, as Sir Within is sure to trace her to this place. As soon as possible, we must manage some sort of mock marriage, for I believe it is the only sure way of stopping this old man in his folly. Now, I leave it to *you* to contrive the plan for this. There ’s another demand for you. See who is at the door.”

“Mr. O’Rorke is wanted at M’Cafferty’s,” said a voice outside.

“I’ll be back in a few minutes, sir.”

“Well, I shall go to bed, and don’t disturb me if there

be nothing important to tell me. Order breakfast for ten to-morrow, and let me see you there."

O'Rorke bowed respectfully, and went out.

"I'd give fifty pounds to hear that you had broken your neck on the staircase!" muttered Ladarelle, as he saw the door close; "and I'd give a hundred had I never seen you!"

CHAPTER XVII.

A HEAVY BLOW.

IN the grand old dining-room of Dalradern Castle, Sir Within was seated with his guest, Mr. Grenfell. The ample wood-fire on the hearth, the costly pictures on the walls, the table covered with decanters and flasks of various forms, the ample old chairs in which they lounged, suggested luxurious ease and enjoyment; and perhaps Grenfell, as he smoked his cigar, in accordance with the gracious permission of his host, *did* feel that it was a supreme moment of life; while certainly he, to whom all the precious appliances belonged, was ill at ease and uncomfortable, answering occasionally at random, and showing in many ways that his mind was deeply and far from pleasantly preoccupied.

Grenfell had been some days at the Castle, and liked his quarters. There were, it is true, many things he wished changed; some of them, he fancied, could be altered by a little adroit diplomacy with the butler and the housekeeper, and other heads of departments; others, of a more serious kind, he reserved to be dealt with when the time should come that he would be regarded in that house as little less than a master. He had weighed the matter carefully with himself, and determined that it was better to stand by Sir Within, old as he was, than to depend on the friendship of young Ladarelle, whose innate vulgarity would have made all companionship irksome, and whose inveterate obstinacy would have made guidance impossible.

The house had, indeed, great capabilities, and, with Sir Within's means, might be made all that one could wish for. With the smallest imaginable addition to the household, thirty, ay, forty guests could be easily accommodated, and he, Grenfell, knew of such delightful people, — such charm-

ing people, — who would be in ecstasies to stop at a house where was no mistress, where no return civilities were wanted, where each guest might be a law to himself as to his mode of life, and where the cellar was immaculate, and the cook better than at the Travellers'.

“If I could only get him out of this stupid isolation, — if I could persuade him that all England is not like a Welsh county, and that this demure neighborhood, with its antiquated prudery, has no resemblance to the charming world of seductive sinners I could bring around him, what a victory it would be!” To this end the first grand requisite was, that the old man should not marry. “If he marry,” argued Grenfell, “he will be so deplorably in love that, what between his passion and his jealousy, he'll shut up the house, and nothing younger than the old French abbé will ever cross the threshold.”

Now, Grenfell had not of late kept up any relations of intercourse with Ladarelle; indeed, in his life in town, he had avoided intimacy with one all of whose associates were evidently taken from the lowest ranks of the turf, and the slang set of second-rate theatres. Grenfell could not, consequently, know what plan of campaign this promising young gentleman was following out; but when he learned that it was quite suddenly he had quitted the Castle, and that his servant, Mr. Fisk, had been left behind, he very soon established such a watch on the accomplished valet's movements as satisfied him that he was there on duty as a spy, and that his daily visits to the post-office signified how industriously he despatched his intelligence. At first, Grenfell was disposed to make advances to Fisk, and win his confidence, — a task not difficult to one whose whole life had been a series of such seductions; but he subsequently thought it might be better to hold himself quite aloof from all intercourse with the younger branch, and stand firmly by the head of the dynasty. “If Ladarelle be really gone after this girl, to marry her, or to run off with her, it matters not which, he is playing *my* game. All I ask is, that Sir Within be not the bridegroom. If the shock of the disaster should not overwhelm him, there is nothing else to be dreaded.” There, indeed, lay the great peril; nor was Gren-

fell a man to undervalue it. In his contempt for all emotions, he naturally ascribed their strongest influences to those whose age had weakened their faculties and impaired their judgments. Love was a folly with the young; but with the old, it was the stupidest of all infatuations, and the reckless way in which an old man would resign fortune, station, and the whole world's opinion on such an issue, was, to *his* thinking, the strongest possible evidence of second childhood.

"If I could make him feel the ridiculous part of the calamity, he would gain courage to brave the disaster," thought he. And while he thus thought he smoked on in silence, neither uttering a word.

"Nine o'clock!" said Sir Within, as he counted the strokes of the timepiece. "Nine and the post not in!"

"How easily one takes the delay of the mail when 'the House' is up!" said Grenfell, purposely saying what might possibly suggest some sort of dissent or opinion; but the old diplomatist had been too well schooled to fall into such indiscretion, and simply said, "It is true, we all hibernate when the autumn begins."

Grenfell saw that his shell had not exploded, and began to talk at random about how much pleasanter it was to have one's post of a morning, — that letters should always come in with the eggs at breakfast, — that people exchanged their gossip more genially then than at any other time; and, at last, arrived at what he sought to portray, the tableau of a charming party in a delightful country-house, — "The best thing we have in England; and, indeed, the best thing the world has anywhere."

"I quite agree with you," said Sir Within, blandly. And he wiped the beautiful miniature of Marie Antoinette that adorned the lid of his snuff-box, and gazed with admiration at the lovely features.

"I fancy they know very little abroad of what we call country-house life?" half asked Grenfell.

"They have their gatherings at 'the château' in France; and in Italy they have their villeggiatura — Ah, there he comes; I hear the clank of the post-bag!" He caught himself quickly, and resumed: "I rather like the villeggiatura;

there is not much trouble taken to entertain you, but you are free to dispose of yourself how you like. What has kept him so late, Fry?" said he, as the butler entered with the bag; "take it up to my room."

"Oh, let us hear who has won the Cantelupe!" said Grenfell. "I have backed Grimsby's horse, Black Ruin, at three to eight against the field."

"Here's the key, then," said Sir Within, with well-feigned indifference.

As Grenfell emptied the contents of the bag on the table, a square-shaped, somewhat heavy packet fell to the floor at Sir Within's feet. The old man lifted it up and laid it on the table, but, on doing so, his hand trembled, and his color changed.

"What about your race, — has your horse won?" asked he, as Grenfell turned over the paper to find the sporting intelligence.

"Oh, here it is, — a dead heat between Black Ruin and Attila. Why, he's Grimsby's also. 'Second heat, Attila walked over.' What a sell! I see there's a long letter about it from the correspondent; shall I read it for you?"

"By all means," said Sir Within, not sorry to give him any occupation at the moment that might screen himself from all scrutiny.

"'The long-expected match between Lord St. Dunstan's well-known Carib Chief and Mr. Grimsby's Black Ruin — for, in reality, the large field of outsiders, fourteen in number, might as well have been cantering over an American savannah — took place yesterday.'" He read on and on — the fluent commonplaces — about the course crowded with rank and fashion, amongst whom were noticed the usual celebrities of the turf, and was getting to the description of the scene at the weighing-stand, when a dull heavy sound startled him. He looked down, and saw that Sir Within had fallen from his chair to the floor, and lay stretched and motionless, with one arm across the fender.

Lifting him up, Grenfell carried him to a sofa. His face and forehead were crimson, and a strange sound came from the half-open lips, like a faint whistle. "This is apoplexy," muttered Grenfell; and he turned to ring the bell and sum-

mon aid, but, as he did so, he perceived that several papers lay on the floor, and the envelope of a recently opened packet amongst them. "Ha, here is what has done it!" muttered he to himself; and he held a square-shaped piece of coarse paper to the light, and read the following, written in a bold, irregular hand, —

"I, Paul O'Rafferty, P.P. of Drumcahill and Ardmorran, hereby certify that I have this day united in the honds of holy matrimony,



Adolphus Ladarelle, Esq., of Upper Portland Street, London, and the "Downs," in Herefordshire, to Kate Luttrell, niece and sole heiress of John Hamilton Luttrell, Esq., of Arran; and that the ceremony was duly performed according to the rites and usages of the Holy Catholic Church, and witnessed by those whose names are attached to this document.

"Jane M'Cafferty, her mark X.

"Timothy O'Rorke, of Cushma-Creena.

"Given on this eighteenth of November, 18—."

Grenfell had not time to look at the other papers, for he heard a step in the corridor, and, thrusting them hastily into his pocket, he rang the bell violently, nor desisted till the door opened, and Mr. Fisk appeared.

"Call the people here; send for a doctor!" cried Grenfell. "Sir Within has been taken with a fit."

"A fit, sir! Indeed, how very dreadful!" said Fisk; but who, instead of hurrying off to obey the order, walked deliberately over and stared at the sick man. "He 'll not come round, sir, take my word for it, Mr. Grenfell. It's no use doing anything, — it's all up."

"Go, send for a doctor at once," said Grenfell, angrily.

"I assure you, sir, it's too late," said the impassive valet, as he left the room in the same slow and measured pace he had entered.

Several servants, however, rushed now to answer the bell, which Grenfell rang unceasingly; and by them Sir Within was carried to his room, while messengers were despatched in all directions for medical aid. Once alone in his own room, and with the door locked, Grenfell re-read the document which had caused the disaster. He was not one of those men who suffer from the pangs of conscience on ordinary occasions, but he had his misgivings here that a certain piece of counsel he had once given might just as well have been withheld. If the shock should kill the old man, it would defeat all that policy to which he had been of late devoting himself. Young Ladarelle would have learned from Fisk enough about his, Grenfell's, influence with Sir Within to shut the doors against him when he had succeeded to the estate. These were painful reflections, and made him think that, very probably, he had "been backing the wrong stable."

"Is the fellow really married?" muttered he, as he sat examining the paper. "This document does not seem to me very formal. It is not like the copy of a registry, and, if the marriage were duly solemnized, why is it not stated where it took place?"

He turned to the long letter which accompanied the certificate. It was from Ladarelle, half apologetically announcing his marriage, and stating that the intelligence could

doubtless only prove gratifying to Sir Within, since the object of his choice had so long been the recipient of so many favors from Sir Within himself, and one whose gratitude had already cemented the ties of relationship which bound her to the family. It was long and commonplace throughout, and bore, to the keen eyes of him who read it, the evidence of being written to sustain a fraud.

"There has been no marriage," said Grenfell, as he closed the letter. "She has been duped and tricked, but how and to what extent I know not. If I were to send for Fisk, and tell him that I had just received this letter from his master, the fellow might accord me his confidence, and tell me everything."

He rang the bell at once; but when the servant answered the summons, he said that Mr. Fisk had left the Castle with post-horses, half an hour before, it was supposed for town.

Ladarelle's letter finished by saying, "We are off to Paris, where we remain, Hôtel Grammont, Rue Royale, till the 30th; thence we shall probably go south, — not quite certain where."

"No, no, there has been no marriage, — not even a mock one. All these details are far too minute and circumstantial, and these messages of 'my dear wife' are all unreal. But what can it matter? If the old man should only rally, it is all for the best."

A knock came to the door. It was Dr. Price. "All is going on favorably. It was shock, — only shock of the nervous system, — nothing paralytic," said he; "and he is more concerned to know that his face was not bruised, nor his hands scratched, than anything else. He wishes to see you immediately."

"Is it quite prudent to go and talk to him just yet?"

"Better than render him irritable by refusing to see him. You will, of course, use your discretion on the topic you discuss with him."

Grenfell was soon at the sick man's bedside, none but themselves in the room.

"We are alone, are we?" asked Sir Within, faintly.

"Quite alone."

"Yates says there were no letters or papers to be found when he entered the room —"

"I placed them all in my pocket," interrupted Grenfell. "There were so many people about, and that fellow of young Ladarelle's too, that I thought it best not to leave anything at their mercy."

"It was very kind and very thoughtful. Where are they?"

"Here. I sealed them up in their own envelope."

The old man took the paper with a trembling hand, and placed it under his pillow. He had little doubt but that they had been read, — his old experiences in diplomacy gave no credit to any sense of honor on this head, — but he said not a word of this.

"Adolphus has married the girl you saw here, — my ward, he used to call her," said he, in a low whisper.

"Indeed! Is it a good match? Has she fortune?"

"Not a shilling. Neither fortune nor family."

"Then you are not pleased with the connection?"

Sir Within drew a long sigh, and said, "It is no affair of mine. His father will, perhaps, not like it."

"How did it come about? Where did it take place?"

"Nothing — nothing but misery before her!" muttered the old man, unheeding his question.

"Do you think he will treat her ill?"

"A life of sorrow, — of sorrow and shame!" murmured he, still lower. "Poor girl, — poor unhappy girl!"

Grenfell was silent; and the other, after a pause, went on, —

"His father is sure to be displeased; he is a violent man, too, and one can't say to what lengths temper may carry him. And all this will fall upon *her!*"

"Do you think so?"

"I know him well!" He mused for several minutes, and then said to himself: "I could not — I could not — not for worlds!" And then, aloud: "But I could leave this — leave the Castle, and let them come here. How she loved it once! Oh, if you knew how happy she was here!" He covered his face with his hands, and lay thus a considerable time.

"And do you mean to invite them here?" asked Grenfell at last.

"You can write it for me," said he, still pursuing his own train of thought. "You can tell him that, not being well, — having some difficulty in holding a pen, — I have begged of you to say that the Castle is at their disposal, — that I mean to leave this, — where shall I say for? — to leave this for the south of France, or Italy."

"Are you equal to such a journey? Have you strength for it?"

"Far more than to stay here and meet her, — *them*, — meet *them*," added he, almost peevishly. "I have not health nor spirits for seeing company, and, of course, people will call, and there will be dinners and receptions, — all things I am unfit for. Say this for me, dear Mr. Grenfell, and tell Yates that I mean to go up to town to-morrow."

Grenfell shook his head to imply dissent, but the other resumed, —

"If you knew me better, sir, you would know that my energy never failed me when I called upon it. I have been tried pretty sorely once or twice in life, and yet no disaster has found me faint-hearted!" As he spoke, a gleam of pride lighted up his features, and he looked all that he thought himself. "Will you take this key of the gem-room," said he, after a pause; "and in the second drawer of the large ebony cabinet you will find a green morocco-case; it has my mother's name on it, Olive Trevor. Do me the favor to bring it to me. This was a wedding present some eighty years ago, Mr. Grenfell," said he, as he unclasped the casket that the other placed in his hands. "It was the fashion of those days to set gems on either side, and here you have emeralds, and here are opals. Ladies were wont to turn their necklaces in the course of an entertainment; they are content with less costly changes now: they merely change their affections." He tried to smile, but his lips trembled, and his voice all but failed him.

"It is very magnificent!" exclaimed Grenfell, who was truly surprised at the splendor of the jewels. .

"The Margravine of Anhalt's present to my mother, sir!" As the glow of pride the recollection imparted to his face faded away, a sickly pallor succeeded, and, in a tone of broken and difficult utterance, he said: "Be kind enough to

place this in an envelope, seal it with my arms, and address it, 'Mrs. A. Ladarelle, de la part de W. W.' That will be quite sufficient."

"They are splendid stones!" said Grenfell, who seemed never to weary of his admiration.

"They will become her, sir, and *she* will become *them!*" said the old man, with an immense effort to seem calm and collected. "I believe," said he at last, with a faint smile, "I am overtaxing this poor strength of mine. Price warned me to be careful. Will you forgive me if I ask you to leave me to my own sorry company? You'll come back in the evening, won't you? Thanks, — my best thanks!" And he smiled his most gracious smile, and made a little familiar gesture with his hand; and then, as the door closed, and he felt that none saw him, he turned his face to the pillow and sobbed, — sobbed convulsively.

Although Grenfell had acceded to Sir Within's request to write the invitation to Ladarelle, he secretly determined that he would not commit himself to the step without previously ascertaining if the marriage had really taken place; because, as he said to himself, this young fellow must never get it into his head that he has deceived such a man as me. He, therefore, wrote a short, half-jocular note, addressed to Ladarelle at his club in town, saying that he had read his letter to Sir Within, and was not one half so much overcome by the tidings as his respected relative. "In fact," said he, "I have arrived at that time of life in which men believe very little of what they hear, and attach even less of importance to that little. At all events, Sir Within will not remain here; he means to go abroad at once, and Dalradern will soon be at your disposal, either to pass your honeymoon, or rejoice over your bachelor freedom in, and I offer myself as your guest under either casualty." "The answer will show me," muttered he, "what are to be our future relations towards each other. And now for a good sleep, as befits a man with an easy conscience."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOME OF SORROW.

It was six weeks after the events in which we last saw Kate Luttrell that she was sufficiently able to rise from her sick-bed, and sit at the little window of her room. She was wan and worn and wasted, her eyes deep sunken, and her cheeks hollow. Beautiful was she, still, in all the delicate outline of her features, the finely rounded nostril and gracefully turned chin almost gaining by the absence of the brilliant coloring which had at one time in a measure absorbed all the admiration of her loveliness. Her long luxuriant hair, — spared by a sort of pity by her doctor, who, in his despair of rescuing her from her fever, yielded to her raving entreaties not to cut it off, — this now fell in wavy masses over her neck and shoulders, and in its golden richness rendering her pale face the semblance of marble. Each day had the doctor revealed to her some detail of what had happened during her illness: how she had been “given over,” and received the last rites of the Church; how, after this, one who called himself her brother had arrived, and insisted on seeing her; how he came with the man named O’Rorke and the priest O’Rafferty, and remained a few seconds in her room, and left, never to return again; indeed, all three of them had left the town within an hour after their visit.

She heard all this in mute amazement, nor even was she certain that her faculties yet served her aright, so strange and incomprehensible was it all. Yet she rarely asked a question, or demanded any explanation, hearing all in silence, as though hoping that with time and patience her powers of mind would enable her to surmount the difficulties that now confronted and defied her.

For days and days did she labor to remember what great event it was had first led her to this town of Lifford, the very name of which was strange to her. The same dislike to ask a question pursued her here, and she pondered and pondered over the knotty point, till at last, of a sudden, just as though the light broke instantaneously upon her, she cried out, —

“I remember it all! I know it now! Has the trial come off? What tidings of my grandfather?” The poor woman to whom this was addressed imagined it was a return of her raving, and quietly brought the doctor to her side. “Are the assizes over?” whispered Kate in his ear.

“More than a month ago.”

“There was an old man, — Malone. Is he tried?”

“The murder case? I was at it.”

“And the verdict?”

“The verdict was guilty, with a recommendation to mercy for his great age, and the want of premeditation in the crime.”

“Well, go on.”

“The judge concurred, and he will not be executed.”

“He will be banished, however, — banished for life,” said she, in a low, faltering voice.

“To believe himself, he asks no better. He made a speech of nigh an hour in his defence, and if it had not been that at the last he attempted a sort of justification of what he had done, the judge would not, in all probability, have charged against him; but the old fellow insisted so strongly on the point that a poor man must always look to himself and not to the law for justice, that he destroyed his case.”

“And was there not one to advise him?”

“Apparently not; and when the Chief Baron named a lawyer to defend him, the old fellow refused the aid, and said, ‘The work that’s done for nothing is worth nothing. I’ll just speak for myself.’”

“And this other man, — O’Rorke, I mean, — where was he? — what did he do?”

“He left this the night before the trial came on, with that young gentleman that was here.”

"Ah, he left him! Deserted him in his last need!" cried she, faintly, but with an intense agony in the tone.

"Had they been friends?" asked the doctor; but she never heard the question, and sat with her hands clasped before her, motionless and silent.

"Were you there throughout the whole trial?" asked she, at last.

"No; I was present only on the last day, and I heard his speech."

"Tell me how he looked; was he broken or depressed?"

"The very reverse. It would have been better for him if he had looked cast down or in grief. It was too bold and too defiant he was, and this grew on him as he spoke, till, towards the end of his speech, he all but said, 'I dare you to find me guilty!'"

"The brave old man!" muttered she below her breath.

"When the crowd in the court cheered him, I knew what would happen. No judge in the land could have said a word for him after that."

"The brave old man!" muttered she again.

"It seemed at one time he was going to call witnesses to character, and he had a list of them in his hand; but he suddenly changed his mind, and said, 'No, my Lord, whatever you're going to do with me this day, I'll do my best to meet it, but I won't make any one stand up here, and have the shame to say he knows a man that the mere turn of a straw might send to the gallows!'"

"Did he say that?" cried she, wildly.

"He did; and he looked at the jury all the while, as though to say, 'Take care what you do; it's a man's life is on it!'"

"Did he ever mention my name? Did he ask for any one in particular, did you hear?" asked she, faintly.

"No; but before he began his speech he looked all over the court for full five minutes or more, as if in search of some one, and even motioned some people in the gallery to stand aside that he might see better, and then he drew a long breath, — either disappointment or relief; it might be either."

"How could they have the heart to say guilty?" said she.

"There was no other word to say. They were on their oaths, and so the judge told them, and the whole country was looking at them."

"And where is he now?" asked she, eagerly.

"All the prisoners for transportation have been sent on to Dublin. They'll not leave the country before spring."

She hid her head between her hands, and sat for a long time without speaking. At last she raised her face, and her eyes were red with weeping, and her cheeks furrowed.

"Doctor," said she, plaintively, "have I strength enough to go to him?"

He shook his head mournfully, in token of dissent.

"Am I too ill?"

"You are too weak, my poor child; you have not strength for such a journey."

"But I have great courage, doctor, and I can bear far more fatigue than you would think."

He shook his head again.

"You do not know," said she, in a low but earnest voice, "that I was reared in hardship, brought up in want and cold and misery. Ay, and I have never forgotten it!"

He smiled; it was half in compassion, half in disbelief.

"Do you know me?—do you know who I am?" asked she, eagerly.

"I know it all, my poor child,—I know it all," said he, sadly.

"Know it all? What does your phrase mean? How all?"

He arose; but she grasped his hand with both hers, and held him fast.

"You shall not leave this till you have answered me!" cried she. "Is it not enough that I am sick and friendless? Why should you add the torture of doubt to such misery as mine? Tell me, I beseech you,—I entreat of you, tell me what you have heard of me? I will deny nothing that is true!"

He pleaded warmly, at first, to be let off altogether, and then to be allowed further time,—some period when she had grown to be stronger and better able to bear what he should

have to tell her. Her entreaties only became more urgent, and she at last evinced such excitement that, in terror lest a return of her brain fever might be feared, he yielded, promising that the confidence reposed in him was a trust nothing should induce him to break.

There is no need that the reader should pass through the sad ordeal of Kate's suffering, even as a witness. No need is there that her shame, her sorrow, her misery, and, last of all, her passionate indignation, should be displayed before him; nor that he should see her as she sat there, wrung with affliction, or half maddened with rage. Compressing the doctor's story into the fewest words, it was this:—

“Kate had met young Ladarelle at Dalradern Castle, where a passion had grown up between them. The young man, heir to a vast fortune, and sure of a high position, did not scruple to avail himself of what advantages his brilliant station conferred,—won her affections, and seduced her with the promise of a speedy marriage. Wearied out at the unfulfilment of this pledge, she had fled from Dalradern, and sought refuge at Arran, intending to reveal all to her uncle, whose pride would inevitably have sought out her betrayer, and avenged her wrong, when she yielded to O'Rorke's persuasion to meet her lover at Westport, where, as he assured her, every preparation for their marriage had been arranged. Thus induced, she had quitted her uncle's house, and met Ladarelle. A mock marriage, performed by a degraded priest, had united them, and they were about to set out for the Continent, when she was struck down by brain fever. The fear of being recognized, as the town was then filling for the assizes, determined Ladarelle and his friend to take their departure. There was deposited with the doctor a sum sufficient to defray every charge of her illness, with strict injunctions to keep all secret, and induce her, if she recovered, to proceed to Paris, where, at a given address, she would be welcomed and well received.”

This was the substance of a narrative that took long in the telling, not alone for the number of incidents it recorded, but that, as he proceeded, the unlucky doctor's difficulties increased as some point of unusual delicacy would intervene, or some revelation would be required, which, in the pres-

ence of the principal actor in it, became a matter of no small embarrassment to relate.

"And how much of all this, sir, do you believe?" said she, calmly, as he concluded.

He was silent, for the question impugned more than his credulity, and he hesitated what to answer.

"I ask you, sir, how much of this story do you believe?"

"There is a color to part of it," said he, diffidently.

"And what part?"

"The part which refers to the marriage here."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"When you lay on that bed yonder, with fixed eyes, motionless, unconscious, and, as all believed, dying, a priest muttered some words over you, and placed your hand in that of this young man I spoke of. The woman of the house saw this through the keyhole of the door; she saw a ring produced, too, but it fell to the ground, and the priest laughingly said, 'It's just as good without the ring;' and, after they had gone, the woman picked it up beneath the bed, and has it now. She saw them, besides, when they came downstairs, sit down at a table and draw up a paper, to which the priest ordered her to be a witness to by her mark, as she cannot write; and this paper she believes to have had some reference to the scene she saw above. All this I believe, for she who told it to me is truthful and honest."

Kate passed her hand across her forehead like one trying to clear her faculties for better reflection, and then said, "But this is no marriage!"

"Certainly not; nor could it have been had recourse to to quiet scruples of yours, since you were unconscious of all that went on."

"And with what object, then, was it done?"

This was what he could not answer, and he sat silent and thoughtful; at last, he said, "Were you not at this Castle in Wales I spoke of?"

"Yes."

"And left it for Arran?"

"Yes," said she again, "that also is true; and I left it to

come and see that old man whose trial you witnessed. He was my grandfather."

"Your grandfather! Surely I am speaking to Miss Luttrell of Arran?"

She nodded, and, after a moment, said: "That old man was my mother's father, and I journeyed here for no other end than to see him and comfort him. Of all these schemes and plots I know nothing, nor have I the strength now to attempt to think of them. Which of us will you believe, sir, — them or me?"

"I believe you, — every word you have told me," said he; "but can you forgive me for the tale I have told you?"

"Enough, now, that you do not believe it. And yet what can it matter to me how I am thought of? The opinion of the world is only of moment to those who have friends. I have not one!"

He did his best to comfort and to cheer her; he said all those kind things which even the humblest of his walk know how to pour into the ear of affliction, and he urged her to go back at once to Arran, — to her uncle.

The counsel came well timed, and she caught at it eagerly. "My wretchedness will plead for me if I cannot speak for myself," said she, half aloud; and how all her thoughts were how to reach Westport, and take boat for the island. The doctor volunteered to see her so far on her journey, and they set out the same evening.

Arrived at Westport, tired and fatigued as she was, she would not stay to rest, but embarked at once. The night was a bright and pleasant one, with a light land breeze; and as she stepped into the boat, she said: "The sea has given me the feeling of health again. I begin to hope I shall live to see you and thank you for all your friendship. Good-bye." And, as she spoke, the craft was away, and she saw no more.

The poor suffering frame was so overcome by fatigue that they were already at anchor in the harbor of Arran before she awoke. When she did so, her sensations were so confused that she was almost afraid to speak or question the boatmen, lest her words should seem wild and unconnected.

"Are you coming back with us, miss?" asked one of the men, as she stepped on shore.

"No—yes—I believe not; it may be—but I hope not," said she, in a broken accent.

"Are we to wait for you?" repeated he.

"I cannot say. No—no—this is my home."

"A dreary home it is, then!" said the man, turning away; and the words fell heavily on her heart, and she sat down on a stone, and gazed at the wild bleak mountain, and the little group of stunted trees amidst which the Abbey stood; and truly had he called it a dreary home.

The dawn was just breaking as she reached the door, and ere she had time to knock, Molly saw her from her window, and rushed out to meet her and welcome her home. Almost hysterical with joy and grief together, the poor creature clung to her wildly. "It's in time you're come, darlin'," she cried, amidst her sobs; "he's going fast, sleeping away like a child, but asking for you every time he wakes up, and we have to tell him that you were tired, and were gone to lie down, and then he mutters some words and goes off again."

It needed but this sorrow, Kate thought, to fill up the measure of her misery; and she tottered into the little room and sat down without uttering a word, while the woman went on with the story of her master's illness.

"A mere cold at first, brought on by going down to the point of rocks at daybreak to watch the boats. He thought he'd see you coming back. At last, when he was so ill that he could n't leave the house, he said that the man that brought him the first news you were coming, he'd give him hothouse and garden rent free for his life, and it did n't need that same to make us long to see you! Then came the fever, and for a while he forgot everything, but he talked away about poor Master Harry, and what a differ we'll feel when *he* was the master, raving, raving on, and never ceasing. After that he came back to his senses, and began to ask where you were, and why you did n't sit with him. There he is now! Hear that! that's your name he's trying to say. Come to him while it's time."

Kate arose. She never spoke, but followed the woman

through the passage, and entered the little bedroom, where a faint lamp blended its light with the breaking day.

The sick man's eager eye saw her as she crossed the threshold, and in a vague, discordant voice he cried out: "I knew you'd come to me. Sit here — sit down here and hold my hand. Such stories as they told me!" muttered he, as he caught her hand in his grasp. "They can't make that drink for me, Kate," said he, in a low, whining voice.



"I'll make it, dearest uncle. I'll be your nurse now," said she, stooping and kissing his forehead.

"No, no; I'll not let you leave me again. You must sit there and speak to me. When you go away, I feel as if you had gone for weeks."

"My dear, dear uncle!"

"Strange! how strange!" whispered he. "I knew well you were there, — there, in that room yonder, asleep, but my thoughts would wander away till I came to think you had left me, — deserted me! Don't cry, darling. I felt that tear; it fell on my cheek. I do believe," cried he, aloud, "they wished me to think I was deserted, — a Luttrell of Arran

dying without a friend or a kinsman to close his eyes. And the last Luttrell, too! The haughty Luttrells, they called us once! Look around you, girl, at this misery, this want, this destitution! Are these the signs that show wealth and power? And it is all that is left to us! All!"

"My own dear uncle, if you but get well, and be yourself once more, it is enough of wealth for us."

"Are we alone, Kate?" asked he, stealthily.

"No, sir; poor Molly is here."

"Tell her to go. I have something to say to you. Look in that top drawer for a paper tied with a string. No, not that, — *that* is a direction for my funeral; the other — yes, you have it now — is my will. Arran will be yours, Kate. You will love it through all its barrenness, and never part with it. Promise me that."

She muttered something through her sobs.

"Be kind to these poor people. I have never been to them as I ought, but I brought them a broken heart as well as a broken fortune. And wherever you live, come back sometimes to see these old rocks, and sit in that old chair; for, solitary as it all is, it would grieve me bitterly if I thought it were to be deserted!"

She tried to speak, but could not.

"If those on the mainland should try to encroach, — if they should come upon your fishing-grounds, girl, — defend your rights. We have had these royalties for more than three hundred years. Be firm, be bold!" He muttered on for some moments, and the last words his lips uttered were "A Luttrell of Arran!" His eyes closed as he said it, and he covered his face with his hand. Kate thought it was sleep; but it was the last sleep of all.

CHAPTER XIX.

SIR WITHIN ABROAD.

SIR WITHIN, accompanied by Grenfell, who was now become an "indispensable" to him, left Dalradern for the Continent. The old man neither knew nor cared what direction he should take. The consciousness that any avowal of his love for Kate would but expose him to bitter raillery and ridicule debarred him from all the sympathy he so much needed. Such a passion at his age was exactly one of those follies that all concur to laugh at, and it is precisely in the class that this old man pertained to, these dowagers of the world of statecraft, that ridicule is most powerful. The man who deems a witty *mot* a triumph is just as ready to accept a severe epigram as a death-wound.

One would not have believed how a few days of sorrow could have aged him. It was not alone that a stern melancholy sat on his features, but that even his erect carriage and firm step had left him, and he walked now with bent-down head feebly and uncertainly. Arrived at Paris, Grenfell endeavored to interest him by some of the pleasures of that marvellous capital. He induced him to dine at the "Rocher," and to drive in the Bois; he narrated all the passing gossip of the day; told him the scandals in vogue, and showed him the actors in them as they drove by on the Boulevards; but it seemed as though all the world of these vanities had closed for him, and he neither smiled nor vouchsafed a word as he listened.

Once only did he betray the slightest animation of voice or manner; it was when Grenfell pointed out to him in a carriage one of the great beauties of the time. The old man looked fixedly for an instant at her, and then,

turning away his head, muttered, "*She* is infinitely more beautiful."

Paris he soon discovered to be too noisy and too bustling. For Switzerland, the season was already late, and the climate was severe. Spain or Italy remained, and he was yet hesitating which to take, when Grenfell mentioned that he saw Mr. M'Kinlay's name amongst the arrivals at the hotel, and, on inquiry, learned that he was on his way out to Italy to see Vyner, and was to leave Paris that night.

"I think I should like to see Vyner too; that is, if he would receive me," said Sir Within, feebly. "Could you manage to catch this Mr. M'Kinlay?"

"Shall we have him to dinner to-day?"

"No; I think not. I'm not equal to it."

"Suppose you were to try. He's not a person to make much ceremony with. If he bores you, pretend indisposition, and leave him."

The old man smiled, — a strange, dubious sort of smile it was; perhaps it amused him to receive a lesson in social craft or address from "a Mr. George Grenfell." At all events, Grenfell read the smile as a partial concurrence with his suggestion, and went on, —

"M'Kinlay would be flattered by the invitation; and if you should want him in any other way, he will be all the more tractable."

"*That* is certainly something," replied he, musing.

"Not to say," added Grenfell, laughing, "that we run no great risk in being tired of him, since the mail leaves at ten, and he'll scarcely remain after nine!"

"That is also something," said Sir Within again.

"Here goes, then, for a note; or stay, I'll just see if he be in the house. We shall say six-o'clock dinner, and alone; these men abhor the idea of dressing, if they can help it."

Sir Within merely raised his eyebrows, half pitifully, that there were such people; and Grenfell hastened away on his mission. He was back in a moment. "Just caught him getting into a cab; he'll be delighted, — he *was* delighted when I gave him your message. He goes off to-night, as the waiter said, and apparently full of important news.

Vyner, it would seem, has come all right. All he told me was, 'Sir Gervais will be on his legs again;' but we'll have it all after dinner."

Sir Within heard the tidings with far less interest than Grenfell looked for. He smiled benignly, indeed; he muttered something about being "charmed to hear it;" and then heaved a heavy sigh, and sat down with his back to the light. How heartless and unfeeling did it seem to him to have so much compassion for loss of mere fortune, and not one word of sympathy for a broken and bereaved heart! What a world it was! What a world of perverted feeling and misapplied generosity!

Grenfell said something about the epicurism of the lawyer class, and went off to give special directions about the dinner; and the old man dozed, and woke, and wandered on in thought over the past, and dozed again, till his servant came to apprise him it was time to dress.

It was the first time he was to encounter the presence of a stranger after some months of seclusion, and he shrank from the effort, and would have retreated altogether if he could only have found a pretext. Conventionalities are, however, the tyrants of such men as himself, and the bare idea of anything unseemly in politeness was unendurable. He suffered his valet, therefore, to restore him to something of his former appearance. His eyebrows were newly tinted and well arched; his furrowed cheeks were skilfully smoothed over and suffused with a soft, permanent blush; and his whiskers were ingeniously brought into keeping with the vigorous darkness of his raven wig, imparting to him altogether a sort of surcharged vitality, that to an acute observer might have imparted a sense little short of horror. The very brilliants of his rings caught a twinkling lustre from his tremulous hands, as though to impress the beholder with the contrast between splendor and decay.

Nor was his manner less unreal than his appearance. With his darkened eyebrows and his diamond studs he had put on his old tone of soft insinuation, and all that was natural in the man was merged in the crafty devices of the minister. No wonder was it M'Kinlay was charmed with a tone and address that had done service in courts. Sir

Within thus "warmed to his work," and actually at last began to feel pleasure in the success he had achieved; and even Grenfell, long trained to the habits of the world, was astonished at conversational resources for which he had never given him credit.

Thus happily did the dinner proceed; and when the servants retired, M'Kinlay had arrived at that point of beatitude in which he regarded the company as something superlatively high, and himself fully worthy of it.

"You are on your way to my old friend Vyner, I think?" said Sir Within, with a heartiness that ignored all estrangement between them.

"Yes, sir; on a pleasanter mission, I rejoice to say, than when I last travelled the same road."

"He is all right again, I hear," said Grenfell, who meant, by an abrupt declaration, to disarm all the conventional reserve of the lawyer.

"Well, that would be saying too much, perhaps, — too much; but I hope, Mr. Grenfell, he is on the way to it."

"With M'Kinlay for his pilot, he'll make the harbor, I have no doubt whatever," said Sir Within, smiling graciously.

"I shall certainly do my best, sir," said the other, bowing. "Not alone because it is my duty, but that Sir Gervais has been good enough to regard me, for many years back, in the light of his friend as well as his lawyer."

"Of that I am well aware," said Sir Within, lifting his glass and appearing to be quietly pledging Mr. M'Kinlay to himself as a toast.

"Has the scoundrel who ran away with his securities been caught?" asked Grenfell, impatiently.

"No, sir; he is beyond being caught, — he is dead." After a pause, which Sir Within and Grenfell saw all the importance of not breaking, but leaving to M'Kinlay the task of continuing his narrative, that gentleman went on: "It is quite a romance, — positively a romance in real life. I'm afraid," said he, looking at his watch, "I shall not have time to tell you the story in all its details. I must start by the ten-twenty train for Lyons."

"We are only a few minutes after eight now," said Grenfell. "Let us hear the story."

"Even in outline," chimed in Sir Within, blandly. "Pray help yourself to the wine, — it is beside you."

"I can give you but a sketch, — a mere sketch, sir. It would seem, sir, that ever since the French conquest of Algeria, a French company has been engaged in the supply of munitions of war to the Arabs, and to this end had established agents at Tripoli, Tunis, and Morocco, who were thus enabled to transport these supplies into the interior of Africa. The director of this company was La Harpe, the Parisian banker, with whom Sir Gervais became acquainted through Mr. Gennet, himself the owner of several shares in the undertaking."

Grenfell sighed drearily at the long-windedness which he saw awaited them; but Sir Within looked intensely interested, and M'Kinlay went on, and, with a prolixity that I have no desire to imitate, entered upon the nature of this company, its operations, and its gains. With a painstaking minuteness he described the false trade-marks used to prevent discovery, and how the weapons, which were forged in France, bore the stamp of Sheffield or Birmingham.

"Giving 'la perfide Albion' all the credit of the treachery," said Sir Within, smiling.

"Precisely, sir," said M'Kinlay, delighted at the attention so graciously vouchsafed him. "I see you understand it all. Indeed, I may remark here, that a very sharp interchange of notes took place between the two governments on the subject, the French alleging, and with apparent reason —"

"Get on, in Heaven's name, to what concerns Vyner," cried Grenfell, "for it only wants a quarter to nine, otherwise you'll have to leave us without the catastrophe."

"I obey, sir," said M'Kinlay, with a certain irritation of voice at the same time. "I must observe, you will find it very difficult to fill up for yourselves the gaps you insist on my passing over. Mr. Gennet, then, for it is of him you wish me to speak, very soon perceiving that Sir Gervais Vyner was not a man to be drawn into such an illicit traffic, assumed to have obtained from the Bey of Tunis and others most valuable concessions to mines of various kinds, and by

specimens of ore, reports of scientific mineralogists, and such-like, imposed on him so far as to induce him to enter largely into the speculation, not at all aware that every shilling he advanced was directed to the great enterprise of La Harpe and Company. It was not a very difficult task for an accomplished swindler like Gennet to show that the mines, which had no existence, had proved a failure. Indeed, the disastrous issue of the enterprise was so plausibly described, and the affairs were wound up with such apparent fairness, that it was no wonder if poor Sir Gervais actually pitied Gennet, and went so far as to beg he might not be molested. I assure you, sir, I have a letter in my desk that says — ”

“ Nine o'clock ! ” solemnly ejaculated Grenfell, as the hour rang out from a neighboring steeple.

“ I hear it, sir, and regret much that my time should be so limited ; but to resume : So soon as Gennet had established the fact of the mock bankruptcy, he fled from Europe, and it was believed took refuge in America, where he had lived many years as partner in a mercantile house,— the firm of Reay, Pate, and Brothers, Forty-sixth Street, New York, large shipowners, and importers on their own account. I feel I am prolix, Mr. Grenfell, even without the admonition of that painful sigh. But really, gentlemen, I am merely selecting the salient points of a very complicated incident, and not entering upon any but the strictly essential details.”

Sir Within assured him he felt an unbounded confidence in his discretion, and he resumed, —

“ There chanced to be in the employ of that firm a merchant captain named Dodge, a man of remarkable energy of character and great daring ; and here I may mention, as a curious circumstance, that I once happened by a singular coincidence to meet with this man, and be his fellow-traveller, under no common circumstances.”

“ I believe I can recall them,” said Sir Within. “ I was the guest of my friend Sir Gervais on the night you told a very remarkable story, in which this man's name occurred. The name was a strange one, and it held a place in my memory. If I mistake not, you crossed over to the Arran Islands in his company ? ”

“I am much flattered to find, Sir Within, that you remember the incident, though I see how trying it proves to Mr. Grenfell’s patience.”

“Not in the least, if you will only consent to start by the morning’s train instead of to-night’s. Do that and you will find you never had a more patient nor more interested listener.”

“Perfectly impossible, sir. I have timed the whole journey by Bradshaw; and to catch the mail-boat — the ‘Queen Hortense’ — at Marseilles, on Saturday, I must arrive by the early train, and there is the half-hour now chiming. I trust Sir Within Wardle will forgive my abrupt leave-taking. One more glass of this excellent claret, and I am off.”

“Pray give my very kindest regards to Sir Gervais, and my most respectful homage to the ladies. Though I am not permitted to learn how the good fortune came, let me, I beg, be associated with every congratulation the event inspires.” And with this Frenchified expression of his satisfaction, the old diplomatist drew himself up like one who felt that he stood once more on his native heath.

So wrapped up was he, indeed, in this revival of an old part he had so long played with success, that he never noticed how Grenfell had left the room along with M’Kinlay, and he sat gazing at the fire and thinking over bygones. Nor was he aware how time flitted past, when Grenfell returned and took his place opposite him.

“I was determined to have all I could get out of him,” said Grenfell. “I jumped into the cab with him, and went to the railroad station. What between his dreary tiresomeness and the street noises as we rattled along, I gained very little; but this much I have learned: That the man Gennet, who had once, as the lawyers call it, ‘compassed’ the life of Dodge, by sending him to sea in a rotten vessel, immensely insured, and predestined to shipwreck, was recognized by this same skipper in the street of Tripoli. Dodge, it seems, had just been landed, with one other survivor of his crew, having blown up his vessel to prevent its falling into the hands of some Riff pirates, and after unheard-of peril and sufferings was picked up at sea with his companion, both badly wounded by the explosion, though they had thrown

themselves into the sea before the vessel blew up. All I could do would not hurry M'Kinlay over this part of the story, which I believe he imagined he told effectively, and I had only got him to Tripoli, as we drove into the yard of the station. While higgling with the cabman and the porters, he stammered out something about Dodge standing at his Consul's door as Gennet rode past with a large suite of Arab followers; that the skipper sprang upon him like a tiger and tore him from his horse. A dreadful struggle must have ensued, for Gennet died of his wounds that night, and Dodge was nearly cut to pieces by the guard, his life being saved by the desperate bravery of his friend, who was at last rescued by the members of the Consulate. The bell rang as we arrived at this critical moment, but I followed him to his compartment, and, at the risk of being carried off, sat down beside him. The miserable proser wanted to involve me in an account of the criminal law of Tripoli when any one holding office under the Bey should have been the victim of attack, but I swore I knew it perfectly, and asked what about Gennet? He then began to narrate how the French Consul, having intervened to defend the interests of his countryman, discovered the whole plot against France, found all the details of the purchase of war materials, bills of lading, and such-like; and, besides these, masses of Vyner's acceptances, which had never been negotiated. Another—the last—bell now rang out, and as I sprang from my seat he leaned out of the window, and said: 'Dodge, it is thought, will recover; his friend is now with Sir Gervais, at Chiavari, and turns out to be Luttrell, the young fellow whom we picked up—' When, where, or how, I cannot say, for the train now moved on, and the tiresome old dog was carried off at a very different pace from that of his narrative."

Sir Within listened with all the semblance of interest and attention. Once or twice he interjected an "Ah!" or, "How strange!" But it is only truthful to own that he paid very little real attention to the story, and could not well have said at the end whether Dodge was not the villain of the piece, and young Luttrell his guilty accomplice.

Very grateful was he, however, when it ended, and when

Grenfell said, "I suppose Vyner has had enough of speculation now to last his lifetime."

"I trust so, sincerely," said Sir Within, with a smile.

"It is such rank folly for a man to adventure into a career of which he knows nothing, and take up as his associates a set of men totally unlike any he has ever lived with."

"I perfectly agree with you," said the other, with an urbane bow. "You have admirably expressed the sentiment I experience at this moment; and even with my brief opportunity of arriving at a judgment, I am free to confess that I thought this gentleman who has just left us — Mr. M'Kinlay, I think he is called — a very dangerous man, — a most dangerous man."

Grenfell looked at him, and fortunate was it that Sir Within did not note that look, so full was it of pitiless contempt; and then, rising, he said, "It is later than I thought. You said something about Versailles for to-morrow, did n't you?"

"I have not heard whether his Majesty will receive me."

Grenfell started, and stared at him. Had it come to this already? Was the mind gone and the intellect shattered?

"You spoke of a day in the country somewhere," reiterated Grenfell, — "St. Germain, or Versailles."

"Very true. I am most grateful for your reminder. It will be charming. I am quite in a humor for a few pleasant people, and I hope the weather will favor us."

"Good-night," said Grenfell, abruptly, and left the room.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. GRENFELL'S ROOM.

MR. GRENFELL sat in an easy-chair, wrapped in a most comfortable dressing-gown, and his feet encased in the softest of slippers, before a cheery wood fire, smoking. His reflections were not depressing. The scene from which he had just come satisfied him as to a fact — which men like Grenfell have a sort of greedy appetite to be daily assured of — that “money is not everything in this world.” Simple as the proposition seems, it takes a long and varied knowledge of life to bring home that conviction forcibly and effectually. Men are much more prone to utter it than to believe it, and more ready to believe it than to act upon it.

Now, though Grenfell was ready to admit that “money was not everything,” he coupled it with what he believed to be just as true, — that it was a man’s own fault that made it so. He instanced to his mind the old man he had just quitted, and who, except in the quality of years, was surrounded with everything one could desire, — name, fortune, station, more than average abilities, and good health, — and yet he must needs fall in love! By what fatality was it that a man always chose the worst road? What malevolent ingenuity ever selected the precise path that led to ruin? Were there no other vices he could have taken to? Wine, gambling, gluttony would have spared his intellect for a year or two, certainly. The brains of old people stand common wear and tear pretty well; it is only when the affections come to bear upon the mind that the system gives way. That a man should assume old age gracefully and becomingly, the heart ought to decay and grow callous, just as naturally as hair whitens and teeth fail. Nature never contemplated such a compact as that the blood at seventy should

circulate as at thirty, and that the case-hardened, world-worn man should have a revival of hope, trustfulness, and self-delusion. It was thus Grenfell regarded the question, and the view was not the less pleasing that he felt how safely he stood as regards all those seductions which fool other men and render their lives ridiculous. At all events, the world should not laugh at *him*. This is a philosophy that suffices for a large number of people in life; and simple as the first element of it may seem, it involves more hard-heartedness, more cruel indifference to others, and a more practical selfishness, than any other code I know of.

If he was well pleased that Vyner should "come all right again," it was because he liked a rich friend far better than a poor one; but there mingled with his satisfaction a regret that he had not made overtures to the Vyners — the "women," he called them — in their hour of dark fortune, and established with them a position he could continue to maintain in their prosperity. "Yes," thought he, "I ought to have been taught by those people who always courted the Bourbons in their exile, and speculated on their restoration." But the restoration of the Vyner dynasty was a thing he had never dreamed of. Had he only had the very faintest clew to it, what a game he might have played! What generous proffers he might have made, how ready he might have been with his aid! It is only just to him to own that he very rarely was wanting in such prescience; he studied life pretty much as a physician studies disease, and argued from the presence of one symptom which was to follow it.

His present speculations took this form. Vyner will at once return to England, and go back to "the House;" he'll want occupation, and he'll want, besides, to reinstate himself with the world. With his position and his abilities — fair abilities they were — he may aspire to office, and Grenfell liked official people. They were a sort of priesthood, who could slip a friend into the sanctuary occasionally, not to add that all privileged classes have an immense attraction for the man whose birth has debarred him from their intimacy. Now, he could not present himself more auspiciously to the Vyners than in the company of Sir Within Wardle, who was most eager to renew all his former rela-

tions with them. Nor was it quite impossible but that Grenfell might seem to be the agency by which the reconciliation was brought about. A clever stroke of policy that, and one which would doubtless go far to render him acceptable to the "women."

If we must invade the secrecy of a very secret nature, we must confess that Mr. Grenfell, in his gloomier hours, in his dark days at home, when dyspeptic and depressed, speculated on the possible event that he might at last be driven to marry. He thought of it the way men think of the precautions instilled by a certain time of life, the necessity of more care in diet, more regular hours, and such like. There would come a time, he suspected, when country-houses would be less eager for him, and the young fellows who now courted and surrounded him would have themselves slipped into "mediævalty," and need him no more. It was sad enough to think of, but he saw it, he knew it. Nothing, then, remained but a wife.

It was all-essential — indeed, indispensable — that she should be a person of family and connections; one, in fact, that might be able to keep open the door of society, — even half ajar, — but still enough to let him slip in and mingle with those inside. Vyner's sister-in-law was pretty much what he wanted. She was no longer young, and, consequently, her market-value placed her nearer to his hopes; and although Sir Gervais had never yet made him known to Lady Vyner or Georgina, things were constantly done abroad that could not have occurred at home. Men were dear friends on the Tiber who would not have been known to each other on the Thames. The result of all his meditations was, that he must persuade Sir Within to cross the Alps, and then, by some lucky chance or other, come unexpectedly upon the Vyners. Fortune should take care of the rest.

Arrived at this conclusion, and his third cigar all but smoked out, he was thinking of bed, when a tap came to his door. Before he had well time to say "Come in," the door opened, and young Ladarelle's valet, Mr. Fisk, stood before him.

"I hope you'll forgive me, sir," said he, submissively,

“for obtruding upon you at such an hour, but I have been all over Paris, and only found out where you were this minute. I was at the station this evening when you drove up there, but I lost you in the crowd, and never could find you again.”

“All which zeal implies that you had some business with me,” said Grenfell, slowly.

“Yes, sir, certainly. It is what I mean, sir,” said he,



wiping his forehead, and betraying by his manner a considerable amount of agitation.

“Now, then, what is it?”

“It is my master, sir, Mr. Adolphus Ladarelle, has got into trouble, — very serious trouble, I’m afraid, too, — and if *you* can’t help him through it, there’s nobody can, I’m sure.”

“A duel?”

“No, sir, he don’t fight.”

“Debt?”

“Not exactly debt, sir, but he has been arrested within the last few hours.”

“Out with it. What’s the story?”

“You have heard about that Irish business, I suppose, sir, — that story of the young girl he pretended to have married to prevent Sir Within making her my Lady —”

“I know it all; go on.”

“Well, sir, the worst of all that affair was that it brought my master into close intimacy with a very dangerous fellow called O’Rorke; and though Mr. Ladarelle paid him, and paid him handsomely too, for all he had done, and took his passage out to Melbourne, the fellow would n’t go. No, sir, he swore he’d see Paris, and enjoy a little of Paris life, before he’d sail. I was for getting him aboard when he was half drunk, and shipping him off before he was aware of it; but my master was afraid of him, and declared that he was quite capable of coming back from the farthest end of the world to ‘serve him out’ for anything like ‘a cross.’”

“Go on — come to the arrest — what was it for?” broke in Grenfell, impatiently.

“Cheating at cards, sir,” plumped out the other, half vexed at being deemed prosy. “That’s the charge, sir; false cards and cogged dice, and the police have them in their hands this minute. It was all this fellow’s doing, sir; it was he persuaded Mr. Dolly to set up the rooms and the tables, and here’s what it’s come to!”

“And there *was* false play?”

“So they say, sir. One of the ladies that was taken up is well known to the police; she is an Italian marchioness, — at least, they call her so, — and the story goes ‘well protected,’ as they say here.”

“I don’t see that there’s anything to be done in the matter, Fisk; the law will deal with them, and pretty sharply too, and none can interfere with it. Are you compromised yourself?”

“No, sir, not in the least. I was back and forward to town once or twice a week, getting bills discounted and the like, but I never went near the rooms. I took good care of that.”

“Such being the case, I suspect your affection for your master will not prove fatal to you, — eh?”

“Perhaps not, sir; a strong constitution and reg’lar habit may help me over it, but there’s another point I ain’t so easy about. Mr. Dolly has got a matter of nigh four hundred pounds of mine. I lent it at twenty-five per cent to him last year, and I begin to fear the security is not what it ought to be.”

“There’s something in that, certainly,” said Grenfell, slowly.

“Yes, sir, there’s a great deal in it, because they say here, if Mr. Dolly should be sent to the galleys ever so short a time, he loses civil rights, and when he loses *them*, he need n’t pay no debts to any one.”

“Blessed invention those galleys must be, if they could give the immunity you mention!” said Grenfell, laughing; “but I opine your law is not quite accurate, — at any rate, Fisk, there’s nothing to be done for him. If he stood alone in the case, it is just possible there would be a chance of helping him, but here he must accept the lot of his associates. By the way, what did he mean by that mock marriage? What was the object of it?” This query of Grenfell’s was thrown out in a sort of random carelessness, its real object being to see if Mr. Fisk was on “the square” with him.

“Don’t you know, sir, that he wanted to prevent the old gent at Dalradern from marrying her? One of the great lawyers thinks that the estate does n’t go to the Ladarelles at all if Sir Within had an heir, and though it’s not very likely, sir, it might be possible. Master Dolly, at all events, was mortally afraid of it, and he always said that the mere chance cost him from fifteen to twenty per cent in his dealings with money-lenders.”

“Are you known to Sir Within, Fisk? Has he seen you at the Castle?”

“Not to know me, sir; he never notices any of *us* at all. Yates, his man, knows me.”

“Yates is not with him. He has got a French valet who lived with him some years ago, and so I was thinking, perhaps the best way to serve you would be to take you myself. What do you say to it?”

"I'm ever grateful, sir, to you. I could n't wish for anything better."

"It will be pleasanter than 'Clichy,' at all events, Fisk, and there's no doubt the police here will look out for you when they discover you were in Mr. Ladarelle's service."

"And am I safe here, sir?"

"You'll be safe, because we leave here to-morrow. So come over here after breakfast, and we'll settle everything. By the way, I'd not go near Mr. Ladarelle if I were you; you can't be of use to him, and it's as well to take care of yourself."

"I was just thinking that same, sir; not to say that if that fellow O'Rorke saw me, it's just as likely he'd say I was one of the gang."

"Quite so. Be here about twelve or one, not later."

"What do you think about my money, sir, — the loan to Mr. Dolly, I mean?"

"It's not a choice investment, Fisk; at least, there are securities I would certainly prefer to it."

"Three years' wages and perquisites, sir!" cried he, mournfully.

"Well, your master will probably have five years to ruminate over the wrong he has done you."

"At the galleys? Do you really mean the galleys, sir?"

"I really mean at the galleys, Fisk; and if he be not a more amusing companion there than I have found him in ordinary life, I can only say I do not envy the man he will be chained to."

Mr. Fisk grinned a very hearty concurrence with the sentiment, and took a respectful leave, and withdrew.

CHAPTER XXI.

MR. M'KINLAY IN THE TOILS.

MR. M'KINLAY was too acute an observer not to see that his arrival at the Boschetto was matter of general satisfaction, and his welcome peculiarly cordial. The Vyners had just escaped from a heavy calamity, and were profuse of grateful emotions to all who had assisted them in their troubles.

Now, M'Kinlay had not been extravagant in his offices of friendship, but, with a sort of professional instinct, he had always contemplated the possibility of a restoration, and had never betrayed, by his manner, any falling off from his old terms of loyalty and devotion.

The Vyners, however, had their acute attack of gratitude, and they felt very warmly towards him, and even went so far as to designate by the word "delicacy" the cold reserve which he had once or twice manifested. Vyner gave him up his own room, and the little study adjoining it, and Georgina — the haughty Georgina — vouchsafed to look over its internal economies and see that it was perfect in all its comforts. She went further; she actually avowed to him the part she had taken in his reception, and coquettishly engaged him to remember how much of his accommodation had depended on *her* foresight.

Mr. M'Kinlay was delighted; he had not been without certain misgivings, as he journeyed along over the Alps, that he might have shown himself a stronger, stancher friend to Vyner in his hour of adversity. He had his doubts as to whether he had not been betrayed once or twice into a tone of rebuke or censure, and he knew he had assumed a manner of more freedom than consorted with their former rela-

tions. Would these lapses be remembered against him now? Should he find them all colder, stiffer, haughtier than ever?

What a relief to him was the gracious, the more than gracious reception he met with! How pleasant to be thanked most enthusiastically for the long journey he had come, with the consciousness he was to be paid for it as handsomely afterwards! How lightly he took his fatigues, how cheerily he talked of everything, slyly insinuating, now and then, that if they would look back to his letters they would see that he always pointed to this issue to the ease, and, for his part, never felt that the matter was so serious as they deemed it. "Not that I ever permitted myself to hold out hopes which might prove delusive," added he, "for I belong to a profession whose first maxim is, 'nothing is certain.'"

Nor was it merely kind or complimentary they were; they were confidential. Vyner would sit down at the fire with him, and tell all the little family secrets that are usually reserved for the members themselves; and Georgina would join him in the garden, to explain how she long foresaw the infatuation of her brother-in-law, but was powerless to arrest it; and even Lady Vyner — the cold and distant Lady Vyner — informed him, in the strictest secrecy, that her dear mother had latterly taken a fondness for Malaga, and actually drank two full glasses of it every day, more than the doctor permitted. What may not the man do, in the household, who is thus accepted and trusted? So, certainly, thought Mr. M'Kinlay; and as he strolled in the garden, apparently deep in thought over the Vyner complications, his real cares were, How was he himself to derive the fullest advantages of "the situation"?

"It is while towing the wreck into harbor the best bargain can be made for salvage," muttered M'Kinlay. "I must employ the present moments well, since, once reinstated in their old prosperity, the old pride is sure to return." He hesitated long what course to take. Prudence suggested the slow, cautious, patient approach; but then Miss Courtenay was one of those capricious natures whose sudden turns disconcert all regular siege. And, on the other hand, if he were to attempt a "surprise," and failed, he should never recover it. He had ascertained that her fortune was safe;

he had also learned that Mrs. Courtenay had made a will in her favor, though to what precise amount he could not tell; and he fancied — nor was it mere fancy — that she inclined far more to his society than heretofore, and seemed to encourage him to a greater frankness than he had yet dared to employ in his intercourse with her.

Partly because of the arduous task of investigating Vyner's accounts, and partly that he was a man who required abundant time and quiet before he could make up his mind on any difficulty, he breakfasted alone in his own room, and rarely mixed with the family before dinner-hour. He knew well how all this seeming industry redounded to his credit; the little entreaties to him to take some fresh air, or take a walk or a drive, were all so many assurances of friendly interest in his behalf; and when Vyner would say, "Have a care, M'Kinlay; remember what's to become of *us* if you knock up," Lady Vyner's glance of gratitude and Miss Courtenay's air of half confusion were an incense that positively intoxicated him with ecstasy.

A short stroll in the garden he at last permitted himself to take, and of this brief period of relaxation he made a little daily history, — one of those small jokes great men weave out of some little personal detail, which they have a conscientious sense, perhaps, history will yet deal with more pompously.

"Five times from the orangery to the far summer-house to-day! There's dissipation for you," would he say, as he entered the drawing-room before dinner. "Really, I feel like a pedestrian training for a race." And how pleasantly would they laugh at his drollery, as we all do laugh every day at some stupid attempt at fun by those whose services we stand in need of, flattering ourselves the while that our sycophancy is but politeness.

Vyner was absent one day, and Mr. M'Kinlay took the head of the table, and did the honors with somewhat more pretension than the position required, alluding jocularly to his high estate and its onerous responsibilities; but the ladies liked his pleasantry, and treasured up little details of it to tell Sir Gervais on his return.

When they left him to his coffee and his cigar on the ter-

race, his feeling was little less than triumphant. "Yes," thought he, "I have won the race; I may claim the cup when I please." While he thus revelled, he saw, or fancied he saw, the flutter of a muslin dress in the garden beneath. Was it Georgina? Could it be that she had gone there, designedly, to draw him on to a declaration? If Mr. M'Kinlay appear to my fair readers less gallant than he might be, let them bear in mind that his years were not those which dispose to romance, and that he was only a "solicitor" by profession.

"Now or never, then," said he, finishing a second liqueur-glass of brandy, and descending the steps into the garden.

Though within a few days of Christmas, the evening was mild and even genial; for Chiavari is one of those sheltered nooks where the oranges live out of doors through the winter, and enjoy a climate like that of Naples. It was some time before he could detect her he was in search of, and at last came suddenly to where she was gathering some fresh violets for a bouquet.

"What a climate, — what a heavenly climate this is, Miss Courtenay!" said he, in a tone purposely softened and subdued for the occasion; and she started, and exclaimed, —

"Oh! how you frightened me, my dear M'Kinlay! I never heard you coming. I am in search of violets; come and help me, but only take the deep blue ones."

Now, if Mr. M'Kinlay had been perfectly sure — which he was not — that her eyes were blue, he would have adventured on a pretty compliment; but, as a lawyer, he knew the consequences of "misdescription," and he contented himself with expressing all the happiness he felt at being associated with her in any pursuit.

"Has my sister told you what Gervais has gone about?" asked she, still stooping to cull the flowers.

"Not a word of it."

"Then I will; though, certainly, you scarcely deserve such a proof of my confidence, seeing how very guarded you are as to your own secrets."

"I, my dear Miss Courtenay, — I guarded! and towards *you*? I pray you tell me what you allude to."

"By and by, perhaps; for the present, I want to speak of

our own mysteries. Know, then, that my brother has gone to Genoa, to bring back with him the young gentleman through whose means much of our late discovery has been made, and who turns out to be Mr. Luttrell. He was here for a couple of days, already, but so overwhelmed by the news of his father's death that we scarcely saw anything of him. He then left us to go back and nurse his wounded friend, the Captain, who insists, it seems, on being treated in the public hospital."

"Luttrell, — Luttrell! You mean one of that family who lived on the rock off the Irish coast?"

"His son."

"The boy I remembered having rescued at the peril of my own life! I wonder will his memory recall it? And why is Sir Gervais —"

He stopped; he was about to ask what interest could attach to any one so devoid of fortune, friends, or station; and she saw the meaning of his question, and said, though not without a certain confusion, —

"My brother-in-law and this young man's father were, once on a time, very intimate; he used to be a great deal with us, — I am speaking of very long ago, — and then we lost sight of him. A remote residence and an imprudent marriage estranged him from us, and the merest accident led my brother to where he lived, — the barren island you spoke of, — and renewed in some sort their old friendship, — in so far, at least, that Gervais promised to be the guardian of his friend's son —"

"I remember it all; I took a part in the arrangement."

"But it turns out there is nothing to take charge of. In a letter that my brother got from Mr. Grenfell some time since we find that Mr. Luttrell has left everything he possessed to a certain niece or daughter. Which was she, Mr. M'Kinlay?"

"Niece, I always understood."

"Which did you always believe?" said she, looking at him with a steady, unflinching stare.

"Niece, certainly."

"Indeed?"

"On my word of honor."

“And all this wonderful story about her beauty and captivation, and the running away, and the secret marriage,—how much of *that* does Mr. M’Kinlay believe?”

“I don’t know one word of what you allude to.”

“Oh, Mr. M’Kinlay, this is more than lawyer-like reserve!”

“I will swear it, if you desire.”

“But surely you ’ll not say that you did not dine with Sir Within Wardle at the Hotel Windsor, as you came through Paris?”

“I have not the slightest intention to deny it.”

“And is it possible, Mr. M’Kinlay, that nothing of what I have just mentioned was dropped during the dinner? No allusion to the beautiful Miss Luttrell or Mrs. Ladarelle? — Mr. Grenfell is in doubt which to call her.”

“Not a syllable; her name was never uttered.”

“And what did you talk of, in Heaven’s name!” cried she, impatiently. “Was it town gossip and scandal?”

For a moment Mr. M’Kinlay was almost scared by her impetuosity; but he rallied, and assured her that Sir Within spoke with the warmest interest of Sir Gervais, and alluded in the most cordial way to their old relations of friendship, and with what pleasure he would renew them. “He charged me with innumerable kind messages, and almost his last word was a hope that he should be fortunate enough to meet you again.”

“And through all this no mention of the ‘beauty,’ — I mean, of Miss Luttrell?”

“Not a word.”

“How strange, — how incomprehensible!” said she, pausing, and seeming to reflect.

“Remember, my dear Miss Courtenay, it was a very hurried meeting, altogether. We dined at half-past six, and at ten I was on the railroad.”

“Did Sir Within strike you as looking so very ill, — so much cut up, — as Mr. Grenfell phrases it?”

“I thought him looking remarkably well; for a man of his age, wonderfully well. He must be — let me see — he must be not very far from eighty.”

“Not within ten years of it, sir, I ’m confident,” broke she

in, almost fiercely. "There's no error more common than to overrate the age of distinguished men. The public infers that familiarity with their name implies long acquaintance, and it is a most absurd mistake."

Now, Mr. M'Kinlay thoroughly understood that he was typified under that same public, who only knew great men by report, and misrepresented them through ignorance. He was, however, so strong in "his brief" that he would not submit to be put down; he had taken pains to look over a record of Sir Within's services, and had seen that he was attached to the Russian embassy fifty-two years ago.

"What do you say to that, Miss Courtenay? Fifty-two years ago."

"I say, sir, that I don't care for arithmetic, and never settle any question by a reference to mere figures. When I last saw Sir Within he was in the prime of life, and if great social talents and agreeability were to be any test, one of the youngest persons of the company."

"Oh, I am the first to extol his conversational powers. He is a perfect mine of good stories."

"I detest good stories. I like conversation, I like reply, rejoinder, even amplification at times; anecdote is almost always a mistake."

Mr. M'Kinlay was aghast. How disagreeable he must have made himself, to render her so sharp and so incisive all at once.

"I can say all this to *you*," said she, with a sweet tone, "for it is a fault you never commit. And so you remark that Sir Within showed no remarkable gloom or depression, — nothing, in fact, that argued he had met with any great shock?"

"My impression was that I saw him in high spirits and in the best possible health."

"I thought so!" cried she, almost triumphantly. "I declare I thought so!" But why she thought so, or what she thought, or how it could be matter of such pleasure, she did not go on to explain. After a moment, she resumed: "And was there nothing said about why he had left Dalradern, and what induced him to come abroad?"

"Nothing, — positively, nothing."

"Well," said she, with a haughty toss of her head, "it is very possible that the whole subject occupies a much larger space in Mr. Grenfell's letter than in Sir Within's mind; and, for my own part, I only inquired about the matter, as it was once the cause of a certain coldness, a half estrangement between Dalradern and ourselves, and which, as my brother takes much pleasure in Sir Within's society, I rejoice to perceive exists no longer."

All this was a perfect riddle to Mr. M'Kinlay, who had nothing for it but to utter a wise sentiment on the happiness of reconciliation. Even this was unfortunate, for she tartly told him "that there could be no reconciliation where there was no quarrel;" and then dryly added, "Is it not cold out here?"

"I protest, I think it delightful," said he.

"Well, then, it is damp, or it's something or other," said she, carelessly, and turned towards the house.

M'Kinlay followed her; gloomy enough was he. Here was the opportunity he had so long wished for, and what had he made of it? It had opened, too, favorably; their first meeting was cordial. Had he said anything that might have offended her; or had he, — this was his last thought as they reached the porch, — had he *not* said what she expected he ought to have said? *That* supposition would, at once, explain her chagrin and irritation.

"Miss Georgina," said he, with a sort of reckless daring, "I have an entreaty to make of you, — I ask a favor at your hands."

"It is granted, Mr. M'Kinlay," said she, smiling. "I guess it already."

"You guess it already, and you grant it!" cried he, in ecstasy.

"Yes," said she, still graciously, as she threw off her shawl. "You are impatient for your tea, and you shall have it at once."

And with that she moved hurriedly forward, and left him overwhelmed with shame and anger.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. M'KINLAY'S "INSTRUCTIONS."

THE party at the Villa were seated at breakfast the following morning when Vyner arrived with his young guest, — a fine, manly-looking, determined fellow, whose frank bearing and unaffected demeanor interested the ladies strongly in his favor at once; nor did the tone of sorrow and sadness in his manner detract from the good impression he produced. The tidings of his father's death had met him as he landed at Genoa, and overwhelmed him with affliction, — such utter friendlessness was his, so bereft was he of all that meant kindred or relationship. His captain was, indeed, now all that remained to him, and he had nursed and tended him in his long illness with untiring devotion, inso-much, indeed, that it was with difficulty Vyner could persuade him to come down to the Boschetto for a few days to rally his strength and spirits by change of air and scene.

Sir Gervais had very early observed that the young sailor possessed the characteristic reserve of his family, and avoided, whenever possible, all reference to himself. Strange and eventful as his last few years had been, he never referred to them, or did so in that careless, passing way that showed he would not willingly make them matter to dwell upon; and yet, with all this, there was an openness when questioned, a frank readiness to answer whatever was asked, that plainly proved his reserve was mere shyness, — the modest dislike to make himself or his story foreground objects.

Lady Vyner, not usually attracted by new acquaintances, liked him much, and saw him, without any motherly mis-givings, constantly in Ada's society. They walked together over the olive hills and along the seashore, every morning.

Once or twice, too, they had taken out Vyner's little sail-boat, and made excursions to Sestri or to Recco; and in the grave, respectful, almost distant manner of Harry Luttrell, there seemed that sort of security which the mammas of handsome heiresses deem sufficient. Ada, too, frankness and honesty itself, spoke of him to her mother as a sister might have spoken of a dear brother. If he had been more confidential with her than with the others, — and his confessions were even marked with a sort of strange deference, as though made to one who could not well realize to her mind the humble fortunes of a mere adventurer like himself, — there was also a kind of rugged pride in the way he presented himself even in his character of a sailor, — one who had not the slightest pretension to rank or condition whatever, — that showed how he regarded the gulf between them.

It was strange, inexplicably strange, what distance separated him from Miss Courtenay. Neither would — perhaps neither could — make any advances to the other. “She is so unlike your mother, Ada,” blurted he out one day, ere he knew what he had said. “He is painfully like his father,” was Georgina's comment on himself.

“You have had a long visit from young Luttrell, Mr. M'Kinlay?” said she, on the day after his arrival, when they had been closeted together for nigh two hours.

“Yes, Sir Gervais begged me to explain to him some of the circumstances which led his father to will away the Arran property, and to inform him that the present owner was his cousin. I suspect Sir Gervais shrank from the unpleasant task of entering upon the low connections of the family, and which, of course, gave *me* no manner of inconvenience. I told him who she was, and he remembered her at once. I was going on to speak of her having been adopted by your brother, and the other incidents of her childhood, but he stopped me by saying, ‘Would it be possible to make any barter of the Roscommon property, which goes to the heir-at-law, and who is now myself, for the Arran estate, for I hold much to it?’ I explained to him that his being alive broke the will, and that Arran was as much his as the rest of the estate. But he would not hear of this, and kept on repeating, ‘My father gave it, and without she is

disposed to part with it for a liberal equivalent, I'll not disturb the possession.'"

"The Luttrells were all so," said she, — "half worldly, half romantic; and one never knew which side was uppermost."

"He means to go over to Arran; he wants to see the place where his father is buried. The pride of race is very strong in him, and the mere utterance of the word 'Luttrell' brings it up in full force."

"What a pity she's married!" said she, insolently, but in so faint a voice he could not catch the words, and asked her to repeat them. "I was only talking to myself, Mr. M'Kinlay," said she.

"I pressed him," continued the other, "to give me some instructions, for I can't suppose he intends to let his fortune slip out of his hands altogether. I told him that it was as much as to impugn his legitimacy; and he gave me a look that frightened me, and for a moment I wished myself anywhere else than in the room with him. 'He must be something younger and bolder and braver than you, sir, that will ever dare to utter such a doubt as that,' said he; and he was almost purple with passion as he spoke."

"They are all violent; at least, they were!" said she, with a sneering smile. "I hope you encouraged the notion of going to Arran. I should be so glad if he were to do it at once."

"Indeed?"

"Can you doubt it, Mr. M'Kinlay? Is it a person so acute and observant as yourself need be told that my niece, Ada, should not be thrown into constant companionship with a young fellow whose very adventures impart a sort of interest to him?"

"But a sailor, Miss Courtenay! — a mere sailor!"

"Very well, sir; and a mere sailor, to a very young girl who has seen nothing of life, would possibly be fully as attractive as a member of Parliament. The faculty to find out what is suitable to us, Mr. M'Kinlay, does not usually occur in very early life."

There was a marked emphasis in the word "suitable" that made the old lawyer's heart throb fast and full. Was this thrown out for encouragement, — was it to inspire hope,

or suggest warning? What would he not have given to be certain which of the two it meant?

"Ah, Miss Courtenay," said he, with a most imploring look, "if I could only assure myself that in the words you have just spoken there lay one spark of hope, — I mean, if I could but believe that this would be the proper moment—"

"My dear Mr. M'Kinlay, let me stop you. There are many things to be done before I can let you even finish your sentence; and mind me, sir, this 'without prejudice,' as you lawyers say, to my own exercise of judgment afterwards; and the first of these is to send this young man away. I own to you, frankly, he is no favorite of mine. I call ruggedness what *they* call frankness; and his pride of name and birth are, when unattached to either fortune or position, simply insufferable. Get rid of him; send him to Arran, if he won't go to Japan. *You* can do it without inhospitality, or even awkwardness. You can hint to him that people rarely remain beyond two or three days on a visit; that his intimacy with Ada gives pain, uneasiness to her family; that, in short, he ought to go. I know," added she, with a bewitching smile, "how little there is for me to instruct Mr. M'Kinlay on a point where tact and delicacy are the weapons to be employed. I feel all the presumption of such a pretence, and therefore I merely say, induce him to go his way, and let him do it in such guise that my brother may not suspect our interference."

"There is nothing I would not do, Miss Courtenay, with the mere possibility that you would deem it a service. All I ask is the assurance—"

"Must I stop you again?" said she, with a sweet smile. "Must I remind you that he who stipulates for his reward risks in some sort his character for generosity, and, worse still, implies a distrust of the one he serves?"

"I am your slave, Miss Courtenay, — your humble slave!" said he, bowing with a deep humility.

"It is what I intend you should be," muttered she to herself; and then added aloud, "Lose no time about this; my brother mentions that he accidentally met Sir Within Wardle in the doorway of the hotel at Genoa; that they embraced most cordially, and parted with Sir Within's

promise to come over and pass some days here, and I believe he may be expected to-morrow; and of course it would be more convenient to have this young man's room, all the more that Mr. Grenfell also is expected."

"I'll set about my negotiation at once."

"Don't call it negotiation, my dear Mr. M'Kinlay. It must be far more effectual and more peremptory. To present this sailor lad as an acquaintance to Sir Within would be monstrous. The pleasure of his visit will depend on his coming actually amongst all his old friends."

Ah, Mr. M'Kinlay, how your heart swelled proudly at that flattery! How exquisite it was to feel you were a member of an order to which, in your proudest day-dreams, you had not aspired!

"There, now, you have your instructions. You'll find me here about four o'clock to report progress, or rather, as I trust, to announce success."

"I have an excellent opportunity," cried M'Kinlay, as she moved away. "He has asked me to go out fishing with him in the boat to-day. It will be just the time to fall into confidential discourse. At four expect me."

CHAPTER XXIII.

FISHING IN TROUBLED WATERS.

ON gaining the beach where he had appointed to meet Harry Luttrell, Mr. M'Kinlay discovered that his young friend had gone off already, taking Ada with him. He could, indeed, detect the form of a lady in the stern of the boat, as she slipped along over the calm sea, and mark that Luttrell was seated at her side.

Here was imprudence, rashness, wilful rashness, all the more reprehensible in a man like Vyner, who knew, or ought to know, the world by this time. "How is that sailor there to remember that he is only a sailor, and how is that young heiress to call to mind that she is an heiress? Why should people ever be placed in a position in which the impossible ceases to look impossible, and even gets a look of the probable?" Such were some of the wise reflections of the sage moralist, though it is but truth to say he never once thought of applying any one of them to his own case.

"What would Miss Courtenay say, too," thought he, "when she discovered that he had been so neglectful of the mission intrusted to him?" He looked about for another boat to go after them. It was a strong measure, but it was a time for strong measures. No boat, however, was to be had. He bethought him of hailing them, or trying to attract their attention by signals; and to this end he mounted a rock, and attaching his handkerchief to his umbrella, waved it frantically to and fro, screaming out, "Boat ahoy!" in a voice he meant to be intensely maritime.

"Shout away, old fellow!" muttered Harry, whose well-practised eye and ear detected the signal-maker. "I'm not going back for *you*."

“Do you see any one, Harry?” asked Ada. “Who is it?”

“That old lawyer — I forget his name, but he’s the only creature in the house that I can’t bear. You would n’t believe it, but he came up to me yesterday evening and asked if I had any recollection of his having saved my life. But I stopped him full, for I said, ‘I remember well how Captain



Dodge picked me up off a spar at sea, and had to threaten to throw yourself overboard for opposing it.’”

“Well, but, Harry,” said she, gently, “people don’t say such unpleasant things — I mean, when they meet in the world; when thrown together in society, they forgive little grudges, if they cannot forget them.”

“Don’t you know that we Luttrells do neither? I can no more forget a wrong than a kindness. Mind me, though,” added he, quickly, “I do not ask to clear off scores with the lawyer, only let him not claim to make me his debtor.

Shout away, it will stretch your lungs for the Old Bailey, or wherever it is that you make your living."

"If your memory be as good as you say, Harry," said she, smiling, "can you recall the time papa's yacht, the 'Meteor,' anchored in the little bay at Arran?"

"I can. I remember it all."

"And how you came on board in one of our boats?"

"Ay, and how you called me Robinson. Don't get so red; I was n't offended then, and I'm sure I'm not now. You said it in a whisper to your father, but I overheard you; and I think I said I should like well to be Robinson Crusoe, and have an island all my own."

"And so you have. Arran is yours."

"No. Arran was mine, or ought to have been mine; but my father, believing me dead, left it to my cousin."

"Oh, how I long to see her again!" cried Ada, passionately. "You know how we were brought up together."

"Your father told me all about it; but I never well understood how or why she was sent away again. Were you disappointed in her?"

"Oh, no, no, nothing of the kind! She was cleverer and more beautiful and more attractive than any one could have anticipated. The lesson that would take me days to learn, she had but to glance at and she knew it. The governess was in despair how to keep in advance of her. And then there was a charm in her manner that made the veriest trifle she did a sort of fascination."

"And were these the traits to send back into hardship and barbarism?"

"To this very hour I never knew how or why she went back, nor to what she went. I must tell you a secret; a great secret it is, Harry, and you will promise never to reveal it." He nodded, and she went on: "Aunt Georgina never liked Kate. She could not help owning that she was very beautiful and very gifted and very graceful, but nothing would wring from her one word of affection, nor even a smile of kindly meaning."

"It is exactly how she treats me. She is all courtesy and politeness; but it is a courtesy that chills me to the heart, and ever seems to say, 'Don't forget the distance that sepa-

rates us.' Perhaps," added he, laughing, "my cousin Kate and I have some family resemblance to each other?"

"Don't indulge any such flattery, Harry," said she, laughing. "Kate was beautiful."

"Come, come, I never meant in face. I only suspected that it was the marvellous gift of fascination we held in common." And he laughed good-humoredly at his own expense. "But to be serious. Was it quite fair to send such a girl as you have described back to all the miseries and sufferings of a peasant's life?"

"I'm not sure that this was done. I mean, that after she went to live at Dalradern — for Sir Within Wardle became her guardian when we came abroad — I never knew what happened; my aunt Georgina actually forbade the merest mention of her."

"I wonder would she tell me why if I were to ask her."

"Oh, Harry, I implore you not to do so. It would be at once to betray the confidence I have placed in you. She would know who had told you of her dislike to Kate."

"The lawyer could tell it, I'm certain," muttered Harry; "that fellow watches us all. I have marked him, as we sat in the drawing-room, studying the looks of each in turn, and pausing over chance words, as if they could mean more than they seemed to say."

"How acute you want to be thought!" said she, laughing.

"I have sailed in two ships where the crews mutinied, Miss Ada, and a man learns to have his wits about him where he suspects mischief, after that. There! look at the lawyer in the boat; he has got a boat at last, and is going to give us chase. Shall we run for it, Ada, or stand and fight him?"

"What wickedness are you muttering under your breath, there, sir?" asked she, with a mock imperiousness.

"Well, I was just saying to myself that, if you had n't been here, I'd even run foul of him and upset us both. I'd like to see the old fellow in the water. Oh! I see I must behave well. Miss Courtenay is in the boat, too!"

"Which means a reproof to me, Harry. My aunt never comes out on any less solemn mission."

"And why a reproof? What have you done?"

“Have I not gone off sailing all alone with that wild scamp Harry Luttrell, — that buccaneer who respects neither laws nor proprieties! But that’s my aunt’s voice! What is she saying?”

“She’s telling the lawyer that it’s all his fault, or Sir Gervais’s fault, or somebody’s fault, and that it’s a shame and disgrace, and I don’t know well what else besides.”

“What can it be?”

“Just what you said a minute ago. There! I’ll wait for them. I’ll slack off and let them come up.”

Whatever might have been the rebukeful tone of Miss Courtenay’s voice a few moments before, now, as the boat drew up beside Luttrell’s, her tones were softened and subdued, and it was with her most silvery accent she told Ada that some visitors had just arrived, and begged her to return with her to receive them, while Mr. M’Kinlay would join Mr. Luttrell, and obtain the lesson in sea-fishing he was so eager for.

“Come along,” said Harry. “It looks fresh outside, and may turn out a nice mackerel day, calm as it seems here.”

“With your good leave, sir, I shall decline a nice mackerel day. I’m a very fair-weather sailor.”

A hurried whisper from Georgina seemed, however, to arrest him in his excuses, and she added, aloud, —

“Of course Mr. Luttrell has no intention of venturing out to sea farther than you like, sir. He goes for your pleasure and amusement, and not to educate you for the Navy.”

Another hurried whisper followed this pert speech; and poor M’Kinlay, with the air of a condemned man, stepped into Luttrell’s boat with a heavy sigh, and a look of positive misery.

“No, no, not on any account,” were the last words of Ada into Harry’s ear, as he helped her to her place.

“Remember, we dine at six!” said Georgina, as she waved them an adieu; and young Luttrell cried out, “All right!” as he slacked off his sheet, and let the boat run broad and full towards the open sea.

“It is fresher, far fresher than I thought!” said M’Kinlay,

whose transition from a row-boat to a sailing one imparted the impression of a strong breeze.

“Cat’s-paws! light airs of wind that die away every moment. But I see it looks bluer out yonder, and now and then I see a white curl on the water that may mean a little wind.”

“Then I beseech you, sir, let us keep where we are!”

“Don’t you want me to teach you something about fishing? You said you wished to know what ‘trawling’ meant.”

“Not to-day; not on this occasion, my young friend. It was another errand brought me here this morning. Could you not draw that thing a little closer, and do something to make us go somewhat steadier?”

“I’ll close haul, if you prefer it,” said Harry, taking a strong pull at the sheet, and, with his helm hard up, sending the skiff along under a full wind. She leaned over so much, too, that it required all M’Kinlay’s strength, with both arms outside the gunwale, to keep his position. “That’s pleasanter, ain’t it?” asked Harry.

“I’ll not say I like it, either.”

“You will when the wind steadies; it’s squally just now, and she feels it, for she has no keel.”

“No keel! And ought she to have a keel?”

“Well, I think she’d be the better of one,” said Harry, smiling.

“Let us get back, sir, — let us get back at once! This is the reverse of agreeable to me; I don’t understand, and I don’t enjoy it. Put me ashore anywhere, and leave me to find my way how I can. There, — yonder, where you see the rocks, — land me there!”

“If I tried it, you’d find your way sure enough, but it would be into the next world! Don’t you see the white line there! Those are breakers!”

“Then turn back, sir, I command — I implore you,” cried he, with a voice shaking with terror.

“I’ll put about when the wind slackens. I can’t do it just yet. Have a little patience. Take the rudder a moment.”

“No, sir; I refuse, — I decidedly refuse. I protest against any share in what may happen.”

"Perhaps it will be past protesting if you don't do what I tell you. Hold this, and mind my orders. Keep the tiller so till I cry out hard down; mind me, now, — no mistake." And not waiting for more, he sprang into the bow of the boat as she ran up into the wind, and held out the foresail to the breeze. "Down helm, — hard down!" cried he; and round she spun at once, and so rapidly that the lee gunwale went under water, and M'Kinlay, believing she had upset, uttered one wild cry and fell senseless into the bottom of the boat. Not much grieved at his condition, — perhaps, on the whole, almost glad to be rid of his company, — Harry lighted a cigar and steered for shore. In less than half an hour they gained the slack water of the little bay, and M'Kinlay, gathering himself up, asked if they were nigh land.

"Close in; get up and have a cigar," said Harry, curtly.

"No, sir; I will not."

"I thought you liked a weed," said Harry, carelessly.

"My likings or my dislikings must be a matter of perfect indifference to you, sir, or I should not be wet to the skin and shivering as I am now."

"Take a go of brandy, and you'll be all right," said Harry, throwing his flask to him.

Though not very graciously offered, M'Kinlay accepted the dram, and then looked over the side towards the shore with an air of greater contentment. "Considering, sir, that I came here to-day on *your* account, I think I might have been treated with somewhat more deference to my tastes," said he, at last.

"On *my* account? And in what way on *my* account?"

"If we are not likely to have any more storms of wind, I can, perhaps, tell you."

"No, no, it's still as a fishpond here. Go on."

"Before I go on, — before I even begin, Mr. Luttrell, I must have your promise that you will not mention to any one what shall pass between us to-day. It is on a subject which concerns *you*, — but still concerns others more nearly."

"All right. I'll not speak of it."

"You will give me your word?"

“I *have* given it. Did n’t you hear me say I’d not speak of it?”

“Well, sir, the matter is this: Great uneasiness is being felt here at the intimacy that has grown up between you and Miss Vyner. Motives of extreme delicacy towards *you*, — who, of course, not having lived much in the world, could not be expected to weigh such considerations, — but motives of great delicacy, as I say, have prevented any notice being taken of this intimacy, and a hope has been felt that you yourself, once awakened to the fact of the long interval that separates *her* condition from *yours*, would soon see the propriety, indeed, the necessity, of another line of conduct, and thus not require what may seem an admonition, though I really intend you should receive it as the warning counsel of a friend.”

“Have you been commissioned to say this to me?” asked Luttrell, haughtily.

“Though I had decided with myself not to answer any questions, I will reply to this one, and this only. I have.”

“Who gave you this charge?”

M’Kinlay shook his head, and was silent.

“Was it Sir Gervais Vyner?”

Another shake of the head was the reply.

“I thought not. I am certain, too, it was not Lady Vyner. Be frank, sir, and tell me candidly. It was Miss Courtenay employed you on this errand?”

“I really see no necessity for any explanation on my part, Mr. Luttrell. I have already transgressed the limits of mere prudence in the avowal I have made you. I trust you will be satisfied with my candor.”

“Let me ask for a little more of that same candor. I want to know what is expected of me, what I am to do.”

“Really, sir, you make my position a very painful one. You insist upon my being extremely disagreeable to you.”

“Listen to reason. I am telling you that I found myself in considerable embarrassment, and I entreat of you, as a favor, to show me the way out of it. Am I to discontinue all intimacy with Miss Vyner? Am I to avoid her? Am I to leave this and not return?”

“That I opine to be the most fitting course under the circumstances,” said M’Kinlay, bowing.

“I see,” said Harry, pondering for some seconds, — “I see.” And then, with a more fervid manner, resuming, “But if I know, sir — if I feel — that all this caution is unnecessary, that I have not — that I never had — the slightest pretensions such as you speak of, that Miss Vyners’s manner to me, in its very freedom, repels any suspicion of the kind, — I ask you, is it not a little hard to deny me the greatest happiness I have ever tasted in life, — the first holiday after a long spell of work and hardship? Why should I not go straight to Sir Gervais and say this?”

“You forget your promise to yourself.”

“Ay, to be sure, *that* is a barrier. I suppose you are right. The best, the only way, is to go off; and I own I feel ashamed to make this return for all the generous kindness I have met here; and what an insufferable coxcomb must it stamp me, if it ever comes out that I left on such grounds as these!”

“That is not how the world regards such things, sir. Men are not supposed to measure their affections by their circumstances. If it were so, we should not see so many *mésalliances*.”

“I don’t know how to go about it. I’m a precious bungler at making excuses, and, whenever I have told a lie in my life, my own shame and confusion have always convicted me; help me to some ingenious pretext for a sudden departure.”

“You can have law business. Your agents wish to see you.”

“But I have no property, or next to none. No, no, that won’t do.”

“You desire to visit your friends in Ireland.”

“Just as bad. I have as little friends as fortune. Try again.”

“Why should not Captain Dodge have sent for you? You left him very ill, and confined to bed, I understand.”

“He told Sir Gervais to keep me as long as possible; that the air of the hospital was bad for me, and had brought back my ague.”

"If you are so very scrupulous, sir, as to what people generally regard as a mere conventionality, I should say, pack up and be off without any explanation at all."

"I believe you are right. It is the old story of paying one's debts with the topsail sheet. Shabby enough, too, but it can't be helped. Perhaps, Mr. M'Kinlay, if occasion should occur, you would find means to let Sir Gervais know that I am not the ungrateful dog my want of manners might bespeak me; perhaps you would convey to him that this step of mine had been suggested by yourself."

"It is possible, Mr. Luttrell, that a fortuitous moment for an explanation of the kind you mention might occur, and, if so, you may rely on my willingness to profit by it. You mean to go at once?"

"I suppose so. Is it not what you advise?"

"Most certainly."

"Here goes, then! I'll start this instant. They are all out driving, except Miss Courtenay. I see her in the garden yonder. She, I know, will forgive me my abrupt departure, and you'll make the best story you can out of it, Mr. M'Kinlay. As I was last seen in your company, you'll be obliged, for your own sake, to say something plausible."

"I will do my best, sir. The eccentric habits of a sea-life must bear the burden of the explanation."

"It's poor comfort that I can't be much missed! Good-bye!" And, without any more cordial leave-taking, Luttrell turned into a side-path that led directly to the house, while M'Kinlay entered the garden and made straight for the seawall, on which Miss Courtenay was sitting, awaiting him.

"Well?" said she, impatiently, as he came forward, — "well?"

"It is done, — all finished!"

"In what way? How is it finished?"

"He goes away, — goes at once!"

"Of course he writes a note, and makes some sort of excuse to my brother-in-law for his hurried departure?"

"I believe not. I fear — that is, I apprehend — he is one of those not very tractable people who always do an awkward thing in the awkwardest way; for when I explained to him

that his position here was — what shall I say? — an indiscretion, and that Miss Vyner's friends saw, with uneasiness, the growing intimacy between them — ”

“You did not speak of me, — you did not mention my name, I hope?” broke she in, in an imperious tone.

“You could not suppose me guilty of such imprudence, Miss Courtenay!” said he, in an offended manner.

“No matter what I suppose, sir. I want you to tell me that my name was not uttered during your interview.”

“Not by *me*, — certainly not by *me!*” said he, timidly.

“Was it by *him*, sir? Answer me that!”

“Well, I rather think that he did say that I had been deputed by you to convey the message to him.”

“What insolence! And how did you reply?”

“I observed that I was not there exactly for the purpose of a cross-examination; that in my capacity as a friendly adviser, I declined all interrogation.”

“Fiddle faddle, sir. It would have been far more to the purpose to have said, ‘Miss Courtenay has nothing whatever to do with this communication.’ I really feel ashamed to think I should play the prompter to a professor in subtleties; but I still think that your ingenuity might have hit upon a reason for his going, without any reference to *us* or to *our* wishes. Did it never occur to you, for instance, that the arrival of Sir Within Wardle might offer a convenient plea?”

“Indeed? I might have mentioned that,” said he, in some confusion. “The house does not admit of much accommodation for strangers, and an additional room would be of consequence just now.”

“I think, sir,” said she, haughtily, “you might have put the matter in a better light than by making it a domestic question. This young man might have been brought to see that the gentleman who was so ungratefully treated — I might say, so shamefully treated — by his near relative, could not be the pleasanter person for him to meet in a narrow family circle.”

“I might. It is quite true, I might have insinuated that consideration,” said he, with a crestfallen air and look.

“I suppose you did your best, sir!” said she, with a sigh;

and he felt all the sarcastic significance of its compassion. "Indeed, I am certain you did, and I thank you." With these words, not conveyed in any excess of warmth or gratitude, she moved away, and M'Kinlay stood a picture of doubt, confusion, and dismay, muttering to himself some unintelligible words, whose import was, however, the hope of that day coming when these and many similar small scores might be all wiped out together.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WITH LAWYERS.

“WHAT! that you, Harry? How comes it you have left all the fine folk so soon?” cried Captain Dodge, as he suddenly awoke and saw young Luttrell at his bedside. “Why, lad, I did n’t expect to see you back here these ten days to come. Warn’t they polite and civil to you?”

“That they were. They could not have treated me better if I had been their own son.”

“How comes it, then, that you slipped your moorings?”

“Well, I can’t well say. There were new guests just arriving, and people I never saw, and so, with one thing or other, I thought I’d just move off; and — and — here I am.”

It was not difficult to see that this very lame excuse covered some other motive, and the old skipper was not the man to be put off by a flimsy pretext; but, rough sailor and buccaneer as he was, he could respect the feelings that he thought might be matter of secret meaning, and merely said: “I’m glad to see you back, at all events. I have no one to speak to in this place, and, as I lie here, I get so impatient that I forget my smashed thigh-bone, and want to be up and about again.”

“So you will, very soon, I hope.”

“Not so soon, lad!” said he, sorrowfully. “It’s a big spar to splice, the surgeon says, and will take three months; though how I’m to lie here three months is more than I can tell.”

“I’ll do my best to make it endurable for you. I’ll get books, — they’ve plenty of books here, — and maps, and drawings; and I saw a draught-board this morning, and you’ll see the time won’t hang so heavily as you feared.”

“That ain’t it at all, Harry. You’ve got to go to Liverpool, to Towers and Smales, — them’s the fellows know me well. Smales sailed with me as a youngster, and you’ll hand them a letter I’ll write, and they’ll look about for the sort of craft we’re wanting, — something bark-rigged, or a three-masted schooner. I was dreaming of one last night, — such a clipper on a wind! The French are blockading Vera Cruz just now, and if we could slip past them and get in, one trip would set us all right again.”

“I think I should like that well!” cried the youth.

“Like it! Why would n’t you like it? There ain’t nothing to compare with blockade running in this life: stealing carefully up till you see the moment to make a dash, — watching your wind, and then with every inch of canvas you can spread, go at it till the knee timbers crack again, and the planks work and writhe like the twigs of a wicker basket, and all the ships of war flying this signal and that to each other, till at last comes a gun across your bows, and you run up a flag of some sort, — English belike, for the French never suspect John Bull of having a clipper. Then comes the order to round to, and you pretend to mind it; and just as they man their boat, dead at them you go, swamp every man of them, and hold on, while they fire away at the risk of hulling each other, and never take more notice of them than one discharge from your pivot-gun, just by way of returning their salute. That’s what I call sport, boy; and I only wish I was at it this fine morning.”

“And what happens if you’re taken?”

“That depends on whether you showed fight or not: if you fired a shotted gun, they hang you.”

Luttrell shook his head, and muttered, “A dog’s death; I don’t like that.”

“That’s prejudice, sir; nothing more. Every death a man meets bravely is a fine death! I’d just as lieve be hanged as flayed alive by the Choctaws!”

“Perhaps so would I.”

“Well, there’s what you’ve got to do. Towers and Smales, ship-builders! — they’re the men to find what we want, and they know a clipper well; they’ve built more slavers than any house in the trade.”

Harry made a wry face; the skipper saw it, and said, "There's more prejudice; but when you've been at sea as long as I have, you'll think less about the cargo than what you get per ton for the freight."

"I'd not turn slaver, anyhow; that much I can tell you," said he, stoutly.

"I'd not do it myself, sir, except when business was slack and freights low. It ain't cheering, noways; and there's a certain risk in it, besides. Towers and Smales, — Towers and Smales!" muttered he over to himself three or four times. "They'd not be the men they are to-day, I can tell you, if they never traded in ebony ware! Had you any talk with your grand friend, Sir Gervais, about that loan he offered me?" asked he, after a pause.

"Not a word. I came away hurriedly. I had no good opportunity to speak about it."

"He said, 'Two thousand, and pay when I like;' not hard terms, certainly."

"And yet I'd rather you'd not accept them," said Harry, slowly.

"Not take money without interest charged or security asked? What do you mean?"

"I mean, I'd rather you'd wait till I've seen those lawyers that managed my father's affairs, and see whether they can't sell that trifle of property that comes to me."

"Why, didn't you tell me your father willed it away to some peasant girl?"

"Yes, the island, for the entail had been broken by my grandfather; but the small estate in Roscommon goes to the next-of-kin, and that happens to be myself. It must be very little worth; but it may help us, at least, to get a ship, and we'll soon do the rest ourselves."

"That will we, Harry. This is the fourth time in my life I've had to begin all over again, and I'm as fresh for it as on the first day."

They went on now to talk of the future and all their plans like men who felt the struggle with life a fair stand-up fight, that none with a stout heart ought ever to think of declining. The skipper had not only been in every corner of the globe, but had brought back from each spot some

memories of gain or pleasure or peril, — sensations pretty much alike to his appreciation, — and whether he commanded a whale-boat at Behring's Straits, or took in his ship store of cocoanuts and yams at the Spice Islands, adventure ever tracked his steps. Dashed with the love of danger was the love of gain, and in his narrative one never could say whether there prevailed more of the spirit of enterprise or the temper of the trader.

"We 'll want that loan from Vyner yet, I see, Harry," said he, at the end of a long calculation of necessary outgoings; "and I see no reason against taking it."

"I do, though," said the other, gravely.

"Mayhap some sentimental reason that I 'd not give a red cent for, boy. What is it "

"I 'll not trouble you with the sentimental reasons," said Luttrell, smiling, "though, perhaps, I 'm not without some of them. What I 'll give you will suffice. While I was one morning with Sir Gervais, going over all about my father and his affairs, of which he knew far more than I did, he opened his writing-desk, and took out a great mass of letters. 'These,' said he, 'are in your father's hand; read them, and you 'll be better acquainted with him than you have yet been.' They were on all manner of themes, — of society, field sports, books, and much about politics, — and interested me vastly, till at last I came upon one which certainly Sir Gervais would not have suffered me to see had he been aware it was amongst them. It was the last letter my father had ever written to him, and was almost entirely about myself. He spoke of the semi-barbarism I had been reared in, and the humble prospects before me, and he told about my disposition and my faults of temper — the old family faults, he called them — that made us all 'intractable to our friends, and intolerable to all who were not friends.' At the end he asked Vyner to be my guardian, and he added these words: 'Be a friend to my boy in all ways that your kindness, your sympathy, your counsel can dictate. Guide, direct, encourage, or, if need be, reprove him, but never, whatever you do, aid him with your purse. It is on this condition I commit him to you. Remember.'"

"Well, I 'd be no ways obliged to *my* father if he had

made any such condition about *me*. I've never been much the better for all the good advice I've got, but I've found the man that lent me a thousand dollars uncommon useful."

"I am telling you of what my father wished and asked for," said Harry, proudly, "not of anything else."

"And that's just what I'm objectin' to, youngster. It was *his* pride to take no help, and it brought him to live and die on a barren rock in the ocean; but I don't intend to do that, nor to let you do it. We've got to say to the world, 'Sheer off there, I'm a-comin', and I mean comin' when I say it. There 's, maybe, room enough for us all, but I'll be smashed and chawed up, but I'll have room for *me!*'"

Whether it was the fierce energy with which he spoke this, or the fact that in a few rough words he had embodied his whole theory of life, but, certainly, Harry looked at him with a sort of wonder blended with amusement.

"Besides this," resumed Dodge, with the same decision of tone, "your father might say, if he pleased, 'You sha'n't help Harry Luttrell,' but he never could say, 'You must n't help Herodotus Dodge.' No, sir!"

"At all events," said Harry, "you'll let me try my own plan first. If that fail, there will be time enough to consider the other. I'll start to-night for Liverpool. After I have seen your friends there, I'll go over and consult my lawyers in Dublin; and I mean to run across and see Arran — the old rock — once more. It shall be my last look at it."

"It ain't a beauty, that's a fact," said Dodge, who saw nothing of the agitation in the other's voice or manner. "Give me an hour or two, and I'll write the letters for you, and I'll tell Smales that if you want any money —"

"I shall not want it."

"Then you'll be unlike any other man that ever wore shoes, sir, that's all!" And Dodge stuffed a formidable piece of tobacco into his mouth, as though to arrest his eloquence and stop the current of his displeasure, while Harry waved him a good-bye, and went out.

The same evening he started for Liverpool. The skipper's friends were most cordial and hospitable to him. They had had long dealings with Dodge, and found him

ever honorable and trustworthy; and Harry heard, with sincere pleasure, the praises of his friend. It was evident, too, that they were taken with young Luttrell, for they brought him about amongst their friends, introducing him everywhere, and extending to him every hospitality of their hospitable city. If Harry was very grateful for all this kindness, his mind continually reverted to the society he had so lately mixed in, and whose charm he appreciated, new as he was to life and the world, with an intense zest, — the polished urbanity of Sir Gervais; the thoughtful good-nature of Lady Vyner; the gentle gracefulness of Ada; even Miss Courtenay, — no favorite of his, nor he of hers, — yet even she possessed a winning elegance of manner that was very captivating.

Very unlike all these were the attentions that now surrounded him, and many were the unfavorable comparisons he drew between his present friends and their predecessors. Not that he was in love with Ada: he had asked himself the question more than once, and always had he given the same answer: "If I had been a man of rank and fortune, I'd have deemed my lot perfect to have had such a sister." And really it was sister-like she had been to him; so candid, so frank, so full of those little cares that other "love" shrinks from, and dares not deal in. She had pressed him eagerly, too, to accept assistance from her father, — a step she never could have taken had love been there, — and he had refused, on grounds which showed he could speak with a frankness love cannot speak.

"I take it," muttered he to himself one day, after long reflection, — "I take it that my Luttrell blood moves too slowly for passionate affection, and that the energy of my nature must seek its exercise in hatred, not love; and if this be so, what a life is before me!"

At last the ship-builders discovered the craft that Dodge was in search of. She was a slaver recently captured off Bahia, and ordered to be sold by the Admiralty. A few lines from Harry described her with all the enthusiasm that her beauty and fine lines could merit, and he smiled to himself as he read over the expressions of admiration which no loveliness in human form could have wrung from him.

He sailed for Ireland on the night he wrote, but carried his letter with him, to relate what he might have to say of his meeting with his lawyer. A little event that occurred at his landing was also mentioned:—

“As I was stepping into the boat that was to take me ashore, we were hailed by a large ship-rigged vessel just getting under weigh, and from which several boats, crowded with people, were just leaving. We rowed towards her, and found that they wanted us to take on shore a young lady whose class evidently prevented her mixing with the vulgar herd that filled the other boats. She was in deep mourning, and so overwhelmed with grief that she was almost unconscious as they lifted her into the boat. I caught a mere glimpse of her face, and never saw anything so beautiful in my life. Only think! the vessel was a convict-ship, and she had gone there to take a last farewell of some father or brother, perhaps, — husband it could scarcely be, she was too young for that. Can you imagine anything more dreadful? One evidently of rank and birth — there were unmistakable signs of both about her — mixing even for an instant with all the pollution of crime and wickedness that crowd the deck of a convict ship! I asked leave to accompany her to her house or hotel, or wherever she was going, but she made a gesture of refusal; and though I’d have given more than I dare tell to have known more about her, I thought it would be so unworthy to follow her that I left her the moment we landed, and never saw her more.

“I am sure I did what was right and becoming, but if you knew how sorry I am to have been obliged to do it, — if you knew how, now that it is all done and passed, I think of her incessantly, — ay, and follow every one I see in mourning till I discover that it is not she, — you’d wonder what change has come over this thick blood of mine, and set it boiling and bubbling as it never used to do.”

He went on next to tell of his visit to the agents of his father’s property. Messrs. Cane and Carter had been duly apprised by Sir Gervais Vyner that Harry Luttrell was alive, and it scarcely needed the letter which he carried as a credential, to authenticate him, so striking was the resemblance he bore to his father.

“You should have been here yesterday, Mr. Luttrell,” said Cane. “You would have met your cousin. She has left this for Arran this morning.”

Harry muttered something about their not being known to each other, and Cane continued, —

“You’d scarcely guess what brought her here. It was to make over to you, as the rightful owner, the property on the Arran Islands. We explained to her that it was a distinct deed of gift, — that your late father bequeathed it to her as a means of support, — for she has really nothing else, — and that legally her claim was unassailable. She was not to be shaken from her resolution. No matter how we put the case, — either as one of law or as one of necessity, for it is a necessity, — her invariable reply was, ‘My mind is made up, and on grounds very different from any you have touched on;’ and she left us with full directions to make the requisite conveyances of the estate in your favor. I entreated her to defer her final determination for a week or two, and all I could obtain was a promise that if she should change her mind between that time and the day of signing the papers, she would let me know it. She has also given us directions about taking a passage for her to Australia; she is going out to seek occupation as a governess if she can, as a servant if she must.”

Harry started, and grew pale and red by turns as the other said this. He thought, indeed, there was some want of delicacy in thus talking to him of one so nearly allied to him. His ignorance of life, and the Irish attachment to kindred together, made him feel the speech a hard one.

“How will it be, sir,” asked he, curtly, “if I refuse to accept this cession?”

“The law has no means of enforcing it, sir. There is no statute which compels a man to take an estate against his will. She, however, can no more be bound to retain, than you to receive, this property.”

“We had three hours’ talk,” said Harry, in writing this to Captain Dodge, “and I ascertained that this very property she is now so anxious to be free of, had formed up to this the pride and enjoyment of her life. She had labored incessantly to improve it and the condition of the people who lived on

it. She had built a schoolhouse and a small hospital, and strange enough, too, a little inn, for the place was in request with tourists, who now found they could make their visits with comfort and convenience. Cane also showed me the drawing of a monument to my father's memory, the 'Last Luttrell of Arran,' she called him; and I own I was amazed at the simple elegance and taste of the design made by this poor peasant girl. Even if all these had not shown me that our old home has fallen into worthy hands, I feel determined not to be outdone in generosity by this daughter of the people. She shall see that a Luttrell understands his name and his station. I have told Cane to inform her that I distinctly refuse to accept the cession; she may endow her school or her hospital with it; she may partition it out amongst the cottier occupiers; she may leave it — I believe I said so in my warmth — to be worked out in masses for her soul — if she be still a Catholic — if all this while none of her own kith and kin are in want of assistance; and certainly times must have greatly changed with them if it be not so. At all events, I'll not accept it.

"I own to you I was proud to think of the high-hearted girl, bred up in poverty, and tried by the terrible test of 'adoption' to forget her humble origin. It was very fine and very noble of her, and only that I fear if I were to see her the illusion might be destroyed, and some coarse-featured, vulgar creature rout forever the pleasant image my mind has formed, I'd certainly make her a visit. Cane presses me much to do so, but I will not. I shall go over to the island to see the last resting-place of my poor father, and then leave it forever. I have made Cane give me his word of honor not to divulge my secret, nor even admit that he has more than seen me, and I intend to-morrow to set out for Arran.

"I asked Cane, when I was leaving him, what she was like, and he laughingly answered, 'Can't you imagine it?' And so I see I was right. They were a wild, fierce, proud set, all these of my mother's family, with plenty of traditions amongst them of heavy retributions exacted for wrongs, and they were a strong, well-grown, and well-featured race, but, after all, not the stuff of which ladies and gentlemen are

made, in *my* country at least. *You* have told me a different story as regards *yours*.

“You shall hear from me from the island if I remain there longer than a day; but if my present mood endure, that event is very unlikely.”

CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE ISLAND.

IT was late at night when Harry landed on Arran. Dark as it was, however, his sailor's eye could mark that the little jetty was in trim order, and that steps now led down to the water where formerly it was necessary to clamber over rugged rocks and slippery seaweed. A boatman took his carpet-bag as matter of course, too, as he stepped on shore; and, trifling as was the service, it had a certain significance as to the advance of civilization in that wild spot. More striking, again, than these was the aspect of the comfortable little inn into which he was ushered. Small and unpretending, indeed, but very clean, and not destitute of little ornaments, sketches of the scenery of the island, and specimens of ore, or curious rock, or strange fern, that were to be found there. A few books, too, were scattered about, some of them presents from former visitors, with graceful testimonies of the pleasure they had found in the trip to Arran, and how gratefully they cherished the memory of its simple people.

Harry amused himself turning over these, as he sat at the great turf fire waiting for his supper. Of those who served him there was not one he recognized. Their looks and their language bespoke them as belonging to the mainland; but they spoke of the island with pride, and told how, in the season, about July or August, as many as fifteen or twenty strangers occasionally came over to visit it.

"There *was* a day," said the man, "in the late Mr. Luttrell's time, when nobody dare come here; he'd as soon see ould Nick as a stranger; and if a boat was to put in out of bad weather or the like, the first moment the wind would

drop ever so little, down would come a message to tell them to be off."

Harry shook his head, — an unconscious protest of dissent it was; but the other, interpreting the sign as condemnation, went on, —

"Ay, he was a hard man! But they tell me it was n't his fault; the world went wrong with him, and he turned against it."

"He had a son, had n't he?" asked Harry.

"He had, sir. I never saw him, but they tell me he was a fine boy, and when he was only ten years old, got a broken arm fighting with a seal in one of the caves on the shore; and, what's more, he did n't like to own it, because the seal got away from him."

"What became of him?"

"He was lost at sea, sir. I believe he turned pirate or slaver himself, and it was no great matter what became of him. They were all unlucky, men and women. No one ever heard of a Luttrell coming to good yet."

"That's a hard sentence."

"You'd not think so, sir, if you knew them; at least, so the men tell me about here. They liked the man that was here last well enough, but they said that nothing he could do would ever prosper."

"And who owns it now?"

"Kitty O'Hara that was — Neal O'Hara's daughter — he that was transported long ago — she's now the mistress of the whole island; and her name — she took it by his will — is Luttrell — Luttrell of Arran."

"Do the people like her?"

"Why would n't they like her? Is n't she working and slaving for them all day long, nursing them at the hospital, visiting them in their cabins, teaching them in the school, getting them seed potatoes from Belmullet, and has n't she set up a store there on the shore, where they can buy pitch, and hemp, and sailcloth, and all kinds of cordage, for less than half what it costs at Castlebar?"

"How has she money to do all this?"

"Just because she lives like the rest of us. Sorrow bit better dinner or supper she has, and it's a red cloak she

wears, like Molly Ryan, and she makes her own shoes, and purtier ones you never looked at."

"And who taught her to manage all this so cleverly?"

"She taught herself out of books; she reads all night through. Come here, now, sir! Do you see that light there? That's her window, and there she'll be till, maybe, nigh five o'clock, studyin' hard. Molly says there's nights she never goes to bed at all."

"That light comes from the tower."

"So it does, sir, however you knew it," said the man; "but it was the favorite room of him that's gone, and she always sits there."

"And are strangers permitted to see the Abbey?" asked Harry.

"Yes, sir. All they've to do is to write their names in this book and send up a message that they want to see the place, and they'd see every bit of it but the two little rooms Mr. Luttrell that was used to keep for himself."

"And if one wished to see these also?"

"He could n't do it, that's all; at least, *I'd* not be the man that axed her leave!"

"Take my name up there in the morning," said Harry, as he wrote "H. Hamilton" in the book, that being a second name by which he was called after his father, though he had long ceased to use it.

The supper made its appearance at this moment, and little other conversation passed between them. As the man came and went, however, he continued to speak of Miss Luttrell, and all she had done for the people, in terms of warmest praise, winding up all with the remark, "That no one who had not lived the life of hardship and struggle of a poor person could ever be able to know what were the wants that press hardest, what the privations that cut deepest, into the nature of the poor. And that's the reason," he said, "that she'll never let any one be cruel to the children, for it was as a child herself she knew sorrow!"

Long after the man had left him, Harry sat at the fire thinking over all he had heard. Nor was it, let us own, without a certain irritation that he thought of the contrast the man drew between his father and this girl, — his father, the man

of mind and intellect, the scholar, the orator, the man whose early career had been a blaze of success, and yet all his acquirements and all his knowledge paled beside the active energy of a mere peasant. The reflection pained him; it chafed him sorely to admit, even to his own heart, that birth and blood were not always the superiors, and he casuistically suspected that much of the praise he had heard bestowed upon this girl was little other than the reflex of that selfish esteem the people felt for qualities like their own.

And out of these confused and conflicting thoughts he set to work to paint her to his mind and imagine what she must be. He pictured her a coarse, masculine, determined woman; active, courageous, and full of expedients, with some ability, but far more of self-confidence, the great quality of those who have been their own teachers. From what Mr. Cane had told him, she was one who could take a proud view of life and its duties. That very resolve to cede the property, when she heard that there was yet a Luttrell alive to inherit it, showed there was stuff of no mean order in her nature. "And yet," he thought, "all this could consist with vulgar looks and vulgar manners, and a coarseness of feeling that would be repugnant." With these imaginings he went to bed, and dreamed the whole night of this girl.

"Have you taken my message up to the Abbey?" asked he, as he sat at breakfast.

"Yes, sir; and Miss Luttrell says you are to go where you like. She's off to the far part of the island this morning, to see a woman in fever, and won't be back till night."

"Then, perhaps, I may be able to see those two rooms you spoke of?"

The man shook his head in silence, perhaps not over-pleased at the obstinacy of the stranger to investigate what was deemed sacred.

"I want no guide," said Harry. "I see the Abbey, and I'll find my own way to it."

And with these words he sauntered along, every step and every stone of the path familiar to him. As he drew nigh, he saw some changes. The railing of the little garden had been repaired, and the garden itself was better tilled than of

yore; and close by the wall of the Abbey, where shelter favored, a few flowers were growing, and some attempt there seemed making to train a creeper to reach the window-sill.

Molly Ryan was out; and a strange face that Harry knew not received him at the door, leaving him, as he entered, to go where he pleased, simply saying, "There 's the way to the Abbey, and there 's where *she* lives."

He turned first to the aisle of the church, paved with the tombstones of bygone Luttrells, and where now a cross in blue limestone marked his father's grave. The inscription was, "To the Memory of the Last of the Luttrells, by one who loved him, but not merited his love."

"Strange that she should have said so," thought he, as he sat down upon the stone. But it was soon of the long past his mind was filled with, — of the days of his boyhood; no happy, careless, sunny youth was it, but a time of loneliness and sorrow, — of long solitary rambles through the island, and a return at nightfall to a home of melancholy and gloom. He bethought him of his poor mother's tears as they would fall hot upon his face, and the few words, stern and harsh, his father would meet him with; and yet, now in his utter desolation, what would he not give to hear that voice again whose accents were wont to terrify him? — what would he not give to see the face whose slightest sign of reproof had once overwhelmed him with shame?

How fervently, how faithfully, will the heart cling to some memory of kindness for those whose severity had once been almost a terror! What a sifting process do our affections go through where death has come, tearing away the recollections of what once had grieved and pained us, and leaving only the memory of the blessed word that healed, of the loving look that rallied us. John Luttrell had been a hard, stern, unforgiving man: it was but seldom that he suffered his heart to sway him, but there had been moments when his love overcame him, and it was of these Harry now bethought him, and it was in such guise he pictured his father now before him.

"Oh, if he were here to welcome me back, — to let me feel I was not homeless in the world, — what a moment of

joy and happiness had this been!" How keen can sorrow make memory! There was not a little passing word of praise his father ever spoke, there was not a kindly look, nor a little gesture of fondness, that did not recur to him as he sat there and wept.

With slow steps and heavy heart he turned into the house, and sought the little room where his father usually sat during the day. There was the great old chair of bog oak, and there the massive table, and over the fireplace the great two-handed sword, and the stone-headed javelin crosswise over the ox-hide shield; all these he knew, but other objects there were new and strange to him, — so strange that he could not but wonder at them. A half-finished water-color on an easel, done by no common hand, was at one side of the window; and in a deep chair, as though left hurriedly there, was a guitar. Music, and pen sketches, and books were strewn about, and a solitary rose in a glass of water bore an almost painful testimony to the rareness of flowers on the spot. A basket of some sewing work — capes of frieze for her school children — stood beside the fire. It was plain to see that this peasant girl had caught up tastes and pursuits which belong to another sphere; and Harry pondered over it, and questioned himself if she were the happier for this cultivation. Was it better for her, or worse, to be endowed with what, in imparting a resource, removes a sympathy?

Seated on the little window-stool, — the same spot where he had often sat silent for hours, — he fell into a train of melancholy thought. His poor father — the broken-down, crushed man, without a companion or a friend — rose before his mind, and filled each spot he turned to; and it was with a feeling of deep self-reproach he recalled how he himself had left him — deserted him, he called it now — to live on in sorrow and die forlorn. Out of this dreamy half-stupor he was roused by the woman hurriedly telling him that her mistress was coming up the path to the house, and entreating him to go away before she entered. He arose at once, and, passing through the kitchen, issued forth by the back of the Abbey at the very instant that Kate crossed the door.

"Who has been here, Jane? Whose cane is this?" said she, taking up a stick Harry had forgotten in his haste.

The woman explained it was the young gentleman to whom her mistress gave permission that morning to see the Abbey, and who had only just taken his departure.

"The whole day here!" exclaimed Kate.

"True enough, miss. He was two hours and more in the Abbey, and I thought he was asleep, for he was lying on the master's grave with his face hid; but when I spoke he answered me. It was what he wished, miss, was to be let go up into the tower and have a view from the top; but I told him your own rooms was there, and nobody ever got leave to see them."

"I mean to go to the Murra Glen to-morrow, Molly," said Kate, turning to her old and faithful servant, "and you may let this stranger go over the Abbey in every part; so that he be away before nightfall, the whole is at his disposal. Go down this evening to the inn, and take his stick to him, with this message."

Seated at her tea, Kate was thinking over the long sea-voyage that lay before her, and the new land in which she was to seek her fortune, when a wild shrill scream startled her, and at the same instant Molly rushed into the room, and when she had reached the middle of it, staggered back, and leaned, half fainting, against the wall.

"What's the matter, Molly? What has happened?" cried Kate, eagerly.

"May the blessed saints protect and guard us, miss, but I seen him as plain as I see you."

"Whom did you see?"

"Himself that's gone, — the master! Glory to him, and peace, too, if it was God's will," said the woman, falteringly.

"How foolish this is, Molly! I scarcely expected this from *you*."

"I don't care. I'll swear it on the book I saw him, and heard him too. 'Would you be so kind —' says he; and at that I let a screech out of me and ran in here."

"This is too absurd," said Kate, with some irritation in her voice. "Go and see what this man wants."



Molly sees the Ghost of Peter Hester.



“Not if you were to give me a hatful of goold, Miss Kate. May I never, if I’d go there again to be Queen of England.”

“I am not pleased with you, Molly,” said Kate, taking a candle in her hand and moving towards the door. The woman threw herself at her feet to prevent her, but with a haughty gesture she motioned her away and passed out.

A man was standing in the doorway, who courteously removed his hat as she came forward, and said, “I am sorry to have alarmed your servant, Miss Luttrell, but I had left my walking-stick here this morning and came to get it.”

Screening the light from her with one hand, she threw the full glare on the other’s face, and, in a voice of deep emotion, said: “I see well why she was frightened. Your name is Luttrell!”

“I must not deny it to the only one that remains of all my kin. Are you not my cousin Kate?”

She held out her hand to him, and, in a voice quivering and broken, said, “How glad I am to see you, — and to see you here under your own roof.”

“There must be two words more before that be settled, Kate,” said he, kindly, as, still holding her hand in his own, he walked back with her to her room.

“There, Molly, — there’s your young master; perhaps you will be less frightened now that you see him at my side.”

While the poor woman gave way to a transport of joy and tears, Harry continued to gaze at Kate with an intense eagerness. “Tell me one thing, Cousin Kate,” said he, in a whisper; “answer me truly: were you on board of a convict-ship in Kingstown harbor on Tuesday last, as she was getting under weigh?”

She nodded assent.

“Then it was I who lifted you into the boat, and asked your leave to see you safely on shore.”

“I’m ashamed to seem ungrateful, but I have no memory of your kindness. I had too much sorrow on my heart that morning.”

“Oh, if you knew how I longed to meet you again, — how I walked and walked incessantly to try and come up with you, never dreaming of such happiness as this, — that when we met I could claim you as my own dear cousin!”

“And was it right, Cousin Harry, for you to come here in disguise and visit the Abbey like a stranger? Was that an evidence of the affection you speak of?”

“You forget, Kate, I did n't know whom I was to meet. If I had known that you were the girl whom I carried down the ladder to the boat, I'd have gone to the world's end to see you again. How came you to be there?”

“You shall hear it all when you have time and patience. We each have much to tell, and you shall begin, but not to-night, Harry; let us be satisfied to make acquaintance now. Why do you stare at me?”

“Because you are so beautiful,—because I never saw any one so beautiful before.”

“A very frank compliment, and I suppose too frank to be construed into what is called flattery.”

“To think of you living here!—*you*, in such a place as this! Why, it is downright monstrous.”

“Cousin Harry,” said she, gravely, “if you are to do nothing but make me compliments, our intimacy will have but a sorry chance to make any progress. I have no doubt I'm pretty, but remember that in this place here there are scores of things you'll be struck by, simply because they come upon you unexpectedly. Look at my little tea equipage, for instance; could you have dreamed of anything so tasteful on the island of Arran?”

The playful raillery of this speech could not turn his thoughts from herself. Nor was it alone her beauty that amazed him, but her exquisite grace of manner, the sweet-toned voice, low and gentle, her every movement and gesture, and then her bearing towards himself, so nicely balanced between the reserve of a maidenly bashfulness and the freedom of a near relative.

“We will have our tea together, Harry,” said she, “and you shall tell me all your adventures. You could not readily find a listener more eager for all that is strange or wild or exciting. Let me hear of the scenes you have gone through, and I'll be able to make some guess of what manner of man my cousin is.”

“My rough life is little more than a long catalogue of commonplace hardships,—hardships that sailors come at

last to look at as the ordinary events of existence, but which certainly tend to make us somewhat careless about life, but very ready to enjoy it. Where am I to begin?"

"At the beginning, of course. I want to see you as a boy before I hear of you as a man."

With a manly frankness, and a modesty totally devoid of any affectation, he told the story of his sea life; the strange lands and people he had seen; the wild spots he had visited; the hopes of fortune at one time full and radiant, at another dashed and destroyed by disaster; dreams of wealth and affluence rudely dispelled by mischances; and, last of all, — the crowning calamity, — the attack made by the Riffs, and his captivity amongst the Moors.

"Was home very often in your thoughts through these reverses?" asked she, gravely.

"Seldom out of my thoughts, Kate. It had not been, as you may know, a very cheerful or a happy home. It was a lonely, gloomy life I led here; but I believe sorrows can attach just as well as joys, and I longed to see the old rock again, and I used to fancy how much more companionable I could be to my poor father now that I had grown up and had learned something of the world and its ways. All my misfortunes were nothing compared to the sorrowful tidings that met me as I landed at Genoa, and learned I was alone in the world, without even one to care for me."

"You went at once to Sir Gervais Vyner's. Tell me about *them*."

"You know them better than I do, Kate," said he, smiling. "Ada told me of all her love for you, — it was the theme she never tired of, — your beauty, your wit, your gracefulness, your talent at everything, — till I grew half angry. She would talk of nothing else."

"And Ada herself, — what is she like? She was, as a child, almost perfectly beautiful."

"She is very handsome. Her features are all regular, and her smile is very sweet, and her manner very gentle, and her voice singularly silvery and musical."

"So that you fell in love with her?"

"No," said he, shaking his head, — "no, I did not."

"Yes, yes, you did! That list of her perfections was given too readily not to have been conned over."

"I tell you again, I felt no love for her. We were whole days together, and lived as a brother and a sister might, talking of whatever interested us most; but one word of love never passed between us."

"A look, then?"

"Not even that. Just think one moment, Kate. Who is she, and who am I?"

"What would that signify if your hearts caught fire? Do you think the affections ask leave of title-deeds?"

"Mine certainly did not. They had no need to do so. I was as frank with Ada as with you." Scarcely was the last word out than a deep crimson flush covered his cheek, and he felt overwhelmed with confusion, for he had said what, if true in one sense, might possibly convey a very different meaning in another. "I mean," added he, stammeringly, "I told her all I have told you about my sea-life."

"You are a puzzle to me, Harry," said she, after a pause. "You can enumerate a number of qualities with enthusiasm, and still declare that they had no influence over you. Is this the sailor temperament?"

"I suspect not," said he, smiling. "I rather opine we salt-water folk are too free of our hearts."

"But why were you not in love with her?" cried she, as she arose impatiently, and walked up and down the room. "You come off a life of hardships and perils into what, of all things, is the most entrancing, — the daily life of people bred up to all the courtesies and charms that embellish existence, — and you find there a very beautiful girl, well disposed to accept your intimacy and your friendship, — how can you stop at friendship? I want to hear that."

"I never knew there was any difficulty in the task till now that you have told me of it," said he, smiling.

She opened a little drawer in a cabinet as she stood with her back towards him, and drew on her finger a ring — a certain plain gold ring — which recalled a time of bygone sorrow and suffering, and then, coming close to him, laid her hand upon his arm, so that he could but notice the ring, and said, —

“I ought to have remembered you were a Luttrell, Harry, — the proud race who never minded what might bechance their heads, though they took precious care of their hearts!”

“What does that mean?” said he, pointing to the ring; and a paleness like death spread over his face.

“What does such an emblem always mean?” said she, calmly.

“It is not that you are married, Kate?”

“Surely you have heard the story. Mr. M’Kinlay could not have been a week at the Vyners’ without telling it.”

“I have heard nothing, I know nothing. Tell me at once, are you a wife? — have you a husband living?”

“You must be patient, Harry, if you want a somewhat long history.”

“I want no more than what I asked you. Are you a married woman? Answer me that.”

“Be calm, and be quiet and listen to me,” said she, sitting down at his side. “You can answer your own question when I shall have finished.”

“Why not tell me in one word? A Yes or a No cannot cost *you* so much, though one of them may cost *me* heavily.”

“What if I could not so answer you? What if no such answer was possible? Will you hear me now?”

“Say on,” muttered he, burying his face between his hands, — “say on!”

“I have a long story to tell you, Harry, and I will tell it all: first, because you shall give me your counsel; and secondly, because, if you should hear others speak of me, you will know where is the truth. You will believe me? Is it not so?”

“That I will. Go on.”

“It would be well if I could speak of myself as one simply unlucky,” said she, in a tone of deep melancholy, “but this may not be! I have gone through heavy trials, but there was not one of them, perhaps, not self-incurred.”

“Oh, Kate, if you would not break my heart with anxiety, tell me at once this ring means nothing, — tell me you are free.”

“Be patient, Harry, and hear me. Trust me, I have no wish to linger over a narrative which has so little to be proud

of. It is a story of defeat, — defeat and humiliation from beginning to end.”

She began, and it was already daybreak ere she came to the end. Tracking the events of her life from her first days at the Vyners', she related an inner history of her own longings and ambitions and fears and sufferings, as a child ripening into the character of womanhood, and making her in spite of herself a plotter and a contriver. The whole fabric of her station was so frail, so unreal, it seemed to demand incessant effort to support and sustain it. At Dalradern, where she ruled as mistress, an accident, a word might depose her. She abhorred the *équivoque* of her life, but could not overcome it. She owned frankly that she had brought herself to believe that the prize of wealth was worth every sacrifice; that heart and affection and feeling were all cheap in comparison with boundless affluence.

“You may imagine what I felt,” said she, “when, after all I had done to lower myself in my own esteem, crushed within me every sentiment of womanly affection, — when, after all this, I came to learn that my sacrifice had been for nothing; that there was a sentiment this old man cared for more than he cared for me; that there was a judgment he regarded more anxiously than all I could say, — the opinion of the world; and it actually needed the crushing sorrow of desertion to convince him that it was better to brave the world than to leave it forever. Till it became a question of his life he would not yield. The same lesson that brought *him* so low served to elevate *me*. I was then here, — here in Arran, — holding no feigned position. I was surrounded with no luxuries, but there were no delusions. Your father gave me his own proud name, and the people gave me the respect that was due to it. I was real at last. Oh, Harry, I cannot tell you all that means! I have no words to convey to you the sense of calm happiness I felt at being what none could gainsay, none question. It was like health after the flush and madness of fever. This wild spot seemed to my eyes a Paradise! Day by day duties grew on me, and I learned to meet them. All the splendid past, the great life of wealth and its appliances, was beginning to fade away from my mind, or only to be remembered as a

bright and gorgeous dream, when I was suddenly turned from my little daily routine by an unhappy disaster. It came in this wise." She then went on to tell of her grandfather's imprisonment and trial, and the steps by which she was led to ask Sir Within's assistance in his behalf. On one side she had to befriend this poor old man, deserted and forlorn, and, on the other, she had to bethink her of her uncle, whose horror at the thought of a public exposure in a court was more than he had strength to endure. If she dwelt but passingly on the description, her shaken voice and trembling lip told too well what the sacrifice had cost her. "The messenger to whom I intrusted my letter, and whom I believed interested almost equally with myself in its success, brought me back for answer that my letter would not be even opened, that Sir Within refused to renew any relations with me whatever, — in a word, that we had separated forever and in everything. I cannot tell now what project was in my head, or how I proposed to myself to befriend my grandfather; some thought, I know, passed through my head about making a statement of his case, so far as I could pick it up from himself, and going personally with this to one of the leading lawyers on the circuit, and imploring his aid. I always had immense confidence in myself, or in whatever I could do by a personal effort. If I have learned to think more meanly of my own powers, the lesson has been rudely taught me. What between the mental strain from this attempt, anxiety, privation, and exposure to bad weather, I fell ill, and my malady turned to brain fever. It was during this time that this man O'Rorke, of whom I have told you, returned, bringing with him Mr. Ladarelle, a young relative of Sir Within's. On the pretext of giving me the rites of my church, a priest was admitted to see me, and some mockery of a marriage ceremony was gone through by this clergyman, who, I am told, united me, unconscious, and, to all seeming, dying, to this same young gentleman. These details I learned later; for long, long before I had recovered sufficient strength or sense to understand what was said to me, my bridegroom had gone off and left the country."

"And with what object was this marriage ceremony performed?" asked Luttrell.

“I have discovered at last. I have found it out through certain letters which came into my hands in looking over your father’s papers. You shall see them yourself tomorrow. Enough now that I say that Sir Within had never rejected my prayer for help; on the contrary, he had most nobly and liberally responded to it. He wrote, besides, to your father a formal proposal to make me his wife. To prevent the possibility of such an event, Ladarelle planned the whole scheme I have detailed, and when your father wrote to Sir Within that I had left Arran, — ‘deserted him,’ he called it, — and Ladarelle forwarded a pretended certificate of our marriage, no further proof seemed wanting that I was one utterly unworthy of all interest or regard. I came here in time — not to receive my dear uncle’s forgiveness, for he had long ceased to accuse me; his last thoughts of me were kind and loving ones. Since then,” said she, “my life has had but one severe trial, — my leave-taking with my poor old grandfather; but for this it has been like a strange dream, so much of active employment and duty blending with memories of a kind utterly unlike everything about me, that I am ever asking myself, ‘Is it the present or the past is the unreal?’”

“The marriage is, however, a mockery, Kate,” said Luttrell; and, taking her hand, he drew off the ring and threw it into the fire.

“You are sure it gives him no claim, — no power over me?” asked she.

“Claim! — power! None. I’m no lawyer, but I could almost swear that his act would subject him to severe punishment; at all events, you have a cousin, Kate, who will not see you insulted. I’ll find out this fellow, if I search ten years for him.”

“No, no, Harry. To publish this story would be to draw shame upon me. It was your own father said, ‘A woman is worse with an imputed blame than is a man after a convicted fault.’ Let me not be town-talk, and I will bear my sorrows patiently.”

“That’s not the Luttrell way to look at it!” said he, fiercely.

“Remember, Harry, I am only Luttrell by adoption,” said she, rising and approaching the fire.

“What are you looking for there in the embers, Kate?”

“My ring,” said she, drawing the charred and blackened ring out from the ashes. “I mean to keep this, — an emblem of a sorrow and a shame which should not be forgotten.”

“What do you mean? It was by no fault of yours this trick was worked!”

“No; but it was my own heartless ambition that provoked it, Harry. I wanted to be a great lady, at the cost of all that gives life a charm.”

“You surely would not have married this old man, — this Sir Within you speak of?”

“I would,” said she, coldly.

“Oh, Kate! unsay that. Tell me that you only said this in levity or jest!”

“I will not tell you one word of myself which is not true,” said she, in a tone firm and collected.

“And you would have married a man you could not love, — a decrepit old man, whose very attentions must have been odious to you?”

“I never forgot the misery I was reared in. I shrank with terror at the thought of going back to it. I used to dream of cold and want and privation. I used to ramble in my sleep about the weary load I had to carry up the slippery rocks with bleeding feet, and then wake to see myself waited on like a queen, my slightest word obeyed, my merest whim fulfilled. Are these small things, — or, if they be, what are the great ones?”

“The great ones are a fearless heart and a loving nature!” said Harry, fiercely; and his dark face almost grew purple as he darted an angry look at her.

“So they are,” said she, calmly. “I had them once, too; but I had to lay them down, — lay them down as stakes on the table for the prize I played for.”

“Oh, this is too bad, — too sordid!” cried he, madly.

“Say on; you cannot speak more cruelly than I have spoken to my own heart. All these have I told myself over and over!”

“Forgive me, my dear cousin Kate; but if you knew with what agony your words wring me — ”

"I can believe it, Harry. Better and purer natures than mine could not stand the test of such confessions; but you would have them, remember *that*. You said, 'No concealments,' and now you are shocked at the naked truth. With very little aid from self-deception I could have given you a more flattering view of my heart and its affections. I could have told you, as I often told myself, that I wished to be better; that I longed to be better; that the only ones I ever envied were those whose fate entailed no such struggle as mine, — a struggle, remember, not to gain smooth water and a calmer sea, but to save life, — to escape drowning! To fall from the high place I held was to fall to the lowest depth of all! I had plenty of such casuistry as this ready, had you asked for it. You preferred to have me truthful; you ought not to shrink from the price!"

"Had you no friend to counsel — to guide you?"

"None."

"Was there none to take you away from the danger you lived in?"

"I could have gone back to the cabin I came from; do you think I was well suited to meet its hardships?"

"But my father, — surely my father's house was open to you?"

"Not till he believed that he was childless. It was when the tidings of your shipwreck came that he asked me to come here. All his generosity to me, his very affections, were given on a false assumption. He gave me his love, as he gave me his fortune, because he did not know that the rightful heir to both was living."

"No, no. I have heard, in the few hours that I have been here, of your tender care of him, and how he loved you."

"He had none other," said she, sorrowfully.

"Oh, Kate, how differently others speak of you than you yourself! What have I not heard of your devotion to these poor islanders, — your kindness to them in sickness, and your cheering encouragement to them in their health! The very children told me of your goodness as I came along."

"*You* gave me the true epithet awhile ago, Harry."

"I? What did I say?"

"You used a hard word, but a true one. You called me sordid," said she, in a low, tremulous voice.

"Oh, no, no! Never! I never said so. Oh, dear Kate, do not believe I could couple such a word with *you*."

"I will not any more, since you have forgotten it; but, in honest truth, it was the very epithet my conduct merited. Let us speak of it no more, since it pains you. And now, Harry, there is daybreak. I must not ask you to stay here, — here in your own house. I, the mere intruder, must play churlish host, and send you off to your inn."

"This house is yours, Kate. I will never consent to regard it otherwise. You would not have me dishonor my father's name, and take back what he had given?"

"It is too late in the night to open a knotty discussion. Say good-bye, and come back here to breakfast," said she, gayly; "and remember to make your appearance in becoming guise, for I mean to present the lieges to their master."

"I wish you would not send me away so soon; I have many things to ask you."

"And is there not all to-morrow before you? I am going to see Inchegora after breakfast; a very important mission, touching a lime-kiln in dispute there. You shall sit on the bench with me, and aid justice by your counsels."

"Can you not give all to-morrow to me, and leave these cares for another time?"

"No, sir. 'We belong to our people,' as Elizabeth said. Good-night, — good-night."

With a most reluctant heart he answered, "Good-night;" and, pressing her hand with a cordial grasp, he kissed it twice, and turned away.

Sleep was out of the question, — his mind was too full of all he had heard to admit of slumber, — and so he strolled down to the shore, losing himself amongst the wild fantastic rocks, or catching glimpses of the old Abbey, at times, between their spiked and craggy outlines.

"What a creature, in what a place!" muttered he. "Such beauty, such grace, such fascination, in the midst of all this rugged barbarism!" And what a terrible story was that she told him! the long struggle she had endured, the

defeat, and then the victory, — the victory over herself at last; for at last she saw and owned how ignoble was the prize for which she had perilled her very existence. “What a noble nature it must be, too,” thought he, “that could deal so candidly with its own short-comings; for, as she said truly, ‘I could have made out a case for myself, if I would.’ But she would not stoop to *that*, — her proud heart could not brook the falsehood, — and oh, how I love her for it! How beautiful she looked, too, throughout it all; I cannot say whether more beautiful in her moments of self-accusing sorrow, or in the haughty assertion of her own dignity.”

One thing puzzled him; she had not dropped one word as to the future. The half-jesting allusion to himself as the Lord of Arran dimly shadowed forth that resolve of which Caue had told him.

“This must not be, whatever shall happen,” said he. “*She* shall not go seek her fortune over the seas while I remain here to enjoy her heritage. To-morrow — to-day, I mean,” muttered he — “I will lead her to talk of what is to come; and then —” As to the “then,” he could not form any notion to himself. It meant everything. It meant his whole happiness, his very life; for so was it, she had won his heart just as completely as though by the work of years.

Where love steals into the nature day by day, infiltrating its sentiments as it were through every crevice of the being, it will enlist every selfish trait into the service, so that he who loves is half enamored of himself; but where the passion comes with the overwhelming force of a sudden conviction, where the whole heart is captivated at once, self is forgotten, and the image of the loved one is all that presents itself. This was Harry Luttrell’s case; and if life be capable of ecstasy, it is when lost in such a dream.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LUTTRELL BLOOD.

“Look at this, Harry,” said Kate, as he came into the room where she was preparing breakfast. “Read that note: it bears upon what I was telling you about last night.”

“What a scoundrel!” cried Harry, as his eye ran over the lines. “He scarcely seems to know whether the better game will be menace or entreaty.”

“He inclines to menace, however, for he says, ‘The shame of an exposure which, certainly, you would not be willing to incur.’”

“What may that mean?”

“To connect my name, perhaps, with that of my poor old grandfather; to talk of me as the felon’s granddaughter. I am not going to disown the relationship.”

“And this fellow says he will arrive to-night to take your answer. He has courage, certainly!”

“Come, come, Harry, don’t look so fiercely. Remember, first of all, he is, or he was, a priest.”

“No reason that I should n’t throw him over the Clunk rock!” said Luttrell, doggedly.

“I think we might feel somewhat more benevolently towards him,” said she, with a malicious twinkle of the eye, “seeing how generously he offers to go all the way to Italy to see Sir Within, and explain to him that my marriage with Mr. Ladarelle was a mockery, and that I am still open to a more advantageous offer.”

“How can you talk of this so lightly?”

“If I could not, it would break my heart!” said she; and her lip trembled with agitation. She leaned her head upon her hand for some minutes in deep thought, and then, as though having made up her mind how to act, said, “I wish

much, Cousin Harry, that you would see this man for me; only —”

“Only what?”

“Well, I must say it; I'm afraid of your temper.”

“The Luttrell temper?” said he, with a cold smile.

“Just so. It reaches the boiling-point so very quickly that one is not rightly prepared for the warmth till he is scalded.”

“Come, I will be lukewarm to-day, — cold as the spring well yonder, if you like. Give me my instructions. What am I to do?”

“I shall be away all day. I have a long walk before me, and a good deal to do, and I want you to receive this man. He will soon moderate his tone when he finds that I am not friendless; he will be less exacting in his demands when he sees that he is dealing with a Luttrell. Ascertain what is his menace, and what the price of it.”

“You are not going to buy him off, surely?” cried Harry, angrily.

“I would not willingly bring any shame on the proud name I have borne even on sufferance. I know well how your father felt about these things, and I will try to be loyal to his memory, though I am never again to hear him praise me for it. Mr. Cane already wrote to me about this man, and advised that some means might be taken to avoid publicity. Indeed, he offered his own mediation to effect its settlement; but I was angry at the thought of such submission, and wrote back, I fear, a hasty, perhaps ill-tempered, answer. Since then Cane has not written; but a letter might come any moment, — perhaps to-day. The post will be here by one o'clock; wait for its arrival, and do not see the priest till the letters have come. Open them till you find Cane's; and when you are in possession of what he counsels, you will be the better able to deal with this fellow.”

“And is all your correspondence at my mercy?”

“All!”

“Are you quite sure that you are prudent in such frankness!”

“I don't know that it will tempt you to any very close scrutiny. I expect an invoice about some rapeseed, I look

for a small package of spelling-books, I hope to receive some glasses of vaccine matter to inoculate with, and tidings, perhaps, of a roll of flannel that a benevolent visitor promised me for my poor."

"And no secrets."

"Only one; a sketch of *Life on Arran*, which I sent to a London periodical, but which is to be returned to me, as too dull, or too melancholy, or too something or other for publication. I warn you about this, as the editor has already pronounced sentence upon it."

"May I read it, Kate?"

"Of course. I shall be very proud to have even one to represent the public I aspired to. Read it by all means, and tell me when I come back that it was admirable, and that the man that rejected it was a fool. If you can pick up any especial bit for praise or quotation, commit it to memory, and you can't think how happy you'll make me, for I delight in laudation, and I do — get — so very — little of it," said she, pausing after each word, with a look of comic distress that was indescribably droll; and yet there was a quivering of the voice and a painful anxiety in her eye that seemed to say the drollery was but a cover to a very different sentiment. It was in this more serious light that Harry regarded her, and his look was one of deepest interest. "You have your instructions now!" said she, turning away to hide the flush his steady gaze had brought to her cheek; "and so good-bye!"

"I'd much rather go with you, Kate," said he, as she moved away.

"No, no," said she, smiling, "you will be better here. There is plenty of work for each of us. Good-bye!"

Harry's wish to have accompanied her thus thwarted, by no means rendered him better disposed towards him who was the cause of the disappointment; and as he paced the room alone, he conned over various modes of "clearing off scores" with this fallen priest. "I hope the fellow will be insolent! How I wish he may be exacting and defiant!" As he muttered this below his breath, he tried to assume a manner of great humility, — something so intensely submissive as might draw the other on to greater pretension. "I think

I'll persuade him that we are at his mercy, — absolutely at his mercy!" muttered he. But had he only glanced at his face in the glass as he said it, he would have seen that his features were scarcely in accordance with the mood of one asking for quarter. The boat which should bring the letters was late, and his impatience chafed and angered him. Three several times had he rehearsed to himself the mock humility with which he meant to lure on the priest to his destruction; he had planned all, even to the veriest detail of the interview, where he would sit, where he should place his visitor, the few bland words he would utter to receive him; but when he came to think of the turning-point of the discussion, of that moment when, all reserve abandoned, he should address the man in the voice of one whose indignation had been so long pent up that he could barely control himself to delay his vengeance, — when he came to this, he could plan no more. Passion swept all his intentions to the winds, and his mind became a chaos.

At last the post arrived, but brought only one letter. It was in Cane's writing. He opened it eagerly, and read, —

"DEAR MADAM, — I am happy to inform you that you are not likely to be further molested by applications from the priest O'Rafferty. He no sooner heard that young Mr. Luttrell was alive and in Ireland, than he at once changed his tone of menace for one of abject solicitation. He came here yesterday to entreat me to use my influence with you to forgive him his part in an odious conspiracy, and to bestow on him a trifle — a mere trifle — to enable him to leave the country, never to return to it.

"I took the great — I hope not unpardonable — liberty to act for you in this matter, and gave him five pounds, for which I took a formal receipt, including a pledge of his immediate departure. Might I plead, in justification of the authority I thus assumed, my fears that if young Mr. Luttrell should by any mischance have met this man, the very gravest disasters might have ensued; his family traits of rashness and violence being, I am informed, only more strikingly developed by his life and experiences as a sailor."

Harry read over this passage three several times, pausing and pondering over each word of it.

"Indeed!" muttered he. "Is this the character I have brought back with me? Is it thus my acquaintances are

pleased to regard me? The ungovernable tempers of our race have brought a heavy punishment on us, when our conduct in every possible contingency exposes us to such comment as this! I wonder is this the estimate Kate forms of us? Is it thus she judges the relatives who have shared their name with her?"

To his first sense of disappointment that the priest should escape him, succeeded a calmer, better feeling, — that of gratitude that Kate should be no more harassed by these cares. Poor girl! had she not troubles enough to confront in life without the terror of a painful publicity? He read on: —

"Of Mr. Ladarelle himself you are not likely to hear more. He has been tried and convicted of swindling, in France, and sentenced to five years' reclusion, with labor. His father, I learn, is taking steps to disinherit him, and there is no wrong he has done you without its full meed of punishment.

"It was quite possible that he and his accomplice, O'Rorke, might have escaped had they not quarrelled, and each was the chief instrument in the conviction of the other. The scene of violent invective and abuse that occurred between them exceeded, it is said, even the widest latitude of a French criminal court.

"I thought to have concluded my letter here, but I believe I ought to inform you, and in the strictest confidence, that we had a visit from young Mr. Luttrell on Wednesday last. We were much struck by the resemblance he bore to his late father in voice and manners, as well in face as in figure. When I hinted to him — I only hinted passingly — certain scruples of yours about retaining the Arran property, he declared, and in such a way as showed a decided resolve, that, come what might, the estate should not revert to him. 'It was yours,' he said, 'and it was for you to dispose of it.' When he put the question on the ground of a dishonor to his father's memory, I forbore to press it further. The Luttrell element in his nature showed itself strongly, and warned me to avoid any inopportune pressure.

"You will, I suspect, find it exceedingly difficult to carry out your intentions in this matter, and I hope you will allow me to entreat a reconsideration of the whole project; all the more, since every information I have obtained as to the chance of employment in Australia is decidedly unfavorable. Except for the mechanic, it is said, there is now no demand. The governess and tutor market is greatly overstocked, and persons of education are far less in request than strong-bodied laborers.

“I hope sincerely I may be able to dissuade you from what I cannot but call a rash scheme. In the first place, it will not accomplish what you intended regarding the Arran property; and secondly, it will as surely involve yourself in grave difficulty and hardship. I know well how much may be expected from what you call your ‘courage;’ but ‘courage’ that will brave great dangers will also occasionally succumb to small daily privations and miseries. There is no doubt whatever how you would behave in the great trial. It is in meeting the slights and injuries that are associated with humble fortune that I really feel you will be unequal.

“Should you, however, persist in your resolve, I shall be able to secure you a passage to Melbourne under favorable circumstances, as a distant relative of my wife’s, Captain Crowther, of the ‘Orion,’ will sail from Liverpool on Thursday, the seventh of next month. This gives you still seventeen days; might I hope for such reflection as will induce you to forego a step so full of danger, present and future? Indeed, from Captain Crowther himself I have heard much that ought to dissuade you from the attempt. He went so far as to say yesterday that he believed he had already brought back to England nearly every one of those he had taken out with hopes of literary employment.

“I think I know what you would reply to this. I have only to call upon my memory of our last conversation to remind me of the daring speech you made when I ventured to hint at the difficulty of finding employment; and once more, my dear Miss Luttrell, let me entreat you to remember you have not the habits, the strength, the temperament, that go with menial labor. You have yourself admitted to me that your early sorrows and sufferings are nightmares to you in your sleep, — that you are never feverish or ill that they do not recur, — that when your head wanders it is about the days of your childish troubles; surely it is not with habits of luxury and refinement you hope to combat these enemies?

“Do not persist in believing that what you call your peasant nature is a garment only laid aside, but which can be resumed at any moment; take my word for it, there is not a trace of it left in you!

“If your desire for independence must be complied with, why not remain and achieve it at home? Mrs. Cane is ready and willing to serve you in any way; and it will be a sincere pleasure to us both if we can acquit towards you any portion of the debt we have long owed your late uncle.

“I wish much you would consult Mr. Luttrell on this subject; indeed, he would have a right to feel he ought to be consulted upon it; and although his experiences of life may not be large or wide, his near relationship to you gives him a claim to have his opinion cared for.

“You will see from all this insistence, my dear Miss Luttrell, how eager I am to dissuade you from a step which, if taken, will be the great disaster of your whole life. Remember that you are about to act not alone for the present, but for the events and contingencies which are to occur years hence.”

The letter wound up with many assurances of esteem, and most cordial offers of every service in the writer's power. A postscript added, —

“On reconsideration, I see that you must absolutely speak to Mr. Luttrell about your project, since in my notes I find that he positively declines to accept your gift of the Arran estate except in exchange for the larger property in Roscommon. In all my varied experiences, two such clients as yourself and your cousin have never occurred to me.”

It was as he was finishing the reading of this letter for the third time that Harry Luttrell felt a hand laid gently on his shoulder. He turned, and saw Kate standing behind him. Her cheek was flushed with the fresh glow of exercise; and her hair, partly disordered, fell in heavy masses beneath her bonnet on her neck and shoulders, while her full lustrous eyes shone with a dazzling brilliancy. It was one of those moments in which every trait that formed her beauty had attained its most perfect development. Harry stared at her with a wondering admiration.

“Well, sir?” cried she, as if asking what his look implied, — “well, sir?” But, unable to maintain the cool indifference she had attempted, and feeling that her cheek was growing hot and red, she added quickly, “What have you done?—have you seen him?—has he been here?” He stared on without a word, his eager eyes seeming to drink in delight without slaking, till she turned away abashed and half vexed. “I don't suppose you heard my question,” said she, curtly.

“Of course I heard it; but it was of what I saw I was thinking, not of what I heard.”

“Which, after all, was not quite polite, Harry.”

“Politeness was not much in my thoughts, either,” said he. “I could n't believe any one could be so beautiful.”

“What a nice rough compliment, what a dear piece of

savage flattery! What would you say, sir, if you had seen me, in my days of finery, decked out in lace and jewels, Harry? And, dear me, don't they make a wondrous difference! I used to come down to dinner at Dalradern at times powdered, or with my hair in short curls, *à la Sévigné*, and my costume all to suit; and you should have seen the worshipful homage of old Sir Within, as he presented me with my bouquet, and kissed the extreme tips of my fingers. Oh dear, what a delightful dream it was, all of it!"

"What a coquette you must be! What a coquette you are!" muttered he, savagely.

"Of course I am, Harry. Do you think I would deny it? Coquetry is the desire to please, as a means of self-gratification. I accept the imputation."

"It means intense vanity, though," said he roughly.

"And why not vanity, any less than courage or compassion, or a dozen other things one prides himself on having?"

"I think you are saying these things to vex me, Kate. I'll swear you don't feel them."

"No matter what I feel, sir. I am certainly vain enough to believe I can keep *that* for myself. Tell me of this man. Have you seen him?"

"No, he has not come; he *will* not come."

"Not come! And why?"

"Here's a letter from Cane will explain it all, — a letter which I suppose you would not have let me read had you seen it first. You said you had no secrets, but it turns out that you had."

"What do you mean?" said she, snatching the letter eagerly from him.

"I read every word of it three times. I know it almost by heart," said he, as he watched her running her eyes over the letter.

"When I said I had no secrets," said she, gravely, "I meant with regard to my past life. Of *that* assuredly I have told you all, freely and candidly. The future is my own, at least so far as what I intend by it."

"And you persist in this scheme?"

"Don't look so sternly, — don't speak so harshly, Harry. Let me enjoy the good news of Cane's letter, in so far as

this priest is concerned. It is a great weight off my heart to know that my name is not to be bandied about by gossips and newsmongers, — that name your poor father treasured with such care, and for whose safeguard he would have made any sacrifice.”

“Tell me you will give up this scheme, Kate; tell me you will make Arran your home,” cried he, earnestly.

“I must n’t tell you an untruth, Harry. Arran is yours.”

“And if it be mine,” said he, seizing her hand, “share it with me, Kate. Yes, dearest, be mine also. Oh, do not turn away from me! I know too well how little I resemble those gifted and graceful people your life has been passed with. I am a rough sailor; but remember, Kate, the heart of a gentleman beats under this coarse jacket. I am a Luttrell still.”

“And the Luttrells have passed their ordeal, Harry. Three generations of them married peasants to teach their proud hearts humility. Go practise the lesson your fathers have bought so dearly; it will be better than to repeat it. As for me, my mind is made up. Hear me out, Harry. I promised my poor old grandfather to aid him on his trial. Illness overtook me, and I was in a raging fever on the day he was sentenced. It was not for months after that I was able to go to him, and the poor old man, who had believed himself forgotten and deserted, no sooner saw me than he forgave all, and pressed me to his heart with rapturous affection. I told him then — I gave him my solemn pledge — that so soon as I had arranged certain details here, I would follow him across the seas. There are many ways by which a resident can lighten the pains and penalties of a prisoner. I learned these, and know all about them, and I have determined to pay off some part of the debt I owe him, for he loved me, — he loved me more than all the world. The very crime for which he is suffering was committed on my behalf; he thought this property should have been mine, and he was ready to stake his life upon it.”

“And must he be more to you than *me*?” said Harry, sadly.

“I must pay what I owe, Harry, before I incur a new debt,” said she, with a smile of deep melancholy.

“Why did I ever come here? What evil destiny ever brought me to know you?” cried he, passionately. “A week ago — one short week — and I had courage to go anywhere, dare anything, and now the whole world is a blank to me.”

“Where are you going? Don’t go away, Harry. Sit down, like a dear kind cousin, and hear me. First of all, bear in mind, people cannot always do what is pleasantest in life —”

A heavy bang at the door stopped her, and he was gone!

CHAPTER XXVII.

A CHRISTMAS AT ARRAN.

FOR two entire days Harry Luttrell wandered over the island alone and miserable, partly resolved never to see Kate again ; yet he had not resolution to leave the spot. She sent frequent messages and notes to him, entreating he would come up to the Abbey ; but he gave mere verbal replies, and never went.

“ Here ’s Miss Kate at the door, sir, asking if you are in the house,” said the woman of the inn ; “ what am I to tell her ? ”

Harry arose, and went out.

“ Come and have a walk with me, Harry,” said she, holding out her hand cordially towards him. “ This is Christmas-day,—not a morning to remember one’s grudges. Come along ; I have many things to say to you.”

He drew her arm silently within his own, and walked on. After a few half-jesting reproaches for his avoidance of her, she became more serious in manner, and went on to talk of Arran and its future. She told of what she had done, and what she meant to do, not claiming as her own many of the projects, but honestly saying that the first suggestions of them she had found amongst his father’s papers.

“ It is of these same papers,” said she, more earnestly, “ I desire to speak. I want you to read them, and to read them carefully, Harry. You will see that the struggle of a proud man against an unequal marriage marred the whole success of a life ; you will see that it was this ‘ low-lived herd ’—the hard words are his own—that had stamped ruin upon him. The disappointment he had met with might have driven him for a while from the world, but, after a year or two, he would have gone back to it more eager for success,

more determined to assert himself, than ever. It was the bane of a low connection poisoned all hope of recovery. How could he free himself from the claims of this lawless brood? His journals are filled with this complaint. It is evident, too, from the letters of his friends, how he must have betrayed his misery to them, proud and reserved as he was. There are constant allusions through them to his stern refusal of all invitations, and to his haughty rejection of all their friendly devices to draw him back amongst them.

“It was in some moment of rash vengeance for an injury real or supposed,” said she, “that he plunged into this marriage, and completed his ruin. If there was a lesson he desired to teach his son, it was this one; if there was a point which he regarded as the very pivot of a man’s fortune, it was the belongings which surround and cling to him, for better or for worse, on his journey through life. I will show you not one, but fifty — ay, twice fifty — passages in his diary that mark the deep sense he had of this misfortune. When the terrible tidings reached him that you were lost, he ceased to make entries regularly in his journal; but on your birthday recurring, there is this one: ‘Would have been twenty-two to-day. Who knows which for the best? No need of my warnings now; no need to say, Do not as I have done!’ Are you listening to me, Harry?” asked she, at length, as he never, by a word or sign, seemed to acknowledge what she was saying.

“Yes, I hear you,” said he, in a low voice.

“And you see why, my dear Harry, I tell you of these things. They are more than warnings; they are the last wishes, the dying behests of a loving father; and he loved you, Harry, — he loved you dearly. Now listen to me attentively, and mind well what I say. If these be all warnings to *you*, what are they to *me*? Do you imagine it is only the well-born and the noble who have pride? Do you fancy that we poor creatures of the soil do not resent, in our hearts, the haughty contempt by which you separate your lot from ours? Do you believe it is in human nature to concede a superiority which is to extend not to mere modes of life and enjoyments, to power and place and influence, but to feelings, to sentiments, to affections? In

one word, are you to have the whole monopoly of pride, and only leave to us so much as the honor of 'pertaining' to you? Or is it to be enough for us to know that we have dragged down the man who tried to raise us? Reflect a little over this, dear cousin, and you will see that, painful as it is to stoop, it is worse — ten thousand times worse — to be stooped to! Leave me, then, to my own road in life, — leave me, and forget me, and if you want to remember me, let it be in some connection with these poor people whom I have loved so well, and whose love will follow me; and, above all, Harry, don't shake my self-confidence as to the future. It is my only capital; if I lose it, I am penniless. Are you listening to me?"

"I hear you but too well," muttered he. "All I gather from your words is, that while accusing us of pride, *you* confess to having ten times more yourself. Perhaps if I had not been a poor sailor, without friends or fortune, that same haughty spirit of yours had been less stubborn."

"What do you mean?" said she, disengaging herself from his arm, and staring at him with wide-opened flashing eyes. "Of what meanness is this you dare to accuse me?"

"You have angered me, and I know not what I say."

"That is not enough, sir. You must unsay it. After all that I have told you of my early life, such an imputation is an insult."

"I unsay it. I ask pardon that I ever said it. Oh, if you but knew the wretchedness of my heart, you would see it is my misery, not myself, that speaks."

"Be as brave as I am, — or as I mean to be, Harry. Don't refuse to meet the coming struggle — whatever it be — in life; meet it like a man. Take my word for it, had your father lived, he would have backed every syllable I have spoken to you. Come back to the Abbey now, and give me your best counsel. You can tell me about this long voyage that is before me. There are many things I want to ask you."

As they turned towards the house, she went on talking, but in short, broken sentences, endeavoring, as it were, to say something, anything that should leave no pause for thought. The old doorway was decked with holly-boughs

and arbutus-twigs, in tasteful honor of the day, and she directed his attention to the graceful courtesy of the poor people, who had bethought them of this attention; and simple as the act was, it revealed to Harry the wondrous change which had come over these wild natives, now that their hearts had been touched by sympathy and kindness. In the old days of long ago there were none of these things. Times nor seasons met no recognition. The dark shadow of melancholy brooded drearily over all; none sought to dispel it.

The little children of the school, dressed in their best, were all drawn up in the Abbey, to wish their benefactress a happy Christmas; and Kate had provided a store of little toys from Westport that was certain to render the happiness reciprocal. And there were, too, in the background, the hardy fishermen and their wives, eager to "pay their duty;" and venerable old heads, white with years, were there, to bless her who had made so many hearts light, and so many homes cheery.

"Here is your Master Harry, that you all loved so well," said Kate, as she gained the midst of them. "Here he is, come back to live with you."

And a wild cheer of joy rang through the old walls, while a tumultuous rush was made to grasp his hand, or even touch his coat. What blessings were uttered upon him! What honest praises of his handsome face and manly figure! How like he was to "his Honor," but far stronger and more upstanding than his father, in the days they knew him!

They overwhelmed him with questions about his shipwreck and his perils; and his frank, simple manner delighted them. Their own hardy natures could feel for such dangers as he told of, and knew how to prize the courage that had confronted them.

"These are all our guests to-day, Harry," said Kate. "We'll come back and see them by and by. Meanwhile come with me. It is our first Christmas dinner together; who knows what long years and time may do? It may not be our last."

With all those varied powers of pleasing she was mistress of, she made the time pass delightfully. She told little





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incidents of her Dalradern life, with humorous sketches of the society there; she described the old Castle itself, and the woods around it, with the feeling of a painter; and then she sang for him snatches of Italian or Spanish "romance" to the guitar, till Harry, in the ecstasy of his enjoyment, almost forgot his grief.

From time to time, too, they would pass out and visit the revellers in the Abbey, where, close packed together, the hardy peasantry sat drinking to the happy Christmas that had restored to them the Luttrell of Arran.

The wild cheer with which they greeted Harry as he came amongst them sent a thrill through his heart. "Yes, this was home; these were his own!"

It was almost daybreak ere the festivities concluded, and Kate whispered in Harry's ear: "You'll have a commission from me to-morrow. I shall want you to go to Dublin for me. Will you go?"

"If I can leave you," muttered he, as, with bent-down head, he moved away.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A CHRISTMAS ABROAD.

LET us turn one moment to another Christmas. A far more splendid table was that around which the guests were seated. Glittering glass and silver adorned it, and the company was a courtly and distinguished one.

Sir Gervais Vyner sat surrounded with his friends, happy in the escape from late calamity, and brilliant in all the glow of recovered buoyancy and spirits. Nor were the ladies of the house less disposed to enjoyment. The world was again about to dawn upon them in rosy sunshine, and they hailed its coming with true delight.

Not one of all these was, however, happier than Mr. M'Kinlay. The occasion represented to his mind something very little short of Elysium. To be ministered to by a French cook, in the midst of a distinguished company who paid him honor, was Paradise itself. To feel that while his baser wants were luxuriously provided for, all his intellectual sallies — small and humble as they were — were met with a hearty acceptance, was a very intoxicating sensation. Thus, as with half-closed eyes he slowly drew in his Burgundy, his ears drew in, not less ecstatically, such words: "How well said!" "How neatly put!" "Have you heard Mr. M'Kinlay's last?" or, better than all, Sir Gervais himself "repeating him," endorsing, as it were, the little bill he was drawing on Fame.

In happiness only inferior to this, Mr. Grenfell sat opposite him. Grenfell was, at last, where he had striven for years to be. The haughty "woman," who used to look so coldly on him in the park, now smiled graciously when he talked, and vouchsafed towards him a manner positively cordial. Georgina had said: "I almost feel as if we were

old friends, Mr. Grenfell, hearing of you so constantly from my brother;" and then little playful recognitions of his humor or his taste would be let fall, as "Of course *you* will say *this*, or think *that*?" all showing how well his nature had been understood, and his very influence felt, years before he was personally known.

These are real flatteries; they are the sort of delicate incense which regale sensitive organizations long called to grosser worship. Your thorough man of the world does not want to be "praised;" he asks to be "understood," because, in his intense self-love, he believes that such means more than praise. It is the delicate appreciation of himself he asks for, that you should know what wealth there is in him, even though he has no mind to display it.

He was an adept in the art of insinuation; besides that, he knew "every one." And these are the really amusing people of society, infinitely more so than those who know "everything." For all purposes of engaging attention there is no theme like humanity. Look at it as long and closely as you will, and you will see that in this great game we call "Life" no two players play alike. The first move or two may be the same, and then all is different.

There was a third guest; he sat next Lady Vyner, in the place of honor. With a wig, the last triumph of Parisian skill, and a delicate bloom upon his cheek no peach could rival, Sir Within sat glittering in diamond studs and opal buttons, and his grand Cross of the Bath. He was finer than the *épergne*! and the waxlights twinkled and sparkled on him as though he were frosted silver and filigree. His eyes had their lustre, too, — uneasy, fitful brightness, — as though the brain that ministered to them worked with moments of intermission; but more significantly painful than all was the little meaningless smile that sat upon his mouth, and never changed, whether he spoke or listened.

He had told some pointless rambling story about an arch-duchess, and a court jeweller, and a celebrated Jew banker, which none could follow or fathom; and simperingly finished by assuring them that all other versions were incorrect. And there was a pause, — a very painful silence that lasted above a minute. Very awful such moments are, when, in

the midst of our laughter and our cheer, a terrible warning would seem to whisper to our hearts that all was not joy or gladness there, and that Decay, perhaps Death, was at the board amongst them.

Grenfell, with the hardihood that became him, tried to rally the company, and told the story of the last current scandal, the card-cheating adventure, in which young Ladarrelle was mixed up. "They've given him five years at the galleys, I see, Sir Within," said he; "and, I remember, you often predicted some such finish to his career."

"Yes," smiled the old man, tapping his jewelled snuff-box, — "yes, you are quite right, Mr. Grenfell, — quite right."

"He goes off to Toulon this very day," resumed Grenfell.

"He was a *charmant garçon*," said the old man, with another smile; "and will be an acquisition to any society he enters."

To the first provocative to laughter this mistake excited, there quickly succeeded a far sadder, darker sentiment; and Lady Vyner arose, and the party retired to the drawing-room.

"I think our dining-room was most uncomfortably warm to-day, Sir Within," said Georgina; "come and see if this little saloon here with the open window is not very refreshing after it." And Sir Within bowed and followed her.

"What do you call *that*, sir?" whispered M'Kinlay to Grenfell, as they stood taking their coffee at a window. "He has just turned the corner; he has been so long loitering about. The head is gone now, and, I suppose, gone forever."

"My position," whispered M'Kinlay, again, "is a very painful one; he sent to me this morning about a codicil he wants executed."

"Does he intend to make me his heir?" asked the other, laughing.

"I opine not, sir. It is of that girl — Miss Luttrell, they pretend to call her now — he was thinking; but, really, he is not in that state the law requires."

"The disposing mind, — eh?"

"Just so, sir. I could not bring myself to face a cross-examination on the subject."

"Very proper on your part; proper and prudent, both."

"You see, sir, the very servants noticed the way he was in to-day. Harris actually passed him twice without giving him Hock; he saw his state."

"Cruel condition, when the very flunkeys feel for one!"

"I thought, at the time, what evidence Harris would give, — I did, indeed, sir. No solicitor of rank in the profession could lend himself to such a proceeding."

"Don't do it, then," said Grenfell, bluntly.

"Ah! it's very well saying don't do it, Mr. Grenfell; but it's not so easy when you have to explain to your client why you 'won't do it.'"

Grenfell lit a cigarette, and smoked on without reply.

"It was finding myself in this difficulty," continued M'Kinlay, "I thought I'd apply to you."

"To *me!* And why, in Heaven's name, to *me?*"

"Simply, sir, as Sir Within's most intimate friend, — the person, of all others, most likely to enjoy his confidence."

"That may be true enough in one sense," said Grenfell, evidently liking the flattery of the position attributed to him; "but though we are, as you observe, on the most intimate terms with each other, I give you my solemn word of honor he never so much as hinted to me that he was going mad."

Mr. M'Kinlay turned angrily away; such levity was, he felt, unbecoming and misplaced, nor was he altogether easy in his mind as to the use a man so unscrupulous and indelicate might make of a privileged communication. While he stood thus irresolute, Grenfell came over to him, and, laying a finger on his arm, said, —

"I'll tell you who'll manage this matter for you better, infinitely better, than either of us, — Miss Courtenay."

"Miss Courtenay!" repeated the lawyer, with astonishment.

"Yes, Miss Courtenay. You have only to see, by the refined attention she bestows on him, how thoroughly she understands the break-up that has come upon his mind; her watchful anxiety to screen him from any awkward exposure;

how carefully she smooths down the little difficulties he occasionally finds at catching the clew of any theme. She sees what he is coming to, and would, evidently, like to spare *him* the pain of seeing it while his consciousness yet remains."

"I almost think I have remarked that. I really believe you are right. And what could she do—I mean, what could I ask her to do—in this case?"

"Whatever you were about to ask me! I'm sure I'm not very clear what that was; whether to urge upon Sir Within the inexpediency of giving away a large portion of his fortune to a stranger, or the impropriety of falling into idiocy and the hands of Commissioners in Lunacy."

Again was Mr. M'Kinlay driven to the limit of his temper; but he saw, or thought he saw, that this man's levity was his nature, and must be borne with.

"And you advise my consulting Miss Courtenay upon it?"

"I know of none so capable to give good counsel; and here she comes. She has deposited the old man in that easy-chair for a doze, I fancy. Strange enough, the faculties that do nothing, occasionally stand in need of rest and repose!"

Miss Courtenay, after consigning Sir Within to the comforts of a deep arm-chair, turned again into the garden. There was the first quarter of a clear sharp moon in the sky, and the season, though midwinter, was mild and genial, like spring. Mr. M'Kinlay was not sorry to have received this piece of advice from Grenfell. There was a little suit of his own he wanted to press, and, by a lucky chance, he could now do so, while affecting to be engaged by other interests. Down the steps he hastened at once, and came up with her as she stood at the little balustrade over the sea. Had he been a fine observer, or had he even had the common tact of those who frequent women's society, he would have seen that she was not pleased to have been followed, and that it was her humor to be alone, and with her own thoughts. To his little commonplaces about the lovely night and the perfumed air, she merely muttered an indistinct assent. He tried a higher strain, and enlisted the

stars and the moon; but she only answered with a dry "Yes, very bright."

"Very few more of such exquisite nights are to fall to my lot, Miss Georgina," said he, sighing. "A day or two more must see me plodding my weary way north'ard, over the Mont Cenis pass."

"I wonder you don't go by Marseilles or by the Corniche," said she, carelessly, as though the route itself was the point at issue.

"What matters the road which leads me away from where I have been so — happy?" He was going to say "blest;" but he had not been blessed, and he was too technically honest to misdirect in his brief. No rejoinder of any kind followed on this declaration. He paused, and asked himself, "What next? Is the court with me?" Oh! what stores of law lore, what wealth of crown cases reserved, what arguments in Banco, would he not have given at that moment for a little insight into that cunning labyrinth, — a woman's heart! Willingly would he have bartered the craft it had taken years to accumulate for that small knowledge of the sex your raw attaché or rawer ensign seems to have as a birthright. "I am too abrupt," thought he. "I must make my approaches more patiently, more insidiously. I'll mask my attack, and begin with Sir Within."

"I have been plotting all day, Miss Courtenay," said he, in a calmer tone, "how to get speech of you. I am in great want of your wise counsel and kindly assistance. May I indulge the hope that they will not be denied me?"

"Let me learn something of the cause, sir, in which they are to be exercised."

"One for which you feel interested; so much I can, at least, assure you. Indeed," added he, with a more rhetorical flourish of manner, "it is a case that would enlist the kindly sympathies of every generous heart."

"Yes, yes, — I understand; a poor family — a distressed tradesman — a sick wife — ailing children. Don't tell me any details! they are always the same, — always painful. I will subscribe, of course. I only wonder how you chanced upon them. But never mind; count on me, Mr. M'Kinlay; pray do."

She was turning impatiently away, when he followed, and said, "You have totally misapprehended me, Miss Courtenay. It was not of a poor person I was thinking, at all. It was of a very rich one. I was about to bespeak your interest for Sir Within Wardle."

"For Sir Within Wardle! What do you mean, sir?" said she, in a voice tremulous with feeling, and with a flush on her cheek which in the faint light, fortunately, Mr. M'Kinlay failed to remark.

"Yes, Miss Courtenay. It is of him I have come to speak. It is possible I might not have taken this liberty; but, in a recent conversation I have held with Mr. Grenfell, he assured me that you, of all others, were the person to whom I ought to address myself."

"Indeed, sir," said she, with a stern, cold manner. "May I ask what led your friend to this conclusion?"

"The great friendship felt by this family for Sir Within, the sincere interest taken by all in his welfare," said he, hurriedly and confusedly; for her tone had alarmed him, without his knowing why or for what.

"Go on, sir; finish what you have begun."

"I was going to mention to you, Miss Courtenay," resumed he, in a most confidential voice, "that Sir Within had sent for me to his room yesterday morning, to confer with him on certain matters touching his property. I was not aware, before, what a large amount was at his disposal, nor how free he was to burden the landed estate, for it seems that his life-interest was the result of a certain family compact. But I ask your pardon for details that can only weary you."

"On the contrary, M'Kinlay, it is a subject you have already made as interesting as a novel. Pray go on."

And he did go on; not the less diffusely that she gave him the closest attention, and showed, by an occasional shrewd or pertinent question, with what interest she listened. We are not to suppose the reader as eager for these details, however, and we skip them altogether, merely arriving at that point of the narrative where Mr. M'Kinlay recounted the various provisions in Sir Within's last will, and the desire expressed by him to append a codicil.

“He wants, my dear Miss Courtenay,” said he, warming with his theme, — “he wants to make a sort of provision for this girl he called his ward, — Miss Luttrell, he styles her; a project, of course, to which I have no right to offer objection, unless proposed in the manner in which I heard it, and maintained on such grounds as Sir Within was pleased to uphold it.”

“And what were these, pray?” said she, softly.

“It will tax your gravity if I tell you, Miss Courtenay,” said he, holding his handkerchief to his mouth, as though the temptation to laugh could not be repressed. “I assure you it tried me sorely when I heard him.”

“I have much control over my feelings, sir. Go on.”

“You’ll scarce believe me, Miss Courtenay. I’m certain you’ll think me romancing.”

“I hope I form a very different estimate of your character, sir.”

“‘Well,’ said he, ‘I should like you to make a codicil, to include a bequest to Miss Luttrell; because, in the event of my marrying,’ — don’t laugh, Miss Courtenay; on my honor, he said it, — ‘in the event of my marrying, it would be more satisfactory that this matter were previously disposed of.’”

“Well, sir!” said she; and, short as that speech was, it vanished every mirthful emotion out of Mr. M’Kinlay’s heart, and sent a cold thrill through him.

“It was not the thought of providing for this young lady made me laugh, Miss Courtenay; far from it. I thought it laudable, very laudable; indeed, if certain stories were to be believed, Sir Within was only just, not generous. What amused me was the pretext, — the possible event of his marrying. It was that which overcame me completely.”

“And to which, as you say, you offered strenuous objections?”

“No, Miss Courtenay, no. Nothing of the kind. I objected to entertain the question of altering the will, accompanied, as the request was, by what I could not help regarding as symptoms of a wandering incoherent intellect.”

“What do you mean, sir? Do you intend to insinuate that Sir Within Wardle is insane? Is that your meaning?”

“I should certainly say his mind is verging on imbecility.

I don't think the opinion will be disputed by any one who sat at table with him to-day."

"I declare, sir, you amaze me!" cried she, in a voice of terror. "You amaze and you frighten me. Are there any others of us in whom you detect incipient madness? Did you remark any wildness in my sister's eyes, or any traits of eccentricity in my mother's manner? To common, vulgar apprehensions, — to my brother's and my own, — Sir Within was most agreeable to-day. We thought him charming in those little reminiscences of a life where, be it remembered, the weapons are not the coarse armor of everyday society, but the polished courtesies that kings and princes deal in. I repeat, sir, to our notions his anecdotes and illustrations were most interesting."

Mr. M'Kinlay stood aghast. What could have brought down upon him this avalanche of indignation and eloquence? Surely in his remark on that old man's imbecility he could not be supposed to insinuate anything against the sanity of the others! His first sensation was that of terror; his second was anger. He was offended — "sorely hurt," he would have called it — to be told that, in a matter of social usage, in what touched on conventionalities, he was not an efficient testimony.

"I am aware, fully aware, Miss Courtenay," said he, gravely, "that Sir Within's society is not my society; that neither our associations, our topics, or our ways of life are alike; but, on a question which my professional opinion might determine, — and such a question might well arise, — I will say that there are few men at the English Bar would be listened to with more deference."

"Fiddle-faddle, sir! We have nothing to do with the Bar or barristers, here. I have a great esteem for you, — we all have, — and, I assure you, I can give no better proof of it than by promising that I will entirely forget this conversation, — every word of it."

She waved her hand as she said, "By-bye!" and fitted rather than walked away, leaving Mr. M'Kinlay in a state of mingled shame and resentment that perfectly overwhelmed him.

For the honor of his gallantry I will not record the expres-

sions with which he coupled her name; they were severe, they were even unprofessional; but he walked the garden alone till a late hour of the evening, and when Sir Gervais went at last in search of him, he refused to come in to tea, alleging much preoccupation of mind, and hinting that an urgent demand for his presence in London might possibly — he was not yet quite certain — oblige him to take a very hurried leave of his kind hosts.

In fact, Mr. M'Kinlay was in the act of determining with himself the propriety of a formal demand for Miss Courtenay in marriage, and endeavoring to make it appear that he "owed it to himself," but in reality was almost indifferent as to the upshot. There are such self-delusions in the lives of very shrewd men when they come to deal with women; and in the toils of one of these we leave him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TRUSTFULNESS.

PERHAPS the night brought reflection; at all events, Mr. M'Kinlay had so far recovered himself that he came down to breakfast with a smile on his face and a mass of fresh-opened letters in his hand, with whose contents he purposed to amuse the company.

Miss Courtenay's manner was so kind, so actually cordial, too, that he felt perfectly reassured on the score of their last interview; and as Sir Within was not present, — he never made his appearance till late in the afternoon, — all went on pleasantly and well.

Giving the precedence to "fashionable intelligence," Mr. M'Kinlay related how certain great people were about to marry certain other great people, with intimations as to the settlements, and, in some cases, a minute account of the costly presents to the bride, — all circumstances which somehow seem to have their interest for every age, and class, and condition of humanity. Some of these were known to Vyner, and he asked about them with eagerness. Grenfell knew none of them except by name, but he spoke of them with all the confidence of an old and intimate friend, — of the "men," without using their titles; of the women as dear Lady Fanny, or that charming little Lady Grace, — so that hearing him was actually imbibing an atmosphere of aristocracy, inhaling the peerage at every respiration.

"What is the large packet with all the seals on it, Mr. M'Kinlay?" asked Georgina. "It has been torturing my curiosity in the most painful manner these last ten minutes."

"This, my dear Miss Courtenay," said he, laying his hand on a somewhat bulky parcel, "is not for me, though

it came under cover to my address. It is for Sir Within Wardle, in a lady's handwriting."

"I think I know the hand," said Miss Courtenay, as she bent her head over it.

"Of course you do, Aunt Georgy. It is Kate's. Nobody ever made those dear little round symbols but herself. It is the very prettiest writing in the world."

"By the way," said Mr. M'Kinlay, searching amongst the papers before him, "there is something here — I just glanced at it — from that young lady. Ay, here it is! You know, Sir Gervais, that you instructed me to write to the land agents of the late Mr. Luttrell, and inform them of your intention to confirm the deed of gift of the lodge in Donegal on Miss Luttrell; in consequence of which I wrote to Messrs. Cane and Carter, and here is their reply. But perhaps I had better keep these business matters for another opportunity?"

"Not at all. We are all friends here, and all about equally interested in these affairs," said Sir Gervais. "Go on."

Mr. M'Kinlay mumbled over, in an indistinct tone, something that sounded like an apology for not having more promptly answered his late communication. "'It was only yesterday,'" he read aloud, "'that we were in receipt of Miss Luttrell's reply. The young lady refuses to accept of the property in question. She declines to admit that it had been at any time in the possession of her family, and desires me, while expressing her deep sense of gratitude, to explain that, associated as the spot is to her with a great calamity, it never could be an object of her desire or ambition.'"

"She refers to that scrimmage where her old grandfather killed a man," said Grenfell, stirring his tea. "Really, I fancied they took these things much easier in Ireland."

"Don't you see that the young lady is of the exalted school, — not to say that, as she always gambled for a high stake, she can't abide low play?"

This bitter speech Georgina addressed directly to Grenfell, as the one person in the company adapted to comprehend it. He nodded and smiled a perfect acquiescence with her, and Mr. M'Kinlay read on: —

“ ‘For your own guidance, therefore, as well as Sir Gervais Vyner’s, — if you should desire to make the communication to him — I may remark that any further insistence on this project would be perfectly ineffectual. Everything I have seen of Miss Luttrell has shown her to be a person of most inflexible will, and a determination far beyond the common. This will be apparent to you when you hear that she is equally resolved to make over the Arran estate, bequeathed to her by her late uncle, to the present Mr. Luttrell, leaving herself, as I may say, totally penniless and unprovided for.’ ”

“What a noble-hearted, generous girl!” cried Vyner.

“The dear, high-hearted Kate!” murmured Ada.

“A most artful, designing minx!” whispered Georgina to Grenfell; “but I suspect that her scheme will not have the success she anticipates.”

“ ‘Of course,’ ” read on M’Kinlay, “ ‘I mention the last in perfect confidence to you.’ ”

“Oh, of course!” broke in Georgina, “my dear Mr. M’Kinlay; the very first trait I discover in myself of angelic self-devotion, I’ll certainly impart it to you under the seal of inviolable secrecy. Mind, therefore, that you tell nobody what a mine of goodness, of charity, and self-denial I am.”

Mr. M’Kinlay bowed an acquiescence, not aware in the least to what he was acceding, so overcome was he by the astounding assurance that the world contained one creature who refused to accept a legacy or avail herself of a gift.

“I am such a poor, weak-minded, vacillatory being myself,” said Georgina, still turning to Grenfell as most likely to appreciate her meaning, “that I really feel terrified in the presence of these great-souled creatures who refuse to be stirred by the common motives of humanity.”

“The girl must be a fool!” muttered M’Kinlay, with his eyes fixed on a postscript of Cane’s letter, — “a perfect fool!” But, without explaining why he thought so, he bundled up his papers, and hurried away.

“What is the mysterious parcel? I am dying to know the contents of it,” said Georgina, as she stood at the window with Grenfell.

“I think I could guess,” said he, slowly.

"You think you could guess! And you have the coolness to tell me this, seeing all the tortures of my curiosity!"

"It is by the shape of the packet that I am disposed to believe I know what is in it."

"Pray tell me! Do tell me!" said she, entreatingly.

"I don't think I can. I don't think I ought. I mean," said he, in a more apologetic tone, — "I mean, it is not *my* secret. It is another's, — that is, if my guess be the right one."

"And you have the courage to heighten my eagerness by all this preamble! Why, my dear Mr. Greuffell, they told me that of all the men about town none knew women as you did!"

"Who told you that?" asked he, eagerly.

"Scores of people." And she quoted at random the most distinguished names of her acquaintance, every syllable of their high-sounding titles falling on Grenfell's ear with a cadence perfectly enthralling. "Come, now," said she, with a look of entreaty, "don't worry me any longer. You see I know more than one half of the secret, if it be a secret, already, — from whom it comes, and to whom it is addressed."

"I am in your hands," said he, in a tone of submission. "Come out into the garden, and I'll tell you all I know."

Georgina accepted his arm as he spoke, and they passed out into a shady alley that led down to the sea.

"If I be right," said he, "and I'd go the length of a wager that I am, the packet you saw on the breakfast-table contains one of the most costly ornaments a woman ever wore. It was a royal present on the wedding-day of Sir Within Wardle's mother, and sent by him to fulfil the same office to Miss Luttrell on becoming Mrs. Ladarelle."

"You know this!" said she, in a slow, collected tone.

"I know it because he sent me to his gem-room at Dalradern to fetch it. He opened the casket in my presence, he showed me the jewels, he explained to me the peculiar setting, — emeralds on one side, opals on the other, so as to present two distinct suites of ornaments. I remember his words, and how his lips trembled, as he said, 'Ladies in those times were wont to turn their necklaces; now they only change their affections!' You'd scarcely believe it, Miss

Courtenay, but it is fact, positive fact, — the poor old man had been in love with her.”

“I certainly cannot stretch my credulity to that extent, Mr. Grenfell,” said she, with a shade of vexation in her voice, “though I could readily believe how an artful, unprincipled girl, with a field all her own, could manage to ensnare a most gentle, confiding nature into a degree of interest for her, that she would speedily assume to be a more tender feeling. And was the casket sent to *her*, Mr. Grenfell?” asked she, in a suddenly altered tone.

“Yes, I enclosed it, with an inscription dictated by Sir Within himself.”

“And she sends it back to him?” said she, pondering over each word as though it were charged with a deep significance.

“It would seem so.”

“I think you guess why. I am certain, if I have not taken a very wrong measure of Mr. Grenfell’s acuteness, that he reads this riddle pretty much as I do myself.”

“It is by no means improbable,” said Grenfell, who quickly saw the line her suspicions had taken. “I think it very likely the same interpretation has occurred to each of us.”

“Give me yours,” said she, eagerly.

“My reading is this,” replied he: “she has returned his present on the ground that, not being Mrs. Ladarelle, she has no claim to it; the restitution serving to show at the same moment a punctilious sense of honor, and, what she is fully as eager to establish, the fact that, being still unmarried, there is nothing to prevent Sir Within himself from a renewal of his former pretensions.”

“How well you know her! How thoroughly you appreciate her wily, subtle nature!” cried she, in warm admiration.

“Not that the game will succeed,” added he; “the poor old man is now beyond such captivations as once enthralled him.”

“How so? What do you mean?” asked she, sharply.

“I mean simply what we all see. He is rapidly sinking into second childhood.”

“I declare, Mr. Grenfell, you astonish me!” said she, with an almost impetuous force of manner. “At one moment you display a most remarkable acuteness in reading motives and deciphering intentions, and now you make an observation actually worthy of Mr. M’Kinlay.”

“And so you do not agree with me?” asked he.

“Agree with you! certainly not. Sir Within Wardle is an old friend of ours. Certain peculiarities of manner he has. In a great measure they have been impressed upon him by the circumstances of his station. An ambassador, a great man himself, is constantly in the presence of a sovereign, who is still greater. The conflict of dignity with the respect due to royalty makes up a very intricate code of conduct and manner of which the possessor cannot always disembarrass himself, even in the society of his equals. Something of this you may have remarked in Sir Within’s manner; nothing beyond it, I am confident!”

“I only hope, my dear Miss Courtenay, that, if the day should come when my own faculties begin to fail me, I may be fortunate enough to secure you for my defender.”

“The way to insure my advocacy will certainly not be by attacking an old and dear friend!” said she, with deep resentment in tone; and she turned abruptly and entered the house.

Mr. Grenfell looked after her for a moment in some astonishment. He was evidently unprepared for this sudden outburst of passion; but he quickly recovered himself, and, after a brief pause, resumed his walk, muttering below his breath as he went, “So, then, *this* is the game! What a stupid fool I have been not to have seen it before! All happening under my very eyes too! I must say, she has done it cleverly, — very cleverly.” And with this cordial appreciation of female skill, he lit his cigar, and, seating himself on the sea-wall, smoked and ruminated during the morning. There were many aspects of the question that struck him, and he turned from the present to the future with all that ready-wittedness that had so long favored him in life.

He heard the bell ring for luncheon, but he never stirred; he was not hungry, neither particularly anxious to meet

Miss Courtenay again. He preferred to have some few words with her alone ere they met in society. He thought he had tact enough to intimate that he saw her project, and was quite ready to abet it without anything which could offend her dignity. This done, they would be sworn friends ever after. As he sat thus thinking, he heard a quiet step approaching. It was doubtless a servant sent to tell him that luncheon was served, and while doubting what reply to make, he heard M'Kinlay call out, "I have found you at last! I have been all over the house in search of you."

"What is the matter? What has happened? Why are you so flurried, — eh?"

"I am not flurried. I am perfectly calm, perfectly collected, — at least, as collected as a man can hope to be who has had to listen for half an hour to such revelations as I have had made me; but it is all over now, and I am thankful it is. All over and finished!"

"What is over? What is finished?"

"Everything, sir, — everything! I leave this within an hour, — earlier if I can. I have sent two messengers for the horses, and I'd leave on foot — ay, sir, on foot — rather than pass another day under this roof!"

"Will you have the extreme kindness to tell me why you are going off in this fashion?"

Instead of complying with this reasonable request, Mr. M'Kinlay burst out into a passionate torrent, in which the words "Dupe!" "Fool!" and "Cajoled!" were alone very audible, but his indignation subsided after a while sufficiently to enable him to state that he had been sent for by Sir Within, after breakfast, to confer with him on the subject of that codicil he had spoken of on the previous day.

"He was more eager than ever about it, sir," said he. "The girl had written him some very touching lines of adieu, and I found him in tears as I came to his bedside. I must own, too, that he talked more sensibly and more collectedly than before, and said, in a tone of much meaning, 'When a man is so old and so friendless as I am, he ought to be thankful to do all the good he can, and not speculate on any returns either in feeling or affection.' I left him, sir, to make a brief draft of what he had been intimating to me.

It would take me, I told him, about a couple of hours, but I hoped I could complete it in that time. Punctual to a minute, I was at his door at one o'clock; but guess my surprise when Miss Courtenay's voice said, 'Come in!' Sir Within was in his dressing-gown, seated at the fire, the table before him covered with gems and trinkets, with which he appeared to be intently occupied. 'Sit down, M'Kinlay,' said he, courteously. 'I want you to choose something here, — something that Mrs. M'Kinlay would honor me by accepting.' She whispered a word or two hastily in his ear, and he corrected himself at once, saying, 'I ask pardon! I meant your respected mother. I remember you are a widower.' To withdraw his mind from this painful wandering, I opened my roll of papers, and mentioned their contents. Again she whispered him something, but he was evidently unable to follow her meaning; for he stared blankly at her, then at me, and said, 'Yes, certainly, I acquiesce in everything.' 'It will be better, perhaps, to defer these little matters, Miss Courtenay,' said I, 'to some moment when Sir Within may feel more equal to the fatigue of business.' She stooped down and said something to him; and suddenly his eyes sparkled, his cheek flushed, and, laying his hand with emphasis on the table, he said, 'I have no need of law or lawyers, sir! This lady, in doing me the honor to accord me her hand, has made her gift to me more precious by a boundless act of confidence; she will accept of no settlements.' 'Great heavens! Miss Courtenay,' whispered I, 'is he not wandering in his mind? Surely this is raving!' 'I think, sir, you will find that the only person present whose faculties are at fault is Mr. M'Kinlay. Certainly I claim exemption both for Sir Within Wardle and myself.' It was all true, sir, — true as I stand here! She is to be his wife. As to her generosity about the settlements, I understood it at once. She had got the whole detail of the property from me only yesterday, and knew that provision was made — a splendid provision, too — for whomsoever he might marry. So much for the trustfulness!"

"But what does it signify to *you*, M'Kinlay? You are not a Lord Chancellor, with a function to look after deranged old men and fatherless young ladies, and I don't

suppose the loss of a settlement to draw will be a heart-break to you."

"No, sir; but, lawyer as I am, there are depths of perfidy I'm not prepared for."

"Come in and wish them joy, M'Kinlay. Take my word for it, it might have been worse. Old Sir Within's misfortune might have befallen you or myself!"

CHAPTER XXX.

THE END.

“You see, sir, she is obstinate,” said Mr. Cane to Harry Luttrell, as they sat closeted together in his private office. “She is determined to make over the Arran estate to you, and equally determined to sail for Australia on the 8th of next month.”

“I can be obstinate too,” said Harry, with a bent brow and a dark frown, — “I can be obstinate too, as you will see, perhaps, in a day or two.”

“After all, sir, one must really respect her scruples. It is clear enough, if your father had not believed in your death, he never would have made the will in her favor.”

“It is not of that I am thinking,” said Luttrell, with a tone of half irritation; and then, seeing by the blank look of astonishment in the other’s face that some explanation was necessary, he added: “It was about this foolish journey, this voyage, my thoughts were busy. Is there no way to put her off it?”

“I am afraid not. All I have said — all my wife has said — has gone for nothing. Some notion in her head about the gratitude she owes this old man overbears every other consideration, and she goes on repeating, ‘I am the only living thing he trusts in. I must not let him die in disbelief of all humanity.’” Harry made a gesture of impatient meaning, but said nothing, and Cane went on: “I don’t believe it is possible to say more than my wife has said on the subject, but all in vain; and, indeed, at last, Miss Luttrell closed the discussion by saying, ‘I know you’d like that we should part good friends; well, then, let us not discuss this any more. You may shake the courage I shall need to

carry me through my project, but you'll not change my determination to attempt it.' These were her last words here."

"They were all the same!" muttered Harry, impatiently, as he walked up and down the room, — "all the same!"

"It was what she hinted, sir."

"How do you mean, — in what way did she hint it?"

"She said one morning — she was unusually excited that day — something about the wilfulness of peasant natures, that all the gilding good fortune could lay on them never succeeded in hiding the base metal beneath; and at last, as if carried away by passion, and unable to control herself, she exclaimed, 'I'll do it, if it was only to let me feel real for once! I'm sick of shams! — a sham position, a sham name, and a sham fortune!'"

"I offered her the share of mine, and she refused me," said Luttrell, with a bitterness that revealed his feeling.

"You offered to make her your wife, sir!" cried Cane, in astonishment.

"What so surprises you in that?" said Harry, hastily. "Except it be," added he, after a moment, "my presumption in aspiring to one so far superior to me."

"I wish you would speak to Mrs. Cane, Mr. Luttrell. I really am very anxious you would speak to her."

"I guess your meaning, — at least, I suspect I do. You intend that your wife should tell me that scandal about the secret marriage, that dark story of her departure from Arran, and her repentant return to it; but I know it all, every word of it, already."

"And from whom?"

"From herself — from her own lips; confirmed, if I wanted confirmation, by other testimony."

"I think she did well to tell you," said Cane, in a half-uncertain tone.

"Of course she did right. It was for me to vindicate her, if she had been wronged, and I would have done so, too, if the law had not been before me. You know that the scoundrel is sentenced to the galleys?"

Cane did not know it, and heard the story with astonishment, and so much of what indicated curiosity that Harry

repeated all Kate had told him from the beginning to the end.

“Would you do me the great favor to repeat this to my wife? She is sincerely attached to Miss Luttrell, and this narrative will give her unspeakable pleasure.”

“Tell her from me, that her affection is not misplaced, — she deserves it all!” muttered Harry, as he laid his head moodily against the window, and stood lost in thought.

“Here comes the postman. I am expecting a letter from the captain of the Australian packet-ship, in answer to some inquiries I had made in Miss Luttrell’s behalf.”

The servant entered with a packet of letters as he spoke, from which Cane quickly selected one.

“This is what I looked for. Let us see what it says:—

“DEAR SIR, — I find that I shall be able to place the poop cabin at Miss L.’s disposal, as my owner’s sister will not go out this spring. It is necessary she should come over here at once, if there be any trifling changes she would like made in its interior arrangement. The terms, I believe, are already well understood between us. By the Hamburg packet-ship “Drei Heilige” we learn that the last outward-bound vessels have met rough weather, and a convict-ship, the “Blast,” was still more unfortunate. Cholera broke out on board, and carried off seventy-three of the prisoners in eleven days.”

There was a postscript marked confidential, but Cane read it aloud:—

“Can you tell me if a certain Harry Luttrell, who has signed articles with me as second mate, is any relation of Miss L.’s? He has given me a deposit of twenty pounds, but my men think he is no seaman, nor has ever been at sea. Do you know anything of him, and what?”

“Yes!” said Harry, boldly. “Tell him you know him well; that he was with you when you read aloud that passage in his letter; assure him — as you may with a safe conscience — that he is a good sailor, and add, on my part, that he has no right to make any other inquiries about him.”

“And do you really intend to make this voyage?”

“Of course I do. I told you awhile ago I could be as obstinate as my cousin. You ’ll see if I don’t keep my word.

Mind me, however; no word of this to Miss Luttrell. I charge you that!"

"And the property, sir! What are your views respecting the estate?"

"I shall write to you. I'll think of it," said Harry, carelessly. After a few words more, they parted. Harry had some things to buy in the city, some small preparations for the long voyage before him; but promising Cane to come back and take a family dinner with him, he went his way. For some hours he walked the streets half unconsciously, a vague impression over him that there was something he had to do, certain people to see, certain places to visit; but so engaged was he with the thought of Kate and her fortunes, his mind had no room for more. "She shall see," muttered he to himself, "that I am not to be shaken off. My Luttrell obstinacy, if she will call it so, is as fixed as her own. Country has no tie for *me*. Where she is, there shall be my country." Some fears he had lest Cane should tell her of his determination to sail in the same ship with her. She was quite capable of outwitting him if she could only get a clew to this. Would Cane dare to disobey him? Would he face the consequences of his betrayal? From these thoughts he wandered on to others as to how Kate would behave when she found he had followed her. Would this proof of attachment move her? Would she resent it as a persecution? Hers was so strange a nature, anything might come of it. "The same pride that made her refuse me may urge her to do more. As she said so haughtily to me at Arran, 'The peasant remedy has failed to cure the Luttrell malady; another cure must be sought for!'"

Harry had scarcely knocked at Cane's door, when it was opened by Cane himself, who hurriedly said, "I have been waiting for you. Come in here;" and led him into his own room. "She's above stairs. She has just come," whispered he.

"Who?" asked Harry, eagerly. "Who?"

"Your cousin, — Miss Luttrell. A letter from the surgeon of the convict-ship has conveyed news of old Malone's death, and she has come up to free herself from her arrangement with the captain. And —"

He stopped and hesitated with such evident confusion that Harry said, "Go on, sir; finish what you were about to say."

"It is her secret, not mine, Mr. Luttrell; and I know it only through my wife."

"I insist on hearing it. I am her nearest of kin, and I have a right to know whatever concerns her."

"I have already told you what I promised to keep secret. I was pledged not to say she was here. I came down to make some excuse for not receiving you to-day at dinner, — some pretext of my wife's illness. I beg, I entreat you will not ask me for more."

"I insist upon all you know," was Harry's stern reply.

"How do I even know it," cried Cane, in despair, "from a few incoherent words my wife whispered in my ear as he passed me? Were I to tell, it may be only to mislead you."

"Tell me, whatever may come of it."

Cane took a turn or two up and down the room, and at last, coming in front of Luttrell, said: "She is about to take back her old name, and with it the humble fortune that belonged to it. She says you and yours have suffered enough from the unhappy tie that bound you to her family. She is resolved you shall never see, never hear of her again. She took her last look at Arran last night. To-morrow she declares she will go away from this, where none shall trace her. There's her secret! I charge you not to betray how you came by it."

"Let me see her; let me speak with her."

"How can I? I have promised already that you should not hear she is here."

"Send for your wife, and let me speak to her. I must — I will speak to her."

"Go into that room for a moment, then, and I will advise with my wife what is to be done."

Harry passed into the room and sat down. He heard Cane's bell ring, and soon afterwards could mark the tread of a foot on the stairs, and then the sound of voices talking eagerly in the adjoining room. His impatience nearly maddened him; his heart beat so that he felt as if his chest

could not contain it; the vessels of his neck, too, throbbed powerfully. He opened the window for air, and then, as though the space was too confined, flung wide a door at the side of the room. As he did this, he saw that it led to the stairs. Quicker than all thought his impulse urged him. He dashed up and entered the drawing-room, where Kate sat alone, and with her head buried between her hands.

She looked up, startled by his sudden entrance, and then, resuming her former attitude, said, in a low muffled voice: "You have heard what has befallen me. I am not fated to acquit the debt I owe."

Harry sat down beside her in silence, and she went on: "I was hoping that this pain might have been spared us, — I mean, this meeting, — it is only more sorrow. However, as we are once more together, let me thank you. I know all that you intended, all that you meant by me. I know that you would have come with me too. I know all! Now, Harry," said she, in a more resolute voice, "listen to me calmly. What I say to you is no caprice, no passing thought, but the long-earned conviction of much reflection. From *my* people came every misfortune that has crushed *yours*. Your father's long life of suffering — told in his own words — his diaries — revealed in the letters from his friends — I have read them over and over — was caused by this fatal connection. Are these things to be forgotten? or are you cruel enough to ask me to repeat the experiment that broke your mother's heart, and left your father friendless and forsaken? Where is your pride, sir? And if *you* have none, where would be mine, if I were to listen to you?"

"There comes the truth!" cried he, wildly. "It is your pride that rejects me. You who have lived in great houses and mixed with great people, cannot see in me anything but the sailor."

"Oh, no, no, no!" cried she, bitterly.

"I know it, — I feel it, Kate," continued he. "I feel ashamed when my coarse hand touches your taper fingers. I shrink back with misgiving at any little familiarity that seems so inconsistent between us. Even my love for you — and God knows how I love you! — cannot make me think myself your equal!"

“Oh, Harry, do not say such things as these; do not, — do not!”

“I say it, — I swear it; the highest ambition of my heart would be to think I could deserve you.”

She hid her face between her hands, and he went on,



madly, wildly, incoherently; now telling her what her love might make him, — now darkly hinting at the despair rejection might drive him to. He contrasted all the qualities of *her* gifted nature, so sure to attract friendship and interest, with the ruggedness of his character, as certain to render him friendless; and on his knees at her feet, he implored

her, if any gratitude for all his father's love could move her, to take pity on and hear him.

There was a step on the stair as Harry seized her hand and said, "Let this be mine, Kate; give it to me, and make me happier than all I ever dreamed of. One word, — one word, dearest." And he drew her face towards him and kissed her.

"The Luttrell spirit is low enough, I take it, now," said she, blushing. "If their pride can survive this, no peasant blood can be their remedy."

THE END.

PAUL GOSSLETT'S CONFESSIONS

IN

LOVE, LAW, AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.

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PAUL GOSSLETT'S CONFESSIONS.

MY FIRST MISSION UNDER F. O.

I WAS walking very sadly across the Green Park one day, my hat pressed over my eyes, not looking to right or left, but sauntering slowly along, depressed and heavy-hearted, when I felt a friendly arm slip softly within my own, while a friendly voice said, —

“I think I have got something to suit you, for a few months at least. Don't you know Italian?”

“In a fashion, I may say I do. I can read the small poets, and chat a little. I'll not say much more about my knowledge.”

“Quite enough for what I mean. Now tell me another thing. You're not a very timid fellow, I know. Have you any objection to going amongst the brigands in Calabria, — on a friendly mission, of course, — where it will be their interest to treat you well?”

“Explain yourself a little more freely. What is it I should have to do?”

“Here's the whole affair; the son of a wealthy baronet, a Wiltshire M.P., has been captured and carried off by these rascals. They demand a heavy sum for his ransom, and give a very short time for the payment. Sir Joseph, the youth's father, is very ill, and in such a condition as would make any appeal to him highly dangerous; the doctors declare, in fact, it would be fatal; and Lady Mary S. has come up to town, in a state bordering on distraction, to consult

Lord Scatterdale, the Foreign Secretary, who is a personal friend of her husband. The result is that his Lordship has decided to pay the money at once; and the only question is now to find the man to take it out, and treat with these scoundrels."

"That ought not to be a very difficult matter, one would say; there are scores of fellows with pluck for such a mission."

"So there are, if pluck were the only requisite; but something more is needed. If Sir Joseph should not like to acknowledge the debt, — if, on his recovery, he should come to think that the thing might have been better managed, less cost incurred, and so on, — the Government will feel embarrassed; they can't well quarrel with an old supporter; they can't well stick the thing in the estimates; so that, to cover the outlay in some decent fashion, they must give it a public-service look before they can put it into the Extraordinaries; and so Lord S. has hit upon this scheme. You are aware that a great question is now disputed between the Bourbonists of Naples and the party of New Italy, — whether brigandage means highway robbery, or is the outburst of national enthusiasm in favor of the old dynasty. The friends of King Bomba, of course, call it a 'La Vendée;' the others laugh at this, and say that the whole affair is simply assassination and robbery, and totally destitute of any political coloring. Who knows on which side the truth lies, or whether some portion of truth does not attach to each of these versions? Now, there are, as you said awhile ago, scores of fellows who would have pluck enough to treat with the brigands; but there are not so many who could be trusted to report of them, — to give a clear and detailed account of what he saw of them, — of their organization, their sentiments, their ambitions, and their political views, if they have any. You are just the man to do this. You have that knack of observation and that readiness with your pen which are needed. In fact, you seem to me the very fellow to do this creditably."

"Has Lord S. any distinct leanings in the matter?" asked I. "Does he incline to regard these men as political adherents, or as assassins, *purs et simples?*"

“I see what you mean,” said my friend, pinching my arm. “You want to know the tone of your employer before you enter his service. You would like to be sure of the tints that would please him.”

“Perhaps so. I won’t go so far as to say it would frame my report, but it might serve to tinge it. Now, do you know his proclivities, as Jonathan would call them?”

“I believe they are completely with the Italian view of the matter. I mean, he will not recognize anything political in these scoundrels.”

“I thought as much. Now as to the appointment. Do you think you could obtain it for me?”

“You are ready to take it, then?”

“Perfectly.”

“And ready to start at once?”

“To-night.”

“Come back with me now, and I will inquire if Lord S. will see us. He spoke to me yesterday evening on the matter, and somehow your name did not occur to me, and I certainly recommended another man, — Hitchins of the ‘Daily News;’ but I am sure he will not have sent for him yet, and that we shall be in good time.”

As we walked back towards Downing Street, my friend talked on incessantly about the advantages I might derive from doing this thing creditably. They were sure to make a Blue Book out of my report, and who knows if my name would not be mentioned in the House? At all events, the newspapers would have it; and the Government would be obliged, — they could n’t help giving me something. “You’ll have proved yourself a man of capacity,” said he, “and that’s enough. S. does like smart fellows under him, he is so quick himself; sees a thing with half an eye, and reads a man just as he reads a book.” He rattled along in this fashion, alternately praising the great man, and assuring me that I was exactly the sort of fellow to suit him. “He’ll not burden you with instructions, but what he tells you will be quite sufficient; he is all clearness, conciseness, and accuracy. There’s only one caution I have to give you, — don’t ask him a question, follow closely all he says, and never ask him to explain anything that puzzles you.

To suppose that he has not expressed himself clearly is a dire offence, mind that; and now, here we are. Crosby, is my Lord upstairs?" asked he of the porter; and receiving a bland nod in reply, he led the way to the Minister's cabinet.

"I'll ask to see him first myself," whispered he, as he sent in his card.

Now, though my friend was an M.P., and a staunch supporter of the party, he manifested a considerable amount of anxiety and uneasiness when waiting for the noble secretary's reply. It came at last.

"Can't possibly see you now, sir. Will meet you at the House at five o'clock."

"Will you kindly tell his Lordship I have brought with me the gentleman I spoke to him about yesterday evening? He will know for what."

The private secretary retired sullenly, and soon returned to say, "The gentleman may come in; my Lord will speak to him."

The next moment I found myself standing in a comfortably furnished room, in front of a large writing-table, at which an elderly man with a small head, scantily covered with gray hair, was writing. He did not cease his occupation as I entered, nor notice me in any manner as I approached, but went on repeating to himself certain words as he wrote them; and at last, laying down his pen, said aloud, with a faint chuckle, "and your Excellency may digest it how you can."

I gave a very slight cough. He looked up, stared at me, arose, and, walking to the fire, stood with his back to it for a couple of seconds without speaking. I could see that he had some difficulty in dismissing the topic which had just occupied him, and was only arriving at me by very slow stages and heavy roads.

"Eh!" said he, at last; "you are the man of the paper. Not the 'Times' — but the — the — what's it?"

"No, my Lord. I'm the other man," said I, quietly.

"Ah, you're the other man." And as he spoke, he hung his head, and seemed hopelessly lost in thought. "Have you seen Mr. Hammil?" asked he.

"No, my Lord."

"You must see Mr. Hammil. Till you see Mr. Hammil, you need n't come to me."

"Very well, my Lord," said I, moving towards the door.

"Wait a moment. You know Italy well, I am told. Do you know Cavour?"

"No, my Lord," said I.

"Ah! They say he over-eats; have you heard that?"

"I can't say that I have, my Lord; but my acquaintance with Italy and with Italians is very slight, indeed."

"Why did they recommend you, then, for this affair? I told Gresson that I wanted a man who could have ready access to their public men, who knew Balbi, Gino Capponi, Ricasoli, and the rest of them. Now, sir, how is it possible, without intimacy with these men and their opinions, that you could write such leading articles as I suggested in their papers? How could you ever get admission to the columns of the 'Opinione' and the 'Perseveranza,' eh? Answer me that."

"I am afraid, my Lord, there is some grave misunderstanding here. I never dreamed of proposing myself for such a difficult task. I came here on a totally different mission. It was to take your Lordship's orders about the ransom and rescue of a young Englishman who has been captured by the brigands in Southern Italy —"

"That scamp, St. John. A very different business, indeed. Why, sir, they value him at one thousand pounds, and I'll venture to assert that his friends — if that be the name of the people who know him — would call him a dear bargain at twenty. I'm certain his own father would say so; but, poor fellow, he is very ill, and can't talk on this or any other matter just now. Lady Mary, however, insists on his release, and we must see what can be done. You know the habits and ways of these rascals, — these brigands, — don't you?"

"No, my Lord; nothing whatever about them."

"Then, in Heaven's name, sir, what do you know?"

"Very little about anything, my Lord, I must confess; but as I am sorely pushed to find a livelihood, and don't fancy being a burden to my friends, I told Mr. Gresson,

this morning, that I was quite ready to undertake the mission if I should be intrusted with it; and that, so far as bail or security went, my uncle Rankin, of Rankin and Bates, would unquestionably afford it."

"Ah, this is very different, indeed," said he, ponderingly, and with a look of compassionate interest I had not thought his face capable of. "Gone too fast, perhaps; have been hit hard at Doncaster or Goodwood?"

"No, my Lord; I never betted. I started with a few thousand pounds and lost them in a speculation."

"Well, well. I have no right to enter into these things. Go and see Mr. Temple, the financial clerk. Take this to him, and see what he says to you. If he is satisfied, come down to the House to-night. But stay! You ought to start this evening, ought n't you?"

"I believe, my Lord, the time is very short. They require the money to be paid by the twelfth."

"Or they'll cut his ears off, I suppose," said he, laughing. "Well, he's an ugly dog already; not that cropping will improve him. Here, take this to Temple, and arrange the matter between you."

And he hurriedly wrote half a dozen lines, which he enclosed and addressed, and then returning to his seat, said, "*Bonne chance!* I wish you success and a pleasant journey."

I will not dwell upon the much longer and more commonplace interview that followed. Mr. Temple knew all about me, — knew my uncle, and knew the whole story of my misfortunes. He was not, however, the less cautious in every step he took; and as the sum to be intrusted to me was so large, he filled in a short bail-bond, and, while I sat with him, despatched it by one of his clerks to Lombard Street, for my uncle's signature. This came in due time; and, furnished with instructions how to draw on the Paymaster-General, some current directions how to proceed till I presented myself at the Legation at Naples, and a sum sufficient for the travelling expenses, I left London that night for Calais, and began my journey. If I was very anxious to acquit myself creditably in this my first employment in the public service, and to exhibit an amount of zeal,

tact, and discretion that might recommend me for future employment, I was still not indifferent to the delights of a journey paid for at the Queen's expense, and which exacted from me none of those petty economies which mar the perfect enjoyment of travelling.

If I suffer myself to dwell on this part of my history, I shall be ruined, for I shall never get on; and you will, besides, inevitably — and as unjustly as inevitably — set me down for a snob.

I arrived at Naples at last. It was just as the day was closing in, but there was still light enough to see the glorious bay and the outline of Vesuvius in the background. I was, however, too full of my mission now to suffer my thoughts to wander to the picturesque, and so I made straight for the Legation.

I had been told that I should receive my last instructions from H.M.'s Minister, and it was a certain Sir James Magruber that then held that office at Naples. I know so very little of people in his peculiar walk, that I can only hope he may not be a fair sample of his order; for he was the roughest, the rudest, and most uncourteous gentleman it has ever been my fortune to meet.

He was dressing for dinner when I sent up my card, and at once ordered that I should be shown up to his room.

"Where's your bag?" cried he, roughly, as I entered.

Conceiving that this referred to my personal luggage, and was meant as the preliminary to inviting me to put up at his house, I said that I had left my "traps" at the hotel, and, with his permission, would install myself there for the few hours of my stay.

"Confound your 'traps,' as you call them," said he. "I meant your despatches, — the bag from F. O. Ain't you the messenger?"

"No, sir; I am not the messenger," said I, haughtily.

"And what the devil do you mean, then, by sending me your card, and asking to see me at once?"

"Because my business is peremptory, sir," said I, boldly, and proceeded at once to explain who I was and what I had come for. "To-morrow will be the tenth, sir," said I, "and

I ought to be at Rocco d'Anco by the morning of the twelfth, at farthest."

He was brushing his hair all the time I was speaking, and I don't think that he heard above half of what I said.

"And do you mean to tell me they are such infernal fools at F.O. that they're going to pay one thousand pounds sterling to liberate this scamp St. John?"

"I think, sir, you will find that I have been sent out with this object."

"Why, it's downright insanity! It is a thousand pities they had n't caught the fellow years ago. Are you aware that there's scarcely a crime in the statute-book he has not committed? I'd not say murder was n't amongst them. Why, sir, he cheated me, — me, — the man who now speaks to you, — at billiards. He greased my cue, sir. It was proved, — proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. The fellow called it a practical joke, but he forgot I had five ducats on the game; and he had the barefaced insolence to amuse Naples by a representation of me as I sided my ball, and knocked the marker down afterwards, thinking it was his fault. He was attached, this St. John was, to my mission here at the time; but I wrote home to demand — not to ask, but demand — his recall. His father's vote was, however, of consequence to the Government, and they refused me. Yes, sir, they refused me; they told me to give him a leave of absence if I did not like to see him at the Legation; and I gave it, sir. And, thank Heaven, the fellow went into Calabria, and fell into the hands of the brigands, — too good company for him, I'm certain. I'll be shot if he could n't corrupt them; and now you're come out here to pay a ransom for a fellow that any other country but England would send to the galleys."

"Has he done nothing worse, sir," asked I, timidly, "than this stupid practical joke?"

"What, sir, have you the face to put this question to me, — to H.M.'s Minister at this court, — the subject of this knavish buffoonery? Am I a fit subject for a fraud, — a — a freedom, sir? Is it to a house which displays the royal arms over the entrance-door men come to play blackleg or clown? Where have you lived, with whom have you

lived, what pursuit in life have you followed, that you should be sunk in such utter ignorance of all the habits of life and civilization?"

I replied that I was a gentleman, I trusted as well educated, and I knew as well-born, as himself.

He sprang to the bell as I said this, and rang on till the room was crowded with servants, who came rushing in under the belief that it was a fire-alarm.

"Take him away, — put him out — Giacomo, — Hippolyte, — Francis!" screamed he. "See that he's out of the house this instant. Send Mr. Carlyon here. Let the police be called, and order gendarmes if he resists."

While he was thus frothing and foaming, I took my hat, and, passing quietly through the ranks of his household, descended the stairs, and proceeded into the street.

I reached the "Vittoria" in no bland humor. I must own that I was flurried and irritated in no common degree. I was too much excited to be able, clearly, to decide how far the insult I had received required explanation and apology, or if it had passed the limits in which apology is still possible.

Perhaps, thought I, if I call him out, he'll hand me over to the police; perhaps he'll have me sent over the frontier. Who knows what may be the limit to a minister's power? While I was thus speculating and canvassing with myself, a card was presented to me by the waiter, — "Mr. Spinnington, Attaché, H.M.'s Legation, Naples," — and as suddenly the owner of it entered the room.

He was a fair-faced, blue-eyed young man, very short-sighted, with a faint lisp and an effeminate air. He bowed slightly as he came forward, and said, "You're Mr. Gosslett, ain't you?" And not waiting for any reply, he sat down and opened a roll of papers on the table. "Here are your instructions. You are to follow them when you can, you know, and diverge from them whenever you must. That is, do whatever you like, and take the consequences. Sir James won't see you again. He says you insulted him; but he says that of almost every one. The cook insults him when the soup is too salt, and I insulted him last week by writing with pale ink. But you'd have done better if you'd

got on well with him. He writes home, — do you understand? — he writes home.”

“So do most people,” I said dryly.

“Ah! but not the way he does. He writes home and has a fellow black-listed. Two crosses against you sends you to Greece, and three is ruin! Three means the United States.”

“I assure you, sir, that as regards myself, your chief’s good opinion or good word are matters of supreme indifference.”

Had I uttered an outrageous blasphemy, he could not have looked at me with greater horror.

“Well,” said he, at last, “there it is; read it over. Bolton will cash your bills, and give you gold. You must have gold; they’ll not take anything else. I don’t believe there is much more to say.”

“Were you acquainted with Mr. St. John?” asked I.

“I should think I was. Rodney St. John and I joined together.”

“And what sort of a fellow is he? Is he such a scamp as his chief describes?”

“He’s fast, if you mean that; but we’re all fast.”

“Indeed!” said I, measuring him with a look, and thinking to compute the amount of his colleague’s iniquity.

“But he’s not worse than Stormont, or Mosely, or myself; only he’s louder than we are. He must always be doing something no other fellow ever thought of. Don’t you know the kind of thing I mean? He wants to be original. Bad style that, very. That’s the way he got into this scrape. He made a bet he’d go up to Rocco d’Anco, and pass a week with Stoppa, the brigand, — the cruellest dog in Calabria. He did n’t say when he’d come back again, though; and there he is still, and Stoppa sent one of his fellows to drop a letter into the Legation, demanding twenty-five thousand francs for his release, or saying that his ears, nose, &c., will be sent on by instalments during the month. Ugly, ain’t it?”

“I trust I shall be in time to save him. I suspect he’s a good fellow.”

“Yes, I suppose he is,” said he, with an air of uneasi-

ness; "only I'd not go up there, where you're going, for a trifle, I tell you that."

"Perhaps not," said I, quietly.

"For," resumed he, "when Stoppa sees that you're a nobody, and not worth a ransom, he'd as soon shoot you as look at you." And this thought seemed to amuse him so much that he laughed at it as he quitted the room and descended the stairs, and I even heard him cackling over it in the street.

Before I went to bed that night I studied the map of Calabria thoroughly, and saw that by taking the diligence to Atri the next day I should reach Valdenone by about four o'clock, from which a guide could conduct me to Rocco d'Anco,—a mountain walk of about sixteen miles,—a feat which my pedestrian habits made me fully equal to. If the young attaché's attempt to terrorize over me was not a perfect success, I am free to own that my enterprise appeared to me a more daring exploit than I had believed it when I thought of it in Piccadilly. It was not merely that I was nearer to the peril, but everything conspired to make me more sensible to the danger. The very map, where a large tract was marked "little known," suggested a terror of its own; and I fell asleep, at last, to dream of every wild incident of brigand life I had seen in pictures or witnessed on the stage.

As that bland young gentleman so candidly told me, "I was a nobody," and, consequently, of no interest to any one. Who would think of sending out an express messenger to ransom Paul Gosslett? At all events, I could console myself with the thought that if the world would give little for me, it would grieve even less; and with this not very cheering consolation I mounted to the banquette of the diligence, and started.

After passing through a long, straggling suburb, not remarkable for anything but its squalor and poverty, we reached the seashore, and continued to skirt the bay for miles. I had no conception of anything so beautiful as the great sheet of blue water seen in the freshness of a glorious sunrise, with the white-sailed lateener skimming silently along, and reflected, as if in a mirror, on the unruffled sur-

face. There was a peaceful beauty in all around, that was a positive enchantment, and the rich odors of the orange and the verbena filled the air almost to a sense of delicious stupefaction. Over and over did I say to myself, "Why cannot this delicious dream be prolonged for a lifetime? If existence could but perpetuate such a scene as this, let me travel along the shore of such a sea, overshadowed by the citron and the vine, — I ask for no more." The courier or conductor was my only companion, — an old soldier of the first empire, who had fought on the Beresina and in Spain, — a rough old sabreur, not to be appeased by my best cigars and my brandy-flask into a good word for the English. He hated them formerly, and he hated them still. There might be, he was willing to believe, one or two of the nation that were not cani; but he had n't met them himself, nor did he know any one who had. I relished his savagery, and somehow never felt in the slightest degree baffled or amazed by his rudeness. I asked him if he had heard of that unlucky countryman of mine who had been captured by the brigands, and he said that he had heard that Stoppa meant to roast him alive; for that Stoppa did n't like the English, — a rather strong mode of expressing a national antipathy, but one, on the whole, he did not entirely disapprove of.

"Stoppa, however," said I, assuming as a fact what I meant for a question, — "Stoppa is a man of his word. If he offered to take a ransom, he 'll keep his promise?"

"That he will, if the money is paid down in zecchin gold. He 'll take nothing else. He 'll give up the man; but I 'd not fancy being the fellow who brought the ransom if there was a light piece in the mass."

"He 'd surely respect the messenger who carried the money?"

"Just as much as I respect that old mare who won't come up to her collar;" and he snatched the whip, as he spoke, from the driver, and laid a heavy lash over the sluggish beast's loins. "Look here," said he to me, as we parted company at Corallo, "you 're not bad, — for an Englishman, at least, — and I 'd rather you did n't come to trouble. Don't you get any further into these mountains than St.

Andrea, and don't stay, even 'here, too long. Don't go in Stoppa's way; for if you have money, he'll cut your throat for it, and if you have n't, he'll smash your skull for being without it. I'll be on the way back to Naples on Saturday; and if you'll take a friend's advice, you'll be beside me."

I was not sorry to get away from my old grumbling companion; but his words of warning went with me in the long evening's drive up to St. Andrea, a wild mountain road, over which I jogged in a very uncomfortable barroccino.

Was I really rushing into such peril as he described? And if so, why so? I could scarcely affect to believe that any motives of humanity moved me; still less, any sense of personal regard or attachment. I had never known — not even seen — Mr. St. John. In what I had heard of him there was nothing that interested me. It was true that I expected to be rewarded for my services; but if there was actual danger in what I was about to do, what recompense would be sufficient? And was it likely that this consideration would weigh heavily on the minds of those who employed me? Then, again, this narrative, or report, or whatever it was, how was I to find the material for it? Was it to be imagined that I was to familiarize myself with brigand life by living amongst these rascals, so as to be able to make a Blue Book about them? Was it believed that I could go to them, like a census commissioner, and ask their names and ages, how long they had been in their present line of life, and how they throve on it? I'll not harass myself more about them, thought I, at last. I'll describe my brigand as I find him. The fellow who comes to meet me for the money shall be the class. "Ex pede Herculem" shall serve one here, and I have no doubt I shall be as accurate as the others who contribute to this sort of literature.

I arrived at St. Andrea as the Angelus was ringing, and saw that pretty sight of a whole village on their knees at evening prayer, which would have been prettier had not the devotees been impressed with the most rascally countenances I ever beheld.

From St. Andrea to Rocco was a walk of seventeen miles, but I was not sorry to exchange the wearisome barroccino I had been jolting in for the last six hours, for my feet; and

after a light meal of bread and onions, washed down with a very muddy imitation of vinegar, I set forth with a guide for my destination. There was not much companionship in my conductor, who spoke a patois totally unintelligible to me, and who could only comprehend by signs. His own pantomime, however, conveyed to me that we were approaching the brigand region, and certain significant gestures about his throat and heart intimated to me that sudden death was no unusual casualty in these parts. An occasional rude cross erected on the roadside, or a painted memorial on the face of a rock, would also attest some by-gone disaster, at the sight of which he invariably knelt and uttered a prayer, on rising from which he seemed to me, each time, but half decided whether he would accompany me farther.

At last, after a four hours' hard walk, we gained the crest of a mountain ridge, from which the descent seemed nearly precipitous, and here my companion showed me, by the faint moonlight, a small heap of stones, in the midst of which a stake was placed upright; he muttered some words in a very low tone, and held up eight fingers, possibly to convey that eight people had been murdered or buried in that place. Whatever the idea, one thing was certain, — he would go no farther. He pointed to the zigzag path I was to follow, and stretched out his hand to show me, as I supposed, where Rocco lay, and then unslinging from his shoulder the light carpet-bag he had hitherto carried for me, he held out his palm for payment.

I resolutely refused, however, to accept his resignation, and ordered him, by a gesture, to resume his load and march on; but the fellow shook his head doggedly, and pointed with one finger to the open palm of the other hand. The gesture was defiant and insolent; and as we were man to man, I felt it would be an ignominy to submit to him, so I again showed signs of refusal, and pointed to the bag. At this he drew a long thin-bladed knife from his garter; but, as quickly, I pulled out a revolver from my breast-pocket. The fellow's sharp ear caught the click of the lock, and, with a spring, he darted over the low parapet and disappeared. I never saw him more.

A cold sweat broke over me as I took up my burden and resumed my way. There was but one path, so that I could not hesitate as to the road; but I own that I began that descent with a heart-sinking and a terror that I have no words to convey. That the fellow would spring out upon me at some turn of the way seemed so certain that at each sharp angle I halted and drew breath for the struggle I thought was coming. My progress was thus much retarded, and my fatigue greatly increased. The day broke at last, but found me still plodding on in a dense pine-wood which clothed the lower sides of the mountain. In addition to my carpet-bag I had the heavy belt in which the gold pieces were secured, and the weight of which became almost insupportable.

What inconceivable folly had ever involved me in such an adventure? How could I have been so weak as to accept such a mission? Here was I, more than a thousand miles away from home, alone, on foot in the midst of a mountain tract, the chosen resort of the worst assassins of Europe, and, as if to insure my ruin, with a large sum in gold on my person. What could my friend have meant by proposing the enterprise to me? Did he imagine the mountain-paths of the Basilicata were like Pall Mall? or did he, — and this seemed more likely, — did he deem that the man who had so little to live for must, necessarily, care less for life? If I must enter the public service, thought I, at the peril of my neck, better to turn to some other means of living. Then I grew sardonic and malicious, declaring to myself how like a rich man it was to offer such an employment to a poor man, as though, when existence had so little to charm, one could not hold to it with any eagerness. The people, muttered I, who throw these things to us so contemptuously are careful enough of themselves. You never find one of them risk his life, no, nor even peril his health, in any enterprise.

As the sun shone out and lit up a magnificent landscape beneath me, where, in the midst of a wooded plain, a beautiful lake lay stretched out, dotted over with little islands, I grew in better humor with myself and with the world at large. It was certainly very lovely. The snow-peaks of

the Abruzzi could be seen, here and there, topping the clouds, which floated lightly up from the low-lying lands of the valley. Often and often had I walked miles and miles to see a scene not fit to be compared with this. If I had only brought my colors with me, what a bit of landscape I might have carried away! The pencil could do nothing where so much depended on tint and glow. A thin line of blue smoke rose above the trees near the lake, and this I guessed to proceed from the village of Rocco d'Anco. I plucked up my courage at the sight, and again set forth, weary and footsore, it is true, but in a cheerier, heartier spirit than before.

Four hours' walking, occasionally halting for a little rest, brought me to Rocco, a village of about twenty houses, straggling up the side of a vine-clad hill, the crest of which was occupied by a church. The population were all seated at their doors, it being some festa, and were, I am bound to admit, about as ill-favored a set as one would wish to see. In the aspect of the men, and, indeed, still more in that of the women, one could at once recognize the place as a brigand resort. There were, in the midst of all the signs of squalor and poverty, rich scarfs and costly shawls to be seen; while some of the very poorest wore gold chains round their necks, and carried handsomely ornamented pistols and daggers at their waist-belts. I may as well mention here, not to let these worthy people be longer under a severe aspersion than needful, that they were not themselves brigands, but simply the friends and partisans of the gangs, who sold them the different spoils of which they had divested the travellers. The village was, in fact, little else than the receptacle of stolen goods until opportunity offered to sell them elsewhere. I had been directed to put up at a little inn kept by an ex-friar who went by the name of Fra Bartolo, and I soon found the place a very pleasant contrast, in its neatness and comfort, to the dirt and wretchedness around it. The Frate, too, was a fine, jovial, hearty-looking fellow, with far more the air of a Sussex farmer in his appearance than a Calabrian peasant. He set me at ease at once by saying that, of course, I came for the fishing, and added that the lake was in prime order and the

fish plenty. This was said with such palpable roguery that I saw it was meant for the bystanders, and knew, at once, he had been prepared for my arrival and expected me. I was, however, more in need of rest and refreshment than of conversation, and, after a hearty but hurried meal, I turned in and fell off to sleep as I had never slept before. Twice or thrice I had a faint consciousness that attempts were made to awaken me, and once, that a candle was held close to my eyes; but these were very confused and indistinct sensations, and my stupor soon conquered them.

"That 's pretty well for a nap. Just nine hours of it," said the Frate, as he jogged my shoulder, and insisted on arousing me.

"I was so tired," said I, stretching myself, and half turning to the wall for another bout.

"No, no; you mustn't go to sleep again," said he, bending over me. "He 's come;" and he made a gesture with his thumb towards an adjoining room. "He 's been there above an hour."

"Do you mean —"

"Hush!" he said cautiously. "We name no names here. Get up and see him; he never likes loitering down in these places. One can't be sure of everybody in this world." And here he threw up his eyes, and seemed for a moment overwhelmed at the thought of human frailty and corruption.

"He is expecting me, then?" said I.

"Very impatiently, sir. He wanted to arouse you when he arrived, and he has been twice in here to see if you were really asleep."

Something like a thrill ran through me to think that, as I lay there, this brigand, this man of crimes and bloodshed, — for, of course, he was such — had stood by my bedside, and bent over me. The Frate, however, urging me to activity, left me no time for these reflections, and I arose quickly, and followed him. I was eager to know what manner of man it was to whom I was about to make my approach; but I was hurried along a passage, and half pushed into a room, and the door closed behind me, before I had time for a word.

On a low settle-bed, just in front of me, as I entered, a

man lay, smoking a short meerschaum, whose dress and get up, bating some signs of wear and ill-usage, would have made the fortune of a small theatre. His tall hat was wreathed with white roses, from the midst of which a tall feather, spray-like and light, stood up straight. His jacket of bright green, thrown open wide, displayed a scarlet waistcoat perfectly loaded with gold braiding. Leather breeches, ending above the knee, showed the great massive limb beneath to full advantage; while the laced stocking that came up to the calf served, on one side, as belt for a stiletto whose handle was entirely incrustated with precious stones. "You are a good sleeper, Signor Inglese," said he, in a pleasant, richly toned voice, "and I feel sorry to have disturbed you." This speech was delivered with all the ease and courtesy of a man accustomed to the world. "You may imagine, however, that I cannot well delay in places like this. Rocco, I believe, is very friendly to me; but where there are three hundred people there may easily be three traitors."

I assented, and added that from what Fra Bartolo had told me, neither he nor his had much to fear in those parts.

"I believe so, too," added he, caressing his immense mustache, which came down far below his chin on either side. "We have, between us, the best bond of all true friendship, — we need each other. You have brought the ransom in gold, I hope?"

"Yes; in gold of the English mint, too."

"I'd rather have our own. The zecchin has less alloy than your coin, and as what we take generally goes into the crucible, the distinction is of value."

"If I had only known —"

"Never mind. It is too late, now, to think of it. Let us conclude the matter, for I wish to be away by daybreak."

I unfastened my waist-belt, and, opening a secret spring, poured forth a mass of bright sovereigns on the table.

"I have such perfect reliance in your honor, signor," said I, "that I make no conditions, I ask no questions. That you will at once release my countryman, I do not doubt for an instant."

"He is already at liberty," said he, as he continued to

pile the coin in little heaps of ten each. "Every step you took since you arrived at Naples was known to me. I knew the moment you came, the hotel you stopped at, the visit you paid to your minister, the two hours passed in the Bank, your departure in the diligence; and the rascal you engaged for a guide came straight to me after he left you. My police, *signor mio*, is somewhat better organized than Count Cavour's," said he, with a laugh.

The mention of the Count's name reminded me at once to sound him on politics, and see if he, and others like him, in reality interested themselves as partisans on either side.

"Of course," said he, "we liked the old dynasty better than the present people. A splendid court and a brilliant capital attracted strangers from all quarters of Europe. Strangers visited Capri, Amalfi, Pæstum; they went here and there and everywhere. And they paid for their pleasures like gentlemen. The officials, too, of those days were men with bowels, who knew every one must live. What have we now? Piedmontese dogs, who are not Italians; who speak no known tongue, and who have no other worship than the house of Savoy."

"Might I venture to ask," said I, obsequiously, "how is it that I find a man of your acquirements and ability in such a position as this?"

"Because I like this life better than that of an 'Impiegato' with five hundred ducats a year! Perhaps I don't follow it all from choice. Perhaps I have my days of regrets, and such like. But for that, are you yourself so rightly fitted in life — I ask at random — that you feel you are doing the exact thing that suits you? Can you say, as you rise of a morning, 'I was cut out for this kind of existence, — I am exactly where I ought to be'?"

I shook my head in negative, and for some seconds nothing was said on either side.

"The score is all right," said he, at last. "Do you know," — here he gave a very peculiar smile; indeed, his face, so far as I could see, beneath the shadow of his hat and his bushy beard, actually assumed an expression of intense drollery, — "do you know, I begin to think we have made a bad bargain here!"

"How so?" asked I.

"I begin to suspect," said he, "that our prisoner was worth a much heavier ransom, and that his friends would willingly have paid four times this sum for him."

"You are entirely mistaken there," said I. "It is the astonishment of every one that he has been ransomed at all. He is a good-for-nothing spendthrift fellow, whom most families would be heartily glad to be rid of; and so far from being worth a thousand pounds, I believe nine out of ten parents would n't have paid as many shillings for him."

"We all liked him," said he. "We found him pleasant company; and he fell into all our ways like one of ourselves."

"A scamp was sure to do that easier than an honest man," said I, forgetting, in my eagerness, how rude my speech was.

"Perhaps there is truth in what you say, sir," said he, haughtily. "Communities like ours scarcely invite men of unblemished morals, and therefore I do not ask you to return with me."

He arose as he spoke, and swept the coin into a bag which he wore at his side. Still, thought I, he might tell me something more about these brigands. Are they partisans of the Bourbons, or are they mere highwaymen? Here is a man fully equal to the discussion of such a question. Shall I ask him to decide the matter?

"I see," said he, laughing, as I propounded my mystery; "you want to make a book about us. But our people don't understand that sort of curiosity; they distrust, and they occasionally resent it. Stay a week or ten days where you are. Fra Bartolo will feed you better than we should, and cram you with brigand stories better still. You'll find it far pleasanter, and your readers will think so too. Addio;" and he touched his hat in a half-haughty way, and strolled out. I sat down for an instant to recover myself, when the quick clatter of a horse's feet aroused me, and he was gone.

There was no doubt of it; he was a very remarkable man, — one who in happier circumstances might have made a figure in life, and achieved a conspicuous position. Who

was he; whence came he? The Frate could tell me all these things. As the robber said, he could cram me admirably. I arranged at once to stay a week there. My week was prolonged to a fortnight, and I was well into the third week ere I shook his great hand and said good-bye.

During all this I wrote, I may say, from morning till night. At one time it was my Blue Book; at another I took a spell at stories of robber life. I wrote short poems, — songs of the brigands I called them. In fact, I dished up my highwayman in a score of ways, and found him good in all. The portmanteau which I had brought out full of gold I now carried back more closely packed with MSS. I hurried to England, only stopping once to call at the Legation, and learn that Mr. St. John had returned to his post, and was then hard at work in the Chancellerie. When I arrived in London, my report was ready; but as the ministry had fallen the week before, I was obliged to rewrite it, every word. Lord Muddlemore had succeeded my patron, Lord Scatterdale; and as he was a strong Tory, the brigands must be Bourbons for him; and they were so. I had lived amongst them for months, and had eaten of their raw lamb and drunk of their fiery wine, and pledged toasts to the health of Francesco, and “Morte” to everybody else. What splendid fellows I made them! Every chief was a La Rochejaquelin; and as for the little bit of robbery they did now and then, it was only to pay for masses for their souls when they were shot by the Bersaglieri. My Blue Book was printed, quoted by the “Times,” cited in the House; I was called “the intrepid and intelligent witness” by Disraeli; and I was the rage. Dinners fell in showers over me, and invitations to country-houses came by every post. Almost worn out by these flatteries, I was resolving on a course of abstinence, when a most pressing invitation came to a country gathering where Mr. St. John was to be of the party. I had never met him, and, indeed, was rather irritated at the ingratitude he had displayed in never once acknowledging, even by a few lines, the great service I had rendered him. Still I was curious to see a man whose figure occupied so important a place in my life’s tableau.

I went; but St. John had not arrived, — he was detained by

important affairs in town, and feared he should not be able to keep his promise. For myself, perhaps, it was all the better. I had the whole field my own, and discoursed brigandage without the fear of a contradiction.

A favorite representation with me was my first night at Rocco. I used to give it with considerable success. I described the village and the Frate, and then went on to my first sight of the renowned chief himself; for, of course, I never hesitated to call in Stoppa, any more than to impart to his conversation a much higher and wider reach than it actually had any claim to.

My "Stoppa" was pronounced admirable. I lounged, smoked, gesticulated, and declaimed him to perfection. I made him something between William Tell and the Corsican brothers; and nervous people would n't have seen him, I ween, for worlds.

On the occasion that I speak of, the company was a large one, and I outdid myself in my pains to succeed. I even brought down with me the identical portmanteau, and actually appeared in the veritable hat and coat of the original adventure.

My audience was an excellent one; they laughed where I was droll, and positively shrieked where I became pathetic. I had sent round little water-colors of the scenery, and was now proceeding to describe the inn of the Frate, and my first arrival there.

"I will not affect to declare," said I, "that it was altogether without some sense of anxiety — I might even say fear — that I approached the room where this man of crime and bloodshed awaited me. Stoppa! a name that brought terror wherever it was uttered, the word that called the soldiers to arms from the bivouac, and silenced the babe as it sobbed on its mother's breast. I entered the room, however, boldly, and, advancing to the bed where he lay, said in a careless tone, 'Capitano,' — they like the title, — 'Capitano, how goes it?'"

Just as I uttered the words, a heavy hand fell on my shoulder! I turned, and there, there at my side, stood Stoppa himself, dressed exactly as I saw him at Rocco.

Whether it was the terrible look of the fellow, or some

unknown sense of fear that his presence revived, or whether it was a terror lest my senses were deceiving me, and that a wandering brain alone had conjured up the image, I cannot say; but I fainted, and was carried senseless and unconscious to my room. A doctor was sent for, and said something about "meningitis." "I had overworked my brain, overstrained my faculties, and so forth;" with rest and repose, however, I should get over the attack. I had a sharp attack, but in about a week was able to get up again. As all were enjoined to avoid strictly any reference to the topic which it was believed had led to my seizure, and as I myself did not venture to approach it, days passed over with me in a half-dreamy state, my mind continually dwelling on the late incident, and striving to find out some explanation of it.

"Mr. St. John, sir, wishes to pay you a visit," said the servant one morning, as I had just finished my breakfast; and as the man retired, St. John entered the room.

"I am sorry I gave you such a start the other evening," he began. But I could not suffer him to proceed; for, clutching him by the arm, I cried out, "For Heaven's sake, don't trifle with a brain so distracted as mine, but tell me at once, are you —"

"Of course I am," said he, laughing. "You don't fancy, do you, that you are the only man with a gift for humbug?"

"And it was to you I paid the ransom?" gasped I out.

"Who had a better right to it, old fellow? Tell me that," said he, as he drew forth a cigar and lighted it. "You see, the matter was thus: I had lost very heavily at 'Baccarat' at the club; and having already overdrawn my allowance, I was sorely put to. My chief had no great affection for me, and had intimated to the banker that, if I wanted an advance, it would be as well to refuse me. In a word, I found every earth stopped, and was driven to my wits' end. I thought I'd turn brigand, — indeed, if the occasion had offered, perhaps I should, — and then I thought I'd get myself captured by the brigands. No man could complain of a fellow being a defaulter if he had been carried off by robbers. With this intention I set out for Rocco, which had got the reputation of being a spot in favor with these

gentry; but, to my surprise, on arriving there, I discovered Rocco was out of fashion. No brigand had patronized the place for the last three years or more, and the landlord of the White Fox told me that the village was going fast to decay. The Basilicata, in fact, was no longer 'the mode;' and every brigand who had any sense of dignity had betaken himself to the mountains below Atri. Fra Bartolo's account of Stoppa was not so encouraging that I cared to follow him there. He had taken a fancy, of late, for sending the noses as well as the ears of the captives to their friends at Naples, and I shrank from contributing my share to this interesting collection; and it was then it occurred to me to pretend I had been captured, and arrange the terms of my own ransom. Fra Bartolo helped me throughout, — provided my costume, wrote my letters, and, in a word, conducted the whole negotiation like one thoroughly acquainted with all the details. I intended to have confided everything to you so soon as I secured the money, but I saw you so bent on being the hero of a great adventure, and so full of that blessed Blue Book you had come to write, that I felt it would be a sin to disenchant you. There's the whole story; and if you only keep my secret, I'll keep yours. I'm off this week to Rio as second Secretary, so that, at all events, wait till I sail."

"You may trust my prudence for a longer term than that," said I.

"I rather suspect so," said he, laughing. "They say that your clever report on brigandage is to get you a good berth, and I don't think you'll spoil your advancement by an indiscreet disclosure."

We parted with a hearty shake hands, and I never met him till ten years after. How that meeting came about, and why I now reveal this incident, I may relate at another time.

CONFESSION THE SECOND.

AS TO LOVE.



CHAPTER I.

“ IN DOUBT.”

THE door into the anteroom where I was waiting stood half-open, and I heard a very imperious voice say, “Tell Mr. Gosslett it is impossible, — quite impossible! There are above three hundred applicants, and I believe he is about the least suitable amongst them.” A meek-looking young gentleman came out after this; and, closing the door cautiously, said, “My Lord regrets extremely, Mr. Gosslett, that you should have been so late in forwarding your testimonials. He has already filled the place; but if another vacancy occurs, his Lordship will bear your claims in mind.”

I bowed in silent indignation, and withdrew. How I wished there had been any great meeting, any popular gathering, near me at that moment, that I might go down and denounce, with all the force of a wounded and insulted spirit, the insolence of office and the tyranny of the place-holder! With what withering sarcasm I would have flayed those parasites of certain great houses who, without deserts of their own, regard every office under the Crown as their just prerogative! Who was Henry Lord Scatterdale that he should speak thus of Paul Gosslett? What evidences of ability had he given to the world? What illustrious proofs of high capacity as a minister, that he should insult one of those who, by the declared avowal of his party, are the bone and sinew

of England? Let Beales only call another meeting, and shall I not be there to expose these men to the scorn and indignation of the country? Down with the whole rotten edifice of pampered menials and corrupt place-men, — down with families patented to live on the nation, — down with a system which perpetuates the worst intrigues that ever disgraced and demoralized a people, — a system worse than the corrupt rule of the Bourbons of Naples, and more degrading than —

“Now, stoopid!” cried a cabman, as one of his shafts struck me on the shoulder, and sent me spinning into an apple-stall.

I recovered my legs, and turned homewards to my lodgings in a somewhat more subdued spirit.

“Please, sir,” said a dirty maid-of-all-work, entering my room after me, “Mrs. Mechim says the apartment is let to another gentleman after Monday, and please begs you have to pay one pound fourteen and threepence, sir.”

“I know, I know,” said I, impatiently.

“Yes, sir,” replied the smutty face, still standing in the same place.

“Well, I have told you I know all that. You have got your answer, have n’t you?”

“Please yes, sir, but not the money.”

“Leave the room,” said I, haughtily; and my grand imperious air had its success, for I believe she suspected I was a little deranged.

I locked the door to be alone with my own thoughts, and, opening my writing-desk, I spread before me four sovereigns and some silver. “Barely my funeral expenses,” said I, bitterly. I leaned my head on my hand, and fell into a mood of sad thought. I was n’t a bit of a poet. I could n’t have made three lines of verse had you given me a million for it; but somehow I bethought me of Chatterton in his garret, and said to myself, “Like him, poor Gosslett sunk, famished in the midst of plenty, — a man in all the vigor of youth, able, active, and energetic, with a mind richly gifted, and a heart tender as a woman’s.” I could n’t go on. I blubbered out into a fit of crying that nearly choked me.

“Please, sir,” said the maid, tapping at the door, “the gentleman in the next room begs you not to laugh so loud.”

“Laugh!” burst I out. “Tell him, woman, to take care and be present at the inquest. His evidence will be invaluable.” As I spoke, I threw myself on my bed, and fell soon after into a sound sleep.

When I woke, it was night. The lamps were lighted in the street, and a small, thin rain was falling, blurring the gas-flame, and making everything look indistinct and dreary. I sat at the window and looked out, I know not how long. The world was crape-covered to me; not a thought of it that was not dark and dismal. I tried to take a retrospect of my life, and see where and how I might have done better; but all I could collect was, that I had met nothing but ingratitude and injustice, while others, with but a tithe of my capacity, had risen to wealth and honor. I, fated to evil from my birth, fought my long fight with fortune, and sank at last, exhausted. “I wonder will any one ever say, ‘Poor Gosslett’? I wonder will there be—even late though it be—one voice to declare, ‘That was no common man! Gosslett, in any country but our own, would have been distinguished and honored. To great powers of judgment he united a fancy rich, varied, and picturesque; his temperament was poetic, but his reasoning faculties asserted the mastery over his imagination’? Will they be acute enough to read me thus? Will they know,—in one word,—will they know the man they have suffered to perish in the midst of them?” My one gleam of comfort was the unavailing regret I should leave to a world that had neglected me. “Yes,” said I, bitterly, “weep on, and cease not.”

I made a collection of all my papers,—some of them very curious indeed,—stray fragments of my life,—brief jottings of my opinions on the current topics of the day. I sealed these carefully up, and began to bethink me whom I should appoint my literary executor. I had not the honor of his acquaintance, but how I wished I had known Martin Tupper! There were traits in that man’s writings that seemed to vibrate in the closer chambers of my heart. While others gave you words and phrases, he gave you the outgoings of a warm nature,—the overflowings of an affectionate heart. I canvassed long with myself whether a stranger might dare to address him, and prefer such a

request as mine; but I could not summon courage to take the daring step.

After all, thought I, a man's relatives are his natural heirs. My mother's sister had married a Mr. Morse, who had retired from business, and settled down in a cottage near Rochester. He had been "in rags" — I mean the business of that name — for forty years, and made a snug thing of it; but, by an unlucky speculation, had lost more than half of his savings. Being childless, and utterly devoid of affection for any one, he had purchased an annuity on the joint lives of his wife and himself, and retired to pass his days near his native town.

I never liked him, nor did he like me. He was a hard, stern, coarse-natured man, who thought that any one who had ever failed in anything was a creature to be despised, and saw nothing in want of success but an innate desire to live in indolence, and be supported by others. He often asked me why I did n't turn coal-heaver? He said he would have been a coal-heaver rather than be dependent upon his relations.

My aunt might originally have been somewhat softer-natured, but time and association had made her very much like my uncle. Need I say that I saw little of them, and never, under any circumstances, wrote a line to either of them?

I determined I would go down and see them, and, not waiting for morning nor the rail, that I would go on foot. It was raining torrents by this time, but what did I care for that? When the ship was drifting on the rocks, what mattered a leak more or less?

It was dark night when I set out; and when day broke, dim and dreary, I was soaked thoroughly through, and not more than one-fifth of the way. There was, however, that in the exercise, and in the spirit it called forth, to rally me out of my depression; and I plodded along through mud and mire, breasting the swooping rain in a far cheerier frame than I could have thought possible. It was closing into darkness as I reached the little inn where the cottage stood, and I was by this time fairly beat between fatigue and hunger.

“Here’s a go!” cried my uncle, who opened the door for me. “Here’s Paul Gosslett, just as we’re going to dinner.”

“The very time to suit him,” said I, trying to be jocular.

“Yes, lad, but will it suit us? We’ve only an Irish stew, and not too much of it, either.”

“How are you, Paul?” said my aunt, offering her hand.

“You seem wet through. Won’t you dry your coat?”

“Oh, it’s no matter,” said I. “I never mind wet.”

“Of course he does n’t,” said my uncle. “What would he do if he was up at the ‘diggings’? What would he do if he had to pick rags as I have, ten, twelve hours at a stretch, under heavier rain than this?”

“Just so, sir,” said I, concurring with all he said.

“And what brought you down, lad?” asked he.

“I think, sir, it was to see you and my aunt. I have n’t been very well of late, and I fancied a day in the country might rally me.”

“Stealing a holiday, — the old story,” muttered he.

“Are you doing anything now?”

“No, sir. I have unfortunately nothing to do.”

“Why not go on the quay then, and turn coal-heaver? I’d not eat bread of another man’s earning when I could carry a sack of coals. Do you understand that?”

“Perhaps I do, sir; but I’m scarcely strong enough to be a coal-porter.”

“Sell matches, then, — lucifer matches!” cried he, with a bang of his hand on the table, “or be a poster.”

“Oh, Tom!” cried my aunt, who saw that I had grown first red, and then sickly pale all over.

“As good men as he have done both. But here’s the dinner, and I suppose you must have your share of it.”

I was in no mood to resent this invitation, discourteous as it was, for I was in no mood to resent anything. I was crushed and humbled to a degree that I began to regard my abject condition as a martyr might his martyrdom.

The meal went over somewhat silently; little was spoken on any side. A half-jocular remark on the goodness of my appetite was the only approach to a pleasantry. My uncle drank something which by the color I judged to be port, but

he neither offered it to my aunt nor myself. She took water, and I drank largely of beer, which once more elicited a compliment to me on my powers of suction.

"Better have you for a week than a fortnight, lad," said my uncle, as we drew round the fire after dinner.

My aunt now armed herself with some knitting apparatus, while my uncle, flanked by a smoking glass of toddy on one side and the "Tizer" on the other, proceeded to fill his pipe with strong tobacco, puffing out at intervals short and pithy apothegms about youth being the season for work and age for repose, — under the influence of whose drowsy wisdom, and overcome by the hot fire, I fell off fast asleep. For a while I was so completely lost in slumber that I heard nothing around. At last I began to dream of my long journey, and the little towns I had passed through, and the places I fain would have stopped at to bait and rest, but nobly resisted, never breaking bread nor tasting water till I had reached my journey's end. At length I fancied I heard people calling me by my name, some saying words of warning or caution, and others jeering and bantering me; and then quite distinctly, — as clearly as though the words were in my ear, — I heard my annt say, —

"I'm sure Lizzy would take him. She was shamefully treated by that heartless fellow, but she's getting over it now; and if any one, even Paul there, offered, I'm certain she'd not refuse him."

"She has a thousand pounds," grunted out my uncle.

"Fourteen hundred in the bank; and as they have no other child, they must leave her everything they have, when they die."

"It won't be much. Old Dan has little more than his vicarage, and he always ends each year a shade deeper in debt than the one before it."

"Well, she has her own fortune, and nobody can touch that."

I roused myself, yawned aloud, and opened my eyes.

"Pretty nigh as good a hand at sleeping as eating," said my uncle, gruffly.

"It's a smart bit of a walk from Duke Street, Piccadilly," said I, with more vigor than I had yet assumed.

“Why, a fellow of your age ought to do that twice a week just to keep him in wind.”

“I say, Paul,” said my aunt, “were you ever in Ireland?”

“Never, aunt. Why do you ask me?”

“Because you said a little while back that you felt rather poorly of late, — low and weakly.”

“No loss of appetite, though,” chuckled in my uncle.

“And we were thinking,” resumed she, “of sending you over to stay a few weeks with an old friend of ours in Donegal. He calls it the finest air in Europe; and I know he’d treat you with every kindness.”

“Do you shoot?” asked my uncle.

“No, sir.”

“Nor fish?”

“No, sir.”

“What are you as a sportsman? Can you ride? Can you do anything?”

“Nothing whatever, sir. I once carried a game-bag, and that was all.”

“And you’re not a farmer nor a judge of cattle. How are you to pass your time, I’d like to know?”

“If there were books, or if there were people to talk to —”

“Mrs. Dudgeon’s deaf, — she’s been deaf these twenty years; but she has a daughter. Is Lizzy deaf?”

“Of course she’s not,” rejoined my aunt, tartly.

“Well, she’d talk to you; and Dan would talk. Not much, I believe, though; he a’n’t a great fellow for talk.”

“They’re something silent all of them, but Lizzy is a nice girl and very pretty, — at least she was when I saw her here two years ago.”

“At all events, they are distant connections of your mother’s; and as you are determined to live on your relations, I think you ought to give them a turn.”

“There is some justice in that, sir,” said I, determined now to resent no rudeness, nor show offence at any coarseness, however great it might be.

“Well, then, I’ll write to-morrow, and say you’ll follow my letter, and be with them soon after they receive it. I believe it’s a lonely sort of place enough, — Dan calls it

next door to Greenland; but there's good air, and plenty of it."

We talked for some time longer over the family whose guest I was to be, and I went off to bed, determined to see out this new act of my life's drama before I whistled for the curtain to drop.

It gave a great additional interest besides to my journey to have overheard the hint my aunt threw out about a marriage. It was something more than a mere journey for change of air. It might be a journey to change the whole character and fortune of my life. And was it not thus one's fate ever turned? You went somewhere by a mere accident, or you stopped at home. You held a hand to help a lady into a boat, or you assisted her off her horse, or you took her in to dinner; and out of something insignificant and trivial as this your whole life's destiny was altered. And not alone your destiny, but your very nature; your temper, as fashioned by another's temper; your tastes, as moulded by others' tastes; and your morality, your actual identity, was the sport of a casualty too small and too poor to be called an incident.

"Is this about to be the turning-point in my life?" asked I of myself. "Is Fortune at last disposed to bestow a smile upon me? Is it out of the very depth of my despair I'm to catch sight of the first gleam of light that has fallen upon my luckless career?"

CHAPTER II.

THE REV. DAN DUDGEON.

MY plan of procedure was to be this. I was supposed to be making a tour in Ireland, when, hearing of certain connections of my mother's family living in Donegal, I at once wrote to my uncle Morse for an introduction to them, and he not only provided me with a letter accrediting me, but wrote by the same post to the Dudgeons to say I was sure to pay them a visit.

On arriving in Dublin I was astonished to find so much that seemed unlike what I had left behind me. That intense preoccupation, that anxious eager look of business so remarkable in Liverpool, was not to be found here. If the people really were busy, they went about their affairs in a half-lounging, half-jocular humor, as though they would n't be selling hides, or shipping pigs, or landing sugar hogs-heads, if they had anything else to do, — as if trade was a dirty necessity, and the only thing was to get through with it with as little interruption as possible to the pleasanter occupations of life.

Such was the aspect of things on the quays. The same look pervaded the Exchange, and the same air of little to do, and of deeming it a joke while doing it, abounded in the law courts, where the bench exchanged witty passages with the bar; and the prisoners, the witnesses, and the jury fired smart things at each other with a seeming geniality and enjoyment that were very remarkable. I was so much amused by all I saw, that I would willingly have delayed some days in the capital; but my uncle had charged me to present myself at the vicarage without any unnecessary delay; so I determined to set out at once.

I was not, I shame to own, much better up in the geography of Ireland than in that of Central Africa, and had but a very vague idea whither I was going.

"Do you know Donégäl?" asked I of the waiter, giving to my pronunciation of the word a long second and a short third syllable.

"No, your honor, never heard of him," was the answer.

"But it's a place I'm asking for, — a county," said I, with some impatience.

"Faix, maybe it is," said he; "but it's new to me, all the same."

"He means Donegäl," said a red-whiskered man with a bronzed weather-beaten face, and a stern defiant air, that invited no acquaintanceship.

"Oh, Donegäl," chimed in the waiter. "Begorra! it would n't be easy to know it by the name your honor gav' it."

"Are you looking for any particular place in that county?" asked the stranger in a tone sharp and imperious as his former speech.

"Yes," said I, assuming a degree of courtesy that I thought would be the best rebuke to his bluntness; "but I'll scarcely trust myself with the pronunciation after my late failure. This is the place I want;" and I drew forth my uncle's letter and showed the address.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" cried he, reading aloud. "'The Reverend Daniel Dudgeon, Killyrotherum, Donegal.' And are you going there? Oh, I see you are," said he, turning his eyes to the foot of the address. "'Favored by Paul Gosslett, Esq.;" and you are Paul Gosslett."

"Yes, sir, with your kind permission, I am Paul Gosslett," said I, with what I hoped was a chilling dignity of manner.

"If it's only my permission you want, you may be anything you please," said he, turning his insolent stare full on me.

I endeavored not to show any sensitiveness to this impertinence, and went on with my dinner, the stranger's table being quite close to mine.

"It's your first appearance in Ireland, I suspect," said

he, scanning me as he picked his teeth, and sat carelessly with one leg crossed over the other.

I bowed a silent acquiescence, and he went on. "I declare that I believe a Cockney, though he has n't a word of French, is more at home on the Continent than in Ireland." He paused for some expression of opinion on my part, but I gave none. I filled my glass, and affected to admire the color of the wine, and sipped it slowly, like one thoroughly engaged in his own enjoyments.

"Don't you agree with me?" asked he, fiercely.

"Sir, I have not given your proposition such consideration as would entitle me to say I concur with it or not."

"That's not it at all!" broke he in, with an insolent laugh; "but you won't allow that you're a Cockney."

"I protest, sir," said I, sternly; "I have yet to learn that I'm bound to make a declaration of my birth, parentage, and education to the first stranger I sit beside in a coffee-room."

"No, you're not, — nothing of the kind, — for it's done for you. It's done in spite of you, when you open your mouth. Did n't you see the waiter running out of the room with the napkin in his mouth when you tried to say Donegal? Look here, Paul," said he, drawing his chair confidentially towards my table. "We don't care a rush what you do with your H's, or your W's, either; but, if we can help it, we won't have our national names miscalled. We have a pride in them, and we'll not suffer them to be mutilated or disfigured. Do you understand me now?"

"Sufficiently, sir, to wish you a very good-night," said I, rising from the table, and leaving my pint of sherry, of which I had only drunk one glass.

As I closed the coffee-room door, I thought — indeed, I'm certain — I heard a loud roar of laughter.

"Who is that most agreeable gentleman I sat next at dinner?" asked I of the waiter.

"Counsellor MacNamara, sir. Is n't he a nice man?"

"A charming person," said I.

"I wish you heard him in the court, sir. By my conscience, a witness has a poor time under him! He'd humbug you if you was an archbishop."

"Call me at five," said I, passing up the stairs, and impatient to gain my room and be alone with my indignation.

I passed a restless, feverish night, canvassing with myself whether I would not turn back and leave forever a country whose first aspect was so forbidding and unpromising. What stories had I not heard of Irish courtesy to strangers, — Irish wit and Irish pleasantry! Was this, then, a specimen of that captivating manner which makes these people the French of Great Britain? Why, this fellow was an unmitigated savage!

Having registered a vow not to open my lips to a stranger till I reached the end of my journey, and to affect deafness rather than be led into conversation, I set off the next day, by train, for Derry. True to my resolve, I only uttered the word "beer" till I arrived in the evening. The next day I took the steamer to a small village called Cushnagorra, from whence it was only ten miles by a good mountain-road to Killyrotherum Bay. I engaged a car to take me on, and at last found myself able to ask a few questions without the penalty of being cross-examined by an impertinent barrister, and being made the jest of a coffee-room.

I wanted to learn something about the people to whose house I was going, and asked Pat, accordingly, if he knew Mr. Dudgeon.

"Troth I do, sir, well," said he.

"He's a good kind of man, I'm told," said I.

"He is, indeed, sir; no better."

"Kind to the poor, and charitable?"

"Thru for you; that's himself."

"And his family is well liked down here?"

"I'll be bound they are. There's few like them to the fore."

Rather worried by the persistent assent he gave me, and seeing that I had no chance of deriving anything like an independent opinion from my courteous companion, I determined to try another line. After smoking a cigar and giving one to my friend, who seemed to relish it vastly, I said, as if incidentally, "Where I got that cigar, Paddy, the people are better off than here."

"And where's that, sir?"

“In America, in the State of Virginia.”

“That’s as thru as the Bible. It’s elegant times they have there.”

“And one reason is,” said I, “every man can do what he likes with his own. You have a bit of land here, and you dare n’t plant tobacco; or if you sow oats or barley, you must n’t malt it. The law says, ‘You may do this, and you sha’n’t do that;’ and is that freedom, I ask, or is it slavery?”

“Slavery, — devil a less,” said he, with a cut of his whip that made the horse plunge into the air.

“And do you know why that’s done? Do you know the secret of it all?”

“Sorra a bit o’ me.”

“I’ll tell you, then. It’s to keep up the Church; it’s to feed the parsons that don’t belong to the people, — that’s what they put the taxes on tobacco and whiskey for. What, I’d like to know, do you and I want with that place there with the steeple? What does the Rev. Daniel Dudgeon do for you or me? Grind us, — squeeze us, — maybe, come down on us when we’re trying to scrape a few shillings together, and carry it off for tithes.”

“Shure and he’s a hard man! He’s taking the herrins out of the net this year, — for every ten herrins he takes one.”

“And do they bear that?”

“Well, they do,” said he, mournfully; “they’ve no spirit down here; but over at Muggle-na-garry they put slugs in one last winter.”

“One what?”

“A parson, your honor; and it did him a dale o’ good. He’s as meek as a child now about his dues, and they’ve no trouble with him in life.”

“They’ll do that with Dudgeon yet, maybe?” asked I.

“With the Lord’s blessing, sir,” said he, piously.

Satisfied now that it was not a very hopeful task to obtain much information about Ireland from such a source, I drew my hat over my eyes and affected to doze for the remainder of the journey.

We arrived, at length, at the foot of a narrow road,

impassable by the car, and here the driver told me I must descend and make the rest of my way on foot.

"The house was n't far," he said; "only over the top of the hill in front of me, — about half-a-quarter of a mile away."

Depositing my portmanteau under a clump of furze, I set out,—drearily enough, I will own. The scene around me, for miles, was one of arid desolation. It was not that no trace of human habitation, nor of any living creature was to be seen, but that the stony, shingly soil, totally destitute of all vegetation, seemed to deny life to anything. The surface rose and fell in a monotonous undulation, like a great sea suddenly petrified, while here and there some greater boulders represented those mighty waves which in the ocean seem to assert supremacy over their fellows.

At last I gained the crest of the ridge, and could see the Atlantic, which indented the shore beneath into many a little bay and inlet; but it was some time ere I could distinguish a house which stood in a narrow cleft of the mountain, and whose roof, kept down by means of stones and rocks, had at first appeared to me as a part of the surface of the soil. The strong wind almost carried me off my legs on this exposed ridge; so, crouching down, I began my descent, and after half an hour's creeping and stumbling, I reached a little enclosed place, where stood the house. It was a long, one-storied building, with cow-house and farm-offices under the same roof. The hall-door had been evidently long in disuse, since it was battened over with strong planks, and secured, besides, against the northwest wind by a rough group of rocks. Seeing entrance to be denied on this side, I made for the rear of the house, where a woman, beating flax under a shed, at once addressed me civilly, and ushered me into the house.

"His riv'rence is in there," said she, pointing to a door, and leaving me to announce myself. I knocked, and entered. It was a small room, with an antiquated fireplace, at which the parson and his wife and daughter were seated, — he reading a very much-crumpled newspaper, and they knitting.

"Oh, this is Mr. Gosslett. How are you, sir?" asked

Mr. Dudgeon, seizing and shaking my hand; while his wife said, "We were just saying we'd send down to look after you. My daughter Lizzy, Mr. Gosslett."

Lizzy smiled faintly, but did not speak. I saw, however, that she was a pretty, fair-haired girl, with delicate features and a very gentle expression.

"It's a wild bit of landscape here, Mr. Gosslett; but of a fine day, with the sun on it, and the wind not so stroug, it's handsome enough."

"It's grand," said I, rather hesitating to find the epithet I wanted.

Mrs. D. sighed, and I thought her daughter echoed it; but as his reverence now bustled away to send some one to fetch my trunk, I took my place at the fire, and tried to make myself at home.

A very brief conversation enabled me to learn that Mr. Dudgeon came to the parish on his marriage, about four-and-twenty years before, and neither he nor his wife had ever left it since. They had no neighbors, and only six parishioners of their own persuasion. The church was about a mile off, and not easily approached in bad weather. It seemed, too, that the bishop and Mr. D. were always at war. The diocesan was a Whig, and the parson a violent Orangeman, who loved loyal anniversaries, demonstrations, and processions, the latter of which came twice or thrice a year from Derry to visit him and stir up any amount of bitterness and party strife; and though the Rev. Dan, as he was familiarly called, was obliged to pass the long interval between these triumphant exhibitions exposed to the insolence and outrage of the large masses he had offended, he never blinked the peril, but actually dared it, wearing his bit of orange ribbon in his button-hole as he went down the village, and meeting Father Lafferty's scowl with a look of defiance and insult fierce as his own.

After years of episcopal censure and reproof, administered without the slightest amendment, — for Dan never appeared at a visitation, and none were hardy enough to follow him into his fastness, — he was suffered to do what he pleased, and actually abandoned as one of those hopeless cases which time alone can clear off and remedy. An

incident, however, which had befallen about a couple of years back, had almost released the bishop from his difficulty.

In an affray following on a twelfth of July demonstration, a man had been shot; and though the Rev. Dan was not in any degree implicated in the act, some imprudent allusion to the event in his Sunday's discourse got abroad in the press, and was so severely commented on by a young barrister on the trial, that an inhibition was issued against him, and his church closed for three months.

I have been, thus far, prolix in sketching the history of those with whom I was now to be domesticated, because, once placed before the reader, my daily life is easily understood. We sat over the fire nearly all day, abusing the Papists, and wondering if England would ever produce one man who could understand the fact that unless you banished the priests and threw down the chapels there was no use in making laws for Ireland.

Then we dined, usually on fish, and a bit of bacon, after which we drank the glorious, pious, and immortal memory, with the brass money, the wooden shoes, and the rest of it, — the mild Lizzy herself being "told off" to recite the toast, as her father had a sore throat and could n't utter; and the fair, gentle lips, that seldom parted save to smile, delivered the damnatory clause against all who would n't drink that toast, and sentenced them to be "rammed, jammed, and crammed," as the act declares, in a way that actually amazed me.

If the peasant who drove me over to Killyrotherum did not add much to my knowledge of Ireland by the accuracy of his facts or the fixity of his opinions, the Rev. Dan assuredly made amends for all these shortcomings; for he saw the whole thing at a glance, and knew why Ireland was ungovernable, and how she could be made prosperous and happy, just as he knew how much poteen went to a tumbler of punch; and though occasionally despondent when the evening began, as it grew towards bedtime and the decanter waxed low, he had usually arrived at a glorious millennium, when every one wore an orange lily, and the whole world was employed in singing "Croppies lie down."

CHAPTER III.

THE RUNAWAY.

I SUPPOSE I must be a very routine sort of creature, who loves to get into a groove and never leave it. Indeed, I recognize this feature of my disposition in the pleasure I feel in being left to myself, and my own humdrum way of diverting my time. At all events, I grew to like my life at Killyrotherum. The monotony that would have driven most men to despair was to me soothing and grateful.

A breezy walk with Lizzy down to the village after breakfast, where she made whatever purchases the cares of household demanded, sufficed for exercise. After that I wrote a little in my own room, — short, jotting notes, that might serve to recall, on some future day, the scarcely tinted surface of my quiet existence, and occasionally putting down such points as puzzled me, — problems whose solution I must try to arrive at with time and opportunity. Perhaps a brief glance at the pages of this diary, as I open it at random, may serve to show how time went over with me.

Here is an entry: —

Friday, 17th November. — Mem., to find out from D. D. the exact explanation of his words last night, and which possibly fatigue may have made obscure to me. Is it Sir Wm. Vernon or the Pope who is Antichrist?

Query: also, would not brass money be better than no halfpence? and are not wooden shoes as good as bare feet?

Why does the parish clerk always bring up a chicken when he comes with a message?

Lizzy did not own she made the beefsteak dumpling, but the maid seemed to let the secret out by bringing in a little amethyst ring she had forgotten on the kitchen table. I

wish she knew that I'd be glad she could make dumplings. I am fond of dumplings. To try and tell her this.

Mrs. D. suspects Lizzy is attached to me. I don't think she approves of it. D. D. would not object if I became an Orangeman. Query, what effect would that have on my future career? Could I be an Orangeman without being able to sing the "Boyne Water"? for I never could hum a tune in my life. To inquire about this.

Who was the mau who behaved badly to Lizzy? And how did he behave badly? This is a very vital point, though not easy to come at.

18th. — Lizzy likes — I may say loves — me. The avowal was made this morning, when I was carrying up two pounds of sugar and one of soap from the village. She said, "Oh, Mr. Gosslett, if you knew how unhappy I am!"

And I laid down the parcel, and, taking her hand in mine, said, "Darling, tell me all!" and she grew very red and flurried, and said, "Nonsense, don't be a fool! Take care Tobias don't run away with the soap. I wanted to confide in you, to trust you. I don't want to —" And there she fell a-crying, and sobbed all the way home, though I tried to console her as well as the basket would permit me. Mem. — Not to be led into any tenderesses till the marketing is brought home. Wonder does Lizzy require me to fight the man who behaved badly? What on earth was it he did?

A great discovery coming home from church to-day. D. D. asked me if I had detected anything in his sermon of that morning which I could possibly call violent, illiberal, or uncharitable. As I had not listened to it, I was the better able to declare that there was not a word of it I could object to. "Would you believe it, Gosslett," said he, — and he never had called me Gosslett before, — "that was the very sermon they arraigned me for in the Queen's Bench; and that mild passage about the Virgin Mary, you'd imagine it was murder I was instilling. You heard it to-day, and know if it's not true. Well, sir," continued he, after a pause, "Tom MacNamara blackguarded me for twenty minutes on it before the whole court, screeching out, 'This is your parson! this is your instructor of the poor man! your Christian guide! your comforter! These are the teachings

that are to wean the nation from bloodshed, and make men obedient to the law and grateful for its protection!' Why do you think he did this? Because I would n't give him my daughter, — a Papist rascal as he is! That's the whole of it. I published my sermon and sent it to the bishop, and he inhibited me! It was clear enough what he meant; he wanted to be made archbishop, and he knew what would please the Whigs. 'My Lord,' said I, 'these are the principles that placed the Queen on the throne of this realm. If it was n't to crush Popery he came, King William crossed the Boyne for nothing.'"

He went on thus till we reached home; but I had such a headache, from his loud utterance, that I had to lie down and sleep it off.

Monday, 31st. — A letter from Aunt Morse. Very dry and cold. Asks if I have sufficiently recovered from my late attack to be able to resume habits of activity and industry? Why, she knows well enough I have nothing to engage my activity and industry, for I will not be a coal-heaver, let uncle say what he likes. Aunt surmises that possibly some tender sentiment may be at the bottom of my attachment to Ireland, and sternly recalls me to the fact that I am not the possessor of landed property and an ancient family mansion in a good county. What can she mean by these warnings? Was it not herself that I overheard asking my uncle, "Would not he do for Lizzy?" How false women are! I wish I could probe that secret about the man that behaved ill; there are so many ways to behave ill, and to be behaved ill by. Shall I put a bold face on it, and ask Lizzy?

Great news has the post brought. Sir Morris Stamer is going out Lord High Commissioner to the Ionian Islands, and offers to take me as private sec.

It is a brilliant position, and one to marry on. I shall ask Lizzy to-day.

Wednesday, all settled; — but what have I not gone through these last three days! She loves me to distraction; but she'll tell nothing, — nothing till we're married. She says, and with truth, "confidence is the nurse of love." I

wish she was n't so coy. I have not even kissed her hand. She says Irish girls are all coy.

We are to run away, and be married at a place called Articlane. I don't know why we run away; but this is another secret I'm to hear later on. Quiet and demure as she looks, Lizzy has a very decided disposition. She overbears all opposition, and has a peremptory way of saying, "Don't be a fool, G.!" — she won't call me Paul, only G., — "and just do as I bade you." I hope she'll explain why this is so, — after our marriage.

I'm getting terribly afraid of the step we're about to take. I feel quite sure it was the Rev. Dan who shot the Papist on that anniversary affair; and I know he'd shoot me if he thought I had wronged him. Is there any way out of this embarrassment?

What a headache I have! We have been singing Orange songs for four hours. I think I hear that odious shake on the word "ba-a-t-tle," as it rhymes to "rat—tle," in old Dan's song. It goes through my brain still; and to-morrow, at daybreak, we're to run away! Lizzy's bundle is here, in my room; and Tom Ryan's boat is all ready under the rocks, and we're to cross the bay. It sounds very rash when one comes to think of it. I'm sure my Aunt Morse will never forgive it. But Lizzy, all so gentle and docile as she seems, has a very peremptory way with her; and as she promises to give me explanations for everything later on, I have agreed to all. How it blows! There has not been so bad a night since I came here. If it should be rough to-morrow morning, will she still insist on going? I'm a poor sort of sailor at the best of times; but if there's a sea on, I shall be sick as a dog! And what a situation, — a seasick bridegroom running off with his bride! That was a crash! I thought the old house was going clean away. The ploughs and harrows they've put on the roof to keep the slates down perform very wild antics in a storm.

I suppose this is the worst climate in Europe. D. D. said, yesterday, that the length of the day made the only difference between summer and winter; and, oh dear! what an advantage does this confer on winter?

Now to bed, — though I'm afraid not to sleep; amid

such a racket and turmoil, rest is out of the question. Who knows when, where, and how I shall make the next entry in this book? But, as Mr. Dudgeon says, when he finishes his tumbler, "Such is life! such is life!"

I wonder will Lizzy insist on going on if the weather continues like this? I'm sure no boatman with a wife and family could be fairly asked to go out in such a storm. I do not think I would have the right to induce a poor man to peril his life, and the support of those who depend upon him, for my own — what shall I call it? — my own gratification, — that might be for a picnic; — my own, — no, not happiness, because that is a term of time and continuity; — my own — There goes a chimney, as sure as fate! How they sleep here through everything! There's that fellow who minds the cows snoring through it all in the loft overhead; and he might, for all he knew, have been squashed under that fall of masonry. Was that a tap at the door? I thought I heard it twice.

Yes, it was Lizzy. She had not been to bed. She went out as far as the church rock to see the sea. She says it was grander than she could describe. There is a faint moon, and the clouds are scudding along, as though racing against the waves below; but I refuse to go out and see it, all the same. I'll turn in, and try to get some sleep before morning.

I was sound asleep, though the noise of the storm was actually deafening, when Lizzy again tapped at my door, and at last, opening it slightly, pushed a lighted candle inside, and disappeared. If there be a dreary thing in life, it is to get up before day of a dark, raw morning, in a room destitute of all comfort and convenience, and proceed to wash and dress in cold, gloom, and misery, with the consciousness that what you are about to do not only might be safer and better undone, but may, and not at all improbably will, turn out the rashest act of your life.

Over and over I said to myself, "If I were to tell her that I have a foreboding, — a distinct foreboding of calamity; that I dreamed a dream, and saw myself on a raft, while waves, mountain high, rose above me, and depths yawned beneath, — dark, fathomless, and terrible, — would she mind

it?" I declare, on my sacred word of honor, — I declare I think she'd laugh at me!

"Are you ready?" whispered a soft voice at the door; and I saw at once my doom was pronounced.

Noiselessly, stealthily, we crept down the stairs, and, crossing the little flagged kitchen, undid the heavy bars of the door. Shall I own that a thought of treason shot through me as I stood with the great bolt in my hands, and the idea flashed across me, "What if I were to let it fall with a crash, and awake the household?" Did she divine what was passing in my head, as she silently took the bar from me, and put it away?

We were now in the open air, breasting a swooping nor-wester that chilled the very marrow of my bones. She led the way through the dark night as though it were noonday, and I followed, tumbling over stones and rocks and tufts of heather, and falling into holes, and scrambling out again like one drunk. I could hear her laughing at me too, — she who so seldom laughed; and it was with difficulty she could muster gravity enough to say she hoped I had not hurt myself.

We gained the pier at last, and, guided by a lantern held by one of the boatmen, we saw the boat bobbing and tossing some five feet down below. Lizzy sprang in at once, amidst the applauding cheers of the crew; and then several voices cried out, "Now, sir! Now, your honor!" while two stout fellows pushed me vigorously, as though to throw me into the sea. I struggled and fought manfully, but in vain. I was jerked off my legs, and hurled headlong down, and found myself caught below by some strong arms, though not until I had half sprained my wrist, and barked one of my shins from knee to instep. These sufferings soon gave way to others, as I became sea-sick, and lay at the bottom of the boat, praying we might all go down, and end a misery I could no longer endure. That spars struck me, and ballast rolled over me; that heavy-footed sailors trampled me, and seemed to dance on me, — were things I minded not. Great waves broke over the bows, and came in sheets of foam and water over me. What cared I? I had that death-like sickness that makes all life hideous, and I felt I had reached a

depth of degradation and misery in which there was only one desire, — that for death. That we succeeded in clearing the point which formed one side of the bay was little short of a miracle, and I remember the cheer the boatmen gave as the danger was passed, and my last hope of our all going down left me. After this, I know no more.

A wild confusion of voices, a sort of scuffling uproar, a grating sound, and more feet dancing over me, aroused me. I looked up. It was dawn; a gray murky streak lay towards the horizon, and sheets of rain were carried swiftly on the winds. We were being dragged up on a low shingly shore, and the men—up to their waists in water—were carrying the boat along.

As I looked over the gunwale, I saw a huge strong fellow rush down the slope, and breasting the waves as they beat, approach the boat. Lizzy sprang into his arms at once, and he carried her back to land triumphantly. I suppose at any other moment a pang of jealousy might have shot through me. Much sea-sickness, like perfect love, overcometh all things. I felt no more, as I gazed, than if it had been a bundle he had been clasping to his bosom.

They lifted me up, and laid me on the shingle.

“Oh, do, Tom; he is such a good creature!” said a voice which, low as it was, I heard distinctly.

“By all that’s droll! this is the Cockney I met at Morrisson’s!” cried a loud voice. I looked up; and there, bending over me, was Counsellor MacNamara, the bland stranger I had fallen in with at Dublin.

“Are you able to get on your legs,” asked he, “or shall we have you carried?”

“No,” said I, faintly; “I’d rather lie here.”

“Oh, we can’t leave him here, Tom; it’s too cruel.”

“I tell you, Lizzy,” said he, impatiently, “there’s not a minute to lose.”

“Let them carry him, then,” said she, pleadingly.

I mildly protested my wish to live and die where I lay; but they carried me up somewhere, and they put me to bed, and they gave me hot drinks, and I fell into, not a sleep, but a trance, that lasted twenty-odd hours.

“Faix! they had a narrow escape of it,” were the first

intelligible words I heard on awaking. "They were only just married and druv off when old Dan Dudgeon came up, driving like mad. He was foaming with passion, and said if he went to the gallows for it, he'd shoot the rascal that abused his hospitality and stole his daughter. The lady left this note for your honor."

It went thus: —

"DEAR MR. GOSSLETT, — You will, I well know, bear me no ill-will for the little fraud I have practised on you. It was an old engagement, broken off by a momentary imprudence on Tom's part; but as I knew he loved me, it was forgiven. My father would not have ever consented to the match, and we were driven to this strait. I entreat you to forgive and believe me

"Most truly yours,

"LIZZY MACNAMARA."

I stole quietly out of Ireland after this, and got over to the Isle of Man, where I learned that my patron had thrown up his Ionian appointment, and I was once again on the world.

CONFESSION THE LAST.

AS TO LAW.

I do not exactly know why I sit down to make this my last confession. I can scarcely be a guide to any one. I even doubt if I can be a warning, for when a man is as miserably unlucky as I have proved myself, the natural inference is to regard him as the exception to the ordinary lot of mortals, — a craft fated to founder ere it was launched. It's all very well to deny the existence of such a thing as luck. It sounds splendidly wise in the Latin moralist to say, "*Non numen habes fortuna si sit prudentia*," which is the old story of putting the salt on the bird's tail over again, since, I say, we can always assume the "*prudentia*" where there is the "*fortuna*," and in the same way declare that the unlucky man failed because he was deficient in that same gift of foresight.

Few men knew life so thoroughly in every condition, and under every aspect, as the first Napoleon, and he invariably asked, when inquiring into the fitness of a man for a great command, "Is he lucky?" To my own thinking, it would be as truthful to declare that there was no element of luck in whist, as to say there was no such thing as luck in life. Now, all the "*prudentia*" in the world will not give a man four by honors; and though a good player may make a better fight with a bad hand than an indifferent performer, there is that amount of badness occasionally dealt out that no skill can compensate; and do what he may, he must lose the game.

Now, I am by no means about to set up as a model of prudence, industry, or perseverance; as little can I lay claim

to anything like natural ability or cleverness. I am essentially common-place, — one of those men taken “*ex medio acervo*” of humanity, whose best boast is that they form the staple of the race, and are the majority in all nations.

There is a very pleasant passage in Lockhart’s *Life of Scott*. I cannot lay my hand on it, and may spoil it in the attempt to quote, but the purport is, that one day when Lockhart had used the word “*vulgar*” in criticising the manners of some people they had been discussing, Sir Walter rebuked him for the mistaken sense he had ascribed to the expression. *Vulgar*, said he, is only common, and common means general; and what is the general habit and usage of mankind has its base and foundation in a feeling and sentiment that we must not lightly censure. It is, at all events, human.

I wish I could give the text of the passage, for I see how lamentably I have rendered it, but this was the meaning it conveyed to me, and I own I have very often thought over it with comfort and with gratitude.

If the great thinkers — the men of lofty intellects and high-soaring faculties — were but to know how, in vindicating the claims of every-day people to respect and regard, in shielding them from the sneers of smart men and the quips of witty men, they were doing a great and noble work, for which millions of people like myself would bless them, I am certain we should find many more such kindly utterances as that of the great Sir Walter.

I ask pardon for my digression, so selfish as it is, and return to my narrative.

After that famous “*fiasco*” I made in Ireland, I — as the cant phrase has it — got dark for some time. My temper, which at first sustained me under any amount of banter and ridicule, had begun to give way, and I avoided my relations, who certainly never took any peculiar pains to treat me with delicacy, or had the slightest hesitation in making me a butt for very coarse jokes and very contemptible drollery.

I tried a number of things, — that is, I begun them. I begun to read for the law; I begun a novel; I begun to attend divinity lectures; I got a clerkship in a public office.

as supernumerary; I was employed as traveller to a house in the wooden-clock trade; I was secretary to an Association for the Protection of Domestic Cats, and wrote the prospectus for the "Cats' Home:" but it's no use entering into details. I failed in all; and to such an extent of notoriety had my ill-fortune now attained, that the very mention of my name in connection with a new project would have sentenced it at once to ruin.

Over and over again have I heard my "friends," when whispering together over some new scheme, mutter, "Of course Paul is to have nothing to do with it," "Take care that Paul Gosslett is n't in it," and such-like intimations, that gave me the sensation of being a sort of moral leper, whose mere presence was a calamity. The sense of being deemed universally an unlucky fellow is one of the most depressing things imaginable, — to feel that your presence is accounted an evil agency, — and that your co-operation foreshadows failure, — goes a considerable way towards accomplishing the prediction announced.

Though my uncle's stereotyped recommendation to become a coal-heaver was not exactly to my taste, I had serious thoughts of buying a sack, and by a little private practice discovering whether the profession might not in the end become endurable. I was fairly at my wits'-end for a livelihood; and the depression and misery my presence occasioned wherever I went reacted on myself, and almost drove me to desperation.

I was actually so afraid of an evil temptation that I gave up my little lodging that I was so fond of, near Putney, and went to live at Hampstead, where there was no water deep enough to drown a rat. I also forewent shaving, that I might banish my razors, and in all respects set myself steadily to meet the accidents of life with as near an approach to jollity as I could muster.

The simple pleasures of nature — the enjoyment of the fields and the wild flowers; the calm contemplation of the rising or setting sun; the varied forms of insect life; the many-tinted lichens; the ferns; the mosses that clothe the banks of shady alleys; the limpid pools, starred and broken by the dragon-fly, so full of their own especial charm

for the weary voluptuary sick of pampered pleasures and exotic luxuries — do not appeal to the senses of the poor man with that wonderful force of contrast which gives them all their excellence. I have seen an alderman express himself in ecstasies over a roast potato, which certainly would not have called forth the same show of appreciation from an Irish peasant. We like what awakens a new sensation in us, what withdraws us even in imagination from the routine of our daily lives. There is a great self-esteem gratified when we say how simple we can be, how happy in humility, how easily satisfied, and how little dependent on mere luxury or wealth.

The postman who passed my window every morning had long ceased to be an object of interest or anxiety to me; for others he brought tidings, good or ill as it might be, but to me, forgotten and ignored of the world, no news ever came; when one day, to my intense surprise, at first to my perfect incredulity, I saw him draw forth a letter, and make a sign to me to come down and take it. Yes, there it was, "Paul Gosslett, Esq., The Flaggers, Putney," with "Try Sandpit Cottages, Hampstead," in another hand, in the corner. It was from my aunt, and ran thus: —

"THE BRIARS, ROCHESTER.

"DEAR PAUL, — I am rejoiced to say there is a good chance of a situation for you with handsome pay and most agreeable duty. You are to come down here at once, and see your uncle, but on no account let it be known that I have mentioned to you the prospect of employment.

"Your affectionate aunt,

"JANE MORSE."

I took the morning train, and arrived at Rochester by nine o'clock, remembering, not without pain, my last experiences of my uncle's hospitality. I breakfasted at the inn, and only arrived at the house when he had finished his morning meal, and was smoking his pipe in the garden.

"What wind blows you down here, lad?" cried he. "Where are you bound for now?"

"You forget, my dear," said my aunt, "you told me, the other evening, you would be glad to see Paul."

“Humph!” said he, with a grunt. “I’ve been a-thinking over it since, and I suspect it would n’t do. He’d be making a mess of it, the way he does of everything; that blessed luck of his never leaves him, eh?”

Seeing that this was meant as an interrogation, I replied faintly: “You’re quite right, uncle. If I am to depend on my good fortune, it will be a bad look-out for me.”

“Not that I value what is called luck a rush,” cried he, with energy. “I have had luck, but I had energy, industry, thrift, and perseverance. If I had waited for luck, I’d have lived pretty much like yourself, and I don’t know anything to be very proud of in that, eh?”

“I am certainly not proud of my position, sir.”

“I don’t understand what you mean by your position; but I know I’d have been a coal-heaver rather than live on my relations. I’d have sold sulphur matches, I’d have been a porter!”

“Well, sir, I suppose I may come to something of that kind yet; a little more of the courteous language I am now listening to will make the step less difficult.”

“Eh? — What! I don’t comprehend. Do you mean anything offensive?”

“No, dear, he does not,” broke in my aunt; “he only says he’d do anything rather than be a burden to his family, and I’m sure he would; he seems very sorry about all the trouble he has cost them.”

My uncle smoked on for several minutes without a word; at last he came to the end of his pipe, and, having emptied the ashes, and gazed ruefully at the bowl, he said: “There’s no more in the fellow than in that pipe! Not a bit. I say,” cried he, aloud, and turning to me, “you’ve had to my own knowledge as good as a dozen chances, and you’ve never succeeded in one of them.”

“It’s all true,” said I, sorrowfully.

“Owing to luck, of course,” said he, scornfully; “luck makes a man lazy, keeps him in bed when he ought to be up and at work; luck makes him idle, and gets him plucked for his examinations. I tell you this, sir: I’d rather a man would give me a fillip on the nose than talk to me about luck. If there’s a word in the language I detest and hate, it is luck.”

"I'm not in love with it myself, sir," said I, trying to smile.

"Did you ever hear of luck mending a man's shoes or paying his washerwoman? Did luck ever buy a beefsteak, eh?"

"That might admit of discussion."

"Then let me have no discussion. I like work, and I dislike wrangling. Listen to me, and mend now, sir. I want an honest, sober, fixed determination, — no caprice, no passing fancy. Do you believe you are capable of turning over a new leaf, and sitting down steadily to the business of life, like a patient, industrious, respectable man who desires to earn his own bread, and not live on the earnings of others?"

"I hope so."

"Don't tell me of hope, sir. Say you will, or you will not."

"I will," said I, resolutely.

"You will work hard, rise early, live frugally, give up dreaming about this, that, or the other chance, and set to like a fellow that wants to do his own work with his own hands?"

"I promise it all."

My uncle was neither an agreeable nor a very clear exponent of his views, and I shall save my reader and myself some time and unpleasantness if I reduce the statement he made to me to a few words. A company had been formed to start an hydropathic establishment on a small river, a tributary of the Rhine, — the Lahn. They had acquired, at a very cheap rate of purchase, an old feudal castle and its surrounding grounds, and had converted the building into a most complete and commodious residence, and the part which bordered the river into a beautiful pleasure-ground. The tinted drawings which represented various views of the castle and the terraced gardens, were something little short of fairyland in captivation. Nor was the pictorial effect lessened by the fact that figures on horseback and on foot, disporting in boats or driving in carriages, gave a life and movement to the scene, and imparted to it the animation and enjoyment of actual existence. The place of director was

vacant, and I was to be appointed to it. My salary was to be three hundred a year, but my table, my horses, my servants, — in fact, all my household, were to be maintained for me on a liberal scale; and my duties were to be pretty much what I pleased to make them. My small smattering of two or three languages — exalted by my uncle into the reputation of a polyglot — had recommended me to the “Direction;” and as my chief function was to entertain a certain number of people twice or thrice a week at dinner, and suggest amusements to fill up their time, it was believed that my faculties were up to the level of such small requirements.

From the doctor down to the humblest menial all were to be under my sway; and as the establishment numbered above a hundred officials, the command was extensive, if not very dignified. I will own, frankly, I was out of myself with joy at the prospect; nor could all the lowering suggestions of my uncle, and the vulgar cautions he instilled, prevent my feeling delighted with my good fortune. I need not say what resolves I made; what oaths I registered in my own heart to be a good and faithful steward, and while enjoying to the full the happiness of my fortunate existence, to neglect no item of the interests confided to me.

All that I had imagined or dreamed of the place itself was as nothing to the reality; nor shall I ever forget the sense of overwhelming delight in which I stood on the crest of the hill that looked down over the wooded glen and winding river; the deep-bosomed woods, the wandering paths of lawn or of moss, the gently flowing stream in which the castle, with its tall towers, was tremblingly reflected, seemed to me like a princely possession, and, for once, I thought that Paul Gosslett had become the favorite child of fortune, and asked myself what had I done to deserve such luck as this?

If habit and daily use deaden the pangs of suffering, and enable us to bear with more of patience the sorrows of adverse fortune, they, on the other hand, serve to dull the generous warmth of that gratitude we first feel for benefits, and render us comparatively indifferent to enjoyments

which, when first tasted, seemed the very ecstasy of bliss. I am sorry to make this confession; sorry to admit that after some months at "Lahneck," I was, although very happy and satisfied, by no means so much struck by the beauty of the place and the loveliness of the scenery as on my first arrival, and listened to the raptures of the newcomers with a sort of compassionate astonishment. Not but I was proud of the pretentious edifice, proud of its lofty towers and battlemented terraces, its immense proportion, and splendid extent. It was, besides, a complete success as an enterprise. We were always full; applications for rooms poured in incessantly, and when persons vacated their quarters, any change of mind made restitution impossible. I believed I liked the despotism I exercised; it was a small, commonplace sort of sovereignty over bath-men and kitchen-folk, it is true; but in the extent of my command I discovered a kind of dignity, and in the implicit obedience and deference I felt something like princely sway.

As the host, too, I received a very flattering amount of homage; foreigners always yield a willing respect to anything in authority, and my own countrymen soon caught up the habit, as though it implied a knowledge of life and the world. I had not the slightest suspicion that my general manners or bearing were becoming affected by these deferences, till I accidentally overheard a Cockney observe to his wife, "I think he's pompious," a censure that made me very unhappy, and led me to much self-examination and reflection.

Had I really grown what the worthy citizen called "pompious," — had I become puffed up by prosperity; and over-exalted in self-conceit? If so, it were time to look to this at once.

The directors, generally, were well pleased with me. Very gratifying testimonials of their approval reached me; and it was only my uncle's opposition prevented my salary being augmented. "Don't spoil the fellow," he said; "you'll have him betting on the Derby, or keeping a yacht at Cowes, if you don't look out sharp. I'd rather cut him down a hundred than advance him fifty." This fiat from

my own flesh and blood decided the matter. I sulked on this. I had grown prosperous enough to feel indignant, and I resolved to afford myself the well-to-do luxury of discontent. I was, therefore, discontented. I professed that to maintain my position — whatever that meant — I was obliged to draw upon my own private resources; and I went so far as to intimate to the visitors that if I had n't been a man of some fortune the place would be my ruin! Of course my hint got bruited about, and the people commonly said, "If Gosslett goes, the whole concern will break up. They'll not easily find a man of good private fortune, willing to spend his money here, like Gosslett," and such like, till I vow and declare I began to believe my own fiction, and regard it as an indelible fact. If my letter was not on record, I would not now believe the fact; but the document exists, and I have seen it, where I actually threaten to send my resignation if something — I forget what — is not speedily conceded to my demands; and it was only on receiving an admonition in the mild vein peculiar to my uncle that I awoke to a sense of my peril, and of what became me.

I know that there are critics who, pronouncing upon this part of my career, will opine that the Cockney was right, and that I had really lost my head in my prosperity. I am not disposed to say now that there might not have been some truth in this judgment. Things are generally going on tolerably well with a man's material interests when he has time to be dyspeptic. Doctors assure us that savage nations, amidst whom the wants of life call for daily, hourly efforts, amidst whom all is exigency, activity, and resource, have no dyspepsia. If, then, I had reasoned on my condition, — which I did not, — I should have seen that the world went too smoothly with me, and that, in consequence, my health suffered. Just as the fish swallow stones to aid the digestion, we need the accidents and frictions of life to triturate our moral pabulum, and render it more easily assimilable to our constitutions. With dyspepsia I grew dull, dispirited, and dissatisfied. I ceased to take pleasure in all that formerly had interested me. I neglected duty, and regarded my occupation with dislike. My house dinners, which once I

took an especial pride in, seeking not only that the wines and the cookery should be excellent, but that their success as social gatherings should attract notoriety, I now regarded with apathy. I took no pains about either company or cookery, and, in consequence, contrarieties and bad contrasts now prevailed, where, before, all had been in perfect keeping and true artistic shading. My indolence and indifference extended to those beneath me. Where all had once been order, discipline, and propriety, there now grew up carelessness, disorder, and neglect. The complaints of the visitors were incessant. My mornings were passed in reading. I rarely replied to the representations and demands of outraged guests. At last the public press became the channel of these complaints; and "Publicola," and "One who had Suffered," and a number of similarly named patriots declared that the hydropathic establishment at Lahneck was a delusion and a sham; that it was a camp of confusion and mismanagement; and that though a certain P. Gosslett was the nominal director, yet that visitors of three months' standing averred they had never seen him, and the popular belief was that he was a nervous invalid who accepted a nominal duty in recompense for the benefit of air and climate to himself. "How," wrote one indignant correspondent of the Times,— "how the company who instituted this enterprise, and started it on a scale of really great proportions, can find it to their advantage to continue this Mr. Gosslett in a post he so inadequately fills, is matter of daily astonishment to those who have repaired to Lahneck for healthful exercise and amusement, and only found there indifferent attendance and universal inattention."

From the day this appeared I was peppered at every post with letters from the secretary, demanding explanations, reports, returns, what not. The phrase, "The Managing Committee, who are hourly less and less satisfied with Mr. Gosslett's conduct," used to pass through all my dreams.

As for my uncle, his remarks were less measured. One of his epistles — I have it still by me — runs thus: "What do you mean? Are you only an idiot, or is there some deeper rascality under all this misconduct? Before I resigned my place at the Board, yesterday, I gave it as my deliberate

opinion that a warrant should be issued against you for fraud and malversation, and that I would hail your conviction as the only solace this nefarious concern could afford me. Never dare to address me again. I have forbidden your aunt to utter your name in my presence."

I don't know how it was, but I read this with as much unconcern as though it had been an advertisement about the Sydenham trousers or Glenfield starch. There must be a great dignity in a deranged digestion, for it certainly raises one above all the smaller excitements and conditions of passing events; and when, on the same morning that this epistle arrived, the steward came to inform me that of three hundred and twenty-four rooms twelve only were occupied, though this was what would be called the height of the season, I blandly remarked, "Let us not be impatient, Mr. Deechworth, they'll come yet." This was in June; by July the twelve diminished to eight. No new arrival came; and as August drew to a close we had three! All September, — and the place was then in full beauty, — the mountains glowing with purple and scarlet heath, the cactus plants on the terrace in blossom, the Virginian acanthus hanging in tangled masses of gorgeous flowers from every tree, the river ever plashing with the leaping trout, — we had not one stranger within our gates. My morning report ran, "Arrivals, none; departures, none; present in house, none;" and when I put "Paul Gosslett" at the bottom of this, I only wonder why I did not take a header into the Lahn!

As we had at this period eighty-four servants in the house, sixteen horses in the stables, and a staff of thirty-two gardeners and boatmen, not to speak of runners, commissionaires, and general loungers, I was not amazed when a telegram came, in these words: "Close the house, place Deechworth in charge, and come over to London." To this I replied, "Telegram received; compliance most undesirable. Autumn season just opening. Place in full beauty. — P. G."

I will not weary the reader with a mere commercial wrangle, — how the Committee reproached me, and how I rejoined; how they called names, and I hinted at defamation; how they issued an order for my dismissal, and I demurred,

and demanded due notice. We abused each other all September, and opened October in full cry of mutual attack and defence. By this time, too, we were at law. They applied for a "mandamus" to get rid of me, and my counsel argued that I was without the four seas of the realm, and could not be attacked. They tried to reach me by the statute of frauds; but there was no treaty with Nassau, and I could not be touched. All this contentiou and quarrelling was like sulphate of quinine to me, — I grew robust and strong under the excitement, and discovered a lightness of heart and a buoyancy of nature I had believed had long left me forever; and though they stopped my salary and dishonored my drafts, I lived on fruit and vegetables, and put the garrison on the same diet, with a liberal allowance of wine, which more than reconciled them to the system.

So matters went on till the ninth of October, — a memorable day to me, which I am not like to forget. It was near sunset, and I sat on the terrace, enjoying the delicious softness of the evening air, and watching the varying tints on the river, as the golden and green light came slanting through the trees and fell upon the water, when I heard the sound of wheels approaching. There had been a time when such sounds would have awakened no attention, when arrivals poured in incessantly, and the coming or the departing guest evoked nothing beyond the courtesy of a greeting. Now, however, a visitor was an event; and as the post-horses swept round the angle of the wood, and disappeared behind a wing of the castle, I felt a strange sensation through my heart, and a soft voice seemed to say, "Paul, Fate is dealing with you now." I fell into a reverie, however, and soon forgot all about the arrival, till Mr. Deechworth came up with a card in his hand. "Do you know this name, sir, — Mrs. Pultney Dacre? She has only her maid with her, but seems a person of condition." I shook my head in ignorance of the name, and he went on: "She wants rooms on the ground floor, where she can walk out into the garden; and I have thought of No. 4."

"No. 4, Deechworth? that apartment costs sixty francs a day."

"Well, sir, as there are few people now in the house," —

this was an euphemism for none, — “I have said she might have the rooms for forty.”

“It may be done for one week,” said I, “but take care to caution her not to mention it to her friends. We have trouble enough with those tiresome people in London without this. What is she like?”

“A very handsome figure, sir; evidently young; but had a double veil down, and I could n’t see her face.”

“How long does she talk of staying?”

“A month, sir. A husband is expected back from India early in November, and she is to wait for him here.”

“So,” said I, thoughtfully, and I am sure I cannot say why thoughtfully, “she is waiting for her husband’s arrival.”

“Those young women whose husbands are in India are always pretty; have n’t you remarked that, sir?”

“I can’t say that I have, Deechworth. These are speculations of a kind that do not occur to me. Let her have No. 4;” and with the air of one who dismissed the theme, I waved my hand, and sent him away.

No. 4 — for so the occupant was called, her name being entirely merged in her number — never appeared in the grounds, nor showed in any way. The small garden which belonged to her apartment had a separate enclosure of its own, and within this she walked every evening. How she passed her days I know not. I was told that she sang like an angel, but I never heard her. She was, however, a most persistent bather. There was not a douche in the establishment she did not try, and possibly, by way of pastime, she was constantly experimenting on new modes and fashions of bathing.

When the establishment had been crowded and in full work, I had my time so completely occupied that I had little difficulty in keeping my mind estranged from the gossip and tittle-tattle which beset such places; but now, when the roof sheltered a single guest, it was wonderful how, in spite of all my determination on the subject, I became perversely uneasy to hear about her; to know whether she read or wrote; whether she got letters or answered them; what she thought of the place; whether she was or was not

pleased with it; did she praise the camellias? What did she think of the cook? She was evidently "gourmet," and the little dinners she ordered were remarkable for a taste and piquancy that stimulated my curiosity; for there is something very significant in this phase of the feminine nature; and when I heard she liked her ortolans "au beurre d'anchois," I confess I wanted much to see her.

This, evidently, was not an easy matter, for she courted retirement, and her maid let it be known that if her mistress found herself in the slightest degree molested by strangers, or her privacy invaded, she would order her horses, and set off for somewhere else without a moment's hesitation. I was obliged, therefore, to respect this intimation. First of all, I felt that as long as No. 4 remained I was sustained in my resolve not to close the establishment. I was like a deposed monarch at whose residence one envoy still remained, and whose sovereignty, therefore, was yet recognized, and I clung to this last link that united me to the world of material interest with intense eagerness.

I ventured to present Mr. Gosslett's respectful compliments in a small note, and inquire if Mrs. Pultney Dacre would wish to see the Park, in which case his phaeton and ponies were always at her disposal, as also his boat if she felt disposed to take an airing on the river; but a few lines declined these offers, — in very polite terms, it is true, yet in a fashion that said, "No more of these attentions, Paul," — at least, it was thus I read her.

Although my contention with the company still continued, and some new menace of law was sure to reach me by every second post, and my own counsel feelingly warned me that I had n't an inch of ground to stand on, and my costs when "cast" would be something overwhelming, I had steeled myself so thoroughly to all consequences, had so resolved to make the most of the present, that I read these minatory documents with an unmoved heart, and a degree of placid composure that now strikes me as something heroic.

I was sitting one evening in study, thinking over these things, — not depressively, not desperately; for, strangely enough, since misfortune had befallen me, I had acquired a most wonderful stock of equanimity; but I was canvassing

with myself what was to come next, when the fatal hour struck, as strike it must, that sounded my expulsion from Eden, when a gentle tap came to my door. I said, "Come in;" and Virginie, Mrs. Dacre's French maid, entered. She was profuse of apologies for "deranging" me. She was in despair at the bare thought of interrupting I do not know what or which of my learned occupations, but her mistress had had an accident!

"An accident!" I started as I repeated the word.

"Oh! it was not serious," she said, with a sweet smile. "It was only troublesome, as occurring in a remote spot, and to a person who, like Madame, was of such refined delicacy, and who could not bear consulting a strange physician, — her own doctor was on his way from India," — she went on rambling thus, so that it was with difficulty I learned at last, that Madame, when feeding the gold-fish in the pond of the garden, had stepped on the rock-work and turned her ankle. The pain was very great, and Virginie feared something had been broken, though Madame was certain it was a mere sprain; and now, as the doctor had been dismissed, Madame wished to know where medical advice could be soonest obtained. I at once declared I was fully competent to treat such an injury. I had studied surgery, and could certainly 'pronounce whether the case was a grave one or a mere passing accident. Virginie smiled dubiously.

"Monsieur was very young. Madame never consulted a doctor under fifty-five or sixty."

"Possibly," suggested I, "in an ordinary case, and where there were time and opportunity to choose; but here, and with an accident, — an accident that, if neglected or improperly treated —"

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" cried she, "don't say it! Don't say there might be unhappy results; come at once and see her!" She almost dragged me along, such was her impatience, to her mistress's room; and in less than a minute I was standing beside a sofa in a half-darkened room, where a lady lay, her face closely veiled, and a large shawl so enveloping her that all guess as to her figure or probable age was impossible. A light cambric handkerchief was spread over one

foot, which rested on a cushion, and this kerchief the maid hastily snatched away as I approached, saying, —

“Monsieur is a doctor himself, Madame, and will cure you immediately.”

“Là!” cried she, pointing to the foot. “Là!”

And certainly I needed no more formal invitation to gaze on a foot and ankle of such faultless mould and symmetry as never, even in the Greek statues, had I seen equalled. Whether there had not been time for the process of inflammation to have set up swelling or disfigurement, or whether the injury itself had been less grave than might have been apprehended, I am not able to say; but the beautiful proportions of that rounded instep, the tapering of the foot, the hollowing of the sole, the slightly mottled marble of the flesh, the blue veins swelling through the transparent skin, were all uninjured and unmarred. Ivory itself could not have been more smoothly turned than the ankle, nor of a more dazzling whiteness. To have been permitted to kneel down and kiss that foot, I would have sworn myself her slave forever. I suppose I must have shown some signs of the rapture that was consuming me, for the maid said, —

“What does the man mean? has he lost his senses?”

“I must examine the part,” said I; and, kneeling down, I proceeded with what I imagined to be a most surgical air, to investigate the injury. As a worshipper might have touched a holy relic, I suffered my hand to glide over that beautifully rounded instep, but all so delicately and gently that I could not say whether the thrill that touch sent through me was not the act of my own nerves. She seemed, however, to tremble; her foot moved slightly, and a gentle action of her shoulders, like a shudder, bespoke pain. It was the sort of movement that one might make in being tickled; and as great agony causes this movement occasionally, I said, “I trust I have not hurt you? I’d not have done so for worlds.” She took her handkerchief and pressed it to her face, and I thought she sobbed; but she never said a word.

“Alors!” cried the maid. “What do you say is to be done?”

“Ice,” said I. “Iced water and perfect repose.”

“And where are we to get ice in this barbarous place?”

“Madame,” said I, “the place is less savage than you deem, and ice shall be procured. There is a monastery at Offenbach where they have ice throughout the year. I will despatch an estafette there at once.”

The lady bent forward, and whispered something in the maid’s ear.

“Madame desires to thank you sincerely,” said the maid. “She is much impressed by your consideration and kindness.”

“I will return in a couple of hours,” said I, with a most doctorial sententiousness, and in reality eagerly desiring to be alone, and in the privacy of my own room, before I should break out in those wild ecstasies which I felt were struggling within me for utterance.

I sat down to make a clean breast of it in these confessions, but I must ask my reader to let me pass over unrecorded the extravagances I gave way to when once more alone.

There are men — I am one of them — who require, constitutionally require, to be in love. That necessity which Don Quixote proclaimed to be a condition of knightly existence, — the devotion to a mistress, — is an essential to certain natures. This species of temperament pertained to me in my boyhood. It has followed me through life with many pains and suffering, but also with great compensations. I have ever been a poor man, — my friends can tell that I have not been a lucky one, — and yet to be rich and fortunate together, I would not resign that ecstasy, that sentiment of love, which, though its object may have changed, has still power to warm up the embers of my heart, and send through me a glow that revives the days of my hot youth and my high hopes.

I was now in love, and cared as little for Boards of Directors and resolutions passed in committee as for the ordinances of the Grand Lama. It might rain mandamuses and warrants, they had no power to trouble me. As I wended my way to No. 4 with my bowl of ice, I felt like a votary bearing his offering to the shrine of his patron saint. My gift

might lie on the altar, but the incense of my devotion soared up to heaven.

I would gladly have visited her every hour, but she would only permit me to come twice a day. I was also timid, and when Virginie said my ten minutes was up I was dismissed. I tried to bribe Virginie, but the unworthy creature imagined, with the levity of her nation, I had designs on her own affections, and threatened to denounce me to her mistress, — a menace which cost me much mortification and more money.

I don't know that the cure made great progress, — perhaps I have learned since why this was so; at all events, I pursued my treatment with assiduity, and was rewarded with a few soft-voiced words, as thus: "How kind you are!" "What a gentle hand you have!" "How pleasant that ice is!" At length she was able to move about the room. I wished to offer my arm, but she declined. Virginie was strong enough to support her. How I detested that woman! But for her, how many more opportunities had I enjoyed of offering small services and attentions! Her very presence was a perpetual restraint. She never took her eyes off me while I was in the room with her mistress, — black-beady, inexpressive eyes for the most part, but with something devilish in their inscrutability that always frightened me. That she saw the passion that was consuming me, that she read me in my alternate paroxysm of delight or despair, was plain enough to me; but I could not make her my friend. She would take my presents freely, but always with the air of one whose silence was worth buying at any price, but whose co-operation or assistance no sum could compass. Her very mode of accepting my gifts had something that smote terror into me. She never thanked me, nor even affected gratitude. She would shake her head mournfully and gloomily, as though matters had come to a pretty pass between us, and as though some dreadful reckoning must one day be expected to account for all this corruption. "Ah, Monsieur Gosslett," said she one day with a sigh, "what a precipice we are all standing beside! Have you thought of the ruin you are leading us to?" These were very strange words; and though I took my watch and chain from my pocket, and gave them to her in order to induce her to explain her meaning, she only

burst into tears and rushed out of the room. Was I then the happiest of mortals or the most wretched? Such was the problem that drove sleep that long night from my eyelids, and found me still trying to solve it when the day broke.

Days would often pass now without Mrs. Dacre permitting me to visit her, and then Virginie significantly hinted that she was right in this, — that it was for my good as well as her own, and so on. I mourned over my banishment and bewailed it bitterly. “One would think, sir, you forget my mistress was married,” said Virginie to me one day; and I protest it was no more than the truth. I had completely, utterly forgotten it; and the stern fact thus abruptly announced almost felled me to the earth.

Mrs. Dacre had promised to take a drive with me as soon as she felt able to bear the motion of a carriage; but though I often recalled the pledge, she found excuses of one kind or other to defer performance, and as I now rarely saw her, she would write me a line, sometimes two lines, on a scrap of paper, which Virginie would lay open on my table and generally shake her head very meaningfully as I read it.

If Mrs. Dacre’s notes were very brief, they were not less enigmatical, — she was the strangest writer that ever put pen to paper. Thus, to give an instance: the ice application she always referred to as “my coldness,” and she would say, “How long is your coldness to continue? have I not had enough of it yet? This coldness is becoming tiresome, and if it be continued, how am I to go out with you?” In another note, referring to our intended drive, she says, “If it is a question of running away, I must have a word to say first; for though I believe you have no fears on that score, I am not so courageous.” Virginie had been telling stories about my ponies; they were frisky, it is true, and it was thus her mistress alluded to them. Some disparagement of me as a whip provoked this remark from her: “As the time draws nearer, I ask myself, Shall I trust myself to your guidance? Who can say what may come of it?”

At last came this one line: “I have summoned up all my courage, and I will go with you this evening. Come up at eight, and I will be ready.” I ought to have mentioned

before this that for nigh three weeks a vulgar-looking man, middle-aged and robust, had come to take the waters; and though he only spoke a few words of bad French, being English, had continued to put himself on terms of intimacy with all the subordinates of the household, and was constantly seen laughing with the boatmen and trying to converse with the gardeners.

Deechworth had conceived suspicion about him from the first; he connected him with the law proceedings that the company had instituted against me, and warned me to be cautious of the man. His opinion was that he belonged to the "Force." "I know it, sir," said he, "by his walk and his laugh." The detectives, according to Deechworth, have a laugh quite peculiar to themselves; it never takes them off what they are saying or thinking about. In fact, it is like the bassoon in a band; it serves just to mark the time while the air is being played by the other instruments.

"I don't like that Mr. Bracken, sir," Deechworth would say; "he ain't here for no good, you'll see, sir;" and it is not improbable that I should have perfectly agreed with this opinion if I had ever troubled my head about him at all, but the fact was my mind was very differently occupied. All Scotland Yard and Sir Richard himself might have been domiciled at the establishment without their ever giving me a moment of uneasy reflection.

Whether Mrs. Dacre's scruples were those of prudery or cowardice, whether she dreaded me as a companion or feared me as a coachman, I cannot say; but she constantly put off our intended drive, and though occasionally the few words in which she made her apologies set my heart half wild with delight, simply because I pleased to read them in a sense of my own invention, yet I grew feverish and uneasy at these delays. At last there came the one line in pencil, "I have made up my mind I will go with you to-morrow evening." It is in no extravagance or mock rapture I say it, but in plain homely truth, I would not have changed that scrap of paper for a check of ten thousand on Coutts.

It was my habit to lay all the little notes I received from her before me on my writing-table, and as I passed them under review, to weave out for myself a story of the progress

of my love. The servants who waited on me, and who alone entered my study, were foreigners, and ignorant of English, so that I could permit myself this indulgence without fear. Now, on the afternoon on which I had received the latest of her despatches, I sauntered out into the wood to be alone with my own thoughts, unmolested and undisturbed. I wandered on for hours, too happy to count the time, and too deeply lost in my imaginings to remember anything but my own fancies. What was to come of this strange imbroglio in which I now stood; how was Fate about to deal with me? I had clearly arrived at a point where the roads led right and left. Which was I to take, and which was the right one?

Thus canvassing and discussing with myself, it was very late ere I got back to the castle; but I carried the key of a small portal gate that admitted me to my own quarters unobserved, and I could enter or pass out unnoticed. As I found myself in my study and lit my lamp, I turned to my writing-table. I started with amazement on discovering that the little notes and scraps of paper which bore Mrs. Dacre's writing had disappeared. These, and a small notebook, a sort of diary of my own, had been taken away; and that the act was not that of a common thief was clear, from the fact that a valuable silver inkstand and an onyx seal mounted in gold, and some other small objects of value lay about untouched. A cold sweat broke over me as I stood there overwhelmed and panic-stricken by this discovery. The terrors of a vague and undefined danger loom over a man with an intensity far greater than the fears of a known and palpable peril. I examined the fastenings of the door and the windows to see whether force had been used, but there was no sign of such. And as I had locked the door when leaving and found it locked on my return, how had this thief found entrance except by a key? I rung the bell; but the servants were all in bed, and it was long before any one replied to my summons. Of course, servant-like, they had seen nothing, heard nothing. I sent for Deechworth; he was asleep, and came unwillingly and angry at being routed out of bed. He, too, knew nothing. He questioned me closely as to whether I had seen the papers on my table

before I left home for my walk, and half vexed me by the pertinacity of his examination, and, finally, by the way in which he depreciated the value of my loss, and congratulated me on the circumstance that nothing of real worth had been abstracted. This was too much for my patience, and I declared that I had rather the thief had left me without a coat or without a shilling than taken these precious scraps of paper. "Oh," said he, with a sort of sneer, "I had not the slightest suspicion of the value you attached to them." "Well, sir," said I, losing all control over my passion, "now that you see it, now that you hear it, now that you know it, will you tell me at what price you will restore them to me?"

"You mean that it was I who took them?" said he, quietly, and without any show of warmth.

"I don't suppose you will deny it," was my answer.

"That will do, Mr. Gosslett," said he; "that's quite enough. I hope to be able to teach you that it's one thing to defy a board of directors, and it's another to defame a respectable man. I'll make you smart for this, sir;" and with these words he turned away and left the room.

I don't know when or how the servants retired,— whether I dismissed them, or whether they went of their own accord. I was like a madman. My temper, excited to the last limits of reason, impelled me to this or that act of insanity. At one moment I thought of hastening after Deechworth, and, with a revolver in my hand, compelling him to give up the stolen papers; and I shuddered as to what I should do if he refused. At another, I determined to follow him, and offer him everything I had in the world for them; for, all this time, I had worked myself up to the conviction that he, and he alone, was the thief. Oh, thought I, if I had but the aid of one of those clever fellows of the detective order, whose skill wants but the faintest clew to trace out these mysteries! and, suddenly, I bethought me of Mr. Bracken, whom Deechworth himself had pronounced to be "one of the Force."

I rung my bell, and desired Mr. Bracken might be sent to me. The messenger was a long time absent, and came, at last, to say that Mr. Bracken had left the castle that

evening, and taken all his luggage with him. The tidings struck me like a blow, — here, then, was the thief! And for what purpose could such a theft have been accomplished? “Tell Mr. Deechworth I want him,” cried I, being no less eager to make him my deepest apologies for my false accusation than to consult his strong common-sense in my difficulty.

The servant returned to say Mr. Deechworth had gone too. He had left the castle almost immediately after our stormy interview, and was already miles away on his road to the Rhine.

In my misery and desolation, in that abandonment to utter terror and confusion in which, with the drowning instinct, one snatches at straws, I sent to know if I could speak to Mrs. Dacre, or even her maid. How shall I describe my horror as I heard that they also were gone! They had left soon after Mr. Bracken; in fact, the post-horses that took them away had passed Mr. Bracken at the gate of the park.

I know no more how the rest of the night was passed by me, how the hours were spent till daybreak, than I could recount the incidents of delirium in fever. I must have had something like a paroxysm of insanity, for I appear to have rushed from room to room, calling for different people, and in tones of heart-rending entreaty begging that I might not be deserted. Towards morning I slept, — slept so soundly that the noises of the house did not disturb me. It was late in the afternoon when I awoke. The servant brought me my coffee and my letters; but I bade him leave me, and fell off to sleep again. In this way, and with only such sustenance as a cup of milk or coffee would afford, I passed fourteen days, my state resembling that of a man laboring under concussion of the brain; indeed, so closely did the symptoms resemble those of this affection, that the doctor carefully examined my head to see whether I had not incurred some actual injury. It was five weeks before I could leave my bed, and crawl down with difficulty to my study. The table was covered with the accumulated letters of thirty-odd posts, and I turned over the envelopes, most of which indicated communications from the company. There was

also one in my uncle's hand. This I opened and read. It was in these words:—

“So, sir, not satisfied with a life of indolence and dependence, you have now added infamy to your worthlessness, and have not even spared the members of your own family the contagion of your vice. If you can give information as to the present abode of your wretched victim, do so, as the last amends in your power, and the last act of reparation, before you are consigned to that jail in which it is to be hoped you will end your days.”

I read this till my head reeled. Who were the members of my family I had contaminated or corrupted? Who was my wretched victim? And why I was to die in prison I knew not. And the only conclusion I could draw from it all was that my uncle was hopelessly mad, and ought to be shut up.

A strange-looking, coarse-papered document, that till then had escaped my notice, now caught my eye. It was headed “Court of Probate and Divorce,” and set forth that on a certain day in term the case of “MacNamara *versus* MacNamara, Gosslett, co-respondent,” would come on for trial; the action being to obtain a rule *nisi* for divorce, with damages against the co-respondent.

A notice of service, duly signed by one of my own people, lay beside this; so that at last I got a faint glimmering of what my uncle meant, and clearly descried what was implied by my “victim.”

I believe that most readers of the “Times” or the “Morning Post” could finish my story; they, at all events, might detail the catastrophe with more patience and temper than I could. The MacNamara divorce was a nine-days' scandal. And “if the baseness of the black-hearted iniquity of the degraded creature who crept into a family as a supplicant that he might pollute it with dishonor; who tracked his victim, as the Indian tracks his enemy, from lair to lair, — silent, stealthily, and with savage intensity, — never faltering from any momentary pang of conscience, nor hesitating in his vile purpose from any passing gleam of virtue, — if this wretch, stigmatized by nature with a rotten heart, and branded by a name that will sound appropriately in the

annals of crime, for he is called Gosslett," — if all this, and a great deal more in the same fashion, is not familiar to the reader, it is because he has not carefully studied the Demosthenic orations of the Court of Arches. In one word, I was supposed to have engaged the affections and seduced the heart of Mrs. MacNamara, who was a cousin of my own, and the daughter of the Rev. W. Dudgeon, in whose house I had been "brought up," &c. I had withdrawn her from her husband, and taken her to live with me at Lahneck under the name of Dacre, where our course of life — openly, fearlessly infamous — was proved by a host of witnesses; in particular, by a certain Virginie, maid of the respondent, who deposed to having frequently found me at her feet, and who confessed to have received costly presents to seduce her into favoring the cause of the betrayer. Mr. Bracken, a retired detective, who produced what were called the love-letters, amused the jury considerably by his account of my mad freaks and love-sick performances. As for Mrs. MacNamara herself, she entered no appearance to the suit; and the decree *nisi* was pronounced, with damages of five thousand pounds, against Paul Gosslett, who, the counsel declared, was in "a position to pay handsomely for his vices, and who had ample means to afford himself the luxury of adultery." I was told that the mob were prepared to stone me if I had been seen; and that, such was the popular excitement about me, a strong police force was obliged to accompany a red-whiskered gentleman to his house because there was a general impression abroad that he was Gosslett.

Of course I need not say I never ventured back to England; and I indite this, my last confession, from a small village in Bohemia, where I live in board — partial board it is — with a very humble family, who, though not complimentary to me in many things, are profuse in the praises of my appetite.

I rarely see an English newspaper; but a Galignani fell in my way about a week ago, in which I read the marriage of Mrs. MacNamara with R. St. John, Esq., the then Secretary of Legation at Rio. This piece of news gave me much matter of reflection as to my unhappy victim, and has also

enabled me to unseal my lips about the bridegroom, of whom I knew something once before.

The man who is always complaining is the terror of his friends; hence, if nothing but bad luck attend me, I shall trouble the world no more with my Confessions; if Fate, however, should be pleased to smile ever so faintly on me, you shall hear once more from poor Paul Gosslett.

THE END.

